Chapter 18.2: Preparations Are Done

“Then why are you so unreactive?”

Hmm…?

Well, the thing wasn’t that I was unreactive. I was just not as reactive because of what happened today.

In fact, today I might have died, but I luckily survived.

Anyway, this information was quite useful and made me learn a lot about Hayashi.

You see, the information was useful because of its very simple facts—there was more or less no lie.

While I couldn’t be sure about many things, I was sure about Yoshida being the chairman’s niece.

It explained why he wanted me to lead my class to victory—he probably wanted to help his niece. Though he might have also wanted me to help because of his daughter, Jackson-sensei.

However, while students could get expelled, teachers couldn’t… Or perhaps they could, since they also used Rp.

But I assumed that would only happen if all the students in a class were expelled.

Maybe.

There was another reason why I was sure that she was his niece. It was because of Hayashi’s expression when she said that she was the chairman’s niece.

It felt quite genuine and also looked quite genuine.

However, this information really didn’t give me what I wanted, but it gave me insight into why the chairman wanted me to help my class.

He wanted me to help his daughter or his niece or perhaps both—honestly, I would love to use this against him, but how?
He was still holding my fate with a thread… If I even moved slightly out of line, then I was definitely going to get expelled.
Another thing I found out was about Hayashi. I finally understood her psyche. You see, while I did blackmail Hayashi, she could lie or perhaps even report me.
But she didn't.
Is it because of my blackmail? Yes, while my blackmail was a voice recording of her blackmailing me, she could deny it.
She happened to be friends with popular people and was a Class Alpha student, so she and her friends could say that the recording was altered or lie like that.
But she didn't.
She was afraid to tell someone that she did indeed blackmail me, and while she could lie to her friends and say she didn't and that I simply had a fake recording, she wanted to avoid the little probable doubt that would be in their minds—that little "Maybe Hayahsi was lying."
That meant she wanted to keep her reputation steady.
While it could be for Rp, I begged to differ because she already tried to protect her reputation on her first day of school.
(For those confused, he's referring to chapter 0.5.)

While it could still be because of Rp, that is, she adapted to the school's reputation rules quickly because she was in Class Alpha—I thought that wasn't the case.
I believed it was because she probably had a fragile self-image and reflected it by conforming to those around her and creating a fake personality that was more polite than who she actually was.
Well, that was my working theory anyway. However, it managed to explain everything.
…And yes, I'm going to work with just theories.
"Uh, Nakamura…?"
I had stayed silent for just a few seconds, but it seemed my silence unnerved her.
"I appreciate your cooperation," I said. "I have already deleted the recording."
"Prove it," she replied.
"Here it is," I said, showing her the recording and then deleting it in front of her.
"What if you have a backup?"
"It is not on the cloud. I have no backup on my phone," I promptly showed her.
"What if it's on an external device?"
"Don't have one."
"I don't believe you."
"Want me to take a picture of my room as proof?"
"You could hide it."
"So what do we do then?"
"Let's make a contract."
"A contract…?"

“Yes, I’ll draw one up.”
“Will the school acknowledge it?”
“Yes, it’s here in the rules,” Hayashi showed me that it was in the school rules, which I hadn’t read yet; well, at least not the real ones.
I watched her draw one up, and when she was done, I read through it. It basically said that if I used the voice recording, then I would be expelled.
It was a one-sided contract, but I didn’t mind. I expected her to pull something like making me unable to blackmail her again.
But I would quickly disagree, calling it completely one-sided, and if it were even, making both of us unable to blackmail, then she wouldn’t agree because she probably wanted revenge.
“I want to add a condition,” I said. “You must answer all my texts within 5 seconds, or you will be expelled.”
“No.”
“How about 10 seconds?”
“No.”
“Then I won’t sign.”
“...”
“...”
There was an unexplainable tension, but I wasn’t going to let up. I gave an expression that said, “I can do this all day.”
“...Fine, I’ll accept your condition, but I’ll alter it a bit. I must answer within 10 minutes, and if I don’t, I have to

pay you 40,000 Rp—provided it is done at inconvenient hours of the day, like before 6 AM and after 11 PM.”
Needless to say, Hayashi broke first.
Not expulsion, huh. Well, I expected that. It’s not like I’m disadvantaged; I actually don’t have the voice recording anymore.
“I agree.”
She quickly added the conditions, and I checked to make sure she didn’t screw me over.
After I signed, I headed for the door. If I stayed here too long, she might get an idea similar to Suzuki’s.
“Later,” I said, leaving her room.
“...”
She didn’t reply. Well, I couldn’t blame her, as I had just blackmailed her and forced her into a contract.
Sometimes I really was terrible; unfortunately, I was going to do something even more terrible.
Anyway, I headed to my room and took a bath before lying on my bed. I took a bath before coming to Hayashi’s room, but took another one because today, I felt extra dirty.
Today was such a mess, and it was best to debrief it now to ease the mental pain.
The walk to school was normal, class was normal with casual bullying, and during break, I met with Kagura and Fuji for another session.
Everything was fine till Honda called me after school.

This time she didn’t call me to the classroom, but instead she called me to the clubroom area of the calligraphy club.
She used my tie as a blindfold, saying it was for a game, before leading me somewhere that smelt weird.
She led me to a big bowl and told me to drink from it, but at my hesitation, she dipped my head into the bowl.
It was then that I realised that I was in the toilet. She tried to drown me.
Rather, she and her friends drowned me, but when I was about to lose consciousness, they would let me go.
When it was someone’s turn to drown me, the rest would hold my limbs so I couldn’t do anything.
I was… scared, really scared. I mean, I thought I was actually going to die, but whenever I was actually close to death, they let go. Unfortunately, I couldn’t do anything about it and took everything they dished out.
After the constant drowning, they let me go, and as I lay on the floor trying to catch my breath, trying to stay calm despite their insensitive laughter, I was about to stand up.
Two people—probably Emi or Aimi—knelt on my hands as Honda held my mouth open. I tried to squirm around, thinking about what they would do next, when I felt something crawl into my mouth—they fed me bugs!
After they were done, they threw my bag into the toilet…
I lost the will to continue after they were done; I had to force myself to go back to my room.

Oh yeah, I also didn't go to today's study session. I'm sure I don't have to explain myself, right?
I can still feel the bugs—
I ran to my toilet to throw up. I was seriously hating my life.
Was this the school experience that I truly longed for?
…No, it was just human cruelty.
At any rate, now I could rest.
I didn't sleep, though, because the committee meeting was in a few hours.
It arrived faster than expected.
[Ito Yuuto: Hey, guys. I met Jackson-sensei, and she said that the questions were a bit above the level of an average first-year student and that very little tweaking is needed. I made a few tweaks; check if it's ok. Test questions.pdf (1).]
We all read it, and from the looks of it, it was basically what we did before, but with some of Arakawa's questions removed, and Ito added some more of his.
It was, however, still mostly the same.
[Me: Are you sure this will work?]
[Ito Yuuto: I already showed Jackson-sensei this, and she said it was fine, but I still had to show you guys. Also, she said we should delete the extra copies just in case.]
[Me: I see.]
So the questions that I gave were fine, huh?
[Ito Yuuto: Next on the agenda is the submission of the test questions.]

[Kagura-chan: It’s obviously Ito that should do it.]
I was about to say something, but then Ito said no.
[Ito Yuuto: I’m a bit busy on Friday. Can you do it?]
I was also about to say something, but Kagura quickly replied.
[Kagura-chan: Nah, I’m also busy.]
Hmm? Everything is going smoothly without me doing anything.
[Ito Yuuto: How about Nakamura does it?]
[Me: I’m fine with that.]
[The Perfect Being: I object.]
Aha! I knew it; things don’t go that smoothly.
[The Perfect Being: Rather, I hate the fact that you are deciding without consulting me, the perfect being. This is the second time it’s happening, and I said nothing the first time. That being said, I will forgive such an action. You may praise me now.]
How comical.
At any rate, the meeting ended without a hitch, and I was grateful that I didn’t have to do anything to get what I wanted.
It seemed I was quite lucky today, but considering what happened before now, I doubted I was lucky.
Maybe I got this stroke of good luck because of the bad luck I experienced yesterday and today.
With that done, I could focus on more important things, like following my plan.
Before that, I had to make some clarifications.

“Ahh!” I stood with my back resting on the wall dividing my room and Hayashi’s before I screamed.
After I was done, I texted Hayashi.
[Me: Did you hear that?]
She waited till there was only a second remaining till 10 minutes before answering me.
[Hayashi: Hear what? Are you schizophrenic?]
Not loud enough, huh?
“Ahh!!!!” I screamed at the top of my lungs.
[Me: Did you hear that?]
I asked again.
She did as before, answering after the same amount of time.
[Hayashi: Just barely. Are you screaming?]
Alright then.
With that done, I let out a deep sigh because now it was time to start with Step 1.

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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.