Y2V4.5 Ch6 Part 2

It was the same day as the get-together where the teachers complained to one-another. The students, who didn’t know anything about their teachers’ troubles, joined their friends to make memories during their remaining time on the luxury cruise ship.

But I, Horikita Suzune, was going to use what little time remained of these holidays for something else entirely.

There was a counter for employees and receptionists in front of the entrance to private pool. If it was available, you could register and pay here to use the pool. However, I heard that the private pool was very popular among the students, so it was likely that it was almost fully booked. Of course, that was convenient for me.

“Excuse me, I’m thinking of making a reservation for the private pool.”

I spoke to an employee stationed at the reception desk. The employee started to give a simple explanation in a familiar manner, as if he had already had the same conversation with many students over and over again.

“Please fill out this form with your preferred time slot. If it’s full, there is also a waiting list.”

With that, the employee handed me a clipboard. I didn’t come to this place to enjoy the private pool. I went through all this trouble to get my hands on the clipboard that I just received.

“I’m borrowing this.”

The reception areas for cafés and such all had a reservation system using tablets and machines. However, in the case of the private pool, where the time was fixed to an hour for each group and reservations could be made several days in advance, all reservations were made on paper.

I pretended to look for a day and time to make a reservation, and took note of every person’s handwriting.

The private pool was used by multiple people, but only one representative had to fill in the form.

In truth, I intended to settle this with the treasure hunt game the other day. About half of the school’s students participated, and for first-year students, the participation rate was more than 66%. Before the game ended, I checked the names and handwriting of all the first-year students who had participated, but there wasn’t a single candidate whose handwriting matched what I remembered.

Did it just so happen that the one who left me that note was among the 34% remaining? No, maybe they didn’t participate because they didn’t want me to match their name to their handwriting?

In any case, because of this, I’ll continue searching from the remaining 34% of first-year students.

But still, what struck me was the reservation rate for the private pool. Almost all the time slots were filled, including the last day. Cancelling a reservation didn’t cost anything up until the day before the appointment, so some students may just be holding onto it for now, but it really was popular.

There was a space where you could write the name of the representative and the number of students, but there was no need to write your year group.

The words I saw written on that paper were truly beautiful. I flipped through the pages and checked everyone’s handwriting, but I couldn’t find anything on the same level. I had a feeling it wouldn’t be easy to find, and unfortunately it seemed to be just as I imagined.

It wasn’t every day that you got a chance to see a student’s name and handwriting. Since I couldn’t find it, the tedious work would have to begin. It would be necessary to look at each individual name once again and match it to the OAA.

Although it wasn’t like there were hundreds of reservations on the list, the confirmation process alone would take a long time. It would be easy to skip students with blatantly messy handwriting or different habits, but I wanted to make sure and be clear about who I could exclude here.

I could exclude Kibayashi-kun of first-year Class B and Mochizuki-san of first-year Class D… Etou-san…I’d already checked her handwriting after she participated in the treasure hunt game yesterday, so I could also exclude her. The receptionist must’ve had a lot of duties to see to, and I was grateful that he wasn’t paying attention to me as I looked at the list with my phone in hand.

Even so, it really wasn’t easy to find. Just to be sure, I checked the registers for the second and third-year treasure hunt participants, but there was no one who seemed to match.

Where on Earth was the person who wrote that note…?

I didn’t even know how many minutes had passed by the time I finished eliminating the ninth person. Just as it seemed the receptionist was starting to become suspicious of me, I was unexpectedly approached from behind.

“Um, are you going to take much longer?”

“Eh?! Ah, yes. I’m sorry. I’m having a little trouble finding a time for me and my friends.”

I was so focused on looking at the register that I didn’t notice the student standing behind me. I’d assumed that almost no students would come to make a reservation, but I wasn’t followed was I…?

Making him wait now in order make a list of students to exclude from my investigation would be difficult. In that case, I decided that it would be better to let the boy make the reservation first. He didn’t look like an upperclassman; he was likely a first-year.

“It seems like it will take me a while to decide, so you can go ahead.”

“Is that so? Then if you’ll excuse me.”

With that, the male student received the clipboard from me. He was tall, about the same height as Sudou-kun, or maybe a little shorter. I waited for the visitor to finish filling out the reservation form, pretending to message a friend while working my phone.

Perhaps because there were only a limited number of openings to make a reservation, he decided sooner than I expected. He finished writing his reservation in no time, and the boy looked back at me.

“Thank you very much. Excuse me.”

I received the register as we switched places, and immediately checked the name the first-year had filled in.

“…Got it.”

Representative name: Ishigami Kyo. The number of users is five.

He didn’t participate in the treasure hunt game, so I was seeing his name for the first time.

Looking up his name in the already open OAA app, I also found out that he was a first-year Class A student. His handwriting was very refined, and it wouldn’t be inappropriate to say he’d likely been practicing penmanship for many years.

However, handwriting was very prone to habits, and it didn’t have the same exemplary feel as the machine-like handwriting I had seen on the uninhabited island. Even so, it was also a fact that it was the closest handwriting I had seen so far. If I had the paper in hand, I could’ve cross-checked it, but since Amasawa-san tore it up and threw it away, that also wasn’t possible. I couldn’t be sure that the letters in my memory and those written by Ishigami-kun really were different.

“I’m very sorry; could you wait for a moment?”

I called out somewhat loudly to Ishigami-kun as he was quickly leaving.

He looked back at me curiously, and I continued, “Actually, I just finished discussing with my friends, but it seems to coincide with the time you wrote. Do you mind if we discuss it a little?”

Whatever the topic, I’d like a hint as to whether he was the one who implied Ayanokouji-kun’s expulsion.

“It’s not like we can’t discuss it, but I just told my friends that I reserved that time.”

I lifted the phone to my face with the back side facing me. For now, because I succeeded in calling out to him, I managed to keep his attention. If the man in front of me was the one who wrote that note on the uninhabited island, there was a good chance that he knew me, even if I didn’t know if he personally delivered it to my tent.

“May I see the list again, please?”

“Of course. I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s fine, Horikita-senpai.”

Hearing him call me by name, my heart started to beat a little faster.

“…So you know my name. I don’t remember talking to you before though.”

“I learnt most of the names and faces of the more academically gifted second-year students for the first special exam just after I entered the school.”

The handy OAA also helps you remember the names of your upperclassmen and underclassmen.

“You must have a good memory. I also intended to remember some of the more academic students, but I didn’t know about you, Ishigami-kun.”

“That’s because I’m not someone who stands out.”

The discussion went smoothly, without any conflicts and without me being suspected. I didn’t get anything definitive, but I still felt that there was something different about his handwriting. Thinking that I shouldn’t keep him any longer, I decided to let him go.

“Can I ask you one thing, Horikita-senpai?”

This time, however, I was the one who was being spoken to by Ishigami-kun.

“When you stopped me, you said you also intended to remember some of the more academic students, but didn’t know about me, right?”

“Yes, what about it?”

I didn’t remember saying anything strange, but…

“You really have no memory of me?” He confirmed, as if as a reminder.

“Of course, I really don’t.”

It was a fact that I had no memory of Ishigami-kun.

“Then, when did you find out that I had high academic ability? If you were discussing the time of your reservation with friends, I think it would take a fair amount of time before you could start up the OAA and check it.”

It was an astute point that I hadn’t thought of, and I couldn’t respond right away. There wasn’t anything strange about finding his name in the list. But certainly, just as Ishigami-kun said, there was something strange about the fact that I knew about his high academic ability.

He should’ve been able to point that out at an earlier stage, but he threw it in slowly. Just when I was feeling relieved that it was going without a hitch, as if he’d been watching and waiting for it, he completed his response.

“I just happened to have the OAA open and it was running in the background. Your name was in the time slot I wanted to reserve, Ishigami-kun, so I hurriedly checked the photo to make sure it was you.”

After checking with his friends on his phone, Ishigami-kun nonchalantly changed the reservation time.

“I see. I apologise for suspecting you.”

“It’s all right. You must’ve been a little surprised, so it’s understandable that you’d be suspicious.”

“Well then, I’ll take my leave.”

“Ah…that’s right, Ishigami-kun, thank you for the reservation.”

“I don’t mind, but───”

He was about to speak up about something, but he seemed to be a little hesitant about what to say next.

“What is it?”

“No, it’s nothing. I’ll see you again, Horikita-senpai.”

“Yes, that’s right. See you.”

It didn’t turn out the way I thought it would, and Ishigami-kun turned his back and walked away. I didn’t get the sense that he was guilty from his handwriting, but I was strangely curious about the student.

After seeing him off until his back disappeared, I stood there clutching the register. Now that I’d made a reservation, it would be unnatural for me to sit here poring over the list.

I had to make sure to remember to call and cancel the reservation after giving it some time. Besides, since I didn’t find any leads, I had to think about my next move.

“You’ve got a very serious expression on your face there~ Horikita-san.”

Rather unusually, Hoshinomiya-sensei appeared and called out to me. She seemed to be with Kanzaki-kun from her class, and our eyes met.

“Is that so? I don’t think it’s any different than normal.”

“Really? That might be so...”

What I was more concerned about was that Hoshinomiya-sensei had her hand on the wall.

“Um, are you feeling unwell?”

“Ohh~ this? Don’t worry about it; it’s a disease specific to adults.”

A disease specific to adults? I wonder what disease it was…

“Anyway, that cool kid from before…um, who was it again~? I feel like I’ve been him before somewhere.”

The person Hoshinomiya passed by just before could only be Ishigami-kun.

“It was Ishigami from first-year Class A.”

Before I could answer, Kanzaki-kun, who was stood next to her, responded.

“Eh? First-year? That’s…well for a second or third-year, it's only natural that you’d know, but…”

For some reason, Hoshinomiya-sensei tilted her head curiously.

“Is something wrong? Do you have thoughts regarding him?” I asked, hoping to get any clues, no matter what they could be.

“Yeah, I think I saw him at school once a while ago, but…maybe I saw wrong. Sorry, Horikita-san, but I don’t think I can do this!”

With her feet wobbling, Hoshinomiya-sensei ran out and headed for the deck. I followed her, wondering what was going on.

“Agh, ugghh, eek!”

I didn’t really understand, but she went outside with a pained voice. Then, with an especially loud gurgle, she grabbed the deck railing, trying to keep her mouth from opening.

The glittery (but in reality not that pretty) vomit was blown away by the strong sea breeze. I just watched her together with Kanzaki-kun, who arrived a little later. What on Earth were we being shown here?

“Sensei…I think there are a lot of problems with what you just did.”

I pointed out the hygiene and moral aspects.

“Ugh, it’s a mix of hangover and seasickness, sowwy, Horikita-sa───Bluurrgghh!”

At least there was some salvation in that there was an ocean beneath us…

“Sorry, I’m gonna go back to my room and sleep after all… I’m sorry, Kanzaki-kun…even though we were in the middle of a conversation.”

“Please don’t worry about it. I will call on you again at another time.”

“And also, I’m sorry for showing something strange, Horikita-san…ugh!”

She waved her hand with a flutter, but quickly clamped her mouth shut and rushed back into the ship.

“…She’s seems to be a busy person.”

“It must be confusing if you’re not used to seeing it.”

“You’ve seen it more than once?”

“We’ve been shown things like that around three times in morning homeroom.”

That’s…what can I say? They have my condolences.

With Hoshinomiya-sensei out of sight, I bowed lightly to Kanzaki-kun and turned to leave.

“What’s your connection to Ishigami, Horikita?”

As soon as I was stopped, he started speaking about something I hadn’t expected to hear.

“What do you mean by that?”

I had no choice but to reply, as I didn’t know the true meaning behind his words.

“You were talking to him, right?”

“The way you’re talking, you must know him in no small way. You knew his name too.”

“I had a lot of opportunities to make contact with the first-years because of the special exam we had just after we became second-years.”

Many of the best students in the first-year were taken by Sakayanagi-san and Ryuuen-kun classes. It wasn’t surprising that Kanzaki-kun came to know Ishigami-kun in the process, but… I was a little surprised that Kanzaki-kun, who didn’t usually talk to me, took an interest.

“We just had a little clash over a reservation for the private pool.”

I explained the situation simply, but Kanzaki-kun seemed a little unconvinced.

“By the way, do you see him as a trustworthy underclassman?”

“His academics leave no room for criticism. You can tell that much from the OAA.”

“That’s true, it was an A grade with no complaints.”

In contrast, his physical abilities weren’t so good, with a D-.

“But being able to study and being trustworthy are not the same.”

“Why do you want to know if you can trust Ishigami? It seems irrelevant to the reservation.”

Right now, we were in the middle of a summer vacation with no special exams taking place. Certainly, it wasn’t surprising that he was concerned about it. I asked Kanzaki-kun about it because he seemed interested, but I’ll just leave it at that.

“You don’t have to worry about it. I just thought I’d ask.”

In order to not give up any information about the handwriting, I’ll try and divert the conversation. However, he didn’t turn away from me and kept talking.

“It’s not like I don’t have information on whether or not you can trust that man.”

It was a strange way of putting it, but it meant that Kanzaki-kun knew something about Ishigami-kun.

“If you answer my questions, I don’t mind telling you about Ishigami.”

I decided that he was leaning more to the side of being innocent, so there was no need to force myself to go along with the conversation. However, the fact that the expression on Kanzaki-kun’s face was different from the calm one he usually showed stuck out to me.

“Questions? About what I wonder?”

“I’ve been pondering about your class for a while, Horikita.”

“…My class?”

“Among your class, in particular…I want to know Ayanokouji’s true ability.”

“Even if you ask me something like that, I can’t answer. Can you ask him directly?”

While I was inwardly surprised to hear Ayanokouji-kun’s name mentioned here, I deflected the conversation.

“I don’t think he’s the kind of person who would give a straight answer when asked.”

“That might be true. But it’s not like you can trust the words that come out of my mouth, can you?”

“If you could tell me just one thing that might be helpful, that would be fine.”

“We’ve know each other for a while now, but I don’t know anything about him.”

“Saying you don’t know anything is too much of an exaggeration. If you call yourself a leader uniting your class, you should have some knowledge of the internal affairs of your classmates.”

“I haven’t gained the trust of all my classmates just yet. That includes Ayanokouji-kun too.”

I didn’t have the qualifications to proudly call myself a leader yet. At the very least, I wasn’t at the level of Sakayanagi-san, Ichinose-san or Ryuuen-kun.

“So you can’t answer me straightforwardly. He’s a valuable asset to your class after all.”

“Just the fact that that I’m alerting you like that should give you a feel of his value to some extent.”

Regardless of whether Ayanokouji-kun was using all of his ability, if he was splitting his effort to think about it, I would be glad to hear it.

“Is there anything else you would like to ask me?”

“No, that’s all I’m concerned about right now.”

If that was the case, then there was no choice but to accept that he wouldn’t tell me anything about Ishigami-kun. I was thinking that I couldn’t make any strong demands, but…

“The student known as Ishigami is excellent, compassionate and can get things done. Already recognised as the leader of first-year Class A, his comrades no doubt have complete confidence in him. The best way to describe him might be to say he is a combination of the best parts of Ichinose and Sakayanagi.”

“I’m sure that makes him dependable for his classmates.”

“However, that is only to his allies, and does not apply to those who threaten his comrades. He’s likely the type to bare his fangs without mercy.”

It was difficult to imagine with the information I had so far, as he seemed like a mild-mannered student to me.

“So how does he behave towards someone who is neither friend nor foe?”

“If it’s someone who’s neither friend nor foe, then he’s indifferent.”

“Indifferent?”

Kanzaki-kun, who had been speaking right in front of me, stopped moving.

“…Yes. For those who are meaningless existences to him, I’m sure he wouldn’t care.”

“He said ‘I’ll see you again’ to me. Would he leave a word suggesting a reunion to someone he was indifferent towards I wonder?”

“Ishigami did? No, he’s not the kind of man who says things like that easily. Did he really say that?”

“As long as I didn’t mishear him that is. Even so, you seem to know a great deal about him.”

I wondered if there was something going on between Kanzaki-kun and Ishigami-kun that had nothing to do with the case I was following.

“I don’t have any details. He’s never taken me on.”

After muttering to himself, he continued. “It’s a fact that that man is only interested in those who are either friend or foe. In other words, it means that Ishigami has already classified you as one of them, Horikita.”

“Even if you say that, I don’t really understand.”

I made contact with Ishigami-kun for the very first time today. Before that, we had never met face to face or even exchanged greetings. A normal analysis would be that I was neither a clear friend, nor a clear foe.

“Unknowingly having a relationship happens all the time.”

“So my actions are indirectly affecting him?”

“We can’t rule out that possibility.”

There was something about what Kanzaki-kun was saying that I just couldn’t understand.

Kanzaki-kun was thinking about it for a while, but eventually he murmured quietly. “I’ll give you one piece of advice. Don’t get involved with Ishigami any further.”

“I didn’t want to get involved in the first place. Seeing as you’re giving me advice, are there any other first-years I should be aware of?”

“Other first-years?”

So far, there was not one person who could be clearly identified as a suspect. I wanted clues. If Amasawa-san or other names were mentioned, it would also give his statements more depth. That’s what I thought, but…

“The only person you need to worry about among the first-years is Ishigami,” Kanzaki-kun answered, before turning and walking away.

Along the way, Kanzaki-kun passed by Ibuki-san, who was looking our way, but she didn’t even make eye contact with him.

“Are you close with Kanzaki?”

“No, not at all? We just happened to have something in common to talk about today. What’s wrong?”

“I don’t like the fact that he’s got that clever face just like you.”

It was a waste of time to listen to her seriously.

“What do you have in common with him?”

“A first-year called Ishigami-kun. He’s a student whose handwriting looked a little bit like the one we’re looking for.” I said, and then brought up Ishigami-kun’s profile on the OAA.

First-year Class A Ishigami Kyo:

“Moreover, the way he spoke and behaved, like there was no bottom in sight, was a little unsettling.”

“Hmm? Does that mean he’s suspicious to you?”

“I’m not sure. I think he’s leaning more on the side of being innocent, but…if this physical assessment isn’t his true ability, then I might just become suspicious in a heartbeat.” I said, but there was no way to be sure at the present time.

“This Ishigami is innocent.” Ibuki-san interjected with a few words, as if to reject my deductions.

“How can you be so sure?”

“The day before yesterday, I was just kinda watchin’ people playing around from the floor overlooking the pool.”

“Alone? How sad.”

“Ha? Do you want me to stop talking?”

“I’m just kidding, go on.”

“Fuckin’ hell… He was tall, so he stood out a little and came into view. He had no upper or lower body training, just a normal body. He definitely doesn’t work out. You’re expectin' the guy you’re lookin' for to have strength like Amasawa or Ayanokouji, right?”

“Could it be that the reason you went to the pool…was to find people who work out?”

She shrugged her shoulders, as if to say ‘you finally noticed?’ and continued. “Strength and the body are always proportional. If you can move well, you’ll definitely have a toned body, and if you’re strong, it’d be strange if you didn’t have well-developed muscles.”

If it was an amateur’s judgement it would be one thing, but, though misguided, Ibuki-san was a martial artist. If she saw Ishigami-kun’s bare upper body, then this data was highly credible.

“Considering it’s you, that’s a good observation.”

If Ibuki-san’s information was correct, it meant his physical ability was undoubtedly around a D-. Of course, the culprit might not necessarily be a potentially strong person like I had initially guessed, but…I think it was safe to assume he was completely innocent.

“Either way, the holidays are almost over, so we’ll have to wait until the second semester starts before we can continue.”

“How long will this take?”

It’s not like I didn’t understand why she was feeling dismayed, but there was no conclusive evidence right now. We would just have to keep at it for a while.