Chapter 20.1: We Have The Same Hair Colour!

Upon hearing the voice, I knew who it was: Kobayashi-sensei.

“Tch,” I flicked my tongue.

I didn’t flick my tongue because it was specifically her; I would probably have done the same for whoever was there.

Anyway, I silently considered running away, but the main issue was that the school would actively look for me, making it easier for them to find me if they pieced together that I wasn’t in class.

The reason I was able to get the information was because of student autonomy, but if a teacher reported it, it would become something important.

And with my shaky reputation, it was best to avoid that for now. Moreover, I wasn’t sure if student autonomy would save me, as all I was doing now was still only based on an assumption, because what if it worked like the Selective Accords?

Provided that was created by a student with obvious flaws in mind, but Kagura happened to talk about how the autonomy clause was basically useless.

Shit, what should I do? Should I ignore her? No, that won’t work.

…Perhaps I should still just run?

“I said you should come out. Don’t even think of running.”

Well, that decides that.
I slowly came out from behind a tree with an unknowing expression. I was deep in thought about what I should say.
“Nakamura-kun? What are you doing here?”
“I woke up a bit late,” I said, rubbing the back of my head bashfully. “Then got lost. Still haven’t figured out the layout of the school.”
“Oh, that’s understandable. Return to class for the test.”
“Yes, ma’am,” I nodded before leaving with the bag.
She bought that?! It seems I’m also lucky today.
While it seemed weird for her to be there, I already knew why. When she submitted her class questions on Friday, she probably forgot her ring and couldn’t get it on the weekend.
Though for a homeroom teacher, she came here quite late. That being said, it was still kinda weird to think of her as a homeroom teacher, but she was.
Each teacher was; there were 5 teachers we had in total, and each of them was the homeroom teacher of each class.
They all taught several subjects to us; some even taught more than others because of electives, though moral education and integrated studies were handled by the homeroom teacher.
“Hope I’m not late!”
Ah, right, at this moment I was on my way to the classroom—you see, I had to run back to the dorms to drop my stuff and was on my way to class.

Anyway, after I ran back to class at a quick pace, I eventually arrived at the door to the classroom.
I entered to see everybody engrossed in the test—some looked utterly and completely confused, some just stared at their tests, and others gave up and just waited for the test to be over.
I also noticed a sigh of relief from the majority of the class.
Did they miss me…? Nope, just didn't want to fail, probably.
Anyway, I went over to meet Jackson-sensei, who silently handed me a test paper before whispering some words.
"Seems like you did *that method*."
I just nodded at her words before collecting the test paper and heading to my desk to work hard on it; of course, I didn't expect to get a high score since this was the test in which I didn't read the answers beforehand. Since that was the case, I took less time for the test and used the remainder of the time to make a physical copy of the other test questions and answers (I got the paper I used from my bag).
I got weird stares as people wondered what I was doing, but I simply continued.
Before long, the test had ended, and most were not done with it.
"Jackson-sensei, we need more time!"
"We'll fail if you take our papers!"

At one point, a certain girl whose name I didn't know began silently crying. During the last study session I went to, she was at Ito's table and constantly fawned over him.
Since I only came for that first session, I wasn't sure how her other study sessions turned out, but they probably weren't fruitful.
I mean, she literally wore glasses to look smarter; I could tell because there was no distortion in the lenses.
"Sniffle sniffle," she silently sniffled with her head on the desk.
Wouldn't it just be better to read more?
Uh, anyway, we were given the remaining day to do whatever. During that time, I got messages from Ito asking why I had come late.
I gave him the same response I had given to Kobayashi-sensei, and he surprisingly believed me as well.
[Ito Yuuto: I suppose it couldn't be helped.]
Huh? That worked? Everyone's believing me so easily!
Unlike Ito, Kagura came to meet me physically, and while Honda gave me a quick glance, she ultimately believed in her blackmail and focused on other important things to her, like Ito, because she forced him to have a 'study session' with her.
Kagura also asked where I was, but when I gave her the same excuse, she didn't believe me but chose not to pry further.

With that done, I gave her the physical copy I made, explaining to her what it was and telling her to share it with everyone in class, but making sure not to say that I used my memory to reconstruct it.
“Wow, where did you get them from?” she asked.
“Can’t say,” I said calmly. “I’ll explain later, when we're done with the special test.”
Please don’t ask questions!
“Fine, I understand, but Nakmaura-kun, where will I say I got them from?”
“Hmm? Uh, just leave them in suspense till next Monday.”
“You *do* know that wouldn’t quench the curiosity of anyone, right?”
“Yeah, but you’re gonna have to trust me. I’m your ally after all.”
I had hoped that throwing the words ‘trust’ and ‘ally’ around would also make her come around.
“Heugh,” she sighed. “Alright then.”
After that, our conversation went on for a little while, briefly touching on Fuji, though none of us could talk to her for now because of the test, and Fuji was aware of that too.
After our short chat, Kagura went on to hang out with her friends and spread the test questions.
I eventually got some texts from Yoshida asking why I didn’t come to class.
I told her my fake reason, and she didn’t believe me, calling me a liar. This went on for a while, and let’s just

say that some heavy amounts of persuasion were needed.
At any rate, the rest of the day and even the week went on uneventfully; of course, I was sure even with the cheat sheet, most wouldn’t get even a 95%, let alone a perfect score.
But I made sure not to get that high. You might ask why, but it stemmed from what happened in the first test, which I flunked.
If I flunked that test, then why did I pass other ones? You might add that they are different subjects, but no, they all incorporate different subjects.
And I couldn’t just suddenly improve my academic intelligence overnight, so I opted to get exactly 20 marks above what I got in the first test, so as not to get caught if they ever investigated the class.
Anyway, the next week rolled by quite quickly, and we were done with the special test.
Now, it was time to see the results, which we, unfortunately, didn't receive during homeroom.
Instead, we were all told to go to the hallway and read off the electronic billboard that was directly outside the first-year building—well, each building had one.
Also, yes, this billboard has been here since my first day, yet I never mentioned it. It was simply because it lacked meaning; rather, it had no purpose.
“Ugh!” I groaned. “What the hell is this weather?! Isn’t it still morning?!!!”

You see, the sun outside was really shining down on me despite it being early October.
It must be at least 36 degrees Celsius.
It really was annoying and made me wonder why they just didn't put the electronic billboard in the school building, but alas, I had to endure it.
At any rate, the ranking on the board is as follows:
Class Gamma—Fifth/Last Position
Class Delta—Fourth Position
Class Beta—Third Position.
Class Epsilon—Second Position.
Class Alpha—First Position.
We managed to come in second; I did a massive fist pump before carefully thinking about it.
I couldn't really see a reason why we came second; well, then again, we *were* Class Epsilon, so it wasn't too shocking.
Though we could see which particular class's subjects we passed or failed. It was a culmination of scores, but it didn't really matter to me, honestly; that is, the scores of most of the other classes—all I wanted to see right now were my class's scores.
"Hmm… Well, alright then."
We passed 85% of our questions but failed 15%, of which 12% came from Class Alpha.
In contrast, Class Alpha passed 98% of their questions but failed 2%, of which 0.5% came from our class, though 0.5% also came from the other classes.

It felt like they cheated, but I knew they couldn’t because they couldn’t cheat on the first one, and they couldn’t have stolen the class questions for Tuesday either, because I was there.
If they didn’t get the questions two days in a row, then they wouldn't have gotten this high.
That meant they got this simply from their own merit, so this was how Class Alpha was.
Hmm...
I didn’t want to believe it was from their own merit, as getting that meant they all failed perfectly without exception.
Ha ha ha ha!!!
The idea that they were all collectively the same intelligence was so impossibly implausible that it was frankly funny.
So, was I wrong, and this truly was their merit?
Or was this their way of saying, I can cheat with ease and not get caught?
…Or is this a message to me, from an asset?
It feels far-fetched, but—
“Whoa!”
“It’s her!”
“Yeah, you’re right!”
Since the electronic billboard wasn’t in our classes, people from other classes also came here.
And more than half of them were swooning over a certain girl who was walking past the billboard with some of her ‘friends’.

Though I use that word loosely because they looked more like bodyguards or personal assistants.
“Hoshikawa-san, are you not going to look at the scores?” her attendant asked.
Hoshikawa, huh.
…No, I doubt that she’s related to that greedy man.
“No, I only came here to scout,” the girl—er, I mean, Hoshikawa—replied in a matter-of-fact tone.
“But we could have—”
“No, I like to do this.”
Hoshikawa briefly glanced at where I was before turning to look at another thing.
“That’s the new student from Class Epsilon,” her attendant said—she noticed her gaze.
“...I see,” Hoshikawa seemed uninterested, and they all left just as quickly as they came.
Why come and then leave so fast?
“She really is so pretty,” a boy said beside me.
I immediately jerked at the random voice I heard beside me.
What the hell, man?
“Especially her trademark Hoshikawa hair and eyes.”
“Trademark?” I asked.
“Don’t tell me you don’t know that she’s the heiress of the Hoshikawa Group.”
Heiress?! Hoshikawa Takemitsu has a descendant?!! I thought the names were just a coincidence.
Now that I think about it, she really does *resemble her dad with the hair and eyes—yes, even her uncle.*

“Nah, I just didn’t know the Hoshikawa family had children.”
“You didn’t know? Have you been living under a rock? She was announced on her 12th birthday.”
I laughed nervously because the last time I interacted with the Hoshikawa Group was when I was 9, so there was no way for me to know.
*That being said, does that mean Takemitsu-sama hid this from **him**?*
Ugh! Does it even matter to me?
I removed my mind from such a thought, and I saw the person beside me still swooning over Hoshikawa.
“Her hair and eyes are just so pretty. You agree, right? Right?” He looked over at me for reassurance.
Uh, I guess? I mean, black hair’s not all that impressive. Moreover, emerald is such a bland colour when compared to my crimson red eyes, right?
“You *do* know that I have black hair too, right?” I asked sarcastically. “Also, wouldn’t you say my crimson red eyes are better, more elegant, than her emerald green eyes?”
“Uh, no. Your hair is just regular black, not jet black; moreover, your eyes look kinda weird. Are you wearing contacts?”
Oi, what the hell did this boy just say?
I was about to hit him when he suddenly got called by a friend and left.
I will find you, and I will kill you.

I briefly glared at him before going to class for homeroom—Jackson-sensei was already inside when I arrived, but instead of greeting me with a glare or an indifferent expression, she gave me a knowing smile.
“With Nakamura arriving, I can safely conclude that we are complete, so I will now project the scores on the board,” Jackson-sensei said, her tone slightly higher-pitched than usual.
So she’s also interested.
I eagerly looked for my grade and saw I was 12th; well, it couldn’t be helped.
The first was Ito, who was still followed by Suzuki. In the end, everyone’s score was the same as that maths quiz we took a while ago—well, except mine, but it was because in the first test I got 50%, so I got 70% in the other tests.
…And with that, step 3 concluded well.
“Now, that concludes the end of homeroom. That being said, I’m proud of you guys,” Jackson-sensei flashed a smile. “Anyway, there will be a special announcement on Friday on TV on the news, so be sure to watch it. I’ll leave the rest of homeroom for you guys to use as you see fit.”
With that done, Jackson-sensei left the classroom, still wearing a grin and glancing at me.
“So… Kagura-chan, so how did you get the questions?”
“Yeah, you said you’d tell us after the test.”
“Mhm.”

People berated Kagura with questions, and she tried to look to me for an answer, but I turned away from her, pretending to focus on arranging my stuff.
You see, I planned this outcome because I knew what would happen next. Not just that, but I desperately hoped that no unknown variable would derail it.
“I, uh…”
“What is it?”
Everyone became engrossed at this point. Kagura had to do something because the pressure was becoming a bit too much.
“I got it from—”
They didn’t want a slow answer but a quick one. Even Ito and Suzuki came to her seat just to hear the answer.
“From whom?”
She couldn’t give a false answer; she had to be truthful and factual.
“I got it from Nakamura!” She succumbed to the pressure.
Everyone was stunned by her, and that was precisely what I wanted. Good work, Kagurazaka Akane, as you have set the stage for step 4 of my strategy.
Nice.
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Author’s Note:
Uh, Eiya, how’d you know exactly what you would get on a multiple-choice test so you’d get 20% above that? The only way to get it is if you—Anyway, remember to

comment, share, and leave a review. Thanks for reading the chapter, and see you in the next one.