Chapter 17.4: Blackmail, Huh.

After I finished my meal, I put my head on my table so I could rest. Before long, the bell rang—signalling that it was the end of lunch break—so I woke up.

It didn't take long for students to flood into class. They didn't want to be late.

While attendance wasn't a rule to break, I came to the conclusion that they did so because they wouldn't lose Rp.

While students wouldn't really care about another student's attendance—especially students in my class—I was sure that teachers cared about such things.

Well, maybe most teachers, because when I came late for homeroom, I didn't lose Rp.

That was probably it, but I didn't bother investigating it.

At any rate, I saw Kagura walk into the class with a large grin.

I'm guessing that her session with Fuji went well. That's good, really good.

"Heugh."

Kagura's grin made me let out a sigh of relief and gave me a grin as well.

Anyway, the rest of the day wasn't anything interesting, though, as you could probably guess; I got the same bullying I got before.

The intensity increased slightly, but I more or less just endured it.

Well, I was steeling my mind for the eventual torture I would get at the end of school.

Though maybe I had overestimated them just a little bit because, from what I had experienced, I wasn't particularly scared about what they would do.
The only reason why I was slightly scared was because of what happened to Kobayashi.
The problem was that I heard what happened; I didn't see it.
Moreover, I didn't hear it from Ito or Kagura. I heard it from Innō, someone who didn't even lend me a hand when I was to be expelled.
I couldn't just believe him indefinitely, and I couldn't disprove him indefinitely either.
The main issue was the matter of exaggeration and prejudice.
Every single human has some sort of prejudice, though some more than others.
It meant that no one could say the complete and absolute truth.
Well, at least Friedrich Nietzsche believed in that, and so did ***he***.
At any rate, because of perception, no one saw the same thing. While we could see something close, we could never see the same thing.
Another thing was the possible exaggeration. During the entire time that Innō told me the story, I didn't utter a word because I wanted to get the complete information, and also because he told me not to.
However, that wasn't good. The thing was that even if Innō said I shouldn't say anything, he still wanted me to.

Whenever a person told a shocking story, they wanted a reaction; they didn't just want silence.
He wanted me to be shocked or at least show a reaction, but I didn't, so he might have exaggerated the story to get a reaction.
Of course, I still gave no reaction. These were the big problems; however, there was another problem that was also common among eyewitnesses, which is why they were considered false after a while.
The other problem was memory.
While the brain could store about 1-1000 terabytes of information, which is equivalent to about 100 million-1 billion memories, most cannot be remembered in detail. The core details were the only things that one remembered, except for facts, habits, and other important memories.
It meant that one couldn't really remember events that didn't really concern or affect you.
The reason I said this was because when Innō mentioned the story, there was only one time his voice wavered, and that was when he mentioned the part where Kobayashi got expelled.
That was probably the only time he paid attention to Kobayashi because throughout his narration, he only mentioned that Kobayashi had glasses and black hair—no other important or memorable details.
Anyway, besides that time, Innō might have forgotten what happened with Kobayashi, or at least the finer details.

He probably just guessed to fill in those same finer details.
All in all, I can't fully believe Innō. Of course, there was a problem about my own bia–
It was then that the bell rang.
Ring, Ring, Ring.
It was already the end of school, and it was time for me to face Honochi. In truth, I had done all this analysis to distract myself, but I couldn't avoid reality.
I waited in class for a while because Honochi and her friends had left the class.
No one cared to ask why I stayed in class while Kagura and Ito looked toward me; they were swayed by their friends to leave.
It must be nice not being a loner.
I waited for 15 minutes before eventually standing up to leave.
Maybe she's letting me off the hook? Nah, she's probably just chasing after Ito or something of the sort. At any rate, time to leave.
I quickly arranged my bag and rushed for the door. As I opened the door, I was suddenly shoved to the floor by something—it was Honochi.
She shoved me?
I was surprised that she could actually push me down, but then again, I wasn't paying attention.
Still, that's—
"Where do you think you're going?" she grinned.
It seemed she waited for me to try to leave.

Wait, that meant she stood at the door for 15 minutes. No wonder she shoved me so easily; she was so frustrated that she put a lot of effort into it.
“Girls, you know what to do.”
The girls went and got my bag and emptied it outside the window.
“W-what are you doing?!”
I rushed over to stop them, but someone kicked me. It was Honochi.
“Trying to fight back,” she said. “Have you forgotten what I’ll do?”
She was trying to use her blackmail to leverage her.
“That wasn’t part of the deal.”
“Really?” she asked sarcastically. “I’ll put it like this: if you try to resist, I’ll just tell our classmates that you tried to put your hands on me.”
It was another blatant lie, but I knew they would believe her. I couldn’t resist.
“So… Are you going to be a good boy and take it?” she asked, her tone condescending.
“...” I was too ashamed to speak, so I simply nodded slowly.
“Then kneel at my feet.”
“...?!”
“Can’t do it?”
I obliged her and went on my knees with my head bowed. Words couldn’t express how I felt.
Shame wouldn’t even describe it.

As my head was bowed, water was poured on me, but the water had a strange smell.
It's not normal water; it's—
"How does it feel to be drenched in toilet water?"
"...?!" I silently narrowed my eyes at her. If I had the chance, I would swing at her.
Of course, such a chance would probably not present itself, and even if it did, it wouldn't be worth doing because she would use it for blackmail.
She wore gloves and touched my hair.
"Such nice hair; I can't believe you're male. You must take good care of it, right?"
What's this? A change of heart?
I counted my chickens before they hatched because, before I knew it, Honochi grabbed a huge chunk of my hair and began to pull on it.
"Ahhh," I couldn't contain my voice. "H-H-Honochi-san, please stop!"
Seems it's gotten to the point I'm using honourifics, huh?
"Huh? You're using my nickname? Is that what you do to your master?!" she grinned sadistically. "Well, I guess we should introduce ourselves. My name is Honda Chihana."
She pulled hard on the hair, but didn't pull it out; she just kept pulling on it.
"Honda-san, please," I begged.
I couldn't bear the pain and was about to hit her when two of her friends knelt on my forearm, while her last

friend, who wore glasses, just stared blankly at me as she held her left hand.
“Huh?” I was surprised that they would kneel on my hands; I couldn’t do anything but accept the pain.
“My name is Abe Aimi,” Abe said. She was one of the girls who knelt on my forearm.
“My name’s Hamasaki Emi,” she said, sticking her tongue out. Her expression was cheerful in contrast with my face, which twisted in pain.
The last girl just looked uninterested and didn’t introduce herself.
“Sorry, she doesn’t like talking to boys.”
Huh? Is she like Take—
Before I could finish thinking, Honochi increased her intensity and was about to pull out my hair, leaving me on the verge of tears, before I heard a noise.
Beep, Beep. Beep, Beep. Beep, Beep.
“It’s already time, huh?” she sighed, letting go of my hair. “We’ll have to continue tomorrow.”
The girls stood up from my forearm, and the girl who stared at me went to the side of Honochi.
“Bye bye,” they waved—except for the last girl, who still remained stoic—and left the class.
As they left, I felt myself gasping for air as I just sat on the floor silently.
What am I even doing? I’m getting bullied?
I couldn’t believe such a thing could ever happen to me… Yet here I was. Talk about being humbled.

He *must be rolling in his grave right now, huh? I mean, the* ***Magnum Opus****, his greatest achievement, reduced to a bullied idiot.*

“Ha ha ha ha ha,” I laughed hysterically like a madman.

“Take that, you…”

I couldn’t finish my sentence.

Huh.

“Fuck,” I swore. “I hate my life.”

I dusted myself off, picked up my bag, and headed outside to pick up my stuff—luckily, everything was in the same place and wasn’t affected.

After getting my stuff, I headed to the library to prepare my test questions for the committee. I brought out all my textbooks and started preparing questions.

Out of the possible 100 questions, I made 40 maths questions, 40 chemistry questions, 40 biology questions, 40 physics questions, and 40 Japanese questions.

I made two sets of 100 questions and headed to my room.

I removed my uniform and took a bath in silence. I really hated today. I just really hated it.

…Probably. Ahh, I broke my mental silence.

Even while drying my hair, I was silent.

I remained silent till the committee meeting.

[Ito Yuuto: Please, everyone, submit your test questions. Mine are here. Test questions.pdf]

[Me: Mine are here too. Test questions.pdf]

This was the second one I made in the library. The first one wasn’t suitable… yet, and would hopefully never need to be suitable.
[Kagura-chan: Here’s my submission. Test questions.pdf]
[The Perfect Being: Here is my submission. Test questions.pdf]
Hmm?
Something broke my mental silence (I didn’t count the other one). It was an account I hadn’t seen before, but it wasn’t hard to guess who it was.
[Ito Yuuto: Ah, you’re here too, Arakawa.]
[The Perfect Being: But of course, I must grace myself among peasants, mustn't I?]
What does that even mean?
[Ito Yuuto: 😅 Sure.]
[Kagura-chan: Now, how do we prepare the questions?]
[Ito Yuuto: Let’s discuss the correct questions.]
We spent an hour deciding the correct questions. Of course, my input was minimal.
I am also useless at this.
[Ito Yuuto: And that marks the end of question-making. Now, for how to submit the questions. We can do it either digitally or physically.]
[Me: I vote we do it digitally. I mean, as we know, it takes Rp for printing, and moreover, someone could take a picture of it.]
[Ito Yuuto: I agree.]
[Kagura-chan: I agree.]

[The Perfect Being: I'll allow it.]
[Ito Yuuto: With that settled, all we need is the person who will submit.]
[Kagura-chan: Can't we just send it?]
[Ito Yuuto: No, we can't. It's an official document; moreover, it's disrespectful.]
So, just because of the procedure?
[Ito Yuuto: Now, who'll do it? Everyone here comes late, and we can't involve someone outside the group. That being said, it can be done in the evening.]
[Me: How about you just give it to her to review?]
[Ito Yuuto: Yeah, that will work.]
[Kagura-chan: Yup, it's settled.]
With that, the meeting ended. I was pleasantly surprised that Arakawa came. It meant that he was listening, but just like in class, he was nonexistent.
With that done, I focused on more important and pressing matters.
How can I handle Honda?
The only way I could think of was to raise my Rp so that her lies would be null and void. The only problem was that to do that, I needed to end the rape accusation.
And I couldn't think of a solution.
Another thing was the thief issue… If there even was a thief.
What a drag.
I lazed around on my phone a bit before I had a knock on my door.

I checked through my intercom to see who it was; it was the laundry people.
“Coming,” I said through the intercom.
I had arranged all my dirty clothes yesterday, so I brought them out.
“Here you go,” I said, giving the worker my dirty clothes.
“Thanks.”
The person silently bowed and left.
With that done, I was about to continue lazing around, but I suddenly remembered something. I had another thing to attend to, so I asked Kagura to send me Hayashi’s acc.
After she did so, I sent a message to Hayashi signalling who it was—though my name was kind of a dead giveaway.
I waited for a few minutes but got no answer.

I sent another message, and another, and another, but still no reply.

This girl is definitely ignoring me.

I eventually got fed up with waiting and went to her door—directly beside me—and began knocking on her door.

Did you really think you could escape when I know where you live?

I kept knocking and knocking until she eventually opened up and dragged me in.

“What do you want?” she glared so deeply at me, as if I had totally ruined her day.

“…At least start with a thank you for helping me enter the student council.”

“Why would I say thank you for something I blackmailed you to do?”

Good point. Also, it’s good to know that Kaneko worked fast and already established Hayashi.

“Anyway, I want you to get a file on two students: Yoshida Aiko and Kato Yua.”

“And why would I do that? I just entered the student council. Why would I snoop around our files?”

“So you won’t?”

“Did you think I would say yes?”

“Well, I did. I mean, after all, I have the voice recording of when you blackmailed me.”

She glared at me—no, rather, it may have been more appropriate to say that she killed me countless times in her head. Well, it was like that before it suddenly softened.

“Well, if you bring me down, then I will bring you down too.”

“Is that right? But I must ask, how will you bring me down when you know nothing about me?”

“Huh? I know a lot about your past. I thought that was obvious, but it seems you’re dense. And if I didn’t, how would you even find out?”

I already knew she knew nothing about me, but this confirmed my beliefs. If she knew something about me, she would have known it would be best to mention it right now; instead, she gave a vague answer, saying she knew a lot about me.

“Don’t think too much about how I would know; well, it’s more of I know than I would know.”

“If that’s the case, then I’ll just tell everyone about ***~~the~~***—”

“Can you tell me what that is?” I gave a knowing smile.

“...Is there a reason for me to embarrass myself? Seems I’ve been caught in my lie; of course, it’s no surprise that *you* would notice,” she said, exasperated by talking to me.

“...I guess.”

Ordinarily, I would take her words as evidence of her being an asset, as she was obviously giving me unworthy praise.

More so from someone who seemingly hated me. It should have been an obvious deduction, but…

She didn’t treat me as someone with some special pedigree but instead like someone who needed to be

put down, like a dog—at least that's what her eyes told me.

Where's all this hate coming from? What did I ever do to offend this g—? I have other things to attend to; let's get this over with.

"Anyway, I hope to get it by tomorrow. I don't want to have to disrupt your daily life," I continued.

"..."

"Do you understand?"

I was acting quite mean, right? Maybe I was releasing my anger from what Honda did, but that didn't matter; it didn't matter how I felt as long as I could get my objective.

"Seems you're still as scummy as ever," she said. "Don't worry, I understand."

I walked out silently as I saw her gather her thoughts—if she were as smart as I thought she was, this would be an easy task.

And on the off chance that I was wrong about her and she couldn't do it, I would make use of Kaneko to get the information, though I wanted to avoid that for now.

Because I would have to reveal more than I wanted to. I mean, I could lie.

…And that shouldn't be a problem for someone like me.

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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.