Y2V4.5 Ch6 Part 4

It was just past 2am at the concert hall.

I opened the heavy door quietly. In the spacious room, there was one person seated with their back towards me. I approached the figure, the silence so quiet that it was almost like my footsteps echoed on the carpet.

“Students aren’t allowed to leave their cabins at this time, you know?”

“Don’t say that. This was the only time when we could be sure that it was just the two of us.”

“If anyone sees us, you’ll be taking responsibility, right? Chabashira-sensei.”

Chabashira didn’t even look at me.

“Don’t worry. The teachers’ night watch only lasts until midnight.”

“If that’s the case then it’s fine. So what’s on your mind for you to go to the trouble of calling me?”

“When the summer vacation is over, the second semester will begin. And then, the next exam will take place.”

“Yes, I suppose so. Last year we went straight into the sports festival.”

“Yes. But this year is different; there will be one special exam held before that.”

“Is this okay? For you to give me this information?”

A teacher shouldn’t be allowed to give advantageous information to a particular student or class.

“Or are you saying that the next special exam has already begun?”

“No───It’s nothing like that.”

In that case, it meant my being brought here and told this was all Chabashira’s own decision. It was surprising only because I had thought that she was a homeroom teacher who wasn’t especially supportive of her class.

I didn’t know what she was thinking, but she suddenly fell silent. There was no point in just standing nearby, so I made my way to the platform.

Normally, this concert hall was a place where you could enjoy live music. The large, high-end grand piano was just left in place. Perhaps because a performance was held in this hall today, it wasn’t covered in dust.

“Acting director Tsukishiro was willing to risk his career to get rid of you on the uninhabited island. Even if your father was famous, his persistence is extraordinary.”

“It seems so. However, if I may correct one thing, Tsukishiro was never interested in the Chancellor’s position to begin with. He was only using the position to get rid of me.”

“So you’re saying that’s just how powerful a force is at work?”

Saying she didn’t understand it at all, Chabashira crossed her arms.

“Are you ready to talk now?”

“…Yes.”

After a pause, Chabashira spoke quietly.

“How do you analyse your class?”

“What do you mean by ‘how’?”

“Do you think they have the strength to move up to Class A?”

“You’re really asking that to a student in your class?”

“I want to hear what you think.”

Unusual…or maybe it wasn’t. That was just how much Chabashira had on her mind.

“Yes that’s right; without a doubt, I think that it has the highest potential among all the second-year classes. However, it’s not like we can just say that, do nothing and then move up to class A. It will be a considerable challenge to catch up with Sakayanagi’s class, which is currently in the lead as Class A.”

The teachers should know this school very well.

“I think the minimum requirement is for the class to be united as one. And that includes you too, Chabashira-sensei.”

After saying that, Chabashira looked at me with a surprised expression. It was a face that said she already knew that.

“I’m…What kind of teacher do I look like to you?”

If I had to say it, Chabashira had always been cold-hearted towards my classmates up until now. Rather, she spent her days shunning and abandoning them.

“A teacher who, while thinking she can’t win, can’t give up hope. In a nutshell, is it something like that?”

“That’s harsh.”

“My impression of you and the fact that you tried to take advantage of me hasn’t changed at all, even now.”

“That’s true, you’re right.”

Unless she sincerely corrected that mistake, Chabashira would never change.

“You shouldn’t make your students work hard because you yourself want to reach Class A. You should work hard for your students who want to reach Class A.”

“Ayanokouji…”

“If you do that, the answer will definitely come to you. That’s what I think.”

“…You said the class needs to be united as one, right?”

“Yes.”

“That naturally includes you too.”

“Of course.”

Our gazes crossed each other’s and Chabashira gulped heavily.

“What if I told you I was throwing my past self behind?”

Her eyes questioned my resolve. It would be better to believe that any lies told here would be seen through.

“If you say you’re going to throw it away, then I’ll throw away my way of thinking up until now too. If you seriously aim for Class A, then I won’t hold back any longer.”

“…Is that so?”

With these words, what about Chabashira would and wouldn’t change? That remained to be seen at the moment…

“When you’re ready to look forward, the class will start to change for real.”

“…That’s right.”

Looking up at the high ceiling, Chabashira closed both of her eyes. It seemed certain that a deep shadow was cast in her heart.

I should just walk away, but for some reason I felt a little different than usual at this moment.

My assessment of Chabashira as a homeroom teacher remained low. However, when looking at her as a person, my assessment was starting to change, although only slightly. She was much more fragile than I thought, a woman who seemed to have grown up only in appearance.

I sat down on the chair and opened the keyboard lid.

“…What are you doing? Don’t tell me you can play the piano?”

Without answering any of her questions, I ran my fingertips over the keys and started to play a tune.

As the performance came to an end, Chabashira applauded uncharacteristically.

“I’m not well versed in music, but that was magnificent. Even if I practiced, I surely wouldn’t be able to play at that level in this lifetime. If I’m not mistaken, the piece was───”

And then, in the silent the concert hall, there was a sound slightly behind me.

Chabashira stood up and turned around in a hurry.

The one who revealed himself from within the darkness was a smiling Tsukishiro.

“Beethoven, Für Elise, right? Even though the piece itself is not very difficult, to play it so perfectly shows magnificent skill. It’s a shame that it was only me and Chabashira-sensei watching. However, it’s forbidden for students to go out carelessly at this hour. You know there are penalties for easily breaking the rules, don’t you?”

“Acting Director Tsukishiro, this is…”

Chabashira hurriedly tried to make excuses, but Tsukishiro stopped her softly.

“Don’t worry. As of today, I have been dismissed from my position as Acting Director. Now that it has been decided that Chancellor Sakayanagi will be reinstated, I am just an irrelevant civilian. I will not report this to the school.”

“…Can I trust you?”

“You don’t have to trust me. However, from the moment I showed up here, Ayanokouji-kun was aware of my presence. If there is a disturbance in emotions, it’s communicated through the performance. But I didn’t see even the slightest hint unrest in your performance… Why was that?”

“It’s simple. Suppose I was punished, I can’t be expelled for something like this. The fight between you and me is only about whether I’ll be expelled or not, so there’d be no point in going to the trouble of penalising me for going out without permission.”

“Even if you know that, you would normally panic when someone sees something that you don’t want them to see. I wonder if you got that courage from your father.”

“Unfortunately, I don’t remember being brought up that way.”

I closed the lid and moved away from the piano.

“Once the morning comes, I won’t be able to speak to you again. With that in mind, I thought I’d give it one last go.”

There were surveillance cameras installed on board the ship. Was he always keeping an eye on the footage of the hallway outside my cabin? He needs a hobby.

“If you’d prefer I leave, I will.”

“No, you’re fine as you are. It would be more inconvenient for Ayanokouji-kun to be left alone with me. It would be better for you to stay here to protect your student.”

Tsukishiro walked up to us and sat down two seats away from Chabashira.

“Is the concert over already?”

“If you have something you need to say, please do as soon as possible.”

I knew it was a joke, so I urged Tsukishiro to speak quickly.

“I’ve got nothing to lose, so I’ve come to negotiate for the last time. Would you notify the school that you will be dropping out and return home?”

“Tsukishiro───san. What on Earth are you trying to do?”

Hearing him say ‘dropping out’, Chabashira interrupted him with some anger.

“What do you mean?”

“You interfered in a special exam without permission and tried to get Ayanokouji expelled. That alone is an unforgivable act.”

“It’s the same for you, Chabashira-sensei. Didn’t you bring in your own feelings and try to tell him about the next special exam?”

The details were unclear, but it seemed Tsukishiro figured out Chabashira’s objective in one way or another.

“Certainly, it’s not something to be praised. But I wasn’t talking about the details of the exam to give him an advantage.”

“You might think that inside, but you can’t prove it. I just happened to be here to prevent it from happening in the first place.”

“That’s…”

“And your sins are not limited to just one. You know what I mean, don’t you?”

At the moment, Chabashira’s sins included calling a student out at a time when they weren’t allowed to go out. Even if it was between a teacher and a student, the fact that we were a man and a woman was a point that shouldn’t be overlooked.

Tsukishiro was able to relentlessly exploit that slight gap.

“The one who’ll be in trouble if you make a fuss isn’t me, Chabashira-sensei, it’s you. And also Ayanokouji-kun.”

If it became a case of sexual misconduct with a teacher, it would go beyond a warning.

It was a threat from Tsukishiro, ‘If you understand, then keep your mouth shut’.

“Tsk…”

Chabashira, having lost track of that part, understood the situation she was in and took a step back.

“That’s all right.”

Without breaking his smile, Tsukishiro approached me, reducing the distance between us to about two metres.

“There are no tricks set up here so don’t worry.”

“You will act in any situation if it’s in your best interest to do so. That’s my analysis of what kind of person you are.”

“I guess that means you’ve been buying into it to a certain extent.”

Up until now, I’d somehow managed to evade Tsukishiro’s tricks. However, that was only because Tsukishiro went through what could hardly be called an outrageous strategy until the very end.

Manipulation of exams, violence, taking captives and so on, and that was about it. It was likely that if this man was so inclined, it wouldn’t have been as easy as it had been until now.

“I won’t drop out.”

“It’s a pity, but I guess it’s no use. So you mean to stay at school as you are until you graduate.”

“That’s the plan. As long as I follow the rules of the school and don’t get expelled that is.”

“No matter how much you want to stay in this world, you certainly can’t fight against it.”

We didn’t talk about it here, but the shadows of the White Room students still flickered around me.

“You are intelligent. And strong. It’s excellent that anyone who knows what you’re capable of would think so too.”

Before long, Tsukishiro was standing right in front of me.

“But no matter how excellent you are, you are still only a child. You should understand that that man sent me here with your strength in mind.”

In other words, did that man foresee the future wherein I would remove Tsukishiro…?

“If you want to stay in school for even one day longer, you would do well to think about it.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

Tsukishiro smiled thinly and laughed once by himself.

“However, this school is surprisingly fascinating. It’s probably the only school in the world that can hold special exams on an uninhabited island. It reminded me of a period when I was a little boy and I was enthusiastic about the Boy Scouts.”

With that, he put his left hand out in front of me.

“With this, it’s farewell, Ayanokouji-kun. Could you shake my hand?”

I didn’t think that this outstretched left hand was just a simple farewell. I held out my left hand in the same way and grasped it back. As if satisfied, Tsukishiro nodded.

“Well then───let’s meet ‘again’ soon.”

Lastly, he tapped me on the left shoulder with the palm of his right hand and turned on his heel.

“Oh and also, make sure to disperse within five minutes. If you don’t, I will report you.”

Chabashira and I saw Tsukishiro off until he was out of sight.

“It’s no use worrying about the finer things, but to think he’d dare ask for a handshake with his left hand. So he had hostile intentions right to the very end.”

Generally, a handshake was done with the right hand. Well, people nowadays didn’t care about that, and they may not even know what it meant.

“I didn’t see it that way though.”

“What do you mean?”

Without any lead up, Tsukishiro told me that he was enthusiastic about the Boy Scouts. It was usually considered impolite to shake hands with the left hand, but the exception to this was the Boy Scouts.

What it meant was───

“Forget it. It’s no use thinking about that man’s thoughts.”

“I’ll go back first.”

“Yes that’s right, that would be best.”

Now that Tsukishiro had spotted us, ignoring the warnings here was only a risk.

“I’m sorry. On account of me calling you out so easily, I gave Acting Director Tsukishiro an opportunity to take advantage you.”

“I don’t really mind. It’s only somewhat, but there are some things I can see now.”

As I neared the exit, I decided to leave a few words for Chabashira without looking back.

“I said it just before, but whether the class will stay afloat or sink going forward isn’t something completely irrelevant you, sensei. It would be better if you understood that.”

No matter what special exams were waiting, the students could only look ahead and keep moving forward. The only people that could lead the way were the teachers of each class.