Beacon of Counterattack

Arc 6 Chapter 77

Mind racing and running at full speed, Subaru reached his destination.

Heart pounding, his breath turned crisp and white due to the cold world surrounding the person he was looking for.

His heart was about to explode as the sight of her thin, slender back came into view.

As a feeling of overwhelming love poured into his chest, he could barely endure his impulses. But right now, there was no time to risk death because of the feelings that were choking his chest, which felt as if it was going to explode.

Gritting his teeth, over her back he saw the face of the enemy.

He had long, dark brown hair and a rough appearance that was wrapped in tattered clothes. The most impressive part about him was the sight of his horrible eyes, which Subaru could see as only seeking prey to destroy and literally devour their lives.

Subaru: “Ley Batenkaitos!”

Shouting at the top of his lungs, making himself known, Subaru tried to attract his attention.

Even if he could only distract him for a brief moment, it could still prove helpful. Of course, there was the possibility that an attack could still reach her, but it wasn’t pointless if the damage to her could be reduced due to his interference.

Fueled by feelings of love, he felt as if he could even take flight.

Subaru: “So, even if the chances of winning increase only by a little.”

He stopped in front of the frozen floor and mustered strength into his body. He was staring at Ley, and with all his might he was focused on any sudden movements when-

Subaru: “Aah…”

Subaru’s mental alertness was smashed by the amethyst eyes looking at him.

Black and amethyst eyes intersected as the two crossed each other’s line of sight.

At that moment, tears that flooded the girl’s eyes due to her emotions grew bigger and bigger. At any moment, they could indulge her heart, drown her and make her unable to breathe.

In some way or another, by expressing these emotions through her eyes, she was getting some sense of respite.

Therefore-,

???: “Wait, stop, it’s dangerous! Well, you may not know me, but he’s an enemy! Leave this to me! You may not know me, but…!”

Confused for a moment, she waved her hand. Her eyes were blinking while being cautious at the same time.

Slowly, Subaru understood the meaning of her words. He recalled there certainly was a “memory” of her saying the same thing before. He grasped the situation.

Subaru was really happy that he got here first.

He knew exactly what he should say.

Subaru: “It’s okay, Emilia-tan!”

Making her nervous by keeping her waiting, and then potentially getting her into trouble because of it would be bad right now.

Thinking this and thus speaking, he nodded his head. Then, realization washed over Emilia's face as Subaru continued staring at the silver-haired girl.

He was pointing at the sky with his right hand while striking a pose on his hip with the other.

An unnecessary action, but his determination was decided. For that reason,

Subaru: "My name is Natsuki Subaru. Emilia-tan's one and only knight!"

Emilia: "Subaru!"

Subaru: "Woah!?"

He had made his decision, and his face showed only readiness. Emilia quickly rushed towards Subaru with great momentum.

Jumping at Subaru with her momentum, Subaru managed to somehow support Emilia's weight while leaning backwards. Although there was nothing to worry about; she was light as angel's wings. Yep, no problem.

If there was a problem,

Subaru: "Eh, Emilia-tan!? I was surprised, but you smell so good! Did you change your shampoo?"

Emilia: "Idiot! You are so stupid, Subaru! I was very worried! Nevertheless, to say that… Stupid, stupid!"

Subaru: "I'm often told that I'm stupid! No, I guess I can't really make any excuses…"

Being scolded by Emilia while in her arms and with her large eyes staring at him, Subaru was overwhelmed by her presence.

Reluctantly, he grabbed Emilia's thin shoulders, releasing her body,

Subaru: "Sorry for making you worry, but I'm back now… Revived? Stuck back together? My body completely belongs to Natsuki Subaru, or not? Anyways, I'm okay."

Emilia: "Aah…"

Subaru: "Leave 'Natsuki Subaru' in the past. Natsuki Subaru: here with a blast." (I think he's making a joke or pun)

Continuing to talk vigorously, he was trying with all his might to keep Emilia's mind at ease. As those thoughts ran through Subaru's mind, Emilia blinked her eyes and gently touched his chest with her fingers.

Gently being touched, his whole body unintentionally quivered as Emilia spoke,

Emilia: "Your memories, were you able to get them back properly?"

Subaru: "..."

Emilia: "You were still yourself, even when you didn't have your memories. So even if you've remembered everything, well, you know, even if it was for a short amount of time, the you who was giving his all was..."

Subaru: "Ah, yeah. It's okay"

Touching his chest, Emilia awkwardly checked on Subaru's footsteps (she looked back on everything he had done up until this point). When his "memory" consolidated, the other 'Natsuki Subaru' may have been integrated into Subaru, or in a sense disappeared, but Subaru did have time to communicate with him.

Subaru: "Ah, then it's easy."

Subaru: “I was always inside myself, and in Emilia-tan too. So, it’s really okay, Emilia-tan.”

Emilia: “… yup.”

Subaru: “So from now on, please, look forward to ‘Perfect Natsuki Subaru’. Let’s use the frustration from all of this and aim for a bright future!” (he may be making a reference to something, and like always, Emilia-tan doesn’t understand)

Emilia: “Sorry, I don’t really understand what you’re saying.”

Emilia answered the smiling Subaru who was showing a thumbs up with a shake of her head.

Even receiving such an indifferent and cold attitude, Subaru wanted to continue flirting with Emilia every minute, hour and day.

Ley: “… well, are you satisfied with your face-to-face meeting?”

In the middle of their conversation, while Subaru and Emilia were touching each other timidly, came a voice with an insidious grin belonging to the Sin Archbishop, “Gluttony”.

At that moment, Subaru raised his eyebrows at the fact that he hadn’t yet attacked them,

Subaru: “Ah, I didn’t think you’d bother to wait so patiently. You regret having done so?”

Ley: “I would never regret “eating”! To us, that’s part of being a “gourmet”. Isn’t that what you’d call a gourmet too? You should know the pleasure of eating, you have to be attentive to the food. I don’t like when the table is dirty. Isn’t that right?”

With a shrill, laughing voice, Ley talked about concepts of table manners that were difficult to comprehend. Hearing this annoying laughter, Subaru nodded his head deeply.

Then,

Subaru: “Well, well, I see. I certainly agree…”

Ley: “You do?”

Subaru: “Since your sister suffered so badly, I was wondering if you were afraid.” (I think he means the reason why Ley remained quiet for so long before interrupting)

Ley: “...”

Immediately, Ley’s grinning expression changed.

His smile disappeared instantly, and instead was replaced with burning rage. With his intense anger, Ley’s body kicked through the frozen passage and plunged towards Subaru in the blink of an eye.

Ley: “You bastard, you know something about our Louis!”

Subaru: “I don’t know anything. She was the one who entered my body without permission. I don’t know what she was thinking, bastard, and I don’t want to find out.”

His sister was the only person Ley cared about, and so his raging dagger was approaching Subaru. However, Subaru was not afraid of the footsteps of the approaching “death”.

Ley, dominated by rage, ignoring everything but Subaru, was moving towards his target with determination,

Emilia: “I’m here too, don’t forget!”

Ley: “Ahk-!”

With her beautiful voice, Emilia’s well-proportioned and long legs created a beautiful arc. Using centrifugal force, she kicked straight into Ley’s face.

At the moment of impact, Emilia’s ice-fighting technique “Ice Brand Arts” activated and ice boots reinforced her feet and pierced the opponent.

Ley: “Uuh…!”

Emilia gathered strength into her white feet and shattered her opponent’s front teeth. Ley’s small stature could not withstand her power and was sent flying, sliding over the frozen floor and rolling into the back of the passage.

There Emilia, turning her palms further, ruthlessly chased after Ley with freshly created ice that piled onto him and succeeded in damaging the “Gourmet”.

Subaru: “It’s decided! This is a combination technique of my words and Emilia-tan’s cute and murderous killing intent!”

Emilia: “Is that a compliment?”

Subaru: “I’m praising you! You are the best! Very cute! I want to marry you!

Emilia: “Keh!-.. E-enough joking around!”

Emilia’s reaction was a bit unexpected, blushing a little and staring at him. Just as he didn’t want her expression to be washed away, Subaru’s own embarrassment rebounded back onto himself.

Subaru: “Meeting with Emilia-tan made me so much happier. But let’s flirt after we finish all of this and fix the problem.”

Emilia: “Subaru! We don’t know if we’ll get attacked or not! So, stay alert!”

Subaru: “I know! If you continue to beat him like this, I would really appreciate it…”

At that moment, emotional balance was restored between Subaru and Emilia, and so they started to try to break through their current situation – Emilia, paying attention to Ley Batenkaitos in front of her, and Subaru concentrating on the overall problems of the Pleiades Watchtower.

Five Obstacles – they were still threatening the Watchtower and Subaru’s allies within it, even after Natsuki Subaru’s identity problem had been resolved.

However, there were some changes in the circumstances and conditions. For example, the shadow that was trying to swallow the whole tower and would destroy everything, as if it was out of time.

That is-,

Subaru: “That’s the penalty I was thinking about before now…”

It reminded him of when he encountered the shadow back in “Sanctuary”.

The circumstances that caused it was that he talked with Echidna in the “Tomb” and told her all about “Return by Death”. If the events that took place in this tower were similar, the shadow would ruin everything if information about “Return by Death” was leaked.

In other words, the reason behind that was certainly Louis Arneb inside Subaru’s body.

Now that Louis Arneb was eliminated and her presence had disappeared from inside of Subaru, whether or not the shadow swallowed the Pleiades Watchtower was probably 50/50.

Leaving it to [mere chance] wasn’t an option, and so he couldn’t let things slow down.

Subaru: “Emilia-tan! I have an idea!”

Emilia: “Understood! Then let’s do it!”

Subaru: “But I haven’t even said anything yet!?”

Having organized all the possibilities inside his head, as soon as Subaru spoke, without needing an explanation, he received ready consent from Emilia.

Emilia energetically answered “Good!” to Subaru, who was surprised by her reaction.

Emilia: “That idea came to you after you thought very hard! Rather than contemplating everything, from now on I will trust you without needing to think about it!”

Subaru: “Aah, shit! That makes me happy you said that!”

Scratching his head, responding to the trust in him which was making him feel uneasy, he strongly stepped on the floor. Then, Subaru pointed at the space where the ice dust was scattered in the back of the passage.

Subaru: “Anyway, Emilia-tan, put another one in that bastard!”

Emilia: “Aye Aye!”

With a thud, Emilia threw a chunk of ice into the back of the passage.

It would be good if this one was the finishing blow for Ley, but that was unlikely to happen. In fact, Emilia, who was focused on the impact point of the ice chunk, exclaimed “Ah!”

Emilia: “ Subaru! The Sin Archbishop…”

Subaru: “Damn, he’s a stubborn bastard! But, he definitely wouldn’t make it out of that without any damage.”

Based on Emilia's expression, Subaru understood that Ley had disappeared from the point of impact.

Subaru was getting fed up with his cockroach-like resilience, but he felt like the situation could be worse, like with the diligent and foolish Petelgeuse, and also Regulus who didn't have the word "humility" in his dictionary.

Regardless, there was no way that bastard would leave the tower.

Subaru: "Emilia-tan! For the time being, let's join with everyone else! This situation can't be overcome unless we all do our best!"

Emilia: "Okay, but should we just let him go like this?"

Subaru: "To be honest, it would have been better if we had shot him completely before…"

Having already lost once, Ley, while resting a little, would use this time to prepare for the next attack with all his might. In that case, it would currently be difficult to calculate the exact time and place needed to attack Ley.

Then, if that was the case, they would have to prioritize coming up with a plan and leave him alive for now.

Subaru: "Don't worry, he won't be able to leave the tower. As for the thing about Louis… He was fanatical about his sister. That bastard can't get rid of his Sister Complex."

Emilia: "Sister complex…?"

Subaru: "It means being attached to one's sister. In their case, it took the form of bad affections towards his sister."

At least, Louis didn't seem to love her brothers, Ley or Roy. If you didn't know her, you would think that she was a pathetic victim or a role-play maniac who was just intoxicated with playing the victim.

But, ironically, they could only trust in the Sin Archbishop's undistorted distortion.

Subaru: "A person who can be resourceful and flexible, and is able to change their way of thinking wouldn't be a Sin Archbishop in the first place."

That was Subaru's evaluation of the Sin Archbishop with whom he had made unwanted contact.

Therefore, it wasn't easy to hunt down the vile Ley Batenkaitos. And so, this situation which was left unattended by Subaru, would only become worse.

But before that,

Subaru: "Emilia-tan! Let's go towards everyone else's location!"

Emilia: "Yes, understood! But where are all the others…?"

Subaru: "That's the duty of my SubaNav!"

Natsuki Subaru Navigation System.

Or SubaNav for short, he activated "Cor Leonis".

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Invoking his Authority, the coexistence of known and unknown sensations welled up within Subaru, creating a perplexing emotional experience.

He could feel his pounding heart and internal organs' locations inside his body, as if extending his heartbeat to expand the range of what he could perceive outside himself. Almost like sonar, which could grasp the surroundings with the echoes of sound.

Although he was feeling the warmth and faint light of his friends, it was a very limited sensation.

Therefore, though not very versatile and limited to feeling the presence of his friends, it had become the most valuable power for them at that moment.

Sensing the faint light perceived through this power, Subaru raised his head.

First, in order of priority, he rushed to Emilia and then decided to go to the people she helped escape. That is, in other words,

Subaru: “First, collect my cute partner!”

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Subaru grasped most of the current situation in the Pleiades Tower from the sensations transmitted via “Cor Leonis”.

As a persistent effect of the power, he understood the general state of each of his friends and a vague sense of distance in relation to himself. It’s not as though he could share their vision and as such didn’t have a complete grasp of their entire condition.

Even so, if they had wounds, he could shoulder their wounds and burdens, -or even if they got a hangover, he could take that burden too. That was the effect of Subaru’s “Authority of Greed” and there were many various possible uses of this power.

Emilia: “Subaru, are you all right? You look pale…”

Subaru: “Ah, yes, I’m fine. I’m bluffing a little, but I’m all right. At this level, I can still do my best.”

While running side by side, Emilia was worried about Subaru, who was breathing heavily.

The sound of her silver bell-like voice and the gaze of her amethyst eyes was appealing to Subaru and he was expressing his honest feelings.

Although it was difficult, he could bear it. Those were his honest intentions.

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Subaru’s facial expression, which was pointed out by Emilia, was clearly under the influence of the mess related to regaining his “memory” from Louis. Mental fatigue was hard to recover from and it was not easy to recover from a worn out heart either.

However, there were more straightforward causes which were making Subaru suffer. It was due to experiencing the burden of Ram, who suffered this pain every day.

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Subaru: “I would have accepted her wounds without permission, but Ram wouldn’t agree to that…”

Ram, being stubborn, would never let someone else take over her burden. If you made a face-to-face proposal to her “to work hard together”, she, laughing from her nose, would *throw steamed potatoes at your nose*. (some sort of japanese saying perhaps)

So, Ram would carry her own burden. No one could refuse her.

Therefore,

Emilia: “Subaru!”

At the corner of the aisle, Emilia, who was looking ahead, called Subaru. Subaru, inside of whom “Lion’s Heart” was pulsating, understood the meaning of that call.

It was someone who should have left the battlefield and created distance between them while Emilia fought Ley.

Ahead, there was a black earth dragon and a girl with blue hair on its back. The blue haired girl and her nearly identical sister were holding the bridle, while a little girl in a dress stood beside them.

Subaru: “Beako!”

Emilia: “Beatrice!”

Beatrice: “Subaru and a girl whom I can’t recognize are here, I suppose!?”

Beatrice was amazed by Subaru and Emilia who were rushing towards them. Not caring about her reaction, Subaru and Emilia jumped at Beatrice almost at the same time.

At this point, embracing the little girl who was screaming,

Subaru: “Oh, Beako, Beako, you are so lightweight! You are so cute and smart!”

Emilia: “Look, Beatrice! Subaru remembers everything! Maybe you can’t recognize me… but Subaru remembered! I’m so happy about that…”

Beatrice: “Well, wait, I suppose! Hold on, in fact! It seems a reunion with someone I know and someone I don’t is happening at the same time, making a mess in Betty’s mind, I suppose!”

Beatrice, swinging her head around, alternated between the words of Subaru and Emilia, her eyes shifting between black and white. But she immediately thrusted her palm out and to silence Emilia,

Beatrice: “… Subaru”

Subaru: “Aah”

Beatrice: “Do you really remember everything, I suppose? Even about Betty, about the time you spent with Betty, everything, in fact?”

Subaru: “I do, no need to make such an anxious face. I remember everything and I can make up as much as I want. Everything that happened or didn’t happen between us!”

Beatrice: “There is no need to make up anything, I suppose! O-oh, my-, in fact!”

Subaru lifted Beatrice into his arms while she took his face with both hands. Looking closely at his smooshed face, Beatrice sighed deeply.

Then she rolled her distinctively patterned eyes,

Beatrice: “You really just do as you please with Betty, in fact.”

Subaru: “A contractor that would not bore you – that was the deal. And you said that I wasn’t Superman, but…”

Beatrice: “- ?”

Subaru: “Looking objectively, I am Superman, aren’t I?”

Subaru laughed at Beatrice, while winking his eye. For a moment, Beatrice’s eyes rounded and her cheeks blushed.

Beatrice: “I think you’re getting carried away, I suppose!”

Subaru: “That’s right. Those who get over-excited are the type of people who can get the job done. And…”

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Subaru took a sideways glance at Ram, who was standing there with a pitiful face. Narrowing her crimson eyes, she pierced Subaru with her gaze.

Subaru: "Ah, Nee-sama?"

Ram: "It's been a long time since the snow melted (I think it's a metaphor for it being a while since he's acted like his original self). Making such a huge fuss just like the real Barusu."

Subaru: "… well, 'all in a day's work.' "

Subaru had no choice but to smile at her calling it a huge fuss.

Actually, given the nearly twenty deaths that Subaru experienced and the mental burden that came with it, one would think that it wasn't just a single day's worth of work.

From Subaru's point of view, it felt more like he had lost memory for several years.

Subaru: "But, I'm back in full force. Say hello to a man who can produce 150% of his power for everyone's sake – Natsuki Subaru!"

Ram: "Ha! Good, say whatever you like. Just don't let the Merciful Ram miss it.

Subaru: "How could you miss it? Bangladesh!" (Random words being spouted as he's blown away, thanks aratinga for the correction)

Beatrice: W-whaaa?!

While Ram was parsing the meaning of his words, and tilting her, Beatrice and the others were blown away by the tail of the earth dragon.

Subaru and Beatrice were thrown and spun until something soft stopped them. Looking at what stopped them, they recognized Emilia, who was also blown away. She was softly supporting Subaru's body from his back and smiling "fufu".

Emilia: “Patrasche is very happy about your return too, Subaru.”

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In Emilia’s line of sight, a dark, black majestic creature was standing.

After that intense tail-blow, Subaru held Beatrice in his arms, whose eyes were spinning from surprise,

Subaru: “Sorry for the tsundere-like treatment. I worried you a lot too. After all…”

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Supported by Emilia, Subaru, standing back up, faced Patrasche who glanced at him with sharp eyes. And, recalling her unchanging devotion to him despite having no “memory”,

Subaru: Really, I was saved by you. I love you.

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Subaru: “… You’re not going to knock me down like usual, are you?.”

When confessing his love, he always got scolded by Patrasche in a lady-like manner but this time it was different. Or it’s,

Subaru: “Whether I’m joking or serious, does this earth dragon understand that too?.”

Beatrice: “… that’s right, in fact.”

How they suddenly got so close, to the point that Beatrice was speaking for Patrasche's inner feelings was unclear. But, since there were no more tail attacks to refute her assertion, Beatrice's interpretation was quite right.

Now that Beatrice acquired the ability to translate for Patrasche, at last Otto could be relieved of that burden.

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Subaru: "Rem!"

Rem was on the back of Patrasche, her body lying over the saddle.

Of course, because she was still asleep, she couldn't hear the joy caused by Subaru's memory coming back. However, seeing Rem's profile, different feelings arose in Subaru's chest.

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In the white world, having been beguiled by Louis Arneb's poisonous, sweet nothings, at the moment when he would have definitely become the victim of "Gluttony", there was no voice that could kick away his cowardice.

But she was someone who wouldn't let Natsuki Subaru forget himself.

So again, overcoming death for forty times, he still returned.

Subaru: "These feelings need to be postponed for later. Some way or another, my memory is back. I'm happy that everyone wants to celebrate that but first, let's fix this situation."

Ram: "A celebration for you is a very high estimate of yourself. I don't know what happened in this short time... and.."

Emilia: “Ah, me?”

Snorting at Subaru who changed the tone of his voice, Ram’s eyes turned to Emilia. What her eyes reflected was the usual arrogance and sense of discomfort.

As it was clear from Beatrice’s reaction too, still,

Subaru: “It’s Emilia. You don’t remember her, I guess.”

Ram: “I know you helped us escape earlier. But I can’t remember anything more. Beatrice…”

Beatrice: “It’s the same for Betty too, I suppose. The result of “Gluttony’s” power, in fact.”

Agreeing with Ram, Beatrice had the same expression on her face. The same thing that happened to Julius in Priestella also happened to Emilia in this tower. The whole situation had become a painful wound that tailed off, and,

Emilia: “Yes! I’m Emilia, just Emilia. I have a lot to say, but we’re all like a family looking in the same direction!”

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Emilia: “I’d be fine if you could at least understand that much. After finding out that Subaru remembers me, I’m feeling really good.”

Emilia bravely flexed her bicep on her white arm – no, that was not courage, she was really smiling with no fear inside herself.

Over that extremely magnificent act, not only Subaru but Beatrice became speechless too. Unusually, even Ram had her eyes open with surprise.

Emilia: “What? Did I say something strange?”

Subaru: “Well, that was a little bit weird, but it was really cool.”

Answering Emilia's reaction, which was a little hasty, Subaru stretched his mouth open and smiled. After Subaru spoke, it was Ram who exhaled deeply, saying "well".

Confirming Emilia's appearance,

Ram: "So, you said your name was Emilia. Curiously, when I look at you, one side of my head feels uncomfortable, like an itchy burning sensation. The same happens for Rem too."

Subaru: "That's…"

Ram: "Having disappeared from my head, it seems that filling that space is difficult. Other than Rem, it's hard to think that Ram had such a relationship."

Ram, narrowing her eyes, was making sure to trace Emilia's presence that disappeared from inside her head. Hearing her words, Subaru felt uneasy.

Ram said all that, but there was no doubt in Subaru's mind that she cared for Emilia, as he was able to watch their relationship from the side. All that accumulated time was lost, so it was only natural that Ram had no idea what to expect.

However-,

Ram: "Just by looking at you and this feeling of pain in my head is the answer to our relationship. So, don't worry. Ram hates being left alone."

Emilia: " It's the same for me too. Definitely, I'll never give up!"

Ram: "Yes, never give up 100 million times!"

Emilia: "That's a lot!"

Subaru was reminded of how reliable Emilia and Ram are, who were exchanging fearless smiles.

Her "name" should have been taken away, she should have been isolated and the relationship should have been broken down. However, Emilia was not defeated by

isolation, and she kept her heart strong. Thanks to that, the cascading destruction that could have started with Emilia could not break the foundations of Subaru, Ram and the others.

Moreover,

> Ram: “Barusu, I just remembered that I had forgotten, but it’s not like I’m going to remember absolutely everything.” (I think Ram is saying this in a very mean/rude way, which is typical of her)
>
> Subaru: “I understand even without being told, but what a way to say it!”

So, without the need for persuasion, he was thankful for them being cooperative.

Anyway, having regained trust, the situation having been explained, tackling each issue while bonding, the dilemma in the tower in the dunes was still tough.

Therefore,

> Subaru: “Let’s tear down those three sibling’s “Eating Festival” with the power of our bonds!”
>
> Emilia: “Yup!”
>
> Beatrice: “Of course, in fact!”
>
> Ram: “Ha!”

Having received replies from three sides, Subaru nodded his head to all of them.

Then,

> Subaru: “I’m still scattered, but I feel like I’m home!”

That was a small but important and certainly deep emotion.