Classroom of the Elite Volume 14 Chapter 4 Part 4

1:55 PM. We arrived at our designated area, H5, in just under an hour.

Although we only received a single point for our efforts, it was still an important step in the right direction.

We had an hour until the next designation, so I wanted to go for a Task if at all possible.

Earlier, most of the available Tasks had been concentrated on the western half of the island, but now they were slowly beginning to pop up over here on the east.

“Can you keep going?”

I posed Nanase a question, watching her sit down as soon as we arrived to take a drink of water.

“Ah, yes!”

While it was praiseworthy that she was able to keep up with me, there was no way that she wasn’t exhausted right now.

“You should take it easy and rest here.”

“But…”

She seemed to be worried that I’d leave and abandon her.

“I’d say something if I wasn’t happy with having you accompany me. I’m not just going to disappear. Moreover, if you push yourself too far now, it’s only going to make it tougher for you to keep up later, right? Although there won’t be another random designation today, we may need to run for the next area if I decide to go for the Early Bird Bonus. I won’t be able to slow down and wait for you if it comes to that.”

Despite her frustrated expression, Nanase eventually acknowledged the limits of her endurance and nodded in agreement.

I felt sorry for her, but this would allow me to move without any restrictions, albeit only temporarily.

If I moved fast enough, I could probably make it to two or three of the Tasks sites in the nearby area, though whether or not I’d be able to participate in them was another matter.

Here in area H5, a ‘History Test’ Task would be starting soon, so I set off to go take part. The first-place group would only receive five points, but if you won, you’d get additional food provisions, so I wanted to make sure I got there in time.

Participation would be limited to only eight groups, which wasn’t a lot, so it’d be best if I moved quickly.

Shortly after setting off, I managed to catch sight of two three-person groups racing against each other through the sea of trees, and from what it looked like, they were headed toward the History Task just like I was.

Fortunately, they didn’t see me, so after slightly adjusting my route, I began to run as well. After all, if I took my time walking, they would beat me to the Task site.

Without stopping, I advanced through the forest and eventually arrived at the Task site, only to find that a decent number of people had already assembled there.

There was an adult present with a tablet in hand, though they weren’t a teacher from the school. I promptly called out to them.

“Could I register for the Task?”

“Yes. You’ll be the seventh group.”

Once I finished registering, the two groups I had seen earlier came running this way.

Of which, the first student to draw close was Hashimoto, a fellow second-year.

He noticed my presence but was far more interested in calling out to the staff member.

“Can we still register!?”

Hashimoto shouted, sweat dripping as though he had just finished running a marathon.

“You would be the final group, but─”

The staff shifted their sights to the students drawing close behind.

Apart from Kamuro, who took up the lead, the next three were all first-years from the other group.

Hashimoto’s third group member, however, was lagging quite a ways behind the rest.

This Task was one that allowed you to work together with the rest of your group, but naturally, the staff on duty wasn’t going to wait for any members that hadn’t arrived yet. Making excuses about how close they were wouldn’t fly either, even if they were only 30 seconds away.

If this group of first-years were to slip in while Hashimoto waited for his last group member, they would snatch away his spot.

Therefore, once Kamuro got close enough, Hashimoto─

“We’re the only ones participating, just me and her.”

─chose to cut off their last member and register as just the two of them.

The three first-years collapsed to the ground in frustration. It must’ve been truly demoralizing to have put in so much effort to get here only to have it bear no fruit.

Hashimoto, on the other hand, seemed content with this outcome even though he had missed the chance for his entire group to participate. When it came to Tasks that allow you to participate as a group, the more people you had, the better off you’d be. That being said, there was a world of difference between being able to participate as a group and not being able to participate at all.

“S-sorry, I, I co- I couldn’t make it in time…!”

Once she finally arrived, Ninomiya sputtered out an apology as she gasped for breath, but naturally, her fellow group members didn’t seem to hold it against her.

Ninomiya had an A- rating in Academic Ability, which was not to be made light of. Her Physical Ability rating, however, was a D-.

“In any case, good work getting here, Masumi-chan.”

“Oh shut it. Don’t talk to me… It’s hot and I’m all sweaty now, this sucks…!”

Kamuro, who was doing what she could to get her breathing under control, kept at a distance, waving Hashimoto away as he approached her. Her dismissal prompted him to turn toward me instead.

“Come to think of it, this is the first time we’ve run into you this exam, Ayanokōji. So you’re in the area too, eh…? To think you’re going at it alone too, brave stuff there. You doing alright on points?”

“In all honesty, I wouldn’t be shocked if I placed in the bottom ten.”

“Stop pulling my leg. There’s no way a guy who doesn’t think he’s gonna win would choose to take on the exam alone.”

I honestly wasn’t in that great of a spot right now, but I didn’t really feel like showing him my tablet to prove it.

“I hear what you’re saying, but when you end up showing up in the top ten tomorrow… what then?”

He faced me with an inquisitive, somewhat tentative look in his eyes, but there was absolutely no way something like that was going to happen.

“Well whatever, I’m just glad this isn’t a math test. We wouldn’t stand a chance against a genius like you.”

“Alright everyone, the Task will now begin.”

“Whoops, looks like that’s enough chatter.”

Since the last group had registered, the Task began immediately.

By actively seeking out and participating in Tasks, you’d often find yourself pitted against students from your own school year, much like how I was now. However, I had no intention of easing up on them.

Besides, basically every question on the Test was four-option multiple choice, so even if I were to get a relatively high score, I could just say that I had gotten lucky after guessing at random.

Although my attention was focused on my tablet, I would occasionally catch glimpses of Hashimoto peering in my direction with a probing look in his eyes.

He had been suspicious of me from fairly early on compared to most people, so this was understandable.

At this point, I began to tackle the twenty test questions. Honestly, if you were to ask me whether I was good or bad at history as a subject, I’d be inclined to go with the latter. This was because, in the White Room, there wasn’t a particularly strong focus on teaching us history. Be that as it may, I was still familiar enough with the subject to have a grasp of the basics.

Since each question only had four choices, I was able to answer them all correctly without any difficulties.

After a short wait, the results were tallied and the final scores for each group were announced.

I took first place with a full 100 points, second place went to a group of third-year students with 80 points, and third went to Hashimoto and Kamuro with 70.

Once I received my points and food provisions, I immediately set off toward my next destination. But, Hashimoto followed close behind and quickly caught up with me.

“You really kicked my ass back there. To think you were good at history as well.”

“I was surprised too. I got lucky on several questions since they were multiple choice.”

“So it was just pure luck, huh? I find that hard to believe.”

“Well, if you don’t believe me then there’s nothing I can do about that. I’m in a hurry right now, sorry.”

“Which Task are you going for next?”

“I was planning on going for the chemistry Task. What about you?”

I watched as he shot a look back at Kamuro who was following from behind. In all probability, his group had been thinking of doing the same thing.

“What a shame. We’ll be going in different directions.”

Hashimoto was a cunning person. Instead of trying for the same Task as an opponent who was certain to take first place, he would rather shift his sights elsewhere to have a better chance of winning, even if it would take a little longer to get there.

In truth, however, he probably wanted to challenge the same Task as me in order to find out what I was really capable of.

Upon hearing what Hashimoto said, Kamuro let show a look of blatant disgust and reluctance.

After all, having to go to a different Task would use up a lot more stamina.

“See you later, Ayanokōji.”

With Kamuro in tow, Hashimoto ran off, heading toward one of the other Tasks nearby. If he was following Sakayanagi’s instructions, then sooner or later, they would probably join up with Ichinose’s group and form a six-member team.