Volume 14 Chapter 3 Part 3

Later, at around 5:30 PM, Nanase and I were waiting together on the beach when Sudō’s group finally showed up, coming from the direction of their designated area.

“How’d it go?”

“Ehhh… Not so great. After we split, a buncha new Tasks popped up so we ended up goin’ for three of ‘em. We took third place in one, but the other two had so many people that we couldn’t even register.”

Sudō clicked his tongue in frustration, slightly short on breath. Nanase and I hadn’t made it to our Tasks in time to register either, so there were clearly quite a few students still in the surrounding area.

“The second day only just ended, so don’t overwork yourselves.”

Although they had been racking up points like crazy, there was no denying that they were moving a little too quickly, something that Sudō had even admitted himself. It was commendable that Sudō, brimming with confidence in his power and stamina, was able to drag Ike along given his ambitionless, sullen demeanor, but they probably wouldn’t be able to maintain that pace forever.

Hondō, in particular, was gasping for air as if he had just braved his way through the depths of hell. There was no way that he was okay with something so strenuous, but from the fact that he hadn’t vented even a single complaint, it was probably safe to assume that he had simply resigned himself, devoting whatever energy he could to follow along instead.

“First things first, let’s find a place to camp. How ‘bout it, Kanji?”

Sudō looked to Ike for a suggestion, prompting the absentminded boy to point off toward the forest.

“Let’s go back to H9 for now. We passed by a clearing earlier. That should be good enough.”

At Ike’s listless reply, the five of us set off.

“I really don’t get the impression that Ike-senpai is the life of the party that you made him out to be, Ayanokōji-senpai.”

“He has a lot going on.”

“A lot…?”

“I don’t feel comfortable talking about it when it’s not my place to do so. If you really want to know, you should ask him yourself.”

“You’re right. I’ll try asking him when I get the chance.”

Nanase responded cheerfully. That said, whether or not Ike would answer her honestly was a different matter.

After following Ike for about twenty minutes, we arrived at a clearing in the forest.

It was a solid campsite; So much so that there wouldn’t be much of a problem even if three or four groups decided to pitch tents here.

“Welp, let’s get these tents set up pronto and get some grub. I’m starving.”

Sudō patted his belly as he spoke, understandably famished after all the moving around he had done today.

At that, both he and Hondō looked over at Ike with eyes full of expectation.

The reason for this was obvious, given the fishing rod sticking out of the back of Ike’s backpack. However, Ike simply stood there without taking notice of their expectant gazes, absentminded as ever.

“Oi Kanji. Ain’tcha gonna go fishin’ tonight?”

Sudō pressed him more directly this time, his expectations soaring high due to their close proximity to the ocean.

“Eh? Oh, uh, well… it’s already kinda late and I’m pretty tired, so yeah. Sorry.”

If he had planned on going fishing, he probably would’ve stayed on the beach back when we all met up.

Well that, or maybe he just didn’t have the drive to exert himself so much.

“Well, I guess it can’t be helped then.”

Although Sudō looked disappointed, he backed down rather quickly, not wanting to force the issue.

Ike shook his head from side to side so as to keep himself from zoning out again before beginning to set up his tent.

“Seems like his mind is somewhere else.”

Even Nanase, who knew nothing of the situation, was able to see through him. So in that light, saying that he seemed distracted almost seemed like an understatement.