Chapter 8.4: Unexpected Call

I was really screwed now, but I still kept a calm expression; there was no point in visibly looking shaken. The waiter went to get the QR code that I would scan.

Seems like I still have some time to think.

I calmly tried to assess the situation, but no solution came to mind.

What could I do? I couldn't just say that I take back what I said, nor could I say it was a joke. Perhaps I could ask for money from one of my friends?

What friends?

Ignoring the fact that I wasn't close with any friends, who would I even ask?

Ito was most likely busy, Kagura was probably at a party, and Kisaragi wouldn't even answer.

As I was still in thought, the waiter returned, still donning a polite smile.

"Just to be sure, are you paying separately or together?"

You have no idea how unpleasant that smile is right now.

Now that the waiter was here, I couldn't wait anymore—the clock was ticking; she had asked again, and we didn't answer.

I'll have to just empty my pockets; nothing more to do, say, or even think of trying.

"I'll—"

"We're paying separately," Suzuki answered.

"Huh? But I'm paying for all of you," I unconsciously uttered such words.

What the hell am I saying? Just shut up and accept it.

Unfortunately, the words had already been said and couldn't be so easily returned. In fact, no word uttered could ever be retracted.

"No, you don't have to," Suzuki replied. "We can handle it ourselves. Why would we charge you for something *we* ordered?"

As she said those words, my mind only thought one thing, and that was—

For a fact, Suzuki Aiya is an angel.

I nodded at my thought because it seemed rather true; no, it was definitely true.

"Anyway, as I said, we are paying separately."

"Alright, then. Please scan the QR code."

Yoshida and Suzuki's other friend stopped using their phones to play games and paid for their food.

Suzuki and I followed suit.

“Your food will be brought out soon,” the waiter bowed and left, still keeping a polite smile.

Now that’s just creepy.

I banished such a thought because her smile was probably just part of her job.

The food was brought, and the girls began digging in—completely demolishing their food—with me eyeing their food as I sipped my soda.

Maybe I should have ordered more.

The girls ate quickly but delicately—except Suzuki; she ate slowly, very slowly.

“Uh, Aiya-chan, are you okay?” Yoshida asked.

“Yeah, why’d you ask?”

“Well, you’re barely touching your food.”

“What are you talking about? I normally eat like this,” Suzuki said, a nervous sweat slowly moving down her face.

“Huh? First, you ordered something smaller than usual, and then you’re eating little by little. Are you sic—Oww."

Suzuki’s other friend gave Yoshida a chop to her head and began to whisper some stuff into Yoshida’s ear.

“Huh?! Nakamura-kun’s gonna think she’s fat—Oww."

Suzuki’s cheeks began to get redder at Yoshida’s words.

Oh.

Suzuki was a…heavy eater, and she thought I would get repulsed by it.

Personally, I didn't find that all too bad—I mean, it was better than a skinny girl who looked like a skeleton. I was about to say something, but Suzuki rushed her food and stood up.

"Uh, Nakamura-kun, I need to… Powder my nose. I'll be back."

"..."

She just ran away, didn't she?

"So where were you, Nakamura-kun?" Suzuki's other friend asked, probably trying to change the subject away from Suzuki. "I'm referring to when you left us."

"Didn't I say that already?"

"Yes, I was just confirming what you said. You said you were with whom?"

"Uh, I was with a friend."

"Friend? You have friends? Ha ha ha ha ha," the girl began to laugh uncontrollably, with Yoshida joining her.

"Uh…"

She was trying to change the subject, but then landed on something she assumed was funny and began teasing me.

Though what she assumed was fair game to tease was the one thing that disturbed me dearly.

Damn, that is a touchy subject… Luckily, I have a comeback.

“You do know that I’m here because I’m friends with Suzuki, right?”

Well, technically I wasn't, but was I to say it here? Nah, I probably shouldn’t, or at least I felt it would be weird for a super loner just to suddenly announce he was dating a class superstar.

I definitely would have been seen as insane.

Tap, Tap, Tap.

I was so deep in this conversation that I didn’t hear some footsteps get closer to us.

“You are sooooo dumb,” she snickered. “Can’t you get a clue? Your seatmates, so she’s trying to be nice… However, something is a bit weird.”

Yeah, cuz we are more than seatmates! And friends too, of course, though it’s not my place to say so.

Though is that why she was weird? Maybe that isn’t why.

“Huh?” Yoshida was clearly perplexed, and so was I.

“Why was she not eating as much? What could be the reason? Even when she eats with Innō or anyone else, she doesn’t care. What makes you different?”

“I’ll explain later,” Suzuki came back. “Also, do NOT talk about him like that, okay?”

Eh?

When Suzuki said that, her expression darkened, and she looked like an evil spirit vehemently warning you. Suzuki’s other friend could do nothing but nod, same as Yoshida, but that wasn’t what shocked me.

I was completely and utterly surprised that Suzuki could sneak up on me.

Not that it was anything special, but… I wasn’t exactly useless at noticing people, so it was kinda alarming to say the least.

Again?

…Perhaps I didn’t notice because I was focusing too much on what Suzuki’s other friend was saying.

Suzuki noticed my intense stare and simply smiled at me.

Seems like I’m taking this a bit too much.

“So it’s getting late,” Suzuki said. “Nakamura-kun, let's walk back to the dorms.”

“Huh? What about us?” Yoshida asked, a bit too loudly.

“I’m going alone,” Suzuki was still a bit angry with Yoshida because I wasn't sure if it was my eyes or what, but I saw lightning sparks above her head.

She’s a freaking superhero.

After Suzuki bid her friends farewell, we headed back to the dorms.

The walk back to the dorms was nothing short of romantic: the illuminant glow of the streetlights, the cool breeze, the silent atmosphere, and the beautiful moonlight and stars.

It was like a cupid had planned this in advance.

“So, how was our first date together?” Suzuki asked, her hands a bit fidgety.

“It was amazing, really. Can you believe today’s my first date ever?”

“Yeah,” Suzuki replied quite quickly.

“At least say it’s not true,” I sighed.

“Huh? Oh, s-sorry, I just instinctively said that.”

Instinct, huh?

I sighed instinctively because of how hard today had been.

“I really am sorry,” Suzuki moved closer.

“Don’t worry, it’s fine.”

“Well, if you’re sure,” she moved even closer, so close that I could smell her perfume; it was strawberry brew.

“So, Nakamura, about my eating habits, were they… off-putting?”

She stopped using honorifics; well, she has done this before but now feels different—completely different.

“Nope. Not in the slightest.”

“Huh? But I thought guys loved skinny girls.”

“Not all of them,” I replied. “I actually like a girl who likes food.”

Well, it’s less about how you feed and more about how you maintain your body—and you maintain yours really well.

“I-I-I see,” Suzuki smiled warmly and walked closer.

She moved closer again, and our fingers were barely touching, but we weren’t holding hands.

It was then that I realised that Suzuki’s face was beet red.

She’s… Nervous?

From her movements, it seemed Suzuki wanted to hold my hand, yet she didn’t take it like when the date started.

Why is that?

At that moment, a little lightbulb lit up in my head—I came up with a little theory.

Suzuki was a social butterfly, so perhaps she was comfortable doing stuff with people there, but when there was no one, she got pretty nervous.

It seemed like I had to be the one to take the lead. I was about to when I suddenly heard a ringtone.

It sounded like it was sung by a popular idol group. It was a happy-go-lucky type of song, or so I guessed.

“Got a plan to get you with—”

Suzuki picked up the phone before I could hear the other lyrics.

“Hey, what’s up?”

“So, I’ve got a question. Why are you so close with Nakamura Eiya?” It was Suzuki’s other friend who was on the line.

“Oh uh…”

“He’s not there, is he?”

“Just say I’m not here,” I whispered.

“Nope, he isn’t,” Suzuki lied.

I told her to do so because I was interested in what would unfold through this conversation.

“You asked why we’re so close, right? Well, it’s because we are dating?”

“Eh?!!!” I heard two voices; it was probably Yoshida who was listening in.

“Yup.”

“Girl, you have got to come over here.”

“Umm…”

I gave her a sign that she should go ahead.

“Sure, I’ll be there soon,” Suzuki cut the call. “See you later, boyfriend.”

She ran after saying that; her face was a bit red, but she also managed to make me flustered, so it was an even attack, if I may say so myself.

After she left, I headed back to my dorm room. I lay on my bed, thinking about what had happened today, and started to drift to sleep until I received a call—it had no caller ID.

Well, that’s weird.

In this school, the name of your account would show when you called, unless you used another account, but that wasn’t possible, as it is directly linked to your school ID. Even the teaching staff abide by this.

The call couldn’t have been from outside the school, as the government had specific cell towers made for the purpose of this school.

Moreover, the phone only picked up signals from those specific cell towers, as the phone didn’t even have a SIM card.

Therefore, the caller was using a special kind of software.

Might as well just hear what they have to say.

“Wow, you picked up so fast. What was that? Like three seconds? Don’t tell me you're not scared.”

This is definitely Kagura’s voice. But why isn’t she calling me through her account?

“Why are you calling me?” I replied as plainly as I could, hiding my surprise and shock.

“I want you to break up with Suzuki.”

How does she even know that we’re dating?

“And if I say no—”

“You’ll get expelled,” she answered instantaneously.

How do those two things correlate? Needless to say, she’s got my attention.

“Why is that?”

She cut the call. Now I had no answers. Her words echoed in my mind as the line went dead.

Break up with Suzuki—or get expelled. What was she playing at? And why was this so important to her?

“I guess I’ll have to find out tomorrow.”

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Author’s Note:

Did anyone get the Twice reference? If you didn’t, then just know that the lyrics from Suzuki’s ringtone are from the song known as “Strategy” from the K-pop idol group known as Twice.

So, uh, I don’t have much to say and am currently writing this at 05:21 AM, so please remember to comment, share, and leave a review.

Thanks for reading the chapter, and see you in the next one.