Volume 14 Chapter 2 Part 3

Afterward, I made my way to two other new Task sites that showed up, but in both cases, other groups had already registered for all the spots before I arrived, so I ultimately never got a chance to participate. When the clock struck 1:00 PM, I went to my second designated area, B7, earning nothing but the one-point Arrival Bonus. Come 3:00 PM, my third was announced as D7 once again, the same as my first. I had arrived there not too long ago now, once again earning nothing but the Arrival Bonus.

I had traveled back and forth and received 2 whole points for my efforts. However, with a cumulative total of only 3 points for the first day, I felt pretty confident that I was one of the lowest-ranked groups out there.

Even so, there was absolutely no reason to be discouraged. It was only the first day of the exam and the various groups hadn’t spread all throughout the island just yet. As such, competition was going to be fierce no matter what. Even if I forced myself to pick up the pace, that didn’t change the fact that it was difficult to rack up points on my own and the drain on my supply of drinking water would be intense as well.

The day’s three Basic Movement intervals were over, and now it was time to prepare for tomorrow.

“Senpai.”

I ran into Nanase a second time, the two of us crossing paths in a place similar to the one she and I had met at this morning.

“Second time today huh?”

“Indeed. What a coincidence.”

She seemed to be taking action on her own again as there was no sign of Hōsen or Amasawa anywhere.

“How did it go for you today?”

“I did what I could and earned 3 points. You?”

“Well, when it comes to designated areas, the three of us earned 8 points. I didn’t manage to make it to the second area in time, but I took first place in a Task instead, so we’re at 13 points altogether.”

“Sounds like you’re off to a good start.”

She hadn’t arrived at one of the designated areas, but that wasn’t a very big deal. In groups of two or more, as long as somebody stepped foot in the designated area, it wouldn’t count as a ‘miss’. At the end of the day, if you’re scoring a large number of points for the time you spend elsewhere, just as Nanase did, you’d still come out ahead.

“Well then, Senpai, if you’ll excuse me.”

After a brief conversation that almost felt closer to a status report, the two of us parted ways.

It was just before 5:00 PM. I began to walk through the forest, looking to decide where I’d be camping for the night. If I pitched my tent somewhere in the sunlight, the temperature inside would increase rapidly.

Even after the sun goes down, there’d still be a chance that the heat hadn’t dissipated yet.

As such, it was probably best to try and find a place that wasn’t under direct sunlight.

I went east, eventually stopping somewhere near the edge of E7.

Between all the students, school faculty members, and exam managerial staff, there should be over 500 people on the island. But without designated areas or Tasks, you never really ran into other people all that often. In a way, that served as proof for just how dense the forest truly was.

Because of the heat and humidity, I chose to set up camp in a relatively open area. I took my two liter bottle out of my backpack and poured the water into a paper cup. Drinking straight from the bottle would do nothing to prevent the bacteria inside my mouth from contaminating the rest of the water. With high temperatures like these, letting the bacteria grow from inside the bottle could lead to serious health hazards. There was just no reason to put your health on the line because of something so trivial. Having said that, once opened, bottled water didn’t have that long of a shelf life anyway. If I wanted to drink the water while it was still in its best condition, I’d have to get through it all by the end of the day today. Though, that wasn’t really an option here with the future as uncertain as it was.

For the first day or two, it shouldn’t be that difficult to get by with all the food and water you bought at the start of the exam. But once your food reserves ran dry, the situation would gradually start to deteriorate. Of course, there was always the option of registering for Tasks for the participation rewards that you would get regardless of whether you won or not. However, from what I had seen on my tablet, there weren’t very many Tasks that fit under that category. Furthermore, there wasn’t a doubt in my mind that the ones that did would be far more contested than usual.

I turned on my tablet to reflect on this. There had been a total 68 Tasks held throughout the day today.

While I had no idea if students actually managed to participate in them, there were 14 Tasks that provided all participants with a certain amount of mineral water.

At a rate of roughly one in five Tasks overall, this was by no means a reliable number of opportunities.

The interesting thing about all of this, however, were the Tasks that were essentially just competitions disguised as student relief measures.

The order in which students arrived at these competitive relief Tasks was directly related to the amount of relief they’d receive, with the student that arrived first receiving 2 liters of water, the second 1.5 liters, and the third 1 liter. Everyone else from fourth to thirtieth would receive 500ml.

That being said, they wouldn’t receive very many points, with first place earning 3 points, second place 2 points, and third place 1 point.

But even so, they were still extremely important, providing students with a reliable, unbiased supply of water.

And─ it was certainly worth noting that these competitive relief Tasks accounted for 8 of the 14 Tasks that provided students with water. So on the first day, not only were there 8 Tasks with identical terms and conditions, but their physical locations and registration timeframes had all been very evenly distributed as well. If these Tasks continued to show up from the second day onward, then…

Well, as long as you could consistently get there in time, you shouldn’t have to worry very much about water.

After finishing off one of my portable meals, brushing my teeth, and going to the restroom, I decided to go lie down inside my tent to avoid wasting energy and prepare for the day ahead.

Starting tomorrow, I’d get serious, redoubling my efforts to earn points and essential resources.