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KAMIGAMI NO ASOBI – Sports Festival Chapter (Apollon)

BACKGROUND: CLASSROOM

THOTH: Everyone, find your seats. Homeroom is starting.

Every morning always began with Thoth's arrogant attitude.

...A few days had passed since the field trip. Though I felt uneasy, classes passed by without any problems. We learned things about anatomy, philosophy, history, sociology... all kinds of subjects. However, only the people who always came to class were there. It felt like there was a deep trench between us and the students who were rejecting school.

This can't go on. But even as I thought that, I let time pass without doing anything.

BACKGROUND: STUDENT COUNCIL ROOM

APOLLON: This won't do, this won't do at all!

After school... When I entered the student council room, Apollon was yelling, his fists clenched tightly.

APOLLON: We're not qualified to be the student council. And the reason is, the reason is...!

BALDER: We haven't improved anything yet. ...Right?

APOLLON: Yeah, that! That! Wait, don't take my lines. I'm the president...

BALDER: We should think of some countermeasures. At times like these, perhaps we should plan some events.

APOLLON: Mhm, mhm. That's good. That's exactly it! Wait, I said don't take my lines!

I didn't know if Balder was doing it on purpose or not, but it was funny watching their exchange.

APOLLON: Alright already, Baru-Baru... After thinking it over, I agree. Let's get everyone involved this time.

APOLLON: If we deepen our bonds with them like we did with each other, they should naturally want to come to class.

TSUKITO: We are dealing with gods who are obstinate about staying away from school. I cannot imagine it would be an easy thing to do.

Tsukito gave us his opinion, not even looking up from scratching copious notes into his notebook. Balder was the secretary, but Tsukito was always taking notes.

YUI: I agree.

YUI: We need to think of something that can catch their interest.

I want to get to know the other gods too. Lately, I've become so attached to this school that I just end up thinking about them. When I first came here, I was surprised at every little thing. Humans can adapt so easily to things.

BALDER: For now, let's start thinking. Time is limited. The worst crime is doing nothing.

Balder, our secretary, stood in front of the blackboard.

BALDER: So, are there any suitable events we can do?

TSUKITO: At this time, there are few choices. Only an orientation or the like.

Having already researched human school life to a certain extent, Tsukito answered even more quickly than me.

APOLLON: Hmm, the name doesn't sound very exciting. Like, it doesn't leave an impression. We need something even better than the field trip. We definitely need that.

Is this student council president really deciding events based on the sound of the name...? I felt a little uneasy.

YUI: Even better than the field trip...

Various kinds of large events came to my mind. And, I arrived at something.

YUI: A sports festival!

APOLLON: Spore festival...? What's that?

YUI: A sports festival. It's a big event where people compete in sports.

YUI: There are all kinds of physical competitions, and you split up into teams and fight each other.

APOLLON: Compete, fight, compete, fight...! Is it like the Olympics?!

With Apollon's interpretation, it suddenly became a gigantic event.

YUI: The nuance is a little different, but it's the same in that both have sports.

APOLLON: Bodies and hearts colliding with each other... And beyond that, each team's firm bonds of trust under the name of victory. Fostering friendships through sports!

Apollon gave us a passionate speech with exaggerated gestures.

APOLLON: That's it, that is it! I like the idea of this sports festival. Okay, let's write a letter of challenge!

YUI: W-Why a letter of challenge?

APOLLON: It's a way to capture their interest. We'll bet on the right to go to school, and fight with all our might!

BALDER: Wait a moment. What happens if we lose?

APOLLON: Our opponents gain the right to be absent from school forever.

YUI: A-Are you serious?!

BALDER: That's... a very serious bet.

BALDER: That sounds like an Agana Belea idea, though. "Right to be absent"... that's... uwah!

Balder started writing this suggestion on the board, but the chalk snapped and he lost his balance and collapsed. To be able to fall without even moving took a special kind of skill...

YUI: A-Are you okay?

I held out a hand to him, but he stood up easily as if he was used to it and smiled gently, telling me not to worry.

YUI: ...Anyway, we can't do that. Please give up on it. Even if I'm wrong about that, it wouldn't work.

YUI: For one, Zeus-san wouldn't give us permission.

APOLLON: Just explain, I'll explain it to him.

APOLLON: Tsuki-Tsuki. Could you help me prepare a letter of challenge?

TSUKITO: If the president wishes.

I could sense Apollon's seriousness through his swift actions. He might break out into a run any moment.

APOLLON: Don't be so anxious, it's fine. We just have to win. Right?

APOLLON: It's fine, we'll definitely win. I swear on my own name, Apollon!

YUI: Yes, but...

My chest was filled with anxious feelings. However, it seemed like no matter how much I resisted, the results would be the same. They... no, Apollon's opinion wasn't going to budge. So I gave up and changed my view on it.

YUI: ...Right, let's definitely win this. I'll put forth all my efforts as well.

The letter of challenge was finished up quickly, and we sent copies to each room. We decided to hold the sports festival two weeks from now. With that as our goal, the student council began preparations on the field.

Each of the gods in the student council had been assigned the task of convincing the gods they lived with in the dorm. It seemed that Apollon bowed his head and pleaded with Hades and Dionysus several times. After a while, it didn't seem like there was a point in the letter of challenge, since we managed to get them to promise to come.

Tsukito went to convince his little brother Takeru. It seemed Takeru responded positively right away, since Tsukito barely spoke to him first. Balder went to convince Loki and Thor, but it appeared Thor was already friendly with humans, so he easily agreed. Loki was apparently interested because Balder told him he could use tricks to fight in the competitions. In any case, having everyone agree to participate was really something to celebrate.

Of course, everyone in the student council gathered after school to practice. We ran laps and did muscle training, building up physical strength together. They seemed to have trouble handling themselves well, since they weren't used to the strain that exercise could put on their human bodies. Instead of regular club activities, all of us made a ruckus late into the night as we continued our special training. I never put it into words, but it felt like a real human school.

BACKGROUND: CLOUDS

THOTH: Ah. Ah...

THOTH: Test, Test... Mic test...

THOTH: No problems. We have no choice but to start.

BACKGROUND: SPORTS FIELD

The field was dressed up in flamboyant decorations. Thoth held a script in his left hand and a microphone in his right, and was standing in front of the student body.

THOTH: We will now begin the First Athletic Festival of this school. ...First? We're not doing this again.

THOTH: Well, whatever. Anyway, it's beginning.

THOTH: Okay, you fools. Rise up to your hearts' content.

Every student gathered on the field gave their applause at his halfhearted announcement.

THOTH: This competition is modeled after human festivals, but there are a few points of difference.

THOTH: You have some nerve making me say all of this, Kusanagi. It's annoying, so we'll cut it here. You fools can observe those differences yourselves.

YUI: Seriously, he is so...

The main point of difference was the number of people. Every student in the school was gathered on this field, but only the gods were participating, since they were the ones needing education. The rest of the students did preparations and cheered them on. A fraction of the gods were there to observe.

There were six people competing in the festival. On the red team were the student council members Apollon, Tsukito, and Balder. The opposing white team was Hades, Takeru, and Loki. The remaining three people, including me, stood watch on the sidelines.

The Greek god Dionysus and the Norse god Thor... To be honest, today was the first time I'd seen them. They had been in places completely unrelated to school.

THOTH: ...The explanation ends here. Once preparations are complete, begin the competition.

THOTH: I leave the rest to you. I'm going back to the library.

Tossing the script and microphone to the ground, Thoth turned and left.

APOLLON: I'm up first, it's my turn. I'm going to win and get everyone fired up.

YUI: Remember your training! If you calm down and breathe, it'll be okay! Do your best!!

In response to my encouragement, he raised a hand lightly and smiled. Next to him was...

...Apollon's uncle, Hades.

APOLLON: Okay Uncle, I'm taking this seriously. I'm definitely going to win, definitely.

Besides the desire to show the results of their training, there seemed to be some other kind of aggressiveness between them.

HADES: ...I will do the same. I don't plan on losing.

Perhaps because he had an adult's composure, Hades spoke only a few words. However, I felt that his intentions were directed beyond Apollon. One of the students in charge pulled a lottery ticket and announced its contents.

GREEK STUDENT: The first competition is... an obstacle course!

The obstacle course was a long race that stretched beyond the school grounds. Various kinds of things related to Greek myth had been set up as obstacles.

GREEK STUDENT: Are you ready? Alright!

GREEK STUDENT: On one... Gooo!

At the sound of a pistol firing, the contest between Apollon and Hades began. The students were cheering wildly, clearly excited for the first contest. Inspired, I thought about cheering for Apollon too.

CHOICE

- >Watch silently
- >Call out his name
- >Just yell for now

**CHOOSE: Watch silently**

I gulped and watched the match silently.

**CHOOSE: Call out his name**

YUI: Apollon-san, do your best! Apollon-san!

I turned toward him as he ran down the lane and kept calling out his name.

**CHOOSE: Just yell for now**

YUI: Do your best!

YUI: Don't lose! You can win this!!

My yelling mixed in with the voices around me. It sounded as if one loud voice was resounding throughout the field.

I caught Apollon's gaze for an instant. It might have been a coincidence. But, deciding that my voice reached him, I cheered even louder.

**(choices converge here)**

The two of them continued to run around the track, neither of them surrendering to the other. With Apollon in the lead, the two of them ran through the school gates and beyond the grounds. Then, with Zeus's power, special visuals appeared in the air. In them, we could see Apollon and Hades, who had already disappeared from our sight.

BACKGROUND: PLAINS

The first obstacle they came across was a choice of two trials. The course split off into left and right paths, so each could choose the path that was better for them. In the distance, a deer with golden horns appeared.

Apollon: I'm right, I'm going right!

When he continued to the right, a sign appeared. On it were the words "Catch the Deer."

Apollon: ...Deer?

...This obstacle course was based on the Twelve Labors of Heracles, and this animal appeared in one of them. The deer with golden horns is said to be sacred to the goddess Artemis. Apollon accelerated, chasing the deer that was now running around a meadow off the course.

On the other hand, Hades had no choice but to take the left path. The trial given to him was...

"Eliminate the lion."

HADES: A lion...?

From behind him came a ferocious roar. In on a few seconds, a real lion showed up on the course. It ran straight for Hades.

HADES: I'm supposed to defeat it without my powers...?!

That was definitely unreasonable. Taking that into account, we had attached a paper ball to the lion's head. If Hades could destroy that, then he would succeed. Even then, it was a nearly impossible feat.

HADES: Does it want to kill me...?!

Deciding not to challenge it to a fight, Hades ran off the course.

APOLLON: Do your best! Do your best, Uncle!

Apollon called out the Hades calmly. Not only had he caught the golden deer, but also he was riding it along the course.

HADES: Wha—?

APOLLON: First, I'll go first!!

Under Apollon's clever control, the deer accelerated toward the next trial. Coming up on another forked road, Apollon chose right again, and what was waiting for him was...

"Eliminate the strange bird."

When he passed the sign with the trial written on it, a gigantic bird with a wingspan of more than 20 meters<sup>1</sup> appeared in the sky. It was a Stymphalian bird, indigenous to marshlands and said to be able to throw their razor-sharp feathers at their enemies. Apollon ran through the course wildly, entering the forest course that was beyond the meadow.

BACKGROUND: FOREST

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<sup>1</sup> ~65.6 feet.

It was a dense forest, with barely any gaps between the trees. It would be difficult for the bird to enter it. The cunning bird circled around outside the forest. Still riding the deer, Apollon broke off some branches around him. He seemed to be making something.

Hades also entered the forest, followed soon after by the lion. The next trial waiting for him was the “horse” trial.

HADES: If I can shake off the lion, I can chase after Apollon!

With a little more hope, Hades ran over to the horse that was waiting for him. But that horse bared its sharp teeth at him. Right, there was no way a normal horse would show up in the Labors of Heracles.

HADES: A flesh-eating horse?! ...Shit! Haa... Haa...

A king named Diomedes was said to have raised these horses. In legend, Heracles tamed them by feeding the king to his own horses. Of course, there was no king on this field. There was no other way to win but to break the paper ball on its head.

With yet another pursuer, Hades ran along the course. Behind him were an oddly sinister couple of monsters. It was almost painful to watch him speed up to avoid them.

APOLLON: Let's leave the forest! I'll shoot it down, I'm gonna shoot it down! Take thiiiis!

Immediately afterward, Apollon came out to the meadow again.

BACKGROUND: PLAINS

At the same time, the monstrous bird dove down to attack him. With the vines and branches he'd collected in the forest, Apollon assembled a bow and arrow. He aimed at the paper ball on the bird's head and fired. The wooden arrow pierced the paper ball, and it burst magnificently. The bird stopped its attack and began to fly up into the sky.

APOLLON: Wait, wait a second! You'll be my partner this time!

From the back of the deer, Apollon deftly leaped toward the bird's legs. Even the students on the white team gave him a raucous round of applause as he met his mark. It was amazing that he could do all of this without his powers. Maybe it was the result of his training.

He was quickly approaching the final trial. On the sign was written “acquire the golden apple” along with a rough map.

APOLLON: Let's go, Bird-san. To the sky, to the open sky!

After checking his destination, Apollon and the bird rose into the sky and disappeared. Several seconds afterward... Hades finally came out of the forest. At some point, he'd shaken off his pursuers and was running along the course alone. While Apollon was doing his trials, somehow Hades had destroyed the paper balls on those monsters' heads. ...I felt a little sorry for him.



The last trial awaiting him was... "Reach the goal with Cerberus."<sup>2</sup> Hades looked delighted at this new chance. Cerberus was the watchdog of the Underworld and Hades's companion.

HADES: Cerberus, lend me your assistance.

At the same time he said this, he jumped onto the back of a jet black dog with three heads. However...

HADES: Guahh!!

Excited at seeing his master again, Cerberus was so energetic that he dropped Hades to the ground. ...No, Hades had grabbed the dog's necklace and was somehow holding on. But most of his body was being dragged along the ground at a terrifying speed.

HADES: ...guh, hey! Cerberus! Pay attention! Your master's in danger!

Though he was yelling, his voice got lost amid the ruckus and didn't reach Cerberus's ears. It was a disastrous situation, but Cerberus continued to dash toward school grounds.

GREEK STUDENT: Whoa! Something's happening over there!

GREEK STUDENT: The lion and horse that our competitor Hades already captured have escaped from their pens!

YUI: What?! Wh-Why is this happening?

It was all so sudden, I actually thought this might have been set up.

GREEK STUDENT: Ah, please calm down, everyone. They'll only go after prey once they've been programmed!

YUI: But, Hades-san is...!

As if he himself was inviting misfortune, Hades faced one disaster after another. This was already beyond the level of sympathy. It was awe-inspiring.

At that time, I could hear footsteps in the distance. They were the footsteps of a wild beast. Beyond the school gate... I could see Cerberus and his pursuers. Overhead was Apollon and the bird he'd captured - it seemed he already acquired the golden apple. The both of them passed through the gates at almost the same time. Going right down the lanes of the track... were both of them, traveling at the same speed. But, then...

HADES: ...Shit.

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<sup>2</sup> Dictionary entry: CERBERUS (in mythological tradition) The guardian of the Underworld, it has three heads and a snake for a tail. In Greek myth, it is said that the saliva dripping from its mouth is a dangerous poison, and that anyone looking at its fearsome appearance turns to stone. (in the world of Kamigami no Asobi) Cerberus is really attached to Hades.

Hades unintentionally let go of Cerberus's necklace. He had no strength to hold on any longer. The two beasts that were following him in the narrow lanes fought for an attack, as if they'd found their prey. The first to move was the lion. It opened its huge mouth, baring its fangs... But somehow it missed with its huge canine teeth and bit into the flesh-eating horse. Surprised, the horse was thrown into confusion and it headed straight for Hades. Hades was knocked away with terrifying force.

HADES: Gahhh!!

In the space of a few minutes, Hades had already run into countless unfortunate things, but...

GREEK STUDENT: Gooooooooaaaaa!! The goal has been reached!

GREEK STUDENT: The winner is the white team's Hades-san! Hades Aidoneus-san!

He won... After being launched into the air, he'd cut through the goal tape at an unimaginable speed. I guess this could be called... fortune amid misfortune.

HADES: What... was that...? Gh, my back... I'm not doing that again.

Well, the winner didn't look all that happy himself. I'd been cheering for Apollon since we were on the same team, but putting the competition aside for now... It seemed the goddess of luck was on Hades's side. I felt really happy for him.

APOLLON: I lost, I seriously lost... I... I'm just...! Ah!

Exhausted, Apollon sat down on the ground. Hades, who had achieved a splendid victory, was carried over to the infirmary with his teammates' help. After seeing him off, I walked over to Apollon, who was still sitting on the ground, depressed.

APOLLON: ...

Seeing the expression of self-hate on his face, I thought of something to say...

CHOICE

>There's still more to the competition

>It was an intense match

>Let's cheer for the others together

**CHOOSE: There's still more to the competition**

YUI: There's still more to the competition, Apollon-san. So, please don't be so sad.

YUI: Let's watch the remaining matches together.

APOLLON: You're so kind, Fairy-san. I guess that's why I like you so much.

APOLLON: Right... That's right. The student council isn't just me. Everyone else will definitely do well.

With some of his willpower restored, Apollon stood up.

**CHOOSE: It was an intense match**

YUI: It was an intense match. I was so fired up!

APOLLON: But, but the results are bad...

A rare shadow of sadness came over the sun god's face.

YUI: It's a shame, but there's no use in worrying over things that have already happened.

YUI: Let's have Balder-san and Tsukito-san win for us on this stage that you brought to life, Apollon-san.

APOLLON: ...You're... right. I guess I should believe in them and wait. I have comrades with me, after all.

APOLLON: Thank you for your warm words, Fairy-san. I'm really happy.

He stood up with a smile and hugged me lightly around the shoulders, like a foreign greeting.

YUI: You're welcome. I was just saying what I felt.

**CHOOSE: Let's cheer for the others together**

YUI: The next match is starting. Let's cheer for them together. We'll take back what we lost.

APOLLON: ...Ah, yeah. I need to make up for my loss. Let's forget about me and cheer for the other two.

Looking a little hopeless, Apollon shakily stood up.

I'd intended to cheer him up, but I think I hurt him instead.

**(choices converge here)**

The next match began right away. The red team's player was Balder. Opposing him was Loki.

LOKI: Are you ready? Let's get started!

BALDER: Yes, let's go.

Their competition was a scavenger hunt.

NORDIC STUDENT: ...Ready?

A mischievous god who loves playing tricks, and a gentle god whom animals are drawn to. The victorious one was...

NORDIC STUDENT: ...Winner, the red team's... Balder-san...

BALDER: I won by the skin of my teeth. I'll entrust the rest to Totsuka-san... to Tsukito-san.

BALDER: I know you're brothers, but no holding back, okay?

TSUKITO: ...

As if the competition was already on his mind, Tsukito wordlessly moved over to the start line.

TAKERU: Bro! I'll do my best!

Instead of his usual scary expression, he was smiling.

TSUKITO: ...

In contrast, Tsukito was the same as ever.

JAPANESE STUDENT: Alright! I will now draw!

The student took a folded piece of paper from the box. Inside was written...

JAPANESE STUDENT: A bread race!

JAPANESE STUDENT: Are you ready?! Let's go!

JAPANESE STUDENT: Take your positions! Get set!

The showdown between the two brothers of Japanese myth began. And the victor was...

JAPANESE STUDENT: Winner...!

JAPANESE STUDENT: White team, Totsuka Takeru!

JAPANESE STUDENT: And the red team, Totsuka Tsukito!

YUI: A tie...?

The audience was roused at the unexpected results. The students in charge of the proceedings looked very confused.

APOLLON: No one won? That's surprising. What should we do now?

YUI: Let's discuss it with everyone.

The red and white teams discussed how the victors should be determined... And we all decided that there should be one more match.

We only had a little bit of time. Apollon was stretching carefully, preparing himself for the final fight. Then, the student in charge slowly came to the front. In his hands was the box he would be drawing from.

YUI: It's time.

APOLLON: I'll definitely win this time. I don't want to let the school life I've spent here with everyone, and you, to crumble.

YUI: I believe in you.

GREEK STUDENT: It is now time to draw for the next match. This time, only competitions that include everyone have been put inside this box.

The representative student put his hand in the box and pulled out a slip of paper.

GREEK STUDENT: This will be the final match!

GREEK STUDENT: A cavalry battle!<sup>3</sup>

JAPANESE STUDENT: A cavalry battle requires four players! One of our students will be added to each team!

NORDIC STUDENT: ...I'll be the referee.

APOLLON: Alright, alriiiight!

Completely different from before, Apollon was even more excited than usual.

APOLLON: This time, for sure. We'll have true victory in our hands. I may have failed, but I can feel us winning. We're winning!

TSUKITO: ...I admire that baseless confidence.

BALDER: It's the president's role to lead everyone's emotions. I like this Agana Belea too.

BALDER: In answer to your feelings, we'll produce good results.

TSUKITO: Understood.

TSUKITO: I still have reservations about my physical strength, but if the president wishes for victory, I am willing to make an effort.

APOLLON: Everyone... for me. Thank you. Thank you. My friends!

TSUKITO: Let us be victorious. I will raise our chances.

YUI: I...

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<sup>3</sup> T/N: This is a popular sports festival game in Japan where teams try to grab each other's flags, and this is what it looks like: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxIppw4EqHE>

YUI: I can't do anything for you physically. So I'll cheer until my last breath if I have to.

YUI: Until my throat goes hoarse. Until my arms are torn to shreds.

APOLLON: Let's aim for an excellent school and see it to completion! We'll show them the willpower of the student council.

It was only for a little while, but we'd practiced while aiming for this sports festival. Those numerous memories floated up and disappeared inside my mind.

My chest filled up with emotion. Our school life together with the other gods hung in the balance, and I was getting fired up. The red team walked out to the stage of the cavalry battle. They met with their fourth team member and began to arrange themselves into a horse. The white team was doing their preparations at the same time.

The red team's rider was Apollon. The extra student was in front, and Balder and Tsukito were on the left and right. The white team's rider was Hades. In front was the short Takeru, to the right was Loki. And on their left, they had placed the extra student.

NORDIC STUDENT: ...The game will continue until one team falls. In the case that both collapse at the same time, there will be a redo.

NORDIC STUDENT: ...This will truly be the final fight. Use all your power so you have no regrets.

NORDIC STUDENT: ...Are you ready?

NORDIC STUDENT: ...Okay!

The start signal echoed across the field. The two teams kicked off and rushed at each other. They headed straight for each other with no hesitation. Neither team had as much energy as in the first set of games, but the look in their eyes was different as they fought for victory. Sharp eyes, like those of starving, carnivorous beasts. The only thing in their minds was taking down the enemy in front of them. There was no room for words or strategy. They rushed forward wildly, like a real horse. The two riders on top grabbed each other's hands and tried to push each other over with all their might.

APOLLON: Fall doooooown!!!

As if threatening his opponent, Apollon yelled from the depths of his belly.

APOLLON: Gooooooooo!!!

HADES: ...!

Hades clenched his teeth and withstood the attack. He wasn't being pushed back; he was patiently waiting for his chance. Apollon seemed to notice this and continued to push forward without hesitation. But Apollon's face looked grim. This kind of tactic was a little too difficult for him.

LOKI: Hey, general!

HADES: Right!

It was a meaningful exchange. I had a bad feeling. Hearing Hades's voice, the white team members breathed in unison and pushed their opponent. Using that momentum, Hades almost pushed Apollon off.

APOLLON: Oh no no no no...!

Apollon lost his balance, and his body leaned backward. If he fell to the ground, he would lose. The two people at his sides desperately retreated to try to remedy the situation... but they got separated from the student in front. As he understood his situation, the student turned pale.

TAKERU: Let's get him!

LOKI: Go, go, forward!

The white team members yelled in unison. They pushed over the student and charged toward their unstable opponents. They rushed madly ahead, confident of their victory. The red team...

APOLLON: Gh, we're not down yet!!

...was persevering.

APOLLON: We can... still fight! We can fight! We'll grasp victory in our hands! Do you... Do you think we'll fall over that easily?!

Even in this extremely disadvantageous situation, the red team showed some immense strength. With insane looks on their faces, they grabbed their opponents.

HADES: Cease your useless struggling...! Don't pay so much attention to his useless game.

APOLLON: I made a promise I'd gain victory! And! No matter what! I want to keep iiiiiiit!!

His yell was like an angry roar. Hades widened his eyes and flinched for a moment.

BALDER: Agana Belea! Now. Push him off!

TSUKITO: Please win, president...!

APOLLON: Leave it to meeeee!!!

HADES: Kh...!

The white team's horse leaned backward. Unable to fully absorb the red team's desperate attack, their form broke in several places.

LOKI: Agh, this is really bad! We'll be crushed underneath like this?!

TAKERU: Idiot, don't give... Ah! Guahh!!

The white team fell in a cloud of dust. Immediately afterward, the red team lost their breath and collapsed on top of the white team. No one was left standing on the field.

NORDIC STUDENT: ...It's been decided! The match is over!

NORDIC STUDENT: The winners are the red team! And overall victory has been confirmed!!

Various voices filled the air, praising the new victors.

YUI: We won...

It didn't feel real. Shocked, I whispered to myself.

YUI: The red team is... victorious...

APOLLON: Fairy-san! Fairy-san, we woaaaaon!!

Apollon jumped up energetically from the pile of fallen bodies.

BALDER: I'm completely spent... I can barely get up.

The usually elegant Balder was covered in dirt, but his smile was shining brighter than usual.

TSUKITO: ...I am on the verge of total exhaustion.

Like toys that ran out of battery power, they lay face-up on the ground, but their expressions seemed satisfied.

YUI: Everyone...

The joy of victory slowly seeped into my chest.

YUI: Thank you so much...!

YUI: I'm happy you could win. ...Truly.

A smile naturally came to my face. At first I wanted everyone to come to school so I could go home... I was very concerned about that, but now was different. The solid unity born among the student council team... I was genuinely glad for that human-like feeling. The magnificence of making an effort together with comrades and sharing that success was an irreplaceable treasure.

As if that thought was contagious, everyone smiled. Even Hades and the others from the opposing team had warm expressions on their faces.

THOR: ...Everyone, stand up. ...It's time to receive your award.

When Thor urged them on, they all moved to the podium, burning with energy. Apollon, the representative, took the trophy as proof of their victory.



APOLLON: Behold, the student council's victory! We are the champions!

Apollon triumphantly brandished the trophy above his head.

APOLLON: By the authority of the winners, the white team will participate in classes from tomorrow onwards!

APOLLON: You'll definitely, definitely be coming! It's a promise with me!

HADES: I won't go back on my word.

TAKERU: You don't have to tell us to come, idiot.

LOKI: Geez, I guess there's no choice. I hope they're not boring classes.

Though they looked dissatisfied, no one in the white team objected.

BACKGROUND: CLOUDS

A sports festival to fill up the holes in our classroom. A huge event full of worries and anxiety. It ended without a problem, and classes were scheduled to begin tomorrow.

It had been almost one month since school started. Since I came here, I'd finally been able to stand at the starting line. Everything was thanks to everyone's efforts – the efforts of the classmates I met here. Imagining how lively the classroom would be, I was immersed in a joyful mood for a while.

...The real school life was about to begin.

NEW CHAPTER: APOLLON CHAPTER 1 – "Clytie Blooming in the Sunset"