Ch5 Part 9

It was after 5:30pm. I had a meeting scheduled with someone before dinner at 6pm.

As I was leaving my guest cabin to go to the deck on the 5th floor, I came across Sudou, who was staying in the cabin two doors over.

“It’s almost time to eat, where you goin’?”

Sudou asked if I was on my way back to the guest cabin.

“Just going for a little walk before dinner.”

“You sound kinda like an old man. Then I’ll see ya at the restaurant.”

We exchanged a few words and were about to part, when Sudou remembered something and spoke up.

“No wait, sorry, sorry. Right, actually something a little surprising happened!”

“Are you talking about how Ike and Shinohara started dating?”

“W-what, you already knew?”

“Yeah, although it was just a coincidence that I ended up overhearing it.”

“Nah, ‘course that was a surprise too, he beat me to it… More importantly he said he wants to study with me. He wants to join Suzune’s study group.”

That was unexpected, or rather, faster than I expected.

“Poor academic performance is fatal at this school after all.”

Students were often in danger of being expelled from school due to academics, which was natural considering it was a student’s duty to study.

“It’s a precious time for me to be alone with Suzune, but if he’s motivated, I’ve got no choice but to support him, right? So Kanji’s gonna study hard, starting with summer training.”

Summer training. Apparently, he intends to start studying right after this trip is over. Whether or not he’ll show any immediate results depends on Ike’s efforts, but some growth may become visible early in the second semester. Both Sudou and Ike may transform as a result of their love lives.

“There might be other members joining you, you know?”

“Huh? Seriously?”

“Ike isn’t the only student who started thinking they want to be taught by Horikita.”

“It’s not a guy, right?”

He came at me and grabbed my shoulders with a serious look on his face.

“No…it’s not. It’s Satou, only Satou.”

I didn’t intend to give her name, but I confessed after being on the receiving end of his unyielding pressure.

“So it’s a girl. Well, if it’s like that… but Satou, huh? If it’s not only me, but Ike as well, she’s probably not gonna join the study group, is she?”

“Don’t you think you’re making certain assumptions? She seemed to have a strong resolve.”

“Hmm. Well, it’s okay. I’m not gonna lose no matter who’s comin’.”

He blew air out of his nose, and I could sense the continuation of his strong desire to study.

“Isn’t it a bit tight? What with your club activities going on at the same time.”

“Yeah, it’s tough. But I’ve always had enough stamina to brag about. The first time I tried to really use my head, I felt like sleepin’ within a minute, but now I can go forev…nah, I can go for like an hour.”

If you could concentrate and study for that long, you wouldn’t have any problems. Study for an hour, take a break, study for an hour, and then repeating was more than enough.

“But, you know…shit, I just can’t accept the fact that Kanji got a girlfriend before me.”

Even while laughing, Sudou lamented with regret in all sincerity.

“I’m gonna hold a grudge ‘bout that while givin’ him proper training. Gonna give him the basketball club’s spartan training.”

It was a love-hate relationship with a bad friend, but he’ll take care of him.

“In moderation, right? After all, it’s not easy to fall in love with something that you used to hate, like studying.”

“I know. I know just how much I hated studying myself.”

Saying that, he stuck out his tongue as if he’d taken a bite of something bitter.

After parting ways with Sudou, I approached my destination. I saw the figure of Kushida ahead of me on the deck and hid myself. It was already five minutes past the time we were supposed to meet, so of course she was in a situation where she had to wait.

I took out my phone and called Kushida, and she picked up after two calls.

“Hello?”

After confirming the voice, I walked out to the deck where Kushida was. Mobile phones, because of their nature, prioritized ‘calling’, so even if the recording mode was activated, it would automatically turn off when a call started. In other words, the conversation that was about to take place would be between me and Kushida alone.

“Sorry Kushida, I’m late. I’m on my way right now, are you still waiting?”

“Yeah, umm───ah, over here!” Kushida checked left and right and waved after immediately spotting me.

I didn’t end the call from my phone and, while continuing to run, arrived in front of Kushida. At about the same time, we both hung up on our phones.

“I’m sorry for keeping you waiting. I took a wrong turn somewhere.”

“So even you screw up sometimes, Ayankouji-kun. But what’s wrong? You said you wanted to talk to me.”

“I’ve been debating what to do for the past few hours, but I figured I should be honest and confess.”

“Hmm? Confess? About what?”

“You know that I participated in the treasure hunt game, yes?”

“Yeah. You paired up with Satou-san, right?”

She looked at me curiously, as if to say ‘and what about it?’, like she didn’t understand what I was getting at.

“The reward for the QR code I scanned during the treasure hunt was 100,000 points. In short, that’s 90,000 points after deducting the participation fee. Divide that by two and you get 45,000 points. I thought the right thing to do was to give you half of it, Kushida.”

After saying that, I took out my phone and showed her the records of my deposits and withdrawals. It clearly stated that exactly 100,000 points had just been transferred to my account.

“Ehh? It was just a game, you don’t have to worry about it so much~”

“To be honest, I thought so too at first. That’s exactly what I tried to think, but I couldn’t help but feel that it was a devious way of thinking. There was a possibility you’d say you didn’t want it, and I thought that if I just kept my mouth shut, you wouldn’t find out. It’s because I’m ashamed of own way of thinking that I decided that I have to give it to you.”

“But───”

No matter how I tried to reason with her, it would be difficult for Kushida to accept the points.

“To be honest with you…I want you to take them, as a sign of good faith.”

“Good faith…?”

“I’m giving you half of the private points I receive to buy safety from you, Kushida. As long as I show good faith regarding this, I’m thinking you’ll to do the same with me.” Am I wrong? I asked with my eyes. “It never hurts to have more private points, even if only a little. Isn’t that right?”

“That’s true, but wouldn’t that put you in a considerably painful situation, Ayanokouji-kun?”

“I don’t mind. It’s nothing compared to getting in trouble with you, Kushida.”

“Somehow…the opposite is a little scary.”

“What do you mean?”

“You know, Ayanokouji-kun, I keep hearing that you’re some amazing student. Are you really giving me half of your private points just because you want to have a truce with me?”

“The way I see it, it’s more dangerous to make an enemy of you, whose personal life comes into play, than a student like Sakayanagi or Ryuuen, who we have to fight in special exams.”

Although she was somewhat wary, Kushida nodded her head as if satisfied.

“All right. Then you’re really okay with this?”

“Of course.”

Using my phone, I transferred the private points to Kushida’s account just like I’d done many times before.

“I hate to say it just after giving you my points, but if I ever get into some money-related troubles, I might ask for your help.”

“Ehh~? That’s a little uncool Ayanokouji-kun.”

Kushida laughed a little, perhaps amused by my shamelessness.

“But I think it’s a much, much smarter approach than Horikita-san. I don’t hate that kind of thing.”

“Is that so?”

“For me as well, the only person I don’t want to make an enemy out of is you, Ayanokouji-kun, so I hope we continue to get along.”

“Yeah. I’d like to keep our mutually beneficial relationship going.”

With that, Kushida and I parted ways as if nothing had happened.