Chapter 16.7: Unanswered Questions

I arrived at the cafe fairly quickly and waited for Kagura to show up.

It was slightly more full than before—now with 5 people—but it still had that calming aesthetic. The same soft jazz was playing in the background as I sat in a seat close to the window.

You see, I wanted to get a good look at the ground from above since the cafe was on the top floor of the mall—it wasn't for a specific reason; I just happened to want a look from up there.

As I waited for Kagura, I fiddled with my phone and started thinking about this special test again.

If you considered my class's academic ability, there weren't many ways to help them.

In fact, I couldn't think of one, and today I was busy handling the thief case that we still didn't even know had happened for sure.

Though I couldn't just say that the study sessions didn't work or help—although study sessions work and all—honestly, the help they offer is minuscule.

But am I going about this right? I don't want to have to actually create a solu–

"Hey," Kagura grinned, taking a seat.

"Yo."

"So, what did you wanna talk about?"

"Before that, let's order something," I said. "Wait, scratch that."

I happened to just realise that all the money I borrowed from Ito had been used.
“No, don’t worry. I’ll pay for both of us.”
“I can’t let you do that when I called you out here.”
“It’s fine. Actually, people had already started leaving the library when you texted me, though we haven’t stopped the study session officially.”
“Still I—”
“Don’t worry about it. I’m always partying, so I’m pretty popular, so my Rp is pretty high.”
“Well, if you say so.”
I gave up trying to convince her because, actually, I was pretty hungry since I hadn’t had a proper meal since breakfast.
“Let’s go and order,” Kagura said, dragging me off my chair.
Chillax, Ms Enthusiastic.
We walked over to the counter so we could order. The menu was plastered on the screen just like in the cafeteria.
The menu consisted of tea, coffee, special drinks, cakes, pastries, light meals, and desserts.
Everything looked amazing, but I didn’t want to put pressure on Kagura, so I had to order something cheap. I wanted to order something that wouldn’t really break the bank; however, I intended to let Kagura order first since she was paying.
“Good evening, what are your orders?” the waiter asked.
“You should go first, Nakamura,” Kagura said.

I could have asked her to go before me and do this back and forth all over again, but I was kind of busy later and didn’t want to waste time, so I just did as she said.
At any rate, I was gonna order something cheap anyway, so it wouldn't be like I was overstepping my boundaries.
“Um, could you give me an iced coffee and a finger sandwich—the regular one?”
I chose the cheapest meals; however, Kagura didn’t let me just do that, of course.
“Is that all you want?”
“Yeah.”
“Are you sure?”
“Pretty sure.”
“Ok.”
Wow, she agreed way faster than expected.
The meal was quickly given to me on a metal tray, and I went over to our table and sat down. I began eating the sandwich and surprisingly finished it in two bites.
Talk about being compact.
Then again, it *was* called a “finger sandwich”, being just a little bit longer than my middle finger.
After I started taking my iced coffee, Kagura sat down. She had a cheesecake, a strawberry cake, and a special drink—a melon soda.
As I sipped my iced coffee, I eyed her cakes because the finger sandwich could barely count as a meal.
Though I couldn’t ask her for cake, so I had to focus on the task at hand.

However, I had to wait for Kagura to finish eating, and it was torture.
“Hey Nakamura-kun,” Kagura said, finishing up her cheesecake. “Do you want my strawberry cake?”
“Huh? Nah, don't worry about it.”
“You sure?”
“Yeah,” I said with a smile; unfortunately, my own stomach betrayed me.
Grrrrr
It was like my stomach was saying, “Who are you to speak on my behalf?”
Hey, cooperate with me, please?
Grrr!
It growled back at my internal thoughts—it was its way of saying, “No!”
“Still sure?”
“Nope. Could I have one?”
I could have said yes, that I was actually full, even though I was obviously lying. I was sure that if I pushed the subject, she would eventually relent.
That should have been what I did.
In fact, that was the polite thing to do; however, there are times when politeness is utter stupidity.
And yes, I was simply thinking with my stomach, but it was better than starving.
“Yup,” Kagura handed the cake over to me and watched me with a smile as I ate it.
Why is she so focused on me?

She just watched me eat with a smile, and I noticed that it was a fake smile since it didn't reach her eyes.
Hmm…
She then stopped smiling and looking at me, but instead faced the window.
"Nakamura," Kagura said abruptly while looking outside the window.
"Yeah?"
"Am I a good person?"
"What?"
"So even a direct question can confuse you like that? Well, I suppose it's just not about understanding the words in a question but the complexity of the question, though context is needed, right?"
"...I suppose so."
"Anyway, back to you. Why'd you call me out here?"
"Before I answer, why'd you ask if you were a good person?"
"I won't reveal it till you tell me which one you think I am: a good person or a bad one?" Kagura said, still looking outside the window.
"If I must pick, I would say you're a good person."
"Is that so? After all, I was someone who hid the school's truths from you."
Is that what was worrying her?
I was surprised that she was still worried about that; if it were Ito, then it would be less shocking. However, maybe Ito could move on faster than her, though I didn't know why she was still concerned.

“I don’t really blame you; moreover, we are allies.”
“Allies? Is that really true?”
“What do you mean?”
“I’m sure you know what I mean. If we’re really allies, why didn’t you ask more questions yesterday?”
“Oh, I see,” I said.
It was then I realised what this was; she thought I didn’t think of her as an ally because I thought she was a ‘bad’ person or, rather, someone who would backstab me.
“So that’s why you asked me if you were a good person; you thought I didn’t think of you as an ally, but you have—” I continued.
“No, no, no, no—you’re wrong,” Kagura cut me off, finally looking me in the eyes. “I asked that because I felt guilty. I-I-I led to someone’s expulsion and almost did so for you. That’s two people from our class.”
“...”
While it was common knowledge that she inadvertently led to my expulsion by not giving me the necessary information, it was more or less for a good reason. Moreover, she tried not to do it and helped me afterward.
However, what was surprising was that I had no idea what she meant by “two people”, but then I remembered that only one person had been expelled from my class besides me, of course.
That person was none other than Kobayashi Shin; however, Ito said that he expelled Kobayashi, so what was going on?

“...What are you talking about?”
You see, I really had to get this information as fast as possible because my curiosity was at its peak, but so was my surprise.
“I expelled Kobayashi-kun—I did it. I made him get expelled and did it for my own benefit, so how am I a good person?” Kagura asked, her voice barely above a whisper.
“...”
So, it really was Kobayashi? Then who’s the one not telling the truth here?
My silence must have unnerved her because she continued talking, but louder than before—way louder.
“Tell me, Nakamura Eiya, or are you just blind and deaf?!!!” Kagura was basically screaming as she slammed the table.
“Kagura, calm down and relax; we’re in a public place, remember. Just tell me what happened,” I said sternly.
“Huh?” Kagura finally realised that we were in a public area and calmed down—luckily, only 5 people were here.
“Kagura, honestly, I came here to talk about Kobayashi Shin.”
“I see. Well, to be honest, I originally didn’t plan on telling anyone about this, but I think you deserve to know since I also expelled you.”
“But that was–”
“Relax, I’m doing this for your sake.”

Unfortunately, what she said was a lie. This wasn't for me; it was to rid herself of guilt.
I was sure that she felt guilty for "expelling" Kobayashi, but she buried those feelings, and they resurfaced because she didn't do anything when I got expelled.
However, based on her words before, she tried not to get me expelled, so that meant that she didn't actually completely bury her guilt, and so it combined with the guilt of not being able to stop my expulsion.
Though this was only true if she wasn't lying when she said she expelled Kobayashi.
While taking her word at face value wasn't the best, I couldn't really do anything about it.
That being said, unless she could pull off a performance as good as Suzuki's, then she was telling the truth because I could feel the true emotions behind her words.
I could try to explain what I felt; in fact, I could tell you all the scientific terminology and definitions behind it.
However, humans weren't just science.
Well, they were, but sometimes it was best for you to feel—yes, not to know, but to feel.
And in this moment, I felt.
Maybe.
"Alright, I understand."
"Ok then, I'll begin," she said, taking a deep breath. "I expelled Kobayashi by making him disobey the rules of a special test because we needed him to pass; however, a day after I did that Ito-kun asked him to try and tell the

information but by writing it down on a paper and that if Kobayashi got caught, he should blame him, but unbeknownst to Ito, I already met him, and because of me, he got expelled, and I also met Kobayashi and told him to not drag Ito down regardless of what happens." Kagura let out a big sigh after she finished saying everything.
"It must feel nice letting all that out."
"Yea—Wait, aren't you going to say anything about what I said?" Kagura pointed with an eyebrow raised.
"Of course I will; I'm just really shocked."
"A shocked person wouldn't talk this calmly; it's like that time on the bus. Sometimes you're really weird, Nakamura," Kagura giggled.
"Weird, huh?"
"Yup, super weird," Kagura grinned; this time the smile was real.
I was actually quite shocked and was trying to process what I had heard.
So basically, Ito thought he led Kobayashi to his expulsion; however, it was Kagura who did so.
I guess that means neither Ito nor Kagura lied; however, I don't know why Kagura did that.
"...Kagura, can I ask why you expelled Kobayashi?"
The smile on Kagura's face was wiped off, and she kept quiet for a few seconds.
"I expected that question, though I still wish you hadn't asked it. …Well, to be honest, I did it for myself," she whispered that last part, but I heard it.

“Huh? What do you mean? You did all this for self-gain?” I eyed her in disdain.
Maybe my voice was too loud or was too volatile, or perhaps I didn’t give the answer that Kagura expected, but her expression changed to a jumbled mess before returning to normal.
…
“No, no, no, no, I-I-I don’t mean it like that,” she stuttered, her hands shaky and some droplets of sweat pouring down her face. “I did it for the girls. Kobayashi was a real pervert, and moreover, how would I know that he would get expelled?”
“Was it not part of the rules of the test?”
“Well, uh, that exam was the final test for the first term, and we didn’t know the rules were that strict because we aced most of the tests.”
“Yet you told him not to drag Ito down regardless of what happens.”
“I-I-I…”
Stuttering, shaky hands, and sweat—it was obvious that Kagura was trying to deflect the blame, but the accumulated guilt and my expression made her look like a villain.
It affected her to the point that she truly *did* feel like a villain, and I already came to the conclusion that Kagura was somewhat of a people pleaser.
I mean, there was a time she said she hated alcohol but still drank with her friends, and there was also that time with her friends when she called me a gloomy guy and

then retracted the comment continuously so that her friend would intervene, so she would seem like an airhead so I would forgive her.
After all, she's someone who undermines her intelligence. Evidence is that time on the train.
You could ask why she did so, but it was very simple. It was so she could be friends with everyone all at the same time; it must have been exhausting to do that. She must have done it because of the Rp. Though I must say this: Was it really that worth it?
Anyway, while she couldn't know for sure that Kobayashi would get expelled, she more or less knew that breaking the rules led to punishments, so she didn't want to take the chance of losing someone like Ito.
The question was, why let Kobayashi get expelled in the first place?
"Why did you do it?"
"..."
"Didn't you want to feel better? Release your guilt?"
"You're wrong, I'm doing this for yo—"
"It doesn't matter the reason. Telling me will make you feel way better; it's not good to let things like this pile up."
"But—"
"Kagura, just tell me and be at peace. Wouldn't you like that?" I held her shoulder.
She looked up at me, and I gave her a warm smile to indicate that this would be fine.

“I did it because I wanted an opportunity to shine. I saw that if I expelled him, I could say that I tried to help him and maybe shed a few tears, and I’d become more popular.”
“I assume it worked.”
“Yes, it did—I became the saint that would be with everyone.”
“I see.”
“Is that all you're going to say? I expelled someone, and you’re just—”
“I won’t condemn you; you’re already dealing with guilt, so why hold you to something else?”
“…”
“That being said, I do have some questions.”
“Sure, go on,” she said, looking at me this time.
“So was last term’s midterm special test academic?”
“Yes, it was. I think all midterm special tests are academic.”
“Did academic activities go on after the midterm special test ended?”
“No, teachers organised a series of tests.”
This much is probably enough for now.
“Ok then, that is all.”
“Huh? That’s all the questions you need answers for.”
“Yes,” I stood up. “I can more or less figure out the rest on my own.”
I couldn’t be asking her questions in this state of mind, so it was best to just leave, and I wasn’t lying because I could figure out the rest by myself.

I know what you're thinking: if I had questions ready, why did I specifically choose Kagura?
I could have talked to Tsubasa Yui, but while she may have given me the information, there was the fact that there is no bond between us because we have no contract, so she could have easily lied to me.
Moreover, I wanted to limit interaction with assets—and by extension, everyone else except people I knew that weren't assets—until I knew what I was dealing with.
"You're leaving?" Kagura asked.
"Yeah, I am."
"Huh? How come—"
"I need to clear my mind."
"I see, but Nakamura, do you trust me as an ally?"
She looked at me earnestly; I could see the hope in her eyes. Unfortunately, I wouldn't lie to her, so I was sure that hope would be shattered by my telling the truth.
I took a deep breath and closed my eyes, preparing myself for her reaction, and then I answered.
"I'm sorry, but no."
"...?!"
"Don't tell me you're shocked, Kagura. I mean, you expelled a student, and that is not excusable. I will not tell anyone this, but I think we should avoid contact for a while. Well, perhaps not a while, but at least not for today."
I said that because I remembered that I still had business with her tomorrow, but for now, she should think about her actions.

“What are you say—” Her tone was erratic, a bit desperate. Well, not desperate for me per se, but desperate not to be a villain.
“I don’t want to deal with someone like…*you*,” I said, cutting her off.
“Huh? Wait, what are you–”
“I’ll tell the committee members that you’re tired, so just rest and think about your actions,” I said, leaving the cafe and heading to the dorms.
As I left the mall and was heading to the dormitory, I saw someone run up to me—it was one of the girls from the library.
“Nakamura?!!”
“Huh? Uh, hey,” I said, my voice shaky. I was nervous because I already knew she was going to ask me something about Ito.
“Where did Ito-kun go?”
Called it.
“Him? Oh, he’s probably in the dormitory,” I replied, my voice now calmer than before.
“Huh? Why didn’t he come back to the library?” she asked, her voice a bit squeaky.
Oh, so that’s what she’s worried about.
“By the time we were done with what we were doing, it was already pretty late.”
Wait, if I put it like that, then she’ll ask more questions.
“What were you doing with Ito-kun? What did *you* do to Ito? Did you attack him?”

Huh? What kind of absurd question is that? Does she think I'm some kind of wild animal?
"Attack him? Have you seen the size difference? He'll tear me apart."
"No, Ito-kun is kind, so he'll let you beat him up."
"I think you're highballing him a little; even Ito would have to attack someone trying to assault him."
"What are you saying? That Ito attacks people? What kind of rumour are you trying to spread? That Ito is a hooligan that beats people up—are you trying to plummet his reputation?" She narrowed her eyes at me.
Where did she get that from?! Does this girl have ears? Either way, I need to calm her down pretty quickly—well, at least before her glare melts me like ice cream.
"No, I'm not trying to do that at all," I said, trying to calm her down as I started sweating a little bit from her intense glare.
Doesn't look like it's working? How do I escape this?
"Lies," she said, her voice growing colder. "You know, I don't even know why I'm talking to a rapist."
"..."
Wait, wait, wait, this is perfect. You just gave me the perfect escape. I am forever grateful to you—whatever your name is.
I took my opportunity and acted like I was affected by her comment.
"Why are you quiet? Speak up," she mocked.

I let down my gaze before walking away. I made it look like I was ashamed, but I was actually ecstatic. After I had given enough distance, I let out a sigh of relief.
“That girl is really a handful,” I voiced.
At any rate, I learnt substantial information about Kagura—I learnt that while she had the capacity to do evil, her guilt wouldn’t let her do too much.
Well, at least not anymore, at least.
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Author’s Note:
Anyway, remember to comment, share, and leave a review. Thanks for reading the chapter, and see you in the next one.