Chapter 23: I Can’t Lose.

I was certainly screwed because of what Kaneko did; that being said, I quickly calmed down upon realising that worrying would do nothing.

“So, what’s the proof that you’ll hold your end of the bargain?”

“I suppose that’s true, though I can’t reassure you, so you’ll just have to take my word for it.”

Of course he’d say that.

I expected such an answer, but I still had to try it just in case.

Kaneko wouldn’t attempt to create evidence that such a conversation happened because it meant that I could try to get such information.

“So, I assume you agree with my proposition.”

“Don’t you mean your unnecessary blackmail?”

“Unnecessary? Sorry, but I’m not confident in taking you head-on.”

Kaneko’s words sounded like he was afraid of dealing with me, but I instinctively knew he was far from it.

He was probably very confident, and for a good reason too, considering I was supposed to be useless at basketball.

Now, I had to become “useful” at it, or else I would be expelled.

“I see. Well, since I have no choice but to comply, I’ll be taking my leave.”

“Really? I thought you’d wanna talk more.”

“Talk to Yumemiya; I have stuff to do.”

“Stuff to do? Maybe I can help~.”

“Tch!” I clicked my tongue at his words; he was obviously trying to provoke me, but I knew it wasn’t wise to get flustered.

The best thing to do is to head home and rest.

“Hmm? Are you angry at me?”

“Why won’t I be, especially talking to a no-good snake like you?”

“Oi,” Yumemiya spoke up. “Just leave before you make things worse for you.”

“Yes, ma’am,” I left the room.

Well, that was scary.

Yumemiya really *was* scary when she wanted to be—she was silent through most of my and Kaneko’s conversation, but all of a sudden she butt in.

Perhaps she likes Kaneko? Though I can’t be sure, and I honestly don’t even care either way.

Also, who was that, or was that my imagination?

When I headed out of the student council room, I heard a sharp screeching noise and saw something move at the corner of my eye.

Should I check it out…?

Nah. It's best to get home.

I hurriedly jogged back to school to get my stuff, but at the entrance to class, I saw Kagura and Ito standing with a wary expression.

"Uh, what's going on?" I asked as I approached them.

"Nakamura-kun," they said in unison. "We've been waiting for you."

"What's up? You could just text me, y'know."

"Well…" Kagura looked at the floor.

"We can't properly convey our emotions through text," Ito helped her finish her sentence.

"Really? It must be really important then; go on."

"Ok, then we'll go together," they bowed deeply. "We want to formally apologise for not helping you or noticing when you were bullied."

"...?!"

I wasn’t actually surprised by this development, but I just thought it best to act that way—actually, sometimes I act instinctively.

“You’re shocked?” Ito asked. “We couldn’t just let it go because we realise how wrong it would be for us to do that.”

“I mean, I don’t mind that you did that—you guys are busy, so I’m sure it was hard to notice I was bullied.”

“We are, but that doesn’t excuse that we—”

“Don’t think too much about it,” I cut them off. “After all, you guys are my friends.”

They both wore a smile as they brought their heads up—they probably had more important friends or people they valued more, but just for this moment they really seemed to be my best friends.

“Thanks for that,” Ito said. “But really, don’t hesitate to tell us anything so we won’t see a repeat of this.”

“Yeah, tell us if you’re getting bullied. And if you’re in a bad position or you’re being blackmailed not to report to the school, I’ll beat ‘em up,” Kagura cartoonishly punched at the air.

“Well, beating them up might be a stretch, but yeah, we’ll definitely intervene,” Ito added.

“Sure, I’ll do that.”

“That’s good, though; since that’s settled, I gotta go. See you guys soon,” Kagura quickly packed her stuff and left.

She’s probably going to another party.

Ito and I wordlessly waved before packing up our stuff and heading to the dorms.

“So, how did you guys even know that I was still in class?” I asked as we left the school gate.

“Well, actually, I was at the dorm entrance waiting for you when Kagura-chan also came there. After some minutes, we decided to check the school when we saw Yoshida-chan leaving the school area—she said you’d be in class or you’d be heading to class.”

“Oh, I was surprised to see you guys waiting for me.”

“We kinda had to.”

“Not really. I wasn’t angry at you guys, and I would always forgive my friends.

“I see,” Ito said. “Nakamura-kun, you’re really a good person.”

“Thanks, I guess, though isn’t what I said what everyone does?”

Ito smiled at my words like I was a little naive kid—I was, in a way—but I thought what I said was correct; however, it seemed I was wrong, really wrong.

“The fact you think that shows just how good of a person you are.”

“I really dou—”

“S-stop!”

We were passing a dark corner as we headed to the dorms and heard a little scream.

Those words together might seem weird, but what was happening *was* weird.

What Ito and I heard was definitely a shout; however, it wasn’t one born out of shock, not even from something you were forced to do, but something you were forced to accept.

At any rate, Ito and I went over to the dark corner and saw something quite shocking.

A deep-blue-haired girl had her skirt raised slightly above her stomach—showing her blue panties.

The scene would have been arousing if not for the fact that the girl’s face twisted in discomfort as a man—whose face I couldn’t see—touched her body.

This was definitely—

Rape.

***

I still stood outside the student council room, but now things were kind of worse.

When Nakamura-kun came outside, I hid and could have left, but my curiosity brought me back, and now I was just hearing Yumemiya-san praise Kaneko-senpai.

“You’re really, really smart, Kaneko-senpai—you make geniuses look like imbeciles; you manipulated that sorry bastard without even breaking a sweat.”

Eugh! Shut up!

I had to hear that for 15 more minutes until she came and left, but she didn’t notice me, unlike with Nakamura-kun, so I didn’t have to run.

Now, I can leave.

Since I was considerably farther away than when I was first eavesdropping, I could quietly sneak away.

I attempted to do it, but then I heard the door of the student council room open.

I wanted to wait for Kaneko-senpai to leave, but he went in the opposite direction, and his steps began to grow closer. I was about to run, but some words stopped me.

“Stay put, Yumeko.”

“Shit,” I silently cursed.

***

Author’s Note:

New volume! A crazy glazer! And new issues! Yeah, this will be my favourite volume both to write and to read, I guess. I hope y’all enjoy it as much as I do.

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