

やはり俺の青春ラブコメはまちがっている。

My youth romantic comedy is wrong as I expected.

渡 航【wataru watari】

illustration ぽんかん⑧

6.5
six and a half

GAGAGA

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six and
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Contents

- 1 またしても平塚静は新たな命令を下す。 010
 - 2 今再び城廻めぐりと巡り会う。 038
 - 3 思ったとおり、相模南は変わってない。 072
 - 4 あくまでも雪ノ下雪乃は試し続ける。 103
 - 5 以上のことから、比企谷八幡は予感する。 178
 - 6 それでも、城廻めぐりは見てくれている。 233
 - 7 そして、最後の会議が踊りだす。 294
 - 8 だから、彼らの祭りは終わらない。 327
- B.T. ぼーなすとらつく!
「そのクリスマスキャンドルの灯が揺れる時……。」 372



Oneday, after school... Yukino&Yui



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戸塚彩加
saika totsuka

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登場人物 [character]

six and a half



比企谷八幡主人公。高二。性格がひねくれている。
【ひきがやーはちまん】

雪之下雪乃奉仕部部長。完璧主義者。
【ゆきのしたーゆきの】

由比ヶ浜結衣八幡のクラスメイト。周りの顔色を伺いがち。
【ゆいがはま-ゆい】

材木座義輝オタク。ライトノベル作家志望。
【ざいもくざ-よしてる】

戸塚彩加テニス部。とても可愛いが男子。
【とつか-さいか】

川崎沙希八幡のクラスメイト。ちょっと不良っぽい。
【かわさき-さき】

葉山隼人八幡のクラスメイト。人気者。サッカーチーム。
【はやま-はやと】

三浦優美子八幡のクラスメイト。クラスの女子の頂点に君臨する。
【みうら-ゆみこ】

海老名姫菜八幡のクラスメイト。三浦グループだが腐女子。
【えびな-ひな】

相模 南八幡のクラスメイト。女子の二番手グループに属す。
【さがみ-みなみ】

戸部 翔八幡のクラスメイト。葉山グループのお調子者。
【とべーかける】

城廻めぐり生徒会長。三年生。
【しろめぐり-めぐり】

平塚 静国語教師。生活指導担当。
【ひらつか-しずか】

比企谷小町八幡の妹。中学三年生。
【ひきがやーこまち】

design:numata rina

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- ① またしても平塙静は新たな命令を下す。 004
- ② 今再び城廻めぐりと巡り会う。 046
- ③ 思つたとおり、相模南は変わってない。 084
- ④ だけれども彼らの祭いは動き出さない。 120

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[ひきがや-こまち]

design: numata rina

Chapter 1: Once again, Hiratsuka Shizuka issues a new order.

The end of the Cultural Festival marked the transition further into fall.

The sky lay bare high overhead and the winds that caressed your cheeks became cooler.

The hallway leading to the special building was empty of people. It was bitingly cold and I refitted my blazer. Only the sounds of my footsteps resounded in the quietness.

At our school, fall was a busily, elapsing season.

Following the Cultural Festival was the Sports Festival and then the field trip.

As second years in high school, our fall schedule in particular was filled to the brim. Those three events likely comprised the biggest period of our youth.

Perhaps that's why every class and year—the entire student body—felt facetious.

High school students were already seen as facetious individuals. And given the season now, their excitement had gotten even more intense. The Cultural Festival was where everyone had united (them ‘n not me), the Sports Festival was where allies and enemies intermingled (them ‘n not me), and the field trip was where close friends would congregate (them ‘n not me), whereby filling another page of their radiant youth. The way I’d keep saying “them ‘n not me” reminded of a certain white and black ice cream. I bet turning it into a milkshake would be pretty good, too.

I arrived in front of the clubroom, though not exactly lured in by the smell of confection, but upon opening the door, I was met with a sweet aroma.

“Oh, Hikki, yahallo!”

My entry was greeted with an energetic lift of a hand along with the light shaking hair styled in a bun.

It was Yuigahama Yui. We were classmates as well as members in this Service Club. She sported an appearance like that of any normal high school girl. Normally, she’d be the type that wouldn’t talk to me so casually like that, but before I even noticed, she had made herself at home in this club. Her behavior resembled that of a puppy or even a

tanuki.

Laid out before her on the desk in front was an assortment of snacks. Apparently, she was in the middle of tea time after school.

Steam floated out of her mug cup. The neighboring plain tea cup was about to filled as well.

The individual holding up the teapot combed her long, glossy black hair upwards with her slender fingers. Her prim profile bore a semblance with white porcelain, faintly tinged by the scarlet of the declining sun like the color of the tea she had poured.

I wasn't very knowledgeable in etiquette, but she, Yukinoshita Yukino, had conducted herself so well that if someone told me she belonged to a family of aristocrats, I wouldn't hesitate to believe it.

After finishing preparing the tea, she gracefully took her seat.

"Well then, let's dig in," she said.

Yuigahama clapped her hands together. "Thank you for the food."

"Enjoy."

It was almost like they were playing house. I wanted to poke fun at them, but the mood that existed between the two of them could easily be rendered as a painting that I kept to myself. If you were to ask what was unnecessary in this room right now, it'd be me without a doubt.

Maybe that's why a portion of snacks weren't prepared for me. *Can we, like, totally stop forgetting only my portion? It reminds me of the time when I worked as part-time staff for a concert and I was the only one with a lunchbox without chopsticks. And that's the moment I thought I'd try eating like I was from India. Sure, there was a convenience store nearby, but... damn you, manager.*

"Oh, Hikki's share..." Yuigahama said, after sipping her cup and chewing an apparently hand-made muffin.

Yukinoshita eventually noticed as well and softly placed her cup on the saucer. She moved her gaze to check around the desk. However, an extra cup wouldn't be around so conveniently like that.

But I didn't need their concern or consideration. Loners were always prepared, wherever and whenever. After all, no one would come to their aid.

"It's fine, I already have something."

I took out a drink that was in a dangerous package flashing the warning colors of yellow and black from my bag. Drinking from the get-go and you were already at the climax; that's what we called MAX COFFEE. Rather than climax, you might as well be done with the drink.

Once I arrived at my seat, I snapped open the tab of my MacCan (the can of MAX COFFEE). I typically liked drinking it when it became lukewarm because it made the kick from the heavy sweetness incredibly destructive. With how much sugar it contained, it wouldn't be odd at all if it was added to the standard rations for the JSDF.

There's a disaster? Bring MAX COFFEE. Feel free to take one with you when you go to the mountains, too.

After the three of us all had our drinks in hand, Yukinoshita abruptly brought out a laptop.

I could understand why she'd have one for the Cultural Festival Planning Committee, but I wasn't sure what her reason was now as I watched her with blank eyes. But you know, the letters "l" and the capital letter "i" looked pretty similar. From "Iaptop and no panties", "Iaptop and no panties", "Iaptop and no panties", and "Iaptop and no panties," which one of them had the letter "i" in the first word!?

As I quizzed myself in my head, Yuigahama made a curious look as she chewed her muffin and made a gander into Yukinoshita's hands. By the way, the correct answer to earlier was all of them!

"Hey Yukinon, what's that?"

"Hiratsuka-sensei made me take it and indicated it was for our new club activity..." Yukinoshita answered briefly as she waited for the computer to boot. She didn't seem to know what that entailed as well.

The computer must've been a pretty old model since it took some time to start up. In the meantime, Yukinoshita went through her habitual motions of thinking with her hand to her chin while staring at the screen.

Yuigahama and I followed her gaze and looked down into the screen from behind her. A lone text file named "Read me!" was on the desktop that was set to the dull default appearance.

Beyond that, there wasn't any other file that seemed pertinent to the club. Yukinoshita slid her fingers towards the file and clicked it.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Service Club,

Your new club activity will consist of consulting problems through mail.

We will dub it, “The Chiba Prefecture Problem E-Consultation”

I would like all of you to make an effort to solve any problem that presents itself.

Service Club Advisor – Hiratsuka Shizuka

After reading the incredibly concise set of instructions, we all reacted differently.

“...I see, I understand now. We simply have to reply to any consulting mail with appropriate advice. However, will we actually receive them that often...?”

Yukinoshita looked more concerned with the system than what the activity involved and rescanned over the text several times.

On the other hand, Yuigahama’s eyes widened. “Is it just me or is Hiratsuka-sensei always this responsible...?”

Now that’s Yuigahama. That single point was what she was surprised with. Heck, I even wanted to say that’s our Gahama-san.

“Not really, she’s usually like this through mail. It’s just surprising because of how she normally acts.”

“Oh, ok—huh?” Yuigahama took a moment to think and then blinked at me twice.

Well, an understandable reaction. Whenever she’s around, she’d act really uncouth, or like an Apache helicopter, or like an avalanche, or like some kind of Abaranger... At the very least, she exhibited zero signs of a courteous, prim, sweet, and earnest instructor...

“It means she’s a proper adult for the most part,” I said.

Both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama then stared at me with doubtful eyes.

“...It sounds as though you exchange mails with Hiratsuka-sensei on a regular basis.” Yukinoshita stated with a cold voice. She crossed her arms quietly and sent me a sharp and piercing gaze. But that wasn’t something to glare at me for.

“Rather than exchange—yeah, it’s more like I receive them. I’d classify them under categories like magazine subscriptions, Amazon, or Mac stuff. Every now and then, I get these absurdly long mails from her.”

“...Is that so? Not that it’s any of my concern,” Yukinoshita succinctly answered. She turned towards the computer again, but her typing sounded awfully loud. Following behind those sounds was a small voice.

“Long mails... Oh, I think I kinda have something in mind we could consult her about.”

You’re scaring me a little by whispering like that you know, Yuigahama-san... I mean, I’d love to know how to avoid those long mails of hers too, okay? It’s just when I don’t reply back, she ends up calling instead...

I fancied the idea of sending a consultation mail right away until the sound of Yukinoshita typing stopped.

“We received a mail already.”

“Oh wow, we really do get them. Let’s see what we got...”

Yuigahama went behind Yukinoshita and hugged her shoulders. Once again, I couldn’t expect any less from a girl of a top caste to naturally engage in skinship like that.

“...So heavy,” Yukinoshita mumbled.

What’s heavy, hmm? Though I was extremely curious on the matter, I’d probably be put through the wringer if I tried inquiring about it, so I decided to ignore it and asked, “What kind did we get?”

“Umm... There’s one from someone with the pen name, Homooo-san... What the heck is with these weird smileys...?”

Alright, I have a good idea who the sender is.

“You don’t need to read the rest of that,” I said.

Yukinoshita seemingly had the same opinion and placed her hand to her temple as though to hold back a headache. She sighed. “That’s true. I can already imagine what it’s about...”

“W-We should at least give it a read! Come on, I’ll even read it, okay!”

Yuigahama tugged Yukinoshita’s sleeve. Although she looked peeved, she apparently couldn’t turn down someone who appealed to her like a puppy. She took Yuigahama’s hand and while pushing it away, she said, “I understand, so stop pulling. We’ll listen to it for now. Just for now...”

“Okay! I’ll start reading then!”

Yuigahama began to read the rest of the mail while Yukinoshita adjusted her posture to listen, albeit reluctantly.

She's so soft on Yuigahama. Am I reading a series from Comic Something Hime or something?
As I watched the two engage in their eye-pleasing Yuru Yuri relationship, Yuigahama read the mail aloud.

[Pen Name: Homooo-san's Consultation]

Ever since the Cultural Festival, my mind has been occupied with two particular boys in my class (H-kun and H-kun).

It's just so rottenly improper how they're so crazily conscious of each other! HxH is obscene! Absolutely obscene, I tell you! Yeah, that's how it's gotta be, do it more.

I've been thinking it'd be nice if both of them got friendlier with each other, but I guess I'm worried about whether they should continue to preserve their distance right now. Which side do you think should approach the other first?

I was more concerned with whether the adjective before improper was just a mistake.

Anyway, what exactly was this person worried about...? If anything, what's HxH? Hunter x Hunter?

I found myself holding my head whereas Yuigahama had a wry smile. Yukinoshita in particular had long stopped listening and had returned to reading the book in her hand. *I totally sympathize with your desire to not get involved, but isn't that reaction just a tad too much?*

With Yukinoshita resolute in ignoring the mail, Yuigahama shot looks between the screen and me, looking for an opinion.

“Wh-What should we do about this...?”

A problematic question. A super development with this particular boy here...

“Uh, you’re not going to get much from asking me... It doesn’t matter which side goes or leaves, either way leads to hell...”

“Even listening is hell...”

She just whispered something really outrageous, didn't she...? Yukinoshita turned the page of her book and looked at Yuigahama and me.

"In the first place... is there even a solution to this?" Yukinoshita asked.

"...Nope. Sorry, Hikki." Yuigahama thought for a moment, but then apologized to me. *What's with this solemn atmosphere...? Don't give up on me!*

"Actually, could you guys stop acting as if it's a given that I'm one of the two guys?"

I was already aware of it, but I still wanted to voice my objection. But Yuigahama had a look of discontent. "But it's what Hina's always saying, so..."

So she's always telling you, huh...? It's supposed to be the mark of popularity when you weren't around and were still the talk of town, but I wasn't the least bit happy about it. In fact, wasn't this just another form of malicious gossip? I'd rather just take the malicious gossip.

Yukinoshita inserted her bookmark in her book and closed it.

"But it's highly improbable for Hikigaya-kun to get along with anyone, so there's no problem to begin with."

"That makes sense. Okay, I guess we're done with this one!"

The two took their tea again as though the case was closed.

What's up with that? I'm fine with rejecting the notion of "HxH," but even my character was being rejected.

"...That's nice and all, but what about the follow up? We should reply, right?" I asked.

Yuigahama and Yukinoshita placed their hand to their mouths and thought.

"Oh, yeah... We have to respond since she's asking us."

"In that case, we'll leave that to you, Hikigaya-kun."

"Why me...?"

I mean sure, I'm the one closest to the computer, but what's with this "make the person who leaves the kotatsu get the oranges" rule? Are we at my house?

I gave the two a reproachful glare with completely rotten dissatisfied eyes and Yuigahama forcefully added, "O-Oh, I know! Hikki, you're really good at language!"

"Except Yukinoshita has better grades..."

At best, I was third in our school year. First was Yukinoshita. Heck, she was better in every other subject to the point I was just impressed instead of frustrated.

But I was pretty annoyed by the fact I wasn't even frustrated. It's because whenever we'd start talking about grades or winning and losing, she'd give me this triumphant look.

And right now, Yukinoshita was smiling with her eyes closed. With a relaxed expression, she brushed aside her hair, looking full of confidence.

"Hikigaya-kun, what's important isn't grades."

"Then what is?" I asked.

"Sincerity... I suppose that's not something we can expect from you..." Yukinoshita answered. Her expression turned into doubt towards the end of her words and she clinched her eyebrows together.

Moreover, Yuigahama crossed her arms and contemplated.

"Your motivation...? Or not."

"Your communication skills are out of the question as well... Hey, what redeeming features do you have exactly?"

"Don't tilt your head at me and look like it's the most mysterious thing in the world."

It's infuriating because of how cute that clueless expression of hers is...

I clearly had a ton of redeeming features, like, you know, uh... like how I was brimming with familial love. Not that I'd say that out loud since they'd just label me a siscon... Oh, I know. I feel like my learning ability was one of my redeeming features. Then again, the way I became more socially withdrawn made it a negative learning ability, didn't it?

I hung my head when I realized I was being far too degrading towards myself. In encouragement, Yuigahama said, "Oh, I know, I know. You seem like you'd write essays fast!"

Yukinoshita nodded. "That's true. For what he lacks in effort, he makes up in speed. Hikigaya-kun's hands are fast. Aren't you glad we were able to discover your strong point?"

I had no words to reply with when she stated that with a pleasant smile. I sighed and did as I was told.

“...Alright, fine, I’ll reply.”

Well, honestly speaking, I was probably the most suitable amongst the three of us. Yukinoshita would likely reply with something abrasive while Yuigahama looked like she’d end things on an easygoing note.

I pulled the computer towards me and began typing.

[The Service Club’s Answer]

This is just our assumption, but have you considered that your idea of “HxH” is simply just a figment of your imagination?

No, we may be completely in the wrong, but we wanted to take the time to point out the possibility to you. With only exposition and no information in your mail, please think of this reply as the limit of what we, “The Chiba Prefecture Problem E-Consultation,” can offer.

I hit the enter key and sent back a response so splendid that it could’ve been mistaken for an answer by a competent psychiatrist. This feeling of satisfaction must’ve been the reason why my lukewarm MAX COFFEE tasted so delicious.

Just when I thought we were done with one incident, a window popped up on the screen.

“Looks like we got another one.”

Yuigahama and Yukinoshita were refilling their tea when I called out to them.

“Okay, read it for us, Hikki.”

The laptop wasn’t a very big model, so rather than have them come over, I might as well do the reading.

“Mm. The person’s pen name is It’s your onee-chan-san.”

The instant I read the name aloud, Yukinoshita stopped her hand as she was pouring the tea.

“.....There’s no need to read that mail.”

Her reaction was enough for me to guess at the sender. *Yeah, she’s definitely the type of*

person who'd do this...

“Wait, we’ll get mails from outside of school, too...?”

How was this even made public? I shuddered from the thought. Yuigahama ignored me as she shook her head back and forth between Yukinoshita and me, apparently not having understood who the mail was from yet. She twisted her head as she groaned and then clapped her hands.

“Oh! It’s from Haruno-san, huh!?”

Correct.

“It’s something she would do. In retrospect, I suppose it’s not something to be surprised about anymore...” Yukinoshita said.

That's freaking scary, normally. Just how concerned is she with her little sister? Also, how much free time does she have?

“...Anyway, let’s see what she has to say.”

[Pen Name: It’s your onee-chan-san’s Consultation]

Hyahallo! Listen, listen!

Lately, my little sister has been soooo cold to me ><

I reaaaally want us to be chummier, so please do something ☆

Thanks in advance, Hikigaya-kun ♡

“.....”

Yuigahama and I were speechless. *She even asked for me specifically, too...*

While Yukinoshita was listening, she flipped the page of her book in an awfully sullen mood.

“It’s remotely impossible for us to make peace if she’s going to send mails like that. She should correct that part of her first before doing anything else.”

That’s what the person in question wanted, so that’s the answer we should return.

I typed down what she had said. But her words were somewhat harsh, so I decided to tone down her words in a friendlier, modern manner. Less problems we invited, the less bothersome things would be. *This is still part of our job as the Service Club, okay? Do that stuff at home, okay?*

“I guess this works...”

[The Service Club’s Answer]

We suspect that the main cause of your discord has to do with your little sister’s dislike for your thorough understanding of her behavior and your nosiness. Why don’t you take the time right now to reflect on your own actions?

As I was checking the message, Yuigahama quietly stood up and approached me.

I asked if she needed something with a look. She slipped her index finger to her mouth and did a subtle wink.

She stood next to me and stooped over, reaching out to the keyboard. For every letter she typed, her pink hair would flutter and I’d get a whiff of her floral perfume.

Oh gosh... You’re kinda close...

I instinctively threw my head backwards. *Chiba’s known for its melons, but I think those melons of yours were just a tad dangerous...*

I sat there stiffly, wondering what she was planning to do. It looked like she was planning to finish the rest of my response.

That’s what Yukinon is saying, but I think she’s gotten much nicer than before, so you should wait just a little longer.

I slipped out a smile after reading the final segment she added. It’s just so like Yuigahama. Of course, I couldn’t imagine Haruno-san following her advice obediently, though.

Regardless, I felt the relationship between the Yukinoshita sisters had inched forward, even if only a little. I’m sure Yuigahama felt the same way.

We didn't know which direction their progress went. I still had yet to know the truth between those sisters and it's possible I never will. That's why, this was all we could respond with right now.

Once Yuigahama finished rereading the response, she placed her hand on my shoulder. With that as a signal, I sent the mail.

At about the same time the display of the sent tray turned zero, the number one appeared next to the inbox. We received another mail. I clicked on the inbox and opened the unread mail.

Yuigahama raised her voice.

"Oh hey, it's Yumiko."

The mail certainly had yumiko☆ as the sender. Although there's a star next to the name, the first person to come to mind in the school was Miura.

"She uses her real name for things like this, too...?"

"Yumiko's pretty bold, so yeah..." Yuigahama said, making a strained laugh.

That's the Queen for you. Protection wasn't the least necessary for her as one who occupied the top of the school's food chain. Well, if someone could possibly inflict any damage to her in this school, the only candidates were irregular existences like Yukinoshita, so I guess it's not a big deal.

But it's still a pretty unsafe thing to do. It's not a problem since we're at school, but exposing your private information in our information society or on the internet was a risky maneuver. There was a time in middle school where I had my mail address and phone number on public display on some kind of dating website. While I made a lot of mailing friends, I became really scared of receiving fake bills. That was seriously frightening.

It's none of my business, but I should probably inform her of the potential danger.

"Yuigahama. You better tell Miura that it's not always safe to use your real name on the internet."

"Huh? This shouldn't be that big of a deal, right?"

"Well, this isn't. But things can escalate out of hand if she doesn't keep that in mind."

It's just my name. It's just my picture. It's just what I did that day. They might not be anything important on their own, but put them together, and it'd easily inflate to

something significant.

I gave Yuigahama a simple explanation. Yukinoshita then closed her book and nodded with admiration. “You certainly are exceptional when it comes to risk management as I’d expect. I suppose it’s not for show when even your name isn’t listed in your class.”

“It’s more like they don’t even remember.” I retorted.

Yukinoshita looked despondent and showed a meek, apologetic face. “Oh, is that so...? I’m sorry to hear that, Hikigoodie-kun.”

“Yukinon, you’re kinda forcing that one, you know!?”

“Yeah. I am *not* that wonderful of an existence.”

“And you’re being mean to yourself, too!?”

No, my feelings weren’t hurt at all, or more like, I’ve gotten used to it by now.

“Putting pointless things like that aside, what does Miura-san’s mail say?” Yukinoshita sat upright and faced us. *Uh, what do you mean by pointless?*

However, Yuigahama took it in strides and suddenly looked at the computer. She then read the mail aloud.

“Let’s see...”

[yumiko ☆’s Consultation]

Sagami is, like, annoying

Straight to the point! Straight to a one-game match! Producer-san! But what March^[1] were you trying to be here by having a clean-cut match like that?

Yuigahama smiled wryly. “A-Ahaha... But I think this feels kinda different from Yumiko usually.”

“Oh yeah? Sounds like something she’d say to me.”

As a matter of fact, she gave off the impression she’d say something even more horrible without batting an eyelash.

“It certainly doesn’t seem like Miura-san.”

I was refuted from someone unexpected. I looked at Yukinoshita so she could extrapolate. She brushed aside the hair at her shoulder and answered, “This is something she’d normally tell people directly, no?”

“Ahh, right. That’s true. You’re like that too, after all.”

“Could you not lump us together like that?” Yukinoshita averted her face in displeasure.

I personally didn’t see much of a difference, but she apparently felt there was a clear one otherwise. She sent me a glare, upset from being categorized together with her.

“I haven’t said much recently in any case since saying anything doesn’t have any effect on some people.”

“Ahaha, Hikki *is* a lost cause and all.” Yuigahama nervously laughed and agreed.

Yukinoshita sighed. “That includes you.”

“You gave up on me, too!?”

...See that, you really do tell people things directly.

Well, it didn’t seem right since she’s the one saying it. Actually, Miura and Yukinoshita were kind of similar. They’re completely opposite types, but what they had at their cores was relatively close in nature. Perhaps that’s why there were some things they just couldn’t get along well in.

Maidens sure are complicated. I thought while fiddling with the computer until I noticed there was more to Miura’s letter.

“Looks like there’s still more to her mail.”

“Huh? Oh, you’re right,” Yuigahama said, focusing on the screen. Yukinoshita watched us and then nodded, telling her with a look to read the rest.

It’s like she’s depressed, or like, she’s so gloomy that the mood gets crappy.

Annoying.

Once Yuigahama finished, Yukinoshita crossed her arms. "...In other words, she's concerned about her well-being?"

"I think so. That's so Yumiko." Yuigahama made a warm smile.

Even I thought Miura was a good person after seeing her smile like that.

True, if I looked back, Miura stayed as Yuigahama's friend even after their confrontation or after the tennis match where Yuigahama sided with the Service Club. This should've been impossible normally. The resentment that results from internal disputes of a caste lasted indefinitely and the people who lost the struggle for control at the very end had no choice but to disappear. Should they be unable to associate with a group of lower rank, it's only normal for them to tread the path of a loner.

But how was Yuigahama still able to stay in the top caste? That was, of course, due to her interpersonal skills. Hayama disliked discord, so his shadow support might've been a factor as well. But the most prominent reason might've lie with Miura's personality.

Queens were expected to be tolerant of things trifling in nature. I felt I could see why she was one.

...That's why, if we think about it, this mail was representative of her complicated feelings, not of kindness, but simple annoyance. Though that didn't mean she wasn't worried, she still found it annoying and even telling her directly would've been annoying. Jeez, that's so complicated that it's annoying.

Yukinoshita who had been in thought undid her crossed arms and asked Yuigahama, "So, how is Sagami-san actually faring?"

"Mm, um, how should I put it? Um..." Yuigahama said, mumbling her words. I continued off where she stopped.

"Yeah, it's definitely annoying. She's basically energetic, but when people around her act all tactful with her, it kind of forces everyone else to do the same thing..."

"That does sound rather irritating..."

Yukinoshita had a dismal expression and this was just from hearing about the situation. It's even worse for Yuigahama and me since we're in the same class.

The stagnant mood was likely due to that tactful atmosphere pervading the class.

"...To solve this—"

"Ahh, don't worry about that. It'll stop eventually." I interrupted Yukinoshita as she was speaking. She then gave me a dubious look.

“What do you mean by that?”

“It hasn’t been that long since the Cultural Festival ended, so Sagami and her friends are just dragging things out. They’ll go back to normal at some point.”

After a brief silence, Yukinoshita probed further and slowly opened her mouth.

“...By dragging things out, are you referring to what you did during the Cultural Festival?”

“Probably. You can tell from the mood,” I said.

Yuigahama didn’t confirm or deny what I stated as her mouth twisted and she made a glum expression. That only made it more certain.

As I thought, Sagami and her group had been spreading libel about how unscrupulous and wicked Hikigaya Hachiman is.

If I had to say, they were like anti-Hikigaya lobbyists. I was used to this kind of denunciation, but it’s still uncomfortable. I could easily just block them out completely, but being able to see them loiter around me or say things I could hear as if they’re buzzing like mosquitos was somewhat irritating.

But I’d say my one salvation was that Miura found that annoying. My philosophy of life, where an enemy of an enemy is an ally, dictated that Miura would be my ally in this case. *Oh, no way! Miura’s going to be my ally!? Miura’s a totally good person, Miura’s so nice. I think I might just end up liking her! Doubt that’d ever happen though!* I quietly expressed my gratitude to her, or rather, I harbored the same compliant mindset. Then, I heard a shallow sigh beside me.

“But you know, I really don’t like hearing that kinda stuff... I don’t want them saying bad things like that.”

I glanced over to my side and Yuigahama was looking down. I could only see her grip the ends of her skirt, unable to see the face she was making.

“Yuigahama-san...” Yukinoshita called her name with a soft voice.

Yuigahama then came back to her senses and shot up her face. “O-Oh! I mean, it just doesn’t feel good hearing people talk bad about others, right?”

...Well, she’s pretty nice, I guess. I, however, wasn’t.

“I get a kick out of hearing people talk bad about others, though.”

“You’re awful!” Yuigahama screamed out.

On the other hand, Yukinoshita was calm. She wore a smile and with a more relaxed and easing tone, said, “It certainly isn’t enjoyable for Hikigaya-kun.”

...*Oh, she’s nice too, huh?* I was surprised by her unexpected support. Yuigahama seemed to agree and nodded after taking a moment.

“Th-That’s true. Hikki’s kinda rotten, but it’s not—“

She spoke quickly until a cold voice cut her off. “After all, there isn’t anyone who would talk poorly of others with Hikigaya-kun.”

“That’s a sad reason!” Yuigahama raised a tearful voice. *Um, I’m the one that should be sad here, you know? Jeez, I was this close to being moved by her for a second there.*

“But it’s the truth, right?”

And then the guaranteed icy smile. Yukinoshita sent me a pleasant smile.

“You’re pretty much right, so I can’t deny it...”

I really couldn’t say anything else. *What grade is her Hikigaya certificate?* I looked at Yukinoshita in amazement. She, however, didn’t seem the least concerned with my mental state and after a light cough, moved the conversation forward.

“In any case, let’s investigate Sagami-san and her group’s behavior as well as the affairs of class F. After that, we can deal with the problem accordingly. While I could tell Sagami-san directly, I imagine it’ll only make the situation worse...”

It sounds like Yukinoshita wanted to do something concrete to resolve the situation. But I felt it was a pointless endeavor.

“No, if we just leave them alone, the problem should resolve itself naturally, so we don’t need to do anything. There’s no real harm, anyway.”

From what I could see, the consideration towards Sagami right now was temporary. It’s something that exploded only because the Cultural Festival had just finished. All they were doing was hiding away their recent embarrassment by attacking someone much more miserable than they were. It’d be idiotic to waste our time with something that would eventually end whether we stayed quiet about it or not.

But Yukinoshita didn’t seem to approve and gazed directly at me.

“.....But there is.”

“Y-Yeah! Besides, it’s a real bummer if the mood stays bad the entire time!” Yuigahama leaned forward and agreed.

There wasn't much I could do if they were both willing. If the majority dictated, then I had to obey.

"...Well, if that's what you want," I said, reluctantly. Yukinoshita nodded back in satisfaction.

But it was already after school. Sagami and her friends probably already went home.

"Alright, for now, I don't think there's anything else we can do today."

"That's true... It's about time to end, so why don't we head home?"

We stood up from our seats, started cleaning, and got ready to leave.

For today's Service Club activities, we handled Ebina-san's delusion lightly, recommended Haruno-san to improve her current situation, and postponed Miura's mail to a later date; another day where we did nothing of note.

As I thought about how bad this club was, Yuigahama adjusted her bag behind her back and pumped herself up.

"Yeah, let's do our best tomorrow!"

Let's do our best tomorrow. Those were good, wonderful words that I'd love to say every day.

We stood up from our chairs, began packing up our things so as to get ready to leave.

The Service Club's activity today, was to find an appropriate way to tackle Ebina's delusion, to preserve the status quo as per Haruno-san's request. Miura's mail was pushed to be the back of my head. There was not one splendid solution to solve either of them.

Reflecting on those matter, I asked myself.

If that is the case, can this activity really be of use? Even if there was no direct results, the activities of the Service Club should have at least helped someone. Right?

And then I answered myself.

Of course..... No, our action this time, no that's wrong..... this time too..... Kuuu..... There was no results!!!^[2]

Chapter 2: A chance meeting with Shiromeguri Meguri once again.

Eyes resembled something like a mouth. That is, it could speak. To put it more accurately, one's gaze was more annoying than their mouths.

Class had already ended. Currently, we were having a Short Home Room (SHR) before we were dismissed.^[3] In the words of an elementary school student, this would be the time for the class gathering before dismissal. To be honest, using the term SHR made it much harder to understand its meaning. When I first heard it, I had thought that it was some race across the North America continent.

I felt the gazes sticking on to me and so I turned towards the back to catch a glimpse.

Since I don't normally attract anyone's attention normally, I was very sensitive to this kind of atmosphere. What was up with this sad habit of mine?

And so, turning my head, I saw those people.

It was the girls in my class. Wow, I didn't know I was that popular amongst the ladies ----- Although I did entertain that thought, I knew that it was definitely not so in reality.

In those eyes that were narrowed and curved like the crescent moon, contained their scorn and disdain for me. Seeing that, I turned my body back to the front again. Then, a shrill laugh rang out for a short while.

Those gazes that had disgust and curiously mixed into it grilled the nape of my neck.

Although I said that it was those girls in my class, they were not Miura's gang of top-caste students but another group that had lower social status than them. The one at the center of that group, was Sagami Minami. Throughout today, she wore the same downcast look, with a sunken expression that seemed like she had been hurt.

Although I could not say that we had no connection, but Sagami and I did indeed have some distance between us. Well, although I would say that I was isolated from approximately half the school population, but all these were separation based upon nothing in particular. In the case of Sagami, this distance was based upon emotional grudges, or borne out of spite.

That sort of distancing was the most troublesome.

If both sides did not know each other, then we could ignore each other perfectly well. If the distance between people were based upon nothing in particular, both parties could normally maintain a certain distance between them, and continue to maintain this status quo.

However, this would be different should emotions come into play. No matter how much you wanted to keep your distance, you would definitely clash with that person at some particular time and place.

If you do not want to form these troublesome relationships, then you can't help but to ignore them. This ignoring others was about as natural as breathing.

There was a trick to hating on others as well.

If you were to stir up trouble with anyone, then there would be repercussions. It was not just limited to the fact that the enemy of my enemy is my friend or that my friend's friend is also my friend. Quarrels and disputes were inevitable, and they will make it known who are really your enemies and friends.

As of today, despite me being not compatible with Miura, our opinions towards Sagami's attitude was becoming more and more similar.

Sagami, you are way too naïve in this regard.

An open act of hostility towards someone would unearth all those potential enemies of yours.

Then again, it's not like I was obliged to teach her this fact or anything.

Paying no attention to the teacher's message, everyone started to stand up one by one.

There were all sorts of people, those that dashed out of the class immediately, those that stayed to talk to their desk partners and those who set about making preparations to go home in a slow manner.

As for me, owing to the fact that I still had the job from Miura's mail of collecting information, I stayed back in the class, exuding an air of still having something to do.

Precisely because it was after school, that this kind of feeling exuded out from me, just like a high school student.

Above all else, the group of people gathered at the park were taking the high road.

Hayama and Tobe, as well as Miura and her friends.

“Then, I will be going off to my club.”

“Ah-, careful on your way-. Ah, Yui, I am going out to shop on Saturday.”

“Oh, ok. I will go I will go. Byebye.”

Yuigahama answered Miura as she skillfully smoothed over the issue over the lack of information that she had gathered as per Miura’s request. Now that I think about it, Miura’s way of invitation was really lousy..... That was totally similar to my level of asking someone out. Well, guess it can’t be helped since she’s the queen after all. That is to say, I am like an emperor? ☺But a nude one.

Yuigahama waved her hand gently to Miura and her friends as she left the class. I guess she was going to the club room. Miura gave a smile as her eyes followed the disappearing figure of Yuigahama. I guess Miura too knows what Yuigahama was going to do during club activities. It was as though Miura was being understanding after Yuigahama had expressed her desires properly. I was one step closer to understanding Miura.

Miura who was staying behind leaned against the wall, beside her was Ebina-san. Hayama and his bunch of friends probably had club activities as well, and were already done with the packing up of their stuffs and were now engaging in leisure conversation as they left the classroom.

There were two doorways to the class, the front and back. Of course, Hayama and his friends would enter the sight of all those who were leaving via the back-door.

As they passed Hayama and his friends who were making light-hearted conversation, they would give one or two words of greetings and bid farewell to each other. What the heck is this? Going home from work?

Then again, this sort of thing was limited to only those who were on good terms with Hayama and his friends. Those who couldn’t be considered “on good terms” with them would quickly disappear from the front door.

There was still one more person who was leaving the classroom. That person was Kawa..... Saki? Well, I think her name is probably Kawasaki. What’s up with her, was she still working outside?

As she passed by me, Kawasaki suddenly increased her speed, and broke into a light jog. Then, as soon as she was a certain distance away from me, her pace returned back to usual. As she walked to the doorway, she glanced back. As her gaze met mine, she made a “uuuu” sound as though the words were stuck in her mouth. She lowered her head slightly and walked briskly out of the classroom.

Seemed like she wanted to say goodbye. Idiot, you should have done that when you

walked past me.

When Kawasaki left, I stoned for a little while again. This time, it was Sagami who walked past me. I guess she was using the front door so as to keep a certain distance from Miura and her friends. From this, I could tell that she knew that it was going to be hard to deal with Miura.

Furthermore, that sort of awareness, was probably going to get on Miura's nerves all the more. Just like Yuigahama in the past, actions that were unclear was bound to piss off Miura.

First of all, understanding the matter to this point was enough.

The crux of the matter is, this problem could be solved if Sagami could take some form of action that will not agitate Miura. What follows next was what kind of action to take.

Anyway, the most effective way was to set your sights on a "TIME OUT" battle. That means that until they changed classes, they should just go about ignoring each other. Although this should have been the way from the start, Yukinoshita wanted to deal with this problem immediately. That means that the original method wouldn't work.

Anyway, as I mused over the information I obtained today, I began to walk leisurely in the direction of the clubroom.

2-2

It was tea time as usual in the club room. The band was about to start playing soon.

As I entered the clubroom, the two of them were already seated in front of the computer.

As the two of them drank their red tea, their hands moved for the snacks, their faces a look of deep contemplation as they looked at the screen.

I sat down at the usual spot, and looked absentmindedly at the two of them discussing various events.

Because there didn't seem to be a portion of the red tea for me, I began to sip the MAX coffee that I had bought earlier on my way to the club room.

As the autumn season steadily goes by and progresses into winter, this period of time was the season for MAX coffee. Also, a can of sparkling chilled MAX coffee was delicious during the time when spring was changing to summer. Rather, why not just say that MAX coffee was a delicacy that lasted throughout the year?

Also, today's snacks were damp rice crackers.

Those rice crackers, were a famous speciality product of Choushi of Chiba prefecture. What was special about it was that it was an official product of the Choushi railway. That was probably known to most. Chiba prefecture was well-known for its production of rice, but it was also just as well-known for its production of soy sauce.

Chiba's combination of rice and soy sauce. Rice and soy-sauce is a "Yu-me" (Dream) Collaboration. ☆[\[4\]](#)

By the way, I recommend eating the damp rice crackers by using an oven toaster to toast it, and then spreading mayonnaise and the seven spice on it.

.....Well, if we talking about its compatibility with MAX coffee, it could probably only be answered with "I, really love Chiba!" with a refreshing smile on my face.

Just as I was about to feast on Chiba's specialty products, or in short, feast on Chiba, Yukinoshita folded her arms with a "um".

"Then, what shall we do?"

"Ah, this-----"

Besides Yukinoshita who had lapsed into thinking with a “Um” was Yuigahama who seemed to be doing the same with a groan. They seemed to be frustrated over the new activity.

Chiba Prefecture Problem Consultation Mails. It was a new mysterious system that was recently added to our list of club activities.

I left my seat and looked at it from behind them, curious over the request that was sent.

[PN: Meguri☆Meguri's Consultation.]

Collecting ideas on how to make the Sports Festival even more exciting. Also, because it's my final year, I definitely must win!

I finished the damp rice cracker in one bite when I was done reading the mail, a feeling of surprise swept over me.

..... It was the first time that someone had written a decent request in the mail. Well, although if I were to say that I am surprised at this sort of thing, wouldn't that mean that this club's activities were questionable?

“Sports Festival, huh.”

Yukinoshita sighed with a hint of melancholy in it.

“Ha..... Is it already that time?”

Putting it that way, means that during the SHR after school, the red and white teams were already decided using the odd and even numbers from our index numbers.

Although recently, most Sports Festival and Sport Carnival were held in spring, our school held the Sports Festival in autumn. When it ended, the season would also finally turn to winter. If it was us second years, this would mean the eminent arrival of our school field trip.

It was not a surprising fact that students viewed the Sports Festival as a big event. Those that glorified youth would probably view this as a fun event as well. Especially those guys from the sports club that could show off their active participation in sports to the girls. [As long as I showed this to them, I too will get a girlfri.....] Those guys who had these delusions were probably not limited to just one or two.

However, girls, especially Yukinoshita were not like that, they would frown in disgust.

“..... I really hate it, inter class relays.”

Ah, I know I know. We did that too in junior high.

“That mysterious pressure.”

I recalled the memories of that time and subconsciously said something that agreed with her. To that, Yuigahama nodded her head with an “Un-Un-“and continued.

“I couldn’t run very fast, so it was very tough for me-----“

“Exactly, I know what you mean. There was Nagayama from the soccer club who would go “tut-tut” whenever someone from the class was overtaken.”

“Who is that?! Why must it be a specific name?!”

Yuigahama turned her head back in surprise. You don’t know Nagayama? It was my classmate from junior high. Well, let’s just leave it at you would be afraid if you knew about him.

Nope, I really hated that guy. Well, I guess I was probably hated by him as well.

Well, it was not only Nagayama from the soccer club that I hated. It was probably the fault of the term “inter-class relay” that fanned the flames of my trauma folder. [\[5\]](#)

“Then there’s also those girls that refuse to take the baton. Why do they say something like [That’s hard to believe] when she’s obviously in the next leg? Tsundere?” [\[6\]](#)

No matter how I thought about it, I figured that they said it so as to grab my attention. Was it to toy the emotions of the one they like? In other words, paradoxically, I am a super popular guy. Am I wrong?

I unintentionally showed a self-deprecating smile, Yuigahama too, gave a bitter laugh of “Haha.”

“No, that is.....”

Oh. Yuigahama’s pitiful gaze towards me was painful. Sometimes, those kind and worried looks that you get would be painful.

“Because I think that you understand the situation quite well yourself, I will refrain from saying it directly. When girls are being hateful towards something, there’s a huge possibility that they really do mean it.”

But, Yukinoshita-san. Didn’t you say that the cold truth would be easier on people?

“How is that not direct? Go and look up the meaning of direct. Also, about Sports Festivals, there’s also that.”

“There’s still more?”

I was about to continue, but Yuigahama gave a stiff smile. Fool, there were obviously tons of stuff in my memories about the Sports Festival. Do I really have to spell them out for you?

“Yup. This is a characteristic of guys. Coordinated group gymnastics. Because you can’t do it with one person so you have to do it with the teacher. Furthermore, there was also not enough people when it comes to making the [Fan].”

Correct, correct – My brain’s 80000 Hachimans all agreed with me. Yukinoshita and Yuigahama did not seem to understand me as they were staring at me blankly.

“Fan.....”

Yuigahama murmured, a face a look of curiosity.

What? You don’t know about fan? It is that, it has no relationship to the Ougoya Jasuko departmental store. It has already changed to EON now. By the way, the EON group’s headquarters was pretty popular in Mihamaku in Chiba.

Though I really wanted to tell them more about such frivolous information and the like, but I knew that those two wouldn’t be interested, so I decided to just cut straight to the point and explain to them about this “Fan” thing in group gymnastics.

“A [Fan], is one of the basics of these gymnastics. Simply put, it is something like this.

\ | /

↑ ↑ ↑

Me. Another The sports teacher

lonely

person

Although I was making a pretty animated explanation with my hands and body, their reaction was a bit slow. Well, perhaps it was because girls didn’t do this gymnastics and hence they have no idea.

“Anyway, this gymnastics weren’t limited to the fan formation. Most scenarios required me to pair up with the teacher. Thanks to that, I was the center of attention during those sports carnivals.”

“To have your parents witness that is really quite pitiable.....”

Yukinoshita put her hand to her forehead, a sullen look on her face. I thank you for

worrying about my parents, but really, such worry was unfounded. My parents took one look at me and burst out laughing, and if you believed it, they soon forgot about me and were soon busy taking pictures with Komachi.

Brothers were such things. They even went to start their dining after that.

Just as I was immersing myself in the sadness and pain that only a brother would have, Yuigahama too seemed like she was provoked by something and called out in a short but sharp voice.

“Ah. But girls have their own troubles too. Such as the creation of their dance.....”

Yukinoshita reacted to that term, and then, she let out a short laugh.

“..... What on earth is that dance creation thing actually? Though I must say that that activity is one of the very best at making us want to forget the past.”

Yukinoshita spoke with an air of annoyance at which Yuigahama went “Un- Un- Un-” and nodded her head in response.

Really, so this dance creation was really that troublesome. Indeed, I did have a great laugh when I took a peek at them, as well as remembered the girls’ huge disgust at having to do it. I couldn’t help it since I young back then. Looking back, when I think about whether it was still possible for me to once again appreciate the figure of those girls dancing with a look of embarrassment, I really wish I could’ve urged the past me to take a more proper look at them.

This was probably a highly detestable memory for the both of them. The atmosphere grew heavy and the silence itself was depressing.

Since it was my bad that had caused the atmosphere to be ruined, I decided to try to comfort the both of them.

“Well, dancing is the nature of the citizens of Chiba prefecture so I guess it couldn’t be helped. All those and gymnastics and such.”

“Totally not comforting us at all.....”

I was told off fiercely by Yuigahama.

Although the mood did not change in the end, but as though it wanted to break apart this impasse, a short rhythmical “DON DON” rang out accompanied by music. Although there was not much force put into making that sound, but it was especially clear in a clubroom where the three of us were in silence.

All of us looked at the door.

“Please come in.”

Following Yukinoshita’s call of invitation, a student that had a familiar face entered the room.

“Please excuse me~”

A warm atmosphere followed her body, each time she looked back and forth about the room, her pigtails shook about as well. Her bangs were tied up with a hairpin and her pretty brow reflected the evening sun. It gave off a feeling of cheerfulness that was like her personality.

Shiromeguri Meguri. She was our one-year senior which meant she was a third year student. Also, she was the student council president of Sobi High. Yukinoshita and I had become her acquaintance during the Cultural Festival executive committee.

Meguri-senpai surveyed the club room with a curious “Ehh” and then gave a smile.

“That, is this the Service Club? I sent a consultation mail regarding the Sports Festival, and since I didn’t receive a reply I decided to just come here directly.”

Hearing her say that, we looked towards the screen of the computer.

PN: Meguri☆Meguri.

I see, that’s probably what Meguri-senpai meant by the mail she sent. When it comes down to the content regarding the Sports festival, to the “Because it’s my last”, all these descriptions matched Meguri-senpai.

“The person who sent this mail.....”

Yuigahama looked back and forth between the computer screen and Meguri-senpai, to which Meguri-senpai pointed a finger at herself.

“Ah, that probably is me.”

As she said that, she walked briskly towards us.

“I want to let the Sports Festival be as lively as the Cultural Festival. I don’t know if you can help with that? Yukinoshita-san and, uh.....”

Thereupon, upon glancing at me, Meguri-senpai’s words seemed to have stuck in her throat. Seeing her frown and going “Umumu”, Yuigahama muttered to her as though it was some kind of secret conversation they were having.

“It’s Hikigaya. Hikigaya.”

Hearing that, Meguri-senpai clapped her hands together. And then she gave Yuigahama a warm smile.

“Ah, so you are Hikigaya-kun. And then that is....”

After her pause, Meguri-senpai glanced at me once more with a frown. Noticing the misunderstanding, Yuigahama hurriedly corrected her.

“No, I, I am Yuigahama. That one is Hikigaya.”

“Oh oh, I see.”

Hearing that, Meguri-senpai seemed to be convinced and nodded her head.

“Yes..... That, Hikigaya, to be referred to as such, that is kind of troubling.....”

Yuigahama averted her gaze, her voice gradually becoming softer and softer. In fact, I can't even hear her already.

That's right, I too, was at a loss of what reaction I should adopt upon hearing that.

“To think that one would be troubled upon being called as such. That truly is a taboo name. That's so expected of you, Hikigaya-kun.”

Yukinoshita nodded her head in admiration.

Don't be like that! Don't use one's name to make fun of them! Please stop calling Kondou-kun Condom-kun from now on. In my case, although I was known as Hikki, if I were to talk about it calmly, it still was amazingly offensive. [7]

“Sorry, I am not too good at remembering others' names.”

Meguri-senpai apologized as she bowed her head.

Thereupon, Yukinoshita consoled her gently in a quiet voice.

“There's no need to take it to heart. It's just that he's excellent at not letting others remember his name, that's all.”

“Isn't it strange to hear that from you? No, although you are not wrong in saying that.”

The truth was, people often referred to me as [That] or [Hey], when calling out to me. I have begun to suspect whether it is true that everyone cannot remember my name.

“Isn't that the case? Aren't you particularly good at erasing your own existence as well?”

Yukinoshita gave a smile. What do you mean by [Isn't that the case?] I totally didn't understand that. Also, not to mention you added a [As well] to it. However, because all these were fact, I was unable to refute any of it, regrettably.

"That, that isn't true!"

However, a sentence of denial came from an unexpected place. Yuigahama broke in between Yukinoshita and I.

"On the contrary, when's he alone in class, he's even more conspicuous!"

"Was there really such a way to console people....."

It was totally not consoling at all. Why are you still following up on your attacks? Are you trolling me? [\[8\]](#)

"Aha"

Meguri-senpai couldn't resist laughing as she watched our exchange.

And then, she took one step towards me, reducing the distance between us.

"Hikigaya-kun."

Hearing her call my name from such a close distance, I involuntarily took a step back.

"Yes, yes."

Meguri-senpai nodded her head with a "Un" at my reply.

"So, you are called Hikigaya-kun. Okay, I have remembered it properly now. During those times when there were people helping out at the Cultural Festival, you were still working very hard. You were very reliable."

Facing that innocent smile, I thought that having my name forgotten was not such a big deal after all. Or rather, getting my name wrong was pretty normal.

More than that however, I was touched by the fact that someone actually remembered me for the work I did during the Cultural Festival.

Also, at the same time, I was embarrassed as I expected.

Although the distance between our faces were extremely close, Meguri-senpai continued to give me that warm smile without a care in the world.

Thanks to that, I averted my gaze.

“Ha, Ha..... Well, I will help out.....”

Right in front of me, where I had shifted my gaze to, was this person who had a sullen face on her.

“Mu-----“

What are you, a pufferfish? Was there an enemy? Is it that? Was it the recent craze surrounding the [Rage PunPun pill]? [\[9\]](#) When I first heard of it, I was thinking, “Which member of Yakult Swallows [\[10\]](#) was that?” So it’s not referring to that BunBun Pill after all. [\[11\]](#)

Behind the unhappy Yuigahama, came a cold voice.

“Meguri-senpai, we can leave “THAT” aside. Please tell us more about the details of your request.”

As I expected, she got colder as winter drew nearer..... It was a voice that gave me the chills. Probably because of that, the smiling expression of Meguri-senpai faded in an instant, and with a “Oh” clapped her hands together as though she had thought of something.

“Ah, that’s it, that’s it. What I wanted to request of you all, was to think of some ideas regarding the games at the Sports Festival that would be eye-catching.”

Meguri-senpai gave a thumbs-up as she started her explanation.

“Eye-catching games.....”

An image of an eyeball monster that emitted sharp and shrill sounds running about materialized in my mind. My hairs stood on end as though they had just become a radar. [\[12\]](#)



This was a vague request that let one's imagination run wild. For example, this was akin to a senior at your workplace asking you to tell him some interesting stories during your free time. Then when I was done talking, they would say something like "So boring. That can't pass as interesting." Oh? And if I were to say that I had nothing interesting to talk about, then they would begin their jibe of how I was an uninteresting fellow. How do I please you exactly? Those who were able to think up of such topics were the very definition of boredom themselves. Seriously, it would be great if those guys were fired!

Well, although I felt that Meguri-senpai did not fall under that category, but the topic at hand lacked any concreteness. We too were unsure of what we should do.

I wasn't the only one who thought as such. Yuigahama raised her hand thoughtfully.

"What do you mean by that?"

Yukinoshita who was beside Yuigahama folded her arms quietly.

"That is to say, what did you do during the last year....."

"Since you asked that, I really don't remember anything."

I tried to dig for those memories, but nothing of that sort came out. That feeling, was akin to just sitting on your own chair and stoning. Although I think I did participate in some match, I had no memories of that.

If we were to talk about what I did remember, it was those fellows from the sport clubs saying something along the lines of "Why are we still doing this Sports Festival when we are already high-school students", "Yeah, seriously." Yet when the matches began, they become particularly serious and seemed to have lots of fun in those stuff. When they returned, they were high-fiving the girls. On the other hand, I was just staring at the girls' high socks.

Seeing that I couldn't recall any important events, Yukinoshita let out a sigh as though she was pitying me.

"People will seal away those memories that are overly painful."

"Will you stop treating my Sports Festival like it's some kind of dark history? In the first place, being able to forget them easily means that it's not some psychological trauma. Anyway, aren't you the same as well since you can't remember them!"

"Isn't it also said that forgetting the past is a way to move on forward?"

Why was she saying that with that look of triumph?

“What? Why do you have that air of [I am beginning to understand] about you? Those words weren’t even good words to use.”

“A, Ahaha. Bu, but I don’t remember anything as well.”

Although Yuigahama seems to be conforming to our views, but if it was her, I would bet that she had really forgotten everything. Probably it was because the three of us had forgotten the key events of last year, Meguri-senpai drooped her arms in disappointment.

“You really don’t remember as I expected…… The name is Cosp-race. You do a race while you are cosplaying……”

Cosp-race, seems like I have heard it somewhere before, but isn’t that Comp-ace? [\[13\]](#)

As I thought, I really didn’t remember anything. However, if I saw those top-class people cosplaying and joking amongst themselves, I would probably have put on a bitter face. I still believed so even till today.

Although she had already explained the details of the competition, Yukinoshita and Yuigahama were still cocking their head in bewilderment.

Seeing that, Meguri-senpai could only give a bitter smile. After muttering a “Is that so”, she probably thought of some new idea, as she said “Un” and become more lively.

“Those past years have always been so plain, so I want to make a showy event this year.”

We saw the warmth and determination behind her gaze. Probably it was because of that zeal of hers, Yuigahama and Yukinoshita took a step backwards.

“So, so I see……”

“I have understood the situation already. When do you need the ideas?”

Hearing Yukinoshita ask that, Meguri-senpai took hold of Yukinoshita’s hand.

“Regarding that, you can think about that during the conference with the Sports Festival Committee.”

“Ha? Ah, that is fine by me. That, why, my hand…… Could you let go of it……”

Yukinoshita was considerably bewildered at having contact with another person out of the blue. Although I had thought that she was already used to this since Yuigahama did all this Yuri actions all the time to her, but it seems like that was not the case. Rather than say that she was used to all these Yuri Yuri actions, why not say that she

was used to Yuigahama instead? Ah, this girl. [\[14\]](#)

Even when Yukinoshita requested for her to let go, Meguri-senpai seemed to have no intentions of doing so. Rather, she took yet another step and was now even closer to her.

“The truth is, we still haven’t decided a chairperson for the Sports Festival committee…… So, will you do it, Yukinoshita-san?”

Yukinoshita blushed under her fixated stare, however, she still seemed to have a little bit of strength inside of her to object, and managed to gently extract her hand from Meguri-senpai.

“I reject.”

“As I expected~”

Meguri-senpai drooped her head with a look of regret, but did not press her, and withdraw from asking her further completely.

And then, her eyes brightened up and she looked in Yuigahama’s direction.

“Then, then, what about you Yuigahama-san?!”

“Eh?!”

Yuigahama jumped at having such a suggestion brought upon her. And then, she frantically waved her hands.

“E, Eh, no, impossible!”

“That’s kind of expected. One would be troubled to be asked such a request all of a sudden.”

Meguri-senpai smiled as her shoulders drooped down lifelessly. Probably because she was pained to see such an expression, Yuigahama gave a heavy sigh.

“Sorry……”

“It’s alright. Don’t worry about it. It’s just that I would feel happier if you accepted it. Thank you for your concern.”

Meguri-senpai patted Yuigahama’s head as she said that. Although Yuigahama was surprised by her sudden action, Meguri-senpai didn’t seem to mind as she continued patting.

But still, to not have decided upon the chairman at this stage was quite a serious problem. Will it affect the operation of this whole event?

Of course, Meguri-senpai probably sensed that impending danger as well, and she stopped her patting of Yuigahama's head. She folded her arms, slanted her body and closed her eyes.

"But, not being able to elect a chairman is indeed troubling.....If this is the case"

If this is the case..... Let me think about it as well then. I had this thought. If it was so, then it would come to that. Following the flow, the next in line would be me. Since she had already asked Yukinoshita and Yuigahama, then shouldn't the next one to be asked be me? IF she were to take my hand and pat my head, I don't think I can reject her at all.

Ah, this is bad, really bad.

Although I was thinking about how to avoid the situation, but before I could think of anything, Meguri-senpai had already made a conclusion.

"If that's the case, I guess we can only try our best to find some ideas."

Meguri senpai nodded her head with a "Un-Un-" as she said that.

.....Huh, what? Over here! The one person that Senpai hasn't asked is over here! Quick, look, it's me! ME!

Me?

However, the shouting in my heart could not be conveyed to her, as though the problem with the committee chairman was already settled in her mind. Gu..... I also want to let Meguri-senpai pat my head..... No, you see, I may have a younger sister but I do not have an elder sister. Towards this kind of things, I had some sort of longing.

As the fleeting fragments of my longings ran about in my head, Yukinoshita murmurs reached my ears.

"Still have not decided on a chairman...."

I saw Yukinoshita putting her hand to her jaw, as she thought about the matter. She seemed to have thought of something as she suddenly looked up, and said to Meguri-senpai.

"It doesn't matter who is the chairperson right?"

Meguri-senpai blinked her eyes at the sudden question, but quickly addressed the main

intention behind that question.

“Eh? No, it’s not really right to say that it doesn’t matter who does it. It’s fine as long as it’s someone who would do things diligently and seriously, someone that we can leave work to without worry.”

Going by that, doesn’t that I was someone that didn’t treat work seriously nor someone that people can rely upon?

Well, the committee chairman, was just someone who was a person of character. I understood this point without them having to say anything.

However, Yukinoshita seemed to disagree, and shook her head quietly.

“No, the problem is not with the person’s character. The problem is more about the limitations of their qualifications or the groups that they are attached to.”

It seems like the point was missed. With the new explanation, Meguri-senpai understood correctly the intention behind her question.

“Ahah, so that’s what you are talking about. IF that’s the case then there’s no problem. The truth is that we did try to recruit some candidates, but we didn’t manage to get anyone.....”

“So you did try and recruit people, I had no idea.”

Ah, Yuigahama let out a surprised gasp. This response caused Meguri-senpai to stutter slightly.

Wow, that was like telling her right in the face that she had no idea of their activities..... Yuigahama’s surprise carried no ill-meanings, but her nature sure was horrible.

Meguri-senpai crumpled as she started to reflect by herself.

“No one knew..... But that’s probably it..... Probably our way of notifying others was bad. Notices were put up, it was also written on the homepage. We distributed flyers, and also asked teachers to help us spread the news. Even my blog was updated as well.....”

No, I had no idea that senpai had a blog. What? An idol?No, this kind of stuff was pretty cute I think. Hehe.

“Ah, about that, sorry! Because I really don’t look at those kind of things! I don’t even know where the notice boards are. But, however, I will take a proper look at them from now on.”

As Yuigahama was trying to make up for her mistake, Meguri-senpai raised a hand silently, and stopped her from continuing. She rubbed her eyes and flashed a smile.

“It’s alright, it’s alright, Yuigahama-san. It was my bad, I will use Twitter from now on as well.”

“I don’t think that’s the problem.....’

I voiced out my opinion involuntarily.

How can I talk to a senpai in this manner! Although I had that thought, I felt that she wouldn’t mind no matter how she was spoken to.

In reality, Meguri-senpai did indeed not seem to care.

“Yup, I will use LINE as well!”

No, that’s why I said..... But this form of optimism was quite awesome, I thought.

“Meguri-senpai, there’s no need for such actions.”

Yukinoshita opened her mouth as though she was surprised at herself. After gently rubbing her forehead, she let out a short sigh.

“What do you mean?”

Meguri-senpai twisted her head slightly. Yukinoshita answered her doubt directly.

“I have a recommendation for this job.”

“Eh? Who who? What sort of person?”

Meguri-senpai pitched her body forward as she took a keen interest in it. To that, Yukinoshita spoke slowly as though she was sorting out the thoughts in her head.

“There’s this person who have had experience with this sort of task, also, she has a will to improve as well as a desire for a honorary position. In other words, you could say that she’s someone who was willing to work.”

There were a wide choice of good points and although Meguri-senpai was clapping her hands in agreement excitedly, I was unable to rest easy.

An image appeared in my mind that seemed to fit the clues that Yukinoshita was giving. I am very good at guessing riddles. It was good to the extent that when it came to [How do you read gloves backwards], I answered it so brilliantly that I got 6 punches in after my answer. [\[15\]](#) Seriously, what happened to being civilized?

That brilliant brain of mine had already found the answer. Also, it was not a good answer.

“Hey, Yukinoshita, hey…… Don’t tell me.”

Having been interrupted as such, she probably knew that I had already figured out the answer. Yukinoshita glanced at me, and as though to give herself a secretive air, mouthed the words “Correct,” to me.

Wow, this girl’s lips sure were charming. Although this sort of random thoughts surfaced, but it was ultimately the feeling of disappointment and resignation that won in the end. Just barely though.

Yuigahama and Meguri-senpai didn’t seem to understand, and so watched our interactions in bewilderment.

However, they would probably have the same reaction as me once they hear the answer. This girl’s lips really were charming…… Well, they probably wouldn’t think those kind of stuff.

“Yukinoshita-san, tell me?”

Being urged upon by her, Yukinoshita once again looked at Meguri-senpai.

“Class 2-F, Cultural Festival committee chairman, Sagami Minami-san.”

“Eh-eh?!”

Yuigahama too added a cry of surprise. Probably because she had never thought of this. Although Meguri-senpai was just as surprised, but her expression quickly grew cold.

“Ah-. Eh, so, so it’s like that…… But, what should I do?”

Substituting Meguri-senpai who was hesitating to speak, I asked Yukinoshita about the true meaning behind her words

“Yukinoshita, what do you plan to do?”

“Same as treating a psychological trauma. Where you have failed once recently, you can only use something that is of equal or higher value to compensate for it. Am I wrong?”

If she put it that way, then I have no problem understanding her. Yup, she was the type of person who would push someone who can’t swim into a pool in the name of practice.

That is to say, by letting her take up the post of Sports Festival committee chairman, she would be able to regain her confidence, or rather, to let others have a higher appraisal of her.

If this could go smoothly, Sagami's request for herself could also be fulfilled, her frustration towards herself would also disappear.

And as a result, the gloomy mood surrounding class 2-F would probably change for the better. Because the main reason for the cause of it was Sagami. Well, although I can't say whether it was my undeniable existence that accelerated that mood.

"However, is it worth to go so far? F class, whatever."

"Yes, it is."

Yukinoshita interrupted me with a steely voice.

I could feel the determination from that sharp piercing gaze of hers.

Well, it was going to be difficult to dissuade her when she has come this far. Not to mention persuasion was a difficult task in itself.

Furthermore, one could not say that Yukinoshita's ideas were flawed, there was some logic to it.

However, what I could understand was only the reason for recommending Sagami. In other words, I could only understand the reason behind making Sagami the focus of the problem.

The problem was the consideration behind letting the committee chairman being the main focus.

Also, Meguri-senpai seemed like she couldn't be persuaded.

"Ah, Sagami-san?"

She murmured with her face in a frown.

Thus, Yukinoshita decided to say something more to supplement her previous statements.

"I think that giving one more chance is very important in nurturing others."

"Yes, I think so as well."

Towards Yukinoshita's opinion, Meguri-senpai closed her eyes and nodded her head.

And then, she slowly raised her head and looked at Yukinoshita directly.

"However, this is serious work. If it is going to be done half-heartedly, I would feel very troubled."

Those pair of eyes were telling us she didn't want a repeat of the incident during the Cultural Festival. That warm yet firm attitude. It was different from the impression of the warm and gentle Meguri that I had always had. This dignified attitude of hers now was one that befitting a student council president.

"....."

Although the intensity of that gaze was not yet overpowering, Yukinoshita lapsed into silence upon looking at those serious eyes of Meguri-senpai.

Indeed, just as Meguri-senpai had said, Sagami had a previous record. Sagami's actions of abandoning her responsibility as well as slowing down the Festival were not something that could be forgiven.

"I don't support this as well."

People do not change that easily. If all it took to change, was words of gratitude, or the kind pity of others, or the cheap declaration of one's resolve, then the streets of this world would be overflowing with transforming heroes.

After experiencing the failure of the Cultural Festival, I didn't feel that Sagami had any sort of growth. If we were talking about growth, then she probably didn't harbor any ill-will against me, and she also probably won't put on some act to seek pity from the rest.

People will not chance. If they were to change, then there was only way to achieve that-.

Only by going through painful experiences one after another, the suffering that is carved into your heart will not disappear, and hence withdrawing from the rest because of the pain you have felt, that one would eventually end up changing one's ways.

Sagami has yet to reach this stage.

Hence, I did not think that Sagami should take up the post of Sports Festival committee chairman.

"Sagamin, how to put it..... If she was to end up like last time....."

Yuigahama's worry was absolutely spot-on. I fear, she would end up exactly like he did in the past.

“She won’t become like that. I will make it my responsibility to see to that.”

Yukinoshita proclaimed confidently.

However, I felt that Yukinoshita’s confidence were dangerous.

“Are you an idiot? You. It wouldn’t have any meaning if you end up like you did during the Cultural Festival. Do you intend to work till you drop again?”

Hearing my say that, Yukinoshita froze there with her mouth agape.

“.....What?”

“Ah, eh, nothing. It’s a little surprising.”

Yukinoshita mumbled in a small voice. She was probably embarrassed by how she froze up just now. Her face was a slight shade of red as she cleared her throat.

“Your worries are unfounded. The Sports Festival is a closed-door event, not to mention that it last only a day. Compared to the Cultural Festival, the workload is significantly lesser and hence my workload will be reduced as well. Furthermore, Sagami-san also has room to reorganize herself should she make a mess.”

Yukinoshita’s explanations came out one after another like a torrential river. Seeing that, Yuigahama and I could only listen to her carefully whilst going “Un-un-“ Then, Yuigahama suddenly stopped whatever she was doing.

“Then again, isn’t the prerequisite for the above being Yukinon doing work diligently?”

Being stared at by Yuigahama, Yukinoshita’s words seemed to have been lodged in her throat in a moment of embarrassment.

“Yu, Yuigahama-san. However, there’s still the matter of the request, as well as Miura-san’s mail.....”

Yukinoshita made some excuses concerning this and that. To this, Yuigahama uttered a soft “Mu--“ and looked at her.

“Ha.....”

Then she gave a sigh. Yuigahama raised her head and smiled at Yukinoshita.

“I will help too. You must let me handle some of the work too as well.”

“Yuigahama-san.....”

A look on relief formed on her face and she let out a small whisper.

“Thank you……”

“It’s nothing at all.”

Yuigahama took a step towards Yukinoshita to be right beside her, and gently held her hand. Ascertaining the warmth of each other.

Ah, two people getting along harmoniously was such a beautiful sight.

I was totally neglected by them, and so I could only watch those Yuri-feelings from afar.

There was still one more person, who was sighing from the side as she watched on.

“If Yukinoshita is going to help, then there shouldn’t be any problem.”

Those were words of some relief. However, you could say that this sort of trust was what caused the trouble during the Cultural Festival.

“Who knows? She’s not perfect after all. I don’t think that we should have too much trust.”

I looked at Meguri-senpai with just a bit of objection. And so, Meguri-senpai replied me with a smile.

“It’s okay. There’s Yuigahama too.”

Indeed, seeing her in front of me, that was sufficient to put me at ease. If Yuigahama is by Yukinoshita’s side this time, then it wouldn’t be possible for Yukinoshita to overwork herself. Finally, Yukinoshita as the failsafe, would ensure that the Sports Festival would progress smoothly without a hitch.

“……Well, I guess so.”

Hearing my short reply, Meguri-senpai brought her face to my ear. She spoke to me in a small voice as though she was telling me a secret.

“Also, you will be by their side right?”

Meguri-senpai’s voice tickled my ear. My body stiffened as I smelled the sweet fragrance, and then Meguri-senpai walked away from me.

Then, she awaited my reply with that smile of hers.

“……Yea, it’s my work after all.”

Unable to meet her eye, I looked towards the window. Nevertheless, the joyful sound of

her laughter reached my ears.

“Okay! Then it’s decided!”

With a clap of her hands, she gathered our attention and then announced in a sonorous voice.

“Then, it’s time to go and visit Sagami-san. I guess you should let me and Yukinoshita go and talk to her?”

“That’s true. We will go tomorrow then.”

Yukinoshita nodded her head at Meguri-senpai’s proposal. However, Yukinoshita’s character was not one that was good at these sort of things.....

“Ah, I will go as well!”

And so, to complement her flaw, that was Yuigahama’s job. Well, there should be no problem now then.

“Then, see you all tomorrow. I am counting on you all!”

With that said, Meguri-senpai turned towards the right as she prepared to exit from the clubroom, but she seemed to have thought of something and turned back to face us. Her skirt fluttered along with her movement.

“By the way, which team are you all in? Doesn’t our school separate each classes into two? I wish to ask about that. As for me, I am in the red team.”

She probably cared about this because of what she had written at the end of the mail
“Because it’s my last so I want to win.”

Since it wasn’t like groups were some sort of personal information, I replied her first.

“Red”

After I said that, I glanced at Yuigahama.

“Red.”

Yuigahama looked at Yukinoshita.

“Red.”

Yukinoshita looked at Meguri-senpai.

The repeated words of “red” were akin to reporting strength. Meguri-senpai looked at

us with satisfaction as she clenched her fists to psyche herself up.

“Same as me. Good! Let’s all set our sights on victory!!”

We did not follow in her high-spirits, and we looked at each other. Why was this person in such high spirits?

Seeing that there was no response from us, Meguri-senpai raised her fist once more.

“Let’s do our best!”

Uh-oh, this was that. This was the same as that with the king in Dragon Quest 5 in the Lenoire city or the big sisters who were the host at the Hero show. If one does not answer carefully here one would be stuck in an endless loop.

It seems that Yuigahama had also sensed that, and quickly looked at me.

“O, O.....”

No matter what, we were still very shy, and both Yuigahama and I raised our fists slightly like a [Beckoning cat]. [\[16\]](#)

Feeling satisfied, Meguri-senpai left the club-room.

.....How to put it, what is this weird situation.

Chapter 3: Just as I expected, Minami Sagami has not changed.

When Meguri senpai arrived at the clubroom the next day after school, I was all alone inside watching over it.

The refreshing autumn breeze blew in from the opened window. The clubroom was quiet, except for the ticking of the clock and the flipping of pages.

Staying alone in this club room felt strange.

Come to think of it, I was always the last to arrive here.

The two people who were normally here before me, were not here today.

Just as they discussed with Meguri-senpai yesterday, Yukinoshita and Yuigahama had gone on ahead to persuade Sagami to take up the position of Sports Festival committee chairman.

Because this was an activity of the Service Club, perhaps I should've gone along as well. But I was on really bad terms with Sagami, so I were to be present, Sagami would probably adopt an obstinate attitude. That much I could envision.

Hence, I was in charge of looking after the club-room.

With no noise around me, it was a pleasant reading experience with the temperature even lower than normal in the club room.

This was totally like the room of spirit and time. [\[17\]](#) As I progressed through the strings of characters and lines, before I knew it, I had already arrived at the final page of the book.

When I finished reading, I let out a yawn owing to the satisfaction and tiredness that I felt.

I had already been here for 30 minutes.

They have probably reached a stalemate with regards to the negotiations with Sagami.

Since I was great at wasting time, I didn't really have any issues with staying alone here but I was still curious as to the progress of the negotiations. If Sagami rejected the position of chairman, then that position would naturally be pushed to us.

Even if I didn't become the committee chairman, that position would most likely be taken up by Yukinoshita or Yuigahama. The person who recommended Sagami was Yukinoshita, and from her point of view, Yukinoshita would feel responsible for it. Hence, if Yukinoshita became the committee chairman, Yuigahama would try to replace Yukinoshita out of her own chivalrous spirit.

In the end, I was definitely going to be dragged into it.

In all probability, Hiratsuka-sensei will throw me into that messy whirlpool.

Since one couldn't reject the work that was allocated to you, then one should be involved with the work allocation from the very beginning, and try to get oneself into a favorable position as much as possible such that one will have a much lesser burden in the end.

This was an era in which even the demon-king had to work. [18] Maybe even I had to work. Since the day will come where I have to work, then I should try and work under the most favorable conditions. Well, if I can get through this without working then that would be the best.

For the purpose of preparing myself for the worse, I wanted to know all the more how their negotiations were turning out. I guess I should go and take a look. As I thought that and stood up, soft voices could be heard coming from the distance doorway.

The door opened rudely all of a sudden.

“Ah~ I am so tired.”

“.....Good grief.”

Both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama were complaining as they entered.

“Thank you for your hard work.”

Hearing my voice, Yukinoshita and Yuigahama gave a short sigh, and nodded their head together. Ah, they look really tired. Their fatigue seemed to have already spread to me. Or rather, I was going to be depressed at this rate. The current atmosphere was really unbearable.

And then, a warm air flowed out from behind the two of them.

“Thank you both. Hikigaya-kun as well.”

The one who said that with a bright smile was Meguri-senpai. She seemed to have followed them here after the negotiations with Sagami.

Ah, I feel refreshed by that. That smile and those kind words.

I see, those who were at the top really do act the way as I expected them do. Even if they didn't, they also couldn't quite possibly tell their subordinates "Eh, already going back?" to pressurize them.

On this note, even if Meguri-senpai did say that, the intention behind it would have felt something like "Already, going back..... I want to stay with you all just a bit longer....." I have no doubt that it would not only have calmed everyone down, but would also have led people to happily stay back and work overtime.

My imagination was amazing. I had even imagined it to the extent whereby I confessed to her after a misunderstanding, at which she will reject me gently with that warm smile of hers and I would leave the place because I wouldn't be able to endure staying around her any longer.

Those warm and gentle type of girls had an abnormally high chance of being confessed to by dull guys.

Just as I was fleeting between psychological trauma and rehabilitation, Yukinoshita's voice washed over me like cold water.

"Shiromeguri-senpai, that guy is not particularly tired, nor is there any need to take notice of him."

Eh eh, although you are not wrong in saying that I am not worn out.

"Yukinon, that's just a form of greeting so it's all right."

Exactly! Yuigahama-san! I know that! But you don't have to say it out! Also, what do you mean by "It's all right?" I have no idea.

There was still one more thing that was more worrying than the above.

"So? What about Sagami?"

Hearing me ask that, Yuigahama drooped her shoulders with a fed-up expression on her face.

"Sagami was a pain to deal with..... Sagamin was quite unwilling, she said a lot of things....."

"A lot of things, huh."

That phrase probably had some meaning to it so I repeated it. Yuigahama nodded her head.

“Yes, that is, how to put it, I felt that we were trying to psyche everyone up[ワッショイ].” [\[19\]](#)

This girl, she probably meant suck up to everyone[ヨイシヨ]. [\[20\]](#)

Although I was already capable of translating Yuigahama-ese to Japanese, Meguri-senpai cocked her head in puzzlement with an “Um?”

“Well, since we did have to suck up to her quite a bit for her to do it, she’s not exactly right yet not exactly far from it either..... Something like that.” [\[21\]](#)

Yukinoshita quickly followed up on Yuigahama. No, those two words are totally different.

“You are warming up to Yuigahama quite a fair bit recently, aren’t you?”

Was this world so yuri yuri? Which publisher? Is it that, time something? [\[22\]](#)

Yukinoshita didn’t seem to know what I mean. Her face had a puzzled expression on it.

“It’s nothing like that, it’s very normal.”

“Really?”

Seeing my gaze that was implying that it was ‘totally not normal’, Yukinoshita lowered her gaze as though she was hurt.

“..... Sorry, Hikigaya-kun has never had any normal interactions with anyone and so he wouldn’t know. This is called normal, please remember it.”

Oh really, so this is normal. This world sure was peaceful. [\[23\]](#)

Well, never mind. Now was not the time to be concerned with the Yuri affairs of Yukinoshita and Yuigahama, about how I was badly treated by them or my human rights problems. The problem was whether Sagami had accepted the position of the Sports Festival Committee chairman.

“So, what happened exactly?”

Having asked as such, Yukinoshita answered with particularly cold look.

“She accepted it more or less.”

“More or less?”

I cocked my head in puzzlement as she added the pillow word to her answer. [24]

Thereupon, Yukinoshita let out a short sigh as though she had given up and gazed outside the window.

“Yes. After us, or rather Hayama-kun implored her to do it. That would be a more accurate way of saying it, I think.”

“So you made use of Hayama? Smart idea.”

To Sagami, the longing for Hayama could be said to be the reason for her existence, and so he would score higher points with Sagami than if Yukinoshita or Yuigahama were to ask her. Hayama was a useful card, but only at this kind of time.

However, it was really strange that Yukinoshita would ask a favor of Hayama. Don’t tell me that there’s going to be a typhoon tomorrow, or that the Keiyou line would stop operating?

Just as I was thinking about that, Yuigahama added on to Yukinoshita’s comment.

“To be more accurate, I think it was more like Hayato-kun intervening because he could not bear to watch us anymore.”

Ah, a vivid image sprang into my mind.

She was probably going all “I can’t do it~,” whilst having a happy expression on her voice as she accepted the task.

The nature of humans do not change that easily.

“Well, at least she agreed to it.”

Meguri-senpai joined in the conversation to smooth things over. Indeed, as long as one obtained the end-result, the process was not the problem. The lack of a committee chairman, the bad atmosphere surrounding class 2-F, all these problems could be said to have progressed a little. Or rather, you could say that the groundwork for it has been prepared. It would be great if all things could progress smoothly from here on, but I really doubt that it would be the case.....

Although she seemed she like she wanted to sigh as well, Meguri-senpai seemed to hold it back and continued speaking.

“Then, we should start.... Moving as well.”

“To where?”

Yuigahama asked and Meguri-senpai smiled.

“What’s next is the conference between the Sports Festival committee.”

Conference..... Ah, seems like I heard an annoying word.

However, this smile was not something that could be resisted. Furthermore, Yukinoshita and Yuigahama had nodded their heads and were standing up.....

If things were going to be like that, I had no choice but to go to the conference. I rose from my seat in resignation and left the clubroom.

3-2

The conference room that was used to hold the Sports Festival conference was the same one used for the Cultural Festival. It was a place where the committee gathered each day.

Although I had not come here for quite some time, the conference room was neat and tidy, and did not have any semblance to the way it looked during the Cultural Festival.

People from the Sports Festival had begun arriving in twos and threes.

Amongst them, most were student council members. Seems like the core of the committee was comprised of student council members.

“Thank you for your hard work.”

As Meguri-senpai called out to the rest, the student council members bowed and stepped aside to open up a path for her. She’s a ninja now?

Besides the student council members, there were also students who were in sports attire. From their physique and aura, they seem to be members of the sports club.

Just as I was wondering about their purpose in being here, Meguri-senpai whispered into my ear.

“I have invited all the sports club to send out some helpers to help out on the actual day. We would be too busy with all the personnel cut and preparation work. “

Ah, I get it now..... Although it’s supposed to be the administration committee, but in practice, it was made up of student council members and us as well as Sagami, those sort of willing volunteers who would help out.

To put it simply, the committee consisted of the executive portion and the team that worked on the grounds.

And so, the group that would come up with the ideas and plans was probably going to be us, the executive committee.

There was a familiar face in the field team.

It was the same for that person. After exchanging gazes with me, that person started to converse in a secretive manner with those around. This fellow was really familiar.

Judging by his attire, and a basketball sports bad on the table. That is to say that person is part of the basketball club?

Where have I seen this person..... I couldn't find a suitable match in my memory that fitted the clues.

Well, I definitely can't remember all these unimportant people.

For the sake of engraving memories, humans would need a strong provocation in order to get a strong stimulus in return. Precisely because of that, Kawa-something would reveal her black lace panties for me to see.

Ignoring those two minor characters for the present, I turned my head along with the rest towards the front of the conference room under the direction of Meguri-senpai.

Then, in the deepest corner of the room, there was a female there flipping through a document folder. Her long legs were crossed, and the white shirt fluttered about.

“Hiratsuka sensei.....”

So it's really her..... Just as I murmured her name in a despondent voice, Hiratsuka sensei noticed us, and turned her head to face us.

“Oh, I see that you managed to get them.”

Hiratsuka sensei smiled when she recognized the people behind Meguri-senpai. To this, Meguri-senpai responded back with a smile as well.

“Yes, just as Sensei put it, it really can't get any better than this.”

“So, this is once again sensei's suggestion?.....”

Noticing that I was looking at her with a rotten look, Sensei chuckled happily.

“I was also starting to dislike the Sports Festival that was more or less the same each year. I have great expectations as to what your will come up with.”

“Seems like she's having fun.....”

Yuigahama said it in an overly honest manner. Well, of course she will start to detest it if it's the same thing getting repeated each other. How many times has this Sports Festival been held again?

Hiratsuka sensei seemed to have experienced it many times but nevertheless maintained a cheerful disposition. Yukinoshita nodded her eye as though she wanted to confirm something.

“Is this Sports Festival also under your charge, Hiratsuka sensei?”

“Yup. This kind of job is done by those who are young. See, I am a young person, a

young person.”

Is it because it was that important that you had to repeat it twice. Tsk, this person.

We felt sorry for Hiratsuka sensei who was saying it so joyously. No matter who it was, no one was able to make any comment. Quick, someone marry her already! Take the chance to grab hold of happiness while she's still young!

We sank into silence owing to our sadness. Hiratsuka sensei probably noticed the change in mood, cleared her throat as though to clear away the past and began to speak again.

“Come to think of it, what about the committee chairman? Has it been decided yet?”

Meguri-senpai smiled vaguely at the question at which she was asked.

“I was rejected by Yukinoshita-san. However, because she recommended someone else so I asked her that person to do it instead.”

“Oh? Recommendation.....”

Because of that word, Hiratsuka squinted her eyes in an instant in surprise. That was a look that was urging Meguri-senpai to continue. Understanding that, Meguri-senpai nodded her head.

“Yes. We have decided to give the job to Sagami-san.”

“Sagami? Oh..... I see.....”

Hiratsuka sensei seemed to be thinking of something as she folded her arms.

“Well, as long as it's someone chosen by your, then there's no problem Then, what about the committee chairman? Seems like she hasn't arrived yet....”

Hiratsuka straightened herself as though searching for someone behind us. However, even if you do that, Sagami still wouldn't be here. Then again, why wasn't Sagami here? Although it was good that she wasn't here.

I looked at Yukinoshita searching for the answer.

Thereupon, Yukinoshita answered without hesitation.

“Sagami-san will arrive here soon.”

“Is that so..... Then we will begin the conference once Sagami is here.”

Hiratsuka sensei glanced at the door as she said that.

We glanced at the door as well. There was no sign of anyone about to enter at all.

3-3

We had arrived at the conference room not long before.

The sound of people engaging in light-hearted talk and coughing, as well as the silence that resembled the intermission of a play. All these repeated itself over and over again.

I glanced at the clock on the wall.

It was already past the scheduled time for the conference.

But still, the conference would not start because of the reason that Sagami was late.

Well, being late for 5 to 10 minutes was no big deal. This was a common affair. Being late for a couple minutes was still tolerated.

Yet, being late for 15 minutes gave people the feeling that you were seriously late. After all, workplaces also used 15 minutes as a measure to whether you were absent or present.

Finally, everyone glanced at the executive committee with a look of “Has it not begun yet?” as though they were waiting for a game that was supposed to be selling in the winter but only appeared in stores in spring.

We had no choice but to continue waiting. Although Yuigahama had already sent a text and made a call, but there seemed to be no response from the other end. She sighed tiredly.

This sigh spread to everyone in the room.

Because of the fact that she still hasn't arrived after so long, my skin started to clam up slowly upon feeling the mood of the conference room.

I made small idle chatter with Yuigahama and Yukinoshita who were beside me.

“Should we go and send someone to look for her?”

“Ah, probably.....”

Yukinoshita replied in a small voice as she glanced at the clock.

“Ah, then I will go and”

Just as Yuigahama was about to stand up, the door burst open. Everyone shifted their attention to the door.

“I’m really sorry for being late-----”

As though she wasn’t actually sorry at all, Sagami walked in leisurely.

Not even waiting for the others to reply, she walked up to the seat in front, as though she had no doubts as to whether she should be in that position.

Midway, she probably noticed some familiar faces, and even waved to them. I wondered who they were and realized that they were those two minor characters that I saw earlier.

“Haruka and Yukko are also part of the administration committee. Please take care of them.”

“..... Un, please take care of us.”

The two of them wave their hands with a somewhat stiff expression.

For some reason, I started to remember their names.

Minor character A and B, those two were together with Sagami during the Cultural Festival. Probably because they were part of the basketball club that they were sent here be part of the Sports Festival administration committee.

As though she was relieved that she had found her friends here, Sagami became even more raucous.

The one who asked her to be the committee chairman was indeed us. Since she was invited here, I imagined that she thought that she was at an advantage.

Despite that, the one who knew that was only the executive committee, the other students had no idea. They looked at Sagami with frustration.

As Sagami took her seat, she probably noticed the gazes and flinched a little.

“Eh, sorry. I am the committee chairman, Sagami Minami.”

With a fair bit of stammering, she made a bow.

The conference had finally arrived at a state whereby it could begin.

As though to confirm this point, Hiratsuka sensei who was seated at the front surveyed all who were present.

“Shiromeguri, let’s begin the conference.”

Having heard her name being called, Meguri-senpai nodded her head, and meted out

an order in a gentle voice.

“Yes, then, let the conference begin. Sagami-san.”

“Yes, yes.”

Sagami seemed a little flustered at having her named called so suddenly.

“Today, you will do this with me. From the next time onwards, you will be hosting it.”

NICE decision. With that look she’s giving, I didn’t think that Sagami would be able to advance the discussions in the conference anyway. It was bound to end up like that time during the Cultural Festival.

Rather than letting Sagami stammer through the meeting from the start, it was more appropriate for Meguri-senpai to go over the important points of the meeting with her.

Meguri-senpai stood up and walked over to the whiteboard. A student council member followed her, and stood beside the whiteboard with a marker.

“Then, today’s topic will be about the main events of the Sports Festival.”

After that announcement, Meguri-senpai took the marker from the student council member, and wrote the topic on the whiteboard in big, round, cute letters.

Then, she smacked the whiteboard.

“Everyone come out with some ideas! Those who have ideas please raise your hands!”

Even after Meguri-senpai had looked about the room, people were just looking at each other and not making any noise.

In the midst of it all, Yuigahama raised her hand.

“Yes! Yuigahama-san!”

During this kind of time, as long as someone raised a proposal from the very beginning, it would change the mood and activity level of the conference. No matter what sort of proposal it was, the most important was to start the fire. In other words, the stupider the proposal, the better.

In this case, Yuigahama could be said to the trump card for this occasion. As expected of a bitch who was good at reading the mood by simply looking about or whatever. Because of the fact that she always looked about restlessly, she has found the only way out.....amazing.

This person sure has grown..... Just as I was touched to the point where my eyes were

becoming slightly moist, I saw her expression. She was happily saying things like “Even though that isn’t bad, but this is quite good as well~”. This person, seems like she was only considering the things that she wanted to try without giving it further thought.

Well, that’s to be expected! This person was not the type to go about thinking of deep strategies before entering a conference.

Yuigahama was standing up, saying things like “I want to try this, I want to try that, I want to try that again!” in an super high-spirited voice.

“Something like inter-club relay!”

“If you did that, then those who don’t have a club won’t be able to participate. You will draw their ire, won’t you.....”

The instant Yuigahama was done talking, Hiratsuka had murmured those few words.

And so, the words that were written on the board <<Inter-club relay>>, was struck out with a line.

That look of being rejected so quickly. I don’t know what to make of it.....

Yuigahama returned to her seat dejectedly.

Yukinoshita seemed like she was unwilling to accept it and tilted her head. She patted Yuigahama’s shoulders, probably to console her.

“Please don’t hesitate to speak up about any ideas you have!”

Meguri-senpai spoke cheerfully.

This time, it was Yukinoshita who quietly raised her hand.

“Okay! Yukinoshita-san!”

Yukinoshita responded calmly when she was called.

“An orthodox, bread eating competition.”

“I am afraid there will be complaints from the rice faction.”

Hiratsuka sensei replied in a flash. Why was there that deep, mysterious expression on her?

Was factional strife that serious?

The rice faction was probably a martial arts faction, what kind of monster were they to make those claims. [25] Rice monster Papp? [26]

“Then, what about a rice-eating competition. Like eating rice balls or something.”

Although Meguri-senpai suggested that, but it was probably going to be rejected for the same reason as before.

Naturally, Hiratsuka sensei shook her head. The reason given was the same as the bread eating competition.

After being rejected, Meguri-senpai muttered “un-un-“ and then clapped her hands together.

“Ah, what about a Mochi eating competition. They will even stick to your face, which will make it more enjoyable to watch!”

“- If they aren’t careful, they are going to die.”

Hiratsuka sensei looked at Meguri-senpai with a shudder. No, Meguri-senpai was scary..... Was it scary because of her innocence? The terror that came along with innocence was really something.

“Ah, what a pity.....”

As she said it, she crossed out the <>Bread eating competition>> <>Rice eating competition>> and <>Mochi eating competition>> with a line.

Looking at the board once more, this time, even Meguri-senpai’s face turned cloudy, but she quickly perked herself up, and said in a even more energetic voice.

“Get your spirits up and let’s try again! Next!”

Hence, no one dared to raise their hands out of fear. Even so, Yuigahama today seemed different from the rest.

Once more, a shout of “Me!” came from her as she raised her hand energetically.

“Okay! Yuigahama-san!”

Meguri-senpai called out her name lightly.

“Scavenger hunt!”

As soon as Yuigahama completed her sentence, Hiratsuka sensei murmured something again once more.

"If we were to take into consideration the students of which their parents still owe debts....."

.....Must you go that far, monster complainer. Hasn't that come yet! The monster hunter! [27]

However, it couldn't be helped. Debts were tough. Before I knew it, I had chalked up some debts to my parents and Komachi. Because this debt was between family members, I would probably default on them when they were due.

Out of consideration, a line was drawn over the words <<Scavenger hunt>> as well.

The whiteboard was a tragic sight to behold even if Yuigahama and Yukinoshita had suggested that many ideas. Yukinoshita eyes shifted between the whiteboard and Hiratsuka sensei, and said in a disgusted tone.

"Being considerate is all we are doing here....."

"Recently, there are many complaints..... There are many limitations as well....."

Even Hiratsuka sensei had a look of irritation on her. I see, if Hiratsuka sensei were to approve any thing risky, she would be reprimanded by her superiors and the children's guardians..... The middle management sure had it tough.

As the fire in the conference room started to subside, Meguri senpai tried her best to get her spirits up.

"Anyway, everyone please try and think about it. Please do give more suggestions!"

Probably because of the sight of Meguri-senpai trying her best, everyone was roused and Yuigahama, Yukinoshita and the members of the student council started to give out suggestions.

One after another.

Even though there were suggestions, but they were all rejected by some opposing voice coming from somewhere.

The whiteboard had already become one scary mess.

<<Ball throwing competition (Meaningless)>>

<<Ball-pushing competition (Meaningless)>>

<<Handicapped race>>

<<Eating contest>>

<<Summoning war>>

<<Decathlon>>

<<Decamelon>>

<<Botticelli>>

<<Chim Chim Cher-ee>>

<<Ooka Cherry>> [\[28\]](#)

All the above were struck out with a line.

Did it somehow change to a word association game in the middle? Wasn't it fine to just leave it at the magical something? Also, stop making jokes out of the virgin Oooka Tadasuke! There's nothing wrong with being a virgin!

If this goes on, the conference was going to end without having decided on anything,

Even if I were to say something now, I fear that it would just be struck down like all the other ideas. There the existence of this "flow" concept in a conference. When the mood was set, ideas and suggestions were more easily accepted. In a negative state, no matter how good the ideas were, they would be rejected or simply put into consideration.

Humans were social creatures. They would change along with the mood and atmosphere of their surroundings. They are fluid, ever changing, and will change along with the flow of people.

That's why, no one can go against this flow.

To oppose this flow will result in discord. If it was not a person like me who had a steel resolve of never backing down, for example, I was like the concrete dike that protected the solitary island. If the person was not like me, they could never go against the flow.

Those who did not understand this would be continuously eroded.

"Please give some ideas, everyone."

The one who said it was one of the person who was in charge of this conference, Sagami.

The voice was not particularly loud. Although she was in charge of the conference, but

because it was Meguri-senpai who did most of the work, I guess that not many people will notice Sagami.

Yet, there will still some people who looked in Sagami's direction.

Familiar voices easily found their way into your ear. It was not because of some simple perceptual awareness, but it was established because of the connection of awareness between people. Hence, only those who had personally interacted with Sagami before would hear her voice.

This, just as the conference was about to come to a halt, this lethargic person's irresponsible remark.

This person..... It's obvious that she didn't do anything, and yet still have the nerve to ask people for suggestion..... Are you the boss!

Although I thought that way, but I didn't speak my mind. That is to say, I am the boss!

Although I feel that I would be amazing in the future, but if a fellow like me became the boss, then my subordinates were going to be in a pitiable state, so I have decided to never work. Never work, absolutely never. To work is to lose.

As I added one more layer of resolve of never working, I stared at the window as I had nothing better to do.

3-4

The setting sun was glowing outside the window. Autumn was progressing, the days were getting shorter.

Seems like once the days become shorter, the air will also grow colder. I didn't know when but the mood in the conference room now could not get any worse.

Long conferences made everyone who were involved weary.

Weary till they were playing with phones, staring lifelessly into blank space or fanning themselves with the printed materials. The administration committee themselves too had a look of unhappiness.

"Uuuuu..... If, if there are still other suggestions, please say it..... Are there any others....."

Meguri senpai said it in a tired voice, the responses from the crowd were pretty slow.

Towards Sagami's "Any more suggestions?----", no one made any reply.

As the two of them went about uttering the same thing in between breaks and pauses, Hiratsuka sensei maintained her silence.

Just like protecting her chastity. Protecting it way too strongly! [\[29\]](#)

As though my thoughts had reached her, Hiratsuka sensei who had always been folding her arms and closing her eyes, now opened one eye and looked at me. Then she moved her jaw in a queer manner as though giving me a secret signal.

She probably wants me to think of something.

I sighed unintentionally.

"Ha, if this goes on we won't decide on anything....."

Yukinoshita's words followed closely behind mine, and pressed her forehead and made a tired sigh.

"Yes. They are far more lacking in ideas than I expected....."

"No matter what we say, objections far outnumber the ideas....."

Although Yuigahama had raised several proposals, but these few times, not only Hiratsuka sensei, but the others as well rejected her with an avalanche of reasons.

Both of them seemed to be in the given up on conference mood. Not the cat ears mode. [\[30\]](#)

In the situation whereby the flow did not feel right, even an assertive proposal will have a weak effect. This useless conference should just hurry up and end.

“There’s a limit to how much we can think. Just thinking alone is pointless.”

Just as I was done saying it, Hiratsuka sensei stared at me.

Also, Yukinoshita and Yuigahama were also staring at me.

Really..... So you guys are really not giving up.....

“Then what shall we do?”

I started to think after being asked that by Yuigahama.

We can’t do it alone. Then we should just let others who could do it, do the job. Or we could force those who cannot do it. Who knows, maybe they will do it by the stipulated time. As expected, we should let someone else other than me to do it.

As expected, we should just let Master Shinran take over from here. I will be awaiting others to help me with their strength. I was seriously a Buddhist. Well, although I am pretty sure Master Shinran didn’t mean it to be like that. [\[31\]](#)

“This what probably what they meant by ‘getting the right person for the job.’”

Hearing that wonderful idiom from me, Yukinoshita nodded her head.

“That indeed is an important line of thought.”

Yup yup, this way of thinking is very important

Whether you were working or not, for some reason, whenever you displayed your specialization, work that were in that field would come non-stop to you from that point on. It was the same in a convenience store. A boy who was drawing some illustrations would always be asked to do some form of signage for the store. The store owner would say thing like “Since your drawing is not bad, you can complete the drawing really quickly right? I will leave it to you”. Just because one could do it doesn’t mean that one would want to do it. People ought to really consider this point more often.

I continued speaking in relation to my past experiences.

“Well, to put it simply, it’s a common fact that people are milked for all they are worth by the organization. Yet, they never get a wage increase so they look like an idiot when

they continue to work.”

“I know! That, I know!”

I looked in the direction where the sudden loud noise was coming from. Hiratsuka sensei was banging her knee-caps and nodding vigorously.

“Hiratsuka sensei, I don’t think you should be agreeing with him here.....”

Yukinoshita’s cold gaze stood out from amongst the pitiful gaze that the other students were giving Hiratsuka sensei. To be able to say such things were truly remarkable. My eyes were starting to tear now and I can’t even see my front clearly now. If no one is going to take her away soon, I might just start working seriously to raise her. Hurry! Someone marry her already! Please!

I wiped away the tears in the corner of my eyes gently and continued.

“It’s pointless to try and get people who can’t do it to do the job. It’s better to just call the experts in the field.”

“That is to say, to give up the request?”

Yukinoshita looked at me in surprise. However, I too can make an assertion proudly.

“Wrong. Work-sharing. Job rotation. Outsourcing.”

Upon hearing those foreign words, Yuigahama made a sound like she was impressed.

“Although I don’t understand the meaning but it sounds impressive.”

Thank you for your praise. Anyway, this girl seems like she would be easily bluffed by others so she watch out for that. Seems like she would be buying those natural or whatever kind of food products and fall prey to a pyramid scam.

On the other hand, Yukinoshita seemed to be greatly troubled. If you could trust others more you would have a happier life, I think.

“I’m just impressed that you came up with so many terms that mean the same thing..... It’s really how you say it huh.....”

Yukinoshita sighed and Meguri-senpai who was next to her, stood up partially.

“However, as long as it can solve the problem it’s okay! Placing your trust in others is very important too!”

I received such strong support. I nodded my head at her and looked at Yukinoshita.

“Yukinoshita.”

“Eh eh.”

Just as I opened my mouth, Yukinoshita replied me immediately. Although it was a short exchange between us, but it seems like my thinking had reached her.

Then, I raised my hand and looked at Meguri-senpai.

“Shiromeguri senpai, as part of the external staff, I want to recruit some advisers.”

Hearing that, Meguri-senpai blinked her eyes.

“A DO BAI ZA-“

“..... BAI ZA-“

Meguri-senpai tilted her head and repeated the words, Yuigahama followed suit.

“There’s no meaning in relying on us since we can’t get you a conclusion. Now, let’s hear the opinions from the pros, shall we?”

Hearing my follow-up, Meguri-senpai gave a smile.

“That is so. I would be happy if they would come and help. Right, Sagami-san?”

Although only in name, but Sagami was the committee chairman after all. Hence there was a need to more or less confirm it with her. Meguri-senpai had already settled everything smoothly, Sagami was probably afraid that she would be left out of the topic and so she replied in a flustered manner.

“Yes, Yes. That’s just what I was saying. No good ideas.....”

Sagami had also recognized the current situation, and would probably not have any reason to object. Those who attended the conference would probably say the same thing.

But then, just after Sagami was done talking, ever so quietly.

Just like the ink that drips into the water, came the sound of a small, faint voice. A voiceless sound that emitted without the vibration of the vocal cords. Although it did not echo, it nevertheless left an impression in my ear.

“Sensei.”

But, that sound disappeared when Meguri-senpai said that word. Meguri-senpai was now looking at Hiratsuka sensei.

Noting her gaze, Hiratsuka sensei nodded her head.

“Okay. I want to settle this quickly as well. Pushooo---- Just like that.”

Whatever you just said was not adviser, but Budweiser maybe? Except for the “er” at the end, everything else was wrong.

(TL Note: Yes, they are still trying to figure out the word adviser.”

Naturally, I will not tell it to her directly. You see, there was nothing to be gained by pampering her.

Hiratsuka looked at me with displeasure, but I ignored her. And so, after a bit of thinking, she spoke again.

“So? Who do you intend to call? I want to settle this and go and eat.”

That, is appetizer. Probably. Except for the ‘er’ at the end, nothing was correct. This was pretty hard to understand, it seems.

Naturally, I won’t say that out. Hehe, if you feed a wild cat, it will follow you home once it knows you better.

“I have someone who has produced tangible results in my mind, I will ask that person.”

Seeing that I wasn’t baited at all, Hiratsuka narrowed her eyes. Then, as though she had the target in her sight, she raised her time.

“Alright, this is the final fusion, I will admit as such.”

“.....”

That is Gaogaigar probably. There isn’t even a ‘er’ at the back. But it somehow did feel close from the impression of the word. As expected from the King of Braves. [\[32\]](#)

I quickly swallowed what I was about to say, and wiped away the sweat on my forehead.

That was close! I was that close to making a retort.....

As I stopped my thoughts, Hiratsuka sensei looked on with a gaze of loneliness. Although I felt somewhat pained to see her like that, but there was a need to settle this main event problem. I will accompany you next time when I am free, so I hope you will spare me the next time.

I averted my gaze from Hiratsuka sensei's look of longing and looked at Yuigahama.

"That, I will leave that fellow up to you, Yuigahama."

"Eh?"

Yuigahama blinked as she pointed at herself.

I waved my hands and Yuigahama moved her chair closer towards me, and leaned towards me.

Closer than I had expected.....

The light perfume and fragrance of the shampoo tickled my senses. In order to calm myself down I took a deep breath. Because of brief pause, Yuigahama looked at me curiously. That's why you are too close.

Because we met each other's gaze under such close distances, we were both understandably embarrassed. We both averted our gaze.

I conveyed my message to her in a way that required me to not look at her as much as possible. In the process of listening, Yuigahama lowered her face. Her light brown ears seemed a little red, but that's probably because of the light.

When I had finished, Yuigahama raised her head.

"I get it now. I will go and call them."

Holding her mobile phone in one hand, she left the conference room to make a call.

I watched her leave and slumped my tired body back onto the chair.

3-5

In a short moment, the advisors had arrived.

“So, it’s them?”

Yukinoshita glanced at the two people at the door way.

“You called me here for something?”

“FUMU?”

Ebina-san was looking at us blankly and then there was also Zaimokuza.

Rather, I felt strange as to why Zaimokuza was here as well.

“Why is Zaimokuza here? Who? Who called him?”

“That’s a stupid question. Where Hachiman is, I will be there. When Hachiman thinks of me, I will be there.”

I totally did not understand him..... Also, it’s particularly disgusting..... Don’t tell me it was that final fusion just now? Ha. I definitely do not want to fuse with Zaimokuza, especially when Ebina-san is here, this is bad!

Although I thought that way, Ebina san remained puzzled as she conversed with Yuigahama.

“Hey, Yui. Why did you call me here?”

.....Seems like in Ebina’s heart, there wasn’t such a thing as ZaimokuzaXHachiman. That’s great..... No, shipping people together was bad in the first place.

“I have some things to discuss.”

Yuigahama brought up the topic as I had forgotten to tell her since I was so relieved that she did not pair me with Zaimokuza. Was it because ZaixHachi seems like ostracism? [\[33\]](#)

“Discuss?”

Ebina-san scanned the room and cocked her head. Indeed, this sports festival committee was totally not related to her at all. No matter how hard people tried to think of a reason, they wouldn’t be able to come up with one.

“Yes, exactly that.....”

“Each year during the Sports Festival, we would come up with some main events. However, we couldn’t think of any good ideas this year..... So I wish to have your creativity aid us in this matter.”

Before I could even explain, Yukinoshita had already touched on all the key points of the matter.

“I am bored so it doesn’t really matter..... But why me?”

“Ah ah, because Hikki chose you.”

Hearing that reply from Yuigahama, Ebina looked at me with deep interest.

“Chosen by Hikigaya-kun..... Heh.”

Ebina-san stared at me as she commented in a surprised tone.

“..... During the Cultural Festival, wasn’t the Little Prince act a big hit? Well, you seem to be able to come up with all these strange ideas so I thought we could rely on you.”

Truth be told, Ebina-san was highly applauded for her creativity.

Producers were normally able to create a 1 from a 0 and change a 1 to a 10. Well, there are those people who had a negative effect. Those who would change the 1 to a 0 and the 10 to a 1. Ah, Zaimokuza gave off that vibe.

If we were talking about Ebina-san, then she excelled in both arrangement and direction, a producer that could change a 1 to a 10. Furthermore, it was obvious that she could be relied on the aspects of projection and management from the results she had shown during the Cultural Festival. Also, she had connections with the school’s top class Hayama and friends. In the whole of Soubu High, there could not possibly exist any producer who was more qualified than she was.

“Un, since you all have placed your expectations on me then let’s do our best together.”

Ebina-san laughed lightly.

Zaimokuza who was beside her looked at her out of the corner of his eye.

“Hachiman! Me too! I will do my best too!”

“Yes yes yes.”

I quickly tried to appease Zaimokuza who was trying to appeal to me by tugging on

my sleeve as that was creeping me out.

“So, I will leave it to you. For an eye-catching main event, I will leave it to you.”

Hearing me, Ebina-san quickly straightened her spectacles.

“Eye-catching..... That is to say, an exciting event?”

“Yea, to put it simply.”

“They just have to be exciting right? They can be exciting in ANY way right?”

Ebina-san had a pensive look on her face but laughed almost immediately. What? What do you mean by in any way. This person was scary..... scary.....

Zaimokuza turned his head towards me for some reason. What? Do I have to attack with the wicked sword Ryushikae? [34] What a weirdo ---- As I verified that fact for myself once again, Zaimokuza turned his neck and called to me.

“Hey, Hachiman. Let me get this right..... Even if it gets everypme riled up with excitement, it doesn’t matter right?”

“Yea, no problem. Yes, do your best.”

As expected he was still a pain so I just briefly replied him. And then came the sound of hands clapping.

“Un un. It’s great that you can leave it to them. Then, we shall have to come up with the main event for the boys, can you help us with that?”

Meguri-senpai who had been watching the proceedings concluded, and Ebina-san and Zimokuza both nodded their heads.

“Then I will think about it~”

“Leave it to Yoshiteru~☆”

They said it at the same time and looked at each other.



“Do your best. Eh, Za, Za? Za Za mushi?” [\[35\]](#)

Sounds about right to me.

However, Zazamushi Yoshiteru seemed to unhappy as he shook his fists.

“Don’t laugh! I will win this current show-down. Al, Also, don’t call me a Zazamushi! You, you prawn!” [\[36\]](#)

After saying something that sounded like some insult from an elementary school student, Zaimokuza ran.

How do I put it? This person seems to have taken Ebina for a rival now..... I guess it was an idiot otaku’s pride to not lose to a fujoshi. This is bad, but it really doesn’t matter. [\[37\]](#)

“When did it become a show-down.....”

Yukinoshita asked with a puzzled expression.

“Who knows? However, perhaps it will turn out great now that he is trying to do it on the basis of a showdown.”

“You are right in that regard.”

As expected of Yukinoshita who wants the loser and winner to be a black and white issue. She was so quickly convinced. Is that the reason why she likes Pan-san? That was black and white too.

Thus, the showdown between Zazamushi and the prawn begins.....

Chapter 4: Yukinoshita Yukino will continue trying till the very end.

(Editor's Note: Chapter 4 on the compilation volume 6.5 is using the title of side volume's 6.5 chapter 1 title and will be used here. Additionally, chapter 4 on the compilation volume are 3 chapters merged into 1, Chapter 4 of 6.25, Chapters 1 and 2 of 6.5. This chapter's original title is *However, their festival does not progress.*)

After school, not long after Zaimokuza had declared war on Ebina.

There was a strange atmosphere enveloping the conference room where the Sports festival Committee were at.

Finally, the moment for the show-down has arrived.

East, Zaimokuza Yoshiteru.

West, Ebina Hina.

A shitty otaku wannabe vs. a high-spec Fujoshi. It was like the opening scene from a dream match in a nightmare. [\[38\]](#)

For this unexpected match, we were making all sorts of preparations in the conference room. We were doing all sorts of jobs, such as putting up the screen at the front of the conference room, warming up the projector, checking the connections for the personal computers, and checking whether the projection was up to standards.

In the midst of these preparations, Hiratsuka sensei watched us from the back, and spoke in a voice full of emotions.

“Oh? Powerpoint? High-school students these days are really good at technology.”

“Isn’t PPT commonly used? You can’t see anything if not’s written big enough on a piece of paper.”

Hearing Yuigahama’s reply, Hiratsuka sensei gave a wry smile.

“No, because we were still using OHP during my time as a student.”

“.....OHP? What’s that abbreviation?”

Yukinoshita tilted her head at hearing that unfamiliar term.

Thereupon, Hiratsuka sensei’s wry smile stiffened.

“No, it’s nothing. No need to worry. Quick, continue your work.”

As she said that, she slumped back onto her chair.

“Is that so..... So no one knows, kids these days.....”

Hiratsuka sensei uttered in a small voice as though she didn’t want to be heard by anyone. It’s all right! I know!

Let me explain. About this OHP, it’s not the OPP in OPPAI (TL note: OPPAI = TITS), but it’s the abbreviation for overhead projector. You use a marker to write on a plastic wrapper-like type of transparent vinyl and then use a machines to project it. It was still possible that this was being used in a elementary school somewhere. I too, have a faint memory of this contraption.

Besides Hiratsuka sensei, whose face was pure white like a burnt out charcoal, the preparations for the presentations were complete.

Finally, after turning the laser pointer on and off to check that it was functional, Yukinoshita called out to Meguri-senpai.

“Meguri-senpai, the work at our side is done.”

“Thank you.”

After giving a smile in reply, she turned to look at the state Sagami was in.

“Then let us begin..... Well, Sagami-san?”

“Yes, that’s, that’s about right.....”

Sagami’s voice was trembling. Probably Sagami was going to start hosting this conference by herself from now on. If I were to describe here expression, then it would be more of fear than that of nervousness.

However, rather than say that Sagami was afraid of her position as the committee chairman, it was more likely that she was afraid of the super energetic Ebina-san besides her.

“Then..... Hina-chan and..... you, I am counting on you two.....”

“Leave it to me!”

“Yahoo!”

Both of them stood up immediately, with a look of nervousness and excitement, and went to the screen. They looked at each other, a provocative smile on their faces.

Finally, their presentation showdown was beginning.

4-2

What was surprising, was that it was Zaimokuza who led the offensive.

Generally, I felt that those who took the initiative in these sort of competitions was most likely to lose..... It seems to be fairly common in most cooking mangas.

“RUFUN!”

Zaimokuza stood in front of the screen, and coughed once.

Lowering his head into a bow, after which he proceeded to operate the computer and showed a summary of his work via Powerpoint. The title was “Sports Festival Game Proposal” which was surprisingly normal. Besides the fact that the font looked like of like calligraphy, there was nothing else that was particularly out of place.

<<Simple is best>> and phrases like that have often been used as an excuse to slack off work. I was one of those who loved using that phrase as well.

Now then, what kind of content would await us with this simple title? Everyone was watching attentively with that breaths held.

Every now and then, only the sound of the mosquito’s wings could be heard as it flew. It was too quiet, everyone was sitting perfectly upright.

Yet, Zaimokuza did not seem like he was going to start anytime soon.

“..... is”

Zaimokuza took a deep breath, bowed once more and retreated.

Eh?! He’s already done?!”

Don’t, don’t tell me, that what sounded like a mosquito’s wings was actually Zaimokuza’s voice?!

“He couldn’t say anything because he was too nervous.”

Yukinoshita analyzed the situation calmly.

Well, he’s probably not too used to this type of thing. In fact, there isn’t really a lot of opportunities whereby one got to present himself before a group of people. The reality was that the same stage where you gave your oral presentation was also the stage whereby you get jeered at. Then, since one was already standing in front of them, then it was alright even if you had to face the tide of unconditional criticisms and

judgements.

“Hikki.”

I know what Yuigahama wanted to say. Well, since we did invite him over to help us out, even if that person was Zaimokuza, we should help him out till the very end. To see what is right and not do it, it is a want of courage. [\[39\]](#) What a good phrase from the people of old.

“What me?..... Well, that’s to be expected. Guess there’s no helping it.....”

What was depressing was that, the only person who could communicate with Zaimokuza here was me. This feeling was like communicating with an Ohmu..... [\[40\]](#)

I let out a short sigh and stood up, and spoke to Zaimokuza who was standing there like a statue.

“Zaimokuza, I will lend you a hand, let’s do it once more.”

GiGiGi.....GiGi.....Zaimokuza turned his head towards me, all the while making those Musubi-like sounds and seized me in his vision. [\[41\]](#) Then, his tense expression softened like that of ice melting. Yuck, this guy, this kind of Yukitoki behavior. [\[42\]](#)

“.....Fu, FUMU. So it’s like that.”

Probably he has already calmed down, and was slowly going back to his old usual self. This was infuriating.

“Then, let’s begin.....”

I gave a small bow and started the powerpoint.

“Please look over here for the details of the proposals. It is called the cavalry battles of Chiba citizens. Eh, what the heck is this?”

I looked at Zaimokuza involuntarily. Zaimokuza who seemed to have very much recovered from the ordeal, was waving his hands about in my direction and called out in a loud voice.

“Cavalry battles of Chiba citizens. Or in shortttttttt, CHIBASEN!!!!!” [\[43\]](#)

He would have been fine if he had just said all these from the very beginning.

“As I was saying, what the heck is this.”

“Ahem. Long ago, there was a battle between the Hojo clan and the Satomi clan in

Chiba. This is a wonderful game that takes into consideration our history.”

“I seem to recall that this place was still a coastline during that time. So, what about the rules?”

Following Zaimokuza’s cue as he gave his speech, I prepared to hit the enter button for the next slide when my hand was stopped by Zaimokuza.

“Ah, no, wait Hachiman! You see, that would be kind of embarrassing! That slide is still not done yet! It’s only half-done, it’s just scribbles! It’s all random crap! It’s not, not properly done!”

Zaimokuza was earnestly giving meal sorts of excuses as he grabbed my hand with a remarkable amount of force. It was at that instant, that the enter key was pressed.

“HOGEEEEEEEEEEEEE”

Following Zaimokuza’s exclamation, something that resembled a photo shopped image appeared on the screen. It was a pretty normal photo of a cavalry battle, with armored riders riding on top of it along with various miscellaneous stuffs. It was like some cut and paste job from paint, the quality so low that it looked like it was done by an idiot.

With the image under everyone’s gaze, Zaimokuza froze once more. In the meantime, I proceeded to continue with the slideshow.

“Eh. Although the rules is similar to a normal cavalry battle, victory is decided by several generals who will be cosplaying, and points is given proportional to how many generals from the opposing side will be defeated. Hence, unlike normal cavalry battles, there’s more strategy involved, and it will be visually more impactful..... Wow, the rules are surprisingly normal. “

I read out the rules and ignored the words <<The storm of romance in Taisho Sakura (LOL) >> [\[44\]](#) written at the end. To be frank, it was hard to hide my surprise at Zaimokuza being able to give this matter serious thought.

“Is, is that so?”

Zaimokuza seemed to be perplexed at the positive comments directed towards him.

“Simple to understand. The picture as well.”

Meguri-senpai nodded her head with a “Un.” Seems like the collage was sufficient to convey the outline of his proposal. Following Meguri-senpai’s clapping, the sound of hands clapping spread throughout the conference room as well.

Well, how should I say it? Even if you did the presentation properly, but if it’s not

properly presented, then in most situations, you would not receive high praise for it. Originally, I had wanted to teach him more about the method of delivering his presentation. This way, it would probably lessen the trauma during lesson time.

Zaimokuza was surprised by the applause, his eyes darted about the room looking this way and that, and appeared quite unsettled.

“Ha, Hachiman, what is this.....”

“Well, your idea wasn’t bad at all. Good work.”

I clapped Zaimokuza’s shoulders lightly, and returned to my seat.

“DIU, DIUFU.”

Because of the unexpected appraisal of his work, Zaimokuza gave a satisfied laugh. And so, the applauses stopped and changed to whispers of “Gross”.

It would’ve been much better without that laughter at the end.

4-3

After Zaimokuza's presentation, it was now Ebina-san's turn.

As expected of Ebina-san who had the experience of doing The Little Prince show back then, as well as being in the top-caste, she began her presentation with a look of familiarity.

"Eh, I am thinking about something like this."

Ebina-san pressed the enter key and the PowerPoints' slides began to appear.

At the start of the PowerPoint, were the words "Botaoshi". [\[45\]](#)

Surprisingly normal..... Despite this being clearly Ebina-san as well..... Perhaps this wasn't Ebina Hina, but Vigna Ghina instead? [\[46\]](#)

"The point this time, is the importance of the existence of the general. Although it's kind of similar to the presentation just now, this focuses more on the aspects of a person's charisma rather than battle strategies."

Totally not noticing my suspicious look, Ebina-san continued on with her explanation. This person was really high-specced. From creativity to skills to leadership, she has it all. She is truly a rare gem.

"Popular amongst the student population, we have our soccer club president Hayama Hayato-kun. By placing him as the general in this Botaoshi event, we are bound to attract the attention of everyone."

With another push of the button, the slide changed. What appeared next was a photo of Hayama giving a charming and carefree smile. What the hell.....

Although I looked on wearily, the girls from the sports clubs were all screaming and creating a ruckus. It's super effective! [\[47\]](#)

"Seems like it will be tons of fun!"

Especially effective on Sagami, who seemed to greatly support this idea.

If that's the case, other girls would probably have the same reaction. There was no problem with Ebina-san's casting. If one wanted to carry out an event, then one had to choose someone who had the ability to attract people to said event, so that one could be certain of the payoff. Ebina-san's idea was flawless.

However, it seemed like this proposal still had some flaw, because Ebina-san's face was clouded with worry.

"However, Hayato-kun is in the white team. There needs to be someone from the red team to take the position as general as well. Eh, is there anyone who is suited for it?"

Ebina-san looked towards the committee chairman Sagami.

"I don't know, what should we do....."

As Sagami cocked her head, Meguri-senpai spoke to the conference room at large.

"Is there anyone present from the red team? It would be a great help if anyone could come up with a candidate."

People began to confirm the teams in which they belonged to. However, no one proposed any name for that position. Meguri-senpai herself began to think as well and then blurted out, "Ah!"

"Yukinoshita-san and her club members are all from the red team, have your thought of anyone that could be the candidate?"

"Eh!! Hikitani-kun is from the red team?!"

Ebina-san immediately pounced on this piece of news. More precisely, she was onto me.

"Then it's definitely Hikitani-kun! The opposing generals' couplings are red-white and so we can all eat red rice today! At long last!"

(TL: Red rice is eaten during celebrations and joyous occasions)

Nope, not doing it, definitely not doing it.

"FUMU. Hachiman, so you are on the red team?"

Zaimokuza grinned broadly. That means this guy was on the red team as well..... Then we should just let him be the general. Although I had this thought, it seems that it's going to be a no-go if the person was not a good match with Hayama. But if we think about from it a negative perspective, but this kind of concept surely won't be accepted. ??????????

Of course, for the same reason, I wouldn't be an option for them to pick for the general. It must be the same as Hayama, it had to be one who could gather popularity from the masses, as well as one would receive the support from the masses.

However, Ebina-san who had entered her Fujoshi-mode continued on her rampage.

“An, anyway. Ebina Ebina will continue to explain in an uninterested manner without hiding her surprise, bewilderment and joy. That, white, white group is Hayato-kun, the red,red group is Hikitani-kun’s rod, BUHA!” [\[48\]](#)

Ebina-san threw her head back in an instant and stopped her motions. Realizing the danger of this situation, Meguri-senpai nodded her head at the student council members. And so, the student council members moved immediately, and took Ebina-san by her hand and led her outside. That form of her being dragged out was like the Roswell incident. [\[49\]](#)

I should take this time to totally scrap the idea of me being the general for the read team. Well, even if I didn’t say it, I am pretty sure the rest would object to it anyway.

“I still have committee matters so I can’t do it. So, please find someone else as a candidate for this.”

“Un----- , that’s true, and we still have to decide which proposal we should carry out.”

Meguri-senpai nodded her head.

“Sagami-san, let’s put it to a vote.”

“Okay. Then, those who think the Kibasen is a good idea?”

A few hands here and there were raised.

“Then, next, those who think the Botaoshi is a good idea?”

As Sagami said it, she raised her hand as well. This time too, the number of hands that were raised did not differ too much from before.

Even though it’s just by a little bit, Botaoshi seems to have gained the upper hand. I guess it wasn’t all that surprising since that activity meant being able to see Hayama’s participation.

Yukinoshita, Yuigahama and I did not raise our hands at any of this options. To us, what was necessary was just raising suggestions, not to decide on which one to pick.

“More or less the same.....”

Meguri-senpai said after counting the hands.

It’s no big deal if Botaoshi was chosen because of this. This was acceptable in a place whereby the winner was decided by the majority rule. Minority opinion, even weak

opinions that tipped the scale slightly, were nevertheless opinions that could not be rejected. As the total number increased, so would be those who were rejected.

This was the majority rule. This system had a fatal flaw. That is to say, there was a problem. In other words, we should go by the minority rule. To put it simply, aren't people like me in the minority generally right? I see, I am justice.

"Then, boys will be having the Botaoshi event....."

Sagami seemed to have made the decision without giving it deeper thought.

"Can't we make the Kibasen the girl's main event?"

"Oh! I get it now."

Meguri-senpai accepted her proposal with a clap of her hands. Then, she looked at Hiratsuka sensei. Hiratsuka-sensei gave a nod.

Probably because her motivation has already vanished, she gave a considerably perfunctory response, but it seemed like she didn't see any problem with it.

Noting her response, Meguri-senpai surveyed the people around the conference room.

"How do you'll feel?"

Hmm, an appropriate decision. Each activity had the approval of approximately half the people here. Meguri-senpai's questions did not raise any form of objection.

To silently kill off the opinions of half the people. In a situation where the majority rule is used, the work done after it was of paramount importance in rectifying the situation.

This point alone, was good enough to earn a passing mark from me.

I didn't think there was anything wrong with this decision. Concept and creativity-wise, it didn't really lose out to Botaoshi. It had also earned the approval of the student council who formed the core of the executive committee.

But, the conference room's response was still rather slow.

Comparatively, the mood of the room shifted to one of detest.

Whispers that were like the sound of worms walking could be heard. "Pssst, Pssst."

This sort of omen was felt by both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama, who were sensitive to this kind of things.

“.....”

Yukinoshita squinted her eyes and looked at the source of this disturbance. Although it seemed that Sagami had yet to notice it, but the atmosphere was indeed worsening.

“Then, seems like there isn’t any objections, then its decided that girls will be having the Kibasen event. Let’s decide on the allocation of work next.”

Because her suggestion was being adopted, she was feeling great.

“The program catalog is now being distributed. Please write down the jobs that you wish to do on the front.”

Sagami gave an instruction. And so, the student council began to give out the materials. What follows next would be a short period of thinking, followed by filling out the form.

“You will be working in the name of the administrative committee on that day, the jobs that you will be doing won’t be hard so there’s no need to worry.”

“Yes. Then, let us proceed with the distribution of jobs by each department.”

Yukinoshita nodded her head and came with some arrangements with the executive committee.

“Un, yes we should.”

“Ah, then Sagamin too.....”

Yuigahama searched for some signs of Sagami.

However, because they were in the same conference room, one could not lose sight of the other that easily.

And hence, everything could be seen.

“What should we do about the person-in-charge? I wish I was in charge of the Botaoshi. Hey Yukko, you guys come over here!”

Sagami was beside Haruka and Yukko now. They were the same people who were with her during the Cultural Festival committee. It was thus most definite that they would cross paths here as well.

However, the distance between them seemed different from before.

Haruka and Yukko exchanged glances, and as though that was a signal, they both spoke the exact same words.

“About that, we.....”

“We still have to attend to club matters so the preparation jobs are going to be a big bother so.....”

Towards this slight distance that now separated them, Sagami appeared bewildered at that instant. That was replaced by a smile immediately.

“Eh..... Eh? But this kind of sucks?”

Just as Sagami was done talking, both of them rejected her gently at the same time as though they had long discussed this beforehand.

“Un, although that’s true, but we still have the meetings and such.”

“Our timings are hard to accommodate as expected. So, this kind of big events is still a bit

“Ah, however, Sagami-chan shouldn’t mind that much, you should just do whatever you want to do.”

Sagami was at a loss. They were repeating the problems of the club again and again, and with a final look of consideration for Sagami, they brought the topic to its end forcefully.

Their way of dealing with her resembled some sort of Shogi from somewhere.

“I, I see. That’s too bad!”

Sagami smiled brightly to show that she didn’t seem to care about it.

“Sorry!”

In contrast, the two of them sounded very apologetic as though they really seemed to care about it.

And so, the conversation between the trio ended.

At this time, Yuigahama had walked over to talk to Sagami.

“Oh, Sagamin. Time to start work.”

“Ah, Un. I am going. Then I will be on my way.”

Sagami waved to the both of them and returned to the executive committee, and so we began our discussions.

“Ho, Hachiman. What am I supposed to do.”

“Eh, ah, you are still here? You can go back now.”

I jumped at the sound of Zaimokuza talking to me. To put it more accurately, why the heck are you staying here for?

“No, I think it’s more convenient if we keep him here.”

“Really? I didn’t think we would need him. Ah, is it that? We are going to hope that’s he going to turn out useful as a heater or humidifier?”

I didn’t feel that he had any more worth in him in other areas. Just as I was done talking, Yuigahama held her breath.

“Seems like breathing is starting to get harder.”

“Hah.....”

Yukinoshita sighed as though she was at a loss for words.

“You, are you an idiot? We still have to flesh out the specifics for the Kibasenn, so it would be for the best if the person who first proposed this is available.”

“Ah, so you are referring to that.”

Is it really okay that Ebina-san remains here..... This is going to turn into some Area 51 from that place again.

When Sagami returned to her seat, the executive committee began its conference.

They verified the jobs that must be done, as well as deciding the people in charge of them. The rest of it, such as the personnel in charge of the various events would be left to the others to decide.

The problem lies elsewhere, such as first aid stations and broadcasting. There were also the issues of props before each event as well as the décor for the area. This was not something that the executive committee could tackle alone, hence a part of the work had to be given to the people who were on site.

Meguri-senpai followed the past years contents and explained them. Sagami nodded her head.

“Then, what we still need is.....”

“The main events involve the entire school, so there’s a need for general mobilization. In this aspect, can we mobilize all the guys and girls?”

“Ah, that should be possible.”

Because of Yukinoshita, I noticed Sagami suddenly standing up. The people who were going to be on-site were half-way through their preparations, but there was a need to inform them of the total work volume.

“Sorry----. We need everyone to participate in the preparation works of the main event. Please write down what you are going to do outside of your current area of responsibility.”

There was a sudden outpouring of chatter from Sagami’s words. There were more voice of objection among the chatter, probably due to a lack of motivation.

Amongst them, there were some who also paused their work in that instant.

It was those two who Sagami had spoken to earlier, Haruka and Yukko. They were whispering to each other, and nodded their head as though in confirmation of something.

Their breathing was synchronized to each other, and both took one step forward.

“About that, Sagami-chan. We object.”

Although I had no idea who said that, but that sentence said by that particular person, began to spread throughout the conference room like a ripple.

“Eh.....”

Sagami seemed unable to say anything after being directly rejected. As though she had no idea what they were trying to say. However, the truth is, there probably isn’t anyone who could grasp the current situation accurately.

“If there’s a need to force everyone to participate, then we, probably would be of much help.....”

Hearing another person say this, Sagami’s face changed.

“Eh, but, isn’t this what everyone decided..... Right, right?”

“However, everyone has their respective club activities..... And we still have to be in charge of other stuff as well.....”

“It’s going to take a lot of time just to prepare for all of it. The burden is so huge that its quite troubling.”

With the both of them saying as such, Sagami could only keep quiet.

A huge portion of the entire committee comprised people from various sports club. They definitely could not be considered to be one heart and one mind with the executive committee, who were mainly student council members.

Meguri-senpai too, seemed troubled.

"Although it will indeed be a big problem, can I still request your help?"

Hearing these words of consideration, and also the fact that it was the student council president who said it, Haruka and Yukko averted their gaze and sank into silence. However, they made no signs of wanting to give in.

Meguri-senpai gave a wry smile at this display of stubbornness.

The difference in the level of interest was obvious.

Since it was a plea from the executive committee, it must sound too forceful. Because a proper hierarchical relationship and a system for delivering instructions have yet to be established.

Even if it was the committee chairman, she was just a mere link between the various members of the same project. Since she could not give orders, people would also not feed the need to follow up on her pleas.

There was a lack of structure.

It wasn't a matter of hierarchical relationship, but a matter of trust, then the possibility of accepting the plea was pretty high. I thought that that was how Meguri-senpai and her predecessors did it.

However there was no such thing as trust between Sagami and the two of them. No, to be more precise, that trust was possibly lost.

The three of them were on the same side during the Cultural Festival, and hence they were close to each other. However, in the Sports Cultural Festival, owing to a difference in position, they could see the difference between their burdens in both the form of their club activities as well as workload.

Omens really do exist.

The whispers and ripples that arose from Sagami's speech and conduct. Those were probably spread about by the two of them. Words about how she was inconsiderate towards the current situation began to accumulate and drew their ire.

Now, what had been held in for so long lashed out.

“Let’s stop here.”

A strong, piercing voice.

As I looked, I saw Hiratsuka sensei standing up and opening the door with vigor.

“It’s already pretty late, we will dismiss for now and continue on another time.”

The executive committee and the rest, although their positions were different, but all were students nonetheless. If someone of higher authority had not sounded out, then they would have not done anything.

The only way who could bring this whole affair to a close was Hiratsuka sensei.

Haruka and Yukko looked at each other, picked up their bags and ran from the conference room. As though following their lead, the rest of the administrative committee left as well.

Only the executive committee was left, the members of the student council and us, as well as Sagami.

“Shiromeguri, could you come here for a while?”

“Yes.....”

Hearing Hiratsuka sensei request, Meguri-senpai walked out of the room as well.

Silence fell upon the conference room.

Sagami who was standing rock still until then, collapsed onto a nearby chair.

The waning sunlight shone into the conference room.

Against the glare of the setting sun, Sagami did nothing but cast down her eyes.

やはり俺の青春ラブコメはまちがっている。

My youth romantic comedy is wrong as I expected.

渡航【wataru watari】

illustration ぽんかん⑧

6.50
six and a half





6.50
six and
a half

渡 航
【wataru watari】

illustration
ぽんかん⑧

Contents

- ① あくまでも雪ノ下雪乃は試し続ける。 004
- ② だから、比企谷小町は頑張れる。 040
- ③ 以上のことから、比企谷八幡は予感する。 072
- ④ 存外、由比ヶ浜結衣は人気がある。 106

やはり俺の青春ラブコメはまちがっている。

My youth romantic comedy is wrong as I expected.

登場人物【character】

6.50 six and a half

比企谷八幡 主人公。高二。性格がひねくれている。
【ひきがやーはちまん】

雪ノ下雪乃 奉仕部部長。完璧主義者。
【ゆきのしたーゆきの】

由比ヶ浜結衣 八幡のクラスメイト。周りの顔色を伺いがち。
【ゆいがはまーゆい】

材木座義輝 オタク。ライトノベル作家志望。
【ざいもくざーよしてる】

戸塚彩加 テニス部。とても可愛いが男子。
【とつかーさいか】

川崎沙希 八幡のクラスメイト。ちょっと不良っぽい。
【かわさきーさき】

葉山隼人 八幡のクラスメイト。人気者。サッカーチーム。
【はやまーはやと】

三浦優美子 八幡のクラスメイト。クラスの女子の頂点に君臨する。
【みうらーゆみこ】

海老名姫菜 八幡のクラスメイト。三浦グループだが腐女子。
【えびなーひな】

相模南 八幡のクラスメイト。女子の二番手グループに属す。
【さがみーみなみ】

城廻めぐり 生徒会長。三年生。
【しろめぐりーめぐり】

平塚 静 国語教師。生活指導担当。
【ひらつかーしずか】

雪ノ下陽乃 雪乃の姉。大学生。
【ゆきのしたーはるの】

比企谷小町 八幡の妹。中学三年生。
【ひきがやーこまち】

design: numata rina

4-4

(Editor's note: This is the first chapter of side volume 6.5 titled **Yukinoshita Yukino will continue trying till the very end**. This chapter and the next are merged into 1 chapter on the compilation volume 6.5.)

The setting sun dyed the sky red. The clouds gushing out from the sea ward side covered the eastern sky, which made them appear to be burning brightly.

At the same time, the land seemed to be slowly swallowed up by the darkness. A somber atmosphere also hung in the conference room.

In the end, there was still no progress after Hiratsuka Sensei announced the dismissal of the meeting. Yukko and Haruka took the lead in leaving the conference room. Those that were present were also returning to their clubs.

We were waiting for Hiratsuka Sensei and Meguri-senpai to return.

Zaimokuza gave a deep sigh, and twisted his body in a disgusting manner. As though that was a sign, Yuigahama and the members of the student council sighed as well.

Yukinoshita however, did not do the same. She closed her eyes, sat up straight and maintained a serious expression. With the exception of her, everyone else seemed to be at a loss. And so, everyone's gaze naturally fell upon that one person.

Sagami Minani.

She had once been the chairman of the Cultural Festival committee, and now, she was the chairman of the Sports Festival committee. However, she did not seem to have the dignity or appearance that matched her title.

She was just lying on the table, not saying anything. The occasional sound of her nails pressing her smart phone could be heard.

From where I was seated, I could not see her expression, but it was probably not one of happiness.

Her friends that collaborated with her during the Cultural Festival, clearly did not approve of Sagami now. In fact, they were even openly opposing her. This also had a huge impact on her.

It was precisely because of the existence of these connections with others that caused one to feel pain when one severed them.

I didn't think that she deserved it.

Rather, I pitied her.

They were never really that close to begin with, yet pain was brought about at the exact time these relationships were lost. The fluidity of these human relationships were really a bother.

Despite there being few returns, the risks involved were too much.

"Yo!-Friend" is what was associated with this kind of limited friendship. I will teach Komachi about this someday. [\[50\]](#)

Perhaps for whatever reason, they were once the best of friends. However, they were mere acquaintances now. They would greet each other with a "Yo!" when they occasionally see each other in school, or perhaps even exchange two or three lines of pleasantries. That kind of relation.

It was different from the fixed relationships that existed in classes or clubs.

The Cultural Festival committee and the Sports Festival committee were representative of this fact. Maybe people in part-time jobs were also included in it.

Could you really call these friends? Don't you think you have set the bar too low for who you would consider as friends?

Sagami had miscalculated that those [Yo!-friends] of hers, Haruka and Yukko would stand by her side this time as well. However, strictly speaking, their positions were different now.

Sagami was one of the top management in the committee, whilst Haruka and Yukko were just the members.

Just a difference in their positions alone could easily lead to friction amongst each other. If those three had the same positions as they did in the Cultural Festival, they would probably still be on good terms with each other.

That chairman is horrible, doesn't bother to do much work. She only knows how to ask others to do work but would never lift a finger herself. They were probably exchanging words like these whilst happily working on their jobs. The effects that such malicious gossips and insults would bring about could not be easily determined.

Shared experiences and knowledge. A common cause being their uniting factor.

This common cause was that of wanting to know the weakness of others. Hence they display their malicious intent openly and trade information with one another through

such ill-means.

And then, they would smooth any conversation afterwards through the badmouthing of others.

Gossip was the best. You could be on good terms with anyone with just gossip.

However, the one who is being gossiped about will not be able to take such a blow.

Friendships that were founded on the basis of sacrifice will always require new sacrifices. If the supply of sacrificial lambs were cut off, then this sacrifice must come from within.

Ever since their positions differed, Sagami has always been on the losing end. Furthermore, this was a 2v1 situation, and thus, from that point on, it was already decided that Sagami would be the sacrificial lamb.

Now, Haruka and Yukko were probably making all sorts of malicious gossip about the management of the committee.

Thinking about this, I felt that Sagami was really pitiful. This was all the more so seeing her grip her hand phone tightly, as though trying to hang on tightly to those relationships.

Surely I wasn't the only one who thought this way.

Yuigahama's lips were curled, constantly glancing at Sagami.

No matter what our intentions were, the one who pushed Sagami to be the Sports Festival Chairman was us. This was a fact that made me feel quite guilty about.

“Meguri senpai and the rest are so slow.....”

Yuigahama did not seem to talking to anyone in particular, but it was because of her that the mood in the conference room started to lighten up somewhat.

“Yes.....”

Yukinoshita opened her eyes all of a sudden and replied.

“Should we go and have a look at the situation?”

A member of the student council stood up and posed the question, but Yukinoshita shook her head.

“I suppose they are still not done with their conversation. Even if we go now, nothing will change.”

Her calm and composed voice brushed off the suggestion of the student council member, to which he nodded and sat down again.

However, it was clear that the members of meeting were growing impatient from all the waiting. The conversation between Hiratsuka sensei and Meguri-senpai was taking longer than I had imagined.

About 20 minutes passed once more, and the two finally returned to the conference room.

Hiratsuka sensei's expression was more serious than usual. Maybe it was my imagination, but Meguri-senpai looked kind of down-hearted.

"Sorry for the wait."

With that, Hiratsuka sensei sat down in a chair at the corner of the conference room. Merguri senpai followed her and went to the middle seat.

When Hiratsuka sensei had made sure that all eyes were on her, she began to speak.

"I have talked with Shiromeguri and decided that this committee will stop its work for one day tomorrow."

"We want to give everyone some time to cool down."

Meguri-senpai added.

This was probably an appropriate judgement. Since there was no way to disperse this strained atmosphere, one could only let the passage of time diffuse the tension or rather, to prevent the deterioration of feelings of everyone.

However, I did not feel that this was sufficient.

"But, if it's just one or two days we can still manage somehow....."

Yuigahama murmured.

"I don't think it's possible....."

Anger was an emotion that persisted for a short period of time. Once given sufficient time to cool off, the correct judgement can be made.

However, even if anger doesn't continue, the resentment will. They will continue to burn somewhere deep within, just like the silently and slowly burning embers.

What was even worse was that the jeers, scorns and contempt will continue on for an

even longer period. Looking down on others is always easier than praising others. A little bit of wit mixed into those words would probably make it all the more enjoyable. Precisely because it allowed one to feel light-hearted, they would be able to continue doing so with the feeling of “Just kidding.” This was different from resentment and anger. This would continue on for a long period of time because people didn’t feel guilty in doing so.

After a few days, there was the possibility that the situation could worsen even further.

“But still, I think it’s better if we continue on with today’s meeting.”

Perhaps sensing my worries, Hiratsuka sensei said so in an awkward manner.

Indeed, if they were to meet suddenly tomorrow, it would be hard to say whether a good outcome could be borne out of it. Furthermore, it was all the more so given Sagami’s current expression.

Giving an occasional glance at Sagami, Sagami continued to stay quiet whilst biting her lips.

“Then, there’s no problem right?”

Hiratsuka sensei confirmed with Sagami, to which Sagami gave a nod.

“No problem, I guess.....”

With her head lowered, she answered in between breaks and pauses,

“.....”

Yukinoshita who had always been staring at her, suddenly tore her gaze from her and looked towards Meguri-senpai.

“.....Then, to inform everyone else about the temporary suspension of work?”

“Yes. This will be left to the student council.”

Meguri-senpai replied. Understanding her words, the student council began to work. Although I had no idea whether they were doing the informing via text or the next morning, but I guess that they had a simple way of doing so judging by how they seemed confident in being able to complete the task quickly.

After ensuring that their task was complete, Hiratsuka sensei continued.

“Then, I guess we will call it a day.”

With that, everyone broke choruses of “Good work” and prepared to leave.

“Then, See you tomorrow, Hachiman.”

Zaimokuza who had always been sitting quietly beside me, quickly packed his things and left the conference room at a brisk pace. The other student council members were also quickly packing up their things, ready to go home.

I snatched up my bag and was ready to leave when I heard a voice that was obviously targeted at me.

“Hikigaya. Would you all stay back for a while.”

“Ah. No, I still have some other matters today.....”

Despite showing her my disapproval, but she nevertheless got everyone else to stay back. Upon careful inspection, Yukinoshita seemed to have predicted this, and continued waiting with an appearance unchanged from before. Yuigahama seemed to have stopped thinking about anything and just stood there stoning.

It seems like as a member of the Service Club, staying back was a matter that was already decided. The moment I realized that resistance was futile, I sat down unwillingly.

Well then, what's there left to say. As I waited for Hiratsuka sensei to speak, her eyes were gazing at somewhere unexpected as she spoke.

“Also, Sagami, you too as well.”

Sagami responded with a twitch upon hearing her name. However, she did not show any signs of rejection, merely responding with a tiny “Yes.”

Hiratsuka sensei glanced at me, Yukinoshita, Yuigahama, Sagami as well as Meguri-senpai and began speaking.

“Alright then, let's get to the point. What shall we do from now on?”

Yuigahama and I exchanged glances, unable to comprehend the true intentions behind those words. However, just doing that will not lead to an answer. On the other hand, Yukinoshita seemed to have understood Hiratsuka sensei, and stared at her.

“That is, how the committee can progress from here on? Is that the meaning?”

“Well, something like that. But it's not just that alone.....”

Hiratsuka answered her question vaguely and glanced at Sagami once more.

“Sagami, how do you want to go ahead from this point on?”

“Eh.....”

Sagami did not seem to have expected the question to be thrown to her, and started to speak after a moment of thought.

“If you ask in such a manner, then I guess, we can only continue.”

What came out was a stuttering and vague voice.

Even though this cannot be considered an answer to the question, but it was probably because she has realized that continuing on in this manner was detrimental. Hiratsuka sensei’s question was how they should proceed and not whether she has recognized the underlying problem. Wasn’t it kind of overboard to pose such a question to Sagami who was already in such a state?

Hiratsuka sensei did not sigh, only nodded her head earnestly. Then, she spoke slowly to Sagami.

“I see. Lets start with the subject at hand then.”

Time has been given to Sagami to confirm her current situation and the points she should be taking note of. Hiratsuka sensei seemed to insist upon Sagami finding out the solution to the problems herself. This was totally Hiratsuka sensei’s style of doing things.

Sagami looked left and right restlessly, her mouth opening and closing slightly. As though she had no idea where she ought to begin.

Sagami’s gaze darted to the people in the surroundings and then shifted away again. Although she did make eye contact with me, she immediately looked away in shame and disgust.

No one else was saying anything. They were all waiting for Sagami to speak.

As though she could feel the pressure, Sagami opened her mouth hesitantly.

“Um....., we could ask those who are present I guess.”

“.....”

Oh, so this is how you are going to do things. Rather than say that the mood now was that of surprise, perhaps you could call it understanding. The people who were seated made no sound. Only Meguri-senpai gave a troubled laugh.

“Yes..... I see. Even though it’s the Sports Festival, in order to organize something

captivating, we still require people here to seek the help of those in the sports clubs so that the event may progress smoothly. However, no one has any spare time, so to confirm the schedule would be quite a task..... Is that what you meant?"

"Y, Yes!"

Sagami replied quickly, but I suspected that she did not truly understand the meaning behind Meguri-senpai's words.

But, that's alright anyway.

Since the position of chairman was Sagami, the one who made the final decision was also Sagami. Hence, letting Sagami think about this problem herself was right.

However, to put it another way, it was all right as long as Sagami was the one who came out with the final decision.

What we ought to do was to lead Sagami to that final decision.

Yukinoshita seemed to have understood all these and paused for a while before turning towards Meguri-senpai.

"Then, the negotiations and coordination with the various clubs..... Confirm the clubs' schedules during the time period leading up to the main event, and divide the tasks according to it."

Yukinoshita's suggestion was spot-on.

This was to take Haruka and Yukko reasons, or rather, a way to tear apart the arguments they used as a shield one by one.

However, this was still not enough.

A logical way of doing things could only persuade people who thought logically.

"Just like that probably won't do....."

"Yes....., probably like that."

Upon hearing me, Yuigahama assented in a soft voice. It seems like Yuigahama also understood the main problem behind this whole affair.

"Please say it."

Hiratsuka sensei urged me, and so I proceeded to explain in an extremely simple manner.

“Since others have the mentality to oppose, unless dealt with appropriately, they will not take any action.”

Humans were creatures that operated on emotions.

The basis of decisions were not just founded on logic alone, it also depended on emotions. Not only that, actions done on the spur of anger could form the basis for actions taken in the future.

In regards to those hateful and unpleasant things that they did, even if they felt disgusted by it, they will still seek all forms of excuses to justify themselves.

No matter how logical the explanation was, the conclusion drawn would be different. There was no need to give any specific examples. Disputes that had subjectivity and objectivity mixed into them were all like that in this world.

“I don’t really understand.....”

Sagami said so rather agitatedly.

..... I am talking about you, Sagami.

Although I wanted to explain things with even more clarity, but she obviously had no self-awareness if she still did not understand at this point. There was a need to be sarcastic with her so that she would understand. There was no point in explaining things further to a person without self-awareness. Not knowing and not existing was the same.

Although explaining things clearer would be good, but it would be a troublesome affair if I started arguing with Sagami at this juncture. Hence, I decided to forgo concrete examples and the utmost proper nouns, and just told her plainly.

“If they are not happy with us, no matter how much logic we inject in our words, they will act on their emotions and continue to criticize us.”

An exceeding simple answer. Because it was too plain and simple, perhaps it wouldn’t be far-fetched to call it a universal truth. No one could object to my words.

My words caused everyone else to be unable to say anything, the entire room was in total silence. But this was supported by evidence. Rather, the example of Sagami during the Cultural Festival was pretty convincing. It could even be that everyone was thinking of that that they were being so quiet.

Hiratsuka-sensei broke the silence with a “Fu-“ as she let out a sigh and started to speak.

“..... If Sagami continues to be the committee chairman, then this problem would continue to persist.”

Such a view was correct.

Once that trust was lost, it cannot be gained back that easily.

On the other hand, to lose another's trust was way too easy.

Sagami has failed.

And, this world was very harsh on failures.

During your first few weeks in high-school or college, failure was lethal. Failure during a mop-up or a deciding match would lead to eternal blame on you.

A person who succeeded could glorify his failure, but that was merely a footnote in their tale of success, a conclusion designed to cover up for what it really is.

There was no value in talking about the failure of a failure. It only let others feel that the failure had no reason to exist.

Although they were both failures, it can only be glorified if it comes from the mouth of one who succeeded. Those who did not succeed must seal their lips and those who have yet to succeed will definitely not believe those sugar-coated words.

Sagami seemed to have understood that she failed, and was now listening to Hiratsuka sensei whilst chewing her lips.

And then, she noticed the meaning behind Hiratsuka sensei's words.

“That is to say, it would be better if I were to resign?”

Upon hearing Sagami flare up, Hiratsuka sensei gave a bitter smile.

“I didn't say anything like that. It's just that if we were to repair our relationships with the rest, it's going to be quite tough from here on. I hope you can understand that.”

Sensei said so in a indirect manner.

But, that was way too indirect.

Although one cannot say that failure will not lead to success, but it definitely was not as simple as the elders or people who succeeded made it out to be. Most of the time, failure will only lead to more failures.

If this continues on, Sagami will continue falling down through the spiral of failure.

To put it briefly, she should just dump away all her past, her attachments, everything and just go live on another planet.

Hiratsuka sensei seemed to be testing Sagami's resolution as she stared at her. Sagami seemed to be a little bit afraid.

".....Ah, that."

Listening to Sagami's words, Yukinoshita glanced at her.

That gaze was one that was looking for an answer. However, that is a big mistake. If I had to say what was wrong, then it would be that she's looking for the answer from the wrong person. She ought to be looking for the one who could give the ideal answer.

Yukinoshita had the same cold expression on her, but spoke to Sagami in an icy tone that was colder than usual.

"There's no problem if you quit. It was just our wish from the start anyway, it was never Sagami-san's intention. There is no need to continue if you don't want to."

"B, But....."

Yukinoshita interrupted Sagami's words of protest

"The one who asked of this favor was me. I will take full responsibility for this."

In other words, to fulfill the duties of Sagami's appointment, Yukinoshita would complete the work of the committee chairman.

Those words were just too realistic. If it was Yukinoshita, then she was definitely more capable than Sagami, the Cultural Festival was proof of that.

This way, someone could cover Sagami's duties. The problem with stopping Sagami from quitting would also be solved.

In order to confirm her resolve, Hiratsuka asked her solemnly.

"Sagami, what are you going to do....."

"I, I....."

Sagami answered with a shaky voice. What Sagami wants, was probably for someone to keep her, to console her. Using those as excuses, she could push her own responsibilities to others.

Or rather, to give a look of pity as she part ways with her own determination, others will not be able to see that she is just running away. That way, she can protect her own

pride.

However, Yukinoshita Yukino will not allow her to do that.

This was a gamble.

Now, in order to complete the request given to the Service Club, to change the mood in class 2-F, to help Sagami regain her self-confidence, to utterly wipe the slate clean of any negative emotion, then Sagami's path of retreat must be destroyed.

If she escaped, then it will only lead to responsibilities being pushed onto others, and she will once again bad-mouth others to maintain her pride.

If that were to happen, then Sagami will not change at all, the class atmosphere will not as well. No, perhaps Sagami's attempts at protecting her pride could worsen the mood even further. To prevent all these problems from happening, Sagami must be the one to make that resolve. She herself must be the one to announce that she wants to be the committee chairman out of her own volition, and destroy her path of retreat.

“.....”

Sagami could not give a immediate reply.

I was a little surprised as well. Sagami quitting right here as the committee chairman carried no risks. All she had to do was find a sacrificial lamb in the class that was lower than her in social ranking in order to save her pride, even if it has to be Haruka or Yukko. After all, those two are just superficial friends, severing her ties to them carried no great harm. Once out of the school compound, they would be able to make light-hearted conversation as though nothing had happened.

The only worry that Sagami has was probably that she obtained this position after Hayama's persuasion. However, because Hayama would never speak ill of anything, her pride will not take a hit as well.

This was not a very favorable gamble.

Even so, since it was Yukinoshita who first proposed it, there should still be some chance at victory. Yukinoshita Yukino hated failure, and so she wouldn't have been foolhardy enough to engage in this sort of gamble.

Yukinoshita followed Sagami's movements closely, even her breathing.

Sagami noticed this as well, and so looked at Yukinoshita with her head lowered.

They made eye contact.

“..... There’s no need to worry about anything after this. Leave it to me.”

The blade was unsheathed.

Yukinoshita followed up on her attacks with a stroke of a blade.

The words seem to be showing concern for Sagami on the surface, but it was probably a line that suggested there was no meaning to Sagami’s existence anymore. No longer beating about the bush, but a straight-forward way of telling her that her presence will not affect the committees’ actions anymore.

Sagami’s face moved a little bit. The sides of her mouth stiffened, and made a forced smile.

I see, was this part of Yukinoshita’s plan?

The gist is that, not to resort to outright scolding or abuse, but to use words to allow Sagami to understand it herself. After that, to await her rousing herself. Probably something like that. Indeed, one’s internal torment is far more painful than what others could say to you.

If it was others speaking ill of you, all you had to do was do the same to them. But when you notice that you are hurting yourself and start rebuking yourself as a result, you are probably unable to speak of ill of other then.

That was a very strict yet proper way of driving her.

However, there was just a little problem with Yukinoshita’s method.

This sort of method that seeks to motivate with rough words, was only effective against those who still had the drive, for those who still had the hope in them. Against those who only knew how to push the responsibilities to others, it was useless. Not only that, if one were to block her retreat path, it would only lead her closer in the direction of giving up.

The Sagami of now was battered, her eyelids drooped downwards.

Even so, Yukinoshita did not intend to slacken her hold on Sagami. She seemed to want to continue her barrage of verbal attacks.

“Sagami-san, you.....”

“Yukinoshita, please stop.”

I interrupted Yukinoshita’s words midway.

She glanced at me but it did not show any signs of wanting to oppose me. Even so, with the exception of Yukinoshita, everyone else thought that my actions was strange, and looked at me awaiting my explanation.

Well, since I have already interrupted her, I suppose I should state my reason. I did not look at Sagami, but at Yukinoshita.

“Even if you continued to say anything, there won’t be a good outcome. Humans are not creatures that change just because of the words of others.”

No matter how wise the sayings were, they were only good for those who were willing to listen. If a wise saying could change a person’s life, then this world would be HAPPY SO LIFE, is a BEAUTIFUL WORLD.

Those who succeeded based on those wise sayings, would probably succeed regardless of whatever they used as their impetus.

Words itself had no power from the very start. It only gave strength to those who accepted it. Speaking of which, Sagami was someone whom words will have no effect on. No, not only towards Sagami, but probably to a lot of others as well. I am one of them.

My interruption caused the conference room to return back to its quiet state.

Thanks to that, a tiny voice that was like the buzz of a mosquito reached my ears.

“..... I will do it.”

A high pitched and hoarse voice sounded out. It seemed to have been entangled in the depths of her throat and was now being squeezed out with much difficulty. The owner of the voice glared at the table, crumpling her skirt as she grasped at it tightly with her trembling fists.



Even so, it was definitely Sagami Minami who gave that reply.

Hiratsuka sensei uncrossed her arms and placed them gently on the table and heaved a deep sigh of relief.

“.....Is that so. Well then, we will leave the rest in your charge then.”

However, I did not feel relieved. In fact, I was totally uncomfortable with it. Why would Sagami Minami continue to be the committee chairman?

In my impression, Sagami was the type who would not hesitate to run away should such an option exists, the type who would rush towards the spider's thread and cling onto it. [\[51\]](#)

Furthermore, there was no Hayama or other members of class 2-F to protect her here.

The people present here, took her as an enemy, or at least not as an ally.

Amongst them, Meguri-senpai who was warmer towards Sagami stood up and walked to her side.

“Then, the first thing would be to mend your relationships with them.”

“.....Yes, I guess.”

Sagami murmured in a voice devoid of confidence.

“”I think that if you explained it to them, they would understand.”

Meguri-senpai patted Sagami's shoulders, and followed through with that discourse.

However, if the Prime Minister were to say that during a coup d'état, he would definitely be killed. [\[52\]](#)

Hiratsuka sensei who was watching the two of them converse suddenly turned towards us. Perhaps she thought that Meguri-senpai would be better off handling Sagami.

“Then we will leave the coordination of those present here to Sagami.....”

“Meanwhile, we will be in charge of the coordination between the various departments. There will be a need for some form of instructions and explanations before we begin the conference next time.”

Yukinoshita answered quickly, to which Hiratsuka sensei gave a satisfied nod. Seeing

this, Yukinoshita took out a ballpoint pen and a notebook.

“Do verify the schedules of the various departments in the mass meeting. Leave the compilation and distribution of work to me.”

Next to Yukinoshita who was quickly doing the job listings, Yuigahama slid her chair with a clunk.

“Leave the heads of the sport clubs to me. I kind of know them anyway.”

“Alright, then I will leave them to you.”

Yukinoshita gave a smile as she replied, to which Yuigahama gave a proud snort, making a “hnng” sound. It seemed like being relied upon had made her really happy.

“What’s next is to consider how we can reduce the workload involved in setting up the [Kibasenn]. [\[53\]](#)

Yukinoshita placed the ballpoint pen under her jaw as she pondered over the matter.

And then, she suddenly looked at me.

“.....Eh, what.”

“There’s still one person who hands are empty.”

“Ah, no, that.....”

As I said it, I looked at my own hands. Huh, this was strange. I totally did not feel that my hands were empty. I didn’t think that my hand had a hole that was capable of sucking in demons?! [\[54\]](#)

“Well then, Hikigaya-kun will be in charge of reducing the costs for the [Kibasenn]. Boutaoshi [\[55\]](#) does not need any more labor, its fine the way it is now.”

Before I had even thought a reply, Yukinoshita had already continued her instructions speedily.

“It’s unreasonable to ask me to make those arrangements. Don’t get me to do those jobs that require communication. I am one of those types that either hide in a corner in a dark room making flowers earnestly, or those that put the strawberries on top of cakes in a bread factory.”

What’s next was reading magazines in the backroom of a convenience store in the night, and able to return magazines which I don’t like as I pleased.

No, I was never suited for work anyway,

“I think you were the one who said something about the right person doing the right job.”

The words that came out of my mouth was a brilliant phrase that I had said some time ago.

However, Yukinoshita did not seemed to have heard any of it.

“Yup. That’s why, this can only be done by you. You have something to say to Za,Zai.....Zaitsu-kun do you not?”

What Yukinoshita just said was indeed correct. But, you had better remember the name!

“I don’t really have anything to say to him..... That guy totally does not listen to anyone.”

Although I tried to object, Yuigahama opened her mouth then to speak.

“Furthermore, just look, neither of us two know how to communicate using Chuunibyou language.” [\[56\]](#)

“No, I don’t know either.”

I had once changed my phone number but did not tell Zaimokuza about it. Oops I guess it was my mistake. A careless blunder that I did. (Sticks out tongue) Just when I wanted to inform Zaimokuza about my change of phone number, for some reason, a bug prevented that message from being sent. I felt that mobile companies should seriously consider how to rectify this bug.

Because of my willful negligence, I had also buried Zaimokuza’s email address into the darkness. However, this sort of willful negligence was something similar to that of a secret love.

Anyway, thanks to me changing my phone number, Zaimokuza and I no longer had any way of contacting each other, providing me with a beautiful excuse. There was no way that any prosecutor could turn this around! [\[57\]](#) Just as I thought about this with relief, Hiratsuka sensei however, cocked her head.

“I don’t think that’s possible. I just told Zaimokuza about it.”

“So it was you.....”

So was it all Hiratsuka sensei’s fault whenever Zaimokuza texted or called me out of

the blue in the past? What on earth are you doing in an era whereby the Personal Information Protection Law is in effect?

“So you really do know.”

Yuigahama was surprised.

However, I have an excuse for that. I hated texting anyway.

Texting first gave me the feeling that I had lost, hence I hated it. Why was there this unwritten law that guys had to be the ones who texted first? Because of this puzzling rule, the difficulty level was raised instantly. What if there was no reply after the message was sent? The damage that I suffer as a result is not small, you know? Thanks to that, ever since junior high, I had deleted every single [?] sign in all my messages.

Well, since it was Zaimokuza this time, there wouldn't be any problems. In fact, there was no need to worry at all. Even if I was treated like something that is worse than trash, I would be perfectly all right, hence I felt at ease.

“.....Well, guess I will just do it.”

I answered reluctantly. Yukinoshita nodded her head.

“Then, I will leave it to you.”

“Ah.”

Anyway, I was already used to rejecting Zaimokuza's plans. I could even go to the extent of saying that his plans were trash and to outright deny it altogether.

Just like that, the distribution of jobs was done.

Yukinoshita was in charge of the scheduling and coordination of shifts, Yuigahama was in charge of negotiations with the various sports club's captains. I was in charge of cutting costs. I guess such an arrangement was quite appropriate.

Even if my workload were to be increased, I would be okay with that. I ought to be satisfied the extent of work I had. In other words, I was the most relaxed with the amount of actual work that I had to do.

But, is this really okay, to entrust everything else to them.

Yuigahama would definitely encounter the most problems. The committee and the people of the sports clubs were often at loggerheads with one another, hence communication between both parties would be kind of a bother. If that's the case, then she will need a guy to lighten her burden. A high spec elite. The duty of Botticelli for

short. [58] No, more like fate. Nevertheless, I didn't know any of the heads in the sports clubs, so how could I possibly help Yuigahama? AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!! Wait, don't I know someone? There was one that I did know of. The President of the tennis club, Totsuka. Wait that's wrong, he's my acquaintance. So I did know one.

And so, my conscience and compassion began to hurt me from the inside. This really was compassion.

I started to list out the subjective reasons.

This could be important.

I concluded the internal debate within me over what reason I would use. Then, pretending that I had just noticed something, I gave a slight cough and said.

"Ah, Yuigahama. I have Totsuka's contact and if you don't mind, I could contact him for you. You see, it's the same whether I call up one or two people, so it doesn't really matter. Still, letting Yuigahama contact everyone is going to be a tough job. I am just doing it because it's convenient for me, so you really don't have to worry about it."

Objective reasons were just as important, aren't they!

However, Yuigahama gave me a look of bewilderment and shook her hands.

"Eh? There's no need for that. Sorry, I already have Totsuka's contact. This is my job, please leave it to me!"

Yuigahama clenched both her fists and placed them both to her chest, giving off the image of confidence. Hearing her say it so directly, I couldn't think of any rebuttal for that. That, no, that's not what I meant.....

Yuigahama averted her face from me a little bit and then glanced upwards at me.

"But..... About that, thanks."

"..... There's no need for that."

Although I had totally no intention of helping her, given the present situation, I could only answer her as such. Ah, I have lost my just cause to text Totsuka. On the contrary, I have just revealed my ulterior motive, my heart hurts.

Just as I was enduring the pangs of conscience, Hiratsuka sensei started to speak.

"The plan is already set. I guess we shall call it a day."

She stood up quickly and called out to Meguri-senpai.

“Shiromeguri. I will lock up the place, you may leave first.”

“Ah, okay.”

Meguri-senpai who has been all the while talking to Sagami raised her hands and replied. Thereupon, she patted Sagami’s back and urged her to go back as well.

“Well then, Sagami-san. Let’s continue to work hard in the coming week.”

“.....Yes.”

Sagami answered weakly and grabbed her bag. Thereafter, she followed Meguri-senpai and left the conference room.

Us, who were still left behind could finally leave as well.

We took our own respective bags and headed towards the door. Hiratsuka shut off the power source and the lights were immediately extinguished. She spoke to us amidst the background of the setting sun.

“Once again, I have caused you some trouble.”

Looking back, Hiratsuka sensei was standing in the middle of the setting sun. Owing to the backlight and the creeping darkness, I couldn’t make out her expression, but that voice was softer than usual.

“Ah-, not at all. I am quite happy too.”

“Besides, this is a club activity.”

A graceful voice and a cheerful voice replied her.

“It was what Sensei asked us to do in the first place.”

Upon hearing the languid voice that followed from behind the two of them, Hiratsuka-sensei smiled brightly.

4-5

As the autumn season intensifies, the absence of people in the entrance made me feel much colder.

The footsteps of the three of us echoed out. One of them had a regular rhythm to it, the other one was prancing about. The last one was dragging his feet as though his whole body was being dragged along as well.

Yuigahama wore loafers, and walked in front of me in a manner that seemed like she wanted to grind away the heels of her shoes. She turned her head and looked at me.

“It would be great if Sagamin could continue being the committee chairman.”

“Who knows? I feel that if she had given up at that time, it would have been better for all of us.”

I answered her as I wore the shoes that I had just thrown on the floor. Yukinoshita walked quietly behind us.

“It would certainly seem so from the perspective of the Sports Festival committee.”

“But, if she did quit, then she would not have changed.”

Yuigahama nodded her head with a “Un,un”

Well, it was indeed so. Both of them were correct.

The Service Club had taken on two requests.

The first was to ensure that the Sports Festival was a success. The second, was to increase Sagami’s “rating”, to let her gain back her confidence and change the mood in the class.

Now was definitely a good time to fulfill these two requests, however, it was precisely because of these two requests that created the two current big problems.

Sagami Minami was the bottleneck. We couldn’t exclude her or control her. Well, in this kind of situation, the only way was to let her continue.

I looked at Yukinoshita in surprise.

“Then again, I didn’t know you would really use that sort of method. That kind of method won’t normally work. If it was me, I would have quitted there and then.”

It would've been fine for those who were unwilling to quit. That was not worth making a fuss over. That was not a fellow that you can use the Powerpuff girls on or to harass with power. [59] Eh wait, the term Powerpuff seems wrong?

Anyway, Yukinoshita was definitely the type to go around mentoring newbies.

But, Yukinoshita was now supporting her chin with a finger, twisted her hand and proceeded to speak in a nonchalant manner.

“Ah, but all I did was speak the truth?”

“Even though it’s the truth.....”

All these truths and realities, I didn’t have to be Conan to know them. [60]

However, I did hear that the society of today had the view that when mentoring newbies, one shouldn’t be too strict nor should one piss them off. If you went overboard with your words, there would be adverse consequences.

I cast a look of suspicion at Yukinoshita. She swept away the hair at her shoulders and spoke again in a nonchalant manner.

“.....Even a mouse that is driven into a corner would retaliate by biting the cat back. Am I wrong?”

“.....”

Was this Yukinoshita’s way of nurturing others? Even if you use the word cat in your example, wasn’t your method of pushing Sagami akin to that of a lion or tiger? It was nowhere as cute as a cat being bitten by a cornered rat. It’s a lion.

A lion will push its cub into an abysmal valley to kill it, a lion will use all its strength to kill even if it’s for a rabbit. A lion will chase the worms out of its body and kill it. [61] I really wanted to leave behind these sayings to the world.

Not only was I speechless, but Yuigahama too, gave a troubled laugh and changed the subject.

“.....Ahaha. I mean, Sagamin really hated Hikki.”

“Well, that is indeed so.”

“Why are you so proud!?”

Why was Yuigahama so surprised?

What was this person even saying given the current situation? I was fully aware of that since a long time ago. I mean, if there was even someone who still liked me given what I did, I would feel really sorry for the human race. People like Hayama for example.

Anyone, those who hated me was not limited to just Sagami alone.

“Why not put it this way. Not only Sagami, but basically everyone else.”

Hearing me say that, Yuigahama gave a “Un” as she thought about it for a little bit before she spoke.

“I am not talking about you being disliked. I am talking about Sagami. She seemed to be the most irritated when being treated like an idiot by Hikki. When Hikki was saying stop, she was glowering at you.....”

“Well, that is probably so. To be looked down upon by someone of a lower status, it would be most reasonable if she started to have one or two thoughts about murdering me.”

“No..... maybe not to that extent.”

Yuigahama was a little bit surprised. However humans do go about killing others for the most mundane of reason, so please don’t get yourself killed by being caught off-guard.

Thus, it would be for the best if one would think before they spoke.

The conversation partner was of more importance than the contents of the conversation. Even if the words are the same, the outcome would be largely affected by one’s social status, title and caste.

Because of that, those who were not afflicted with any of the above could freely speak their mind.

When you are alone, you are assured of the fact that you can speak freely. On the other hand, those who were in the top caste often controlled the speech of others. What kind of bleak country in the world today still suppresses other’s speech? I guess loneliness was seriously a developed nation then.

As I stood there basking in the belief that I had once again secured victory over the top caste, Yuigahama ignored me. Then, she clapped her hands as though she had just thought of something.

“Ah, so Sagami should have some motivation in her after that?”

“Huh?”

Yuigahama spoke in a goofy voice, making it obvious that she still did not understand the issue.

She walked to Yukinoshita's side and stole a glance at her.

"Hey, Yukinon. You said those words because you understood what Hikki's words meant, didn't you?"

".....Who knows."

Yukinoshita answered briefly and took her leave. Yuigahama and I looked at each other unintentionally. And then, Yuigahama gave a proud laugh.

What? I highly doubt that you read her intentions. The setting sun bathed the school building, school campus and everything else in a shade of dark red. Thanks to that, my face was probably dyed a deep red as well.

My youth romantic comedy is wrong as I expected.

One day... Mobile talk Hachiman & Zaimokuza

AHEM! Don't assume that I can do everything just because I am an otaku. I don't know how to make costumes. I don't know how to draw illustrations, and neither do I know the railroad particularly well. I don't really know much about setting up personal computers as well..... Even so, why does my mother always ask me those questions..... When I say I have no idea, she gives me that look of contempt.....

Well, mothers are probably just like that. It would speed things up if there was someone who could make costumes.

It would really be great if such a person existed.

I have someone in mind. Although I have no idea whether she would listen to me.

Oh, so there exists such a person. So then, who is it.

That, Kawasomething..... Kawauchi?

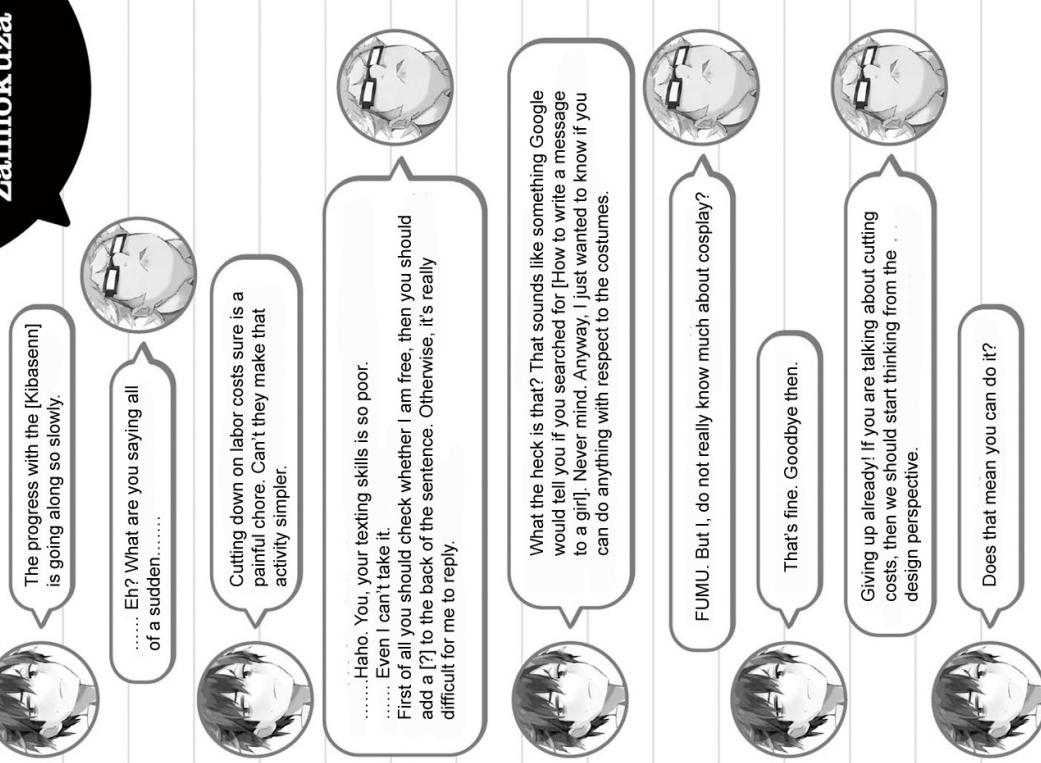
Kawauchi*.... A light cruiser? Sounds like they specialize in night warfare.

Probably something like that. Anyway, please come up with a brief proposal by this week.

Leave it to me! Fumuu?
Wait, do you really mean this week?

Hello Hello? What???? That's weird?
Isn't today already Friday night?

One day... Mobile talk Hachiman and Zaimokuza



*TL Note: Reference to a battleship used in WW2 by the Japanese.
See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_battleship_Kawachi

4-6

(Editor's note: This is chapter 2 on the side volume 6.5 and is merged with chapter 4 on the compilation volume 6.5. The title of this chapter is **That's why, Hikigaya Komachi is trying her best.**)

The wind came blowing in from the open windows. As midnight approaches, the temperature drops rapidly. You could also hear the sounds of the insects far away.

I stopped reading and walked towards the living room. I did not feel sleepy as of yet. Tomorrow was a holiday. I did not have to attend school and hence I could sleep by myself all the way till noon.

There is no mistake. It was an awesome holiday. Very liberating. FREE.

And so, I might as well drink a cup of coffee and enjoy this long autumn night. I walked out of my room to the corridor, taking care not to disturb my parents who were already in a deep slumber. Actually, there was no need for such a worry. Both of them were already so hard at work in the day that they would be sleeping very soundly by now, and hence would not be easily awoken.

The dark living room was quiet, yet it did not feel lonely.

Here, the Hikigaya household has had few occasions whereby the entire family could gather for dinner. Both of my parents had to work, and they came back at different times. They even had to work during the holidays. Komachi was preparing to take her entrance exams, and so had to attend cram school every day and night. As a result, dinner was either bento that she had brought along or food that she purchased outside.

Although I normally eat my dinner alone now, whenever I think of the fact that Komachi often ate alone like this when I was preparing for my entrance exams, tears would start coming out somehow. Yet despite saying that, it does not mean that our family relationships were poor.

This living room was bustling with activity in the morning. It was where our parents, who were preparing to go to work, and us, who were about to go to school, had our conversations.

Tomorrow was a holiday, hence I would sleep it away. Although I would miss the morning scene, I would be able to make up for it with my liveliness in the night.

Ah this is bad, I am feeling all sentimental now. I can't spend this long autumn night like this. Autumn is truly a season for sentimentality.

To perk myself up, I started to hum a song as I began to feel for the lighting switch. Despite only switching on the living room light, the light shone all the way to the kitchen that was facing it. Since the light could shine that far, then it was more than sufficient for tasks like boiling water and the like.

I turned the tap, and let the water run into the electric kettle. I closed the tap as it was about to be full and started it up jauntily. Then, I proceeded to wait just a little while for the water to boil.

Thereupon, the door opened with a creak.

I thought that it was Komachi, but upon looking, realized that there was no one. It was probably the wind then. It was probably due to the wind that was blowing in from the windows from my room as I had left them open.

Without giving the matter anymore thought, my gaze shifted back to the electric kettle.

It was not as though watching it would make the water boil faster. However, this was probably the same as watching the churning motion of the washing machine or the drying machine. Also, this was like the repeating pressing of the button at the pedestrian crossing. Although this repeated pressing would not cause the traffic light to change quicker, but it was already a kind of a habit. It was this that caused me to repeatedly press the cancel button on the elevator. As a result, it got even slower, so that's definitely something to beware of.

If I were to listen carefully, I could hear the low rumbling of the kettle.

Mixed into the noise, were the sound of splashing water.

Picha picha.

Picha picha.

An unearthly noise that shook me to the bones echoed out in the dark kitchen. The voice came from behind me. What the heck was behind me?!

Uwaa – I hate this. Scary. Gross. Weird. All these thoughts were running through my mind. I had a unpleasant feeling about this. Wait, this was strange. Why am I still able to hear the sound of water at this time? Was it my imagination? As I thought about it I decided to listen carefully once more.

Then, I did indeed hear it behind me. Picha Picha Picha Picha Picha.

Ahhhh. This is bad. There really is something there. Even so, I still turned my head to look at what was behind me.

Then, a bright light shone out from the darkness.

It was the eyes of a cat.

It must have been the boredom that led me to keep visualizing the real-life horror events of Hikigawa Junji in my mind. [\[62\]](#) When I turned my head, I saw that it was only our cat Komakura drinking water. But still, a cat drinking water in the night, making those pichapicha sounds seriously made it appeared like a cat monster.

As I waited for the water to boil, I decided to tease Komakura.

I squatted down besides Komakura and continuously stroked its fur. I made sounds like URIIII, WRYYYYYYYYYYYYYY as I kept stroking its back, shoulders, neck and the base of its throat. Komakura glared at me as if I was some kind of annoyance. So cute~~~~. [\[63\]](#)

This fellow would never try to be friendly with me, only staying a respectable distance away from me as though I was a chair in the winter season. However, it was very affectionate towards Komachi, always following her around and going “Meow-, Meow-,” as well as often sleeping together with her.

If so, then if Komakura was still awake now, that would probably imply that Komachi was still awake.

I retracted my hand from Komakura and stood up.

I stopped the electric kettle, and after filling it up with enough water, set it up once more. Alright, that should be good. Just as I was about to pet Komakura again, Komakura brushed itself against my leg and set off from the kitchen to the living room. What was this? A SUNEKOSURI? [\[64\]](#)

It obviously could keep me company for just a little while more. I want to adopt that kind of attitude and become a spirit, because that would mean I get to stave off work and live off others!

A dog and a scissors has its uses, but a cat was useless. [\[65\]](#) I gave up on Komakura and glanced at the electric kettle once more. There was no one around me, and so I began to start reflecting on today’s events in the quiet kitchen.

About Sagami Minami.

About Haruka and Yuuko.

It was impossible to say that they were unrelated under the current circumstances. Since I already understood that I would be unable to escape work, what follows next would

be to figure out how to reduce my workload.

My job was technically to deal with Zaimokuza, but that was just my most recent task.

After today, as the committee itself got progressively busier, that would be a corresponding increase in the number of odd jobs. If that was the case, then all these odd jobs would become my work. The extent of these odd jobs were truly strange.

Based on the experience I got from handling the cultural festival, wouldn't that mean I would become the one who handled everything? What was this? Am I the new member of some black business now? (Think sweatshops)

Given the manner that Sagami was doing her work, Yukinoshita's work would increase. That would mean that my work would increase as well.

The most important part was not letting Yukinoshita handle the distribution of jobs.

Despite saying this, I fear that it would be quite a impossible task to do.

As long as Sagami continue to be the committee's chairman, there would be a very obvious problem. That was exactly what I had said in the conference room after school.

However, no matter how many hopeless people there were, as long as they desired to be helped, we would extend our hand towards them. That was Yukinoshita's thoughts on the principle behind the Service Club.

As long as they so desired to be helped, we would have to find a way to help them.

The problem would be to find out the way to help.

As I was thinking, the electric kettle sounded out, signifying that the water was boiling.

Well, as long as we haven't seen what Sagami would do in the following week, we were at a loss. Or perhaps, unexpectedly, we would be able to restart the whole process of becoming superficial friends with them again.

I stopped my thought process at this point, and poured a suitable amount of instant coffee powder into the mug, followed by the pouring of hot water into it.

The hot air drifting from the mug was accompanied by the coffee's fragrance. I took a sip and placed the mug aside.

As I was about to reach my hand out for another mug, the door opened discreetly.

"What's the problem, Oni-chan."

Upon careful inspection, I noticed that it was Komachi. She had a hair tied into a bundle with a hairband, as well as a cold-strip placed across her forehead. Komakura was beside her leg stretched itself lazily.

“It’s nothing, I just wanted to drink some coffee. Do you want some?”

“I want!”

“Komachi replied immediately and then went to seat at the sofa. Komakura, who was beside her, followed suit by jumping onto the sofa. I speedily prepared another mug of coffee, put a few lumps of sugar as well as some milk, and brought it over to the sofa area.

“Here.”

“Thank you.”

Komachi took the mug, and with a few “Fuuuuuu- Fuuuuuuu”, blew onto the hot coffee to make it colder, before placing it to her mouth to drink. I stood by the side of the table as I watched her.

“How are you feeling?”

“Well, so-so I guess.”

So-so, huh? That does not seem to be good..... When this girl was feeling well, she would be constantly trying to annoy me and to seek attention from me.

“How about you, Oni-chan?”

“Me? I feel especially great. There’s still the regular examination that’s about to take place.”

“Is that so?”

Due to the fact that there were still school events that had to be held, the exams won’t take place for a while. Normally, students would be rejoicing over this fact. However, I would say that these periodic examinations made me feel a bit happier. Komachi seemed to have read my thoughts, and started talking whilst seeming to be remembering something.

“Ah, there’s still the sports carnival.”

“Yup. Why would you know about that?”

“Yuigahama-san told me via a mail.”

“Oh, is that so?”

My, the relationship between your two sure were great.

I gave a sigh followed by a wry smile, to which Komachi followed suit with a deep sigh of her own.

“That’s so great, Komachi wants to go too.....”

“This is different from elementary school and junior high. It’s a closed-door event.”

If the scope of the committee had to include dealing with parents, then it would really be a hopeless situation.

“Anyway, you need to study as well.”

Hearing that, Komachi sighed deeply.

“Yes, I guess so. Study..... Study..... Stu, dy.”

Speaking up till this point, she stopped. That kind of abrupt halt was akin to her soul being sucked out of her. Seems like studying was really tough on her.

Althought these words were inappropriate for this moment, Komachi was a idiot. However, she was good at swimming with the tide, quick-witted, good at reading the mood, cute, and adept at household chores as well as good at cooking. Ah, this won’t do. Why did I feel this sudden sense of pride for my sister as I talked about her?

Anyway, if we were talking about the qualities of Komachi, then studying should not be a problem for her. Although up till now, her results have been sub-par, but the reason for that was that she was not trying hard enough. Above all, the most important reason would be that her efficiency was too low.

“Listen here Komachi. There’s no need for you to get full marks in every subject in an exam. You need to be able to gauge your understanding in every subject, and from there, calculate the time that you would need to spend on those subjects. You need to plan your study strategies from that aspect, otherwise it would just be a waste of time.”

“Oni-chan sensei.....”

What’s up with this kid? Komachi was whining in a low voice, as though she had heard me say this countless times and was now shaking her head to shake it off.

Well, I didn’t want to say such abstract stuff anyway. If a suggestion lacked feasibility then it was as good as talking to myself.

This was the time where I ought to be giving suggestions relevant to the point at hand.

“So, which subject are you having trouble with now?”

“Japanese.....”

Komachi slumped her shoulders as she said that.

“Because I have never really studied hard for Japanese, I don’t know any method to study it at all.”

Perhaps it was because of my love of reading ever since I was small, and that’s why I never really had any trouble with the Japanese examination. My ability to write down the author’s thought snad feelings notwithstanding, I was even able to write down the thoughts and feeling of the test-setter as well. All I needed to do was to just memorize the kanji, the ancient Japanese language and the gramma and syntaxes of old. With that done, I didn’t really encounter any problem in completing the questions. So, I did not really understand what kind of trouble Komachi was facing in Japanese. Why she was facing them, I did not know. Sorry, Oni-chan could do them all.

Is there anything else? As I sgiftd my gaze towards Komachi, Komachi raised her hand with a “Yes.”

“Social studies.”

“Just memorize them all.”

Social studies was really just about memory work. Whether it’s the history of Japan, the history of the world, civics education, all these were simply rote memorization. Although there were some expository questions that were asked in high school, but if one were to memorize everything properly, then one would have no problem answering those as well.

I continued looking at Komachi, waiting for her to tell me about problems that she had with other subjects. Once more, she raised her hand.

“Sciences.”

“That is also memorization.”

Talking about sciences in general, first and foremost were physics and chemistry. Although they were classified under science and mathematics subjects, they were obviously memorization subjects when it comes to high school promotional exams. It is true that there are questions that asks about springs and the tilt of the star, the mass of chemical compounds amongst other similar questions. However, the questions that were posed were seriously elementary level. As long as you remembered the way to

derive the answer, you would be able to substitute it in those questions and complete the questions in a mechanical fashion.

Alright, after giving up on Japanese, I have already settled Komachi's issue with two other subjects. As I thought that I looked at Komachi, but her eyes did not meet mine. A, Ah? Komachi-chan?

And then, as though Komachi had given up, she gave a sigh, and murmured.

“.....English”

“Another subject to memorize as expected.”

The English in high-school promotional exams were all about the memory of English vocabulary words, a few short phrases and subsequently the memory of the grammatical structure. As long as you did that, there would be no problem. Although this form of learning was painful, but this way, you were ensured that you will not encounter any problems during exams. It was also because of this that made it quite unsettling.

It was strange the way things are from an educational perspective. There was no way we could really speak English if we were to study using this method. We would also be unable to communicate with foreigners. Then again, Japanese could not even communicate very well with their own language. I wonder what the MEXT thought about the matter. [\[66\]](#)

At this point, Komachi had already stopped listening to me. She was now playing with Komakura's forehead.

“Erm, Komachi-chan?”

“Ah, you are done? Well then, next would would be mathematics.”

It sounded like she just spoke about it casually. However, even though I was participating in this so actively, I had no smart way of answering her question.

“About mathematics, I can't help with that.”

My score in mathematics was only 9 marks, the last in my year. What was this mathematics again? It sounds like masochistic. Learning mathematics always gave me that strange feeling of being a masochist.

“Really useless huh....? Right, Ka-kun?”

Komachi said so as she continue to pet Komakura. Thereupon, Komakura gave a snort with his nose.

REA. LLY. USE. LESS.

I thought that I could at least help her a little bit, but all I got in return was that phrase. And yet, she gave me a somewhat lukewarm gaze.

“Well, although it’s not that I don’t understand Oni-chan. Well, nevermind, Komachi will always be kind and gentle towards such a useless brother. I won’t dislike you ~. Now that was so high in Komachi points.”

She was looking at me ever so compassionately and affectionately as she concluded her sentence. On top of that, she still had to add those points to it. Although, I would have felt that the exclusion of that last line would have been cuter in the past, I recently felt that even this bit of sly and cunning was cute as well. Ah, this sure is troubling.

This cute Komachi leaned towards me as she hugged Komakura.

“Then again, even though I scored so abysmally for mathematics, I was still able to enter Soubu High.”

“Well, that is true.....”

I did study mathematics in junior high. However, it was definitely not my forte. As soon as I noticed that I would be having much more fun in the liberal arts course, I quickly gave up on studying mathematics.

After all, as long as I took the supplementary exam and the tuition classes, I was bound to pass the periodic examinations and promote to the next year.

You only do something when you need to. Otherwise, don’t do it.

Life was probably like that too. To live meant that you would encounter things that you hated. To put it in another manner, it meant that the act of living itself was something hateful, but one must not give up living just because of this.

If so, then how does one avoid this hateful problems? As long as your thinking revolves around this point, the method is bound to reveal itself. The art of learning was like that as well.

And thus, this was how I dealt with mathematics as well.

“Well, that is a method used by those who have no idea how to study mathematics.”

Having heard that, Komachi slowly inched her way towards me.

“Oh, could you tell me the details?”

There was nothing wrong in telling her..... Well, nevermind.

Although it could be said that this was the foundation of the foundation, the basics of the basics. However, it was probably because she really doesn't know, that was why we had to go back to the very basics of it all. I explained it to her briefly.

"Don't force yourself to do questions that you don't know. If it's a big question, then go along with your instincts. Other questions should be completed flawlessly. There are also some questions that you can throw away. This is because the other people would also have a low percentage of getting the difficult questions correct, hence you can discard them. Ensure that those that you do know how to do have no mistakes. That's about it."

You must resign yourself to doing the above from the start. That was essential.

However, this kind of methods could be learnt during normal exams. However, perhaps if you applied them consciously it would have a better effect.

This is a really simple thing, I thought as I looked at Komachi. Komachi squinted her eyes and rubbed away the invisible tears as she said the following.

"Oni-chan, what Komachi wanted was this kind of advice from the start....."

As she pretended to cry, she went "Un,un" as though she had understood something. Well, as long as I could solve this girl's problems, I guess.

Having spoken for so long, my throat was a little bit dry, and hence I drank a mouthful of coffee to moisten my throat. At the same time, Komachi placed her mug by her mouth. Then, she raised her head and looked at me.

"However, Oni-chan, it would be great if you could study mathematics properly now."

That was indeed a reasonable opinion. But still, it's just your opinion. If you were unable to practice what you preach, then it would definitely be lacking in persuasive power.

However, there were somethings in this world that can't be explained or solved by logic alone.

Hence, I only said this one line.

"I..... have already given up on math."

"Wow, that's so cool! That was just like a sanguine way of saying that one has given up on his dreams!"

Oh- Oh- , Komachi's eyes were sparkling.

"I know right? It's the same as saying one abandoning baseball because he got injured from it, and yet not completely giving up and returning to the baseball grounds right?"

"Yup. If the right hand is screwed then they will use their left. If that is screwed too, then they will ask to become a batter. That is really cool."

I see I see. It was really that cool huh? That was really great, this was some major-class coolness huh?

"Hahaha!"

"Ahahaha!"

Komachi and I both started to laugh.

..... Where did this ecstatic family come from?

It was probably due to us getting all high in the deep night that we were laughing away without a care in the world. After the laughter subsided, the silence returned. This too, was a characteristic of the deep night. As the laughter ended, both me and Komachi drank our coffee quietly.

"Then again, besides choosing our school, what about the others?"

Although the feeling of being immersed in silence wasn't too bad, but the opportunity that presented itself now was rare. I wanted to properly understand Komachi's plan for the future, as well as present her with a better path.

Due to the fact that both our parents were busy, we did not really have anyone to discuss with about this kind of things. I had already decided for myself at that time which high school I was going to enroll in.

Thus, I should act more like a brother at times like this, and discuss it over properly with my sister, isn't that so?

"The others..... You mean like my other options?"

"That's right."

"Dad and Mom have asked me this as well."

Ah, have already been asked? That is to say, not only me? Oi oi, is this really my parents we are talking about? No, wait, that's wrong. That would probably be because I had already earned my parents' trust. Hence, they did not ask me about that. So this is

the “trust” that people talk about. Hahaha, I am being doted on.

However, the practical problem was that, even if they had asked me, my answer would not have changed. Even if they had objected, I would not have listened. As expected of my parents. They really did understand me.

Well, my matters aside. This was about Komachi.

Komachi started to raise one, two fingers from her hand and started to count the names of the schools.

“JuuEi and Motonara. As well as Edo Girls. I think I have already signed up for them.”

Yup, from my level, all these schools seemed to be a reasonable choice.

“Edo Girls..... Edo Girls. Go and try for Edo Girls. Wait, I think it’s better to go and enrol in Edo Girls.”

“This sentence sounded exactly like what father said.....”

Komachi expressed a surprised smile.

As expected of our father. Upon careful thought, co-ed school were definitely out of the question. In such a school, approximately 90% of the guys want a girlfriend. (According to my research) I definitely cannot put Komachi into their midst. That is because, if Komachi wasn’t my sister, even I would have confessed to her and then gotten rejected.

Well, it was because she was my sister that I would not feel that way, but as a brother, caring for her sister was only natural.

However, Komachi now smiled gently, as though she had already seen through my intentions.

“But, I heard that if you are in a girls only high school, if you don’t have any match, it is almost certain that you would be brought along to mixers or be introduced to potential boyfriends.”

Ah, she really does understand my way of thinking. This girl, please don’t say thing like that as though you understand me.

“..... Well then, I guess you should continue to work hard to try and enroll in our school.”

At least there was still a year whereby I could secretly look out for her. If others knew

that Komachi had such a disgusting brother, there would definitely be fewer boys who would approach her. Wow, this was such a perfect plan. However, that would mean that Komachi would be unable to make any friends. This is such a double-edged sword.

Just as I was thinking about this, Komachi moaned with a “Nnnnnn” sound.

“Even if you didn’t say it, I would still have gone to Sobo High.”

“It would be great if you could get there.”

Although I had no idea of the extent of Komachi’s capabilities now, but from what I could tell from the routine periodic examination rankings, she was still quite some distance away from the passing mark. Just as I was thinking about others ways in which I could help her, I suddenly thought of something.

“How about recommendations? Weren’t you part of the student council?”

Komachi seemed to have been a member of the student council. I did recall her saying something along those line on the car during our summer trip to a training camp.

If she was a student council member that would mean she would be in a position to acquire GPA points [\[67\]](#) and meet recommendation criteria. Truth be told, about half of all junior high students entered the student council for that sole purpose. Another half joined it owing to the influences by mangas and animes. They entered it with some sort of longing, but then discover that reality was vastly different from what they expected and as a result, got disappointed.

“Since you are a idiot, rather than betting it all on a single exam, wouldn’t it be better to try for a selection test that judges students based on their characteristics?”

Listening to that, Komachi broke into a loud laugh.

“Fu-Fu-Fu. Oni-chanKomachi’s school results are bad because she’s stupid right?”

Why was she saying this with such a smug look?

Just as I was all surprised, Komachi seemed to have been hurt by her own words, clutched at her chest and spoke in a choking tone.

“That’s why, the points that I need for a recommendation is still not enough.....”

With that, she broke down crying. Darn, this was really reaping what one sows. However, I guess she could still more or less set her target on getting a recommendation.....

However, brooding over the past was not the style of the Hikigaya household. I had

discarded plenty of my past experiences as well. Of course, as the Hikigaya's household final weapon of communication, Komachi had inherited this part as well. Quickly lifting her head, she continued speaking as though nothing had happened.

"Oni-chan was also ranked well only in the periodic tests. It's just that it would be better if I could take along a letter of recommendation."

"Hnng. You really are an idiot. My attitude in class is so bad, my teacher's impression of me must be really bad as well. I had never chased after that sort of thing from the start."

Why was I able to say that with a look of triumph? It seems like this enigmatic high-spiritedness of the deep night had still not disappeared. Hearing that, Komachi nodded her head as she said "So it's like that-". Hmph, what's with that attitude? Your oni-chan is abit hurt now, you know?

However, being understood by others is something that can't be helped. It goes without saying that my attitude and other's impressions of me during practical skills lessons were the worst. Whilst I could still cope with the 5 core subjects, but I really was helpless in the other subjects like sports, arts, music and home-economics. This was a devilish system whereby only those favored by the teacher could win. And then, if the teacher became the consultant of any kind of club, they will be obviously biased toward the members of said club. Then, those cute girls and the students they favour will have higher marks. Because I was not a devil's survivor to be able to survive in this kind of environment [\[68\]](#), I had already given up on these four subjects.

Sobu High was a school centered on prepping students for university. If you wanted to get a recommendation, you would need to score about 40 points from all 9 subjects. Since you could only get a maximum of 45 points from all the subjects, the bar was set pretty high. Not to mention that I had never thought of getting a recommendation from the very beginning.

Rather than having a good conduct and looking at the numbers on your report card for the two and a half years, wouldn't it be more efficient to just study like mad during the final half a year?

Just like how the quality of illustrations would not affect the decision to make an anime, the numbers on a report card will not affect the final outcome of the test. Let me teach you that!

That is to say, the end result was more important than the process.

"Anyway, you just need to score well in your exam. Do your best."

Because I was a little bit far away from Komachi to be able to clap her on her shoulder,

so all I did was to gently raise my mug. Thereupon, Komachi raised her mug a little in response.

“Yup, I will do my best!”

Those were idiotic words from me, but if they could spur Komachi, I guess that was fine.

Well then, what follows next would be to go back to the room and read a book leisurely until I fell asleep. I finished up the rest of the coffee in a gulp and went to the kitchen to wash the mug clean.

“Well then, I am going off to sleep.”

At the instant that I spoke that, Komachi jumped up.

“Alright! Time to start! Oni-chan!”

“Huh? What do you mean by time to start?”

A war at night? Is it a war at night? But your Oni-chan wants to sleep now.....

Komakura gave a bored yawn, stretched itself lazily and then left the living room.

4-7

The table was piled with a stack of reference books as well as past-year questions. Although the short-hand of the clock was already pointing at the 12 on the clock, Komachi seemed to want to study.

Komachi went back to her room and returned with a entire set of studying apparatus. As I looked on, I poured myself the second cup of coffee for today.

The table was cluttered with books from different subjects. Her studying was progressing with that same old “unable to study” look as always. However, the motivation for studying seems to be just a bit different from the past.

Komachi gripped her mechanical pencil with a look of gusto.

“Oni-chan, Komachi has noticed something. Just like what you mentioned about the mathematics test, there is a trick to studying.”

“Oh, you are making great progress.”

Rather, wouldn’t it be better to ask yourself why you have not noticed it till today? Or perhaps, surprisingly, everyone was like that. Even if they obtained some sort of knowledge during class, they still would not have obtained the method to studying or the way to take noted. Even if they attended the same lesson by the same teacher, as long as one noticed this, perhaps they would be able to distinguish themselves from the rest.

This was currently a phase of trial-and-error that Komachi was undergoing now.

“There’s a trick to memorizing isn’t there?”

Listening to her question, I thought about my own method of studying. Ah, she’s not wrong in thinking that. However, because it might be described by some people as disgusting, I didn’t really want to say much about it.....

“Well, there is a way. But it’s just a way that I found suitable for myself. I don’t know if it would suit you.”

“No, It definitely will!”

Komachi interrupted me. Where was she brimming with confidence when she said that?

I had already answered in such an ambiguous manner, but after what Komachi said,

there was no way I could go about covering it up now. She stared at me expectantly with those sparkling eyes. I guess I had to tell her then.....

“Well, the trick behind memorization..... You would do well to remember what I am about to say next.”

“Make it specific!”

Komachi said in a serious tone. Whoaa..... Are you my superior now? Before giving an explanation or a presentation, one must think things through properly before speaking, you know?

I took the history book beside me and started riffling through the pages with a “Para-Para-“noise.

“Let’s see..... For example, world history.”

The part that I flipped to was on modern history. Komachi placed a chair next to me. Her elbow was close, but her face was even closer. That’s going to be a hindrance if I am to explain anything to you..... Well, nevermind.

“Historic events are remembered through the flow of events.”

“Huh? The flow of events?”

Komachi repeated my words with a look that seemed like she barely understood anything. Although this method was not uncommon, but if one did not explain the way to using this method in detail, then to grasp the concept behind this method could be said to rather difficult.

I coughed twice to clear my throat, then proceeded to speak in a low and smooth voice.

“A long long time ago in some area, there existed Soviet Union-chan and America-chan.”

“Ah, what, what happened to Oni-chan.”

Komachi immediately drew away from me. The next instant, she had pulled the chair far away from me. As though I had just said something disgusting. Why you little..... You were the one who asked me to explain it in the first place.

“You shut-up and listen to me. I am teaching you the way to remember things.”

“Yes, yes.....”

Komachi straightened her back and looked at me earnestly. However, although she was

listening, the chair was still far away from me. Oni-chan feels a little sad now, you know?

Stifling the sadness in me, I continued speaking in a voice that was on the verge of tears.

“Soviet Union-chan was a cool and beautiful bitch, America-chan however, was a happy-go-lucky and cute bitch.”

“Bitch?”

“Yes, bitch.”

Even though I affirmed those words, they were fictional characters so associating those words with them probably doesn't matter. If I were ever to be terminated by the CIA or the KGB, then this would probably be the reason.

The real problem was the story that these two bitches weaved. What followed next was important.

“The two of them are in the same class. The relationship between them was that of rivals vying to be the popularity queen. Since both wanted to be the top, this often led to quarrels.”

“Seems like a common story.”

This is a common story? Girls really were scary. Although I wanted to hide my own trembling, the voice that I spoke in probably had a few stammering and stuttering in it.

“Well, probably. They want to engage in open warfare, but owing to the onlookers in the surrounds, or perhaps the gaze of the guys, it would be difficult for them to do so. Hence, Soviet Union-chan and America-chan engaged in some high-level rumor-mongering warfare. For this purpose, they formed their own cliques to do battle.”

“Rumor-mongering warfare.....” [\[69\]](#)

Komachi murmured in a voice that seemed like she had some deep emotional attachment to those terms.

“That's right. Stuff like [That girl is going out with that university student at her workplace], or things like [They don't want to greet us anymore.] or [C85Nano is all sold out!] and other related topics.” [\[70\]](#)

“Those are also common stories.....”

This was commonly seen as well? Wow, that's enough, I need to stop taking notice of the happenings in Komachi's class. I need to focus my energy and continue the explanation.

"This is the war between the communist country and the democratic country. In other words, this is the cold war."

As though she had just heard some familiar terms, Komachi nodded her head with a "N , N." If she could still understand at this point, then I guess I should just go on ahead.

"As they engage in this warfare, both Soviet Union-chan and America-chan possess important secrets that have the power to obliterate each other. Both sides are holding on to each other's weakness. What do you think about that?"

"There's no way for them to do anything to each other....."

"That's right. Although they could destroy each other, but they risk facing a similar payback in return, a blow that would be the equivalent of annihilation. If they were to go ahead, there was the risk that the entire class would crumble. From the perspective of modern day history, this weakness would be nukes."

Both sides had the means to destroy each other. Both sides also understood this point perfectly. This is what is meant by mutually assured destruction.

"That's about it."

"Oh, oh, seems like I know yet I don't."

Although I had just completed a portion about the cold war, Komachi's reaction did not seem to have any reaction. However, what was important now was not the contents of the cold war, but rather the method to remember it.

"Anyway, I have already described it in an extremely simple manner. Whether it's through personification or what, anything related to the subject of history should be remembered by knowing the flow of events. First, form a skeletal structure of it. Then use the knowledge as the "meat" and stick that onto it. This is the way to remember things. Just remembering vague terms has very low efficiency. "

Using this method, one could remember historical events. When answering discussion questions, you could use this method and soon, one after another, the events would unfold themselves and the answer would reveal itself to you. This is the method that I would recommend for studying. Well, although it's just a recommendation, I had no one else in mind who I could recommend it to besides Komachi.

Komachi opened her mouth with a "Ha-"as though she was slowly beginning to

understand, and nodded her head a great deal.

“The most important thing, is to novelize the textbook right?”

“The gist of it is like that. My method is not the only one. It would be great if you could come up with your own as well.”

Having said that, I could finally go back to my room and sleep. As such, I stretched myself and in the tears that I squeezed out, I could make out the figure of Komachi moving her pen speedily.

..... Well, I guess I could accompany her a bit more.

In the quiet room, the sound of the mechanical pencil going “Pe-sha” echoed throughout. Komachi continuously flipped the pages, taking up the eraser and even occasionally drawing something with the marker.

“Komachi, can you pass?”

To which Komachi replied without stopping what she was doing.

“I don’t know. It would be nice if I could.”

She did not give me an answer to my question. That was just her wish.

This was like those time when I was in elementary school and junior high. We wouldn’t really keep in touch for no particular reason. After all, she wasn’t anyone that I could boast about. Even if I was proud of my little sister, there was no one that I show her off to.

There was no point in studying in the same high school. But if Komachi wished to enroll in my high school, then that was alright as well.

Komachi stopped her writing, and shifted her attention from the note. It was as though she was gazing at the future that was arriving soon.

“.....Yup, there are things that I want to do.”

“Things that you want to do? Stuff like club activities?”

“Yes-. Well, stuff like that.”

“Which club do you want to enter?”

Although our school had many club activities, but they would all come to an end. There were seriously too many clubs. What ROU, what SHI-, what KATE club. Incidentally, the go-home club seems to be having quite a lot of activities don’t

they? [71]

However, even if I asked her, she seemed unwilling to say it out.

“Hehe, it’s a secret.”

Komachi raised her index finger and winked at me as she said that. Whoa, that was a gesture that was cute to the point of annoying me.

“If it’s the Service Club, then forget it. That, I have no idea when it will come to an end.”

“Eh, is that so?”

Komachi stared at me with an expression like she was a punctured ball. That happy atmosphere accompanied by her smile vanished in an instant.

What was left was the quiet of the night.

I used some coffee to force the words in my throat back down into my stomach. After burying it in my heart, I began to speak.

“I have no idea when I entered that club. That was the same for Yuigahama. Well, I don’t really know about Yukinoshita as well. That’s why, should anything happen, it would probably disappear real quick.”

This was a 3 member only club. Furthermore, we were all second year students. Although unlike the sports-related clubs, we did not have an official time to “retire” from the club, but this club would only exist until the time we graduated. It could also be easily disbanded for a reason that had nothing to do with the time factor.

What would be that reason?

Komachi gulped her coffee in one mouthful and gave a painful expression.

“Oni-chan. When you say should anything happen, what did you mean?”

“..... Who knows?”

I laughed it off in my reply to her.

I had probably already noticed it. I was exceedingly aware of it.

Yukinoshita Yukino, Hikigaya Hachiman, Yuigahama Yui. These three people’s club activities would come to an end one day. Our position, our environment, our personalities were all different. The relationship between us would be lost one day.

This was not limited to just the three of us. To begin with, the relations between people were weak. It was probably always weaker than what I had imagined.

As I came back to my senses, my gaze fell onto the coffee. There, on the black surface, a even darker pair of pupil was reflected on the ripples of that black surface.

“Oni-chan?”

Hearing Komachi’s voice, I reflexively answered her.

“I am listening. What were you talking about just now?”

“You weren’t even listening.....”

Komachi spoke in disgust. However, she regained her energy pretty quick and picked up her mechanical pencil.

“What’s left now, is for me to do my best and get into Soubu High!”

“Whatever. Do your best.”

I held back my laughter and drained the cup of coffee.

Chapter 5: In summary, Hikigaya Hachiman has a premonition

There was an unusually large group of people in the classroom during lunchbreak. Those who had gone off to buy lunch were all slowly returning back in droves.

I was amongst one of them.

I took out the bread from the plastic bag and unwrapped it on the table. Although I would normally bring my food to a much more open space, I didn't do so today.

Water droplets were falling along the windows, and the railings of the verandah were being struck with rain.

The rain had started falling since morning, and while it did not look like it was going to get heavier, it also did not show any signs of stopping. Just the continuous constant drizzle of the rain.

This was not the autumn shower nor the rain that signified the transition of autumn into winter. Just seeing this type of incomplete rainfall made me feel a little bit chilly.

However, it was all the colder in the classroom.

There was a gloomy atmosphere at the front of the classroom that I thought was brought about by rain.

It seems like today, the tragic Sagamin theatre continues on with its stunning performance.

I could see it pretty well even when I was seated halfway towards the front of the class.

There seems to be a new program, *To be urged on by someone to become the Sports Festival committee chairman, and then to be told off by some annoying person. That's me* that was making its debut. The title is so long. Is there a way to condense it?

Sagami had an unusually black face. A girl was seated in front of her, looking at her face to face, whilst another was standing beside her looking at her with a worried look.

“So, he seems to have asked me to do something in a roundabout manner.”

“What, that is like, too much?”

In that instant, I could feel them staring at me. Oi oi, don’t keep looking at me from time to time, I will think that you are in love with me.

To be able to feel the gazes of scorn and contempt was an ability that was the norm for a loner. Being a loner meant taking the world as your enemy. Your daily life was a battlefield, and so, in order to protect your life and your spirit, you had to acquire these skills. This was the same as those elites who were able to detect another’s killing intent or their presence. Hmm, something wrong with that? Am I wrong?

Since one knew beforehand what was going to happen, then one must go in prepared. Just like how it was raining outside, if one knew about it in advance, then one would have prepared an umbrella. Well, one may still get wet from the rain despite the umbrella.

“I didn’t perform to my best at all, sorry, but—“

“Nothing like that at all. The one who’s in the wrong is Sa—“

Sagami’s foul mood was increasing with a fury. Its sphere of influence was spreading to the nearby areas, even those who passed by her were affected by it.

“Oh- man- , the rain is seriously bad. I was drenched to the skin just from buying stuff from the convenience store.”

The one who was dragged in was Tobe. He seemed to have bought it as a forfeit for a game. Both his hands were carrying bread.

As he walked to the front of the classroom frivolously as always, he was sucked into the foul temper.

“Ah, hey, Tobe-kun, have you heard?”

“Ah, what, about what?”

Tobe asked as he unwrapped the bread wrapper. That girl approached Tobe’s face gently.What? Her face seems to be a little red. Don’t tell me she’s about to say something as lame as a confession of her love towards Tobe? Sigh, this Tobe.

I stared at Tobe with my Mystics Eyes of Death Perception. [\[72\]](#) Tobe threw his head backwards and slapped his forehead.

“Uwa. He’s here. Hikitani-kun is seriously too much.”

“Wait, wait abit! Your voice is way too loud.....”

Just as I thought that Tobe's love story was about to suddenly unfold. I realized that my worries were for naught. The topic of their conversation was me. To be the subject of a conversation is really bad.

"Ah-. But this is really bad. No, Hikitani-kun wouldn't do such a thing-"

Ku. Are you still saying the same thing from just now..... Don't just keep saying the same thing over and over again..... Well, it can't be helped that humans are going to keep conversing for all eternity. However, saying the same thing over and over again would get you hated pretty quickly, you know?

Tobe seemed to want to join in the conversation and left the plastic bag on the table beside him.

.....Is that okay? Weren't you asked to buy stuff for the others?

Just as I thought.

I heard the sound of fingernails clicking against the table.

A strong presence seems to be approaching the center of that foul mood.

Looking back, I saw Miura's irritated expression as she stood there. From her glare I could see the burning flames from deep within those eyes.

See, I said you were scary.....

"Oi, Oi-! Tobecchi, hurry up hurry up!"

Sensing Miura's displeasure, Yuigahama beckoned to Tobe. Noticing this, Tobe waved his hand as well.

"Ah coming now.Sorry, someone's calling me, excuse me."

"Ah, un."

Seeing that, that bunch of foul-tempered people realized Tobe. This was probably because they just needed someone to converse with, and that it need not necessarily be Tobe, or they were taking into consideration Miura glaring at them from behind. Well, probably a mixture of both. Thereupon, Miura grew more irritated upon seeing this attitude.

"Sorry."

Tobe apologized as he lined up the bread. While Hayama and his group were giving their words of "Thanks" and "Good job", Miura squinted her eyes at him, with a look

of displeasure.

“So slow.”

Miura exclaimed, unable to hide her frustration. However, her mood seems to improve upon choosing her bread. As she took the chocolate coronet, she let out a laugh. Was she hungry?

However, I cannot keep looking at others. You see, there was Yuigahama who was stealing glances at me.

Guess I should hurry up and finish my bread and head off to the library.

Yuigahama and I barely converse whilst in the classroom. At least, not in the presence of other.

Even though I don't remember any agreement, but this seemed to be a mutual understanding between us recently. This is not on deadly grounds. [\[73\]](#) Yuigahama seemed to have noticed that as long as she doesn't speak to me, I would not take the initiative to do so either.

Well, from the hostile pose that the Sagami group was taking, our actions could possibly aggravate them. There was no need to go the extra mile to pray for rain when it is already raining.

To be able to preserve the current situation was probably due to Yuigahama's ability. Having the ability to discern the moods of various group was really useful. Yuigahama was probably fit to work as a saleswoman in a clothing store.

However, it was probably impossible to expect someone else other than Yuigahama to have this ability.

Suddenly, my aura of ‘Do not speak to me’ was interrupted by the shadow of a person walking towards me. OI oi, those who did not know how to read the mood won't be able to survive in today's Japan, you know? As a human, that could be said to be horrible.

Although I had that thought, but everything would be fine as long as that shadow did not belong to a human.

“Hachiman.”

Totsuka trotted towards me.

It can't be helped if it's an angel. They don't live according to the same rules and principles as we humans do. You could say that they are those who dance in the rain

without an umbrella. That is what it means to be free. [74]

“Wh, what?”

“Ah, no, nothing. I only felt that It was strange for Hachiman to be here in the classroom.”

Totsuka replied and placed a bread on my table. Wh, what was this, a bait to lure me? As I had that thought, Totsuka pulled a chair from the nearby table and sat down beside me.

As I stared blankly at Totsuka, Totsuka raised his head and looked at me in surprise.

“Is something the matter?”

“Ah, no, nothing in particular.”

That, why was Totsuka sitting with me, face to face and eating bread? If this goes one, I would mix mine and Totsuka’s bread together and change it into a state of PANPANKAPAN. [75] (Especially my head)

In this current situation, there was only one reason why Totsuka would approach me. I regulated my breathing, and spoke to him in what I hoped was a normal voice.

“.....Then, shall we eat together?”

If at this point in time Totsuka were to say “Ah..... I don’t really want to.....” I guarantee that I will not be coming to school ever again. However, Totsuka replied energetically.

“Un! Hachiman is always eating alone outside. I have to practice during the day as well, so I always didn’t have the chance to eat lunch with you. Doing this occasionally is great.”

In contrast with Totsuka’s lighthearted smile, my heart seems to be entering a rainy season.

My heart received a supplement of rainwater and was now feeling the effects of hyaluronic acid. The composition of the rainwater is GURUGURUGURUGURU glucosamine grape sweets! [76]

.....Rain is awesome! Way to go, this foul mood.

As I thanked the heavens for this gift, Totsuka’s gaze dropped to his hand.

“Also.....”

Totsuka stopped his actions with the plastic wrapper and continued on in a small voice.

“You don’t seem too well.....”

“.....”

I was silenced by that unexpected sentence. Totsuka raised his head suddenly and looked straight at me.

“Although I can’t do much..... but as long as it’s within my power.”

Thereupon, I understood. Totsuka was worried about me.

The situation in the class was as such, especially Sagami’s group who was spreading this matter far and wide openly. No matter how ignorant one was of current affairs, Totsuka would have noticed it.

Also, I fear that my behavior was different from usual.

Although I had wanted to face it calmly, but hate would accumulate unknowingly. Then, this hate would be naturally expressed through one’s behavior. Even though I would say that I am not a person who would suppress pressure in the bottom of my heart, I wouldn’t say I couldn’t feel anything.

Just like how rain water would eventually erode a rock, there was a limit to all this.

That’s why, at those times, whenever I notice those kindness coming at me at a whim, I would want to rely on them.

However, it would probably be trouble if I were to rely on those kindness. I was frankly quite troubled.

I didn’t want to let such a kind person shoulder this heavy burden. Those that I could rely on unconditionally were my family members.

I could not make that request for others to help me lessen my burden. I didn’t know how to as well. To learn such a method now was extremely difficult. Furthermore, if I were to rely on others with this feelings of guilt, it would be far happier if I were to suffer alone.

Totsuka’s words, worry and warmth, were like break of clear weather amidst the long rain.

However, I was more willing to become the loner who danced and sang under the rain than to stay in that interval of clear weather.

“.....Sorry to have worried you. However, there’s no problem.”

I laughed and answered with a sense of self-mockery and servility, but my voice never once dropped.

Although my intention was to convey the message that he needn’t worry about me, I didn’t want him to stop caring just yet.

“That’s good to hear..... However I did hear that the preparations for the Sports Festival was troublesome.....”

“Sports Festival?”

Totsuka was smiling as he said his point.

Hearing that term all of a sudden caused me to blink my eyes in surprise, to which Totsuka tilted his head in bewilderment.

“Hachiman is currently doing work in the Sports Festival committee? I thought that you seem so lifeless because you were fatigued from your work.....”

Ahem. So you were talking about the Sports Festival. Ah, that’s right, and there I was thinking you were worried about my current situation in the class.

What’s up with this excessive self-consciousness? I really want to kill myself now.....

To think that I would read so deeply into such trivial concern. ARGHHH!!!! SERIOUSLY!!!!

Just as I was reeling from the damage that I had caused myself, Totsuka patted my back.

“Ha, Hachiman! Are you all right?”

“Y, Yes.... I just choked from eating the bread.”

I gave a cough to try and corroborate my words. Totsuka looked at my bread with a face of bewilderment.

“You haven’t even started eating yet.....”

“It’s the saliva, that, the drool.....”

“Are you that hungry? Then hurry up and eat.”

“Un.....”

That’s right, unexpectedly, humans generally don’t care about others. As someone who

has already given the matter considerable thought, such matters were all too common.

..... Well, Totsuka would be indifferent towards these fetters. Because everyone treats Totsuka as some sort of mascot. Cute boys were easily ‘tampered’ by guys and girls, and so I was inclined to protect him from coming into contact with such darkness of the human soul. I didn’t know whether this was really the best decision for him.

However, no matter how I tried to explain it, the fact that Totsuka had shown me concern was an undeniable fact. Then, the conclusion would no change no matter how I said it. Thus in order to not cause him further worry, I ought to conduct myself in an appropriate manner.

I had a complicated expression on my face as I dug into my Neapolitan roll, before washing it down with tea.

“Well, there’s no need to worry about the Sports Festival. What will be will be.”

“Is that so? If it’s Hachiman, I guess there won’t be any problems!”

Being trusted so simply really is troubling.

What should I do? Hearing such a thing, a loner’s practice was to simply reply “Ah, no problem.” Consequently, meeting with a catastrophe as a result of that answer was not uncommon. Now, I had already answered reflexively despite knowing that.

“However, was it really as troubling as it looks?”

“Un..... The tennis club has already sent forth some members to help out, how should I put this.....”

Totsuka at this instant seemed to be evading something. He wasn’t the type who like to speak ill of others. Regarding this, he was the exact opposite of me. That is to say, our personalities were pretty much compatible with one another, guess we can’t help but to marry each other. Wrong.

The most important thing was not this, but from what Totsuka couldn’t say, it seems that the members that we loaned from the Tennis club surely didn’t have a good impression towards the executive committee.

“Well, I am afraid that we will have to trouble everyone until the Sports Festival ends. The Tennis club as well.”

“There’s absolutely no cause for concern about that. Even so, even if I can’t help out much.....”

“No, it’s enough that you could lend us some club members to help out. Anyway, it’s

not like I can do anything as well.”

“Then, isn’t that still no good?”

Totsuka seemed surprised for a while before letting out a laugh. Seeing him laugh so freely, I felt better myself as well.

However, there was still one matter that couldn’t make anyone feel happy.

From Totsuka’s words, it would appear that during the weekends, the people from the sports clubs had already been spreading around a negative image of the committee.

That is to say, it wasn’t hard to imagine that the hate from the helpers must be continuing to increase.

If the person wasn’t there, they would surely be vilifying that person.

The tennis club was headed by a gentle president. One could infer from this that the tennis club was still considered one of the more peaceful clubs within the school. If the remarks amongst them were bad, then those by the other sports clubs were obviously much worse.

Repairing these relationships, although it was what Meguri-senpai had asked, I knew that it was no simple feat. Especially if it was Sagami who was the one to do it, then one could not really expect to look at it optimistically. If that’s the case, then my workload was going to increase again. If you were to say that it was for Sagami, it would be more accurate to say that it was because of Sagami’s error that caused the increase in my workload. This was no small pressure.

The moment I thought about my bleak future, I sighed deeply.

“However, I am looking forward to this year’s Sports Festival.”

Hearing that voice, I raised my head, and saw Totsuka’s bright smile. Totsuka was carrying frank rolls in both hands. I really wanted to feed him.

I bite down on my bread. Although I kind of felt sorry for him, I still hoped that he wouldn’t have such expectations.

“This time probably won’t be all that different from all those other times. School events are always like that.”

“Is that so? I thought this will be more fun than last year. You see, the last year.....”

The words at the back faded, and Totsuka lowered his head gently. Saika-chan what’s wrong? Why did your face turn so dark all of a sudden? I asked him curiously.

“What happened?”

“That..... Because I was forced to wear some strange costume.....”

As he replied, his eyes gradually lost their shine. Eh? There was such a thing? What happened last year..... I totally had no idea. Was it because I didn't attend last year's Sports Festival?

Last year, Sports Festival, strange costume..... Eh? Cosplay?

“Eh, Totsuka, you went for that?”

Totsuka nodded his head.

“I was forced by my senpai.....”

Totsuka's voice had gone very soft. Se,sesesesese senpai, mu mumumumumu muri. What was this hot progression? (Mainly in the thin book.) However, I won't allow it. Wasn't this the equivalent of power harassment? A Robattle Fight cannot commence unless both sides agree to it. [\[77\]](#)

Then again, why didn't I remember? Nobody showed me a photo? Even if there was a photo, I still had no friends so I didn't have any way in which I could borrow the photo. Ah, this is regrettable.

Although I had already formed that conclusion in my heart, I still could not mask my regret as I spoke.

“I have no impression of it.....”

“.....It's better if you don't remember it.”

Totsuka turned his head abruptly.

What was he wearing..... It would be too normal if he was wearing a maid or a nurse costume. A sailor suit was also not really unexpected for a student. That means, it was a China Dress? My personal opinion was that a costume that revealed the chest, as well as a deep slit would be more suited for Tostuka. See, if you were to tie the hair into a bun-

But wait.

This was not necessarily so, for the Chinese dress would place an emphasis on the young aspect of Totsuka, so it may not be that choice as well. In other words, it would make him even cuter than usual.

I stared at Totsuka.

“What on earth could the costume be.....”

“Really! Don’t think about it! Stop!”

Totsuka knocking on the table and interrupted the conversation. His face swelled up to exaggerated amounts, seemingly very angry.

“Ah, no, I was thinking of using it as a reference for this year.”

Although I had an excuse, Totsuka turned his head to the side without replying me. Even when he was angry, he was so cute. No matter when, I had to say “That’s great! Come and find!” [\[78\]](#) However I was not the Girl of Love, Hachimanna. Rather, you could say that I was a sad warrior.

I know that Totsuka didn’t like others treating him as a girl. As expected, I can’t let him hate me. Then again, will he face me again? Even though I wished for it, Totsuka still did not look at me.

Both of us were silent for a while, Totsuka stole a few glances at me as though he wanted to ask me something. His actions were like those of a squirrel. It made one have the urge to ask him “Did I bully you?”

“I am going to buy some yam. Do you want some, Totsuka?”

“No, No.”

“Then, that. Coffee?”

According to my past experiences, Totsuka was unexpectedly into coffee.

Both of us finding a compromise. This was how negotiations were supposed to proceed. Well, it would only work if both sides had the intention to negotiate in the first place.

Luckily, Totsuka had such an intention, and he nodded hesitantly.

“.....If it’s coffee.”

Totsuka broke into a smile shyly as he said it. Although I wanted to smile as well, I held it back. Because that probably wouldn’t be a smile, but a smirk.

“Then, I am going off to buy it.”

“Ah, Un. Take care.”

I stood up and waved gently to Totsuka.

Although I don't normally eat with Totsuka for lunch, but this sort of interaction wasn't that bad. This sort of happiness that wasn't forced felt good.

Seems like this was a service only provided by the rain..... It would be good if it could rain every day.

5-2

Walking out of the classroom, the corridors during lunchbreak were very crowded. It seems that due to being unable to go outside, it was even more bustling than usual. As expected, some of the people had gotten carried away with the mood and were now playing hide-and-seek. However, their crazy antics did liven up the students that were entering or leaving the classroom.The rain is such a bother. If only the temperature could be lowered by two degrees.

As I approached the second year student classroom, I felt the gazes of others. The feeling of everyone around me laughing away, accompanied with the humid weather, was discomforting.

The students in this school have a wrong inclination towards the idea of “hit the man who is down.” To stand out was bad, but the bad will inevitable stand out, and will become the target of biases.

The most important bit, was to neither stand out nor yield. As long as you did not admit to being defeated, then you will not be defeated. If you didn’t view the problem as a problem, then there won’t be a problem.

In the instance when one admitted failure, that was when one took the greatest hit. Because of the notion that justice must triumph, then the losers must be evil. And when dealing with evil, it was right no matter how you dealt with it.

This was the iron rule of school and society.

Low-caste members or failures were detested by all, and hence abuse was natural. The school was such a place whereby such trial in absentia was carried out.

Everyone was the plaintiff, and yet everyone was also the accused. Everyone was also the prosecutor, the defense lawyer and the jury. Not only that, the judge who gave the final judgement was also everyone. In the end, everyone was bound by this concept of ‘Everyone’ .

I fear that the day whereby they were free of these bonds would never come.

Unexpectedly, perhaps the Riajuus who went about playing with others cheerfully was so as to escape such trials by absentia. It seems to be a preventive measure to prevent one from being back stabbed when one wasn’t around.

I ignored the gazes and occasionally turned my head around to intimidate them with a scary look, and arrived at the vending machine on the first floor.

Although I was here to buy sweet drinks, but to Chiba citizens, sweet drinks mainly refers to MAX coffee. I slotted in some coins and pressed the black-yellow button that resembled a bee. "KACHA." With that sound, the first can dropped to the bottom, and I started to think.

What's next would be buying coffee for Totsuka.

Well, MAX coffee was something that all Chiba citizens drank. MAX coffee was really omnipotent.

As my hand reached for the button without hesitation, I heard some quick steps from behind me. Seems like there was someone who wanted to buy the same drink as me, or perhaps to buy some sweet snacks.

I took the can of MAX coffee from the outlet and retreated swiftly to the side. I was very confident in my ability to not be a hindrance to others.

However, that footstep did not continue to walk forward.

What's happening? Was that person hesitating over whether to approach me? I looked at that person as I entertained such thoughts.

And then, I saw Hayama Hayato with a bitter smile on his face.

Hayama, upon noting that I didn't seem to have anything to say, nodded his head slightly and walked towards the vending machine. After a bit of hesitation over what to buy, he pressed the black coffee button. Look here, are you trying to pick a fight with me by buying something else other than MAX coffee in front of me?

I opened my can, and even Hayama's words that followed seemed like he was trying to pick a fight.

".....Seems like progress isn't all that smooth."

"Ah?"

Was he trying to pick a fight or remonstrating me? Even though the intention behind his words were not clear, but if one understood Hayama, then one would know that he was saying it out of true concern. Not causing trouble was the way he lived his life.

"If it involves people then there will be trouble. That much is natural."

To me, no, probably to Hayama as well, this was natural. It would be a miracle if the relationships between the groups formed by the executive and administrative committee turned out fine. Just the number of people alone were sufficient to cause friction between them. I laughed scornfully at Hayama saying," Are you really asking this

now?" However, Hayama did not laugh.

"I am not talking about that. I am talking about the class."

I thought that he was talking about the Sports Festival Committee, seems like I was wrong. Class matters, does that mean the one that involved Sagami? Miura was probably worried about her as well.

However, no matter which problem it was, they were all the same.

"The answer is still the same."

In the end, the root of the problem did not change. The important bit was, whether a person could manage the work successfully. After all, human relationships were troublesome. Whether you viewed it from a macro or micro point of view, the work that had to be done was similar.

Hence, the answer to both the problems were the same.

"Once things turn sour, it would be unable for it to go back to its original state."

Hayama didn't seem to understand my answer. He didn't drink from his opened can of coffee, only sending me a reproaching gaze.

".....Is that so?"

"Probably."

As I finished that, I turned my body and prepared to head back to the classroom. Then, I heard a voice from behind me.

"Sorry about the stuff with the Sports Festival."

"Huh?"

I turned my head, and Hayama's gaze gradually lowered.

"Because I convinced Sagami-san to take up the post without giving it further thought."

"No, I had already decided that Sagami would take the job. Even if you didn't asked her to do it, I would still have done it. Rather, you were a great help since I didn't have to step in. Thus, this has nothing to do with you."

If a quarrel was about to break out in front of him, Hayama would step in to diffuse it. This was Hayama's nature. I was abusing this point this time. Apologizing to me was illogical.

“However, I support the idea of Sagami becoming committee chairman. If there’s any problem, I will help too, so please go ahead.”

“Ah, Un.....”

It wasn’t that easy to just list out the problems.

Just as I intended to speak my mind, Hayama noticed it and smiled.

“I have heard a little on the side of the clubs.”

Ha, was this new already leaked? Then again, since Totsuka was already worried about it, Hayama knowing such things was obvious.

However, this had a much stronger impact than I had imagined.

If even the soccer club, who was led by the super charismatic Hayama was also like that, then from the personalities of both the soccer club and tennis club, the members were probably gentle and easy going people.

That is to say, the situation in other clubs were even worse. There was even the possibility that they did not want to cooperate anymore. At the same time where people were spreading malicious gossip, they were also consolidating everyone’s opinion. In the end, they will become stubborn and be a stickler behind this unified opinion. This situation will further be cemented after everyone’s affirmation and approval.

During this time, playing the Hayama card was indeed a valid choice.

Hayama, not only was he an opinion leader, he could also garner the support of the soccer club and will result in the Sports Festival being able to progress smoothly without problems.

However, this would only raise Hayama’s value, but it would not elevate Sagami’s appraisal. This was the Cultural Festival all over again when Yukinoshita took up her post.

..... Well, Sagami herself would probably be happy at receiving Hayama’s help.

However, if Hayama and Sagami were to become closer, Miura’s mood will get even worse, and the consideration towards Miura will make Sagami shrink even more. The class atmosphere will enter a deflationary spiral. The opposition between these two sure were bothersome.

No, wait a minute. If the administrative committee received Hayama’s help, then Sagami will definitely even more irritation. If that’s the case, then I should seriously think about objecting to it.....

Whether it was Hayama or Yukinoshita, although they were both wild cards, but putting them to use effectively was no easy task. This time, there was a need to deploy them while letting Sagami be the main consideration.

As I was stimulating the moves of all these pieces like a chess problem, I heard a hesitant voice.

“What’s the matter?”

Seeing my sudden silence, Hayama looked at me in surprise.

“Ah, no..... Well, that, should be no problem. No need to worry.”

“.....Really?”

“Well, if there’s any problem I will talk about it then.”

Having spoken my piece, I turned and left. Although it seemed that Hayama still had something to say, but seeing that I had no intention of listening, he waved to me silently.

I walked swiftly through the corridors.

Hayama was a trump card against the anti-sagami or the anti-committee alliance. However he could not be used against both at the same time. In the event that Sagami and the committee were facing off against each other, it would be hard to utilize Hayama’s peaceful nature to calm down both parties. In fact, it may even spark off something else.

I first had to think of a way to remove the friction between Sagami and the helpers.

For this problem, the conference today yielded some plans. More or less, some preparations were being done.

Yes, even so.

----- Once things turn sour, it would be unable for it to go back to its original state.

The words that I once said, continue to swirl about in the depths of my heart.

5-3

The footsteps of the people entering the conference room were unusually heavy.

This was expected given what had happened last time. Despite the weekend, it seems like the hateful image had not disappeared. In fact, I felt like I was one of them now as well.

Because of that, the number of people coming to the conference was a bit lesser than that day. Most of the people arrived punctually or slightly later than the scheduled time.

As a result, the start of the conference was pushed back 5 minutes from the scheduled timing.

Meguri-senpai who was keeping constant watch over the door, did occasionally glanced at the clock. Then, she spoke to Sagami.

“Sagami-san, let’s begin.....”

“.....Yes.”

Although Sagami answered as such, she did not stand up.

“I, I as well.....”

Yuigahama wanted to stand up as though to encourage Sagami, but was stopped silently by Yukinoshita. With Yukinoshita’s hand pulling at her, Yuigahama sat down reluctantly.

This was all right.

What Sagami needs to do after this was to perform a purification ceremony. [79] This had nothing to do with the others. Sagami probably found the gazes of all those present unbearable.

Sagami breathed deeply and stood up determinedly. If the time dragged on, there will probably be someone who will stand up. She probably wants to avoid such a scenario. This sort of pride, no, more like her vanity. That was really a strong display of vanity there.

Even though the speed at which she stood up was slow, she did walk at a brisk pace.

Her target was the back of the conference room, where the helpers sat.

Haruka and Yukko were seated there as well.

They stared at Sagami. That gaze was perhaps that of contempt or scorn, or maybe just simple doubt.

The reason why Sagami would go there.

She will say it herself.

"That, can I have a few moments of your time."

Upon hearing this, Haruka and Yukko looked at each other. After exchanging looks with one another, they raised their head together and looked at Sagami.

"There's no problem..... Now?"

"Can't it wait?"

Hearing the objection, Sagami regulated her breathing.

".....It's better if it is now."

Hearing this, both of them replied without so much as exchanging a look.

"Then, please say it."

"The conference has already started, it's okay to say it here right?"

".....Eh"

Faced with this condition that was added on so smoothly, Sagami seemed at a loss for words.

Then, one could hear the soft laughter coming from amidst the helpers.

On the other hand, the rest of the people in the conference room were trying their best to keep quiet, and were silently listening to her.

This really was a purification ceremony, and also a form of punishment.

Under everyone's gaze, Sagami's face was flushed red, and her shoulders shook gently.

And then, the words came out bit by bit.

"That, sorry..... I, was thinking about how to make the Sports Festival into a more enjoyable event. I was only thinking about that."

Sagami spoke those apologetic words.

Haruka and Yukko as well as the rest were silently listening to that soft and slow voice.

Just like exposing herself to the rest.

However, it was normal for the one who bore the brunt of the blame to face the wrath of the people. As long as something negative happened, they will find the culprit and shame ridicule and scorn said person. That was a rule of society. As a result, the people here will likewise require that Sagami admit her fault in front of everyone.

What Sagami said just now, fulfilled their request.

Haruka and Yukko seemed a little trouble and replied as they played about with their finger.

“.....It’s no problem. We were too busy thinking about our club activities as well. Sorry.”

It seems like the members of the Sports club seem to think so as well, and now the place was filled with voices of “Yes” and “Un” agreeing with Haruka and Yukko.

Thanks to those voices, Sagami’s voice gradually became more fluent.

“Un. That, I. As I thought, I still want everyone to get hyped up, and I will work hard for the sake of that. That’s why, I would be more than happy if I could get everyone’s support. Of course, I will try my best to cut down on everyone’s burden regarding club activities.”

Sagami raised her head firmly as she said it. In contrast, the helpers were slowly shifting their gaze away from her.

Even so, the meaning behind her words were already sufficiently understood. The people present continued to reply.

“.....Un, we will do whatever we can as well.”

“Thank you, please take care of me.”

Perhaps she was already done talking, and hence she lowered her head speedily and turned about and went back to her place. Meguri-senpai looked at her and heaved a sigh of relief.

“We can finally bid goodbye to this matter.”

She smiled at me, to which I could only nod my head.

“.....Indeed.”

I replied as I swallowed the worry that was stuck in my chest like a small piece of fish bone.

Looking at the surface, it did indeed seem like it was the end of the matter. From how it looked, it definitely looked like the matter was over and done with.

But if one thought about it deeper, one would see that there were still things unresolved.

This was a habit of the loner elites.

Sagami's words, to me, seemed like while she was trying to defend herself, she was at the same time, outright accusing them of wrongdoing as well. She was ingeniously using Haruka and Yukko club activities as a complement to her explanation, to bait those words out of them.

What an annoying thought.

However, the annoying thoughts that I had would always come true, unfortunately. Sometimes, it gave me the wrong impression that I somehow could predict the future.

As I hoped that my line of thought was wrong, I sat there quietly, waiting for the conference to begin.

5-4

The conference got off to a proper start once the late-comers arrived.

Under Hiratsuka sensei's watch, the first to speak was Meguri-senpai. Perhaps she felt guilty about handing everything over to Sagami just now.

"Un, then this conference will begin now. First, according to the conclusions we derived from the past conference, I had thought about some ideas to improve upon the proposals. Yukinoshita, will you please?"

"Yes."

With that, Yukinoshita stood up. Then, upon sweeping her eyes across the student councils, its members hastily changed their positions. Just exactly when did they become that obedient towards Yukinoshita?

The members of the student council gave everyone a piece of print-out.

Yukinoshita held a similar sheet of paper in her hand and began her explanations.

"We made enquiries regarding clubs who had some problems with the schedule. Then, we rearranged the schedules for all the clubs from now till the actual day itself. We have already taken into consideration each club's schedule in this time sheet. Please confirm."

Hearing her speak and with a glance at their own sheet of paper, the helpers seem to be thrown into disarray. Seems like they saw something unexpected and were now thoroughly confused.

Well, probably because this schedule list was created by us from our own point of view. But their reactions were within our expectations.

"Eh, because this is only an improvement, it's not finalized. If there are still problems we can still amend it. I have already spoken to the club presidents so there shouldn't be any huge problems."

Yuigahama added swiftly. She belonged in the top-caste, and so contacting the clubs' presidents and asking for their cooperation would be a simple matter to her. Everyone present should've at least understood this.

"Also, for the Kibasen, in order to lessen the burden, we have decided to amend a portion of the rules as well as simplifying the costumes. This will probably lessen the workload and manpower needed with respect to the target that we set last conference."

Yukinoshita continued to explain. What is manpower? Was that like the sky of love? You meant the sky of ninjas. [\[80\]](#)

That sort of preemptory explanation was probably better termed as threatening.

Yukinoshita had made a detailed comparison between the current and old schedule list. I wasn't sure whether it was just that she was a speedy worker or that she was too bored. Probably a mix of both. There was also the possibility that she didn't want anyone else to give complains to delay the progress of the festival. She sure was evil.

However, this appeared to yield results, as the helpers all complied with the new schedule.

Yukinoshita surveyed the quiet room, and sat down. Probably she was going to let the committee chairman take over.

Noticing this, Meguri-senpai urged Sagami on.

"Then, following what was said the last time."

"Yes, yes. Then, let us divide the jobs using this new schedule as a basis."

As I watched Sagami speak from the side, I placed my chin gently on my hands. Measures have been taken up to this point.

The conference settled the issue with the schedule, as well as obtained the support of various sports clubs presents. The most important topic, the cost of the Kibasen had also received several suggestions on how to reduce its cost.

And now, Sagami had reconciled with Haruka and Yukko, the 'leader' of the helpers.

In the current situation, there was nothing else to do. Treating it as a plan B to restore relationships was more than sufficient.

Even so, my eyes were moving by themselves, searching for reasons to be uneasy.

My ability to think of the worst possible scenario was still ever present.

But doing so was not to prevent things from happening. I could only think up of plans to resolve it once such things happen, even I pitied myself for that.

Because you see, didn't this cause the same amount of hurt to those who knew and didn't know? Rather than being over-confident, the extent of damage would probably be lesser the less one knew. To reduce the damage to its minimum, so that the time to recover will be shorter. This is one of life's wisdom.

They were solemnly distributing work in the conference room.

Looking about, there seems to be no big problem.

Sagami was doing a good job distributing the work. Meguri-senpai was beside her. Also, due to Hiratsuka-sensei exercising her authority over them, no one was making any fuss.

There didn't seem to be any dispute on the surface.

But in that instant, I saw that look in those eyes.

Those eyes belonged to Haruka and Yukko, who were standing at the whiteboard writing their names. As they passed by Sagami, their faces were expressionless. When they passed her by, both of them nodded their heads at each other.

“Hey.....”

“Hey.....”

I heard the sound of them whispering. Perhaps they were discussing some other matters, I didn't know anything about it.

Well, the apology had only taken place quite recently. I didn't think that the awkwardness that existed between them now would lead to anything.

I stopped my observation and speculation, and reclined on the chair. As I straightened my back, the chair made a creaking noise.

As I leaned back on the chair till it was on the verge of falling, I turned my head to look at the back.

Water was still steadily running down the window panes.

The rain, has yet to stop.

5-5

(Editor's note: This chapter is merged with chapter 5 on the compilation volume 6.5 but is chapter 4 on side volume 6.5. The title is **Yuigahama Yui was surprisingly popular.**)

It has been a few days since the last conference, and the administrative committee are finally getting to work.

However, it could not be said that the work was being done smoothly. Even though the shift has been readjusted according to the new schedule, the work efficiency was lower.

It would be an illusion, to think that everyone would get to work simply by adjusting the shift and schedule.

We are not machines, our body needs to take a rest when we are unwell. There would be times when something crops up all of a sudden, or when we would need to take a break when we are fatigued.

Hence, Yukinoshita was once again readjusting the schedule, to let everyone have some room to breathe.

However, despite this, some things cannot be avoided.

Rescheduling, was a means to set in stone the jobs of others. After confirming one's job scope, they seem to have made some sort of promise, vow or limit themselves to it, never bothering to step over the boundaries and helping others.

To completely distribute the jobs, if you take it the other way, it also meant to limit the boundaries of their job completely.

The ironic part was that, the workload that was decided that each would do turned out to be shackling them instead, and became the reason why they do not want to work.

Well, it's not like I don't understand them.

Huh? That's not my job..... This sort of words were a norm in this world. People who got their remuneration but did not do their jobs were really strange. It's true, it's true!

.....Despite thinking so, why am I filled with this desire to work hard?

As I prepared the programs, my mind was stimulating how students would walk past me and toss down their documents as they entered and exited the room.

"What is it this time?" I muttered as I flipped the paper. It was a request for items that were to be used during the event.

“.....”

I scratched my head and stood up from my seat.

There was a need to change the mood. To do that, I needed to go out, go home take a bath, eat my dinner and go to sleep. Changing the mood is very important.

As I walked out of the conference room to buy some coffee, I was approached by Yuigahama.

“Ah, Hikki, you are here just when I wanted you.”

Yuigahama’s job seemed to be in charge of creating the entrance to the event. What, are you here to take a break? As I thought so, I tilted my head to inquire about what’s plaguing her.

“No-, there’s a lack of manpower. Hikki, come and help.”

“No, I still have other stuff to do..... Anyway, how are the helpers doing?”

Hearing this, Yuigahama smiled helplessly.

“Because of club activities.....”

“That again?.....”

These few days, this sort of pattern has been emerging more and more frequently.

Using Sagami’s *We won’t let this be a burden to your club activities* as a pretext, there were many who had begun to go back earlier, or skiving during work.

Then, as the number of people who came to help became less and less, the power to draw in more people grew weaker as a result, and the efficient of work each day dropped.

Everyone has stuff to attend to, it is impossible to have everyone prepared and ready to work at all times. As long as there was a gap, there would be a need for someone to fill it up.

However, if everyone is only thinking about ‘My job’, then it was impossible to fill said gap. Even though we had some buffers in place to try and avoid this kind of situation, but we were eventually getting overwhelmed, and the gap gradually could not be filled.

Hence, even the entire executive committee had to be activated to do the work.

Especially Yuigahama, who seemed to be showing up everywhere, and busily involved

in scheduling jobs.

However, if you think about it calmly, going by the standards as of now, Yuigahama really wasn't suited for this..... Although part of it was because she was a girl, the more important part was that one could see she lacked the power to create anything judging from her cooking ability. This not only added on to other's problems but also delayed the completion of a job. Since I was a bit tired from doing all these jobs seating down, I figured that moving about now wouldn't be such a bad idea. And then, from there, after that..... Well, whatever.

"..... Let me help a bit, I could do with a little change of mood."

"Un! Thanks."

Yuigahama pushed my back happily.

My back and shoulders obeyed her readily. However, no matter what, this change of mood brought about by the change of jobs, means that I was still going to do more job. This..... let me feel a sense of hopelessness.

Walking through the corridor, down the stairs, I arrived at a spacious room that had many pillars in it. I had no idea what they people were creating with those but it seems like some sort of admission gate. I originally thought that only the helpers from the sports club were there, but it seemed like there were also members from the student council making all sorts of creaking and squeaking noises whilst sawing something.

The others did not appear to be doing anything, and were repeatedly glancing at the clock.

"What's the heck is this.....?"

"Aiya- Ahaha."

Yuigahama tried to gloss over the situation with a laugh, but in actuality, she couldn't bring herself to laugh. It was nearing the Sports Festival and there wasn't much time left. And yet, this was the situation that we were seeing.

Although I was mentally prepared, but to actually see this scene with my own eyes was heart-breaking. If this was the situation I guess I should just go and take a break as well.

".....Seriously, this is like my attitude when I used to work."

"Hikki, I am surprised you didn't get fired with this kind of attitude....."

I too, thought that it was a miracle. Why didn't I get fired when I did my work in a

slipshod manner? I really wished to be fired. I used to slack off in this manner as well after that.

The stores know that this was the risk they faced when recruiting high-school students. Then again, it was really easy to find people to replace us.

However, it wasn't that easy to find replacements for the people in the administrative committee. Of course, it was possible to recruit new helpers by going about and negotiating with the various clubs. But the problem was that we didn't have the luxury of time, there was also no one who had the spare time to go around holding discussions with the clubs.

The smart thing to do now was try and reconcile with all the clubs.

Be that as it may, I used my rotten eyes to look about the surroundings once more.

There was no one who seemed to have the will to do anything. If even I, who had no will to do anything could say that, then this was a really bad situation.

Just as I was thinking about how it came to this, Yuigahama who was beside me, scratched her cheeks and said with a bitter smile on her face.

“Although I did try to motivate the crowd, but it seems like this mood.....”

“No, this is fine.”

In this case, if there was someone who is overly spirited, it would only result in a sense of revolt for said person. It was already way past the time to be motivating people.

From the very beginning, people should be apathetic towards one another, and do their own stuff according to their pace. Those who did not feel like doing anything will not do anything no matter what you tell them.

Whether it's the blackboard or the admission gate, there seems to be a lot of work left to do. Since I was already here, I might as well finish them.

Now, there was a student council member who seemed to have spotted a familiar face in the crowd, and had begun walking towards him. Upon closer inspection, there were a few people behind him who were taking a break. What's this, a shift system? (/act blur)

“I've brought along a helper-“

Yuigahama said as she pointed to me, and the student council members looked relieved.

.....Fumu. I am going to do my best on my own. I silently extended my hand. They realized my intention pretty quickly and passed the hammer to me. Then I nodded my head. They nodded theirs as well and went to sit down at a cooler spot.

Student council members were a valuable fighting force. It would be troubling if we were to force them to keep working. You guys have a good rest.

I waved the hammer about, leaned over, and steeled myself in preparation for what's about to come.

"Well then, let's go."

"Oh-----"

Yuigahama replied and then squatted down opposite me and held the wood in place. No, that, if you are going to squat down like that, your panties would be revealed. That..... You should've worn sport pants this time! Really! I don't know where to look!

I swung my hammer to try and get rid of such distracting thought. If I didn't focus I would hit my finger.

As the both of us got down to work, the people who had been always resting seems to be a little unsettled. They stood up and said, "Let us help out as well."

Then, they intentionally decided to do their work in an area whereby we could see them. Well, they probably felt that we were monitoring them. But this was only a temporary threat.

As I watched them do their work, I continued hammering in the nails. Were these guys really hammering the nails..... I think I said something of that sort.

After continuing my work for a short while, someone unexpectedly called out to us. Naturally, I wasn't the one who the person called out to.

"Ah, Yuigahama-san."

"Oh, what's the matter?"

Yuigahama turned her head and asked. Because of that, the plank lost its balance and the hammer nearly struck my finger. That was dangerous. Had it really hit my finger, I would have cried out "Kugyu" [81]



This is dangerous okay? So please hold it properly for me? I raised my head to tell her that and saw that Yuigahama had turned her head and was looking into the distance.

Seems like she was looking at the person who spoke to her.

“Is it okay to do it like this?”

“Ah-. Seems about right!Not very sure though.”

Not very sure..... This girl sure was easy-going..... At the same time, a member of the student council swiftly came over, and mumbled a few words of advice before going away.

“Oh, seems like there’s no issue.”

“Thank you. You were a great help. Ah, right, after this I may have some matters that I might not really understand so could you please give me the contact details.”

“Okay.”

And so, Yuigahama ran towards the student council member who had just left. She took the phone from the student council member who was resting under a tree. And so, the contacts of the two were quickly exchanged.

“Thank, thank you.....”

His face seemed at a loss for words as he mumbled his thanks.

..... Well, so there was this kind of person as well.

Under the pretext of participating in events, when the real intention was to actually befriend girls. I guess this kind of thing can’t be helped.

(TL: It should be noted that the guy did not specify WHOSE contact details he wanted, hence this whole fiasco.)

Must ignore, must ignore. I shouldn’t be thinking about such stuff.

Today, I am a worker whose job is to hammer these nails in as fast and as quick as possible. I don’t care about other matters.

Even though I tried not to notice, but the voice still seemed to be as sharp and clear as ever. How strange. This could be considered one of the three big seven wonders. No, the total was 21 wonders!

“Come to think of it, what should we do for the weekend?”

Even though I know they weren't talking to me, I still shot a glance at the speaker.

What followed next, was that he stopped working and turning to talking mode. Oi oi, even Kaminuma Emiko no Oshaberi Cooking [82] does work as she speaks. Go and learn from her.

However, well, to continue to talk was only natural. Yuigahama was a girl who would give a proper response to others.

"Ah? Same as always- However, I have to do things related to the Sports Festival. Well, today too."

"If it's the weekends, how about helping us out when our club activities end? Give me a way to contact you."

Ah, yes yes, If you really intended to help out you wouldn't be slacking away just now. My hands suddenly broke out into sweat. So typical of me. When I was in the second year of elementary school, boys and girls were forced to hold hands with each other during our field trips. It was then that people were disgusted by me because my hands would always break out into sweat. My hand was so sweaty that I could barely hold my hammer. Maybe I will just fling the hammer at the back of his head. Ufufufu.

Just as I was lifting my head to take aim at my target, Yuigahama spoke.

"Oh-, that's fine I guess. But, if we do our jobs properly this week then we wouldn't need to do it on the weekend. I guess I really want to go out and have fun during the weekends."

Despite Yuigahama trying to change the topic back to work, the guy had already lost interest in that, and continued to converse. How do I put it, he's really persistent.....

"Go and have fun. Where?"

"Ah? That's probably decided by Yumiko..... Well, I will leave it up to Yumiko?"

"Ah, Miura-san..... Miura-san is it....."

The guy's voice seemed to grow softer and softer.

Was this that, was this proof of my focus and concentration? Definitely. Just like when I was studying and listening to music, once I really concentrated I would be in a state whereby I couldn't hear the music anymore. Yes, it's probably that state now.

Focus, focus. Focus on the plank. Now's not the time to be distracted by other things. You see, that, I , I love doing work.....

.....Anyway, I want to hurry up and finish this and leave this place.

I continued to hammer the nails. My mood was like that of visiting a shrine at two o'clock in the morning. I put my all my might into hammering the nail into the cursed door, the English name was Fantasista doll. I poured forth my hate and pain and hammered hard on the nail. [\[83\]](#)

I hammered the nail in smoothly and as I prepared to take another nail from the box, I realized that it was empty.

".....There are no more nails."

A long nail. No, a normal nail would do.

"Here."

I looked up and saw that Yuigahama had already prepared a nail for me.

".....Oh."

I took the nail from her, taking great care not to touch her hands. That, is the same logic as how one would clutch the change tightly when it is given to them by a cute cashier at the convenience store and somehow fall in love with her. Guys should try their best and reduce their contact with females.

"Then again, is this really ok?"

"Ah, what?"

Hearing my question, Yuigahama gave a surprised look.

"Nothing, if it's okay then it's okay."

Yuigahama was really popular amongst the guys.

This was something I had heard during the break in Chiba village from Tobe. Although Tobe wasn't saying it to me, but I did indeed hear him say it.

That was only natural.

If we were talking about looks then she would be in the slightly cute category. She was nice to everyone. Furthermore, she belonged to the top-caste which only made her more desirable.

The most important part was that, she was very kind.

Even if her greatest flaw was being an airhead, in the eyes of others, even this was

possibly a virtue.

Under the illusion that such school events would bridge the distance between the two genders, she would probably be approached by boys she wasn't familiar with. That was natural. This sort of thing probably wasn't only limited to such events.

Witnessing this personally, I once again had this feeling.

That fellow really wasn't any ordinary guy. As expected from the top caste. Was he trying to make it look natural? After trying so hard then running away, that sure is one weird guy.

As I thought that, I noticed that the surrounding had gone very quiet.

"Huh? Where did all those guys go?"

I scanned the surrounding, but I could only see the resting student council members. As well as Yuigahama, who was right in front of me.

"Un, seems like they left first because they had club activities.Or maybe, because of Yumiko."

.....Ah, as I thought, was that guy being self-conscious of his actions and so ran off to hide?

Seems like she invoked Miura's name in order to avoid the guy. From her everyday appearance and the way she talked, Miura was a formidable woman. This type of girl was good at politics, or rather, her skills in politicking in the classroom was top notch. If you could get 90 marks in politics, then you would probably be at the same status with Miura. Her leadership skills were about 95 points. Using her name to repel guys was a really scary tactic. No, I really do understand how the guys feel. Miura was scary.

However, there shouldn't be a problem in telling him her contact. Well, there probably were some other reasons. Anyway, if I were to think about this deeply, it will only get depressing, so I shall just forget it.

I pulled myself together, and took up the hammer with my other hand.

".....Anyway, let's continue."

"O-"

Yuigahama raised her hands and replied energetically. Still, the one who did the work was me.

The sound of the hammer continued on.

The sound of work echoed out loudly throughout the courtyard. From afar, the sound of the baseball team in the grounds, the soccer club, the rugby club as well as the whistle from the track and field club were mixed together.

After hitting in one, two more nails, I could feel the pair of eyes staring at me.

“.....What?”

If you are going to keep staring at me I can't continue my work. When I asked my question, Yuigahama hastily shook her hands. No, hold the plank still will you?

“Ah, nothing.Anyway, Hikki, you seem awfully familiar with this.”

“I think everyone knows how to do this sort of thing.”

Because guys have had experience with a mini-toy car, they would also know how to use such tools. Screwdriver notwithstanding, pliers, pin vise were all tools that we had used.

Not only the mini car, guys were those who wanted to create anything with tools in their hand. One could fashion some meaningless thing from a piece of wood. A cardboard box was also possible.

Whether we did a good job or not doesn't matter, the thing was that such simple jobs could be done by us. Especially so for guys with no other capabilities.

Well, girls on the other hand, didn't know how to make anything. If they needed any help with such stuff on-site next time, it would be better for me to do it. Of course, it would be the best if I didn't have to come.....

As I thought about this, I played with the hammer, and Yuigahama suddenly murmured something.

“Hey you know.... this isn't bad, don't you think?”

“What's not bad?”

I couldn't keep up with the workload..... Come to think of it, work was still being done at this sort of time, and it was we who were doing said work. This was really strange..... I could've sworn there were other things to do.....

What's this person saying..... I sent Yuigahama a look of protest, but she seemed to find something interesting and smiled before continuing.

“I think that this feels like youth.”

“.....Idiot. This make me feel like a corporate slave.”

If staying back and doing this work was known as youth, not to mention that this work was something that is beyond your job scope and was forced onto you. If this is called youth, then all the employees must be soaked in youth. At least when my dad comes back from work half-dead, he will never forget to speak about his hatred towards his company and society. I definitely did not feel that it was anything close to youth.

“I think that the youth you are taking about, is that pointless sparkling, stupid thing, that thing which likes sudden surprises?”

“What’s up with that impression? I didn’t say anything like that.”

She objected to my comments using an unexpected method. Am I wrong? I thought that she liked that sort of stuff.

Yuigahama sighed deeply.

“For me, I only did work in class during the Cultural Festival. I didn’t get to do anything with you two.”

Fumu. That is indeed true. Rather, it should be said that the class event went on so smoothly due to Yuigahama playing an active part in it. This girl, although she doesn’t know anything, but she sure was concerned about the management of money.

However, this sort of active participation could not be considered *Youth*.

“Didn’t you have enough youth in class? Also, you formed a band with Yukinoshita. Have a little patience. That is more than enough youth for you.”

“It’s not like that.....”

Yuigahama raised her head and averted her gaze. Her face was slightly red. The setting sun was pouring down from the special building. When I noticed it, the whole courtyard had been dyed red.

By my hypothesis, the meaning of youth according to Yuigahama, meant doing that sort of thing with Yukinoshita, well, that is really, some heavy love.

I should probably give her a warning.

“If you keep sticking to others, they will be quite troubled. The most important thing is, it’s going to be the most tiresome when you are aware that it is tiresome.”

“Uwa.....Don’t keep saying this kind of annoying stuff.....”

Yuigahama said so with a look of disgust. Stop leaning your body backwards. The board is already making tilting backwards. As long as you don’t make the board tilt, I don’t care how you want to lean your body.

After readjusting it, I nailed the last nail into the last corner.

Fumu. Anyway, I guess it’s done. What follow next would be to saw away all the extra portions. Chiba citizens have a deep connection with saws. That was because of this Mount Nokogiri in Chiba. [\[84\]](#) Anything else, we didn’t feel any connection with them. Or rather, you could say we had 0 connection with them.

I stood up to take the saw. Just as I was coming back with an appropriate saw, I saw that Yuigahama had a sullen look on her face.

“That’s not what I wanted to say either.....”

“Well, never mind then.”

I used my other hand to take the saw and stepped lightly onto the board to stabilize it. To prevent my hand from messing up, I looked straight in front, not once moving my eyes.

“I still have to do this on top of attending all those strange club activities. Even if we weren’t doing it together, I would’ve done it anyway.”

Creak, creak, the sound of the saw blocked out plenty of noise. I continued to saw swiftly in a diagonal fashion.

“.....Un, that is indeed so.”

However, no matter what kind of noise the saw made, it had no meaning. Because I could still hear Yuigahama’s voice clearly.

I would have done it anyway. Those words were rather.....

Those were words that led me to lose confidence in myself more than anyone else.

It was still better to assume that there won’t be a next time. I can’t think that way. The relationships between people were more dangerous than I imagined. Our relationship was like that as well.

Bit by bit, the excessive portions of the board was sawed away and the floor was a mess of sawdust. The saw in my hand felt lighter and lighter, and eventually, a clunk sound could be heard.

5-6

After I completed my job, I left the finishing touches to Yuigahama and the members of the student council. I went back to continue my own work.

Entering the conference room, Yukinoshita raised her head and looked at me.

“Ara, and here I was, thinking where you ran off to..... Are you done with the movement stimulation that I asked you to do just now?”

“I will give it to you when I am done.”

Don’t ask me such a pointless question! This kind of thing is easily understood with just a bit of thinking. I too, will want to give it to you as soon as I done. The instant I am done with it I will definitely give it to you.

I stared at Yukinoshita, who looked at me nonchalantly as she brushed her hair aside.

“Right now, I am not confirming whether you are doing your job, I am pressuring you to do it.”

“Is that so?.....”

Well, if your superior were to ask you *Are you done?*, your only answer is *Going to do it right now!*. There was absolutely no way you could say no in such a situation at your workplace.

Guess it can’t be helped, back to work it is. Can’t help it if someone pressuring me. Yukinoshita truly did have the reputation of being a pressure-cooker. She must have been under constant pressure herself. She probably grew up trying to rebel against these sources of pressure.

As I complained in my heart, I sat myself down lifelessly on the chair beside Yukinoshita that was already prepared for me, and continued my unfinished work.

I took out documents from the piles accumulated on the table to do some verification.

One piece. Two piece. Three piece..... Four piece. Oi-

My work has increased yet again.

I stared at her with my eyes full of bitterness like Banshu Sarayashiki. [85] The recipient of my bitterness, Yukinoshita looked at Meguri-senpai without speaking a single word to me.

.....Ah, that's right, it's Meguri-senpai.

However, it seems that Meguri senpai was also busy working. She was clearly going to take her college test soon, so these jobs should be given to others to do. That means, there would be a need for a student council president election..... She still can't step down from her duties before her successor is chosen.

At least there should be someone who can lessen her burden.

I shook my head vigorously, and with my mood turning better, I turned my gaze towards the documents again.

I scratched my head vigorously, and my mood changed for the better and looked towards the documents again.

Figuring out where students should sit, their movements, the holding area where people would wait for the next program, the position of the entrance and exit gates and their respective marking, stimulating student's movements whilst following my own markings, then to fine tune and arrange everything.

What a mundane job.....

"Please help me with these as well"

One more document appeared on top of the mountain of documents. What was added to my workload was a clear folder containing some documents. That, my table is not a Dropbox, don't just keep putting stuff here, I will be really troubled.

Looking to my side, I saw that Yukinoshita was keying in something to the computer.

This girl was really still doing work as I had expected..... When others were working, I would feel that I must do so as well. I think that peer pressure is really bad.

No, this sort of pressure was useless against the helpers, unfortunately. An atmosphere of 'not a care in the world' was not rampant amongst them.

This portion of the job was something that had to be done by us.

Although I understood this, I felt uncomfortable if I didn't complain about it. As my hands worked, my mouth moved along with my hands.

"Why do I feel like I have been doing nothing but work all this time."

"It was unexpected."

Yukinoshita answered coolly. Of course, her hands were not taking a break, I could still

hear the sound of the keyboard being pressed.

Just as Yukinoshita had said, unexpected means unexpected. Never thought that I would have to do this sort of job.

“That’s true. My dad would faint if he hears that I am actually doing work.”

“I am not talking about this..... No, this is rather unexpected as well. Well, I guess your dad is most probably like that too”

I heard Yukinoshita’s sighing away in astonishment. However, only one sentence was needed to explain this.

“Because it’s my dad.”

“That was kind of persuasive..... Compared to this, I am more surprised by Sagami-san.”

Hearing that name, I spun my head around in surprise. Yukinoshita was looking at Sagami, who appeared to be working at a spot diagonally in front of her.

“She’s surprisingly taking her work seriously.”

“That’s kind of too much.....”

Surprised..... The one who pushed her onto that position was you..... However, thinking of it that way, I was a little surprised as well.

I had thought that Sagami had definitely lost the will to go on, but surprisingly, she seemed to be taking her work seriously.

Well, now was probably a crucial point in time for her as well.

If the opinion of her continues to fall at this time, Sagami will not have the chance to salvage her ratings again. The only path left was to scorn at those who were more inferior than her to protect her pride.

A person’s pride, vanity had a very sensitive disposition.

However, it would be great if she really was doing all this seriously. Reality did not show that this was the case.

Yukinoshita seemed to understand this point very clearly, and added in some sharp words.

“But, she definitely cannot be considered excellent. Hence it is regrettable that I cannot give my work to her as well.”

“There’s no point in using her as a comparison against you.”

If we were to use Yukinoshita as the basis for comparison, then everyone else was of the utmost incompetence.

In that instant, Yukinoshita shot me a dirty look as though she was rebuking me.

“It’s not only me. There are others who are themselves, rather excellent people.”

“Well, when you put it that way.....”

Those who were on par with her would probably be people like Haruno or Hayama.

“Also.....”

Yukinoshita continued in a small voice.

I did not know when, but her hand had stopped typing. She gripped her fist lightly on the keyboard, and there was a little bit of strength being focused into it.

“.....I can’t really be considered outstanding. This schedule is on the verge of crumbling.”

She pressed the keyboard forcefully. Seems like she was editing the schedule by following the current progress.

However, it wasn’t Yukinoshita’s fault that the shifts needed to be edited. That’s to say, nobody would have to do anything if that schedule didn’t exist.

“It’s not really your fault.”

“So you say.....”

“It probably isn’t. It’s the society’s fault, society.”

“You really are the best when it comes to shirking responsibility.”

Yukinoshita laughed at me like I was an idiot. She straightened her back and looked at the computer once more. As though to make up for the time lost spent conversing just now, her fingers flew swiftly and lightly across the keyboard.

Yukinoshita seemed to have felt some sense of responsibility but really, it wasn’t Yukinoshita’s fault that we had such a problem.

Comparing the shifts and the schedules, there was a more important reason for the delay in work.

That was the motive.

Even though the conference was not under some sort of boycott, but it kept stopping every now and then due to opposing opinions to the extent that even work was done under the pretext of *not becoming a burden to one's club activities*.

Under this type of situation, those who came to help out could not possibly have any motivation to work.

Hence we had to resort to using shifts to allocate jobs. However if we used this 'shifts' to allocate jobs, then we also lose the ability to do flexible scheduling. The lack of manpower would then have to be supplemented by those in the executive committee.

In the end, we would always end up doing over-time to complete various odd-jobs.

Also, there were a lot of uncertain factors that had resulted in loose ends.

Seeing the current progress, I guess that in the near future, these uncertain factors would lead to a eventual failure.

5-7

Just the sound of people talking in the morning ruined my mood.

The day had just started, but there was this feeling of ‘It has already ended’ that I felt. What a horrible feeling.

Due to the people from the other classes causing a ruckus at the school entranceway, there was a frivolous mood in the air that was even more depressing than the mood in the classroom.

There was nothing bad about people having a close relationship with each other, but there was still a need to maintain some distance.

A friend’s friend.

IN the previous year, they were still a class, but over time, drifted apart.

Club members.

When one encounters several unfamiliar faces, they would all be putting on an appropriate facade. Their façade was of course, different from their real personalities.

Everyone would be deceiving others on a daily basis. From this, I could tell that being alone was the way to go. From the beginning till the end, there would be only me.

Thinking about this, I have always felt that being straightforward with this world would bring in a huge profit for me.

The noises from the surroundings were cut off completely as I was immersing myself in these thoughts. To prevent myself from being washed away by the crowd, I moved my body slightly left right, up and down, just like the Dempsey roll. [\[86\]](#)

When I reached my shoe rack, I whispered in a small voice *Makunouchi!* *Makunouchi!* and extended my hand forward. I wasn’t going to execute a punch, just wanting to take my shoes. It is really bad that I keep finding joy in such meaningless delusions.

I put my hand into the shoe locker to retrieve my indoor shoes, when I suddenly felt my hand brush against something.

What is that? I thought, as I took it out to see.

.....Oh.

Did someone throw rubbish in my shoe rack?

What was thrown into it were paper scraps made from sweet wrappers.

Ah, what is this, some sort of bullying?

Anyway, I should go check whether there were any more things thrown inside.

I quickly took some glances at the shoe racks about mine, and it seemed like trash was thrown only in mine.

.....So this is what it is?

I became slightly disheartened at what I saw. When I discovered this matter, a wave of fatigue assaulted my shoulder all the way to my back.

Rather than say that I was upset or angry, it would be more appropriate to say that I felt a sense of futility.

Ignoring me, ostracizing me was something that I didn't care about since it was no different from before. Gossiping about me behind my back, I could understand that too as well.

But, I don't really understand this sort of childish action. What was the point in doing this, will someone benefit from this?

Troubling myself over this matter was a waste of time and effort. You could even say that it was meaningless.

This school was a prep school that prepped you for universities, so I had thought that there would be fewer idiots in this school, but of course, there were exceptions to everything.

This kind of action was only slightly better than resorting to violence.

Since the rubbish thrown inside didn't contain water, I guess I was kind of lucky.

In this world whereby there existed many more such idiots, having this type of people as my opponent was already kind of lucky.

Thanks to that, I learnt a lesson.

A man would be trodden all over once he fell.

Anyone would feel that, it was fine to continue bullying those who were being bullied now.

Time stopped for just a second.

No matter what this school became, I would be able to understand and thus I would be prepared. But even so, I would still be shaken by what may come.

I felt embarrassed that I was actually flustered for a instant by such a childish act.

Well, there was a still a way to counter this, given the extent of it.

I quickly composed myself and retrieved the trash from the shoe rack.

Then, focusing intently to feel the atmosphere around me.Good, it seems that my stealth ability is still there. I could still use it even in the presence of many people.

Confirming that no one was looking in my direction, I took another look at how the shoe racks were positioned.

Our seating arrangements were arranged according to the syllabary order. Thus, the one in front of me was Hayama. The one in front of him was Tobe and the one in front of Tobe was Totsuka.

This shoe rack was arranged just like our seating arrangements. Hence, the relative positions of the four of us was the same as that of the shoe rack.

This must be God's arrangement!

I took the trash in my hand and tossed it into Tobe's shoe rack, which was quite close to me.

.....Forgive me, Tobe.

Just as how I had been nobly sacrificed for someone else's joy, likewise, someone must sacrifice themselves for me.

Well, I guess you could call this a means of self-defense. It wasn't always effective towards anyone at anywhere, but this time, it was an effective method.

I clapped my hands to rid myself of the dirt that had stained my entire hand, and left the place jauntily.

Then, I heard a ruckus from behind me. That was probably Tobe who had just arrived at the entrance way after finishing morning practice.

I turned my head and glanced at him. He was greeting his many friends who were walking by and then extended his hand into the shoe rack.

"Morning! Oh?"

Tobe seems to have sensed something weird and he stopped his actions in an instant. Then, he took out his own indoor shoes with a certain amount of trepidation.

“Eh..... What! Seriously! Eh!? W – A – IT - !?”

Tobe’s shouts had attracted the attention of everyone.

Everyone looked at Tobe from afar, those who were on good terms with him walked to his side, and roared with laughter

“Tobe, what’s up, what’s so funny?”

“Fuhuhu, someone’s bullying you?”

Hearing that, Tobe turned around exaggeratedly.

“Wait a minute! There’s trash in my shoe rack, someone’s bullying me!? Wait, someone’s actually bullying me!?”

Although there was a commotion, but I could sense the tragedy in his voice. The feeling of guilt stabbed at my chest. Uu, sorry, Tobe.

As I apologized to him in my heard, Hayama had managed to extricate himself from the crowd surrounding Tobe. He too, had just come back from morning practice like Tobe.

“Tobe, so noisy.....”

Hayama appeared crestfallen, as though he was helpless against Tobe’s crying noises that was echoing about from all sides. However, as though to compensate for this, Tobe’s spirits appeared to improve. If meeting Hayama was all it took to improve your mood, I am guessing you like Hayama.....

“Wait, Hayama-kun, listen to me, I am being serious. Someone threw trash in my locker! Things like Pocky stick and crispy plum wrappers. Ah, theres a male plum inside!”

“.....”

Listening to him, Hayama’s expression hardened.

He silently put his hand into his own indoor shoe. Then he stood still just like that. He stared closely at his own shoe rack.

However, he didn’t stand still for long.

He retrieved his own shoes, and as he wore it, he smiled at Tobe. This was totally different from that hardened expression from before.

“Go and tidy up your shoe rack. Did someone mistake it for a trash bin? You should take those indoor shoes home every once in a while and wash them.”

“Now look here Hayama-kun! That’s too much!”

“I am just joking. We will go think about it if this sort of thing continues. Anyway, lets head back to the club room to put down our things.”

Hayama patted Tobe’s forehead and shoulder, who was now looking up and sighing away. Then he urged him on to return to the club room.

“Wait, you know, I was really surprised-. To think that the MEXT [\[87\]](#) said that no such bullying would exist in this school, they really shouldn’t say such lies. That’s why I say that I hate the government-“

Tobe continued to rant as he walked away.

As expected of Tobe.

Such a person who could make so much noise even if he was hurt was really rare. Furthermore, to think that he would focus all the attention on himself, so as to spread the news.

I didn’t hate Tobe. Between like and hate, I really didn’t think any of that mattered at all in this scenario.

I didn’t throw the trash into Tobe’s shoe rack out of hate, but for self-defense purposes.

Using Tobe’s conspicuous existence as a means to create publicity for this problem of mine, so as to prevent those fellows from making another direct attack again on me.

There was no need for those people to witness Tobe’s reaction. Tobe would have told many people and it would then trickle down to those guys.

I couldn’t guarantee whether Tobe would make such a big commotion, but I did believe in Tobe.

He was a very weak person deep down inside. Even if he may have been hurt often, but if it was Tobe, I suppose he would have kicked up a huge fuss for the purpose of self-defense.

From this matter, they would not look at it as a case of [bullying], but rather understand it as [being teased], [an interesting prank], and elevate it to the status of a

joke.

I had two reasons for thinking this way.

The first was Tobe's weak-headed personality.

He would wish for the topic to head towards a more interesting direction.

The second was Tobe's position in the school.

Because he belonged to the top-caste, hence he would not think that he was being bullied. The more crucial part was that when encountering such a situation, he would have massive support. Hence, it could be treated as a joke. Or rather, there was the possibility that his pride didn't want to let others see that he had succumbed to bullying.

No matter which, perhaps I should express my thanks to Tobe for the first time ever.

With the spreading of this incident, my opponent would find it tough to make a move. There wasn't a need to find the culprit. It didn't have any benefits for me anyway.

It was fine enough to just stop the attacks.

Even if they were to continue the attacks, they would find another sacrificial lamb.

Ahahaha! Most regrettable! Although that kind of underhanded method seems to be effective until now, but I am more underhanded than you guys by three times! Also, I am really mean!

.....Fu.

However, was there really someone who hate me that much so as to resort to this? I was really taken aback by this. Well, was it because our relationship was rather weak, hence this was the only way to attack me? Although I didn't feel that this sort of attacks could escalate any further.

I thought about the countermeasures I could adopt in the future as I headed towards the classroom.

Climbing up the stairs, turning the corner and arriving at the corridor that led to class 2-F. I noticed that it was unusually quiet here. Normally, this place would be noisy as heck, but today there was only the faintest of noise

I looked about the corridor, and it seemed like everyone was staring at a far-off distance, then averted their gaze and chuckled softly and whispered amongst themselves.

I looked towards the center of the vortex.

It was Sagami Minami.

And also Haruka and Yukko.

With the three of them as the centre, there were also several others had crowded around them. Some of them were standing of the side of the Haruka and Yukko whilst others were in the middle. Then, there were also some who stood on Sagami's side. Amongst them, I could see Yuigahama.

It wasn't exactly rocket science to guess that they were arguing over something.

What were these people doing..... As I looked on, Yuigahama, who had noticed me, was now running swiftly towards me.

"What's the problem?"

Hearing my question, Yuigahama leaned towards me ear. Too close.....

"Seems like Sagami-chan went to say hi to them, but began quarreling after they ignored her....."

Yuigahama sighed tiredly. Her sigh blew to my ear that cause my neck to have goosebumps, but now was not the time for such frivolous conversation.

The scene just now was that of Sagami, staring at both Haruka and Yukko. From their respective positions, it seems like Sagami, who was either entering or leaving the classroom had coincidentally met up with Haruka and Yukko, but was ignored by the duo.

Because they were blocking the back door of the classroom, people from the F-class had to enter and leave via the front door.

This has turned into some troublesome thing again.....

Was it better to stop them or to disperse them? I didn't know what to do so I looked towards Yuigahama. She too, appeared at a loss as she tried to think of a plan.

If I were to intervene here, the state of the committee would turn sour real quick. It seemed unlikely that there was anything to be gained from supporting either Sagami or Haruka and Yukko.

Thus, the superior plan was to let them remain in this stalemate, and wait for the time where they must eventually separate.

Just as I was ready to give up, the presence of someone completely changed the situation.

“Hey, I, want to pass through here.”

Miura Yumiko scattered the crowd that had gathered and strode towards the trio as she said that. She shook her blonde hair, and looked at the three of them with displeasure.

Sagami, Haruka and Yukko backed off, and used this as an opportunity to go their own separate ways.

The advance of the queen easily scattered the small fries.

She caused them all to shut up without so much as doing a mediation or persuasion.

Miura was unbelievable.....

Thanks to her, this unusual morning came to a finish.

However, the sparks did not yet disappear.

Just like the glowing embers, silently, burning forevermore. When the wind changes, they will definitely grow into a roaring flame.



やはり俺の 青春ラブコメは まちがっている。

My youth romantic comedy is
wrong as I expected.

渡 航【wataru watari】

illustration ぽんかん⑧

6.75
six and three
quarter



渡航
【wataru watari】

illustration
ぽんかん⑧

Contents

- ① それでも城廻めぐりは見てくれている。 004
- ② 密やかに、川崎沙希は問いかける。 034
- ③ そして、最後の会議が踊りだす。 068
- ④ だから、彼らの祭りは終わらない。 102

やはり俺の青春ラブコメはまちがっている。

My youth romantic comedy is wrong as I expected.

登場人物【character】

6.75 six and three quarters

比企谷八幡 主人公。高二。性格がひねくれている。
[ひきがやーはちまん]

雪ノ下雪乃 奉仕部部長。完璧主義者。
[ゆきのしたーゆきの]

由比ヶ浜結衣 八幡のクラスメイト。周りの顔色を伺いがち。
[ゆいがはまーゆい]

材木座義輝 オタク。ライトノベル作家志望。
[ざいもくざーよしてる]

戸塚彩加 テニス部。とても可愛いが男子。
[とつかーさいか]

川崎沙希 八幡のクラスメイト。ちょっと不良っぽい。
[かわさきーさき]

葉山隼人 八幡のクラスメイト。人気者。サッカーチーム。
[はやまーはやと]

三浦優美子 八幡のクラスメイト。クラスの女子の頂点に君臨する。
[みうらーゆみこ]

海老名姫菜 八幡のクラスメイト。三浦グループだが腐女子。
[えびなーひな]

相模 南 八幡のクラスメイト。女子の二番手グループに属す。
[さがみーみなみ]

城廻めぐり 生徒会長。三年生。
[しろめぐりーめぐり]

平塚 静 国語教師。生活指導担当。
[ひらつかーしずか]

雪ノ下陽乃 雪乃の姉。大学生。
[ゆきのしたーはるの]

比企谷小町 八幡の妹。中学三年生。
[ひきがやーこまち]

design:numata rina

Chapter 6: Even so, Shiromeguri Meguri is watching.

As first period began, I looked about my surroundings to release the stiffness in my shoulders.

From the corner of my eye, I could make out a figure that resembled Sagami. I took a glance at her. She was hunched over, with her gaze staring downwards. Unmoving.

What kind of impact did the squabble from earlier in the morning have on Sagami? I wish to confirm that for myself.

Up until now, these squabbles have always been confined within the limits of the Sports Festival Committee, but now it has extended itself into daily life. That is to say for Sagami, these squabbles have already invaded her life. Even up until now, she has always been waiting for the school event to end so she could forget about the unhappy past, and continue living her life as though nothing had happened. Nonetheless, these turns of events did indeed leave a scar on her.

This undeniable fact gradually showed its effects on Sagami. The usual soft voices of “She’s so pitiful” had begun to subside, and at a glance people could tell that she was depressed.

However, I didn’t think that she was pitiful or laughable.

At first, I did not take much notice of Sagami, even though I was once the object of her tantrums, but that was all there was to it.

Originally we were already walking different paths. From now onwards, I still probably wouldn’t cross paths with her.

Still, despite that, there was still the need to observe her. The reasoning being exceedingly straightforward, or exceedingly simple.

To put it simply, she was very much like an average person.

Or rather, she was someone amongst those that I know, that most resembles a human.

Although you could find some of the animalistic traits of purity, naivety, or cuteness in

Sagami, her slyness could be said to be the trademark of humanity. Smoothing things over with lies, bragging, and putting on appearances. These were actions that only humans would do.

However, the way Sagami makes friends, as well as the method through which she communicates are closer to that of wild beasts. That is to say, we could look at her as a highly developed animal.

For example, like a bonobo or a chimpanzee. The aforementioned animals had class and rank. When met with restraints, they would escape them intelligently. When under threat, they would chatter agitatedly.

In the process of communication, one was often limited by social status, or maybe people had always been wary of it. Sagami Minami was such a person.

There were those whose way of making friends were different from her.

Consider for example, Miura Yumiko.

Her way was the equivalent of a tiger making when it comes to making friends.

When friendships were established, she would place them under her ‘territory’ and maintain them, treating them as her own child, protecting and raising them.

Of course, this was similar to the image of that of the Holy Mother or an affectionate mother, but to other animals she is just a fierce adversary with acute claws and sharp teeth. I mean it, she really is scary...

Miura and Sagami both made friends, but their group of friends were completely different.

There is no right or no wrong to this.

Naturally, both were right.

Just like how people have different strengths in this world, owing to different positions, the criteria by which something is right is ever changing as well.

If I have to say it, it would be that perhaps both of them have the common notion that loneliness is evil.

The class of 2-F had such thoughts in mind, and a deadly air filled the classroom.

A way to describe it would be like the bush in the savannas. The bush here refers to the forest, not the president.

Incidentally, the forest here also does not refer to that singer who argued with his lyricist, but a place where the trees grow. By the way, that also does not refer to the spirit bomb, [88] but it wouldn't be wrong to say that everyone is currently sapped of their energy.

In this highly-developed civilized society, a laidback man like me could only watch on in silence at the sudden appearance of this highly-strained, wild, and foreign environment. Man, it's really wild. The wild that the National Geographic keeps talking about is appearing right in front of me. Heck, the current situation is so bad that I think even the animals at the zoo are much more docile. Somehow, I felt that my life was at risk just by being in this place. It's probably the same for everyone as well, that there was this smell of bloodlust in the air.

The incident that transpired this morning had brought with it a queer sense of tension in the classroom.

The reason being Miura and Sagami. The fact that these two did not see eye to eye had not changed, but the difference in power between the two had become even more pronounced.

Tigers are the kings of the forest. A monkey was just a resident of the forest. A common populace could not simply hope to match up to the might of a glorious king.

Normally, there would be this constant chatter even during lesson time. Today however, was totally quiet. Only the occasional sound of Miura tapping the table with her nails could be heard. There was even the occasional nervousness that one had when they were about to cough.

No matter who it was, no one looked at either Miura or the target of her anger, Sagami. No one wished to be associated with either of them, and they had the thought that it was better to not agitate them further.

This was especially true for Hayama, Yuigahama, and Ebina who knew better than anyone else what to do in this situation. For they were Miura's friends. Hence, no one else bothered to go up and talk to her.

Well, it's only adding fuel to the fire if you ask someone who's mad why they are mad. Even if that person knew your question was borne out of care and concern.

There is a saying that goes, 'A wise man stays away from danger', and so the smart ones will not approach others without any particular reason. Being in contact with others would be equivalent to sowing the seeds of trouble. Hence, those who are alone are the sages, a model of intelligence.

Even so, a certain amount of time had passed since morning up to the current break

time. The class had more or less resumed its usual chatter. No, perhaps it was just them wanting the day to pass like always, trying to tell themselves that today was just like any other day, to pretend that nothing had happened at all.

This sort of self-delusion is rather important. However, as there was no need for me to do such a thing, I could feel the dullness of the class, to the point where it was creepy.

Whether one's relationship with another was good differs completely from person to person. However, those who were truly close to Sagami wouldn't worry about that at such a point in time. It was only those she wasn't really close with that showed care towards her. Even so, they didn't really try to make conversation with her or approach her. One could say that her being alone was partially due to other's kindness, or maybe it was completely due to kindness.

Just like how the sun rises daily, the classroom would probably return to its usual state given sufficient time. Miura had already returned to her usual self, chatting listlessly with both Yuigahama and Ebina-san.

Noticing this, I took a glance about the classroom.

Sagami had quietly left the classroom. Despite it already being break time, it seemed that she had no intention of staying behind with her friends to gossip and badmouth others. Earlier this morning, she had gotten into a fight with Haruka and Yukko. Having that witnessed by a huge group of people, Sagami's pride probably took a huge blow from that. There are times where people will actively seek to be alone. Isn't that a bit too selfish of them to just decide that they want to be alone whenever it's convenient for them? Normally, they would be mocking or looking down on the loners.

However, those who truly seek loneliness have their own way of doing so. At the very least, they don't do it to obtain the pity of others, or in the hopes of obtaining concern from others. Doing so will only lower your own self-worth. It was akin to announcing to the world that if no one acknowledged them, they have no reason to exist.

Just now, Sagami's friends had tried to make light-hearted chit-chat with the unusually quiet Sagami.

However, Sagami gave a helpless grin instead.

"There's something... I need to do."

With that, she quietly slipped away.

This was totally different from her usual actions.

Keeping her distance from people, maintaining a distance from them.

This was extremely different from the usual Sagami who had, up until recently, been trying to grasp the attention of others or to seek the acknowledgements of others. I was shocked by this sudden change and my eyes followed her every move.

Let me repeat this once again, people do not change that easily.

That is my belief. If someone could change that easily over any trivial reason, then that was probably not the real “them.”

Egoistic people, as well as those self-conscious, would always reject change. All humans would, by default, wish to protect their self-identity.

If any person still wished to change, then there was only one reason.

That would be because they were smashed to bits after falling from a great height, and experienced true pain for the first time. Therefore, instinctively, they change to avoid experiencing the same pain again.

Doing so was merely a front to mislead people into thinking that one had grown. However, doing it habitually would eventually let it become a part of you. We can only determine a person’s character through their actions alone. Objective criticism would be criticism towards their actions. Hence, by instinct, they would use their actions to try and change other’s view towards them, even though their true nature may not have changed at all.

What’s this? Mother Teresa?

Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values, and your values become your destiny.

Words truly worthy of Mother! Such great words. Mother sure is wonderful. Mother Ranch is amazing! The soft-serves there are great! [\[89\]](#)

We judge a person based on their performance. Words, actions, habits. The people around us judge each other based on that.

Then, I wonder, what exactly Sagami’s change in her actions signifies.

6-2

Today was the day where it was forecasted that a meeting for the entire sports committee would be held. The key points of discussion being to check on the sports festival progress as well as to discuss possible problems that may arise. However, thinking back to what happened this morning, I had an uneasy feeling even before the meeting started. I felt that it would not progress smoothly at all. Heck, even my hair was reacting to that unease within me, moving ever so slightly.

After school, I walked towards the committee room. I wondered if it was due to the fact that the library and staff room were nearby that I felt that the place was unusually crowded.

Now, the students walking along this corridor would never have imagined that they were just one wall away from people who were discussing about the sports festival. In fact, it would've been strange if anyone even knew about the existence of the sports festival committee.

Even in a committee that few knew about, I still went about trying to hide my own presence. Such was my character.

Everybody, this is Ninja Hikigaya. Well, rather than talk about hiding my presence, it would be more correct to say that I have zero interest in it. Hachiman knows this. The super peaceful loner gets along very well with everyone. (Because there's only myself to get along with).

However, even if I were to erase any hints of me ever existing, someone would still notice me. That person was Hiratsuka-sensei, who had just left the staff room and was now walking my way. Noticing me, she raised her hand slightly, to which I nodded in reply.

We walked towards each other, and when we were at a distance where we both could hear each other clearly, Hiratsuka started to speak.

“Hikigaya, is there a meeting today?”

“Ah, yes.”

I replied to her as I took a slight glance at the conference room. Hiratsuka paused a little before continuing.

“...Sorry, there’s something I need to do today so I can’t be there.”

“I see.”

If that's the case, then we would lack yet another person who could control the crowd... The unpleasant feeling from before began to grow. My Hachiman radar was already at 3 bars. Come to think of it, the expression 3 bars was rarely used nowadays. Recently, all the smartphones have 5 bars of reception or so. However, the reception indicator did not really reflect the actual reception it was getting. What's going on...?

"At about this time, the second-years need to continue on with their activities right? I have a lot of work to do as well. I have to attend to matters regarding the school excursion as well. Then, there's yet another important event waiting for me..... Seriously, why is all the work coming for me...?"

Hiratsuka sighed tiredly. Ah, is this a sign of what's coming next? That she is going to spout something about the lines of "I am still young, hence all the work..."

However, I won't let you say that. Each time I hear something like that from her, there would be this inevitable sense of pity that I felt for her. Incidentally, I should also mention that I would also find her quite cute whenever I see her rejoicing over being able to say trivial stuff like that, hence there was a definite need to prevent her from saying that.

I decided then, that I should speak first to gain the upper hand.

"Well, sensei, don't overwork yourself..."

I mean, she is already getting old. Well, those words I kept to myself. I didn't want to get bashed by her.

She didn't hear the sarcasm in my words, but rather, treated it as some form of concern from me.

"My my, it's rare that you would say such admirable words. I will keep them in mind."

Then, she smiled at me. ...Well, I guess she too knew that she was overworked. Besides, it's not like I wasn't really concerned about her health, so there wasn't any need for me to correct her. However, facing her smile directly was rather difficult. I averted my eyes and what entered my view next was the sight of the conference room's door.

"...Now then, I should get a move on."

"Okay, take care then."

Those words were strangely embarrassing to my ears. But we soon started moving.

As we passed each other, Hiratsuka-sensei patted my shoulder lightly.

“Don’t force yourself too much either.”

I didn’t understand the intention behind those words, and so I turned my head. However, all I saw was Hiratsuka sensei walking further away from me at a steady pace. As though she knew that I was watching her, she raised her hand once more, and waved.

...Ah, don’t get too worried over me. You are getting old, after all.

6-3

The noise in the conference room was louder than usual. Hiratsuka-sensei being absent during the meeting probably had a huge influence to this. Though that may be so, no one at the executive committee was talking. It was only the helpers that were chatting away.

If this was the scene before the meeting actually commences, then there was nothing strange about it. A few casually chatting here and there after meeting each other was also normal. However, the regrettable thing about this is that the meeting had already commenced.

It was as though this meeting was not taking place at all. Of course, as a meeting between high-school students, no matter how unmotivated they were, the bare minimum that they could do was to at least stay at the meeting place. However, those waves of soft gossip could not be avoided.

In the midst of it all were Haruka and Yukko. Both of them were totally like minor characters. I couldn't even tell one from the other. Furthermore, there was a crowd of people surrounding them, which made them appear even more insignificant than ever. They really do have that 'minor-character' feel to them.

In sharp contrast to the executive committee sitting in a \square -shaped pattern, the helpers were clumped together into a tightknit group. The two groups looked like two different clans facing off against each other.

"Hmm... Will each class please report your current progress..."

In the midst of the noise, Sagami had started talking.

However, there was no response from anyone.

"...First, let's hear about the situation regarding the craftwork. How's the entrance progressing?"

Meguri-senpai who couldn't bear to watch the scene any longer, interjected with her own question.

Well, if the other party had any motivation at all, it didn't matter how the question was asked. People who were motivated would complete the task properly. However, in this sort of extreme situation, if someone didn't get straight to the point in their question, if no specific party was targeted by the question, there would be no answer.

Although Meguri-senpai directed the question to the crowd of helpers at large, the one

who stood up was Yuigahama.

"Ah, yes. The shape of the entrance is more or less there. Then, what follows would be the paint and decorations... Something like that."

"I see. Thank you very much."

Meguri-senpai replied with a huge smile, but the expression on her face was a little grim. This was to be expected of course. Craftwork related labor were mostly delegated to the helpers and the person in charge of it all had already been designated. It should've been that person who answered.

However, by not answering, it was as though they were trying to get the executive committee to lend a hand. It's not like I don't understand how they feel. After all, the work was thrown to them in the midst of the preparations for the sports festival.

Could it be said that we were entering a negative spiral? Right now, not only was there no motivation, but the sense of responsibility was beginning to fade away as well.

The atmosphere right now had the hint of "Just give me whatever that you don't want to do yourself."

Amongst the helpers, I am pretty sure that there were people who were thinking, "I was forced to do it," "I will do it for your sake."

Anyhow, the position that they had adopted now was one whereby we were the ones begging them for help. It has reached a state where they were trying to make us feel that they were taking out a little of their precious time from their club activities to help us.

It was obvious which side had the advantage. If there was some sort of tangible award, maybe the mood might change a little. However, we were unable to make such promises. Was this the fate of all sports related clubs in this school? They were always asked to help out year after year for this event.

Since there were no rewards to speak of, raising their motivations was naturally difficult.

Though my skin could feel the stiffness in the air, the meeting must continue on.

"Next, we have the special program... How are the preparations coming along?"

As she ended her question, she looked in Yukinoshita's direction. This portion was probably all done by the executive committee. Even so however, due to the continuous addition of various task, it was quite a feat to get everything done nicely.

"We have more or less decided on the boys' special program. Also, regarding the

captain for the Boutaoshi, the red team has already decided on a candidate. From here on, please link up with Hayama-kun for further confirmations.”

Yukinoshita replied to her fluidly. Well, Boutaoshi didn’t really require much preparations. The rules were simple as well. You just have to decide the captain for the team and that’s about it.

The next problem would be the Chibasen.

“Hmm, regarding the girls’ program...”

As Yukinoshita was speaking, a sudden loud noise rang out from amidst the crowd. Glancing towards the source of the disturbance, I could see a few girls whispering to each other, their faces nearly pressing against one another. Then, one of them lightly raised her hand.

After making sure that she was indeed raising her hand, Yukinoshita nodded her head slightly.

“Is anything the matter? Please speak.”

Upon taking a closer look, I notice that the girl who had just been urged to speak was Haruka.

“That... activity called Chibasen? It’s a little....”

Haruka didn’t look at Yukinoshita as she spoke, but was instead watching her friends’ reactions as she dished out her words bit by bit. It seemed like this was an answer that she had come up with after discussing it with her friends. We waited patiently for her to continue.

Suddenly, Yuigahama who was sitting beside them sighed. What a coincidence! I was feeling exactly the same way as well. The way she spoke made it clear that she was going to reject the idea no matter what.

The reason for those vague words was because she had trouble putting it into actual words. That is actually quite a bad trait. I know that because most people who converse with me all have this same problem as well. Ah, being an esper is really quite bad. Maybe she was forced by her father to become a nude model [\[90\]](#)?

I wondered what she would say next. Although she could more or less guess the contents, Yukinoshita pressed her to continue.

“It’s... a little.”

Her normally sharp glare, combined with her cold voice froze the very air about her.

Haruka who was under her intense stare was scared motionless. Though she seemed to have cowered under those eyes, she still continued to speak haltingly, probably because of the perceived support from her group of friends.

"That, Chibasen. Isn't that, like, a little dangerous... You see, the festival is coming soon. Then, with the addition of the club activities, the chances of getting injured is quite high, so I don't really want to do it..."

Having said this much, Haruka stopped talking and gulped.

The ensuing silence that followed made it seem as though we were waiting for someone. In that momentary silence, we hesitated to say anything. What was surprising however, was the fact that Sagami was the first to respond. She pushed aside her chair and stood up.

"W...- why are you saying this now...!"

Her mouth opened and closed, and at last, no sound came out of it at all. Then, she looked at Haruka and Yukko, her shoulders shaking slightly.

"We have been having that thought since some time back..."

"...We do have club activities after all."

Haruka and Yukko both looked away. Well, they did have a legitimate reason. During the temporary truce that they did have with Sagami, they had already gotten her to agree that club activities would be prioritized. They had also expressed that they will do their best to aid us. Furthermore, using that as an excuse, they had managed to get Sagami as well as us to be more understanding of them. Which is to say, they had gotten approval for their actions in a very legitimate fashion. It should've been during back then, that we should have struck back and rebutted them. After being lenient on them once, they were now taking things for granted and trying to push it.

Right now should be the time to strongly rebuke them. That country that claims itself as the world's police has always been saying that we mustn't submit to terrorism. Well, there is nothing inherently wrong with that. We shouldn't be using wayward methods to try and force the other party to submit to our own selfish aims, after all.

I snuck a glance in Meguri-senpai's direction, trying to see what would be the executive committee's response. Noticing my glance, she smiled and nodded at me. Then, she looked at Sagami.

It seems like she would be leaving it in Sagami's hands.

Sagami was currently biting her lips.

“But, this has been decided already...”

Finally, Sagami, refusing to give in to them, uttered those words. However, her voice grew softer and softer with each word. Both Haruka and Yukko glanced at her before returning their gaze to the surroundings.

After exchanging a look with one another, both looked at Sagami once more.

“It’s true that it has been decided already. But, if the idea is wrong in the first place, I think that we should correct it now.”

“Indeed, after giving it some careful thought, I think this should be the way.”

Both their sentences sounded as though they had prepared it beforehand. No, I bet that they had indeed thought of this to say beforehand.

It was precisely because of that that the seating arrangement was in such a manner. It was only natural to try and gather those who had similar opinions, and have them seat close to you. In the face of pressure, using numbers to quell your opponents was the simplest method.

Before the meeting had even begun, or perhaps during the meeting, one just needed to complain and voice out what they found unsatisfactory. Doing so, it will gradually cause the others to feel the same way as well. This much, was natural.

Be it Sagami or the executive committee in general, everyone should be somewhat unhappy with us. People were bound to be unhappy at the notion of being “used.”

The destructive power of badmouthing others was multiplicative. Just like how those games get exponentially harder. You could probably say that it has a synergistic effect. Even if each person’s unhappiness was small, their combined unhappiness was not something that should be underestimated. Unknowingly, those people will begin to succumb to the illusion that they are somehow revolutionaries or righteous crusaders that will right the wrongs of others.

When you know that someone has a similar ideology to yours, you would be able to justify your thinking, even if they might be wrong to begin with. If everyone’s thinking was the same, everyone will just blindly assume that their own thinking was right.

It was happening right now, at this very instant.

Because people were using their previous remarks as an excuse to reject our proposals as well as to seek the help of everyone, those who were currently unhappy would surely be itching to say something now as well. Using those remarks to demonstrate the fact that there were also others who felt unhappy, and to let all of these unhappy people stand by their side.

In order to prevent this from happening, the executive committee must demonstrate their strong leadership abilities, and shoot down Haruka and Yukko's opinions completely. Just like in the world of wild beasts, one must show the other side who is the stronger party.

If it was Yukinoshita, this was probably what she would do. No matter how much she would've had to twist her words, she would definitely snipe them down, right here and now. If it was Yuigahama, she would smile and gloss the whole thing over, and in between words like, "Ah," and "I kind of think that..." would search for openings to initiate a negotiation. Whichever route one decided to take, both were equally valid to deal with the current situation.

However, before we could act, Sagami had already started speaking.

"Right now, even if you were to say something like that..."

Sagami mumbled weakly on. Her face didn't look too good, probably out of unease. Swaying to and fro, as though she could fall at any moment, she sat down once more. Just like that, the stage is now set.

Watching how Sagami, the head of the executive committee, caved to the pressure, the complaints and grumbles spread out throughout the entire room like ripples on a water surface.

"Chibasen is dangerous."

Someone said that very softly. I didn't know who, but it was someone else other than Haruka and Yukko. Then, other people chimed in on the matter as well.

"It's too close to the meet..."

"There's no time to prepare the costumes as well."

"If we get hurt, who's taking responsibility?"

The voices came from all directions. This was like lighting a fire in the wild. After the initial small ember, it was soon going to turn into a roaring inferno. Anyone could open their mouth at will or just follow up on what others have already said. The current situation was well beyond salvation.

In the meeting room that was currently overwhelmed with complaints and questions, the sound of clapping hands rang out.

"Silence! Attention!"

It seemed that the person who had clapped, was Meguri-senpai. She was now standing

up.

“We are very clear on the doubts that everyone has. We will think of the solutions.”

With her announcement, the room suddenly grew quiet.

As expected of someone who has been accustomed to such scenes! Her response to the situation was lightning-quick, and she defused the scene in an instant. Well, it's as they say, prevention is better than cure.

If it was possible, stopping them at an earlier stage would've been more desirable. Meguri-senpai had probably wanted to test Sagami, hence the reason for her silence just now. Wait, that means we two were of the same mind..... There isn't a reason for me to complain about her interjecting only now then...

Meguri-senpai continued on, so as to stop any possible complaints, “Anyway, please continue on with your other works.”

However, the people present were now looking at each other, whispering here and there. It seemed like they still wanted to continue discussing the previous topic. Once again, I tossed Meguri-senpai a look of suspicion.

Although it was obvious that Haruka and Yukko were just trying to be clever just now, I couldn't assert that their worries were unfounded. It was indeed the executive committee's job to oversee safety related matters. Especially since the big meet was drawing near, everyone's concerns over safety could be understood.

However, if that's the case, then we wouldn't even be able to hold a normal sports meet...

You will bump into things when you walk and you will trip when you run. No matter what we do, there's the possibility that we could get hurt. As long as continue living, we would continue to get hurt.

Though that may be so, it would be pointless to talk about this sort of principle or idealism. Right now, if we couldn't say something to assuage their fears, we would probably never hear the end of this matter.

The people present were now all looking at us. Their gazes were a mixture of dissatisfaction, scorn, and contempt. Although we said that we would think about it, seeing as we have yet to give them a clear answer on how we were going to resolve it, they probably saw us as useless. To always be harping on trivial details, yet never able to give solutions to important problems, we must really appear to be some sort of useless superior lacking any leadership capabilities.

However, underestimating us would be a really bad thing for them. When faced with

this sort of provocative attitude, there was someone amongst us who detested losing, who always took things quite seriously. Furthermore, she was also very talented.

Yukinoshita had always been quietly folding her arms up till now. However, she had now unfolded her arms, and had raised her hand.

“Yukinoshita-san, please.”

Meguri-senpai called out Yukinoshita’s name, to which she silently pushed her chair away and stood up quietly. Then, she walked to the front of the whiteboard and took a marker.

“With regards to the current situation, there are several effective measures.”

All eyes were focused on her now, waiting to see what she would write. As she bore the brunt of their gaze, she continued writing, the marker swishing across the whiteboard.

“First of all, it would be most important to have some people be the first-aiders. Then, they should cooperate with the local fire-fighters. They should ensure that the game rules are adhered to stringently, and dispense punishment to anyone who violates them. Of course, this would mean that additional manpower would be required...”

As she recited her proposal, she continued writing on the board. Everyone had their mouths agape. Probably because she looked so unconcerned over what just happened.

Then, after she had written quite a fair bit, she turned again quickly to face us.

“We will establish who shall be the first-aiders by discussing it with the gym teacher. As for the matter with the fire-fighters, should we leave it to the school to formerly write a proposal to them?”

Meguri-senpai looked at Yukinoshita and nodded her head. Having her idea accepted so quickly, Yukinoshita swiftly continued on, not letting anyone interrupt her.

“As for the rules, we need it to be written clearly and let the rules be distributed before the actual event. Then, we will enlist the teachers’ help and supervision. This should be sufficient to prevent any sort of dangerous plays that students may do, I think...”

Explaining things step by step was definitely Yukinoshita’s style. The people present were also scrutinizing each and every thing she had written. Taking a look around, there was no one who seemed to be whispering to each other anymore.

“What about it?”

“Ah, if it’s like this...”

“However...”

“Hmm.”

“But...”

Rather than say it was an exchange of opinions, it would be more prudent to say that they were trying to get confirmation of the current situation. Everyone was reading the mood, and in turn, responding to it. As they continued conversing using such highly-contextual words, their attention eventually fell back onto Haruka and Yukko, who had first opposed the idea.

Then, the two of them looked at each other, and this time, Yukko timidly raised her line.

“However, this doesn’t absolutely guarantee...”

She seemed to be afraid of Yukinoshita, her eyes looking about Yukinoshita’s feet, only occasionally looking at Yukinoshita directly.

Despite locking eyes with her, Yukinoshita did not shy away, but merely continued staring at Yukko with that cold, clear gaze. Then, Yukko’s voice gradually vanished. However, this should not be assumed to mean that she had retracted her statement. Right now, she was just quietly whimpering.

As if such a matter could simply be resolved with logic alone. Even if you disentangle a rope, as long as a kink remains, then it would just entangle once more.

The silence continued on for quite a while. Actually, it wasn’t that long, but the tension in the air made it appear so. Haruka didn’t really take a look at the time, but she nevertheless slowly said, “It’s about time.”

Hearing that, everyone began looking at their watches as well.

“Ah, anyway, since we now have a plan, then, let’s.....”

Yuigahama tugged lightly at Yukinoshita’s sleeves.

“...Indeed. We will do a bit more thinking to see if we can’t increase the safety a little more.”

“Let’s dismiss then. Thank you for your hard work, everyone. Those who still have unfinished work, please stay behind.”

Meguri-senpai took over from Yukinoshita and made her parting remarks. Thanks to this pleasant voice, the tension in the air disappeared in an instant and the mood

returned to normal. Those who still had work to do exuded an aura of laziness. Both Haruka and Yukko quickly vanished. A few more followed behind them. Since there was now the golden pass of “For the sake of not interfering in our club activities,” we couldn’t hold it against them.

The remaining people watched them leave. The executive committee members sighed.

However, it was definitely not a sigh of relief. Rather, it was a sigh of resignation.

The problem was deeper than I could’ve imagined.

During the meeting, after work had ended for people due to time constraints, we still have not solved a single issue. In the end, the executive committee was also in a state where we were going to have to work extra hard. With the amount of time left, and the lack of manpower as well as the addition of this new safety issue, I felt that we would never be able to catch up.

Since the number of people had been reduced, we could feel the autumn’s cool breeze blowing in from the open windows. If the wind can easily pass through the area, does that mean that there were few people in the area? That was what I contemplated as I surveyed my pathetic working environment.

6-4

(Editor's note: This chapter is merged with chapter 6 on the compilation volume 6.5 but is chapter 2 on side volume 6.75. The title is **Quietly, Kawasaki makes an inquiry**)

We continued making the entrance and the notice board as well as collecting flag poles, ropes, and other various materials. After that was done, we ticked it off our to-do list. Although the jobs were rather plain, it was still a relief to see our work eventually coming to an end. Especially since we had landed ourselves in this current state.

The real problem was when we were faced with a job where we couldn't see its end.

A handwritten task, "Chibasen safety management," was written at the end of the to-do list. Seeing those words, I frowned. It wasn't only me, but just about everyone in the meeting room had the same reaction as well.

"What, should we do about that...?"

Meguri-senpai groaned as she asked her question. Yuigahama, who had been crossing her arms and tilting her head this whole time seemed to be thinking of the same thing as well. Then, she gave up thinking and sighed.

"But, I feel that what Yukinon said is already quite sufficient. There's nothing more to add..."

"I agree. To be honest, I think we would have to cancel it if we can't get them to understand."

I voiced my agreement with Yuigahama. Yukinoshita was probably the only one who could come up with such a logical proposal in such a short amount of time. It was indeed admirable. However, if such a proposal could not obtain the other's approval, then it was no longer a problem of right and wrong.

This whole problem started as a result of emotions that have gone awry as a result of the animosity towards the executive committee as well as Sagami.

Putting it this way made the problem appear childish, but that was just human nature at work. People's emotions are hard to control. There would be times where an act of impulse could lead to a disaster. If curiosity killed the cat, then emotions would be the thing that kills humans.

Suddenly, Sagami stopped what she was doing and said in a low voice.

“Maybe it’s better for me to quit...”

It was kind of unexpected to hear that coming from her. Compared to the Sagami of the past, her tone now sounded more sincere. That was probably because she wasn’t talking to anyone in particular, but just her mulling over the matter. There was no intention of acknowledging herself in those words.

No one replied after she expressed her doubt.

In the silent meeting room, the sound of Yuigahama’s arms rubbing on her clothes as she folded her arms could be heard.

“...Probably. But we will cross that bridge when we come to it.”

In the past, Yukinoshita had said something similar before as well.

However, this time there was none of that testy nuance in it. Yuigahama’s gentle voice made one feel as though she was worried for Sagami. Sagami seemed to have felt so as well, and she had a resigned look as she smiled bitterly. It would appear that she had felt her own helplessness in this entire affair.

“That’s true...”

“Although you failed this time, it doesn’t mean there won’t be a next time. Maybe, they will understand someday...”

“I see...”

Hearing Yuigahama’s words, Sagami nodded her head powerlessly. However, she probably didn’t believe her unconvincing argument.

Sagami had already given up. Be it as the chairman or trying to get Yukko and Haruka to understand her, she had given up on both.

If even she thought that way, then there’s no helping it.

In the first place, Sagami didn’t have it in her to stand above others anyway. This much was made clear to me after the Cultural Festival.

This time, the request we had received was to make the Sports Festival a success, as well as to let Sagami think of a way to restore the mood in class 2-F.

If Sagami was upset in any way, she would probably take a short break to calm herself. Of course, after a certain amount of time has passed she would probably continue badmouthing others in an attempt to justify her actions in the past. In fact, if we were to consider Sagami’s character, that would probably be what she would do.

Even so, we should still be able to keep Sagami from running her mouth for the time being.

When we receive Sagami's resignation, we would go into full overdrive to try and salvage the Sports Festival, and attempt to fulfill the request.

This wasn't the best way, but it was at least reasonable.

In fact, for the whole affair to have fallen into this state, that was probably the limit as to what we can do.

As I was thinking, I suddenly heard the sound of a chair being pushed. Looking at the source, I could see Yukinoshita readjusting her chair's position. Up till just now, she had been folding her arms and her eyes were closed. Right now however, she had straightened her body, and was looking directly at Sagami.

"...But, are you sure that will be better?"

"...Eh?"

Sagami raised her head with bewilderment written all over her. She seemed unable to comprehend the meaning behind those words. However, Yukinoshita didn't seem to care for that as she continued on.

"There may not be a 'next time' or a 'someday.'"

Yukinoshita's words were very cold and as sharp as a thorn, but her voice was gentle. It was because of this, that Sagami could do nothing but keep quiet.

"..."

If she had said something provocative, maybe she might've gotten a fierce rebuttal in return.

However, there was nothing one could do when one received warmth during the times they are hurt or suffering. That was because one's suffering had already been witnessed by others. Because such an action from the rest had already proven just how pathetic one's own existence was. Likewise, it was because she had already noticed that she was someone that was only saved by the gentleness of others. Someone who couldn't do anything.

Rather than shoulder everything yourselves, it would probably be easier if one just pushed the responsibilities onto others who could not understand the situation.

Sagami bit her lips. The fact that she was unable to formerly say that she wanted to resign at this stage was an indication that she is still not yet mature enough. However,

at the same time she didn't say she wanted to continue on either, which showed that she had a clear grasp on the current situation.

To be honest, having it come to this stage of whether or not Sagami remained as the chairman was of no real issue. It would just mean one less manual laborer. This was now a complicated problem that needed way more than just leadership abilities to resolve. To say it even more plainly, it meant that Sagami wasn't needed anyway, chairman or not.

However, this also did not mean that everything will go on smoothly if Sagami quits. It was way too late for that.

Even if Sagami was to resign now, the problem would not be resolved.

Maybe the other party might be in a better mood if that were to happen. If the other party's wish were much simpler, like merely unhappiness towards Sagami, this problem could be easily dealt with.

However, they had some strange request complicating the matter even further.

Safety management and club activities.

Though we could try and tell them, "Why talk about this only now?" they would use their hate against us, and construct some sort of weird emotional argument.

Arguments based on emotions had no real merit. Just like this time, they had constructed some kind of weird argument after deciding that they didn't like Sagami or us.

Well, it's true that we can easily overturn their arguments. However, if we didn't resolve the knots in their hearts, they will definitely not listen to it.

Furthermore, since they had armed themselves with emotional arguments, the end result can only be that everyone would be unable to come to an amicable resolution. What would happen, would be that it becomes an endless mudslinging war.

"I..."

Sagami lowered her head and tried her best to say something. However, after saying just that one word, she didn't continue on further. Everyone was silent, waiting for her to continue. Yukinoshita had closed her eyes, quietly listening to Sagami. Yuigahama looked earnestly at Sagami. Meanwhile, I was petting my head, thinking of stupid things like, "Ah, my nails are getting long." as I waited for her.

There was only one person who did something unexpected.

Meguri-senpai coughed, seemingly on purpose, and slowly began to speak.

“I think, that Sagami-san has done a decent job.”

Sagami raised her head in surprise.

“Eh?”

Both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama had a similar reaction to Meguri-senpai’s words. This reaction was too honest, but it couldn’t be helped. After all, when one observes what Sagami has done up until today, it would be impossible to arrive at the conclusion that Sagami had done a decent job.

Meguri-senpai, noting the two’s honest reaction, looked somewhat flustered as she waved her hand slightly and continued on.

“Ah, um, that... y... you see, although the way she handled things weren’t that great.... But even if it was me, I might not have been able to handle it well too. That’s why, I know, that you’ve worked hard.”

It was a little unexpected, but it wasn’t entirely unbelievable either. Indeed, Meguri-senpai’s practical experience in such matters were at best above average, and her leadership capabilities didn’t seem that high either.

Senpai herself seemed to have noticed these points as well, and she looked away. She rubbed her cheeks, forming a difficult expression.

“No... There are a lot of others before me who were extremely good. Like, for example, Haruno-senpai.”

Hearing that name, Yukinoshita narrowed her eyes. Indeed, Yukinoshita Haruno was someone who differed from the norm. Her ability at handling situations were naturally top notch. However, it was her ability to see through one’s intentions and manipulate others that was really scary. She sat right at the top of the list of people who one could only hope to become.

“People often call me an airhead as well. It probably is true though... Ahaha, if I didn’t have the other student council members’ help, I might not have made it through the years.”

When she was done talking, the student council members had tears in their eyes. There were some who seemed so moved that they were even saying things like, “Hey, hey.” Just how much do you people adore her?

However, it could be seen from their reactions that Meguri-senpai did have a little charm to her. In contrast, Sagami had no charm at all. Well, let’s just leave this topic for

now.

"That's why I was saying, I think that Sagami has done a decent job. Since you've already worked so hard up till now, why not continue on?"

Meguri-senpai appeared somewhat shy, and she smiled bashfully. Her actions right now, along with her cute personality and the way she got along well with everyone was extremely charming indeed.

Although it was clear that no one was interested in having Sagami stay on the committee, Meguri-senpai had given Sagami an honest review of her change. That's why, she had decided to let Sagami continue on with this festival. Hence, it was why she could obtain the adoration of all the student council members, the reason why up until now, she was still the student council president.

Sagami's face twisted strangely. It was probably because this was the first time anyone had ever told her something like that since the cultural and sports festival. As a last measure, Meguri-senpai added in one more question, "How about it?" Sagami nodded her head.

Yuigahama and the rest of the student council sighed slightly when they saw this. Although Yukinoshita did not break into a smile, her expression slackened somewhat as well.

However, I didn't think that this was something worth celebrating.

Because of her choice, Sagami was probably going to be forced into more difficult situations from now onwards. She was probably going to remember how one cannot hope to complete a task without getting hurt.

Kindness is a poison. At the same time she was being healed, it would also land her in a very difficult position. In order to prevent yourself from getting hurt any further, escaping is the correct option. Now, with her decision, it was going to mean that she would bear the full brunt of any repercussions. Even if this time the festival could progress along smoothly, the hate of old would not disappear.

We already knew this. Exchanging blows would not result in friendship. Even if one could mask the malice through good-will, the malice would not disappear. At the most unexpected moments, that pretense would be peeled off, and the underlying malice and hate would be revealed once more.

That's why, there wasn't much point in Sagami's determination anymore.

However, if one knew about this, but was still willing to stand at the front, then there is meaning to that.

To revolt against ignorance, to rebel against the masses.

I will not reject those who had decided to go the way of the loner. Hence, I will not reject this scene before me, a scene fabricated by kindness, a scene that was somewhat annoying as well.

“Then, what should we do next?”

Hence, I decided to keep my judgements to myself, and continued to push the topic along.

In the first place, I didn’t have the right to prevent her from making her decision. I didn’t have the job of advising her anyway. Sagami would probably not seek my opinion either. Sagami has made up her mind to continue being the chairman. Then, what follows would be how we were going to follow through with our plans from before and come up with a concrete and tangible proposal.

Following my question, Yukinoshita swiftly replied.

“Since we can’t get this side to give up, we can only get the other side to yield.”

This girl is sure as smooth as ever... This was a plan that respected Sagami’s solution. Since we had now decided to duke it out with the others, with no signs of each other letting up, there was no other choice but to crush the other side.

I agreed with her.

“But...”

Yukinoshita words caused Sagami to frown. However, just like just now, she didn’t press on. It was Meguri-senpai who continued.

“How do we get the others to submit?”

This was a problem. Both Yukinoshita and I did not have a concrete plan on how we could achieve that. After a brief silence as we thought about it, Yuigahama raised her hand timidly. Meguri-senpai nodded her hand, urging her to speak.

“A... a way to p-persuade them?”

Yuigahama didn’t seem very confident as she said that. Well, persuasion is quite a basic idea. However, it wasn’t a very good idea to just try and persuade them in this current situation.

“It’s because we had talked so much to persuade them that we ended up in this situation...”

Since the very beginning, we had always been trying to use words to persuade the rest. From the establishment of the shift cycles, to editing said shifts to please them. Yet, it was still at this pathetic state with all the compromises we made. Meguri-senpai, who had witnessed all these first hand as well, agreed with me, and nodded her head strongly.

“Yes. At the very least, they still have motivation. If we ended up saying too much it would be trouble if they end up losing interest.”

In hearing Meguri-senpai’s explanation, Yuigahama seemed convinced. She then, with a frown, crossed her arms once more. However, I didn’t quite understand.

What caught my notice was the word, motivation. Just how did she arrive at the conclusion that everyone was still motivated?

I didn’t intend to lend Sagami a hand, nor did I consider supporting Haruka and Yukko. Because both sides were wrong. There was a need to correct the both of them.

“...We should just get all the current helpers to quit. Then, we go around recruiting new ones.”

I had said that half-jokingly. In other words, it was half-serious as well.

The relationships between the parties involved had already soured, so it didn’t matter what we did now. Since our side didn’t plan on quitting, we should make the other side quit then. This was extremely simple logic. Rather than create a breeding ground for future problems, why not just start again from scratch?

“...Hm. I don’t think we have that sort of time.”

A great many wrinkles had now appeared on Meguri-senpai’s forehead. In particular, a「川」like shape had formed in between her brow. Looking at the calendar, though it might appear that we still had some time left, the fact that we didn’t work on weekends meant that we actually didn’t have the sufficient time to start from scratch.

I too, knew that this train of thought wouldn’t work out. However, looking at the current situation and the people that we have, I don’t think we would make it either.

Suddenly, Yukinoshita spoke.

“...There is a need to get new people. Though I might say that, I don’t think it’ll be feasible to get everyone to quit. There’s no real meaning if we get them to stay till the very end and being just supports.”

“That is to say, it would be better to get these new people to join us, am I right?”

Hearing this, Yukinoshita nodded her head. She placed her hand beneath her chin and began concluding her thoughts.

"Yes. We need to think about how we can possibly bring us back up to speed, given that the current people have just been slowing us down with all their excuses and procrastination."

That is to say, even if we had new manpower, the problem of what we could use the current helpers for still remains.

After hearing all our thoughts, Yuigahama raised a finger.

"No matter what, it seems that we have to think of a way to cooperate with them."

"But, I think that they won't continue helping us..."

Sagami replied, an apologetic look on her face.

"That is because they understand that our greatest weakness is our lack of manpower."

Yukinoshita sighed all of a sudden and placed her finger gently against her temple.

Weakness, huh?

It was indeed so. Since there was no way we could change the personnel now, we had to have their cooperation. If they didn't aid us, there was no way in which we could get things done.

In other words, the success of the Sports Festival depended on them, and precisely because of that, they were able to become stronger.

It was because they knew that we wouldn't be able to get it done without their help, hence they could threaten us that it didn't matter to them one bit, even if they didn't do anything. Needless to say, it wasn't just one or two of them who thought that way. Those two had gathered people who shared similar thoughts as them, and caused everyone to feel this way.

If one relied on numbers, to exert their dominance over all others, then that said person is my enemy.

If we didn't yield to their demands, they would not help us. That was just how haughty they were right now.

Just why were they like that though? I had used my spare time to help out as well. What right do they have to say whatever they want, and do whatever they want? Are you looking down on us? Don't you dare look down on middle-management!

I hated it when the truth fails to get reciprocated, and when proper reasoning failed to get through. I hate myself too for trying to find a reason so that I could better understand their actions.

If the other side was not going to listen to reason, then we didn't have to use reason as our basis for persuasion. If brute force could work, then there would be no need for reasoning.

They had taken the Sports Festival hostage, and through their actions they told us that if we did not listen to them, then they wouldn't continue to assist us in preparations for the Sports Festival. Even though this was not something they had premeditated or wanted to do in the first place, it would appear that this has indeed become their intention.

If that's the case, then there's only one solution.

"Let's use the same tactic as them..."

"What do you mean?"

Yuigahama tilted her head slightly and looked at me.

"The crux of the matter is that they are fighting with us over leadership. The other side wants to sabotage us via a strike to achieve that aim. They want to take the Sports Festival opening works as a hostage."

"...Potage?"

Why is she repeating that word over and over again? Her face appeared to be deep in concentration as if she was thinking of something. She didn't seem to understand what I just said at all... This has nothing to do with corn or potato or even Saudade [91] for that matter. Although their readings are similar, they have completely different meanings.

As Yuigahama looked while completely frozen in thought, Yukinoshita's eyebrows were knitted together, and she looked at me coldly. What? You want me to get straight to the point?

"So. In other words, what is it that you plan to do?"

Hearing her question, a phrase suddenly appeared in my mind and so I said it.

"Mutual assured destruction."

Just by hearing this phrase alone, Yukinoshita should more or less be able to guess what I was getting at. She stared at me, her eyes opened wide and took a long sigh.

“What a surprise... To think that you would be able to come out with such an idea. Should I call it a fair and square underhanded measure, or you being downright malicious...?”

“Are you complimenting me?”

I couldn’t help but ask her that. Hearing my question, Yukinoshita looked shocked and blinked several times.

“Ara, couldn’t you tell?”

“No, I can’t...”

Hearing my reply, Yukinoshita’s face changed, and she now looked extremely happy.

“Probably not. It’s not a praise.”

Indeed. Come to think of it, she has never been fond of complimenting others. Habits are such a scary thing. However, skills such as openly praising others but actually speaking ill of them was something that took time to master. She could’ve used that time on other things... I didn’t say all this out loud, merely cursing at her in my heart. Then Yukinoshita laughed, a laugh so soft that one could’ve missed it if they weren’t paying attention.

“But, it’s not exactly a bad idea.”

Yukinoshita smiled a smile that exuded a victorious aura from it. Indeed, going on the attack was more Yukinoshita’s style than going on the defensive.

“If we are going to do that, then there are some preparations we have to make...”

After mumbling a few words to herself, she placed her hand to her mouth, looking deep in concentration. She was that close to grinning just now, but as it is now, this girl looks truly scary...

It was scary enough when she was looked so happy trying to think up a strategy. It was even scarier when she could completely figure out what I want to do just from those three words. The truth is, the others still didn’t seem to have completely understood at all, and appeared at a loss towards our interaction.

“Hikigaya-kun, could you explain your idea?”

Hearing Meguri-senpai’s question, I looked at her.

“We need to take their sports festival hostage as well.”

“Huh?”

Sagami looked at me with a mix of both contempt and surprise. This girl is really pissing me off... Her manner of speech that is, her manner of speech.

However, now was not the time for me to act like some elementary school kid. I couldn't just secretly tell my plan to Meguri-senpai and tell Sagami, “Not gonna tell ya ~” because if I did that, she would be furious, but that would also really hurt her... If you don't want me to hear you guys, then don't keep mumbling amongst yourselves on purpose in front of me. Man, the things that elementary school kids do are totally savage.

I was no longer an elementary school student. Now, I was an outstanding high-school student. Hence, like a high-school student, I continued my explanations in an impudent, roundabout manner. To be honest, I didn't feel like explaining it to Sagami in a straight-forward manner.

“To take away from them, and destroy the Sports Festival that they hope and wish for. If they are fine with that, then they can go ahead and do whatever they want.”

However, was it too roundabout? My explanation didn't seem to reach anyone at all. Not only Sagami, but Meguri-senpai also appeared stunned. Incidentally, Yuigahama also appeared to be stunned as well.

Meguri-senpai and Sagami looked at each other, as though asking if the other had understood what I was talking about.

Meguri-senpai looked somewhat troubled, and Sagami had her pride preventing her from asking me again.

At this time, there was only one person who they could rely on.

“S-so, what do you mean?”

Yuigahama tugged at my clothes. Ah, don't look so shy when you tug lightly at my clothes... I will be greatly troubled. Hence, I shook my body light, and managed to shake off her hand and continued to explain.

“If those guys secretly request to have Sagami removed, we will request them to be removed as well. If we are going to let numbers decide the victor, we just need to prepare a larger battleground.”

If they are going to try to exert their absolute dominance, we are going to do the same too. If they want to achieve victory via superior numbers, we will do the same as well.

A more direct way to put it would be.

“An eye for an eye. It’s that simple.”

With this final line that I added, Yuigahama clapped her hands in understanding.

“I... I see... I understand! It’s like...”

Because the last two words of hers were slipping off her tongue, her voice gradually faded off as she was unable to continue her sentence.

Well, words are not able to convey it as well as actions could. I exchanged a few words with Yukinoshita, who seemed to have completed her thought processes, and confirmed our next move.

After a quick confirmation on what we were going to do, I explained the plans to the rest on what will be executed, as well as countermeasures. Although there wasn’t a need for some grand concerted effort by us, there was still the need to make some small preparations.

After I concluded my explanation, Meguri-senpai sighed and then stared at me.

“...Ah, what?”

Having her stare at me like that, I couldn’t help but ask. Meguri-senpai shook her head slowly.

“It’s nothing really... Hikigaya-kun, you really are the worst.”

Then, a mischievous smile formed on her lips.

6-5

As we readied for the next meeting, other things aroused that needed preparations. The entire committee had already fallen into disarray. If the executive committee were not of one mind, then the Sports Festival would be an impossibility.

The topic for the meeting on the next day was going to be focused on the main events.

There were two big problems.

The first was related to the Chibasen costumes. There was a need to find out a way to cut the cost and workload. I had more or less discussed this issue over mail with Zaimokuza. After school, before the meeting begins, I quickly took action. If not, that person would've gone home. Evening comes quick for loners, or as the others say, "As swift as the Shimakaze" [\[92\]](#).

Apparently, has the highest evasion and speed amongst chaser-class in the game.]

In order to talk with her, I started motioning myself towards her seat. She had just finished packing up her things, and was just about to leave. Each time she listlessly took a step forward, her blue hair flowed along with her movements. The hairband that she had on was also hand-made.

Just like always, she appeared to be physically exhausted. She was looking at the classroom door, her eyes narrowed making her appear as though she was unhappy with something.

Although I had approached her stealthily without making a sound, my mind was blank as to how to actually talk to her.

"..."

What? Did you think that I should approach her with a loud, "Ah!"? Maybe, but that would be gross... We had not reached the level where I could just casually say, "Yo!" But saying, "Umm," "Hey," and "Errr," were probably fine. However, this made one appear like they didn't bother to remember the other's name. However, directly calling out, "Kawasaki" was somewhat risky as well. That is because, I wasn't really sure whether Kawasaki was indeed her name. Also, "Saki" (崎) may also be read as "Zaki." What a bother. Can someone give this kanji a singular reading already?

As I was deep in thought, an "Umu" escaped from my mouth. Due to that, Kawasaki noticed my presence.

"...Hyaa!"

Upon seeing me, Kawasaki let out a surprised but short wail, and took a few steps back. Her eyes were round as though they had just seen a ninja. Her expression had the words, “Ninja!? Why is there a ninja here!?” written all over it. Aren’t you a little too surprised...?

Kawasaki seemed to be embarrassed at her own action, and stared at me with her face flushed red.

“...What’s the matter?”

“Ah, nothing.”

I can’t say anything if you are going to stare at me like that. Come to think of it, this person was actually quite scary... Although she could be quite a nice girl if we go by her reaction just now. As I convince myself with such thoughts, I searched for something to say.

“Are you going back?”

Hearing my question, Kawasaki looked surprised. Then, she turned her back and replied in a small voice.

“...Y-yes.”

“Really?”

“...Y-Yup.”

As she replied to me, she fiddled about with her cuff, but did not look at me. However, she didn’t stop herself midway and just walk off, but continued standing there in silence.

How should I continue? Why do I feel that there is no way to continue this conversation!?

How did people normally lead the other person to the main topic...? Since we don’t normally communicate, I’m stuck here in hesitation. What is up with this mood...?

Continuing on with the silence is not an option, so I said those pointless things like “Are you going back?” and “Really?” Come to think of it, it was really quite disgusting. Kawasaki seemed to be more considerate of me, and shot me a glance and spoke.

“D-do you have something to ask?”

“Ah, yes. Do you have some free time later?”

Thank goodness Kawasaki had asked me if I had something to ask. If not, I would never have been able to state my request so easily. Finally, we can enter the main topic.

Hearing my question, Kawasaki thought for a bit then turned her face away again. Then, she replied in a barely audible voice.

“...Yes, I do.”

Oh, then that's great. With all her work commitments, cram school, and going home, I was a little worried how she would reply since she seemed so busy.

However, the next request for her was a little simpler. Yet, because of how heavy her responsibility would be, I could not use a light-hearted tone to ask her either. I wanted to ask her in a more sincere tone than usual, thus I coughed once before asking.

“...Clothes, can you help me to make it?”

Then, we lapsed into a really long silence. It felt as though time had stopped altogether.

Kawasaki's mouth was wide open. She blinked several times. After a few seconds, it seemed like she finally understood what I was trying to say.

“....Ah? I-I make? Y-your clothes? W-what is happening...?”

She seemed to have slipped into a state of confusion, and continued waving her hands about, at a loss of what to do.

Was what I said not clear enough? I had wanted to explain in detail after she had understood what I was saying. Anyway, I added on to what I was saying earlier.

“No, not my clothes. It's for use in one of the events for the Sports Festival. You don't need to make them for all of the events. You could just tell me how to make it if you want.”

“...Oh, the Sports Festival. For a moment, I thought...”

Kawasaki sighed deeply. It seemed like she was now somewhat relieved.



“...Come to think of it, you are part of the committee or something, right?”

Her previous look of anxiety was gone, and was replaced by her usual listless one. She had said it with a tone of utter disinterest. Eh, the committee don't really publicize themselves. I had thought that, other than the ones already involved, no one else would really know about it.

“Do you know of it too?”

I asked, and Kawasaki answered me in a jaded tone.

“I heard it from Taishi.”

Seems like everything about me came from Komachi. A sister's power at spreading information was really scary. Furthermore, the fact that something that should've been between brother and sister could reach someone like the Kawasaki siblings was also scary. Why do you have to talk about this sort of boring topic to others?

“As expected of a bro-con...”

I shuddered as I said it. Kawasaki who had been looking away from me, suddenly turned and stared at me.

“I'm gonna whack you.”

“S-sorry.”

Faced with that low-tone and her sharp yet furious flare, I couldn't help but apologize immediately. It was really scary how this person became so serious when it came to topics regarding her brother. The point is that her bro-con look was really scary.

Kawasaki shrugged her shoulders in surprise, and with a flick of her hand, brushed away the hair that had fallen on her shoulders.

“Committee, huh... I didn't think you would do that sort of troublesome thing.”

“It's a club activity.”

“Oh...”

I sighed as I replied her and Kawasaki gave a non-committal response in return. Then, all conversation ceased. As though unable to stand the silence, she began to fiddle about with her hair restlessly. Then, as she looked at her finger, she continued to speak in her normal tired voice.

“...Just that reason?”

“Eh? There’s no others.”

I didn’t give it much thought and replied immediately. Hearing my answer, she closed her eyes for a while.

“Is that so...”

Her reply sounded even more lackluster than before. However, I was kind of curious as to why she would ask me such a question.

“Why do you ask?”

“No, it’s nothing. I just don’t understand.”

That was natural. There was no way one could understand others. Kawasaki, who correctly recognized this, had the right to comment on it. The most important thing is, it will be trouble once others do understand. I couldn’t accept other’s concern and understanding when no one knew the answer. In the first place, I hadn’t asked for others’ understanding or answers at all.

Noticing that Kawasaki was using some really strange questions to change the topic, I forcibly brought it back to my original topic again.

“Ah, about the clothes.”

“It’s okay. Not much of an issue. I don’t work now anyway, so I am quite free.”

This time, it was Kawasaki who replied immediately.

“Really? Then, that would be a great help... Come to the meeting room one hour from now.”

Upon hearing my words, Kawasaki opened her eyes widely in surprise.

“Wait, today?”

“Um, yea. I thought you were free?”

“That is true, but... Ah, whatever, I get it.”

Kawasaki began to suppress her increasingly agitated voice, sighed, and reluctantly accepted my request. Was it too much to ask for a favor of her today out of the blue? However, we didn’t have much time. Although I am very sorry, I do hope you can still come and help out.

“Sorry, I will thank you the next time.”

“...I don’t need that.”

Although this was one of the rare times that I had said something so sincerely, Kawasaki turned her face away.

6-6

Kawasaki said that she would spend some time by herself before making her way there, so she parted ways with me. I walked towards the meeting room ready to begin the meeting. The important members of today's meeting are nearly all gathered there already.

The chairman, Sagami, Meguri-senpai, Yukinoshita, and Yuigahama, as well as the student council members.

The important topic for discussion today would be to choose the captains for the [Botaoshi] event.

Regarding this matter, the white team had already decided that Hayama would be the most suitable candidate. Though there was still the need to negotiate with him over this, Hayama Hayato was a person who would always help those in need. He would not refuse those who had asked a favor of him. Proof of these could be found during that time when we organized that pointless judo meet, the Cultural Festival, and this time too during the persuasion of Sagami to take up the role of chairman.

That means the problem that was left is to decide the captain for the red team.

Regarding this matter, there was a need to get that person's help.

Enter, Ebina Hina, full-time adviser.

"Haro haro."

As she made her meaningless greetings to everyone, she sauntered nonchalantly into the meeting room.

"Hina, yahallo!"

Yuigahama waved her hand lightly in greeting, and Ebina took a chair nearby to sit down. Meguri-senpai began speaking to her with a tone of gratitude.

"Sorry for specially calling you here."

"Oh, it's nothing. We are going to decide the captains for the [Botaoshi] event today, right?"

Ebina smiled at Meguri-senpai as she answered. Then, Yukinoshita's gaze shifted to Ebina and quickly entered the main topic.

"Yes. Everyone is fine with Hayama Hayato as the captain for the white team right? If

that's the case, then we can formally send him a request."

As Yukinoshita asked around for confirmation, Ebina nodded her head.

"Oh, isn't that great? But, I am not sure whether Hayama-kun will want to be the captain."

"H-Hayama-kun isn't?"

It was something unexpected coming from Sagami, and to that, Ebina smiled vaguely in response.

"Yes... Well, I think that he will definitely do it. But, we still need to ask him formally."

"If it's Hayama, he will definitely do it."

Hearing my words, Ebina's eyes sparkled and she leaned her body forward. Her mouth continuously sucking in the drool that kept pouring out from her mouth.

"Oya, such confidence..."

"It's not what you think..."

With a half disgusted, half surprised look, I completely denied her words. Yes, it's definitely not what she thinks. Rather, it would be more accurate to say that it was the complete opposite.

I felt that, that Hayama Hayato was one of those people who would want to settle everything amicably. That was probably why he had learned that mysterious skill known as "The Zone."

That is to say, he was someone who avoided trouble at all costs. That's why he would probably accept.

However, there was no need to explain this to Ebina. I've always felt that those sparkling eyes of hers were scary.

Hence I decided to just repeat what Hayama had said the last time, to put an end to this topic.

"He said that he would help out if we needed assistance. That's why he would probably come."

Hearing my words, Yukinoshita nodded her head.

"Seems like you've already gotten him to commit to it."

Hey, the way you put it makes it sound seriously terrible. Why do you make me out to be someone who has just deceived Hayama?

However, Yukinoshita didn't give me time to correct her and instead swiftly moved along to the next topic.

"That's easily settled then. Yuigahama-san, could you contact him now?"

"Ok."

With that, she quickly whipped out her mobile phone and began typing a text. As long as we have this hotline, it was more or less set in stone that Hayama would become the white team's captain.

Up to this point, everything was as I had expected.

The problem was the other captain.

Yukinoshita had folded her arms once more, her eyes staring at the table. On the table was a list of names for the white and red teams created by the student council.

As she scrutinized the list carefully, she mumbled, "Next, would be the candidate for the red team..."

I shot her a brief glance and replied, "Well, because we are going to be facing off against him, we need someone that is like Hayama to be the captain."

This was an event that was participated by all the boys in this school. It was better to have the captain be someone that was both famous and whom everyone wanted to become. Hayama definitely fits this role very well. Finding a second person that is like this will be very difficult.

With an "Unnn," Ebina began to think and then, energetically punched the air and shouted, "Yes!" She covered her spectacles, and in-between coarse breathing sounds, began to speak.

"Hikitani-kun is very balanced! A balance between attacking and taking it!"

Ha. Ha. Ha. Nothing of that sort. I laughed dryly in my heart. Let's ignore Ebina for now.

"Is there anyone that is like Hayama?"

I didn't really understand the situation in my school. Or rather, I had no interest in it. Therefore, I looked at Yuigahama, who seems to have the biggest grasp of such things. With an "Hmmm," she began to think.

“Someone that stands out... Tobe?”

“I think it’s more fitting to call him an eyesore.”

A swift rebuke came from Yukinoshita. My, that was really harsh.

Although Tobe did hang out with people who were absolute trash, I didn’t think he was really such a bad guy. I mean, he did become my scapegoat. (Forced to)

However, there was no way that Hayama and Tobe were on the same level. Furthermore, it was also written on the list that Tobe was on the white team too. Damn, guess I can’t use him after all.

Other people from the red team...

As I continued to scroll through the list, I discovered a familiar name. Zaimokuza Yoshiteru. He did stand out, but in such a bad way that there was probably no one else like him. Other than Zaimokuza, there was probably only Superstar man who was like that [\[93\]](#).

However, there were just too many things that Zaimokuza was lacking when compared to Hayama. The most important being common sense. Hence, Zaimokuza was eliminated. If I could, I would also want to eliminate him from my memories.

I continued scanning through the list, having been unable to find a suitable candidate. Sagami, who was also looking at the list, spoke, “Senpai. Can we get a third-year to be the captain?”

Upon hearing her question, Meguri-senpai shook her head slightly.

“Um, I don’t think so, cause my year’s students are all really docile... It’s not easy at all to find someone like Hayama.”

If we considered Hayama’s outstanding qualities, that was certainly believable. From his handsome features, good personality, athletic ability, and popularity, it made one wonder how on earth could someone like him even exist in this world.

Hayama was probably one of those kind that you meet once every ten years. He’s an outstanding talent, unlike those Beaujolais nouveau that is produced each year. Even if we were to ignore the existence of Hayama, one could not dismiss the strengths of his abilities.

If the third-years didn’t have someone like that, then we could only turn our hopes to the first-years. But they weren’t really well-known in school too, so we could only eliminate them from our list of possible choices.

As I mumbled to myself whether there were really no more viable plans, Yuigahama suddenly clapped her hands, seemingly having thought of something.

“Ah, Hayama is the captain of the soccer club right? Why don’t we pick the captain of some club from the Red team? That way, it will become something like a face-off between two captains. Wouldn’t it be more exciting that way?”

“Face-off between two captains...”

Oh. As long as one had a certain concept in mind, then it would make it okay to choose someone who originally wasn’t really fit for that role. We are going to use people’s titles to find a suitable candidate now, huh?

As expected from Yuigahama. Seems like she wasn’t just a bitch after all. It seemed like she was also good at thinking up plans for her own fun, or to liven things up.

Yukinoshita nodded her head in admiration and picked up a pen.

“That sounds good. The captains that are on the Red team are...”

“Track and field, ping-pong and tennis...”

As Meguri-senpai nodded her head, she began singling out names from the details written in the remarks column.

“Someone amongst these people who is like Hayama...”

As Sagami mumbled to herself, she continued looking through the list. She too, was searching for a suitable name. Before long, Yuigahama began to speak.

“Ah, Saika-chan is on the Red team too.”

“T-Totsuka!?”

I began to quiver uncontrollably upon hearing that name. Ignoring my reaction, Ebina voiced her support too.

“Ah, I see now. Totsuka-san was once Hayama’s partner during the Cultural Festival. I don’t think it’s a bad coupling.”

What coupling are you talking about? I oppose that entirely.

“No, Totsuka is a no-go...”

I barely managed to say all that in a collected voice. Yuigahama didn’t seem to understand.

“Why not?”

Is there even a need for a reason? It gives me goosebumps to think how Totsuka would become the target of so many guys. Oi, who decided these groupings anyway? The Sorting Hat? What if Totsuka gets into any form of danger? Don’t tell me that it will all be resolved if one shouts Gryffindor.

However, it will be really gross if I say all that out loud. You could perhaps say that, the fact that I even thought of this meant that I’d already lost.

Hence, I need to think of another reason.

“J-just think about it a little. What if Totsuka gets hurt? The tennis club is quite weak physically.”

If Totsuka gets injured during this “Botaoshi” event and is unable to attend club activities as a result, I would have no choice but to join the Tennis club to take responsibility… Hey, wait, that doesn’t sound that bad. Instead of just fifteen love, falling in love was a possibility that could arise. Ah, no way? No way, right?

As these bits and pieces swam about in my head, Meguri-senpai looked at me with a wry smile.

“Hikigaya-kun, when you put it that way, it sounds as though you are making the same excuse as them all.”

“Oh, right…”

Is it? Did I just act on my emotions? Though I am usually calm and collected, do my thinking abilities drop to Haruka and Yukko’s equivalent whenever it concerns Totsuka? Totsuka was one scary guy.

However, arguments based on emotions alone would never have any logic to it. Not even 1/3 of it would reach the others. That’s what the ED of Rurouni Kenshin said anyway [94]. In other words, it would reach the other party as long as you have three times the love. Ah, that’s so logical! I am a genius!

...Idiot. As I reflected on my actions, Yuigahama spoke in a dumbfounded tone.

“You worry too much. Totsuka-chan is a guy.”

“Also, so as to prevent something like that from happening, we are currently implementing stricter rules, so as to enhance everyone’s safety.”

What Yukinoshita said was correct. However, there was a chance that there might be someone who would flout the rules. I am still worried... Unable to suppress my

emotions anymore, I spoke against my will.

“But, it’s not guaranteed.”

“H-Hikigaya-kun? Seriously...?”

Meguri-senpai puffed out her cheeks and chided me. Somehow that had a most pleasant feel to it. As I was calmed down by Meguri-senpai’s Meguri-effect (Primary effect: Healing and relaxation, as well as an Onee-san buff), Ebina-san said something that sealed the deal for me.

“The captain is someone who is protected by everyone in the group. There’s no need to be so worried, right?”

...Protect? I protect Totsuka? I am Totsuka’s knight? I see. Not bad. This way, it’s totally alright. Then let’s do it! I want to give this idea a “Like!”

“Ah, that is true...”

Yukinoshita acknowledged this point somewhat reluctantly, and, as she arranged the sheaf of papers, began to make her conclusions.

“Then we will make a request for Totsuka-kun.”

“Support!”

Yuigahama smoothly gave her support. The others didn’t seem to oppose it either. A round of applause was even heard.

In the midst of their clapping, I could hear the sound of the door knocking.

It seemed that Kawasaki had arrived at the scheduled timing.

What’s next on the agenda would be to decide on how we were going to go about making the costumes for the Chibasen based off of Kawasaki’s ideas. Then we were more or less finished with the main events.

Just like this, the preparations are complete.

Next, would be the time for our retaliation.

My youth romantic comedy is wrong as I expected.

One day... Mobile talk Hachiman & Yui

Yahallo! (=^ω^)/
Am speaking with the
second-year? (^_-)?

Yes.

Σ(^A^|||) Just one word?
So short!

I think it is sufficient
enough to convey
my message.

I am pretty sure you can say more than that.
(((((:^Δ^)))))
Also, at least use some ASCII facial emoticons!
You sound like you are angry..... (.__.)

Yes. (^ V ^)
Like that?

Gross.

Hey, don't you go pulling
a one-worder on me.



Chapter 7: At last, the final meeting begins to dance.

After a few days, the Sports Festival committee called for a meeting once more. This was probably going to be the last meeting of the Sports Committee, and the final chance for us to change the course of anything if we needed to. Due to time constraints, if we were unable to get everyone's support on the main events then it was going to be a very difficult task to make it a reality.

Furthermore, if the executive committee were to yield at this time, the others would no longer listen to us anymore.

This was the critical moment, a do-or-die situation as one might call it. [\[95\]](#)

Just as we were preparing for the meeting ahead, Hiratsuka-sensei was the first to show up.

“How’s the situation?”

“How...”

“Hmm? That answer isn’t exactly precise...”

My reply gave rise to Hiratsuka-sensei’s doubt. However, there was no way I could give a satisfactory answer regarding the current situation right now.

“Hah, there’s nothing I can do this time, so umm...”

It was as I said, there was nothing much that I could do during this meeting. Maybe it’s better to say that doing nothing was my job. What a dream job...

Hiratsuka-sensei seemed to have sensed something from my vague answer. She surveyed the meeting room, her gaze falling on the rest of the members.

“Is that so? Does that mean that I should ask Yukinoshita and Yuigahama?”

“No, they have the same thoughts as me. They are not very clear about the situation either.”

“Hmmm. How did this happen?”

That's right. The three of us will not do anything this time. What we needed to do was already done. The one who needs to bear the brunt of it all was someone else. No, that person should've taken up that position right from the very beginning. I peered at that person who was seated far away from me. That person, who was at this moment, checking through sheets of paper.

“This time we will leave it to ‘Miss’ Chairman.”

“Oh...”

Hiratsuka-sensei narrowed her eyes, staring hard at the main character this time, Sagami Minami, with what appeared to be a trace of excitement.

If we weren't able to sufficiently demonstrate Sagami's traits as a committee chairman this time, then there would probably be no further salvation for this entire committee. If we were just talking about subduing the helpers, then we, or rather Yukinoshita, would have no problem doing that. However, doing so would not erase the negative feelings that they have against Sagami. Since we already decided against letting Sagami quit, and our actions were largely based on this, we have no choice but to let Sagami do it, no matter how much unease we felt.

Sagami doing it herself is the only way anyone, including Sagami, would reverse their opinions of her.

Simply put, this was a bad gamble. The stakes were insanely high. People who were not delicate, arrogant, who only thought about themselves, who were nervous and terrible when it came to the big stage, were probably not suited at all to be chairman.

But, even so, for the sake of the Volunteer Club being able to complete two requests, we have no choice but to do this. In order to raise the success rate a little higher, we had to make some preparations. What we did was different. What was left was to take a look at how it all plays out... Talk about unease...

“What exactly are you planning to do...? Well, let me take a look at your skills then.”

She said so in a happy tone as she smiled, and walked to her designated seat. She sat down, and the meeting would soon begin.

I too returned to my seat.

The executive committee members were seated right in front of me.

Seated beside me was Yuigahama. Yukinoshita, however, was seated near the center of the U-shape table. Sagami, was seated right in the middle of that. Beside her was

Meguri-senpai. Further away, the student council members were seated there. Before the meeting began, I glanced at Yukinoshita.

“It’s about time.”

“Yes.”

Yukinoshita, who had been looking over the information on the papers this whole time, suddenly raised her head to confirm the time. I looked at the time too as I spoke.

“Well, all the important things will be brought up by you. Careful to keep calm.”

“Mhm.”

Yukinoshita gave a very short reply. Actually, there was no need to tell her that. The times that Yukinoshita could not keep her calm were totally rare. It was the same during the Cultural Festival, as well as the previous meetings. I know that for this time too, she would handle the situation appropriately. Still, I continued to speak.

“In the end, we are still at an advantageous position. There’s no need to answer honestly to their doubts. The more important part is to not let them see you acting up.”

Hearing my detailed explanation, Yukinoshita looked at me unhappily.

“Are you talking to someone else?”

“Yup.”

I gave a wry smile towards that very Yukinoshita-like answer. Obviously, that was not meant for Yukinoshita. Rather, it was meant for that Miss-Chairman who was already so stiff that she couldn’t move. During today’s meeting, there was a need to have Sagami adopt an unyielding stance today to fight back the anti-Sagami sentiments. Hence, in a very out-of-character manner, I chose a roundabout way to inform her. I mean, normally, she wouldn’t want to talk to me, right...?

However, even like this, she probably couldn’t hear it.

Originally, she was already deaf to my voice. Up until now, she had been stubbornly ignoring me. I thought it was kind of impossible for her to suddenly listen to me, especially for today.

Right now, the most worried one is Sagami. All the rest of the preparations for the meeting were already complete.

There were over a thousand sheets of paper on the tables of student council members. This was something that had been prepared for today’s meeting. Without so much of a

complaint, they had been printing it and moving it here. Just like that time during the Cultural Festival, we were under their care this time as well.

Next was the rough sketch of costumes that Kawasaki made in a rush.

During the meeting the day before after accepting several suggestions from Ebina-san and building upon the original designs from Zaimokuza, Kawasaki speedily finished a rough sketch.

I didn't know whether this was some exceptional ability of hers, but Kawasaki was indeed amazing in this regard. Because apart from Taishi, who was two-years younger than her, Kawasaki also had two other younger siblings. Hence, she probably picked this up whilst taking care of her siblings. As I thought of how Kawasaki had to draw with a bothered look on her face as her siblings continuously badgered her, my serious face softened somewhat.

I checked through all the things that had been prepared, and quietly awaited the start of the meeting. The helpers slowly began to stream in. As though unsatisfied with the half-ass conclusion of last time, the people that came today were a fair number.

Although there were a few who still had not turned up, Meguri-senpai gave the go-ahead with a nod towards Sagami when she checked the time.

“...It's time. Let the meeting commence.”

Sagami said it quite softly. And so, the last meeting begins.

7-2

The meeting first began with checks on everyone's progress. Well, that may be so, but not much time had passed since the last meeting. Such that there was nothing special to report on, and the meeting progressed blandly.

Despite there being nothing particularly noteworthy to report, the behavior of the helpers were atrocious. Besides the volume when they spoke, there were some who were sprawled on the desks, playing with their phones. There were others who were sleeping, looking as idle as someone from a painting. Yet, this also showed what they thought of us. They didn't even bother to keep up a façade. In fact, they may be doing this on purpose to show us up.

Their attitude accurately reflected their anti-executive committee attitude. Because they all adopted this attitude, it further strengthened their sense of unity. Although this was just a childish and malicious act of rebellion, its effects were surprisingly good. With Haruka and Yukko at the center of this open act of rebellion, the negative sentiments against us had only gotten stronger. As long as there was someone leading the charge, more people were bound to follow.

Something similar to this had happened before during the Cultural Festival. What was different from that time, was that the positions of Sagami, Haruka and Yukko were all different.

This time, because the executive committee and the helpers were quite clearly at war with each other, there was no need to create a common enemy. This point was different. The enemy already existed. What we needed to do now was to change it into a situation whereby they would fight amongst themselves.

Hence, another plan was needed this time.

The way that this meeting was going was exactly like the last time, and the present situation was just as bad.

As Sagami led the discussion, I was quite curious as to whether her voice could really reach everyone. I sort of felt that it would be better if the others couldn't hear her. Anyway, Sagami continued to advance the meeting in indifference.

Then, as we were entering the next topic of discussion, she paused for a brief moment. With a cough, she silently swallowed her nervousness.

"Then, the next topic is about the main events, as we were discussing the last time."

Upon hearing this, everyone present stopped their boisterous activities, and adopted an

attentive stance. It was plain as day that this was the main topic for today.

To them, this was surely the largest attacking point.

Of course, it was the same to us.

Meguri-senpai looked at Sagami worriedly. Yuigahama's hand, which were resting on the table, began to shiver uncontrollably, looking apparently uneasy.

As she bore the brunt of these warm looks, she continued on.

"Regarding the unresolved safety issues surrounding Chibasen, we will do it as we had just discussed the last time. We will mete out severe punishments for rule breakers, cooperate with the local fire-fighters, and establish a first-aid group."

As Sagami was talking, Yukinoshita closed her eyes and straightened her back, quietly listening to her. Hiratsuka-sensei with her arms crossed, looked at Sagami sharply. However, her gaze also seemed to suggest that she was surprised, as though wondering what she was going to say next.

In the midst of this cold and sensitive mood, Sagami continued on.

"Also, in order to reduce our cost, we have checked up on the Chibasen costumes. For the details, I would like everyone to please take a look at what's just been distributed. As long as you have the ingredients, and follow the design blueprints, this event can be safely done. The process of making it can also be made simpler just by following it."

With that, Sagami proceeded to display one of the printed sheets of paper that has the design blueprint of the Chibasen costumes.

It was a blueprint given by Kawasaki, and utilized materials which were thought to enhance safety. The entire costume was split into various parts and could be easily be pieced together in a stream-line process.

That way, even if someone was only mediocre in these areas, they could still make it. As long as each part of the costume had people dedicated to working on it, the costumes could be completed with high efficiency. From the production efficiency to its practical usage, everything had been well thought out. Such a design plan was really great.

I was a total stranger to costume design, but I still thought that her idea was great. Though, I wouldn't know if the others thought the same as well.

Therefore, one mustn't forget to include a disclaimer that 'said design is merely for your perusal.' This would permit one to make tons of changes to the design as they see fit. Does this mean that adding a disclaimer that 'this is merely my opinion' at the end of

every sentence would be better? Wait, wouldn't that mean that one could say whatever they want then?

When Sagami was done talking, Haruka and Yukko looked at each other. After seeking confirmation with one another, they nodded their heads lightly and raised their hands.

“This doesn’t sound like anything has changed from the previous time...”

“In the end, it’s still not a completely safe idea...”

I had long expected that they would say that. In fact, one could say that everything that Sagami has said up till now was merely a basis to bait these words out of them.

Hence, all the ruckus that the helpers were now causing after Haruka and Yukko, were all within expectations.

“The big meet is coming up soon...”

“Come to think of it, isn’t it a bit atrocious that the chairman is merely repeating what has been said before?”

“Yea! She just wants us to do work.”

However, this sort of thing that was purposely said so loudly would not easily dissipate. The unease within Sagami was clear as she shot several glances at Meguri-senpai and Yukinoshita to seek confirmation. No matter how many times we had briefed her beforehand, she was probably still a little afraid upon facing the sudden commotion now.

However, both Meguri-senpai and Yukinoshita nodded their heads, causing her to relax. Sagami trusted them, and waited there devoid of movement. She stood without saying a word, her gaze fixated, and her posture never changing. There was only the slight trembling of her hand that was clutching the sheet of printed paper.

Soon, most of the unhappiness seemed to have been vented out, and everyone became somewhat quieter. Looks of suspicion were cast upon the silent Sagami.

What was surprising was that no matter how noisy it was, once it began to quieten down, everyone would naturally shut their mouths. Everyone was looking at each other to confirm the mood.

After another brief moment, the whole meeting room was in complete silence. This was the moment that Sagami had been waiting for, so she began to speak.

“This at present is our best proposal. If you are still unsatisfied, and worry that something might happen...”

Just like we had discussed earlier, Sagami paused for just a while.

Then, she continued.

“You will hold yourself responsible for anything that happens should you attend the Sports Festival.”

The words that Sagami had just said didn’t seem at all easily comprehensible. The helpers were now making sounds of doubt in a scornful manner. On the other hand, Hiratsuka-sensei who was sitting at the corner looked completely dumbfounded.

“...That is to say, those who are currently unhappy with the proposal, can just not attend the Sports Festival?”

Hiratsuka-sensei asked this to ascertain the meaning behind Sagami’s words.

As though not quite expecting a question from a teacher, Sagami was unable to give an immediate reply. At this time, Yukinoshita swiftly replied.

“It’s not only Chibasen that something could happen. No matter which event it may be, something might happen. Hence, we feel that with lesser people, the lower the risk. We feel that this is a reasonable line of thought.”

“Ah, that’s true but...”

Ignoring Hiratsuka-sensei who seemed to be thinking of something, Sagami continued on. The most important part of this proposal had yet to be said.

“Also, outsiders are not allowed to attend the Sports Festival’s activities. This includes giving support and watching the events as well.”

The effects of these words were immediately shown. Owing to the simplicity of these words, the helpers immediately understood her meaning and began causing a commotion.

“What the heck’s that...? Why did it come to this?”

“What’s the meaning of that...?”

The meeting room descended into chaos and everyone began voicing their displeasure.

There wasn’t really a proper reason as to why we did this, so we just had to smoke our way through. However, getting Sagami to do this was a little hard since it wasn’t in her character. This was my specialty.

“The school’s Sports Festival is an internal event... Parents, guardians, and friends from

other schools are all not allowed. In other words, all outsiders are banned from participating in this Sports Festival.”

Even I felt that this reason was totally stretching it. When they had calmed down, they would definitely fight back strongly with something like, “Hey, this reason is too weird!” However, no one said anything like that amidst the current chaos.

Other than the executive committee, Hiratsuka-sensei was probably the only one who was calm. She seemed to be still pondering over the participating criteria that Sagami had said earlier. She rubbed her hands gently against her jaw, then raised her hand to stop the commotion.

“Wait, wait. How are you going to deal with those who don’t want to attend? You are not going to really tell me we just let them stay at home right?”

“Can’t we just do it like the school excursion trip? Those who don’t want to go will just come to school to do self-studies.”

I continued on rambling. This was really stretching it. The Sports Festival and school excursion had totally nothing to do with each other. They were just existences that were set-up by the school. There was no way that we could actually do this. There should probably be other feasible solutions to this.

“Can we...? Or not? Who should decide during this sort of time? The year head? PE teacher? Head of department? Principal? But, the Sports Festival only concerns physical fitness...”

Let’s ignore Hiratsuka-sensei, who was busy stressing over the society that was built upon chains of command, and continue with the meeting. Sagami took a brief glance at the people in the meeting room, and continued with the conclusion of the executive Committee.

“Since we can’t guarantee the absolute safety of everyone, we have no choice but to do this.”

This was the result after considering everyone’s safety.

During the meetings where we discussed our plans, we had to axe countless plans on the basis of safety. Practice has shown that if we were to consider precedent cases, one could use the idea of safety to lead other’s opinions. Very few people would oppose the idea of safety.

Be it us or them, none of us could oppose the upper management of the school. That being the case, we will just use their plan against them, and add further restrictions based on the idea of safety. If we abuse this point sufficiently, we can guide the discussion down the path we want it to go.

“Ah, that means that those who oppose it cannot go to the Sports Festival?”

“No, I think they mean that those who want to go can go.”

“But, if we oppose the Chibasen, we can’t attend the rest as well.”

They still seemed to be discussing all sorts of stuff.

“I mean, they are just too crazy.”

“No need to listen to them.”

“Yea, they are just willfully deciding for us whether or not we can attend.”

They were soon gradually caught up in a wave of their own rage. This punch that caused them to waver seemed to be more powerful than I thought.

Then, it’s time to deliver the final blow.

I stood up, and gathered the sheets of paper that had piled up in front of the student council members and passed them to Yukinoshita. Taking it from me swiftly, she tossed one of it to Sagami.

Sagami calmly took it and took a light breath.

“This is the best we can do in terms of safety management. There’s no way that we can make it better. If you still oppose it, we do not want to listen to just your opinion, but the entire school’s.”

Sagami then pointed towards the stacks of papers that totaled over a 1000.

“This is a questionnaire that we have created for that purpose. There’s one for each student in this school.”

Hiratsuka-sensei stood up, and took one from the stack to have a look. After reading it, Hiratsuka opened her mouth wide.

“Whether or not you want to attend the Sports Festival… This is the first time I have seen such a question directed at students…”

With a bitter smile, she waved the paper in front of Sagami.

“How did you people explain it to the students?”

“All of it…”

“Huh?”

Hiratsuka seemed to find her answer somewhat unexpected and blinked several times in response. This time, it was Yukinoshita who added on to her answer.

“We’ve already explained everything. Everything honestly. We’ve pointed out the dangers that may come with some activities, and the proposal to mitigate said risks. We’ve told them, and despite that, we still could not come to an understanding (with them), hence we needed the school’s population’s opinion.” That’s how we explained it.

No. It looked like a supplement on the surface. However, it was meant as a check for the actions of the helpers. That is to say, a public shaming of them.

Using “some activity” to obscure the actual event itself would surely lead to people guessing and prying into the real nature of said event. Whether that be out of malice, curiosity, or a sense of justice, there will always be those who oppose such an action.

The Sports Festival was probably not something that students really looked forward to as compared to the Cultural Festival and school excursion trip. However, to those who thirst after this thing called youth, this was one of the prominent events that could spice up their high-school life. If it was unrightfully snatched away from them, there will always be someone who will try and do something.

Also, the number of people who will actually do something will be a lot.

To the first-years, this was their first Sports Festival since enrolling in the school. To the third-years, this was their last Sports Festival. Even for the second-years, there will probably be a lot of them who will probably treat it as some special event that had some sort of sentiment value.

Even if there were people who wished to see the Sports Festival fall into chaos, a great deal more hoped that the Sports Festival would continue. If it wasn’t done well, they could face the backlash of those from the sports clubs.

Just thinking of this alone would make them unable to easily defy the executive committee. Actually, there was no real need to ask the student population. All of this was done so that they could see that our preparations were ready, and that we could act at a moment’s notice.

The chance that we would actually do it was low, but it was fine as long as they thought that we would actually do it.

Let that be a lesson to all you guys who rely on numbers. See, that’s how empty the things that you believe in are. Go drown yourselves in the fear that you guys may not be the majority.

Of course, there would be someone who would make an objection.

“B-but, even so, wouldn’t it be fine if we just didn’t carry out the Chibasen?”

“There’s no need to make the entire Sports Festival like that...”

However, the tone of Haruka and Yukko, as well as those around them were remarkably subdued. As though they were afraid to be publicly shamed, they were now on the fence about the situation.

Then, I guess it’s about time for checkmate. This final blow should get them to shut up.

“I would like to talk about the Chibasen as well. Though we had obtained approval from everyone present, there somehow seems to be many who are opposed now.”

“To think that what was once approve is now completely overturned... If this sort of news leaks out, then maybe the entire committee needs to take responsibility... Heh...”

From where Sagami had stopped, Yukinoshita continued on in a very solemn manner. I wonder just how much of an act was she putting on when she said that. Because this way of doing things was not very honest, and Yukinoshita detested doing things this way.

But, perhaps it could be argued that it was precisely due to her hesitation that her words achieved the intended effect. The prominent, talented girl of this school, who had up until now been the ‘real’ chairman, clearly illustrated the abnormality of the current situation with her troubled expression.

The commotion in the room grew louder.

What we have said just now was to show them that we were aware of their concerns and had created proposals that addressed all these risks. If they wanted to kidnap the Sports Festival’s opening and hold those who wish to attend hostage, we can do the same as well.

We can hold their illusion of what the Sports Festival would be like hostage as well.

Each side held the button to the nuke that would destroy each other’s ideal Sports Festival.

This was the mutually assured destruction that was spoken of.

Both Haruka and Yukko were shaking.

“What... How can this...”

“This is too much.”

“Just because you are the chairman, we have to listen to you? Surely there’s no such bullshit.”

Sounds of hatred and criticisms came flying towards Sagami. This was natural. From the very start, she had been bearing the full brunt of it. Being the dart-board for everyone to aim at was only natural. All Sagami can do now was to bear with it.

There was no bed of roses for someone who was at the top. Because they were right at the top, they were also right in front. Hence, they would be hurt more than others, their blood would be shed more than others.

If there was no way to resolve it peacefully, then it would come to striking down others, or getting struck by others. A person at the top could only choose from these two options. Such a position was tough, but for the position of committee chairman, it was still slightly easier to bear the brunt of abuses.

However, in most cases these abuses would soon be linked to one’s character. To begin with, position was a very different thing from a person’s character. Yet, they were intimately linked from an objective viewpoint.

In other words, if this goes on, it would soon turn into a personal attack on Sagami.

“You obviously don’t do work normally. Why are you acting all chairman-like only at this time?”

“Incomprehensible... You were obviously late that time too...”

The topic gradually shifted from the chairman into personal attacks on her. At the core of these attacks, were obviously Haruka and Yukko since they knew everything about Sagami. Because they were once close friends, they were much more capable of targeting Sagami’s weaknesses.

“Oi, stop it.”

“Yes, yes. Calm down, please?”

Though Hiratsuka-sensei and Yuigahama urged the crowd to be quiet, the both of them were in a state of hysteria. With so much blood rushing to their head, the crowd seemed unable to listen to any instructions to stop. Not only that, their voices were getting louder.

“During the Cultural Festival, Sagami was just doing her job half-heartedly. What’s up with this attitude all of sudden?”

“T-that was...”

Having her past dug up, Sagami's voice began to grow softer. The Cultural Festival was probably not a good memory for her. However, one should further advance their attack after figuring out their opponent's weak points. And thus, Haruka and Yukko continued their verbal assault non-stop.

"During that time, we were scolding that dude like crazy. How come you are treating that person like your ally now?"

"Yea, aren't we supposed to be your allies? Why are you helping that detestable person?"

It seems like there were times where the normally meek Haruka and Yukko would also get caught up by their emotions and turn vicious as well. The intensity emanating from them caused people around them to be unable to say a single word. Of course, I was one of them.

"Erm, hey-hey, hold your horses. Hikki is not like that."

Yuigahama was trying to put out the fire that had spread all the way across here, but it's kind of bad to have someone defend you when you were the one being badmouthed.

I stood up, and after careful consideration of my choice of words, said the following to Haruka and Yukko.

"Well, it's true that Sagami was like that, but this time..."

"Shut up..."

My words were interrupted halfway through. I looked towards the person who had said it and saw Sagami with her head lowered. Was it her who said that just now? In order to seek confirmation for my doubts, I took a step towards her. Then, Sagami raised her head, and in clear voice, spoke to me.

"You shut the hell up. So noisy. What is it that you want?"

What she said was full of her enmity towards me. Even since the Cultural Festival, Sagami had always been venting her anger at me like this. Well, I guess I should fight back too. Just as I wanted to do so, someone walked in front of me.

Yukinoshita brushed away the hair at her shoulders and looked angrily at Sagami.

"Sagami-san, what you said just now..."

"SHUT UP!"

However, Sagami had no intention of listening at all and said the same thing to Yukinoshita as well. Then, just like Haruka and Yukko, she began to launch her own tirade.

“Everything is always decided by you people. No one ever listened to me. What’s up with all your looks of I understand everything?”

She began to gasp for air as though she just had a seizure and with great effort, began to squeeze out the last bit of her words.

“Aren’t I trying my best too...?”

Was this directed at me and Yukinoshita? That wailing voice of hers was not only directed at us, but was also an attack at Haruka and Yukko as well?

“Aren’t I doing my best this time!? Why do you not understand that!? I’ve already apologized and reflected on my actions...”

Sagami lowered her head, and her expression could not be clearly seen. However, what was clear were the tears streaming down her face. Slowly, her voice faded away. However, no one said a single word. The only sound that could be heard was Sagami speaking in a husky, repentant tone once again.

“That’s why I said, that I will do it properly the next time, that’s why...”

Sagami couldn’t continue on. What followed next were no longer words, but the sound of her sobbing.

As Meguri-senpai caressed Sagami’s back, she spoke to her in a gentle voice, “Sagami-san.” However, Sagami could not calm herself down, and continued sobbing convulsively.

“Shiromeguri. Can you bring her someplace else to let her calm down?”

Meguri-senpai nodded her head at Hiratsuka-sensei’s instructions. Then, she slowly tugged at Sagami’s hands and pulled her up. In this manner, she brought her out of the meeting room.

The people who were left behind quietly watched as she left.

No one could think of anything appropriate to say, and so kept quiet. Even Haruka and Yukko, who had been running their mouths just now were like that. There were still people whispering here and there, but now it was a complete silence.

This turn of events was completely unexpected. It totally superseded my expectation. This was not reason. It wasn’t logical at all. It didn’t make any sense. Sagami’s cries

and clamors was a pure and simple emotional argument.

This was different from what I had planned, of not letting her back down from her supposed responsibility. In other words, I miscalculated. There was no mutually assured destruction.

Alright, I get it. You're crying and bawling. It was just that alone.

I admit defeat.

No really, I admit defeat.

Such a lame, dumb, vulgar and petty method. Was this the reason why I had not noticed something that simple?

From the very beginning, this problem arose from emotions. If we were to resolve this completely, we had to base our arguments on emotions as well.

To return anger with anger, to strike back when struck.

In this mud-slinging war, the first to lose their cool was the loser. Sagami had already left the room. On the other hand, Haruka, Yukko, as well as those around them would require some time to recover. As though somewhat embarrassed by all the stares they were getting, they sat back down quietly.

In the uncomfortable silence where one would have to think twice before even moving their body, Hiratsuka-sensei coughed lightly. Hiratsuka-sensei was probably the only one who could restore order to this mess.

After looking at everyone, she spoke.

“Let me ask once more. Is there anyone who is opposed to the Chairman’s proposal?”

If anyone were to object now, the person would probably be treated as an asshole. There was probably no one who dared to lash out against someone who just cried her heart out in front of everyone.

Therefore, no one dared to raise their hands.

Hiratsuka-sensei nodded her head satisfactorily at this result.

“Okay, then it’s decided.”

“Now then, let me explain what we will be doing from today onwards.”

In place of Sagami, Yukinoshita proceeded on with the meeting. Yukinoshita’s calm and steady voice reverberated throughout the meeting room that had yet to regain its

composure after the storm.

I leaned in heavily on a chair and sighed deeply.

7-3

A day has passed since the meeting, and everyone was finally doing their work. However, everything was not resolved, but instead was just left in an unsettled state. Nonetheless, a lot more people believed that it was all settled, and they came down to work seeing that they had no other choice.

Although not everyone had motivation, we could finally get the bare minimum done. Though that may be so, we still needed to catch up on work that had been put off in the past. In the end, everyone in the executive committee ended up going down to work as well.

The Chibasen costumes were left to Kawasaki and Ebina-san. With Yukinoshita in the center, several girls were using sewing machines to rush out parts of the costumes. The main bits were left to those who knew how to do it.

Zaimokuza and the student council members would cut out Styrofoam and cardboard, and make it into armor and helmets. As expected of student council members who were in the student council, they seemed to be able to get along really well with Zaimokuza.

Sagami was not working with the rest of them, but was mainly doing paperwork with Meguri-senpai. After exposing that ugly side of hers to the rest, it would be really difficult to get her to work with the rest of them.

As for me, it was business as usual. Before, when I didn't have any work assigned, I was sent around to help out on odd-jobs. There's a term for this that people would call me... uh, a freelance? Nomad? It sounds cooler if you call me that...

Today we were sorting out documents related to the newly established first-aiders. We had to check all the first-aid items that we needed, as well as designate a spot where we can set-up a tent. Then we also had to establish a way to contact the first-aiders in the event of an emergency... Ah, wait a minute. Who was actually going to be the first-aiders? Oh, this was going to be our job again huh...?

Crap, I am thinking about things that I don't need to...

Isn't this that sort of pattern? Yup, that sort of pattern whereby work just snowballs when you start working. Yep, this was one of the laws that ensured you always had work. A devilish system that ensured that new work is always ready once you had done the current job. What was even scarier, was that the possibility of me being the one to figure out the whole first-aiders thing was extremely high.

Even if I wanted to let someone else be the first-aiders, the student council members will

be on the frontlines on the actual day. All of the people around me who I could trust had been allocated work as well. Manpower was really lacking.

Even if I get some of the current helpers down here to be the first-aider, there still needs to be someone from the executive committee to be the head to bear responsibility. Sagami and Meguri-senpai would probably be cooped up in the operations tent doing work. That means...

Damn it, why did I notice this? I am too smart for my own good.

Just as I lost motivation and began to zone out in despair, the door to the meeting room was suddenly flung open.

“Yahallo!”

It was obvious who was here just from the voice alone. Or you could say that there was only one person who made that greeting. With my eyes half-closed, I looked at Yuigahama who was running in my direction.

“...Where did you go?”

“Eh?”

Hearing my question, Yuigahama blinked several times, and, for some reason, began to blush.

“At our class... Were you trying to find me when you noticed I wasn’t here? That was kind of unexpected... But this sort of unexpectedness isn’t bad either.”

“Dummy, I meant in the sense like where were you since you aren’t doing any work.”

What was this person going on about...? Can you not say something so random? If I were to think deeper about it, would it make me shy?

“Ah, that’s what you meant... Sorry! I do do my work properly, you know!”

It seemed that she was somewhat embarrassed by her misinterpretation of my words, but then became angry a short moment later. Just like always, it seems that this girl never got tired from being so noisy and full of life.

Her anger was kind of unexpected and so I decided to ask her what she was doing.

“Then, what were you actually doing?”

When she heard my question, her facial expression changed quickly and began to chatter on happily.

“Ah, weren’t our jobs just decided quite recently? After a bit of checking, I realized that there was only one person doing the broadcasting. So I thought it was a little strange.”

“No, there’s nothing strange about that? That person just has to play music and announce the names of those making an entrance. So I don’t think you need that many people.”

Hearing that, Yuigahama froze in surprise.

“…Ah, is that so?”

“Yup.”

“Really…”

Yuigahama’s shoulders drooped dejectedly.

“What’s the matter?”

I asked her uneasily, afraid that she has gone and done something again. Yuigahama laughed awkwardly and fiddled about with her hair bun.

“Ah, I thought that there would be a need for something like someone to explain the current situation of events, stuff like that.”

“It’s just a high-school Sports Festival, there’s no need for that.”

“R-really?”

“Yeah.”

I asserted my opinion, but Yuigahama looked restless, and like she had trouble with something she wanted to say. I waited patiently for her, and she soon began to speak in a low voice.

“…But, I’ve already asked that person and brought that person here.”

“Then bring that person back.”

“Eh-!”

“Don’t ‘eh’ me. There’s no need to add more jobs.”

“W-wait!”

With that, Yuigahama took out her mobile phone from her pocket and began to make a call.

“Ah, hello? It’s me...”

As she made her call, she walked away from me a little. Just who was she calling? Just as my gaze shifted to her, she had already hung up her call.

“Yukinon says there’s no issue! That means I can do it right?”

...Why does she sound like a small kid who had just brought back a stray puppy? But, if Yukinoshita said it was fine, then there ought to be a reason behind it. If it was only Yuigahama who suggested it, I would’ve thought that it was some naïve idea of hers. However, if Yukinoshita agreed to it, then there was no point in opposing, and so I agreed as well.

“Well, as long as the others agree, I am fine with it.”

“I will go and ask!”

With that, Yuigahama quickly ran off to Meguri-senpai and Sagami. I think that everyone will approve of it. Everyone is so nice to her...

Just as I expected, Yuigahama soon gave me an okay signal from Meguri-senpai’s side. As expected, they had agreed.

And with that, Yuigahama proceeded to walk towards the door and brought that person in.

That person was pulling away unhappily at her blonde, curly hair. Upon entering the room, she began looking around.

“...But, why is it Miura?”

I spoke to Yuigahama quietly so that Miura would not hear me. In a similarly quiet voice, Yuigahama replied.

“Because Yumiko excels at this sort of job. Also, if Miura took this job, Tobe and a lot of others would definitely come and help out as well.”

Well, this point I could understand. If Miura and her friends became the broadcasters, they will definitely be well-received. Yuigahama did think this through after all. Just as I was admiring her for this, Yuigahama continued on with a mischievous smile.

“Furthermore, when I was talking to Hina about committee stuff, Yumiko was sulking because she couldn’t join in the conversation.”

I didn’t know Miura was this sort of person. So cute! My imagination started to run.

However, the Miura right now wasn't cute at all. In fact, you could say that she was scary.

She was looking at me, and looked as though she wanted to say something but was holding it back. What? Do you want to ask me if there are rewards for doing this job? But, like, all the jobs are purely on a voluntarily basis. There is not even a gift to show appreciation. The only thing there is, was a thank you.

"...Erm, sorry, but we are counting on you then."

It was very rare from me, but I thanked her nevertheless. This was probably the result of Yukinoshita's noisy education on mannerisms. Or perhaps I was trained to do so by her?

However, Miura replied coldly with an unhappy look.

"It's nothing really. It's Yui who called me here anyway. I haven't decided if I want to do this yet."

"Eh!? But you said you would just now!"

Miura looked away upon hearing Yuigahama's surprise. Guess it can't be helped. Queens are, after all, fickle-minded people.

Although she didn't seem to want to do it at all, her eyes didn't look anywhere else. In fact, she was staring at Sagami. Sagami had noticed Miura as well, and was now walking towards us. Did she want to make a greeting, seeing that her fellow classmate had arrived? Because of what happened before, she probably felt that she had to make a simple form of greeting at the very least.

"Miura-san."

Sagami called out to her and Miura nodded in response.

"Miura-san wants to come and help out...?"

Sagami seemed to have some sort of complicated feelings towards Miura and her tone made it sound like she was at a loss for words. Miura didn't seem to like that sort of attitude and gave her a cold reply.

"I. Said. That. I still haven't decided whether I want to do it yet."

"Y-yea."

Sagami shrank back, probably from the sharp glare that Miura was giving her. Her actions seemed to infuriate Miura even more, and she sighed shortly before crossing her

arms.

This was a common sight in the classroom.

However, this was different from that time.

Although her smile was somewhat stiff, Sagami said something unexpected.

“We are short on manpower. If Miura-san would come and help out, it would surely make the event livelier. Can you come and help out please? Please?”

Then, she lowered her head.

Her actions would make anyone feel somewhat servile. However, this was also something that had never happened before in the relationship between Sagami and Miura. Miura seemed to have noticed this point as well. She uncrossed her arms, looked away and fiddled with her curls that she was quite proud of. She seemed to be contemplating her reply.

“...Hmm, really?”



It was a lackluster response from Miura. Upon hearing that however, Yuigahama smiled and translated that sentence.

“That means that she has agreed.”

“Hey! I didn’t say anything!”

Sagami smiled, and watched the two of them banter. It seemed like there was small progress in the relationship between Sagami and Miura.

Through the interactions with one another, people would ascertain the distance between them and their own position. Sagami had, through her conflict with Haruka and Yukko, learned how to maintain a distance that would prevent each other from getting hurt.

No matter how you look at it, it’s an action one took to prevent themselves from getting hurt. Yet, this was also proof that Sagami had changed.

Although Sagami had learnt how to maintain a certain distance from Miura, it was still unclear whether she would know how to keep an appropriate distance from Haruka and Yukko.

However, if she were to spit everything out, to expose it to everyone, yet able to maintain that somewhat unsightly, embarrassed smile, she might be surprisingly able to determine that appropriate distance.

Chapter 8: And so, their festival does not end.

I stood there on the field, watching the sand being blown about. With a red headband and a first-aid armband, I was now walking towards the administrator tent. I glanced at my surroundings and saw that everyone was busy chattering away and looking somewhat restless. Some of them were wearing the same sports attire, and in their hands carried a red or white headband. Some of them placed the headband around their forehead, whilst some placed it around their necks.

Some of them looked really motivated, whereas some were just mumbling about how dull this festival was. Also, Tobe-kun, why is your headband tied so nicely?

Thank goodness for the nice weather. It felt so pleasant to have the cool wind blowing. It was a good time for some light exercise. Even simply walking to the tent itself felt like a good stroll.

This was the ideal weather for the Sports Festival.

In this comfortable weather, if I didn't have to do any committee work, I would probably be taking a nap outdoors. Occasionally, I might glance at the girls in their sports attire, look at their figures as they dash with all their might, or admire Totsuka in his sports attire. A pity that I couldn't do any of those now.

Today I had to fulfill my duties as a committee member along with carrying out my job as a first-aider. Since I will be waiting inside the tent in case of emergencies, I wouldn't get to watch Totsuka running at his full speed, or watch Totsuka in a crouching start position, or watch Totsuka getting stuck in the net during the obstacle race.

Just as I thought, to work is to lose.

“The importance is in participation.”

This was a phrase that Pierre de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympic Games, made in one of his speeches. Though this phrase is widely known, it has often been misused as a means to force others to participate. In this world there are plenty of things where participation is pointless. If there is importance in participation, then participating in not participating must also be of importance. If there is value in everything, then the experience of not experiencing something must also be of value. In

fact, you could say that not experiencing something that everyone has experienced would be a valuable experience itself.

“There he goes again.”

Turning my head, I saw Yuigahama who came into the same tent. She had a look of amazement. Looks like I said my thoughts out loud again. In between sighs, Yukinoshita said, “It’s not logical at all, but it’s surprisingly persuasive, and therein lies the problem.”

Yukinoshita had probably come along with her. Still, this was the first time I have even seen Yukinoshita in her sports attire. It contradicts her usual image, but despite this, it fits her quite well. How strange.

That aside, I do have my own views on the matter as well.

“No, wait, it’s not my fault, it’s society’s. Perhaps I should say that I am a necessary evil.”

Good guys only exist because there are bad guys. It is only because of someone like me, who has failed at youth, that others are able to recognize the brilliance of youth. Humans always love to compare amongst each other. When people find out that they are better off than others, they will be able to know what bliss feels like. Others’ misfortunes tastes like honey. It’s a riddle that was given by Mr. Katze too! GATCHA! [\[96\]](#)

However, Yukinoshita dismissively countered.

“Those who call themselves a necessary evil are usually the villains.”

“Yeah. To call it necessary is very strange.”

From the way Yuigahama put it, it seemed like she wasn’t talking about bad people in general, but specifically me. What’s with her “evil·instant·slay” attitude? Depressing... [\[97\]](#)

“Hold on ladies. Don’t make it sound like there is no need for me to exist please.”

When I made my mild objection, the sound of cheerful laughter could be heard from within the tent. It was Meguri-senpai. Seems like she was inside working.

Meguri-senpai looked very excited for this Sports Festival. She walked towards us and wrapped her arms around Yukinoshita and Yuigahama’s arms.

“You three are quite the team!”

At this point, all three of us had a “No such thing...” expression. However, Meguri-senpai didn’t seem to care for that.

“Okay! Do your best! Ay-Ay-Oh!”

“O-oh!”

Why is this person so fired up...? But we were caught up in her enthusiasm anyways, and cheered along with her. Meguri-senpai seemed satisfied with our response and nodded her head.

Then she pulled even harder on Yukinoshita and Yuigahama’s arms and brought them close to her. Yuigahama’s face was red from surprise and Yukinoshita twisted her body, trying to escape from Meguri-senpai’s clutches.

Meguri-senpai closed her eyes and placed her face closer to the two of them. Then, bit by bit, she said it slowly, “Thank you. Thanks to the discussions that I had with you three, I am very happy right now.”

The liveliness from the crowds was now fading away.

This was originally Meguri-senpai’s request. To her, this was her final Sports Festival, and probably the final event that she would organize as the student council president. That’s why she wanted it to be grand and a big success.

Meguri-senpai seemed to be filled with emotions. However, Yukinoshita gently shook off her arms and replied calmly.

“No. It hasn’t ended yet, Shiromeguri-senpai.”

“Eh?”

Meguri-senpai responded in surprise.

“Well, there’s still half of the request that we have yet to fulfill.”

It’s true that we had yet to fulfill her request. There was something that she had added at the very end of her request.

Yuigahama clasped Meguri-senpai’s arms while she was still surprised.

“That’s right! We went through so much trouble to organize this. Let’s win!”

I want to win. That was what Meguri-senpai had written in her mail.

It was just this point that we weren’t really confident about. After all, luck was a factor in victory here. Before the whole thing ended, no one knew who would be the ultimate

winner. Still, if we gave it our all, it was possible to raise the possibility of us winning. Meguri-senpai scanned our faces again. When our eyes met, I thought I could see her eyes sparkling.

“...Okay. Do your best!”

She wiped the corners of her eyes and laughed warmly.

8-2

Well, even though we might wish for victory, the present situation was not in our favor.

After doing all the preparations for the opening, I barely got the chance to take a breather when the races began. The Sports Festival was finally underway.

The only event that I participated in was the race. Because I only attended one event, all I had to do for the rest of the time was be in the first-aid tent and observe. No matter how I look at it, the red team was not in a favorable position.

Before noon, I had thought that our points were still acceptable. But by afternoon, we were increasingly falling behind.

It seems that the red team had already decided that they will going to lose, and they all went into some “Loser mode.” Their motivation was decreasing by the second. There were some who were giving off the, “Because I didn’t give it my all... No, I totally didn’t even try.” sort of mood. There were even some who had resorted to entertaining the audience.

If these people, who were trying to get laughs from the audience, normally behaved like clowns in their daily lives, then their actions were at least understandable even though it was somewhat lame.

However, the problem is huge if your normal everyday Joe begins to get affected by their actions, and in turn, also influence their close friends to do the same as well. It was really unbearable watching these people in the corner being criticized with statements like, “You are so lame!” Even if I am a first-aider, I cannot heal things like emotional wounds...

In this event that involved the whole school, doing things that suit your stature was very easy. The simplest way was to just give it your all for the competition. Perhaps I should say that even though your actions were the same as the rest, as long as you made yours more outstanding and eye-catching, others will feel that you have great individuality.

Being an eccentric doesn’t equate to individuality.

The existence that could verify this point was the white team’s core, Hayama Hayato.

Hayama was not especially eye-catching. All he did was complete the relay race and obstacle race with ease. Okay, maybe that was stunning indeed.

Still, he got first in any event that he participated in.

Seeing this, girls will definitely go wild.

At the events that Hayama, the greatest point-scorer for the white team, participated in, the barriers were surrounded by clusters of girls, all with some sort of troubled smile. The reason why I didn't find this sight annoying was probably because of Tobe and his friends happily partying away in the crowds.

However, the only people who could smile at this was probably an outsider, like me or Hayama's friends. In other words, the entire white team.

The guys in the red team were all giving him looks of hate. Especially Zaimokuza. His eyes were about as rotten as mine right now.

Contrasting Hayama's liveliness to the red team's growing lack of motivation when they entered the "Loser mode," it was clear that the white team held the advantage from start till end.

Just as all the events were about to come to a close, I took a look at the scoreboard near the school building's window. There was a considerable score gap between the two teams.

White team 150 points. Red team 100 points.

Perhaps this was already the end.

I looked at the faraway scoreboard and sighed. This was when I heard a sigh as well coming from beside me. Turning my head, I saw Yuigahama groaning away.

Well, I can understand how she felt. Thinking back to what we had declared so impressively, this was indeed a little... As I thought about this, I saw someone who was looking at the scoreboard more earnestly than the two of us. Yukinoshita was standing there with her arms folded. She then cleared her throat.

"...What other events are left?"

There was an indescribable intensity to her voice, and I couldn't help but reply honestly.

"Ah. There's still the two main events, Chibasen and Botaoshi."

"Oh, really..."

Then, she lapsed into silence.

Yuigahama and I looked at each other and we both nodded.

Is it that? The usual?

Compared to the roaring red flames, the silently burning blue flames were much hotter. Just like Yukinoshita right now.

Yukinoshita had not given up. Even at this point, she was still thinking of a way to win. What a shining example of someone unwilling to lose.

8-3

After a short break we began to prepare to participate in the main events. In the time that the riders took to change their clothes, the rest of the students began to queue up.

Even if I am a first-aider, I couldn't help but give my support to this sort of large-scale event.

Also, for some reason, the person who thought of this, Zaimokuza, came here uninvited and began to help out too.

There was a <Production Director> armband on him. It was either to show his sense of responsibility, or because he felt bored as we all ignored him. Probably the latter though, because we never said anything about an armband.

As Zaimokuza and the student council members as well as a portion of the helpers did their job of directing people and making them form queues, I could suddenly hear cheerful shouts from them.

Turning my head, I saw Ebina leading a bunch of riders toward us. As Yukinoshita began checking on her headband, she spoke with Ebina.

"Is the formation done?"

"Yup."

Ebina gave a simple reply and made a hand gesture that implied for her to see for herself. All that was left was to enter the event grounds. This was not a problem. There was just something that made me a little surprised. I had to confirm it.

"...What's with this get-up?"

"...I want to know as well."

Yukinoshita sighed deeply. Yukinoshita was wearing an overly gaudy and slightly suggestive armored dress. The materials used to make it were somewhat cheap, but the covering for the back of the hand and wrist were separate, and one could see the skin. The back and the shoulders were separated as well, and looked beautiful. There was a sense of heaviness from how the hand armor and chest plate were designed, but the skirt gave off a light-floaty feeling, and appeared very soft.

Although this armored dress was made in a hurry, it still came out fine. However, there were still parts of it that looked weird.

Strange... When I looked at design sketch, I was sure it was Japanese style. When did it become like this...? There must have been many dark ongoings behind the scenes in the production of this...

Yukinoshita inspected her hands, feet, and her neck. She was looking at a loss as to why the costume was designed this way.

I wonder how others felt about this design... I looked around searching for Yuigahama. Gahama, Gahama... Ah, there she was.

Yuigahama touched her chest plate, her hand armor, then tugged a little at the skirt. In the next instance her face turned red.

“Ughh, this is super embarrassing...”

Well, yeah. This was like cosplaying in front of the entire school... Meanwhile Ebina was admiring the super embarrassed Yuigahama. Kawasaki was beside her. Ah, Kawasaki needed to wear this too. However, Kawasaki didn't look too happy about it...

Was she this unwilling to wear this? I wondered as I looked at her. Kawasaki blushed and glared at me upon noticing that I was looking at her.

“...What?”

The rage that came from her voice was really scary. However, if I were to give a standard “nothing” as my answer, Kawasaki was going to remain in a bad mood. Anyway, I should think of something to say to soothe her.

“Ah. That dress suits you quite well.”

“...You looking for a fight?”

She replied in an even lower voice than before. Hey, I am obviously praising you... Ah, I know now. Sorry, I won't look at you anymore, so please stop glaring at me...

I averted my eyes since she was glaring at me so viciously. My eyes turned to Ebina. Ebina was wearing the dress as well, and she didn't seem to mind it one bit.

“...Must we wear it like this?”

There was definitely doubt in her voice. With a look of surprise, she gently knocked against her clothes and the cord around her waist began to fall. Kawasaki noticed this,

and looked bothered as she sighed. She walked behind Yuigahama and began to help her tie it.

As though to erase the unease within Yuigahama, Ebina slapped her shoulders.

“This is a co-op battle. The riders need to wear their armor properly.”

“Ah, you are right.”

As she said it, she twisted her body about.

“Don’t move.”

Following Kawasaki’s stern command, Yuigahama stopped immediately.

“But, to have to wear this sort of costume for a competition, it’s a little...”

Yukinoshita looked somewhat gloomy.

However, Ebina didn’t seem to care.

“Isn’t this just fine! This is the special costume that is PRODUCED BY ME and MADE BY Sakisaki!”

“Don’t call me Sakisaki!”

My my, aren’t you getting along just fine... I felt that after the Cultural Festival the distance between Ebina and Kawasaki had shortened considerably.

When Kawasaki was done inspecting everyone’s clothes, she nodded her head. Yukinoshita turned about, checking herself. This girl really is super serious about winning. To go to the extent to ensure that she could easily move about... On the other hand, Yuigahama doesn’t seem to have gotten used to it. She sighed while looking at herself out of curiosity and admiration.

After checking on herself, Yukinoshita sighed too.

“But even so... why is it Western-style...?”

“Yes... Shouldn’t it be like a samurai-style?”

As soon as Yukinoshita had finished, Yuigahama voiced her doubts as well. I know. Just who on earth decided on Western style clothes? I looked at the proposer, Zaimokuza for an answer. Kawasaki too looked at Ebina, her eyes full of doubt.

Then, both Zaimokuza and Ebina pushed up their spectacles. Due to the sunlight's reflection, the glasses sparkled brightly.

"Isn't it obvious? Because I like it!"

"Isn't it obvious? Because I like it!"

Oh, I get it now. There's no helping it if the reason is because you people like it...

In fact, that's probably what happens in all productions. Someone's idea will be used as a foundation, but due to various people throwing in their own ideas into the mix, the final product will be something quite unexpected.

Even though those people will think that this is a good thing, the people wearing it will find it hard to agree. Both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama looked at them with disdain.

Meguri-senpai, who was wearing the same thing as them, walked towards them upon seeing their expressions. You could tell just by her broad grin, that this sort of sight was something that Meguri-senpai really enjoyed.

She placed her hands around their shoulders and smiled happily.

"Now, now, isn't it just great that we are so lively?! Let's aim for a comeback!"

Saying that, Meguri-senpai invited them over to join the line. It was about time to enter the event grounds anyway. Both Ebina-san and Kawasaki walked towards the white team's line. I lightly waved my hands towards Meguri-senpai and the two of them.

In the instant that our paths crossed.

"If we win this, we get 30 points."

"Hm, then, we just have to win the boy's event and we can make a comeback..."

Both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama looked back and glanced at me. I know that without you two telling me. The main events are worth 30 points apiece. If we win the both of them, the red team will make a comeback.

"But, even if you say so..."

Even if they put it that way, there's no guarantee that we would win the following events. Thinking of everything that had transpired, it was still the white team's advantage. In other words, the chances of the red team obtaining a victory was even

lower.

What was even more obvious was the captain of the white team, Hayama. His incredibly high ability was a given, his charisma was also something that spurred on the white team. On the contrary, the red team had zero motivation left...

Winning in this state is near impossible.

Needless to say, Yukinoshita was very clear on this point. However, she continued to look at me.

“...Because you will keep your promise.”

After saying this, Yukinoshita walked away. Yuigahama raised her hand, and smiled spiritedly.

“I don’t think it can be called a promise unless both parties agree to it...”

I mumbled this even though I clearly knew that she wouldn’t be able to hear it.

8-4

The red and white teams were divided accordingly on the field. They looked quite grand. Amongst them were the generals, and they looked especially eye-catching.

The generals on the red team consisted of people like Yukinoshita, Yuigahama, and Meguri-senpai. Facing off against them were Miura, Kawasaki and Ebina. Truth be told, we didn't even have the time to decide who would be the generals for the Chibasen event. Therefore, they were mostly either the executive committee members or someone related.

Well, Meguri-senpai was a given. Both Miura and Yukinoshita were well-known throughout the school. So there was no issue there. Although Kawasaki wasn't really well-known, people's first impressions of her weren't any less energetic than any of the others.

While Ebina-san had looked like she didn't want to do it at all, she had nevertheless agreed.

When the generals had took their places, everyone readied themselves as well.

At that moment, a howling sound could be heard from the school's PA system.

“A- A, A-!”

The sound of people testing out the microphone could be heard.

Up until now, the explanations and commentary of the events had been mostly done by Miura and Ebina. They have been doing a wonderful job at that too. However, since the Chibasen event had to be participated by all the girls, the people doing the broadcast has changed as well.

It was probably on Miura's orders, but the people had now been replaced by three idiots. They were clutching the microphone tightly.

“Well then, the Sports Festival is nearing its end. At the moment, the white team has a point advantage. Under Hayama Hayato's great efforts, we have obtained a huge amount of points and the competition continues on in our favor.”

Strangely enough, it was a white team member who was doing the broadcast... Also, what's with the usage of “our...?” As expected of virgin Oooka. There's zero neutrality in this.

“However, the victor has yet to be decided...”

On the other hand, the seriousness of Yamato's voice began to fan people's expectations of the red team.

Although the two of them sounded very excited, their voices were still very noisy.

"We are finally at the main event of this year's Sports Festival. The Chibasen has girls of Chiba facing off against each other. In short, Chibasen!"

Tobe's mysterious statement resonated throughout the school grounds. To suddenly bring up Chibasen now was certainly weird.

"Now then, the two teams' generals and armies are already in position. The victor will be determined by how many generals each team can take down."

Oooka explained the rules simply. Each side had 3 generals. Whilst protecting their own general, each team must "destroy" the other team's horse and take their headband.

The two armies looked and glared at each other. The grounds were filled with an anxious atmosphere.

The person who directed the start of the event was Hiratsuka-sensei. With a conch in one hand, she looked quite lively and cheerful. Eh, this person looked like she really enjoyed this sort of thing...

Then, she took a deep breath and blew into the conch.

With a loud "OOOOOOOOOh-----" sound, the two armies rushed off.

"The fire of the Chibasen has been lit!"

As I listened to Oooka's commentary, I watched each team's every move. The white team seemed to have decided on a swift approach, and the generals were actively on the attack. Each of them had their own targets.

The first to strike was Kawasaki.

Ignoring the movements of those around her, she launched an attack immediately. Her target was Meguri-senpai.

Amongst the red team's generals, she might be the easiest target. From her usual calm and warm demeanor, one would think that she would fall at the slightest touch. Yet, the truth was much different.

No! Wrong!

Upon realizing what Kawasaki was up to, she became flustered for a brief moment but

quickly regained her composure. She then said to those around her, “Everyone, I’m counting on you!”

Following that, those who were around her quickly formed a wall, blocking Kawasaki’s advance. There was now a barrier between Kawasaki and Meguri-senpai.

This was a personal virtue of Meguri-senpai. Protected by an impenetrable defense, Kawasaki had no way in.

“...Tsk.”

Kawasaki clicked her tongue, repositioned herself and backed off for the moment.

It seems that danger has temporarily passed for Meguri-senpai... Just as I relaxed, I could hear some strange cry and wailing coming from the center of the field.

“Ufufufu, Y-U-I!”

That weird noise was made by Ebina. She was riding on a horse formed by athletic girls and was charging forth, blowing up heaps of sand in her wake.

“Uwa-, something’s coming!”

The wails were from Yuigahama. She had become prey for the overly excited Ebina. Faced with Ebina’s persistent assault, she wailed as she ran about trying to escape her. Yuigahama weaved in between horses while running all over the place. Ebina still chased after her.

The two of them dashed everywhere. They looked as though they had no idea where they were heading at all.

This looked like a stalemate to me... Well, I should be able to rest easy as long as Yuigahama was busy trying to escape.

The crowd gave large shouts of support upon seeing the generals taking the lead in the attack.

“Each of the generals are continuing to have their short clashes. Oh, it looks like there’s going to be a clash among two generals again!”

Following Oooka’s commentary, the crowd began to cheer earnestly again. The spotlight fell on the remaining generals.

Yukinoshita’s horse was running nimbly throughout the field, circling around horses that were blocking her path, and with a precise aim, took the headband of the other party. At the end of all these blockers, Miura stood her ground, ready to face her.

Even as she looked at Yukinoshita, she also continuously decimated her opponents that were coming to attack her, crushing them easily.

Then, the two of them finally faced each other.

They locked eyes with each other. Miura was grinning whilst Yukinoshita was ice-cold.

The two of their fighting styles were different, and the fight between them had become the center of attention.

As though it was planned beforehand, the two of them charged forward at the exact same time. Miura burst forth explosively.

On the other hand, Yukinoshita moved forward silently, as quiet as a snowflake falling onto the ground.

Then, a fierce battle erupted between them.

In the instant they crossed each other, Miura's body began to float slightly.

From a far, it looked like just a slight brush of their bodies. However, I think I have seen that move somewhere before.

The move where one could still toss someone out without even touching them. This was something that Yukinoshita specializes at.

"A-Air throw... Are you supposed to be Master Asia? Dying at dawn? [\[98\]](#)!"

Just as I was all tensed up, Miura's horse lost balance and collapsed. After Miura fell, the white team fell along with her.

And so, the victor was decided.

Hiratsuka sounded the conch once more.

"What a beautiful technique! Red team's victory!"

With praise given to the red team, the audience gave a huge applause for each team's performance.

This person really did win...

With anxiety and understanding, I clapped my hands as well. Then, Yukinoshita and the rest returned. Yukinoshita was panting heavily, seemingly exhausted. Yuigahama dragged her feet along, probably still mentally tired out from having been chased for so long.

“Good work.”

I waved my hand lightly and both Yukinoshita and Yuigahama clapped my hands.

“We’ll leave the rest to you then.”

“Hikki, we’re counting on you.”

“...Easy for you to say.”

I watched both of them go back to the administrative tent, and then I looked down at my hands.

8-5

There was just a little time left before the Botaoshi competition, so I returned to the first-aid tent for a short while.

Well, it's to prepare for the worst. After finding what I needed, I hid it away by squashing it into my pocket.

Following that, I heard Miura's voice, probably because the commentators have already switched.

"Next, we have the boy's Botaoshi event."

Alright, it's time for me to go then.

The next event that was going to take place was the Botaoshi event, where the rules were very simple. In both camps, a pole was erected, and whoever topples the other team's pole wins.

Ebina's idea was surprisingly normal, and I felt somewhat let-down. When I was thinking of this, I could hear a low and gross voice coming from the PA system.

"Ufufufu. B-Boys locked in a grapple, trying to topple poles. H-How lewd..."

Following that, I heard the sound of a loud smack. Miura had probably smacked Ebina on the head. At the same time, a loud wail emitted from the microphone.

Ebina-san is weird after all...

As I listened to the trivial commentary, I joined the queue and waited for my chance to enter the field. However, it seemed that there were a great many people there already, and the entrance was so packed that the crowd didn't seem to be moving along at all. As I was thinking to myself what a huge bother this was, someone smoothly cut into the queue.

"Oh-oh, if it isn't Hachiman."

By some dumb luck, I'd run into Zaimokuza.

"Why aren't they moving?"

Maybe someone who had arrived here before me would know more about it. However, Zaimokuza shook his head at my question.



“Who knows? Maybe something happened in front.”

“Hmmm.”

Well, whatever. Anyway, it’s darn noisy with that many people, so hurry up and move already.

Then, somewhere ahead of me, I saw an empty space among the crowd of people.

There was someone alone there. I wonder who it was.

As I looked at that person, I realized that it was Totsuka wearing the school uniform. Why was he wearing the school uniform...? As I thanked God for the chance to find out, I proceeded to walk towards him, and he noticed me as well.

“Hachiman!”

He smiled and began walking towards me. The slightly large school uniform flapped about on him.

“Totsuka, your clothes...”

It’s too cute! I rushed forward, as though overcome by an urge to ascertain what was going on. What was this? The person who thought of this combination must be a genius, right? To let Totsuka wear the school uniform, what’s with this Columbus Egg situation...? I already have no idea what’s right or wrong. I could even feel that the Law of Cause and Effect being reversed, and the Law of Cycles being brought out. [\[99\]](#)

Having heard my question, Totsuka didn’t seem to know the answer to it himself either.

“S-seems like... Something to do with being the captain... So I was requested to wear this... I-is it strange?”

Totsuka nervously fiddled with his excessively long sleeves, and upon noticing the looks he was getting, tried to make himself look less noticeable. It seems like this uniform was prepared for him in a hurry, and was quite large for the relatively slim Totsuka. But, this was fine.

“It fits you very well. It’s not strange at all.”

That’s right, it’s not strange at all. This is love...

“Hm. I think this is the first time that I have seen the instant someone falls in love...”

Zaimokuza was trembling as he said that, but I didn't really hear it because Totsuka was just way too cute.

8-6

Both the red and white teams had entered the field. The event was now underway.

“First, let me introduce the captains for both sides. For the white team, we have the soccer club captain, Hayama Hayato-kun. For the red team, we have the tennis-team captain, Totsuka Saika-kun.”

Ebina’s commentary could be heard over the PA system, and everyone shifted their attention to the two captains. Totsuka looked a little flustered, probably from having his name called out all of a sudden. On the other hand, Hayama waved his hands in response to the crowd’s cheers, looking very calm.

His calmness seemed to have affected all those around him as well. The white team’s morale was really high. With Hayama at the center, they were huddled in a circle giving off a fine impression of what youth was really supposed to be like.

In contrast, the boys of the red team looked really demotivated. They looked really weak when combined with their gloomy mood.

The only one who was actually motivated was probably Zaimokuza, who was just mumbling to himself, probably fantasizing about something. It seems like chuunis like him really enjoy this sort of competition. Or maybe to him this was like a war, where he could tell everyone about useless things like Gyorin or Kakuyoku or Rikutousanryaku. [\[100\]](#)

There’s no way we can win like this... I couldn’t help but sigh at our impending defeat.

However, our chance of winning was not zero. I stared at my hands as I thought about it. Things could be changed if one thought about how to play one’s hand with the cards that they were dealt.

“Zaimokuza, I have a secret plan.”

Hearing those words, Zaimokuza shivered for a brief moment.

“Secret plan...? Something you need to consult your general about? Ok, let’s hear it.”

Nice, I see you fell for my bait. This guy sure loves things like secret plans. Although I was kind of unhappy being treated as his subordinate, I’ll forgive you today. After today, I will give you hell.

I whispered a few words to Zaimokuza, and Zaimokuza jumped in surprise.

“...Ah? Me?”

Zaimokuza was back to his old self instantly. But this was also troubling.

“There’s no one else but you. Right now, your position is like Guan Yu from the Three Kingdoms. Totsuka is Liu-bang. That being the case, you are the only one who can unite and lead the entire army.”

I utilized something that everyone loves, that is the Annals of the Three Kingdoms. Zaimokuza hummed in thought and then slapped his knee.

“Ah, I get it. Leave it to me.”

Seems like I have successfully pressed the switch for Zaimokuza’s chuuni mode. That way, Zaimokuza will have no fear. Chuunibyou sufferers can exert an extraordinary amount of pressure sometimes. It would be impossible for them to do things like telling others their own fantasies, or dressing up in a trench coat mid-summer without a strong self-consciousness that could destroy common knowledge.

Zaimokuza walked in front of the red team. With an exaggerated cough, he began to shout loudly.

“Listen up, peasants. Our army’s supreme commander wishes to speak!”

Totsuka looked at Zaimokuza dumbfounded, as though asking him what this was all of a sudden. Then, upon noticing his name being called, he walked over in a fluster.

“Ah, um. I am the red team’s captain, Totsuka Saika. E-everyone, let’s do our best.”

Totsuka had his small hands clenched in front of his chest and looked more like he was encouraging himself. Although he didn’t sound very confident, it gave people the impression that he was giving it his all. --- That smile, I want to protect it.

After his rallying call, Zaimokuza took another step forward.

“Our one and only enemy is Hayama Hayato! Just ignore the rest of the small-frys! Listen up! This is the time that we’ve been looking forward to. How can we let someone so repulsively handsome win! I hate it! I really hate it! I don’t want any more sad memories like that! I don’t want to give way when I see him in the corridors! I don’t want to force myself to smile whenever he talks to me! I don’t want to suddenly find myself going quiet whenever he walks by me! What about you guys!?”

Zaimokuza’s voice had turned into what sounded like sobs halfway through his speech. It seems like he was way too into character, and had said something really painful. The red team had felt the mysterious pressure from the extreme sadness of Zaimokuza. The white team looked on nonchalantly. This place has become the center of everyone’s

attention.

“O-. O-Oh...”

Then, the sounds of sporadic agreements came from the red team.

“Then what should we do!? We have to win! Now is the time to awaken! Stand up, my fellow-men!”

“O-!”

There was a great deal of zeal in Zaimokuza’s speech, and it seemed to have the red team regain a bit of motivation. Totsuka’s greeting was especially good. Unknowingly, I’d already become like everyone, filled with the drive to give it our all for Totsuka’s sake.

Zaimokuza looked at the red team and approached me with a satisfied look.

“How’s that?”

“Um. Not bad. Very disgusting and very eye-catching. I’ll leave the rest in your hands.”

“D-Disgusting?”

Zaimokuza seems to have suffered some sort of shock. No, you are already disgusting normally... But, it was because of this that you emanated a sort of indescribable pressure. A pressure that, in turn, makes everyone listen to you. When morale was low, there was a need to say something first that would pique their interest.

On this note, Zaimokuza has done it beautifully. Probably, along the way home, he would agonize over it, wondering why he had said something like that.

When you get too caught up in the moment, it’s very easy to leave behind an inerasable scar.

Thanks to Zaimokuza’s precious sacrifice, and Totsuka’s smile, all the preparations were complete. I looked at the white team’s flag. Underneath it stood the white team’s captain, Hayama Hayato. Though I was looking at him from afar, he seemed to have noticed me nevertheless, and smiled in return.

Alright, let’s settle this then, fair and square, in the meanest, vile, and most servile way possible.

8-7

As soon as the signal rang out, the two groups of boys leapt into motion. Cheers rang out from among the crowd and mixed together with the guys' shouts. The atmosphere became highly spirited.

Ebina, who was giving the commentary, was in high spirits too.

"And they are off! Boys getting on top of others boys to bring down the other boys' pole! Attack and defense! Each army plunging hard into each other! It's the white team who leads the offensive!"

Her stupid sounding commentary was especially troubling to anyone who was listening to it seriously. As expected, the white team's morale was higher than ours. That was because Hayama was their captain, and their team appeared more skilled as well. They concentrated their attack power, looking for that one point to break through. Naturally, the red team, which didn't have any team set-up or formation in play, was rapidly scattered by the onslaught, and was continuously pushed back towards their pole.

Totsuka and a few others were at the pole protecting it. The white team too was now gathered there.

"Ah, uhhhh."

Totsuka went into a crouching position upon seeing the ferocious onslaught. (Very cute) There would be no one to protect the pole if they broke past Totsuka. All the nearby red team members went over to assist.

Totsuka seemed to have gotten rid of some white team dude who was trying to get him. However, the defense team had already taken some considerable damage.

Seeing that, Totsuka rushed over to help.

"S-Sorry!"

"No! For our captain, this is nothing!"

Hearing that, Totsuka gave a shy smile.

"Thank you..."

"...Mmm."

The red team's defense had the face of a dead person, and they collapsed on the spot after having witnessed Totsuka's smile from so close-up.

“The red team’s guys are really all idiots...”

Although I couldn’t see all that was going on in the area, I don’t think there would be any problem leaving the pole’s defense to Totsuka and them. Listlessly, slowly, I walked forward. Just as I was about to reach the dead center, an agonizing wail rang out from the midst of the enemy.

“Uwaaaaaa!”

Upon closer inspection, Zaimokuza’s body seemed to be covered in dirt. Shaking to and fro, he continued to walk forward, welcoming his impending death in an exaggerated fashion.

“U-Uwaaa! E-even if Zaimokuza dies, our victory will not die! I have no more regrets in this life... I-I am free...”

His exaggerated display of welcoming death ensured that neither his allies nor his enemies dared to approach him. There was a veil of dust surrounding him. His hair was a mess too. Continuously mumbling non-stop, he continued lumbering forwards, shaking to and fro.

This guy was as annoying as always... However, thanks to him grabbing all the attention, I can do what I need to do.

Zaimokuza’s death scream continued to ring out in the distance. The red team continued to be under the strong assault of their opponents. That is to say, neither of them noticed what I was doing.

I am known as the person who most certainly did not grab anyone’s attention.

An ability I’ve acquired over my years as a loner. Stealth Hikki!

I took out the bandage from my pocket and quickly wrapped it about my forehead. That way, I looked just like one of the member of the white team. As I mingled amongst the white team members, I continued breaking through into the enemy’s camp. Or rather you could say I simply waltzed into it.

Right now Zaimokuza’s wails were still continuing, and people continued to look in his direction. If I let him continue grabbing their attention... The white team’s flag was right in front of me. All I had to do was to stealthily go over and topple and it. I raised my head, and just when I had made a quick mental calculation on their approximate defensive strength, I heard someone calling out.

“Sup, I knew you would come.”

“Hayama...”

Hayama Hayato was smiling his invigorating smile as usual. I couldn't help but smile pettily in return. Before I knew it, I was already surrounded by Hayama and his team. Hayama pointed his finger at his own headband and asked.

"That bandage. Is your head injured?"

"Well, they do say that there's something wrong in my head..."

His way of talking made it sound like he was chiding a child for his mischievous prank... Even I felt somewhat troubled by it. I swiftly removed my bandage. Then, Hayama glanced at Zaimokuza. Zaimokuza was still pretending to throw up blood and screaming UNIVERSE or something like that as he walked about shaking all over the place.

"Zaimokuza-kun? It's a great plan to use him as bait... However."

Hayama's smile disappeared and he gave me a very serious look.

"There's no way I wouldn't keep an eye out for you."

"You think too highly of me... I don't have such a big role to play."

As I replied to him, I took in the intensity from those surrounding me. Hayama and the others approached me, little by little.

Just as I observed that there was no way I could break through this, Hayama gave his last words to me upon noticing what I was doing.

"Don't try anything funny. We are fighting your grandstand play with team play."

"That's just 'tyranny of the masses.'"

"Don't make it sound so terrible. I'm just using our numbers advantage."

Hayama broke into a grin again. His temper was really good to be able to smile in a situation like this. I thought that this person was quite warped as well. However, now was not the time to analyze Hayama's character. I slowly raised my hand. Hayama didn't understand what I was doing, and so he asked.

"Surrendering?"

Well, one could probably only interpret it as such in this situation. However, that could not be further from the truth.

"No... Zaimokuza!"

I swiped my hand in the direction of the pole.

“Oh!”

Hearing my shout, Zaimokuza, who had been rolling around and pretending to writhe in pain got up in a flash and flew towards the pole.

“If you are going to win by numbers, I am going to win by weight.”

In that instant, I gave a detestable smile and declared as such to the white team, who didn’t seem to have understood what was going on. Following that, the shocked Hayama quickly gave his orders.

“A decoy for a decoy? Crap! Everyone, help!”

Hearing Hayama’s orders, Tobe, Yamato and Oooka reacted instantly and went forth to stop Zaimokuza.

“You shall not pass!”

“Just try and see!”

“We’re going to get you!”

The three of them locked arms and stood in the path of Zaimokuza. However, Zaimokuza had no fear and continued dashing forward.

“Hohohohoho! Buzz off!”

Having him running at full speed coupled with his weight made him a formidable force to be reckoned with. Just like that, he pushed past the three of them and made a beeline for the pole.

The pole swayed slightly. There was a stir amongst the crowd before they all held their breaths. The pole was still shaking non-stop. No one made a sound. All were just watching wide-eyed at the motion of the pole.

Then, bam!

In the instant the pole fell, an applause exploded from the crowd. In the enormous applause, Zaimokuza let out a victory roar that was louder than everyone else.

8-8

Autumn was approaching, and the wind entering the clubroom had become cold as well. Thanks to that, the MAX coffee on the table was very tasty. There was also the hot steam from the tea floating about.

It felt like an awful long time since I had been spending the days here like this in the clubroom after school. A few days after the Sports Festival had ended, the Service Club resumed its usual activities. Simply put, that meant Yukinoshita and I were reading books, whilst Yuigahama played on her phone.

Nevertheless, a little bit of the aftertaste of the Sports Festival remained.

Yukinoshita closed her book audibly.

“I didn’t think that this was how we were going to lose...”

“Yeah... it was unexpected to lose from flouting the rules.”

The two of them spoke as they reached for their teacups. It was slightly hurtful to my ears.

“If only someone hadn’t done something stupid to his headband, we could’ve won...”

Saying that, Yukinoshita shot me a look. Seems like she was somewhat unsatisfied with the outcome of the Sports Festival. Well, this was only to be expected given Yukinoshita’s personality.

“Now, now. It’s not Hikki’s fault completely.”

Yuigahama seemed to have sensed the dangerous atmosphere and hurriedly came to my defense. That it may be, but come to think of it, didn’t Yukinon and dangerous (ken’non) sound similar? Was this how her nickname came about?

This dangerous person suddenly sighed and looked at something faraway.

“Well, what’s done is done...”

Just like the two had said, the Sports Festival had ended with the red team losing. The reason was due to violating the rules during the Botaoshi event. The announcement during the closing ceremony caused a huge storm.

The person who was in charge of announcing the results was the committee chairman, Sagami.

“Due to their dangerous actions by both teams during the Botaoshi event, the event’s results are voided, therefore neither of the teams scored any points. More details will be announced in the coming days.”

With that plain and direct statement from Sagami, it was the white team’s temporary victory.

The real problem was that there was no way anyone could check what each and every member was doing during the Botaoshi event that because it had so many participants.

Maybe someone had secretly stood back up after being pushed to the ground. Maybe someone had engaged in violent behaviors. Maybe some had switched headbands as well.

Of course, the cries of objection came quickly. Voices of how people wanting to know what violations had been committed, and who had committed them.

However, it was incredibly difficult to give a detailed breakdown of all the foul plays. That was because a conclusion could not be reached unless one knew from the top of their hand what each and every person was doing during the entire competition. This was similar to how you had to provide irrefutable evidence for the proof of the existence of spirits or unidentified living things. Originally, the committee was in charge of such things like verification and observation. If even the committee had no idea, then no one else will know the truth either.

Thanks to that, what I did will never be known to the public. Well, there’s no evidence that suggest that it was only I who had flouted the rules.

“Well, isn’t the conclusion that Miss-chairman gave just fine?”

Hearing these words, Yukinoshita immediately looked at me coldly.

“Seems like you need to do some more reflection...”

With that, I was speechless. For some reason, it seemed that both Yuigahama and Yukinoshita knew about how I violated the rules. It almost seems like they were certain that Sagami was talking about me.

I had no idea that everything was out in the open already. I don’t even have the motivation to try and cover things up anymore.

“Sorry... I didn’t think that anyone would be watching...”

It was a half-assed apology. Yuigahama stuck up her fingers, as though ready to give me a lecture.

“No, I think everyone saw it?”

“Yes. I was thinking ‘what on earth you were going to do with that bandage’ when you pulled it out of your pockets.”

Yukinoshita sighed in surprise. Really? You noticed it from that moment? This girl really did notice me flouting the rules huh... Yuigahama turned her head and asked an unexpected question to Yukinoshita.

“Ah, Yukinon was watching too?”

Yuigahama seemed to have been watching me at that point in time too. Then, Yukinoshita batted her eyes.

“...Coincidentally.”

She said so in a low voice then went back to reading her book.

“So you saw everything...”

Well, I know as well that in this sort of group competition it was easier to take notice of the actions of someone you know. In fact, in the Chibasen, I had been observing it from start till end with wide-open eyes as well. Hence, my cursing voice became softer.

Yuigahama seemed to have sensed the mood getting darker, and in a happier than usual voice, said, “Ah, look! Meguri-senpai was really happy!”

This was the only salvation.

Although the red team had lost, this had become a very happy memory for Meguri-senpai. If possible, she had really hoped to win. However, not all things necessarily go your way.

Yuigahama’s words brought out a warm smile from Yukinoshita.

“Yes. Sagami-san had probably thought up of something as well, which is why she said it like that.”

“Who knows?”

I didn’t really believe that a person could grow or change. In fact, I believe that a person’s true nature would never change.

I think that people could only keep up appearances. To put on a façade. To learn to keep an appropriate distance between themselves and others. So as to not hate each other, they would do things like forcibly cover things up or pretending not to see certain

things. I didn't know whether this was the right way to do things.

"However, losing the Sports Festival is surprisingly frustrating. I never knew it would be so."

Seems like Yukinoshita, who hated losing, had said this after being reminded once more of the loss in the Sports Festival.

"Then let's win next year!"

"...Yes, let's."

Once again, Yuigahama's cheerfulness brought out a warm smile from Yukinoshita.

"We might not be on the same team next year you know."

"Why do you have to say something like that so soon?"

Yuigahama puffed out her cheeks whereas Yukinoshita smiled calmly.

"Yes, it would be more interesting if Hikigaya-kun was my enemy."

"Why do you sound so motivated?"

Watching them banter, I couldn't help but smile wryly. It was only after experiencing those special times like at the festivals that one would feel nostalgic towards this sort of everyday scenery.

Before I knew it, I had gotten used to this sort of everyday life. I would eventually get used to losing this sort of everyday life as well.

Perhaps one could say that everyday life was about obtaining and losing something. With one big gulp, I downed the rest of the MAX coffee, and flushed my thoughts into my stomach.

Watching the two of them from the corner of my eyes, I quietly stood up.

"I'm going to buy coffee."

Saying that, I left the clubroom without waiting for their reply.

The autumn wind was blowing through the special building. I could hear the shouts from the various sports clubs through the windows. The Sports Festival had ended, and they had returned to their everyday lives.

Haruka and Yukko's memories of this Sports Festival, as well as their memories towards Sagami, would become blurred as well. Soon, they would forget about all that

had transpired during this Sports Festival, and what had resulted from it. Everything would be gone with the wind.

I ambled about in the empty school building.

When I descended a floor and turned a corner, I nearly bumped into someone.

Who was that? That was dangerous. I raised my head and saw that it was Sagami Minami.

Sagami was hugging a pile of papers. There seemed to be the words “Sports Festival” printed on one of them. Seems like the committee still had some things to take care of.

“.....”

“.....”

We averted our eyes and kept silent. Then, Sagami spoke all of a sudden.

“Oi, move it.”

Although this was what she said, she didn’t look at me. Just like always, my relationship with Sagami was the same, two parallel lines. Without a word, I moved to the side.

What followed was the sound of footsteps going away.

Even so, ah, how should I put it? This was a huge improvement. Although it was still unable to be done now, Sagami and I should be able to maintain a normal stranger relationship in the days ahead.

As I listened to the footsteps going away, I began to walk too.

Just like this, the festival after the festival had ended. It was all too late now.

There are somethings that cannot be undone. However, each day continues to pass by in sorrow or happiness, until the day high school ends.

That’s why, their festival have yet to end.

Bonus Track: When the lights of those Christmas candles flicker...

Christmas.

It was, festive all over town along with the couples jammed packed everywhere and the parading of the young spouting “weeey, weeey”^[1], a frightening event. For those who were ostracized by society, look no further for something so hateful.

But, wait. Just a moment.

To those who cursed Christmas, hold your intentions higher.

On the internet, you shouldn’t mess around, posting things like “those who agree Christmas should be discontinued retweet this”. That was just the ramblings of a loser.

What you should be cursing wasn’t Christmas, but those who unreasonably recited “wey, wey” all year long. The merry city and the frivolous couples were, Christmas or not, annoying. The idiotic students going “wey, wey” were in fact even more troublesome like the beginning of spring.

To those who denied Christmas, hold your intentions higher.

You shouldn’t be giving worthless excuses like “I’m actually Buddhist (lol)”. That was just nonsense of the weak.

In the first place, mentioning the names of God and Buddha and proceeding to deny Christmas was nothing short of being arrogant.

If you were truly a loner, then you wouldn’t be relying on other people, let alone gods.

Bringing up the god that you didn’t even know existed wasn’t something you should do, but instead, using your resolute mental fortitude, you should be denying Christmas.

Don’t pray to god, lest your heart be crushed.^[2] Don’t demand, but take.^[3] Do so, and it shall be given you.^[4]

To begin with, livestock had no gods nor did corporate slaves.

Whether you were alone or with someone, Christmas would visit this year as well.

In other words, Christmas was...

It was... Um, in other words, you know, it's that thing, yeah. Anyways, how should I say this, this is really bad... To this day, I've never actually properly enjoyed Christmas before, so I don't know what I'm supposed to do, seriously, what the heck am I going to do about this...?

Bonus Track 6.5.2

The school campus that was already on winter break was empty.

The sun had already set in the scenery that peeked in from outside the window. Faint voices of those engaged in the activities of their sports could be heard coming from outside as well.

The fields were slightly lit up by the glow that spilled out from the school building and gym and the street lights. With no presence of people and minimal lighting, this campus was bleak as barrens. The chilly winds that blew from the sea shook the windows.

However, thanks to the slight heating, this room was submerged in warmth.

“Haaaa... The tea sure is good!” Sitting diagonally opposite of me, Yuigahama let out a voice that resembled a sigh of relief as she gently placed her mug on the table.

Both Yukinoshita and I returned a small nod to Yuigahama and placed our hands around our tea again. Yeah, yeah, we had better treasure our teatime![\[5\]](#)

“It’s a good thing the Christmas event went well...” said Yuigahama laidback, easing up from the sensation of finishing a job.

Yukinoshita smiled. “That’s true. I wasn’t sure how it’d turn out, but it looks like we’re relieved of a burden now.”

“I guess so. Feels like it’s been a while since we’ve had the chance to relax too...”

In reality, these past few days were filled with unease as if something had been chasing us the entire time.

The Culture Festival, the Sports Festival, the field trip, the student council election, and lastly, the Christmas collaboration event. All those days appeared and disappeared, faded out and faded in..... Weren’t those just floating lanterns[\[6\]](#)? Did I die or something, non?

As I was reflecting about that, I drank the rest of the remaining tea. Although the cup was empty, it was still slightly warm.

I let out a short sigh. In that timing, three sighs overlapped.

Yukinoshita casually lifted her face and looked at Yuigahama’s mug. “Yuigahama-san, would you like another serving of tea?”

"Ah, thanks!" said Yuigahama as she happily extended out her mug.

"Hikigaya-kun, hand me your tea cup."

"Mm."

I handed over my cup without any particular complaints, but after thinking about it more closely, I had the feeling her words were oddly different for me.

"...Uh, wasn't the reception just a little unequal there? The disparity's a little too obvious, you know?" I said.

Regardless, Yukinoshita quickly directed her gaze to the box atop the table. As she was preparing the tea, she opened her mouth, "Also, there's quite a bit of cookies left over so could I ask you two to help finish them?"

"Totally not listening to me either... Okay, well, I'll still eat the cookies though. It'd be a waste since we won't be at school for a while."

I rustled through the cookies or whatever that were bunched up in the box and Yuigahama peeked in from the side.

"I'll take two!"

"Sure, please help yourself."

"Yay! The cookies that Yukinon makes are so good!"

Yukinoshita showed her a small smile and Yuigahama happily tried to bite into her cookie. But suddenly realizing something, she vigorously stood up from her chair.

"...Er, wroooooog!"

Yuigahama's voice echoed in the quiet room.

"Oh, what's the deal, suddenly standing up like that?"

"You'll spill your tea, you know."

But since Yukinoshita and I were long familiar with her noisiness, our reactions were composed. Heck, Yukinoshita was acting like a mom of the sort too.

Unhappy with our reactions, Yuigahama abruptly shot open her eyes and continued further. "You two are just way too laidback! Today, weren't we supposed to talk about what to do after this!?"

Remembering once it was mentioned, Yukinoshita tilted her head. "Speaking of which,

we were, weren't we..."

"Yeah, yeah! So, today's Christmas, what should we do? It's a rare opportunity, so let's all do something crazy!" Finally obtaining a satisfying response, Yuigahama nodded as she abruptly stretched out her hands.

Still, we were at a loss to her question. Reflexively, I scratched at my head. "Even if you say let's do something... I was planning on spending Christmas normally at home though."

"Eeh? Is that reaaaally normal? Isn't Christmas, more like, where everyone goes PAN with that PAN-PAKA-PAN kind of feeling? [7] kind of feeling, right?"

"What kind of feeling is that? I have no clue what that means..."

Especially that PAN-PAKA-PAN part. That PAN-PAKA-PAN.

Yukinoshita placed her hand on her chin and began to think. "I don't believe spending Christmas at home is anything unusual. In the west, celebrating it with your family is supposedly commonplace."

"But we're in Japan..." Yuigahama opened her mouth, moaning in discontent, but I stopped her there.

"Wait, calm down, Yuigahama. The European founding fathers were the ones saying that. So the correct answer here is to obediently spend your Christmas with your family. This is what they call the Christmas that was GLOBALIZED by way of the WORLD STANDARD."

I retorted with an argument, but Yuigahama's reaction seemed somewhat indifferent. She shook her hands in front of her face.

"No, no, I don't know what the deal with THE WORLD or the STANDARD, but does that really matter? Everyone's enjoying it like normal even if they aren't too knowledgeable about it."

"...That's true, after getting localized over here, it's become a unique aspect of Japanese culture," said Yukinoshita after some consideration. For Yukinoshita to be persuaded like this was rather rare. Still, there was something else that was more shocking.

"Yuigahama actually made a sound argument..."

"Fufun." Yuigahama displayed a triumphant smile, teeming with pride.

"Well, fine. Let's suppose that what Yuigahama said is right. So, what's the correct way to enjoy Christmas in Japan then?"

Yuigahama tilted her head and went “hm?”

“Eh, like I said, normally—”

“To me, normal means to spend Christmas at home. I’ve never spent Christmas with anyone outside of my family before. What exactly are we supposed to do? Should I just go ‘wey, wey’? It’s not like we’re in front of a station of a college in April here...”

Yukinoshita nodded. It looked like she agreed as well. “Certainly, stations near colleges in April tend to be annoying in various ways.”

“Those guys were seriously saying ‘weeey’ for sure... Especially if it’s Christmas in the city, then those guys were definitely going ‘wey, wey, yolo, yolo’. When I think about how I might end up seeing guys like that, that alone already made me...”

I despaired to the thought of those guys who were sure to cause a ruckus no matter when or where regardless of whether it was at the beginning or end of the year.

Yuigahama waved her hands that went no way. “No, no, they don’t say stuff like ‘weeey’ or ‘yolo’ or whatever.”

“They totally do. Like Tobe.” I retorted instantly.

Yuigahama was at a loss for words. “Aah, Tobecchi is... But it’s Tobecchi, so there’s no helping it or something...” You sure had your way with words even if you were trying to brush it off with a smile.

Yukinoshita, who was listening, tilted her head and of course, said some horrible things as well. “Tobe-kun doesn’t really matter right now, but, um, what does ‘weeey’ and ‘yolo’ mean?”

It really didn’t matter to Yukinoshita and it seemed like she was more interested with ‘weeey’ and ‘yolo’ than with Tobe. When asked, Yuigahama cocked her head to the side inquisitively.

“Who knows? I wonder..... Maybe, English?” Yuigahama said innocently, causing my cheeks to loosen. I couldn’t help but mix in a smile, letting out a voice that was meant for speaking with a child.

“That’s right. To Yuigahama, any word she doesn’t know gets treated as English, see. It’s okay, she just can’t help herself.”

“The way you’re saying it so nicely makes me upset!” Yuigahama retorted back sullenly. But look here, you were using the same kind of logic where all foreigners were Americans, so I couldn’t help but think of you as a little child, so what’d you expect...?

On the other hand, Yukinoshita had earnestly considered Yuigahama's remark and was contemplating about something. "So 'weeey' in English... would be the equivalent of 'wait', which would be the meaning of 'matsu', I suppose..."

"No, I'm pretty sure that's not it."

In fact, they probably didn't even know a lick of English, especially with their Japanese already being suspicious. But apparently, it had nothing to do with them having issues with wording or having low communicative ability. As a matter of fact, actually managing an actual conversation with a limited arsenal of vocabulary like "crap", "totally that", "ooh right", "that, for sure", and so forth indicated their communication ability was stupidly high. It was one super contextual culture. It really emphasized "our cultures are soooo different!"

While I was thinking that, Yukinoshita tensely looked in my direction. "Hikigaya-kun, wey. Stay, house."

"So treating me like a dog, huh...?"

Don't tell me you were betting your life on that? What do you know, that's pretty sophisticated.

"Don't even bother; I was ready to hit the road to my house a long time ago..."

When I attempted to head home obediently as I was instructed, Yuigahama forcibly pulled my sleeve and sat me back down.

"Wait, wait! Just wait! We haven't even decided on anything yet."

"Yeah, but still... Besides, you say to spend Christmas with everyone, but what are we supposed to do?"

Although I readjusted in my seat, I didn't see any signs of progress from here. As usual, I still didn't understand what you're supposed to do when you hang out. By all means, I'd appreciate it if someone made a manual. Please put it on the Daijisen^[8]. I feel there were a lot of people who could get the job done as long they knew the step-by-step process.

Well, a manual like that couldn't possibly exist, as people learned through hearsay and under those who were experienced.

Yuigahama, who lived a life of hearsay, nodded her head as she thought. "Go nuts...! Is something Hikki probably wouldn't like... The illumination is pretty? Then again, Hikki would just say he'll go look at it by himself... Ummm, ummm..."

I couldn't help but find myself slightly impressed with her.

“Oooh, she’s thinking ahead… It looks like we can finally see Yuigahama’s growth.”

“Actually, I think Hikigaya-kun’s growth is what we can’t see here… You’re going to be coming along anyway, so why not give up? You sure don’t learn.” Yukinoshita said with a look of amazement. But I had a thing or two to say about that.

“Look who’s talking, it doesn’t look like you’re learning either. You can’t expect me to tag along if you put it like that…”

“Oh, I can’t have you looking down on me. I’m making sure to learn myself,” said Yukinoshita, showing an unyielding smile. But midway, it lost its spirit. “… Yuigahama-san, she may not look like it, but she can be really stubborn, so there are times when turning her down is pointless.”

“That’s not learning, that’s being whipped…”

Well, Yukinoshita and Yuigahama’s slightly unhealthy relationship was in its own way a sign of progress, so that’s fine, yes.

Or so I was thinking until Yuigahama shot up her hands. “Ah, I know!”

“It looks like you have something in mind. Can we hear it?”

Once Yukinoshita was ready to hear her out (fully whipped), Yuigahama lifted her finger. She spun it and opened her mouth not looking very confident. “Umm… W-We can all eat chicken together, or something!”

“We can already eat that at any time, can’t we…?”

“With that logic, then places like the yakitori stores would have Christmas every day. Besides, there’s already chicken at my place anyway.”

Yukinoshita adjusted herself towards me with a smiling face. “‘There’s’? Are you sure you don’t mean ‘I am’?”

“Hey, hey, I can’t have you lumping up other chickens with the ones at my place. They’re super easy to eat since they’re boneless too. Include my pops and we have two lively ones. Compared to houses elsewhere, our place was extravagant. By the way, when we count chickens, can we count them using ‘lively’?”

“If they’re still alive, then ‘lively’ should be fine.”

“Don’t say things like ‘still alive’! Grotesque things are banned! I won’t feel like eating chicken anymore!”

Yuigahama let out a heart wrenching scream. Still, if it ended on that note, then

Yuigahama's suggestion wouldn't mean anything anymore.

"If you're not going to eat chicken, then that means we won't need to hold a party. The objective is gone."

"Hikki, you schemer!" said Yuigahama, choking on her words, but still continued. "Okay, if chicken's no good, then... Let's eat cake instead, cake!"

"Cake, huh..."

I tried giving some thought to cakes. Honestly, back during the earlier Christmas event, we had made a mountain of cakes, so I wasn't sure what to think if we had to eat even more of them. Besides, whether it was chicken or cake, we could eat those whenever we wanted. The condition, "during Christmas", seemed just a little too lackluster.

Hmmm.

Yuigahama looked into my face apprehensively and asked, "Huh, you don't seem too interested... Hikki, were you bad with sweet things?"

Just as I was about to open my mouth to answer, an individual did so before I could.

"Not at all. As a matter of fact, he likes them."

"Why did you answer, Yukinoshita...? Was this self-introduction time or something? Well, I do like sweet stuff though..."

Yukinoshita flicked away the hair against her shoulders and looked at me with a composed expression. "It's not something we need to check. Coffee that sweet isn't something you can drink unless you have a considerable sweet tooth, right?"

"Hah, you're underestimating MAX COFFEE too much. Sweet tooth or not, I drink it out of necessity. The farmers of Chiba are extremely likely to buy them in bulk too. When it comes to replenishing body fatigue, it's the most optimal."

In reality, the farmers of Chiba did tend to buy MAX COFFEE in bulk, even 4-koma magazines too. I saw it in an extracurricular lesson during elementary when we went to a farm so there's no doubt about it. Times of exhaustion called for something sweet. To be consuming this much MAX COFFEE made me wonder if the residents of Chiba were just way too tired.

Just when I figured I'd enlighten them to the sweetness and wonders of MAX COFFEE, Yuigahama tilted her head. "Hikki, you don't really seem like you're tired though... Like how you're always conserving energy... or maybe being economical, or laidback? You always feel like that."

“Just so you know, conserving energy and economical doesn’t mean to take it easy...”

“So you’re aware that you’ve been cutting corners in life... However, from the perspective of people you don’t know, your rotten eyes would certainly give the impression that you’re tired... Yet you’re completely healthy... As usual, your eyes are formidable.”

“No, as a matter of fact, this conversation is making me tired. So can I go home?”

“Like I said, you can’t go home yet! Argh, whatever’s fine! For now let’s decide on something! Something, okay!”

“So pushy...”

So this was the mysterious hardheadedness that whipped Yukinoshita, huh...?

The rude thought floated in my head and Yuigahama casted her face downwards.

“If you don’t really want to, then, that’s fine too...” said Yuigahama, shooting me suggestive peeks with upturned eyes.

“Er, no, it’s not that I don’t want to, but when I hear Christmas, there’re just too many little things that I can’t wrap my head around or something...”

When she showed me that kind of expression, I couldn’t help but feel incredibly guilty. But if I pardoned the framework-like thing called Christmas here, I had the feeling she might go “hey, hey” and nag about other things too. Unless we could draw a line that I’d be okay with, it wouldn’t work... Uwaah, this guy sure was a pain. By this guy, I mean me.

As I was groaning while conflicted, Yukinoshita who was watching our exchange let out a short sigh. “It’s not something you need to think so hard about. Instead of Christmas, think of it as a simple party. I’ll be accompanying Yuigahama-san.”

Yuigahama’s face instantly lit up when she heard that and she flew at Yukinoshita.

“Yukinon, thank you! That’s right! Maybe a simple party might be better. Iroha-chan and the others are probably busy with the student council too. Besides, we can think of it as a thank-you to Sai-chan and Komachi-chan for helping us earlier.”

“Yes, if you think of it as something to appreciate their help, then I believe that would be enough of a reason to go.” Yukinoshita said, peeling Yuigahama off of her. I listened to the suggestion and contemplated.

“...I see, you have a point... But, well, today won’t work for me.”

“Why?” Yuigahama removed her face from Yukinoshita and looked at me.

It was either from chicken or cake that I remembered I was entrusted with the task of bringing home the party barrel we reserved.

“I need to bring back chicken for my family. Besides, you know, at least for today, I need to prepare dinner instead of Komachi.”

Yuigahama made a surprised expression. “He’s surprisingly a devoted husband.....?”

“It’s rather rare for Hikigaya-kun to have any plans.”

I instinctively smiled bitterly in response to Yukinoshita’s words. You’re absolutely right. For the most part, I’d never have any plans, but in regards to family, mostly Komachi, I made sure not to ignore them.

“Sorry, but anyway, that’s how it is, so today is a no go.”

“I see... If you have things to do, then there’s not much we can do, I guess...” Yuigahama nodded her head, looking convinced of something. She made an “ahaha” laugh and quietly sighed.

It may have been a sudden suggestion, but Yuigahama was probably looking forward to Christmas. In her case, she had plenty of friends she could spend time with. That’s why I felt apologetic when she was making this kind of expression for someone like me.

Yukinoshita looked at Yuigahama anxiously, presumably feeling the same way. She then shifted her gaze to me. “If today doesn’t work, you won’t mind tomorrow then?”

“...Well, I don’t have anything particular to do.” I answered as I scratched my head.

Realizing what that meant, Yuigahama looked at Yukinoshita, then me, and clapped her hands.

“Eh, eh, ah, right, I see! Okay, tomorrow it is then! So tomorrow, we’ll get ready and get everyone to go buy presents and stuff!”

Quietly watching the energetic Yuigahama, Yukinoshita nodded as well. “Sure. I think that’s fine. Today, I’m feeling, just a little tired...”

It looked like that was a relief for Yukinoshita. But thanks to that, our conversation ended on a good note and I stood up from my seat. *Now I just had to go pick up the chicken and go home...*

“...Okay, so we’ll leave it at that.”

I put my hands on the door to the room. –Aah, right. I had to say this just in case. After rethinking, I turned back to the two.

“See you, tomorrow.”

Yukinoshita looked slightly surprised, but she quickly showed a small smile while Yuigahama energetically waved her hands.

“Yes, see you tomorrow.”

“Yeah, see you tomorrow!”

Taking those remaining words with my back turned, I left the room. It felt like it had been a long time since I was able to exchange these kinds of trivial goodbyes.

Bonus Track 6.5.3

I headed home after picking up the chicken at KFC.

“I’m baaack.”

I called out and went up the steps. When I opened the door to the living room, Komachi, who had been lying on the sofa, stood up and jogged over.

“Welcome back, onii-chan!”

“Yeah, here. The chicken.” I handed over the party barrel I was holding to Komachi. She carefully took it and carried it to the kitchen.

“Thanks♪ Mom’s going to be home soon too.”

“That so, how about pops?” I took off my coat and tossed it onto the sofa.

Komachi picked it up, straightened it on a hanger, and said, “Who knows?”

What a stone cold reaction... What did you do this time to make Komachi hate you, pops?

So pitiful, you’re so pitiful pops. There wasn’t much he could do about his daughter hating him, but needing to work on a day like this, corporate slaves were truly pitiful...

“Putting that aside, are you sure you shouldn’t be spending time with Yukino-san and Yui-san today?”

“Spending Christmas Eve with family gets first priority, after all.”

Komachi made an odd face. “Mmm. You sound like a girl that says no because she has something else in mind.”

“...Eh? That’s how girls refused? Gosh, the boys who honestly thought ‘she sure is a good girl to be spending time with her family...’ were totally pitiful... Why do you always have to feed me unnecessary information like that?”

Scary... Girls were scary... Now that I’ve been exposed to this story, I couldn’t help, but suspect almost all the girls who behaved a certain way meant something else. You thought “she sure is a nice girl to give me cough drops”, but it turned out she actually meant “You’re so boring, shut up, here have some candy”, or something like that. Again, which middle school me was this?

As I trembled from the fear, Komachi placed her hands on her waist and threw out her

chest. “The thing about onii-chan is that while you’re extremely cynical, you also like to dream a lot. I just think I should gradually destroy those illusions of yours. This is a little sister’s love, you know?”

“Aah, why thank you missy...”

I didn’t really need that Imagine Breaker though...

As I felt disheartened, Komachi glanced at the party barrel in the kitchen and then looked at me anxiously. “Onii-chan, you didn’t have to worry about us. You could’ve just enjoyed your Christmas Eve, you know?”

“That’s not it. We just rescheduled a party to tomorrow, that’s all. We’re going to buy some presents and then have the party or something afterwards.”

“Really? What the heck, I want to go too!” Komachi leaned forward and blurted and it made me remember.

“Aah, speaking of which, they did say they wanted to thank you for the help today... But you’re still in the middle of tests...”

“Gosh, taking a day or two off from studying isn’t going to change anything. I just need to make up those two days of work on another day!”

“That’s what they call a death flag. ‘I’m still okay’. ‘Just a bit more and I can do it’. ‘I think I just might make it’. While you’re reciting all that, it’d be long over; that’s what they call a deadline. Listen here, Komachi. You can push back your deadlines, but you can’t do that for test days.”

“Normally you can’t push back deadlines either, onii-chan...” Komachi looked at me with deep, but pitying eyes.

Ha, ha, ha... You’re right about that. You couldn’t push them back... The recent memory of the collaborative Christmas event chasing after me gave me nightmares. Urgh, just why did things like deadlines exist in this world...? Especially when there’d be people who could be happy without them... The fact that these formidable enemies called deadlines were causing many people to suffer, it might as well be considered as an evil. Therefore, the solution that could destroy the existence of that formidable enemy would be justice. But I digress.

Deadlines weren’t the issue right now, but Komachi. Deadlines, important. Little sister, much more.

“But messing around given the season, I’m not so sure about that...”

Dear, was this really fine? Dear, was this really in the best interests of Komachi? The person in

question, however, looked unperturbed and was even happy-go-lucky.

“No worries, no worries. See, ‘just what is onii-chan doing right now?’, ‘did he do something again?’; it’s a big problem since I can’t concentrate with these thoughts!”

“Well, I understand where you’re coming from.”

I was the same way. “What’s Komachi doing?” “I hope there aren’t any weird bugs sticking to her.” “Kawasaki Taishi isn’t pushing her against the wall as he talks to her or anything, right? Because if he is, I’m going to murder that damn brat...” Those thoughts would consume my mind and it’d be common for my fist to transform into various shapes.

When she saw me looking convinced, Komachi forced one last push. “Also, as far as Komachi’s concerned, being told to study just makes me lose my drive.”

“That’s it. Exactly that. Seriously that. Totally exactly that. There’s nothing, but that.” I reflexively pointed at Komachi. “When you get told to study or work, your efficiency just drops, strange as it is.”

I sighed in exhaustion and Komachi roped me in with a smile. “Riiiight!? And. That’s. Why...”

“...Well, as long we don’t stay out too late, then I guess.”

“Yay! I better figure out what kind of presents I want to buy!”

Although Komachi was raising her hands up in the air in joy, I should at least give her a warning. If she failed her exam because of this, I wouldn’t be able to look her in the eyes.

“You better make sure to study. Ah, that’s right. Almost forgot the present.” I grabbed the bag that was tossed onto the sofa, took out a bag from inside, and rested it on Komachi’s head. “Here. Merry Christmas.”

Making a curious expression, Komachi placed her hand on the bag atop of her head and fixedly looked at it. After that, Komachi’s face from her mouth to her ears gradually turned to a smile.

“Is this... a present for me? Onii-chan, thank you! Hey, can I open it?”

“Go ahead. Though it’s just something I bought on the spot after I got Yukinoshita and Yuigahama’s recommendation. If you’re going to thank someone, thank them.”

Komachi’s hands stopped just right before she was about to open her present with a look of surprise “...Huh? You chose it together?”

“...Well, it just kind of happened.” I answered.

Komachi made a wicked smile. “Hoooh, is that sooo? Oh, I seeee, together, huh?”

“...What’s with that irritating face and tone of yours?”

That’s totally getting on my nerves. I glared at Komachi, but she kept her teasing smile while giving me a lukewarm stare.

“No, no, this is just a smile overflowing with happiness, that’s all. As a matter of fact, what you told me just now was the absolute best Christmas present ever.”

“Oh yeah? Well, as long you’re happy, then whatever.”

I spoke from my shoulder and Komachi lifted up a finger and took on a haughty attitude.

“Ah, but listen to this, onii-chan. When you’re giving a present to a girl, you shouldn’t mention that you chose it with another girl. As far as Komachi’s concerned, that’s very low in Komachi points. Well, since I’m your sister though, it doesn’t matter. In fact, it makes me very happy. Seeing onii-chan, Yukino-san, and Yui-san united is the best thing I can see.”

“Yeah, yeah. I very rarely give presents to people in the first place, but I’ll keep that in mind. Anyway, guess I’ll get dinner ready.”

“Yeah! Ah, that’s right. I better mail Yui-san about tomorrow...”

As I took note of Komachi’s advice, I headed for the kitchen.

Alright, first off was Christmas at the Hikigaya household. Let’s show them what I got... Or so I said, but aside from the chicken, it’s mostly just side dishes.

Bonus Track 6.5.4

It was the day of Christmas, following the night of Christmas Eve.

Komachi and I were heading to the shopping mall where everyone would meet. Since it was Christmas, the streets up to the shopping mall brightly glittered from the illumination and ornaments and people going to the city were in high spirits.

Amongst those people, my little sister, Hikigaya Komachi, I knew all too well was the peppiest. She had been humming energetically since a while back.

“Pretty lively first thing in the morning, aren’t you?” I said.

Komachi who had been walking further ahead, turned around to me with a twirl. “Duh, it’s Christmas, you know? And we’ll be going shopping with Yukino-san and Yui-san too, see? And after that, we’ll be having a party and exchanging presents, see? Of course I’ll get super excited!”

Komachi seemed to have understood our plans. Heck, she might even know more than me.

“Really? Well, I guess girls do like things like present exchanges and stuff. Whenever I hear present exchanges, I end up recalling the encyclopedia I didn’t fill up and the guys I couldn’t evolve...” I reflected, with the nostalgic regrets enveloping me.

With a gentle voice, Komachi encouraged me. “Onii-chan, it’ll definitely be a lot better from here on... See, even Ruby and Sapphire got remade, you know!”

“Your reason’s weird... Also, I’m more of the original type of guy...”

Well, if they decided to implement the Wonder Trade^[9] feature, then a lot of issues would be solved. *Then again, Komachi, exchange something with me...* I looked at Komachi.

She tapped my shoulders and pointed to the entrance of the mall. “Don’t sweat the details. Look, we made it, onii-chan. Ah, they’re both here already too.”

I moved my eyes to the entrance of the shopping mall and Yuigahama and Yukinoshita were standing there. They looked like they noticed us a well and Yuigahama made a big wave with her hand.

“Yahallo!”

“Yui-san, yahallo! Yukino-san too, yahallo?”

“Hello.”

Komachi gave her greetings to Yuigahama and Yukinoshita, but I really wish they’d stop doing that... It’s a little embarrassing. I found myself checking around us anxiously.

“You guys sure are early. Is this everyone? If we’re all here, let’s get going.”

It was Christmas, so it was considerably crowded. I was fed up with having to walk through this congestion of people. There’d be nothing better than to get this over with quickly.

But Yuigahama motioned us to wait. “Hold on. I invited Sai-chan too.”

“Oh really? Then let’s wait forever until Totsuka gets here.”

“Okay, that works, but somehow that bugs me...” groaned Yuigahama.

Komachi spoke up from there. “Yukino-san, Yui-san. Thank you for the Christmas present.”

“Not at all, if you’re happy with it, then that’s great.” Yukinoshita smiled, shaking her head telling her not to worry about it while Yuigahama nodded her head going “yup, yup”.

“I mean, I’m not sure what to expect from onii-chan with tastes like that, but I’m glad the two of you chose it for me!”

This time I was nodding to Komachi’s words. No, really, they really saved me some trouble by choosing for me. Well, she was probably happier from the fact those two chose the present for her than what she received.

Watching the smiling Komachi, Yuigahama happily returned a smile of her own. “Ah, right. We did give some advice, but the one who chose the present in the end was Hikki.”

“That’s true. Although he normally doesn’t think all that much, he was worrying and worrying all the way until the end...” Yukinoshita wined her long hair with her fingertips and looked at me.

Komachi’s mouth was stuck open with surprise. “...Huh? Is, that what happened?”

“Uh, you didn’t need to mention that... Really stop, don’t say anything...”

I was supposed to look cool because I nonchalantly chose a present, but actually seriously worrying about what to pick was too embarrassing. Because Komachi’s stare

that was focused on me was uncomfortable, I decided to shift my gaze and the topic to something else.

“Anyway, what’s this about me not normally thinking all that much? I’ll have you know there aren’t very many who think as much as I do. I could literally get a bronze statue for it.”

Yukinoshita placed her hand on her mouth, holding back her smile. “Oh? I’m sorry. ‘You don’t think of anything worthwhile’ would’ve been more correct.”

“You’re not wrong there, so I’ll give you that.”

“So you’re okay with that... Ahaha... Ah, but look, Komachi-chan. Hikki really did think about— Er... Komachi-chan?” Yuigahama said to Komachi.

Komachi who had been in a daze restarted. “...Ha! Shoot! I almost got fooled by onii-chan being a hinedere^[10] again! A-Anyway, thank you two very much. Also... onii-chan too.”

What, who’s getting fooled here...? I was always getting fooled by Komachi’s cuteness, you know. Both Komachi and I looked away from each other from embarrassment.

“Mm. Well, it’s not a big deal. Don’t worry about it.”

“Right, right.” Yuigahama looked at the both of us and let out a chuckle.

Yukinoshita watched us with a gentle expression, but looking like she realized something, she spoke. “In any case, Komachi-san, I know you’re having a difficult time with your exams, so I’m sorry that we had to call you out like this. We did invite you, but was it really okay for you to come? If by chance you’re just forcing yourself, then...”

“No, it’s fine. Relaxing is necessary too.”

Yukinoshita glared at me. “If all you do is rest, not only do you get complacent, but your knowledge will too.”

“Ugh, you hit it where it hurts...”

Certainly, taking a break or trying to change gears was often used as excuses to ditch.

Seemingly in pain from those words, Komachi was mumbling something in a small voice next to me. “I wonder if Yukino-san’s more of an education-conscious mom... A reliable older sister... One day, I want her as my onee-chan.” Komachi’s eyes visually sparkled.

“Yukinon, it should be okay. Komachi-chan’s very responsible so you don’t need to worry too much.”

Certainly, Komachi’s very responsible.

Seemingly happy with that follow up, Komachi was whispering something in a small voice next to me. “I guess Yui-san’s more of a Wise Wife, Good Mother^[11], huh? A tolerant older sister... Eventually, I want her as my onee-chan.” Komachi’s eyes visually sparkled.

“Just what have you been mumbling about...?”

“Mmm? That’s a secret! ♪” Komachi sent me a wink, waving her index finger.

...Damn it, this girl was too cute to the point it was irritating, seriously.

“Well, anyway, we don’t need to be all that worried, right? Besides, look, even I passed the tests!” Yuigahama lightly hit her own chest.

Yukinoshita made a difficult expression. “When you put it that way, there’s not much we can say...”

“Please say something! You need to follow up somehow!”

Yuigahama’s crying voice was interrupted by Yukinoshita’s composed tone.

“Then, question. Name the prefecture that’s ranked first in the production of Satsuma sweet potatoes. Further, Ibaraki Prefecture is ranked second.”

“Eh, eh!?” Yuigahama panicked from being quizzed out of the blue.

You don’t really need to think twice about this...

“Isn’t this way too easy...? You gave a big hint away.”

“Easy and a big hint... Potato, Ibaraki... Ah! It’s Chiba Prefecture!”

“Incorrect. I said Satsuma, didn’t I...? The correct answer is Kagoshima Prefecture. By the way, Chiba is ranked third.”

“Yukinon, trick questions are unfair!”

“There was no trick. It was really simple actually...” said Yukinoshita with amazement, and Yuigahama groaned in discontent.

Then again, how the heck did she get Chiba from those hints? What’s this, were you saying Chiba was the same as Ibaraki because they gave off this feeling of potatoes

somehow? Could you stop trying to diss Chiba?

Komachi, who had been watching their exchange, asked with a confused expression.
“...Yui-san, just how did she pass?”

“Miracles and magic, right? Well, Komachi should do okay on the tests. By virtue of being my little sister, her problem solving skills are good. She’s an idiot, but she’s good at handling things.”

“Your appeal of trying to show how good you are at problem solving is a little bit annoying, but I can see what you’re trying to say.” Yukinoshita nodded her head, seemingly having no qualms with my opinion. Really though, what’s with the “annoying” part...?

Still, it looked like that evaluation was odd for Komachi and her face turned into a frown. “Mmm, it doesn’t sound like a compliment at all though...”

“Aah, that’s true. When you get told ‘you’re good at handling things’, you feel like you’re cheating or something.” Yuigahama expressed her agreement.

Hoh, surprisingly it was bothering her. Well, it’s true that Yuigahama was good at handling things. That’s probably how people saw it from the way she’d maintain just-right distances with people. So it wouldn’t be odd to hear one or two unpleasant things about it. Girl society’s pretty scary, after all.

“I see. Then, let’s think of something else..... Little sneak, or something.”

“It got even worse!?”

Yukinoshita placed her hand on her chin in disregard to the surprised Yuigahama and after thinking, she majestically opened her mouth. “Impudent little... or the like.”

“Yukinon, you’re like a boss character!”

I had no absolutely no idea why Yuigahama was looking at Yukinoshita with admiration, but in contrast to Yukinoshita, Komachi opened her mouth with a twinkle.
“Little devil, or something! ☆”

“You’re going to say that about yourself!?”

Aah, no, Komachi’s just that kind of girl. So including that, that part was what made her good at handling things. In other words, if we were going to change how we described being good at handling things, then...

“Komachi’s cute, or something.”

Yuigahama had a disgusted face. “There’s the sis-con… It’s fine that you get along, but Hikki’s response kind of hurts…”

“Nope, not at all. Even if she got into my eyes, that is.”

“Just how much do you love her!?” Yuigahama withdrew midway.

But there was also someone next to her doing the same thing. “Uhhh, just now, even I was just a bit grossed out there, onii-chan. I’m okay with it at home, but doing that outside is just a little problematic.”

“So it’s fine at home…”

“A-Ahahaha…”

When Yukinoshita stated with half amazement and half surprise, Yuigahama laughed with the same feeling. There, Yuigahama noticed something and lifted her hand.

“Ah, it looks like Sai-chan’s here. Heeeeey, over here!”

When I looked myself, running over here in the distance was Totsuka.

“Hachimaaan!”

“Oooh~, Totsuka, you’re here!” I stepped forward, ready to catch Totsuka in my arms, but behind him I could see a wild boar running my way like the surging waves of a storm.

“Hachimaaaaaan!”

“Aaah— Zaimokuza, you’re actually here…”

While Zaimokuza was steadying his violent breathing with a “fushururu!”, Yuigahama spoke to Totuska.

“Sai-chan, yahallo!”

“Uh huh, yahallo!”

A refreshing greeting. On second thought, it really is a good greeting. “Yahallo” sure is cute.

As I was thinking that, the revived Zaimokuza turned to me and raised his hand. “Indeed, Hachiman. Yahalloooo!”

Then again, this greeting was really embarrassing… Even so, why did he greet only me?

“Y-Yeah… So, who called Zaimokuza?” I checked with Yuigahama and Yukinoshita

with a quiet voice and the two's faces distorted in confusion.

"Eh? You weren't the one that called him, Hikki?"

"I thought for sure he was under your care..."

"No, I didn't call him..."

Still, the one good thing about Zaimokuza was that you could place any doubt to rest with just "it's because it's Zaimokuza". It also included not having any interest in what he did. In other words, it's basically "whatever works" ☆!

"...Well, that's fine. I was going to thank him at some point anyway."

"Indeed. If you wish not to turn bald, then I would advise to not fret over the specifics. So to speak, for what reason do we gather today?" Zaimokuza spoke.

Komachi looked at both Yuigahama and Yukinoshita. "Ummm... We're going to have a Christmas party, but before that, we'll be doing some shopping and buying presents for the gift exchange. Does that sound about right?"

Yuigahama nodded in response. "Uh huh. Since we're all here now, we should get going."

"I suppose. Let's get this over with quickly." Yukinoshita said, heading inside to the shopping mall.

We all followed right after her.

Bonus Track 6.5.5

Presents. They were a type of Christian stepping tablets.[\[12\]](#)

If you gave someone something mediocre, “Aah, so this person actually thought I was someone who’d want something like this, uh huuuh”, of the sort would come to mind.

Foresight. Tastes. Financial fidelity. Resourcefulness; it wasn’t an exaggeration to say that those qualities were all judged... No, it might be an exaggeration. Probably, an exaggeration... It’d be nice if it was an exaggeration. Well, I’ll just ready my nerves just in case.

The inside of the shopping mall was overflowing with people as well. Christmas carols were incessantly playing and people who passed by were carrying large bags. All of the stores were decorated with wreathes and tinsel. Just a quick glance revealed that a fair number of stores were inside.

“Oooh. I’ve never actually stepped foot in this shopping mall since it was built, but there’s a lot of things in here, huh?”

I looked around finding it rare since this was my first time stepping foot in here. In the same way, Yukinoshita was anxiously examining the area.

“It’s rather big, isn’t it...? Also, there’s quite a lot of people since it’s Christmas as well... Just walking is tiring...”

Yukinoshita had no endurance and also wasn’t comfortable with crowds of people. Despair was fading in and out from every alternating letter of her words. In contrast, there was Yuigahama.

“You’re right! It’s so lively, this actually might be kind of fun! Ah, look, there’s a Santa here!” Reinforced by the merry atmosphere filling the interior of the mall, Yuigahama was elatedly enjoying herself, pointing at the person in a Santa outfit distributing balloons in the area. She then pulled at my sleeve. “Hey, hey, Hikki, how long did you believe Santa-san for?”

“I think I believed in him up until elementary school, maybe.”

“Heeh, that’s kind of surprising.” Yuigahama opened her mouth in surprise.

Wait, it shouldn’t be that surprising. Even I had a time when I was just a pure, naïve child. Just when I thought I’d give her a piece of my mind, Komachi quietly stood next to me.

“My brother when he was younger was sooo adorable, you know~. Especially in the pictures and home videos..... His eyes weren’t rotten at the time either.”

“What the heck? That makes me super curious!”

It didn’t look like Yuigahama’s voice reached Komachi as she had a regrettable expression with a distant look in her eye. It was like she was mourning those long days past. I-I’m sorry, okay? Sorry that onii-chan turned out this way...

After watching Komachi and Yuigahama, Yukinoshita smiled with a look of pity. “Just how did he turn out this way, I wonder...? Time can be quite cruel.”

“You got that right. Everything was time’s fault.”

“Waah, as usual...” Yuigahama let out a resigned sigh.

Yup, that was also time’s fault. I wasn’t the one at fault here.

“Hikki’s beyond help, but Yukinon, did you believe in Santa?” asked Yuigahama.

Yukinoshita looked into the distance and murmured, “By the time I was old enough to understand things for myself, nee-san already told me...”

“Aah, she was that kind of person after all...”

Poor Yukinon, poor Yukinon... Both Yuigahama and I couldn’t help but, send her a gaze of sympathy. But since it was Haruno-san, there wasn’t much she could do. Well, it might’ve been different if she blurred out “that’s onee-sama for you!”[\[13\]](#) and clung onto her though.

“Hachiman, since the dawn of time, I had never placed any faith in Santa! In this world, I have no God, Buddha, Santa, or giiiiiiiiiiirfriend!” Zaimokuza screamed out loudly as he clenched his fist.

“I understand your feelings, but why are you talking just to me...? Let’s talk about these important things with the others, yeah?”

I couldn’t deny the fact that girlfriends were on the same vague plane of existence as gods, Buddhas, and Santa. It was only that point alone that made it worth listening to Zaimokuza’s opinion.

Since there were so many people on the side that denied Santa’s existence at a young age, Yuigahama let out an embarrassing “ahaha” laugh. “Then again, it looks like most people find out pretty early, huh? I believed in Santa up until my third year in elementary~.”

“Ahaha.” Komachi laughed in the same way. “Oh you’re such a joker, Yui-san.”

“Ahaha, I know, right? I was just a teensy bit dumb back then...”

No, that still holds even now, not when you were just a kid...

Just as I was about to tell her this, Komachi beat me to the punch, with her eyes going sparkle ☆ with an adorable smile. “No, no, Santa really does exist. That just now was high in Komachi points.”

“There it is! That naughty smile!”

Although Yuigahama pointed it out, Komachi’s eyes continued to sparkle.

“Well, Komachi’s always like that... Then again, we need to stop talking about this. There might be someone who still believes in Santa here... Like Totsuka.”

“Ha! That’s possible for Sai-chan...”

We peeked in Totsuka’s direction and Totsuka frantically shook his hands.

“C-C’mon, even I don’t believe in him anymore. But... it’d be nice if he did exist though, I think.”

Looking straight at Totsuka who let out an embarrassed “ehehe” laugh, Komachi threw her head back. “Whoa, so bright! Totsuka-san’s too bright!”

“I-I’m going to become liiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiight!” That also appearing in Zaimokuza’s line of sight, even he was suffering.

Good grief, these guys just didn’t prepare themselves enough... That level of brilliance was natural for Totsuka, jeez.

“Uh, I doubt you can turn into light... But since I can’t turn into light, I’ll become Totsuka’s Santa instead.”

“Just what are you saying...?” Yukinoshita said in disbelief as she brushed away her hair.

Ha! Shoot! I was supposed to stay composed, but before I noticed, I had completely turned into light...

“Anyway, with the mall being so large, it’s hard to know which area we should start looking around in.” Yukinoshita stated as she looked around.

Well, there was a part of you that had no sense of direction after all...

Having been told that, Komachi groaned as she did a little thinking. “Let’s see. What kinds of presents does everyone want to buy?”

“I was thinking of like maybe accessories or general stuff, but... What about everyone else?”

Then, surprisingly, Zaimokuza responded with a suggestion.

“When you hear Christmas, you think of toys. And when you hear toys, you think of ‘R Us!’”

“Aah, their commercial tune has some pretty nice lyrics. It really made you sympathize.”

“What kind of song was it again?” asked Totsuka, and I tried to sing the lyrics from the ‘R Us commercial song. Uhhh... I think it went like this...

“I want to staaaay a child, funfufufu— funfufu? No, that’s not right. Nya? Nyanya—nya —, I don’t want to become an aduuult, I don’t want to work...” As I was singing, I could feel the mood get muddy and depressing. H-Huuuh? Was this song really that much of a downer?

Totsuka made a slightly strained smile, wondering the same thing as I did.

“W-Was it that kind of song...? Although most of it was made up on the spot, you’re amazing to remember only that last part properly... Ah, but it looks like there’s a ‘R Us over there.”

“Indeed. Let us enter.”

“Oh, sounds good. I’m starting to get kind of giddy now.”

The boy group was eager to go inside, but Yuigahama made an obviously displeased face.

“Eeeh, we’re really going inside?”

Looking to calm Yuigahama down, Komachi took her arms. “Now, now, they might have stuff like party goods, so why not give it a shot?”

“Now that you mention it, that’s true. I wonder if they sell crackers.” Yukinoshita nodded after thinking.

Totsuka agreed with that as well. “Yeah, let’s try taking a look.” As Totsuka headed inside the store, we followed right behind him.

...Still, Yukinoshita-san, crackers of all things? You were totally looking forward to this party, weren't you...? No, well, that's not a bad thing or anything.

Bonus Track 6.5.6

The inside of the store plastered with Christmas special displays was submerged in a unique fanciness liken to a toy store, becoming a small land of dreams and magic. Though Yuigahama was reluctant earlier, she was raising her voice in happiness going “waah”.

Toy stores were truly places that allowed you to revert back to a child. Really, I don’t want to become an adult, I don’t want to work...

As we walked about in that exciting space, we came across a familiar individual. That person was squatting in front of the plastic model shelves.

It was Hiratsuka-sensei.

As I stood there with my tongue tied, Hiratsuka-sensei noticed us as well. “Oh, Hikigaya...”

“Se-Sensei...”

“Ah, it’s Hiratsuka-sensei.”

“Oh, so Yuigahama and the others were with you.”

Coming from behind me was Yuigahama and the others and they noticed Hiratsuka-sensei as well.

“What could you be doing at a place like this?”

“R-Right. Basically... W-Work.”

No, that had to be a lie... You were totally mumbling your words and even though the heating wasn’t all that strong, your hands were totally sweating. Still, Yuigahama looked at Hiratsuka-sensei with innocent eyes.

“Huuuh, that must be rough. Even though it’s Christmas too.”

“Urg, nngh, y-yeah, well, it is work after all... It’s just part of my job as a guidance counselor. It’d be a big deal if students caused problems during winter vacation from playing around too much. A-Aah, what a bummer. You know what they say about privacy and work. Even dinner conversations were becoming work related recently too. A, ha, ha, ha...”

“Sensei, your eyes aren’t laughing...” Totsuka looked at sensei with frightful eyes amidst the space that shook with Hiratsuka-sensei’s laughing voice.

Once she finished her laugh, Hiratsuka-sensei took back her calm demeanor as if something had blown past inside of her. "...So, I'm in the middle of my work, but what are you all doing?"

"We're thinking of holding a party soon so we're doing some shopping for that. Ah, I know. Sensei, why don't you join us?" Yuigahama asked and Hiratsuka-sensei crossed her arms and contemplated.

"Fumu... Well, it doesn't hurt to cut loose for a bit. Maybe I'll bother you guys for a bit. Not like I had any plans anyway..." She added those words with a small voice.

Komachi tilted her head. "What ever happened to your work...?"

"Komachi, stop. Don't ask." I gently grabbed her shoulders and stopped her. Luckily, those words didn't reach Hiratsuka-sensei's ears as she started to rummage through the shelves energetically.

"So now that's decided, I'm suddenly feeling super excited! C'mon, look Hikigaya! There's a ton of fun toys around!"

Looking at how Hiratsuka-sensei was, Yukinoshita muttered. "She's energetic all of a sudden now..."

"I guess the lid's finally off..."

Well, being able to change gears quickly was a good thing! As I explained her behavior in a positive light, Hiratsuka-sensei took a number of things from the shelves and showed me a wonderful smile.

"Look, Hikigaya, how about something like the Mini 4WDs? Once you're an adult, you get really hooked. There're also B-Daman, Hyper Yo-Yos, Beyblade... But I guess I still prefer Transformers. No, ZOIDS are hard to let go too. Aah, you can't forget about the trading card games too."

Zaimokuza was pulled in from the lineup that was close to our senses as boys. "Indeed, bundled with golden cards signed by the cast and new specially drawn illustrations, Precious Memories with raving reviews from Movic is on sale!"

"What's with the sudden commercial...?" I was surprised by his unexpectedly good voice.

Totsuka nodded as well. "But card games are pretty fun. I used to play all the time... Let's abide by the rules and have a fun duel![\[14\]](#)"

"Your hunger is lacking! But for men, then Chogokin[\[15\]](#) is the way to go! Become the

liiiiiiiiiiiight! [\[16\]](#)”

“Hey, seriously, your screaming is making me want it now...” Because of Zaimokuza’s exclaimed in a cool voice, I found myself leaning forward and checking out the toys as well.

On the other hand, speaking of the girl group, they were looking at us with cold stares at a distance away.

“...Haa, I guess boys just like that stuff, huh?”

“Boys will be boys wherever they are after all.” Komachi said to pacify Yuigahama’s given up voice.

“So why is Hiratsuka-sensei with them over there...?” Yukinoshita said with her head tilted.

Well, it wasn’t anything out of the ordinary. I mean, it was Hiratsuka-sensei after all. In this world, there was no such thing as something mysterious. [\[17\]](#)

We boys along with Hiratsuka-sensei looked at more of the ‘R Us shelves. Totsuka tugged at my coat’s sleeve (cute). “Ah, hey Hachiman, look, look. They have a lot of Gunpla here.”

When I looked, a bunch of Gunpla was overcrowding the shelves.

“Oh. You’re right. Are you interested?”

Considering Totsuka’s typical image, it didn’t suit him very much. Obviously this included his facial features and body type, though there’s also his sports club, he didn’t really give off the impression he’d like this kind of stuff.

When I asked, Totsuka’s gaze lowered to the floor and he muttered with embarrassment. “...Yeah, I am”.

“...M-Me too!”

“Eh?” Totsuka looked at me with a blank face.

Whoa, not good, not good. My hot pathos almost gushed out right there. I had better revise my statement. “Aah, no, sorry. I couldn’t hear you very well there so I said something weird. Sorry, but could you say that five more times?”

“Stop right there! Hachiman!” Zaimokuza gripped my shoulders, keeping me in check which allowed me to return to my senses again.

Th-That was close. The way his face was blushing bright red as he looked away trying to muster his words out earlier was one thing, but also how cute the way he lightly tilted his head with a mix of surprise and confusion as he narrowed eyes almoooost made me slip out something weird. Thanks Zaimokuza! I sent him a look and Zaimokuza lifted his glasses as he operated his smart phone.

“I will ready the recording, so buy me some time!”

“Yeah, leave it to me!”

What a reliable fellow Zaimokuza was! I’d never had guess to use a recording of Totsuka’s voice as an alarm clock to wake up in the morning and night! This guy really was disgusting! But no objections from me! Except streaming it was NG! I want to monopolize it, after all!

The moment I tried to open my mouth in hopes of buying some time, Komachi interrupted me with a sigh. The strategy was a failure!

“Uwaah, what a good-for-nothing combo. But onii-chan, you used to make this a lot back then.” Komachi said as she snatched a Gunpla from the box and lifted it up.

“Aah, you used to break them all the time too though... Well, that’s the fate of the older sibling.”

Well, if you had a younger brother or sister, plastic models getting destroyed was common. To add, save data was no exception. It was natural for your adventure log to get deleted the moment their feet hit the console. Heck, “I want to see this scene again” and you’d go out of your way to save on a different slot only to hear “I wanted to start a new game, so I overwrote it ☆” which caused you to lightly cry.

Filled with my young memories, I could hear Totsuka’s sweet voice. “So Hachiman, you made them before too, huh? Me too. It was my dad who was into it at first though. [\[18\]](#)”

“Heeh. That’s actually kind of surprising.” I replied back. I was totally under the impression Totsuka was brought up gracefully. For him to be influenced by his pretty dad— I mean, dad, was a bit surprising.

Totsuka covered his mouth with his hands and chuckled. “Really? I mean, I *am* a boy after all, you know?”

The way Totsuka gently tilted his head and peek into my face from below was as if he was testing me. In the small distance that he covered by getting close to me, I reflexively lost my words and Zaimokuza in the same way emulated Totsuka. For what reason?

“That is right, Hachiman. There is no way this cutie could ever be a girl!”

“Urg, right, he *is* a boy after all, kuh...”

Watching our worthless exchange, Hiratsuka-sensei approached us. She held a Master Grade set and looked it over.

“Oh, Gunpla, huh? I hear girls have been making them too recently... Surprisingly, this kind of hobby might affect popularity in the future.”

“Are you serious? Now I’m starting to get interested... Kirara ☆ [\[19\]](#)”

When Komachi’s eyes sparkled, Hiratsuka-sensei laughed with provocation.

“Oh, Hikigaya’s little sister. Want to have a match with me in gunplay then?”

As Komachi and Hiratsuka-sensei took opposing stances, for some reason, Yukinoshita slid to the front.

“If you mean match, then losing won’t be forgiven.[\[20\]](#)”

“So you got hooked by the word ‘match’, huh? Even though you’re always being Yarukinainen-san [\[21\]](#). You sore loser...”

Still, how exactly do you have a match with Gunpla... A match of craftsmanship? As I thought that, Komachi didn’t seem to care at all about that, but was just ready to go. She displayed a fearless smile and then pointed at Hiratsuka-sensei and Yukinoshita.

“Fufufu! Very well! Then let’s have a match! Should you win against me, for the prize... I will present you my brother!”

“Hohoo...” Hiratsuka-sensei looked at Komachi with a sharp glint.

Crap, those eyes were serious!

“...Now just a second, Komachi-chan? Could you stop trying to sugarcoat your attempt at getting rid of a nuisance? I’ll just say for the time being, but that’s—”

“No, you can’t! You definitely can’t do that!” Yuigahama interrupted the words I tried to say. The way Yuigahama barged into made me look in her direction.

“Y-Yeah... Well, they certainly can’t, do that...”

“Ah... Um, it’s not that they can’t do that, er...”

When our eyes met, we both averted our faces.

“.....”

“.....”

We also went dead silent too. What the heck was this? I really wanted to jump to my death right now. And then, remembering a feeling of discomfort from watching Yuigahama and I, Komachi looked at the both of us.

“Oh? Oh? Is it just me, or a mood I don’t know of is... Could this possibly, be...?” Komachi’s eyes were illuminating.

Please, Komachi-chan, don’t look at your onii-chan with those kinds of eyes... As I was thinking that, watching that exchange from a distance, Zaimokuza let out an incredibly dull voice.

“Hachimaaan, I totally don’t care, but can I like go pick a Gunpla already, huuuh?”

“Eh, aah, right. I’ll go look over there for a bit too.” When I headed to where Zaimokuza was, I could hear Komachi click her tongue from behind.

“Tch, that darn chuuni-san... He interrupted at a good spot too...”

“Phew, I guess we’re putting the match on hold. Well, why don’t we go check it out too?” Hiratsuka said and everyone rummaged around inside of the store.

I lined up next to Zaimokuza and Totsuka who were looking at the Gunpla.

“I’m suddenly feeling tired now...”

“Ah, Hachiman. Why don’t you pick something?” Noticing from my voice mixed with a sigh that I had lined up next to him, Totsuka did a turn.

“So you say, but I don’t know what’s what nowadays. I don’t have the confidence I’d build them nicely either...”

“That’s okay. You don’t need to worry about it too much. With Gunpla, you can freely make things with whatever you can think of!”

Totsuka’s smile as he fervently talked with sparkling eyes was bright...

“When you put it like that, now I really want to try building something... Okay, maybe I’ll go with this...”

I looked through numerous ones and I reached my hands out for something that struck a chord with me.

Zaimokuza spat out an exaggerated sigh. “Aaah, Hachiman, you’re going to choose thaaat? You’re really going tooooo?”

“Eh, what, is this no good?” I looked at Zaimokuza wondering what the problem was and his answer was vague.

“No, it’s not that it’s not good... It’s not that it’s not good, buuut... But the thing issss.”

“You’re so annoying... This is the problem with otakus... Whatever, this works for me. With this suit, I will... become a Super Pilot.” I stated with an attentive face and Zaimokuza made a needlessly determined face.

“Hohoh, if that is so, then I will go with this suit that shines brightly in the eye of the storm and I’ll return it twoooooooooooooold!” We both glared at each other and showed an unpleasant smile.

Yuigahama then barged in, clapping her hands and said “Okay, stop, stop. These are presents you won’t know who will get.. Hikki and chuuni, you both need to think more about it.”

“Mmg, I see...” Both Zaimokuza and I obediently put back the Gunpla on the shelves. *So maybe a more mainstream Gunpla will work...* As I thought that, I reached my hand out to another Gunpla, but Yuigahama stopped me there.

“Okay, choose again! One present per person!”

“Are you my mom or something...?”

Watching the terrible spectacle of the boy group from afar, Komachi groaned and thought for a little bit. She then clapped her hands. “It looks like we’re not going to get much shopping done if we stick with my brother and the others. Is it okay if we go look around on our own?”

“Uh huh, I think that way might be better.” Totsuka agreed.

Yuigahama also raised her hand. “Agreeeed! Okay, when you’re done, meet up in front of the cake shop.”

“Yes, see you in a bit.”

With Yukinoshita’s words as a signal, everyone broke off into small groups.

...Now then, guess I’ll go get some presents.

Bonus Track 6.5.7

After leaving the 'R Us, I aimlessly wandered around the shopping mall. Although there were a variety of stores located inside, nothing seemed to click even from quick glances at the store. I also found myself running away whenever the clerks would run over to me just from a brief look.

I finally managed to go inside to a variety store where the clerk couldn't call out to me, but I still didn't know what to pick.

"Still, they say to pick out a present, but... We won't even know who it'll go to ... Choosing something that would be useful in some form, but not a nuisance to anyone is pretty difficult..." I blabbered to myself (special skill) and organized my thoughts. Then, there was a person who had been quietly standing behind me.

"Fu, fu, fu, you seem troubled."

"Ooh, Komachi. Well, I most certainly am."

When I turned around, Komachi was assuming a daunting post. She then lifted a finger.

"Times like this are where expendable things are good, onii-chan."

"Expendable things?"

What do you mean by "expendable"? Like a NINJA? That's a bit suspicious, isn't it...?

I tilted my head and Komachi continued. "Yup, it won't feel depressing if there's nothing left. Throwing it away wouldn't be an issue too."

"R-Right... So with the assumption it'll get tossed, huh..."

Now just why would this brat say something so scary...? But, well, I see what she was getting at. In short, expendable things were, in other words, consumable things? Candy, tea, or daily necessities, well, stuff like that, I wonder? I see, it's just like Komachi said, they're easy to get rid of.

Once I was convinced, Komachi went further. "Things you can wear are just a little heavy too. Like accessories or expensive stuff."

"Scary... My little sister's showing the face of a woman... Well, I'll see what I can find."

"Okay, good luck. I'll see you later then."

“Yeah.”

Komachi dashed off looking like she some things in mind. Remaining there, I raised my hand, saw Komachi off, and scratched my head.

“‘Things you can wear are heavy’, huh? Well, that sounds about right...”

Heavy things didn’t only trouble the giving side, but also the receiving side, after all.

“Alright, let’s look for something— something that’ll make Totsuka happy— something that’ll make Totsuka happy— or so...”

I readjusted my mood and decided to enter the closest store.

Bonus Track 6.5.8

There was a store with a relaxing atmosphere in contrast to the shopping mall congested with people. After entering, I was, as usual, looking through all the items.

It looked like this store was a home decor store, with many types of interior items, accessories and tableware.

I couldn't complain about having an assortment of items to browse through, but the more choices a human had, the more he's unable to act and that happened to be the very predicament I was in.

"Aah... What to buy... I've been looking around for a while now, but I have no idea what's good..."

As I was grumbling to myself, a voice called out to me from the shelf across.

"Ah, Hikki. You're checking out this store too?"

"Mm, Yuigahama, huh? Yeah, well, for me, I have no idea which stores had variety goods or not though."

I gently placed the miscellaneous item I picked up which had some incomprehensible Asian style to it back on the shelf.

Yuigahama, who was watching, came up next to me and wryly smiled. "Mmm, right. Since anything could work, it's actually kind of hard..."

"Picking anything would be a bad idea, wouldn't it? Things that changed based on a person's preferences definitely never become anything worthwhile afterwards."

It's not like this was limited to presents either. Things that couldn't find a consensus always ended in a dispute. It was especially at times like these where we'd need a GRAND DESIGN CONCENSUS that had an INNOVATIVE WIN-WIN relationship. Not good, my head's ascending.

"You don't need to think all that hard about it. I mean, your feelings are what's important, or like how you'd be happy from the fact they thought so much about their gift to you... That's why anything works." Yuigahama said as she poked her index fingers together.

Well, "feelings are important" wasn't all that difficult to understand.

However, just how much worth was placed in the feelings that weren't conveyed and

the thoughts that couldn't reach? Besides, I felt "it's the thought that counts" wasn't all there was to it.

I let out a small sigh. "The anything part is what's getting me though... Besides, look, you wouldn't know what to do if you were given a Gunpla, right?"

Yuigahama blinked several times and slightly averted her eyes.

"Aah... Erm, that's, well, I guess so... I guess I'd end up worrying about what they thought of me instead, maybe."

"Right? It's one thing to have the person you're giving a gift to be considerate towards you. If that's how it's going to turn out, even if I don't want to, I'd have to seriously consider what I want to pick."

Once you gave the gift and after a slight pause, they told you "...Th-Thank you—", forcing themselves to be energetic, that's the moment when you'd want to die. With those imaginative thoughts being drawn in my mind, I scavenged through the shelves in dejection.

Yuigahama broke into a smile. "You're so serious about the strangest things... In that case, I'd better think a little harder about what to pick too."

"Right, you do that. We won't know who gets what, after all."

"I guess so," said Yuigahama. Both Yuigahama and I placed the tableware and accessories in our hands back on the shelves. Yuigahama then reluctantly opened her mouth. "...But it'd be nice if it did go to the right person. That is, returning the favor for my birthday, I haven't really properly given one to Hikki yet, so..."

"Eh?" I asked back, but what that was referring to came to mind. Although it felt like a rather long time since then, it was at most only half a year ago. It's likely she was talking about that present I gave to her back then. However, I felt that was just a gift I used as an excuse to settle my entirely selfish sentiment using her birthday as a cover.

"Aah, no, it wasn't that kind of thing, so don't worry about it. It was just my return gift in the first place. If we keep going back and forth, it'll never end." I felt this was also a part of my selfish reasoning. However, since I had no other reason as of now, this was the only way I could put it.

But, Yuigahama wasn't looking at me and instead gently whispered, "It's not like, it has to end though..."

Those casual words pulled at my heart.

"...I, guess so."

“...Uh huh.”

Both of us were quiet.

A relationship that didn't end was something I couldn't imagine at all. It was probably just a dream, a delusion, or possibly an ideal; something that I didn't think could ever be real.

For how beautiful it was, it was painful, and I couldn't find the words to say back to Yuigahama.

The silence was destroyed by Yuigahama's bright smile. “Ah, that's right. Actually, it's almost Yukinon's birthday.”

“Oh yeah, I remember hearing about that.” I wasn't sure of the specific day, but I believe it should've been in winter.

Yuigahama grabbed something from the shelf and quickly put it back. After doing that a few more times, she glanced at me. “When it was my birthday, um, my present, you went to buy it with Yukinon, right?”

“Pretty much. Komachi was there too though.”

“U-Uh huuh.” Yuigahama responded nonchalantly. The miscellaneous item she had in her hands, she placed it again back on the shelf and stared at it. “Then, it'd be nice, i-if you could go out, with me... Um, shopping that is...”

I looked at the shelf as well and somehow tried toying with the item Yuigahama had in her hands from earlier.

If it was just “shopping”, there wasn't a reason to refuse. I think. Just like the time when I went with Yukinoshita before, the objective this time was clear as well.

We did make the promise of going out together at some point, but that, too, should've been something else. So it might be okay to be a little more easygoing regarding this.

I let out a quiet, unnoticeable sigh and lifted my face. “Mm... Shopping, huh...? Well, if it's just shopping, then whenever works for me.”

“Okay...” Yuigahama gave a short reply and looked away in embarrassment. Ahead of where she looked, she noticed Yukinoshita who seemingly came to this store to choose presents too.

“Ah, it's Yukinon. Okay, let's leave this talk for later. Heeey, Yukinoon!” Yuigahama spoke quickly and she dashed off towards her.

“Oh, Yuigahama-san and Hikigaya-kun.”

Yuigahama placed her hands on Yukinoshita’s shoulders after she turned around.
“Yukinon. Have you decided what to buy?”

“No, not yet. I received quite a bit of advice from Komachi-san, but...”

You don’t say. Yukinoshita was with Komachi, huh?

“I don’t see Komachi anywhere though...”

“Komachi-san’s over there.” Yukinoshita pointed.

When I looked, Komachi really was there. She was... but she was just a little odd.

“Oh, there you are. Hey, Komachi... What are you doing?” Upon looking, Komachi was collapsed on a gigantic cushion, as if there was no response. She was spacing out, her eyes somehow hollow. But when she noticed I was calling out to her, she quickly returned to her senses.

“Ah, onii-chan. This is good! This sofa that turns people into good-for-nothings! Uwah, amazing, I’m totally going to become a good-for-nothing. Ah, not good, Komachi, at this rate, I’m going to...” Komachi mumbled and mumbled as she sank further into the sofa. Was this what they called the power of the sofa that turned people into good-for-nothings...?

“Eh, is it really that good...? Now I’m totally interested.”

I want to give it a try too. As I thought about how I would collapse on the sofa with Komachi and how it would feel to have afternoon nap time with her, I tried to take a step forward only to be stopped by a voice.

“Oh, I believe that isn’t necessary for Hikigaya-kun, right? You’re already a good-for-nothing after all.”

When I turned around, Yukinoshita was smiling.

“Stop with that nice smile of yours. Did you not know? If you multiply a negative with a negative, it becomes positive.”

“If you add negatives, then it just becomes a bigger negative. Did you not learn arithmetic in middle school?”

“No, wait. Think in reverse. We can also try propagating this so everyone becomes a negative. Look here, Yukinoshita. If everyone’s a good-for-nothing, then the good-for-nothings will disappear.”

Yukinoshita let out a big sigh. “That misguided equality mindset is just like always. As I thought, that sofa really isn’t necessary for you.”

Listening to our helpless exchange, Komachi finally got up.

“Phew. Up we go... Well, I guess so. What my brother wants is something more family oriented. As far as Komachi’s concerned, rather than a sofa that made people into good-for-nothing, I want a wife that’ll make my brother into a good-for-nothing ↳ Hint, hint, hint!”

“Heh!? Eh, eh, no, ummm, I’m just, umm...”

Yuigahama who had been smiling wryly from the side tried to speak up, but her words just wouldn’t come out. I’m glad... I get the feeling I’d drop dead if I were to hear anything right now... On the other hand, speaking of Yukinoshita, she shrugged off Komachi’s gaze.

“Komachi-san, unfortunately, I don’t believe that wish of yours will be granted. It’s impossible for Hikigaya-kun.”

“Eeh, really? What a bummer. I really want someone to succeed me already...”

Mmm, Komachi-chan, you’ve been trying to get rid of me too much lately, haven’t you? I think it’d be okay if you delayed our inevitable parting just a little bit, okay?

Well, I was grateful for Yukinoshita writing off Komachi’s pointless appeal, but still, I wasn’t quite too satisfied with what she said.

“Hey now? Could you, like, not destroy a person’s dreams with just a few words?”

Yukinoshita sent me a cold gaze. “Despite what you say all the time, you’re someone who actually goes through with things, aren’t you?”

“Aah, I can see that. Hikki, you seem like you’d work despite complaining all the time.” Yuigahama nodded her head.

Komachi turned towards me. “There you have it, onii-chan.”

An unpleasant image came to mind. “No, honestly, I really just can’t get into the mood... Perhaps I’ll get worked hard on mediocre pay, and as I spit out curses towards the company, I’ll find myself working overtime, bringing me up to an average salary. By the time I become used to it, I’ll end up giving up thinking, ‘Phew, maybe this life isn’t so bad after all...’, and end up living a life as a healthy corporate slave. I’m just so worried and worried that I’ll end up like this... I’m seriously worried about my future.”

“His imagination is strangely realistic...”

“Yet, the point he’s worried about is off the mark...”

Yuigahama and Yukinoshita both had disheartened expressions. Really, I had no hopes or dreams.

“That’s exactly why I want to at least have some dreams. I will definitely, become a full-time house husband...”

“I can’t help, but find it mysterious how only rubbish conclusions result from someone so imaginative...” Yukinoshita let out an exaggerated sigh.

“Now, now, as you two know very well, my brother has that kind of personality. It’ll be a big help to me if you don’t expect too much from him.” Komachi supported me with not very supportive words.

“I suppose so. I’ve already given up.”

“A-Ahahaha. W-Well, he’s a lost cause.”

The two were saying harsh things, but only Komachi looked happy as she peeked into my face.

“Hear that! Isn’t that great, onii-chan!?”

“No, no, that’s not great at all. They’ve given up on me and think I’m a lost cause, you know.”

That hopeless feeling wasn’t something to scoff at. Consider at a part-job time: It was on the level of not being expected of anything “...Aah, aaah, aah, you don’t need to do anything anymore”.

To Komachi though, that didn’t seem to be the case with her smile still intact. “Mmm? I don’t know about that. I think it’s a good thing though... Fufu, oh whatever. Then we won’t need this sofa huh?”

“Right. In place of a sofa, we have a fluffy fur ball rolling around at home anyway.”

Komachi nodded in agreement. “Aah Kaa-kun, right? But I bet Kaa-kun would be happy with this sofa though. With this, he might just yawn all day.”

Yup, yup, I can see that. Just why do cats go straight for sofas and futons anyway? I thought that, but apparently that wasn’t something limited to just cats.

Yuigahama hit her hands, imagining something in particular. “That’s true! I can see Sabure hopping up and down on the sofa too! Maybe I should buy it.”

"Nah, I'm pretty sure he'll just sink into it... If our cat just laid down, he'd probably just sink too."

In that instant, Yukinoshita stopped her movements with a jolt. "...If the cat, laid purrfectly down...? That cat is, so cute."

...J-Just now, there was an extremely, cold punny onee-san here... No, the voice was really quiet, so I might've misheard it. I looked at Yukinoshita.

With a turn, she had an attentive face, looking my way. "Hey, Hikigaya-kun, are you sure you shouldn't buy this sofa? After all, pets are a part of the family and if you treasure spending Christmas with your family, then a present would be perfect, right?"

"No, could you stop acting bashful with that 'it's perfectly logical!' elated face of yours? That theory of yours was as full of holes as beehives..."

Maybe it was something like that; it was a theory structured like a honeycomb that she was being bashful about... *Just how am I going to avoid her suggestion?*

Komachi pulled at my sleeve. "Ah, onii-chan. This sofa has a small cushion version. This size should be okay, right?"

When I looked, there was another cushion made from the same material.

Yukinoshita gently rubbed the cushion and nodded. "I believe this size would be perfect for a cat. Right? Hikigaya-kun."

"Your criterion's becoming completely cat-centric..... Well, I'll think about it. I'll go look at other things too."

I had the feeling the longer I stayed, the closer I'd be to buying that cushion just for my cat. So I ended the note with vague words. It looked like Yuigahama and the others respectively still had things they wanted to buy as well.

"Okay, then, see you in a bit."

After I saw Yuigahama and the others leave, I left the area as well.

Bonus Track 6.5.9

Since I finished buying what I needed for the present exchange and, well, a couple of other things, I decided to go to the cake shop that was designated as the meeting spot.

I readjusted the paper bag with the present inside in my hands and checked the clock.

“Phew... For now, I managed to buy the presents... No problem with the meeting place around here either. It’s almost about time too...”

The others should be coming about now. I decided to stand there and wait. As I was fiddling with my smart phone, I could hear a listless voice you’d hear at a part-time job at a convenience store.

“’elcome, ‘come.”

“Hm? This annoying voice sounds awfully familiar...”

You’re so loud. I sent him a menacing gaze and the person with the listless voice was wearing a Santa outfit and seemed to be selling cakes at the front of the store.

“’elcome, ‘come.”

You sure are annoying. I thought, but I couldn’t really move from this meeting place. I tried to not let it bother me, but the annoyingness was too much for me that I ended up looking. It was then the eyes of that listless Santa met with mine.

“...Ah. Oh snaps? Ain’t that Hikitani-kun!?”

The listless Santa openly started talking to me. *Aah, this guy sure is annoying.* As it turned out, it was Tobe.

“Ooh, surprised me there... Tobe, huh...? Talking to me out of nowhere like that, I almost thought he was a friend for a second there...”

Tobe acting so familiar made me cringe a bit, but that didn’t seem to bother him as he tried to talk even more. “Beh, ain’t that a coincidence for us to be meetin’ at a place like this, yeah? I’m tryin’ to sell some cakes right now, but I’m freakin’ bored here.”

“Aah, so that’s why you’re a Santa... Wait, isn’t it a bit odd you have free time while working...?”

“Not a single customer’s comin’. Beh, I’m seriously bored here.” Tobe blabbered on with a lazy attitude while pulling the hair at the back of his neck.

But even so, there was no way I could relieve him of his boredom and I could only respond with repetitive, brief replies.

“Is that so?”

“Yeah, totally so.”

“Hooh...”

“Yeaaah, totally man...”

“I see...”

Noticing that our conversation wasn’t heading anywhere, Tobe awkwardly stuttered.
“..... Aah... But sup? Hikitani-kun, whatcha doin’ here?”

It was a topic that he had to squeeze out forcibly. Um, having to be considerate of me and all, sorry, okay?

“Nah, just doing a little shopping of the sort.”

Since he changed the topic, responding was basic manners.

Happy that he found a way to continue the conversation, Tobe leaned forward.
“Shoppin’ fer real? What, what, what kinda shoppin’ are we talkin’ about here?
Seriously? Hikitani-kun, ya shop too? I gotta know what’s up here!”

No, even I do some shopping every now and then... Just what does this guy think I am...?

Crap, what do I do? I don’t really want to talk any more than this, not like I had anything to talk to Tobe about anyway... While I was unsure what to do, someone was standing nearby.

“Hikigaya-kun, is something wrong?”

“Oh, Yukinoshita. Nothing, I just happened across Tobe here.”

It looked like it was almost time for everyone to gather since Yukinoshita was here. When she heard “Tobe”, Yukinoshita tilted her head mysteriously. No, Tobe as in Tobe. Why was that mysterious to you? You don’t know him?

But well before Yukinoshita, Tobe had been tiling his head mysteriously. He was looking at the both of us.

“Oh? Oh? Yukinoshita-san? Why are both of ya shoppin’...? Ah! Uh huuuh.”

“Hey, what’s with that pause just now? What the heck did you just imagine?” I tried

asking Tobe.

But Tobe seemingly had already made his own conclusion internally, going “uh huuuh” while looking between me and Yukinoshita.

Displeased by Tobe’s curious stare, Yukinoshita squirmed uncomfortably.

“.....It seems like there’s a misunderstanding here, but it’s not like, that’s, the case...”

At first, Yukinoshita glared at Tobe with a tense expression, but near the end, her strong voice had shriveled and I couldn’t understand what she had said last.

Tobe, like the usual Tobe, wasn’t listening to Yukinoshita and hit my shoulders. “Aww man, if that’s how it is, ya shoulda just said somethin’, and we coulda given both of ya some time together at Destiny.”

“No, that’s not how it is...” I said, guessing at what Tobe was referring to, but he wasn’t listening.

Watching Tobe, Yukinoshita looked like she was in a bad mood.

“...Do you mind if I leave now?”

“Eh, yeah. Well, you were the one who talked to me first though.” I looked at her with eyes asking her if she needed me for something.

Yukinoshita stuttered with her words and she abruptly looked away. “Oh, right... Because Tobe-kun was wearing the Santa outfit, I didn’t notice him, so I just...” Still looking away, Yukinoshita’s small voice disappeared midway.

When I looked ahead of where her gaze was, Yuigahama was approaching. Noticing us, Yuigahama waved her hands to us. “Hikki, Yukinon. What’s wrong...? Huh? It’s Tobecchi.”

Following her, Tobe, standing next to me, made a surprised face as well.

“Eh, eh? Yui was here too.....? Ah! Uh huuuh.”

“Again, what the heck did you imagine?”

Tobe pulled at his hair again and hit his forehead. “Say what, the heck! Goin’ shoppin’ with two girls is totally crazy! Seriously, Hikitani-kun, ya a total normie man! Serinormietani-kun, fer real. Heck, ya might as well be Seritani-kun?”

“No, I don’t have a clue what that means. Also, my name was never Hikitani in the first place.” I said, but he wasn’t listening. He was spouting “beh, beh” and all sorts of stuff.

Yuigahama spoke to him. “Tobecchi, are you working? We’re actually here to shop for a Christmas party.”

“Ah, that so...”

It looked like that explanation somehow convinced him. As Tobe was nodding his head, it looked like it was just about time for everyone to gather. Totsuka and Komachi arrived as well.

“Aah, it’s Tobe-kun.”

“Waah, long time no see!”

Getting excited from having met people he knew, Tobe did hand signs that Stan Hansen would do.

“Ooh! Ain’t it Totsuka and Hikitani-kun’s little sis! Weeey!”

“What kind of greeting is that? That’s pretty annoying.”

“A-Ahaha... I mean, it’s Tobecchi, so...” Yuigahama said so hopelessly and Yukinoshita was fixedly looking at Tobe.

“It’s like a greeting from some tribe... I don’t understand what he’s saying at all...”

“Right? Trying to understand it causes pain.” I sent an apathetic look to Tobe, but he didn’t seem to mind.

“Merry XMAS, weeey!”

“Look, he’s yelling aga—“ Just as I was about to say, Komachi greeted him back in the same way.

“Weeey! Merry XMAS!”

Because Komachi next to him was in high spirits, Totsuka looking a bit confused joined in as well. “W-Weeey!”

“Weeey!”

“Huh!? Even Hikki joined in!?”

Hah! Shoot! I reflexively lured myself in... B-But, you know, if Totsuka and Komachi were there, surprisingly, it might just work, weey.

Overjoyed that everyone returned his greeting, Tobe happily looked at everyone.

“What’s this, what’s this? Havin’ ya’ll really here really gets ya pumped up or somethin’...? Uh, oh? If I look a bit harder, ain’t that Zaimokuzaki-kun there? Zaimokuzaki-kun, weeey!”

Who the heck was Zaimokuzaki-kun? It looked that was referring to Zaimokuza. Just when did he get here? Tobe, you have some good eyes... When I looked in Zaimokuza’s direction, he looked bewildered having been spoken to.

“Wey? Wey, wey!? Wey, weeey!?”

“Tch. Seriously, he should go die with those wey’s.”

“Onii-chan, you sure are blunt.”

No, Komachi-chan, you know? Annoying things were annoying. The source of that annoyingness, Zaimokuza, was mumbling about something in confusion.

“Wey, wei, to... u, Eightman!? In Japanese, Hachiman!?”

“Huh?”

“Who is that? Who is he? What kind of man is he?”

“Yeah, he’s in my class, Tobe. He’s annoying, but he’s a good guy. Also, fundamentally, he’s annoying.” I briefly explained.

Zaimokuza nodded. “I see, I see. Indeed, that truly is annoying. Particularly that long hair and his loud voice, and further, that familiarity.”

“That’s one amazing boomerang you just tossed there...”

The entirety of what you said applied to you too, you know...

“Still, that mongrel, why does he know my name...? Further, he even turned my name into a codename.... Ha!? Could he be from the organization!?”

“I guess so. Unlike you, he belongs to a group, so I guess he’s a person from another organization.”

“Yes, yes, I do not belong anywhere after all... Uh, heeeeeeeeey! Hachimaaaan! Heeeeey!” While saying, he was hitting my chest. What is this, a one-man comedy routine [22]?

“On second thought, Zaimokuza’s more annoying...” With that in mind, even Tobe’s voice wasn’t that bad. And speaking of that Tobe, he opened his mouth looking like something came to mind.

“Ah, actually, Yui and everyone, ya’ll havin’ a Christmas party?”

“Uh huh, that’s right.”

“Oh, oh, then wanna buy this cake? This place here is my senpai’s cake store, ya see. They asked me fer a favor. It’d be totally bad if we don’t sell out.”

“Mmm, cake, huh? What should we do?”

Yuigahama worried about what to do and a sudden loud voice reverberated inside the shopping mall.

“I’ve heard what you had to say!”

“Huh? Hiratsuka-sensei?”

Hiratsuka-sensei’s appearance with her coat flapping despite no presence of a breeze bewildered Tobe. Her heels clacked nosily as she approached.

“It looks like you’re in a bind with the leftovers.”

“That’s totally right. We’re in a total bind here.” Tobe looked at the stack of cakes.

Looking at that, Hiratsuka-sensei nodded. She directed a sympathetic gaze to the cakes. “I understand... I’ll buy all of them..... The ones that don’t sell, are very lonely after all.”

“Wait a second? Let’s stop giving the cakes feelings, okay?”

“Tobecchi, that didn’t count, okay?” Yuigahama quickly told Tobe, realizing all the cakes really would be bought out at this rate.

“It’d definitely be difficult eating them all if we bought them.”

“But even if we buy one, that doesn’t change anything.”

Komachi and Yukinoshita’s words caused Tobe to become dejected and he spoke with a feeble voice. “But seriously, if we don’t sell these out, it’ll totally be bad. Senpai’s totally gonna snap, fer real. How should I say it? Power harassment or somethin’? So could ya’ll help me out here?”

Listening to his story, Totsuka tilted his head. “So you want a way to sell the cakes?”

“Even if you say that... There isn’t much we can do right now though.”

As I thought, Yuigahama energetically shot up her hands. “Here!”

“Hoy, Yuigahama. Letz hear it.”

“Make it cheaper!”

“That could work.” Tobe nodded to Yuigahama’s straightforward and simple answer.

Furthermore, Zaimokuza thought of something as well and confidently cleared his throat. “Hapon, including a special bonus will increase the value! Here, we can use my specially written novel...”

“That ain’t gonna work.”

The American attitude Tobe took when he lifted both his hands was just a bit annoying, but Totsuka’s contemplating face blew that all away.

Totsuka looked like he thought of something and opened his mouth. “How about a service where you write names on the cake, like on your birthday or something?”

“That’s totes possible, I say.”

Listening up until that point, Yukinoshita nodded. “How about labeling it as a limited item?”

“That could work.” Tobe responded back.

This guy’s obviously fine with anything, wasn’t he...? But despite all of what we brought up thus far, I felt leaving it up to Tobe’s judgment wouldn’t get us anywhere.

“No, all of those are pretty difficult, aren’t they? We’re limited to what we’re allowed to do by the store’s authority. If you don’t want to get harassed by the top, why not just ditch your work?”

“Pretty dark, Hikitani-kun, pretty dark. Gettin’ harassed by the top is totally bad. Just one thing that’s real good, countin’ on ya!”

Coldly refusing him after he clapped his hands together like that would’ve given me a bad conscience. As I looked at the cart stacked with cakes, wondering if there was anything Tobe could do at the moment, I noticed stickers near the registers... Well, it’s almost about that time.

“Mmm... Ah, how about that? The cakes will be half-off, right? Why not push that up? See, the half-off stickers are over there too.”

Then, for some reason, Hiratsuka-sensei, instead of Tobe, reacted. “Uu, half-off... I know, right... When you pass 24, you’re half off... And when you’re past 25, you’re ready to get thrown out...”

"This is about cakes, right? We're talking about Christmas cakes, right?" I tried confirming, but my voice didn't reach Hiratsuka-sensei.

"Why won't they sell even though they're on bargain...? Haa." Hiratsuka-sensei said as she reached out to the half-off seals.

"C-Crap, Hiratsuka-sensei's putting the stickers on herself. Hurry! Someone hurry up and take her!"

Yuigahama went in to stop Hiratsuka-sensei as well. "S-Sensei, it's okay! Half-off is totally a good thing! I mean the sales tax goes up!"

"That's not a follow up, you know..."

"That's right, if it's the consumption tax, then that means there's last minute demand, so that's different from Hiratsuka-sensei."

Hold on! Yukinoshita-san!

Please stop cornering her! Someone please buy her! Someone please take her! The cost performance's the best too!

I really wanted someone to take her already. If no one did, then I just accidentally might end up taking her instead. Actually, was there a reason why this person couldn't get married...? It's one of the top three mysteries amongst the Seven Wonders of the World, seriously.

"Well, given our situation, the only thing we can do is call out normally."

"Calling out, huh... If only we had something to attract attention with."

Yukinoshita's idea caused Tobe to react.

"Ah, that totally could work! Like check it, we even have some extra Santa outfits. Also, reindeer horns too! Tobe said, taking out a Santa outfit from behind the register.

Yuigahama examined the outfit and groaned. "But this doesn't look like it'd fit a girl."

"That means a boy will have to wear it." Yukinoshita said and Tobe looked at us boys.

"Naah, it looks a bit too tight for Zaimokuzaki-kun... Sooo, Totsuka or somethin'?"

"Eh, y-you want me to wear it?" Totsuka was surprised, but so was I.

"Why was I ignored just now, non?"

"It wouldn't be a good idea to have onii-chan directly deal with customers, so it can't be

helped... In any case, Totsuka-san, please!" Komachi tapped on my shoulders. She then showed a smile to Totsuka.

"O-Okay, I guess I'll try wearing it then..."

Since Totsuka was being treated properly as a boy, he looked motivated. Once he took the Santa outfit from Tobe, he quickly went behind the register to change.

"Mm... There we go."

There was the sound of rustling clothes and a gentle voice. It looked like he was afraid of being seen directly, so he went behind everyone.

After Totsuka finished changing, he came up to us. "H-How is it...?"

Looking at Totsuka twist his body in embarrassment, I slipped out my voice. "Ooh..."

The Santa outfit he was wearing was bigger than his size, so it hung loosely resembling a miniskirt. The way he pulled at the fringes at the partition because it bothered him looked very sweet. Feeling embarrassed from being stared at, he used one of his hands to cover himself with his hat. His flush red cheeks and his white skin were adorable.

Tobe, goooooooooooooood job! Maybe Tobe really was a good guy... It's possible we could make good friends. Well, I'd probably just forget him in a week though. I will, forget about Tobe, in a week...

Tobe nodded his head in satisfaction. "Ooh, ain't that good? Alrighty, let's try callin' out together. 'elcome, cakesirs?"

Tobe was trying to demonstrate how to call people out, but was that really helpful...? Even Yukinoshita was frowning.

"Just what is he saying? I don't understand at all..."

"It's hard listening to late night convenience store lingo after all... If you translate it, it's probably, 'Welcome, would you like a cake?' I think." I confirmed for the time being.

Totsuka then looked at me with a sparkling gaze. "Hachiman, you really do understand... O-Okay, I'll try it too. W-Welcome. C-Cake... Would you like a cake?"

There was movement in that instant.

"Fumun, well then, those objects of cake, all 7 trillion of them, I will take them off your hands!"

"Ah, excuse me, could I have a cake too please?"

I lined up right after Zaimokuza and took out money from my wallet, waiting for my turn.

On the side, Yukinoshita let out an amazed sigh. “Why are you buying one too...?”

“Wha, oh shoot. The overloading cuteness made me...”

“Ah, but, it looks like it might get crowded now.”

When I looked, shoppers were looking our way wondering what the commotion was about. After looking at the showcase, menu, and the stockpiled cakes, they were conversing. It looked like there were people planning to buy cakes right now. With the flow of things, the cakes just might sell out without issue.

Realizing the same thing, Tobe grew confident from relief and blurted. “Naah, that totally worked. With cute girls here, of course it’d turn out this way!”

“Cute girls!? Fu, fu, fu...” Hiratsuka-sensei reacted with high speed, displaying a happy smile.

Seeing that, Komachi’s voice choked up. “Uu, my tears are blurring the illumination... That’s right, sensei *is* a girl after all. Yes, I totally understand. Women are always maidens at heart after all.”

Thanks to other customers observing the showcase, people passing by also stopped.

Seeing how things turned out, Tobe laughed in satisfaction. “Yeaah, but what a total lifesaver. We’ll sell out at this rate.”

“Ah, no problem. Then again, it’s not like we did anything...”

Well in truth, it’s not like we did anything particularly special either, I thought.

After looking around at the customers, Hiratsuka-sensei opened her mouth, “Fumu, this is what they call a line summoning other lines. It’s like a ramen shop.”

“Don’t they call that a trap...?”

Well, trap or not, if it solved Tobe’s problem, then that’s fine... I looked at Tobe who asked us for help and as far as Tobe was concerned, it looked like the objective was achieved.

He gave us his thanks and took out a cake from the showcase.

“Hikitani-kun and y’all are holdin’ a party, right? Have a cake as my thanks. I’ll even do y’all a candle service ☆.”

“We don’t need candles on a Christmas cake...”

For some reason he winked with a bling ☆. Annoying...

But, well, if he’s giving it to us, then we’ll gladly take it off his hands.

I took the cake and Yuigahama expressed her gratitude. “Tobecchi, thanks!”

“Nah nah, ya helped me, so we’re all good. A’ighty, Juicy! Party! Yeah!” said Tobe, giving a thumbs-up.

He was annoying, but a good guy. Annoying though.

“I don’t understand at all what you’re saying, but thank you very much.” Komachi politely thanked him.

We said our byes and left gradually. If we stayed any longer, then we’d get in the way.

Just as we were about to leave, Totsuka waved. “Okay, see you later, Tobe-kun.”

“Weeey, see ya!” Tobe waved his hands to us while helping the customers. His voice was needlessly loud.

“...Damn, I’m real jealous. I want to spend next year with Ebina-san too... Huh? Ain’t next year testing time? Beeh. That’s totally baaaaad man.”

With those murmurs from behind, we left the shopping mall.

Bonus Track 6.5.10

After leaving the shopping mall, with Yuigahama guiding us, we found ourselves in a karaoke box at the front of the station. Once we entered the room we booked, everyone held crackers in their hands.

Once everyone was ready, we naturally made eye contact. “And go” said Yuigahama in a small voice and all at once, voices and sounds overlapped.

“Merry Christmas!”

Following the noise of crackers were the sounds of opening chanceries and toast. Everyone was celebrating Christmas.

On the other hand, I found myself looking throughout the room.

“So, why karaoke again...?” I asked.

Yuigahama set the plates and answered, “If we went to Yukinon’s place, we’d get noise complaints. Also, this karaoke place lets us bring cake too.”

“Uh, well, it’s not like there’s anything wrong, but...” As I tried to speak, Yukinoshita spoke up.

“I finished cutting the cakes. Still, I wasn’t expecting to get three whole cakes from him.” Yukinoshita said, distributing the cakes.

Komachi nodded. “Tobe-san’s a good person, isn’t he?”

“Was it just me or did you mean that he was someone convenient?”

Well, it’s true that Tobe was a good guy, but since it didn’t go any further than that, it made me feel bad for him. Not to mention Isshiki’s use of him wasn’t something to laugh at either...

“Here, Hachiman. There’s chicken too.”

“Ooh, thanks.” I said, taking the chicken.

Zaimokuza who sat next to me made a blissful face while Hiratsuka-sensei across was happily pouring drinks.

“Hachiman, meat is good. Meat is real good... Deep-fried food soothes your heart...”

“C’mon, drink up, drink up, though it’s just chanmery.”

Everyone was enjoying this Christmas party in their own way. We ate chicken, cake, got engrossed in conversation, and toasting with our glasses...

But wait. Just a moment.

Is this really Christmas...? That doubt wouldn't leave my head.

I slowly placed my glass on the table to confirm that. The ice in the cup bounced off of each other.

"Hey, do you mind real quick...?"

"What is it?" Yuigahama looked at me as she chewed her cake.

I looked at Yuigahama's eyes and slowly asked, "So how is this any different from a birthday party?"

"Eh?"

The moment I asked, Yuigahama stopped.

"I mean, we're at karaoke again, eating food, cake, and doing toasts... Is this really the right way to spend Christmas? This doesn't feel any different from going 'wey, wey' and now I'm starting to fear for my own identity..."

"T-That's, um..." Yuigahama stuttered, looking away.

Ahead, Komachi had an unpleasant face. "Uwaah, you're such a pain, onii-chan. You're such a pain." Komachi said.

I wasn't the only one who had thought that because Yukinoshita stopped eating her cake and she narrowed her eyes.

"...Certainly. How exactly is this any different...?"

"Ha! Not good. The pains in the butts are spreading!" Komachi said apprehensively (Komachi only) and Hiratsuka-sensei laughed.

"Hikigaya, you're like a Cheetah... Just when I thought you took a step forward, you immediately take two steps back..."^[23] She made a smug smile.

But listening to her, Yuigahama whispered into Yukinoshita's ear. "Hey, Yukinon, are cheetahs really like that?"

"I-I wonder? I've never heard of that before..." The cat professor Yukipedia-san tilted her head.

Hiratsuka-sensei groaned out in pain. “I-It didn’t get across, huh... I guess that’s how it is... Our generations are completely different after all... Haa.” With the generation gap before her eyes, Shiratsuka-sensei sank.

No, I’m sure our ages were pretty different too...

“Aaah! I don’t know what’s going on, but the pains in the butts increased!” screamed Komachi.

Totsuka looked like he realized something. “Ah, but look, Hachiman. We still have the present exchange so that should be Christmas-like!”

“Ooh, you’re right about that!”

I see, present exchanges were very Christmas-like. Unlike birthdays where it was just one side giving, Christmas had both sides exchanging presents.

When I was convinced, Komachi squeezed her fist. “Nice! Nice Totsuka-san! With that being said, present exchaaaange! Okay, okaaay! Everyone, please take out your preseeeents! Please put them in the middle of the table!” Komachi began giving orders in an effort to get rid of the bothersome atmosphere.

“Here, this is okay, right?”

Starting with Totsuka, everyone obediently followed Komachi’s instructions. Komachi checked that the presents were all gathered.

“Okay! Then we’ll get to mixing them!”

“Shuffle tiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiime!”

Using Zaimokuza’s scream as a signal, Komachi shuffled the presents at random and began to explain the rules of the present exchange.

“So, we’ll shuffle the presents around and you’ll get whatever present when the music stops. Well, as for the rest, just read the mood as we go along.”

“This girl, she tries to be considerate, but sometimes her explanations can be very crude...”

Just like Yukinoshita said, I didn’t understand how things worked from Komachi’s crude explanation. If you weren’t nice to the beginners, they’d just quit, in things like beat ‘em games.

“Well, it’ll be faster if we just get to it. Now then, the music’s starting!” Hiratsuka-sensei said and she operated the karaoke remote controller with beeps.

It looked like it functioned for these kinds of parties too. What a convenient world.

When the music started to play, everyone quietly passed the presents right to left. Everyone was quiet in the meantime.

Noticing that the atmosphere was oddly rigid, Yukinoshita spoke reluctantly. “What exactly is this bizarre silence...?”

“This is, like, a lot more normal than I was expecting... Hey, Yuigahama, is this how it’s supposed to go?”

“U-Ummm... Well, for the most, it’s something like this, I think. Surprisingly, the Christmas parts tend to be less exciting...”

“I think I was subjected to a really regrettable story just now... Oh, the music stopped.”

“Okaaaay. Then let’s start off with onii-chan’s present!”

Called out by Komachi, I took the present in front of me and proceeded to unwrap it.

“Me first, huh? Let’s see... Oh, this is... a USB flash drive.”

“Gefukon, gefukon, okopooon. It appears that you have received my present.” Zaimokuza named himself after making weird coughs. Were those really coughs? Still, this was a present from Zaimokuza, huh...? It was kind of surprising.

“Ooh, Zaimokuza’s huh? This is pretty darn practical of you... What’s up with you?” I asked, caught off guard by the fact that he actually picked something useful.

Zaimokuza adjusted his glasses upwards and displayed an elated smile. “Worry not, Hachiman. I made sure to put the documents with my story in there for you.”

“What to do, I don’t really need that.”

“Fuhahaha! During the winter, do yourself some good and read it! Now then, from whom did I get my present from?” Zaimokuza began opening the present in front of him, ignoring my disappointment.

“Oh, what is this, what is this!? Is this not what they call a cushion!?”

In Zaimokuza’s hands was a fluffy cushion.

Looking at that, Yuigahama raised her voice. “Ah, that’s the series of cushions that turn you into a good-for-nothing.”

“So that means it’s a present from Hikigaya-kun?” asked Yukinoshita.

“Yeah. The sofa was too big and expensive, so I went with the cushion.” I answered.

In the end, I couldn’t decide on what was good and went with what they recommended at the store that time.

Zaimokuza fiddled with the cushion and checked its quality.

“Indeed, this is quite good. Starting today, I shall hug this while sleeping.”

“Er no, stop that, that’s gross.”

Not listening to a thing I was saying, Zaimokuza placed the cushion to the side and rested his head on it.

“Hm, let’s give this a try… Oh? Ununu… T-This is!” Zaimokuza’s eyes shot opened. “This abundant warmth and this fluffy softness, and how it adjusts its shape to my needs… Ah, I, can’t, no more… I aaaaaam faaaaaaaaaalling…! Drop.” Zaimokuza went silent.

“…Ooh, Zaimokuza became quiet. That cushion sure is useful.”

Ignoring Zaimokuza who fell asleep, the present exchanged continued.

“Um, okay. Shall we go with Hiratsuka-sensei next?” Komachi called her name.

Hiratsuka-sensei nodded and placed her hand on her present. “Umu, this is wrapped very cutely… Mmm, oh, hand cream, huh?”

When we looked around wondering whose present it was, Totsuka reacted.

“Ah, yes. This season will get you really dry so that’s why. There’s also shea butter in there too, so it really moistens you up. I use it a lot myself during club.”

“S-Sai-chan, you’re amazing…”

“Overwhelming girl power…”

Yuigahama and Komachi were taken aback. Of course I was too. Hiratsuka-sensei, though, wasn’t anywhere close to that.

“I see, so this is girl power… So if I use this, I wonder if it’ll increase mine… Haa, I could, use some moisture… Since I’m so dried up…” Hiratsuka-sensei kept going “dry, dry” repeatedly like curses.

Somehow, the atmosphere was getting dried too. Sensitive to that, Komachi barged in frantically.

"Ha! Shoot! The atmosphere's becoming a pain again! Okaaay, Komachi's next! Oh, this is a wrapped rather fancily... The inside is, ah, tea leaves. So that means this is from Yukino-san!"

Inside the wrapping was a rectangular can. It looked like something I've seen before in the club.

When Komachi guessed right, Yukinoshita returned a smile.

"Yes. I tried looking for something that isn't too strong..." Yukinoshita then made an uneasy expression. "It's just..."

"Just?" Komachi asked further.

Yukinoshita sent a glancing look at me. "I thought maybe Komachi-san might be more oriented towards coffee instead."

Aah, I see. Now that she mentioned it, there were a lot of occasions where I drank coffee. Even in club, I was drinking MAX COFFEE. So that's why, she thought Komachi, who I lived with every day, might be drinking it normally just as well. The reason for Yukinoshita's concern was something I could understand.

But that was a needless worry.. Komachi happily held the can of leaves close to her.

"Not at all, that's not it in the least. Well, I do drink it quite a lot to match with my brother though. But, but, with this, maybe my brother just might be enlightened to the joys of tea!"

"Umu, receiving a present that'll expand your interests is something to look forward to." Hiratsuka-sensei said as she fiddled with her hand cream.

Komachi nodded her head. "That's right! Okay, okay, Yukino-san, why don't you open your present next?"

"Sure."

Yukinoshita reached out to the present in front of her and Yuigahama broke into a smile.

"Ah, that's mine!"

"Oh, is this bath salt? The packaging is cute too... That's very like you, Yuigahama-san. I think it's wonderful."

"Right! Actually, you can use this with a scrub too!"

“This is one incredibly girly conversation...” I thought as I watched the two of them acting cute together.

Hiratsuka-sensei hit her knees. “Darn, bath salt, huh...? I think I overlapped with Yuigahama...”

“Eh, sensei, you bought something like that?” I asked her in surprise.

She was going “oh shucks” while pressing against her forehead. “Yeah, to think I’d overlap with a high school girl of today, huh? Oh darn, what to do?”

“This person’s *really* happy for some reason...”

The present that apparently clashed with the present that came from a high school girl of today was apparently given to Totsuka when I followed her gaze.

Yuigahama looked at that present with sparkling eyes. “Eeh, I wonder what it is? Now I’m really curious. Sai-chan, try opening it.”

“Okay. Here I go... Ummm, this is...”

When he undid the plain wrapping, what appeared was an enshrined box.

Looking at that going “hoeeh” in confusion was Yuigahama.

“An assortment of hot spring items...”

“That does certainly resemble bath salts... But there’s something decisively different about it...” said Yukinoshita as she pressed against her temple.

Komachi also had trouble commenting. “Mmm, it’s less like a girl, but... like an o-, old — an adult!”

“Uu, I can’t help but feel the consideration...”

Hiratsuka-sensei wiped her eyes, looking close to breaking down.

Totsuka quickly displayed a smile like the blossoming of a flower. “But I do like hot springs, so I’m really happy.”

I-I see... Well if Totsuka’s happy, then whatever. My image of it was different from everyone else’s, but I agreed with Totsuka. “Y-Yeah... Well, for us guys, it’d be something to happy about.”

“R-Right? It’s a little too early for you guys, but a beer after a long bath is the greatest, you know!” Hiratsuka bounced right back thanks to that and said something manly.

"I think I understand why sensei can't get married. She's a lot manlier than those boys over there." Komachi said with sadness.

Okay, well, it's true that Hiratsuka-sensei was rather cool for a woman, us boys actually being a lot timid in comparison...

"Okay, so last one is me then."

Yuigahama reached out to the present in front of her.

"So that means it's a present from me!"

"From Komachi-chan? Huh, that makes me super curious. Can I open it?"

"Please, please!"

Komachi urged her on and Yuigahama undid the wrapping.

"Ah, it's soap! Thank you! This is actually one of the popular ones right now too!"

"That's right! I'm using it right now and it has a really good smell!"

Hoh. So this is how presents between girls were... It's like, THA GIRLS, ah, no, THE GIRLS, huh? I then felt a feeling of discomfort.

"...Huh? You've been using that soap? I've never seen it before though..."

"Ah, yup. I only bring it out when I take a bath. I mean, I wouldn't want onii-chan and dad using it, right? That'd be kind of gross too."

"Eeeh...? I-Isn't that a little mean? Onii-chan received a huge shock just now..."

"Gross", huh...? C-C'mon, what's so bad about me using the soap...? I couldn't help, but be depressed.

Yuigahama clapped her hands in realization of something. "Oh, I know. Yukinon, let's use this together today. Oh, with the bath salt too! I can't wait!"

"I don't mind, but..... Eh? You don't mean to go in together, right?"

"Eh? But if we don't, then we can't use it together..."

Yukinoshita and Yuigahama went, "Eh? Eh?", as they looked at each other. I couldn't help but go "Eh?" myself, trying to confirm various things. G-Go in the bath together, you say? Then again, don't go saying stuff like that in a place like this! You're making me think about a lot of things because of that!

"Hey, Yurigahama, I mean, Yuigahama. Talk about that stuff *after* you get home, *after...* Because, you know... Just because."

Though I tried to get the point across with vague words, Yuigahama apparently didn't understand at first, but gradually grew bright red.

"...Ah, y-yeah."

"Yuigahama-san, you dummy..." said Yukinoshita with a disappearing voice. Um, if you're going say that with a flush red face like that, even I was getting embarrassed... It was even more so with Komachi staring at us with a grin.

"Gefun, gefun, morusu.... Fuumu... Upon opening my eyes, the atmosphere has become very odd at some point, it seems...?"

"Ah, chuuni-san, did you just wake up? It's okay if you just sleep a little longer."

Komachi went "ufufu" with a smile directed at Zaimokuza who tilted his head with a curious face, but that was actually kind of scary...

In any case, today's main event, the present exchange, had safely ended. Now what were we supposed to do next?

"So the present exchange's over... I don't see anything else Christmas related..."

Yuigahama and Komachi thought while groaning.

Komachi suddenly lifted her face. "Ha! Speaking of Christmas, then that means Christmas carols!"

"T-That's it!" Yuigahama agreed and Komachi nodded.

"In fact, there's nothing else I can think of!"

Really?

Apparently I wasn't the only one with the same thought. Yukinoshita frowned. "Is singing enough to make it feel like Christmas, I wonder...?" Yukinoshita said with skepticism, and Totsuka started to think of something.

"Christmas carols do have a lot of imagery with it and just listening gets you in the mood too."

"Correct. A theme song can be said to be the face of a product Truly, face song! The song draws a spectacle before your eyes." Zaimokuza nodded his head, thinking he was saying something good.

On the other hand, the sitting Hiratsuka-sensei felt like she was already out there. Her eyes were flying all over the place, going “Gahaha!”

“Oh, going to sing, are we? Sounds good, sing, sing! If you guys aren’t going to sing, then I’ll sing Single Bell instead!”

“Hiratsuka-sensei, is she drunk...? There shouldn’t be any alcohol.” Yukinoshita said. Of course, there weren’t any alcoholic drinks. She was probably just drunk from the atmosphere.

Influenced by the energy, Yuigahama gripped the microphone and stood up. “Okay! Yuigahama Yui will sing...! Here, Yukinon too.”

“Eh, wait, why me too...?”

Yukinoshita tried to refuse the microphone presented by Yuigahama, but cornered by Yuigahama’s immovable smile, she reluctantly took it.

“Weeeeey!”

Komachi shook the tambourines to heat up the moment for the two.

...Well, if it wasn’t for this opportunity, we wouldn’t have been able to hear these two singing. That’s why, well, we could consider this an event special to Christmas parties.

If so, then, I suppose we could consider this as our very own way of spending Christmas.

Bonus Track 6.5.11

The cold wintry wind was blowing along the street that continued from the station

Once the party was over and we left the karaoke box, the sun had long set. Compared to the afternoon, the number of pedestrians had dropped considerably.

Christmas, too, was just about to end. We were walking down the night lane, a slight feeling of loneliness hanging in the air.

Yuigahama stretched. “Mmm, we sure sang our hearts out...”

“In the end, it just turned into karaoke, huh...?” I said.

What exactly was that party about, anyway...?

Yuigahama faltered with her voice. “W-What’s the big deal? It was fun.”

“But I wonder if this was enough as a thank you to Komachi-san and the others...” Yukinoshita murmured, looking worried. That’s true, at first, I had the feeling that the entire premise was to thank Komachi and the others. But, still, judging by their behavior, worrying wasn’t necessary.

“Well, it looked like they had a good time, so it should be fine.”

“Uh huh, I hope so. Ah, but Hikki, was it okay for you to come with us? I know Komachi-chan told you, but you didn’t really have to walk us back.”

“That’s true. My house is just right over there as well.” Yukinoshita said and looked further up the path. Up there was the apartment Yukinoshita was living in. The distance between the station and her place wasn’t exactly that significant, so there wasn’t a need to walk them back, but with Komachi’s insistence, I was here now.

“...Well, there’s the cake and other baggage. This much isn’t a big deal.”

“I see. That’s a big help then. There’s quite a bit of leftover cake too.”

“But, but, it’s kind of nice having an entire cake left! It’s one of my dreams! Eating it whole!” said Yuigahama with an ecstatic expression, and Yukinoshita sent her a cold stare.

“If you can really eat all of it, then that’s fine... It’s actually quite painful.”

“So you tried it before...”

While delving in that kind of conversation, once we walked through the street in the park, we made it into the main street. Now that we had made it this far, Yukinoshita's house was just over there.

"Ah, we can see Yukinon's place now."

"Yes. Hikigaya-kun, up to here is fine."

We stopped before the crosswalk that passed over the main street.

"Is that so? Alright, here, the cake."

"Okaaay."

I handed over the cake I've been holding the entire time to Yuigahama.

"...Also, can you take these back with you too?" I said, and took out two more bags from the pouch.

Although Yuigahama and Yukinoshita accepted them, they stared at it wonder exactly what it was. Upon realizing, they asked timidly to check.

"Eh? Are these... Christmas presents?"

"For me, and for Yuigahama-san... There's one for each of us." Yukinoshita let out a small breath in surprise.

How they earnestly looked at them with really unexpected faces was somehow embarrassing.

"...Well, it's like a thank you for the tea cup." Unable to directly look at them, I shifted my eyes away in a completely different direction.

"...Is it okay, if we open them?"

"Mm, sure." I ambiguously replied to the question asked in confusion. When I thought about what kind of reaction they'd give after opening the bag, my hands started to sweat despite being in the middle of winter.



I could hear blowing winds along with the sound of the ribbon being undone. I then heard small gasps.

“Waa...”

“They’re scrunchies...”

The breaths that the two girls let out were somehow warm and unconsciously, I felt relieved.

“Yukinon and I are matching!” Yuigahama said as she looked at hers and then Yukinoshita’s. Her voice sounded like it was full of joy.

“Yuigahama’s blue while mine’s, pink...? I feel like this should’ve been the opposite.”

“No, that’s good, or at least I think...”

Just why I decided to do it that way, I wouldn’t have been able to explain it properly at all. I was at a loss even if I was asked. However, I felt that it was surely the right, because it was something I considered in my own way; a conclusion that only I arrived at. It’s fine even if I didn’t understand it. I think gifts were just those kinds of things.

“I see...” said Yukinoshita, just quietly and not asking any further. She lifted her face from the scrunchie in her palm and smiled. “If this is a form of gratitude, then I’ll gratefully accept it.”

“Yeah, Hikki... Thank you. I’ll take care of it.” Yuigahama gazed directly at me and gently embraced the scrunchy in her hands at her bosom. I couldn’t look directly at her out of embarrassment.

“Yeah. Well, I’ll leave it to you to take care of it...” I mumbled my words, and ahead where my averted gaze was the lights of the crosswalk turning red to green.

“O-Okay, I’ll see you later.” Using that as a signal, I sent them off.

“Yeah, see you later...! Good night.”

After Yukinoshita and Yuigahama nodded to each other, they quietly began walking away.

I watched their backs as they grew further and I turned my back as well.

“Alright...”

I let out a quiet breath and looked up at the sky.

The night sky of winter was clear, and I could see Orion very well. There were probably other constellations, but unfortunately, Orion was the only one I knew.

I think there were a lot of things that you wouldn't be able to recognize just because you could see them. Would there ever be a day I'd be able to notice the things I once overlooked?

With the guidance of the starlight and street lights, I smoothly took a step.

"Hikigaya-kun."

"Hm?"

I turned around after being called to a stop, and standing directly in the middle of the crosswalk was Yukinoshita. Yuigahama had already finished crossing over and was looking at Yukinoshita with a slightly curious face.

She stood there idly, tying her hair together, but when our eyes met, she gently combed through that hair with her fingertips.

The pink scrunchie, highlighted against her glossy black hair, radiated even in the dead of night.

Yukinoshita stopped her hand that caressed her hair, looking hesitant, but after seeing the start of the countdown of the lights, she quietly breathed in. She then opened her palm halfway and waved slightly back and forth.

"...Merry Christmas."

"...Y-Yeah... Merry Christmas." I was taken back due to her suddenly speaking up, but I somehow managed to reply back.

Yukinoshita chuckled, expressing a small smile and briskly ran after Yuigahama who was waiting ahead.

The two lined up and exchanged several words. Yuigahama then made a big wave with her hand. On the cuff of her hand was the blue scrunchie swaying back and forth.

After seeing that, I turned my back once again.

"Guess I'll go home..."

Despite having walked around the entire day, oddly enough, my steps were light, and I found myself starting to hum as well.

The curtains of night silently descended, with the cold winds massaging your cheeks.

Even so, the lights of the city were faintly warm like candles, tenderly illuminating the Christmas that was soon to end.

Prayers that didn't reach and wishes that weren't granted surely existed.

But, peacefully, those, along with the clear exhaled breath, would surely be allowed, at least for today.

That breath that also shook someone's light surely existed.

Whether you were alone or with someone, Christmas would visit this year as well.

That's why, to everyone out there, Merry Christmas...

Afterword (6.75)

Good evening, I am currently doing my work. Without mistake, I am Watari Wataru.

I was having such a tough time that I had forgotten all about it! Me, that is!

Now then, this Vol 6.75 is the last of the special volumes included in the My Youth Romantic Comedy is Wrong as I Expected Blu-ray and DVD sets. Where did my holiday go?

In these last few months I have released a bunch of special volumes in addition to Vol 7.5. Then I became the editor for the script of the game that is going to be released in September. Then, there is still Vol 8 that is going to go on sale in November. Feels like I am writing some sort of collection of deadlines to be published in a magazine called Monthly Watari Wataru. Why does this sound like some sort of travel magazine? [TL: His name literally means voyage.]

On top of that, I still have to be a corporate slave. What a tough life I have.

Well, although it's quite tough in this current state, and my job is quite demanding, I don't think I was happier before. Recently, I've felt that a student's life is really tough. I thought that something would change once I became an adult. Yet, all that hardship, suffering, and numbing unease that I'd experienced during that time was still right here in front of me, just in a different form.

What a pity, all you students! Your difficult lives today are going to continue! Ahahaha!

Even if it's painful, time continues to pass us by. They will become our past when the days that pass us by accumulates. After experiencing life as a student and as a working adult, I have accumulated countless failures. Be it exams or work, or making choices in life. Among the many facets of life, my biggest failure is probably human relations.

Some failures, I've forgotten. Some failures, I've gotten used to. Some failures, I've salvaged, but that in no way erases the scar of the failure.

You could even say that failure is proof that we are alive.

As such, everyone will continue to live their lives in failure.

Anyways, I present to everyone, My Youth Romantic Comedy is Wrong as I expected

Volume 6.25, 6.5, and 6.75.

Below are my thanks.

To Ponkan8 god:

To.Tsuka! To.Tsuka! What a wonderfully drawn cover this time as well. Thank you very much. I am very grateful that you were alongside me as we trudged through the hell of publishing the main novels. Let's work hard together in the days ahead!

Next, to editorial-in-charge, Hoshino-sama:

Each time, I have nothing to say to him but sorry. Just who decided on the release schedule anyway...? Thank you for taking care of the light novel as well other media productions. I will be under your care for the days ahead as well. Let Watari Wataru have a go with hell the next time too.

To executive producer Yoshimura as well as the rest who made the animation:

Although it's quite annoying for you all to hear my thanks after each volume, you guys really did a fantastic job with the animation. Thanks to your hard work, this light novel is able to be animated. Each week, I am waiting anxiously for the anime to air. There's still the packaged release so please take care of it as well. Thank you very much.

To Eguchi Takuya and the various voice actors:

It has been two years since the drama CD. If I write it like this, does it mean we have been in contact for a really long time? D-Don't get the wrong idea! When I say contact, I don't mean that! I had just written the second volume when I went for the voice try-outs. How nostalgic. Come to think of it, it was because of that time at the voice-trials that I had so many ideas for the characters that I felt that I had to really nail down on their core details. Thank you very much for allowing me to express and capture the characters' thoughts from the LN as well as the casual talks we had. I hope that you will continue to work with me for the long period of time that is ahead of me.

To the production committee and staff affiliated with Oregairu:

I've been under your care for lots of things, like from the production of the anime, other media, publicity, and sales. To be able to let this product, which I originally felt wasn't too suitable to be made into an anime, be shown to the world in a form that is not LN, this is definitely thanks to everyone's hard work. I am especially happy to be able to vent my frustrations via the official Twitter handle. This sort of "do whatever I want" feeling is something that I feel to be similar to this LN. Also, the special volumes have definitely added some workload to the people who produced this BD and DVD. Thank you for bearing with me and making the necessary arrangements. Thank you very much.

Lastly, to all the readers:

This product, from light novel, to anime, manga, or game, is only possible because of everyone's support. I have received a lot of encouragement from readers to the point where I think that this work was written by all of us. The LN is still continuing. Thinking of how I am going to be able to spend each day happily with each and every one makes me very happy. Please continue this journey with me and this LN. It would be a great honor if you are able to enjoy whatever may come. Thank you very much.

This is where I end.

See you again in the coming Vol. 8!

On a certain day in September, somewhere in Chiba, in the deep of the night, drinking MAX coffee blissfully whilst tired out.

Watari Wataru.

Translation Notes

6.5

1. » Pretty Cure – Cure March
2. » A reference to Attack on Titans. 何の成果も得られませんでしたああ A phrase said by the Recon team leader in Ep1 that made its rounds in JP. <http://www.nicovideo.jp/watch/sm20940922>
3. » Homeroom- think of it as a meeting for the class after school to discuss random stuff.
4. » Formed from the kana of the two words. Soy-sauce (醤油) (Shou yu) and Rice (米) (go me). Take the back of the two words and you get (Yume) which mean Dream (夢)
5. » Japanese meme. Has the form of 僕のXX フォルダが火を噴くぜ Means I am about to showcase some collection of stuff I have.
6. » Tsundere: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsundere>
7. » If you don't know, Hikki is short for Hikkikomori, which refers to someone who is a shut-in, generally a derogatory term.
8. » Watari uses the word 漁法 which technically means fishing method. The word trolling is thought to have originated from trawling, a form of fishing method. » <http://slang.tokyo/slang/troll.html> The page is in Japanese, but you should be able to make sense of it with a online translator.
9. » A (somewhat) cute way to say you are pissed off, used by girls. There are 6 levels of rage, more is discussed over here: <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/geki-oko-punpun-maru>.
10. » Baseball team in Japan: The Tokyo Yakult Swallows.
11. » The Bun-bun-maru is a nickname for a player in the above team. Takahiro Ikeyama, As for why, I don't know. :D
12. » A reference to the GeGeGe_no_Kitarō series. MC has only one eye.
13. » Don't you just love Wikipedia? TL;DR: Japanese computer game and manga magazine https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monthly_Comp_Ace
14. » Yuri: think lesbian love.
15. » 手袋 is read as (Te Bu Ku Ro). Reading it backwards would be Ro Ku Bu te which is similar to 六打って (Ro ku bu tte) or hit me 6 times.
16. » [<- READ. ITS CUTE AND AWESOME.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maneki-neko)
17. » Dragonball Z reference.
http://dragonball.wikia.com/wiki/Hyperbolic_Time_Chamber
18. » Reference to The Devil is a Part-Timer
19. » ワッショイ: A cry generally used to rally people when lifting up a palanquin.
20. » ヨイショ Something like Heave-ho. Has the addition meaning of sucking up to someone, hence Hikki's monologue.

21. » Implying that they were lifting Sagami up on a pedestal (i.e. like a god) to get her to take the post. The actual words used here were 神輿に担ぎ上げる. Literally, it simple means, to lift the palanquin, but 担ぎ上げる also means to convince someone to take up a position, generally through flattery. Hence the reason why Yukinoshita says that Yuigahama is not far from the truth.
22. » Yuri- lesbian love. Also maybe a reference to Houbunsha, which published After-school tea time.
23. » Reference to the phrase 今日も日本は平和です. No idea where it originated from though. Seems like a popular one on nico nico.
24. » <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makurakotoba>
25. » The monsters here refer to people who make unreasonable complains.
26. » Referece to ごはんかいじゅうパップ, a children's anime in 2011.
27. » Monster Hunter is a game. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Hunter
28. » The stuff at the bottom is just random bullshit. Chim-chim-cher ee is by Mary Poppins and Botticelli is a game whereby you guess the name of a person that someone is thinking. Also decamelon seems to hint at big breasts although it could just refer to the book title, which I doubt.
29. » Word play on 守. It quickly went from 沈黙を守って (Maintaining the silence) to 貞操を守って.(Protecting one's chastity) Probably just Hikki doing his usual mock-the-sensei.
30. » Tsukuyomi's opening theme song.
31. » Shinran(親鸞) is a Japanese Buddhist monk. The note sentence is a pun on the doctrine of the 浄土真宗 (Joudou Shinsuu) of which Shinran founded. The doctrine is that one cannot hope to extricate themselves from the cycle of life and death by their own power(自力) and hence seek the salvation of the Amitabha. (他力) 他力本願 in the LN means salvation by faith in Amitabha or more obviously, replying on others to achieve one's goal.
32. » The King of Braves Gaogaigar is an anime that began in 1997. Ultimate Fusion is some technical term in the show.
33. » Screwing around with the Kanji of their names. In the LN, their pairing is shortened to just ZaiHachi which is (材ハ) which is closely similar to (村八分) meaning ostracism.
34. » Reference to a series of short stories: The hidden sword.
35. » It's a bug. Lol.
36. » Ebina Ebi which is Japanese for prawn.
37. » Fujoushi Girls who likes stuff depicting male homosexual love.
38. » Reference to 史上空前!! 笑いの祭典 ザ・ドリームマッチ. A variety show from JP
39. » 義を見てせざるは勇無きなり <- idiomatic expression from Confucious.
40. » Reference to the Ohmu, from Nausicaa of the valley of the wind. They can only communicate with certain sensitive people.
41. » Musubi is a character from Hadashi no Gen.
42. » You should know.... From the 1st season OP. [The meaning of the lyrics in said song is something about the transition to spring from winter]
43. » Google kibasen for many many videos and explanations.

44. » A reference to an ancient game: Sakura Wars.
45. » Think of it as a JPN version of Capture the flag. Alternatively, google it.
46. » Mobile suit in the movie Mobile Suit Gundam F91
47. » From Pokemon. I mean, everyone knows this right? RIGHT?!
48. » Reference to the way the Misaka Sisters talks. Both Ebina and the Misaka sisters are voiced by the same CV: Nozomi Sasaki
49. » Roswell incident. A UFO conspiracy.
50. » No legitimate English translation as far I can think of. Written as [よつ友] simply means a friendly who you just say Yo to. But that's too clunky to put inside so I just left it Yo-friend.
51. » “The Spider’s Thread” is a 1918 short story by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa. Search it online
52. » https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_15_Incident
53. » Google Kibasenn and you will get it. Also, S1E13 has footage of it as well, first half I believe.
54. » Reference to Miroku from Inuyasha. His Wind—Tunnel opens up a hole in his hand that can suck demons.
55. » Same as [53]. Google it. Two groups of people trying to knock down each team’s pole. S1E13 has it as well.
56. » Should be familiar to most. From Urban Dict:People with chuunibyou either act like a know-it-all adult and look down on real ones, or believe they have special powers unlike others.
57. » [検事でも逆転] Reference to the Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney franchise, specifically, Turnabout Prosecutor of which the Japanese title is [逆転検事]
58. » I think this originates from the Botticelli (game), of which you guess the names of a person the other has thought of. This person must be as well-known as Botticelli hence the name. I presume it just means the duty of someone famous here.
59. » Pretty sure Watari is just playing around with the words [パワパフ] (Powerpuff) and [パワハラ] (Power harassment). Also, Powerpuff here does indeed refer to the Powerpuff Girls.
60. » Detective Conan.
61. » 獅子は我が子を千尋の谷に突き落とす, 獅子は兎を狩るにも全力を尽くす and 獅子身中の虫 are the three original proverbs. Hachiman added the “To kill” part to them. The first one means to mould a child through tough love. The second means to put one’s best efforts in everything. The third means something thorn in one’s flesh.
62. » Adapting his own name into 稲川淳二 (Inagawa Junji)m a very popular horror movie director in Japan. (本当にあった怖い話) [Real-life horror stories] is a morning television program whereby its contents are created according to well.... Real life events.
63. » URIIIII and WRRYYYYYY are the cries of DIO, a character in [Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure].
64. » I cant think of a way to put it in English hence I left in its Romanized form. Aす

ねこすり (SUNEKOKORI) is a demon that appears on rainy nights in the Okayama prefecture. As its Japanese name implies, it's a demon that goes about interfering with a person's movements. I.E. To try and trip them up etcetc.

65. » [A dog and scissors have their uses] is a LN by Sarai Shunsuke.
66. » Too cluncky to translate. MEXT is the abbreviation of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan.
67. » Lonaticus idea to translate it as such. Thanks. POI! But anyway in Japan, these points represent how well you did in each subject. The maximum amount of points you can earn in each subject each semester is 5. These points that are accumulated over the three years apparently plays a significant portion towards your high-school promotion. In the case of Komachi, these points can be boosted because she is part of the student council.
68. » Reference to Shin Megami Tensei : Devil Survivor. Look it up!
69. » The actual words used were 情報戦 which would translate to something like Information Warfare. I changed it to what I did because it sounded stupid in the context of a classroom.
70. » Reference to Magical Girl Lyrical Nanoha, whose products always get sold out really quick. To get a higher chance of buying the products, people apparently spreaded fake information that the peripherals were already sold out on 2chan and Twitter.
71. » Your translator failed you because he is too noob to figure out what Watari is talking about. He's mainly talking about the excess of clubs that even he (Hikigaya) can't remember them all. Actual words in the LN are ろうとしーとかてーとか. Abbreviation of some clubs in japan that I can't be bothered to find.
72. » http://typemoon.wikia.com/wiki/Mystic_Eyes_of_Death_Perception
73. » Name of an American movie in 1994.
74. » Reference to a quote from Roger Smith, from the Big O series. Phrase: 雨の中、傘を差さずに踊る人間がいてもいい。自由とは、そういうことだ。
75. » Reference to the NDS game Panpaka Panya-san, where you... bake bread.
76. » Reference to the lyrics of a commercial about one of Setagaya's organic products. Said product is supposedly able to treat joint pain. For the LOL commerical: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnLyYk0y5oY>
77. » Reference to Medabots. Before they fight, the announcer would shout something like: Medabots! Robattle!
78. » Reference to the anime, 愛少女ポリアンナ物語. (The story of Pollyanna, Girl of love) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Story_of_Pollyanna,_Girl_of_Love
79. » A very strong word, misogi (禊) is used here, strictly refers to the Shinto Purification ceremony. Probably implies she's too screwed up.
80. » Play on words. Ninku (人工) means manpower. The sky of love; Koizora (恋空) is a 2007 film based upon a cell phone novel of the same name. Lastly, Ninkuu (忍空) is a manga by Kouji Kiriyama. 恋空 and 忍空 are often mixed up by people, whereas 人工 and 忍空 are similar sounding.
81. » All hail the queen of tsunderes Rie Kugimiya. Kugyu is her nickname. Incidentally, Kugi is the romaji for nails as well.

82. » It's a cooking show by Japanese comedian Kaminuma Emiko. The name of the show can be somewhat translated to Cooking and chatting with Emiko Kaminuma.
83. » (丑の刻参り) here refers to a ancient ritual in Japan whereby you visit a shrine at 2am in the morning. There you hammer a straw doll to a tree that is near the shrine with long nails to curse the person.
84. » You can probably guess. Nokogiri = saw.
85. » <http://www.internationalghostsandhauntings.com/2011/11/okikus-well-banshu-sarayashiki-at.html>
86. » From the anime Hajime No Ippo. The following line, where Hachiman utters Makunouchi is because that's what the crowd would shout when they see Makunouchi do the Dempsey roll.
87. » Abbreviation for the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology, Japan.
88. » Bush = George Bush = forest. Forest (in JPN, mori) = Shinichi Mori, the singer. Place where trees grow =木が集まる = 気が集まる (gathering energy (for the spirit bomb))]
89. » Mother Ranch refers to a theme park with a ranch as its theme in Chiba
90. » Refers to 1977 manga, Esper Mami. MC earns money by being a nude model.
91. » In Japanese, it's サウダージ (Sa-U-Dā-Ji), which is similar to sabotage (サボタージュ) and potage (ポタージュ)
92. » One of the catchphrases of the Shimakaze, from Kantō. (速きこと島風の如し) Shimakaze is a chaser built in 1943.
93. » From the show, To the max! Lucky Man. He's a superman, but has no actual abilities besides being eye-catching.
94. » The ED in question is 「1/3の純情な感情」. The line in it being「壊れるほど愛しても 1/3も伝わらない」
95. » Actual kanji is 天王山. Refers to site of the crucial Battle of Yamazaki in 1582.
96. » From Gatchaman Crowd's Insight. Others' misfortunes are as sweet as honey. (人の不幸は蜜の味) is a riddle that Berg Katze first gave the MC
97. » From Rurouni Kenshin. One of the shinsengumi codes that Saito Hajime lives by.
98. » From episode 45 of Mobile Fighter G Gundam. Where, Master Asia literally dies at dawn...
99. » The great mindfuck from Puella Magi Madoka Magica
100. » The first two refers to ancient Japan war formations. The last one refers to two books on the art of war from China.

Bonus Track

1. » A phrase from Project Arms.
2. » A Japanese meme. Akin to something like "lel, lawl" of the sort.
3. » A quote from Eureka Seven.
4. » A phrase from the Bible.

5. » Kongou from Kancolle loves tea.
6. » The Obon Festival is a Japanese custom that honors the spirits of one's ancestors. Typically these floating lanterns are placed on the river which follows a stream down somewhere late at night.
7. » Sound effects that Atago from Kancolle makes.
8. » Japanese encyclopedia of the sort.
9. » [Wonder Trade](#)
10. » Komachi's coined “dere” term for Hachiman. “Twisted dere” so to speak.
11. » [Good Wife, Wise Mother](#) – East Asian ideal of the supposed role of women.
12. » A fumi-e (ふみえ) is an object that was used to identify Catholics and sympathizers during the Edo period of Japan. It typically had a picture of Virgin Mary or Christ and if the people reluctant to step on it would be branded as a Catholic and sent to Nagasaki for torture, execution, etc.
13. » A line said by the younger sister of Ayase Eli, Ayase Arisa.
14. » A line spoken by Kotori Mizuki from Yu-Gi-Oh! Zexal II.
15. » [Chogokin](#) – A line of metal robot and character toys sold in Japan. Originated from Mazinger Z.
16. » A line said by Guy Shishioh from GaoGaiGar, also voiced by the same voice actor.
17. » A line from a short story collection, Hyakkiyakko, by Natsuhiko Kyougoku.
18. » Sei Iori's dad from Gundam Build Fighters also loves Gunpla. Also Sei Iori is voiced by Mikako Komatsu who does Totsuka.
19. » [Kirara☆](#)
20. » [Aila Yurukiainen](#) from Gundam Build Fighter is voiced by Hayami Saori who also voices Yukino.
21. » Wordplay on Aila's last name which is “Yurukiainen” in Japanese. The wordplay part, “yarukinai (やる気無い) here means “no motivation to do anything”.
22. » The proper term in Japanese is nori-tsukkomi which is where you play the straight man and the boke by yourself.
23. » Kiyoko Suizenji, also known as Cheetah, released a single caused “The 365-Step March”. This made its debut in 1968.

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