As agreed earlier, they were going back to Mihama Academy for a visit, so Jhin waved a hand and announced that the café would be closed on Sunday. Kurumi, naturally, voted yes with both hands. That guy had worn her little feet out to the point of aching in the middle of the night, so a day off was the perfect excuse to curl up in her nest and play games.

Chisato had wanted to tag along and see Mihama Academy, but a DA commission called her away again. Takina watched her put on her Lycoris uniform, pick up the weapon bag disguised as a school bag, and leave. Restlessness stirred in her chest once more, so she went to Synapse Technology on her own and asked Kazami Kazuki for permission to enter the virtual space for training.

Satania got the day-off notice, happily set her phone down, and slipped back under the covers to keep sleeping in.

Jhin and Sachi Komine arrived at Mihama Academy, and right at the school gate they ran into Michiru Matsushima, who looked like she was waiting for him.

"Yo, Michiru. Been waiting here long?"

"I-I wasn't waiting for you! I was just taking NyanMelu for a walk, and I happened to end up here!"

"Got it, got it." Jhin laughed and ruffled her hair. "Want to head back together?"

"I-if you put it that way, then I guess I'll keep you company." She blinked, and her pupils turned emerald green. Then she boldly looped her arm through his. "Do you want to come sit in my room today?"

"If I get the chance, I'll come."

"Then I'll have sweets ready for you."

"Mm."

Jhin had originally planned to come back, spend time with his girlfriends, and cook a meal while he was at it. He never expected that the moment he stepped into the student dorm, Amane Suou, her eyes glowing green, would snatch him straight out of Michiru's hands. A loud, lilting moan rang out from her room, and after that, not a sound came out.

Eriri came out of her bedroom and found most of the girls in the dorm gathered in the first-floor hall, chatting. Curious, she asked, "Didn't someone say Jhin was back? Where is he?"

"Jhin is in Amane's room right now."

"Huh? But isn't Suou-san right here?" Eriri stared at Amane Suou, whose face was unusually flushed and who seemed to be glowing all over, and she got confused.

Sachi Komine kept her flawless, perfect smile and went on answering. "Right now, it's Miss Michiru in there."

"Right now?" Eriri scratched her head, and understanding dawned. Her cheeks slowly turned red, and steam burst from the top of her head like a boiling kettle. "Th-they actually… in broad daylight…"

"Blame a certain starving someone who couldn't even wait until night and dragged him into her room the second he walked in." Yumiko closed the mystery novel in her hands and glared at Amane Suou with no sympathy at all. She had been planning to invite Jhin to her own room for a long, slow chat and let things build from there, and now that plan had gone down the drain.

Amane Suou, who didn't know the meaning of shame, laughed awkwardly and scratched her head. Then she offered a suggestion. "How about… Yumiko, you take over next?"

"How could I possibly do something like that?!" Yumiko refused flatly, her face red.

Makina Irisu, on the other hand, eagerly raised her little hand. "Me, me, me! Later, Megumin and I will go together!"

Her explosive statement made everyone turn to look. Eriri's eyeballs nearly popped out, and her mouth moved on its own. "You th-three…"

"Three what, Sawamura-san? Surely it isn't the word I'm imagining?" Kasumigaoka Utaha stared at her with a teasing look all over her face.

"Th-three of you, behave yourselves!" Eriri finally squeezed the line out, then slumped onto the sofa as if she had burned herself out.

Who knew what kind of wager Megumin had made with Makina, but the fiercely competitive girl threw away her shame completely. She covered her small face with her right hand, struck a chuunibyou pose, and declared loudly, "I shall make that little girl Makina witness the bond between me and the Envoy of Orchid Starlight! No one may stand in the way of this! A mere Pitch-Black Raging Flame Dragon? I shall simply ride it!"

"I know what Big Brother likes far better than you do! It's time you tasted the flavor of defeat!"

The two little girls started bickering back and forth. Luckily their conversation stayed fairly restrained, or it might have needed muting from start to finish.

The afternoon rolled around. Kazami Kazuki came back to the student dorm from the company and saw the girls all sitting obediently in the hall. A huge question mark floated above her head. "Where's Little Brother?"

Sachi Komine was once again the one to answer. "He's in Amane's room."

"Ugh…" Michiru clutched her rumbling stomach.

"Don't tell me none of you have eaten?"

Faced with the question, the whole group of girls shook their heads in perfect unison.

"What's gotten into Little Brother? He comes back and doesn't even cook? And why didn't you make something yourselves in the kitchen if you hadn't eaten?"

Miyake Hinata timidly raised her hand. "Th-the thing is, to get to the kitchen you have to pass Suou-san's room, so no one dares go over there."

"Hm? What does that mean?" Kazami Kazuki had no idea what she was trying to say, so she decided to go and see for herself.

She had barely reached the door of Amane Suou's bedroom when it suddenly swung open and a strong, powerful hand yanked her inside. At the same moment, Megumin and Makina Irisu walked out, fully dressed, their eyes hazy and unfocused.

Kasumigaoka Utaha swallowed nervously. Even though her own room was on the second floor, she didn't dare go back to it, because getting upstairs meant passing Amane Suou's bedroom too. "It's become a demon's den where you lose your purity the moment you step in."

"Why don't we go out to eat?"

"But some people's wallets and phones are still in their rooms, and we need to change clothes too."

After that brief exchange, the hall fell silent again. The girls looked at one another, and no one could think of a good way out of their predicament.

In the end, it was Kyaru who gritted her teeth and stood up. "I-I have a way, but you all have to pretend you never saw it!"

Eriri, dizzy with hunger, pressed her palms together and spoke in the most sincere tone she could muster. "We're counting on you, Kyaru!"

The other girls chimed in too. Kyaru stretched out a hand toward Kokkoro with a tragic, heroic look. Kokkoro understood what she meant and took a glass vial from her storage space, roughly thumb-sized and filled with some kind of liquid, and placed it in her palm.

After a few deep breaths, Kyaru walked to the bedroom door with heavy steps and called out in a sugary voice, "Meow… meow~, Jhin, let me in."

The next moment, everyone's vision blurred. Kyaru's figure was gone, and in her place stood Kazami Kazuki, her deep crimson eyes shimmering. Unlike the girls before her, she didn't stay dazed for a while. She blinked twice and her mind cleared, though the languid allure at the corners of her eyes refused to fade.

She leaned lazily against the sofa, her voice still a little hoarse. "I finally understand why none of you dared to go near. So… will someone tell me exactly who caused this?"

Amane Suou raised her hand, trembling. "I-it was me."

"Of course it was you." Kazami Kazuki let out a soft sigh. "You're banned from any physical contact with Little Brother for a week."

"Noooo!!!"