A Dangan Ronpa fan story starring sixteen original characters stuck in the Kamakura History Museum, written in the format of a game script. Readers will have the opportunity to choose who the main character spends their free time with and trial puzzles will be given in a way that allows the readers to solve the puzzles themselves. Updates will be erratic, so if you're interested, I would suggest subscribing rather than just checking every week or so. TvTropes Page at: http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Fanfic/DanganRonpaLegacyOfDespair

Notes

Introduction: Here's what some of the different text formats mean.

Bracketed Words describe actions made by the characters, camera, and things related to the "game mechanics".

Italicized Words are our main character, Takito Narita's, thoughts.

Bold and Italicized Words are Takito describing the situation after the fact.

More formats will be explained at our first trial.
Hope’s Peak Academy…

The name is whispered throughout the country. A school populated entirely by the best in their field, where entrants are selected not by wealth or connections, but exclusively by merit. Only the most skilled in any talent can be elevated to the school’s prestigious Super High-School Level and allowed to enroll.

I admire their honesty and truth, and taking a class there was my life goal.

...But I didn’t quite make the cut.

My name is Takito Narita. I’m the son in a fairly famous family, but I’m neither skilled enough for the main school nor rich enough to be a reserve student. Today, I’m visiting Hope’s Peak to deliver a present and say hi to a special friend of mine. I hear he’s recently been admitted, and I thought that giving him an enrollment gift would be just the thing he needed.

The doors stood before me, conveying the towering ability of people within. I pushed them open and... and... and...

I don’t remember.

Takito: Hngh… Hngh…

Where am I? Some sort of bedroom…
I don’t remember ever seeing this place before…

[Examination Begins]

[Examine Bed]

Plush… At least whoever brought me here likes me.

[Examine Shower]

A shower? This place is built for extended stay.

[Examine Desk]

Hmm… Oh, keys!

Why would someone lock me inside a room and then just give me the keys? I feel like I’m in a terrible “escape the room” game. (Keys Acquired)

[Examine Door]

I may have only assumed these keys would work… Here goes!

*click*

Whew… But still, what is this place?

[Move to Dorm Hallway]

Huh? More Rooms…

[Camera focus on Takito’s Door Panel]

Why is my face on the door?
[Camera returns to all the doors]

*Wait, there are faces on every door!*

...*Is this some sort of boarding school?*

[Move to Employee Hallway]

[Camera focus on “Employees Only” Sign]

*Employees Only? So it’s not a boarding school…*  

**What is this place?**

[Camera returns to normal]

[Move to Foyer]

...*People!*

Takito: *HEY! DID YOU WAKE UP IN A BEDROOM, TOO?*

Bespectacled Shy Boy: *D-don’t shout so loud!*

Tired Large-Build Boy: Of course we did, numbnuts. [shrugs] Can’t you, you know, infer things?

*Well I kind of expected a better –*

Device-Sporting Snide Girl: You aren’t very bright. [smiles] Regardless of our situation, we would’ve woken up in a bedroom anyway.

Yellow and Black Energetic Girl: [muffled whispering] Don’t listen to her. Bertrand thinks you’re smart.

*I feel like I had more answers before I –*
Blackbeard Impersonator: Now, now, keep your wits about ya, mate! We need all hands on deck right now!

Formal Red Dress Girl: Kasai-san is correct. [smiles] Credibility is an essential part of presentation.

Takito: Could someone explain what’s –

Verdant Costumed Girl: [points wand at Takito] Sweet Flower Enlightenment Beam!

Uptight Hispanic Boy: Everybody shuddup!

[mumbles continue from everyone]

Uptight Hispanic Boy: [Flips open glass case from his watch with a red button and number panel attached to it.]

[mumbles immediately die down]

Uptight Hispanic Boy: [Closes glass case and puts arms at his sides] Now that I have your attention, let’s explore our surroundings in an organized manner.

This kid has some sort of serious power over the others…

Uptight Hispanic Boy: First, it’s only polite that I introduce myself to the newest member of our little group. [valiant pose] Before you stands the great Pablo Vargas III, the excellent ruler of the island nation La Espera, and the Super High-School Level Dictator of Hope’s Peak Academy.

[SHSL Dictator Title Card]
Pablo: Under my rule, my proud people repelled the invaders of several nations. I have used the cleverest of diplomatic ploys and acquired the best imports for my country. [crosses arms] Rest assured, this dilemma will be solved shortly, and those responsible [eyes gleam as he looks down] … will pay dearly.

He seems a bit overzealous, but it’s easy to see where he got his influence.

Pablo: And so I have introduced myself. Now it is your turn.

Takito: Oh, yeah. I’m Takito Narita.

Pablo: What about your talent?

Takito: Talent?

…That’s right! Every student at the main school of Hope’s Peak Academy has a particular talent they are the best at.

…But I’m not a student here…

Takito: I, uh, don’t have one.

Pablo: [puzzled expression] Narita-kun, this is no time for jokes.

Takito: I’m not joking. I came to Hope’s Peak to deliver someone a gift.

Pablo: …

Should I have said that?

Pablo: Well, to be honest, that’s not much of a setback for this group. You will be a valuable asset
still. (valiant pose) In the meantime, we shall begin our exploration of this museum.

_Museum?_

[Camera pans over to text above the help desk]

“Kamakura History Museum”…?

Pablo: Takito, you would do well to introduce yourself to others. “Positive relationships are key to a cohesive team,” as my father has said.

[Examination Begins]

[Talk to Pablo]

Takito: Pablo, do you know who this Kamakura might be?

Pablo: Of course! Izuru Kamakura is the founder of Hope’s Peak Academy. This museum was most likely built in his honor.

_Could the school be responsible for whatever’s going on?_

[Talk to Formal Red Dress Girl]

Formal Red Dress Girl: Of all the people to be stuck with, you’re very fortunate its me. (smiles) Are you sure you’re not one of the Super High-School Level Good Lucks they keep talking about?

Takito: …Excuse me?

Formal Red Dress Girl: [giggles] Oh, silly me! It looks like I’ve forgotten the basics. [smiles] I’m Tamaki Ozu, the Super High-School Level Hostess.

[SHSL Hostess Title Card]
Tamaki: [brings out gourmet sample] Here why don’t you try my five-star catering? Sautéed Lox is a savory wave to calm your nerves.

Takito: No thank you. Hey, uh, do you know what’s the deal with Pablo’s watch?

Tamaki: [smiles] Oh… [opens eyes and stares intently] It would not be wise to talk about that while a certain person is in the room…

Takito: I get it. This is starting to seriously scare me…

[Talk to Beige-Vested Worried Girl]

Beige-Vested Worried Girl: [looks frightened]

Takito: Hey, I’m Takito Narita. I’m not here to hurt you.

Beige-Vested Worried Girl: [Grabs rock, chisels it to a point] Back off! I have… I have… I HAVE A VERY SPECIFIC SET OF SKILLS!

Takito: Is she SHSL Hostage Negotiator? What are these skills, per se?

Beige-Vested Worried Girl: I, Itsumi Jukodo, the SHSL Archaeologist, will conquer my f..fff… [drops rock and flinches away from it.]

[SHSL Archaeologist Title Card]

Itsumi: dirtydirtydirty… [bites lip]

Takito: May I help you? Does she have…
Itsumi: Don’t you dare think I have OCD!

Gah!

Itsumi: I… I just don’t like dirt is all! [bites lip] D-don’t make me hurt you!

Takito: No, I think I’m going to leave you alone for now. I’ll see you later then.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Talk to Vigor-Filled Cyborg]

Vigor-Filled Cyborg: Ah, yes, the vocally challenged boy from earlier. [salutes with robot arm] I’ve been looking for you, as it is my duty as a citizen to relieve you of one of your worries.

Is that what people really think of me?

Vigor-Filled Cyborg: Rest assured, fellow citizen, because the hypersensitive patriot sense of Wataru Gensai, proud Japanese citizen and Super High School Level Pyrotechnist, has come to a most satisfying conclusion.

[SHSL Pyrotechnist title card]

Wataru: We are, without a doubt, still in the greatest country on Earth!

Wait, Patriot sense? I better not think too hard about that, and since we’re out of the room…

Takito: Well, would you mind using your patriot sense to discover what’s up with Pablo’s watch?

Wataru: No need, my friend. [fighting stance, and mechanical arm starts releasing steam] That foreign tyrant has already betrayed its purpose to us! [punches air]

That watch connects to his nation’s nuclear arms!
Whaaat!?

Wataru: If we do not bend to his will, he threatens to launch his missiles directly upon Hope’s Peak!

He’ll nuke us!? No wonder everyone seemed scared when he pulled out the watch…

Wataru: But fear not! I, you, and any other patriots we find will lead a surprise attack on such foreign rule, remove the watch, and with it, his power!

Takito: I’ll keep that in mind.

Maybe I should talk about the elephant in the room…

Takito: What happened to your arm..? 

Wataru: [looks down on the verge of tears]

Maybe I should have just let it eat its peanuts…

Wataru: It is a badge of shame! A foolish sacrifice in the naïve, early days of my craft! And because of my injury, I am forbidden to serve in the world’s greatest army! [sniffles] Look away, now, I beg you!

Normally, I stick around to fix my messes, but…

[Move to Employee Center]

Look at all the office machinery in here. It’s so formal, I would’ve felt guilty if I didn’t have a suit.
Takito: Hi there! You seem right at home already!

Device-Sporting Snide Girl: [Doesn’t notice Takito, keeps messing with her computers]

Takito: It’s okay, I’ll leave you to um… [peeks at her screen] buy stocks.

Device-Sporting Snide Girl: [continues typing away] Simpleton.

Takito: Excuse me?

Device-Sporting Snide Girl: [stylishly closes laptop lid] Sim-ple-ton. You honestly think whoever’s kept us here would give us internet?

_Come to think of it, that was kind of “simple”._

Device-Sporting Snide Girl: [switches to swiping tablet] I’m simply playing a pre-downloaded stock game. As Nahoko Miyake, the Super High School Level Day Trader, and highly esteemed leader of the Miyake Investment Group…

[NHSL Day Trader Title Card]

Nahoko: …I must sharpen myself at all times.

_That’s some dedication._

Nahoko: After your mistake of a sentence, it’s clear to me that you could use some guidance in the dangerous world of economics. [exaggerated swipe on her tablet]

Our firm is famous for excellency and efficiency, and prides itself on superb results.

[Switches to dual smartphones] Perhaps you have heard of our greatest accomplishment, how we
helped the great Byakuya Togami in his famous 40,000,000,000 yen outing into the stock market. Without our advice, we are confident his results would only have 400,000,000 yen.

*That’s still a lot…*

Takito: Err… Did you make that round shelf you wear yourself?

Nahoko: [sulks and looks to the side] No, my mother makes them for everyone at the firm. [spins shelf] Being able to spin them around and easily reach all my devices is essential to my performance.

_Maybe I should get my dad one of those…_

Nahoko: Don’t bother asking for one. They’re not for sale.

Takito: …

*I’m going to leave before she reads my mind again._

[Move to Help Desk]

*It’s a help desk for the main foyer. Tamaki is doing a princess wave at me, Pablo is carefully examining pair of doors, and Itsumi appears to be cursing me from a distance.*

[Move to Employee Center]

[Move to Employee Hallway]

[Move to Cafeteria]

*Hmm… This place is pretty good looking. Not what I expected for something most customers don’t see.*
[Talk to Bespectacled Shy Boy]

Bespectacled Shy Boy: [takes Takito’s photo]

Hey!

Takito: Shouldn’t you ask people before you do that?

Bespectacled Shy Boy: [sulks] …Don’t talk so loud.

Takito: [whispers] Okay, I won’t speak so loud to you, but Pablo asked me to introduce myself to everyone here.

Bespectacled Shy Boy: [scared expression] …

You know, maybe I’ll just talk to someone else about him.

Bespectacled Shy Boy: [Hands Takito Newspaper] …Take it.

Wait, what? A newspaper column?

About the Editor: Ryouta Miki

As our proud school’s Super High School Level Reporter, Ryouta Miki is head editor of the Hope’s Peak Newsletter. His credentials include winning both the National Student Journalist Photography and National Student Journalist Crime Column awards, the only case of one student earning multiple awards. His personal choice for his best accomplishment is his shocking exposé of the Kuzuryuu family’s illegal printing and selling of counterfeit pollution permits.

[SHSL Reporter Title Card]
Takito: Is that you?

Ryouta: …

_Hmm. Must’ve been._

[Move to Serving Zone]

_Normally, I’d get my food here, but considering the circumstances, I’ll probably have to get my own food here. It might make me seem spoiled, but I can’t remember many times I’ve served myself._

Takito: [sighs]

[Move to Kitchen]

_All this tasty food! I’m drooling a little, but the fact that our captor prepared all this make it all a bit suspect._

[ Talk to Blackbeard Impersonator]

_This fellow doesn’t look like a high school student…_

Takito: Excuse me, how old are you? _That beard makes you look in your 30’s…_

Blackbeard Impersonator: Ho, ho! You think I’m too old for high school? [Bends down and jokingly stares Takito in the eye]

...  

Blackbeard Impersonator: [laughs] I’m only 14, mate!
F-fourteen and a beard?!?

Blackbeard Impersonator: [laughs harder] Just pulling your chain, matey! I’m 15.

Takito: …I don’t have words.

Blackbeard Impersonator: Well I do, matey! My name’s Benito Kasai, and the fish selection here is superb! I’m surprised I didn’t catch it myself!

Takito: What? S-slow down! Err… Could you please be a little more consistent?

Benito: [smiles creepily] I’ll oblige your request, but for future reference, using formal manners is an insult to scurvy dogs like me! [laughs] Yarharhar! I’m the Super High Seas Level Fisherman!

[SHSL Fisherman Title Card]

Benito: Oy! Takara!

Takara, Benito’s Shoulder Parrot: Hungry!

Wait, that was alive?

...

I don’t know much about pirates, but I thought they’d be more straightforward than this.

Benito: Matey! It’s high time you repaid me for such a gem of information!

Takito: Sorry. …I don’t feel like swabbing the poop deck anytime soon.
Benito: [smiles creepily] Now matey…

Takito: !

Benito: If we were in a boat and not a museum, you’d be chum for such words.

Takito: ! …okayi’lldoitjustpleasedon’tkillme

Benito: [laughs and hands Takito a minnow] Great! Now, feed Takara.

Takito: *I guess I overestimated him…* [Tosses Takara the fish]

Takara: [eats fish midair] Thank ye! Thank ye!

*I’m going to leave before he finds more chores for me.*

[Move to Serving Area]

[Move to Cafeteria]

[Move to Employee Hallway]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Talk to Energetic Pigtail Girl]

*She isn’t facing me. Better get her attention.*

Takito: Hey, it’s me! Takito!
...Still ignoring me.

Energetic Pigtail Girl: [Opens eye on the back of her head]

*Wait, nope nope what no I did not sign up for any of—*

Energetic Pigtail Girl: [turns around] Got ya, didn’t I!

Takito: D-don’t do that to people!

Energetic Pigtail Girl: [twirls hair] Do what?

Takito: Do that!

Energetic Pigtail Girl: Doo rag?

*Ugh. Now that I look at her, everything about her is as piercing as that third eye. Especially that eye-shaped belt buckle.*

Takito: [shudders]

Energetic Pigtail Girl: Anyhoo, I’m Hitomi Yunokawa, the S-H-S-L Mutant!

[SHSL Mutant Title Card]

Hitomi: Yeah!

Takito: Yeah!
Did I just say that?

Hitomi: I bet that Pablo wants me to introduce myself formally, eh?

At least she gets the picture.

Hitomi: [clears throat and grabs paper, reading it in a stuffy manner] “Subject 125 is human woman that exhibits polydactyly on both hands and a fully functional eye on the back of her head. Yadda, yadda, yadda, skipping to the good stuff… Aha! Such abnormal extra body parts cannot normally be controlled, but the subject has shown uncanny ability to utilize her gifts. This particular ability is what makes her, according to the officials at Hope’s Peak Academy, Super High School Level.

Does everyone come with these explanatory letters? I’d really like them.

Hitomi: So remember, Takito, wherever you are, I’ll always, always have eyes…

…on you! Boo!


Hitomi: See you later! Get it, see! C!

[Move to Laundry]

A laundry? I don’t get what’s all this stuff doing here. Employees don’t normally live at their workplaces, especially at museums.

[Talk to Pinstriped Pretty Boy]

This fellow seems a little too interested in this batch of laundry.
Pinstriped Pretty Boy: Hongh... Hongh... [reels]

Takito: Are you... messing with women’s underwear?

Pinstriped Pretty Boy: Wait, whuh? No no, absolute slander, not true! [turns around] Gah! [removes panties from his head]

Takito: But I saw it happen.

Pinstriped Pretty Boy: No, no, you must have mistaken a more lecherous, dirty man for myself! [grabs and stares at robe]

Takito: But I saw it happen.

Pinstriped Pretty Boy: [valiant pose] But I am a man of pure heart! Ladies have always sung the praises of... [places rose in mouth] ...Okita Sugitani, Super High School Level Playboy!

[SHSL Playboy]

Takito: I saw it happen. And that didn’t help your case.

Okita: [blood begins to drip out of where he bit the rose, and Okita looks distraught]

Takito: And you know, your name sounds a bit familiar.

Okita: [returns to valiant pose] But of course! I have a relationship advice blog known throughout the country! [picks a petal from his rose] Only a miserly gentleman would refuse the opportunity to help others!

Takito: Oh, yeah, now I remember you! You’re the guy whose tips turned my sister’s boyfriend into an asshole.
Okita: Err… [distraught]

Takito: He told about all these scuzzy tricks you teach people to use on women.

Okita: [rose’s petals blow away] Abort! [jumps into pile of clothes]

…I really hope we get out of here soon.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Storage]

Finally, a room that belongs in a museum!

[Talk to Overalls and Scythe Girl]

Overalls and Scythe Girl: Hey, your name was Narita, wasn’t it? Would you mind helping me with these boxes over here?

Finally, a person that belongs in err…

Normal land?

Takito: Sure. But call me Takito.

I started moving some boxes, but the girl stopped me.

Overalls and Scythe Girl: I probably should have been clearer; I need you to search through the boxes, not open them. [smiles] Pablo asked me to look for supplies.
Takito: Nah, I understand. *Now that I think about it, that was worse than the bed thing. I'm glad she seems trustworthy enough to share this.*

Overalls and Scythe Girl: By the way, I’m Kotori Ijiri, the SHSL Farmer. Pleased to meet you.

I *rummaged through the boxes with Kotori.*

Takito: Y’know, I was wondering why you carry that scythe around. There’s no need to kill anyone.

Kotori: It’s just my mother’s. It’s actually not just a scythe; it’s an experimental farmer’s multitool. I’ve been working on getting it available for public purchase.

Takito: Your mother’s? That’s really kind of you.

Kotori: There’s no need for flattery. I’m just trying to follow in her footsteps.

I *would’ve liked to stay a bit longer, but I had finished with the boxes. She might be worth keeping as a friend after this whole thing is through.*

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Garbage Disposal]

An incinerator? Is the curator some sort of doomsday prepper?

[Talk to Verdant Costumed Girl]

Verdant Costumed Girl: Filthy garbage choking our planet! Begone, and tell your creators to feel the wrath off nature!
It looks like she’s in the middle of something…

Verdant Costumed Girl: Florify Sparkle Strike! [hits pile of garbage with her wand]

[A flower grows in the garbage]

Woah! Is she the real deal?


Takito: Since we’re stuck here, would you mind telling me your real name?

Gaia-chan: Never! [points wand at Takito] My identity must be kept secret from all those who wish to endanger the Earth! Chlorophyllic Sunlight Blast!

Well, might as well as see if his influence will affect her again…

Takito: You know, Pablo said you had to.

Gaia-chan: [dejected look] Urk! [curses sky] Gah, curse the indoors! I have no sunlight for my most powerful attacks! [pouty look] Anyway, my civilian name is Chiyo Ando, and I’m the SHSL Magical Girl.

[SHSL Magical Girl Title Card]

Chiyo: [poses] Now, you must promise not to tell anyone! My duties as Nature’s Angel include secret attacks upon polluters and the enemies of natural life. [waggle wand in attack pose] Many people wish me out of the picture, if you know what I mean.

Takito: You mean there are hits out on you?
Chiyo: Of course! Gaia-chan is Japan’s 2nd most wanted! [smiles] Don’t tell that cyborg fellow, though, I here he’s the type to turn me in.

*Now I’m just curious about who’s the first…*

[Move to Dorm Hallway]

[Move to Gym]

*I guess we won’t have to lose our conditioning after all?*

[Talk to Beige Dress and Rimless Glasses Girl]

Beige Dress and Rimless Glasses Girl: Pablo eínaí éna kataraméno aftarchiký alazoniký malákas!

Takito: Excuse me? Hello?

Beige Dress and Rimless Glasses Girl: Mtekaji yetu pengine ni laughing punda zao mbali katika uzembe wake. [notices Takito] Oh, it seems I have a visitor.

Takito: Yeah, it’s me, Takito Narita. I’m from the foyer, remember?

Beige Dress and Rimless Glasses Girl: Ah yes, Vzpomínám si říkal něco o drobné lůžek. For future reference, I’ll refer to you as Kansai Dialect Male #345.

*How did she…? I’ve barely said anything.*

Takito: Is there anything I can refer to you as?

[SHSL Polyglot Title Card]

Satoko: I know almost every language. [shifts glasses and smirks] I’ve memorized all the dead, nearly dead, and widely spoken ways of saying “Þú ert hálfviti.”

*I’m just going to pretend that “halfwity” is not a cognate.*


Takito: [nods] ...I have no intention of incurring the wrath of a private army today, so I’m just going to play it safe and be silent.

Satoko: Oh, and here’s a German proverb from me to you. [smirks] Holen Sie sich Eis, wenn er trifft dich.

[Move to Pool]

*Hey, someone’s here without a swimsuit. I hope they don’t fall in.*

[Talk to Distraught Pious Fellow]

Distraught Pious Fellow: [stressed in appearance] Oh please, give me a shoulder to lean on, good sir! [leans on Takito]

*It’s not thaaaat bad.*

Takito: Eh…. Something on your mind?
Distraught Pious Fellow: What? Isn’t it obvious? We’re trapped!

Come to think of it, maybe this is the normal reaction...

Takito: …But why do you feel so sad more than anyone else?

Distraught Pious Fellow: Oh, that’s right! I guess that question would be there if you didn’t know me… [stands upright and sternly] I am Akinori Kurokawa, the SHSL Preacher!

[SHSL Preacher Title Card]

Akinori: [distraught pose] And woe is me! My people need me for guidance! We’ll probably be trapped in here forever, and soon my parish will stop waiting for me, and then they’ll start drinking and smoking and killing and sinning and—

Takito: [puts hand on Akinori] That’s a bit of an overreaction. First off, we probably won’t be in here forever.

Akinori: O… K… then, how do I stop feeling so… so…

I may have bitten off more than I can chew here.

Takito: Err., Let’s try some breathing exercises. In… Out… In… Out…

We practiced deep breathing for a few minutes.

Akinori: [smiling and overcome with joy] Narita-san! W-where did you learn this miraculous technique!
Most everybody knows it, honestly, but I don’t know if should say that.

Akinori: [fills incense pot] Here, let me bless this pool water… [splashes Takito]

Takito: Gah!

Akinori: Feel better? Holy water is a cure-all for the murkiness of the mind.

*Yeah. It helped me remember why I don’t like going to church.*

[Move to Changing Room]

*Why is this here? Does the museum have its own swimteam?*

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Talk to Yellow and Black Energetic Girl]

Takito: Hello there! I’m—

???: buzzzz…

*Oh no. ohnoohnoohnoohno. Is that…*

Bee: buzzzz…

*Okay, remember what to do. Just stand still, and I won’t sting you.*

Takito: [attempts not to move face] …helpme
Yellow and Black Energetic Girl: Bertrand! Bad boy!

Bee: buzz? [flies away]

Yellow and Black Energetic Girl: Oh you know Bertrand. Always gets up close and personal with new friends.

Takito: Actually, I don’t know Bertrand. Or you.

Yellow and Black Energetic Girl: Whaaaaaat? You haven’t seen me on TV before? [points to self with thumb] I’m Yasue Temko, the SHSL Beekeeper and star of my own show, [jazz hands] Yasue Temko: Bee Whisperer!

[SHSL Bee Keeper Title Card]

Takito: Sounds interesting. Can you actually talk to bees?

Yasue: Nope! That’s ridiculous!

_I didn’t think ridiculous was in this girl’s vocabulary._

Yasue: [grasps Bertrand and looks at him lovingly] I share such an intimate and immediate connection with bees that speech is obsolete!

...Well, I guess they don’t call her SHSL for nothing.

Yasue: Like right now, I can tell that Bertrand really _really_ likes you. [cute face] He wants to cuddle up to you. Right. Now.

...And I’m getting out of here. Right. Now.
Move to Tired Large-Build Boy’s Room

_Huh?_

[Camera zooms out to give a more holistic view of the room]

_He’s completely ransacked his own room!_

[Camera zooms back to normal position]

_It’s so ruined and messy yet so comprehensive and thorough – this’ll take hours to clean up. Our captor probably won’t be happy about this…_

Takito: [quietly] crapppp…

Tired Large-Build Boy: Hm? [turns around and stops rummaging through dresser] Hey! Get over here!

_Judging from his size, I’m not in any position to disobey._

_I carefully tiptoed across the room, trying to only step on the small islands of exposed floor._

Tired Large-Build Boy: Is that Pablo kid around here?

Takito: …N-no?

Tired Large-Build Boy: Good. Now listen up. [whispers] I don’t like to hurt people. I don’t want people to think I’m that kind of person.

*_gulp*_
Tired Large-Build Boy: But I’m sure as hell not letting some pompous autocrat screw up my life. [slams fist into palm] So get the word out – if anyone decides to report any of my “indiscretions” to Castro Jr. there, [looks to the side] they can expect to feel whatever punishment Pablo gives me; times two.

Takito: Wait, you’re not upset about being trapped?

Tired Large-Build Boy: Nah. If this place is what I think it is, I’ve been meaning to get myself locked up in one of these places for a long time. I wasn’t aware being locked down in a museum was something you could just “get”.

Tired Large-Build Boy: Now, if you’ll excuse me, you should be going now… ahem.

[Automoved to Dorm Hallway]

Takito: Wait, I er, have to know your name!

Tired Large-Build Boy: Is this for Pablo?

Should I lie…? It might come back to bite me.

Takito: Yeah…

Tired Large-Build Boy: [begins closing door]

Takito: If you don’t, he’ll probably punish you! Big time!


[SHSL ??? Title Card]
Ikkaku: I’m not saying it again. [slams door]

That seems like everybody...

Announcements: Ding dong, ding dong! Students, this is your headmaster speaking! All students of Hope’s Peak Academy, please report to the museum foyer for a very special announcement!

…Oh, and the loser non-student should probably come too. Trust me, it’ll be in all your best interest! Upupupu! Upupupu!

…! Our captor was the headmaster? And he wants to see us in person?

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

When I opened the door, I found the other students, sans Kirigiri. They were all arguing and bickering about the identity of the captor.

Itsumi: [holding sharpened rock] Did you honestly think that headmaster act and voice filter would fool anyone? J-jig’s up, P-pablo! [drops rock and flinches away from it]

Akinori: [scowling face] You monster! Is this some sort of intricate hostage situation?

Pablo: [dismissive pose] Absolutely not! [crosses arms] I posses no device capable of modulating my voice, and I was here, with witnesses, the whole time!

Benito: Cpt. Pablo makes some sense with that one… [unsheathes sword] And besides, if anyone here be capable of such a thing, it be the lass with the server round her waist.

Nahoko: [about to throw smartphone] You insolent bilge water! I’m innocent without a doubt, and
when we getting out of here, I’m shorting your two-bit fishing—

Okita: [sniffs rose] There’s no need to explain. I can tell when a lady’s lying, you most certainly are no—

Nahoko: [smacks Okita with a tablet] CAN IT!

Satoko: C’mon. Does anyone here really believe the words of a diktators? I’d bet money that watch can change your voice and do a whole lot more.

???: I do. He didn’t make that announcement, I did.

Hitomi: Finally, confirmation! [reaches out for hug] …Wait, who said that?

[Camera shifts to the reception desk as a black and white teddy bear jumps onto the counter.]

Bear: It was me, ya bastards! I’m the headmaster, me, Monobear! [points at crowd] And don’t you ever think it’s anyone else.

Tamaki: I don’t recall the headmaster looking like that…

Ryouta: Eep! [cowers]

Monobear: I’m glad you’ve all gotten situated in our extended stay at the school museum. Nothing makes a bear like me happier than getting to skip tutorials! [happy pose] …But it’s time for the real reason you’re here! The mega hope-destroying purpose we’ve treated you all to a field trip!

Chiyo: [overjoyed expression] Oh boy, the exhibits!

Monobear: Hey! [angry expression] Didn’t I say hope-destroying! Quit that happy shit right now! …Erm, as I was saying, it’s time for…
THE TRIPLE-TASTIC MUSEUM VISIT OF MUTUAL KILLING!

Wataru: M-mutual killing? [rage] That’s anarchy, chaos, and totally against the values of our great nation! [salutes an imaginary flag] I will never agree!

Monobear: Too bad, G. I. Shithead, this school program is compulsory! Luckily for you though, it’s something simple enough for nitwits to understand; whoever kills another student first gets out, and everyone else dies!

Yasue: [shields Bertrand] Gah! Nobody harm Bertrand! [stern expression] How could you do that! The tough ones will leave us all to die!

Kotori: Yes, this isn’t exactly fair…

Monobear: Upupupu! That’s why there’s a rule two! After a murder occurs, we will have a school trial. Everyone, including the murderer, will work together to suss out who offed your pal. If you get it right… [joy] than the killer will be executed in a glorious fashion! Oh, how much despair will come! Seeing one’s plans for murder, their only hope, unravel before their very eyes!

Ryouta: W-what happens if..f..? [cowers]

Monobear: But if you bastards choose incorrectly, only the murderer goes free, and the rest get an express ticket to hell! Upupupupu!

Pablo: [stern expression] You villain! I will stand for none of this! Do not expect forgiveness, or even a minor punishment! [raging pose] I will have your head and the head of all your underlings! [reaches for holster] Huh? You took my gun…

Nahoko: You didn’t think they would take your weapons? That’s almost as bad as Takito’s blunder…

I smiled a bit.
Nahoko: [quick glance] Almost.

Monobear: You're lucky I did take your gun, Prince Albert. Violence against the headmaster is punishable by death.

Pablo: [shocked expression]

Monobear: In fact, there are a few more rules I've set up for our museum visit. If you like living, I wouldn’t break them. You’ll find these new rules on your ID cards, which I’ve graciously placed in a box in the cafeteria. [anger] Also, it seems like someone decided he was too good for public announcements. I'll let him off with a warning this time, but be sure to fill him in on this highly relevant information. [brandishes claws and makes a mark on the desk] The next time anyone thinks they’re “2 kewl 4 schewl” around here…

[happy pose] …well, you know. [Escapes through a set of double doors while saying:] Upupupupupu!

[Camera zooms out to look at the fifteen students]

Akinori: Not good! Not good!

Itsumi: Back off! Nobody’s killing me!

Hitomi: No, no, no, no, no!

Everyone began whipping up into a panic, and began distancing themselves from each other.

Even I began to worry about who might be willing to take that bear up on their offer, and who might they choose as their first victim. Maybe they’d choose the weak, talentless kid who doesn’t even know why he’s here…

But I couldn’t think about that, and I wasn’t that much more vulnerable than the others anyway. It was much more likely that no one would kill for such a stupid reason anyway. For the time
being, I just had to trust that my new acquaintances would still think of that bear as the enemy rather than each other…

PROLOGUE END

-16 Students Remain-
Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair - (Ab)normal Day 1

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 1- In the Belly of Despair – (Ab)normal Days Begin

Our group remained frantic for the next few minutes, but I was one of the first to calm down. I told myself that I couldn’t get anywhere worrying. It was getting to the point where the hysterics were starting to get annoying. Thankfully…

Pablo: [Flips open glass case on his nuclear watch and hovers finger above it] Enough!

…!

…everyone quieted down.

Pablo: [closes glass case] Now, that we’ve…

Benito: Yaa! [pushes Pablo to the floor]

Pablo: Oof!

Benito: You’re incompetent bilgewater! And even if ye weren’t, no one has business shackling the freedom of a pirate! [unsheathes sword and points it at the double doors Monobear escaped through] Now, its time to go after the real treasure! Let’s keelhaul some bear!

Yasue: Yohoho! Yeah!

Hitomi: That bear’ll walk the plank!

Pablo: Wait! [wheezes]
Okita: Yar?! Yeah, Yaarrr!

*Before I knew it, we were all rushing through those doors.*

[Forced to Move to Geology Hall]

Chiyo: Huh? That bear’s gone! [scans the room] There’s not even a trace of him left.

Nahoko: Damn it. And I was looking forward to whacking that bear into mush.

Pablo: [walks into the Geology Hall] And that’s exactly the problem. [disappointed expression] Didn’t you hear what that bear said? He’ll kill us if we oppose him.

Wataru: But he’s just a little teddy! He surely couldn’t take all of us!

Okita: Yeah!

Kotori: [puzzled expression] I wouldn’t be so sure… That bear has probably thought ahead and planned a way to kill all of us.

Monobear: Yep! In this museum, I’m practically everywhere at once! I could slaughter you all in seconds!

Ryouta: Eep! H-he’s back!

Monobear: Not for long! Upupupu! [escapes into the foyer]

Pablo: [valiant pose] This is the exact reason this group needs strong leadership and firm order. I volunteer to be that leadership.

Nahoko: [disgruntled expression] ...Fine.
Pablo: For now, it appears that our captor has unlocked some of the museum exhibits. In order to create an environment safe from murder, I am ordering the investigation of these new areas and the reporting of any dangerous objects. I, and um... Takito will be supervising the exploration to prevent laziness and the concealment of contraband.

Takito: Whuh? I suppose I'm happy nobody will be supervising me.

Pablo: [salutes] Temporary Esperan Guard, To Work! [Marches off into an exhibit]

[Investigation Begin]

[Talk to Kotori]

Takito: …Er, Kotori, how perceptive are you?

Kotori: Very. It’s a good trait to have.

Takito: So, have you noticed anything suspicious about the erm.. uh.. doors here? Supervising might be more boring than I thought.

Kotori: Well, it’s pretty simple, so I might as well explain everything.

[camera pans to the doors leading to the foyer]

Kotori: These doors lead back out into the foyer. [charmingly points] They may look plain, but as the only way in and out of the Museum area, they’re very notable.

[camera pans to the doors with a sign that says “Dino Room”. There is also a cartoon dinosaur saying “Hey Kids! Come see Ally the Allosaur!” in a speech bubble poking its head above the door]

Kotori: This door leads to the Dino Room. Apparently, it’s the museum’s main attraction for
children.

[pans to two green doors at the end of a side hallway]

Kotori: These doors are entirely unremarkable, and probably lead to another hallway.

[pans to doors with a sign saying “Cradles of Civilization” ]

Kotori: These doors lead to the museum’s collection of artifacts from ancient civilizations.

[pans to sign that says “Geology Hall”]

Kotori: Finally, this area we are in is called the Geology Hall, although the actual rocks on display are further down the hallway.

Takito: Whew. Thanks, that’s gonna help me a lot with orienteering myself.

Kotori: Don’t mention it. Well, maybe just to Pablo.

I almost forgot I was supposed to do that. I guess doors are so… mesmerizing.

[Talk to Benito]

It’d be a good idea to seem nice to everyone here. Otherwise, I might get some secondhand resentment from Pablo…

Takito: Good job! These rocks are very heavy and sharp, and it would be a good idea to keep them locked up.

Benito: Heh? [shakes head] No, matey, I’m not really interested in how sharp these rocks are. [smiles widely] I’m after the shine of the geodes!
Takara: Shine! Treasure! Squaaawk!

*Oh, of course, he’s a pirate and all…*

Benito: [sulks] But to be honest, I’m nowhere close to SHSL Thief, and the geodes are behind a fairly nice security system…

*Hmm, there doesn’t seem to be a way to open the glass cases, and I think I spy motion detectors on the corners.*

Takito: At the very least, nobody can use them as murder weapons, right? …right?

Benito: [sulks]

*Maybe that wasn’t the right thing to say…*

Benito: Oh, wait! [wide smile] I almost forgot! [A camera lens extends from Benito’s eyepatch]

! *

Benito: This is my secret weapon during my battle on the high seas! Meet “First Mate”, the one-of-a-kind lens that lets me see my prey underwater!

Takito: That’s impressive, but what does it have to do with geodes?

Benito: Photos, matey! It takes them! I may not be able to have the stones themselves, but I’ll have their image forever! Yarharharharhar!

*I’m glad he found one use for it here.*

[Talk to Yasue]
Yasue: [leaning up against the wall at the end of the hallway] Bzzz? Bzz Bzz.

Takito: Notice anything suspicious about that wall, Yasue?

Yasue: Bzzz… Yes Bertrand? Oh yes, that’s terrible!

Takito: What’s terrible? *I didn’t think something could be so terrible about a wall…*

Yasue: [agonizing expression] Bertrand can’t stand it here! All of his dead ancestors are on display!

Bertrand: [flies around Yasue’s head] Bzzz…

*She must be talking about the insects trapped in the amber samples. I don’t actually remember seeing any bees in there…*

Takito: So, why are standing so close to that wall?

Yasue: Oh, the wall? Bertrand told me that it was thinner than the others, and I was trying it out. [smiles] Wanna listen with me?

Takito: Sure. It’d be a good idea to check this out firsthand.

*I listened in, and sure enough, I could hear Akinori talking to himself fairly clearly on the other side of the wall.*

Yasue: I hear there’s an excavated chapel on the other side that they airlifted in. [Pensive pose] I wonder if they thinned a walls a bit to make the chapel fit?

*That was probably accurate, but it would worth checking out later, just to be sure.*
[Move to Dino Room]

[Camera pans to T-rex’s head]

*Gah!*

[Camera moves back to Takito’s view]

*It’s a good thing the thing’s dead. I hope this threat of murder hasn’t made everything more frightening for me.*

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: Hi there, Takito! Great day, isn’t it?

Takito: No, it’s really not. Don’t you remember our situation?

Hitomi: Of course I do! [proud pose] But no one would dare lay a finger on Hitomi Yunokawa!

Takito: I wouldn’t be so sure of yourself… we’re all potential victims here.

Hitomi: Perhaps, but would you attack someone with a literal eye in the back of their head? I wouldn’t, and I’m me!

*I’m not entirely sure what that last sentence meant.*

Takito: Well did you discover anything suspicious?

Hitomi: [ashamed pose] Well, you may think this is a bit obvious, but I thought the fake plants here were dangerous.
Takito: No, no, that’s not obvious at all. Would you mind explaining how dangerous these plants are?

Hitomi: Well, first of all, they’re everywhere.

*She’s right. We can’t actually walk off a very small path here because of the plastic plants surrounding the dinosaurs’ feet.*

Hitomi: [turns around and opens her third eye] Secondly, they’re very thick, and I can’t see the floor.

*Correct again. I’m starting to see her logic here…*

Hitomi: [turns around but keeps her front eyes closed] So, if a murderer were to hide or dispose of something in those plants, we probably would never find it again.

Takito: Excellent idea. *Still, I wouldn’t have expected thinking like a killer from her. This’ll definitely be something to tell Pablo.*

[Talk to Tamaki]

Tamaki: [angry expression][talking to herself] Tch… How could they… I mean… Arggh!

*I’ve only known her for a few hours, but I am bit shocked to see her this angry.*

Tamaki: Ah, Takito, you have impeccable timing. I really need someone to vent to right now. [angry expression] If there’s anything I hate, it’s bad form at a public venue.

Takito: What’s so bad about the Dino Room?

Tamaki: [angry expression] Did you notice anything about the doors on your way in?
Now that she mentions it…

Takito: They were kind of heavy. It took a lot of force to get them open…

Tamaki: Exactly! This is an exhibit for children! Why would you force them to do so much work!

Takito: Yeah, that might be a lot for little kids. But you are suggesting they should’ve done work on the door?

Tamaki: [angry expression] Of course I am! [happy expression] As the SHSL Hostess, I would ensure all the doors had the appropriate inertia. It’s those little extras that really get your event up to SHSL quality.

I suppose I underestimated the talents of “the best of the country”…

Wataru would probably be upset.

Tamaki: Speaking of which… [brings out gourmet food sample] I made salads for everyone with the greens in the kitchen. I figured it was the best way to get the group together.

Takito: Thanks! [eats]

Delicious, but a bit dry.

[Talk to Itsumi]

Takito: So, Itsumi, as our resident dinosaur expert, would you mind telling me if there’s anything suspicious about these fossils?

Itsumi: … [sulks] …No… They’re just your standard dinosaurs.
[camera moves to stegosaurus]

Your average stegosaurus…

[camera moves to T-rex]

Your average tyrannosaurus…

[camera moves to allosaur]

And your really average allosaur.

Takito: Is something wrong, Itsumi?

Itsumi: [sighs] No. J-just don’t ask me about archaeology again.

Takito: Sure. *There probably won’t even be a need to.*

Itsumi: [resentful stares]

Takito: Oh, and I’m sorry for bothering you. I won’t do it again.

Itsumi: [guilty expression] [sighs]

*I just wish I could end a conversation with her feeling decent…*

[Move to Chapel Hall]
[Talk to Okita]

Okit: …! [shock, then turns around to look at painting] Yep! Nothing behind these paintings! And they’re hung straight, too! Heh heh.

*I thought doing something like that wouldn’t take so long…*

Okit: I definitely was not doing anything in the restrooms, that’s right Mr. Supervisor Sir!

Takito: Hmm? *I shouldn’t have been daydreaming about checking paintings…* What did you do in the restroom?

Okit: Gah! [hands up and shocked expression] Ok you got me!

Takito: Got you?

Okit: Yeah… I was inspecting the bathrooms and marking their locations… I always record them when I visit places.

Takito: *I kind of doubt his sincerity…* Okay… Why don’t you report your findings to me? And tell me about all the doors in the hallway as well. *Let’s see if he can do it…*

Okit: [pulls at shirt collar] Um.. Okay.

[camera pans to doors leading to the Dino Room]

Okit: Those doors lead to the Dino Room, but you already knew that.

[camera pans to a pair of green doors at the end of a side hall]

Okit: I think those doors lead back to the Geology Hall, judging by color.
Okita: I took these doors to get here, so I know they lead to the Cradles of Civilization exhibit.

Okita: That’s some excavated chapel they airlifted in, at least that’s what Akinori said…

Okita: These probably lead to the next floor of the museum. I guess Monobear doesn’t want us up there for the time being…

Okita: And finally, the bathrooms. I counted three pairs of bathrooms in the museum. One here, one opposite the cafeteria, and one at the very end of the Dorm Hallway.

Okita: That’s everything, isn’t it?

Color me impressed. I guess should be less judgmental from now on.

[Talk to Ryouta]

Ryouta: H-hey T-takito?

Takito: Yeah?
Ryouta: If you know something important, and want to t-tell everyone… [mumbles]

Takito: And?

Ryouta: …B-but you’re afraid someone could h-hurt you because of it, what should you do?

Takito: If there’s something you need to say Ryouta, just say it. The rest of group will definitely be willing to protect you.

Ryouta: I’m n-not so sure…

*I’m sure it’s not as bad as he thinks, but it’ll be important to teach this kid some bravery.*

[Move to Excavated Chapel]

[Talk to Akinori]

Takito: Hey, Akinori! You seem really busy investigating.

Akinori: [turns around from doing task, sulks] Well, thank you for the kind words, but I’m not really investigating anymore. I’ve checked, and the most dangerous thing about this place is the candles.

Takito: So what are you doing?

Akinori: Now that I don’t have a chapel, I’ve decided to temporarily repurpose this chapel. I’ve been trying to make suitable as a modern church.

*Looking around, I noticed several Christian icons, like crosses and lambs, decorating the room. Some of them were probably there before, but I couldn’t tell which ones…*

Akinori: It’s a shame though, because I’ve run out of things to decorate with and I still ought to put
something on this statue of Mary…

Takito: Why not your necklace?

Akinori: [shock] N-never! [angrily shakes pocket bible at Takito] Never, never!

Takito: Woah! Wasn’t expecting that…

Akinori: This is my custom made titanium rosary symbolic of my faith! [pulls out necklace to show it to Takito] First, it is unbreakable! Second, I vow to never let leave me! I have had these symbolic factors inscribed upon the beads in Latin, so I never forget them!

…[pants]

Wow. I really hit a nerve there.

Akinori: I apologize for lashing out against you, [pants] I just [pants] took it as an attack on my piety. [pants] Would you mind doing those breathing exercises with me again?

Takito: Sure.

I taught Akinori some breathing exercises again.

[Move to Chapel Hall]

[Move to Cradles of Civilization]

Well it certainly looks the part…

But for a museum run by Hope’s Peak Academy, the things on display here seem a bit …lacking.
Wataru: Ah, Takito! Have you come to bask in our’s country’s rich heritage as well?

Takito: Well, no, but I’ve always had a soft spot for period stuff.

Wataru: [laughs heartily] Don’t we all? [extends arm for handshake] Come, and look at collection of dotakus and katanas?

Takito: Well, I know what katanas are… And we’ll probably have to dull them somehow… but what about dotakus? Satoko, do you know?

Satoko: [smirks] Of course. They’re those heavy bronze bells. They’re from really ancient Japan. [points pencil at Takito] I’m not sure why you had to ask me though. There really wasn’t translation involved.

Wataru: [sad face] …and I wanted to answer that.

Looks like I accidentally denied them chances to show off…

[Talk to Chiyo]

Chiyo: [distraught expression]

Uh-oh, Chiyo looks upset. It wouldn’t be good to have an emotional near-superhero about.

Takito: Chiyo, is something bothering you?

Chiyo: [crying] These people on this artifact! They’re being treated so horribly!
That artifact? It’s like an ancient comic on this weird triangular prism shape…

Takito: It’s just a drawing…

Chiyo: But the people were real, and it’s too late to help any of them! [cries] Look at the ID card!

Okay, Let’s see here…

Artifact’s ID Card:

“STANDARD OF BABYLON II”
by Unknown Babylonian Artist
Dimensions: 7’ long x 1’6” high x 1’ wide

This Standard is a depiction of the Babylonian Hierarchy, known for it’s unique shape and for being one of the first major pieces of art. Surprisingly for a piece commissioned by royalty, there are little embellishments, and it does not share the gilded “fence” upon its top edge like similar works.

I was hoping to find something to cheer up Chiyo, but it seems the standard is really as violent as she said it is.

Takito: Chiyo, erm, maybe you should look at some of the other artifacts.

Chiyo: [pouty face] But they’re all gross and mechanical!

Takito: And this isn’t?

Chiyo: …Good point. [joy] I’ll go to the dinosaur exhibit soon.

[Talk to Nahoko]
Nahoko: [upset expression] Tch. All the money from the reserve program, and this is all they can get?

Takito: Really? The exhibits don’t seem that bad to me…

[pans to Greek column]

Takito: Look at that actual Corinthian column!

[pans back to Nahoko]

Nahoko: Well, maybe that’s impressive, but what about this cheap knock-off of Chichen Itza?

[pans to Model Chichen Itza]

Nahoko: Not only is it made of cheap plaster, but they only finished a quarter of it! Damn tightwads!

She has a point. [camera pans to the exposed side of the model] Anyone looking from around where Chiyo is would only see a wall of plaster. But at the same time…

Takito: I don’t know Nahoko. It’s pretty big, and if they made it full size, there wouldn’t be room for anything else. Both the standard and the column are within only a couple feet of each side.

Nahoko: Tch. [crosses arms] I still think it’s terrible. And why face the plaster sides towards the interior of the room? It’s like they didn’t care about hiding how fake it is.

I don’t know… It might be fun to climb up and look down on everything else.

I had just finished speaking with everyone when Monobear gave us another announcement.

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!
Monobear: Attention students! It is now 10 pm, and nighttime begins now.

We will allow the cafeteria to be open to grab your ID Cards tonight for one extra hour, but in the future, it will be closed for restocking.

The things around you may be timeless, but you are not. Please go to sleep shortly, and Goodnight…

Pablo: [shock] My, we’ve completely lost track of time! If it really is ten o’ clock, you all should probably go to bed.

Itsumi: [angry] Hey! I’m not sleeping with 15 potential murderers around!

Pablo: [worried expression] Please don’t worry… I and another student will be wandering the premises through the night. We will monitor each other as well, so any murderers would be caught immediately.

Ryouta: …T-that’s good enough for me. It’s nice to know I’m protected.

Everyone except Pablo went to his or her rooms. At the moment, I wasn’t sure if having someone wander the halls at night would be good or bad idea. But before I could attempt to sleep on the issue, someone came knocking on our door.

Ikkaku: [opens the door] Hey, it’s you.

Please don’t kill me…

Ikkaku: [shrugs] Relax, okay? You look like I interrupted a nightmare. I’m only here because Pablo is making me deliver ID Cards as punishment for missing some important announcement this morning. It was probably about menus or some crap.

[hands Takito his ID Card] This should be yours. [slams door]
I held the ID Card in my hands for a while. It seemed oddly futuristic to me. After I turned it on, I made a strange discovery. Since I wasn’t a student, it seems Monobear never bothered to give me a profile page. Mine only had a name and the words “NOT A STUDENT” in every other field. The only other thing of interest was the rules.

Rule No. 1

-Students must live together within the museum. There is no time limit on our museum stay.

Rule No. 2

-Destruction of museum property is forbidden.

Rule No. 3

-Students may investigate as much as they want and wherever is available to them.

Rule No. 4

-Nighttime is between 10pm and 7am. The Cafeteria is closed during Nighttime for restocking.

Rule No.5

-Violence against Monobear is punishable by death, as is the destruction of any monitoring systems.

Rule No. 6

-A “culprit” who kills a fellow student will graduate the school, provided that they are not declared guilty in the school trial for the murder they committed.

Rule No. 7

-Letting a culprit graduate will result in the execution of the rest of the student body.

Rule No. 8

-Murderers who are declared guilty will be executed publicly.
Rule No. 9

-Monobear reserves the right to make new rules at any time.

The rules seemed simple enough. But the meanings behind them seemed dire. Putting my ID Card on the bedside table, I slowly drifted off to sleep, and tried, for only a moment, to forget my situation.

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: Thanks for reading-slash-playing “Dangan Ronpa: Legacy of Despair.”

Monobear: I assure you; I’ve had as much fun with it as you will!

Monobear: I thank you for your purchase.

Monobear: Hmm? What’s that? You didn’t purchase anything?

Monobear: No, no, no! That’s not despair-filled at all.

Monobear: You need to feel like you misspent your money, if only for a second.

Monobear: We’ll have to send this problem to R&D immediately.

Chapter End Notes

History Notes: The Standard of Babylon II is based on a real life piece known as the
"Standard of Ur." If you like history, you should look it up.

Also, we'll have two slots of free time in the next update, so please place your suggestions as replies to my comment saying: "Free Time 1 and 2 Poll"

You may need to actually click the Comments button at the top of page to see it.
Chapter Notes

Free Time Results! Itsumi was the clear favorite, and Yasue won the coin flip amongst our finalists. If you voted Ryouta, I wouldn't worry, because this chapter incidentally featured a lot of him anyway.

Also, as part of free time, I'll be introducing how the multiple choice questions in free time and trials work.

Basically, you'll be given the possible answers in parenthesis and have to choose the correct one. When you want to check to see if your answer is correct, you can use the string of numbers below the choices. You'll find a single number, a colon, and then the sequence of numbers. The first number tells you which number in the following sequence to look at. Find that number, and it will tell which of the answers is correct. Here's an example below.

2+2=?

( 3 / 4 / 5 )

6: 12312212321231

The first digit was six, so I'll check the sixth digit in the sequence. It's 2, so the second answer of 4 is the correct one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair - (Ab)normal Day 2

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It's the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let's give it our all again today!

Grungh…
Wah! I’m awake! …And not dead!

...Did Pablo’s plan actually work?

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Whew… Everyone’s here. Even Ikkaku’s present.

Satoko: Guten Morgen, Takito! [smirks] Sind Sie nicht der letzte, der alles?

Ikkaku: [annoyed expression] Would it kill you to say something in Japanese once in a while?

Satoko: [disapproving expression] Schist-head.

Takito: Anyway, what are we having for breakfast? I’ve only eaten Tamaki’s salad since I woke up yesterday.

Pablo: [valiant pose] Not to worry! As leader, I will designate a random member of our group to cook each meal. They will be under my strict supervision, so poisoning is impossible. Today’s chef waaaaas...

Chiyo: Me! [big smile] Who wants all-natural pancakes?

Feeling uneasy, I decided to sit by Chiyo and make sure she took a bite first. Looking around, it seems like several others had the same idea. Pablo and Ikkaku on the other hand, chowed down with serious vigor.
The pancakes are okay, but they're a bit dry and rough. I suppose they're better for me than regular pancakes, though.

Pablo: [stands on his chair at the head of the table] Attention, everyone! [salutes] In order to ensure the safety of everyone in this facility, I am enforcing a chore system! Yesterday, Ms. Hitomi Yunokawa discovered that the faux plants within the dinosaur room pose a threat to our well-being. In addition, the samurai swords on display are too dangerous in their current state. In order to prevent a murder, two students each day will be randomly chosen to work on dulling the blades and removing the plants. [motions to Tamaki] Tamaki, please bring out the bingo tumbler.

Tamaki: [smiles and stares intently at Pablo] Certainly. [spins the wheel until four balls fall out] For our blade dullers today… we have Okita… and Nahoko!

Okita: [rose wilts] Nahoko… do you even know how to do this…?

Nahoko: [proud expression] If I don’t know now, I’m sure I can figure it out.

Pablo: And those removing in the plants today will be… Benito and… [uncomfortable expression] erm, me.

Benito: Scared of a little manual labor, are we? Wahaha!

Pablo: [angry expression] Of course not! If you knew the things I do for my citizens… [turns away]

The group and I watched Tamaki and Pablo walk into the kitchen, and then returned to socializing. I was about start talking when Pablo opened the door and began motioning to me to go inside the kitchen.

[Moved to Kitchen]

Within the kitchen, Pablo and Tamaki looked at me with grave expressions on their face.

Pablo: Takito, we have a very special chore for you.
I looked down and saw a tiny ball with my name on it resting at the exit tray of Tamaki’s bingo machine.

What kind of chore would need to be given in private…

Takito: [gulps]

Pablo: We have randomly chosen you to inform Ikkaku of the mutual killing scenario by the end of the day.

Tamaki: [pensive, worried pose] Originally, we thought informing him would make it more likely for him to commit a murder.

Pablo: [stern expression] However, other students have reported that he has no desire to leave the complex. As a result, we have determined that not being aware of the situation makes him more vulnerable, and therefore increases the likelihood of someone murdering him. [salutes] And so, by the order of the La Espera autocracy, you are to convey all relevant information to Ikkaku Kirigiri by the day’s end. Agreed?

I’m in no position to say no…

Takito: [salutes back] Agreed!

Pablo: Wonderful! [puts arm around Takito’s shoulder]

[The three of them are all automoved into the Cafeteria]

Pablo: [removes arm from Takito’s shoulder] Attention! Breakfast is over! Temporary Esperan Guard, to your duties!

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Employee Hall]
Itsumi: Hey Takito, Are you interested in sharing the morning with me?

I decided to spend some time with Itsumi.

Takito: Sure.

Itsumi: [sits down and takes out a soap bar and chisel] Would mind sitting down for a bit?

Takito: Not at all. Where’d you get that soap?

Itsumi: I got it from the storage room, and I want to try carving or sculpting with it.

Takito: Oh, do you want try a new hobby? Maybe I could benefit from learning a new skill.

Itsumi: Well, I mainly want it as an alternative to chiseling fossils…

Takito: Why would you want to avoid your talent? I don’t even have one…

Itsumi: [uncomfortable expression] D-don’t you r-remember?

Crap, I completely forgot! Itsumi has a really severe fear of dirt, which I think is…
Takito: Sorry, I forgot you were mysophobic.

Itsumi: Nah, it’s okay. I’ll forgive you, [smiles] but only if help me carve this soap.

Takito: [laughs] Okay, lemme pick up the shavings for you.

*I spent some time helping Itsumi carve a soap sculpture.*

Takito: There! It’s beautiful!

Itsumi: I don’t know… I made several mistakes, and sculpting still kind of feels like archaeology. [hands Takito statue] It was originally going to be a rhino, but I had to settle for a bear.

Takito: [surprise] …Oh, thank you! *I wasn’t expecting to keep it…*

Itsumi: I want you to keep it until I can make a better one.

*I think a tiny soap bear will look nice in my room.*

[FREE TIME ENDS]

Takito: [stomach grumbles]
...I guess it’s time for lunch. Maybe I’ll get my chance to tell Ikkaku the news in an area with lots of potential witnesses around…

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]

Ryouta’s looking at me intently, and I couldn’t live with myself if I left someone like him alone…

Takito: Hey Ryouta, is there something on your mind?

Ryouta: [looks down] W-would you mind sitting with me at lunch? A-alone?

I really should use this opportunity to inform Ikkaku in public, but I can’t say no…

Takito: Sure. It’d be a pleasure.

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

Ryouta and me sat down at a table in the corner of the room.

Takito: So, uh, Ryouta, is there anything you wanna say to me?

Ryouta: …

Ryouta remained completely silent and fairly motionless the entire time. I never even saw him eat, but somehow, his plate was empty by the end of the hour.

To this day, I think he waited until I looked away to take bites.
Takito: Ryouta, why did you want to eat lunch with me today? We didn’t do anything…

Ryouta: …

*Maybe he just needed a friend…*

Takito: I mean, if you just want to sit with someone, that’s okay.

Ryouta: T-takito? Can we go to that office room?

Takito: Sure, whatever you need.

[Move to Employee Center]

Ryouta: Takito, there’s something important I need to show you. [pulls out newspaper] On the first day, I found this in my backpack…

*Hm? This is the newspaper I read the “About the Editor” page off of the other day…*

Takito: You already showed me this, Ryouta.


Takito: *Okay.* [turns to page B2].

[The camera shows an image of both Ikkaku and Kyouko Kirigiri at a crime scene. Kyouko is examining a body in the forefront, and Ikkaku is handing money to someone not far in the background.]
Ikkaku? Oh yeah…

[flashback]

Ryouta: If you know something important, and want to t-tell everyone… [mumbles]

Takito: And?

Ryouta: …B-but you’re afraid someone could h-hurt you because of it, what should you do?

[/flashback]

This must be what Ryouta was so worried about telling the group. If it’s something that might help us prevent a murder, it’s probably worth reading…

Newspaper Caption:

“Secret Sleuths?”

“Although Hope’s Peak Gazette’s star criminal correspondent does his best to be first to the scene of major crimes, there’s one group that’s always beating me to it. Sure, Kyouko is the Super High School Level Detective, but the reasons why all the members of the Kirigiri family seem so involved in crime had eluded me for the longest time. Recently, though, my investigations have discovered the Kirigiri family’s secret involvement in detective work dating back to feudal times. What remains a mystery is why they would keep such talent a secret. Pictured above is Kyouko Kirigiri examining a body, and Ikkaku Kirigiri paying off a witness for information.”

So Ikkaku is some kind of pro detective?

…That’s nowhere near as bad as I thought it would be. Nevertheless, it is interesting…
Takito: Ryouta, it’s great you could tell me this. But in the future, you may want to tell everyone at once, and besides, this doesn’t look like something Ikkaku would hurt you over…

Ryouta: [winces] I-it’s just Ikkaku never told us his talent… [shock] I thought he really wanted to h-h-hide it…

Takito: Well, if you’re still uncomfortable telling everyone, can you promise me something?

Ryouta: [looks intently] What is it?

Takito: If someone murders me, you need to tell Pablo that Ikkaku can help catch the killer. It’ll help you survive.

Ryouta: Okay… I promise. B-bye, Takito. [leaves]

If Ikkaku is part of this “Kirigiri Detective Troupe,” he might not be as much of a brash guy as I thought. Telling him about the mutual killing might go over better than expected.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Yasue’s Room]

[Talk to Yasue]

Yasue: Oh, do you care to join me? I’ll get Bertrand and make it a party!
I decided to spend some time with Yasue.

Takito: Absolutely. What are we doing, exactly?

Yasue: Well, Bertrand been getting a bit sickly lately, and I really want to do something about it! [punches palm] Sooooooo, we’re gonna a li’l garden just for him! I’m sure some pollinating is just the thing to cheer him up!

Takito: That sounds like it’ll be great for him, but I seriously doubt we’ll be able find all the necessary supplies.

Yasue: [dismissive motion] Oh, don’t be such a pessimist. I know exactly where to get dirt! I’ve been stealing it from all the ficuses!

I thought they seemed a bit unstable…

Anyway, she can get water from several places, and light from even more, but still…

Takito: What do you plan on using for a pot? I’m not sure many people would appreciate you taking their stuff.

Yasue: [pouty expression] I’m more prepared than you think, you know! I have a pot right here!

Takito: But that’s a cup. That you stole from the cafeteria…

Yasue: Well, yeah it’s small, so I only think this can hold one plant…

Bertrand: bzzz…. bzzz….. Bzz! Bzz, bzz, Bzzzz!

No, no, no… I really don’t want a trained bee angry with me. …If that’s even what angry looks like.
Takito: It’s okay Yasue, I think I have a solution. *Emphasis on the “I think”*…

Yasue: Really? *Bzzz, Bzz, Bzzzzzzzzz!*

Bertrand: *Bzzzz…*

Takito: Do you have any seeds?

Yasue: Of course! [hands Takito a bag of seed packets] I got these from the cafeteria too!

*How even…? No, don’t think about that. Concentrate.*

Takito: We’ll look for a plant that will have the most flowers per plant. I think we should pick…

( Lilacs / Lillies / Carnations )

7: 312231132131231223123

Takito: I think we should look for some lilac seeds.

Yasue: [joy] Oh, that’s a great idea! Lesse here…

*We spent some time searching through the seed packets for lilacs.*

Yasue: [crushing disappointment] Noooo!
Takito: [nervous] Is something wrong…?

Yasue: That Monobear! He’s replaced every last flower seed packets with dangerous plants like venus flytraps! [anger] He’s trying to kill Bertrand! The only flower he left was roses, and probably only because they have thorns… Hmmph! I’ll plant it anyway, but if I wanted Bertrand to use a rose, I would hung around that Okita guy.

Takito: His roses are probably dead anyway…

*But they’d be better than Bertrand buzzing around me.*

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Takito: Hey Ryouta, do you want to eat with me again?

Ryouta: Y-yeah, I’d appreciate it…

Takito: Can we sit with some other people this time, too?

Ryouta: S-sure…

[Move to Cafeteria]
We sat with other people, but he still refused to talk at all. He had considerably more on his plate at the end, probably because he couldn’t find much time when no one was looking.

Just as I was finishing a meal, I got an idea about how to improve Ryouta’s courage.

Takito: Ryouta, there’s something I need to do, and think it’d be good for you to come with me.

Ryouta: [wincing] You’re going to do something scary, aren’t you?

Am I really that transparent?

Takito: It won’t scare you, I promise. I will make absolutely certain that you will not be scared.

Hopefully.

Ryouta: Okay, but if-f-f-f..

Takito: Nothing’s gonna happen.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Examine Ikkaku’s Door]

Ryouta: [fear] T-t-this definitely qualifies as scary!

Takito: Just calm down for now. [knocks on Ikkaku’s door]
Ikkaku: Who is it?

Takito: It’s Takito. We need to talk. I don’t think you need to hide yourself from us anymore.

Ikkaku: [opens door] Who said I was hiding anything? I’ve been completely clear about the type of person I am since day one.

Ryouta: [shaking and slowly slinking away]

Oh great…

Takito: Ryouta, you should really stay.

Ryouta: [slinking back towards Takito and Ikkaku]

Takito: Ikkaku, look, I really want to be friends, and I think you have skills everyone here could benefit from.

Ikkaku: You can be my friend if you want. That journo kid too. It’s always welcome. [smug look] But do you honestly think you know what’s best for me? I know what I need, and it’s to be independent from everyone here who’s telling what to do.

Takito: I think know more about you than you realize. [shows Ikkaku the “Secret Sleuths?” Article]

Ikkaku: [shock and worry] The hell…? How did you…?

Ryouta: [cowers and shivers] I-I-w-wrote th-hat…

Takito: See? You can use your detective skills to help our group. And if I had to guess, I say you
only developed this “tough guy” persona to intimidate witnesses.

Ikkaku: [snickers]

*What? That wasn’t supposed to be funny…*

Ikkaku: [laughs] I have no skills. None that’d be good here, anyway. [stares into Takito’s eyes] I’ll be straight with you. Part of the reason I’m avoiding everyone is because I’m a selfish burden. Nothing redeemable. [smug look] Once again, if you’re just doing this to be friends, that’s fine. I’ll be friends with all of you.

Ryouta: Really?

*Still here? He’s braver than I thought…*

Ryouta: I could really use a friend like you…

Ikkaku: Only if you’d let me, er, who are you again?

Ryouta: It’s Ryouta! I’m the Super High School Lev—

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Attention students! It is 10 PM, and Nighttime begins now.

During Nighttime, the Cafeteria will be closed for restocking.

The things around you may be timeless, but you are not. Please go to sleep shortly, and Goodnight…

*Crap! This took longer than I thought, and I promised Pablo I’d give Ikkaku the news. I really wasn’t willing this morning, but now I might be able to trust Ikkaku enough.*
Takito: Ryouta, erm, do you think it’s ok to tell him?

Ryouta: [smiles] Yeah! I’m sure he wouldn’t do anything! I’d swear he’s a good guy to anyone!

*How long has it been since you were shivering? Like, five minutes?*

Ikkaku: [scratches the back of his head] Huh? You guys keeping a secret from your new friend?

Takito: Well, yeah, there’s something Pablo told me to tell you…

Ikkaku: [stern expression] Come on, spit it out. I can take it.

Takito: There is a way to get out of the school. You have to.. erm.. um..

Ikkaku: C’mon, how do I earn my way out of here? It’s important to me to plan my success.

Takito: You have to kill someone. You have to kill another student, and then not get caught. The headmaster wants us to kill each other.

Ikkaku: [stoic expression] …

Ryouta: [worried expression] …

Ikkaku: Get out. Get away. Don’t do anything with me again. Get Pablo to lock my door. Avoid me at all costs. [closes door]

Ryouta: …f-f-f-friend?

*I couldn’t believe what I just heard. Ikkaku had actually seemed approachable just a moment*
before, and then suddenly became colder than ever.

After I shuffled a crying Ryouta to his room, I sat on my bed, thinking about whether Ikkaku was trustworthy. The answer seemed to change every minute. After a while, my brain couldn’t take it, and I closed my eyes to rest…

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: Do you why I love dinosaurs?

Monobear: Because like them, I strive to be the biggest and most powerful.

Monobear: I think I’ve done a good job. I’ve got the claws and teeth down for sure.

Monobear: And when it comes to killing, I can’t be beat.

Monobear: But really, that isn’t enough.

Monobear: Do you want to know the real reason I love dinosaurs?

Monobear: It’s because for as big and powerful as they were, they’re all extinct now.

Monobear: And it’s that bigness and powerfulness that aided in their fall.

Monobear: Upupupupu! They’re like despair incarnate!

Chapter End Notes

So, we have two more units of Free Time to vote on.

Please reply to my comment saying "Free Time 3 & 4" to vote.
Be sure to click the "Comments" button if the comments aren't showing up.
Chapter Notes

Sorry about the slight delay, folks.

Anyway, Ryouta won our first free time slot, and I interpreted "Tamako" as Tamaki. Sorry if it was supposed to be someone else.

[Bonus Note: We only got one vote in last time. Please vote, as I would not like to have to resort to RNGs to determine our free times. Even if you don’t have an account, you can still comment and vote, so please do.]

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair - (Ab)normal Day 3

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastard! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Hungrh…

Day number three, and my paranoia hasn’t weakened a bit.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Examine Ikkaku’s Door]

He’s probably not in there…
Maybe I should peek inside…

Takito: [creaks open door and peeks in]

No one, and it doesn’t seem to have changed since I last saw it. Still as messy as ever…

Wait, are those shirts tied in knots around the bedposts? I guess that one way to store them…

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Talk to Kotori]

Kotori: [puzzled expression] Ryouta seems especially fragile today. Do you know anything about that?

Erm… I don’t really want to lie…


Kotori: [slightly angry face] That sounds terrible! I’ll try and cheer him up today.

[Move to Cafeteria]

Ikkaku: [approaches Takito] …Hey.

Takito: …

I don’t understand why he’d want to speak with me after what he said yesterday. I’m a bit scared of his motives…
Ikkaku: I did breakfast today. Pablo made me tell everyone, so as he says, [attempts to imitate Pablo’s voice] “those attempting to poison the student body will be discovered and pacified immediately.”

Whew…

I tried to check and see if the chef ate his own food again today, but Ikkaku insisted on eating alone. I ended up sitting fairly far away from him, but couldn’t help staring the whole time.

Ikkaku definitely noticed, but he really didn’t seem to mind…

Pablo: A…att…tention! [struggles to walk up the podium]

Akinori: Gah! He’s been possessed! [hides behind bible]

Pablo: Izzz t… tim …me f… fo… r…

Wataru: There is no possession! The first murder has been committed, and done through poison! [points at Ikkaku] Tackle him!

Ikkaku: I’m innocent. Take it or leave it, but it’s the truth.

Pablo: lezz… t… talk… abow…. [falls over]

Tamaki: [catches Pablo, puts him down gently] Relax, everyone. Pablo’s just overworked himself. [chuckles] I’m surprised he was able to make it this far.

I just realized; he’s been up for two and a half days now… It really is a wonder he stayed awake.

Tamaki: Anyway, I will be giving announcements in his stead. [smiles] Nahoko and Okita, please tell us of your progress in dulling the blades yesterday.
Pablo: [huge snore]

Nahoko: [confident smile] Cutting the blades yesterday was even easier than projected. [flips open tablets, revealing upward-climbing stock graphs] We managed to dull all the blades in a single day.

Okita: [outstretches rose] You couldn’t even cut one of my rose stems with one now!

Tamaki: Wonderful. [smiles] I hope the progress report for removing the plants will be just as grand. [stares calmly] Benito?

Benito: [anxious expression] Erm, well, sorry lass…

Tamaki: [puts her hand over her mouth] Oh, what seems to be the matter?

Benito: [anxious expression] Me n’ Pablo experienced more resistance than expected. [makes fists] The hide of complex plastics is much tougher than a common weed! [apologetic expression] We barely managed to cut a fifth…

Takara: Fifth! Fifth!

Tamaki: Well, that’s okay. [chuckles] No one expected you to finish anyway. We’ll simply roll two more names again today.

Benito: [makes fist] I would’ve done a helluva job if Sleeping Beauty over there didn’t confiscate my cutlass!

Pablo: [grumbles] …Nnn… Insolent wretches… [snores softly]

Tamaki: [slight shock] Oh my. We’ll need to get him to his room immediately. [smiles] But first… [brings out bingo roller and beginning rolling] …Kotori! Itsumi! It seems you will be cutting down the plants today.
Itsumi: [side eyes Pablo] D-do you think he’d let you use your…scythe thing?

Kotori: [puzzled expression] I doubt it’d work anyway. My scythe is designed to cut organic materials only.

Tamaki: Congratulations, everyone! Lunch is officially adjourned!

I didn’t know it was such an accomplishment.

Yet, it looks like my chance to inform Pablo of Ikkaku’s words has missed me…

I’ll just have to play the long game until he’s rested up.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Storage]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Ryouta: T-t-takito! Y-you scared me a little, but if you did it to say hi, that’s okay…

I decided to spend some time with Ryouta.

Takito: I didn’t mean to scare you. Is there anything you want to do together?
Ryouta: [sulks] W-well, I’ve been feeling kinda g-guilty about something lately. Do you remember when I took your photo on the first day?

Takito: Yeah… *I didn't think there was much time for personal projects here.*

Ryouta: When I did that, I was trying to take the photograph of a witness to this whole m-mess. I wanted to start w-working on an article about our kidnapping, b-b-but your reaction scared me away from ever finishing…

Takito: Oh, I apologize for getting in the way of your profession. Do you want to start again?

Ryouta: [sulks] There’s a-another thing that kind of in the way… I searched the storage room, and there’s only barely enough film to get everyone’s photo, and I doubt we’d get more…

Takito: What do you mean? Monobear might get you more film…

Ryouta: [distraught] No! He never would, not good film. It’s way too expensive!

Takito: Huh?

Ryouta: Didn’t you know? High quality film has to be expensive…

Takito: Let me think.

*I think I remember why film strips can be expensive…*

( They’re very small and complex / They need to be handmade / They contain precious silver )
Takito: I know Monobear might not be willing to shell out for precious metals, but I think I have a solution.

Ryouta: Oh? Already…?

Takito: *Here goes*… I’ll help you get the perfect shot you need. Here’s the plan…

*I outlined a plan with Ryouta on how I would get people’s attention to take their photos.*

*He seemed impressed, so we got to work.*

[photo snap]

Kotori: Oh! Has this been some sort of game show the whole time?

[photo snap]

Wataru: Gah! I did not expect you to be so brazen, Ryouta!

[photo snap]

Akinori: Eeh! Don’t do that! I thought I’d died for a second.

[photo snap]

Benito: Yar! You’re messing with my eyepatch, lad!

[photo snap]
Hitomi: Oooh! Be sure to get my other good side!

Soon, we had everyone’s mugshot.

Ryouta: [joy] Wow! [scratches head] We might have gotten some people in u-unflattering postions… [joy] But we did it!

Takito: And some film to spare, too!

Though, I think I might’ve strained my reputation… I’ll be known as the guy who says obvious things and aids paparazzi.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

Hmm? I think I just felt some sort of evil chill…

Announcements: Ding dong, ding dong! Ding dong, ding dong!

Monobear: Attention all you students! …And non-student loser! It seems no one has even attempted a murder yet, thanks to the organization of one idiot dictator. As your resident headmaster and promoter of despair, I’m going to provide all with even more reason to participate in mutual killing. Everyone, report to the foyer immediately! Be sure to bring the sleeping and irritable bastards, too.

…That must’ve been it.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Foyer]
Akinori: [nervous] Finally, you’re here! I thought Monobear might have done something terrible to you…

Chiyo: …Yeah… It’s starting to sink in how scary that bear is.

Satoko: I’m still a bit skeptical of this bear’s abilities. Tôi ghét phải nói nó, but I’ve got a morbid curiosity of what this bear going to show us.

Wataru: Friends! It approaches!

[camera pans to the help desk as Monobear jumps out from behind and sits down]

Monobear: Upupupu! Hello friends! It’s great to see you all could make it.

Ikkaku: [crosses arms] I made it a priority on my schedule this time.

Monobear: [bashful pose] Now then, my acting coach taught me to do something funny before I do something dramatic, so… [pulls out bottle of seltzer water] Ta-da! [sprays Pablo]

Pablo: Galgalgalgg… Wah! Corporal, cover my flank! [puzzled expression] Huh? …Monobear! What have you done?!

Monobear: Upupupu! Oh, you haven’t seen the half of it! It’s time for a new mechanic in the Museum Visit of Mutual Killing!

Akinori: [anxious expression] Please, just leave us be! We were doing just fine by ourselves, really!

Ryouta: …I s-second that!

Monobear: [puzzled expression] …Doing …fine? But no one’s dead! There hasn’t even been an attempt, and I’ve got the place under CCTV! No despair at all! [dismissive pose] And besides, you
guys don’t even have protection!

Nahoko: [angry expression, spins wearable shelf violently] Protection from what? Have you been hiding something from us, bear?!

Monobear: Only your new motive.

*Motive? Don’t we already—*

Monobear: If nobody gets murdered in the next three days, I’m injecting everyone here with Syphilis! Upupupupupupu!

Ikkaku: [gulps]

Pablo: You… I would rather succumb to illness than give in to you! You won’t win!

Monobear: Did you hear that, everyone? Your gallant leader would rather have you all die than sacrifice somebody. That must really change your opinion of him…

Pablo: Ragh…

Tamaki: [points playfully] Your plan’s still failed, Monobear. Every possible murder weapon has either been destroyed or placed under strict surveillance.

Okita: [anger] You’re only saying that because you know Pablo wouldn’t kill you!

Yasue: I can’t handle it anymore! Just kill me now!

Bertrand: Bzzzz!

Monobear: And since you’re all so eager to get to the killing, I think I’ll do something about this
weapon shortage! [opens arms] Despairy Christmas! Murder-tastic knives for everyone!

Monobear revealed 16 silver knives in glass cases.

Monobear: I got these knives specially made for our despair! They’re super sharp—

enough to cut bone, and each comes with a special storage case with your name on the bottom! [joy] Feel proud that we pulled out all the stops for you guys!

Pablo: [smirks] Nonsense! I’ll be confiscating the knives now, so everyone grab theirs and hand it—

Monobear: Oh, we can’t have any of that! I think it’s time for a new rule! [takes out a Monophone] Lemme text it to you all.

Rule No. 10

Willingly touching another student’s personal knife is punishable by death. This rule will become void after the first murder is committed.

Monobear: [on a Monophone] #FreshRuleFriday #Pablosux

Pablo: [Looks down at the ground, dejected] …Rnnnnnngh! [deep breathing] Everyone… just take your knives for now… You may need them for self-defense…

I couldn’t believe it. All of Pablo’s careful planning and safety procedures were gone in a matter of minutes. Monobear was not someone to be underestimated.

Itsumi: I-I guess I have to… [takes her knife]

Nahoko: I never thought I’d side with Pablo on something… [takes knife]

Ikkaku: [deep breaths and nervousness] …I’m getting this over with [takes knife]
Everyone took their knives. Even Pablo took his with gruff resistance. I felt mine in my hands and then pocketed it. I didn’t want to think about how dangerous our situation just got. I just wanted to someone to pass the time with.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

Move to Employee Hall

Move to Cafeteria

Move to Serving Zone

Move to Kitchen

Talk to Tamaki

Tamaki: Oh! Hello Takito. [smiles] If you spend time with me, I can assure you it will be absolutely wonderful!

I decided to spend some time with Tamaki.

Takito: Hey Tamaki, I was wondering why you spend so much time around Pablo.

Tamaki: [giggles] Well, don’t tell Pablo, but… [wide grin] I’d really kind of love to be in charge.

Takito: Are you planning some sort of coup, Tamaki? Maybe I really should tell Pablo…

Tamaki: [gasps and puts hand over her mouth] Of course not! I just really like to host events…

Takito: Well, you sure are SHSL about it. I’ve never seen anyone get so accustomed to co-leadership
as you.

Tamaki: [smiles] That’s why I’m the best, silly! [pulls out plate of takoyaki] Pablo wanted to try some authentic Japanese food, but I accidentally made too much. Care to sample?

_Hmm… It seems to make sense, but I still have some resignations about her relationship with Pablo…_

Takito: Still, I wonder about how you were able to get so close to Pablo. I don’t know how anyone could earn the trust of a stranger so fast…

Tamaki: [giggles and motions dismissively] That’s a trade secret! Don’t just go asking a hostess about things like that! Seriously though, do you want a takoyaki?

_Okay, now she’s deliberately dodging the question. Maybe I should push further…_

Takito: Is it okay if I guess?

Tamaki: [puzzled expression] Guess what?

Takito: I think you were able to gain Pablo’s trust quickly because…

( You’re related / You’re a citizen of La Espera / You’ve hosted a Vargas family event )

11:2123211223312312312313122312

Takito: I think you host things for the Vargas family.

Tamaki: Oh! [puts hand over her mouth] Well, you’ve certainly got me! As a representative of
Hope’s Peak, I hosted the welcoming event for Pablo. [scratches the back of her head] We met there, and he’s the only one of us he knew beforehand…

Yeah, Takito! I think I deserve some victory takoyaki…

Tamaki: You know, Takito, this is quickly becoming an interrogation session.

...There goes my appetite…

Takito: Sorry about that. Is there anything I could do for you?

Tamaki: [giggles] Of course! I’ve always got chores around here…

Takito: Erm… I think this is her subtle way of revenge…

Actually, it wasn’t that bad. Tamaki had me help plan out schedules for the coming days. It was pretty nice to get a heads up on these kinds of things. I even got to nibble some of that takoyaki.

Tamaki: There! I hope you’re ready for dishwashing next Wednesday!

Takito: [groans] At least it was better than the alternative…

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Serving Area]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Dinner tasted terrible. It may have been tainted from what happened earlier, but I didn’t care.
Pablo seemed particularly hit hard.

Pablo: [heavy breathing] [takes bite] [heavy breathing]

Satoko: [whispers] I got over it hours ago. What is with that little dítě?

Yasue: [angry face] Satoko!

It wasn’t until after dinner he seemed to be back in authority.

Pablo: [gets up, walks to the podium] Attention, La Esperan Temporary Guard! Today, our resolve and plans for safety have been shaken to their core!

Itsumi: [sulks] I still can’t believe it…

Wataru: [stares down shamefully] I can’t believe I would feel sympathy for a foreign leader. [sighs] It is true what they say. War makes strange bedfellows.

Pablo: Yet, I have prepared two countermeasures for the prevention of murder. [motions to Tamaki, who brings out a whiteboard] First, if you still have your knife, please get it out.

I took out my knife and stared at the case. Just as Monobear had said, my name was printed in gold lettering on the bottom. The rest of it was black reflective plastic, except for the glass covering that let me see the knife inside. I had seen knives before, but this seemed somehow real and terrible.

Pablo: I can’t touch them, but I will create a system in which anyone attempting to access their knife will be immediately noticed. [draws map of one of the dorm rooms] Every day, at noon, I or one of your classmates will check to make sure your knife is in this [points to bedside table on his diagram] location. If your knife is not here upon inspection either at the regularly scheduled times, or after a murder, your guilt will obvious.

I have to admit, that’s a fairly cunning counter-plan.
Akinori: Yeah! [claps] I knew you could do it! You saved us all!

Ikkaku: … [crosses arms, and takes a deep sigh]

Nahoko: Still, I worry about the Syphilis…

Pablo: [slight anger] Second, as I have learned today the limits of sleep deprivation, I will have to take a few days off from staying up all night. [deep breath] So, I will be reusing the bingo machine to select the two people who will be staying up to patrol. This will be a permanent addition to our chore regimen. [motions to Tamaki]

Tamaki: Of course. [rolls bingo machine] I took the Pablo ball out this time, but I’ll be sure to put it back in as soon he’s caught up on his sleep.

Two balls fell to the bottom of the machine.

Tamaki: Our patrollers are… …Chiyo and… …Me!

Chiyo: I don’t know if I’m good for this job. [crosses arms] I’m really more alert during the daytime, when my suit can photosynthesize…

Tamaki: Oh, Chiyo. [dismissive motion] Nobody likes a work dodger, especially in this dire time!

Pablo had managed to patch together a counter-effort. Yet, I still felt more shaken than before Monobear’s surprise announcement.

Sleeping always seemed to calm me down, and it was about time for bed anyway. I decided to head in that direction.

[Move to Employee Hall]
It looks like Chiyo’s stationed outside Ikkaku’s room. I wonder if what I told Pablo made this happen…

[Talk to Chiyo]

Takito: Chiyo! I may have to be a night guard someday, so I was wondering what it is was like. Mind telling me?

Chiyo: [smooths out flowers on her costume] Well, I just started five minutes ago. I don’t really know what it’s like. [contented pose] But if you really want to know, you could…

Takito: No. I really don’t want to take your shift.

Chiyo: You know, if I hadn’t taken an oath to only use my persuasion pollen on enemies of the Earth…

Ikkaku: [opens door] …! Takito! Just who I wanted to talk to! I need to speak to you in private.

He seems unusually eager. Yet, I worry…

Chiyo: Hey! I’m not just here to stare across the hall! Pablo said, “In light of recent intel, no one is allowed to be alone with Ikkaku Kirigiri! He is a clear danger by his own admission!”

Ikkaku: [annoyed tone] C’mon, Chiyo. If I wanted to kill Takito, I wouldn’t do it in such an obvious place.

That doesn’t exactly calm my nerves.

Chiyo: But…
Ikkaku: [patronizing pose] No one but us has to know. If Pablo somehow finds out, you can tell him I overpowered you.

Chiyo: [angry, flowers spout pollen] Hey! I’m the one who could overpower you! I’m Gaia-chan, champion of the Earth, don’t you forget it! [calms down] I’d only agree to such an agreement if Takito consented. And you will absolutely not use any “overpowering” rumors!

Ikkaku: [stares into Takito] I won’t kill you. It’d be stupid. I promise.

Takito: …I guess it’s okay. What have I gotten myself into?

Ikkaku: Great. Chiyo, stay out here.

[Automoved to Ikkaku’s Room]

Ikkaku: [large sigh of relief, puts hand on Takito’s shoulder and lowers his head to make eye contact]

Erm…? Am I getting “the talk?”

Ikkaku: First off, Everything I said yesterday? Bullshit.

Takito: What?

Ikkaku: You and Ryouta were right yesterday; I’m the 2nd best detective in the nation, behind my sister, Kyouko. I needed to lie in order to discover who would truly be by my side, and by agreeing to meet me in here, you passed the test.

I guess I wandered aimlessly into success…

Ikkaku: You also may have noticed that our “leader” can only half protect us against this teddy bear. I can do the whole job. I’ll save everyone and stop this Syphilis motive crap, but I can’t tell you how here. I need you to meet me in the Dino Room, tomorrow at midnight. Come alone; you’re the only
Takito: What’s so bad about your room? *It seems fine to me*…

Ikkaku: Our first step has to be done in the Dino Room, and who knows if Pablo’s bugged our rooms. Even now, I’ve said a lot. [points to the door] You need to calm down Chiyo. Getting everyone on my side is one of my many goals.

Takito: Okay, but maybe if you could give me a summary…

Ikkaku: [shivering, deep breathing] G0!

Takito: Sure, sure!

[Move to Dorm Hall]

Chiyo: [surprise] You’re safe! Oh, wow, you’re safe!

Takito: Of course I’m safe. Ikkaku isn’t as bad as you think.

[Move to Takito’s Room]

*That day, I had felt probably the worst shock of my life. I had never seen such a system dismantled so swiftly. Yet, I felt hope that Ikkaku would be able to right what went wrong. It had felt good to plant a seed of trust within Chiyo. I remember thinking about how that bear loved saying the word “despair”, and thought that clinging on to the hope Ikkaku gave me was the best way to fight Monobear off. I clung as hard as I could, slowly drifting off into sleep…*

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: There’s one question that people ask me often.
Monobear: They say, “Why are you called ‘Mono’ if you look like two bears put together?”

Monobear: Sometimes, I say it’s because of my sound system.

Monobear: Sometimes, I say it’s because of my favorite album.

Monobear: Sometimes, I say it’s because of the town where I was manufactured.

Monobear: Everyone believes these reasons, but none of them are true.

Monobear: On very very rare occasions, I tell them the real reason.

Monobear: But after that, I always kill them! Upupupupupupu!

Chapter End Notes

Well, I hope you like all these characters, because the last free time vote of the chapter begins now.

Please check the "Entire Work" comments page, find the comment saying "Free Time Poll 5 & 6", and make your vote a reply to that comment.

Also, If you don't mind, I'd like your predictions on who the first to die will be. Please make your guesses replies to the comment "First Death Predictions". It's good for a writer to be able to see how well his twists work.
Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair - (Ab)normal Day 4

Chapter Notes

Nobody voted for free time this time, so I RNG'd our free time recipients and got Wataru and Chiyo.

Not to be passive-aggressive or anything, but votes are really appreciated, and I hope we get some more come Chapter 2.

Also, to the commentor "B gal", I'll get detailed descriptions of the characters up soon. It'll be either the next or second next update. Thanks for the complements!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair– (Ab)normal Day 4

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Takito: [sighs] Once again, I thought familiarity would lessen the tension, but it only seems to be getting larger…

[Move to Dorm Hall]

Ikkaku: [leaves dorm room] Hey. [winks]

Takito: [winks]

Ikkaku: [leaves for the cafeteria]
Everything's on track. Just gotta make it to midnight tonight, and Ikkaku will solve it all. Just gotta make it.

Takito: [calming breathing]

Akinori: [exits room] Oh, looks like you need breathing exercises, too! [sigh of relief] I was working myself up thinking I was the only one!

That was more embarrassing than it needed to be…

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Benito: Ay, Takito! You made it just in time for my morning fish filets!

Okita: [huge grin, chuckles] Not typical breakfast food, but what the hell! I’m game!

Most of us were going to continue their morning routine of closely watching the chef, but Benito actually brought some cooking devices out of the kitchen and cooked our food right in front of us. I don’t know about everyone else, but I was too busy staring at Benito’s grill skills to be worried about poisonings.

Benito: [throws fish with spatula] Hah! Catch, Takito!

Takito: Woah! [catches fish on plate]

No poison. Surprisingly, it tied Tamaki’s cooking for the best food I’ve had at this place. Who knew there’d be so many skilled chefs?

Pablo: [thumbs up] Thank you, Benito! I can only hope for such succulence in all my meals to come!
Benito: [smiles and crosses arms] Yer welcome!

Pablo: Yes, it’s incredibly savory! I’d love to have it again for dinner!

Tamaki: [concern] Pablo, I think it’s time for announcements…

Pablo: [shock] Oh! Of course! [scrambles to the podium] Erm, announcements are very good today. We did not find anyone’s knife out of place during this morning’s inspection.

Itsumi: [points at Pablo] Hey! I’m n-not about to just b-believe the inspectors weren’t lying!

Pablo: [salutes] Already taken care of! I ordered double inspections of each room, done by different inspectors each time!

Hitomi: [proud pose] It’s true! I was one the inspectorators myself.

Wataru: [smiles] For a foreigner, you have incredible skill in unifying our group! [extends bionic arm, gives thumbs up] Your leadership has finally gained the approval of myself and the entire nation!

Pablo: [valiant pose] Of course! [gallant smirk] Through thick and thin, my leadership has led us completely out of the grasp of that malevolent bear!

Nahoko: I never thought I’d say it, but you truly did it, Pablo. [small smile and claps]

Pablo: [valiant pose] Yes, let me hear and now declare… [intense expression, makes fist] that no one shall die! Ever, at all! [raises glass] Now, a toast! Hahaha!

Wataru: Agreed! [raises glass] Hahaha!

Yasue: [raises glass] Hahaha!
Pablo: Hahaha! [takes large gulp]

Chiyo: [raises glass] Hahaha!

Satoko: [raises glass] Hahaha!

Pablo: [finishes glass] Hahaha… [wipes brow]

Monobear: Upupupupu!

Pablo: Haha…Wah!! [shocked expression]

Monobear: Oh, don’t mind me. I just heard someone make an estimate about when the first murder will occur.

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] That’s right, you devil! I’ve foiled yesterday’s little plot! I will announce once again for all to hear, [salute] NO [valiant pose] ONE [crosses arms with gallant smirk] WILL [intense expression, makes fist] DIE!

Monobear: Huh? [looks down bashfully] I suppose I can’t stop you from ruining my plans for despair, Pablo-senpai, but as long as we’re having a guess party, may I please guess too?

Pablo: [scratches the back of his head] Erm… I guess it’s okay… As long you don’t promote killing…

Monobear: [looks down bashfully] …W-well Pablo-senpai, my guess is… [sinister laughing pose] …that someone will die by midnight tonight! For certain! Upupupupu!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] You villainous braggart! You’re no kyoudai of mine!

Monobear: [blushes] Not like that mattered to me anyways. Oh, and if anyone’s a braggart, it’s you,
Ill Douche. I’ve seen multiple despair games of mutual killing go down, so believe it or not, I can call a murder. [points casually at Pablo] So, bastards, have any of you have any mutual killing experience you’d like to disclose?

_Silence. I couldn’t refute Monobear’s logic. I had to get to Ikkaku and tell him we need to put “the plan” in overdrive._

Monobear: Exactly! If I were one of you guys, I’d make sure it wasn’t you! Upupupupu! [runs away]

Pablo: [stern expression] Ahem! Now that our unwelcome guest has exited, it is time to announce the day’s workers. [motions to Tamaki] Tamaki?

Tamaki: [smiles] Thank you. Today, as a special surprise, we have a volunteer! [claps] Ikkaku has offered to cut down the plants today.

_Dammit! Why would you do this? Right when I needed to talk to you, too!_

Pablo: A volunteer? Not only that, but Ikkaku as well? [slight cry] Our group truly has a unity to be envied!

Ikkaku: [raises eyebrow] Are you calling me uncooperative?

Pablo: Uh-Of course not!

Tamaki: So then… [rolls bingo machine] …Hitomi! You’ll be working with Ikkaku today!

Hitomi: Heh! I’m a great working partner, ‘cause I’ll always have my eye on the job! Get it?

Ikkaku: …

Hitomi: Oh… I don’t know if I can work with such a Humorless Harry…
Kotori: Don’t worry, Hitomi! Itsumi and I managed to get more than half of it yesterday! [grins] You might even finish before lunch!

Ikkaku: [scratches the back of his head] Why does every want to avoid me?

I don’t…

Argh. Looks like I can’t deliver really important news to Ikkaku until at least lunch. Gotta find someone else to spend the time with.

I just hope it won’t be a corpse.

[FREE TIME BEGIN]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Gym]

[Talk to Wataru]

Wataru: Ah, Takito! Your companionship is always welcome!

I decided to spend some time with Wataru.

Takito: [puzzled expression] So, erm, what do pyro-technicians do to make friends?

Wataru: [shrugs shoulders] Sadly, Takito, I don’t know. [constructs simple firework with a face full of concentration] I am, as all should aspire to be, a citizen first, and a hobby man second!
Yeah. I forgot he really only does fireworks out of patriotism.

Wataru: But if you’re really interested in how I strengthen my friendships, [extends bionic hand, intense expression] I challenge you to an arm wrestling match!

Takito: [extends hand] I really hope I don’t break my arm. Who knows what that thing’s grip strength is…

Wataru’s cyber arm wasn’t as strong as I thought. I was able to keep him from winning for a good ten minutes. But in the end, Wataru got some sort of burst of energy from nowhere and slammed my fist down.

Wataru: [slams down Takito’s hand] Once again, Victory!

Takito: You have to admit, though, it was pretty close. I lasted for a while.

Wataru: Oh, that? I did that on purpose.

Takito: Wha-what? I’m not the pitiable type of person, am I?

Wataru: [concern] No, do not be worried that our connection was not genuine! You most certainly gave your all to overcome me, and in that, I have bonded with you on an indescribable level.

Shouldn’t I need to get your all, too? I feel like I’m permanently at a disadvantage now.

Wataru: [flips open panel on his forearm and begins tinkering] And as a huge bonus, you have assisted in the important procedure of calibrating my arm! [flexes bionic hand] I discovered almost all of my weak points. [puts hand on Takito] Gwahaha!

How does someone just patronize someone else without even realizing it?
Takito: How does that even work?

Wataru: Oh, my calibration? I could tell by which points on my hands you could push further.

... 

Ok. That misunderstanding was probably my fault.

I began to think about the answer to my actual question.

Wataru: [anger] HEY!

Takito: Gah!

Wataru: Daydreaming is not part of the duties of a good citizen! [points] Pay attention!

Takito: I was!

Wataru: Really? Then what am I doing when I do this?

Wataru placed one of his hands on top the other one, and then attempted to slap the bottom of the bottom hand with the top hand while simultaneously attempting to pull the bottom hand back to avoid getting slapped.

Crap. I shouldn’t have let my school reflexes get the best of me.

Wait, I think I remember this. Wataru is testing…

( the speed of his hands / his reaction time / the durability of his hands )
Takito: [salutes] That procedure is done to test reaction time! Sir! ...C’mon…

Wataru: [surprise] Correct! [grimace] I-I am very sorry to have doubted you, Citizen Takito!

Takito: I forgive you. But it’s about time I got on my way!

Wataru: [salutes] It would be an honor to see you again soon.

[FREE TIME END]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

There he is… I can’t let this chance slip me by!

Takito: Ikkaku! We need to talk. About the thing.

Ikkaku: [angry] Not out here, idiot! Follow me.

[Automoved to Employee Center]

Ikkaku: [annoyed] What is it? I’m not someone who likes to be kept from lunch.

Takito: You heard Monobear at breakfast, though, right? I think we need to get whatever plan you
have working really soon.

Ikkaku: [pauses and thinks] [puts hands over his eyes and laughs] Don’t be silly. My plan requires that we take action at midnight.

Takito: But shouldn’t we prepare, though? Monobear said…

Ikkaku: [gulps, nervous expression] I don’t care what that idiot bear said! If I do the plan early, it’ll fall apart, and everyone will be at risk!

Takito: But…

Ikkaku: [panting, clenching at chest] [harsh tone] IF I DO THE PLAN EARLY, PEOPLE WILL DISCOVER IT AND PABLO WILL STOP IT. GO. I DON’T HAVE TIME FOR STUPID IDEAS. [pants heavily, looks down]

Takito: Okay, okay!

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

He seems very adamant about this. I don’t know if I can change his mind.

Takito: [sighs]

Still, Monobear’s prediction is really scary. I wonder if Ikkaku’s even considered it. For the time being, I’ll just have to hope none of us would commit murder.

…I’m running out of hope for that sort of thing.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Foyer]
I decided to spend some time with Chiyo.

Chiyo: Takito! [points wand]

Takito: [shock] W-what do you want?!

Chiyo: [pensive pose] I’ve been thinking, about this Monobear... [throws petals, points wand] I may have fought him before!

Takito: R-really? Do you know his weakness or something?

Chiyo: [pouty expression] Of course I do! But can you let me tell you the whole story first? [angry expression] The story of Gaia-chan cannot be split and dissected into only the parts you want! [fiery eyes] It’s unnatural!

Takito: [nervous voice crack] Uh, okay. Continue.

Chiyo: [valiant pose, speaks into wand like a microphone] Six months after I had taken up the mantle of Nature’s Angel Gaia-chan, I received a call that poachers were using an illegal sonar device to make whales beach themselves! ...and kill kittens!

[camera goes to comic-style image of Chiyo on a boat heroically facing off against the silhouette of a bear-like behemoth]

Chiyo: Taking my own vessel, the Gaia Beluga, I boarded the ship where the sonar was supposed to
be. But the whole thing was a trap! It seems that an anonymous coalition of enemies to Earth had hired thugs to take me down! There were hundreds of them, and in the middle…

[camera zooms in on the silhouette of the bear, and its red eyes begin to glow]

Chiyo: …was the villainous Kemikaru Kuma, a giant mech-bear capable of spewing acid at high speeds. He was programmed with one desire: To exterminate allies of the Earth! It would say, “DEATH TO GAIA-CHAN. DEATH TO GAIA-CHAN.”

Wow. Chiyo must be reeeeeeally troublesome to “enemies of the earth”.

[camera goes to comic-style image of Chiyo in a magical girl pose]

Chiyo: But then, I shouted, “Enemy of the Earth, allow me return your nutrients to the soil! Gaia-chan Root Whip!” and made Kemikaru Kuma fall on his own weight!

[camera returns to original comic-style image]

Chiyo: I dispatched the remaining goons, and sunk the treacherous ship, but unknown hands have rebuilt Kemikaru Kuma many times. To this day, I can count on his appearance at every major battle I’m in.

[camera returns to Chiyo in the Geology Hall]

Chiyo: [points wand with intensity] And so, I believe this whole affair is the plot of Kemikaru Kuma, and Monobear is only one of his cub underlings!

Takito: …But that didn’t have anything to do with a potential weakness!

Monobear: [angry pose] …And I’m not an underling!

Takito: Gah!
Chiyo: [shock, jaw drops] Eep! You demon!

Monobear: I’m no cub, either! I’m a full-grown, self-made bear, dammit!

Takito: [sighs] Well, as long as you’re here, are you related to this Kemikaru Kuma?

Monobear: [laughs] Of course I am! Upupupupu! We’re robo-brothers!

Chiyo: [points wand with intensity at Monobear] See! I told you! This is a plot for polluters and poachers to destroy their nuisances!

Monobear: That’s very arrogant of you, Chiyo. If I only wanted to kill you, [brandishes claw] I’d have done it already.

Takito: Besides, I don’t think these two are really brothers.

Monobear: Takito, you too?

Monobear and Kemikaru Kuma can’t be brothers because…

( Monobear can’t shoot acid / The two weren’t made for the same purpose / Kemikaru Kuma is much larger )

Takito: If you were robo-brothers, you’d be made in the same factory for the same purpose, yes? So a brother to Kemikaru Kuma really would’ve killed Chiyo on the spot.
Monobear: [nervous sweat pose] Oh, maybe this really is my fault. How despairingful. [standard pose] You see, Kemikaru Kuma and me are “oil brothers”. We exchanged each other’s oil.

Chiyo: [pouty expression] So Kemikaru Kuma really isn’t involved…

Monobear: Nope! He actually tried to get inside the museum a few days ago, but I dismantled to keep of despair environment pristine!

Chiyo: [jaw drops] You’d kill your oil brother?!

Monobear: Upupupupupupu! The gift of despair is the best part of brothership!

Chiyo: Takito! You are excused! I will give this bear a stern talking to for his despair behavior!

Okay… I’m really glad I don’t have to be there for that…

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

I had dinner. It tasted like nervousness and tension. But soon after, Pablo held even announcements.

Pablo: [quickly salutes the group] Announcements will be brief tonight, as we only have . Tamaki, please roll our guards for the evening.

Tamaki: [smiles] Certainly.
Crap! I almost forgot. If only Ikkaku or me get picked for guard duty, our plan is busted!

Tamaki: Our guards for tonight are…

Come on…

Tamaki: Satoko…

Come on…

Tamaki: …and Chiyo!

Takito: [whispers to self] …whew…

Chiyo: [anger] God damn it! What’s even the probability of getting picked twice in a row?!

Wataru: [hits table with bionic fist] Chiyo! The device used for selection is impartial and entirely fair! Do not shirk from your duty!

Chiyo: [attack pose, grimaces at Wataru] But it’s guard duty, where you have to stay up all night! Why can’t I do duty sticking it to those fake plants in the Dino Room? They have no business impersonating nature!

Wataru: [anger] Your personal preferences mean nothing when it comes to serving your countrymen! You are a disgrace of a public warrior!

Okita: [smug pose] Wow, we really might have a murder tonight!

Chiyo & Wataru: [staring at Okita] Keep quiet!
Ryouta: ...Eep!

Pablo: [makes fist] Silence! Chiyo, you will accept your duty!

Chiyo: [crosses arms] But…

Pablo: [valiant pose] No buts! As Wataru said, the bingo machine is completely impartial. However, on the rare occasion that you are selected for guard duty a third time, I will fill in for you.

Wataru: [disappointed face] But, her duty…

Pablo: [stern face] No buts, either! As a leader, you must be compassionate! Now, it is getting late. If you are not a guard, please report to your room.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Takito’s Room]

I sat in my room, waiting, lying on my bed, but most of all, thinking of whatever Ikkaku had in store for me at midnight, and if all of us would live to see it. Eventually, the nighttime announcements rang.

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Attention students! It is now 10 pm, and nighttime begins now. The things around you may be timeless, but you are not. Please go to sleep shortly, and Goodnight…

Only two more hours. No one’s dead yet, and we only need to last two more hours.
At 11:45, I decided it was time to get off the bed and start heading towards the Dino Room. Worried about Monobear’s estimate, I looked for my knife, but it wasn’t there.

Shit. Has someone taken my knife? If someone else doesn’t literally kill me, Pablo metaphorically will. It’ll be dangerous to go out now, but it might more dangerous to stay here, where people expect me to be.

Takito: [gulps] Gotta stay strong.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

Nobody’s up. I might have to deal with Satoko and Chiyo, though.

...Speaking of which, where are they?

I felt a bit of a chill go up my spine.

[Move to Employee Hall]

Still no Satoko or Chiyo.

...

Please don’t be dead.

[Move to Foyer]

Luckily, I saw Satoko pacing within the main area of the foyer, and Chiyo sleeping on the help desk. I must have sighed the biggest sigh of my whole lineage that they were still alive.
…Unluckily, they were still guards.

Satoko: [frustrated expression] Takito! Get back to your silid-tulugan right now!

Takito: Erm… I have an appointment.


Takito: It’s with Ikkaku. He told me to meet him at midnight. …And by the way, what’s with Chiyo sleeping?

Satoko: [shrugs] I’m just being a good person and letting her sleep while I do her shift. [anger] But still, even if you have some sort of appointment with a person who couldn’t possibly be there, there’s no way in Enfer I’ll let you pass alone.

Takito: Come on, Satoko!

Satoko: [crosses arms] Nien.

Ikkaku won’t like this, but I have no choice…

Takito: Ikkaku wants to meet with me about ensuring the group’s safety. Look, do you think Pablo’s leadership has been a bit …lacking?

Satoko: [crossed arms] Perhaps.

Takito: Ikkaku’s promised to put a real plan into action. He said it’ll ensure everyone’s safety and even make Monobear’s Syphilis threat a non-issue.

Satoko: Sounds a bit farfetched… But…
Takito: But what?

Satoko: [shrugs] What the hell. We need any help we can get. I’m giving you thirty minutes. Both you and Ikkaku have to be out by then, and Ikkaku has to tell me how he snuck inside. [intimidating expression] If you aren’t out when thirty minutes are up, I’m busting the isicabha down and dragging you out.

Takito: Thank you. I promise, it’ll be worth it.

Satoko: Better be. And no mention of any of this to Pablo or Chiyo.

Takito: Got it!

[Move to Geology Hall]

Walking up to the Dino Room’s door, my heart pounded. I had just bluffed my way past Satoko, banking entirely on the word of someone I’ve only just met. I hoped ridiculously hard that Ikkaku would come through for me, and got ready to greet him on the other side of the door. I pulled open the heavy door, and once inside, turned around.

...

I was not ready. Nobody is their first time.

[Play this for the full Dangan Ronpa effect: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4kxEAVJjSM]

Ik… Ikk….

Ikkaku….

You’re… dead…
Cut straight in half…

I… should've done something…

I blacked out, right then and there.

Chapter 1- In the Belly of Despair: (ab)Normal Days END

Chapter End Notes

Think you know Ikkaku's killer already? Speculate as a reply to the comment "First Killer Speculation".

Be sure to check the main comments page if they aren't appearing for you.
**Bonus: Detailed Character Descriptions**

*Chapter Notes*

This is bonus description for the characters, so if you don't care about this stuff and just want to get to investigating, you can skip this. Otherwise, it's here!

**Bonus: Detailed Character Descriptions**

**Takito Narita:**

Has brown hair, green eyes, an average complexion, and of course, an ahoge. He dressed very formally for his visit to Hope’s Peak, wearing a black three-piece suit completed with a brown tie and steel cufflinks. His shoes are black leather slip-ons. His voice is a bit higher than the average for boys his age, (More like Naegi than Hinata). He has an average height and build, but is not very muscular at all.

**Akinori Kurokawa:**

Has short, clean-cut red hair, hazel eyes, and wears round glasses. Like most priests, he wears black robes over white ones, and is never without his titanium rosary. His shoes are worn, brown, and tight-laced, and his complexion is slightly pale. Akinori speaks in a voice similar to Takito, but with a bit more hesitancy. He’s also average height, and slightly skinny.

**Benito Kasai:**

Has scruffy, dark black hair with a full-grown beard, sea-blue eyes, and wears a large black tricorner hat. Benito wears an eye patch over his left eye, and it has been specially made to help him see underwater. He also wears a black, worn trench coat with a brown undershirt, beige shorts, a cloth belt, and traditional leather buckle shoes. Benito is taller than expected for a high school student, and is very muscular, especially in the upper body. He speaks with a hearty, deep, booming voice.

**Ryouta Miki:**

Has short, messy brown hair, dark brown eyes and an average complexion. Ryouta wears square, thick glasses, as well as a bowler hat where he keeps his pens. Ryouta also wears a green vest over a blue polo shirt, navy slacks with a tan belt, and worn white sneakers. He wears his camera on a strap around his neck, and also wears a light grey backpack. Ryouta is the shortest guy of the group by a considerable margin, and his habit of hunching slightly doesn’t help. His voice is a very high tenor, and he often stutters due to anxiety.
Okita Sugitani:

Has perfectly styled blonde hair, green eyes, and very fair skin. Okita is also heavily perfumed, and keeps a blood red rose handy at all times. He wears a pin-striped suit, with suede shoes, a white undershirt, and a matching pin-striped tie. Okita’s voice is slightly deeper than average, and he’s only a few inches above the average height for his age. Despite appearing skinny to most passerby, he’s actually quite well-defined.

Wataru Gensai:

Has spiky black hair that points upward, piercing yellow eyes, and a tan complexion. Wataru wears a sleeveless white shirt, a utility belt, khaki pants with several pockets, and steel-toe military boots. Metal plates that look like muscles cover his metal arm’s internal workings, but certain areas are exposed if Wataru moves his arm the wrong way. Wataru’s over six feet, and is very muscular, though not quite as muscular as Nidai or Sakura. His voice is loud, deep, and projects throughout every room he’s in.

Pablo Vargas:

Has well kept dark brown hair, brown eyes, and a deep tan from his days on La Espera. He wears a buttoned-down general’s uniform with gilded shoulder pads. His shirt, and were custom-made to fit him, and are both light green. Pablo also wears dark green, tight-laced boots, and displays the badges signifying his rank on his left breast. Pablo is only a half inch shorter than Takito, but his voice is slightly deeper than the average. Pablo’s private dieticians have given him a very good physique, but he is still not comically big like Wataru or Benito.

Ikkaku Kirigiri:

Has pitch black hair, purple eyes with noticeable bags, and a very pale complexion. Ikkaku wears a light purple leather vest over a dark purple t-shirt, as well as blue jeans, a white belt, and worn brown sandals. He has a large body and is fairly tall; his size comes more from fat than muscle, but he’s not obese by any means. His voice is deep and sounds very distinguished.

Nahoko Miyake:

Has long chestnut hair that reaches about a half foot beyond her shoulder, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. She wears a small green fez without a tassel on top of the center of her head. Nahoko’s outfit includes a green work dress that ends at the knees with long sleeves and a high neckline. She also wears moderate make-up and matching green work heels with dark blue socks. Her solid beige tech shelf is held up by tan suspenders and carries a wide variety of smartphones, tablets, and laptops, all running stock programs. Nahoko is taller than average, but has a very average build, and is only moderately muscular. Her voice is only slightly deeper than average.
**Hitomi Yunokawa:**

Has short, strawberry-blonde hair tied back in two explosive pigtails, a moderately tan complexion, and all three of her eyes are brown. Hitomi wears a sleeveless white top with a high neckline, jean shorts with three belts and a golden eye belt buckle, and yellow sneakers with red socks, but doesn’t wear make-up. She’s fairly skinny and she’s in the shorter half of the girls, but she’s also the most muscular. Her voice has an average pitch, but she puts a ton of energy into all her words.

**Satoko Royama:**

Has long, dark brown hair that she keeps in a bun using a variety of hair clips, bobby pins, and pencils. Her eyes are a deep green, and her complexion is only slightly tan. Satoko wears a dirt-brown dress that goes down to her ankles, is tied with a built-in belt at the waist, and has a high neckline. Her other clothes include her rimless bifocals, blue earrings, make-up, and beige heels. She towers above the other girls, and has a large, but not muscular, build. Her voice is high-pitched, and she likes to put emphasis on all her words.

**Chiyo Ando:**

Has long blonde hair tied into two huge, fluffy pigtails with flower pins. Chiyo also has green eyes and a moderately pale complexion. The Gaia-chan costume includes a one-piece, short-sleeved and short-panted suit made with tightly woven small vines, a large vine satchel with floral-patterned utility pouches, holsters and shoes made of leaves, and long, light green, translucent gloves and socks. Don’t forget the wand, which is a stick of woven leaves culminating at a large tulip water lily flower with a glowing pearl at its center. Chiyo, true to her cause, wears no make-up. She also has average height, a very high-pitched voice, and is fairly muscular due to her missions.

**Kotori Ijiri:**

Has long, braided white hair, purple eyes under thick-rimmed, round glasses, and holds the record for palest girl in the group. Kotori wears a long, white lab coat with stuffed pockets, a lavender small-weave sweater shirt, dirty black work overalls, and worn boots. Her scythe is a silver metal staff with purple lights that can become a scythe, hoe, axe, or a variety of other tools. It creates a purple plasma shape out of the end of the staff to become the right tool. Kotori is completely average in terms of height, voice, and build.

**Itsumi Jukodo:**

Has light brown hair put into twin braids, black eyes with thick square glasses, and a moderately tan complexion. Itsumi wears a beige pocketed vest over a black-and-white-striped t-shirt, dark green khaki shorts with several more pockets, and tan climbing boots with white cotton socks. Itsumi wears an explorer’s hat and minimal make-up. Her voice is high-pitched, and she stutters when she’s scared. Itsumi’s the shortest girl of the group, but is moderately muscular.
**Tamaki Osu:**

Has long, flowing, waist-length black hair, brown eyes, and a moderate complexion. She wears a formal, red, V-cut gala dress, and white high heels. She accessorizes with pearl earrings, a pearl necklace, 24-karat silver bracelets, and heavy make-up. She’s very tall, with a slightly high-pitched voice and is not very muscular.

**Yasue Temko:**

Has short, bowl-cut black hair, yellow eyes, and a tan complexion. Yasue wears a black-and-yellow-striped sweater, black corduroy pants, a yellow belt, and yellow high heels. She also likes to wear her novelty bee antenna headband, a clear plastic fanny pack for Bertrand to stay in, and no make-up with the exception of yellow lipstick. Yasue is only an inch above the average, and while she speaks with a deep soprano, she can buzz at all possible frequencies people can make. Yasue isn’t particularly muscular.
Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair – Abnormal Days Part 1

I was out cold for a while. I’m not sure exactly how long, but eventually…

???: Sveg… si! Wake… Svegliarsi!

Takito: [opens eyes] Enrghh…

Satoko: Get up, you filthy, filthy idiot! [grabs the back of Takito’s collar and pulls him up]

Takito: Hey, wait, what are you doing?

She pulled me up, grabbed my head, and forced me to look at Ikkaku’s corpse, or at least half of it. He was lying down, arms outstretched, with a shocked expression permanently etched onto his face. There was blood around both the top of his head and where he was cut off at the torso, where I could see intestines leaking out. I couldn’t spot the rest of his body, and I’m a little glad I couldn’t— It might have been the only thing keeping me from vomiting.

Satoko: [verge of tears, incredibly angry] Look at it! Look what you’ve done, you murderous bastard!

Takito: I-I didn’t do anything! I’m innocent!

Satoko: [anger] Yeah right! You’ve been alone in here for 30 minutes, and then conveniently faint, and you’re somehow not the killer? Kupabyka! [handcuffs Takito]

Wh-huh?
Takito: Where’d you guys get those?!

Satoko: [angry glare] They come standard-issue from Pablo for criminals like you! [gets behind Takito and moves him towards the doors he came in] I’m not letting you out of my sight until someone else can take you, homicida!

[Automoved to Geology Hall]

[Automoved to Foyer]

Satoko: [anger] Chiyo! Svegliarsi! Now!

Chiyo: [snoring, asleep] Ah, my long time nemesis, the Sicilian Smoglord, returrrr… [shock] Wah! Takito! Satoko! What’s going on? Have my foes invaded the museum?

Satoko: [angry tone] Ikkaku’s dead, and Takito’s the one who killed him. [pushes Takito forward towards Chiyo] Takito “made an appointment” with Ikkaku in the Dino Room, and then murdered him right there!

Urk… So much for due process…

Chiyo: Really? You cretin! [slaps Takito]

Takito: [muffled] Ouch…

God dammit. I know I’m innocent, but I don’t really have anything to prove it with…

Should I really blame them, though? I might have acted the same way…

Chiyo: I trusted you! We all trusted you! [cries] Why did you have to be such a greedy idiot! [slaps Takito again]
Takito: Ouch… I didn’t… honest…

Satoko: [stoic] Come, Chiyo. Don’t believe his lies. You should really see it for yourself.

Takito: I’m not… lying…

[Automoved to Geology Hall]

[Automoved to Dino Room]

*Seeing the corpse a second time didn’t help anyone’s mood, especially mine. I was now starting to realized how amazingly screwed I was. It felt horrible.*

Chiyo: [blank expression] Oh… Takito… Not even my villians are this… cruel. [cries] I… I…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: A body has been discovered!

Monobear: Following a brief period of investigation, we will commence our school trial!

Takito: Hmm? We get an announcement for this?

Satoko: Of course we do! Murder’s a big deal, but it’s not like you needed to know it happened, you murderer!

Takito: Believe me or not, but I didn’t kill anyone! Honest!

Chiyo: [concerned expression] I’d like to say you are not our opponent, [angry expression, points wand at Takito] all the evidence points to you! According to what Satoko said, only you knew Ikkaku was going to be there, and only the three of us were close enough to kill him!
Takito: I can’t deny I didn’t make an appointment with Ikkaku, [desperation] I swear on my life I’d never kill him! Really! I mean look, we’re going to have some sort of “school trial” in an hour or so, so if you have accusations, make them then!

Satoko: [deep thought] Hmph. I suppose you have a point, [points at Takito with a menacing expression] but I’m still not uncuffing you until you’re unable to mess up the evidence.

Chiyo: [curious expression] Hey, Satoko! Look at the other pair of doors! They’re cracked open slightly, and there’s some sort of metal object on the top… [shock] Of course! [points wand at the object, triumphant expression] Takito is not the killer after all!

Satoko: [confused] Excusez-moi?

*I’m just as puzzled, but I’ll accept anything to get me off the hook at this point.*

Chiyo: I should’ve known from the beginning! Enemies of the earth have sent a steel assassin to disrupt the peace within our group, and it hopes to catch up unawares in the Chapel Hall! [aims wand] To prevent further bloodshed, allow me, Gaia-chan, to return its essence to Mother Earth!

Pablo: [kicks open Geology Hall doors and enters] Temporary Esperan guards! If you didn’t hear, there’s been— [looks at Ikkaku’s body] [looks at Chiyo aiming her wand at something] Treachery! Freeze where you stand, scoundrel!

Chiyo: W-wait!

**Chiyo fired her wand, hitting the “steel assassin” and making a lot of noise. Barely a second after, Pablo tackled her to the ground. Luckily for both of them, they just barely missed landing on Ikkaku or his blood.**

Pablo: [righteous fury] I should’ve confiscated your entire arsenal!

Chiyo: [winces] Get off me! Gaia-chan would never hurt the innocent!
Satoko: [disappointed stare down at Pablo] Chiyo didn’t do it. She was never out of my sight long enough to do all this.

Pablo: [gets up] Then why did she have her gun out?

Chiyo: [annoyed tone] I was saving us from the steel assassin! Geez!


Chiyo: [gets up, points wand towards Chapel Hall doors] I saw it escape into the Chapel Hall!

…And is that what I think it is?

Takito: Looks like there’s a trail of blood droplets heading towards the Chapel Hall, too.

Pablo: [intense expression] What are we waiting for, then! After this “steel assassin” immediately! [valiant pose] Charge!

[Automoved to Chapel Hall]

Huh?

[camera moves to view a tipped bucket full of Samurai swords]

Heh. For a second there, I was actually worried about a bucket…

Pablo: This isn’t a steel assassin at all! It’s just a bucket!

Chiyo: [crosses arms, pouty face] It sure looked like a death-bot sent to kill us! Don’t blame me!
Takito: It might not have been such a bad move after all.

camera moves to a trail of blood droplets leading into the Cradles of Civilization Room

Takito: That blood trail’s still a good lead. We might actually be able to corner the killer!

Satoko: [side-eyes Takito] Like we haven’t already.

Pablo: [shock] Wait, we have? [anger] Why aren’t they in handcuffs?

Takito: They are. [turns around to show Pablo] Satoko suspects me of the killing.

Satoko: [angry expression] I don’t just suspect, Jeg vet!

Pablo: [puzzled] …Excuse me?

Satoko: [nervous] I, erm, mean, “I know”. …It’s Norwegian. [shakes head] Anyway, Takito was the only one who knew the victim would be there, and had 30 minutes by himself in the Dino Room. [satisfied grin] Ergo, it could only be him. …And ergo is Latin.

Pablo: [pensive expression] Hmm… [uncertain expression] I’d say that Takito has a …60% chance of being the killer. [stern expression, stares at Takito] I will continue to have the handcuffs on you, but considering that remaining 40%, you will still be allowed to investigate.

Takito: [sigh of relief] I can’t thank you enough, Pablo.

Pablo: [proud pose] Well, as the valiant leader of La Espera, I’ve learned that compassion is a must. I remember when morale was low, so I had to go to the front lines and stitched—

Chiyo: [angry expression, hands on hips] Hey! Is nobody going to investigate this blood trail?! It hasn’t stopped, y’know!
Pablo: [shock] …Yes! Of course! [valiant pose] Once again, Charge!

[Automoved to Cradles of Civilization]

*Pablo opened the door to the Cradles of Civilization room, and Satoko prodded me inside. Most of the room was the same, but all of our eyes were drawn to the huge bloody splotch on the middle of the Standard of Babylon II. And in the middle of the huge bloodstain was…*

Chiyo: [shivering, scared expression] …Is that…?

Pablo: [looks down disappointedly, makes fist] Ikkaku’s left leg. Digusting. [serious expression] Even in battling the many vicious invaders of my country, I would never allow my men to dismember corpses. Whoever may have done this, they are beyond reproach. Monobear will be kind compared to what I would do.

…Yikes. I wouldn’t go as far as Pablo, but what kind of monster could kill so violently? I couldn’t imagine anyone of us would be capable of such a thing.

Satoko: [points] Ven aqui. The blood trail continues back into the Geology Hall.

*It’s fainter than before, but still clearly there.*

Takito: There’s also this samurai sword at the foot of the Geology Hall doors.

Pablo: [valiant pose] No time for that! If there’s a blood trail, then for a third time, we charge!

[Automoved to Geology Hall]

Chiyo: [looking down] It’s harder to see, but the trail continues this way…
We followed it down the Geology Hall, through the noodle-like bend, around to the very end of the hallway. There, we found, well…

Pablo: [sighs, dejected expression] The final piece. It’s Ikkaku’s right leg.

There was a large bloody splotch on the wall, with drip stains going down to where the leg rested. It was disgusting, but I sighed internally, knowing I wouldn’t be seeing any more dismembered limbs today.

Pablo: [slams wall with fist] Dammit! A murderer has been sneaking around under my supervision, and has escaped us as well! [furious pose] AAARRGGH!

He seems really distraught. I’m not so sure he’s used to failure.

Pablo: [deep breaths, sighs] I suppose we’ll have to have some sort of investigation soon. [authoritative pose] Satoko, Chiyo?

Chiyo: Yeah?

Satoko: What should we do?

Pablo: Tamaki and I are only ones who woke up due to the announcement. [pensive pose] I spoke with Tamaki before she came over here, and she said she would come as soon as she “made herself presentable”. I need you two to wake up the remaining students and gather them in the foyer. In addition, please check to make sure everyone’s knives are in their proper places.

Crap! My knife… If they discover it’s missing…

Chiyo: [magical girl pose] Of course! Wait ‘til everyone gets a taste of Gaia-chan’s Wisteria Wake-up Powder! [leaves for the Dorm Hall]

Satoko: [smug grin] Oh, this’ll be just too much lōbu. [leaves for the Dorm Hall]
Takito: [nervous] What about me?

Pablo: [pensive pose] My apologies, seeing that you are the most likely suspect, I cannot allow you to go off by yourself. Come with me. [grabs handcuffs]

[Automoved to Foyer]

Tamaki: Oh, Pablo! I saw your guards leave for the dorms. [smiles] Have you determined a suspect yet?

Pablo: [releases Takito and walks in front of him] I have some doubts still, but Takito is the most likely murderer.

Tamaki: [surprise] Oh, is that so?

---

*Pablo and Tamaki discussed the likelihood of my guilt while I stood in the corner. The rest of the students began to trickle in, and soon everyone was here. I thought about the ways I could escape being framed, but at this point, I couldn’t think of an option.*

_Ech. I’m starting to think I’ll never be cleared._

Itsumi: [nervous] W-what’s going on? I-it’s like on-ne in the morning!

Benito: [annoyed] Ey, Pablo, are you implementin’ some sort of boneheaded night exercises?

Pablo: [angry] I was under the impression that a certain two people would have told you all…

Chiyo: [playful pose] Whoops!

Satoko: [smug grin] I must have been too occupied with powdering everyone.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well, anyways, you are all here tonight because one of us has made the
grave mistake of murdering a fellow classmate. Some of you may know the victim, Ikkaku Kirigiri. [motions to the doors leading into the Geology Hall] His body lays in pieces, scattered across the exhibits of the museum.

Ryouta: [wincles, puts hands on head, cries] N-nn-n-nn-no!

Hitomi: [sweating] You’re joking, right, Pablo? Ha! Hahaha!

Monobear: Upupupupupu! This is no joke, but laugh all you want! I know I will!

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] Villain! Don’t act like you were uninvolved in this senseless killing!

Monobear: [puzzled expression] Oh, who said I was? But yeah, for once, your fearless leader is right. Ikkaku’s dead, and one of you guys killed him.

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Shit, really?

Monobear: [happy pose] Yup! And that’s not the best part! In an hour or so, we’re going to have a school trial. There, you’ll have to guess the killer! [brandishes claw] Get it right, and I’ll make sure the killer sees Ikkaku real soon. Get it wrong, and I’ll kill the lot of you.

Akinori: [gulps, scared expression] …I can feel that bear’s deadly claws on me already! [flinches] Make it stop! Make it stop!

Monobear: [curious expression] Want it to stop? [outraged expression] Solve the murder!

Nahoko: [crosses arms, stares at Monobear] I already knew that, idiot bear. Do you have a real reason to be here or not?

Monobear: [shock] …That’s right! I do! [proud pose] Presenting this murder’s wonderful edition of the Monobear File! [Monobear pulls a small box out of his mouth] The Monobear File contains all sort of information that forensic noobs like you bastards would need days to figure out on their own! I have plenty for everyone, so please don’t shove.
Pablo: [takes two Monobear Files, extends a hand with one to Tamaki] Tamaki, please show this to Takito.

Tamaki: [smiles] Of course. [takes Monobear File] Takito, would you mind looking at this?

Takito: Sure. *It may be the first step to proving my innocence*...

**Monobear File 1: Ikkaku Kirigiri**

*Cause of Death: Brain ceasing to function due to a stab wound to the top of the head. The shape of the wound suggests that in order to make sure the victim was dead, the blade had to be pushed in further after initially being stuck in.*

*Time of Death: Uncertain due to the separation of the body parts.*

*Additional Information: The body was separated post mortem.*

*Stab wound? Was that...*

[flashback to an image of the blood stain on the top of Ikkaku’s head]

Takito: [shivers] *At least he died quickly. I can’t imagine being split like that alive.*

[returns to the present]

Yasue: [grasps Bertrand for safety, fearful expression] Whoever killed him, stay away from Bertrand! I won’t let you do ...that to him!

Wataru: [scared expression] *W-we founded this nation to escape such barbarism!*
Akinori: [distraught expression] …Such cruelty! [wince] It’s unforgiveable!

Pablo: [looks down dejectedly] I know. I can’t apologize enough for my failure. [sighs] [authoritative pose] But our best chance for a peaceful future will be to pass this bear’s “trial”. Satoko, would you mind telling us about which knives you found out of place?

Satoko: [smug grin] Of course. And let me preface my report with a proverb from our friends in America. [points and smiles at Pablo] “I told you so.”

_Oh shit._

Satoko: Chiyo and I looked inside every room, even Ikkaku’s, and checked to make sure every knife was in position. Out of all of them, [adjusts glasses] only Takito’s was missing.

Pablo: [crosses arms, angry expression] Is that so? [turns to Takito, pensive pose]

Hmm… Your chances of being the killer have elevated to 80%. Do have anything to say, Takito?

Takito: Believe me or not, it was missing when I left my room! I don’t have any idea where it is!

Pablo: [pensive pose] So, no real alibi? [anger] Takito, you were loyal to my cause, but I have no tolerance for murderers…

Takito: I swear! I’m innocent!

Ryouta: [crying] I t-t-trusted you!

Takito: Ryouta? Please believe me!

Ryouta: [crying] I p-put so much t-trust in you, T-takito! [wipes face] Pablo, there’s something I need to show everyone. [takes out newspaper and hands it Pablo]

Pablo: [puzzled expression] Hmm? “Dr. Tanaka’s Veterinary Advice?” What are you trying to tell
us, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [worried expression] T-t-that’s the wrong article… [takes newspaper and points to “Secret Sleuths?”] D-do you see h-here? Only T-takito, Ik-k-kaku and me knew about this!

Pablo: [realization] Oh! [furious expression] Oh… [slowly turns to face Takito] …YOU TREACHEROUS WEASEL!

Ryouta: Eep! [escapes into the crowd]

Pablo: [furious] YOU THOUGHT THAT IF YOU COULD KILL OFF THE BEST DETECTIVE AMONG US, IT WOULD EASY TO FOOL THE REST OF US, DIDN’T YOU?

Takito: [nervous] I didn’t kill anyone! Really!

Pablo: [furious] YOU ARE, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE KILLER OF IKKAKU KIRIGIRI!

Takito: [winces] I’m… I’m…

Kotori: He’s not!

Pablo: [calms down] Heh? Kotori, don’t waste your time on a dead man. He is an enemy to our group, and shall be dealt with accordingly.

Kotori: [skeptical expression] But if there’s any chance, even a tiny one, Takito should have the benefit of the doubt. Innocent until proven guilty, as they say.

Pablo: [crosses arms, angry expression] Weren’t you paying attention? “Proven guilty” just happened!

Kotori: [skeptical expression] I’m willing to give him a chance. I say, we let Takito investigate under my supervision. [points with energy at Pablo] If circumstances were different, you could be in the same situation!
I sighed internally, and shot Kotori a look of gratefulness. I could not thank her enough. Around us, everyone, even Satoko, started to look unsure of themselves.

Pablo: [unsure expression] Well, I suppose it’s fair, but he stays in the handcuffs until I say so, and if Takito turns out to be guilty, [crosses arms, displeased expression] I won’t let you complain about my judgment ever again.

Kotori: That’s a risk I’m willing to take.

Pablo: Fine. We have a wager. [checks watch] Monobear said we have about 60 minutes to collect all the evidence we need for the trial. As leader, I will be preforming my own investigation, and you will be required to join it. [salutes] Temporary Esperan Guard, to work!

Takito: I really can’t thank you enough, Kotori. I’ve been wondering for ages how I’m going to get out of this.

Kotori: It’s okay. It’s just all part of my duty as a classmate. Just tell me where you need to go, and I’ll take you there.

[INVESTIGATION START]

Chapter End Notes

Think you know Ikkaku's Killer? Speculate as a reply to the comment "First Killer Speculation".
Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair – Abnormal Days Part 2

[Talk to Monobear]

Takito: …Erm, Monobear?

Monobear: [confused expression] Eh? Why bother with little old me? Don’t you have a reputation to clear?

Takito: Well, I need to ask you about something…

[flashback]

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: A body has been discovered!

Monobear: Following a brief period of investigation, we will commence our school trial!

[flashback ends]

Takito: What’s with the announcement when Chiyo discovered the body?

Kotori: [confused] Announcement?

Takito: You slept through it. It really wasn’t that special anyways, and had no real facts about the
case. [turns to Monobear] Why wasn’t there an announcement for Satoko or me?

Monobear: Pfft… pfft… Upupupupupu!

Kotori: [worried expression] Do you two have an inside joke I should know about?

Monobear: Wait a second… You two aren’t playing dumb? You seriously don’t know about the Body Discovery Announcement?

Takito: Nope.

Kotori: [worried expression] Not a chance.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Then that’s even funnier! Upupupupupu! Check your IDs, kids! It’s all on there.

Kotori: [looks at ID] No, it really isn’t. [shows Monobear] See, here’s all the rules. I don’t see anything about a Body Discovery Announcement.

Monobear: Ohh… [distressed pose] I’m such a useless, terrible, useless bear, I-I’ll never be able to spread despair with such sloppy work! [standard pose] I mean, I’ll update everyone’s ID cards immediately. [laughing pose] I hope being in the dark about this whole thing has been a despairing experience!

Kotori showed me the update to the museum rules on her ID.

Rule No. 11

After three people discover a body, a Body Discovery Announcement will ring throughout the museum. The murderer does not count towards the three people unless they have successfully integrated back into the group.

Takito: So, Monobear, does…
Monobear: [dismissive pose] So predictable! No, fainting, or pretending to faint, does count as “successfully integrating,” especially the when you’re right in front of the body. Upupupupupu! You’re not out of trouble yet!

Should’ve known he’d dash my hopes…

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Talk to Benito]

Benito: [relieved pose] Whew! Safe and sound!

Takara: Safe! Safe!

Takito: [worried] Are we in danger? Did the killer come through here?

Benito: [crosses arms] You two? In danger? Feh. If the killer ain’t you, and I’m not certain you aren’t, they’d be half a fool to kill off their best scapegoat.

Kotori: [puzzled expression] So who is out of danger?

Benito: [smiles, crosses arms] No one! It’s my precious treasure that’s escaped the murderer’s deadly grasp! [joy] Oh, gemstones! Oh, crystals! Oh, rubies, oh diamonds, oh my!

Are you sure you’re not taking your pirate fantasy a little far there?

Takito: You do know that none of the gems are yours, right?

Benito: [angry pose] What do you mean, bilgewater? So long as I breathe the air in this museum, these jewels are mine, and safe, too!
Kotori: [curious expression] Are you sure someone couldn’t have stolen a few incredibly insignificant gemstones?

Benito: [flexing, proud pose] Impossible! Only an amateur scurvy dog would forget to count his jewels!

*You are an amateur scurvy dog…*

Benito: [petting Takara] And besides, mates, there’s no way to remove the glass, and I don’t see any cracks! [thumbs up] My treasure is the most secure booty around!

Takara: Around! Around!

Benito: Wahaha!

[Talk to Nahoko]

Nahoko: [muttering to herself] All my employees laughed at me when I spent 5000 yen to download Pocket Coroner… [chuckles, snide grin] I’d like to see their faces now…

Takito: Hey, Nahoko…? What are you doing hunching over the leg?

Nahoko: [angry expression] An accusation? From you? You’re one to talk!

Takito: [nervous, puts hands up] No accusations here! I’m, uh, interested in what you’re doing with Ikkaku’s leg.

Kotori: [looks over Nahoko’s shoulder] Hmm? Are you doing something with your tablet?

Nahoko: [annoyed stare] Of course I am! [moves tablet out of Kotori’s eyesight] I’m applying the top-of-the-line technology of Miyake Investment Group to our current forensic needs. [smug grin, messing with tablets] My Pocket Coroner App will uncover every possible secret the killer left behind with this leg.
Takito: Oh? What does it say?

Nahoko: [annoyed stare] Well, I was just about to use it when you disturbed me...

Takito: [embarrassed expression] Sorry about that.

Nahoko: [smug grin] There’s no need for apologies. You’ve presented an opportunity to show off the flexibility of my investment group’s services.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Stockbrokers who also solve murders? Never heard of that before.

Nahoko: [triumphant pose] Of course! I am the best, and the best do more than ever expected! Now, for the analysis…

Tablet: [computer voice] Analyzing… Analyzing… Analysis Complete. [presents images of the leg with various filters and points of interest]

Nahoko: [examining tablet] Hmm… It seems the cut was made cleanly and with one slice.

Kotori: Really? But look at where the cut is made. It's a very steep diagonal along the hip.

*Yeah, if I were separating someone’s legs, I’d cut it straight in half. I think most people would do it that way too.*

Nahoko: [angry expression] Are you doubting the legitimacy of my agency’s hand-selected application? I’ll have you know my choice was peer-reviewed!

Takito: I don’t doubt the accuracy of your coroner tablet; I just think maybe we should get a second opinion…

Nahoko: A second opinion? My services exist so that second opinions are unnecessary. There is no
need for such redundancy.

Takito: Okay. I’ll take your word for it. *It’s not like the program’s that untrustworthy anyway.*

[Talk to Satoko]


Kotori: [angry expression] You say that like any of it has been proven.

Satoko: [shrugs] Tako? Gravity hasn’t technically been proven, either.

Kotori: [earnest expression] But if we don’t have proof, we’re gambling our lives!

Satoko: [smug grin] Yo sé. Which is why I’m not betting on anyone but the favorite.

Takito: Look, Satoko, I get what you have against me, but would you mind just telling us about what happened?

Satoko: [points angrily at Takito] You know exactly what happened!

Takito: I don’t mean about the murder. You were the only one who was guarding the entrance to the crime scene. I want to know if what happened.

Satoko: I already told you. [straightens glasses] Nobody but you came to the door that night.

Kotori: [puzzled expression] Are you sure? Spending multiple hours up in the middle of the night can take it out of you. Not taking even one break seems a bit unrealistic.

Satoko: [proud expression] Maybe for you, but not for me. I made sure to get in a few cups of coffee
beforehand. Everybody does it. [realization] Wait…

Takito: What is it?

Satoko: [worried] Erm, there was one time I left my post…

Kotori: I knew it!

Satoko: [embarrassed expression] After drinking all that coffee, I kind of had to use the restroom by the büfê…

Takito: How long was this? When did it happen?

Satoko: [embarrassed expression] I’m not certain, but I think it took about four minutes. I had to go not long after the Nighttime Announcement.

Takito: So, someone could’ve snuck in then?

Satoko: [embarrassed expression] It’s unlikely, but I concede it’s possible. [angry glare] The evidence still points towards you.

[Maybe, but there’s one less piece than before.]

Kotori: [smile] Another hole in the case against you! Where to next?

[Move to Dino Room]

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [stands there, back to Takito, crying out her third eye] Bwahahaha!
Takito: Hey Hitomi, if you need someone to help you get over Ikkaku, I can—

Hitomi: [turns around, puzzled expression] Whuh? Who’s Eek Aku?

Takito: Um… He’s the guy who died? He’s the guy lying dead in this room. He’s the guy you were crying over.

Hitomi: [shock] Ikkaku’s real name was Eek this whole time! [twirls hair] Well, I guess it was kind of obvious.

Takito: His name isn’t Eek Aku! Ikkaku Kirigiri is Ikkaku Kirigiri!

Hitomi: [sighs] First my idea to cut the plants doesn’t mean anything, and then everyone starts confusing me with names… [pouty expression] Why is it always “Pick on Hitomi Day”? [cries]

Kotori: [smiles] Ah, cheer up, Hitomi! Ikkaku spent his last moments with you, even if on assignment. People really care about you.

Takito: Speaking of which, did anything important happen while you guys were “weeding”? I hate to press her in such a fragile emotional state, but there might be some good evidence.

Hitomi: [perky] Okie-dokie!

So much for fragile....

Hitomi: [thinker pose] Well, Ikkaku was actually a really good worker! He worked the entire time, and even got to the Dino Room before I did every time we took a break together!

Takito: How often did you take these breaks?

Hitomi: [counts on fingers, tongue out] Well, we broke for lunch, and then once every two hours for a few minutes to get a drink, pee, or whatever. [shrugs] But he always beat me. For such a stocky guy, he’s really fast!
Kotori: [pensive pose] Can you imagine Ikkaku in the 100m dash?

*I always thought of him as more of a jockey.*

[Talk to Tamaki and Pablo]

Pablo: [scowling] Keep your distance, fiend! This is evidence!

Tamaki: While I don’t share quite the same emotions, I’m afraid I have to second that. [smiles] Please keep your distance.

Takito: [muttering to Kotori] How am I supposed to mess with anything in handcuffs...

Kotori: [earnest] That’s right, how is he supposed to mess with anything in handcuffs?

Takito: [winces] Please don’t repeat everything I say...

Pablo: [scowling] You shirk from transparency? You’re a devil, even amongst killers!

Tamaki: [concern] Now, Pablo…

Pablo: [anger] I refuse to let you add insult to this poor man’s injury! Begone!

Kotori: Aww, can’t we just take a little peak? Please…?

Takito: Please? C’mon, guys…

Pablo: No! [intense stare, scowl] Do you think I led La Espera to victory being malleable?
Tamaki: [smiles] If you have trouble with rhetorical questions, the answer is no.

...

*I think Tamaki was serious there.*

Kotori: Well, if you won’t let us get close, the least you can do is tell us the key points you noticed.

Takito: Yeah, do you remember the Monobear File?

[Black and White flashback to image of the Monobear File]

**Cause of Death: Brain ceasing to function due to a stab wound to the top of the head.**

[Return to present]

Takito: Did you see any wounds at the top of the head?

Pablo: [discomfort] Not that you wouldn’t already know, but yes, there was a knife wound directly on top of his head, and from my amateur estimates, it appears to match one of the knives Monobear gave us.

Tamaki: There’s even a little pool on the floor where the blood poured out right under the wound.

Pablo: [scowling] Other than that, it’s not that special.

Tamaki: [pensive expression] In all honesty, this entire half of the body isn’t that special. There isn’t that much evidence.
Kotori: [shock] But if there’s so little evidence, why keep the body from us?

Pablo: [makes fist, intense stare] On principle! [points to Takito] And for the few hours you have left, don’t you forget it!

Tamaki: [smiles] Please pardon him.

Takito: [mutters to Kotori] I don’t think we’re going to get much more out these hardasses.

Kotori: Huh? What?

Takito: [mutters to Kotori] I don’t think we’re go…

*On second thought…*

Takito: Nothing. I said nothing.

[Examine blood trail]

Takito: [kneels, stares down] That’s definitely thicker than the one in the Geology Hall.

Kotori: Takito?

Takito: Oh, it’s nothing. I was just verifying something I noticed a while ago.

Kotori: Tell me next time, though, okay?

[Move to Chapel Hall]
[Talk to Itsumi]

Itsumi: … [noticies Takito, sharpens a stone with her chisel] T-takito…

Takito: [shakes head] It’s okay. I would be afraid of me too.

Kotori: [slight smile] Did you notice anything that could help us discover the killer?

Itsumi: [distraught expression] Y-yeah…

[camera pans over to the pair of double doors leading to the Geology Hall]

Itsumi: Do you s-see that s-sword? The one placed between the h-handles…

[camera moves to take a better look at the sword]

Takito: It looks like one of the katanas from the collection of ancient artifacts.

[camera returns to Kotori]

Kotori: [pensive pose] And when it’s placed like that, no one can enter the Chapel Hall from the Geology Hall.

Itsumi: [worried expression] The k-killer left that there… They w-wanted to limit our m-movements…

Takito: Nice deduction. We’ll need to remember that for the trial.

Itsumi: [reaches into one of her pocket] A-also, I f-found this... [brings out a wooden block] It was w-wedged between the those doors between here and the Dino Room.
Kotori: [takes block and turns around in her hands] Do you see these Celtic markings? This looks like another artifact from the Cradles of Civilization room.

[pensive expression] Do you mind if I borrow this?

Itsumi: S-sure… [angry expression] B-but I don’t trust T-takito with it yet! Keep it safe!

Takito: [sighs] I promise not to touch it, okay?

Kotori: And I promise not to let him touch it.

Itsumi: Okay. I s-still h-half trust you.

*Good to know.*

[Talk to Wataru]

Wataru: [raises eyebrow] Ah, Takito! [grabs Takito by the shoulders] Do not worry! Though that foreign scourge has tried to smear your name, I know any citizen of our nation could not be capable of such cruelty!

Takito: Wow. Okay. *That’s almost the closest anyone’s gotten to me today, and definitely the most uncomfortable.*

Wataru: [removes hands, looks embarrassed] Erm, excuse my proximity, fellow citizen.

Kotori: [concerned expression] Anyway, was something bothering you there? You seem worried.

Wataru: I’m worried about the murder, of course, but I know that’ll be sorted out sooner or later. [side-eyes the Dino Room door, grimaces] Yet, there is a second, much more invisible threat I fear more…

Takito: Another murder? So soon after this one?
Wataru: [continues to scowl to the side] No. I’m thinking something much more insidious.

[camera zooms in on a small hole in the wall about 3.5 feet to the right of the Dino Room doors]

[camera moves to a similar hole 3.5 feet to the right of the Cradles of Civilization doors]

Wataru: [deep thought] These holes have appeared here recently, and I can only think of one reason… [makes fists, intense anger] Without a doubt, that dictator is employing invasive insects to ruin our nation’s ecosystem! Grah!

Takito: …

Kotori: …

Takito: Y’know, I’m not quite sure that’s accurate.

Kotori: [nervous] Yeah, the holes are only a couple millimeters wide. I don’t know if a bug could fit in those.

Takito: Plus there’s the location…

[camera shows two side by side images of the holes]

Takito: They’re both the same distance from a pair of doors, and both are about the same height as the door handles. Can all that really be coincidence?

Wataru: [crosses arms] Of course it’s not! Pablo must have methodically chosen their locations!

Takito: Well, I, uh, can’t really disprove that, so I think I’ll just keep your warnings in mind when the trial comes.
Kotori: [nervous] Yeah, me too.

[Examine Tipped Bucket]

Kotori: [puzzled look, points down] Takito, do you know how this mess happened?

Takito: That? It was on top of the Dino Room doors when we found it, and Chiyo shot it down.

Kotori: [kneels down to examine the bucket] Yeah, I can see the burn marks where someone hit it. But there are also all these blades…

Takito: Yeah, those must be some more stolen samurai swords from the Ancient Japan exhibit. [raises eyebrow] Wait, Kotori, move that sword on the left. [points]

Kotori: This one? [moves it] Wait, is that…?

Takito: [kneels down to look with Kotori] It’s one of Monobear’s gift knives. Mine. [sighs]

Kotori: [digusted expression] Ick. It’s all covered in Ikkaku’s blood. All but the handle, anyway.

Takito: [shudders]

*I don’t know if I can take much more of this forensic stuff.*

Kotori: [curious expression] Hmm? Wait, did you see the blood splatter on the bottom of the bucket?

Takito: What about it? Are you talking about this empty spot in the center?

Kotori: Bloodstains normally make round stains, but this large clean spot in the center is very…
geometric. It’s full of right angles.

Takito: It looks kind of like a circle with bunch of random squares placed on the edge.

Kotori: [deep thought] I know a few flowers that could make that shape, but I doubt there’d be any
of them here. I’m at a total loss about this blood splatter.

Takito: Yeah, this’ll be tough to wrap my head around later. Still, this whole bucket thing seems
really weird from the murderer’s perspective. Why put all this evidence in a convenient bucket for us
to find?

Kotori: [sighs] Why even kill Ikkaku in the first place? Some things we just understand until we
work them out in the trial.

Takito: I suppose, but still…

*This killer’s gone all over the place. They seem both disorganized and really organized at the same
time.*

Kotori: Still what?

Takito: It’s nothing.

[Talk to Chiyo]

Chiyo: [serious face, pointing wand at Takito] Takito! Kotori! Stay close to me, and protect
yourselves from the steel assassin still in our midst! [makes a different pose for each letter] G-A-I-A-
chan! Gaia-chan!
Takito: But that was the bucket, remember? We really weren’t in any danger in the first place.

Chiyo: [angry expression] That’s what the assassin wants you to think. [valiant pose] But I can still sense its presence! I can sense its evil waves ruining the atmosphere and feng shui of this room!

Takito: So, you know a killer is in the room because the feng shui is off? Are you sure it isn’t the wallpaper?

Chiyo: [deep thought] Well, yes, this specific disturbance can only be caused by either a slanted wall painting or a vengeful killer-for-hire.

Kotori: A slanted wall painting… like this one? [points]

Chiyo: [shock] Yes! Exactly like that…! [begins to straighten it] Gah! The killer placed this here to throw me off the scent!

Takito: Wait, you don’t believe it was me?

Chiyo: [valiant pose] Of course not! If you were the killer, you would have just let me think it was some sort of murder-bot.

Kotori: [curious expression] Chiyo, are you sure someone else didn’t bump into it investigating?

Chiyo: [nervous] Well, no, but I definitely felt the disturbance when I came through here with Takito, Satoko, and Pablo earlier.

So the killer really did take time out to goof off with a painting? Weird.

[Move to Chapel]

[Talk to Akinori]
Takito: Hey Akinori, why are you in here? The investigation’s out there.

Akinori: [distracted expression] Well, that’s sort of the point. [sigh] To tell you the truth, I can’t handle being around such heinous acts. I used to get out of stressful situations by going to my sanctuary back at my church, and this chapel is sort of my sanctuary for now.

Kotori: [smiles] If it’s been too shocking, you’re welcome to stay in here.

Akinori: [distracted expression] Thank you. I really need to just pray in peace.

Takito: I don’t get it, though; why would you not want to help us catch the killer? Our lives are on the line!

Akinori: [shakes head] Oh, Takito. One of the first things my faith has taught me is that it has never been my role to judge. With actions so terrible, the killer will burn eventually. The time they do so does not matter.

The rest of the group could learn a thing or two about pre-judging, but still, Akinori’s piety is getting a little impractical here.

Kotori: Well, if there’s anything important in here, please let us know.

Akinori: [worried expression] Well, actually, there is some evidence I found. [moves towards pottery shelf] I had been doing Takito’s breathing exercises, hoping the murder hadn’t found its way in here, but lo and behold… [moves a large pot to the side] …I found these.

[camera shows an image of a dusty shelf, with a large round dustless space]

Takito: What am I looking at?

Kotori: If I had to guess, something important to the case was hidden here at some point.

Akinori: [worried expression, sighs] It was most likely the bucket. [shakes head] Ugh. I hate the contamination of sacred places.
Takito: Wait, how do you know it wasn’t just a pot?

Akinori: I’ve inspected all the pots; none of them have a bottom that size. [sighs] I shouldn’t be thinking this, but I really do hope we uncover the killer. The idea of such a dirty being living instead of the true symbols of hope… It sickens me.

Takito: We’ll do that for you Akinori. Just sit tight for now, and be helpful in coming trial.

Akinori: [deep breaths] Sure.

[Move to Chapel Hall]

[Move to Cradles of Civilization]

[Talk to Okita]

Okita: [haughty pose, places rose between lips] Get away from her, murderer!

Takito: Whuh?

Okita: [points angrily] You heard me! Step away from the helpless woman!

Takito: Um, Kotori’s with me of her own volition.

Kotori: [angry] What was that word you used? “Helpless”?

Okita: [bleeds from lip, nervous expression] Erm, I, uh…

Takito: Look, did you find any evidence you can share with us or not?
Okita: [adjusts corsage nervously] I, uh, saw that some of the artifact cases were broken into.

Takito: [looks over at the cases] Yes. They certainly were.

[Camera shows an image of three cases: one with katanas, one with ancient tools, and one with Celtic woodworks. The katanas and Celtic cases show obvious signs of being broken into.]

Okita: See! Those two cases have huge holes in their glass casings! The murderer’s definitely been messing around in there!

Kotori: Be careful not to touch the sharp edges.

Takito: Well, I get why the killer might have wanted to use the swords, but why these Celtic carvings? They’re just lightweight blocks; you’d have an easier time killing someone with your own fists.

Kotori: Or maybe one of these hammers in the tool case.

Takito: But that case wasn’t broken into…

Kotori: I’m not so sure.

[Zoom in on the tool case]

Kotori: Do you see that one hammer on the left? It’s off its supports, and looks like it was just placed randomly in there. I think someone took a hammer, used it, and placed it back.

Takito: But, how would they get in without breaking the glass?

Okita: I can answer that one! If you look closely…
Okita: …there’s a tiny hole in each case, made so that the staff could open them up!

Takito: But then why would anyone smash the case open?

Okita: [places rose between lips, shrugs] I dunno. Maybe they didn’t notice it?

_Perhaps. But still, I wonder if there’s something more._

Kotori: [grins] Thanks for the evidence, Okita.

Okita: [grins with rose in teeth] No problem!

[Talk to Ryouta]

Kotori: [worried expression] I would back off of Ryouta for now. He doesn’t look so good.

Ryouta: [shivering, looking down] I-I-I-I-kak-kak-kak-kak-u…

Takito: [sighs] You’re right. Maybe you should ask him some things without me. I’ll just stay away and listen in for a little bit.

Kotori: [smiles] Leave it to me. [approaches Ryouta] Hi there, Ryouta! Something on your mind?

Ryouta: [shivering, looking down] Bluh-bluh-bluh-blood…
Kotori: Is the bloodstain on the standard bothering you? Have you tried moving to a different part of the room?

Ryouta: [shivering, looking down] W-w-w-won’t… h-h-h-help…

Takito: [loud whispering] Psst! Kotori! The bloodstain is on all sides of the standard. He’ll be able to see it from anywhere in the room.

Kotori: [slightly angry] Takito! He can hear you!

Takito: [mouths the word “Sorry”]

Kotori: [concerned expression] So, Ryouta, maybe you should try going to another room for a while.

Ryouta: [shivering, looking into Kotori’s eyes] Ok-k-kay… [leaves]

Takito: Erm, sorry about speaking up when I shouldn’t have…

Kotori: [smiles] Just don’t do again, okay?

Takito: Yeah, I know. I’ve help Ryouta get through some tough things, too, y’know.

[Talk to Yasue]

Takito: [raises eyebrow] Erm, Yasue? What are you doing up there?

Yasue: [posing on top of the model Chichen Itza] Yodel-le-hi-hoo! Ace Climber and Bee Whisperer Yasue Temko scans the mountaintops for valuables!

Kotori: [puzzled expression] Valuables? I think they were in the Geology Hall.
Yasue: [snooty pose] Harumph! I guess you don’t want to see what evidence I’ve found up here!

Takito: Wait, no, no! We definitely want that!

Yasue: [stares into Bertrand] Well, Bertrand, what do you think? You think they should get to know about it?

Bertrand: Bzz, bzzzz, bzzz.

Yasue: Oh, I agree. [snooty pose] Bertrand and I say you have to come up here to know what we’ve seen.

Takito: [turns to Kotori with hesitant face]

Kotori: [stares Takito down]

Takito: [winces slightly, then climbs up the Chichen Itza model]

Yasue: [joy pose] Yay! We didn’t think you’d actually do it!

Okay…

Takito: What exactly did you find up here?

Yasue: [poses like a climber] Ay, Sherpa Narita! Take a look at the top of that column!

*The Cornithian one? Okay…*

...!
Wait, what’s that bloody grey thing on top of it. It kind of looks like ribbons and a wheel.

Takito: That’s quite the sight, Yasue, though I’m not sure exactly what it is…

Yasue: [smiles and takes an energetic pose] That’s okay! Bertrand and me don’t either!

Takito: That’s reassuring. I think I need to rejoin Kotori now.

Yasue: [thumbs up with Bertrand on the top] Sure thing! Just tell me whenever you want to be my Sherpa again!

[INVESTIGATION ENDS]

Kotori: [smiles] That’s everybody and everything!

Takito: Whew! I really couldn’t have done it without you. Seriously, thanks.

Kotori: [smiles] Don’t ment—

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Investigation time’s over, bastards! Report to the foyer for the majesty of your first school trial!

Kotori: [nervous] I mean, erm, don’t mention it.

Takito: We should get going. Mind helping me one last time?

[Automoved to Geology Hall]
Kotori and me went to the foyer, and waited for everyone else to trickle in. Most of the students shot me looks of hate or disappointment. My death felt scarily close. I looked down, hoping something else could occupy their attention.

Monobear: [jumps out from behind the help desk] Upupupupu! Well, kiddos, it’s time for our little trial! Anybody have some final words before we begin?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I, for one, think this trial unnecessary. [removes papers from his pocket] I have held a straw poll during the investigation of everyone’s votes, and Takito is the clear winner. Any further exposure to this murder runs the risk of trauma and mental damage to our group. [stern expression] I move to execute Takito now, and be done with this extended suffering! [hands poll results to Monobear]

Monobear: [puzzled pose] Wait, you think I don’t want trauma and mental damage? I really have to work on being more obvious. And what’s this? [outraged pose] Your only poll choices are Takito and Not Takito! My despair has high standards, and it’s an insult that you bastards think you can do it on your own! [tears up poll results, brandishes claws] INADMISSABLE!

Pablo: [shock] Gah!

Monobear: [angry pose] No more questions! Your trial begins now!

[camera moves to move the doors that would normally lead outside open up, revealing a large elevator inside]

Monobear: Everybody in! The trial room is at the bottom floor.

We all went inside the elevator and waited to reach our destination. Pablo and the others probably couldn’t wait to get this over with, but I hoped this elevator ride would last forever. Pablo’s straw poll didn’t go as he had hoped, but it still cut in to me deep.

Kotori turned to me and whispered something in my ear.
Kotori: It’s not over yet. Don’t give up.

She must have known how I was feeling. It was a nice gesture, but I still had doubts over my survival. This felt like an elevator ride into hell.

Elevator: Ding!

The elevator doors opened, revealing sixteen podiums in a circle inside a sand-yellow Egyptian-themed room. Monobear had somehow snuck ahead of us and was sitting on a throne opposite the elevator.

Here it was. The moment of the truth. 15 enter, 14 leave. And unless I can solve this murder, even fewer will survive. It felt so tense. I took my place at my assigned podium and steeled my nerves.

It was time.

ABNORMAL DAYS END

Chapter End Notes

The investigation is over. Think you know Ikkaku’s killer? Reply to the comment "First Killer Speculation" with your guess about who it was or how it happened!
So, as part of School Trial, I'll be introducing how I'll handle Non-Stop Debates and Cross Swords Encounters.

Non-Stop Debates will be denoted by Bold Text. You will be given a certain amount of evidence bullets before the debate starts, and throughout the Debate text there will be bolded (Disagreement) or Underlined (Agreement) phrases. Your job is to match the correct evidence bullet with the correct highlighted phrase. The Debate text ends when you see the phrase "Debate Ends, Solution Below", and the Solution will be given shortly afterwards. The Solution shows the correct Evidence Bullet (E1 refers to the first evidence bullet, follow the pattern) and piece of testimony (T1 refers to the first highlighted phrase, ditto).

Cross Swords Encounters are handled similarly, but will often have fewer highlighted phrases to object to.

Non-Stop Debates/Cross Swords will be shown like this:

Evidence Bullets: Basic Math, Basic Reading

Dude: I can't believe *these numbers can add!*  
Guy: Yeah! *2+2=5!*  

Debate Ends, Solution Below  

~~~~~~  
Solution: E1, T2  

~~~~~~

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 1: In The Belly Of Despair – School Trial Part 1

Classroom Trials START

Monobear: Before every trial, I like to explain the rules in simple terms so you bastards don’t forget. If you are the mob, your goal is to uncover the culprit and vote for them as the killer. If you are the culprit, your goal is to mislead the mob and have them vote for someone else. [giggles] The winner survives, and the loser dies! Upupupupu! Game on!
Monobear: Oh, and I better get those handcuffs off Takito.

_He did._

Wataru: [hesitant] I must ask you, are you sure one of us aren’t the killer?

Monobear: Of course it’s one of you guys! Do you think I would do something that cruel?

_I looked around to see everyone who could’ve done it. I still had a hard time believing any of us could’ve done it._

Hitomi: [joy pose] Hey look, Ikkaku’s alive again!

_What? Whuh?_

[camera moves to Ikkaku’s funeral image]

Takito: Are you talking about that thing?

Hitomi: [turns around and opens third eye, giving thumbs up] Of course I— [shocked pose, remains with her back to the group] Wait! That’s not Ikkaku at all!

Akinori: Of course it’s not! [winces] What is this anyway? Some kind of cruel joke to us all?

Monobear: [curious pose] Oh? Don’t you want your fallen friends to help in the trial? With this little stand I’ll set up for each of your corpses, even death can’t keep you from the fun of a good case!

_Could’ve done without that sloppy x of blood, though._

Okita: [wide grin, crosses arms] Oooh, can we do voices? [grabs the Ikkaku funeral image stand next to him] “Hi, I’m Ikkaku Kirigiri, and I’m half the man I used to be!”
Nahoko: [furious] Can it! Have you no respect for the dead?! [throws phone at Okita]

Okita: [dodges] What the hell was that for?!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Enough of this frivolity! We all know who the culprit is, so let’s get this over with!

Satoko: [energetic] Yeah! Rápidaamente!

Ryouta: [wincing] I’d like to g-g-go back to my r-room now…

Tamaki: [thoughtful pose] A speedy trial would be very beneficial, but I’m unsure if we can vote so early.

Monobear: Voting starts whenever you’d like, but you’d better be sure! Upupupupu!

Benito: [Makes a hook with his finger and points it at Takito] Then what are we waiting for? Keelhaul the rat!

Takito: Hey! Whatever happened to human until proven ratty?

Kotori: [smiles] Seconded. Even if you don’t believe that everyone here deserves a fair trial [coughs] Pablo [coughs]…

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] When we’re done, I will be sure to get medicine for your cough. Very bitter medicine.

Kotori: …When our lives are on the line, it’s worth going over our reasoning. Even if Takito has a 10% chance of being innocent, most of us wouldn’t risk our lives those odds if there were another way.
Itsumi: [shock] 10%!? That’s one or two of us d-dying! P-please not that!

Satoko: [scowling] It’s not 10%! It’s only 1% at best!

Pablo: [angry expression, slams fist on podium] We’ve been over this! I’ve done the percentages, and it’s zero percent, without a doubt!

Takito: If you’re so confident, Pablo, why don’t you explain your reasoning to us all?

Pablo: [points intensely] Because some of us are sick of murder and deceit, that’s why!

Yasue: [puppy dog eyes] Can’t we be sure, though? I can’t die when so many bees are depending on me!

Kotori: C’mon Pablo, if you have nothing to worry about…

Pablo: [sighs, crosses arms] If you insist. But when the rest of you must give mandatory apologies to anyone who suffers trauma from this extended exposure to darkness!

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Secret Sleuths?” Article, Monobear File 1

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The case against Takito is threefold!

Pablo: [raises single finger, stern face] Reason One! Takito was the last to see the crime scene before the body was discovered!

Satoko: [smug grin] He had 30 minutes to do whatever he wanted in there.
Pablo: [raises two fingers, stern face] Reason Two! He was one of a few people to know that Ikkaku was the SHSL Detective!

Ryouta: [nervous] O-only Takito, Ikkaku, and m-me knew.

Pablo: [raises three fingers, stern face] Reason Three! His knife was the only one out of place!

Chiyo: [distraught expression] Satoko and I checked it ourselves. Sorry, Takito.

Pablo: [intense expression, points at Takito] All three of these details point undeniably in the direction of Takito Narita! Only he could be guilty!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Solution: E1, T2

~~~~~

Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! …At least if my thinking is straight. [clears throat] Ikkaku cannot be the SHSL Detective!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Oh, so you think if you yell enough, you can trump the evidence? Ryouta, your article shows Ikkaku working as a detective, no?

Ryouta: [cowers] C-correct…

Takito: I think you’re the one who’s yelling without evidence, Pablo. Let’s take another good look at the article Ryouta wrote.

[camera changes to an image of Kyouko and Ikkaku Kirigiri investigating a crime scene in a
newspaper. Kyouko is examining a body in the forefront, while Ikkaku is handing money to someone in the background.]

Article: “Sure, Kyouko is the Super High School Level Detective…”

[camera returns to the trial]

Takito: Only one student can have each Super High School Level talent at a time. [points at Pablo] If Kyouko is the SHSL Detective, Ikkaku can’t be!

Nahoko: [smug grin] He’s right. [makes fist, intense expression] If Hope’s Peak decided to hand out Super High School Levels to just anybody, I’d be outraged!

Pablo: [points at Takito, angry] He’s also mistaken! I remember seeing multiple SHSL Good Lucks on the Hope’s Peak forum!

Takito: I’m fairly certain SHSL Good Lucks are a special case given out each year instead of each class. Besides, there’s a key word in the article that proves there is only one SHSL Detective. That word is…

( sure / is / the )

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

8:12333213213123132313222

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Takito: The article specifically describes Kyouko as “the Super High School Level Detective.” [slams podium] If there were any possibility of multiple people with that title, they would have called her “a Super High School Level Detective!”

Pablo: [grabs medals on his chest as if shot] Urk!
Wow! I feel like some sort of genius lawyer…

Tamaki: [smiles] If you don’t mind, Takito, I have a question.

Takito: [wide smile] Go ahead!

Tamaki: [stern expression] Does any of that matter?

Kotori: [annoyed expression] Of course it does! Takito blew a huge hole in Pablo’s theory on the motive!

Benito: [looking up thoughtfully] Much like a cannonball, I must remark… [thumbs up] He changed my opinion of ‘im.

Tamaki: [stern expression] That may be true, but aren’t we forgetting our surroundings? [blank stare] Everyone has motive here. We all want to get out, and we all want to avoid Syphilis.

Pablo: [intense expression, heroic pose] That’s right!

Chiyo: [pensive expression] If you just substitute killing to avoid Syphilis in for Pablo’s original idea, everything makes sense…

Tamaki: [smiles] Thank you, Chiyo. Furthermore, I would like to make a serious effort to bring this trial to swift close. My apologies to Takito and his sympathizers, but as Pablo mentioned earlier, some of us are receiving emotional damage from this trial and repeatedly bringing up the death of our friend. [bows] It would be unceremonious to have some of you continue to suffer, so as the SHSL Host, I will provide a quick return to peace and quiet.

Akinori: [puzzled expression] How are you going to do that? Pablo laid out the case against him pretty well already, didn’t he?

Tamaki: [giggles] Well, out of the two remaining elements of Pablo’s theory, one of them is actually
very airtight.

Pablo: [confusion] Wait, not both of them?

Tamaki: [confusion] You don’t know? There was a slight opening during the night when both guards were unable to man their post.

Pablo: [furious] Whaaaat?!

Tamaki: [smiles] Now, Pablo, there is a time and place for anger. For now, please allow me to make my case.

Pablo: [sighs] You have the floor.

Kotori: [energetic] Hey, Takito! Don’t let her confidence break you!

*Bring it on, Tamaki!*

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

_Evidence Bullets: “Steel Assassin”, Monobear’s Knife Rule, Personalized Knives_

Tamaki: [serious expression] Ikkaku was stabbed directly on top of his head with one of the knives Monobear gave us.

Tamaki: [serious expression] No other knives matching the wound are in this museum.

Okita: [scratches head] We found a knife nearby the scene, didn’t we?

Tamaki: [smiles] Yes. *And it is clearly Takito’s.*
Tamaki: [serious expression] Monobear’s rule states that no one could touch another person’s knife before the murder.

Tamaki: [serious expression] So if Takito’s knife killed the victim, and only Takito can touch his own knife…

Tamaki: [smiles] …then only Takito could have killed the victim.

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Solution: E3, T3

~~~~~~

Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! That knife is not clearly mine!

Tamaki: [cocked head, puzzled expression] Yelling again, are we?

Well, I worked pretty well the first time.

Tamaki: [smiles] Don’t forget, the knives came personalized.

Takito: Yes, they did, but I wouldn’t describe the knives as the things that were personalized.

Hitomi: [confused pose] Heh?

Takito: The cases are the only things with names on them. If you take the knives out of their cases,
they all look identical. The best of us couldn’t tell them apart!

Wataru: [crosses arms, thoughtful expression] Most knives are mass-produced like that…

Takito: So, Tamaki. [points vigorously] How you can be so certain this knife is mine?

Tamaki: [crosses arms, raises eyebrow] Well, I must say I’m more than a little disappointed in Monobear. These knives aren’t really personalized at all.

Monobear: Upupupupu! Steel printing’s expensive, toots! What did you expect?

Takito: Well, then now that this knife thing is—

Satoko: **HALT DIE KLAPPE!**

**CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT**

**Evidence Swords: Satoko’s Testimony, Personalized Knives, Chiyo’s Testimony**

Takito: [surprise] What?

Satoko: [very annoyed expression] I expected you to lie trying to cover your ass. I didn’t expect you’d be such a fucking moron about it.

Takito: [confused] Excuse me?

Satoko: [furious] You really forgot? Let me remind you how kneppet you are. [slams fist on podium and stares menacingly at Takito] Kouto ou te youn nan sèlman nou pa t ‘wè nan li a kòrèk plas!

Takito: [nervous] Could I get a translation for that?
Satoko: [clears throat] [very annoyed expression] Your knife was the only one we found out of place in the room!

Takito: [shocked] Oh! [worried] That…

Satoko: [smug grin] That’s right! The final nail in your coffin!

**CROSS SWORDS BEGINS**

*Okay, deep breaths. Just have to think this through.*

Takito: [deep thought] So you and Chiyo were the ones who went and checked everyone’s room to make sure each knife was in place, right?

Satoko: [proud pose] That’s right! [points at Takito] Which is why I’m doubly sure!

Takito: So, for clarity’s sake, can we go over how you checked each room for its knife? We should make sure there weren’t… gaps in your search process.

Satoko: [annoyed expression] If you insist upon it, I’ll let you known exactly how we did it. [smug grin] But it’s your loss. After all, it’ll just make the case against you stronger.

Takito: Oh, I’m very prepared for what happens.

Satoko: [smug grin] Our plan was simple yet efficient. We went into each room, and looked to see if the case and the knife were in the place Pablo instructed us to place them.

Takito: [pensive pose] So, you checked for placement?

Satoko: [annoyed expression] Yeah, **Chiyo and I checked for placement.** What about it?
Takito: [nervous] Erm, nothing for now. [curious expression] So, my room was the only one without a knife in it’s place?


*I’m not so sure yet… What if…!

CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

Solution: E2, T1

CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

Takito: I’LL CUT YOUR CLAIM TO PIECES!

Pablo: [shock] Wait! No swords allowed!

Takito: [nervous] Well, erm, I’ll cut it down metaphorically. [confident pose] Anyway, if Satoko and Chiyo only checked for placement, there’s an important detail they must have missed.


Takito: Do you remember what Monobear said about how the knives were personalized?

[flashback to Monobear handing out knives]

Monobear: They’re super sharp— enough to cut bone, and each comes with a special storage case with your name on the bottom!
Takito: Our names are on the bottom. A place you couldn’t see… [points vigorously at Satoko] …if you were just checking for placement!

Satoko: [pencils fall out of her hair] Urk!

Chiyo: [apologetic pose] Excuse my sloppy work! [heroic pose] I’ll be sure to redeem myself as Gaia-chan!

Yasue: [disappointed expression] Don’t celebrate yet, Takito. Why would someone even check for names when people can’t touch each other’s knives?

Takito: [proud smile] We may not be able to touch each other’s knives, but we can definitely touch the cases.

Satoko: [worried, replacing hair pencils] Are you trying to say what I think you’re trying to say?

Takito: If someone simply picked up my knife in its case, and placed it where their knife should be… [points dramatically] They could simply use their knife, dispose of the case, and still appear innocent when someone checked the knives!

Itsumi: [shock] W-wait, really? A-anyb-body could have used their own k-knife that easily?

Pablo: [distraught, appears wounded] Gah! This whole damn time… [angry] Why are my plans always full of loopholes?

Monobear: [laughing heartily] Upupupupu! I wouldn’t worry too much about this one, Lil’ Castro. I planned this little misunderstanding from the start.

Pablo: [expression of disbelief] You… planned this? [furious] Rngh!

Monobear: [dismissive pose] Come on, now. You didn’t think it strange I didn’t mess with your counter to my motive?

Pablo: [furious] Rngh!

Monobear may have made a dick move, but I need to get everyone back on track here…

Takito: [puzzled expression] So, am I out of the woods yet?

Kotori: [deep thought] Well, I’m pretty sure all three parts of the case against you are gone. [shrugs] So I guess you’re okay now.

Pablo: [angry] Not yet! You have only exposed the possibility of your innocence! [authoritative pose] Erm, I mean, for a full acquittal, you need decisive evidence, not just the circumstantial kind.

Wow. He regains his composure really fast.

Chiyo: [worried expression] Hey, uh, Pablo? There’s something I need to share with everyone.

Benito: [annoyed expression] Don’t wait for him! If you have something to say, out with it!

Chiyo: [serious expression] I don’t think Takito did it anymore.

Huh? Well, I can’t say I didn’t expect it. She was always kind of iffy about it.

Nahoko: [mumbles, looking to the side annoyedly] You didn’t need to make a big deal out of your shitty hunches…

Chiyo: [angry] I heard that! [serious expression] But anyway, I don’t think Takito did it anymore… [points wand intensely] …because I know Satoko did it!
Satoko: [shock] Vous plaisantez?

...I can’t say I expected this...

_Satoko seemed innocent when I found her. Should I try to save her, even after she tried to hard to get me found guilty?

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

_Evidence Bullets: Satoko’s Testimony, Ikkaku’s “appointment”, Location of the body parts_

Kotori: [annoyed expression] Hey! I thought we just learned something about baseless accusations!

Chiyo: [brandishes wand defensively, upset expression] My accusation has a base! You see, I was sleeping during my shift!

Pablo: [angry] Rngh, Chiyo! [sighs, calm expression] All this rage-inducing trickery is going to kill me…

Chiyo: [points wand at Satoko] Don’t blame me! Satoko is the one who allowed me to do it! She’s an enemy of the Earth, and of us!

Pablo: [angry] Satoko…

Satoko: [stern face] Discipline me later. [smug grin] And besides, isn’t that anger going to kill you?

Chiyo: [points wand at Satoko] My point is, Satoko planned to let her guard partner sleep so she could be the only one up during several hours of the night! She could’ve swapped the knives, killed
Ikkaku, and **set up everything for us to find!**

Okita: [shock] So, Satoko betrayed us all?

Pablo: [dejected expression] I set up two guards so this exact thing wouldn’t happen…

Chiyo: [points wand at Pablo] Do not fear! As Gaia-chan, I take full responsibility for sleeping on the job.

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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Solution: E2, T2

~~~~~~

Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Chiyo: [pouty face, points wand at Takito] Hey! I’m the one on your side!

Satoko: [chuckles] Seriously, dziecko, do you have a death wish? [shurgs] I mean, I’d appreciate the help, but…Seriously?

*Hey! I’m the one on your side…*

Takito: [thought pose] Chiyo, you said that Satoko had planned this murder, right? I don’t think that’s possible.

Chiyo: [intense expression] But it has to be!
Takito: [serious face] It can’t be. Do any of you know why Ikkaku was in the exhibits in the first place?

Benito: [scratches back of head] Come to think of it, we really don’t…

Satoko: [distraught expression] Wait, Takito, you didn’t tell them?

Kotori: [displeased expression] Didn’t even tell me, apparently. [confused expression] What is it?

Takito: Ikkaku was there because we made an appointment. He promised to come up with a plan to stop Monobear.

Chiyo: [shock] That was real? I thought Satoko made that up!

[camera moves to a surprised Pablo]

Judging by his expression, it looks like Pablo thought so too. ...Was he really thinking Satoko had done it?

Satoko: [annoyed expression] Oh, it’s real. Takito told me about it so he could get into the Dino Room.

Okita: [confused expression] Wait, Takito, you know what this means, right? This is a serious addition to the case against you!

Akinori: [upset face] You were the only one who could’ve known Ikkaku could be there!

Takito: Dammit! [worried expression] Did I say that out loud?

Pablo: [makes a fist, intense expression] See! You have been guilty from the start!
Kotori: [determined expression] Takito, think back. Are you sure no one else could’ve heard you?

*Only Ikkaku and me were in the room, and we spoke too softly for Chiyo to eavesdrop on… Argh! Nobody else could’ve heard!*

Hitomi: [sad expression, near tears] Is this it? I don’t Takito to die!

*Maybe I should just do something ridiculous, just to buy time.*

Takito: [realization] Wait!

[flashback to the meeting with Ikkaku]

Ikkaku: Our first step has to be done in the Dino Room, and who knows if Pablo’s bugged our rooms.

[return to the present trial]

Pablo: [puzzled expression] Eh? You know someone?

*I don’t believe a word of this, but it’ll have to do…*

Takito: [stern expression] Yeah, I know someone! [points] It’s you, Pablo!

Pablo: [staggered back, shocked expression] WHAAAAAAATT? [angry expression, points intensely at Takito] Insolence!

Takito: There was a reason Ikkaku didn’t want to meet with me in his own room. [points] He was afraid you had bugged it!

Wataru: [furious] I knew it! You foreign tyrants are always trying to steal national secrets!
Yasue: [confused] I have a national secret?

Pablo: [annoyed expression] There are no bugs! I don't have that kind of technology!

Nahoko: [sneering] Pfft! Like hell you don’t! You’re a rich-ass dictator!

Pablo: [slams podium, angry expression] Maybe I have bugs at home, but not here! Besides, Tamaki and I have each other’s alibis! We met right before I went to the crime scene!

Tamaki: [smiles] I will confirm this. We are innocent.

Ryouta: [wincing] I d-don’t feel g-good believing anyone anymore…

Kotori: [annoyed expression] After my talk about baseless accusations, the last person I expected it from was you, Takito!

Takito: [worried expression] Erm, don’t worry about it, Kotori. I know where I’m going with this.

Kotori: [displeased expression] So did everyone else. I hope this pans out for you.

Takito: [energetic] Pablo!

Pablo: [makes a fist, intense expression] Yeah, you swine? What is it?

Takito: As a gesture of good will, I think you should tell us about what you did from the time you woke up until you found the body. It’ll give you a chance to clear your name.

Pablo: [sighs] Thank you. I suppose I must… [puts hand on face] In my home country, it would never come to this…
Whew. I’ve never rode out such hot air so long in my entire life. He’s not guilty, that’s for sure. He wouldn’t have fallen for Chiyo’s theory otherwise. Still, an innocent man will probably have a solid alibi... Maybe I should look for something other than a lie or contradiction.

Takito: [deep sigh] If this doesn’t pay off, I’m screwed.

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Steel Assassin”, Body Discovery Announcement, Ikkaku’s “appointment”

Pablo: [salutes] As your ever-vigilant leader, I always sleep lightly to be ready for emergencies.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] At around midnight, I heard an announcement that the body was discovered. I immediately checked in with Tamaki and asked if she heard it.

Tamaki: [chuckles] Unfortunately, I wasn’t ready at the time. [sweet smile] As a hostess, I have to be presentable, even during a murder.

Pablo: [deep thought] She wasn’t actually ready until Satoko and Chiyo went back to tell everyone to wake up.

Itsumi: [angry expression] T-this testimony is about you, not T-Tamaki!

Pablo: [nervous] My apologies… [authoritative pose] After meeting Tamaki, I went through the hallways until I reached the Geology Hall.

Chiyo: [thoughtful pose] There something I wanted to ask you about, Pablo… [curious expression] How did you know to come to the Dino Room?

Pablo: [nervous expression] I, erm, actually didn’t. I tried the other doors, but for some reason, the Dino Room doors were the only ones I could open.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] I kicked open the Dino Room doors, mistakenly tackled Chiyo, and that’s when I join the company of other students.

Tamaki: [smiles] See, definitely innocent!

Of course he is, but I need to find something that will acquit me…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Solution: E1, T4

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Takito: I CONCUR!


Takito: [dismissive gesture] I never thought you were guilty, Pablo. I just needed you to talk a bit more.

Nahoko: [nervous, visible stock charts plummet] Heh, heh, me too. We were all just testing you…

Pablo: [pensive pose] Oh, is that the case? You could’ve just asked…

Takito: [serious expression] Regardless, I think you’ve just proven both of us innocent.

Pablo: [surprise] Wait, wait, wait! Really?
Takito: You said the doors from the Geology Hall to the Cradles of Civilization and Chapel Hall were both sealed shut, correct?

Pablo: [salutes] Yes. I assumed the murder wouldn’t take place in the room we tried to hard to make safe, so I tried the other two first.

Takito: Now, let’s talk about the “steel assassin” that we found looking in on us from the Chapel Hall.

Satoko: [deep thought] What about it? [shrugs] It was only some bucket on top of the door.

Takito: [shakes head “no”] It was something a bit more than that. The bucket was placed as a common type of prank. The mark opens the door, and the contents of the bucket fall on top of them.

Akinori: [worried expression] But that bucket was full of blades! Was the culprit trying to kill us?

Takito: [deep thought] Maybe. But my main point is this. [points with energy] Such a prank can only be done from one side of the door!

Wataru: [unimpressed expression] Eh? That’s your point?

Takito: If I could only set up the trap from the Chapel Hall side of the doors, and the other doors that led into the Geology Hall were locked… [slams fists on podium] There is no way I could be in the Dino Room when Pablo found me!

Okita: [annoyed expression] Not so fast, kid! How do we know you didn’t lock the other doors from the Geology Hall side?

Takito: [determined expression] Locking from the Geology Hall side was impossible. This piece of evidence says as much.

( Samurai Blades / Celtic Woodblock / Pablo’s Testimony )
Takito: Itsumi, can you tell everyone what you found on the door between the Geology and Chapel Halls?

Itsumi: [determined expression] S-someone had slipped a k-katana between the door handles… on the Ch-chapel Hall side.

Pablo: [pensive pose] Come to think of it…

[flashback to Pablo and others charging through the Geology Hall/Cradles of Civilization door]

Takito: There’s also this samurai sword at the foot of the Geology Hall doors.

Pablo: No time for that!

[return to present trial]

Pablo: [pensive pose] We did pass over a similar thing in the Cradles of Civilization…

Kotori: [thoughtful pose] Locking the doors like that would need to be done opposite the Geology Hall, right?

Takito: Exactly.

Benito: [hands on head, shocked] He did it! By Captain Kidd, he did it! Takito proved himself innocent!
Ryouta: [depressed expression] [sighs] I d-doubted h-him t-this wh-whole time…

Takito: [smiles] Don’t frown, Ryouta. Even when it was hard, you were able to stand up to your friend. Be proud of that.

Satoko: [distraught] I guess I owe you an apology, too.

Takito: [chuckles] No need. If you didn’t notice, I also proved you innocent. Chiyo and Tamaki, too.

Monobear: Upupupupu! Hate to break up this pity party, but I just hate premature celebration! You bastards still haven’t found the killer!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yes, about that! I have a plan to uncover the real killer! [nervous] Takito, what do you think?

…

*What do I think? I need to come up with a plan of action, and fast…*

Chapter End Notes

Several students have been ruled out!

If that changes your theories on whodunnit, and you have a new one, Comment as a reply to "First Killer Speculation" Below!

...Oh, and I'd be remiss if I didn't repay the shout-out I received from Dangan Ronpa: Luxurious Cruiseliner of Despair by UltimateProtagonistNerd. Check them out if you have the time!
Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair - School Trial Part 2

Chapter Notes

Sorry about the delay.

Today in the trial, I'll be introducing the Hangman's Gambit. It's a simple unscramble-the-word puzzle in this Fangan Ronpa. The solutions will given similarly to the multiple choice solutions, but instead of the correct choice, the number before the colon denotes the first letter of the solution word. From there, read backwards until the word ends. Look at the sample below for help

2+2=?

OFRU

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15:frourouffuorouffrouffofoufourfuouofrfouof

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 1: In The Belly Of Despair – School Trial Part 2

What to do… What to do…

Takito: [scratches the back of his head] Um… Maybe we should try and discover the killer’s movements.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Hm? That’s a little general…

Takito: [uncertain] It kind of has to be at this point…

Kotori: [comforting pose] Well then, let’s explain it until it’s more specific. [pensive pose] We know that the killer’s only opportunity to enter was during Satoko’s bathroom break.

Tamaki: [thoughtful pose] And the culprit must have escaped between the time Pablo attempted to open the Cradles of Civilization door and the group found the blade removed from the door handles.
Takito: [thoughtful pose] So, that leaves the time between the entry and the exit unaccounted for. [shrugs] Any ideas?

Wataru: [scratches his ear] Well, they must’ve killed Ikkaku shortly after going in, and spent the rest of their time in the exhibits…

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] That’s not really up for debate…

Ryouta: [worried expression, extends palm in “stop” gesture] W-wait! About t-that… [curious expression] If the k-killer h-had some much time to themselves, h-how did they know it was safe to leave w-when they did?

Okita: [shrugs] Lucky guess, maybe?

Kotori: [pensive pose] No, when it comes to getting caught and executed, most people would not rely on a lucky guess.

Takito: [thoughtful pose] Yeah, I’d have to agree there. The killer definitely had a method for knowing when to escape… [shrugs] But, after that, I don’t really have a clue.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I am authorizing an official brainstorm amongst the members of the Temporary La Esperan Guard! [salutes]

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

**Evidence Bullets: Heavy Doors, Chapel Hall’s Small Holes, “Steel Assassin”**

Kotori: [pensive pose] So, any ideas about how the killer knew when to leave?

Chiyo: [points wand energetically] Oh, what about the Body Discovery Announcement?
Nahoko: [crosses arms, smug grin] Maybe, if that information wasn’t hidden from us until after the
murder happened.

Monobear: [angry] I didn’t hide it from you, I forgot! [proud pose] The memory demons from the
fourth level of hell attacked me, heathens! Erm, metaphorically, I mean.

Chiyo: [puzzled expression] Okay… [shakes head, puts on serious expression] Well, I don’t think
they had to know in advance if it happened anyway. A warning’s a warning.

Akinori: [unnerved, flipping through Bible] I’d wager the killer looked to make sure you guys had
left the hall before leaving.

- 

Hitomi: [dismissive pose] Nah. [turns around to look out third eye] I’d wager the killer heard them.
We have unnaturally noisy footsteps.

Okita: [mumbles] You’re one to talk about natural.

Hitomi: [turns back around, angry] I heard that!

Itsumi: [pensive pose] I’m not sure Hitomi’s being serious, but sometimes I can sense vibrations in rocks. I wonder if the killer somehow felt you guys coming…

- 

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Solution: E3, T3

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Takito: I CONCUR!
Hitomi: [claps] Yeah! Takito agrees with me! After this trial, he’s gonna help me put fabric on everyone’s shoes.

Takito: [nervous] No, I don’t agree with you entirely. I just think that the most likely way the killer could’ve known the time to leave is by hearing it.

Chiyo: [confused expression] Heh? What about the Body Discovery Announcement? It was a giant loud “PEOPLE HAVE DISCOVERED THE BODY” across the whole museum!

Takito: [shakes head] I’m afraid there’s a giant hole in that. While leaving after the Body Discover Announcement is sound in theory, if the killer did that, they would’ve had a big problem.

Chiyo: [puzzled] Like what?

Takito: Like this:

( They would’ve made a lot of noise / They would’ve ran into someone / They would’ve left behind incriminating evidence )

~~~~~

11:123213212123123132

~~~~~

Takito: Pablo was walking towards Satoko, you, and me from the moment the Body Discover Announcement rang, with only a short deviation to check in with Tamaki. [points at Chiyo] If a killer was returning soon after the announcement rang, they would’ve doubtlessly run into him!

Chiyo: [shock] Watch where you point that! I almost mistook you for my nemesis “Smoggy Fingers” there!

Takito: [embarrassed expression] Heh, Sorry. [regains composure] But seriously, the killer must have
had some other plan for escape, and I think it was the bucket prank.

Kotori: [smiles] Ooooh… I get it.

Wataru: [confused expression] Get what? Nothing about that poor man’s death trap suggests escape…

Kotori: [smiles] That’s because you haven’t seen it in action. A bucket of knives falling over would create a lot of noise, wouldn’t you think?

Takito: The trap would only trigger when the group was one room away from the killer, too. They could be sure nobody would catch them while they ran away.

Akinori: [shocked, flipping through Bible faster now] So it wasn’t a death trap?

Takito: [shakes head] Probably not. Building a death trap with dulled blades is kind of stupid anyway…

Pablo: [authoritative posse] That’s an excellent theory, Takito. [taps the side of his head] Yet, I can’t dismiss the possibility the trap was designed to harm us. [raises eyebrow] You remember the sharp knife found inside the bucket’s mess, yes?

Takito: I’m not saying it couldn’t have done that. Only that it wasn’t the primary purpose.

Tamaki: [smiles] Regardless, it seems our theorizing on method of escape has wrapped up nicely.

Benito: [tips hat over eyes] Yet we still don’t know how or why the killer spent a couple hours mucking about in the exhibits…

Wataru: [displeased expression] I’m beginning to wonder why this whole body splitting thing happened in the first place.

Yeah… Wait, why did the killer do that? It seems like so much effort for nothing.
Satoko: [deep thought] Je Doh Yo. They couldn’t have worked so hard on splitting the body if it were just for shits and giggles. [serious expression] If we can crack this, I’m certain it’ll be the key to this case!

Ryouta: [wincing] All this is just kind of c-confusing to me…

Yasue: [shock] Huh? Confusion?

_Yasue’s been kind of silent lately. I wonder what got her to talk…_

Yasue: [joy] Oh, oh, that’s it! C-O-N-F-U-S-I-O-N! The whole thing was done to confuse us!

Takito: How so? [scratches the back of his head] I mean, it’s just a body…

Yasue: [pouty face] Well then, Mr. Smarty Pants, tell me where Ikkaku was murdered!

Takito: [nervous] I.. uh… erm… have to think about it…

Yasue: [sticks out tongue] See, I told you! Luckily for you, Bertrand and me are going to tell you exactly where it was!

Bertrand: Bzzz! Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

_That bee’s much more pleasant when he’s a couple meters away._

NON-STOP DEBATE

_Evidence Bullets: “Steel Assassin”, Standard of Babylon II, Blood Trail, Ikkaku’s “Appointment”, Ikkaku’s Right Leg (The one in the Geology Hall)
Yasue: [smiles at Bertrand, who is resting on her index finger] Y’see, the killer couldn’t afford to let us know where the killing happened!

Yasue: [points jokingly] Exactly why is….! [dejected] I’m not sure…

Bertrand: Bzzzz…

Satoko: [annoyed grimace] If you’re not sure, izslēgt muti…

Yasue: [pouty face] I heard that! Anyway… the killer split the body to confuse us about where they killed Ikkaku, but they can’t fool me!

Yasue: [proud pose] Do you remember the blood trails? Their traits show us something super important!

Yasue: The largest body part had to be moved between the Dino Room and the Cradles of Civilization, because that’s where the thickest trail was!

Okita: [smiles] Oh, I get it! The thinner trail shows us a leg was moved between the Cradles of Civilization and the Geology Hall, right!

Yasue: [claps, happy expression] Correct! So, if we apply a little bit of logic, since there was only one trail in each path, and both trails are different thicknesses…

Yasue: [proud pose] …We can tell that the killer killed Ikkaku in the Cradles of Civilization, carried the upper body to the Dino Room, then carried the right leg to the Geology Hall!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

Solution: E4, T3
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Yasue: [pouty face] No I don’t!

Takito: [intense pointing] Yes you do!

Pablo: [disappointed expression] [clears throat]

Takito: [obviously fake smile] Oh, yeah, the problem with her testimony… [serious expression] Ikkaku made a specific, private appointment with me in the Dino Room, and promised to stay there until midnight. [points] He had no reason to leave the Dino Room! If he was killed anywhere, it was in there!

Tamaki: [pensive pose] Are you sure knocking Ikkaku out first wasn’t possible?

Kotori: [pensive pose] Probably not. We didn’t see any bruising on the body or Monobear File.

Takito: [points] So, if you can’t knock him out, and he had no reason to leave the Dino Room, then he had to have been–

Benito: SAVE YOUR TRIPE FOR THE CHUM BUCKET!

CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT

Evidence Swords: Ikkaku’s Upper Half, “Steel Assassin”, Dulled Katanas, Murder Weapon

Benito: [triumphant pose] There’s a rule in fishing, mate. Always bait the hook. [laughs] No fish’s just going to walk into their end!
Takito: Are you saying what I think you’re saying?

*I’d kind of prefer he didn’t call Ikkaku a fish.*

Benito: [laughs] You bet, mate! [points at Takito] Ikkaku was bated into the Cradles of Civilization!

**CROSS SWORDS BEGIN**

Takito: [confused expression] Bated? Ikkaku isn’t exactly the type to fall for a cookie on a string…

Benito: [triumphant pose] Food is a popular and effective bait, aye, but I don’t wager it was the type used here. [uppercuts the air] When you’re out on the seas chasing down gargantuan beasts, you have to use different tactics!

Takito: [nervous expression] You’re going to have to explain this for the non-anglers here…

*I can’t think of any fish bait other than worms…*

Benito: [makes hook with finger, intense stare] You have to appeal to their curiousity! Flash a light, make a sound, and man and beast alike will come to see what happened! [uppercuts the air] Ikkaku followed the bait into the Cradles of Civilization, and before he knew it, he had a knife in his skull!

Takito: I know Ikkaku. I don’t think he’d endanger himself without some sort of countermeasure.

Benito: [laughs] At only a handful of days, can you really say ye know anyone? Anybody can be fooled, mate.

*Guess I’ll have to think of some harder evidence than just Ikkaku’s word…*
Takito: I’LL CUT YOUR CLAIM TO PIECES! [puts hand down on podium] If Ikkaku was stabbed in the Cradles of Civilization, why is this blood pool in the Dino Room!

Benito: [draws cutlass] Eh, that? Probably bled out from his huge separation wound.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I don’t think you understand, Benito. I personally found the blood pool under Ikkaku’s knife wound.

Benito: [defensive pose] Really then? Then how can ye say the wound didn’t come from pulling out the knife?

Takito: [pointing] Well, uh, this is how!

( There’s dried blood on the knife / There’s no blood by the Cradles of Civilization door / There’s lots of blood on the Standard )

Takito: [pensive pose] If Ikkaku was jumped entering the Cradles of Civilization like you said, there
would be more blood around the door. He couldn’t have died there!

Benito: [sheathes cutlass, looks disappointed] Ergh. Ye have me there. But still, the blood pool in the Dino Room isn’t anywhere near a door, either.

Takito: [dejected expression] Yeah… We really haven’t thought about exactly how Ikkaku was stabbed. He doesn’t seem like he’d be easy to kill, especially right on the top of his head like that.

Itsumi: [worried expression] I d-don’t know if we can count out s-sneaking up on Ikkaku just yet… I can’t imagine any one of us being able to k-kill him another way.

Chiyo: [looks to side nervously] Even with my arsenal of natural weapons, I wouldn’t dare take him head on…

Hitomi: [points at Chiyo] Sillies! Stealth was impossible! After we de-leaved the Dino Room the Cradles of Civilization room was the only place with decent hiding places, and that place has a noisy tile floor. If you moved toward him from behind, he’d hear you like that! [snaps fingers]

Kotori: [deep thought] Stealth or no stealth… It’s a rock and a hard place.

Akinori: [nervous] Regardless, it’s clear that someone would need considerable strength to overcome Ikkaku’s own. [hides behind Bible] So, if I, uh, had to guess, I would accuse one of the two strongest amongst us…

Wataru: [furious] What’s that, you foreign-brainwashed fool? My rockets can shoot through a thousand of your cowardly book-shields!

Benito: [angry] You’d be tied to the mast for that one on the high seas, Akinori…

Tamaki: [concerned expression] Please, do not harass Akinori for speaking his mind.

Okita: [points to self, smiles] Besides, I’m one of the strongest he was talking about.
This debate is going nowhere. Is this stealth/not stealth dichotomy really what we should be using? Maybe I need to open up a new angle…

*Do I have anything that could bring new light onto how Ikkaku died?*

( “Steel Assassin” / Monobear File / Murder Weapon )

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12:12312332123112312312

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*That’s it!*

Takito: Guys! Take a look at this!

Nahoko: [displeased expression] That bucket? You’ve shown us that a million times already…

Pablo: [salutes] Yes, we’ve already discovered the purpose of the “steel assassin.” You’ve said as much already, that the bucket was used to aler… [shock] Wait, is that blood?! [intense expression, makes fist] Why did you withhold this information?!

Takito: [scratches the back of his head] Well, I didn’t try to withhold it…

Kotori: The point is, if there is blood in the bucket, it’s likely Ikkaku was killed near it.

Chiyo: [confused] Eh? The blood’s in this weird shape…

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] It’s in this ring shape, and the empty area’s shaped like a cartoon sun. [thoughtful pose] How did this skvrna even get made?
Takito: [deep thought] That may be the key to how Ikkaku died, Satoko.

Satoko: [thoughtful pose] Well, if Ikkaku was only stabbed near the bucket, there would blood on the outside…

[camera shows image of the bucket’s inside]

Satoko: …Yet, all the sangre is inside…

[camera returns to the trial]

Satoko: [confused] …the only explanation is Ikkaku was stabbed inside the bucket.

Ryouta: [wincing] B-but, that makes z-zero sense!

Satoko: [confused] Pero, it’s the only thing that makes sense!

Kotori: [disappointed expression] Once again, a rock and a hard place…

I need another new angle, but I’m out of new evidence…

I’ll have to think deep for this one. Maybe if I could just think of some concept that could explain it all…

HANGMAN’S GAMBIT

AEPT
Takito: [deep thought] *Maybe... if that happened...* [realization] Of course!

Pablo: [puzzled] Heh? Think of something?

Takito: What if... the prank was used more than once?

Tamaki: [curious expression] Hmm? You mean, the knife, inside the bucket, fell on Ikkaku? Doesn’t seem like the knife would stay in place...

Wataru: [displeased expression] Your theory doesn’t explain the blood splatter, either. Your theory is too flawed to have any merit. Try another.

Takito: [defensive pose] Woah, woah! Slow down and let me explain! That’s where the tape comes in.

[camera shows the inside of the bucket]

Takito: Duct tape is shaped like a rectangle, right? So if we were to imagine tape in the bucket...

[image changes to show the bloodless spot taped over]

Takito: ...and if Ikkaku bled inside the bucket...

[image changes to have blood coating the tape]
Takito: …then the tape was removed…

[image changes to what the bucket looks like now]

Takito: …it would easily create the shape that’s here now!

Tamaki: That still fails to explain how the knife kept in place.

Takito: Isn’t it obvious? The killer wouldn’t just put tape there for fun.

[image changes to show the tape holding the knife upright in the center of the bucket]

Takito: It was done to keep the knife in the position most likely to kill someone.

[camera returns to the trial]

Pablo: [annoyed expression] I wouldn’t celebrate yet, Takito. [points at Takito] On paper, your idea works, but in practice, we found no such tape at the crime scene!

Kotori: [smiles] You might’ve not, but someone else definitely found some tape.

Pablo: [annoyed expression] Who did? I’m tired of people withholding evidence from me!

( Akinori / Itsumi / Yasue )

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13:123132132213213132231132
Takito: Yasue found the tape.

Yasue: [wincing] No, no, don’t let Pablo get mad at me! Bertrand, protect meeeeeeee!

Bertrand: Bz! Bz! Bz! Bz!

Pablo: [nervous] I, uh, didn’t know I had been coming across that way…

Takito: *This got awkward fast.* [stern face] Nevertheless, Yasue, do you remember the mystery object you found on top of the Corinthian Column?

Yasue: [joyous pose] Of course I do! It was gray with pink, and had a ribbony part on a donut… Oh!

Pablo: [annoyed expression] Tch. What an annoying hiding place. Most people wouldn’t think to look up for evidence.

Okita: [puzzled expression] Lemme get this straight. Ikkaku could’ve died anywhere in the museum there’s a door?

Nahoko: [slight shrug] Just about, yeah. [spins shelf to use laptop, uses laptop] Though, if Ikkaku really was waiting in the Dino Room, any door not connected to the Dino Room can probably be ruled out…

Benito: [displeased expression] Eh? Wait about the bait?

Takito: If Ikkaku suspected something was going on, he would’ve probably opened the doors more cautiously. Really, the doorway between the Dino Room and the Geology Hall was the only place it made sense for the trap to be.

Kotori: [pensive pose] So, if Ikkaku died nowhere near the Cradles of Civilization, does anyone have a guess as to why that huge bloodstain is in there?
NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: Standard of Babylon II, Ikkaku’s Body Parts, Murder Weapon, Monobear File

Wataru: [crosses arms, raises eyebrow] Feh. A blood splatter this large could come only from a full dissection. Ikkaku’s body was split apart here!

Hitomi: [shock] Gross! Head blood is one thing, but intestine blood? Ech!

Chiyo: [serious expression] The culprit probably brought the body there to use the Standard as some sort of chopping block...

-  
Akinori: [thoughtful pose] Probably carved Ikkaku up using the knife...

Yasue: [dismissive pose] Nah! Too small! The killer definitely used one of the samurai swords!

-  
Ryouta: [wincing] B-but, weren’t those blades d-dulled…?

Yasue: [pensive pose] Yeah, but if you applied enough force, they might be able to work! [thumbs up]

Nahoko: [angry] I take offense at the idea. Blades I dulled myself could never be used again!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Solution: E2, T3
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! [slams podium] Ikkaku’s body was cut cleanly!

Akinori: [shock, Bible slams shut] I, erm, uh, have, uh, eh, erm–

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yes, Takito, that is correct. [confused expression] But, erm, what exactly is the discrepancy you’ve found with Akinori’s statement?

Takito: These knives are fairly small.

Yasue: [proud pose] Yup! I’ve said so myself!

Takito: So, if you were to cut the body with them, you couldn’t make one clean slice. It’d have to be piecemeal, and cutting like that leaves a jagged edge.

Satoko: [annoyed expression] ¡Tengo una problema! If the knife won’t work, and the swords won’t work, there’s no blades left in the museum!

*Crap, she’s right! No blades… Maybe I should change my thinking about what counts as a “blade”.*

Kotori: [smiles] Really, Satoko? I can think of one blade left.

*If there are no other options, the blade that cut Ikkaku had to be…*

( The edge of a door / The edge of a glass shard / The edge of the Standard of Babylon II )
Takito: [smiles] *That’s it! It’s go time!* [chuckles] We’ve been ignoring the one sharp edge that Ikkaku could’ve been split on. It’s covered in blood, too!

Pablo: [furious] Goddammit! When you find something like this, tell me!

Kotori: [smiles] Seems you’ve figured it out, haven’t you, Takito?

Takito: [determined expression] Yep! The blade that split Ikkaku… [points dramatically] …was the top edge of the Standard itself!

Itsumi: [shock] W-w-w-w-ha!

Hitomi: [surprised] Huh? I mean it’s kinda sharp, but…

Takito: Yasue brought up an excellent point earlier. If you apply enough force to something, any edge can cut what you need it to! The swords might have been too dull for any level of force humans are capable of, but the Standard is definitely sharp enough. You could easily cut yourself on it!

Akinori: [nervous] I told you all… Someone strong killed him…

Wataru: [furious] Keep your foolish theories to yourself!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Regardless, we’ve solved the how, but not the why. Splitting the body must’ve taken a lot of effort. Why would anyone do it?

Takito: [shrugs] My best guess is the same as Yasue’s earlier idea. Our culprit couldn’t afford to let us know the true scene of the crime, so they tried to make it ambiguous.

*Still, I can’t seem to figure out why the Dino Room was so incriminating to whoever did this…*
I’ll need to try out some new angles.

Chapter End Notes

The update after the next one, I'll be revealing the killer.

You've got two more updates to guess the culprit. If you think you know, comment below!

EDIT: Almost forgot! Someone requested the positions everyone takes in the trial room, so here they are going clockwise:
Ikkaku Kirigiri (In front of Monobear)
Okita Sugitani
Wataru Gensai
Itsumi Jukodo
Takito Narita
Hitomi Yunokawa
Nahoko Miyake
Chiyo Ando
Pablo Vargas II
Tamaki Osu
Ryouta Miki
Benito Kasai
Kotori Ijiri
Yasue Temko
Satoko Royama
Akinori Kurokawa
Chapter Notes

In this update, I'll be introducing the Logical Dive, also known as the snowboarding multiple choice game. In Legacy of Despair, it will simply be a string of multiple choice questions.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair – School Trial Part 3

Well, there is that one last issue…

Takito: [pensive pose] Why kill Ikkaku?

Kotori: [confused] What?

Takito: I mean, why kill Ikkaku? If I were a killer, Ikkaku would be one of the last people I would choose to kill.

Itsumi: [wincing] He’s kind of int-timidating… I think everyone w-would be scared to t-take him on.

Nahoko: [pensive pose, checking tablet] On top of that, he’s always on edge. Hardly ever let his guard down.

Wataru: [triumphant pose] Though I am confident in my abilities as a fighter, [nervous] I would have reservations about fighting that man. [shivers]

Takito: My points exactly. Ikkaku is a difficult target. Why would the killer choose him?

Tamaki: [confused pose] Do you think the killer knows something we don’t? A hidden weakness, like an allergy, perhaps?
That really could be the case... Is there something the majority of us don’t know yet about Ikkaku, but might have been able to learn...?

(Ikkaku’s talent / Ikkaku’s fears / Ikkaku’s medical history)

Takito: There was one thing that might’ve made Ikkaku a target. Something that we could realistically find out. [gestures at Pablo] Pablo, didn’t you make a big deal out of Ikkaku’s talent when we first began this trial?

Pablo: [stern expression] Yes… I claimed that Ikkaku’s position as a detective made him a strategic choice for murder. Kill him, and our investigative abilities would be ruined.

Satoko: [annoyed expression] Eh? Denbora alferrik hontan goaz? This was one of the first things we disproved in the trial!

Pablo: [annoyed expression] I’m still certain Ikkaku’s talent is at least detective related. If I had to guess, he would be SHSL Interrogator or something very similar.

Okita: [points concernedly] If that’s the case, wouldn’t the ones who saw the article be the most likely killers?

Benito: [confused expression] But since Takito’s been proven innocent...

Ryouta: [realization] G-g-gah! [wincs, shivers] D-d-don’t look like t-that at m-m-me!
Itsumi: [angry] S-s-stay away from him! He’s incapable of m-murder! [stares at Takito] D-do something!

Takito: [frightened] I guess I can’t just let Ryouta be accused based on a hasty assumption… [serious expression] Can we really just assume Ikkaku had a detective-related talent like that?

Pablo: [annoyed expression] Of course we can! Look at the article!

[camera shows the image of the article, which shows Kyouko investigation a body in the foreground, while Ikkaku hands money to someone in the background]

Pablo: [annoyed expression] Ikkaku is clearly assisting Kyouko! He’s bribing a witness for information!

[camera returns to trial]

Is that really true…? If I remember right, Ikkaku laughed at the idea that he was a detective. And then there was that thing he said afterwards…

[flashback to Takito and Ryouta’s meeting with Ikkaku]

Ikkaku: [laughs] I have no skills.

[return to the present trial]

Takito: [deep thought] No, Ikkaku being anything detective related doesn’t make sense. Pablo’s interpretation is probably incorrect.

I’ll need to look at the evidence differently in order to come to a better conclusion.

HANGMAN’S GAMBIT
No wonder he didn’t like his talent… It’s like some sort of badge of shame…

Takito: Pablo, you said that Ikkaku was bribing a witness for information, but are you really sure?

Pablo: [confused] Well, no, but based on the context, that’s the only thing that makes sense…

Takito: Really? Isn’t there another option that might fit the picture? Like buying something, for example?

Yasue: [pensive pose] But what would you be buying near a fresh crime scene? [shock] Oh! You don’t mean…

Takito: Yeah, I do. [slams podium] Ikkaku was buying illicit goods, specifically some sort of drugs. His talent was SHSL Addict!

Nahoko: [sneering] Ridiculous. Where’d you even get this addict idea anyway?

Pablo: [angry] And what kind of talent is addict, anyway? I was under the impression this school only allowed students with actual skills, not conditions.

Says the man who pretty much inherited his…

Takito: Well, it mostly comes from something Ikkaku said the first time I met him.
Ikkaku: If this place is what I think it is, I’ve been meaning to get myself locked up in one of these places for a long time.

Takito: That phrase only makes sense if Ikkaku thought he was in some sort of rehab, a place meant for those with addictions.

Akinori: [pensive expression, flipping through Bible] I believe your theory. I’ve heard of non-skill related talents being accepted before. [closes Bible, stares at Takito] Yet, I don’t think it means anything. What does Ikkaku’s talent being “SHSL Addict” matter to this case?

Takito: Well, if Ikkaku’s talent was something that didn’t make him a target, Okita’s assumption earlier doesn’t hold water. [shakes head dismissively] Besides, Ryouta and I heard Ikkaku say he has “no skills.” I doubt anyone’d would deem him “too strong to live” after that.

Okita: [apologetic smile] Heh. Heh. [turns his head and sighs]

Ryouta: [wincing] M-monobear, is it t-true? Is Takito t-telling the t-truth?

Monobear: [laughing] Upupupupu! Yep! Ikkaku Kirigiri won Hope’s Peak Academy’s title of SHSL Addict! He’s officially the most dependent bastard in the country! [extends head, hands on hips] Do you wanna know the best part? The most despairing part of all?

I kind of don’t…

Monobear: [laughing] Ikkaku isn’t really a Kirigiri! He’s adopted! Upupupupupu!

Pablo: [shock] …
Kotori: [shock] …

Monobear: [excited pose] Oh, to be a mediocre junkie forced into a family of greats! The shame, the expectations, the despair! It’s all so overwhelmingly amazing!

Tamaki: [upset expression] Monobear, aren’t you supposed to keep quiet and let the rest of us do the deduction?

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Hey! I make the rules here! I’ll take a little despair break whenever I feel like it! [nervous] Though, in the future, I’ll try to not to get too carried away…

Pablo: [sighs] So, it seems this route has been a dead end… [authoritative pose] We don’t know any more about the case. What say you, Takito?

Takito: [nervous] Ech. I don’t really have another lead right now…

*Are we stuck? Are we really ending this trial with everyone being unsure?*

Nahoko: [smug grin] Simpletons. [spins her wearable shelf, grabs and uses tablet] When you want answers, ask the person who has them. [closes tablet] The last unknown lies in the Monobear File.

[camera shows an image of the Monobear File]

Monobear File: “Time of Death: Uncertain due to the separation of the body parts”

[camera returns to the present trial]

Nahoko: [determined expression] The killer is hiding their identity in the time of death!

Benito: [crosses arms, smiles] Ah, so if we find the time of death, we find the killer!

Nahoko: [triumphant smile] Exactly. [stock charts on tablets start rising] And since I’ve deduced the only possible timetable for the killing, I’ll begin explaining it to you all.
Pablo: [annoyed expression, pointing] If you have any more helpful evidence, get it out now! I promise I won’t get mad at you… too much.

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

*Evidence Bullets: Takito’s Knife, Ikkaku’s Appointment, Satoko’s Testimony, Ikkaku’s Talent*

Nahoko: [blank expression] **The first event of the night was Satoko and Chiyō taking their posts.** [messes with phone] Soon after, Satoko allowed Chiyō to sleep on the job.

Chiyō: [pouty face] Don’t forget that I had stayed up the night before for guard duty! [embarrassed pose] You’ll make me sound lazy otherwise…

Nahoko: [annoyed] After that indiscretion, the killer snuck out of their room and stole Takito’s knife…

Takito: [motions to stop] I’m afraid that can’t be the case. I was up all night until midnight, so nobody could’ve snuck in to take my knife tonight.

Nahoko: [sighs, annoyed expression] Okay, so **somebody stole Takito’s knife during the day, and then swapped it with their own that night.** [looks at tablet] After swapping the knives, the killer brought the supplies to make the trap into the Dino Room and assembled them.

Hitomi: [wincing] Oh, here it comes! [covers eyes with hands, and then peeks through fingers] I can’t look, maybe possibly!

Nahoko: [blank expression] **Later that night, Ikkaku entered the Dino Room for his appointment, and fell victim to the trap.**

Wataru: [slams podium] Your theory is too obvious for you to act like the grand empress around here! I could finish it myself!
Nahoko: [throws phone, furious, points at Wataru] Really, asshat? Then do it yourself!

Wataru: [points to himself] Of course! I never make idle threats! The killer simply split the body parts, recreated the trap for us to trip, **and then waited patiently in the Cradles of Civilization until they heard the bucket fall!** [flexes] Never doubt the legitimacy of a Gensai family patriot!

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] Hmph.

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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Solution: E3, T3

~~~~~

Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Wataru: [points angrily at Nahoko] See, greedy woman, the best debater is on my side!

Takito: [puts hands up defensively] I’m not on anyone’s side here! *And I’d hardly call myself the best debater…* There’s just a flaw in Nahoko’s timetable of the case.

Nahoko: [raises eyebrow] Really now? [slides finger across tablet] I’ve gone over all the events repeatedly, and this is the only logical sequence for them all.

Takito: Oh, I think you’ve forgotten at least one. Specifically, the one window when people could’ve gone from the dorms to the exhibits.

Satoko: [embarrassed pose] Oh yeah, my little break… It was only a few minutes or so.
Takito: [points] You see, Nahoko? You claimed both the killer and Ikkaku entered during this small window, which subtracting time for both the killer and Ikkaku to travel to the exhibits, would leave only about four minutes to assemble the trap and barricades!

Nahoko: [using laptop, upset expression] What world do you live on? [closes laptop] Four minutes is plenty of time if you hurry!

Takito: [slams podium] Why would the killer hurry? To make it in time for the target they didn’t know was coming so soon?

Nahoko: [wincs] Hurk! [using laptop, upset expression] My idea… may have flaws… [closes laptops] …but it’s still the best timetable out there. [points dramatically] My challenge to you: come up with a better one or shut up!

Takito: [frightened] Yikes! [thoughtful pose] I don’t really have a clue on this one. I mean, except for that one part, Nahoko’s timetable seemed really solid…

Wataru: [concerned expression] Pull through, Takito! Your country needs you! My pride needs you!

Takito: [thoughtful pose] Maybe I only need to change one little thing… There was one part of her theory that was pretty weak, but I didn’t have any evidence to disprove it… [stern expression] I’ll have to choose one of her other three statements and attack it!

( “The first event of the night was Satoko and Chiyo taking their posts.” / “Somebody stole Takito’s knife during the day, and then swapped it with their own that night. / “The killer waited patiently in the Cradles of Civilization until they heard the bucket fall!” )

~~~~~

13:2133211312311231231213122232123

~~~~~
Takito: I concede, Nahoko. Your theory is mostly right. Mostly.

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] Your job wasn’t to critique mine, it was to come up with your own!

Takito: [frightened] Well, that’s because mine is yours. Mostly. [serious expression] I only have a problem with the idea that nothing happened before Satoko and Chiyo took guard.

Kotori: [smiling] Oh, I get it! If the killer entered the exhibits before the guards took their places, they would’ve had plenty of time to get ready!

Ryouta: [nervous] But when would the killer have the time to do that?

Tamaki: [smile] Pablo and I only take attendance at the beginning of meals. If someone were to sneak out of dinner early, we wouldn’t have noticed.

Pablo: [distraught expression and pose] Ergh… My apologies, I’ll have to close this gap in the future.

Itsumi: [determined expression] H-hey, wait! We established earlier that the killer couldn’t have known about Ikkaku’s appointment! This murderer couldn’t have prepared like that!

Okita: [angry expression] Yeah, your theory is just as flawed as Nahoko’s was!

I’ll need to show them some evidence before this gets out of hand. Do I have anything that proves some degree of premeditation?

( Artifact Cases / Chapel Dust Formation / Sword Barricades )

~~~~~

11:123112312321231231231123321321312
Takito: Akinori?

Akinori: [flipping through Bible quickly] Yes? Do you have anything to say to me?

Takito: You found a round circle in the chapel’s dust the same size as the bottom of the bucket, correct?

Akinori: [flipping through Bible slows down] Yes, of course. It was hidden behind some pottery. [closes Bible] I always make sure to inspect whatever sanctuary I am allowed.

Itsumi: [annoyed expression] H-how is this supposed t-to answer my… [shock] Oh!

Okita: [scratches the back of his head] Yeah…

Hitomi: [nervous] Could somebody explain whatever Itsumi and Okita just figured out?

Kotori: [smiles] The only reason the bucket would’ve been placed there is to hide it for later use. In other words, there had to be some preparations for this murder.

Hitomi: [puzzled expression] But! But! [turns around and opens third eye] No one could’ve possibly known Ikkaku would be at the Dino Room that night! [turns back around, angry expression] How can a killing be planned and unplanned at the same time?

Takito: I’m not too sure myself, Hitomi. Maybe the killer planned to kill someone else, and Ikkaku just walked in?

Wataru: [makes a stop motion] Wait! [pensive pose] Since the killer hid the bucket in the chapel, and there’s only a few people who could’ve done that… [points with intensity] We can narrow down the suspect list significantly!

Pablo: [overjoyed, clapping] Huh-hah! Looks like we can count this little venture as a success after
all! [deep thought] Let’s see… Only the people who had worked on weeding the Dino Room would have access to place the bucket there, and if we eliminate people we know couldn’t have done it from earlier… [points with intensity] Hitomi! Kotori! Itsumi! It’s one of you three!

Hitomi: [staggers back] Gah! [cowers] Don’t look at me like that! I’ve done nothing!

Itsumi: [wincing] I k-knew it! You’re all out t-to get me!

Kotori: [nervous] Well, I can definitely vouch for Itsumi, but…

Akinori: [angry, grasps Bible tight] Don’t blame Hitomi! With that tool of hers, Kotori’s the only one strong enough! We know who the killer is!

Benito: [furious] Shut up, all of ye! There’s evidence that tool was not the death of Ikkaku!

Okita: [smug grin, extends rose at Hitomi] And besides, if we’re accusing anyone, it should be the girl who worked with the victim.

Hitomi: [hands over ears, flinching heavily] Stopitstopitstopit!

*I feel really sorry for the three of them. I found out not too long ago how much being falsely accused can hurt.*

Takito: [determined expression] *I have to repay Kotori’s favor to me! I’ll uncover the killer as soon as I can, and spare anyone else this suffering!*

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

**Evidence Bullets: Itsumi’s Testimony, “Steel Assassin”, Kotori’s Testimony, Hitomi’s Testimony**

Pablo: [slightly angry] **You two are the only three who could’ve stored the bucket in the chapel.**
Therefore, you are the only three capable of murder. [slams podium] We are on your heels, murderer! So, before we expose you, I will give you a short period of time to confess.

Hitomi: [nervous] …

Itsumi: [angry, holding a sharpened rock] …

Kotori: [distraught] …

Pablo: [slight anger] And so, it comes to this. [points] Alibis, now!

Hitomi: [distraught expression] I’ll tell you what I told Takito and Kotori… Ikkaku had his eyes on me the whole time! I couldn’t have visited the chapel while he was watching!

Kotori: [concerned expression] That’s not all you told us… [upset] Didn’t you say that you two took short breaks every two hours?

Hitomi: [despressed pose, pouty expression] Yeah… I might’ve been able to place the bucket in the chapel then… [angry] But I’m telling you! I really didn’t!

Pablo: [pensive pose] Suspicious… [dismissive pose] Yet, I cannot jump to conclusions! Itsumi, Kotori, state your case!

Kotori: [contemptuous pose, muttering softly] …Can’t jump to conclusions? Feh. [stops muttering] First of all, I don’t think you all should be expecting me to be capable of forming such a devious plan when we only found about the knives that day. I like to think I’m smart, but that borders on supergenius.

Satoko: [smug grin] Everyone knows you couldn’t have placed the bucket there before the knife announcement. Disagreeing would be trottelig. [points angrily] The point is, you could’ve thought it up and brought the materials after then!

Kotori: [shocked pose] Well, Itsumi and me checked in on each other every minute, and I didn’t hear any doors opening or closing, so…
Itsumi: [angry expression, points rock point at Kotori] Stop d-derailing! Did you t-think I wouldn’t bring up you arriving b-before me after the knife announcement? [slams podium] **You had p-plenty of time between when you entered the exhibits to w-when I entered the exhibits!**

Kotori: [annoyed expression] Hrnghh… I can’t deny you, but I swear I’m innocent.

Okita: [pensive pose] Well, it seems Kotori is willing to speak for Itsumi, at least… [shrugs] Two witnesses, both with a hole in their alibi. We’re getting nowhere fast…

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

~~~~~

Solution: E4, T1

~~~~~

Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! More people than just Kotori, Hitomi, or Itsumi could’ve hidden the bucket!

Pablo: [annoyed expression] Nonsense! Takito, you proved this yourself! [slight frown, sighs] I know Kotori was nice to you, but you can’t use impressions as evidence!

Takito: [points angrily] I’m not using impressions as evidence, [slams podium] I’m using evidence as evidence! [slightly angry expression] Kotori, do you remember what Hitomi said when we were investigating?

[flashback to Hitomi in the Dino Room]

Hitomi: [thinker pose] Well, Ikkaku was actually a really good worker! He worked the entire time, and even got to the Dino Room before I did every time we took a break together!
Takito: How often did you take these breaks?

Hitomi: [counts on fingers, tongue out] Well, we broke for lunch, and then once every two hours for a few minutes to get a drink, pee, or whatever. [shrugs] But he always beat me. For such a stocky guy, he’s really fast!

[return to present trial]

Takito: [deep thought] Hitomi said that there were times during the work when the both of them didn’t have eyes on each other. So, it stands to rea–

Chiyo: [angry, pouty face] Hey! Are you really gonna trust the word of the prime suspect! That’s unnaturally stupid!

Takito: Well, if Hitomi had only said these things in her alibi, I would agree with you. But Hitomi made this statement before, during our investigation.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Yeah… She said the same thing back when it wouldn’t have incriminated her.

Chiyo: [annoyed expression, pouty face] Fine… But know you’re on shaky ground with whatever theory you have here. [points wand at Takito] I’d make your next few words count!

Takito: [gulps] As I was going to say, Hitomi and Ikkaku were separated from each other, and specifically during the breaks and when Ikkaku arrived early. So, if we can say this provides Hitomi an opportunity to hide the bucket, why can’t we say this provides Ikkaku with a chance to hide it?

Ryouta: [scared] I-I… N-n-no! That d-d-doesn’t make s-s-sense!

Akinori: [annoyed expression] Are implying Ikkaku aided in his own killing? That’s absolutely silly!

Takito: [defensive pose] Woah, woah, woah! [nervous] I never said he helped his murderer!
Pablo: [annoyed expression] It sure sounded like it, Takito. And lest you forget, [slams podium] you have zero evidence for this claim! Bring it somewhere or stop now!

Chiyo: [smug grin] I’d really make your next few words count this time.

_As much as I hate to admit it, Pablo’s got a point. I need to bring this to a conclusion or stop playing._

Takito: [deep breath] _Concentrate... concentrate... concentrate..._

LOGICAL DIVE

_Why did Ikkaku bring the trap’s supplies in?_

( To help with removing plants / To make an emergency self-defense kit / To kill somebody later )

~~~~~~

15:12323123123221321231231123

~~~~~~

_Why did Ikkaku feel compelled to kill?_

( He hated everyone / Severe withdrawal / He was allied with Monobear )

~~~~~~

14:123123123121321123123213
Who was Ikkaku’s intended victim?

( Himself / Takito Narita / Pablo Vargas )

LOGICAL DIVE ENDS

Takito: THAT’S IT! [slams podium] *I had kind of suspected this since I thought about the appointment, but Ikkaku was acting strangely since he asked me to meet him…*

[flashback to Ikkaku in his room]

Ikkaku: [shivering, deep breathing] GO!

[change to Ikkaku in the Employee Center]

Ikkaku: [panting, clenching at chest, harsh tone] *IF I DO THE PLAN EARLY, PEOPLE WILL DISCOVER IT AND PABLO WILL STOP IT. GO. I DON’T HAVE TIME FOR STUPID IDEAS. [pants heavily, looks down]*

[return to present trial]

*Those had to be withdrawal symptoms. I don’t want to admit it’s true, but if it isn’t, nothing else makes sense... The person who placed the bucket in the chapel had to be Ikkaku!*
Nahoko: [furious, points at Takito] Hello? Anybody home? Nobody’s going to assist in their own killing!

Takito: [determined smile] Of course not. But Ikkaku wasn’t try to kill Ikkaku, [points dramatically] he was trying to kill me!

Pablo: [shocked] What… But… How… [annoyed expression, makes fists] But he’s the dead one!

Takito: I’ll get to that later. But first, let’s consider the nature of my appointment with Ikkaku. He asked me to visit him at a secluded location in the middle of the night, and not tell anyone about it.

Yasue: [frightened] When you put it that way, it sounds dangerous!

Takito: It sounds dangerous because it is dangerous, Yasue. [points] Ikkaku tricked me into walking to my would-be death.

Yasue: [frightened] Wait, does that mean Ikkaku set this all up?! The trap, the barricades, all of it?!

Bertrand: Bzzzzzz!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hmm… It would explain the killer’s “impossible” knowledge of the appointment. [happy gesture] The creator of the appointment would undoubtedly know!

Wataru: [shocked] I… [angry, makes fists] Damn this wretch for deceiving us all!

Tamaki: [frowning] Tsk, tsk, Takito. You’re whipping everyone up into a frenzy on a baseless theory. Get some evidence or quit this tangent!

Takito: Sure. Do I have something? Anything that supports my theory? C’mon…

( Artifact Cases / “Steel Assassin” / Ikkaku’s Talent )
Takito: You want evidence, Tamaki? Have it. [slams podium] Let’s talk about the artifact cases in the Cradles of Civilization room. All of them were opened, but only some of them were smashed open.

Tamaki: [frowns] I am well aware, Takito. Please get to your point.

Takito: [deep thought] These multiple opening methods suggest multiple people opened these cases. One of these people smashed these boxes open, while the other person took the time to find the hidden way to open them.

Okita: [proud pose] Yeah! The smasher also smashed the case with the swords that would be necessary to prevent Takito from entering other rooms. I don’t know why the smasher would break open the woodwork case, though.

Itsumi: [determined face] I k-know why! I found the w-woodblock near the door where we f-found the trap, so I think it’s some s-sort of doorstopper.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Wasn’t the non-smashed case the one that had its property returned to it, too? It’s almost like they wanted to hide their messing around…

Tamaki: [smiles] I see. Since the smasher took supplies Ikkaku would’ve used in your theory, you think this smasher was Ikkaku. While not ideal, it does give credence to your idea. [smile widens] Carry on.

Takito: [embarrassed pose] Aw, thanks.
Kotori: [deep thought] If this Ikkaku theory pans out, all we have to do is essentially switch Ikkaku with our mystery killer in the timeline. Ikkaku enters first, before the guards, and then the killer enters during Satoko’s bathroom break.

Pablo: [sulking] While all this theory exploration and such is welcome, I wish somebody would answer my original question. [annoyed expression] If Ikkaku was the one who planned on killing, why was he the one ended up dead?!

Takito: Well, since we know Ikkaku died in his own trap, it’s likely the trap somehow backfired while he was assembling it. And since bodies just don’t separate themselves, we know it wouldn’t have just been by his own accident.

Kotori: [serious expression] The only logical explanation is that our killer disrupted the trap while it was being set up, sending the bucket onto Ikkaku’s head. Considering the trap we’re talking about, the killer probably killed Ikkaku by just trying to open the door.

Hitomi: [shivering] Just by opening the Dino Room’s door? You could find yourself a murderer that easily? I couldn’t stand such an accident if it happened to me…

Wait! …"Accident?"

This killer… had intentions other than killing…?

I don’t think many of us had a reason to go the exhibits that night…

...

!

In fact, besides Ikkaku and me, only one person had any reason to be there that night!

Kotori: Anyone else have something to add?
Takito: If you don’t mind, everyone, I’d like to make an accusation.

Kotori: [annoyed] Takito…

Takito: [shakes head “No”] Don’t worry Kotori, I’m sure about this one. [slams podium, points] "??????"! You are the only one capable of this murder!

Choose a Culprit!

Chapter End Notes

The killer is revealed next update!

If you think you know who killed Ikkaku, post a comment below!
Chapter 1: In the Belly of Despair - School Trial Part 4

Chapter Notes

Before we see who the killer is, I'll quickly go over the guesses everyone made. (I'll exclude any accusation of the six people acquitted earlier). I'll also be adding some spacers in these opening notes to make sure the killer's name isn't visible until you want it to be.

Most common was Akinori, but another commentor accused "the cap'n", which seems to be Benito.

And so, the killer is...

...  
...  
...  
...  
...  
...  

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 1: In The Belly of Despair – School Trial Part 4

Takito: [slams podium, points] Akinori! You are the only one capable of this murder!

Akinori: [staggers back, hides behind Bible] Huh?


Hitomi: [pensive pose] Yeah, he’s only, like, 9th on my list of most likely suspects.

Takito: [determined expression] If the killer killed Ikkaku accidentally, they didn’t come to the exhibits to murder. And if they didn’t come to the exhibits to murder, they had to have had another reason for being there.
Akinori: [flips through Bible quickly] Are you implying I had a reason to be there tonight? [nervous smile] I can’t come up with an idea of why I would visit the exhibits…

Takito: Really? That doesn’t match what you told me earlier.

[flashback to Akinori in the Chapel]

Akinori: [distraught expression] I used to get out of stressful situations by going to my sanctuary back at my church, and this chapel is sort of my sanctuary for now.

[return to the present trial]

Takito: You go to the chapel when you’re feeling worried. So, if you were scared because of Monobear’s prediction, you might’ve gone to the chapel some time before midnight to cool off.

Akinori: [flipping through Bible gets faster] Well, that would be a possibility… if I hadn’t stayed in my room until Satoko and Chiyo woke me up.

Takito: [annoyed] Don’t play coy with me! You know you went to the exhibits that night, and you know that the death being accidental leads to you! That’s why you split the body! You needed to make it look like Ikkaku might’ve been killed somewhere other than on the path to chapel!

Akinori: [flipping through Bible very fast] Wheh-heh-heh-well, I don’t–

Pablo: CEASE!

CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT

Pablo: [angry expression, makes fist] I will stand your harassment of an innocent man no longer!

Takito: [distraught expression] Well, maybe I could’ve been a little nicer about it… [stern expression] But I would not call Akinori an “innocent man”!
Pablo: [crosses arms, displeased expression] I would! Your reasoning is fundamentally flawed! [points at Takito] There’s another reason anybody could’ve had to go to the exhibits! Don’t you remember the nearby bathroom?

CROSS SWORDS BEGINS

Evidence Bullets: Satoko’s Testimony, Pablo’s Testimony, Okita’s Testimony, Chiyo’s Testimony, Akinori’s Testimony

Pablo: [angry expression, makes fist] Anyone who had to use the restroom could’ve gone to exhibits to use the one there! [authoritative pose] In the future, you should be sure to check your accusations to see if they make sense.

Takito: Are you sure you haven’t forgotten to check? Have you forgotten the bathroom Satoko used? If it was there, why would anyone go to the farther bathroom?

Pablo: [valiant pose] Feh! Don’t you know that as leader of a nation, I am sworn to be one step ahead? [authoritative pose] Think about it for a second. If Satoko was in the restroom, another girl couldn’t use it! You may have ruled out the men, but my theory still stands!

Takito: [deep thought] It still seems unlikely, though. Why wouldn’t this hypothetical girl just wait until Satoko left?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] It doesn’t matter how “unlikely” it is! [slams podium] As long as leaving to use the exhibit restroom instead is a reasonable action, my words are completely valid!

Takito: [shrugs] If you say so…

CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Takito: I’LL CUT THAT CLAIM TO PIECES!

Pablo: [annoyed, raises eyebrow] Doubtable. [valiant pose] As you have seen, any cuts you make will heal instantly!

Takito: [serious expression] I’ll make this quick, then. [snaps fingers] Okita, how many restrooms are in the building?

Okita: [crosses arms] I told you earlier, there’s three. There’s the one in the exhibits, the one across from the cafeteria, and… [smiles] Oh-ho-ho, I see where you’re going here.

Pablo: [furious] Dammit! [hits podium] How could I forget the one in the dorm hall? Curse you brain!

Takito: [pumps arms] Yeah! [nervous] Though, Kotori looks like she’s not exactly with my accusation…

Kotori: [deep thought] Takito, I think you’re being a bit brash here.

Pablo: [points nonaggressively at Kotori] Hm? Do you agree with me?

Kotori: [motions to stop] No, not at all. Takito’s logic is sound; I just think we shouldn’t treat this accusation as any more than a theory for now.

Akinori: [Bible flipping slows down to a stop, then closes] Whew.

*I know Kotori’s doing the right thing, but…*

[camera pans to Akinori acting shifty]
...If he isn’t the killer, logical errors appear.

Takito: [shakes head] I’ll have to keep following this path for now. If any flaws in my reasoning appear, I’ll have to trust the rest of the group to find them.

Nahoko: [looks up from her phone] Huh? Are we still on this bullshit train? [points mockingly at Takito] Akinori doesn’t have the guts to kill a man. Never has, never will. [smug grin] And even if he did, the kid has zero muscle mass. The biggest thing he’s ever lifted is a bigger-than-average wine chalice.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I concur! Akinori is the weakest among us! There is no way he’s capable of all this!

Akinori: [nervous] Thank… you…?

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, it seems we’ve reached a consensus. Does anyone have another idea?

Takito: [slams podium] Wait! I know you find my ideas unlikely, but at least entertain them!

Tamaki: [puzzled expression] Hm? How would you want us to do that?

Takito: [determined] I want Akinori to give us his alibi. Not only what he was doing, but also why he thinks he’s innocent.

Ryouta: [looks around room] T-that seems f-fair enough…

Tamaki: [smiles] Agreed. Will you comply, Akinori?

Akinori: [annoyed expression, flipping through Bible slowly] If you’ll excuse my anger, I find Takito’s ideas baseless, premature, and insulting, on top of being downright false. [closes Bible, stares down Takito] Yet, if it’ll get him to quit his wild lies, I’ll explain my innocence in full detail.

Wow. Defensive Akinori is really different from regular Akinori. Still, if he’s confident this testimony
will clear him, it might be hard to find a hole. I’ve got to scan every word for a weak point!

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: Body Discovery Announcement, Known Timetable, Standard of Babylon II, Model Chichen Itza, Chapel Décor

Akinori: [slowly flipping through Bible pages, blank expression] My actions tonight were simple. About five minutes after dinner, I went to my room and fell asleep. I stayed there for the entire night, or at least until everyone got up to investigate. I was unconscious until Chiyo woke me up.

Chiyo: [fiddling with wand] If it helps any, I’ll back up that last sentence.

Satoko: [pensive pose] Sing babagan tengen. I saw Akinori come out of his room with Chiyo. Still, you know how weak this, right, Akinori?

Akinori: [hides behind Bible] I’m aware. [slowly flipping through Bible pages, annoyed expression] Which is why I have a reason as to why I can’t be responsible for the killing. You may have guessed it already.

Itsumi: [critical expression] Is it about your s-strength?

Akinori: [quickly flipping through Bible pages, nervous expression] …My apologies. When I say that, I mean that some of the things the killer would’ve had to do require some strength. [page flipping slows down, blank expression] Takito said it himself, the killer had to exert a lot of force to split Ikkaku over the Standard. And because this is impossible for someone as frail as I am, the killer cannot be me.
Benito: [angry expression] So this was yer slimy reason for accusing me?

Akinori: [closes Bible, angry] I did not accuse you! I said it had to be someone with your strength! [hides face inside Bible] Grah!

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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Solution: E4, T3

~~~~~

Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Hitomi: [puzzled expression] But, wasn’t that proven earlier? It’s wrong now? [turns around, puts hands on head nervously] This trial’s too complex for me, mannnnnn…

Takito: [determined expression] Don’t be fooled. Akinori’s subtly twisted the facts to suit his own needs.

Akinori: [flips through Bible pages quickly, angry expression] Twisting facts?! I would never do that! You’re the one putting a negative spin on everything!

Takito: [shakes head] No, that’s still you. I only proved that a lot of force was needed to split Ikkaku’s body. You’re the one insisting that a person provided that force. We all may have made an undue assumption there, but there’s no need to keep it any longer!

Akinori: [page flipping gets faster, angry expression] I don’t stand for fruitless nitpicking! I may have added the detail about a person supplying the force, but do you really think could be anything else? [closes Bible, furious glare] Monobear would never help with a murder, so unless you know how a gorilla somehow entered the museum, you’re going down a dead end!
Takito: [shakes head, slams podium] He’s still adding his own little helpful details. He’s not going to give up until I explain exactly how he got enough force to split Ikkaku. Don’t be ridiculous, Akinori. If a killer without physical strength wanted to split the body, they wouldn’t use an animal. They would borrow a natural force, like gravity!

Nahoko: [puzzled, frantically searching on tablet] Gravity? The hell?

Pablo: [annoyed expression, points at Takito] Are you saying the killer can control gravity? And this lets you call Akinori’s gorilla ridiculous?

Takito: When I say gravity, I mean the killer dropped the body on the Standard’s edge from a high place. For example, the top of the model Chichen Itza.

Akinori: [shocked, staggers back, rosary wraps tight around his neck] Gck!

Caught him!

Okita: [jovial pose] Hey now, Takito, I thought you were going with a theory that was less silly. I mean, climbing up the exhibits? That’s five-year-old shit.

Yasue: [sad face]

Takito: That’s not really evidence that the killer wouldn’t do it…

Okita: [shrugs] It’s just too unlikely for me to buy, and I bet I’m not the only one. [bites rose] You’ll need more than just words to convince me, monsieur.

Takito: [determined expression] What if I told you I had evidence suggesting the killer had been up on the Chichen Itza at least one time before?

Okita: [serious face] I’d laugh. [jovial pose] But, if you were to show me this evidence, things may be different.
Guess I’ll have to…

The evidence that proves the killer was up on the Chichen Itza is…!

( Artifact Cases / Duct Tape / Standard of Babylon II )

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10:2311322312123123112312313212313

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Takito: [satisfied smile] Yasue, where did you find the duct tape?

Yasue: [salutes] Ooh! Ooh! On the Corinthian column, sir, yes sir!

Takito: [nervous] No, I, er, mean the place you were when you found it.

Yasue: [pensive pose] Oh, that! I was on top of the Chichen Itza when I saw the tape! [lets Bertrand rest on her finger] Bertrand can collaborate my story.

Bertrand: Bzz! Bzz! Bzzzzz!

Takito: [points at Okita] Do you see, Okita? The killer probably noticed the hiding place for the tape while they were up there dropping the body!

Okita: [lip bleeds slightly, nervous expression] Ouch! [shakes head, dignified pose] I mean, congratulations. A gentleman like myself always admits when he’s beat. I-I’m honestly more interested in what Akinori has to say about all this.

Wataru: [furious pose] If he has any honor, it’ll be a confession! [punches palm] That rat killed one
of our own and had the audacity to frame me! [points menacingly at Akinori] I swear, if I had been the one to walk through that door, I would have sacrificed myself and confessed immediately!

Benito: [makes a hook with his fingers, furious expression] Akinori, you treacherous filth… Monobear, tie the bastard to the mast already! He’s got motive, means, and opportunity!

Akinori: [deep breathing, staring down at his Bible] I… I…

Pablo: [slams podium, intense expression] Everyone, calm down! That’s a government order! [authoritative pose] Possibility does not equal decisive evidence!

Tamaki: [frowns] I hate to disagree, Pablo, but it seems that all the current evidence points to Akinori. It would be unwise to bet on anyone but him.

Pablo: [distraught expression] But… I saw trust in his eyes… I’ve picked all my council members like that, and never was wrong… [angry pose] Didn’t we all say the same thing about Takito?

Kotori: [serious expression] We did, and I can’t refute your claim. Yet, Takito was able to prove himself innocent. I have to wonder why Akinori has made such a weak effort to defend himself…

Akinori: [staring down at his Bible] My defense… [looks up, furious expression, Bible pages turn wildly] …is not weak!

Takito: [staggers back] What?!!

Akinori: [angry glare at Takito] You’ve made it hell for me, Takito, turning everyone against me, making me out to be a liar… [flips Bible pages quickly] …but unfortunately for you, I don’t belong in hell. You’re the only liar here!


Akinori: [Bible pages flip wildly, angry expression] Quit your lies, and let me finish! All liars like you will burn!
Takito: [frightened] Okay, okay!

Akinori: [calms down, sighs, Bible pages slow down] For the rest of you, I am severely disappointed you did not listen to the whole of my testimony. [annoyed expression] Providing the force on the standard was only one of the things I am too weak to do.

Ryouta: [pensive pose] R-really? I can’t th-think of anything else…

Akinori: [serious expression] Well then, allow me to explain. [angry glare] Takito?

Takito: [puzzled] Um, yeah?

Akinori: [angry glare] Pay attention. Learn how to speak the truth from an expert.

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

**Evidence Bullets:** Chapel Hall’s Small Holes, Blood Trails, Artifact Cases, Monobear File, Tamaki’s Testimony, Ikkaku’s Body Parts

Akinori: [blank expression, flipping Bible pages quickly] As I was saying, there is one other thing I couldn’t do. Ikkaku’s a heavy man, and before he was split, the killer would’ve had to lift or drag his entire body from the Dino Room to the Cradles of Civilization.

Nahoko: [slams podium, angry expression] Bullshit, Akinori! You can totally drag a body around!

Akinori: [annoyed expression, flipping pages faster] Well, I know myself, and I cannot. Even if I were capable of dragging 100 kilograms around, pulling that weight and opening the extremely heavy museum doors would be impossible for all but the strongest among us.

Tamaki: [angry frown] I’m still bothered about that. How could such a reputable organization as Hope’s Peak could put such heavy doors in a family venue?
Itsumi: [angry glare] If the d-doors are really that heavy, there m-must’ve been a d-doorstopper. C-couldn’t the killer have used th-that, Akinori?

Akinori: [annoyed expression, dismissive gesture] I will not stand by and be accused on “must’ve beens”. If anyone actually found a doorstopper, tell me now.

…

Akinori: [points, Bible pages flip wildly] See? The doors were not tampered with! The killer had to open them with their own strength!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Solution: E1, T4

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! Akinori, there was definitely tampering involved with that door!

Akinori: [angry expression, flipping Bible pages quickly] You saw the doors, right? They were completely normal.

Hitomi: [sad expression] Yeah, Takito, I saw them too, and nothing was off. I even checked the hinges…

Takito: I know that. If you look at only the doors, you won’t find tampering… [points at Akinori] … but if you look at the nearby walls, the killer’s mark is clear as day!
Wataru: [smiling, thumbs up] Heh! Are you talking about those two holes I found? They were both in the Chapel Hall about the same height as the door handles, and they were to the side of doors leading to the Dino Room and Cradles of Civilization. If I remember right, they were really puny as well; only a couple of millimeters wide. [points at Akinori menacingly] Incredibly suspicious, don’t you think, murderer?

Akinori: [angry expression, flipping Bible pages wildly] You… You brutish philistine, trying to pin the crime on me… [dismissive gesture] These holes are in the wall. How could they possibly be related to the door? If you can’t tell me why those holes are there, don’t waste this court’s time!

Takito: [pensive pose] I’ll probably have to explain what made the hole…

...!

*If I consider what else Akinori did as the killer, the answer becomes clear! The hole was made by…*

( A drill / An insect / A nail )

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8:12213213123123121312312312312312

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Takito: [determined expression] If the killer stole a hammer from the artifact cases, it only makes sense that the hole was made by hammering in a nail.

Akinori: [furious, Bible pages flip wildly] Sure, whatever. You’ve done nothing but put a nail in a wall. Can you even prove there was a nail there for the killer to use, or that a nail in the wall means anything? You can’t, Takito. [slams podium] You couldn’t then, and you can’t now!

Takito: [slams podium] First of all, I know exactly where you got the nail. From this room!
Takito: [points at Akinori] You got the nail from the chapel hall!

Akinori: [furious, Bible pages flip wildly, sweating] You’re all talk, Takito! Bring me evidence or stop wasting everyone’s time!

Kotori: [worried expression] Takito’s talk has proven pretty valid so far. It’s hardly wasting anyone’s time here.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] When you make silly theories without evidence, how is it not a waste of time?! [slams table] You can’t just say this mythical nail is in the Chapel Hall! Prove to me one was there!

_I was going to have to sooner or later. The evidence that proves the nail came from the chapel hall is…_

( Wataru’s Testimony / Chiyo’s Testimony / Itsumi’s Testimony )

Takito: [determined expression] Akinori, you borrowed the nail from a wall painting.
Akinori: [furious, Bible pages begin to fly out] Liar! Liar, liar, liar, liar, liar!

Takito: [smug smile] If you didn’t want us to find out, you should’ve straightened the painting when you were done.

Chiyo: [crosses arms, pouty face] You really should’ve anyway. [angrily points wand at Akinori] You completely ruined the atmosphere of the room!

Akinori: [seething mad, Bible pages flying out] I didn’t ruin anything! I’m not the killer! I. AM. NOT.

Pablo: [disappointed expression, authoritative pose] This is harassment, Takito. Quit tying an innocent man’s life to this damn nail!

*What did he say? Tying something to the nail…*

…

…

*!

*It… It all makes sense now!*

Takito: [points at Pablo] This nail is pivotal in the case! It allows a weak killer to keep one of the doors open while they move Ikkaku through!

Yasue: [shocked] But… It’s just a nail! And Wataru said the hole was a few feet from the door anyway!

Takito: [determined expression] That may be true when the door was closed… but when it’s open,
the hole would only a couple inches from the door, and more specifically… [slams podium] …its handle!

Tamaki: [confused expression] The handle…? You aren’t saying the killer connected the nail and the handle to hold the door open?

Takito: That’s exactly what I’m saying. All the killer, or Akinori, would have to do is place a band between the handle and the nail, and he could hold the door in place as long as he wanted!

Akinori: [hides behind Bible] Hurk!

Nahoko: [sneering at Akinori] Are you ready to confess yet, Friar Dickcheese? Every one of your excuses has been disproven!

Akinori: [seething mad, Bible pages fly out, sweating] Never! Not while Takito’s logic is full of holes! [hunches over, sweats harder] Where’s this band, anyway? You may have gotten lucky with the nail, but a band is much harder to find in a museum, especially one strong enough to stop that door from closing!

Benito: [annoyed expression, crosses arms] I hate to say it, but I have to side with Akinori. The only bands I think could do it were my treasures, and they’re locked safe inside their glass casing. [looks down in shame] Sorry, matey.

Pablo: [angrily pointing at Takito] See here, Takito? Grill an innocent like that, and you end up at a dead end of wasted effort! If there was no band, stop with this harassment!

Takito: [slams podium] I’m sorry, Pablo, but there was a band, and I can tell you where it is.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Where is it, then? No generalities this time, I want specifics!

( Akinori has it / In the Chapel / On Ikkaku’s body )
Takito: [sighs] I didn’t want to do this to a friend. I want you to confess on your own. [points] Akinori, take off your rosary!

Akinori: [winces, shocked, Bible pages fly out] I… I… How?

Takito: Your rosary is made of titanium, so it’s definitely strong enough to hold the door open.

Pablo: [frightened, staggers back] Akinori… Do you really have such a thing?

Akinori: [deep breathing, sweating nervously] I… do…

Pablo: [shocked] Aki…nori…

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m afraid it gets worse, Pablo. If Akinori really does never take off that necklace, he’s the only one who had access to it. This contraption with the nail is conclusive evidence that Akinori is guilty.

Monobear: [laughing] Ho ho ho! It seems we’re all ready for a vote! I’ll just get the voting interface ready for you all…

Akinori: [deep breathing, sweating nervously] Hold it!

Wait, what?!

Akinori: [deep breathing, sweating nervously] I have… [regains composure] …not given up yet!
Congratulations! Most of you got it right!

If you have anything to say about the mystery or just a critique of the first chapter (so far), comment below!
Chapter Notes

One last mechanic introduction for this chapter: The Panic Talk Action.

Four words of a four word phrase will be shown in a diamond shape, and the goal is to put them in order. To find the solution, you will need to read the number before the colon, find that numbered letter after colon, and then read that letter and three before it in backwards order to find the cardinal direction sequence to read the four words in. Here's an example.

Person: You can't answer 2+2!

Answer Is

Four

10:\text{wenswesewnwensnewseenwsewnwensnewwesewe}

Also, there's no puzzle for Climax Inference. Just read along and enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 1: In The Belly of Despair – School Trial Part 5

Kotori: [blank expression] Akinori, it’s over. There’s definitive evidence against you, and the killer’s movements match exactly what someone like you would have to do.

Akinori: [angry expression, flips through Bible pages quickly] Of course all the evidence points to me! I’ve been framed! [hyperventilating] I… I… I left my rosary in the chapel that night! Anybody could’ve used it!

Pablo: [shock] Oh! [huge smiles, clapping] Why didn’t you say so earlier? [authoritative pose] It seems a huge change in our understanding of the case is in order!

Wataru: [angry pointing at Pablo] Foreign imbecile! How could someone such a high political position not know a lie when they see one!
Pablo: [defensive stance, angry expression] I know lies! This is not a lie!

Akinori: [angry expression, flips through Bible pages wildly, nervous sweating] Besides, I have evidence! Many of you might have noticed the decorations I’ve been putting up in the chapel recently. I simply thought my rosary would make a welcome addition.

Takito: [slams podium] Sorry, Akinori, but Wataru’s got a point. You don’t have a good track record of credibility.

Akinori: [angry expression, Bible pages flip wildly, hyperventilating] Really? But if someone had framed me, nothing I’ve said was a lie, right? [Bible pages speed up] You can’t disprove the fact that your “definitive evidence” was available to everyone! I was framed!

*Dammit… Akinori’s definitely lying his ass off, but his lie’s too general to disprove, and he knows it.*

Akinori: [angry expression, Bible pages fly out, hyperventilating] Have you finished reflecting on your mistake yet? The real killer is still out there, and they need finding!

*Maybe I should focus on proving his intentions to be impossible instead of proving the rosary’s location impossible… I’ll just need to buy some time to think of something for this new angle…*

Takito: [points] You're a bad liar, Akinori. Saying two contradictory things to the same person? A big no-no.

Akinori: [furious expression, Bible pages fly out, hyperventilating] Oh, so your only evidence is insults now? I'll schedule a confession session later, just so I can make you pay for your slander!

**PANIC TALK ACTION**

(Listen to this for the true Dangan Ronpa experience: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9_LdiIMvqI)
Akinori: [points angrily at Takito, Bible pages flip wildly] Cut out your tongue, liar!

Akinori: [angry expression, Bible pages flip wildly, heavy breathing] I told you the truth!

Akinori: [points angrily at Takito, Bible pages fly out] You villain!

Akinori: [furious expression, Bible pages fly out, heavy breathing] I would never contradict myself!

Akinori: [clenches chest, hunches over, sweating] Why won’t you believe me? Get over yourself!

Akinori: [angry expression, hyperventilating] Let’s move on already!

**FINAL SHOT**

Akinori: [furious expression, slams podium, Bible pages flip wildly] You can’t refute that I left my rosary in the chapel! It’s a fact!

Inscribed

Vow

In

Latin

~~~~~

13:wsnewensnsenwwsnesenwnwsensnewnsnwensnwsen

~~~~~
Takito: IT’S OVER!

Akinori: [clenches chest, nervous, hyperventilating] What do you mean…? You still can’t prove–

Takito: [slams podium] You took a vow to never let your rosary leave you.

Kotori: [pensive pose] I remember that. Didn’t he say something about inscribing the vow on the beads?

[flashback to Akinori in the chapel]

Akinori: [intense expression, displaying rosary] Second, I vow to never let leave me! I have had these symbolic factors inscribed upon the beads in Latin, so I never forget them!

[return to the present trial]

Takito: [determined expression] Yeah, he did. In other words, we have the proof of his lie in writing.

Akinori: [clenches chest, nervous, Bible pages fly out] No you don’t! You’ll-You’ll never see it!

Nahoko: [annoyed expression, spins around tech shelf] Don’t be a fool. [messes with smartphone] I know probabilities better than anyone, and yours are astronomically slim. An innocent Akinori would freely let his rosary be examined.

Akinori: [staggers back, Bible spins faster] Eep!

Takito: [determined expression] A guilty Akinori has two options. He can take this last chance for a dignified confession, or hand over his rosary to Satoko for translation.

Satoko: [smug grin] If you insist on doing things the strulig way, I’ll have you know I picked up Tae Kwon Do when I learned Korean abroad.
Ryouta: [wincing, distraught expression] P-please, be g-gentle…

Takito: [determined expression] So, Akinori, what’s it going to be?

Akinori: [looks down, takes off rosary and places it inside Bible, then raises the pair up in one hand] … [deep breathing]

Itsumi: [worried] Akinori?

Akinori: [throws Bible and rosary down at the floor, resulting in an explosion of pages] I don’t need anyone to read the rosary.

Pablo: [dejected expression, hides face] So, it’s true then. [sighs] You’ll confess.

Akinori: [nervous expression, sweating, hyperventilating] I… I… I… [sighs] I can’t do it. I can’t confess.

Satoko: [annoyed expression, shrugs] I’ll pick up the rosary.

Akinori: [motions to stop, sweating, nervous expression] No, no! Don’t pick it up!

Takito: [serious expression] Akinori, you need to pick one. Confess, or show your rosary.

Akinori: [sweating, nervous expression] I want to confess… But I can’t bring myself to do it… Takito, can you… confess for me?

Takito: [puzzled expression] Uh, Akinori, that’s not how it works. Only the killer has to confess.

Akinori: [deep breathing, begging motion] I know, it’s just… You seem to know everything that happened. I think it might be easier you told everyone what happened, and then I could agree to it.
I guess that’s okay. It might be a good idea to have a recap anyway.

Benito: [impatient expression] What say you, Takito? Will you humor the little killer?

Takito: [shrugs] Don’t see why not. I’ll start from the beginning.

CLIMAX INERENCE

(Music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsi0xxuHqrE)

As SHSL Addict, Ikkaku was desperate to escape due to his withdrawal. He tried to warn us, but against his better judgement, he couldn’t help but organize a plot to murder. Specifically, murder me.

First, Ikkaku invited me to speak privately with him in the Dino Room. The next day, he volunteered to take shift cutting the fake plants, solely so he could hide the tape and bucket he would need for the murder. He left early from dinner to swap his personalized knife with my own, and then headed for the exhibits, where he would camp out until the coast was clear.

Ikkaku got to work, collecting the other supplies he needed from the artifact cases within the museum. After he slid katanas between the handles of certain doors to make sure I had to use the door he wanted, he began to set up a trap where a bucket with a knife in it would fall on my head as I opened the door. Unfortunately for Ikkaku, he had no knowledge that the true culprit of this murder would be sneaking out to visit the chapel tonight.

Exploiting a small window of opportunity, the culprit snuck past Pablo’s night guards and into the museum proper. Since the Dino Room door was the only working one at the time, they have to open it, making the unfortunate accident of doing so while Ikkaku was setting up the trap. The bucket backfired on Ikkaku, falling onto his head. The stab wound killed him within seconds, and the culprit panicked, having just found themselves an accidental murderer.

Soon after, the culprit realized that as long people knew the crime scene was the Dino Room, the crime could be traced back to them. They had to make the whole nature of the crime confusing and uncertain. The culprit was too weak to carry the body between room, but they were able to use a nearby nail and their personal titanium rosary to keep the door open. They used this method to move the body to the “Cradles of Civilization” room, and dropped the body on the sharp edge of the
Standard of Babylon II to split Ikkaku in 3 parts.

The upper body was placed back in the Dino Room, the left leg remained in the Cradles of Civilization, and the right leg was thrown against the end of the Geology Hall. The culprit also made sure to hide the tape Ikkaku used on top of a column, where few people would think to look.

Finally, the culprit planned their escape. Imitating Ikkaku, the culprit redid the bucket trap without the knife on the other set of doors connected to the Dino Room. When Chiyo shot down the bucket trap, the culprit heard the noise and knew it was safe to escape. From there, the culprit ran back to their room, and faked being asleep so they could “wake up” with the other students. They integrated without a trace, and for a time, everybody bought their innocence.

Only one person had both reason to visit the chapel and access to a titanium rosary!

Akinori Kurokawa, it could only be you!

CLIMAX INFEERENCE ENDS

Benito: [impatient expression] So, ye lying deckrat, is this what ye did?

Akinori: [deep breathing, uncomfortable pose and expression] ….Yes. Everything. I did it all. I killed Ikkaku Kirigiri, and tried to hide the evidence.

Pablo: [dejected expression, hides face] …How were you able to fool me? No one but my father’s been able to do that before…

Akinori: [uncomfortable pose and expression] …I don’t know. I just tried my best.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupupupu! Well kid, your best just wasn’t good enough! You all seem to have your killer, and since I have to uphold my speed standards, why don’t we get started on the voting? [smiling] Just select who you think did it, and we’ll have our result lickety-split!

I voted, choosing Akinori, obviously. After everyone else had made their pick, Monobear directed our attention to a giant tablet on the wall.
The image of a slot machine with the words “Who will be found guilty?” appeared. The slots cycled through all of our faces, eventually landing on triple Akinoris. Soon after, millions of tokens erupted from the machine.

Monobear: [joyful pose] Ding, ding, ding! Looks like you bastards’ beginner’s luck pulled you through. [camera shows a frightened Akinori] The bastard who offed Ikkaku was none other than Akinori, the pitiful, powerless priest!

Tamaki: [cocks head in confusion, slight frown] Now that the formalities are out of the way, I think some questions are in order. How and why did you do this?

Akinori: [uncomfortable pose and expression] It’s like Takito said. It was an accident… It just happened, I opened the door, [frightened expression] and… and…

[camera goes to a black and white still of a scared Akinori and Ikkaku with a bucket on his head. They are both in the Dino Room.]

Ikkaku: [painful, muffled noises]

Akinori: [hyperventilating] Oh god! Are you hurt? What is this? Are you okay?

[camera shows a solid black screen]

[thump noise]


[camera returns to the present trial]

Akinori: [distraught expression] After that, I guess I was trying to keep my life. I didn’t even
consider all of yours. How could I live with myself?

Hitomi: [concerned expression] But it wasn’t an accident, wasn’t it? You can’t feel that bad about it!

Wataru: [angry frown, crossed arms] If he wanted to stay innocent, he should’ve thought of that before engineering a crime scene to absolve him. The liar had his chance.

Itsumi: [points sharpened rock and Wataru, angry] D-don’t say that! H-he’s hurting!

Akinori: [distraught expression] No, Wataru is correct. My chance came, and I refused to take it. I have failed as both a priest, and a student of Hope’s Peak. I was lying to myself this whole time, convincing myself that was on the “right path”…

Okita: [confused expression] What? How? How can you think so many lies was the moral thing to do? You’re a priest, right? Don’t you fear hell, or something?

Akinori: [fearful expression] …I do fear hell, Okita. If I died just after a murder, I would’ve gone there. I couldn’t let that happen. [sighs] Yet, thanks to Takito, I kept only digging myself a deeper hole.

Kotori: [frowns] I’m sorry, Akinori. It’s a shame this happened to both you and Ikkaku. Though, if I understand your religion correctly, there’s still time to avoid hell. You can still preform a confession ceremony, can’t you?

Akinori: [uncomfortable expression] I… I… don’t want to. I need to force myself not to.

Takito: [puzzled expression] But, didn’t you say…?

Akinori: [uncomfortable expression] I’ve stained myself. I could never live with what I did, especially not for eternity. I’d be tortured, seeing everyone around me whose life wouldn’t be a lie. [puts hand over face] After seeing Takito get falsely accused, a part of me knew I was irredeemable, and knew I deserved hell. …It’s the main reason I refused to confess…

Pablo: [annoyed expression] Don’t be an idiot, Akinori.
Akinori: [nervous expression] Hm?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If my father acted like you did every time he did something immoral, my nation would never have risen up! You know it was wrong, and that’s all you need to ask for forgiveness!

Akinori: [surprised, happy expression] That’s right… I can! I don’t have to die in shame!

Monobear: [laughing pose] Actually, you do! Upupupupupu, it’s about time for you to die, don’t you think?

Akinori: [angry glare] N-no! I’ll die when I’m ready!

Monobear: [angry, brandishes claw] WILL YOU REALLY TRY TO DENY ME, WEAKLING?!

Akinori: [staggers back] Eep!

Monobear: [laughing pose] I’ve prepared a special punishment for our SHSL Preacher, Akinori Kurokawa!

Akinori: [hyperventilating, hands on head] No, no, no! I can’t die now, I can’t! [crying] I can’t go to hell!

Monobear: [laughing pose] Without further ado, it’s punishment time!

Akinori: [intense crying] PLEASE, GOD, PLEASE! FORGIVE MEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

Monobear: [hits button with gavel]

AKINORI KUROKAWA HAS BEEN FOUND GUILTY. NOW COMMENCING EXECUTION…
At first, it didn’t seem like anything was going to happen. Akinori just stood there crying loudly. Suddenly, a large claw on a chain reached out, and took ahold of his neck. Akinori screamed and resisted, but eventually, the claw pulled back behind two closed doors.

A few seconds passed, and I saw him again on Monobear’s large monitor. He was in the ruins of a small church, with restraints on his arms and legs forcing him to kneel. The room is dark, with the exception of some atmospheric candles, and Akinori is sweating intensely.

Suddenly, the camera tilted upwards to show dark clouds above, which quickly parted and turned white. A pillar of light shot out from the small patch of blue sky and surrounded Akinori. Akinori slowly began to levitate and rise out of the church.

He rose up like that, smiling and looking up, for a while. Akinori approached the hole in the clouds, and continued to smile up at them.

When he actually passed through the cloud, though, all that was up there was Monobear operating a tractor beam. Monobear laughed, tore off Akinori’s black priest robes, and turned off the tractor beam.

Akinori began to fall quickly, as a fissure opened up in the ground where the church ruins used to be. Akinori screamed as fire and demonic laughs erupted from the fissure. Monobear peeked out from the clouds and laughed. With a final screech, Akinori fell face-first into the hell fissure, and the ground closed behind him, a puff of smoke escaping from the seam.

The monitor turned off, and everyone stood back in terror.

Yasue: [gaping mouth, hands on head] Gaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

Okita: [staggers back] What the fuck was that, man? Haven’t you ever heard of a firing squad?
Monobear: [laughing pose] If you want to shoot the next one, be my guest! [dismissive pose] I will count it as a murder, though.

Chiyo: [points wand menacingly at Monobear] Don’t laugh this off! Why didn’t you let him confess? The least you could’ve done is let him die at peace with himself!

Monobear: [neutral pose] Inner peace? In case you haven’t noticed, that’s not exactly my style. [laughing pose] Dis-bear is despair, kiddos! Upupupupupupu!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Monster! All we wanted is to go to high school! Why can’t you let us do that?

Monobear: [angry pose] Everybody’s so dense today! You are in high school! [dismissive pose] And if you wanted a Hope’s Peak Education, don’t worry. You already have it.

Takito: Wait, what?

Monobear: [puzzled pose] Did I not tell you? [laughing pose] You bastards have already gone to Hope’s Peak for years! You were still in there, most likely bored to death, when I took you out, wiped your memories of the school year, and put you in here. [neutral pose] Well, except for you, Takito. You just looked like a nice and generic character to round out our cast.

Ryouta: [distraught expression] I sh-should’ve known… I had a n-newspaper I’d never even wr-written…

Tamaki: [frowns] How can you call yourself a host? Wiping memories? Kidnapping? You are inexcusable!

Monobear: [dismissive pose] Don’t flatter me.

Wataru: [furious] Nobody’s flattering you! You invaded our minds, the most sacred and private of places! Is this some sort of plot by foreign subversives?
Nahoko: [angry glare at Monobear] I doubt it’s a foreign plot, who did this is some sort reprehensible criminals. [points at Monobear] You hear me? When we get out of here, I’m buying every private eye in the country to bring you and your friends down!

Monobear: [relaxed pose] So much anger, so little power. You’ll want to save your energy and go to bed, ‘cause you lot have a big day tomorrow! I’ll unlock the trial room doors for you, so off to sleep!

_We exited and left for our rooms. Most of us did so immediately, but I stuck around to take Akinori’s rosary. I wanted to have some sort of memento. Now that the first killing was over, Pablo demanded we turn in all our knives to him so they could be destroyed. No one was in a mood to disagree._

_I had to go back into Ikkaku’s room to get my knife. It was just as messy as the first time I found it, but it had a completely different atmosphere now that the inhabitant was dead. I lifted up the knife case, and found a short note written on a napkin underneath._

_“If you’re reading this, you already know what I did. Please also know that I tried.”_

_I didn’t know what to do with it. I decided to keep it with me in my desk. I could put it with the rosary, and make a little collection of things to remember the dead by. I sincerely hoped it would stay at two. I went to bed, attempting to prepare for whatever Monobear meant by a “big day”. Knowing what I knew so far, I would need all the sleep I could get._

**CHAPTER ONE END**

-14 Students Remain-

Chapter End Notes

Thanks everyone, for your support through this first chapter! As always, I’d to know what you thought of this update and the story as whole.

"Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny" will be coming out soon, though I made need to spend a little bit more time than usual to prepare and plan out the finer details of the chapter.

In the meantime, here’s a little teaser:

"Faster than 10 criminals, and smarter than 9, Kibogaman is the SHSL Superhero of our generation! Go, Kibogaman, and bring us a more hopeful tomorrow!"
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – (Ab)normal Day 1

Chapter Notes

Woohoo! Legacy of Despair is back, and we're in Chapter 2!

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – (Ab)normal Day 1

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! As usual, you have another day of learning in the museum today, but I've prepared a special surprise for you all first! Come to the cafeteria, everyone! Upupupupu!

Erngh…

Takito: [sighs] *I just got done with seeing two people die. I'm not in the mood for one of Monobear’s surprises.*

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

Everyone was crowding outside the Cafeteria, with Pablo standing closest to the door.

Benito: [crosses arms, scowl] Move it, deckrat! Some of us are hungry!
Hitomi: [flexes, pouting face] Yeah! Do you think I keep a physique like this by skipping breakfast?

Pablo: [stretches arms in front of the door] Stay back! I’m not risking anyone’s life until Monobear’s “surprise” is proven safe!

Satoko: [angry glare] Well, how are we going to prove that, hm? Abra a porta!

Pablo: [flustered expression] Of course I’ll open the door! …But only after everyone is at a safe distance.

*Everyone backed up from the door as Pablo slowly creaked the door open and peered inside.*

Pablo: I see Monobear doing something! Stand back! [gets a running start and kicks the door open] Yaaa! …What?

Monobear: [wearing a chef’s hat and apron with words “kiss the cook”, operating a grill] Upupupupu! Come on in!

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

Pablo: [staggers back, shock] What… what is this?!

*Piles of succulent-looking food were on the tables. Almost every type of breakfast was there, and it all smelled amazing.*

Yasue: [drooling] Oh… mountains of fluffy rice topped with tasty eggs! [runs off] Woohoo! The pancakes are mine!

Itsumi: [wonder] Is… is that a miso w-waterfall? Is that t-tower made of b-bagels?

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh… [smiles] Well, that’s a pleasant surprise! Monobear meant no harm after all!
Monobear: [jolly pose] Upupupupu! You better believe it, baby!

Pablo: [facepalm] Geh… Even when I win, I lose…

*Everyone dove into Monobear’s special breakfast. It tasted just as good as it looked; it was better than any meal I’d had at this place, including Benito and Tamaki’s cooking. Yet, it was Monobear, so my worries put a damper on what would’ve been an excellent breakfast.*

Kotori: [swallows food] This is very good, Monobear, but why would put so much effort into a feast for us?

Monobear: [blushing] Oh, it’s nothing! I just wanted to congratulate you all for passing the first round of mutual killing!

Ryouta: [spits up food, stares with wide eyes] So, this is because our c-classmates d-died?!

Monobear: [dismissive pose] Be more proud of yourself! One in eight don’t make it to this point, you know.

Okita: [grimaces, rose droops out of mouth] This isn’t an accomplishment for us! None of us wanted this, asshole!

Nahoko: [holds phone, ready to throw] Screw you, waiting until after we ate all this so we’d feel guilty!

Monobear: [sweating, shock] What?! [demure pose] You don’t like rewards? I guess you don’t want access to the second floor then… It’s a shame, there might be an escape route…

Pablo: [slams table with fist, earnest expression] …Open the second floor at once!

Monobear: [laughing pose] Okey-dokey! But it’s no longer a reward, it’s a punishment now! Have fun with it, and by the way, there’s no way I’d put an escape route in this place! Upupupupu! [runs off]
Pablo: [scowls, puts hand on top of head] Argh… Now I just have another place to make murder-proof. [sighs] Does anyone know where the second floor actually is?

Wataru: There’s a flight of stairs behind a metal grate next to the chapel. [hits palm with fist] We couldn’t get to it before, so it has to be open now!

Chiyo: [shrugs] There’s no arguing that. [points wand] Onwards!

[Automoved to Chapel Hall]

Sure enough, the metal grate guarding the stairs had lifted.

Pablo: [grits teeth, intense stare] Be wary, everyone. I have no idea what dangers could lie inside.

Tamaki: [concerned face] Hm? Aren’t you going to implement something to protect us?

Pablo: [hides face] …Not at the moment. My last effort was much more …flawed than anticipated. I’ll need some time to think of some better preventative measures. [regains composure] In the meantime, I ask that you all thoroughly investigate the new floor and report back to me. [salutes] Temporary Esperan Guard, to work! [drops salute]

[INVESTIGATION BEGINS]

[Move upstairs to Timeline Hall]

So, this is the second floor? It’s a lot more dull and beige than I thought it would be. At least there’s a lot of facts and pictures on the walls.

[Talk to Tamaki]

Tamaki: [smiles, giggles] See, isn’t this much better?
Takito: Uh, what’s better?

Tamaki: [smiles] The museum design! Whoever designed this floor should’ve designed the first one. That one was just a mess.

_I don’t remember it being that bad_…

Tamaki: [frown, furrowed brow] And whoever designed this place knows how to use a hall, too! [smiles] A nice, clear timeline of all the world events from 0 to 1800, with pictures and simple language for the little kids! There’s even a sub-timeline about just the events in Japan, so people can tie it back to themselves! Why can’t this mastery be everywhere?

Takito: Well, I definitely see how the walls are better, but what about the floor design? I don’t quite get it.

Tamaki: [puts hand over surprised mouth] Oh! [smiles] Maybe it’ll be easier to see if I explain the floor plan first.

[Camera shows a map of the 2nd floor]

Tamaki: There are only four rooms on this floor. The first one we’re in, the Timeline Hall, makes a giant “U” shape, and contains nine doors in total. Two of them lead to the staircases that go the third and first floors. Three of them go to the square room in the center of the U, one on each side. This room is the museum’s Art Gallery. The left-over space in the U is filled up by a rectangular Cleaning Closet, connected to the Art Gallery by one door in the center and to the Timeline Hall by two, one on each side. Finally, to the right and bottom of the Timeline Hall is the L-shaped Nautical Room, which connects to the right and bottom sides of the Timeline Hall with two pairs of doors.

[Camera returns to Tamaki in the Timeline Hall]

Takito: I still don’t get it.

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, you can get to anyplace you want using the least possible number of doors and steps. [frown, furrowed brow] In the first floor, they put doors wherever they felt like – even in
Takito: I think I understand now. Tamaki’s really invested in her profession. Seeing mistakes of any kind of hosting must piss her off to no end.

[Talk to Wataru and Ryouta]

Takito: Hey, Ryouta, there was something I was meaning to ask you about.

Ryouta: [looks from side to side] Y-yeah?

Takito: It’s just, your newspaper’s articles about the outside world were really helpful with the last case. I was wondering if you look it over for important people.

Ryouta: [opens and reads paper] W-well, most of the people in are simply n-namedropped, but I’ll do my best… [turns pages] Other than Ik-k-kakku, there’s two other semi-biographies to look at.

Takito: Good. Lemme see ‘em.

[camera changes to “Secret Sleuths?” article]

Ryouta: The first is Kyouko K-kirigiri. She’s Ikkaku’s sister, the SHSL D-detective, and the daughter of J-jin Kirigiri, the normal h-headmaster of Hope’s Peak.

Monobear’s most likely put Jin in a torture room, by now, and that’s if he’s even still alive.

Takito: [shudders]

[camera changes to a figure wearing a white jumpsuit and helmet, with blue and green decals. The figure is standing triumphantly over a pile of unconscious criminals.]
Ryouta: The other one is K-Kibogaman. He’s–

[camera returns to the Timeline Hall]

Wataru: [intense expression] Kibogaman? Where? Where is he?

Takito: Where did you–?

Wataru: [intense expression] Kibogaman is the hero we need in this dire time, and my hero as well! If you’ve seen him, ask for his help immediately! …And his autograph!

Ryouta: [winces] Eep!

Takito: I’m pretty sure Kibogaman isn’t here. I’m not exactly sure who he is yet.

Wataru: [shock, clasps heart] You don’t? How can you call yourself a… [jolts with realization] …Oh, that’s right, you haven’t been graced with a Hope’s Peak application, have you? [stern face] Well, as a good citizen, I cannot allow you to continue ignorant to greatest hero of our proud school!

Takito: [whispers meekly] It’s okay, I have a newspaper…

Wataru: [imitates Kibogaman’s pose] Summoned by danger and beckoned by violence, Kibogaman is the Super High School Level Superhero that protects the students of Hope’s Peak Academy from those who would harm them! With his signature Phoenix Rounds, Kibogaman strikes fear in the hearts of villains and burns away at their rotten core!

Takito: Wow. That’s pretty impressive for improvisation.

Wataru: [blushes, puts hand on the back of head] [chuckles] Don’t flatter me, Takito! That mantra was spoken by Kibogaman himself! [points to self] It’s common knowledge amongst fans such as myself.

Takito: So, the Phoenix Rounds are something he named himself?
Wataru: [smiles] Of course! A secret special recipe gives the Phoenix Rounds a cone of fire around them when they are fired, leaving a huge trademark circular burn around the bullet wound. It’s immensely painful, and makes criminals think twice before breaking the laws of our great nation!

Takito: So, Ryouta, does the article have the same things to say? If Wataru’s right, there shouldn’t be much to say about this guy besides his latest exploits in crimebusting…

Ryouta: [sweating, wincing] Actually, the article is a c-cr-criticism of Kibogaman.

Takito: Huh?

Wataru: [makes fists, grits teeth] Lies, slander!

[camera changes to the Kibogaman article, with an image of Kibogaman standing triumphant over a pile of unconscious criminals]

Ryouta: The author, who I w-will say is n-not me, claims Kibogaman isn’t pr-preventative enough.

Wataru: Nonsense! The threat of Kibogaman righteous judgement is a deterrent to crime everywhere!

Ryouta: W-well, Kibogaman only seems to come to a crime after s-somebody’s been k-killed or h-hurt. People say he sh-should come faster, so that n-nobody gets h-harmed…

Wataru: Hmph! That’s just Kibogaman’s heroic nature!

[camera returns to Wataru in the Timeline Hall]

Wataru: [makes fist, intense expression] A true hero always arrives late!

Ryouta: [cowers] D-d-don’t hurt the m-messenger…
Why would Kibogaman just leave people to get hurt like that? It doesn’t seem very heroic…

[Talk to Yasue and Itsumi]

Yasue: [raises arms in joy] Hey, Takito! Bertrand, Itsumi, and I need you to settle a little debate we’re having!

Takito: Sure, I think I can help, though you’ll probably have to translate for Bertrand.

What do you even debate with a bee, anyway?

Itsumi: [neutral expression] Y-yasue and I want to know who the b-best warrior of this timeline is. I th-think the samurai are the b-best.

Yasue: [big grin] I like the English knights, and how their armor is both strong and turbo-awesome looking! Someday, I’m gonna replace my beesuit with platemail.

Itsumi: [angry frown] B-but samurai have the sharpest swords and extensive t-training! S-samurai are the most d-disciplined!

Yasue: [dismissive gesture] Discipline, schmiscipline! [standing proud] I want the freedom of riding around on my horse, decapitating any who endanger my hives!

Itsumi: [angry frown] You d-do know that knights have tr-training program, too, right?

Yasue: [pouty face] Maybe… But I still like them more!

Itsumi: [neutral expression] Well, if this is about l-liking them m-more, that’s okay. I’ll r-respect it.

Yasue: [puts hands on cheeks] Aw, thank you! Samurai are pretty cool in their own right, too!

Itsumi: [blushes] Y-yeah…
Didn’t seem like they needed my input after all. Still, there’s one lingering question…

Takito: Wait, wasn’t Bertrand in this argument? Who did he think was the best?

Yasue: [stares at Bertrand resting on her fingertip] Well, I simply assumed he would agree with me, but I might as well ask… Bzzz… Bzz…

I’ll jot these phrases down for later. It might be useful to learn Bee.

Yasue: [tilts head confusedly] Is that so, Bertrand? Well then. [faces Takito] Bertrand says he likes archers the best.

Takito: Which ones?

Yasue: All of them. All the archers. He admires their stinging abilities.

Should I have expected more from a bee?

[Move to Cleaning Closet]

The walls are really bland here, and there are boxes everywhere. I guess the museum didn’t spend a lot of time on things the patrons wouldn’t see.

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [facing away from Takito, back eye closed] Sweet relief! [turns around, eyes open] Oh, hi, Takito! Didn’t see you there.

Takito: Wait, were you in pain or something? Why did you say “Sweet Relief”? 
Hitomi: [turns around, opens back eye] Well, sort of. [sad expression] My back eye gets all sorts hair and dirt in it. I have to put eyedrops in it daily, or I get uncomfortable and can’t have as much fun as I’d like to.

Takito: Makes sense. *Hitomi’s active personality probably gets her covered in dirt really often.* Though, where exactly did you get these eyedrops? This doesn’t seem like a place you’d find them.

Hitomi: [turns around, opens front eyes, giggles] Silly Takito! You didn’t see the first aid kit on the wall by the door? It has everything!

*There’s no–*

…

*Okay, there actually was a first-aid kit.*

Takito: It must be pretty all-inclusive to have eyedrops.

Hitomi: [smiles, twin thumbs up] Oh, it has everything! Hopefully, if there’s another murder attempt, we might be able to save someone with it!

*Hopefully, it never comes to that.*

[Talk to Pablo]

*He looks kind of frustrated…*

Takito: So, are you making any progress in designing counter-murder measures?

Pablo: [shakes head “no”, angry frown] I’m afraid not, Takito. Coming up with a plan foolproof enough to outsmart that bear has been more …taxing than what was in my original vision.
For all his shortcomings, Pablo really seems to care.

Pablo: [sighs] In the meantime, I’ve turned my efforts towards taking inventory of this cleaning closet.

Takito: Really? Find anything dangerous?

Pablo: [serious face] I’ve already taken the bleaches and cleaning fluid downstairs. Other than that, there are only really party supplies, like tables, plates and silverware. There’s nothing deadlier than a butterknife, and I’ll swear that on my nation’s honor.

Takito: Party supplies? You mean like if a private event were held in the museum?

Pablo: [pensive pose] That seems to be the case, yes.

Takito: Maybe we could organize a party with Tamaki’s help later.

Pablo: [pensive pose] Well, if Tamaki thinks it’s good, I’m sure it’s an opportunity. We could really use the morale. [sighs, frowns] Ech. The fact I’ve even lost two people is a disgrace. If my father knew I couldn’t save them all…

Takito: Just concentrate on the moment, Pablo. We need your full effort.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Very well. But please don’t tell anyone I got counsel from you, okay? My effectiveness depends upon my image as a strong leader.

Takito: Sure. I can do that for you.

[Move to Art Gallery]

I really like the ornate design of the walls and the wooden tile floor, but the atmosphere is a bit smothering. I feel like I’ll get yelled at if I’m not whispering every word I say in here.
Talk to Kotori

Takito: I didn’t know you were interested in art, Kotori.

Kotori: [smiles] To be honest, I’m not. I just like looking closely at the various types of brushstrokes.

Takito: Yeah, that’s some technique, isn’t it? Brushing a certain way to create pattern and texture in specific colors… these artists’d put somebody like me to shame.

Kotori: [points at Takito] Well, if you know the strategy, who says you can’t do it yourself?

Takito: That’s… That’s a good idea, Kotori. Maybe I’ll try a sketch or two later. …To be honest, I only said that because I’ve been feeling kind of inferior in general lately.

Kotori: [motions to stop] Hey, that’s no way to be! Tell me what’s wrong.

Takito: Being in a school full of the country’s best can wear you down sometimes, y’know? It just makes someone like me feel a little small.

Kotori: [stares and frowns at Takito] Don’t think like that. Hope’s Peak students are only specialists. The world needs generalists like you, too.

Takito: Sure, I guess that’s sound.

Kotori: [neutral expression] There’s no need to guess, Takito. It’s true.

I’ll try to take her words to heart, but some things are easier said that done.

Takito: [sighs]
[Talk to Nahoko]

Takito: Nahoko! Do you have time for a question?

Nahoko: [looks up from laptop] Yeah? I just found out Monobear shut down my internet, so I might be more irritable than usual right now. If you still want to ask, go ahead.

Well, it is for the group…

Takito: Since that information about Ikkaku was so useful in the last trial, I thought I’d collect everything I could about figures in the outside world.

Nahoko: [chuckles, closes laptop] Oh, so you think I’m connected, do you? Don’t flatter me.

Takito: Well, you did mention this Byakuya Togami guy on the first day…

Nahoko: [puzzled expression, spins shelf and grabs phone] Wait, you don’t know who he is? [shows image of Togami on phone] You’ve never seen this face?

Takito: No, I really have no idea about him. You did say he was great and day traded with you, right? Is he some sort of finance celebrity?

Nahoko: [focused on phone] You could say that, I guess. He’s the SHSL Heir, the richest student at the academy by a wide margin.

Takito: Wait, heir? You mean he got all of this money from his parents?

Nahoko: [crosses arms, raises eyebrow] Wait, you don’t know about the Togami Conglomerate either? Have you been living in a hole, kid?

Takito: Togami Conglomerate! That’s where he comes from! No, I do, it’s just… It took me a while to make the connection. Though, it seems weird that someone could get into this school just for being born.
Nahoko: [chuckles, smug grin] Oh, it’s not easy. Byakuya had to beat out all of his other siblings for the title in what I’ve been told was a “battle of wits”. Every member of the Togami family gets a top-of-the-line education and training anyway, so Byakuya isn’t just some rich kid getting what he wants.

Takito: Was the competition held by Hope’s Peak? Family battles sounds a bit cutthroat based on what I know about the school.

Nahoko: [pensive pose] No, the competition is a strict family affair. Nobody knows much about it, except that only the winner gets to stay with the family.

Takito: R-really?

Nahoko: [smug grin] Yep! The losers get disowned.

Takito: Isn’t that a bit harsh?

Nahoko; [focuses on laptop] Maybe, but the Togami family wants tough offspring. In the business world, only the best survive.

Takito: [shudders] That’s a too bit ruthless for me…

[Move to Timeline Hall]

[Move to Nautical Room]

This certainly feels like the ocean, with the blue walls and sand-colored floor. There’s even a giant model ship big enough to walk on the deck. I swear I can even hear sloshing water somewhere…

[Talk to Satoko]
Is something up with Satoko? She’s practically motionless.

Takito: Uh, Satoko? How long have you been staring at that wall of knots?

Satoko: [concentrating] I don’t know. Dos horas, más o menos.

Takito: Could I get a translation, please?

Satoko: [mildly annoyed expression] A couple hours. I’m trying to find out why all these knots have the names they do.

Takito: It can’t be that hard, can it? I mean, sailors are a practical bunch. They wouldn’t give knots obtuse names.

Satoko: [smug grin, stares at Takito] Really? Why don’t you tell me where a sheet knot’s name comes from.

Takito: That one? It looks like it’s going to fall apart, but it is holding up the weight it’s on well enough.

Satoko: [smug grin, stares at Takito] Pode, fregar? Pode?

Takito: I’ll be honest. I have no idea.

Satoko: [pushes glasses up on nose] The sheet knot is actually the knot used in fishing nets and rope blankets.

Takito: Well, it makes sense, but how did you figure that out?

Satoko: [shrugs] Two hours of thinking. And the fact there’s a fishing net on display right to the left.
I’ll give her credit, I really should’ve noticed that…

[Talk to Benito]

Benito’s getting a little bit too happy on that model ship. Maybe I should check on him…

Benito: [child-like wonder] I can hardly believe me eyes! A real, ten-meter pirate ship, built just like the golden days, right in front of me!

Takito: Benito?

Benito: [smiles, crosses arms] Genuine, hardwood oak, and fully equipped twin masts! It’s the ship of me dreams, but it’s real, and right in front of me!

Takito: Benito?

Benito: [startled] And this plank feels loose… Is there is a lower deck crawl space? [removes plank] Oh, it is? It is! Perfect for storing loot!

Takito: …Benito?

Benito: [crosses arms, smiles] Wahahaha! The wheel even controls the rotor! Take note, everyone! When this murder business is over, I’ll be taking this vessel out on its maiden voyage! [whistles]

Takito: …Are you there, Benito?

…I guess not.

[Talk to Chiyo]

Takito: Uh, Chiyo, what are you doing in the water?
Chiyo: [heroic pose] Water and bathing is a natural part of life! Don’t mock me for basking in the glory of biology!

Takito: Bathing? That water’s so still and murky, it’ll probably make you dirtier.

Chiyo: [pouty face] Well, I actually haven’t left my costume since we came here, I’ll really take any water I can get.

Takito: Wait, shouldn’t you take your clothes off when you’re trying to bathe? And aren’t there showers by the pool?

Chiyo: [wide-eyed shock] We have showers? What am I doing?

*Chiyo got out of the water, with dirty water stains up to around where her navel would be, and ran off immediately to take a shower. But after about a minute, she came running back.*

Chiyo: [jumps back in the murky water] Woohoo!

Takito: Wait, why aren’t you in the shower?

Chiyo: [angry frown] Monobear told me the water in the shower is heated by burning coal under the tank! I won’t stand for that!

*Well, I suppose a true hero would never compromise their principles. Even if it does mean they smell terrible.*

[Talk to Okita]

Okita: [stares intently at Takito] Takito, you’re a fan of love and romance, right?

Takito: I guess so. *I mean, I’d kind of like to have a girlfriend someday.*
Okita: [places rose inside mouth and motions to the left] Well then, don’t you think it’s perfect?

Takito: Uh… He’s pointing to that primitive 14th century life preserver, right? …What’s perfect about this?

Okita: [bites down on rose, lip bleeds] Oh, that’s a bit of disappointment. [removes rose] Imagine, if you will, you and your lover venturing out onto the Pacific in a classic ship.

Takito: Okay.

Okita: [romantic pose] Now, swing your lover around in the air on the upper deck. Swing a rope ladder over the edge, and have the both of you climb down.

Takito: Okay.

Okita: [romantic pose] Now, imagine the two of you sitting on the life preserver, out on the open ocean, nuzzling!

Takito: Okay.

Okita: [frowns, remains in pose] That’s not amazing to you?

Takito: I don’t know. I’d kind of like to stay on the ship. Getting that wet is kind of a turn-off.

Okita: [crosses arms, holds rose by the tip in his mouth] Hmph. I thought for sure you’d… Eh!

[INVESTIGATION ENDS]

Without warning, Pablo approached me.
Pablo: [salutes] Takito! I’ve finally thought up a plan to prevent murders. Round up everyone and bring them back to the cafeteria so I can discuss it.

*I did as he asked. Some of the group were disgruntled to leave what they were doing, but all were curious to discover what Pablo had to say.*

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

*As we all sat down, Pablo and Tamaki emerged from the kitchen, with Tamaki wheeling the bingo machine in front of her.*

Hitomi: [pouty face] Aw, the chore machine? I didn’t see any dangerous things up there! Why do we need it?

Pablo: [defensive pose] At ease, Hitomi. There won’t be any chores besides guard duty, and Tamaki and I have volunteered to guard duty tonight.

Tamaki: [smiles] The real reason we brought the bingo machine is to make pairs for our new “buddy system”.


Tamaki: [smiles] You misunderstand, Wataru. From now on, everyone will assigned a “buddy” or somebody they must accompany if they are to venture past the foyer. The idea is that no one could prepare for murder without their buddy seeing their actions and stopping them, and if somebody kills their buddy, we’ll know exactly who to suspect.

Satoko: [shifty eyes] What would happen if we were to say, zadejte museum without a buddy.

Pablo: [angry expression] You will be reprimanded. Specifically, you will be confined to your room for the next 12 hours, not counting sleep time. So, Satoko, if you’re thinking about trying it, don’t.

Satoko: [puts hands up] Requiesce, sem! I wasn’t going to.
Tamaki: [smiles] Pablo and I have decided we will be each other’s buddy ahead of time. Without further ado, let’s get rolling! The pairs are…

…Takito and Kotori!

Kotori: [chuckles] You just can’t say away from me, can you?

Takito: Well, I kind of have to now.

Tamaki: Wataru and Ryouta!

Wataru: [flexes bicep, smiles] Perfect! I was going to submit a guest article about my journey into becoming a proud Japanese citizen!

Ryouta: [takes out notepad] W-well, I’ll s-see if I can p-pencil it in…

Tamaki: Okita and Nahoko!

Nahoko: [digusted expression] I hope you’ll be taking plenty of cold showers the next few days.

Okita: [sticks out tongue] Flirting with you? I’d never!

Tamaki: Benito and Itsumi!

Benito: [smiles and crosses arms] Finally, something I can talk smart about gemstones with!

Itsumi: [angry frown] I actually kn-know very l-little about g-gems…

Tamaki: Chiyo and Yasue!
Yasue: [puppy dogs eyes] Can Bertrand use your flower while we’re together? Pleeeease?

Chiyo: [laughs] You didn’t have to ask! Anything to protect a declining species like the honeybee.

Tamaki: And by the process of elimination, that leaves Satoko and Hitomi.

Satoko: [annoyed expression] If you’re going to be with me, you’re going to have to cool it a little.

Hitomi: [frown] Why do I have to always be paired with the killjoys?

Pablo: [salutes] So it’s settled. The buddy system will be in place, starting tomorrow. If my watch is correct, the nighttime announcement will ring soon. Everyone, to your rooms!

*Out of everyone, I probably would’ve picked Kotori as my buddy anyway. We would do a good job of keeping an eye on each other.*

The thing I was really worried about was the feeling I had been secretly feeling the whole day, but only now put a finger on. The feeling of guilt at having benefited from someone else’s demise. How would Ikkaku or Akinori feel if they knew we had a feast because they died?

I couldn’t let that bother me now. I had to go to sleep, seeing as I didn’t get much last night. The new area seemed safe enough, and Pablo’s buddy system seemed pretty solid. For now, there was little to worry about…

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: You know, we live in a globalized culture. The world is very small, socially.

Monobear: I’m certainly grateful. It lets me spread despair much, much faster!
Monobear: Do you know how it all started? First, humans met everyone on their continent.

Monobear: Then, they built boats, and met everyone on other continents.

Monobear: Hope-loving bastards like to pretend this was all lovey-dovey.

Monobear: In reality, it was brutal. It caused disease, war, slavery, and most importantly, despair!

Monobear: I think there’s an important lesson in all of this.

Monobear: Everyone should just hole themselves up in a dark room, and be entirely by themselves.

Monobear: You can’t hurt if you do nothing! Upupupupupu!

Chapter End Notes

I'm changing up the Free Time system a little bit. I will instead have a queue for Free Time that can only be filled while we're on that slot's chapter. For example, I'll only be accepting requests for Chapter 2 right now. This is to avoid people voting for characters that will die before they can do Free Time.

I'll also be using Pablo, Nahoko, and Benito for the first three slots of the chapter, by popular demand. The remaining three slots can still be voted on!

Other than free time votes, speculation and impressions are still welcome in the comments below!
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - (Ab)normal Day 2

Chapter Notes

Happy E3 Everyone! Here's some Legacy of Despair to up your hype.

As promised, Pablo and Nahoko are the free times, in that order.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – (Ab)normal Day 2

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

That bear… He says that everyday, all while trying to get us to kill each other. It’s starting to get really anger-inducing. I hope Pablo’s plan works, if only to wipe that sick smile of Monobear’s face.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Everyone was getting ready for breakfast as usual.

Hmm. No surprise breakfast this time, I suppose.
Breakfast went fine, without interruptions. Monobear had taken all the leftovers from last night, so we were back to normal breakfast.

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] I can’t believe I had to cook. I was sure that that food would still be here! [slams wearable desk]

Chiyo: [crosses arms, pouty face] I know, right? It’s a crime against humanity, specifically us!

Pablo: [smiles widely] Heh-heh! Well, I do have some good news for announcements today!

Okita: [raises eyebrow] Which is?

Pablo: [smiles widely] There aren’t any announcements! Hurray! There’s nothing you all specifically need to worry about, so find your buddy and off you go!

Kotori: [puzzled expression] Hm? Are you sure?

Pablo: [smiles widely] Heh-heh! Ab-ab-absolutely!

Itsumi: [brandishes sharpened rock] H-hey! Only Ryouta and I are allowed to st-stutter around here!

Pablo: [staggers back] Uh… Erm…

Tamaki: [smiles] Now, Pablo, this isn’t what we agreed upon talking about.

Pablo: [smiles widely, sweating] Well, maybe, but I thought…

Tamaki: [smiles] You’re a terrible liar, Pablo. Please just admit it.

Pablo: [gulp] Enrgh…
Tamaki: [smiles] Well, what Pablo means to say is that we had a little bit of an incident.

Satoko: [smug grin] Oh, what does the great Pablo not want us to know about? Je, yeye mvua mwenyewe?

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] It was nothing I couldn’t handle myself! [nervous sweating] I simply… erm…

Tamaki: [frowns] He tripped and scraped his knee on a stair.

Pablo: [angry glare] That was for me to say!

Wataru: [confused expression] Well, that is certainly shameful for a leader to do, but I fail to see why we need to know.

Pablo: [mumbling] You couldn’t run a country if you tried… [authoritative pose] I mean, what’s important here is what happened afterwards. This strange man in a full-body suit and helmet appeared before us and subdued Tamaki!

Tamaki: [frowns] He put my hands behind my back and started yelling about how “violence against other students shall not be permitted” under his watch. Eventually Pablo told him he did this himself, and the man ran away.

Pablo: [frowns] This figure did not seem immune to reason, though. I had planned to resolve this peacefully and secretly.

Yasue: [hands on head, anxious] But that’s insane! He only held Tamaki down now, but if he senses one of us as a threat, he might do worse! [shakes head] He could kill Bertrand without thinking!

Wataru: [pensive pose] Wait, what color was this man’s suit? This is important!

Tamaki: [frowns] Don’t look at me. My hands were tied.
Pablo: [pensive pose] Well, I’m pretty sure the suit was white, with streaks of blue and green…

Wataru: [cross arms, stern expression] Then it must be so. Your attacker was none other than… [heroic pose] Kibogaman! The SHSL Superhero who will exact retribution from the villains of Hope’s Peak!

Benito: [angry pose] Hero? The rat attacked Tamaki without warning! He’s a filthy turncoat, probably hired by Monobear!

Wataru: [furious glare] You slanderous…! Kibogaman would never betray us! He is sworn to protect Hope’s Peak and its students from danger, and is probably working against Monobear as we speak!

Monobear: Upupupupu! I wouldn’t count on it!

Wataru: [staggers back] Gah! Evil beast!

Hitomi: [shocked expression] Wait, is Kibogaman against us?

Monobear: [dismissive pose] Nah. I’d love to have him join me, but he wouldn’t. [laughing pose] So, I did the next best thing! I put him in a museum with fifteen other highschoolers, and told him to murder!

Ryouta: [hand over heart] W-wait, Kibogaman is…

Itsumi: [holding rock defensively] …o-one of us!

Monobear: [laughing pose] You bet, kiddos! He’s one of you, and he’s read to punish anyone who’s violent!

Wataru: [makes fists, furious expression] Never! Kibogaman is our ally, somebody to trust! He will lead us to a better tomorrow!
Monobear: [laughing pose] Not trapped in a museum, he won’t! Upupupupu! [runs off]

Wataru: [shakes fist] Argh!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If this is the case, Kibogaman must be subdued until we figure out how to pacify him. If you are Kibogaman, please step forward.

Nobody stepped forward, opting instead giving each other cold stares of suspicion.

Pablo: [facepalm, shakes head] I had a feeling this would happen. We will have to continue as normal, and hope for more evidence to find its way to user sooner or later.

Tamaki: [frowns] Until then, be careful. Don’t do anything that could be classified as “violent”.

Yikes… I’ll have to go the whole day or more without so much as stubbing a toe, or Kibogaman might strangle me. I hope we find out who this is soon.

The suspicious glares continued as the group slowly joined with their buddies and left the cafeteria. I remember thinking to myself that I wouldn’t want to be the one paired with Kibogaman.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Gym]

[Talk to Pablo]
Pablo: [smiles] Ah, Takito? Care to spend some time strengthening our friendship and the cohesion of our unit?

Kotori: [slight smile] If you two want to chat, I think I’ll just speak with Tamaki for a little bit.

*I decided to spend some time with Pablo.*

Takito: What are you doing in the gym? I don’t see anyone else.

Pablo: [chuckles] What else would I be doing in a gym? I’m exercising, Takito!

Takito: Well, I guess that’s obvious, but I always thought you’d be more… of an administrative guy.

Pablo: [crosses arms] I’m still very much human. Even back in La Espera, my father required I spent one hour daily with a private exercise instructor.

Takito: Really? I mean, I knew you were rich, but…

Pablo: [chuckles] Oh ho! Only the best for the heir to the Vargas line! My instructor was one of the best in the world, and she taught me how to train every single muscle in the body!

Takito: Why would you need to know that? I don’t think the ruler of the country has the time to moonlight as a bodybuilder!

Pablo: [motions to stop] A bodybuilder? Flattering, but my training had more to create the perfect administrator’s physique. Your body plays a huge role in the influence you exert on your subjects. [examines hand] I had to make sure some of my muscles are large, some are small, and some are just the right size.

Takito: Sounds like a real hassle.

Pablo: Oh, it’s hardly anymore. After getting it for the first time, it’s easy for a young man like me to
maintain it. I only work on a few select muscles a day. [chuckles] Today, I happen to be training my trapezius.

Takito: Trapezius, that’s the ________ muscle, right?

( Shoulder / Hip / Back )

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9:12321223112312321221231231

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Takito: Trapezius, that’s the shoulder muscle, right?

Pablo: [claps] Correct, Takito! I must admit, I seem to have underestimated the public schooling in your country.

I’m not sure how to feel about the fact he didn’t think I knew that.

Pablo: [curiosity] How do you usually stay fit, Takito?

Takito: Heh, heh. I hate to admit it, but I’m not exactly “in shape.” Though, if you want to know how the average Japanese teen exercises, it’s usually through sports.

Pablo: [smiles] Sports? Oh, La Espera has an excellent baseball team, you know! [frowns] We don’t get many opponents, being an autocratic island nation, and all. I ought to organize a match between my team and the team of Hope’s Peak as a measure of goodwill.

Takito: I don’t know about that. I’ve heard the Hope’s Peak team has problems. Their star player doesn’t want to show up half the time.
Pablo: [frowns] Tsk. A shame. The La Espera Riders have been waiting to face off since their creation.

Normally I don’t find myself sympathizing with dictatorships, but I’d really like to see the team play someday. I hope the Olympics readopts baseball soon, or something.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

Kotori: Are you two done?

Takito: Yup. I’m ready to go to lunch, if you are.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

Takito: Hey, Kotori. Do you know anything about these decorative plants strewn about the halls?

Kotori: [frowns] They’re just yucca plants. They’re standard desert fare; nothing particularly special about them.

Takito: Really? They look fairly cool to me. [reaches out and touches]

Kotori: [shocked] Takito, NO!

Takito: [cuts himself on the sharp leaves] Wha-Owowowowowow…

Kotori: [nervous sweating] Maybe I oversimplified the description; yucca plants have razor sharp leaves.

Takito: [sucks wound] It’s okay. It’ll heal within the hour.

Kotori: [nervous sweating] It’s not your finger I’m worried about, it’s–
Kibogaman: [battle stance] Whenever the threat of violence is leveled against the student body of Hope’s Peak, Kibogaman will be there to level back!

Shhhhhhhhit…

Kibogaman: [aims pistol] Watch, danger, as Kibogaman’s purifying Phoenix Rounds eliminate your very existence!

Takito: [tackles Kotori] Watch out!

Kotori: Umph!

Kibogaman: Perish! [fires Phoenix Round]

I feel the heat of the Phoenix Round pass over me. It even singed a few of my hairs. After a while, I looked over at the yucca ficus. It was a flaming mess. Scanning the rest of the room, I couldn’t see Kibogaman. I could see a laughing Monobear and frantic Pablo, though.

Pablo: [holding a fire extinguisher] Hold on! I’ll take it upon myself to save you two! [fires foam at the fire]

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Hey! I was cooking marshmallows! It’s not everyday you get an open fire indoors!

Pablo: [intense expression, grits teeth] Don’t you worry about the museum burning down?

Monobear: [pauses] Not really.

Kotori: [coughs] I’d like… to stand up now, Takito.
Takito: Eh! Sorry!

Pablo: [drops fire extinguisher, intense expression, grits teeth] Wha-what the hell happened here?

Kotori: [confused expression] You didn’t see? Takito cut himself, then Kibogaman came back, shot at me, and set the ficus on fire!

Monobear: [laughs] Upupupupu! I like him already!

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Did he say anything?

Takito: No, not really. Just more about justice and stuff.

Pablo: [frowns, nervous sweating, hits wall] Dammit! [regains composure] Well, at least we know he’s not you, Takito.

Takito: Whew. *I don't want to be on the wrong end of suspicion again.*

Pablo: [pensive pose] In the meantime, it’s clear further precautions need to be taken about Kibogaman. He’s a threat we can’t ignore any longer.

Kotori: [frown] You can say that again.

Pablo: [salutes] In the meantime, keep quiet about this. I want to disclose it in a prepared manner at dinnertime. Do I have your word?

Takito: [salutes] Sure.

Kotori: [salutes] Sure. But it better not be because you don’t want people to know you did something embarrassing.
Pablo: [angry stare] Of course not! Now, at ease!

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

_The both of us managed through lunch without telling anyone, but Pablo was really testing our trust here. He had better have a good reason to hide it by dinnertime._

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to 2nd floor]

[Move to Art Gallery]

[Talk to Nahoko]

Nahoko: [spins shelf, grins] Oh, so you’re requiring my services after all. Can’t say I’m surprised.

_I decided to spend some time with Nahoko._

Nahoko: [turns around laptop so that Takito can see it] If you’re going to be investing with MIG, you’ll need to see all our investment plans. We offer mutual and hedge funds, and every stock on every imaginable market. As a beginner, I suggest our blue-chip program…

…She’s going to be at this a while, won’t she? I don’t know how to tell her I’m not interested.

Nahoko: [typing on tablet] We also offer bonds of all levels of risk through our special government partnership. Of course, if you still have indecision, I have a variety of flowcharts to help find the perfect program for your finances.
Takito: Heh, heh, Nahoko, I’m not really interested in investing. Not with the world’s economy the way it is, and all…

Nahoko: [pounds shelf] Economy? I don’t need a good economy! I’m the SHSL Day Trader! If I will the markets to be a certain way, it is so!

Takito: There’s no doubt you’re skilled Nahoko, but stocks are falling everywhere! I can’t imagine making money off them.

Nahoko: [tilts head] Oh, you can’t? I can, and I do it all the time. I make money on falling stocks using my special secret stockbroker technique.

Takito: Wait, I think my mom told me about this once! It’s called…

( Reverse Trading / Stock Flipping / Short-selling )

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15:123131231231323123121231231231

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Takito: …short-selling, correct?

Nahoko: [adjusts collar] Yes. Yes it is. It’s supposed to a bit of a secret…

Takito: It’s really not if I heard about it from my mother.

Nahoko: [stern expression, spins shelf] Regardless, if you want to short-sell, Miyake Investment Group has an entire wing dedicated to the practice. Pick a stock or industry, and we can get started right away.
Takito: Right away? Are you sure we can’t wait until… you know?

Nahoko: [operating phone] I don’t follow.

Takito: You know? Monobear?

Nahoko: [operating tablet] Him? Nothing. Just give me your stock choice now, and I’ll invest it as soon as we leave. I can even forward the profits to your family if you die.

Takito: I appreciate the offer, but I’ll have to decline right now. I need more time to think. Of a better excuse…

Nahoko: [slight smile] Take your time. MIG is the best investment group in the country, and will patiently wait for your decision.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to 1st floor]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]

I spotted Pablo outside the Cafeteria, welcoming everyone inside.

You better keep your word, Pablo. My patience is beginning to wear, and I suspect I’m not the only one.

[Automoved to Cafeteria]
I kept my eye on Pablo for nearly all of dinner. I like to think I looked menacing, but in retrospect I probably just looked angry for no reason.

Pablo: [distraught expression] In terms of nighttime announcements, [pulls at collar] I have some regretful news.

Tamaki: [frowns] You’ve never told me about this…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] We had another incident slightly before lunchtime today.

Benito: [pounds table] That bastard! [makes hook with hand, angry expression] What’d Kibogaman do this time? His zealotry is killing us all!

Pablo: [stern frown] Nobody’s dead, obviously. Kibogaman merely fired at Kotori and Takito, and destroyed one of the ficuses in the dorm hall.

Satoko: [smug grin] I was waiting for you to acknowledge that pile of ash.

Hitomi: [hands on hips, angry] Can we save the jokes, please? Lives are in danger!

Satoko: [icy glare] Any more than usual, stemorsblomst?

Itsumi: [distraught expression, holding chisel defensively] H-hey! Isn’t anyone going to ask T-takito and K-kotori what happened?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] According to them, Kibogaman said very little; nothing that would provide clues as to his identity. Though if they have anything to add…

Takito: Nothing.

Kotori: [shrugs] He saw less than me.

Takito: Yeah… I managed to get us both down before the bullet flew by, but it was a close shave.
Okita: [crosses arms, bites rose at the end of the stem] So, glorious leader, are you going to do anything about this? Kibogaman’s not getting any weaker, [points rose at Pablo] and one of these times, it not’s going to be a close shave!

Nahoko: [mumbles] Well, we can start by not putting sharp plants in our mouths…

Okita: [grimaces]

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Kibogaman’s strength is definitely a threat. Normally, I’d have a trained soldier squad to take care of a threat like this, but with only myself and some civilians, one of which could be Kibogaman himself, I’ll have to resort to drastic measures. [claps twice] Monobear!

Ryouta: [cowers] G-g-g-gah! You’re the m-mastermind behind all this?

Pablo: [sighs] No, I’m simply calling Monobear to ask him something. [claps twice] Monobear!

…

Pablo: [claps twice] MONOBEAR!

Monobear: [neutral pose] Huh? Oh, it’s Pablo! I thought heard a mouse in here, and I’d hate to have rodents getting into my students’ food!

Pablo: [scowl] Monobear, there’s something I wanted to ask you about.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! Ask away! There are no stupid questions, but actually there are!

Pablo: [stern expression] I want my gun back, Monobear. I want to be able to rival Kibogaman in strength, and threaten him with lethal force if he strikes again.
Monobear: [turns around] Hmmm… Hmmm…

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Monobear?

Monobear: [angry pose] I’m thinking!

Pablo: [staggers back]

Monobear: [pensive pose] Hmm… Hmm… Okay! Take the gun! [gives the gun in gift wrapping to Pablo] Just careful you don’t do anything, you might …regret! Upupupupu! [disappears in a puff of smoke]

Yasue: [holds Bertrand closely] Are you sure this is a good idea? If you shoot Kibogaman, you’ll be executed!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Lethal force will be a last resort. I hope to wound him first, and only if he becomes a threat once more. [hides face] And if it does come to killing Kibogaman, I will do it and face the consequences.

Wataru: [frustration] There is no reason for this! Kibogaman would never harm anyone! You are simply introducing a dangerous weapon into our environment.

Chiyo: [frowns] I agree. I’ve fought along Kibogaman before against the Kuzuryuu Family before. He’s not that tough when doesn’t have the Hope’s Peak security to back him up.

Wataru: [makes fist] Slander! Kibogaman can hold his own without question!

I saw Pablo tear the wrapping off his pistol. I didn’t know much about firearms, but it looked like it had a large-than-average caliber, and came equipped with a silencer.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Regardless of Kibogaman’s ability, armed patrols with Tamaki and me start tomorrow. I have six bullets, so if you are Kibogaman, don’t think you can trick me into firing at
nothing.

Pablo had chosen the severe option, and not the kind everyone would agree with. Pablo wasn’t dumb, though. He knew the risks, and continued anyway. I kind of trusted him to use the power wisely.

At the same time, Monobear wasn’t dumb either. The fact that he agreed to this was very troubling. With that sense of doubt in my mind, I gradually drifted off to sleep. I could only wait and see.

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: You know, I haven’t told a story in a while. Let’s fix that.

Monobear: Once upon a time, in a village of luddites, there was a boy named Akira.

Monobear: He never did much; he went through grade school and high school…

Monobear: After that, he worked on his family’s farm, selling just enough rice to pay mortgage, time and time again.

Monobear: He never married or had children…

Monobear: Never had a deep relationship with anyone, even platonically.

Monobear: He simply kept to himself, until his 80th birthday.

Monobear: On that day, he told himself he would turn his life around; make something of himself.

Monobear: And then, the next day, he died!
Monobear: That’s what you get for hoping! Upupupupu!

Chapter End Notes

As always, Free Time Votes, Speculation, and Impressions are always welcome.
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - (Ab)normal Day 3

Chapter Notes

Hi everyone! Benito will be the first free time this update, and Tamaki will be the second. In the future, Free Time will be decided by order listed and who posted first, just so you know.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – (Ab)normal Day 3

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Takito: [deep breath] Two days without a murder, and Kibogaman might be too scared to appear again. Hopefully nobody’s tensions are too high, and we can just wait Monobear out.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Breakfast went like normal, but I noticed people kept making uneasy stares at Pablo. Pablo himself seemed to notice himself, after a while.

Pablo: [angry glare] Do you have a problem with the way I look, Wataru?
Wataru: [crosses arms, discontented] …

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Do you, Wataru?

Wataru: [crosses arms] Your contempt for Kibogaman is complete nonsense! Get that deadly weapon away from here!

Itsumi: [stares at Pablo] …Y-yeah! I don’t w-want any more b-bullets flying around here!

Pablo: [grits teeth] How many times must I tell you; I don’t want this as much as you do, but I have to match Kibogaman!

Satoko: [adjusts glasses] Kibogaman vil stadig overmande dig. Put that away before you shoot someone’s eye out.

Yasue: [holds Bertrand tightly] I agree with Itsumi! I don’t want anyone firing at Bertrand just because they think they’ve heard someone!

Pablo: [slams table] Calm down!

Benito: [smiles and points to self] If you want to sniff out a rat, listen to the man with experience.

Chiyo: [crosses arms, pouty face] If you need force, I’ll let you borrow my wand instead!

Okita: [disinterested expression] Am I the only one who likes Pablo’s idea?

Pablo: [presses fingers against forehead, sighs] Apparently so.

*The arguments lasted for a few minutes longer. Eventually, I discovered that not only was Okita on Pablo’s side, but also Tamaki and Hitomi. I didn’t pay specific attention to anyone else, but I assumed they were on the opposite side.*
Monobear: [curious pose] Hmm? What’s all the commotion about? We prefer physical violence here, not verbal!

Tamaki: [smiles] Nothing you should get involved in, Monobear. Just a little argument.

Monobear: [angry pose] Little? [brandishes claw] Don’t bullshit me! That wasn’t little!

Tamaki: [staggers back]

The arguing stopped almost immediately. I could see the sweat beads running down the side of Tamaki’s neck.

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Listen up bastards! I, personally, have no problems with you all shooting each other, but these arguments are making my security tapes really annoying. [laughing pose] So, to get everyone back to get planning for murder, I have a special present for Pablo. Upupupupu! Summon holster!

A puff of smoke appeared on an empty table. When the smoke cleared, there was shiny leather holster sitting in a clear plastic box.

Nahoko: [holds tablet firmly] How’s that going to solve anything?

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Patience! [hides claw] The holster has a Velcro slip that needs to be opened before Pablo can use his gun. It’ll put a stop to any reflexive shooting you all are worried about.

Pablo: [holding the holster in his hands, confused] Erm, thank you?

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Don’t expect this to become a regular happening. I’m very disappointed in you bastards’ collective inability to shut up. [laughing pose] Maybe, if you keep bickering, I will give you some gifts later today, but I can’t guarantee you’ll like them! Upupupupupu! [runs away]
Benito: [angry glare] Even Monobear agrees with your knotbrained plan, Pablo? Argh… [slams] We should be luring Kibogaman out to get information, not creating deterrents!

Hitomi: [whispers, nervous] Shhh! Didn’t you hear what Monobear said!

Benito: [grumbles]

*Everyone got with their “buddies” and went on their way. I wanted to ask Kotori what she thought of all this, but I was afraid Monobear consider that bickering, so I kept it to myself.*

*Someone else was probably going to blow up at Pablo again, but if we were going to another gift, I didn’t want to be the one who ruined it for everyone.*

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to Kitchen]

[Talk to Benito]

Benito: [thumbs up] Takito! Takara’s gone off somewhere, so would ye like to be my first mate for a while?

*I decided to spend some time with Benito.*

Benito: [wide smile, grabs a huge fish slab from under the table] Takito, want to see how to prepare a fish?

Takito: *Well, it might be nice to know.* Sure. What are we making?

Benito: [chopping fish] Swordfish!
Takito: Swordfish?! We have swordfish in here?!

Benito: [pensive pose] Heh? Why wouldn’t we?

Takito: Well, erm, swordfish is kind of rare and expensive, isn’t it?

Benito: [chopping fish, laughing] Swordfish? Rare? Me first catch was swordfish, and I’ll never forget it. I’ve landed dozens of swordfish since!

You know, he may actually be the reason they’re so rare…

Benito: [stops working, stares blankly] Me first catch… I wanted a special fish more than anything to be me first.

Better catch up on chopping while he’s reminiscing…

Benito: [blank stare] I wanted a fish with a sharp, pointy nose. [looks at Takito] You know the type, don’t you?

Takito: Uh, swordfish?

Benito: [makes hook with fingers] It’s not just swordfish, mate! Be more general!

Takito: Okay, okay! I’m pretty sure the type of fish is called…

( Pinfish / Billfish / Spearfish )

~~~~~

15:21323112312312233123123221132132
Takito: …Billfish! They’re billfish!

Benito: [blank stare] Aye, that’s what they are. Regardless, I wanted one. [tenses fingers, grits teeth] And when it saw it, majestically leaping from the water, and I swung my hook and chain…

I’m just going to go ahead and put the fish back. I don’t think we’ll be getting to anytime soon.

Benito: [valor pose] I had it on the winch, and got me entire crew to help me pull it in. It took two hours of intense angling, and the lost of the winch, but we finally landed all 1,100 pounds of the beast!

Takito: [drops fish filet] 1,100 pounds? All this you got out isn’t the entire fish?

Benito: [hearty laugh] Hardly, matey! Even the smaller ones weigh a nice amount! [surprise] Takito! You scallywag!

Takito: Huh?

Benito: [crosses arms, angry expression] You dropped the fish!

Takito: Gah! Sorry, I’ll, uh, eat that part.

Benito: [crosses arms] Feh. I’ll cook the filth out of it all anyway. You better enjoy dinner tonight, ye hear?

Takito: Aye, aye, Captain!

[FREE TIME ENDS]
Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Upupupupu! All students, and non-student asshole, please report to the foyer! I need you all for a special little experiment of mine, and if you don’t show up, well… Upupupupu!

*Experiment?*

...

*I don’t what’s scarier, when Monobear knows what he’s doing, or when he doesn’t.*

[Move to Cafeteria]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

*I spotted the others, with Pablo standing in the center and scratching his head.*

Takito: Pablo?

Kotori: [points, confused expression] Um, Takito? You may want to take a look at this.

*Monobear had set up some sort of tropical-themed display on the foyer desk, with a large surfboard with a luau cardboard Monobear nailed to the side and the words “Monobear Travel” painted on. There were also several envelopes with our names on them places on the desk.*

Takito: [reaches out for “Takito” envelope] *Monobear doesn’t seem to be here, so should I just take–*

Monobear: [angry pose] Who do you think you are? [brandishes claw] Are you trying to do something without me?!
Takito: [crawls away backwards] Gah!

Wataru: [action pose] Takito! Back away!

Monobear: [happy pose] Upupupu! Relax, I’m not gonna kill you. After all, I need you bastards to participate in the test run of my new vacation agency!

Ryouta: [grabs notepad, huge smile] V-vacation? W-we’re getting out of here?

Itsumi: [smile, claps] Really? I’ll g-go pack!

Monobear: [angry pose] Nobody’s going anywhere!

Nahoko: [annoyed glare] Oh, are you some kind of cheap “staycation” agency?

Monobear: [depressed pose] No, no, I, um, er… [bashful pose] I really want to give you all one of my vacations, but you know I can’t you big meanies out with you running away from me. [happy pose] So, I’ll just have you focus group the advertising! Upupupu, I’m such a genius!

Satoko: [snide smile] “Come on over to Monobear’s Museum of Fun! So far, we only have a 1 in 8 rate of customer death!”

Monobear: [angry pose] Hey! Did you read my sign outside?

Satoko: [crosses arms] ...Nyet.

Monobear: [neutral pose] Anyhoo, the real advertisements are in those envelopes. I personalized them for each of you bastards, just like the knives. [begins throwing envelopes at their recipients]

The envelope hit me in the forehead and landed on the ground. I picked it up and started opening it, but my attention kept drifting towards a conversation between Pablo and Monobear.
Pablo: [puzzled expression, holding unopened envelope] An enveloped ad? What kind of advertisement is this?

…I guess he's never experienced ads in the mail before. One of the unnoticed perks of being a dictator.

Monobear: [joy pose] Upupupu! So glad you asked! My ad campaign is based on one simple fact. Everybody has a rival.

Pablo: [puzzled expression, holding unopened envelope] Well, I suppose so, but that doesn't really make me want to go on vacation.

Monobear: [dismissive pose] Patience, now. My advertising taps into that lovely sense of rivalry by showing just how much better your rival has it on their vacations! [laughing pose] And then, in their rush to get even, everyone will get vacations with me! Upupupu!

I wanted to listen in further, but by that point, I had opened the envelope and felt more compelled to look at what's inside.

My envelope contained some sort of postcard with the words “Wish You Were Here!” and tropical art around the edges. In the center of it all was a photo of a brown-haired, messy-looking boy about my age gorging himself on ice cream in a hotel room.

Is this supposed to be my rival? I've never seen this guy before.

I quickly flipped it over to read the backside.

Postcard: Hey there, Takito! Remember me, Akira Itou?

Akira! That jerk from middle school? He always seem to follow me around and outdo me at pretty much everything.

Though, I don’t know if he can count as my biggest rival. I had pretty much forgotten about him
Postcard: I’m chilling it up in this hotel! The owners have let me run it these past few weeks, so while you’re fearing for your life, my only fear is when we’ll run out of desserts! I think I’ll be surfing on luggage carts and relaxing in the pool forever, but what I don’t know is that if Takito Narita graduates his Museum Visit of Mutual Killing, Monobear is going to kill me slowly and painfully, and then give Takito everything I have! Oh, if Takito graduates, I’ll be really sorry!

Takito: [crumples postcard] Damn it, Monobear!

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! Is my ad campaign too strong for you?

Hitomi: [shakes finger at Monobear] You’re shilling murder, Monobear, and you know it!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I’m shutting this desperate murder campaign down. [snaps fingers] Everyone, turn your postcards into me, and we’ll organize therapy sessions for anyone deeply affected by these “ads”.

Tamaki: [frowns] I wouldn’t do that, Pablo. Monobear might have forbade us from touching each others’ again.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Oh, I haven’t done anything like that this time. But I’ve done a bit of demographic research, and I’m not sure everyone will hand theirs in willingly. Upupupu!

Pablo: [authoritative pose, clears throat] We’ll see about that. Temporary La Esperan Guard, hand all postcards over to me!

Nobody turned theirs in. I probably would’ve turned mine in, but I had already crumpled it earlier.

Pablo: [grits teeth, palm on forehead] No one? Not even you, Tamaki?

Tamaki: [frowns] Sorry. My postcard has very …personal information on it.
Pablo: [slight frown] Well, if it helps anyone else come forward, I’ll read mine. [clears throat]

Pablo’s Postcard: Hey Pablo! Remember me, Chief of Finance Salazar? I’ve been running the country in your absence, and taking a lot of political creative liberties. How many programs have you put in place that I’ve recently gutted? Five, ten now? I’ve lost count. With your continued absence, I’ve begun to think I may have this job forever. But what I don’t know is that if Pablo Vargas II graduates his Museum Visit of Mutual Killing, Monobear is going to kill me slowly and painfully, and then let Pablo reinstate all of his policies. Oh, if Pablo graduates, I’ll be really sorry!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] So, would anyone else like to share.

Still, no one was comfortable with reading theirs.

Monobear: Upupupupu! It looks like you could use an ad campaign yourself!

Pablo: [grits teeth, palm on forehead] Well then, I’ll see you all later. I hope you all can see the danger you’re in before dinner tonight, and reconsider sharing.

Pablo left through the door to the museum, clearly frustrated. I picked up the crumpled remains of my postcard, and waited for everyone to trickle out of the foyer.

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Talk to Tamaki]

Tamaki: [smiles] Care to spend some time with me? I’m certified to make it worth your while.

I decided to spend some time with Tamaki.
Takito: Hey Tamaki? There’s something I need to ask of you.

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, I am a hostess. If you need anything to make you feel comfortable, tell me now.

Takito: Well, I wanted to know more about Pablo, and I’m little scared to ask him directly.

Tamaki: [chuckles] Are you sure you’re not just hungry for more of my takoyaki?

Takito: No… *I’m still a bit stuffed from that last meal. Takoyaki isn’t exactly my favorite, anyway.* Erm, how was Pablo before, you know, all this? Was he different?

Tamaki: [smiles] Sorry to disappoint, but I never paid much attention to him. And I don’t think he changed much since then anyway.

Takito: What?! You didn’t pay attention to the dictator you were working for? That’s not exactly your average everyday job.

Tamaki: [chuckles] Perhaps not for you, but for me, it is. I’ve hosted events for so many political families, I’m one of the first names they call for such things. [grabs teapot and teacup, begins pouring] Yet, I’m still only really famous amongst the parents of political children. It’s a shame; yet, the best servant is the one you never notice. Tea?

Takito: [takes sip] But, how are you able to get all this? It seems near impossible to get that recognized before you even graduate high school.

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, I did get pretty lucky on that account. I only have one thing to thank for that.

Takito: Let me guess…

( The Hope’s Peak Reputation / Parental Connections / Chance Encounter )
Takito: …you ran into someone?

Tamaki: [chuckles] Aren’t you clever? I befriended some sort of princess on the Hope’s Peak Forum, and she immediately told her parents I needed to host everything for her. Though, “befriended” is a bit strong for what actually happened. She’s a bit strange and excitable.

Takito: [shrugs] Eh. So is just about everyone here. [sips tea] Eck!

Tamaki: [puts hand to mouth, gasps] What is it?

Takito: My tea got cold, and now it’s really bitter.

Tamaki: [grabs tea] Never worry! I’ll heat it up for you and give it back sometime tomorrow, okay? [leaves]

_Ah, Tamaki. Always a little too eager to serve._

_[FREE TIME ENDS]_

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]
I sat down to dinner that night, but through some combination of worrying about Monobear’s postcards and the food actually being kind of terrible, I hardly had an appetite. Halfway through though, I spotted Wataru sneaking up behind Pablo.

Takito: [mouthing words] What the hell are you doing?

Wataru: [motions to be quiet, mouths words] This is for the good of everyone.

Wataru slowly and carefully undid the strap holding Pablo’s hostler on his belt, and removed it without Pablo noticing. I considered alerting someone, but then Wataru did something I never expected.

Wataru: [shock] What?! But… Just this morning!


Before I could register, Pablo had tackled Wataru to the ground and grabbed his holster from Wataru’s grasp.

Pablo: [intense anger] What did you think you were doing? Stealing my gun because you believe your superhero friend is going to protect you?

Wataru: [glare of contempt]

Pablo: [intense anger] Do you honestly think his hands, the ones that have shot at us, are more capable? Do you?

Wataru: [glare of contempt] I’d look inside your holster before you ask questions like that, foreign despot. [spits on the ground]

Pablo shrugged a look on disapproval and opened his holster. His face almost immediately turned into a cross between horror and disgust. Whatever Wataru had noticed, Pablo knew it now.
Tamaki: [frowns] Pablo… Is something the matter?

Pablo: [sad pose, sighs] Someone has pickpocketed my pistol. [shows the inside of the empty holster]

Yasue: [gasps, Bertrand flying circles around her head] But that’s impossible! There’s Velcro! There’s no way you could pickpocket it without making a loud “Vrrrp” sound!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That’s what I had reasoned. It seems impossible, but someone had to have done it. [tampering with holster] I mean, otherwise my gun would be… wait…

[Camera shows close-up of a secret opening in the holster]

Pablo: The top just comes off, Velcro and all! MONOBEAR!

[Camera returns to Cafeteria]

Monobear: [joy pose] What can I say? I’m a master engineer! [laughing pose] My lovely holsters are part of my brand new “False Sense of Security” accessories line!

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] You idiot! You’re going to get us all killed!

Monobear: [confused pose] Idiot? Have you forgotten already? That’s what I’m trying to do! You were the one who took my stuff. Who’s the real idiot?

Pablo: You… [throws holster on the ground]

_Pablo stormed out in frustration. Most of us still couldn’t believe what happened. Somebody, with the intent to kill, had gotten their hands on a pistol, and Pablo was the one responsible for all of it. Even the supporters of Pablo must’ve had a hard time defending him right then._

_I could hear the frustrated murmurs of various people as I marched off to bed. They began talking as if another murder was a certainty now. I didn’t want to believe it, but I had trouble_
coming up with anything resembling a counter argument. As I lay down on my bed, I looked over at the drawer containing Akinori and Ikkaku’s mementos and shuddered a little bit.

All I could do is wait for sleep to clear my head for me.

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: Hello? Is this ********?

Monobear: Are you there? Can you read this?

Monobear: We’ve been trying forever to communicate with you.

Monobear: If you can read this, please give us some sort of sign.

Monobear: Wiggle your toes, scream, anything.

Monobear: We don’t want to lose you, ********.

Monobear: Please tell us something.

Chapter End Notes

A deadly weapon is now in the hands of a plotting killer...

Think you know what happens next? Or just like to give impressions?

Either way, comment below!
Chapter Notes

Only one unit of free time this update (you'll see why soon), and it's Satoko.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – (Ab)normal Day 4

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Takito: [yawns] …Still alive. And I’m fairly certain everyone else is, too. At least, I didn’t hear any gunshots in the middle of the night…

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

I walked into a room of blank stares and tension. There was serious distrust in the air, but a quick scan the tables revealed that everyone was still alive.

Breakfast felt oddly uncomfortable that day, though it was pretty obvious why. By the time Pablo took the podium to give announcements, the wait was nearly unbearable.
Pablo: [takes podium, clears throat, slightly angry expression] I have no announcements today. Remember who your buddies are, and if you feel threatened, pat them down.

*The room sat silent for a small while.*

Pablo: [attempts to leave the podium]

Wataru: [grits teeth, makes fist] What kind of ruler are you?

Pablo: [raises eyebrow, annoyed expression] Pardon?

Wataru: [grits teeth, makes fist] When bombs are dropping on La Espera, do you tell your citizens to stay calm and go about their business? A person with a firearm and the intent to kill is out there, and you refuse to act!

Pablo: [runs fingers through hair, annoyed expression] What am I supposed to do?

Wataru: [crosses arms, stern expression] Do you what you should’ve done the first time you could! Summon Kibogaman to help us!

Pablo: [runs fingers through hair, annoyed expression] Never! That’s insanity!

Satoko: [smirk] Yeah, don’t let your massive erekcija for Kibogaman cloud your judgment. He’s too dangerous.

Wataru: [grits teeth, makes fist] I can contextualize that!

Hitomi: [pensive pose] I dunno, Kibogaman might actually be a good idea. [turns around, opens back eye] I mean, Kibogaman only might want to help us, but we know whoever stole the gun doesn’t.

Okita: [dismissive expression, twiddles rose in mouth] Oh, so we’re choosing the lesser of the two
psychopaths now? I’ll pass, thank you.

Pablo: [slams hand on podium, authoritative pose] Exactly! And we don’t even know if the gun thief is Kibogaman!

Itsumi: [holds sharp rock defensively] How could it even not be K-kibogaman? H-he’s the only one who could d-die because of the gun!

Yasue: [crosses arms, scowl, Bertrand flies around her head] Yeah! When are we going to put a stop to this guy? Let’s just round up all the guys and interrogate them already!

Ryouta: [cowers, nervous sweating] I-i-interrogation? Nononononono… [wincses] T-they’re going to h-h-hurt meee!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If interrogations are happening, Ryouta, they certainly wouldn’t be that inten–

Nahoko: [smug grin] Hm? Who’s deciding that? [spins shelf very fast, than stops it] If they know it’s gonna be easy, they’ll never say anything!

Benito: [makes hook with hand, intense expression] Yeh, who gave you authority, anyway, you deckrat? I have better leadership skills in me little finger!

Pablo: [hides face with arm] Oh, you’ve forgotten why I’m in charge? Let me remind you. [presents forearm, removes sleeve, revealing the nuclear watch] At any moment, I could destroy everyone and everything here!

Wataru: [gulp]

Yasue: [angry glare]

Pablo: [pulls sleeve back down, returns to authoritative pose] In the hands of a more vicious person, this watch could be used to force you all to let me graduate. But I, in a gesture of good will, have
used it to keep order and institute a murder-free environment. [angry stare] If you have any suggestions about how things should be run, you can present them peacefully. I assure you, they will be given a fair chance.

_That watch... I almost forgot it existed. I guess Pablo doesn't like to use force._

Pablo: [clears throat, authoritative pose] Now, as I promised, your complaints will be considered. In the meantime, the best way to avoid being murdered is to stick with your buddy and keep a close eye on your surroundings. [salutes] You are all dismissed. [stops saluting]

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Talk to Satoko]


_I decided to spend some time with Satoko._

Takito: So, I, uh, thought you could teach me so–

Satoko: [stares off, disinterested] Newspaper.

Takito: Excuse me?

Satoko: [stares off, disinterested] I need a newspaper. Gallwch ddod o hyd i un yn y office.

Takito: Sure... I'll be right back with the paper.
Satoko: [slight smile at Takito] Soyez rapide, maintenant.

Well, I found the paper, right there on the desk, but I feel kind of snubbed. I didn’t exactly expect hospitality, but doing a newspaper run for her?

Satoko was sitting down the end of her bed, legs crossed, and fingers impatiently tapping. She was mildly surprised to see me enter.

Takito: Here’s your newspaper, Satoko. To be honest, I kind of expected a little more from--

Satoko: [immediately swipes newspaper away] Gracias. [starts discarding various pages]

Takito: [dives to the floor to recover discarded pages] Woah, wait! I just got those for you! Hey! You can’t just do that!
Satoko: [eyes in deep concentration on the paper] Why can’t I? It’s my novine, and I didn’t want those parts.

Takito: But these are all the important parts! Politics, Culture, Sports, Local–

...Wait. That article is talking about something from half a year ago. Is this a back issue?

If it’s a back issue, what could Satoko be interested in.

Satoko: [finds the part she was looking for, the comics section]

The comics? High and mighty Satoko, only interested in the–

Satoko: [removes pencil from hair]

Oh. She wants the puzzles.

Satoko: [looks up from paper] Adakah anda halus, Takito? You’ve been oddly quiet.

Takito: Nothing, nothing! I was, erm, seeing if I could help you with your puzzle.

Satoko: [looks down on Takito] Really now? From over there? You don’t even know the type of puzzle I’m solving, do you?

Ouch. Called my bluff.

Takito: Of course I know! You’re solving a…

( Kenken / Sudoku / Cryptoquip )
Takito: …a cryptoquip, right? Or at least a word puzzle.

Satoko: [looks down on Takito] So you don’t know. [pauses] But at least you could figure it out.

Takito: …Whew. So, what have you done so far?

Satoko: [writing, concentrating] …

Takito: Satoko?

Satoko: [writing, concentrating] …and done!

Takito: Already?

Satoko: [adjusts glasses, smirk] Of course. Coded letters aren’t far off from a new language, and I am the SHSL Polyglot, after all. Learning a new language quickly is the skill I take the most pride in.

Takito: Ech. Here I was, thinking it was about memorization.

Satoko: [smug grin] A common misconception. Nevertheless, that was the last cryptoquip in the building. [devilish stare] I’d appreciate it if you’d make up some puzzles of your own to challenge me. Don’t make them too easy, now.

Takito: Too easy? You’re on!
Satoko: [returns to reading paper] I’ll be looking forward to it.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

_Hm? Are we early?_

Takito: Nobody seems to be here…

Kotori: [puts hands up to shout] HELLO? IS ANYONE HERE?

…_Oh shit! Somebody might have actually murdered in here!_

Okita: [sticks head out of kitchen door] Oh, is a mademoiselle in need of company?

Nahoko: [walks out of kitchen door, scowls at Okita] Trust me, you’re better off alone.

Kotori: [scratches head] So, does anyone know where everyone went?

Okita: [smiles wide, twiddles with rose] No need for worrying, Ms. Ijiri. You and your companion have simply been early.

Nahoko: [staring at smartphone] No, they’re not, Okita. Not even close. [puts phone down] We’re late, somehow.
Pablo: [kicks down Employee Hall door] You four! Emergency! Come with me, now!

_I wasn’t about to question it._

[Automoved to 2nd floor]

_We walked upstairs to find Benito pacing worriedly and Hitomi, eyes closed and deep in thought._

Kotori: [concerned expression] Is anyone going to tell us what’s going on first?

Benito: [crosses arms, looks to the side] I’m not the one to ask, lass. [motions to the door to the Cleaning Closet]

_This is a big deal… But there wasn’t an announcement, so it can’t be a murder, right?_

…right?

[Move to Cleaning Closet]

_At first glance, I couldn’t see what all the fuss was about. Chiyo and Itsumi were sitting on foldable chairs near the first-aid kit corner of the room. A closer look, though, showed me that Chiyo and Itsumi were clearly shaken, and Itsumi was holding a folded note._

Pablo: [authoritative pose, stoic expression] I suppose I owe you all an explanation.

Nahoko: [mutters under from her breath] About time.

Pablo: [sighs, maintains posture] We’ve had another run-in with Kibogaman today. Or rather, Chiyo and Itsumi have.
Kotori: [tilts head] It doesn’t look like anyone’s hurt, though. What’s the problem?

Pablo: [gulps, pulls at collar] You’d be better off asking the ones who were there.

_I approached the two of them._

Takito: Hey, erm, Chiyo, would you mind filling us in a little further?

Itsumi: [grits teeth, grabs sharp rock] H-hey! I’m up to it! D-don’t think I’m–

Chiyo: [puts hand on Itsumi] I think he gets it.

Itsumi: [frowns, stares at Takito] I’m n-not sure…

Takito: I’ll let you tell it, okay! It doesn’t matter who.

Itsumi: [whispers, frowns] No need to b-bite my head off. [neutral expression] A-anyway, the whole thing started b-because I asked to switch buddies with Y-yasue.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Heh? This is the first I’ve heard of this!

Chiyo: [pouty face, hands on hips] We know already, it was stupid! Don’t you think we already have a huge incentive to never do it again?

Itsumi: [grits teeth, grabs sharp rock] T-the switch isn’t even the r-real reason Kibogaman c-came…

Pablo: [looks to the side, slightly annoyed] Fine, but your misbehavior is not to be repeated. [eye contact] Continue.

Itsumi: [grabs other arm, morose expression] Well, I k-kind of got out my pointy rock to show C-chiyo, but I accidentally b-bumped her and c-cut myself.
Chiyo: [crosses arms, pouty face] I tried to protect her, like a good superhero, and get her first aid from over there, but when we got to the cleaning closet, he appeared.

[camera changes to static image of Kibogaman confronting the pair]

Itsumi: H-he had us c-cornered… It was sc-scary, but didn’t really do m-much…

Chiyo: He didn’t even say a word, and then just vanished. It was strangely disappointing.

Itsumi: If it was j-just that, it w-wouldn’t be a big deal. But then we found the n-note on the opposite side of the r-room.

[camera changes to the image of a folded note superimposed on a dark shadow of Kibogaman with devilish eyes]

“I am the purveyor of justice for Hope’s Peak. Do not think this threat of an armed murderer has gone unnoticed. For the sake of justice, this perpetrator cannot go unpunished. At around 8 PM tomorrow, I will strike down this villain, and disarm them, permanently. Rest assured, my Phoenix Rounds will stop their murderous heart.”

[camera changes back to Chiyo and Itsumi in the Cleaning Closet]


*Pablo was concentrating.*

Takito: You’re not going to let that just happen, right?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No, I’ve put several people on an investigation of the area, and since you now know the full story, it includes you, too. [scoffs] “Rest assured”… He can rest assured he’ll be pacified long before then.
Takito: So, the sooner we find this guy, the better?

Pablo: [authoritative pose, intense glare] That’s the idea. If you see anybody do something fishy, tell me immediately!

*Pablo’s really eyeing me down, and it’s starting to give me the creeps. I want to find Kibogaman as much as he does, though, so I better find something to investigate for my sanity’s sake.*

Takito: Itsumi! Has anyone taken a good look at your rock yet?

Itsumi: [crosses arms, raises eyebrow] Y-you’re probably not going to find anything, b-but if it’ll find that m-madman…

Kotori: [concerned frown] Takito? I’m not entirely sure that’s an efficient use of our time.

Takito: [laughs nervously] Nonsense! *Is Pablo still staring at me?* Let me just take it… [retracts hand, grimaces]

*I had cut myself.*

Chiyo: [holding back laughter] As Gaia-chan, I advise clumsier people like you to be more wary of sharp objects.

Takito: Heh, heh. Kotori, could you, uh, get me a bandage?

Kotori: [chuckles] Sure. But only if you promise to investigate somewhere where you can’t get hurt.

Takito: Fine. *Sometimes, I wonder if I’m just some sort fragile crop to take care of in her eyes.*

[Automoved to Art Gallery]
[INVESTIGATION START]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Ryouta: [heavy breathing, nervous sweating, back to Takito and Kotori]

*Ryouta doesn’t look alright. He seems really shaken.*

*Monobear’s some asshole to put such a soft guy through all this murder and death.*

Kotori: [tilts head] Are you okay, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [turns around, joyful surprise] K-kotori! Takito! Wh-where were you?

Takito: We were just around and about. The both of us only found out about this incident a few minutes ago.

Ryouta: [sighs, relaxes] Y-you’re not d-dead? Thank goodness. When you two w-weren’t here, I thought someone had g-got to one of you.

Kotori: [smiles] We’re both very safe. I’m curious, though, does your paper have anymore information about Kibogaman?

Ryouta: [sulks, looking at newspaper] N-no… Nothing that you d-don’t already know. [turns page] Wait, has W-wataru told you about the Shark Sense?

Takito: No, I’ve never heard of Kibogaman having Shark Sense. Does he know if there’s any great whites in a 2-kilometer radius or something?

Kotori: [neutral] It can’t be that ridiculous, right, Ryouta?
Ryouta: [sulks, cowers] I d-don’t know. The article only s-says that he h-has it.

Takito: Well, it’s nice to know anyway. If you have anything else, tell us, ‘k?

Ryouta: [slight smile] ‘K-k-k!

[Talk to Wataru and Yasue]

*I’m really curious as to what Wataru thinks of all this. Can his love of Kibogaman survive?*

Wataru: [crosses arms, displeased] When will you finally accept that Kibogaman is our friend?!

Yasue: [scowls, fists up, Bertrand buzzing violently] Your “friend” just scarred Itsumi for life, and is going to kill another one of us tomorrow!

*I guess it did.*

Kotori: [whispers off screen] Hey, Takito? I think we might just want to listen in on these two and stay out.

Takito: [whispers] Definitely.

Wataru: [displeased] Scarred for life?! [raises finger to point] It’s her fault for harboring fear! Good-natured citizens have nothing to fear from Kibogaman, and if she just accepted him as the benefit he is, she would be completely unscathed!

Yasue: [scowls, fists up, Bertrand buzzing violently] Not everybody wants to convert to your Kibogama-cult!

Bertrand: Bzzzzz! Bzz! Bzz! Bzz!
Yasue: [same pose] And Bertrand’s right! Anybody who’s flinging those flaming bullets around is going to be scary! That’s not even considering the threat note, too!

Wataru: [dismissive gesture] Threat note? Feh. That is an announcement of noble sacrifice, offering themselves up at the hands of Monobear so that this gun thief may be cleansed from our midst! [conceited smile] It even allows time for the gun thief to come clean and save us from bloodshed. It’s so genius, I’d do it myself!

Yasue: [raises eyebrow] You’d murder someone on a hunch? Pablo’ll love to know about that.

Wataru: [crosses arms, displeased] Stealing a gun is more than a hunch! It is a clear indicator of this scoundrel’s intentions! [stares at Yasue] In fact, slander against an obvious protector of the peace is a clear indicator of wrongdoing. How do I know I’m not looking at the thief right now?

Yasue: [stares angrily at Wataru] Oh, really? How do I know Mr. I’d-clean-out-Kibogaman’s-gun-with-my-toothbrush isn’t the real Kibogaman. You’re the only one vouching for the dickcheese!

Kotori: [whispers off-screen] Hey, Takito? Now might be a good time to back out.

Takito: [whispers] …Definitely.

[Move to Timeline Hall]

[Talk to Okita, Benito, and Nahoko]

Takito: Okita, are you sure you’re going to find anything on that timeline?

Okita: [twiddles with rose] Eh? Didn’t you supposedly hurt yourself trying to search Itsumi’s rock?

Kotori: [chuckles] Not just supposedly!
Takito: Kotori!

...

*It stung a lot…*

Okita: [bites rose playfully] If you want get on somebody for not investigating the right thing, you might as well chastise everyone. [poses stylistically] Be careful around the ladies, though!

Kotori: [moves head backwards, hesitant expression] What do you mean chastise everyone? This is the crime scene, so this is where we should investigate.

Okita: [proud gesture] Well, I can’t say this isn’t a bad place to investigate. It’s just not the best place. If I were in charge, we’d be raiding some rooms.

Takito: Raiding? *I’d like to keep my room orderly, thank you.*

Okita: [proud gesture] Of course! If we find something that definitely proves the room’s owner is Kibogaman or the gun thief, we could end this business now!

Benito: [pushing down the hat brim, grits teeth] I wouldn’t be so sure, mate.

Okita: [bites down on rose stem, muttering] Nobody asked you…

Benito: [pushing down the hat brim, grits teeth] There’s no way our thief is bone-headed enough to leave their weapon where any deckhand can find it.

Okita: [proud pose, twiddles rose] But if they had it on them, they risk being discovered in a pat-down, no, monsieur?

Benito: [pensive pose] Perhaps, but then it would mean the vermin hid it in some neutral territory.
Okita: [valorous pose, smiles wide] It’s settled, then! We shall search all the rooms except the bedrooms, and the gun will be back where it belongs, and thanks to Okita and Benito!

Kotori: [uneasy expression] Won’t we not know who stole it, though?

Okita: [laughs, adjusts corsage] If we have the gun, the thief’s irrelevant, the day is saved, and all the women on campus will be swooning for Okita Sugitani, hero of the trapped students!

Nahoko: [spins shelf, scowls at Okita] Shut up. I can hear your ego-stroking from across the room.

Benito: [hearty laugh] Har ha ha!

Nahoko: [stares at Benito] You too, Loudbeard. The both of you have been shouting your plans so loud, the thief couldn’t have not heard them. Tell me, do you telegraph everything you do?

Benito: [scratches the back of head, nervous] Ehh…

Okita: [bites down on rose, lips bleed] Oww…

I suppose any plan can be spoiled like that. I hope we catch this thief just so I don’t have to debate Nahoko in trial again.

Takito: [gulp]

[INVESTIGATION END]

As suspected, we didn’t find much evidence as to Kibogaman or the gun thief’s identity. Asking around proved that none of the boys (other than Pablo and me, of course) even had solid alibis for the event.

[Automoved to Cafeteria]
Dinner was kind of on a sour note. Still, it was somewhat nice to know that Kibogaman wouldn’t be striking for at least another day.

Afterwards, Pablo took to the podium to discuss the new plan of action.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Many of you are probably wondering what I will be doing going forward to combat this new threat. We do not know to identity of Kibogaman, nor the identity of the gun thief, Kibogaman’s chosen victim.

Satoko: [mumbling, discontented] Why don’t you give us some jævla good news…

Tamaki: [smiles] Please, this is an important announcement. Offhand comments should be kept to a minimum.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No, Satoko is right to say that. Things do seem dire. Kibogaman, however, has made the mistake of specifying when he will kill. In my experience, it has always been easier to guard a time than place. I am planning to keep all of us in one place during Kibogaman’s announced time by hosting a gala in the Art Gallery.

Hitomi: [hands on the sides of her head, chittering teeth] No! That’s insane! [cowes] Kibogaman’s going to lure one of us out, and kill them!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No, I’ve prepared for that as well. A specially chosen board of organizers and myself will assign guards to different posts and times. Planning so that any guard can be accounted for if they have murderous intent will be top priority.

Tamaki: [smiles] That board includes me, Chiyo, Ryouta, Itsumi, and Kotori, so if any of you had plans tonight, clear them.

Wataru: [angry] …

Yasue: [angry]…
Takito: Aw, not me?

Tamaki: [smiles] The members were chosen based on trustworthiness and nonpartisanship. You almost made it through, trust me.

Kotori: [smiles, sighs] I guess I won’t be getting much sleep tonight.

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

[Automoved to Dorm Hall]

[Automoved to Takito’s Room]

**Well, I hadn’t expected that. The suspense had been taken out of when somebody would strike, but it had been replaced by near certainty. I felt like I should be more scared than I was. Pablo’s plan did seem to make sense, but I had thought that about all his other failed attempts. His credibility was dying.**

*If the note was right, at least I would be safe. I could only close my eyes and wait for the morning…*

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: Have you ever heard about how much I hate fairytales?

Monobear: They’re clichéd trite, the lot of them.

Monobear: Always a hero with some dumbass backstory and a destiny.

Monobear: That never happens in real life. I should know, because I make sure of it!
Monobear: If I wrote a fairytale, it would be about a hero who has a destiny…

Monobear: …the twist would be that the destiny was to ruin humanity!

Monobear: It’d sell billions! Upupupupupu!

Chapter End Notes

Not to spoil, but somebody dies next time.

If you think you know, comment below!

Also, frequent commentor Kitt_Monroe has started her own story, "Dangan Ronpa: Forever Despair". Check it out sometime!
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - (Ab)normal Day 5

Chapter Notes

Well, last free time of the chapter everybody, and Ryouta has won it. Free Time Voting for Chapter 3 will begin when the Chapter 2 trial starts.

Also, frequent commenter Bub has done me the favoring of creating a Tvtropes Page! Thanks a ton, Bub, and if any of you are tropers who'd like to contribute, the link's right here:

http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Fanfic/DanganRonpaLegacyOfDespair

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – (Ab)normal Day 5

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Well, it’s do or die today. Pablo’s little party versus Kibogaman’s declaration of murder.

I really hope do wins.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

I saw Yasue helping a groggy Itsumi walk to the Employee Hall. Normally, I would’ve immediately expected poison, but knowing exactly when the murder was going to happen took the fear out of it.

I shivered. I didn’t like the way the certainty of this next murder was making me feel. I didn’t want
murder to be normal or calming. Yet, emotions are pretty hard to control.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Everyone else was strangely calm as well. Everyone who was in Pablo’s advisory committee last night was half asleep, except Pablo and Tamaki. They were as abnormally energetic and perky as ever.

I sat next to Kotori and began eating.

Takito: [whispers] Pssst! How was last night?

Kotori: [groggy] Ungh… Deadlocked… It took hours… So much arguing… [falls asleep on the table]

Well, at least it explains Itsumi’s problem.

Kotori eventually got her hands on some coffee, and Pablo took to the podium to discuss the fruits of last night’s meeting.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Tamaki, have you finished handing out the coffee?

Tamaki: [smiles] Of course! Coffee and tea are the primary drinks of my trade.

Pablo: [smile, light chuckle] Well, I hadn’t expected anything less.

Satoko: [whispers, smug grin] Mendapatkan bilik…
Ryouta: [wincing] I d-don’t like b-bitter drinks…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Regardless of taste, every member of my advisory committee should drink their coffee. We must be as alert as possible for tonight’s party. [clears throat] Speaking of which, the guards for the event have been selected.

[camera changes to show a diagram of the 2nd floor]

Pablo: In order to get eyes on every square inch of the hall, we assigned one guard to each line of the “U” shape, creating three positions for guards to be stationed: Left, Right, and Middle.

[guard positions appear as red dots on the map]

Pablo: As a guard, your job is to keep watch over people out in the halls, and makes sure nobody goes where they aren’t supposed to. This includes the Cleaning Closet if you’re on the Left or Right, the Nautical Room if you’re on the Right or Middle, and the 1st floor stairway if you’re on the Right.

[camera returns to Pablo in the Cafeteria on the podium]

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The committee has also decided to have two shifts so that everybody may enjoy the festivities. The first shift will have Yasue on the Left, Ryouta on the Middle, and Benito on the Right. The second shift will have Wataru on the Left, Okita on the Middle, and Satoko on the Right.

Okita: [angry glare, pulls at shirt collar] Aw, really? I have to spend the last hours of the night staring at a wall?

Tamaki: [smiles] Now, now. Each of our choices were specially selected for a multitude of reasons.

Wataru: [grumbles] You just wanted to keep my dissent about your treatment of Kibogaman silenced. [grits teeth] Yasue, your little friend has corrupted the committee!

Yasue: [annoyed expression, crosses arms] I’m a guard too, doofus! [muttering] They probably just want to keep us apart…
Tamaki: [smiles] Please, regardless of you think of them, these decisions are to be followed. I look forward to seeing you all at the party. [giggles] While it is just a safety precaution, I do think you’ll have much more fun than you’re expecting.

_I wasn’t sure I agreed with Tamaki’s definition of fun, but before I could ask further, Tamaki and Pablo left to help set things up. Kotori pulled herself up, and told me to check back with them around lunchtime._

_Like usual, I guess I’m going to kill time and wait for something to happen, while the big players set things up._

Takito: [sighs]

_[FREE TIME START]_

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Storage]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Ryouta: [awkward smile] H-hey Takito. I c-could really use your help right now, but if you’ve g-got other th-things, that’s okay…

_I decided to spend some time with Ryouta._

_Ryouta looks a little more on edge today than usual. Is he…?_
Takito: Are you okay there, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [nervous, wincing, teeth-chattering] T-t-takito? H-how do you d-do the th-th-thing?

Takito: What’s the thing, exactly? I’m pretty sure I can do it. …Apparently I’ve done it before.

Ryouta: [nervous, wincing, teeth-chattering] Y-y-you kn-know… [stops wincing] …the th-thing wh-when you’re a-alone where y-you just g-go up to s-s-someone and… and… and t-talk?

Takito: Erm, I, uh… I’ve never actually thought of this before, it all happens pretty naturally for me…

Ryouta: [cowering] Y-y-you d-don’t know, d-d-do you?

Takito: No, no! I know! Kind of. Conversation is kind of a case-by-case basis. What do you to talk with someone about, anyway?

Ryouta: [stares to the side, chews pen] Do you r-remember, when I asked t-to g-get help with an article about our k-kidnapping?

Takito: Yeah?

Ryouta: [stares to the side, chews pen] I th-thought P-pablo might be a g-good person to interview f-for it…

Takito: Knowing Pablo, he’d jump at the chance of something like this. You can do the actual interview part, right? Lemme just get him to come over, and I’ll ask him for you.

Ryouta nodded and made an awkward smile as I left to do just that. Well, I actually just told Pablo to “come with me.”

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Is this what you wished to show me? I appreciate your concern, but I am
already well aware that Ryouta exists.

Takito: Well, it’s not just that. Ryouta’s kind of making an article about our situation, and would really like an interview. From you.

Pablo: [blushing slightly] Ah, well, that’s a reasonable request. Where do you want to begin?

Ryouta: [insecure expression, holds notepad] W-well, if we c-could start with wh-why you stepped up to l-lead the group…

Pablo: [valorous pose] Well, the reason truly begins five years ago, when my father and I watched a crab fiddle with a rock on the beach…

For some reason Pablo’s voice was a bit more sleep-inducing than normal. I woke up to Pablo muttering something.

Pablo: [valorous pose] …That should be everything you need for an outstanding article, if I’m not mistaken. I don’t actually read the newspaper, so I’m not familiar with what kind of article this would be. [turns to Takito] Takito!

Takito: [wakes up fully] What?!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] You’re an average, paper-reading fellow. What kind of article is Ryouta writing?

Ryouta: [pensive pose] I was th-thinking it could b-be a little b-bit of an opinion piece…

Takito: I actually kind of get my info off the Internet most of the time… Erm, I’m pretty sure it’s called…

( Editorial / Column / Feature )
Takito: Opinion pieces about news are editorials, last I checked, anyway.

Ryouta: [frowns, messes with hat] Why don’t you r-read the n-news, Pablo? D-don’t you c-care about your p-people?

Pablo: [defensive pose, worried expression] No, no, that’s not the case at all! I make most of the news on my island, and what I’m not involved in I hear from my government co-re-spondents. [sweat drop] You know, I’ve been interviewed before, but it has never felt this much like an … interrogation.

Ryouta: [cowers, shifty eyes] I h-h-have t-t-to k-keep j-j-j-journalistic…

Takito: I think Ryouta’s just trying to get everything he can for a balanced article.

Pablo: [uncomfortable expression] Well, I suppose that’s fair, though I’d really like to feel that way again. It’s unnerving, to say the least. [leaves]

Ryouta: [cowers] Th-thank you… I th-think I n-need some t-time to m-myself…

Takito: Sure, sure.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Dorm Hall]
Before I knew it, a very formal-looking pair of Pablo and Tamaki approached Kotori and me. Tamaki didn't look that different; her dress was now white and had better stitching, and her jewelry was all-around more complicated. Pablo, on the other hand, was wearing a very stiff-looking white version of his old uniform on top, and had added matching general's hat. His pants and shoes were also white, but they were clearly the type of fancy clothes a civilian would wear.

Kotori: [carefully inspecting] Ho? Why so dressed up, you two?

Pablo: [proud smile] Tamaki and I agreed it would be nice to make our little event a proper gala, just like the ones on La Espera.

Tamaki: [smiles] If you don’t mind Kotori, we’d like you to put on your best as well. Takito, you’re fine as is.

Takito: …You really forget you’re in a tuxedo when you wear it every day. Wait, isn’t the whole reason we’re having this to prevent another murder?

Tamaki: [smiles] That may be true, but it doesn’t stop us from having fun, does it? [chuckles]

Pablo: [proud smile] Believe me, I’m more than capable of still doing my job.

You already aren't particularly capable.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Well, it may be nice to have a fancy gathering like this…

Tamaki: [smiles, claps] Then it’s settled! Takito, come with us while Kotori gets ready.

[Move to 2nd Floor]

[Move to Art Gallery]
Those two really must have been busy…

The Art Gallery had several tables full of food, drinks, and décor pieces. Several plates, glasses and utensils had been brought here from the kitchen, creating a make-shift buffet. Near the door to the Cleaning Closet, another table was set up with a standard-issue grey stereo playing a classical track I couldn’t recognize.

As for the people, just about everybody but Kotori was there. Itsumi, Ryouta, and Nahoko gotten themselves dressed up, but Yasue and Wataru wore their normal clothes, probably as a show of contempt. Chiyo and Benito decided not to part with their costumes, and Hitomi had put on a tuxedo suspiciously similar to mine.

After this party, I’m going to start counting my suits.

Satoko and Okita were also wearing their normal clothes, but like me, they were probably formal enough to get away with it.

Tamaki: [smiles] I see you’ve gotten acquainted with the party, Takito. Be sure to thank the person handling the music.

Takito: I didn’t know we had CDs like that in here.

Tamaki: [smiles] Neither did I! Yet, Hitomi found them for us, and I’m eternally grateful she’s handling our audio this evening.

Hitomi: [in the distance] Woohoo! DJ 3tomi is here to party hardy!

Benito: [in the distance] Hoy, DJ! Do ye mind if I show me lovely chanting voice?

Tamaki: [frowns] Well, erm, mostly eternally grateful.
It wasn’t long before the guards took their places and the party officially began. I grabbed some punch and leaned against the wall, trying to enjoy myself. Despite Pablo and Tamaki’s best efforts, there was an atmosphere of artificially and imminent death that killed most of my enjoyment.

Takito: [sighs, mumbles softly] There are some things even the SHSL can’t help.

Kotori: [off screen] Did you say something, Takito?

Takito: Kotori?!

Wow... That’s a really spectacular dress.

She was wearing something that combined a purple top with a flowing blue skirt. To this day, I’m surprised Monobear let us all have such nice clothes.

Takito: You’ve, uh, really gotten into this gala, haven’t you?

Kotori: [blushes] Not really. Not as much as the organizers have, anyway. I never thought you’d be able to get music like this.

Takito: Actually, that was Hitomi’s doing. I’m still not sure exactly where she got it.

Kotori: [extends hand] Well, I’m curious too. You want to find out?

Takito: Don’t have anything better to do.

The two of us walked over to Hitomi’s sound station, where Pablo and Tamaki were also making conversation.

Tamaki: [smiles] Hitomi, I think it’d be absolutely wonderful if the next track were Gnossienne No.1. It’s a bit slow for our purposes, so if you could speed it up as well, that would be very nice.
Hitomi: [pouty face, grumbling] Whatever you say, you meanie… [mumbling] She’s like an oni, and an evil queen. An evil Queen Oni!

Pablo: [slight smile, authoritative position] Now, now Hitomi. Tamaki is the expert here, so it’d be best to quell your current ambition.

Hitomi: [pouty face, grumbling] But it’s so booooooring…

Takito: Well, didn’t you get any other tracks from wherever you got these?

Hitomi: [nervous smile, touching tips of fingers together] Well, I sort of could only get classical ones, and there was a sample track of Hope’s Peak talent from storage…

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] Wait, you didn’t get this from storage? [accusatory tone] Hitomi, where did this music come from?

Hitomi: [turns around and opens back eye, nervous expression] I maybe, maybe, maaaybe borrowed them from Monobear…

Pablo: [spit-take] What?! How could you!

Monobear: [sniffling, sad pose] Really, Hitomi? Lie like that, to hide my generosity! You make this poor bear cry!

Takito: Who invited you?

Pablo: [furrowed brow, scowl] And what do you mean, lie?

Monobear: [sad pose] I was the one who offered to give Hitomi the music, and now she’s repaying me with a big old fib, trying to steal the credit! [faces away from Hitomi] Hmmfph! Well, you can expect me to never act out of the kindness of heart again, you freak! [runs away, crying]

Hitomi: [frowns, faces the camera, hands on head] No, no, no! I only wanted to help, but now
Monobear’s gotten his claws on everything!

Tamaki: [frowns] Well, I suppose we can’t use the kind of tracks I wanted anymore! Tsk, tsk.

Takito: Wait, why not? It’s just music, isn’t it?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That’s exactly what I thought about the holster. I’m not going to risk this again.

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] We still have that sample track, right?

Tamaki: [frowns] It’s our only choice at the moment. [smiles] Do you recognize anything suitable, Hitomi?

Hitomi: [claps excitedly] Oh, okay! Well, there’s this one by the school’s Light Music Club I really really like, but I need to use the lights to make it work.

Pablo: [shrugs] Well, light music sounds harmless enough. The light switch and dimmer is right behind you if you need it. I’m a bit interested in hearing more of this country’s music anyway.

Hitomi: [pumps arms, giddy smile] Here gosie! DJ 3tomi’s gonna rock your world!

I’ve got a seriously bad feeling about this…

[The camera changes to show an image of Hitomi working the stereo with a huge smile. The lights dim and brighten in time with this music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHw1LC_Bs5w]

My ears… My ears…

I remember feeling my ears to check if they were bleeding, but when I did, I couldn’t feel any blood. Only the music still ringing in my ears.
I never want to experience… whatever the hell that was again.

Pablo: [shocked expression, staggers back] I don’t… I can’t… When was this torture device conceived?

Kotori: [grimaces] Is this one of those real things? Do people allow this to be real?

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh… Just, I… Oh…

Hitomi: [arms in the air, smile] Woooo hoooo! Anybody ready for round two!

Nahoko: [frowns] …

Wataru: [shock] …

Itsumi: [cowering, shaking] …

Okita: [gaping mouth, rose slowly falls out] …Hey, don’t I have a wonderful civic-duty guard position to take right about now?

Pablo: [stuck in the last position] … [authoritative pose] …Yes, yes, of course. Please find your first shift equivalent and tell them it’s time to come back in. Though, if any of you would like for me to take their place…

Satoko: [sweating nervously] Nein, auf keinen Fall. Ich werde Sie später sehen werden, Scheiße Herr! [leaves]

Wataru: [sweating nervously] What she said! [leaves]

Okita: [pulls at shirt collar] Erm… [waves goodbye] Gotta go! [leaves]
Pablo: [deflated, frown] Well, I guess that’s that.

Yasue: [raises eyebrow, Bertrand buzzing around her] What’s with everyone. Bertrand says it looks like you’ve all seen a ghost.

*We did. It was music’s.*

Okita: [opens door, fearful expression] Guys! Someone’s whacked Ryouta!

*Damn it! Kibogaman!*

Satoko: [follows more calmly behind him] When you say it like that, it’s like he’s dead.

Pablo: [angry expression, authoritative pose] Hold on. Let me take a look for myself.

*Pablo walked outside, and curiosity got the better of the rest of us. I decided to see what had really happened to the poor guy.*

[Automoved to Timeline Hall]

[camera shows an image of a small bloodstain on the wall. The camera slowly pans down to find an unconscious Ryouta face down on the ground.]

Itsumi: [cowering] Oh, h-he’s d-dead…

Satoko: [rolls eyes] I told you all, he’s okay. No está muerto. I took his goddamn pulse.

Kotori: [frowns] So did I. Satoko’s right, but somebody still did this to him.

Wataru: [angry stare, crossed arms] Yasue! You were out here, anti-justice worm!
Yasue: [fighting stance, Bertrand buzzing violently] Maybe your friend Kibogaman gave Ryouta one of those Justice Slams you love talking about. [smug smile] I know! Benito’s strong enough to be Kibogaman, and he was out here! Maybe we should ask him about your undying faith for a violent zealot!

Tamaki: [frowns] Satoko, do you have any idea where he went? Yasue has presented a fairly important point.

Satoko: [pensive pose] Nanage gottilla. He wasn’t anywhere. I even looked around the corner by the stairway.

Then…

Takito: There’s only one place he could be…

Moving Ryouta a little to the side, I moved the Nautical Room door open. I slowly walked inside, scanning the room in case Benito really was a killer. That’s when I saw it.

The first thing that got my attention was the rope tied to the top of the model ship’s sail, and the creak, creak, creak noise it made. I moved like it had a weight on it, so I followed the rope down, and…

[Play this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4kxEAVJjSM]

…Benito, upside down, dangled with two seared holes in his chest.

…Just, just damn it.

Chapter 2- Masks and Mutiny: (ab)Normal Days End

Chapter End Notes
Benito’s sailed his last ship, it seems, and Ryouta came very close to death. Who's responsible for this almost double homicide?

If you think you know, Comment Below!
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - Abnormal Days

Chapter Notes

Finally, it's here!

Sorry about the delay: Things have been a bit inconvenient on my end. If it makes up for it, this is a big update, nearly reaching 4,000 words.

Anyway, here's the investigation

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – Abnormal Days

I almost fainted again, but this time, I had someone to catch me.

Pablo: [chuckles] Lost your balance, eh? At least stay upright when Kibo… [stagers back] …Oh, god, Benito!

Tamaki: [quivering frown] Oh… Kibogaman’s kept his promise after all.

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: A body has been discovered! Following a brief period of investigation, we will commence our school trial!

Itsumi: [gasping, panicking] H-he’s n-not… H-he’s not…

Chiyo: [sulks] There’s no mistake. The announcement doesn’t lie.

Wataru: [grits teeth, makes fist] Another one of us has killed our own? Grrr… [valorous pose] Whoever they are, Kibogaman has awakened, and will now be here to bring them to justice!
Yasue: [annoyed expression] Come off it. You know exactly who did this.

Okita: [nervous sweating, pulling at shirt collar] It’s only been like, five days since Ikkaku! I think I’ll just be holing up in my room after this. I don’t really wanna mess with that creepy bear aga–

Monobear: [arms raised] Congratulations, everyone! [laughing pose] And a corpse well done to you-know-who! Upupupupu!


Monobear: [laughing pose] Don’t be so pushy! It’s not a good personality trait, and besides, this lovely murder couldn’t have happened without you botching your shoddy party prevention plan! Upupupu! Don’t ever say I didn’t credit you!

Pablo: [heavy breathing, scowls]

Monobear: [blushes] I really gotta thank ya, but I’m not a bear who comes all the way out here just for “thank yous”. It’s time for Monobear File II: Necromancing the Rown! You can access them from your IDs this time.

I took out my ID and found an app called “Monobear Files” underneath School Rules. Just like he said, both Ikkaku’s and Benito’s Monobear Files were present.

Monobear File 2: Benito Kasai

Cause of death: A severe burn cauterized his aorta, killing him within a few seconds.

Time of death: Heat-related death makes it uncertain, but definitely within an hour of discovery.

Additional Information: Benito died from the first shot. The second came only about a second afterwards.

Monobear: [laughing pose] You all sorted? Then Toodle-loo! Have fun with with your catch of the
day! Upupupupu! [disappears in a puff of smoke]

Nahoko: [crosses arms, looks the side, annoyed] Eh? He died from these huge burns, huh? What else is new?

Chiyo: [taps wand on head, pensive pose] Nahoko being a little mean, but she does have a point. [angry sulk] The Monobear File doesn’t have a lot of material this time around. Do you think we should take a closer look?

Pablo: [contemplation, sighs] It seems like we’ll have to. Somebody’s going to need to closely examine those wounds.

*Are we really going to poke around inside Benito’s wounds? I’m not exactly resistant to gore and gu–*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Takito! You were fairly helpful last trial. Do you think you help me examine the body?

Takito: [groans] Sure. *Might as well get my nausea out now.*

*[INVESTIGATION START]*

*[This investigation is specifically of a static image of Benito’s hanging body, not a room]*

*[Examine Rope]*

*Wow, that’s tight around his legs. I think I can see blood starting to build up above the rope.*

Satoko: [motions to Takito] Hei, Takito! You looking at the same knot I’m looking at?

Takito: [scratches head] Maybe…? There’s only two.

Takito: Excuse me?

Satoko: [rolls eyes] It’s the top one. [sighs, looks to the side, annoyed] I was gonna say it’s kind of pretty, but it feels really okungalungile to complement a murderer, you know?

Takito: I guess so. Both of these are tied in front in elaborate patterns. The killer really put a lot of effort into this, but I would too if I had to keep somebody as heavy as Benito off the ground. Still, there’s this odd level of craftsmanship. It’s kind of weird.

Satoko: [looks to the side, annoyed] More like uncomfortable.

[Examine Pocket]

Takito: Pablo, do you see that bulge in Benito’s coat? I wonder if he has a third wound.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Doubtable. The killer probably wouldn’t see a need to do any more damage. [pensive pose] Still, I wonder if he still has his postcard. I’m really curious, and it might be related to his death.

*I never did see him throw his away. Pablo might onto to something here.*

Pablo: [reaching inside the pocket] Let’s see here… [eyes open wide] Wait. [retrieves gun with silencer attached from Benito’s pocket]

Takito: No… Benito? *He couldn’t have stolen the gun. He’s not like that, at least I don’t think.*

Pablo: [pensive pose, furrowed brow] It’s puzzling to me too. He was always talking about baiting Kibogaman. [frowns] I sincerely hope he wasn’t planning to use this as his “hook” once Kibogaman arrived.

Takito: *Yeesh, was that Benito’s plan all along?* If there’s anything good to come out of this, at least
he never got to use it.

Pablo: [frowns, shakes head] Somebody’s still dead. And I’m not ever sure the gun wasn’t used yet. [removes magazine] …Empty?

Takito: Empty? How did Benito fire six times without anyone noticing?

Pablo: [nervous, running hand through hair] The chamber’s dirty, so it had to have been fired. Yet, even with the silencer, a gunshot’s fairly loud… [sighs] I need to concentrate on forensics for now. Analysis is for the trial.

Takito: Reluctantly agreed.

[Examine Wounds]

Wow, are these hard to look at.

Takito: [gags slightly]

They’re practically 8-inch circles of pure burn wound. Seeing something that was once a person turned to this red and black puffy scar.

Tamaki: [takes knife and pokes center of the wound]

Takito: Oh, now it’s leaking… [gags slightly] ..Urk. Tamaki, don’t do that!

Tamaki: [frowns] Do what? Do you mean my poking around in the wounds?

Tamaki: Yeah, it’s kind of disgusting seeing all that blood and maybe blood ooze about.

Tamaki: [frowns] Perhaps, but I am making an attempt to cover up my work. Besides, how am I supposed to get the other bullet out?
Takito: Other bullet? What?


[camera cuts to an image of a fairly clean and well shaped bullet. The few small stains the bullet has are blood and chars. The flat end of the slug has text that reads “.40 caliber” in romanji.]

Tamaki: I found this falling out of Benito’s left wound, from that hole right there.

It looks like it would go straight to inside Benito’s heart. I’m not sure I want to get closer.

[camera returns to Tamaki in the Nautical Room]

Tamaki: [frowns] I’ve looked around for a cartridge on the floor, but I’m still yet to find any. This killer hasn’t missed a beat, unfortunately.

Takito: Well, as [slight gag] nausea inducing as it might be, you probably should get the other one. I’ll just close my eyes and imagine a less revolting locale…

I tried, but I couldn’t escape the sounds of Tamaki’s “autopsy”. I didn’t hurl, but it still wasn’t pleasant.

Tamaki: [frowns] It’s nearly identical to the other one. Same shape, same color, same caliber, same everything.

Between all these similarities and them both being in Benito, it’s almost undeniable they both came from the same weapon. So Benito was both shot and burned to death? Huh.

[Examine Face]

It’s a bit hard to see, but there’s a fine scar line under, er, over Benito’s exposed eye. It looks kind of
Chiyo: [pensive pose, taps wand, mumbling] It’s a bit hard to see, but there’s a fine scar line under, er, over Benito’s exposed eye. It’s looks kind of fresh, too. Hm.

Takito: Oh, Chiyo! We did a thing!

Chiyo: [defensive pose, puzzled expression] A thing? What?

Takito: You know, a… a… a… Damn it, what’s it called? A ditto?

Chiyo: [aims wand at Takito, angry expression] As Gaia-chan, I need to be aware of my actions at all times! Tell me!

Takito: I thought something, and then you said it word for word. It was about Benito’s hard-to-see eye scar.

Chiyo: [relaxes] Oh, I thought I might have accidentally done something much more serious. If the symbol of a better tomorrow did something environmentally irresponsible by accident, the public might never trust the Nature’s Angel game again!

Takito: No worries, Chiyo, it’s just a scar. I promised to keep your secrets anyway. You’d think you’d notice this before.

Chiyo: [frowns, fiddles with wand] Yeah, I’m a bit disappointed in myself for not noticing it before. I mean, I talk with Benito a lot, and only just now seen it.

Takito: Me too. I don’t feel disappointed as much as confused, though.

[Examine Floor]

Kotori: [off-camera] Psst! Takito! Could you move a little to the left?

Kotori: [off-camera] Could you also lift your leg up?

Takito: Uh, excuse me?

Kotori: [off-camera, chuckles] Sorry, I just want to get a better look at the floor.

Takito: Here, what if I just turn to the side…

Kotori: [off-camera] No, no, no. Still can’t get more than small glimpses. It’d be better if you just told me what you see.

Takito: Well, I see a floor, and Benito’s hat fell off his head. There really isn’t much else.

Kotori: [off-camera] Well, of course I can see that. Tell me what it’s like close-up. Notice anything?

Takito: Lesse here… I think there’s some ashes in the cracks of the floorboards. I’m no expert, but they don’t look like their from Benito’s body, at least. Maybe his coat?

Kotori: [off-camera] That’s the most likely thing.

Takito: This whole floor examination seems pretty cut and dry.

Kotori: [off-camera] Still, it might be worth keeping track of this for the trial.

_When’s it ever not?_

_[INVESTIGATION ENDS]_
Pablo: [authoritative pose] That appears to be everything. [sighs, shakes head] The evidence about the killer here is pretty clear.

Wataru: [makes fist, angry expression] What do you mean, “clear”? We’ve only just found him! [very angry] I will NOT let you put my life in danger and malign the dead with idle assumptions! I demand you reeval– [wincing] Ouch!

Yasue: [scornful expression, pointing at Wataru] Bzzzz! Bzzzz! Bz! [Bertrand flies in and lands on Yasue’s finger] Use your head! It’s absolutely clear what happened.

Wataru: [seething] Did… Did you send your bee to sting me?

Yasue: [scornful expression, pointing at Wataru, Bertrand buzzing around her head] Yeah, someone needed to get you to pull your head out of your ass. Think about it: Who announced they would be killing the person who stole Pablo’s gun tonight? Who has a weapon that can burn and shoot someone at the same time? You know exactly who that is! Your best friend Kibogaman!

Pablo: [defensive pose] Let’s not do anything that might people riled up…

Itsumi: [grits teeth, grips rock tight] B-but he just said i-it too!

Tamaki: [smiles] We ought to save any speculation–

Yasue: [scornful expressions, pointing at Pablo, Bertrand buzzing around her head] But Pablo had just accused Kibogaman! Why are we being reprimanded for the truth?

Wataru: [deep breathing, motions to stop] I agree.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Really, you?

Wataru: [deep breathing, gulps] If Yasue wants to spout meaningless slander, she can go ahead.

Yasue: [looks to the side angrily, Bertrand imitates] Meaningless… Feh.
Wataru: [deep breathing, holding self] Please excuse me, erm, citizens. [leaves]

*Just like they said, the evidence was pretty clear. Even Wataru was having doubts about Kibogaman’s moral fiber.*

At least this time, I have the luxury of “knowing” the culprit. Maybe I should devote some time to really get to know this SHSL Superhero.

...And maybe check out parts of the room that aren’t Benito’s gross dangly corpse.

Takito: [wince of repulsion]

[INVESTIGATION START]

[Talk to Okita]

Okita; [pulls at shirt collar] Takito, do you think you could tuck away with me for a while, there’s an issue you may or may not be [pauses, looks around] sensitive to.

Takito: If you want me to teach you how to iron a suit, just ask. Seriously, there’s only a handful of people here. Your reputation isn’t going to disappear if you aren’t Mr. Slick and Suave all the–

Okita: [angry stare, grinds rose stem with teeth] It’s not that! [calms down, pulls at shirt collar] What I mean is [pauses, looks around] …don’t you think it’s becoming, erm, the opposite of a sausagefest in here?

Takito: What? That’s your big concern?

Okita: [mumbling, looking to the side] Well, um, I mean, don’t you, with nothing but, you know, guys like us, being the dead ones?
...I don’t if that’s sexist or just generically terrible.

Okita: [pulling at shirt collar] I can’t be only one worried about this, right? Right?

Pablo: [raises eyebrow confusedly] Right? What’s right? Are you not spending your investigation time efficiently?

Okita: [sweating, nervous chuckling] Of course I am! I mean, look at that knot wall! It’s looking pretty important to me! It’s, erm, uh, got two knot missing! Look at those empty places! Important, very important!

Pablo: [raises eyebrow, tilts head] Sure. [turns to Takito] In the future, Takito, I wouldn’t accept people’s invitations to have alone time in corners. It might be dangerous in our situation.

Takito: Understood. Well, at least not when Okita is asking for one of these talks.

[Talk to Wataru]

Wataru: [head in hands] Do you, of all people, know why?

Eh, I’m going to have to tread lightly here to get any information.

Takito: What should I know, exactly?

Wataru: [head in hands] Why would he…? Why…? [faces Takito, verge of tears] What would cause somebody to break their code of honor? Akinori did it on accident, but this…

Takito: I don’t know. He probably couldn’t see any other option.

Wataru: [faces Takito, verge of tears] But, there’s always an option. A true hero… [head in hands] …always finds a way… [cries softly]
Crap, I’m in deep here. I really shouldn’t be messing with Wataru any more.

Wataru: [head in hands] I met him once, in costume. [crying] He told me… He said he would never kill an innocent! He was meant to protect us!

...

From the bottom of my heart, fuck you, Monobear.

[Talk to Nahoko]

Nahoko: [spinning shelf, adjusting devices, mumbling] Here we are… Just set to flash…

Nahoko’s being kinda suspicious with her tech…

Takito: Hey Nahoko, what’re you up to? [softly muttering] Hopefully not something sneaky…

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] First of all, I wouldn’t try hiding your suspicions from me.

What? How did she?!

Takito: I don’t have, heh, suspicions. None about you, no ma’am.

Nahoko: [smug grin] Cute, Takito. [opens tablet and presses button]

Recorded Takito Voice: Hopefully not something sneaky…

Nahoko: [closes tablet, smug grin] Second of all, I was just taking a panorama shot of the room for the trial, idiot. I’m also recording what people say on the side, and, well, you just learned why that’s handy.
Takito: Sorry about that.

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] Yeah, you better be.

Takito: Did you at least see anything in your panorama shot?

Nahoko: [annoyed expression] I have to look at it first. You know that, right?

Takito: Ich. Double sorry, I guess.

Nahoko: [stares at tablet] Nevertheless, I can tell you that nothing immediately obvious is here. No bullet holes, and… Wait. [looks up] There’s an empty exhibit. Look here. [extends tablet for Takito to see]

Takito: That looks like where the primitive life preserver was. Has someone pilfered it?

Nahoko: [bites lip, taps and spins shelf] There really isn’t another option, but I can’t think of anybody having a reason to steal that piece of driftwood.

Takito: People don’t steal things without a reason, though.

Nahoko: [bites lip, taps and spins shelf] …Eck. This’ll take some time.

[Talk to Chiyo]

She looks really busy inspecting the water over there. Should I really be asking this?

Takito: So, Kibogaman is a superhero.
Chiyo: [busy inspecting] …

Takito: And, you’re a superhero, kind of.

Chiyo: [busy inspecting] …

Takito: So, do you think you could tell me a little about Kibogaman?

Chiyo: [turns around, stern expression] If you need any help with the case, any help at all, don’t be afraid to ask.

Takito: [shudders slightly] She’s shockingly invested.

Chiyo: [stern expression] I wouldn’t call Kibogaman a superhero, honestly. First of all, a real superhero wouldn’t do [gestures to Benito] …this to an innocent.

*Can’t argue with that.*

Chiyo: [stern expression, crosses arms] Secondly, Kibogaman’s sloppy. He always goes in guns blazing, without regard for strategy, and those Phoenix Rounds aren’t exactly mean to stun. It’s a wonder he still hasn’t gotten himself or a bystander killed.

Takito: Yikes. Wataru idolizes this guy?

Chiyo: [stern expression, crosses arms] This type of thing doesn’t surprise me at all from him. I remember when we worked together, and he kept ruining my attempts at stealth.

Takito: Wait, you two worked together?

Chiyo: [bites lip in anger, crosses arms] Yeah, one time we cooperated trying to take down an illegal and destructive operation by the Kuzuryuu yakuza family.

[Camera changes to an image of Gaia-chan and Kibogaman in a dark room, surrounded by yakuza]
thugs. Kibogaman is ready for action, while Gaia-chan is shooting an accusatory glare at Kibogaman.]

Chiyo: One time was more than enough for me, though. I learned first hand how rash he was. I couldn’t sneak around the way I like to.

Past Kibogaman: Stand down, vile corruptions! Submit to the purveyor of justice, or your time is near!

Past Gaia-chan: What the hell are you doing? This is a stealth mission!

Past Kibogaman: Try as you might, neither the brutes of the yakuza nor the cowardice of allies will keep my Phoenix Rounds from striking true!

[sounds of gun fire play as the image fades back into Chiyo in the Nautical Room]

Chiyo: [stern impression, wand at the ready] All in all, Kibogaman’s fairly reckless, but there’s something to be said about having no strategy and still having such a spotless record. I wouldn’t let your guard down.

Takito: Understood.

*It’s actually a bit shocking to hear this. Is this the superhero Hope’s Peak trusts?*

*[INVESTIGATION END]*

Well, I think that’s everyone I wanted to talk to, but I wonder where’s…

*There?*

Takito: What exactly are you doing halfway inside the door, Itsumi?
Itsumi: [looking away] N-nothing, really. Y-yasue and me are j-just looking after Ryouta until he wakes up.

Takito: Mind if take a look? It’s not always so good if they’ve been out for this long.

Itsumi: [grimaces] G-go ahead…

*Oops, misspoke.*

Takito: Of course, he could just be fine. You’ll probably want to see how he’s doing, too.

[Automoved to Timeline Hall]

Yasue: [slight frown, Bertrand buzzing slowly] Hey, Takito. If you could knock next time, it’d be great. I’m kind of on edge here.

*I stared down at the unconscious Ryouta. Yasue had laid him up against the wall and put his hat back on to make him look somewhat presentable. I could see his chest expand and contract slightly, and his newspaper was laying on his lap.*

Yasue: [neutral expression] Don’t worry about him. He’s breathing more, and what bleeding there was has stopped already. He’ll be a-okay in a minute or two.

Bertrand: Bzz! Bzzz! Bzzzzzzz!

Yasue: [chuckles] That’s right! Oh, Bertrand, you always cheer me up.

Takito: When did his newspaper get out on his lap? I don’t remember that the first time I saw him.

Itsumi: [picks up paper] Y-yasue was just reading a b-bit…
Yasue: [crosses arms, Bertrand buzzing faster] It was some exposé about Kibogaman and how slow and irresponsible he is. You ought to read it yourself.

Itsumi: [hesitation] I’ve r-read it too. I’m not exactly s-sold on its accuracy, though…

*I took the article from Itsumi and began reading.*

“If for some reason you think the increased number of armed riots wasn’t enough to tarnish Hope’s Peak’s reputation, then surely their recent response, the so-called SHSL Superhero, must be enough. Ignoring the huge risk involved in tasking one high schooler with defending the entire campus, Kibogaman, as the school has named him, has a horrible response record. He has yet to have arrived to an incident before at least one death or injury has already occurred. Paramedics and police forces have also made several complaints to school administrators regarding Kibogaman’s unwillingness to cooperate with other law enforcement. Several people are already attempting to discover Kibogaman’s identity, so I’m telling you now, Hope’s Peak administration, end the Kibogaman program and get a real campus PD, before someone else forces you to.”

Yasue: [frustration, Bertrand flying fast] So you get it now, right? How much of a problem this Kibogaman is?

Takito: I guess so. Chiyo told me some similar things.

Yasue: [frustration] Practically everything points to Kibogaman being terrible. How does Wataru look up to this guy?

*I’m not sure he does anymore, actually…*

Itsumi: [uncomfortable] I’m n-not so sure. The whole th-thing seemed t-too critical to me.

Yasue: [looks to the side] Well, you do have a point. You can’t always believe everything you read. [stern expression] Still, I wouldn’t call the school newspaper disreputable…

???: Hnggh…
Itsumi: [tilts head] Huh?

_I turned around to see Ryouta rubbing his head and attempting to lift himself up._

Ryouta: [woozy] Tak… kito… Yasu…

Takito: Easy there. You’ve been out for a little while.

_Yasue and I helped Ryouta off the ground. It didn’t take long for him to become fully conscious._

Itsumi: [worry] Are y-you okay?

Ryouta: [looking down, distraught] F-fine…

_Whew. That’s one less death than necessary, at least._

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Hey kids, poke the corpse time is over! Please report to the foyer for your trial!

Ryouta: [place, shocked face] Oh oh oh oh n-n-n-n-n-n–

Yasue: [annoyed expression, Bertrand rests on shoulder] Ryouta, just, don’t worry for now. We’ll explain everything at the trial.

_Ryouta wasn’t taking things well, but I managed to get him downstairs without much resistance._

[Automoved to 1st floor Foyer]

_Ryouta calmed down soon enough, though, and Pablo and the others soon trickled in._
Pablo: [smiles wide] Ryouta, thank goodness! It’s a miracle you’re alive.

Ryouta: [nervous, distraught] I w-wouldn’t say so. S-somebody still died. [quick glances around the room] It’s not B-B-Benito, is it?

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m afraid it is. [smiles] But if you tell us about how you were knocked out, we might be able to apprehend the murderer.

Ryouta: [wincses] I’m s-sorry. I just was standing b-beside the Nautical Room door, wh-when somebody sl-slammed me against the wall. I d-didn’t even g-get a gl-glimpse… [shakes] I’m so s-sorry.

Monobear: [neutral pose] Well, don’t you suck.

Ryouta: [cowers, shaking nervously] Hnngh…

Monobear: [pulls out Takara, resting on Monobear’s head] Anyway, check out my new hat! Do you teens think I can finally be “hip” with this?

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] As long as I’m living, looting the dead will never be trendy!

Monobear: [laughing pose] As much as I’d like to take you up on that offer, I really need you for the trial. Speaking of which…

*The foyer doors opened again, revealing an elevator.*

Monobear: [arms up] Ta-da! Upupupupu!

*Without much of a word, everyone entered the elevator and rode down. Someone among us had killed Benito and assaulted Ryouta, and we had to find out.*
Elevator: Ding!

The doors opened, revealing a completely different trial room, this time looking like the interior of a Feudal castle. Benito and Akinori also had their own funeral portraits like Ikkaku’s, but Akinori’s X resembled more of a tilted cross.

With a quick look at my friends, a took a deep breath and found my podium.

Chapter End Notes

The trial for Benito’s killer begins next time.

Think you know who did it?
Comment with your guess!
Once again, sorry about the delay. Things on my end have been really busy.

Here's the first part of the school trial.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – School Trial Part 1

Classroom Trials START

Monobear: Before we begin, lemme re-explain the rules of a school trial. If you are the mob, your goal is to uncover the culprit and vote for them as the killer. If you are the culprit, your goal is to mislead the mob and have them vote for someone else. [laughing pose] The winner survives, the loser dies! Upupupupu! Game on!

Takara: On! [squawks] Onnn!

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! I can see why Benito liked you so much! Maybe when the rest of these bastards are dead, I can teach you some dark arts! Would ya like that?

Takara: That! That! [squawk]

Et tu, parrot?

After Takara quieted down, there was a strange lack of talking. Everyone was kind od just awkwardly waiting for someone else.

Monobear: [angry pose] …What are you waiting for? [brandishes claw] I put all this effort into a trial, the least you can do is make it not boring!
Kotori: [uncomfortable] I think we’re all just at a loss for where to start.

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Not my problem! Do something!

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Well, Benito, it seems, was murdered, with a gun, and he was, erm, hung upside down…

Hitomi: [taps chin thoughtfully] Y’know, we could start the way we did last time, and make a pretend culprit for a while.

Takito: That involved everyone ganging up on me…

Okita: [toys with rose] Nah, we probably won’t be messing with you, Takito. We already know Kibogaman’s the killer!

Wataru: [distraught expression, sighs]

Nahoko: [spinning shelf, mumbling] But we don’t know who’s Kibogaman, you dolt… We can’t make an accusation off that!

Pablo: [annoyed expression] I’d prefer nobody make an accusation off anything right now…

Hitomi: [hands on hips] Well, too bad, ‘cuz I’ve already figured it out!

Pablo: [staggers back] Huh?

_Huh?

Hitomi: [points, grins with enthusiasm] Yasue! You can’t hide from the law forever!

Yasue: [seething, Bertrand buzzing erratically] The hell do you think you’re doing?!
Oh, this can’t be good…

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Monobear File”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Guard Shift Timetable”, “Benito’s Corpse”

Yasue: [seething, Bertrand buzzing erratically] You had better have a good reason for this…

Itsumi: [grabs sharpened rock] Y-yeah!

Hitomi: [self-satisfied smile] ‘Course I do! First off, you, the victim, and Ryouta were the only ones in the hall!

Ryouta: [cowering, maintaining frightened stare] Y-you’re f-forgetting, th-though… Anybody c-could’ve left through the doors to the h-hall without being spotted.

Hitomi: [pouty face, wags finger] Nuh-uh! Ryouta specifically said that he did not see the attacker, and since any of the guards would notice somebody exiting their specific door to guard, nobody in the party could escape without getting caught!

Satoko: [raises eyebrow, puzzled] Qué? Señor Kibogaman es una mujer?

Wataru: [holding head an hands, keeping eye contact] In all my time as a fan, I had never considered this possibility… It seems I had never really known Kibogaman after all.

Hitomi: [self-satisfied smile] Well you learn new things every day! Yasue only had sneak up behind Ryouta and slam him against the wall, and she could easily commit the murder from there!

Yasue: [shakes head with Bertrand] It’s not true, but I can’t do anything about it. Grr…
E2, T4

Takito: **YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!** Sneaking up was impossible!

Hitomi: [karate pose] Wha? But it’s the only possible!

Takito: [shakes head] Not in the Timeline Hall it wasn’t. Ryouta specifically said he was “slammed against the wall” and “without noticing anything”. Combine that with the fact that guards have to survey their surroundings for work, and knocking out Ryouta from the hall starts looking very unlikely. Even if he didn’t hear the footsteps, Ryouta would have had to look in exactly the right direction for an extended time!

Hitomi: [distressed pose] Eep…

Yasue: [wags finger with Bertrand] See! I told all of you!

Okita: [twiddling rose] Eh? But if Yasue couldn’t knock him out from hall… [slams podium, grits teeth with rose in mouth] Nobody could! Ryouta, you lying shit!

Ryouta: [cowering, shivering]

Wataru: [stern stare] If you insist on using your tongue for baseless slander against victims, you’re better off without it, Okita.

Okita: [grits teeth with rose in mouth] Yeah, ‘cause you’ve got such a great track record with calling
people innocent.

Tamaki: [smiles] No, Wataru has a decent point. Very few people, least of all Ryouta, could hurt themselves enough to go unconscious…

Okita: [stares to the side angrily, grumbling] It’s not about whether or not Ryouta can KO himself… [stops mumbling] It’s that if he can’t be attacked from the hall, he can’t be attacked from anywhere else!

Takito: Really? Don’t you think he could be knocked out from _______ as well?

(Art Gallery / 1st floor / Nautical Room)

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8:1232321312321232312231

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Pablo: [authoritative pose] The Nautical Room? …Well, I do suppose that’s an option.

Ryouta: [realization shock] I h-had been staring at the g-gallery door the whole time… [wincing] G-gah! I sh-should’ve turned around and checked…

Kotori: [pensive pose] It does make sense. The assailant could easily creak open the door, and use their hand to slam Ryouta against the wall without being noticed.

Nahoko: [busy with tablet] That’s very clever, Kotori. [looks up, angry glare] Almost too clever.

Yasue: [angry, hands on hips] Hey now! Don’t just accuse someone like that!
Nahoko: [swiping on tablet, angry glare] Why shouldn’t I? She seems to know way too much, and unless you’ve got evidence to the contrary, it’s our best lead!

Yasue: [annoyed expression] I’m not going to stop you, but Bertrand and I’d at least consider what happened with Hitomi’s little tangent.

Hitomi: [pouty face, crossed arms] The two of you…! Poopyheads!

Yasue: [slight smile, Bertrand buzzing in a circle] Besides, Betrand just brought up an excellent point that blows your theory out of the water.

Nahoko: [angry glare, fully focused] I’d like to see you try!

Monobear: [wide grin] Now we’re talking! A nice, heated fight! [shivers excitedly] Oh, I can’t wait to see where this goes! Upupupupu!

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Guard Shift Timetable”, “Nautical Room”, “Monobear File”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Pablo’s Revolver”

Yasue: [slight smile, Bertrand buzzing in a circle] I’ll be upfront with you all. Only Benito could KO Ryouta.

Wataru: [stern expression, crossed arms] But Benito’s the victim, isn’t he? Are you implying a suicide?

Yasue: [frowns, defensive pose] No, no, I’m arguing who the killer is here. They can be two separate people. I’m only saying Benito is the one who knocked out Ryouta.

Nahoko: [swiping at tablet, sneering] I’m only hearing legless claims so far… [closes tablet, intense glare] Get proof or get out!
Yasue: [annoyed expression] Alright already! My point is, any would-be killer would have to encounter Benito before reaching the Nautical Room.

Bertrand: Bzzzz! Bzz!

Yasue: [looks charmingly at Bertrand circling her head] They wouldn’t have long before Benito got suspicious, so they’d have to kill Benito right there in the hall. If Ryouta was still conscious when that happened, he’d confront and discover the killer within seconds.

Satoko: [pensive pose] And Ryouta can’t be knocked out before the mord, so, only Benito had access to that door behind him.

Yasue: [smile] See?

Bertrand: Bzzzzz…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E2, T4

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] You sure, amic? It seems pretty airtight to me.
Takito: Well, I do kind of have to agree, but there’s one thing that sticks out at me.

Yasue: [puzzled expression, Bertrand lands on head] Really?

Takito: Well, if Benito was killed in the Timeline Hall, why is he hanging upside down in the Nautical Room?

Kotori: [taps fingers] He has a point. It’s a lot of work for no gain, at least none we could see right now.

Pablo: [troubled expression] But… that wouldn’t happen unless Benito moved into the Nautical Room of his own accord, and that’s a blatant violation of guard duty!

Chiyo: [annoyed expression, taps wand on shoulder] You know, we are talking about Benito the gun thief. “Blatant violations” aren’t strong disincentives to him.

Wataru: [frowns, nervous sweat] I never should’ve trusted someone who looks up to the moral fiber of pirates… [crying slightly] How could I be such a fool?

*They have great points, but…*

Takito: I’m just not sure. Benito may have stolen the gun, but only because he thought it was right. There isn’t really any moral justification to skipping out on guard duty.

Kotori: [pensive pose] For the theory to work, though, Benito still has to have gone into the Nautical Room. Can you think of a reason?

Takito: I’ll try…

(“Benito wanted to meet someone there” / “Benito wanted to murder someone” / “Benito to check out the exhibit”)

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Takito: Benito had to waiting for someone, someone who could help put an end to Kibogaman.

*It’s not hard evidence, but it’s the only thing I can see him doing.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose, angry glare] So, that’s a possible two murders caused by “appointments” now. [pauses] As soon as this is over, private meetings are banned!

Itsumi: [intense stare] Al-r-r-right! Whoever sch-scheduled this meeting—

Takito: I’d save your breath. Whoever did make the appointment is probably the killer, and there’s no way they’d just admit that.

Wataru: [invested] But, wait, haven’t we agreed that Kibogaman is the killer here, not this “mysterious meeting” fellow? Could Kibogaman really be innocent this time?

Tamaki: [smiles] How are you certain they are not one in the same?


Chiyo: [puzzled expression] Wait, what do you even mean Tamaki? They’re the same person?

Tamaki: [smiles] Have I neglected to explain again? My bad.

**NON-STOP DEBATE**
Tamaki: [smiles] To begin with, “appointment” is probably not the best way to describe what I think happened. Only Kibogaman knew his own identity, so trying to meet with him would be impossible.

Chiyo: [crosses arms, displeased] I’m still confused. How do you have a planned meeting with getting to plan it?

Tamaki: [chuckles] I thought you of all people would realize what their message was, seeing as you were there for it.

Chiyo: [confused expressions] You don’t mean…? This meeting is when Kibogaman came to kill the gun thief!

Tamaki: [smiles] Exactly! Benito is the gun thief, after all.

Okita: [concentrates on rose] Benito must’ve wanted a secluded area to defend himself. [squints and focuses] He would wait for Kibogaman to appear, and then attack! Benito must’ve been shot trying to shoot first.

Wataru: [pensive pose] Kibogaman would never shoot someone without proof of mal-intent. I’m afraid Benito drawing the gun would be interpreted that way…

Tamaki: [frowns] Yes, and this fear for one’s life might be the reason Benito was shot twice. I can’t really see a reason why there’d be two shots, otherwise.

Pablo: [face in hands] This whole murder… It could’ve been avoided through proper communication.

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Okita: [looks up at Takito] Really? Today’s just not my day.

Takito: [confused] Is he joking with me? [shakes head] Let’s think about this. You claim that Benito tried to draw his gun on Kibogaman, and this is what caused him to get shot.

Okita: [raises eyebrow, smirk] Yeah, what of it?

Takito: If that were true, though, Pablo’s gun would be out to Benito’s side, and fall right next to him. Yet, where did we find the gun? [slams table] In his pocket!

Satoko: [shrugging] So? Kibogaman just put the gun there. Problema resuelto.

Takito: But if he did, something else doesn’t make sense.

(The body’s position / Kibogaman’s code of honor / The location the gun was found)

11: 231311231321231212312

Takito: [determined expression] Kibogaman may have killed Benito, but he didn’t do so out of greed
or a chance to escape. Kibogaman follows a strict code of honor. Why would someone trying to rid the group of danger place the gun back on the body? It doesn’t make—

Nahoko: **DON’T EVEN START WITH THAT SHIT!**

**CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT**


Takito: I thought it was pretty good shit, myself.

Nahoko: [spins shelf, thoughtful pose] Well, I maybe can get behind the “why did he leave the gun thing”, [angry glare] but you’ve forgotten something. Something big.

Takito: Eh?

Nahoko: [self-assured smile] Kibogaman may not have taken the gun, but he sure made off with the bullets. Guns are useless without them, unless you prefer pistol-whipping to shooting.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] With the silencer on, even that’s not really dangerous.

Nahoko: [grins] Not to mention, if Kibogaman was caught with gun, they’d be discovered immediately. **Simply taking all the bullets** was much more efficient, and easier to hide.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Everyone, turn out your pockets!

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m afraid they’re probably been disposed of…

**CROSS SWORDS END, SOLUTION BELOW**
Takito: I’LL CUT THAT CLAIM TO PIECES! Kibogaman couldn’t have taken all the bullets.

Nahoko: [shrugs, shelf spinning] Really? Six bullets were in it before it was stolen, nobody’s heard it fired, and when we found it again, six bullets were missing. Please, tell me why I shouldn’t take this golden opportunity.

Takito: Pablo inspected his gun, that’s why. And he found dirt in the barrel.

Chiyo: [nonchalant] Benito’s kind of a dirty guy. That’s not surprising.

Kotori: [tilts head] Chiyo, do you not know what a dirty gun barrel means?

Nahoko: [shock]

Chiyo: [puzzled expression] …That the barrel is dirty? [points wand playfully at Kotori] If you haven’t noticed, I don’t use guns in my line of work.

Pablo: [serious mode] A filthy gun barrel means the gun was fired. [frustration] I can confirm that the gun was full and perfectly clean before I lost it.

Nahoko: [pulls at shirt collar] And I argued myself why it couldn’t have been fired before the murder, yet my photos of the crime scene prove it couldn’t have been fired into the Nautical Room’s walls, either. [seething] Dammit! Where did he fucking shoot!

Itsumi: [fidgeting with rock] Are y-you sure you g-got everything, N-nahoko?

Nahoko: [seething mad] Every wall, floor, and ceiling panel. [slams shelf, devices fall] Dammit!
Okita: [turned around, thoughtful] That doesn’t leave us with many options.

If I want to help out, I'll have to get creative on this one…

What was Pablo’s gun shot into…?

(“Nautical Room Pool” / “Kibogaman” / “Benito”)

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10:1233211231231231222132112

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If Kibogaman were shot, they’d be bleeding out right about now. And if Benito were shot from a normal pistol, there’d also be bleeding that isn't there…

Takito: [determined smile] …So that leaves only one place. A place bullets could go, but not cameras…

Takito: Do you think somebody shot into the pool?

Ryouta: [moves head back] The p-pool?

Takito: It’s the only place that makes sense. Nahoko’s camera can cover a lot of area, but the water the model boat floats in is incredibly murky, and I don’t think she would submerge it.

Nahoko: [adjusts shelf suspenders] All of my devices are custom made by professionals. Even with the all the yen flowing through my investment group, replacing them would be costly.
Wataru: [looks down, touching forehead] It would have to be there, then. [mumbling, sighs] Where is your spine, Gensai? [sighs]

Chiyo: [stem expression, points wand] Wait, that makes no sense at all! Why would Benito fire into a pool? Kibogaman would’ve come from the complete opposite direction!

Hitomi: [pouty face] If an explanation doesn’t make sense, it’s useless! There’s no way Benito would shoot the pool!

Kotori: [smile] Regardless of how much sense it makes, the evidence is pretty clear. The gun was full and clean beforehand, empty and dirty afterwards, and there’s only one place someone could shoot into and not get discovered. We really ought to be considering a scenario where shooting the pool does make sense.

Satoko: [frustrated, hand in hair] The only way it would make sense is if he hit the piscina missing Kibogaman. But that would mean Kibogaman had to be between Kibogaman and the pool.

Yasue: [focused] You guys think maybe Kibogaman was invited in?

Pablo: [intense expression] Why would anyone invite a killer inside?

Yasue: [annoyed expression] I mean before he revealed himself. Benito didn’t know the danger until Kibogaman was right beside him.

Pablo: [pensive pose] Maybe… Yet I’m still unsure. Tamaki?

Tamaki: [frowns] I agree. This is only scenario that could happen.

Pablo: [staggers back] Are you sure, Tamaki? You seem to be frowning.

Tamaki: [frowns] It’s just, I can’t see this happening another way, but something about all this gunplay bothers me.
Itsumi: [frowns] It’s the n-noise, isn’t it?

Tamaki: [frowns] Unfortunately, correct. These gunshots would’ve made a lot of noise, yet nobody’s heard them.

Okita: [smiles, fiddles with rose] Really? I can think of at least one person who would.

Ryouta: [pulls down hat] …

Itsumi: [frowns] R-ryouta… Y-you must have h-heard something…

Ryouta: [pulls down hat] …

Wataru: [contemptful glare] You had heard a telltale noise of a murder, and done nothing. Explain yourself, or face decades of familial shaming!

Ryouta: [winces] …I’ll… I c-can talk about it. It’s s-simple, r-really…

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Hitomi’s Testimony”, “Pablo’s Revolver”, “Phoenix Rounds Information”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Monobear File”, “Tamaki’s Testimony”

Ryouta: [nervous sweats] I h-heard them. F-fairly clearly, t-too. If y-you want to kn-know, I h-heard b-both shots, a-actually. It d-didn’t make s-sense at the t-time, but one shot s-aounded m-muffled, and the other d-did not. If B-benito had his own g-gun, I g-guess it m-matches what h-happened.

Satoko: [clenches fist, incensed] Then why didn’t you do anything! Aren’t you dziennikarz supposed to be quick on the scenes?

Ryouta: [winces] …
Kotori: [stern expression] Satoko! You can’t do things like that! Do you want this testimony or not?

Satoko: [looks to the side] …Fine.

Ryouta: [wincing] I d-didn’t act because I didn’t r-realize they were g-gunshots. [gulps, stares forward] They w-were the same time you were p-playing this weird s-song, and they j-just fit so w-well with the th-theme.

Hitomi: [points to self with thumb, smug smile] That’s not just any weird song, it’s my weird song.

Chiyo: [grimaces] That’s not something to be proud of right now.

Pablo: [pressing forehead] Is this all, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [cowering] Y-yes, s-sorry… I was kn-knocked out n-not long after th-that…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E6, T2

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Ryouta: [pulls hat down] N-no I d-don’t! I c-can’t!

Kotori: [scornful look] Takito!

Takito: No, you really can. Especially with something as simple as this. You know what I’m talking
about, right, Tamaki?

Ryouta: [heavy breathing, wincing] Wh-what does he th-think I’m wr-wrong about? T-tamaki?

Tamaki: [frowns] You said that you heard two gunshots, one from Benito, and one from Kibogaman. Yet, when I examined Benito’s wounds, there were clearly two bullets in his chest.

Takito: Unless Benito shot himself, you’re one shot short of what happened, Ryouta.

Ryouta: [heaving breathing, hands on face] I h-h-heard what I h-h-h-heard!

_Huh? He’s not even trying to correct it?_

Ryouta: [heaving breathing, hands on face] I h-heard two sh-shots! One s-silenced, then one n-not!

Okita: [slams podium] Bullshit, kid! Saying it more won’t make it not obviously false!

_Ryouta’s so sure of himself, yet what he’s saying is clearly a lie. Should I trust him or keep pushing this?_

Chapter End Notes

Should he trust Ryouta or push the issue further?

If you think you know who killed Benito, comment below!
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - School Trial Part 2

Chapter Notes

And here we are! The second part of the school trial.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

[Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny – School Trial Part 2

Ryouta, what the hell have you gotten yourself into?

Tamaki: [frowns] Ryouta, your account does not match what we know transpired. You have quite a bit of explaining to do.

Nahoko: [focused on smartphone] Do you think I’ll be soft on you just because you’re demure? [drops phone, angry glare] You’ve got another think coming.

Ryouta: [wincing, shaking] I h-heard what I h-h-h-heard! T-t-two shots! [takes several photos] It’s the tr-tr-truth! Pl-please!

Wataru: [disapproval] The evidence suggests you clearly aren’t! You’ve clearly just made up the number of shots you heard!

Chiyo: [glares, aims wand] Do you have something to share, Ryouta? Shall Gaia-chan strike you down as a filthy liar?


Oh, this ain’t good for him.

It doesn’t make much sense, though; If Ryouta had something to do with the murder, he would still be able to get the number of shots right. Lying about this would be just too dumb to believe.
Itsumi: [looks down, frowns] R-ryouta…

Hitomi: [cleaning out ear, tongue out] Wait, couldn’t Kibogaman just shot Benito again later? Y’know, after Ryouta got forcibly sleepinated.

Pablo: [puzzled] Hearing a gunshot while unconscious would be somewhat difficult…

Satoko: [rolls eyes, mumbling] Somewhat?

Yasue: [crosses arms, frowns angrily] But it doesn’t make sense! Even Bertrand can’t find a reason why Kibogaman would delay his second shot like that!

Takito: Well, there is one reason…

( He needed to reload / The Phoenix Round pistol has a cooldown period / Benito appeared to die from the first shot)

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12:2313213212331231231231232212231

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Takito: Phoenix Rounds pack quite the punch. If you took one to the chest, you probably die immediately. Kibogaman might’ve made this assumption and decided to leave Benito alone.

Ryouta: [cowering] And th-then go kn-knock me unconscious…

Hitomi: [cleaning out ear, tongue out] He must’ve seen Benito trying to get up and then shot him dead.
Itsumi: [looks to the side] K-kibogaman seems so c-cold…

Wataru: [frowns] …

Kotori: [pensive pose] There’s a problem with this whole idea of a delayed second shot, though.

_Huh? Is this the first time Kotori’s opposed me in a school trial?_

Kotori: [pensive pose] Benito didn’t just sustain a flesh wound. He was shot in the chest, and probably hit a major organ. It’s a little hard to believe he wouldn’t have bled out.

Satoko: [tapping chin] Wataru, you probably know the most about these bullets. What kind of damage do these things do?

Wataru: [looks to the side, frowns] It’s like she says. Benito wouldn’t survive for very long without losing blood.

Tamaki: [neutral] So then, Hitomi’s theory fails to hold water.

Okita: [scowls, holds rose like sword] And so does Ryouta’s testimony!

Ryouta: [teeth chattering, cowering] …

_Is that really true? Something’s bothering me about these details, but I can’t put my finger on it…_

Ryouta: [teeth chattering, cowering, shivering] …

Pablo: [authoritative pose] It seems Ryouta has nothing to say in his defense. _C’mon, c’mon, c’mon! Think!_
Takito: Wait! Benito didn’t have to bleed out!

Nahoko: [staring at tablet] Give it up. [staring at Takito] You’re determined, and I admire that, but you can’t argue a lie. Ryouta’s a liar.

Takito: [slams podium] No. Do you know what the word “cauterize” means, Nahoko?

Nahoko: [drops phone, realization] Gah!

Takito: Blood vessels can get seared shut by burn wounds. If the fire from the Phoenix Rounds cauterized Benito’s blood vessels around the wound, Benito could last a whole day without bleeding out!

Tamaki: [frowns] But that’s ridiculous! You can’t just burn a wound shut instantly like that!

Wataru: [troubled expression] The Phoenix Rounds’ cleansing flames are powerful, but I’m not sure they’re that powerful, Takito.

Takito: What if I told you I had evidence not only that you can, but that Kibogaman did?
Tamaki: [frowns] Go ahead. What’s this “evidence” you speak of? I’d wager it doesn’t exist.

(“Wataru’s Testimony” / “Monobear File” / “Benito’s Corpse”)

13:2131231233212232321321312312312232122312

Takito: Take a better look at Benito’s exact cause of death.

Monobear File: “A severe burn cauterized his aorta, killing him within a few seconds.”

Takito: We know for certain that Phoenix Rounds can cauterize instantly!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hm. I’ll grant you that one. Ryouta’s off the hook for the moment.

Ryouta: [looks around] Th-thanks…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yet, without this inconsistency in Ryouta’s testimony, we don’t have any leads.

Chiyo: [tilts head] Well, we at least have Kibogaman. We could try searching for him instead just the murderer.

Itsumi: [staring down at rock] But we kn-know practically n-nothing about him! H-how are we s-supposed to f-find him out?

Satoko: [snaps fingers, snide grin] Êasca. We ask an expert. [points at Wataru] Wataru.
Wataru: [face down] …

Satoko: [snide grin] You know the most about Kibogaman, so you’re the best person to talk about him. Care to testify?

Wataru: [stares forward] …

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Kibogaman Article”, “Guard Shift Timetable”, “Monobear File”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Chiyo’s Testimony”, “Yasue’s Testimony”

Wataru: [stares forward] … There’s no need for talking about Kibogaman’s finer details.

Satoko: [shock] What?

Wataru: [incensed expression, makes fists] … Because without a doubt, Yasue is the killer!

Takito: [surprise] … Wasn’t expecting this.

Yasue: [slams podium, furrows brow, Bertrand buzzing violently in place] Shut up and focus on the actual topic! We already proved I couldn’t have attacked Ryouta!

Wataru: [closes eyes, crosses arms] I recall proof that you didn’t attack Ryouta from the hallway, [opens eyes, angry glare] but nothing that suggests you couldn’t have gone around through the Nautical Room.

Yasue: [furrows brow, Bertrand buzzing violently in place] And walk right through a party where everyone knows I’m not supposed to be? Bullshit!

Bertrand: Bz! Bz! Bz! Bz! Bz!
Wataru: [crosses arms, angry glare] Being coy doesn’t become a supposed innocent beekeeper. [makes fist] **You could’ve passed easily through the Cleaning Closet without a trace!** You shame everyone around you!

Yasue: [grumbling, looks the side] Urrgh… Believe me or not, **I didn’t leave my post.**

Wataru: [intense expression, punches the air] What are we waiting for? Sentence this liar immediately!

Tamaki: [frowns] Well, Wataru you’ve proven the possibility of Yasue being the culprit, but there’s no decisive evidence.

Ryouta: [looking around] Even I’m n-not sure why you’re sp-specifically after her…

Wataru: [determined expression] Heh. I almost forgot about that. Yasue’s certainly guilty because she didn’t react at all to the bullet sound.

Yasue: [angry expression, Bertrand buzzing violently in place] What do you even mean? **I never heard it!**

- 

Wataru: [slams podium] A likely story, to be sure. Even with the silencer, the sound of a gunshot can echo to where you were standing. And that’s not even considering the noise Ryouta’s incident must’ve made.

Yasue: [makes fists, seething, Bertrand buzzing violently in place] Screw you! You just want to get back at me for making you face the truth about Kibogaman! [knocks head] Earth to Wataru! If I, an innocent, get executed, you’ll die too!

Wataru: [heavy breathing] You’re a shameful, treacherous swine, gloating over her one moment of accuracy. [punches the air] You’re what you call Kibogaman, tenfold!

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**
Takito: I CONCUR!

Wataru: [angry glare] Siding with the obvious liar? I was under the impression you were clever, Takito.

Takito: Well, I’m not about to fail your expectations. [slams podium] Yasue could not have heard that gun shot!

Wataru: [raises eyebrow] Oh, were you able to get inside her ears?

Nahoko: [looking at phone] Wataru’s logic seems pretty solid to me. [stares at Takito] Are you really gonna try and prove such something as subjective as whether or not she heard something?

Yasue: [groaning] Look, I appreciate this, but hearing or not hearing something can be easily made up. It’s not a real argument.

Takito: I’m not going to prove that you did or didn’t. I’m going to prove that you couldn’t. [points at Ryouta] Recall Ryouta’s testimony.

[Camera gains greyscale flashback filter]

Ryouta: [wincing] I d-didn’t act because I didn’t r-realize they were g-gunshots. [gulps, stares forward] They w-were the same time you were p-playing this weird s-song, and they j-just fit so w-well with the th-theme.

[Camera returns to normal filterless state]

Takito: Ryouta specifically mentioned that the, erm, eccentric music track was playing when the shots fired. So, that means the song must’ve been obscuring Yasue’s hearing as well!
Kotori: [tapping podium] It’s not too much of a stretch to say Yasue mistook the shots for part of the song, too.

Itsumi: [clasps chest] W-wait! I w-want to be s-sure, was the song still playing for the f-final shot?

_Ek! Didn’t consider that…_

Ryouta: [biting tongue] I c-can’t tell you for s-sure, but it was st-still on when I lost c-conciousness…

_Whew…_

Pablo: [authoritative pose] So, are we all in agreement that Yasue’s name is clear?

Yasue: [angry glare, Bertrand flying loops around her] Absolutely!

Bertrand: Bzzz, Bzzz!

Wataru: [crosses arms, displeased expression] While my claims against her have been torn apart, calling her innocent right now would be unwise, to say the least. [turns back on group] Her name is far from “cleared”, by the standards of any decent citizen.

Pablo: [presses forehead] That doesn’t concern me.

_Pablo’s looking kind of worn out right now._

Hitomi: [pouty face] Doesn’t concern you? But so many lives are on the line! 13 people, a parrot, and a bee!

Monobear: [neutral pose] Monobear’s After-Death services reminds you that in the event of a mass punishment, all pets will be released into the wild. [laughing pose] Well, maybe not Bertrand. I’d like him for my private honey farm! Upupupu!
Pablo: [presses forehead] So long as Yasue does not have more suspicion over her than the others, [points, intense expression] I can safely narrow the murderer down to two people!

Tamaki: [wide eyes] What?!

Kotori: [shock] What?!

Takito: What?!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] We have overwhelming evidence that the killer is Kibogaman, and therefore male. And there are eight males among us.

[Camera pans over to each male student’s trial podium as they are the focus of the conversation]

Pablo: Ikkaku and Akinori were dead long before the trial began. Benito is the victim of the case, and there’s evidence this wasn’t a suicide. Ryouta was, with near certainty, knocked unconscious by the killer, and so can’t be the killer himself. Kotori and I can speak to Takito and Kibogaman being separate people in the same room, and Tamaki, Kotori and Takito can all tell you I can’t be Kibogaman.

[Camera returns to Pablo]

Pablo: [presses forehead] That only leaves two people. [points, intense expression] Wataru!

[camera shows Wataru staggering back for a small while, then returns to Pablo]

Pablo: [points, intense expression] and Okita!

Okita: [bites rose, bleeding lip] What the hell?

Wataru: [angry glare, crossed arms] Feigning shock, are we, you weasel?
Okita: [determined smile] I’m not the weasel here, dickweed!

NON STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Hope’s Peak Talent CD”, “Guard Shift Timetable”, “Benito’s Corpse”

Wataru: [crosses arms, displeased expression] I beg to differ. You’ve been accusing everybody at the slightest provocation! The only person who would do that would be the weasiest weasel of them all – the killer!

- 
Wataru: [crosses arms, displeased expression] Simple. I, unlike you, am not a narcissist.

Okita: [adjusts collar] Huh? I was pretty sure all of those were justified. [points rose at Wataru] I, personally, am more worried about the sole member of Kibogaman’s fan club here. You love and know about Kibogaman too much to ignore. How do we know you’re not him?

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Wataru: [crosses arms, displeased expression] Also simple. Like a good, sociable citizen, I spent time conversing with my fellow students throughout the party.

You’ll find that very easy to prove if you ask around.

Satoko: [looks to the side] I remember speaking with Wataru. It was near the end of the party, though.

Itsumi: [holds rock tight] M-me as well! Also ar-r-round that time.

Nahoko: [working on laptop] I’ll back him up. It seems all of us have met Wataru at the tail end of the party, though. Kind of strange.
Okita: [snide smile, bites rose] Woopsie. It seems your own alibi has left you a huge load of unaccounted-for time.

Wataru: [crosses arms, grumbling] I was speaking with another during the opening of the party, too… [wipes brow] It just so happens that this “another” was Benito. …I talked with for almost all the time until he was summoned for guard duty.

Okita: [snide smile, bites rose] Ohoho! The man talks, but he still only has half an alibi!

Wataru: [makes fist, stares down Okita] It’s better than none, weasel king! You’ve yet to account for yourself at all!

Okita: [bites rose, tilts head back] Eh? [stares down Wataru, grits teeth] For your information, I was leaning next to the wall by the food the entire time! …At least until I went out and found Ryouta.

Itsumi: [holds rock tight]: I s-saw Okita by the f-food… B-but he was also pretty cl-close to r-right h-hall door.

Nahoko: [working on laptop] Once again, I’ll second that.

Satoko: [looks to the side] Ja ću biti treća. It looks like both these two have semi-solid alibis for the exact time of the murder.

Tamaki: [frowns] This is quickly becoming a predicament.

Pablo: [presses forehead] Gah…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! Along with just about everyone else…

Pablo: [slams podium] How can you even object to that? It’s a general summary, not a definite fact!

Takito: [determined expression] I’d beg to differ. Satoko clearly said that the both of them had alibis. That is a definite fact, and one I’m about disprove.

Chiyo: [raises eyebrow] With the CD, of all things?

Takito: [nods] Yeah. We previously determined the murder happened while this CD was playing, but neither Wataru nor Okita have accounted for what they were doing at that time! Only before!

Wataru: [sparks fly from arm] How?!

Okita: [unexpected explosion of petals] Huh?!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] It seems the both of you were dodging the question that whole time. [slams podium] I want your real stories, now!

Wataru: [gulps, crosses arms] That music… I held me in a trance of pain, like everyone else!

Okita: [lips bleeding] It was like all the love in the world just disappeared… I couldn’t sense anything but my own pain.

Tamaki: [frowns] I don’t think corroborating these is going to be a possibility, Pablo. Nearly everyone was in this “trance of pain”.
Kotori: [worry] In other words, nobody could tell if anybody was still there or not. Anyone could have snuck out and back in without a trace. [grimaces] We’re back to where we started. Ugh.

Hitomi: [sweating, grabbing hair] Oh, at this rate, we’ll never find Kibogaman!

Ryouta: [cowering] I kn-know… It’s h-hopeless…

Kotori: [pensive pose] I wonder… Have we made a misstep somewhere along the way?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Impossible! Our logic was too sound.

Kotori: [tilts head] “Our” logic? I don’t remember it being “ours”. Could you please elaborate on “our” logic?

NON STOP DEBATE


Pablo: [authoritative pose] If I need to go over the entire case to convince you, I will. This was a carefully planned, premeditated murder. As the sworn guardian of Hope’s Peak students, Kibogaman saw Benito, who was the gun thief, as a threat. When Benito saw Kibogaman’s warning note, he realized this, and brought his gun in order to get to Kibogaman first.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Go on.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Kibogaman knew that since he was a guard, Benito could be isolated. He gained Benito’s trust, and entered the Nautical Room. Somehow, when Kibogaman was between the pool and Benito, Benito realized the culprit’s true identity, fired once at him and missed. Kibogaman then retaliated with a shot of his own, and hit Benito non-fataly. Thinking the situation was over, Kibogaman tied Benito to the mast, and went to knock out Ryouta.
Kotori: [pensive pose] But then, Benito, right?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Absolutely. **Benito was noticeably still alive when Kibogaman re-entered the Nautical Room, so Kibogaman had to finish him with his second shot.** [presses forehead] I can’t be too certain about Kibogaman returned to the Art Gallery, but I assume **he simply re-entered while the music was still playing.**

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hmm…

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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E2, T3

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Takito: YOU GOT THAT WRONG!

Pablo: [displeased, authoritative pose] Takito, that statement is a proven fact. Benito was a guard, period.

Takito: My problem isn’t with that. It’s with the idea that Kibogaman knew this. [slams podium] There’s no doubt this was planned. The warning Kibogaman left is proof of that. But how then, did Kibogaman know Benito would be a guard? It wasn’t decided until after Kibogaman left the note!

Pablo: [confused, pointing in different directions] But, then, huh?

Tamaki: [smiles] I believe what Pablo meant to say is this: What does it matter? Benito didn’t necessarily need to be the victim.

Takito: [shakes head] No. The warning note also specifically specified that Kibogaman was after the
gun thief. That’s one specific person, not just whoever might receive Benito’s guard post!

Pablo: [confused, pointing in different directions] But, this breaks just about everything about our understanding! What does this even mean?

Kotori: [smiles] What does it mean? I believe Takito has figured it out already.

*I have?*

...!

*If I haven’t, I better get started. Think, think, think…*

**LOGICAL DIVE**

What was Kibogaman counting on?

("Benito would reveal himself as the gun thief” / “Benito would be isolatable” / “Pablo would plan a party” )

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10:2313123122313132213321231231

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Who placed Benito as a guard?

("Pablo’s Party Organization Committee” / “Pablo himself” / “Benito himself” )
Who must Kibogaman be?

( “A woman” / “A guard” / “One of the party organizers” )

LOGICAL DIVE ENDS

Takito: That’s it! Kibogaman was on the Party Organization Committee!

Pablo: [staggers back] A traitor? In my committee?

Takito: It’s more likely than you think. After all, only somebody from the committee could’ve given Benito that spot as a guard.

*But if Kibogaman had to be a member of the committee, that means*…

*Oh no.*
I don’t want to say it, but I guess I have to.

Takito: [gulps] And that’s not all. With this information, I can tell you exactly who Kibogaman is! [points] **************, the jig is up! Kibogaman, the Hope’s Peak distributor of justice, could only be you!

Choose a Kibogaman!

Chapter End Notes

Who do you think is Kibogaman?

Comment Below!
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - School Trial Part 3

Chapter Notes

Huge Update Time!

I'm really proud of this one, and I've been waiting all chapter to get to this part. Hopefully, you'll see why. ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny — School Trial Part 3

Takito: [points] Ryouta Miki, the jig is up! Kibogaman, the Hope’s Peak distributor of justice, could only be you!


Okita: [smug smile] Told ya! [fiddles with rose] If you had just listened to me…

Kotori: [scowls] Takito!

Takito: [shakes head] I'm sorry Kotori, but Okita's right this time.

[camera cuts to a still image of the six committee members over a plan diagram]

Takito: There were six people on that committee. I saw personally that you weren’t Kibogaman, Pablo and Tamaki were together when he first appeared, and Chiyo and Itsumi were together when he dropped his warning note. That leaves only one person with the power to place Benito near the Nautical Room, and we all know who that is.

[camera returns to the courtroom]
Pablo: [wide eyed, mouth open] I can’t believe this! Such a small person, Kibogaman?

Tamaki: [smiles] With today’s modern technology, there are plenty of ways to artificially buff one’s physique. It could appear especially convincing under the kind of full-body suit Kibogaman wears.

Pablo: [wide eyed, mouth open] Still, I, I can’t hardly believe this!

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, nervous sweat] D-d-don’t! It’s n-n-n-ot tr-tr-true! [angry glare, shaking] I n-n-ever m-m-made any s-s-sort of pr-pr-proposal l-like th-that at the c-c-committee!

Yikes, I really got to him…

Nahoko: [spins shelf, concentrating] Is this true, Pablo? Can we verify if he actually pushed for Benito as a guard at the planning?

Pablo: [presses forehead] I didn’t really expect something like this… I didn’t make a transcript, and I don’t remember exactly who did what…

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, heavy breathing] I d-d-didn’t… [shakes head violently] I D-DIDN’T D-DO ANYTHING!

Chiyo: [calm, tapping wand against hand] Well, somebody did Ryouta, and by process of elimination, it’s you.

Ryouta: [angry glare, heavy breathing] N-n-no..! B-b-benito n-never n-needed t-to be a g-guard!

Takito: But—

Kotori: [motions to stop] Hold on. Let’s a least let him defend himself.

In my experience, he’s just going to dig himself a bigger hole…
Ryouta: [grasping camera tight, stern expression] Th-there’s no w-way around it. K-kibogaman was after the g-gun th-thief, Benito. B-but even if B-benito wasn’t a g-guard, there are t-two ways the m-murder could still h-happen.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Two? There’s hardly one!

Ryouta: [cowering, hides behind camera] Eep! …Erm, the f-first one is pr-pretty simple. The murderer would have to be the guard instead. [grabs camera, looks around nervously] Th-the other w-way would b-be to use the C-cleaning C-closet as the sc-scene of the cr-rime.

Chiyo: [aiming wand, stares at Ryouta] But the Cleaning Closet is way too close to the party, and being one of the guards would get the killer expected immediately!

You’re just lying again!

Ryouta: [cowers] I d-did not l-ly! I d-d-d-didn’t!

Tamaki: [smiles] Clearly, these flaws are what kept these plans from being the killer’s first choice.

Still, are they enough to absolve Ryouta? He still hasn’t entirely proved anything.

Ryouta: [shaking, gripping camera tightly] T-takito… I c-can’t b-believe you w-would do this to m-me… I tr-trusted you…

Takito: I’m sorry, but at this point, I have to suspect you.

Ryouta: [shaking, gripping camera tightly] I c-can’t b-believe it… After all th-that t-time I sp-spent, w-worrying about y-you when K-kibogaman left that n-note… I c-cCouldn’t see y-you, s-so I th-
I thought you had died... [looks straight at Takito] I was so happy to see you when you came!

Maybe I am being too harsh... But if Ryouta’s hiding something, it has to come out now. I may need to open another way into the truth.

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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E6, T5

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Takito: I CONCUR!

Ryouta: [sighs, drops shoulders] Wh-who...?

Pablo: [staggers back] Wait, what? Aren’t you supposed to object to everything? What was the point of this testimony?

Takito: I wouldn’t celebrate yet, Ryouta. All I’m saying is that worry you described is one of the many pieces of evidence currently saying you’re Kibogaman.

Ryouta: [cowering, shaking, grips camera tightly] H-how did you turn kindness on its head like that...?

Takito: It was kind, and I thank you. But you seemed to know a little too much. [turns to Wataru] Wataru, do you remember how Kibogaman navigates himself to the scenes of injustice?

Wataru: [salutes] Absolutely! Kibogaman uses his acute “shark sense” to detect nearby danger!
Takito: “Shark sense”, though, is just the flashy name for it, though. In reality, it’s the long-range ability to detect…

( “Fearful Sweat” / “Bloodshed” / “Violent Movement” )

Takito: All the times Kibogaman’s appeared, it’s always been following a cut or a scrape. Just as a shark can sense a drop of blood in thousands of liters of ocean, Kibogaman can sense bloodshed several meters away.

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, shock] …

Pablo: [staggers back] I don’t exactly follow here… What does this have to do with Ryouta?

Takito: Right before meeting Ryouta that time, I had accidentally pricked my finger.

Pablo: [raised eyebrow] Again? Do I have to give you blade-resistant gloves?

Takito: …Ehh… [shakes head “no”] My… clumsiness is not the point here. The point is that only someone who could sense bleeding, but not tell where it’s coming from, would be under the impression somebody had died!

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, nervous sweating] I j-just was w-worried about y-you, b-because y-you hadn’t sh-shown up! [rapidly taking photos] It w-w-was a d-d-d-dangerous t-t-time!

Kotori: [frowns, looks down] Ryouta… Don’t lie.

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, shock] H-huh?
Kotori: [frowns, stares at Ryouta] Nobody else was worried. Passing that off as a natural fear is ridiculous.

Yasue: [hands on hips, angry expression] And why were only worried about Takito! Other people were in “danger” too!

Takito: Ryouta. Are you or are you not Kibogaman?

Ryouta: [grips camera tightly, nervous sweating] Y-your evidence… It’s n-not d-definitive…

Takito: But—

Ryouta: N-NO B-BUTS!

**CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT**

Evidence Blades: “Wataru’s Testimony”, “Chiyo’s Testimony”, “Itsumi’s Testimony”, “Kibogaman’s Abilities”, “Kibogaman Article”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, heavy breathing] Th-there’s n-no way I’m K-Kibogaman! N-not wh-when I’m already SH-SH-SHSL R-reporter!

Takito: Huh?

*I’m not exactly familiar with the school…*

Takito: Is it not possible to have multiple titles?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Unlike you, it seems, I have done my fair share of research. I can confirm that, yes, no one student can hold two SHSL titles.
Takito: [nervous smile] Thanks…? [regains composure] Anyway, how can I still be sure Kibogaman isn’t just a hobby for you?

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, intense stare] K-kibogaman is official! H-hope’s P-peak’s T-talent Listings has him as th-their SHSL S-superhero! It c-can’t be j-just a s-s-side pr-project!

Takito: Wouldn’t that mean someone knows his secret identity?

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, intense stare] N-n-n-no! He’s l-listed under “K-kibogaman”, and only th-that!

Takito: [determined smile] If Hope’s Peak doesn’t know, though, it means someone could break the “one talent per person” rule completely undetected!

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, shock] I-l-I-I… [grips camera tight] N-none of th-that m-matters! W-with my p-position, I w-wouldn’t have enough t-time to f-fight cr-crime! I’ve g-got to wr-write my articles and r-research!

Takito: Does it really take that long?

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, intense expression] H-hours! H-hours and h-hours of l-legwork!


CROSS SWORDS END, SOLUTION BELOW

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E2, T1
Takito: I’LL CUT THAT CLAIM TO PIECES! Aha! I think I’ve finally unraveled this little conspiracy!

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, nervous sweating] I c-can’t make m-more t-time, Takito. You c-can’t ch-challenge th-that!

Takito: [determined smile] Has anyone here heard the expression “two birds with one stone”?

Monobear: [laughing pose] I have! But usually, a shotgun is better. Upupupupu!

Thank you, peanut gallery…

Takito: [determined smile] What I mean is, with one action, you can do two jobs. For example, someone who was fighting crime often could easily get material for investigating reporting, no?

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, gulps] …

Kotori: [puzzled expression] Are you suggesting Kibogaman’s some sort of cover for investigating?

Takito: Absolutely. At least, partially. [pensive pose] It also would explain why Kibogaman always rushes ahead; he wants to survey the scene untouched.

Satoko: [slams podium] I’m for catching Kibogaman as much as anyone, but isn’t this just theorizing? You’ll need a bit more proof to convince me, kolega!

Takito: This brings me to what Chiyo told me earlier.

[flashback to a black-and-white image of Chiyo in the Nautical Room]
Chiyo: [bites lip in anger, crosses arms] Yeah, one time we cooperated trying to take down an illegal and destructive operation by the Kuzuryuu yakuza family.

[returns to the trial]

Takito: Chiyo, could you elaborate more on what that mission was for?

Chiyo: [discomforted, fiddling with wand] In an effort to minimize the damage industries do the environment, factories need to purchase expensive “permits” to pollute. [aiming wand, pouty face] It’s a huge cop-out if you ask me, but anyway, the Kuzuryuus were illegally and irresponsibly printing fake ones to sell to cheapskate businesses and pocketing the cash. Kibogaman busted their printing press pretty good, but almost everyone got away…

Takito: If that’s the case, I can definitively connect Kibogaman to Ryouta with this article!


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9:3213221312132131231231231231

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Takito: It says right your biography, Ryouta. “His personal choice for his best accomplishment is his shocking exposé of the Kuzuryuu family’s illegal printing and selling of counterfeit pollution permits.” There’s no way you could’ve gotten enough information for an “exposé” after it was raided unless you were there!

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, shock] Egh! Y-y-you… Y-you’re f-forgetting…

Takito: Huh?

Okita: [bites rose, poses] Aw, poor kid. He doesn’t know when he’s beat.
Ryouta: [grips camera tight, heavy breathing] I d-don’t only wr-write cr-crime articles! I d-do ph-photos and also act as h-head ed-d-ditor! Anyway y-you look at it, a sch-schedule w-with all these t-tasks d-doesn’t add up!

Takito: Ack!

Okita: [sweating, lip bleeds] Aw, poor me.

_I didn’t think of that! All the evidence is pointing to him, but he’s still right about his timetable._

Kotori: [stern expression] Takito.

Takito: Uh, yeah?

Kotori: [stern expression] I know he’s Kibogaman. We all do. But he’s got us trapped under some sort of assumption. [stares directly at Takito] Destroy the assumption, and you can discover what really allows Ryouta be both of these things.

_Assumption? Alright, I have to go back and remove one of my thoughts. Something where everything still makes sense if I take it away…_

(“Kibogaman is one person”, “Ryouta is the SHSL Journalist”, “Ryouta is Kibogaman”)

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10:23123131221323312113212321123

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_Bingo!_
Takito: Ryouta, I apologize. You were correct the first time.

Ryouta: [shoulders relax] Th-thank y-you…

Wataru: [crosses arms] Hm? You do all this grandstanding, yet lack the courage of your convictions? [makes fist] What are you even doing here?

Takito: I didn’t say he was right about not being Kibogaman. He was only right about not having two roles. [slams podium] The truth is, Ryouta Miki is not, and never has been the SHSL Journalist!

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, gaping mouth] Wha-wha-wha-wha—

Pablo: [slams podium, scowls] Lies, lies, lies! You read the paper, didn’t you? He’s written several articles, and even has a biography! I don’t know if you’re familiar with this school, but a SHSL Talent isn’t just something you can make up!

Takito: [shakes head “no”] Of course Ryouta couldn’t have made it up. But the school can. I’ve been reading quite a few of these articles over the past few days, it’s pretty clear to me now; none of them sound like Ryouta.

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, nervous sweating] S-so…?

Takito: You didn’t write them, did you? [points] The “Ryouta Miki” writing these articles is a ghostwriter, and the real SHSL Journalist!

Ryouta: [accidentally takes photo, gaping mouth] …

Itsumi: [angry expression, grips rock tight] W-wait, all of this m-makes zero s-sense! Th-there’s no w-way this sch-school would do th-this, and wh-why would this gh-ghostwriter even agree to b-being unknown!

Takito: No, I definitely think both the school the real writer would do this. By creating a false
identity, they create the ultimate cover for the man who protects their grounds and collects exclusive scoops! [points] Isn’t that right, Ryouta Miki?


Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Ryouta…?

Ryouta: [picks up camera] You, no, nobody was… [presses button on camera, dispensing a smoke bomb, revealing Kibogaman in costume] No-no… [clutches chest] NOBODY WAS SUPPOSED TO KN-KN-KNOW!

Pablo: [staggers back] Ry-ryouta! Now you’re making me stutter!

Wataru: [wide-eyed, defensive stance] All this time… I never would’ve guessed…

Yasue: [almost falls over, Bertrand stops moving and falls] Howinthe—

Ryouta: [clutches chest] They made me sw-swear! Never r-reveal yourself! [holds head in hands] And I’ve d-done it!

Okita: [adjusts collar] Hey now! You can’t be more worried about that than the murder you’re accused of! What do you have to say for yourself.

Yeah, almost forgot this wasn’t a trial for Kibogaman’s identity there.

Ryouta: [clutches chest] I killed that man! I shot him dead! [slams podium] In the name of justice, execute me now!

The hell?

NON-STOP DEBATE

Ryouta: [heroic pose] This is how it happened. **Two days ago, I witnessed Benito take the revolver right out of Pablo’s pocket.** I knew then he was a threat, and one that must be cut down for the protection of Hope’s Peak’s student body.

Chiyo: [angry glare, aiming wand at Ryouta] So, you had to scare us to death when you left that warning note, huh?

Ryouta: [ducks] M-my apologies. It is never the goal of a sentinel like myself to frighten the innocent… [heroic pose] But I had hoped to prepare you a bit better after seeing everyone’s reactions to my direct approach…

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] You were going to kill someone! No one cared about your approach!

Ryouta: [ducks] That’s becoming very a-apparent… Anyways, during my shift, I told Benito I had found something suspicious with the knots in the Nautical Room. [neutral pose] I had actually taken two of them earlier, but he didn’t know that. **Once he was inside, I got him to face me, and then shot him.** Benito had struck me a worthy foe, so I shot him twice to make sure.

Hitomi: [drops shoulders] Whew… So my special musical surprise wasn’t part of your plan? Yay!

Ryouta: [crosses arms] That was purely luck. Though, Monobear might’ve had something to do with it…

Hitomi: [quivering lip] Awww…

Ryouta: [heroic pose] After that, **I took Pablo’s gun off Benito and fired all the bullets into the pool.** Once fired, bullets can’t be used, after all. [touches the tips of his fingers, hunches over] I then tried to make an example of Benito by tying him up like that. **Other than that, I left the crime scene alone.**
Itsumi: [stares downward] W-weren’t you th-thinking of us…?

Ryouta: [ducks] I’m so s-sorry! I wasn’t thinking about consequences at the time…! [grabs head] I only r-realized I was in danger afterwards. I changed out of my costume and used all my force to knock my head against the wall. It still hurts a bit…

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] Serves you right! [adjusts collar] If this confession is to be believed, voting ought to start soon…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E4, T6

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! [slams podium] Ryouta!

Ryouta: [stands at attention] Yes, sir!

Takito: Why in the world would you lie in your confession?

Ryouta: [beats chest, proud pose] I h-have not! Not at all!

Tamaki: [frowns] Takito, think this over. There is no reason why somebody would want to fib a confession.

Takito: Yeah, that’s what so strange about what I noticed. If what Ryouta says is true… Benito’s hat is in the wrong place.
Chiyo: [displeased, holds wand at the ready] It’s under his head, though, right? That’s exactly where it should be!

Kotori: [pensive pose] In every version of how the case went down, though, Benito is always tied up after he gets killed, and Ryouta specifically testified he didn’t touch anything but the body and the gun. [casually points] Ryouta’s confession would suggest it be on floor near where he was originally killed.

Ryouta: [heroic pose] That’s right! [points dramatically, scarf flutters] I shot him while he was near the model boat! That’s why it was there!

Takito: [shakes head no] Sorry, no dice. This, right here, proves you didn’t kill him there!

(“Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Benito’s Hat”, “Model Ship”)

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Takito: Ryouta, you just said you had killed when he was inspecting the wall of knots. [points] That’s nowhere near the model ship!

Ryouta: [clutches chest, scarf flutters violently] N-n-ngh! Well… erm… I lied.

Pablo: [staggers back] What? Are we serious? I thought we were done!

Nahoko: [scowls] Are you trying to get us all killed? [rage] You’re a disgrace to your uniform! Relinquish your title before I tear it out of you!
Ryouta: [ducks] N-no! I lied to save you all! [shaking, stands upright] All you needed to know was that I was guilty!

Kotori: [confused] What?!

Ryouta: [shaking] I, in a mistaken lapse of my heroism, shot and killed Benito Kasai! That’s all that matters!

Kotori: [tilts head] Is that the truth?

Ryouta: [shaking] Ab… Ab… [points dramatically, scarf flutters] Absolutely!

Kotori: [tilts head] So why didn’t you just tell us the truth, then? The fact that you shot Benito is included, right?

Ryouta: [heroic pose] The truth… is not the truth! I cannot be trusted!

Okita: [stares intently, rose droops] …The fuck?

Ryouta: [grabs head] Things that I remember… [heroic pose, scarf flutters] They cannot possibly be true! For you have so valiantly disproven them earlier!

Nahoko: [grimaces, drops phone] …The hell?

Takito: What do you even mean?

Ryouta: [grabs head] I remember all sorts of things that contradict the facts! [touches the tips of his fingers] But I did k-kill Benito, and that’s important! I thought if I told you the tr-truth, you’d point out the flaws in it and make everyone convict someone else… [ducks] I don’t want to be alone!

Monobear: [sighs] Well, you’re certainly boring.
Takito: Ryouta, I think you should tell us this “truth” anyway. *Have to admit, I have a little bit of a morbid curiosity right now.*

Ryouta: [touches the tips of his fingers] Okay… But this is the absolute truth this time. Don’t just tell me I’ve got it wrong if something doesn’t line up!

*He has a point. I don’t want to waste anyone’s time, so I’ll have to be selective. I shouldn’t bring up a contradiction unless it’s something we haven’t gone over before.*

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

**Evidence Bullets:** “Benito’s Hat”, “Support Rope”, “Benito’s Corpse”, “Pablo’s Revolver”, “Monobear File”, “Model Boat”, “Hope’s Peak Talent CD”

Ryouta: [heroic pose] First of all, **I didn’t leave that note.**

Itsumi: [holds rock tight, scowls] Wh-what?! B-but I saw you!

Ryouta: [ducks] I was there, but I didn’t leave the n-note! I have no idea how it got there. [stands upright, touches the tips of his fingers] So when, the party rolled around, I was actually just as worried as everyone else…

Chiyo: [aims wand, pouty face] Enough about that! What happened at the party? Don’t forget, you’re still on watch by all of us!

Ryouta: [heroic pose, quivering] At first, it was normal and peaceful. Then, **I sensed someone bleeding in the Nautical Room,** and rushed over to help. [hands on head] When I got there, **Benito was already hanging upside down on the rope!** I thought someone had already killed him!

Pablo: [slams podium] Preposterous! How does that even happen?

Tamaki: [smiles] Now, now. Let’s wait for context before passing judgement.
Ryouta: [heroic pose, quivering] That’s not even the most s-surprising thing! [points dramatically, scarf fluttering] Soon after I entered, Benito came to life and began firing at me! [ducks] My reflexes as SHSL Superhero k-kicked in, and then, I sort of, erm, shot him, but only once.

Yasue: [crosses arms, angry stare] This big mighty superhero, frightened by a mere one-man ambush? Feh.

Kotori: [pensive pose] How certain are you that you killed him?

Ryouta: [hands on head] V-very. He was drooped like a dead body after I shot him, and I fired at his heart, exactly as the Monobear File said. The only thing that didn’t fall was his hat, though I guess that fell later.

If Ryouta told the truth this time, he seems like more the victim than the killer.

Takito: That must’ve been a tough sight for you, huh?

Ryouta: [ducks] I was so scared… I left the room immediately after seeing Benito die. It seems really weird, because I’m a s-superhero, but I’ve never felt more powerless in my life…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E2, T3

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Ryouta: [holds head in hands] D-do you still think I’m lying? I swear on my honor as Kibogaman, I’m for real this time!
Takito: I do, I do. But there’s something about your testimony that can’t be explained. You said Benito was already tied up to the mast when you got there, right?

Ryouta: [heroic pose] Yes, yes, yes! If I’m wrong, maybe Hope’s Peak fire me on the spot!

_They actually might after this…_

Takito: But if that’s true… Who tied up Benito?

Hitomi: [hands on hips, pouty face] He tied himself up, obviously! This is a murder trial, you know, you could stand to be little more serious!

Takito: But the knots were tied in front, and from a rod 3 meters off the ground! There’s upper body strength, and then there’s just impossibility; somebody else must’ve tied those knots!

Chiyo: [aims wand, frowns] You’re not really suggesting there was a third person in that room, are you? [thrusts wand forward] Do you need one of my Enlightenment Beams?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Erm, Chiyo, or maybe Gaia-chan, is right. We have zero evidence to suggest anyone but Ryouta and Benito entered the Nautical Room before we discovered the body.

Kotori: [pensive pose] I’d say we have plenty of evidence. [stares straight ahead] Think about all the evidence we have that contradicts what Ryouta just said. If we include a third person who “cleaned up” the crime scene, everything makes sense.

Takito: It’s not like a third person sneakily leaving the party is out of the question either. We called it possible earlier.

Okita: [scowls, holds rose like a knife] Bullshit! This is all just maybes, based on the word of someone who’s lied his ass off for the past half hour!

Ryouta: [points dramatically, scarf flutters] Th-this is the truth! I’ve only lied in service to you all,
and I promise you, I shot Benito exactly as I described!

Okita: [scowls, holds rose like a knife] Like hell you did! If what you said is true, there needed to be a third person in the room.

Chiyo: [toying with wand] Takito just proved as such.

Okita: [shrugs, bites rose] So, did you see the third person? Do you have evidence that a third person was even there? [sharp glare] That goes double for you, Takito.

Ryouta: [clutches chest] I never saw anybody else, actually… Not even a tr-trace… Let’s not drag this out any longer… Just execute m-me…

Damn… They had to be in that room, otherwise they wouldn’t know when it was safe to return. But Ryouta could’ve seen every corner…

Wataru: [thoughtful pose] …

Kotori: [pensive pose] Do you think maybe this third person hid underwater?

Okita: [shrugs, bites rose] Not likely. People tend to float, y’know.

Pablo: [massages forehead] It’s actually somewhat difficult to stay at the bottom of a pool.

Wataru: [thoughtful pose] Could it be?

So, the pool’s out of the question. That doesn’t leave many hiding spots left. There has to be one place we haven’t considered… Come on, think!

Where could a third person hide?

( “Knot Display” / “Model Ship” / “Ancient Life Preserver” )
Takito: Wait, there’s definitely a way! The Model Ship has a hidden lower deck. It’s not spacious, but someone could definitely squeeze themselves in.

Okita: [looks to the side, dejected] Feh. It’s not solid evidence, but it’s possible. You win, I guess.

Wataru: [thoughtful person] This person… they’re acting very oddly. They’re helping Benito to his death, and making their presence hidden from their fellow classmates.

Kotori: [confused expression] You’re not suggesting what I think you are, are you?

Takito: Oh, I think he is.

Wataru: [valorous pose] This third person was the culprit all along! Kibogaman, the innocent cruelly beaten upon by the ungrateful masses, took the accusations admirably, and was even willing to die for his companions! [crying] Kibogaman, how can I ever repay the disservice I have done to you with my doubt! I will follow you into righteous battle for ever and ever and ev—

Ryouta: [ducks] St-stop! In the name of Hope’s Peak, I can’t stand to disappoint you anymore!

Wataru: [staggers back] Huh?

Ryouta: [holds head in hands] No one can replicate the Phoenix Rounds, okay? Nobody could’ve killed Benito but me.

Wataru: [crying] But… But…
Replicate the Phoenix Rounds? If you wanted to frame Kibogaman for murder, it's something you'd probably have to do, but it's pretty hard for any of us...

Wait, maybe not that person...

Takito: [determined smile] Ryouta, don’t give up yet.

Ryouta: [staggers back] What? But, I just told you,—

Takito: [determined smile] One among us has the means to make their own Phoenix Rounds, and used them this evening to murder Benito and frame you for it. [points at ????????????] And that one is you!

Choose a Culprit!

Chapter End Notes

The culprit is revealed next time! Make your final guesses as to who killed Benito!
Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny - School Trial Part 4

Chapter Notes

Special circumstances have let me get this one out extra fast, and it looks like the next one can come out quick too!

Here's the penultimate update of Chapter 2!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny — School Trial Part 4

Takito: [points at the culprit] And that one is you! Chiyo Ando, you’re behind this crime!

Chiyo: [snickers, covers mouth] Really? Me? [aims wand at Takito] I’m probably the one who’s least connected to this crime. And besides, Gaia-chan is sworn to protect the Earth and it’s inhabitants!

Takito: [shakes head no] I beg to differ. [slams podium] You’ve been holding a wand with you the entire time we’ve been here. I don’t know the specifics of it, but back when you shot down that bucket, I learned it could shoot fiery blasts.

Ryouta: [staggers back] J-just like the Phoenix Rounds…!

Chiyo: [crosses arms, pouty face] … [sparkles, graceful pose] My heat blasts are much more sophisticated! And unlike yours, I never killed Benito with them!

Wataru: [combat pose] Ah, it’s a rivalry between superheroes gone too far! I can see it no; you were jealous of Kibogaman’s devotion to justice, and needed him out of the picture!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Quit running your mouth! Chiyo is an upstanding individual, and could never have committed this crime! [valorous pose] Why, she’s so upstanding, I nominated her to my Party Organization Committee!

Chiyo: [angry glare] …
Pablo: [uncomfortable expression] Your eyes are so piercing… [makes fist, intense expression] Why are you staring like that?

Takito: It’s because you brought me to my next point. Chiyo was member of two important groups that allowed her to manipulate the circumstances to her favor.

[camera fades into an image of Pablo, Tamaki, Ryouta, Itsumi, Chiyo, and Kotori debating as part of the Party Organization Committee]

Takito: The first, as you mentioned, was the Party Organization Committee. Being a part of it gave her the ability to place Benito and Ryouta where they needed to be for the murder to work.

[camera returns to the trial]

Pablo: [drooped shoulders] Eh… I don’t know how to feel about what I did.

Tamaki: [smiles] There, there.

Takito: [determined smile] The second group, of course, was…

( “Women” / “Party Guard” / “Witness to Kibogaman Dropping the Warning” )

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[camera fades to an image of Kibogaman confronting Chiyo and Itsumi]
Takito: Chiyo was one of the two people who witnessed Kibogaman drop his warning note. Of course, as recent testimony has told us…

[camera cuts to Ryouta speaking in a black and white flashback filter]

Ryouta: [heroic pose] First of all, I didn’t leave that note.

[camera returns to the image of the confrontation]

Takito: …that might not be accurate. It’s possible that somebody at the event could’ve dropped a note earlier, and then made Kibogaman appear by creating a wound.

[camera returns to the trial]

Takito: [determined smile] A wound like the kind Itsumi received.

Chiyo: [angry glare, threatening gesture] Are you sure you want to be so forceful with that accusation? I mean, Itsumi’s in both of those groups you talked about.

Itsumi: [wincing] Ch-chiyo…

Yasue: [pissed, Bertrand buzzes violently] Are you just throwing Itsumi under the bus like that?

Chiyo: [sparkling, graceful pose] I’m simply stating all the options.

Takito: Itsumi never had the wand! [slams podium] Fact is, you’re the only one with a weapon that could imitate the Phoenix Rounds!

Chiyo: **GAIA-CHAN REBUTTAL BLAST!**

**CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT**

Chiyo: [stares, aims wand at Takito] So, you really want to go forward with this, eh? In the name of Mother Earth, Gaia-chan will stop you now!

_Huh?_

Chiyo: [angry glare, threatening gesture] I won’t deny I could’ve made the burn marks, but as versatile as my wand is, it can’t make bullets from thin air. [stares, aims wand at Takito] If Benito didn’t receive a genuine Phoenix Round, where’d those bullets come from?

Takito: Huh? I thought it went without saying. You killed Benito with the blasts first, then used the bullets from Pablo’s Revolver.

Chiyo: [snickering] Pfft… Oh, you’re going to need several enlightenment beams later…

Takito: What? It makes sense, and it’s consistent with the evidence, isn’t it?

Chiyo: [waves wand dismissively] Anybody who’s even looked at a gun will tell you. There’s an obvious difference between a fired bullet and unfired cartridge.

Tamaki: [frowns] The bullets I recovered from Benito had both already been fired. Chiyo simply taking them out of the gun and sticking them into Benito would’ve rung false immediately.

Takito: Couldn’t you have just fired them first, then?

Chiyo: [waves wand dismissively] Sorry, but nobody saw bullet holes nor heard a gunshot before that terrible song tonight. _I couldn’t have shot that gun, not even into the pool, without anyone noticing._

Takito: Not even with the silencer?
Pablo: [shakes head] No, even silencers make a lot of noise. It’s less noise than normal, but very distinct and noticeable.

Gah! I thought I had her figured out…

**CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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T1, E4

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Takito: I’LL CUT THAT CLAIM TO PIECES! This is a stretch, but… If you shot inside the Nautical Room’s Pool, you definitely could’ve made the shot undetected!

Chiyo: [points wand at Takito] GAIA-CHAN ENLIGHTENMENT BEEEEAM!

Takito: What?

Chiyo: [sparkling, graceful pose] With a case this severe, I figured I had to start administering them immediately. [whacks wand against podium] We already talked about that! The noise a gunshot makes means I would’ve been heard!

Takito: [determined smile] Here’s the difference, though. You were talking about shooting into the pool. [slams podium] I was talking about shooting inside the pool!

Chiyo: [sparkles suddenly drop, wand smokes slightly as she covers it up] Huh? I? What?

Takito: I don’t know for certain, but if you fired the gun underwater, the water may have muffled the shot.
Yasue: [pensive pose, Bertrand circles around head] Can a gun even be fired underwater?

Pablo: [blushes] Mine can, at least. The gun uses the dry gunpowder and oxygen sealed within the cartridge to fire, so getting wet doesn’t matter. [presses forehead] Still, it’s not exactly good in the long-term…

Tamaki: [smiles] Not to worry. [retrieves cloth and alcohol] I can personally repair any damage the revolver might’ve received from underwater use.

Satoko: [staggers back] Zut alors! …Where do you get all this stuff?

Tamaki: [smiles] Don’t you know? “Be prepared” is the hostess’ motto.

Chiyo: [angry glare, points wand] Hey, can we all stop acting like this is some unquestionable fact!? It’s only a possibility at the moment! There’s no evidence that proves it!

Kotori: [blank stare] There’s also no evidence to the contrary. [smiles] And this is the only theory without evidence to the contrary.

Chiyo: [intense stare, holds wand tight] Oh yeah? You don’t even need evidence to end this game of make-believe! [whacks wand against podium] The killer must’ve been on a tight schedule to get everything done before the changing of the guards. So why do you think I’d spend fifteen minutes of that searching a huge, murky pool for bullets?

Takito: Well—

Chiyo: [whacks wand against podium] That was rhetorical! The answer is I couldn’t!

Takito: Not in 15, no. [points] But with this, you could find them in one!

(“Benito’s Eyepatch” / “Chiyo’s Wand” / “Bertrand the Bee” )
Takito: Benito’s eyepatch allows it’s wearer to see underwater. He was, erm, very assertive about that fact. [points] If you wore it, and I know you wore it, you could easily find all the bullets you needed underwater!

Chiyo: [fiddles with wand] …

...?

Chiyo: [fiddles with wand] …

Takito: Isn’t this the part where you get angry or call me wrong?

Chiyo: [snickering] Is that why you play Mr. Detective all the time? For the reactions? [whacks podium with wand] That’s not nearly as noble as Gaia-chan, or even that sad excuse for a guardian over there!

Ryouta: [staggers back] …!

Chiyo: [waves wand dismissively] As for why you weren’t even able to get a rise out of me; you did answer my simple in-the-moment question, but can’t solve my real underlying question. Which just so happens to be… [points wand at Takito, intense expression] …do you have any proof for any of this?

Takito: Gah!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Hmph. Chiyo raises a fine point. In a real court of law, you wouldn’t have been able to get half this far on the kind of conjecture you’re making, especially against a proud
benefit to society. [closes eyes, adjusts collar] Chiyo is both innocent, and trusted amongst this makeshift Vargas administration. [intense expression, makes fist] Let it be known; baseless accusations die here!

Chiyo: [sparkling, graceful pose] The Earth Goddess Gaia-chan is merciful. If you stop shouting and pointing willy-nilly now, all will be forgiven. [angry glare, threatening gesture] Otherwise, the forces of nature will quash you into submission so hard, you’ll never point or shout again!

She’s really gotten her hooks into Pablo now… But with how defensive she’s being, she can’t not be hiding something!

Takito: [nods] I’m willing to risk continuing.

Chiyo: [sparkling, graceful pose] Don’t say I didn’t warn you. [whacks podium with wand] The quashing begins now!

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Monobear File”, “Benito’s Corpse”, “Chiyo’s Testimony”, Pablo’s Testimony”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Pablo’s Revolver”, “Model Ship”

Chiyo: [angry glare, threatening gesture] You, Takito Narita, have spent the last several minutes making nothing but baseless accusations against the guardian of the Earth!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] You have claimed Chiyo used her own attack wand to kill Bentio. You have no proof.

Chiyo: [sparkling, graceful pose] You claimed I then shot Pablo’s gun underwater, used Benito’s eyepatch to find the bullets, and then mutilated a dead body with them! It’s horrible, but once again, [angry glare, whacks podium with wand] you have no proof!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Finally, you claim this is all part of some elaborate set up to frame Ryouta for the crime. You have proof that perhaps a third person was involved, but nothing to suggest they are the true killer.
Tamaki: [frowns] …

Chiyo: [sparkling, graceful pose] We already have a very likely suspect. **Ryouta has confessed and was especially close to the crime scene.** For someone who wants the truth, you’re fairly willing to trust the person who has repeatedly proven himself untrustworthy. [whacks podium with wand] Your insistence on believing these lies is exactly why you need to shut up!

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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T3, E2

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! [determined smile] I’ve got enough proof to blow your pigtails off!

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] You have it? Then tell us, won’t you? [pouty face] Or are you just bluffing?

Takito: This is one bluff you’ll regret calling. [slams podium] How many of us have gotten a good look at Benito’s face before the murder?

Nahoko: [using tablet] I have. Aside from that raggedy beard and eyepatch, it’s actually non-descript. You’d think there’d at least be a scar on his face somewhere from all that time on the open ocean… [spins shelf, begins typing] Maybe he’s a bit of a faker…

Takito: So, Nahoko, you’re saying Benito had no scars on his face? Not even a faint one?

Nahoko: [closes laptop, proud smile] Absolutely.
Takito: So, why was it that both Chiyo and I found one after all of us discovered the body?

Nahoko: [raises eyebrow] Really?

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] I admit it, I saw that scar then, and not before. How does this even prove anything?

Takito: [determined smile] It’s because there’s a good reason why nobody’s seen it until now. Up until tonight, that scar was actually under Benito’s eyepatch.

Chiyo: [sparkles suddenly drop, wand smokes slightly as she covers it up] …!

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Chiyo? Is something wrong?

Takito: It seems the lady of the hour has figured it out. [points] Chiyo Ando, when you put Benito’s eyepatch back on, you put it on the wrong eye!

Chiyo: [blowing out smoke coming from the wand’s tip]

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Chiyo!? What does this mean?

Chiyo: [deep breath] … [sparkles, graceful pose] Well, I wish it didn’t have to come to this. [stares straight ahead] I have a confession to make.

Pablo: [staggers back, gaping mouth] Chiyo! You… You killed someone? You betrayed us all?

Chiyo: [snickering] Oh, of course not! [sparkles, graceful pose] I have simply been more involved than I may have let on.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Excuse me?
Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] I was there, and I’ve seen a lot. I wanted, for obvious reasons, though, to distance myself from the crime scene.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Chiyo, this is a huge breach of trust. [angry glare] If you do survive this trial, you can expect to never be given positions of power under my leadership again.

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] Oh, I more than understand. But as it stands, I have some interesting testimony to share with you all. [smiles] First of all, Ryouta is the killer. I had hoped to have him convicted without dragging my experiences out, but oh well.

Ryouta: [ducks] Ch-chiyo…

Wataru: [mumbling] Lying, murderous wench…

Is she telling the truth now, or is this just another carefully crafted lie? Whatever it is, it looks like she’s prepared it from the beginning. If there’s a crack in her story, it’ll be well, well hidden.

NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “Pablo’s Testimony”, “Chiyo’s Testimony”, “Ryouta’s Testimony”, “Model Ship”, “Hope’s Peak Talent CD”, “Monobear File”, “Benito’s Hat”

Chiyo: [smiles, fiddles with wand] As Gaia-chan, I am sworn to serve and protect Earth and it’s inhabitants. So, when Benito came to me with a plan to kill Kibogaman for the good of the group, I couldn’t refuse.

Wataru: [staggers back] Benito…! [makes fist, angry glare] He would never take up arms against justice incarnate like that!

Hitomi: [cleaning out ear, tongue out] I’m not sure. He seemed eager to catch him up until, well, you know.
Chiyo: [smiles, fiddles with wand] I didn’t believe him at first, but after he showed me the revolver he stole from Pablo, I knew he was serious. He told me to bait Kibogaman into coming, and then drop a fake warning note to help his plan succeed. [angry glare] As some of you have theorized, I did.

Pablo: [nervous sweating, running fingers through hair] Why would you..? You are sworn to protect, and yet you’re deceiving us and assisting in a murder? [makes fist, intense expression] I can’t believe it; two superheroes today, both of them corrupt!

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] Please, relax. Benito was going to confess after the murder was over. All he wanted was to put an end to the danger Kibogaman was putting us in.

Pablo: [turns back on Chiyo] Hmph.

Chiyo: [smiles, fiddles with wand] Earlier tonight, he spoke with me and told me his plans for the party. As soon as it was his turn to be guard, I was to meet with him in the Nautical Room and tie him to the mast like he is now. Then, I had to hide in the ship’s lower deck and listen for when the gunfight was over. I thought having him be tied up was strange, but he insisted it was to catch Kibogaman off-guard.

Okita: [chuckles, spins rose stem in mouth] What? How is that supposed to surprise someone?

Ryouta: [holds head in hands] I-It got me, okay!

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] Of course, curiosity kind of got to me. I peeked out through the holes in the planks, and saw Kibogaman as she shot Benito dead, right in front of me. [frowns] At that point, I panicked. This clearly wasn’t part of Benito’s plan. I waited for Kibogaman to leave, and then left the lower deck of the ship, and thought about ways I could get Kibogaman to trip up in the class trial.

Kotori: [pensive pose] You were very desperate not to talk about your involvement, weren’t you?

Chiyo: [angry glare] Yes. I was. [smiles, fiddles with wand] But eventually, I decided to plant evidence that would get Kibogaman discovered in court. I shot another hole in Benito with one of my wand’s blasts, and then shot Pablo’s gun underwater to get a bullet I could place inside. I then emptied the gun, put it back in Benito’s pocket, and threw the bullets in the pool. [sparkles,
graceful pose] After that, well, it wasn’t safe for me to stick around. I went back to the party.

Pablo: [presses forehead] Chiyo. I am incredibly disappointed in you. [authoritative pose] But, if this story is to be believed, you had some semblance of good intentions, and you weren’t the real killer. I do have to thank you.

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] My apologies. As Gaia-chan, let me never let you down again!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E6, T6

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! I admit, that was pretty clever of you, Chiyo, but the time for lies is over.

Chiyo: [sparkles suddenly drop, wand smokes as she covers it up] You’re kidding, right? Ha ha ha! Gaia-chan told you how she worked to protect you all!

Takito: [shakes head no] You gave us a story alright, but a story with one gaping hole. [slams podium] The Monobear File specifically states the second blast to Benito hit “about a second afterwards”. Yet, you’re here trying to tell us the time between shots was at least a few minutes!

Chiyo: [blowing out smoke coming from the wand’s tip] [coughing weakly]

Pablo: [staggers back] Impossible! I went over that story three or four times in my head, and it was airtight! [presses forehead, sighs] I… Grah!

Tamaki: [looking down] Oh, my. It seems I finally know the identity of the person who spoiled my
party tonight. [piercing glare] Ms. Ando, would you like to confess now, or later? I’m well prepared for both options.

Chiyo: [aims smoking wand, shaking] You, you filthy piles of trash! [coughs] None of that even matters! Ryouta confessed to shooting Benito, didn’t he? That doesn’t just go away because of what some autopsy says!

Ryouta: [holds head in hands] She’s right. I did shoot him. N-no matter what she said, that’s a fact.

Wataru: [hand over heart, leans in] Kibogaman! I will never begrudge you! You acted in self-defense!

Ryouta: [ducks] But I still shot him…

Chiyo: [whacks wand against podium] See? Any way you slice it, Ryouta has to be the killer!

Chiyo makes a compelling point. But if it were, true, why would she lie about what’s she’s seen? Is there some secret she’s hiding?

...

Is there some truth that only she knows?

I’ll have to think hard about what must’ve really happened tonight.

LOGICAL DIVE

When Ryouta entered the Nautical Room, Benito was…?

( “Alive and Tied Up”, “Alive and Unrestrained”, “Dead and Shot Once”, “Dead and Shot Twice”)
When Ryouta entered the Nautical Room, where was Benito?

( “In the Ship’s Lower Deck”, “In the Pool”, “Tied to the Ship’s Mast”, “Not in the Nautical Room” )

Who did Ryouta shoot?

(“Himself”, “Benito”, “Chiyo”, “Monobear”)
Takito: That’s it! The “Benito” that Ryouta shot at was Chiyo!

Chiyo: [snickering] Are you serious with that? Pffft…

Nahoko: [swiping at smart phone] Don’t be ridiculous. Chiyo and Benito look nothing alike, especially when it comes to clothes and build.

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] Don’t forget my face! An eyepatch and beard are unmistakable features.

Kotori: [pensive pose] We already talked about how you could put on the eyepatch, though, right? The same goes for Benito’s hat.

Yasue: [hands on hips, angry glare] Yeah… Couldn’t you do that with all of his clothes? His baggy jacket could make you look bigger, too. Then you’d look just like Benito.

Ryouta: [points dramatically, scarf flutters] And why that hat didn’t fall! You were keeping it on so I couldn’t see your hair!

Chiyo: [aims smoking wand, shaking] Quit it! You all sure are giving me a lot of clothes to take on and off, and not a lot of time to do it!

Wataru: [crosses arms] What nonsense are you talking about now? Monobear will give you plenty of time to change, right here!

Monobear: [angry pose] No, no, no! I don’t support lewd happenings on my field trips! [covers face with paws] Ewewewewewew!

*Maybe we could use something of Okita’s to escape later…*

Chiyo: [aims smoking wand, shaking] What I’m saying is, there wasn’t nearly enough time for me to swap clothes with Benito, and then swap back. All this talk of me dressing up doesn’t hold water!
Is this true? Is there something that could let Chiyo change her clothes really fast?

(“Chiyo’s Talent”, “Chiyo’s Wand”, “Benito’s Eyepatch”)

10:231123122112322312223323132

Takito: Chiyo, you’re the SHSL Magical Girl, right? And that’s sort of a superhero…

Chiyo: [whacks wand against podium] I’m getting really tired of your roundabout explanations.

I’ll take that as a yes…

Takito: So, as a sort of superheroine, you probably have a way of quickly changing back and forth between your uniform and street clothes. I’m thinking, maybe, you could use that technique to change quickly into and out of Benito’s outfit?

Ryouta: [nervous sweating] I don’t know about th-that.

Takito: Why? It makes sense, doesn’t it?

Ryouta: [nervous sweating] A lot of things that make sense are exactly the case. Both my street clothes and Kibogaman uniform have to be specially made for quickly dressing and undressing.

Chiyo: [aims wand, angry glare] He’s absolutely right! Benito’s clothes don’t have the appropriate accommodations for my quick-change technique! Only my outfit and some of my street clothes do!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Then, what if… Your street clothes resemble Benito’s?
Chiyo: [wand smokes slightly as she covers it up] …! [coughs weakly]

Gotcha!

Takito: Think you could show us any black outfits you might be hiding on yourself right now?

Chiyo: [aims smoking wand, shaking] I suppose I don’t have a choice…

Chiyo pulled out a black cloth and some night-vision goggles, then dispensed a smoke bomb. When the smoke cleared, she was wearing the goggles and solid black tactical suit.

Pablo: [staggers back] My heart… I don’t think I can take anymore shocking reveals…

Chiyo: [adjusts night vision lens] This is my tactical suit. It’s for when my normal costume lacks the subtlety a mission might require. [point on the night-vision goggles shines] There’s even a way for me to use my wand while I’m wearing it, as you can see.

Takito: So, now that we have everything we need to convict you, would you mind confessing?

Chiyo: [snickering] Pfft… [adjusts lens, point on the night-vision goggles shines] Oh, I’m far from caught. [points] You don’t know the half of it!

Chapter End Notes

Did you guess Chiyo was the one?

What are your impressions of the chapter (so far)?

Comment Below!
Happy Halloween everyone! Not that it matters, since it’s always macabre around here anyway.

Here’s the final part of Chapter 2.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: Masks and Mutiny — School Trial Part 5

Chiyo: [fighting stance] You’re so sure of yourself, but you’ve forgotten one of the most crucial details…

Takito: [presses finger to forehead] Means, opportunity, and fairly decisive evidence… I’m pretty sure I have all I need. Maybe she wants motive, but getting to leave the museum might be enough...

Chiyo: [slams podium] Are you even listening? [fighting stance] Your model of events is that I disguised myself as Benito for Ryouta, right? Do you remember what happens during that little meet-up? [goggles glare menacingly] Benito got shot!

I… Damn!

Chiyo: [goggles glare menacingly] If I was up there in place of Benito, why aren’t I dead? I should at least have a nice scorched hole in my chest, right? [slams podium] Fact is, your theory isn’t worth shit!

Takito: [determined smile] C’mon… I’ve come this far. I can’t let her weasel out of this now! There has to be a way she could take a Phoenix Round!

PANIC TALK ACTION

(Listen to this for the true Dangan Ronpa experience: http://www.youtube.com/watch?
Chiyo: [fighting stance] You and your goddamn melodrama!

Chiyo: [adjusts lens, point on the goggles shines] STEALTHY MINI ENLIGHTMENT BEEEEEEEEEM!

Chiyo: [snickering] Your logic’s clouded with smog!

Chiyo: [sparkles, graceful pose] I protect all of Earth’s citizens, including Benito!

Chiyo: [goggles glare menacingly] You’re kind of washed up, y’know!

Chiyo: [smirks] Your friend’s guilty. Accept it!

**FINAL SHOT**

Chiyo: [goggles glare menacingly] I couldn’t have taken Benito’s place! I would’ve died, dumbass!

As

Life Shield

Preserver

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Takito: IT’S OVER! [slams podium] You can’t run from the truth forever, Chiyo!

Chiyo: [defensive pose, nervous sweating] Heh? Heh heh heh… That’s a great joke!

Takito: [determined smile] After all this investigation and debate, there were still two pieces of evidence I couldn’t account for. One was a missing life preserver that used to be on display, and the other was the mysterious ashes found between the floor cracks on the model ship. I now know, however, exactly how they fit into this crime. [points] They’re both the same item!

Chiyo: [goggles smoke slightly] Aw, shit.

Takito: [points] You hid the life preserver on your chest, and let it take the bullet for you! [slams podium] And after it served its purpose, you let it burn up to “dispose” of the evidence!

Chiyo: [goggles smoke slightly] Urngggh… Stop…

Takito: In reality, Chiyo, evidence never truly goes away. In fact… [points] …those ashes are the decisive evidence that proves your guilt!

Chiyo: [goggles smoke slightly] …Urngghh… Ugh…

Pablo: [staggers back] Chiyo, are you well?

Ryouta: [defensive pose] Chiyo…

Chiyo: [goggles smoke slightly] I… [cough] I… [wheeze] I… [Chiyo removes her goggles as the smoke coming from them increases and sparks begin to fly. She watches as the goggles break down further] I… [coughs weakly] I… [wheeze] I… [Chiyo looks visibly distraught in silence for several seconds, tilting her head and staring straight ahead] I… [Chiyo cries, and the smoke violently erupts]
Do I really hit that hard with my pointing?

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Chiyo, are you quite alright?

Chiyo: [angry glare] Don’t talk to me.

Pablo: [nervous sweating] So, you have nothing to say in your defense? Nothing at all?

Chiyo: [angry glare] Don’t. Talk to me.

Tamaki: [frowns] I don’t think you should talk to her. [smiles] The case is as good as solved, anyways.

Pablo: [sighs] Could someone please go over this for me, to confirm it? [hides face] I hate to admit it, but as a leader I failed to accept the truth…

Chiyo: [angry glare] …Feh.

Takito: Alright, Pablo, this is how it went down.

CLIMAX INERENCE

(Music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsi0xxHqrE)

For some reason, after seeing their personalized postcard, the culprit devoted themselves to murder. They would strive to escape at all costs. Their first action was steal a revolver right from under Pablo’s nose.
Second, the culprit wrote a note saying Kibogaman would kill the gun thief the following night. Normally, announcing a murder would be a foolish move, but it was all part of the killer’s plan; they needed to bypass the buddy system in order to avoid being caught.

On the way to drop their note, the culprit was confronted by Itsumi. The culprit used this opportunity to “accidentally” prick Itsumi’s finger, creating the blood that would summon Kibogaman and strengthen the case that the note was his. When Kibogaman appeared, the culprit dropped their note, and had everyone read it under the impression Kibogaman had written it.

Just as the culprit planned, Pablo organized a gala to keep an eye on everyone during the announced time for murder. As someone highly trusted by Pablo, the culprit could also count on being placed on the party’s organization committee, where they could give Kibogaman and Benito the exact guard positions they wanted.

The next night, the party started, and both Benito and Ryouta, secretly Kibogaman, took their posts outside the Nautical Room. Back in the party room, the culprit snuck out and met with Benito in the hall. The two entered the nautical room, and as soon as they could get a good shot, the culprit blasted Benito twice with their magical girl wand. Benito died instantly, and the fiery nature of the blast cauterized Benito’s wounds, stopping them from bleeding.

Afterwards, the culprit changed into their stealth costume, and borrowed Benito’s hat and cloak to look like Benito. The culprit hid the real Benito under the model ship’s lower deck, and used a simple knot to hang themselves upside down from the mast of the model ship, as well as a nearby life preserver for protection. The culprit then used a small cut to summon Kibogaman.

Kibogaman arrived, just as expected, and fired a Phoenix Round at the culprit out of fear for his life. The culprit then faked their death, and Kibogaman fled in terror and guilt to create an alibi for himself.

The culprit untied their simple knot, and tied Benito up in the position they were just in, only sturdier. They then fired Pablo’s revolver underwater until it was empty, and used Benito’s special eyepatch to retrieve the bullets. By shoving bullets inside Benito’s burn wounds, the culprit made the burns appear as if they were caused by Phoenix Rounds.

After changing back to their normal costume, planting the revolver and eyepatch on Benito, and letting the life preserver burn to ashes, they used a cover of ear-splitting music to sneak back into the party. There, they waited for the body to be discovered, and for the blame to fall on Kibogaman, which it did. They succeeded in fooling everyone, even Kibogaman himself, until just recently…
Only one person had the magical girl wand and the dark clothes necessary to commit this murder!

Chiyo Ando, it could only be you!

CLIMAX INERENCE ENDS

Pablo: [presses forehead] I see. So there is no room for doubt.

Wataru: [pumps fists] Huzzah! Though the shadows of villainy obscure it, justice shines bright in the end!

Yasue: [shakes head, Bertrand buzzes around] Okay, you win, Wataru. [smiles] But back then, my case was rock-solid, though, right?

Itsumi: [smiles] Y-yeah, it was… [anger, grips rock tight] You w-would’ve been r-right, too, if Ch-chiyo hadn’t plotted to k-kill us all!

Chiyo: [angry glare] Rggh… [sighs, looks down] Eh…

Monobear: [laughing pose] Oh, look at little Gaia-chan, now! Upupupupu! [neutral pose] I think you’ve all reached a conclusion. Let the voting begin!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Are you going to confess, Chiyo?

Chiyo: [angry glare] Find out for yourself. Vote; my words aren’t worth shit right now.

Monobear: [angry expression, brandishes claw] Hey, get to voting! The killer isn’t going to execute themselves!

I chose Chiyo as the killer. There really wasn’t much of a debate. Just like last time, the tablet on the wall turned on, and the image of a slot machine with the words “Who will be found guilty?” appeared. It spun and spun, showing our faces, and soon, the slot machine landed
triple Chiyos. Millions of tokens spilled out of the machine and several lights flashed.

Monobear: [joyful pose] Ding, ding, ding! That’s two for two! [camera shows a cold, annoyed Chiyo] The bastard who strung up Benito was none other than Chiyo, Nature’s Fallen Angel!


Pablo: [authoritative pose] Chiyo. You have betrayed the trust of all of us. [intense expression, makes fist] Especially me! I’ve put you first, well I mean, second in everything I’ve done!

Tamaki: [frowns] You ruined my gala… And with seemingly no remorse.

Ryouta: [holds head in hands] I truly th-thought… we had the same goal, Chiyo. As protectors of the peace.

Chiyo: [tilts head to the side, cries] You… Protectors… Remorse… [wipes tears, angry glare] You don’t know the meaning of those words! None of you here do, and Benito especially didn’t!

Satoko: [adjusts glasses, smirks] Don’t dare insult my vocabulary. I’m sure all of us know those words quite well.

Chiyo: [angry glare] You do, huh? Then tell me, who are you protecting? Do you have any remorse for what you’ve just done? ‘Cause if you did… then… [tilts head to the side, cries] …Damn …Don’t listen to me, I’m worthless.

Takito: I don’t think I get what’s going on here.

Chiyo: [head tilted to the side, eyes closed and crying] Just read this… I’ve lost my trust in speech…

Chiyo handed Monobear a card with writing and asked him to put it up on the monitor. It read:
Hey Chiyo! Remember me, Benito Kasai? Actually, you probably do, but do you remember how I gave up the location to your base and sold you out? You could never forget that, though, right? You know exactly where I am, so when you’re ready to kill me, go ahead!

Takito: Where did this come from?

Monobear: [laughing pose] Aw, you’ve forgotten already? Maybe I need to make more of an impression next time. [neutral pose] This is the special postcard Chiyo received as her motive to kill, and needless to say, it was successful. Benito got one just like it, if you were wondering.

Wataru: [quivering lip] Benito, too? I’m losing trust in everyone today!

Nahoko: [raises eyebrow] I don’t get it. Where does a fisherman get top-secret base information, anyway?

Chiyo: [head tilted to the side, crying] Benito… Besides fishing, he had another important skill. You may be familiar with his eyepatch… That was one of the many gadgets he built and designed. He actually made what’s left of my wand and goggles, a long time ago… [angry glare] But after a few years working with the team, he… he…

[flashback to a black and white still of Benito and Chiyo in an engineering lab. Benito is sitting down at a table in front of some parts, and looks visibly annoyed. Chiyo is angry with him]

Benito: You heard me. I want out, lassie.

Chiyo: Out? Out?! I need you! The Gaia-chan program needs you! The whole damn world needs you!

Benito: I’m dying in here, Chiyo. I need the sound of waves. I need the open ocean. It’s for me spirit.

Chiyo: Benito, we’re a family here, especially you and me. And a family doesn’t split up for anything.

Benito: Heh. I guess I’m the little, picked-on brother, then.
Chiyo: Don’t get smart with me. You know that in this kind of business, you can’t just leave, anyway. People will hunt you down to squeeze you for your information.

Benito: … If that’s how it is, lassie, I don’t have much of a choice, then. I’ll get back to me work.

[flashes forward to the school trial]

Chiyo: [tilts head to the side, crying] The next day… He was gone. I was shocked, and didn’t realize what he had done until it was too late. [angry glare] We were ambushed. There were guns and bombs everywhere at once, and I couldn’t get into my suit fast enough. [tilts head to the side, crying] Some of the team… they didn’t make it out unharmed. They were so close to dying…

Itsumi: [holds rock tight, sulks] B-benito… He did all th-that to you…

Kotori: [crosses arms] It’s no excuse. Murder is not an option worth taking, especially not here.

Yasue: [pouting face] Can’t you have a little sympathy?

Chiyo: [head tilted to the side, crying, eyes closed] No, Kotori’s right. I ruined my own life, and I should’ve made amends while I still could… [angry glare] DAMN FUCK SHIT MY DUMB ASS! GRAH!

Hitomi: [whimpering] If Benito had a card like this, too, why didn’t he say anything? He should’ve spoken up…

Chiyo: [angry glare] He… He had his reasons.

[flashback to a black and white still of Chiyo and Benito meeting face to face in the Nautical Room]

Benito: Could ye tell me what you scrounge up in here again?
Benito: Oh… This is about “that”, now, lass? I was hoping we could sort it out in private quarters myself. [chuckles]

Chiyo: You nearly killed everyone I loved. You have no right to laugh!

Benito: Calm down, lassie. Rail on me all ye want, but only after we figure out this bear and the crazy superhero.

Chiyo: Stop being happy! You can’t be happy! You’ve scarred me, you fucking bastard!

Benito: Lassie, I just want to—

Chiyo: You smiley fuck! Learn to feel pain for once! Your smiles hurt, dammit!

Benito: Lassie…

Chiyo: I… I won’t let your smiles hurt anyone again!

[Camera cuts to black. Two blasts are heard.]

[flash forward to the trial]

Chiyo: [tilts head to the side, cries] To think… A servant of justice like me, driven to murder by someone else’s smiles…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The both of you should have come forward. At the very least, Chiyo, if Benito was all you wanted, you could’ve confessed right afterwards.

Tamaki: [frowns] You should keep my parties out of things, too, please.
Chiyo: [head tilted to the side, cries] There’s another reason. When I read my card, I remembered everything about the past… [closes eyes] The world right now… It needs Gaia-chan more than ever.

Takito: Wait, what’s going on out there?

Monobear: [relaxed pose] Yawn… If I have to sit through any more pity party, I’m gonna barf.

Chiyo: [angry glare] It’s that time, then, is it?

Monobear: [laughing pose] Yup! Upupupupu!

Chiyo: [angry glare] Listen, all of you. Gaia-chan falls here. But you need to go out and fix the mess the world has become. It’s… polluted, in every sense of the word.

Ryouta: [points dramatically, scarf flutters] Gaia-chan!

Monobear: [laughing pose] I’ve prepared a special punishment for our SHSL Magical Girl, Chiyo Ando!

Wataru: [solemn pose] Gaia-cahn was a noble warrior. Even though she never matched the heights of Kibogaman, I always respected her. [intense expression] Please, do not die in despair!

Chiyo: [stares straight ahead] …

Monobear: [laughing pose] Without further ado, it’s punishment time!

Chiyo: [stares straight ahead, cries slightly] …Shit. Just, shit.

Monobear: [hits button with gavel]
Within seconds, a claw on the end of a chain took hold of her neck and pulled her into a backroom. She didn’t resist very much as it dragged her inside.

Soon after, I saw Chiyo on Monobear’s large monitor. She was tied to a post, and back in her standard magical girl clothes. The scenery around her was white and fluffy, with giant strawberries and whip cream puffs. It looked almost like she was on top of a giant cake.

Soon, a squadron of ten Monobears with rifles appeared and walked in line up to Chiyo. As they aimed their rifles, Chiyo winced, prepared to die. The Monobears cocked their rifles, aimed, and fired.

…But not at Chiyo. Chiyo, opening her eyes with surprise, twisted her head around as far she could to see that all the bullets had actually hit a different, now limp and lifeless, Monobear. She sighed in relief, but soon, she grimaced. The limp Monobear had now begun to squirm and convulse.

The Monobear opened its mouth, and a giant serpent-like creature with a Monobear face squirmed out into the air. It approached Chiyo, staring endlessly as she began to sweat.

The creature opened its mouth wide. Chiyo gaped in fear, and things seemed to go still for a little while. Then, without warning…

…The creature bit down, decapitating Chiyo. The serpent pulled her out of the restraints, and
flung her lifeless body to the side, then squirmed over to eat it. The screen went black.

Ryouta: [clutches chest] I thought I was prepared after the first t-time… Ugh…

Yasue: [staggers back, Bertrand buzzing violently] You just have these monsters locked up here, Monobear?

Okita: [nervous sweating, drops rose] When I asked for a firing squad last time, I didn’t mean—

Monobear: [sighs] Yawn… The fearful whimpers of the mundane… They always bore those like I…

Nahoko: [holds phone about to throw, seething glare] Are you fuckin’ listening, bear? Someone just got their head bit off!

Monobear: [sighs] Oh, look, the incompetent ones are speaking to me. Two attempts, and they still can’t even pull off a murder correctly. I think I’ll pass on responding.

Itsumi: [grips sharp rock tight, angry expression] Do you h-have any empathy? Any at a-all?

Monobear: [happy pose] On the other hand, my avian friend of the night has easily surpassed all his human companions! Students, gaze into his eyes, and see the cold tenacity of Sheol!

Takara: [ruffles feathers] …Squawk! Sheol!

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupupu! Quite right, my friendly adversary. Unfortunately, Sir Kasai has departed this Earth. Go, seek out your true master’s soul in the ruins of mortal society!

Monobear opened a small door in the ceiling of the trial room, allowing Takara to fly out to freedom. It was only a few square feet, but I got a clear view of the dusty, apocalyptic outside skies.
Chiyo was absolutely right about the outside. What ever happened there must be dwarfing the problems we have in here.

Yet, when I looked back down at Monobear, he was still giggling as usual. How can he be happy about the fact we now know the world has gone to hell? Does he know something we don’t?

It wasn’t long before Monobear was yelling at us to leave the trial room. I scooped up Chiyo’s goggles and made my way to my room. Opening the memento drawer, I added the night-vision goggles and special eyepatch to its contents.

I couldn’t shake the feeling that murder was going to become an institution in our schedule. Just to fall asleep that night, I remember how I had to whisper “At least I’m still alive” over and over again…

CHAPTER TWO END

- 12 Students Remain -

Chapter End Notes

...There we have it.

Were you surprised by this final part? Who might be next?

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner, is coming soon (Late November/Early December) as soon as I can get preliminary planning done. On a personal note, it's probably my favorite chapter in the story, and yes, without spoiling anything, I will be keeping the double victim tradition. Here's a preview:

Tamaki: [frowns] May I be honest with you? Pablo's obsessions are beginning to worry me... I don't know how long he can protect her, anyway. If he fails...
Chapter 3: Bedside Manner - (Ab)normal Day 1

Chapter Notes

Yahoo! Legacy of Despair is back, everyone!

The third floor is open, and ready to explore...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner – (Ab)normal Day 1

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Oh, and maybe a special surprise for you all in the cafeteria! Let’s give our all again today, Upupupupu!

It’s probably going to be that buffet again… I really don’t want to be reminded on how we just lost our second-best cook…

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

I hadn’t seen anyone else up before hand, but Pablo and Monobear were standing outside the door to the cafeteria.

Pablo: [chuckles, small smile] Takito, you’re up early, aren’t you? [laughs] Not that I mind any. Keep being punctual like this, and I might see if you can join my Cabinet!

Takito: Didn’t the morning announcements ring? This isn’t that early, really.
Pablo: [claps, chuckles, small smile] You’re up before the others, aren’t you? That’s more than enough! Anyway, I’ve been trying to get inside, but Monobear’s refusing me entry.

Monobear: [angry pose] No, no, no! If I let you in before the others, you’ll eat half of it and let the rest get cold!

Takito: So, it is a buffet again!

Monobear: [angry pose] Gah! You made me ruin the surprise, too!

It’s not really one at this point…

Monobear: [dismissive pose] Feh. If you’re so set against my special surprises, I’ll just let you in. I can’t promise the others will appreciate it, though…

I heard a small click, and Monobear left with a puff of smoke and an “Upupupupu!”

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well then. The time for praise is over. These breakfast goods won’t inspect themselves.

[Move to Cafeteria]

The breakfast buffet was back in full glory. It seemed nearly identical to the last one, but without them side by side, I really couldn’t tell.

Hitomi: [claps, wide smile] Oh, another one of these! [turns around, opens third eye] It’s an even better sight in two dimensions, you know!

Pablo: [chuckles, small smile] Hitomi, did I ever congratulate you on how early you are?
One by one, the others trickled in. They all seemed groggy and half-asleep, though.

Okita: [slumped over] Grungh…

Pablo: [chuckles, small smile] Okita! On time for breakfast as usual, I see!

Okita: [slumped over] I’m… the last one here… idiot…

Pablo: [chuckles] But you’re on time, aren’t you? That’s great!

Okita: [slumped over] I’m not even that…

Satoko: [looks to the side, pensive] The trial last night took all of our enérgeia. None of us can function on this kind of sleep.

Tamaki: [smiles] I’m sure you’ll feel better after you eat. If you need to take a moment to just relax, go ahead!

We all began to eat. I couldn’t help but think of what Monobear said the first time we had a feast like this. How this was a “reward” for completing a round of mutual killing. It put a sense of disgust into every bite, and judging by some of my classmates’ faces, it was in their bites, too.

Pablo, however, seemed to be forcing a smile throughout the meal. After he finished, he got up and prepared to speak.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] In light of, erm, recent events, I as well as my companion…

Ryouta: [journalist clothes, uneasy] …Th-that’s me…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] …have decided to willingly relinquish our weapons to Monobear.
Yasue: [crosses arms, Bertrand flies around her head] About time, really.

Bertrand: Bzzzz!

Yasue: [crosses arms, Bertrand flies around her head] Bertrand says he hates gunpowder. Good riddance!

Wataru: [staggers back] You can’t be serious! I understand Pablo, but Kibogaman? [furrows brow, makes fist] We need your power and guidance right now! You can’t just abandon it like this!

Ryouta: [cowers, looks to the side] I h-have to… N-nobody but you would tr-trust me if I k-kept it…

Wataru: [bends forward, sad eyes] But, Kibogaman! You are the hero for our generation!

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb and becomes Kibogaman, heroic pose] Be worried no longer!

Wataru: [overjoyed] Kibogaman!

Nahoko: [stares at tablet] Oh boy.

Ryouta: [points dramatically, scarf flutters] Even with this setback, I will protect you all without fail!

Wataru: [salutes] Yes, sir!

Tamaki: [smiles] With that resolved, everyone’s right as rain, correct?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] …Not quite. If Monobear’s being consistent, he might’ve unlocked another new floor for us to explore. I wouldn’t want any weapons up there I don’t know about.

Tamaki: [smiles] Of course, of course! Finish your meals, everyone. We depart for the third floor in ten minutes.
Pablo and Tamaki set off immediately, and I followed shortly after.

[Automoved to 2nd Floor, Timeline Hall]

Pablo was blocking off the entrance to the third floor when I got there, yet he didn’t see very focused on it.

Itsumi: [frowns] Wh-what’s going on? I th-thought you wanted us to investigate the third fl-floor.

Pablo: [arms out, staring into the distance] …

Itsumi: [frowns] P-Pablo…?

Pablo: [arms out, staring into the distance] …

Yasue: [scowls, Bertrand buzzing violently] Hey! Wake up, or I’ll get Bertrand to sting you!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yes, erm, my apologies. [clears throat] We are about to enter a new floor, with all sorts of possible threats and murder weapons. Please investigate thoroughly and if you see someone in one spot, pick another place to look. [moves out of the way] Please, continue, and I’ll be standing at the entrance to the floor.

Monobear: [waves at Pablo] Oh ho ho ho! Somebody’s full of doubt aren’t they?

Pablo: [stern, authoritative pose] Nobody invited you.

Monobear: [blushing] I mean, why not just board up the new floor and not risk it? There’s no guarantee you’ll be able to handle it, right, and it’s not like you have a great track record…

Monobear: [blushing] If you think there’s a secret exit in there, I’ll tell you; there isn’t. Upupupupu!

Pablo: [furrows brow] Leave. We have things to do today.

Monobear: [laughing] Can’t face the truth, can’t you? Well, goodbye!

Pablo and the others poured into the 3rd floor stairwell. To be honest, Monobear’s words kind of got to me. I stood there for a while, but I had to keep going.

[INVESTIGATION BEGINS]

[Move to the 3rd floor, Industrial Hall Right]

So far, the 3rd floor wasn’t striking me as too threatening. It was a simple reddish-brown hallway with industrial parts and machines on display. With only two doors in and out, it felt more like a foyer than a proper exhibit.

[Talk to Pablo]

Pablo: [presses forehead, grumbles] Gruhh…

Takito: Monobear’s words got to you, didn’t they?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] They did not! I know better than to trust that beast! [valorous pose] Besides, if Monobear doesn’t want us in here, there has to be something worthwhile. Our investigation can be nothing but fruitful!

Takito: But if that’s the case, what’s got you worried?

Pablo: [looks to the side, frowns] Nothing.
Takito: C’mon. You’re a pretty poor liar, Pablo. Anybody could tell you something’s on your mind.

Pablo: [looks to the side, frowns] Before people started dying… [faces Takito] I thought that I could handle keeping the peace. I had done it in the turbulent periods of La Espera before. Doing it here didn’t even seem like a question. [presses forehead] I had blown the first incident off as a fluke, but after the second, it seems holding the group together is going to take my all. [looks to the side, frowns] And that’s if my all will even end in a success…

*I’ve been having my doubts, too, honestly. But at the same time, I can’t just say that…*

Takito: You can do it. Definitely. …And I’ll give it my all to help you.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Takito.

Takito: Yeah?

Pablo: [presses forehead] You are an equally poor liar.

*…Shit.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Still, as clichéd as it is, all I can do is my best. I need to really focus on preventing a third murder. Thank you for your time.

[Move to Steam Engine Room]

[Talk to Kotori]

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hey, Takito? Do you think Pablo should know about this?

Takito: …The giant steam engine?
Kotori: [shrugs, smiles] What else would I be talking about?

Takito: Well, it’s just, I don’t Pablo will need telling about this. It’s impossible to miss.

Kotori: [crosses arms, taps fingers] …

Takito: …

Kotori: [crosses arms, taps fingers] You know what meant.

Takito: Well, it doesn’t look that dangerous.

*There are a lot of intricate parts that could really hurt someone, but they’re all out of reach and stuck to the chassis. Not to mention how it’s cordoned off.*

Takito: I don’t think anybody’s going to be getting to it anytime soon, anyway.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Yeah, those wheels are nailed to the ground, aren’t they… Funny how when one part gets ruined like that, the whole machine’s pretty useless.

Takito: Every one of them needs each other to function. Kind of like people.

Kotori: [smiles] Yeah! [sighs] Though sometimes, it seems like not all the parts can be trusted…

*I wonder what it’d be like if we were all parts in machines. Parts do the same thing everyday for all of their lives. It seems miserable, but at the same time, they never have to wonder what their purpose is, or struggle with indecision. It might be nice to be a machine sometimes…*

Kotori: [tilts head, snaps fingers] Takito? Takito? Earth to Takito?

Takito: Gah! Sorry, I guess I was daydreaming for a moment there.
Kotori: [smiles] That’s okay. Just remember, you can die here, so it’s important to stay alert.

Takito: I’ll remember.

[Move to Industrial Hall Left]

[Talk to Tamaki]

Tamaki: [smiles] Takito! You’re well. I thought Monobear’s taunts had left you indecisive.

Takito: Honestly, the decision was already made for me. But honestly, they didn’t get to you at all?

Tamaki: [smiles] Nope.

Takito: Not even a little bit?

Tamaki: [smiles, chuckles] No, no, no. [pulls out plate with granola] You sound like you need a light snack to calm your nerves.

_How do you get that to stay on?!_

Takito: I’m, erm, full, thank you. I was just thinking, you’re kind of in a special position to make sure Pablo succeeds, and you’re pretty good at what you do. Why don’t you step up more?

Tamaki: [smiles] I don’t understand. Pablo’s fine.

Takito: I’m not sure even Pablo thinks Pablo’s fine anymore. Why don’t take some more initiative.

Tamaki: [frowns] Takito, I’m hurt. I take initiative all the time to help keep you safe. Is this what you
think?

Takito: No, but—

Tamaki: [smiles] Then you understand. I’ll get back to my inspecting.

...

_Gah! How does she do that so well?

[Move to Steam Engine Room]

[Talk to Okita]

_I noticed Okita sidling along in a circle around the north wall of the Steam Engine Room._

Okita’s walking strangely… I better talk to him before he starts walking very strangely.

Takito: Erm, Okita? What exactly are you doing here?

Okita: [squints, sticks out tongue] Here… If I stand and look right here…

Takito: [snaps fingers] Okita?

Okita: [smiles, chuckles] Oh, Takito! Didn’t see you there. Say, have you ever been deep in thought about basic utilities?

Takito: That’s nice. What were you just doing?
Okita: [pulls at shirt collar] Heh. You’re a charmer, aren’t you… [shakes head, stands up straight] Well, do you see that vent over there? I think someone could climb into it.

Yeah… It’s about half a meter on each side. Climbing through would be simple for pretty much any one of us.

Takito: That’s vent’s definitely something to tell Pablo about.

Okita: [twiddles with rose] That’s the only thing about it, though. The vent bends not far in, so it’s hard to see very much of it. However… [sidling left and right, sticking out tongue] If I just look inside from the right angle, I can see all the way to the next bend! C’mon… Here!

Takito: You found it?

Okita: [thumbs up, wide smile] See for yourself!

Okita stepped out of the way, and I checked it out for myself. Sure enough, I could see the next bend in the vent.

Takito: It’s a bit dark, but definitely there.

Okita: [thumbs up, wide smile] Yeah, now if someone tries to hide there, we’ll catch them for sure!

Takito: Yeah… I guess I underestimated you, Okita.

Okita: [grits teeth] You what?

Takito: Whoops, time to go!

[Move to Militaria Hall Left]
The left door on the north hall of the Steam Engine Room led to a short red hall with an assortment of rifles and weapons attached to upholstery behind thick glass.

[Talk to Nahoko]

Nahoko: [solemn stare] …

Nahoko seems really interested in that cheap musket. I’ve never seen her so transfixed on what she would call an “inferior product”…

Nahoko: [spins shelf, stares blankly] That gun, on display right there, is one of the first ever made. Whoever had it would’ve been unstoppable, even for just a short time.

Or until they run out of bullets.

Nahoko: [spins shelf, stares blankly] They outdid everyone and gained an advantage. They made a fort no one could ever take away from them.

Takito: I guess that’s just how the world was back then. You made everything yourself, because not many people would do it for you.

Nahoko: [turns around] …

Takito: Nahoko?

Nahoko: [back to Takito, spins shelf] That’s the world my mother loved. And I’m not sure that world is gone, either.

Takito: I dunno. The world may be cruel, but it’s a lot more of a community now.

Nahoko: [back to Takito] …
She must have run out of will to talk…

[Move to War Set]

*In the back of the third floor, the museum had a war set up, complete with astroturf and fake hills. In the middle, there was a life size medic tent that I could enter.*

[Talk to Satoko]

Satoko: [grabs hair] Ugh… Of all the things…

Takito: Something the matter over here?

Satoko: [scowls, grabs hair] Není to zřejmé, že jste slepý kreténe?

Takito: Uh, Japanese, please, Satoko.

Satoko: [shakes head] …Can’t you see for yourself? There’s so many weapons all over the place! Pablo’s gonna have us “securing” this room until we die from exhaustion. Alespoň jsem si představil Pablo dostat popraven...

Takito: Isn’t this just a fake museum set-up, though? Actually loading the weapons or keeping them sharp would just be a lawsuit waiting to happen.

Satoko: [rolls eyes] Well, as soon as we’re out of here, you can take them to court. That’s exactly what they did. [crosses arms] These cannons are ready to fire, and the rifles are all fully operational. The bayonets and daggers are even sharp enough to cut your hands off. Now that you mention it, the museum might be the real cause of my misfortune. Dylai pobl wneud eu gwaith ffycin hyn a hyn…

*Hmm… Should I tell her about the vent I see, or wai—*

Satoko: [grabs hair]: Scheiße! That vent’s huge enough to crawl through. How are we even going to
“fix” that…?

Takito: Sorry, Satoko. I honestly have no idea.

Satoko: [wide smile] You don’t have to tell Pablo, do you? That vent’s not that big a problem, right?

Takito: Hate to say it, but I think the secret’s out. It’s only a matter of time before someone else notices, anyway.

Satoko: [scowls] Niemand mag einen Hartersel.

Takito: …I’ll take that as a complement.

[Move to Medic Tent]

[Talk to Itsumi and Yasue]

Yasue: [grins, thumbs up] Wow, the astroturf goes inside here, too! They really nailed the attention to detail, didn’t they, Bertrand?

Bertrand: Bzzz! Bzz?

Yasue: [wags finger, chuckles] Now, now, I think they did a great job. [crosses arms, leans forward] But if anybody’d be able to spot an inaccuracy, it’d be Itsumi.

Itsumi: [looks to the side, bites lip] S-sorry to disappoint, but I’m an archaeologist, n-not an anthropologist…

Yasue: [grins, crosses arms, closed eyes] See, Bertrand, you’ll just have to trust me… [opens eyes, scratches head] Wait, what aren’t you?
Itsumi: [blushes, smiles] An anthropologist… You know, someone who studies cultures of the past. Looks to the side If you want my amateur guesses, the large cabinet and cots look old enough…

Yasue: [grins, crosses arms, closed eyes] That’s good enough for me! Grimaces, opens eyes But, it means that rack of saws and other tools were really the kind of things they used back then, huh?

Itsumi: [stares down] Yeah… Back then, you made do with what you had, even if it wasn’t enough…

Yasue: [grabs right arm, sulks] It’s kind of been like that lately with me and Bertrand. He’s been getting more and more anxious to find some real flowers, and what I can find around here isn’t cutting it much anymore… Stares ahead, sulks I’m not sure if he picked up on the fact the rest of the world has gone brown and lifeless. Tears well up Even if we get out soon, I’m not sure if…

Itsumi: [stares down] If it comes to that… I’ll help you.

Yasue: [smiles, tears] Really?

Itsumi: [smiles, blushes] It’s a promise.

…

I shouldn’t interrupt this.

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [facing backwards, tilts head, third eye open] Woah! Did you know they had all this stuff back then, Takito?

Takito: Yeah. I mean, humanity has had beds and knives for a while now.

Hitomi: [faces forward, wags finger] No, silly! The stuff in the tiled section! The fact that even had
Takito: That’s just for comparison’s sake with the kind of things they would actually have. They didn’t really have any of that stuff. Well, except for tile. Tile’s pretty old, actually.

Hitomi: [wags finger, shakes head] Nuh-uh! 1800’s people totally could’ve made that fancy bed frame!

Takito: Well, maybe, but it’s hard to have a heart monitor without electricity, or an IV system without plastics.

Hitomi: [closes eyes, crosses arms] Well… [turns around] Hmph! Hmph-ity Hmph Hmph! If you’re so smart, where does the power for the heart monitor come from?

Takito: I dunno. A battery?

Hitomi: [turns around, pouting] You “dunno”? You can’t dunno! You’ve been lecturing me all this time.

Takito: That’s just the way it is, ma’am.

[Move to War Set]

[Move to Militaria Hall Right]

_The right Militaria Hall was remarkably similar to the left. Red walls, and weapons behind thick glass display walls. This time, though, the weapons were swords and shields instead of rifles._

[Talk to Wataru and Ryouta]

Takito: You guys find anything suspicious around here?
Wataru: [expressionless pose] No, not really. Whatever. That is not of importance right no. [makes fists, rage] Ryouta! Kibogaman! How could submit to an outside leader and abandon your power like that!

_Uh oh…_

Ryouta: [nervous sweating] It’s n-not that I s-submitted…

Wataru: [makes fists, rage] What do you call it then? Surrender? Caving In? You gave in to the demands of foreign influence when we needed you most!

Ryouta: [nervous sweating, shaking] I h-h-have r-reasons for my actions…

Wataru: [points angrily at Ryouta] What honorable reason could someone have for—

Ryouta: [puff of smoke clears, Ryouta is in Kibogaman costume, pointing dramatically at Wataru] In the name of justice, be silent!

Wataru: [staggers back] Kibogaman!

Ryouta: [crosses arms, scarf flutters] A hero always leads by example! If you think that my gun earns me respect and power, you have a lot to learn!

Wataru: [nervous sweating, gets on knees] Of course I do, Kibogaman! Please, teach me the ways of justice and true heroism!

Ryouta: [heroic pose] A revolver should only be used when absolutely necessary, otherwise, it brings fear. There’s no need for firearms at the moment, and as we recently learned, when people fear the force of a gun, they may do desperate things.

[points dramatically] “Know your strength!” That is hero lesson number one, citizen!

Wataru: [crying, on knees] You are a true hero, Kibogaman!

Takito: Wow. I didn’t know you had that in you, Ryouta, even as Kibogaman.
Ryouta: [puff of smoke, back to civilian clothes, blushes, rubs head] Th-thank you… K-kibogaman gives me the str-strength to assert myself s-sometimes.

Takito: So, did you find anything suspicious around here?

Ryouta: [smiles] N-nope!

…

[INVESTIGATION ENDS]

Right on cue, my stomach growled for dinner just as I had finished inspecting the last part of the new floor. I guess Pablo had felt it too, because he called everyone back to the cafeteria within a few minutes. It wasn’t long before he was up on the podium, addressing us all, either.

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

Pablo: [authoritative pose] …As many of you may have already discovered, the new floor of the museum is based on industrial and military history of the 19th century. With the obvious focus on weaponry, today might’ve been a disaster, but thankfully, the majority of them are behind thick glass walls.

Satoko: [nervous sweating, smile] Heh, heh, heh! Don’t you mean, all of them, moyat priyatel?

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m afraid many people have reported live rifles and cannons out in the open within the War Set, and that’s not even mentioning the saws within that little tent. No matter how anyone may have wanted, there is plenty of work to be done.

Satoko: [grimaces] Eh…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] And so, I have decided to revive our old friend the Bingo Machine.
Pablo continued as Tamaki wheeled out and uncovered the device. I didn’t take my eyes off it, but I could still feel the worried quavering of the people next to me.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Our first order of business will be to empty the rifles and dull their bayonets, as well as safely empty the cannons. Without further ado, our two workers for tomorrow will be…

Tamaki: [smiles] Okita and… Yasue!

Okita: [sulks, rose droops] Come on!

Tamaki: [frowns] Hm? Don’t you have experience in dulling weapons? It should be much easier this time, no?

Okita: [sulks, rose droops] Knowing how to do it only makes it more of a pain in the ass!

Yasue: [crosses arms, Bertrand buzzes violently] Why would they even load the cannons in here? That’s just silly and dangerous!

Monobear: [blushing] Silly and dangerous? That’s exactly what I was going for!

Satoko: [angry glare] You? You did that?

Monobear: [neutral pose] Of course I did! [laughing pose] You guys actually believed the museum did that? Upupupupu! I wanted to teach you bastards not to hope there’s anything good on the next floor.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense stare] You villain! You artificially made things worse for us!

Monobear: [blushing] Artificially? Making things worse for you is just what I do, and it seems like you just haven’t learned that yet. [laughing pose] Maybe I’ll reload some of them during the night until you figure me out! Upupupupu! [disappears in a puff of smoke]
Pablo: [presses forehead] If Monobear wants to make our lives hell, we’ll just have to fight back. [authoritative pose] We’ll continue to unload the cannons just as he reloads them.

Tamaki: [smiles] Goodnight everyone.

I went to my room wondering about our path. Was Monobear right about exploring new floors? And even if he wasn’t, will he be making sure all our decisions end in failure from now on? He seemed to be antagonizing us a lot more than usual, and we have less people to deal with him now. Our trajectory seemed more uncertain by the minute…

- MONOBEAR THEATER -

Monobear: Y’know what really makes me mad?

Monobear: When people call unoriginal or “a copy”, just because I have copies of myself.

Monobear: You humans are made of parts, too!

Monobear: If I had a little blood, a little muscle, a little fat…

Monobear: …and your brain, I could make a copy of you!

Monobear: How does that make you feel, huh?

Chapter End Notes

Monobear has reaffirmed his commitment to being the enemy of Pablo and the students. Think you know what will happen next? Want to vote for free time? Comment Below!
Chapter Notes

Christmas may have gotten the best of me, but here's a late present for everyone!

Okita and Kotori won these two slots of Free Time, in that order.

Hope you'll enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — (Ab)normal Day 2

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s the start of a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Guroogh…

I’ll give to Monobear; I am learning some stuff here, if only a little bit…

[Move to Dorm Hall]

Looks like everyone’s up bright and early today. At least compared to yesterday.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]
I sat down next to Kotori, and she greeted me. Through some combination of not having our second best chef, the meal Monobear gave yesterday, or my general worry about where we going, today’s breakfast wasn’t appetizing at all to me. I could barely eat half of it before I just couldn’t continue anymore, but it seemed Pablo had decided to move forward with his announcements anyway.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, stern expression] I’m not sure how long the duties will take today, so I’ll start early and make this brief. Today, Okita and Yasue have been assigned the task of dulling the bayonets, emptying them of their ammo, and also safely unloading the cannons.

Kotori: [pensive pose] How are they supposed to “safely” unload the cannons again? It doesn’t seem possible.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Simple. Imagine unloading them in a dangerous fashion, and do that, but safely.

Itsumi: [displeased, grips rock tight] Th-that’s not a real w-way to do it!

Pablo: [looks to the side, pulls collar] Of course it is! I laid out how to preform the action, and then added a simple instruction.

Itsumi: [displeased, grips rock tight] Y-you don’t kn-know how to unload them s-safely, do you?

Pablo: [authoritative pose, nervous sweating] Whether I do or do not is not of importance. There is a job to be done, it can’t be put off any longer, and those chosen must complete it.

Okita: [scowls, bites rose stem] Woah, woah, woah, man! Your stuff about a “job to be done” doesn’t even matter! You can’t just ask us to do something you couldn’t do yourself.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, displeased stare] I could do it myself, given enough time. You figured out how to dull those katanas with Nahoko, right. Also, Okita, remember this. [draws up sleeve, taps nuclear watch] I’m not asking you.

Yasue: [mumbling] Ugh, how am I going to do this…
Itsumi: [grits teeth, earnestly] Hey P-pablo, can’t I go h-help, too? If they’re g-going to have to f-figure it out themselves, they’ll n-need all the h-help they can get, r-right?

Pablo: [claps, chuckles] Of course! Additional work is always—

Tamaki: [frowns] Pablo…? A word, please. Right now.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Yes, Tamaki?

Tamaki: [frowns] While Itsumi’s enthusiasm is appreciated, every time we have left who does chores up to anything but randomness, …unfortunate things have happened.

Pablo: [pulls at collar] Well, Itsumi, Tamaki makes a valid point and—

Itsumi: [grits teeth, earnestly] Pl-please! I’ll even t-take Okita’s sl-slot! Don’t you tr-trust any of us, Pablo?

Pablo: [pulls at collar] Well, I—

Yasue: [stern] I trust here. Bertrand trusts her.

Okita: [wide smile, thumbs up] I definitely trust her!

Pablo: [presses forehead] Well, if two third parties approve, I suppose I don’t have a choice.

Itsumi: [raises hands, open smile] Yeah!

Yasue: [pumps fists] Woohoo!
Okita: [wide smile, thumbs up] Yeah, no work for me!

Tamaki: [frowns] …

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Hm? Do you still have an issue with this, Tamaki? I find them more than trustworthy.

Tamaki: [frowns] I think we need to talk about your standards for “trustworthy”.

_Pablo and Tamaki discreetly entered the kitchen and closed the door behind them to have their little chat._

Kotori: [pensive pose] What do you think?

Takito: Me? I definitely trust Itsumi.

_Though I don’t really trust myself to trust the right people…_

_Is this what Pablo feels right now?_

_[FREE TIME BEGINS]_

_[Move to Employee Hall]_

_[Move to Dorm Hall]_

_[Move to Okita’s Room]_

_[Talk to Okita]_
Okita: [grins, extends rose] Oh? Do you want a few morsels of advice from yours truly?

I decided to spend some time with Okita.

Takito: Hey, Okita? I’ve got a kinda …embarrassing question to ask you.

Okita: [intense stare, holds rose upright] Embarrassing? Spill it!

I could’ve done with better reception, but this isn’t going to get fixed otherwise…

Takito: Well, you and I both wear suits, and I’m starting to notice how crinkled and dirty mine are getting.

Okita: [raises eyebrow, bites rose] Heh? Don’tcha clean ‘em?

Takito: Well, I can’t just use the laundry machine on this kind of fabric, and I’m a total sucker with ironing. Your suits are always so clean, though! How do you do it? Seriously, I don’t know how it’s possible.

Okita: [grins, extends rose] Oho-ho! With my patent-pending “Sugitani Seduction Secrets”, any feat of presentation is more than possible!

Takito: I don’t want to seduce anyone, I just want to look—

Okita: [points rose, focused stare] Op-op-op! The first step to looking clean is prevention. Have you ducked away from spills instead of using yourself to block them?

Takito: …Yes, I already do that. As much as I can, anyway.

Okita: [points and smiles at Takito] Great! [points rose, focused stare] Now, the most important parts people notice on your suit are the sleeves, shoulders, and especially the lapels. [thrusts rose forward] Give me a plan of action for how to protect the key areas, now!
Takito: Erm, I should use dandruff shampoo, roll up my sleeves when eating, and…

\[ \textit{Shit… I don’t really remember what or where the lapels are. Think, think, think…} \]

\[ \textit{What are lapels again?} \]

( “Large flaps of fabric on the collar” / “Chest pockets” / “Upper coattails” )

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Takito: I, uh, always fold my lapels in when I eat. Because, you know, they’re on the collar. That’s where lapels are. Yes.

Okita: [smiles, bites rose] Just remember to follow the instructions you just made up at all times, every day, and your suit will stay clean and fresh for ten times as long!

Takito: Yeah!

…

Takito: Wait, what if hypothetically, my suit was already dirty? And what if, by hypothetically, I meant in reality?

Okita: [fiddles with rose] Oh, so that’s your problem… Oh, you’re out of luck, friend.
Takito: What?

Okita: [shrugs, bites rose] Sorry, I got nothing. Whenever one of my suits gets dirty, I just get another one. If you want, you could borrow one of my suits. They might be a little tight around the middle, though.

Takito: Uh, no thanks. I’m not really a fan of the “pin-striped” look.

*Screw it. When I get a chance, I’m just ironing it like normal.*

Okita: [smiles, bites rose] Remember to follow the advice you made up, kid!

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

*As soon I as I left the room, I saw Kotori meandering about. She looked like she definitely use something to do.*

Takito: Hey Kotori, it’s a nice day for a—

???: BANG!

Kotori: [staggers back] What the..?

Takito: That sounded like thunder… It couldn’t be, though, right?

Kotori: [stern expression] It kind of sounded like it came from the 3rd floor. Whatever happened, it’ll be there.
A wall of smoke hit us as we opened the door.

Kotori: [coughing, looking down] So much smoke in my eyes… [hacks] Can you see anything?

Takito: Nope, nothing. Wait, smoke…?

Oh, no! Oh, no no no! Not already!

Takito: Itsumi! Yasue! If you’re alive, say something!

Yasue: [not visible] I’m fine! [cough] I think Itsumi is, too!

Kotori: [coughing, looking down] You think?

Yasue: [not visible] She only [coughs] fainted when it went off! She doesn’t [coughs] even have a scratch, really!

Takito: What’s “it”?

Yasue: [not visible] I’ll explain later! [coughs] We just need to get her out of here, before she inhales [cough] too much smog! …And Betrand needs to get out too!
Kotori: [coughing, looking down] Got it! Just follow our voices, okay, and we’ll get you two to the hall!

We kept speaking for a few minutes to give Yasue a sense of direction, and soon, she emerged, with Itsumi and Bertrand in her arms. Someone else decided to enter, through their own door, too.

Pablo: [puzzled expression] What…? What’s happened here?

Tamaki: [frowns] I can’t say I didn’t expect this, but I certainly never thought it would be like this.

Yasue: [scowls] Hey! Nobody’s killed anyone! There’d be an announcement if someone did, right?

Tamaki: [frowns] That does ring true… But it still fails to explain what’s happened.

Yasue: [looks down and to the side] Look, me and Itsumi had kind of put off doing the stuff we didn’t know how to do, but after we finished unloading the rifles, we really didn’t know how to unload the cannons. So we, erm, sort of tried firing them.

Pablo: [presses forehead] This is partially my fault, I see.

Yasue: [looks down and to the side] We thought we were a safe distance away, but one of the wheels on the cannon just snapped, and it suddenly changed trajectory. It was aiming right at us, and I dived into Itsumi to save her… [looks straight, wipes eyes] It went right over our heads, and then there was smoke everywhere.

Pablo: [presses forehead] I do not know what to say.

Yasue: [displeased expression] You could start with an apology.

Pablo: [presses forehead, sighs] …I am more sorry than you could ever know.
Tamaki: [frowns] Me too. It was irresponsible to let your friend onto the job site.

Yasue: [displeased expression] If that’s how you feel, I hope you won’t mind me asking for me and Itsumi to get off work for the day.

Tamaki: [smiles] Absolutely. I’ll go fetch a replacement right now. [leaves]

Itsumi: [groggy, hunched over] Ugnh… D-did something happen…? Am I d-dead?

_**Yasue quickly explained to her the situation while the rest of us waited for the smoke to clear. Pablo also wasted no time apologizing to her, too, and Yasue looked on with approval. We were actually getting kind of bored, but Tamaki arrived sooner than expected with her “replacement”._*

Okita: [dejected] Aw, I was supposed to get out of work today!

Tamaki: [smiles] That’s right, you were. Past tense.

Okita: [grits teeth, bites rose] This isn’t something you can just change, though!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] It’s absolutely something I can change. Yasue and Itsumi have absolutely earned a reprieve after a dangerous incident today. You, as the person who escaped work, and as one of the two people who can dull blades, are the perfect substitute.

Okita: [grits teeth, bites rose] No way, assho— [smiles, thumbs up] I mean, isn’t this a job for two people? With all due respect, I couldn’t possibly do this by myself.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Of course you couldn’t. Which is why I’ll be helping you.

Okita: [pulls at collar, bites rose] Heh heh.

Pablo: [presses forehead] I share partial responsibility for this accident, and shall live up to it accordingly. [authoritative pose] By the day’s end, I will have a safe, proven method to unload these
cannons, and you will help me!

Okita: [pulls at collar, bites rose] Goodie.

*Kotori and I helped Yasue and Itsumi to their rooms. I looked back before leaving the Militaria Hall Left, and saw Pablo march Okita into the War Set.*

*Needless to say, Okita didn’t look well.*

[Automoved to Steam Engine Room]

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Industrial Hall Left]

[Talk to Kotori]

Kotori: [smiles] Oh, you want to see what I’ve been up to? I won’t stop you, anyway.

*I decided to spend some time with Kotori.*

Kotori: [smile] Y’know, I was just thinking about my farm back where I work. After spending so much time in these tight hallways, it’ll be nice to look across a wide-open field or two.

Takito: Everybody could. Until now, I hadn’t really noticed how stale the air is, either.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Oh, maybe I shouldn’t have said that…

Takito: No, no, it’s alright! I mean, at least we don’t have to spend our days working a field, right?

*…Honestly, though, slaving away at making everything safe isn’t much different.*
Kotori: [chuckles, shakes head] I don’t actually work most of the field, you know. I have co-workers and machines to help me with all of that.

Takito: Wait, aren’t you the SHSL Farmer. You’re telling me the SHSL Farmer doesn’t even farm her own field? What do you even have that tool for?

Kotori: [chuckles, shakes head] Oh, Takito. Don’t worry, I do work some of the field. And my title as SHSL Farmer doesn’t really come from how many crops I make.

Maybe I, an average rich kid, shouldn’t be questioning the merits of someone who’s the best in country, but…

Takito: Wait, then how did you earn it, then?

Kotori: [pensive pose] You’re pretty smart, you know. Let’s see if you can’t figure it out yourself…

Let’s see, what else could’ve earned Kotori her title as SHSL Farmer?

( “Developing New Farming Techniques” / “Inventing Farming Devices” / “Crop Genetics Research” )

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Takito: To be honest, the only other thing I could see that could count as “farming” is developing new farming techniques.

Kotori: [smiles, claps] Ding, ding, ding! I knew you could guess it! I actually design methods to
cultivate and grow crops, and then test them on my own little plots on the farm. Plus, it’s something I can do in the cramped confines of the Hope’s Peak campus.

Takito: You’d think after 3000 something years, we’d all be masters at this stuff.

Kotori: [crosses arms] Well, there’s always room for improvement, and there’s a lot of things the experts didn’t even know about until relatively recently.

Takito: Really? What kind of research are you doing now?

Kotori: [pensive pose] Just basic anti-erosion methods… It’s kind of boring, actually. [smiles] But it beats the hell out of whatever Monobear’s planning for us.

Takito: Yeah. We’ll have to treat everyone to a nice trip and some fresh food once we’re out of here.

Kotori: [smiles] I’ll see what I can do.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to 1st Floor]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

By the time I had ambled down to the Cafeteria, it seemed like dinner had already started. When I saw Yasue and Itsumi sitting alone, I felt kind of obligated to be with them, especially after today.
Takito: So, uh, are you two alright?

Itsumi: [frowns, focused on rock] I'm f-fine, as long as I d-don’t do anything intense. P-pablo took our names out of the m-machine today to h-help with that.

Takito: Why so glum, then? I’d love to get a guaranteed day off.

Itsumi: [frowns, focused on rock] B-Bertrand…

Takito: Bertrand?

Yasue: [looks down at Bertrand in her cupped palm] Bees can’t handle smoke as well as humans. He’s going to have to go into my own little version of “intensive care”.

Takito: I’m really sorry.

Yasue: [looks down at Betrand, touches him gently] You really didn’t do anything wrong. I just need a place to put Bertrand for a while so he can heal. My room may not be a safe enough place if I’m living in it.

Itsumi: [fiddles with rock] Do you think my room might work?

Takito: I don’t know. I don’t see how your room would be any better than Yasue’s. Maybe if we close off the office, and let everyone know, it could work. It’d be a lot easier for people to check on him, too.

Yasue: [looks at Takito, touches Bertrand gently] That’s probably the best for him. I’ll talk with Pablo about—

Pablo: [not visible] Ahem!
**Announcement time already? I really was late.**

Pablo: [on podium, authoritative pose] I’m sure by now, you all have heard of the incident that happened during the removal of danger in the War Set today.

Okita: [hunched over] Damn straight…

Tamaki: [smiles] While we did complete one of the important tasks, [frowns] today’s incident has caused another risk that needs removal.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, deep breath] As the partial cause of this incident, I would like to stress that today’s workers were not responsible.

Monobear: [neutral pose] Actually, they were. It’s pretty obvious they were.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I respectfully disagree, and you should know that the two had— [intense expression, makes fist] Hey! You were never invited to our peaceful dinner!

Monobear: [puzzled] Invited? Did you forget already? [laughing pose] I own this museum now. Guests can’t exclude their hosts from the festivities, can they? Upupupupu! That’s just impolite!

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] You have no right to laugh! You’re responsible for what happened today, too, and much more responsible than all of us combined.

Monobear: [neutral pose] Oh, I’d seriously beg to differ. But out of the kindness of my cold, machine heart, I’ll be fixing the hole in the wall for you.

Hitomi: [leans in close] Really? You’d do that for us.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Nope! Upupupupupu! Well, actually, I will do it, but not for any of you bastards. I still own this museum, and I can’t just have gaping holes littering the walls. So, I’ll be taking care of any damage you guys do. [brandishes claw] But, if any of you take this as an excuse to wreck my property… Upupupupu…
Well, you know what will happen.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well then, no fixing the hole. But many jobs still exist, and I move to quickly decide who will do them before any more ursine interruptions. Tamaki?

Tamaki: [smiles] I’ll get started. [begins rolling the bingo machine]

Monobear: [angry pose] Hey, assholes! Are you two trying to speed past my visit?!

Tamaki: [smiles] Our workers for tomorrow are Wataru… and Satoko!

Satoko: [scowls] Är du seriös? You can’t have us doing work that could get us killed!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] It was before, but Okita and myself have devised a safe method for disarming the cannons. Right, Okita?

Okita: [hunched over] Yeah, sure, it was.

Wataru: [crosses arms, taps fingers] Okita’s response is not exactly filling me with trust.

Monobear: [laughing pose] By the way, kiddos, if someone dies during a workplace accident, I will blame you, Mr. Vargas. Upupupupu!

Pablo: [presses forehead] I… [authoritative pose] I do not fear you. Work will take place as ordained. [turns around, walks away from podium and out into the hallway]

*And with that, Pablo didn’t say another word to us that night. In fact, after Monobear was through mocking us, I didn’t see anyone speak to anyone, and went right off to bed.*

*There seemed to be a lot of different thoughts going through Pablo’s head today. I wondered if any of them had been like mine.*
Monobear: Hey, do you know that thing you like?

Monobear: I bet you think it’s some pretty quality shit, huh.

Monobear: Well, if it’s so quality, do you think anyone would like it?

Monobear: You do? Well then, that would mean the most evil people in the world would like it, too.

Monobear: You share a favorite thing with Stalin, don’t you?

Monobear: You’re absolutely terrible!

Chapter End Notes

Think you know where it's all headed?

...Or you just want to vote on Free Time? Comment Below!

Also, the one-year anniversary is coming up. I have to say, Legacy of Despair has really been a great thing to come back to every night, and I look forward to the reception every time I post an update.
Here's to a wonderful 2015 at the Kamakura History Museum!
The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Uhweh… Another day in this hellhole…

Takito: [shakes head] No, wait. Everything’s sorted out. Pablo’s confident enough with the cannons, Bertrand is going to get his treatment, there’s no reason to think anything bad will happen. [deep breath] Today will absolutely be alright.

Hm. There’s already a “NO ENTRY” sign pasted to the Office room’s door. I suppose she got to Pablo pretty early.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, raised eyebrow] Do you wish to enter, Takito?
Takito: No. I know what “NO ENTRY” means.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well then, erm, don’t go inside there today. Only Yasue is allowed inside.

Takito: Understood. *Glad to see Yasue’s got what she wanted.*

[Move to Cafeteria]

*With Yasue still on my mind, I found my eyes subconsciously drifting to where she was sitting. She was with Itsumi as usual, but what got my full attention was Kotori playing with some sort of phone. I got my food and sat down as quick as possible to get more info.*

Takito: Where’d you get the phone? I didn’t think Monobear would just let us have stuff like that.

Kotori: [chuckles] Well, your thinking’s still correct. He didn’t. Nahoko gave me some of her devices to hold onto today.

Yasue: [snickers] Really? I thought you’d be more likely to get them from Monobear.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Actually, I didn’t even ask to take them. She asked me, and it didn’t seem like she was going to take no for an answer.

[Flashback to an image of Nahoko in the Cafeteria]

Nahoko: [spins shelf, grumbling] Pablo’s asking me to teach Wataru and Satoko how to dull bayonets today, even though I didn’t get called. [intense stare] That dumbass Okita got away with a half day…

Kotori: [pensive pose] It can’t be that bad, can it? I won’t take more than an hour, max.

Nahoko: [spins shelf, grumbling] It’s not about effort. Sure, I can do it quick. [intense stare] It’s about principle! Okita got called for a full day, and he didn’t have to do it, and when we need extra
help that only he or I could do, he escapes responsibility again! [slams shelf] Grah!

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] You’ve tried voicing your complaints to Pablo, right?

Nahoko: [grumbling, stops shelf] He’d never listen… Here, you take some of my more sensitive devices. If they get damaged from the smoke in another “accident” today, that’d just be the icing on this shit sundae.

[Return to the Present]

Kotori: [smiles] I sure got a lot of her stuff. She gave me everything but one of her tablets and her private phone.

Itsumi: [earnest] R-really? Do you th-think maybe l-later I could—


Tamaki: [smiles] First of all, I’d like to give a quick reminder that Wataru and Satoko have work for today. If you two have any trouble with dulling the blades, don’t worry. Pablo has asked for a special instructor to help you.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Secondly, Yasue’s bee has been seriously injured in yesterday’s incident, and Tamaki and I have agreed to close off the Office to allow for the bee’s recovery. We ask that you avoid passing by the Office today, as well.

Okita: [shakes rose at Pablo] Woah, woah, woah. I can understand setting aside a room, but a whole hallway? And the one we need to get from the museum to our dorms, all for a bee?

Yasue: [scowls] That’s not just any bee, that’s Bertrand!

Wataru: [crosses arms, frowns] Maligning another’s pets is not a sign of a model citizen.

Okita: [defensive pose] Look, look, I love pets, okay! I have a cat! I just don’t get why we need goddamn quarantine zone for a bee!
Pablo: [authoritative pose, scowls] I’ve been informed that the microscopic systems of an insect are extremely delicate, and need a stable environment to recover. If you absolutely must pass by the Office today, please do so on the side of the hall opposite the door, and don’t loiter!

Okita: [sulks, drooping rose] Fine…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Please, be on your way, and remember to stay away from the Office.

[Automoved to Foyer]

I guess I won’t be going back to my dorm, either. I wonder what everyone is doing now that they’ve been forced out…

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Dino Room]

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [facing away, eye open] I see you! [turns around opens eyes] Did you come to see me?

* I decided to spend some time with Hitomi. *

Takito: You’re way too good with all your extra parts. I can’t even comprehend controlling them myself.

Hitomi: [touches cheeks, blushes] Awww… Well, they did take me a while to learn.
Takito: Wait, learn? You have an origin story?

Hitomi: [points to self with thumb] Of course I do! All mutants have an origin story! Duh!

Takito: Well, come on, tell me! *Whatever happened, it has to be interesting!*

Hitomi: [heroic pose] Grown in a secret lab, Project H was designed to be a new hope for humanity, but when the clumsy janitor broke her glass cage, she escaped and took up the alias “Hitomi Yunokawa”, living her life as an average high school student away from the authorities!

Takito: If that’s the case, you really need to get out of school as soon as possible. I doubt Hope’s Peak would have any problem reporting you to whatever scientists made you.

Hitomi: [bites lip] Well, about that, erm… [heroic pose] Ohohoho! You saw through my lie I give to the public!

Takito: I did? Lie?

Hitomi: [heroic pose] In truth, I am not of this planet. My people have sent me to document how the citizens of Earth live with so few fingers and eyes. [grins widely, thumbs up] So far, I have to say, you Earthlings make excellent use of the few sensory organs you possess.

Takito: …Hitomi, is this a lie again?

Hitomi: [hands up] Your eyes! They cut through secrets like daggers! [pulls arms into chest, hunches over] Oh, the real truth is much sadder. I once was two people, Hitomi Kawa and Yuno Kawa, who were killed in a yakuza hit. However, a mad scientist dug us up and fused as many salvageable parts as he could, making—

Takito: Yeah, I think I know what really happened. You…

( “…were born with it.” / “…had the parts surgically attached.” / “…were exposed to radiation as a child.” )
Hitomi: [hands up, pouty face] Me, simply born with my exquisite, supernatural features?! Never!

Takito: Are you sure?

Hitomi: [crosses arms, pouty face] Okay, maybe I was born with them… [angry expression] But that doesn’t make for an exciting story at all! I mean, what if Ultraman was just born with it!

Takito: I think Ultraman was born with it.

Hitomi: [frustrated, shakes fists] Dang!

Takito: You know, if you want a cool origin story, you can still make one. It doesn’t have to be your birth.

Hitomi: [heroic pose] Of course! I can be like that bat guy, and work to avenge the times people cut me off in traffic! Come on, Takito, you can be my sidekick, Solvey Boy!

Takito: I’m not sure that’s—

Hitomi: [teary eyes] You won’t even try to help me… [sniffs]

Takito: Well, I think I hear some sidekick-level evildoing in the other room! Uh, Solvey Boy, away!
Hitomi: [heroic pose] Yeah, go get ‘em!

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]

Lemme just slide past the Office doorway to the Cafeteria… There! I’m pretty sure I stayed far away enough.

[Move to Cafeteria]

Hmm. There’s Kotori… There’s Itsumi… I don’t see Yasue anywhere.

Takito: Hey, Itsumi do you know where Yasue might be?

Itsumi: [pressing fingertips together, looks to the side] Sh-she should be ch-checking on B-bertrand… Do y-you think s-something h-h-happened to her?

Kotori: [smiles] I’m sure whatever she’s doing takes time. She’ll be here any second now.

I acted confident, but inside I wasn’t so sure. Excusing myself at the earliest opportunity, I snuck out into the hallway.

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

Takito: Tamaki? What is she doing here?
Tamaki: [smiles] Yes, Takito? Why aren’t you eating?

Takito: Yasue seems to be missing, and Itsumi said she was, y’know, in there.

Tamaki: [frowns] Please, don’t try to sneak around. [smiles] If you need to check on someone, I’ll gladly do it for you.

*Tamaki walked over to the Office door and knocked.*

Tamaki: [smiles] Yasue? Is everything okay?

*No response.*

Tamaki: [frowns] Yasue? Yasue?

*Yasue pressed her ear to the door. She heard nothing.*

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m going to open the door now, Yasue, ok?

*[Automoved to Office]*

*I quickly entered with Tamaki and scanned the room. Yasue was curled up in a corner. She looked devastated, but very much still alive. I wondered why she was crying, but it didn’t take long to find out…*

*[Play this music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hn3gBV-nYc]*

*I looked over at the counter and found the flattened husk of Bertrand, without a speck of life left. Tamaki touched my shoulder.*
Tamaki: [frowns] Stay here. I’ll inform everyone. [leaves]

*Um… Time to investigate?*

**[INVESTIGATION START]**

**[Talk to Yasue]**

Yasue: [crying] …They killed him. They killed him.

Takito: Did you see who did it?

Yasue: [crying] …No. I don’t get it. Why would anyone kill Bertrand? He never did anything I didn’t ask him to…

Takito: I’ll find who did this, I promise. Do you remember anything about what happened? Anything at all?

Yasue: [crying] …I just came in, and everything was like this. I couldn’t believe it. [covers face, sobs]

Tamaki: [appears] Takito, how is she?

Takito: Well, uh, she’s physically fine, but otherwise…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] What’s happened in here?

Yasue: [sobbing] …Bertrand…
Pablo: [presses forehead] … [pulls at collar] …Oh no.

Itsumi: [cowers, shaking] B-bertrand is d-dead…

Okita: [sweating] Oh no, oh no. Listen, I’m sorry about everything I said today; I honestly had no idea something would—

Monobear: [appears in a puff of smoke] Surprise! Did someone say “dead”?

Nahoko: [sneering] If you want a corpse, prepare to be disappointed.

Monobear: [tilts head] Huh? Are you guys toying with my fragile feelings?

Pablo: [presses forehead] What Nahoko means to say is, Yasue’s pet bee has been killed.

Monobear: [blushes] Oh man, that’s amazing! There’s no way I’d ever hold a trial for a bee killer; I’d personally congratulate them! Upupupupu! Though in this case, I’m not sure the perpetrator would appreciate it.

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] You hate bees?

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Of course I do! They always attack me when I try to get honey! I hate honey that’s full of stinging!

Hitomi: [scratches head] But if the bees were gone, you couldn’t get honey full of anything, right?

Monobear: [tilts head] That’s… a very shrewd observation.

Pablo: [waves hands, nervous sweating] No, no, no! We can’t have Monobear hold a trial over this!

Monobear: [laughing pose] You honestly thought I was going to? Upupupupu! You’re too rich, kid!
I’m gonna have to leave before I suffocate from laughing. If any of you want to exact vengeance for your bee friend, you’re gonna have to do it on your own. Upupupupu! See ya! [disappears in a puff of smoke]

Yasue: [stands up, distraught] So, are you going to do it?

Pablo: [presses forehead] Well, we certainly won’t be executing anyone, but whoever’s responsible will find themselves coming up quite often from the Bingo Machine…

Tamaki: [smiles] Don’t worry. We’ve solved two cases so far, I doubt this will be much of an issue.

Yasue: [forced smile] I wasn’t worried. Takito promised me he’d find whoever did it, and he’s way too good to fail.

Takito: Uh, don’t make me blush.

Pablo: [smiles, thumbs up] Great! You’re in charge of investigations.

What?!

…

I guess I did ask for it, and the least I can do for her is have a look around.

[Talk to Wataru and Satoko]

If there’s anyone I can trust to be innocent, it’s Wataru and Satoko. They couldn’t of had the time to do anything like this.

Takito: Hey, do you guys know anything about Bertrand’s, erm, murder?
Wataru: [crosses arms] Absolutely not. We were two floors above the whole incident.

Takito: [mumbles] Well, there goes my one lead…

Satoko: [raises eyebrow, smiles] ¿Qué? You had a lead?

Takito: Well, I thought I could trust you two, with how you were working all day.

Satoko: [chuckles, wags finger] I wouldn’t be so sure, ma petite détective. I was in such deep focus, I couldn’t really keep track of Wataru.

Wataru: [crosses arms, angry stare] You traitor…! If you haven’t forgotten, I couldn’t keep track of you either!

Satoko: [points at Wataru, furrows brow] Painu helvetiin! I’m just telling him what happened!

Wataru: [crosses arms, angry stare] A very skewed version of what happened. And you failed to mention what happened with my lighter!

Satoko: [rolls eyes] Sentespri kaka, you actually think that’s important to this?

Takito: Lighter? Important?

Wataru: [firm stare, points upward] As a precaution, I detached the lighter part of my arm and left it outside standing upright. Yet, when I returned from my duties, the lighter was on its side! Someone had clearly stolen it, and returned it under the impression I would fail to notice! [proud pose] Hmph! As if dirty tricks ever fail to be seen by a honest citizen!

Satoko: [rolls eyes] Or, you know, a fly bumped your lighter and you got all self-righteous about it.

Wataru: [crosses arms, angry expression] For such a cynical woman, you sure assume the best of my careful observation.
Satoko: [points at Wataru, furrows brow] I assume the simplest, not the worst, lul!

Yeah… I should back out while I still can.

[Talk to Tamaki]

Tamaki: [frowns] This… This is very, very unfortunate.

Takito: Yeah, it really bites for everyone, even you. I’m really sorry all your organization went to waste in less than a day.

Tamaki: [frowns] No, no, this is a failure on my part. I never should have let this room go unguarded. If I hadn’t, he definitely wouldn’t have gotten in.

Takito: He? You know that a man did this?

Tamaki: [frowns] Well, only by proxy. I’m certain this has all been Okita’s doing. He must’ve been angered about our little debate this morning.

Takito: Wait, why? He’s not the kindest, but I don’t feel like he’d kill Bertrand just to prove a point.

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m not one to make accusations just based on hunches, Takito. I saw him hanging around the Office door about an hour before lunch.

Strong evidence, but still not conclusive….

Takito: You’re that confident? Why not just “arrest” him now?

Tamaki: [frowns] I can’t really do that without more proof.
Tamaki: [frowns] And you know, Pablo likes to do these kinds of things by the book.

Takito: Ooooooh. That’s what you’re after.

Tamaki: [smiles] I’m glad you see. So if you could simply collect the evidence so we can get going, that’d be pleasant for all of us.

*Personally, I’m not about to just leave it at that…*

[Examine Bertrand]

Itsumi: [uneasy, holds up hand to mouth] B-bertrand… Was he really killed…? [stares earnestly] If he d-died naturally, m-maybe Yasue w-would feel a l-little better, r-right?

Takito: His cage was open. I’m sorry, but anyway you look at it, this is premeditated bee-icide.

Itsumi: [looks down] O-ohh…

Takito: Don’t worry too much. She won’t feel half as bad as she does now once we find out who did this.

Itsumi: [looks down] …I th-think I get it. [stares earnestly] I’ll d-do everything I can to s-solve this!

*That’s the spirit!*

Takito: Now, let’s begin by preforming our own little bee autopsy…

Itsumi: [distressed] I d-don’t know. Y-yasue wouldn’t like y-you cutting into his b-body…

Takito: …! Okay then! *I can’t really do much of an autopsy without looking inside…*
Takito: ...*but I kinda doubt Bertrand was killed from the inside.*

Itsumi: H-he’s squashed fl-flat… and th-there’s g-goo all over him!

Takito: Yeah… That goo is probably what’s left of his insides. Bertrand was pressed so hard against the counter that it was pushed out of whatever tiny hole of the exoskeleton it could find.

Itsumi: …D-don’t…

Takito: …Sorry about that.

*Think before you talk, Takito!*

[Camera returns to Takito and Itsumi in the Office]

Takito: But this way, at least we know how he was killed. Bertrand was crushed to death by a flat surface pushing down on him.

Itsumi: [distressed] N-no! Th-that’s impossible… Bertrand was t-too fast for th-that!

Takito: I have to agree, but what’s in front of me doesn’t leave much room for imagination.

*There has to be something in this general area that could help solve this mystery…

...on the floor, maybe?*
Takito: Itsumi, do you see this? This tiny shard on the floor?

Itsumi: [jerks back] Th-that? It c-could be a clue, r-right? [stares earnestly] I'll g-get my tools and s-see if I can extract it without it br-breaking!

[Camera fades to black, then returns to a close up of a small clear shard with a stain on one of the edges]

Itsumi: …There! Wh-what do you th-think it is…?

Takito: I don’t really know. I guess it’s some sort of glass or plastic…

Itsumi: W-wait…! Is that B-bertrand on the edge?

Takito: At this point, it kind of has to be. It means whatever this shard is, it came off our murder weapon.

[Camera returns to Takito and Itsumi in the Office]

Itsumi: [stares earnestly] Is th-this everything? [distressed] This d-doesn’t seem like enough to h-help Yasue.

Takito: This is only a tiny part of the scene, Itsumi. And honestly, this’ll probably be the most helpful.

Itsumi: [distressed] It’s h-hard to b-believe you… [stares earnestly] …b-but you’ve n-never been wr-wrong before.
Takito: Thanks. I know it’s getting harder to trust people.

[Examine Printer]

_Eww, the paper in the printer’s all soggy. It’s probably going to grow mildew soon and stink up the whole floor._

...

_Eeeewwwww, every printer’s got soggy paper. I’ll have to come by later and fix this if I ever want to save my nose._

[INVESTIGATION ENDS]

Pablo: [authoritative pose] You look like you’re struggling to find things to do. Are you finished investigating?

_I don’t want to say it, but…_

Takito: Yeah, yeah I am. Honestly though, it doesn’t feel like it. It feels incomplete.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Feel? How do you know if an investigation feels right?

Takito: I’m not sure. I just sort of feel it. You know what it’s like to intuition, right?

Tamaki: [smiles] Certainly you’ve found a credible suspect with your limited evidence, though, correct?

Yasue: [crosses arms, slight smile] C’mon, it’s Takito we’re talking about. There’s no way he couldn’t have!
Dammit Yasue, don’t make this harder for me than it is already.

Takito: Actually, no.

Yasue: [gaping mouth, staggers back] No? No?!?

Takito: Whoever did this is too good. I can’t even rule out anyone at this point.

Tamaki: [frowns] That’s disappointing. [smiles] But I’m sure whoever did will incriminate themselves fairly soon.

Yasue: [scowls] …

Takito: Yasue?

Yasue: [scowls] I don’t want to talk to you. [leaves]

…

Pablo: [presses forehead] I can’t say I’m proud of your failure, either, Takito. It’s probably better you fail when bee has been killed rather than a person, but still, I can’t say my respect for you is still what it was.

One by one, people filed out. Kotori and Itsumi wanted to stay behind, but I insisted they leave. I needed some alone time. I told myself that there was nothing I could do, and that their words had no malice behind them, but they still kinda stung.

At this point, the only thing I could concentrate on was finding Bertrand’s killer. Tamaki seemed very certain about Okita, and while I had my doubts about her reasoning, it was my only thing that could be considered a lead.
I stood outside the door to Okita’s dorm and waited for him to come. He walked up to his door, and when he tried to open it…

[Camera changes to a still image of Takito grabbing Okita’s hand as he reaches for the doorknob.]

Takito: Okita, we need to talk.

Okita: Hey! What the hell, man!

Takito: Did you kill Bertrand?


Takito: Tamaki really thinks you did it, and I put way too much effort into keeping her away from you for the sole sake of due process. I let down a lot of people for you, so if you have anything to tell me about Bertrand’s murder, anything at all…

Okita: Okay, okay! I walked by the Office today, but that’s it. I just wanted to prove that walking by the place wasn’t gonna do anything.

That’s when Tamaki saw him.

Okita: Tamaki caught me and told me to go help at the War Set as punishment… But I went back down anyway afterwards. Someone’s gotta teach her that walking isn’t going to do anything.

[camera returns to normal view]

Takito: [releases hand] You better be telling the truth, Okita. And even if you are, you’ve done some shitty things. I’d think about them tonight.
Okita: [defensive gesture] Okay, asshole. I’ll think about how you stopped me from trying to sleep. [leaves]

Maybe I should’ve just gone with Tamaki’s idea and…

Oh no.

Yasue: [seething] …

Takito: Yasue—

Yasue: [seething] I heard everything. You did have a goddamn fucking shitstain suspect, but I guess you didn’t any rivals for being king douchebag.

Takito: Yasue, I’m sorry.

Yasue: [seething] You’re not. You never were.

Takito: Goodbye. I’ll, uh, see you tomorrow.

[Automoved to Takito’s Room]

Goddamn Takito, what did you get yourself into…

I need to sleep. I really need to sleep.

- MONOBEAR THEATER –

Monobear: Once upon a time, a small child came up to me.
Monobear: He told I was known as the “Giving Bear” for my generosity.

Monobear: He also said he needed a gift to help him.

Monobear: I told him “Sure, kid,” and gave him third degree burns.

Monobear: Upupupu! That’ll teach him to spread lies about me.

…

…

…

…

???: [bumping, smashing noises]

Takito: …What?

*What was that? Do I really want to find out?*

*I went back to sleep, full of shame.*

Chapter End Notes

Bertrand's dead, and Yasue's angry.

Things aren't looking good for Takito.

Who killed Bertrand?

Who'll kill next?
Comment below if you think you know!
Chapter Notes

Here it comes! One huge update.

Ryouta and Itsumi are up for free time this time.

Hope you Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — (Ab)normal Day 4

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

…

Upupupupu!

*He doesn’t usually laugh like that, does he?*

…

*I had better be extra careful today.*

[Move to Dorm Hall]
I was just about to head off to breakfast, as usual, when Yasue’s room door caught my eye. I felt the guilt from yesterday swell up inside me; I couldn’t last five more minutes if I didn’t try apologizing at least one more time.

I knocked on her door.

Takito: Yasue?

…

No response.

Takito: [knocks] Yasue? Yasue?

…

Still nothing. This doesn’t look good at all…

I reached for the doorknob.

…Buuuut, I don’t think I can afford to be knocking down her doors anytime soon.

[Move to Employee Hall]

I spied Kotori outside the Cafeteria, and couldn’t contain myself.

Takito: Kotori, have you seen Yasue at all today? I knocked on her door twice, and—

Kotori: [frowns, finger on cheek] Takito, calm down. How long has it been since anyone got up; ten, twenty minutes? Once her emotions settle, I’m sure you’ll know how she really feels.
I can’t really be sure at this point.

Takito: It’s not just that! I think someone might’ve, you know, gotten to her! I heard something suspicious last night, and—

Kotori: [slight shock] That’s quite a different story. Did you try going inside her room?

Takito: No, I, uh, didn’t think it would be polite.

Kotori: [pensive pose] So, you still kind of think she’s alive, then?

Takito: [sighs, shakes head] Yeah, I guess I do. She’s probably not in any real danger, honestly. Let’s just go eat breakfast.

[Move to Cafeteria]

I let that benefit of the doubt control my thinking during breakfast. It might’ve lasted the whole day, if not for what happened at announcements.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] So, as you all know, Ryouta and Nahoko will be doing today’s chores.

Nahoko: [stares curiously] I think it would be a lot more efficient if you use some of your Kibogaman abilities.

Ryouta: [nervous sweating] I d-don’t really know… Wh-which ones are you t-talking about?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] In other news, please be considerate with Yasue. Her pet has just been killed, as you have to have learned by now, and… [scans the room] Ah, she’s not here. [presses forehead] …To be honest, I’m worried about her emotional state. As much as I don’t wish to say this of anyone, Yasue has become “at risk”.
Itsumi: [glares, grips rock tight] Wh-what do you m-mean, “at r-risk?”

Pablo: [pulls at collar] Well, at such points in people’s lives, they may do something brash, like murder, or—

Itsumi: [glares, grips rock tight] M-murder? Y-yasue is not a m-murderer!

Pablo: [pulls at collar] I didn’t say that, I said that she might—

Itsumi: [glares, grips rock tight] Sh-she’s been in her room all m-morning, not saying anything! Sh-she won’t even open the d-door, and y-you’re here, calling her a m-murderer!

*From there, the worries just flowed out.*

Takito: [stands up] Wait, you couldn’t contact her either?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Wait, what’s going on here?

Tamaki: [frowns] Yasue’s locked herself up in her room, it seems. Away from all possible causes of distress.

Takito: Doesn’t that seem kind of suspicious to you, though? Like she’s been killed in her room?

Itsumi: [staggers back, drops rock] N-no! Th-that’s w-worse!

Pablo: [crosses arms, furrows brow] It’s also considerably less likely.

Takito: Listen! I heard these noises last night, and I genuinely think something might’ve happened!

Itsumi: [pulls on hair, distressed] Oh n-n-no! N-n-n-n-n-no!
Pablo: [presses forehead] This is looking a lot more serious than I want it to be. [authoritative pose] I don’t think we can afford to not investigate this.

Tamaki: [smiles] Everyone, please stay here. We’ll only take a minute.

Itsumi: [grips rock tight, hyperventilating] N-no! I n-need to see her!

Tamaki: [frowns] Now, Itsumi—

Pablo: [presses forehead] Just let her go. It won’t hurt anyone if she does. [gestures at Takito] You should come too, since you “discovered” this.

Takito: …Okay.

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

Takito: You know, I’m not entirely sure it’s a good idea for me to be here…

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Hm? I thought you wanted this.

Takito: Well, it’s just Yasue and I aren’t exactly on good terms, and if she sees me, well—

Pablo: [crosses arms, furrows brow] Wait, do you think she’s dead or not?

Takito: I think there’s a serious risk, okay, just between those noises and Itsumi. If I knew for certain…

Tamaki: [smiles] I understand. We can’t leave this unverified.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] Tamaki’s correct. But in the future, Takito, these kinds of things can cause a lot of hysteria. I wouldn’t do them without good cause.

Takito: I get that. I really do.

[Automoved to Dorm Hall]

Pablo: [knocks on door] Yasue? People are worrying about your health.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Alright, Yasue. On 3, we’re coming in.

1…

2…

3…

"Here it comes…"

[Automoved to Yasue’s Room]

Itsumi: [nervous sweating, grips rock tight] Wh-where is she? Wh-where is she?

Tamaki: [smiles] I see her. She’s simply sleeping on the bed.

Itsumi: [sighs, hunches over] Oh, th-thank you.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] So, Takito, is your curiosity quenched?

Takito: …Wait, why is she lying over the blankets? Does she normally sleep like that?

Monobear: [laughing pose] Nope! Upupupu!

Itsumi: [wincing] Wh-where is he? Wh-where’s that b-bear?

Monobear: [pensive pose] Oh, I must’ve done a better job of sneaking up than I thought! Yay me!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] What the hell is going on here? Did you kill her, you worthless, shite-stain of a—

Tamaki: [frowns] There wasn’t an announcement, Pablo. Monobear’s unsavory, but he’s not that unsavory. Yet.

Monobear: [laughing pose] You should listen to your friend more often, Pablo. I’ve told you all, I only kill the bastards you find guilty. This is a very, upupu, special case. Why don’t you all wait in the Cafeteria, and let me bring her out for you.

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

Monobear forced us back to the Cafeteria, leaving us half scared, half confused.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Sit tight, kiddos, and give me a minute to get ready! Upupupu!

Nahoko: [stares intently] What’s going on? What the hell is up with Yasue?

Pablo: [authoritative pose, looks down] We don’t know.

Okita: [grits teeth, pulls at collar] It’s been a while since the last death… You don’t think Monobear’s gonna start killing people off to “motiviate” us, do you? [hands on head] I can’t handle anymore, man, I just can’t!
Kotori: [whispering] Psst! Takito! What’s Monobear doing?

Takito: [whispering] I seriously have no idea. We just found Yasue unconscious on her bed and Monobear—

Monobear: [off-camera] Attention, one and all!

*Monobear burst into the room, riding a cart covered in a white cloth.*

Monobear: [Joyful pose] Upupu! I present to you, your new motive!

*Grabbing the cloth, he removed it, showing off the unconscious Yasue underneath.*

Monobear: [laughing pose] Enjoy it, bastards! Upupu!

Wataru: [staggers back] It’s… It’s terrifying! [neutral pose] Wait, what is it?

Hitomi: [pouting face] It’s Yasue, duh! [touches fingertips together] I still don’t know how it’s a motive, though.

Ryouta: [as Kibogaman, points dramatically] That villain is trying to do that to all of us! Stay back, bear! I’m still skilled without a weapon!

Monobear: [dejected pose] Aw, you guys really think I’m after you all. [crying noises] After I made this all to help you, I feel so dejected.

Itsumi: [scowls, grips rock tight] N-nothing you do is f-for us! [prepares to throw] H-how can you s-say that about k-killing my fr-friend?

Monobear: [blushes] Upupupu! I don’t remember any killing. Your friend has, through the help of
several extra-strength sedatives, simply been put in a coma. It’s no biggie.

Tamaki: [tenses up] That’s against the rules! You absolutely, positively, cannot do such a thing under the guidelines you established at—

Monobear: [sighs] Blah, blah, blah. I don’t remember any rules about comas, either. [happy pose] Anyway, this time, I realized that it’s hard to kill when you’re a high school scrub like you bastards are. So I turned on easy mode. Upupupu! It’s so simple to kill a person who’s practically already dead, right?

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] This isn’t a motive, this is you weaseling your way around the fact you can’t kill!

Monobear: [confused pose] Eh? Do you want another motive? I can do that.

Pablo: [staggers back] No! Absolutely not!

Monobear: [neutral pose] Then shut up, asshole. Some people are trying to formulate a murder plan, now that half the effort’s been done for them.

Pablo: [mumbling] I assure you, that’s not the case.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Well, that’s about all the fun I got for today. Maybe next time, someone can really be dead! Upupupu!

…

A full minute of silence. Everybody looked at each other, trying to figure out who might go for it.

…

Itsumi: [jumps out, spreads hands out] N-nobody touch her! She’s my friend, and I’m t-taking care of
her before anyone else!

Pablo: [defensive gesture] Nobody wants to harm her. [authoritative pose] Is that correct, everyone?

Tamaki: [smiles] Absolutely!

Takito: Yeah! Nobody’s going to fall for Monobear’s tricks! …Probably!

Okita: [pulls at collar] Look, I may have been rough with you, but I don’t kill! Honest!

Itsumi: [distressed] …

Kotori: [stares intently] Can you trust us, Itsumi. Please? Can you imagine any one of hurting her?

Itsumi: [distressed] Y-yes… B-but not everyone… I’ll… I’ll t-talk this over with P-pablo and Tamaki.

Kotori: [smiles] Great. Let’s leave them be, okay?

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

That was too scary… Even if I were perfect about warding off murderers, Monobear can just incapacitate you without warning.

I don’t know if “easy mode” is strong enough to motivate someone, but the real fear from this definitely is.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Foyer]
Ryouta: [taps fingers] T-t-takito! Y-you scared me a little, but if you did it to say hi, that’s okay…

I decided to spend some time with Ryouta.

Ryouta: [nervous sweating] H-h-hey, T-takito! H-how’s it g-g-going?

Takito: …Ryouta, is something bothering you?

Ryouta: [winces, frowns] It’s j-just, I’m almost d-done with my report on our k-kidnapping. You know, the one w-we’ve been working on.

Takito: That doesn’t sound like a bad thing. Doesn’t being close to the end make you want sprint forward for one final, awesome push?

Ryouta: [hands on head] N-n-no! [uncomfortable] I’ve b-been putting off this l-last thing very m-much intentionally!

Oh, it can’t be that bad.

Ryouta: [holds camera over face, shudders] I n-need to interview M-Monobear.

...!
Okay, it’s that bad.

Takito: Do you have to do that, though? I mean, really?

Ryouta: [hand over chest, determined expression] I h-have to! I pr-pride myself on getting the best data for the b-best articles! I c-can’t hold the title of SHSL without it!

Takito: Okay. But, uh, let me come along, just in case, y’know?

Ryouta: [smiles, blushes] Gr-great! Do you know h-how to summon Monobear?

Takito: Well, erm, don’t you know how, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [taps fingers] N-no…

Monobear: [neutral pose] Oh, well, it’s really simple. Y’all need two liters of tiger blood and a rotten papaya, then—

Ryouta: [hides face behind camera] M-m-m-m—

Takito: Monobear! What’s wrong with you?!

Monobear: [tilts head] Heh? I thought you bastards wanted me here. If you don’t, maybe I’ll just be on my merry way.

Ryouta: [extends hand, shaking] N-no! I n-need you for an interview!

Monobear: [tilts head] Interview? [happy pose] Aw yessss, an interview! Upupupu! I love talking about all the great things that make a Monobear so great!

Ryouta: [hides face behind camera] A-actually, it’s n-not really about y-you…
Monobear: [looks down] … [brandishes claw] What did you say?

Ryouta: [winces] It’s n-n-not about y-you…

Monobear: [brandishes claw] You bring me out here for an interview to talk about some boring, non-Monobear horseshit?!

Ryouta: [winces harder] N-no…

Monobear: [brandishes claw] You better make this worth my while pretty soon, kid!

Ryouta: [shaking, winces] I…

Crap, I have to step in here…

(“He wants to talk about your ideals” / “He wants to talk about despair” / “He wants to talk about your latest accomplishment”)

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12:23121231212332212131231212

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Takito: Ryouta simply wants to know more about your latest accomplishment here with us, right?

Ryouta: [holds camera tight, smile] A-absolutely! I w-want to know about th-this event w-we’re in…

Monobear: [pensive pose] Hmm? Well I don’t think I can divulge every little thing, but maybe I can give you a bit of juicy info…
Monobear talked on and on, and Ryouta furiously scribbled down notes. He went on for a surprisingly long time, but most of it seemed like Monobear was trying to sneak details about himself in. Ryouta only pretended to write during those parts.

After regaling us with his entire story, Monobear let out his trademark laugh, and teleported away. Ryouta turned away from him and looked at me, smiling.

Ryouta: [smiles] Th-thanks, Takito. R-really. It w-was really close th-there.

Takito: Don’t mention it. I wouldn’t just let Monobear endanger someone like that.

Ryouta: [takes photo] Th-thanks, still, though. Be s-sure to r-read the article when it’s d-done, okay? I’ll d-definitely put something n-nice about you in.

Takito: [blushes] You really flatter me, Ryouta. But I still expect SHSL quality out of it, alright?

Ryouta: [thumbs up, smile] A-absolutely! I’d n-never give anything l-less!

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to 2nd Floor]

[Move to 3rd Floor]

[Move to Steam Engine Room]

[Talk to Okita]

Okita: [heavy breathing, adjusts collar] Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit, oh shit…
Takito: You okay, Okita?

Okita: [tenses hand, angry stare] No! I’m in deep, deep shit right now!

Takito: Huh?

Okita: [tenses hand, angry stare] Don’t act like you don’t know! I’m the biggest fucking suspect in the “who killed Bertrand?” case yesterday, and now his owner ends up dead!

Takito: But Monobear did it, though. There’s not really any denying that.

Okita: [grabs head, nervous sweating] You don’t know how it works, man! Once somebody gets a suspicion in their head, they never let it go! They might even think I work for Monobear or some crazy shit if they’re convinced enough. [grabs Takito] Oh god, oh god, oh shit!

Takito: That’s ridiculous. Nobody’s that paranoid, are they?

Okita: [adjusts collar] I’m not taking the fucking risk, mate. Tell that Itsumi girl to stay away from me, too, alright. She’s a serious vigilante risk, if you ask me.

Takito: I’m not asking you. Really. But, please do try look out for yourself. It’s never good to see someone you know as a corpse.

Okita: [adjusts collar] I get that. You watch your back too, got it?

[Move to Militaria Hall Right]

[Move to War Set]

[Talk to Itsumi]
Takito: Itsumi?!

I thought you were down— What did they do— How did you get up so fast?

Takito: What happened?!

Itsumi: [frowns, rocking uncomfortably] Th-they kicked me out. I h-had already been given an appropriate a-amount of attention, they said.

Takito: Sorry about that. Knowing them, they probably just wanted to discuss something privately. Do you feel like you got everything in?

Itsumi: [frowns, rocking uncomfortably] I t-talked about w-wanting to be able to see Y-yasue often, and making s-sure nobody c-could get to her… Th-they said they w-would take everything into consideration and th-then just asked me to l-leave. [droops further down] I k-kind of just wanted to sp-spend more time with Yasue’s b-body. I guess h-here’s the next best pl-place.

Takito: Don’t be so down. You’ll be able to see her again soon, I’m sure of it.

Itsumi: [frowns, rocking uncomfortably] I d-don’t know. [droops further down] Th-they might think I c-could want to kill her.

Takito: That’s…

That’s likely, if Pablo’s involved. Yet, I can’t just tell her that…

Takito: That’s something. Even still, they wouldn’t spend time listening to you just to not take you into consideration at all. I’d have a little hope. If not for your sake, for hers.

Itsumi: [sighs, grips rock tight] I’ll tr-try. It s-seems like a losing battle to think of br-bright tomorrows lately.

I know, Itsumi. I really do.
Itsumi: [fiddles with rock] Hey Takito. Are you interested in sharing the evening with me?

I decided to spend some time with Itsumi.

Itsumi: [smiles, pulls something out her pocket] T-takito, do w-want to see a little something I’ve been w-working on?

[camera shows a bar of soap in Itsumi’s hand, with Itsumi’s name in kanji carved in relief on one side]

Takito: Woah. I don’t know what to say! How’d you get your strokes so thin and even like that?

Itsumi: [smiles] It’s a l-lot of practice. I wh-whittle every free m-moment I get.

[camera returns to Itsumi and Takito in the War Set]

Takito: That’s some serious dedication, Itsumi. Are you working up to something?

Itsumi: [blushes] N-no…

Takito: Itsumi… I can tell when you’re lying.

Itsumi: [blushing, hides face] Okay, it’s f-for a special someone… I w-want to make a carving for th-them.
Takito: You think you’re ready for that?

Itsumi: [determined expression] Oh, I’m r-ready! [looks down] But, I n-need something more durable than s-soap, and s-soap’s the only thing I can cut with a b-butterknife… I d-don’t think Pablo will l-let me have anything sharper.

Takito: Are you sure?

Itsumi: [shock] Y-you aren’t sure? You r-really think he’d just g-give me a sharp kn-knife like that?

Takito: Well, no, but there’s no use not trying, right? Let’s try it together and see what happened.

[Automoved to Cafeteria]

Pablo: [smiles, chuckles] Ah, Takito! Come to ask me for a simple favor, I presume?

Takito: Uh, erm, can Itsumi have a knife?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Is that a joke? It’s not a funny one, honestly.

Itsumi: [looks down, whispers] I t-told you, it w-would never w-work…

Takito: Itsumi really just wants to make something nice for someone special to her. Can’t you make one little exception?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Enough “exceptions” happen without me making more, and it only takes one to make a murder.

Takito: What if I watch over her while it happens, to make sure nothing goes wrong? What then?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Still no.
Itsumi: [looks down, whispers] It’s o-okay, Takito.

Takito: C’mon Pablo, don’t you have anyone special to you that’d you do something for?

Pablo: [authoritative pose, angry glare] There’s no one in the world I would endanger several lives for!

Takito: Really? Not even…

( “…your mother?” / “…your father?” / “…Tamaki?” )

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8:3213123212132312312132

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Pablo: [pensive pose] …My father?

Takito: Yeah, you talk all the time about how much you respect him. You’re telling me there’s nothing you’d risk to do him a favor? Nothing at all?


Takito: Pablo?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Very well. You may borrow one of the paring knives from the kitchen. But Itsumi is to be watched over at all times, understand?
Takito: Understood, sir!

[Automoved to War Set]

Takito: See, what’d I tell you?

Itsumi: [smiles] Y-yeah, you w-were right. I guess pr-pressing on and on and on can r-really help sometimes.

Takito: Don’t you forget it, Itsumi. Now, what are you going to carve?

Itsumi: [blushes, looks down] W-well, uh, I don’t exactly kn-know… I d-don’t have any wood…

Takito: …Really?

Itsumi: [blushes, looks down] …Y-yeah… Heh, h-heh.

…

Takito: Let’s just wait for another day to continue, okay then?

[FREE TIME ENDS]

[Move to 2nd Floor]

[Move to 1st Floor]

[Move to Geology Hall]
Tamaki: [smiles] Takito! Just who I wanted to see! We’ve just finished up our plan for Yasue. It’d be great if you could collect everyone for us, you know.

*I did as she asked. I don’t remember if it was out of respect for Tamaki, curiosity, or a mixture of both, but soon, I had brought everyone back to the foyer.*

Tamaki: [smiles] Wonderful, Takito. Thank you all for coming.

Itsumi: [grips rock tight] Wh-where’s—

Tamaki: [smiles] Yasue will be here soon. Pablo should be getting her.

Pablo: [off-camera] Here I am!

*Pablo wheeled in the body, still on its cart from earlier. He didn’t seem chipper or happy in any way, but at the same time held a sort of confidence about him. Yasue didn’t seem any different from this morning, causing Itsumi to sigh in relief. It was as good a sign as she could hope to get, I suppose.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The plan is simple. Yasue will be placed where the most medical equipment is available, the War Set.

Hitomi: [turns around, crosses arms] Hey, aren’t people supposed to be disarming cannons and rifles in there? Are you sure that’s a good idea?

Ryouta: [Kibogaman costume, heroic pose] Kibogaman Edict #32: Firearms are not to be trifled with! I thought this lesson would be seared into all of our brains by now.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, smile] Acknowledged and accounted for. From now on, those meant to pacify the War Set will now be guards for both the dangerous materials, and Yasue.
Tamaki: [smiles] Pablo will be the one who takes guard inside the tent. The other two will be standing outside, by the doors guarding each Militaria Hall.

Nahoko: [fiddling with phone, raised eyebrow] Why does the inside person have to always be Pablo? I thought you all were against anything that didn’t randomize the guards.

Itsumi: [grips rock tight, stares intently] Y-yeah, why are y-you the only one to see Yasue?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] In cases like this, Tamaki and I agreed it would be best if this particular role wasn’t left up to chance. We could let just anyone be that close to Yasue, after all.

Itsumi: [grips rock tight] W-will I still get to see her?

Pablo: [authoritative pose, sighs] We’ll see.

Itsumi: [frowns] …

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Meeting adjourned. Go to bed.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

*I didn’t know for sure yet, but I had a good feeling those bumps last night were related to Yasue being turned into a vegetable. I tried to sleep with one eye open that night; I couldn’t let that happen again.*

*The fear from the morning came back in full force that night. Every tiny noise frightened me. After a while, my heart couldn’t take it anymore, and I surrendered myself to deep sleep…*

-MONOBEAR THEATER-
Monobear: Do you know about mayflies?

Monobear: They only live for a day, you know.

Monobear: A lot of bugs are like that. Male praying mantises get killed right after sex.

Monobear: So many mantises die. And all for what?

Monobear: To make more mantises who can die again?

Monobear: Upupupu… If humans were like bugs, maybe I wouldn’t need to exist.

Monobear: Now that’s truly scary!

Chapter End Notes

Monobear's shocking new motive has been revealed!

How long can Yasue last unconscious, and what does it mean for everyone else?

If you think you know, Comment Below!
Chapter Notes

This one's a little short, for reasons soon to be revealed.

Only one Free Time this time, and it's Nahoko's.

Oh, and word of advice: if you're heavily invested in this story, I'd have a box of tissues handy. It's gonna be one of those.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — (Ab)normal Day 5

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today!

Takito: [groans, mumbles] I’d trust him more if didn’t actively trying to stop us “giving it our all”…

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

Without warning, Tamaki pulled me aside.

Takito: What the hell, Tama—

Tamaki: [frowns, puts up finger to lips] Not so loud! This is for your ears only!
Takito: [whispers] Okay, but don’t do that, alright? I’m scared of murderers enough as it is.

Tamaki: [frowns] My apologies, but this issue is too pressing to ignore.

Takito: Okay, what is it, then?

Tamaki: [frowns] May I honest with you? Pablo’s obsessions are beginning to worry me… I don’t know how long he can protect her, anyway. If he fails…

Takito: What? What happens if he fails?

Tamaki: [frowns] …I don’t know. Nothing good, though, that’s for certain.

Takito: Hmm…

Tamaki: [frowns, looks around] …

Takito: Sorry, I just don’t buy that. Pablo doesn’t really seem that obsessive, anyway.

Tamaki: [frowns] That’s right. You don’t know what he’s like in our private meetings, do you?

Takito: You’d tell me that?

Tamaki: [smiles] So long as Pablo never finds out, it’s absolutely fine.

You know, in my head, I imagine these two would be more loyal to each other. I wonder if something bad really is going on behind the scenes here.

Tamaki: [frowns] Pablo loses his temper a lot lately during these planning sessions we have. He
doesn’t lash out at me, thankfully, but he does get angry at just about everything else. He’s very frustrated at his “inability”, as he says.

Takito: So this recent incident with Yasue, must’ve hit him hard, huh?

Tamaki: [frowns] Unfortunately, yes. He blames himself very much, and between you and I, the idea that he would constantly watch over her was 90% his. I fear my voice in how we operate may slowly be crowded out by Pablo’s fears.

Takito: You’re saying Pablo’s feeding into some sort psychosis by guarding Yasue?

Tamaki: [frowns] Absolutely. It’s already affecting his ability; he knows he shouldn’t be breaking the volunteering rule.

Takito: This seems serious. We’ll keep in touch, alright.

Tamaki: [frowns] Remember this, okay. I’ve reached out to you for a reason. [enters Cafeteria]

...

Is she telling the truth? There’s always this layer of artificiality and restraint when she speaks.

Still, I have no reason to doubt her, and she wasn’t more artificial than normal. Maybe I’ll just see how this pans out.

[Move to Cafeteria]

Breakfast went well, though after my little chat with Tamaki, I couldn’t help but look at Pablo.

He really didn’t do anything suspicious, though. It was almost disappointing. By the time announcements rolled around, I had given up hope of any eventful things happening this morning.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] Ryouta! Wataru!

Ryouta: [Kibogaman costume, salutes] Yes, Sir Vargas?

Wataru: [salutes, nervous sweating] …

Pablo: [authoritative pose, blushes] Salutes aren’t exactly necessary, you know. I guess, Sir Vargas was my father after all, and— [shakes head] What I mean to say is, you two, as well as I, are assigned to be guards of Yasue and the War Set today. Remember, Yasue’s life is in our hands, so please redouble your efforts as guards today. That is all.

Itsumi: [grips rock tight] W-wait! Don’t go yet, I h-have something important to s-say!

Tamaki: [frowns] Itsumi, I believe we’ve been over this. Volunteers are strictly forbidden.

Itsumi: [grips rock tight, looks down] I kn-know, but… [stares intently] I sp-spent all night st-studying medical care! I have the empty coffee containers to prove it! I’m… I’m w-way better than P-pablo at c-caring for Yasue now!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Hmph! I, for one, find the idea of you suddenly coming into medical knowledge very hard to believe. [turns to the side] For one, there are no such books within the museum.

Itsumi: [stares intently] I l-looked it all up on N-nahoko’s phone! J-just ask her!

Nahoko: [looks up from phone, spins shelf] Yeah, she doesn’t take no for an answer.

Satoko: [smirk] She’s really not gonna take this time, eh, il presidente?

Pablo: [presses forehead] Argh… [authoritative pose] This position is not about medical skills, or even guard skills. It’s about objectivity and trust to not take advantage of this position.
Kotori: [crosses arms, furrows brow] Pablo! You honestly think Itsumi would do that?!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I have to consider all possibilities.

Okita: [wags rose at Pablo] Really? I don’t think we’ve considered the possibility that you might kill someone!

Wataru: [angry glare, fists ready] He’s right! Kibogaman, stay back, I’ll handle him for you!

Ryouta: [Kibogaman, touches fingertips together] I don’t think Pablo is a threat in this circumstance, Wataru.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Of course not! I wouldn’t hurt a fly.

Okita: [wags rose at Pablo] Oh, anybody can say that… [crosses arms, bites rose] But unlike you, I’ve seen Itsumi walk the walk. I trust her miles more around Yasue.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Since when have you given a shit about Yasue’s best interests anyway, you—

Tamaki: [smiles] Let’s just give them their way for now, Pablo, and spend some time calming down. There’s no need to make decisions filled with anger.

Pablo: [crosses arms, looks to the side] …As you wish. But this is only a stopgap, and if things go wrong, everyone here will know why.

Tamaki: [smiles] Itsumi, you know what to do, correct?

Itsumi: [salutes, smiles wide] Of c-course!

Tamaki: [smiles] Then by all means, get to it. [leaves, winking at Takito as she exits]
Kotori: [raises brow, whispers] Hey, did you see her wink at you? Did she do something with you?

Takito: …I think everything’s just gone the way she wanted it to.

Kotori: [frowns, looks to the side, whispers] Ah. Tamaki’s really taking charge lately, isn’t she?

Takito: Yeah. *Is that a good thing? A bad thing? Anything?*

…

*I’ll just have to wait and see.*

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Talk to Nahoko]

Nahoko: [spins shelf, grins] Oh, so you’re requiring my services after all. Can’t say I’m surprised.

*I decided to spend some time with Nahoko.*

Nahoko: [holds and stares at tablet] Hngrrh…

Takito: Uh, Nahoko?
Nahoko: [holds and stares at tablet] Shh… This takes intense concentration. I can’t lose now.

Takito: Huh? Lose? Are you gaming right now?

Nahoko: [holds and stares at tablet] …

Yeah, better just let her do what she’s doing.

I watched Nahoko play for a few minutes. I didn’t really recognize what was going on, but I think I got the basic mechanics of the game down—stun all the enemies and bump into them to win the level.

Eventually though, I found it more fun to just look at Nahoko’s expressions out of context.

Nahoko: [grips tablet, stares aghast] Are you kidding me with this shit?

Takito: What? I didn’t say anything, I swear!

Nahoko: [crosses arms, scowls] It’s not you, it’s the game. [spins shelf idly] I just beat it—all 100 levels, mind you—and now it tells me I didn’t really beat it if I don’t do it with another player! [slams shelf] Horseshit! I do it the harder way, and it lectures me for it!

Takito: Why don’t you just ask someone else for help? I like to think I’m pretty good at those kinds of games.

Nahoko: [scratches chin, spins shelf] Ehh… I’m not really sure.

Takito: C’mon. I watched you play for a little bit! I know I can do it!

Nahoko: [wags finger, smug smile] Oh, it takes more than observation to play with the best, kid. This game was made back when the whole medium was designed to crush the wills of the innocent. You need some raw experience.
Takito: I have the experience! ...Kind of!

Nahoko: [wags finger, smug smile] Really now? What’s the title? Do you even know that?

Takito: Well, of course I know the game’s title… It’s, uh…

(“Space Encroachers” / “Bubble Babble” / “Berg Climber”)

~~~~~

10:321312213231312312231231231232312

~~~~~

Takito: Well, obviously it’s Bubble Babble. Obviously.

Nahoko: [nods head slightly] Okay, Captain Obvious, let’s see what you’re made of.

_Yasue spun her shelf around, tossed me a tablet, already set up with Bubble Babble._

Takito: You have two of these?!

Nahoko: [smug smile] I have three, actually. [grabs tablet, intense stare] Now shut up and start bubbling!

_I played Bubble Babble with Nahoko for a solid hour until we got back to level 100. Nahoko was way, way better than I was, but I like to think I kept my own._

Nahoko: [concentrating] Takito?
Takito: Yeah?

Nahoko: [concentrating] Quit stealing my lives.

*…For the most part, anyway. Once we, and by we I mean mostly Nahoko, beat the boss again, we got the true ending screen.*

Nahoko: [shoulders droop, smiles] Ah, another conquest complete.

Takito: You’re really good, Nahoko. Like, I couldn’t conceive someone being this good before.

Nahoko: [shoulders droop, smiles] Practice makes perfect, and I have more practice than anyone.

Takito: …Can’t fault that. Well, anyway, today was fun with you. It’s not everyday I get to help out with videogames.

Nahoko: [pulls at collar] Takito, could I ask a small favor from you?

Takito: What?

Nahoko: [stern expression] I like to keep an aura of raw professionalism around me. If people found out I spend time mastering simple games…

Takito: Nahoko, your secret’s safe with me. I wasn’t really gonna tell anyone anyway.


*Huh. I didn’t even realize that until now. It’s always interesting to see another side of somebody.*

*[FREE TIME ENDS]*
[Examine Yasue’s Door]

*Hm. Yasue’s door is open. Better close it for her.*

...

*Wait...*

[Move to Yasue’s Room]

**Takito:** ...It’s a total mess in here!

*I thought Ikkaku’s had been bad, but this... someone’s been doing business in here.*

[Examine Bed]

*Something shiny’s sticking out of the sheets over here...*

...!

*It’s a knife. It looks like one of those personalized knives from the first murder, but didn’t Pablo take all of them?*

*I better take this. At the very least, I can delay whoever’s messing with this for a little while.*

[Move to 2nd Floor]

[Move to 3rd Floor]
[Move to Steam Engine Room]

[Talk to Okita]

Okita; [bites rose, smiles] Hey Takito, fancy meeting you here.

Takito: Have you seen Pablo? I just found something important.

Okita: [stern expression, points rose at Takito] Forget Pablo. You and I both know he’s lost it by now.

Takito: What are you even talking about? Pablo may be straining to keep up a little, but he isn’t insane!

First Tamaki, and now Okita? I wonder what everyone else must think.

Okita: [adjusts corsage] As long as we’re being honest here, I don’t we have long before everything goes to shit around here, too.

Takito: You really think that? When everything seems so okay?

Okita: [stern expression, points rose at Takito] Believe me or not, but when shit does hit the fan, come to me. I’m the only one you can trust.

...?

Takito: Well, uh, that’s considerate of you, but seriously, do you know where Pablo is?

Okita: [pulls at collar] No. I mean, I’ve seen him pacing around, frustrated, but—
Takito: Did you hear that just now?

Okita: [twiddling rose] Just like I told you. Someone must be doing some sneaky business in the vents.

Takito: The vents? Are you sure?

Okita: [raises eyebrow, bites rose] Do you see any steel drums around here? Come on, we have to get to the War Set! [runs towards door]

Takito: Woah, woah, woah, wait! If we stay here, we can catch the killer right away while they’re trapped in the vent! Maybe you could do that perspective trick to see them in there!

Okita: [snaps fingers, points at Takito] Great idea, man! Lemme just get into position… and… and…

I can’t tell if finding the person now is lucky or terrible. At the very least, we’ll be spared an investigation. Best case scenario, they haven’t even started yet!

Okita: [crosses arms] Nobody’s in there. It’s pretty much empty.

Takito: But we just heard—

Okita: [crosses arms] I trust my eyes way more than I trust my ears with this. Why don’t you look for yourself? It’s pretty easy.

[camera shifts to an image of an empty vent’s interior. The only visible object is a round spider web in the upper right corner]

Takito: You’re right. Nothing’s here.
Takito: How can that be? I was sure I heard someone!

Okita: [grabs hair, scowls, bites rose] Dammit! They must already be inside!

[Move to Militaria Hall Right]

Okita: [grabs hair, scowls, bites rose] Oh shit, Ryouta. I forgot about those guys.

Takito: Ryouta, could you please let us in? Itsumi and Yasue are in serious danger right now!

Ryouta: [looks down, bites lip] S-sorry. I c-can’t do that for anyone. Even P-Pablo tried several times to g-get in today, and—

Okita: [grabs hair, scowls, bites rose] The killer is already inside! Every second we waste is another second the murderer has to get away!

Ryouta: [shakes, puts hands up] Okay! O-okay! J-j-just go inside!

[Move to War Set]

???: [metallic, clanging noises] [static beep]

Okita: [grabs hair, scowls, bites rose] Shit, shit, shit! Now there’s two noises!

Which one do I check on first…?

…
Wait, what am I thinking? I need to check on the people first, then noises later!

Takito: Okita, into the Medic Tent, now!

[Move to Medic Tent]

The first thing I saw was the source of the beep. It was an EKG, showing only a flat line. Fearing the worst, I looked down…

[Listen to this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4kxEAVJjSM]

…and found Yasue, lying there, with blood streaming down her forehead. And just below her…

[Replay music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4kxEAVJjSM]

…Itsumi lied on the bloodied and broken shards of her glasses.

Chapter 3- Bedside Manner: (ab)Normal Days End

Chapter End Notes

Against everyone's best efforts, the group gets another murder, this time a double homicide.

Theories? Reactions? Criticism? All are welcome in the comments.
Chapter 3: Bedside Manner - Abnormal Days

Chapter Notes

Here it is, the investigation for Chapter 3.

It's fairly dense, and has a few nice developments for you all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — Abnormal Days

Oh, no... No, no, no, no, no!

Okita: [staggers back, bites rose] Aw shit Jesus fuck!

Ryouta: [winces, shakes] B-but... I... j-just saw th-them this m-morning...

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: A body has been discovered! Following a brief period of investigation, we will commence our school trial.

Almost immediately, I heard two doors simultaneously slam open.

Wataru: [off-screen] Itsumi! Shout if either of you are dead!

Pablo: [off-screen] Where is it? Where’s the body?! Whoever’s in here, secure it now!

Takito: We’ve got two bodies in here!

Pablo and Wataru rushed inside the tent, pushing aside the door cloth and each other.
Wataru: [hand over heart, looks down] Not them! No, no, I was here all day! How could I have failed them both?

Pablo: [slouches, grabs forehead] Another murder… No matter what I do, they still seem to sneak through… [sighs, authoritative pose] Ryouta, did you find these two here?

Ryouta: [touches fingertips together] W-well, no th-they asked to c-come in, and I w-watched over th-them wh-while they…

Pablo: [crosses arms, furrows brow] Hm? And you would let them in before me?

Ryouta: [winces] Th-they heard th-things! Th-they s-said that in the v-vent—

Pablo: [points upward, shock] The vent! [leaves]

Takito: Pablo, wait!

[Automoved to War Set]

Takito: Pablo, where are you?!

Pablo: [off-camera] Nobody’s in here!

I ran around to the other side of the tent to find Pablo halfway inside the air vent.

Takito: What are you— How’d you get that grate off so fast?!

Okita: [holds rose, snickering] Having a little trouble in there, Grand Leader? [holds out and admires rose] Don’t worry, we already looked—
Pablo: [off-camera] Then why aren’t you… [coughs] …out there catching the killer?! Go, go, go! Now! [coughs]

[Automoved to Militaria Hall Right]

[Automoved to Steam Engine Room]

Okita: [bites rose, looks around] Where are they? Where are they?

Takito: They’re not here. I think we missed them.

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Shit, shit, shit… What are we going to tell Pablo?

I couldn’t think of much to say, but luckily, the door from the Industrial Hall swung open and people started coming inside.

Kotori: [earnest expression] Takito! Do you know where the body is?

Tamaki: [frowns] We’ve searched every public room on the lower floors. It’s hard to believe three people could’ve found it already, really…

Takito: Sorry, but it’s bodies, not body. Itsumi and Yasue are both—

Kotori: [pensive pose] I understand. Someone must’ve gotten to them in the tent, right?

Takito: It really looks that way, yeah.

Tamaki: [frowns] This is my fault. If I hadn’t allowed Itsumi to be a guard, she’d be still alive.

Kotori: [crosses arms, stares intently] There’s nobody to blame but the murderer. You know that.
Tamaki: [frowns] I’d like to believe that, but it’s just not the case. You don’t blame natural disasters for a poor evacuation plan, do you?

Kotori: [pensive pose] No, but that’s clearly different. I mean…

Pablo: [authoritative pose, dusty face] Is Kotori the killer? I never would’ve—

Okita: [bites rose, crosses arms, looks to the side] No, it’s Tamaki.

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Davvero? Questo rapido!

Tamaki: [frowns] I am absolutely not the culprit! …Wait, when did you arrive?

Nahoko: [looks up from tablet] When did you arrive, miss killer?

Takito: Listen, we didn’t find anyone! Okita’s just being an ass again.

Okita: [bites rose, crosses arms, looks to the side] I think Takito’s the killer of fun…

Hitomi: [backwards, third eye open] Wait, who’s even dead? [turns around, pensive pose] It can’t be her, can it?

Monobear: [raises arms] Oh, you know it is! A two-for-one special! Upupupupu!

Wataru: [stern expression] I did not need you in my life right now.

Monobear: [sad pose] Oh, but who else is going to give you a Monobear file, and be your judge for the grand trial? Nobody, that’s who.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] What Wataru meant to say was that our patience is running slim. Just give us the file and go.

Monobear: [thoughtful pose] Hm. You apologize for someone else, and then act just as rude… I’ll never understand humans. But here you go, it’s what you’ve all be waiting for with baited breath—the Monobear File, double issue!

*Monobear File 3: Itsumi Jukodo and Yasue Temko*

*Cause of death: Suffocation, Head Trauma*

*Time of death: Within twenty minutes of discovery*

*Additional Info: Both victims were killed with the same weapon*

Monobear: [laughing pose] Hope you enjoy! It took me five whole minutes of rewatching how it all went down, and that’s a lot of effort for teddies. Upupupu! [sighs] Oh, how shitty it is for you all. Goodbye! [warps away]

Pablo: [presses forehead] The same weapon, hm? [makes fist, intense expression] We didn’t find anything of the sort at the scene, so the weapon must still be on the killer.

Tamaki: [frowns] Have we really looked at the scene yet, though?

Takito: You couldn’t have been there more than two minutes, Pablo.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Besides, we need to do a full investigation anyway. …And something about that Monobear File strikes me as …weird.

Pablo: [hands up defensively] Well then, I suppose a thorough investigation is only appropriate. [authoritative pose] Everyone! I want a detailed, no-expense-spared report on everything!
[INVESTIGATION START]

[Talk to Okita]

Takito: You really like checking out that vent, don’t you?


Takito: Alright, Mr. SHSL Ventilator, do you think you could find some other vents to look into.

Okita: [crosses arms, displeased] Why? I mean this is the only relevant one.

Takito: You don’t know that.

Okita: [smug grin] Yeah I do! I’m the expert, remember?

Takito: [sighs] But you won’t find any new evidence!

Okita: [smug grin, points rose at Takito] Au Contraire! I found something very much like evidence! The spiderweb you saw earlier— it’s gone!

Takito: …So, the killer destroyed it going through, right?

Okita: [pensive pose, bites rose] Well, if they did, they’re pretty good at it! There’s not a trace left. [pulls at collar, bites rose] But the real question is, how are we gonna get Monobear to exterminate all the damn spiders? Whenever I see one, I’m like “eeeuugh!”

Takito: If it makes you uncomfortable being here, he’ll probably do nothing and tell you to kill someone and get out. He’s not exactly accommodating.
Okita: [pensive pose, bites rose] Well, if anyone’s the expert there, it’s you.

_Eurgh. I really don’t want to be known as the SHSL Monobear Whisperer._

[Talk to Pablo and Tamaki]

Pablo: [presses forehead] Augh… I never should’ve listened to you. [makes fist, intense expression] Why can’t I get any authority anymore? I needed to be in the tent today! I could’ve saved them!

Tamaki: [frowns] I think I’m the wrong person to ask about that. If you want to do something, just do it. You accepted Itsumi’s idea, remember?

Pablo: [crosses arms, furrows brow] But you all boxed me in like that! I had no choice! I would’ve looked like a traitor to the group!

Tamaki: [frowns] I don’t know what to say, Pablo. I just don’t understand why, knowing what would’ve happened to you, you still wish you could’ve been there.

Pablo: [presses forehead] Maybe when you’ve been the head of a country, you will.

Takito: Uh, Pablo, is this a bad time? There’s something …urgent I found before we discovered Yasue.

Pablo: [presses forehead] To be honest, it’s a horrible time. [authoritative pose] But it’s only going to get worse from here. [salutes] Report!

Takito: [salutes] Sir! I found a knife in Yasue’s room, sir! [puts hand down] …Well, uh, yeah, here it is.

Pablo: [wide-eyed, holding knife] How…? This is one of the knives from our first days here!

Tamaki: [intense stare] Where did you put them? Where!
Pablo: [wide-eyed, holding knife] I placed them in a box in storage. We don’t have any locks, so the best I could do was hide it and make it look unassuming.

Tamaki: [frowns] Well, it seems that wasn’t nearly enough. I just hope it wasn’t a part of our current mess.

Pablo: [wide-eyed, quivering] You… You don’t think…?

Takito: There’s no blood on this knife. I really doubt this is the murder weapon.

Tamaki: [frowns] So, it either was used for some secondary objective, or belongs to different evildoer altogether.

Takito: I just hope we can put it in context at the trial.

Pablo: [looks down, shivering] I need to be alone. Please excuse me, Tamaki.

...And I really hope we can keep Pablo together to solve this.

[Move to Militaria Hall Left]

Kotori: [smiles, points playfully] There you are! I was wondering when you’d show up, Takito?

Takito: You don’t have to wait for me. …Wait, what are you waiting to do again?

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] Seriously, you’ve already forgotten the investigation?

Takito: Well, I wouldn’t say forgotten, but— Wait, what are we doing? We need to get to the scene!
Kotori: [smiles] When you’re right, you’re right. Can’t let anyone tamper or hide the evidence.

[Move to War Set]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Takito: You were a guard, right, Ryouta? You have to have seen something.

Ryouta: [looks down, hands on head] N-no… I only w-went in early in the m-morning and r-right after the m-m-murder…

Kotori: [pensive pose] Really? You didn’t smell anything with your Shark Sense?

Ryouta: [winces, trembles] Are y-y-you accusing m-me?

Kotori: [composed pose] Not if you can answer the question: did you smell blood today?

Ryouta: [winces, trembles] Y-y-yes… [stares forward, makes fists] B-but I c-couldn’t go in! P-pablo told me the d-day after the trial th-that I c-couldn’t ch-chase after every papercut anymore!

Takito: It’s okay, It’s okay. We believe you. Did you notice anything else suspicious? Anything at all today?

Ryouta: [looks to the side, hunches over] W-well, there’s the c-cannon over there…

Kotori: [jerks back] Did you fire off a cannon today?

Ryouta: [winces, trembles] N-no, absolutely, no! [grabs shirt, looks to the side] I s-saw this morning that one of the wh-wheels was gone. I kn-know I haven’t been here since the f-first day, but I’m sure all the wh-wheels are supposed to be th-there…
Kotori: [pensive pose] Well, Takito? You’ve been here later than he has.

Takito: Come to think of it, I think all the wheels were there when one of the cannons accidentally discharged. Though, sometimes battle damage is part of the exhibit…

Kotori: [pensive pose] The axle doesn’t show any signs of damage, though. There’s no room to doubt—somebody’s stolen this wheel, and didn’t want anyone to know about it.

*How could a wheel help in this murder? It seems so useless…*

Ryouta: [determined stare] Th-there’s one other th-thing I found. I r-rushed over to th-the wall v-vent as soon as I c-could after we g-got together, and it’s b-bottom screws are g-gone. [fidgets with hands, looks down at the vent] The t-top two are still th-there, but they’re l-loose, so they w-work like h-hinges.

Takito: So, the killer wanted to hide their use of the vent, eh? So much for that. Thanks for the scoop, “SHSL Journalist”.

Ryouta: [determined stare] I may n-not be recognized by H-hope’s Peak, but I’m st-still decent at journalism!

Kotori: [smiles] We know, we know. We’re simply kidding.

Ryouta: [sighs] That’s a r-relief. It’s n-nice to know you r-respect me.

Takito: It’s nice to know you trust us, Ryouta.

[Talk to Wataru]

Wataru: [stands up tall] Takito! Kotori! Have your searches been fruitful?

Takito: Not really.
Kotori: [smiles] Actually, we were just about to ask you that.

Takito: We figured that as one of the guards, you had to have seen something.

Wataru: [salutes] I have seen… Absolutely nothing!

Takito: …Great.

Wataru: [scratches chin] I have only peered into the room this morning, and as soon as I heard the body discovery announcement. If I had looked inside, I would’ve exposed my back to would-be intruders.

Kotori: [dissatisfied expression] So, nothing suspicious, then?

Wataru: [scratches chin] Well, Pablo was pacing quite often around here. He said he wanted to go in nearly every time.

_Didn’t Ryouta say something similar right before we went in?_

Wataru: [crosses arms] He claimed it was his duty as leader to watch over, but I knew better. He wanted in, probably for a chance to murder!

Kotori: [pensive pose] If Pablo was planning to murder, he wasn’t being very smart about it.

Wataru: [crosses arms] That’s why I believe he’s innocent— here at least.

Wataru doesn’t have a lot of respect for Pablo, does he? Maybe it’s right to distrust Pablo’s leadership after what’s happened, but I’m unsure Wataru’s got the right reasons…

[Move to Medic Tent]
Kotori: [frowns] This is them, huh?

Takito: Yeah. It’s not very pleasant, is it?

Kotori: [frowns] You know, for the first time, these victims aren’t in horrible positions, but I feel worse.

Takito: I feel the same way. What do you think it is; familiarity, fatigue, or how hard we tried to protect them?

Kotori: [frowns] I… I don’t need to know right now.

[Talk to Nahoko]

Nahoko: [perched over Yasue, inspecting her] …

Nahoko has one of hell of a concentration stare. I wouldn’t want that thing aimed at me any day.

Kotori: [pensive pose] I take it you’re inspecting Yasue’s body, Nahoko?

Nahoko: [stern stare] Yeah. [examines tablet] Despite the abilities of both myself and my Pocket Coroner app, I can’t find anything that isn’t obvious.

Takito: Obvious? I mean, Kotori and I know what’s obvious, but should explain, for uh, prosperity.

Nahoko: [closes tablet, condescending glare] Well, for prosperity, the obvious things are things you can see. The point of impact being her right temple, her swelling that’s also there, the blood on her face, et cetera…

Nahoko’s stares… They chill me to my core…

Kotori: [frowns] Her face… It’s very red, and her expression looks horrified. [puts hand over mouth] Coupled with the blood, it’s actually pretty disgusting.
Now that she mentioned it, I noticed how kind of gruesome Yasue’s positioning was. She looked shocked, and was leaning over limp on the left side of the bed. Her left arm even dangled lifelessly over the bedrail. The whole pose almost seemed deliberate.

Takito: This whole set-up gets me kind of existential. Will I be like this one day?

Nahoko: [smirks, points at Takito] Of course you will. But if you act like that every time you see a body, it’ll be closer than you prefer. In my world, if you spend too much time contemplating the inevitable, you’ll soon realize the inevitable is here and you’ve done nothing.

…

I couldn’t deny there was some truth to that.

[Talk to Satoko]

Takito: Hey, Satoko, would you mind turning over Itsumi’s body?

Satoko: [displeased, adjusts glasses] Ĉu vi ne volas scii, parteron.

Takito: Uh…

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] Could you repeat that?

Satoko: [displeased] I said, you don’t want to know. [closes eyes] She doesn’t look good, parteron.

Takito: It’s not about wanting. We kind of have to.

Satoko: [slight shrug] Fajna. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

Satoko gently took hold of Itsumi’s hair and lifted her head up. Itsumi’s glasses had been
smashed by the impact of her head against the floor, and the shards of her glasses had been pushed into her face. Between the blood, glass, and wire, she was barely recognizable.

Takito: Oh god… You found her like this?

Kotori: [crosses arms, furrows brow] I sincerely hope she didn’t make Itsumi this way.

Satoko: [scowls, muttering] Mi piacerebbe farlo solo per le persone che odio. [crosses arms, looks straight ahead] I mean, erm, I’ve done nothing to her face. I did have to move her body to get a good look, though. I had to remove her hat and turn her over a few times. [looks away, pushes on glasses] I actually found some tinier pieces of glass on her lower body, and—

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] Wait, you removed her hat? It wasn’t already knocked off?

Satoko: [touches chin, tilts head] Nah, it was just resting over this huge bruise on the back of her head. You think the killer wanted to hide it?

Takito: The hat’s in pretty good shape, considering its owner. Not a bit of blood on it.

Kotori: [frowns] I wish I could say the same about her stone.

Takito: Huh? Oh, not that, too!

Satoko: [chuckles] E ’solo una roccia cazzo…

Takito: Translation, please? I’m pretty sure I heard “rock”.

Kotori: [raises eyebrow at Satoko] As I was saying, Itsumi’s rock is soaked with blood. You think it’s the murder weapon?

Satoko: [smirks] Puó essere. I don’t know if that stone can do the things the Monobear File said the murder weapon could do.
Takito: What about these fibers on the point? They’re soaked with blood too, so they have to be related to the murder.

Kotori: [wide-eyed] Good catch! The blood makes it hard to tell what they came from, but we might be able to figure it out later with some context.

Satoko: [smirks] Mira estos pequeños Jose Luis Torrentes…

Kotori: [raises eyebrow at Satoko] Voy a fingir que no escuché eso.

Satoko: [staggers back] ¡Qué!

Looks like Satoko’s been counter-Spanished.

…If that’s even a thing.

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [turned around, third eye open and waving at Takito] Hi there! Wanna take a break from all the bodies and look over here?

Takito: I’d love to, honestly, but we need all the time we can get to investigate.

Kotori: [wags finger playfully] Takito… You know you shouldn’t only look at the bodies.

Hitomi: [facing forward, grins and blushes] Besides, you wouldn’t to be known as the boy who spends way too much time looking at dead girl bodies, would you?

Takito: No! Nobody should have that idea!
Hitomi: [grins and blushes] Then you better look somewhere else for a bit, before I do!

Takito: Yes, ma’am! Uh, uh, there’s the tears in the canvas over there, and, uh, uh…

*Think, think, think!*

Takito: I don’t want to do that to dead bodies, really!

Hitomi: [coy smile] Relax, Takito, I’m only joking. But yeah, there are some suspicious looking tears in the tent’s back wall!

Kotori: [pensive pose] The gashes are fairly large, but also fairly clean.

Takito: There’s some behind the supply cabinet, even.

Hitomi: [puts arms up, surprise] Gasp! Somebody must’ve moved the cabinet!

Takito: She’s right! There’s dust that shows where the wheels used to be!

Kotori: [pensive pose] So the cabinet was pushed forward somehow during all this struggle. To be honest, this seems a bit …unimportant.

Hitomi: [proud grin, hands on hips] Nothing is too unimportant! [turns around and waves] Hey Ryouta! Get in here and cover the cabinet story of the century! Stop hiding, I can see your shadow!

Kotori: [pensive pose] I think we should slowly leave.

Takito: Yeah…

*[INVESTIGATION END]*
Having not yet found one, we spent the remainder of our time looking everywhere in the War Set for a murder weapon, but came up empty.

There were plenty of things that could’ve been used to kill, especially in the Medic Tent, but nothing had any sort of blood on it, and there were no traces of anything being wiped off.

Takito: Well, that was a load of crap. What could be the murder weapon?

Kotori: [pensive pose] Our best bet has to be Itsumi’s rock. It’s the only thing we found with blood. [bites lip] Still, there some things that just don’t add up with that theory…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: It’s trial time, everyone! Report to the Foyer as soon as you can, or miss out on the exciting third part of the trilogy! Upupupu! Just kidding, we’ll probably have more later. See you there! Upupu!

Kotori: [frowns] Eh. We’ll have to save it for the trial.

[Automoved to Foyer]

Kotori and I made our way down. Pablo was there, as usual, but instead of speaking to everyone, he just seemed to part of the crowd. I stared at him for a while, but he motioned for me to come closer.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Takito, since your discovery inside Yasue’s room, I’ve re-examined the box of knives I’ve been keeping.

Tamaki: [smiles] I was there, too, of course. Just to add credibility to Pablo’s word.

Pablo: [sighs, looks to the side] …
Takito: So, what’d you find?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] You may find this interesting— The knife you found in Yasue’s room? It came from your case.

Takito: Wait, you aren’t accusing me, are you?

Tamaki: [smiles] Of course not, silly. As long as they found the box, anyone could’ve taken anyone else’s knife. But we both think someone may be trying to send a message.

Pablo: [presses forehead] They may be declaring you as a rival, or considering that knife’s history, maybe telling us something about Ikkaku’s murder. [avoids eye contact] To be honest, it scares me that someone can be so cryptic and dangerous without me knowing.

Tamaki: [smiles] But you, on the other hand, might be a position to counter whoever’s behind this.

Takito: I’ll, I’ll do my best.

At that moment, I didn’t know what to think. I had suddenly been tasked with discovering some creeping threat happening inside the museum.

I looked at Pablo. He had been trying to lead the group the best he could, and now he could barely trust himself. Could I even do this arguably harder job? And if I did find whoever’s behind this, could I stop them?

I shook the idea off and entered the trial room on Monobear’s command. The place had changed again, this time sporting an overdone, Baroque design.

This mystery person won’t matter if I can’t solve this murder now.

I must’ve said that to myself at least twenty times before the trial started.
Chapter End Notes

The investigation is over.

Do you think you have all the information you need for an accusation?

Or do you think you can tackle what's going on behind the scenes?

If you do, Comment!
Chapter 3: Bedside Manner - School Trial Part 1

Chapter Notes

Finally, it's here! This went through way more revisions than normal, so I hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — School Trial Part 1

Classroom Trials START

Monobear: Before we begin, lemme go over the rules of a school trial. If you are the mob, your goal is to uncover the culprit and vote for them as the killer. If you are the culprit, your goal is to mislead the mob and have them vote for someone else. [laughing pose] Win to survive, lose and you die! Upupupupu! Let's go, you bastards!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] To begin, I offer a formal apology.

Nahoko: [facepalms, sighs]

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I stand before you today, a killer.

...What?

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Hey! Don’t make it all easy like that! I need at least three hours out each of these to stay happy!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No, no, I did not directly kill these two. But I did, through my incompetence, allow the true killer to act.

Monobear: [sighs] Eh... Metaphorical murderers don’t count, folks. If y’all haven’t noticed, I’m not too big on poetry.
Pablo: [holds head in palm] I failed to secure the vents, and in doing so, failed as a leader. [authoritative pose, beats chest] However! There is hope for redemption, as I, heir to the Vargas line, will pick myself up and—


Pablo: [authoritative pose, beats chest] Rising from the ashes of defeat, I, heir to the Vargas line, will —

Satoko: [displeased expression] [clears throat] Hablesacerca del respiradero, burro.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] ¡No estoy burro!

Takito: Kotori, do you know what they’re saying?

Kotori: [frowns] Yes, and I don’t want to.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Since you would like to know, Hitomi, the reason the vents are so important is because the killer used them to enter and exit the War Set.

Tamaki: [smiles] Takito and Okita actually heard the killer inside it. They can testify, if you prefer.

Hitomi: [cleaning out ear, sticks out tongue] Yeah, I’m gonna need all the clarification I can get.

Okita: [bites rose, grins] Then, my mademoiselle, allow me.

*Okita may embellish some things that make himself look better… I might want to just check this testimony over once or twice.*

**NON-STOP DEBATE**
Evidence Bullets: “Noisy Air Vent”, “Stolen Wheel”, “Monobear File”, “Okita’s Testimony”, “Pablo’s Testimony”

Okita: [bites rose, grins] You see, Takito and myself were having a fine conversation in the Steam Engine Room, when we heard this metallic noise. [examines rose] Using the fine art of deduction, it didn’t take long to figure out the noise came from within the air vent.

Hitomi: [pouting face] So you just let them get killed? How could you?

Okita: [puts up hands, bites rose] Ah, you misunderstand. We immediately investigated the source of the noise, but found nothing there. [swipes rose forward] At that point, the killer must’ve already moved into the War Set and attacked!

Ryouta: [winces] Y-you mean all our h-hurrying was for n-nothing?

Okita: [frowns, rose droops] Oh, I wish it wasn’t so as well. [points rose, smiles] But now, a fresh chance for redemption faces all of us!

Hitomi: [turns back, opens third eye, hands on hip] Wait, Ryouta was there too! Now you’re just confusing me on purpose!

Ryouta: [shudders] N-no, it’s j-just that th-they came to me to enter the W-War Set. [looks down] I a-accidentally wasted some time asking q-questions, and by the t-time we went inside, the k-killer had already m-made it away…

Okita: [bites rose, grins] Yes, the telltale noises told us so!

Ryouta: [cringes] I’m s-s-sorry…

Hitomi: [faces crowd, frowns with eyes closed] Aw… I can’t not forgive a face like that.

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Okita: [puts up hands, bites rose] Hey, hey! You were there too! You know everything I said was right!

Takito: Oh, I know. Everything you said about what we saw was spot on. The problem comes with what we didn’t see.

Okita: [crosses arms, bites rose, raises eyebrow] Huh?

Kotori: [points at Okita] He’s talking about your theories about what the killer was doing.

Wataru: [crosses arms] I don’t understand. All of those are simple deductions based on what he knew.

Takito: Simple, yeah. Accurate, not so much. Let’s assume that Itsumi and Yasue were still alive when we heard those noises. If that were the case, then Itsumi would’ve heard the noises too, and definitely would’ve done something about them.

Okita: [looks away, sulks] That’s fairly big assumption of your own, my friend. How did you know Itsumi would’ve sought help!

Takito: Uh… Because that’s why the guards exist?

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Ho… ho-ho… Well, then, I…
Pablo: [salutes] For the record, I did tell Itsumi to contact both guards and myself if anything got out of hand.

Okita: [shrugs, bites rose, lip bleeds] What if she forgot then?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Impossible! I reminded her ten times and made her repeat my phrasing!

Nahoko: [blank stare] …

Tamaki: [smiles] At any rate, you do know what this suggests, don’t you?

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Suggests? Asta Okita ar trebui să fie mut?

Tamaki: [smiles] It suggests one of these two guards is responsible.

Ryouta: [wincing] N-no… I got enough of this last time…

Wataru: [slams podium] I will not stand for accusations against me and the emotional boy over there! Reasoning! Now!

Tamaki: [smiles] It’s simply put. If the vent made too much noise, the only way to sneak in would be through the doors. And the only people who could do that were guards.

Wataru: [touches forehead] But if it’s not me, then… [enraged, points dramatically] RYOUTA! How could you, after everything we’ve been through!

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb, changes into Kibogaman] More like… [points dramatically, scarf flutters] How could you? I, unlike you, have an alibi!

Okita: [wide eyed, drops rose] Huh?
Takito: Oh, yeah… Ryouta was with us when we heard noises in the vent the second time.

Kotori: [pensive pose] If he was with you, it’s impossible for him to also be in the vent, making the noise.

Ryouta: [heroic pose] Correct as always!

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh… Things don’t look good for you, Wataru.

Wataru: [makes fists] But… I’m innocent! A cold-blooded murder against two sisters of the state? Inconceivable!

Okita: [wide grin, points with rose] Ah, but as the great detective once said, “When you eliminate the imperceptible, what remains, no matter how unoriginal, must be the truth.”

Satoko: [groans] Thank you, Okita.

Nahoko: [smiles] So, you killed them ahead of time, then made those noises to trick people into thinking the murder was just happening? [wags finger] Pretty clever, but not clever enough!

Wataru: [makes fists] I’ve done none of that! Stop it, now!

Wait… Something about what Nahoko said… It’s too good to be true…

I think Wataru would have to have something he couldn't in order to pull this off…

( “Knowledge of the Future” / “Accomplice” / “Remote Control” )
Takito: Wait, this all seems kinda fishy to me… Wataru would’ve had to have quite a bit of foresight for all this to work.

Wataru: [makes fists] Exactly! If Takito had gone for me first instead, I’d have been discovered immediately when I didn’t make the second noise!

Tamaki: [frowns] Hmmm…. No, I do not buy that. Even if you don’t consider Takito’s better relationship with Ryouta, your chances are only 50-50.

Kotori: [pensive pose] 50% chance for failure… It doesn’t seem risky when the stakes are small, but when your life is on the line, chances that low can be scary.

Takito: How about this, then, Tamaki? How would Wataru have known that Okita and I would even be there? Or that Ryouta wouldn’t have immediately intervened?

Ryouta: [heroic pose] Normally, I would’ve responded to any blood I detected, but Pablo instructed me not to chase after simple spilling of blood! [places fist on chest] Wataru, he knew nothing of this.

Tamaki: [smiles] … I see. Well, I suppose this has been an exercise in futility.

Takito: I wouldn’t say that either. We now know exactly when the murders took place.

( “Before the Noises” / “Between the Noises” / “After the Noises” )
Takito: We know it couldn’t be after the noises firsthand. We also ruled out someone coming in from either door or the vent between the noises. That only leaves before the noises as a possible time for murder.

Hitomi: [scratches head] So what happened then?

Takito: …You know, I, uh, don’t actually know.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Think we should go over the case again, now that we have a new perspective?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Exactly. Several of our assumptions were based on the idea of Takito and Okita finding the killer before the murder. If we’re going to get anywhere, we need to look at the killing afresh.

Hitomi: [smiles, hands on hips] Yeah, lemme try it! I need to see if I got this straight or not!

NON-STOP DEBATE


Hitomi: [touches chin, sticks tongue out to the side] So, at first, the killer must’ve snuck in using the vent, right?

Tamaki: [smiles] That’s the working theory.

Wataru: [salutes] I can definitely attest to my door being impassable. And I’m sure Kibogaman would never fail such a simple task.
Ryouta: [heroic pose] Thank you for the complement, young student! ...And yes, no one could’ve gotten through either of our doors.

Hitomi: [taps forehead] Yeah! And then, the killer attacked Itsumi through the holes in the tent. [shrugs] Well, actually, I’m not too sure about that, but I’m sure the killer killed Itsumi first to get to Yasue!

Okita: [smells rose] Oh-ho-ho! Here comes my part!

Hitomi: [touches chin, sticks tongue out to the side] Okay, so the killer killed Yasue, and tried to leave using the vent, right? So they heard Takito and Okita talking about the noise they just made, and had to stop. Otherwise they’d be found out.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, smiles] Exactly. Well, Okita, do you see any discrepancies?

Okita: [smells rose] Oh… It’s even better than I remember.

Hitomi: [smiles, hands on hips] Great! It’s so much fun to be accurate!

Nahoko: [examining phone] You’re not exactly done, though, are you?

Hitomi: [blushes] Oops… The killer, uh, waited in the vent for Takito and Okita to enter Ryouta’s Militaria Hall, and then snuck off. [smiles, thumbs up] That’s everything!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E4, T5

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!

Hitomi: [hands on cheeks, gaping mouth] Oh, nooooooooo! My perfect theory is ruined!

Takito: Uh, well, I’m sorry. You’re still wrong though.

Hitomi: [smiles, hands on hips] Nah, I’m joshing with you. [turns around, opens third eye] I didn’t have any confidence to begin with, man! I figured I had at least one or two of those contradiction things.

Takito: Okay… Well, you may not have been around to hear it, but the killer couldn’t have just hid in the vent when they heard me talk with Okita.

Hitomi: [faces Takito, hand over mouth] But isn’t that the only place—

Okita: [extends rose, smug grin] Didn’t I tell you, the two of us both took a good, leisurely look inside the vent. Nobody was there. Only a little bitty spiderweb.

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Couldn’t the killer just move back out of the vent, then? Doesn’t that fix the contradiction?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I’m afraid not. Moving backward in that vent was nearly impossible when I tested it after the murder. The killer could not have done as quickly as necessary.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Then we have another contradiction, then.

Takito: Huh? Now I’m confused.

Kotori: [stern expression] If the killer couldn’t have done things between the noises without alerting the victims, and the killer couldn’t have done things before the noises without getting caught in the vent… [stares at Takito] When could they have done it?
Hitomi: [raises hand] Ooh, ooh, I know! What about after?

Nahoko: [leans forward, wags finger] Nope! When Ryouta and pals found them, they were definitely dead! The announcement confirms it!

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh, this is what one of my old friends would’ve called a “Catch 22”.

Kotori: [pensive pose] I’ll be honest, Takito, I don’t have an answer. Do you have one?

Takito: Hey, don’t put me on the spot… I only just figured this out…

Wataru: [slams podium] We need you right now, citizen! We need your skills!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Explain all this, Takito! That’s an order!

*Crapp… There really isn’t a way around this. I’ll have to solve it soon.*

*But at the same time, trying to solve doesn’t really do anything but hurt my head.*

*Gah! What to do, what to do, what to do…*

Takito: Hey, uh, guys, do you think we maybe should try another angle…?

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Is there another angle?

Takito: Oh, of course there is! We should look at the—

Okita: **OH, YOU SLIMY ASSHOLE!**

Okita: [scowls, points rose at Takito] What the hell do you think you’re doing, man?

Takito: *Good question.* I’m, uh, changing the subject to something I can solve easier.

Okita: [scowls, points rose at Takito] No you’re not! I’ve waited minutes to testify about my special moment, and you’re trying to take it away because it’s too hard?!

Takito: Well, erm, you already got to testify, and I’m not sure I can really do anything more with—

Okita: [scowls, bites rose] No, goddammit! You’re going to give this its due, and you still haven’t answered the important question, man!

Takito: You mean, how could the killer enter and exit when it’s impossible in every time slot?

Okita: [scratches head] Well, hmm, I guess that’s it. [intense stare, points rose at Takito] The most important question is, of course, how could the killer sneak in at all without making noise and alerting the victims? [sniffs rose] *You said it yourself; quiet entry using the vents is impossible.*

 Well, I wasn’t expecting it, but he does have a point.

Takito: I guess that’s just another reason to try another topic.

Okita: [scowls, points rose at Takito] Aw, come on! Aren’t you some sort of super detective? *You know the killer couldn’t have snuck through the doors, too.*

CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW
Takito: I’LL CUT YOUR CLAIM TO PIECES! …Even though it goes against what I previously thought. Think about what Pablo did right after we discovered the body.

Okita: [raises eyebrow] Pablo? He just messed around in the vent a little. I don’t get it.

Pablo: [presses forehead] Well, I wouldn’t call it messing around…

Takito: Regardless, he was doing it while we were outside in the Steam Engine Room, right Okita?

Okita: [raises eyebrow] Yes, and…?

Takito: We didn’t hear him, did we?

Okita: [bites rose, staggers back] No, you can’t be suggesting that, can you? We both know that’s impossible.

Takito: Nah, I’m saying it. Moving through the vent doesn’t require making noise.

Hitomi: [pouting face] Wait, we just used that noise to prove the killer couldn’t have killed between noises, and now you’re walking back on it? [turns around, opens back eye, hands on hips] Gah! No wonder you all are so confusing!

Nahoko: [focused on tablet] Does this mean that time slot opens up as a possibility? That sure gets rid of your little predicament.
Takito: I wish it was that easy, but know. Even if it was possible not to, Okita and I know that noise was made, and how it would’ve been loud enough to alert Itsumi.

Wataru: [crosses arms, frowns] So, back at the standstill, are we?

Satoko: [disinterest] Well, Takito did want to look at something before Okita had his natsup. Šta hoćeš, Takito?

Takito: I kinda forgot… Maybe the murder weapon?

Satoko: [smug grin, adjusts glasses] Kako sreće. I was just thinking about what that would be.

Pablo: [smiles, proud pose] So was I, actually! Considering the mystery surrounding it, it’s probably something we’ve all considered.

Satoko: [scowls] Dame mi momento, culo…

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

**Evidence Bullets:** “Monobear File”, “Itsumi’s Rock”, “Missing Wheel”, “Bodies”, “Tent Tears”, “Noisy Air Vent”

Nahoko: [examining phone] So, the murder weapon, huh? Well, we know two things for sure. The **murder weapon has to both suffocate and bludgeon**. Not a lot of people can do both things.

Satoko: [presses forehead] Before Pablo interrupted me, I was thinking maybe Itsumi’s pet rock would be the weapon.

Hitomi: [frowns, stop gesture] Woah, woah! First of all, it’s not a pet, and second—
Satoko: [smug grin] How do you suffocate with a rock? **If you push up against the trachea, anything could’ve suffocated either of them.** It’d be fairly easy when she was out cold like she was.

Ryouta: [combat pose] The way you say it, it sounds as if you yourself had done it…

Satoko: [scowls] Coida da súa vida!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Following Satoko’s logic, **the missing wheel could also be a candidate…**

- Wataru: [scratches chin] I wonder if you’d have to break part of the wheel first for that to work… [pulls hair] Geh! I don’t like this thinking like a killer… It’s not right for a model citizen!

Pablo: [presses forehead] We’re not getting anywhere with this. **The killer probably didn’t even leave the weapon in the room.** If they were able to stump us earlier, they wouldn’t leave this lead for us to go on.

Tamaki: [smiles] C’mon, Pablo, if we want to succeed, we need to give this new angle our full effort.

Pablo: [presses forehead] I am. I truly am.

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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E4, T3

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG!
Satoko: [hunches over] Ja, ja. What’d I do wrong?

Takito: While it’s certainly possible to suffocate someone the way you said, both wounds are on top of their heads, and there aren’t any marks on either neck.

Satoko: [bites pointer finger] I guess the rock’s out. Eh. Ich glaube nicht, es hatte Potential trotzdem.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Then the wheel couldn’t work either. Nothing could.

Tamaki: [frowns] Hm. Even a rope would’ve left a mark. Come to think of it, no object in that room would’ve worked, no?

Pablo: [presses forehead] It’s just as I told you. The killer took the weapon with them.

Nahoko: [examining tablet] You seem fairly sure of that…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Can you dispute it?

I really can’t…

Okita: [double pistol hands, bites rose] Oh-ho-ho! Hope is not lost, then! We’ll just pat everyone down, and we’ll find it!

Wataru: [shakes head] Your hope is welcomed, citizen, but misplaced. There was plenty of time for disposal between the killings and now.

Okita: [double pistol hands, bites rose] Oh-ho-ho! Hope is not lost, then! We’ll just search everywhere, and—

Pablo: [authoritative pose, intense stare] That’s not a possibility anymore!
Okita: [staggers back] Geh! I’m only trying to help, man!

Hitomi: [grabs face, gasps] Kotori, Wataru, someone help! Okita looks like he’s gonna fall over!

Kotori: [pensive pose] No marks… How do you suffocate someone with no marks…

Hitomi: [raises eyebrow] Kotori?

*Maybe this will be more helpful than I thought. Kotori’s logic seems sound; not a lot of things could suffocate without leaving marks on the neck. If I think hard enough about what we’ve learned some more, maybe I can learn something about the murder weapon.*

**LOGICAL DIVE**

**What piece of evidence must be fake?**

( “Itsumi’s Rock” / “Tent Tears” / “Missing Wheel” )

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11:32123132311223232123123

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**Why was it faked?**

( “To frame someone” / “To destroy other evidence” / “To act as the murder weapon” )

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What was the killer ignorant to?

(“Takito and Okita’s arrival” / “Itsumi’s Rock” / “The Suffocation”)

Takito: THAT’S IT! The killer couldn’t have known they were suffocating someone!

Tamaki: [frowns] Are you sure, Takito? Suffocating someone without knowing is no easy feat.

Takito: I know, but it has to be true. We already know Itsumi’s Rock couldn’t be the murder weapon because it can’t suffocate without leaving a mark. Yet, somehow, blood got all over it.

Ryouta: [combat pose] Ah! Somebody’s been attempting to create false evidence! They wanted us to think it was the murder weapon! Feh! You can’t fool justice!

Takito: Exactly. But making it out to be the murder weapon doesn’t make sense if you know it’s not the right type. The suffocation had to be an accident!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Takito… I’m not sure. There are some serious holes you have there.
Takito thinks he has a breakthrough, but Kotori's not so sure...

Think you know who the killer is? Have other predictions?

Comment Below!
Chapter 3: Bedside Manner - School Trial Part 2

Chapter Notes

Here it is! Delayed, but here!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — School Trial Part 2

Huh?

Kotori: [pensive pose] The killer attacking in the same way twice, but it having vastly different effects each time? It just seems hard to buy.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The same way? What do you mean?

Tamaki: [frowns] And how would you know?

Kotori: [bites lip] Well, I don’t know for certain, but if the killer didn’t know they were suffocating them, and tried to paint a blunt object as the murder weapon…

Satoko: [concentrating, scratches chin] …they used force with both victims. Nnŋŋ akŋ.

Pablo: [presses forehead] …Well, yes, that does make sense, and there are consistent wounds on the heads of both persons… [authoritative pose] Still! It is as of yet, unproven conjecture!

Okita: [shrugs, bites rose] Eh. Seems legit to me.

Nahoko: [smug grin] All the more reason to doubt it.

Wataru: [crosses arms] This is a problem with your theorem, Takito. Do you have any
counterarguments?

Takito: Uh….

(“What if something was different about the victims?” / “Kotori is completely right.” / “The two of them weren’t actually hit the same.”)

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10:1232121211233212323122132213123

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Takito: You think maybe, it wasn’t the killer acting different, but the victims being different?

Kotori: [pensive pose] Huh. [points at Takito] Y’know, I had been considering that, but I didn’t think there was enough of a difference between them to justify it.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Wait, you believe this?! After it ran counter to your own ideas that you spent so much time proving?

Tamaki: [smiles] Detective work is a science, Pablo. And a good scientist never gets attached to their ideas.

Ryouta: [civillian clothes, grabs camera tight] Itsumi and Yasue never seemed all that different to me, though… How many differences are there even between them?

Okita: [bites rose, shrugs] He’s right. I mean they’re both Japanese girls and they go to the same school. They’re practically the same person.

Takito: Uh… I think you can be more creative than that. If there’s any difference between the two you know about— anything at all, talk about it. It could explain how the same weapon had different effects.
NON-STOP DEBATE

Evidence Bullets: “The Answer”

Nahoko: [looks at tablet] I’ll start. Itsumi and Yasue are pretty different when it comes to height. With concussive force, that can make a difference.

Kotori: [shakes head, bites lip] Eh… If I had to bet on anything, it’d be their physical conditions. You could tell Itsumi works out much, much less.

- Ryouta: [pulls at collar, looks around] Do you think it has anything to do with the glasses Itsumi wears?

- Tamaki: [smiles] Perhaps. But other than eyewear, Itsumi wears considerably more layered and intricate clothing. Could that be relevant?

- Wataru: [crosses arms, scratches chin] That Yasue… I assume she’s used to have more fresh air out in her apiaries. This might make her more susceptible for choking, maybe?

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Saluton? Idiotoj? Did you already forget she was in a coma?

Okita: [bites rose, looks down, adjusts collar] She was looking pretty down before she went under… I’ve heard that can mean something. Do you think she died of a broken heart for her fallen pet?

Nahoko: [looks up from tablet] That’s insultingly dumb. It’s more likely Itsumi was upset about her loss.

- Kotori: [pensive pose] Does anyone remember who inhaled the most smoke from the cannon? That could mean something too. Have you thought of anything, Pablo?

Tamaki: [frowns] You’ve been silent. It’s disappointing.
Pablo: [presses forehead] Geh. The only thing I can think of is that one of them must've been hit first. That’s kind of self-evident, though.

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

E1, T10

Takito: I CONCUR!

Pablo: [tilts head, raises eyebrow] Really? I was only guessing, you know…

Takito: Maybe you should guess more often. All the other guesses either didn’t consider that the killer used a blunt object, or didn’t relate to suffocation at all.

Satoko: [makes fists, scowls] Paano ang tungkol sa akin? Those don’t explain why the coma had nothing to do with it! Yasue was way more susceptible to being suffocated!

Kotori: [pensive pose] …Actually, they do. We know the killer wasn’t aware of one of them being suffocated, and since Yasue wasn’t found with her nose and mouth covered, being in a coma couldn’t have made her suffocate.

Tamaki: [smiles] Great job! So, if being either first or second victim was important, it’d be worth our time to determine the order of the deaths, right?

Wataru: [beats chest, points to self] I shall discover that. [scratches chin] Hmm… Yes… Yasue was the clear goal, so they likely went after her first, but it’d be near impossible to hit her while Itsumi just watched…
Both are excellent points, but one of them has to outweigh the other…

Kotori: [pensive pose] Itsumi.

Wataru: [jolts upward] Huh? Yes?

Kotori: [nods head, points at Wataru] It has to be Itsumi first. Yasue was hit on her side, and there’s just no way someone could from the door to right beside Yasue without Itsumi seeing them and acting.

Wataru: [crosses arms] I know that.

Kotori: [tilts head, raises eyebrow] Then why are you still asking the question.

Wataru: [clears throat] …

NON-STOP DEBATE


Wataru: [crosses arms] There’s no way the killer hit Itsumi while she was attacking them.

Ryouta: [looks around, taps fingers] I d-don’t get it. I d-doesn’t make sense that the k-killer just took Itsumi’s attacks…

Wataru: [crosses arms] I know full well that it doesn’t. But there are no wounds on the front of Itsumi’s head… For to receive the killing blow there would be impossible.

Kotori: [taps fingers on head] And for to turn around during the struggle would be even less
possible. I get your idea.

Pablo: [presses forehead] It’s looking like the attack on Itsumi had to have been done without warning. She was out before she knew anything. [authoritative pose] It’s the only way you get a good hit on the back of Itsumi’s head, after all.

Hitomi: [grimaces] Don’t say it like that, man! It’s weird!

Pablo: [presses forehead] Geh…

Okita: [staring up, bites rose] If it were up to me, the killer’d have grabbed Itsumi and turned her around before hitting her. [adjusts collar] Not that I was involved, of course.

Hitomi: [turns around, opens eye, points at Okita] Wait, woah!

Okita: [slumps over] Don’t tell me I’m scaring you too!

Hitomi: [points at Okita] No no no! I was just thinking, if Itsumi was really grabbed like that, could she have been suffocated from there? The murder weapon could be a fist!

Okita: [looks up, bites rose] Well, it’s possible, I guess…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E1, T4

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! I have definitive evidence that Itsumi retaliated!

Pablo: [presses forehead, sighs] …Go ahead. I had no stock in my answer anyways.

…Okay?

Takito: Do you remember the tears in tent wall? There’s only one reason they could be there. Itsumi saw her attacker through the tent, and tried to slice at them with rock.

Hitomi: [faces forward, pouts lips, wags finger] Hey, hey, hey! Don’t you think that tent is a little bit too not transparent to see through?

Kotori: [grins, points at Hitomi] That’s ironic, coming from you.

Hitomi: [staggers back] Huh? Am I see-through? [grabs hair] The scientists never told me that!

Kotori: [motions to stop, frightened] No, you’re perfectly opaque.

Hitomi: [sigh of relief]

Kotori: [pensive pose] No, I mean Takito and I were with you when you saw Ryouta’s shadow through the tent wall. [points at Hitomi] Itsumi couldn’t see much about her attacker, but the shadow would be enough to tell an attacker was there.

Takito: It also explains why Itsumi didn’t see them until they got close to the tent. Until then, the shadow they created could not have been seen.

Nahoko: [frowns, holds phone] Okay, you can tell there were some slashes there, but how do you even know Itsumi made them? What if they were planted after the murder happened?

Takito: Well that’s not quite possible, because…

( “Itsumi’s Hat” / “Glasses Shards” / “Itsumi’s Rock” )
Takito: There are fibers, covered in blood, on the point on Itsumi’s rock. The only way they could get there is if they were from the cloth wall of the tent. Technically, they could’ve been made after the murder had been done, but the blood soaking the fibers tells us they were there before the murder.

Kotori: [pensive pose] If they weren’t, the fibers would only be partially bloody, and there would be blood on the tent wall where the tears are.

Wataru: [crosses arms] I expected better from the both of you. Proud citizens should always give their personal best.

Takito: Huh?

Wataru: [crosses arms, furrows brow] In that scenario, Itsumi would still be facing her assailant. Where it happened changes nothing.

...Shit! He’s right! I got so caught up in the contradiction, I completely forgot—


Nahoko: [looks up from phone, raises eyebrow] You mean turning her around? It makes it possible, sure, but it’s completely arbitrary. There’s no reason the turn the victim around when blunt force is just as effective from the front. It’s a wasted effort.

Kotori: [wags finger] At the tent’s door, sure. But if you’re attacking through the tears in the wall,
your dexterity is limited. Grabbing Itsumi to make sure she couldn’t move is much more likely.

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb] Aha! [becomes Kibogaman, points dramatically] You say Itsumi was murdered by where the tears in the wall was, correct?

Takito: Yeah, pretty much.

Satoko: [wags finger, smug grin] Buta, ostoba. I saw where Itsumi was, and you did too. She wasn’t there.

Takito: Huh? You didn’t see this too?

(“Shards of Glass” / “Itsumi’s Rock” / “Itsumi’s Body”)

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11:3212312312131231221312123312

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Takito: The shards of glass under Itsumi’s body? They only place they could’ve come from were Itsumi’s glasses, and since Itsumi was hit on the back of her head, those should’ve shattered directly under Itsumi’s face when he hit the ground.

Satoko: [crosses arms, raises eyebrow] We found plenty of glass under her face though, why would you— [gulps, nervous sweats] Ho, fiki min.

Takito: There’s no reason why glass shards would be under Itsumi’s body, only her head. The only explanation is that Itsumi fell somewhere else, and the killer swept them under her to make us think she died where she is now.
Satoko: [scratches chin] And since they were still under Itsumi, we all bought it. The real place where she fell would be by the window, da?

Takito: Absolutely! I’m glad we agree.

Satoko: NE TAK BYSTRO!

CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT


Takito: Excuse me?

Satoko: [clears throat] NOT SO FAST!

Takito: But… We were agreement friends…

Satoko: [smiles] That was until I thought of something better I could be; the person who cracks the case wide open.

Takito: Really? Doesn’t seem like we’re even close.

Satoko: [smiles, wags finger] Zagadka etogo, to. Why was killing Yasue even necessary?

Takito: Of course killing her was necessary! She was the target, wasn’t she?

Satoko: [smiles, wags finger] Au contrare. You only need one recorded kill the leave the museum. Killing Yasue would be easy, yeah, but it could only leave more evidence. If they didn’t want to get caught, they simply wouldn’t touch Yasue.
Takito: Well, that’s, uh, a compelling argument.

...Shit.

Shit, shit, shit.

Takito: Don’t you maybe think you’re assuming the killer didn’t have an emotional reason for killing Yasue? Or maybe they were just in the heat of the moment?

Satoko: [furrows brow] Sorry, you can’t just erase this away. **You have zero evidence that anyone had a large emotional motive against Yasue.** Everything from the covering up of the crime scene to the careful use of noises in the vent to escape suggests this was cold and calculated. Geen passie hier.

*Augh, she’s got me good…*

**CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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E4, T1

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Takito: I’LL CUT YOUR CLAIM TO PIECES! What if they had to?

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] They didn’t. [gestures to the left] So, as you all can see—

Takito: [clears throat] As I was saying, what if, in order to not get caught, they had to kill Yasue?

Nahoko: [confused stare, puts phone down] What the hell are you saying?
Takito: I’m saying Yasue was a witness.

Nahoko: [confused stare] You’re fuckin’ kiddin’ me, right?

Ryouta: [gulps, looks to the side] I’d l-like to believe y-you, Takito, but Yasue was cl-clearly unconscious… Sh-she couldn’t have seen anything…

Takito: But look at her face! Do you remember what it looked like when we first found her? We all thought we she was sleeping!

Kotori: [pensive pose] There’s no evidence to support the idea of the killer needing to move Yasue’s face, and to do it with such realism would take hours. [stern expression] It’s looking very likely that Yasue woke up during the first murder.

Pablo: [motions to stop, tilts head] Wait, during the murder? How can you pinpoint it to such an exact time?

Tamaki: [frowns] Any earlier, and Itsumi would’ve come out to tell us, don’t you think? [sighs] Tsk, tsk. And to think we were so close…

Nahoko: [furrows brow] Hey, are we gonna keep talking about this horseshit like it’s fact or actually look into it? This isn’t just a gentle nap Yasue was taking; she was full of tranquilizers!

Takito: Well, yeah, everybody knows that, but nobody knows how much.

[Flashback to Monobear in the Cafeteria]

Monobear: [blushes] Your friend has, through the help of several extra-strength sedatives, been put into a coma.

[Return to School Trial]
Takito: Monobear never told us.

Monobear: [laughing pose] To be honest, I don’t even know. I just put a bunch of sleep medicine in a blender. Upupupupu!

Takito: So, there was really no telling when Yasue would wake up. It’s entirely possible she could’ve seen her murderer kill Itsumi first.

Wataru: [covers mouth] How unfortunate… I don’t think I could stomach such a thing.

Satoko: [grits teeth, furrows brow] Halten Sie es! You can’t honestly believe Yasue was awake to see Itsumi die! She would’ve done something, blödmann!

Takito: Maybe she didn’t have the time to re—

Satoko: [grits teeth, furrows brow] No, stop flapping your lips! Give me evidence, dammit!

I guess the facial expression weren’t enough for her. Is there something even more concrete out there that can satisfy her?

If I can’t prove this now, it’s only going to get messier… Think, think, think…!

LOGICAL DIVE

Where was Yasue hit?

( “Her right” / “Her left” / “Square in front” )
Which way did she fall when she was hit?

( “Her right” / “Her left” / “Backwards” )

What part of Yasue’s body proves she was upright when struck?

( “Right arm” / “Left arm” / “Head” )

Takito: THAT’S IT!

*If you look at the physics of it, everything makes sense!*

Takito: Okay, let’s say that Yasue didn’t wake up. She was lying down, exactly as we last saw her. Do you remember where Yasue was hit?
Satoko: [smug grin] Kompreneble. She was hit on her right temple. With the wound there, it’s pretty obvious.

Takito: Exactly. When an object is hit on its right side, it moves to its left. Yasue is no different. She would’ve moved to the left, but not any higher than she already was.

Satoko: [confused expression] Tiel?

Takito: I want to know this: If she was laying down on the bed, how did her arm end up over the bed rail? Even if the killer hit Yasue as hard as they could, as long as she was lying flat on the bed, the rail would stop anything from falling or dangling off. It doesn’t make physical sense.

Satoko: [looks up, scratches chin] …

_Satoko stood deep in thought for a couple of minutes._

Satoko: [looks up, scratches chin] … [slumps over, grimaces] Ugh… Mierda de mierda.

Takito: Does anyone know what she said?

Pablo: [presses forehead] She has nothing more to say.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Not that there can really be any doubt that Yasue was awake now, anyway. Once you realize that she was sitting up when struck, her arm falling over the rail makes perfect sense.

Ryouta: [looks down, sighs] So there’s really no way around it, then… Y-yasue really saw her b-best friend get m-murdered…

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m not too sure, to be honest.

Takito: What?!
But... But... I spent all this time just proving it!

Tamaki: [frowns] We’ve certainly proven that Itsumi was hit first, then Yasue, but we still have no idea how suffocation factors into this. If anything, this new theory make things seem as if both were simply hit hard enough to die.

Hitomi: [raises hand excitedly] Hey, hey! Remember when I said the murder weapon could be the killer’s hand! What about that?

Wataru: [crosses arms, stern expression] Sorry. There were no telltale marks on either victim’s neck.

Pablo: [presses forehead] So, this weapon can hit hard, and suffocate without leaving a mark? I couldn’t think of something like that in La Espera’s entire arsenal, let alone this museum.

Kotori: [smiles] The more restrictions you have, the easier it is to be creative. I’m sure someone can figure it out.

She’s looking at me. It’s like she expects me to do it.

I’m not sure I can just crack this case like she was expecting me to, but I could give it a shot... What could possibly be added to a blunt weapon to make it suffocate someone, without leaving a mark?

( “Blade” / “Adhesive” / “Poison” )

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15:3213211231231233211231231233121213

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Takito: Maybe, just maybe... Poison was involved?
Okita: [bites rose, raises eyebrow] Huh? You mean the weapon was laced with poison? How can poison even suffocate someone?

Kotori: [pensive pose] Poisons can do anything. Technically, anything not living that can harm from the inside is a poison. [proud pose] I’m actually pretty good at coming up with the perfect herbicide for each type of weed.

Nahoko: [examining phone] That’s pretty hard to believe though. How can a poison work on one of them and not the other?

Tamaki: [frowns] Not to mention, you proved any poison must’ve been placed on the weapon by accident…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] A valiant effort, Takito, but it looks like we’ll need something better…

Takito: [shakes head] No, Kotori and I are right. There’s one kind of poison that works only on specific people…

*Can’t back down now!*

**HANGMAN’S GAMBIT**

**LEGNELAR**

Chapter End Notes

I'm trying something a bit new at the end here: the answer to the Hangman's Gambit will
be given next time.

In the meantime, if you have theories, criticism, etc, please comment below!
Chapter 3: Bedside Manner - School Trial Part 3

Chapter Notes

Last chapter before I reveal the killer!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — School Trial Part 3

Takito: [shakes head]: No, Kotori and I are right. There’s one kind of poison that works only on specific people…

*Can’t back down now!*

Takito: …an allergen!

Ryouta: [grabs hat] Al-llergies? I’ve got a f-few of th-those. I h-had to install a f-filter in my Kibogaman helmet so I don’t have an at-tack. [sighs] It’s kind of em-mbarrassing to be a wh-wheezing superhero.

Wataru: [points at Ryouta] There’s no shame in that! I always knew Kibogaman had the strongest, most active immune system known to man!

Ryouta: [tilts head] Oh… Th-thank you…?

Kotori: [pensive pose] At any rate, Takito thinks that either Itsumi or Yasue were allergic to something on the murder weapon, and an allergic reaction caused them to suffocate.

Tamaki: [frowns] That’s a little hard to believe. I’ve never heard anyone tell me of any allergies before now. You’d think they’d me so I didn’t accidentally feed them something.

Pablo: [crosses arms, intense stare] And how would the killer know about this, even?
Takito: They couldn’t possibly, remember? The allergen had to be placed on the weapon by accident. It probably wasn’t even visible.

Nahoko: [stares and points at Takito] Here’s the deal, though. What was it? Because right now, I still have a hard time believe something could even be there.

Takito: Huh? What? But… I proved it!

Tamaki: [frowns] You’ve proved nothing, and the more we think about this, the less likely the theory becomes. To work, this allergen would have to fall within several different categories.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] First, it must be something invisible in trace amounts, so that the murderer wouldn’t notice it.

Nahoko: [using phone] Second, it must be something common enough to accidentally find its way onto the murder weapon.

Tamaki: [frowns] And third, it cannot be a food. I would’ve heard of any food allergies by now, and I have not. I find it extremely difficult to believe anything fitting those three categories can be found in the museum.

Still, there has to be… Time to prove her wrong! It’s not like I haven’t done it before!

What was the source of the allergen?

( “Itsumi’s Rock” / “Latex” / “Bertrand” / “Pollen” )

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14:431232413241134212313214231234123
Takito: There are no plants, latex, or any airborne particles in this museum that could cause an allergy to either of our victims.

_I don’t like where this is going…_

Tamaki: [frowns] Pardon? Aren’t you just proving my point?

Takito: No, because there’s still one last thing someone could be allergic to. Bertrand.

Ryouta: [camera flashes, flinches] B-bertrand? But h-he was d-dead two days before!

Hitomi: [turns around, looks up with third eye and taps head] Yeah, after that, Bertrand definitely wouldn’t be stinging anybody.

Satoko: [mumbling] Slava bogu. Nasekomi mi pobûrkvam…

Wataru: [makes fist, furrows brow] Quickly! Where was the bee placed after our first investigation?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Bertrand was buried within a small flowerpot found in Yasue’s room. Much to Takito’s chagrin, there is no way any part of could’ve inadvertently been added to the murder weapon.

Takito: Well Pablo, this is where it gets …uncomfortable. There is a way Bertrand’s stinger poison could’ve found its way onto the murder weapon, but I don’t think a lot of people will like it…

_How did the poison on Bertrand’s stinger end up on the murder weapon?_

( “When Bertrand died” / “Wiped on afterwards” / “Bertrand stung it” )
Takito: [sighs] ...Bertrand left his poison on the murder weapon when he was killed. In other words, Bertrand, Itsumi and Yasue have the same killer.

Tamaki: [frowns] You can’t be serious, can you?

Takito: Trust me, I’m a lot more serious than I want to be. But so far, it’s the only way things could’ve played out.

Wataru: [makes fist, growls] Gah! We never should’ve given up our investigation of that bee! We could’ve had something!

Okita: [bites rose, smiles] Well, we at least have something to go on, don’t we? I wouldn’t be crying about it!

Tamaki: [frowns] Crying about it? Weren’t you the one most under suspicion for Bertrand’s murder?

NON-STOP DEBATE


Tamaki: [frowns] I saw you standing outside that the office an hour before we found Bertrand’s body, remember? And you were audibly aggravated at Bertrand earlier. You had motive, means, and opportunity! You are guilty!

Okita: [puts hands up, bites rose, sweats] Woah, woah, woah! I was just walking by, okay?! I wanted to prove this was all blown out of proportion.
Tamaki: [frowns] So you admit it? You were at the scene of the crime?

Okita: [bites rose, grits teeth] No, I was just outside it! For fuck’s sake, produce something that says I was really in there, or shut up!

Nahoko: [wags finger, puts down phone] Tsk, tsk. She doesn’t have to. We can figure out that it was you through process of elimination. You were the only one who went near the Office Room, so you’re the only suspect.

Hitomi: [thumbs down, sticks out tongue] Nah, that’s total foo-fah! What if somebody entered the Office without being seen?

Nahoko: [blushes] Well, that’s another possibility. I guess.

Satoko: [lowers glasses and stares] If we’re looking at the sheer time spent in that office, Yasue is the most likely sospechoso. Though, there are problems with the motives of that theory.

Ryouta: [nervous sweats] S-surely, at this p-point, we can r-rule out Itsumi and Yasue, r-right? I mean, th-they couldn’t have killed b-both Bertrand and themselves. This w-wasn’t a suicide!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I can’t call it a certainty. At any rate, if the owner of weapon is all that’s important, the real killer could’ve just stolen it from Bertrand’s killer.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Finding Bertrand’s killer would still be helpful…

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! I think you have to work on your spatial thinking skills, Nahoko.

Nahoko: [raises eyebrow] Really? [shakes head, scowls at Takito] No, wait, no I don’t! I train them daily!

Takito: Well, you did say Okita was the only one, other than Yasue, seen going into and out of the Office, right?

Nahoko: [uncomfortable stare] Yes. Yes, I did. I’m not going to completely vouch for it, though, because I got my information from very specific other people…

Takito: Still, everyone’s who’s seen doesn’t always mean everyone who’s there. Like for example, who was there to see Okita?

Tamaki: [clears throat, frowns] Are you accusing me?

Takito: No, just pointing out that Okita isn’t our only major suspect.

Tamaki: [frowns] Good. …It’s important that you examine every lead after all, and we’re certainly not letting Okita off the hook yet.

Okita: [bites rose, scratches chin, stares at Tamaki] You’re being a lot more defensive than you usually are, y’know? Maybe we’re pinching a nerve, hmm?

Tamaki: [piercing glare] As I said earlier, Okita, you are still not cleared of charges. And you should know, you are incapable of unnerving me.

Okita: [rolls eyes, smiles with rose] I dunno…
Satoko: [mumbles to the side] Získejte místnosti, poražené.

Okita: [rolls eyes, smiles with rose] What do you think she said? I think she said you’re lying.

*A toothpick suddenly flew from Tamaki’s direction and stabbed the stem of Okita’s rose.*

Okita: [drops rose, staggers back] Wh-what the fuck?

Tamaki: [piercing glare] You cannot escape your fate, Okita, but at the very least, you can lessen it by not pissing me off.

Okita: [picks up rose, aghast] Did you really just do that?

Tamaki: [frowns] Yes, and I’d do it again.

Kotori: [hands on hips, furrows brow] Stop it, both of you! You’re both acting like spoiled babies!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Kotori is right.

Tamaki: [frowns] Feh. I was dealing with a rabble-rouser appropriately.

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Like hell you were!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Enough squabbling! You two were the only ones to go near the room, weren’t you? Talk about it! In detail!

Tamaki: [frowns] Understood.

Okita: [sighs]

Okita: [bites rose, crosses arms] I’m not sure what you wanna hear, man.

Tamaki: [frowns] He wants to hear your testimony and what happened when you walked by.

Okita: [bites rose, rubs back of neck] That’s what I mean! Like I said earlier, I thought the “no walking by” rule was kind of stupid, so I just walked by. **I didn’t go in, or anything, I was just walking by.**

Tamaki: [frowns] You need to be more detailed! If you have forgotten already, I’ll remind you: Your life is at stake!

Okita: [bites rose, defensive gesture] Okay! Okay! I uh… well, I didn’t really hear or see anything, because again, I wasn’t in the room—

Tamaki: [clears throat]

Okita: [bites rose, crosses arms] I smelled something I think! It kind of smelled like a wet dog! [mumbles] Fucking hell…

Tamaki: [frowns] A wet dog? Where would you possibly have smelled any pets in here! It’s simply ridiculous!

Okita: [bites rose, smug grin, wags finger] Tsk, tsk. Getting snippety, are we? And aren’t we arguing over a dead pet right now? **What if there’s an animal roaming the halls right now?**

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m fairly certain we’d notice if that were the case.
Okita: [bites rose, smug grin] Well, I’ve said my piece. What do you have to say about all this?

Tamaki: [frowns] I saw you on the dormitory side of the Office door, and kept an eye on you to check to for mischief.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well? Did you see any?

Tamaki: [frowns] No, not exactly… But if he was on the wrong side to start, he must’ve walked past the door once before, too!

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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T2, E7

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Takito: I CONCUR! Okita’s telling the truth!

Okita: [double thumbs up, smug grin] Heh heh heh heh! That’s more like it!

Don’t make me wish you hadn’t been…

Tamaki: [frowns] What are you saying, then? That he’s trustworthy? [piercing glare] Are you accusing me?

Takito: No, no, no! I’m saying neither of you did it. At least, I think.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That’s not a particularly strong position, Takito. I somewhat expected better.
Well, eheheh…

Takito: If I’m being honest, this isn’t a strong lead. I can only prove that Okita’s telling the truth about what he smelled.

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] You’re not seriously saying there’s another pet in the museum, are you?

Okita: [bites rose, smug grin] There’s no denying it now, huh? We’ve got a beast to catc—

Takito: No, no, of course I’m not saying that. I’m saying that something else was wet and smelly. Specifically, the paper in the office printers. They were wet when I found them during the investigation.

Kotori: [pensive pose] The office papers were wet? That’s interesting, but I don’t see how it’s relevant.

Takito: Well, I, uh, think the killer made them wet, but other than that I don’t really have an idea.

Hitomi: [taps chin] Well, wetting every piece of printer paper would be a lot of effort… [stares intently] It couldn’t be just for nothing!

Satoko: [pensive pose] Da… There needed to be a purpose for that, or the killer wouldn’t bother…

Is there? Do I have any idea why water would help the killer?

(“To ruin the electronics” / “Weakening Bertrand” / “Creating an Alibi” / “Staying Hydrated”)

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13:43131423312123424312311314231324
Takito: The only sensible reason would be to weaken Bertrand’s ability to fly.

Wataru: [scratches chin] Yes, insects do tend have trouble flying in the rain…

Pablo: [presses forehead] I remember carrying spritzer bottles to combat the tropical insects in my home country.

Nahoko: [swiping at phone] Nah, I’m not too sure about that. Wasn’t Bertrand in there in the first place because he was too weak to be outside? [puts down phone, stares ahead] Bringing in a tub of water to douse a bee that already can’t fly just isn’t economical.

Satoko: [wags finger] Lo siento, Takito, but it seems that’s not an option anymore.

Ryouta: [scratches head] But if T-takito isn’t r-right, why are the p-papers w-wet?

Takito: That sounds like something I’ll have to figure out myself.

* I’m absolutely sure the water was brought in to weaken Bertrand, but can I prove Bertrand was able to fly before he was murdered? *

(“Bertrand’s Cage” / “Bertrand’s Autopsy” / “Printer Paper” / “Clear Shard” )
Takito: Betrand’s cage was open when we found it, and his body was outside. Yasue never would’ve opened the cage herself, so we have to assume the killer did so.

Kotori: [pensive pose, smiles] …So that Betrand would fly out on his own and be smashed.

Hitomi: [hands on hips, bites tongue] Is that really right, though? Couldn’t the killer just pick Betrand out of the cage?

Kotori: [crosses arms] This killer is meticulous. It’s unlikely they’d risk a bee sting anymore than they had to.

Hitomi: [hands on hips, angry stare] C’mon, be serious! Bee stings hurt, but not that much!

Kotori: [neutral pose] I was talking more about the telltale rash and bump than the pain. If the killer were caught with it, well… It would be the end for them.

Nahoko: [searching on phone, grits teeth] It’s probably why the culprit went after the bee in the first place. If Yasue sic’d him to protect herself, the killer would be caught for certain.

Pablo: [presses forehead] I should’ve seen this coming the moment Betrand was killed… Nahoko, if only I had your keen stockbroker’s insight.

Nahoko: [puts down phone, smiles] There’s no need for flattery.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well, that’s all well, but something’s still bothering me.

Tamaki: [frowns] Yes?

NON STOP DEBATE

Pablo: [presses forehead] Simply put, while we do not put restrictions on access to water, we did restrict access to the kitchen. I am not convinced that a container large enough for the killer’s purposes existed in areas I deemed open to the general public.

Wataru: [crosses arms, furrows brow] Nonsense! There are plenty of cups that could be used in other places.

Satoko: [wags finger] Onmogelijk. Cups are too small. The killer could not afford to go back for more water if they didn’t get Bertrand the first time.

Tamaki: [frowns] Satoko’s right. I’ve personally seen every drinking cup in the kitchen; even they aren’t large enough.

Wataru: [crosses arms, desperation] Still, there are several ways other than cups to transport water. If someone were to soak a large towel from the pool room, that could suffice.

- 

Hitomi: [uncertain expression] I don’t really think so… [turns around, opens third eye] You can only get a little water out of a towel at a time. You’d need to cover a lot of area with water at once to catch Bertrand. [turns back around, smiles and thumbs up] That kind of slow release is great for a hot summer day, though!

Nahoko: [using phone angrily] You’d probably need a tap in that room to get that kind of volume. But even that’s impossible.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Simple pouring seems to be out of the question.

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Waar heb je het over? Don’t tell me you think Bertrand was submerged?

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Kotori: [pensive pose] Of course not. But even with the largest container available, pouring water couldn’t catch a flying bee.

Pablo: [chuckles, claps] Aha! I get it now!
Wataru: [confusion] What?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The killer **used a spritzing bottle**! It’s the only logical explanation.

Tamaki: [frowns] Do we put restrictions on those bottles? Are they available in the museum, even?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well, I’ve forgotten, but it’s still the only logical explanation!

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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T4, E5

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Takito: I CONCUR!

Hitomi: [pumps fists] Yeah, woohoo! [scratches head] Wait, what did I say?

Takito: You said that it would take something that could cover a large area of water at once to catch Bertrand. That’s at least if I remember from one minute ago.

Hitomi: [scratches head] I dunno. Do you?

Takito: Well, erm, assuming you did say it, I think it’s right. And judging from the dampness of the printer paper, the culprit managed to spray water on every part of the room at once.

Nahoko: [looks up from phone] What are you even talking about? That’s ridiculous! Are you claiming one of us has power over water or something?
Kotori: [pensive pose] Of course he isn’t. He simply figured out the method the killer used to trap Bertrand with water.

Uhh….

Kotori: [stares at Takito] You have, haven’t you? There’s only one way at this point they could’ve done it.

*I better think long and hard about this before I hurt myself in ways I didn’t expect…*

**HANGMAN’S GAMBIT:**

**KRENSPIRL**

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14:ERSKPRELKNIRPSKINLEPRSNILPEKRSEPRNPSEK

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Takito: THAT’S IT! The killer took advantage of the sprinkler system!

Pablo: [raises eyebrow, authoritative pose] We have a sprinkler system? I thought Monobear would’ve just let us burn in case of that after the incident with Kibogaman.

Tamaki: [smiles] It makes sense the dorm hallway wouldn’t have; Monobear must’ve built that part himself to accommodate us, but every other room was once museum property. I’m not sure what it’s like in La Espera, but businesses without fire safety precautions in Japan can face serious legal trouble.

Pablo: [nods, authoritative pose] Trust me, I have similar laws in my country.
Wataru: [crosses arms, stern expression] I’ve been educated on plenty of fire safety myself. For reference, modern sprinkler systems are only set off when high heat melts a special wax within them.

_Do I know anything that the killer could’ve used to produce high heat?_

(“Phoenix Rounds”, “Wataru’s Lighter”, “Oven”, “Hot Breakfast”)

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13:1324123213412314321134143241312412341234131

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Takito: Wataru, you also said your lighter had been messed with, right? How it was in a different position than when you left it?

Wataru: [pounds chest] As a matter of fact, I did tell you. Satoko, too! [staggers back] You don’t mean it was used for some sort of evil deed, do you?

Takito: Yeah, I do. Our murderer must’ve used the flames to trigger a room-wide water shower.

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, that’s settled, we now know how Bertrand was killed.

Satoko: [muttering] If only we knew who… We have everything but the important part.

Kotori: [sighs] Sorry, Takito, but Satoko has a point. Aside from the killer having to be wet at that particular moment, we don’t know anything else that would point to them.

_Wait… They would’ve had to be drenched, and they would’ve had to have planned to be drenched, too…_
This points to one particular person…

Takito: Don’t worry, Kotori. I know exactly who the killer is!

CHOOSE A CULPRIT!

Chapter End Notes

Think you know our triple-killer? Comment Below!
Chapter 3: Bedside Manner - School Trial Part 4

Chapter Notes

Well, to begin with I'd like to apologize for taking almost a full month to complete this. I'm starting college in the fall, and the transition has eaten up so much more time than I expected. Still, I really hope I get back to biweekly updates once all the dust settles and I no longer have to make excuses.

...But in more plot relevant things, the Killer is about to be revealed! Let's see if all that time helped you to guess right...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — School Trial Part 4

Takito: Don’t worry, Kotori. I know exactly who the killer is! [points dramatically] Nahoko, you killed Yasue and Itsumi!

Kotori: [pensive pose] Huh?

Nahoko: [puts down phone, chuckles] Are…? Are you shitting me?

Takito: I'm not shitting anyone.

Hitomi: [grimaces] Yeah, that would be painful!

Takito: Uh, sure, Hitomi. [shakes head] What I mean is, I’m deadly serious about this. Let’s think back to what Nahoko was doing that day.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I know exactly what she was doing! She was going to teach Wataru and Satoko how to dull bayonets.

Wataru: [crosses arms, furrows brow] What are you playing at, Takito? Wouldn’t this give her an alibi?
Takito: It would, but only for the very beginning of the day. After the lesson was over, she could wander the museum as much as she wanted.

Nahoko: [crosses arms, condescending expression] Is that your point? That I didn’t have an alibi? [chuckles] Loads of people didn’t have an alibi.

Takito: Your alibi isn’t the problem; it’s your actions. Picture this; the killer, in order to kill Bertrand, would’ve had to get drenched under the sprinkler system. On top of that, they would’ve planned for it to happen. So is it any coincidence that on the very same day of Bertrand’s murder, Nahoko, the woman who has never left her electronics alone up to this point, suddenly and deliberately leaves all but a few of them with someone else?

Satoko: [wags finger] Ne eliri antaŭeniras de vi mem. [adjusts glasses] You and I both know that Nahoko left her electronics alone to keep them from getting smoke damage.

Takito: But if that was her reason, it doesn’t make any sen—

Nahoko: WEAKLING!

CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT


Takito: Huh?

Nahoko: [smug grin] You heard me. Weakling. As in, you are a weakling.

Takito: I don’t know what to say to that. I’m not.

Nahoko: [displeased expression] Oh, no, no, no, no. Here’s why you are; a weakling always thinks
they’re stronger than they are. They might, for instance, use circumstantial evidence to build a, if I’m being honest, very shaky, version of events and believe it to be concrete fact.

Takito: That’s… not true. I knew it wasn’t. But I couldn’t really say why or how.

Nahoko: [smug grin] A weakling would also push an equally weak conclusion. As Satoko has already enlightened you, I gave a perfectly valid excuse for my actions: I was preventing my electronics from being smoke damaged. There reason to doubt that this was my purpose, and until then, thinking I did that to prepare for murder is absolutely the thinking of a weakling.

Takito: I don’t buy that for a second! The actual risk of smoke damage was slim to none and you know it! Plus, you’ve put your devices in worse danger before without word!

Nahoko: [raises eyebrow] Like when?

Takito: When you were examining Yasue’s body, or when Kibogaman was shooting about…

Nahoko: [smug grin] You’re stretching, and you know it. You’ve been stretching this entire time! Seriously, what reason do we even have to believe that the bee and the victims even had the same killer? Some wild theory about allergies? You pulled that out of your ass; you don’t have any hard evidence!

Takito: Of course I have evidence! It’s the only possible way to explain the two different causes of death!

Nahoko: [smug grin] Sure it is. Can you even tell me whether Yasue or Itsumi had the definitely real allergy attack?

Takito: Well, erm.. uh…

Nahoko: [chuckles] Exactly.

CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW
Takito: I'LL CUT THAT CLAIM TO PIECES! Who do you think it was, Nahoko?

Nahoko: [raises eyebrow] Who do I? What?

Ryouta: [wincing] W-wait?! You c-can’t just turn around a q-question like th-that, can you?

Nahoko: [angrily points] Seriously, how am I supposed to know, asshole?

Takito: Normally I wouldn’t ask you, but you saw the victim. You looked up close at the wound!

Nahoko: [heavy breathing, intense stare] …

Takito: That’s why you were standing over Yasue, weren’t you? You noticed the same thing I did—the swelling on the wound on her head. Your Pocket Coroner App would’ve told you it wasn’t natural swelling, wouldn’t it?

Nahoko: [heavy breathing, intense stare] …

Hitomi: [frowns, looks down] Nahoko…?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] It seems Nahoko has nothing to refute. Monobear, if you wi—

Nahoko: [unnatural smiling] Hold Pfft… Hold Pffft…
Kotori: [raises eyebrow] …What is she saying?

Nahoko: [unnatural smiling] Hold pfft… pfft… [hysterical laughing] I… I can’t fucking believe you all actually bought the shit Takito’s spewing out of his mouth!

Tamaki: [smiles] So you still refute these claims?

Nahoko: [smug grin, using phone] Exactly. I was looking at Yasue for reasons that should be obvious. She was the victim, and needed a thorough examination. And for the record, my Pocket Coroner App said the swelling was a natural formation of blunt force trauma.

Takito: That’s what you’re going with, your word against mine? My story doesn’t seem so ridiculous to me.

Nahoko: [wags finger, sighs] I totally get why it wouldn’t in the land of magic theories. But in reality, don’t you think expecting a bee keeper to be allergic to bees is a little …unrealistic.

…! I don’t know what to say to that.

Okita: [bites rose, crosses arms, taps fingers] Yeah, that’s a bit of a problem there, sport.

Takito: Do you have any proof she wasn’t allergic to bees, though?

I was sweating bullets on the inside, and I was fairly certain she could tell.

Nahoko: [wags finger] Lemme turn the question back over: Do you? [using phone, smirk] It’s just probabilities now, and at it this point, the clear bet is on the person who works with bees every day of their life not being allergic to them.

It hurt to hear that, but it was right. With no evidence either way, people were going to trust her likely idea over my unlikely one.
Kotori: [pensive pose] Have something, Takito? Even something to even the odds would be more than helpful right about now.

_Do I have anything? Anything at all that could suggest Yasue had a bee allergy…_

(“Yasue’s Talent” / “Itsumi’s Testimony” / “Yasue’s Body” )

Takito: When you say that being a beekeeper makes it unlikely to have a bee allergy, what do you mean?

Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Sie sind nicht wirklich so dumm, oder?

Nahoko: [looks up from phone, contemptuous stare] Because she’d be stung. A lot. A beekeeper with a bee allergy would before the second week, if they weren’t smart enough to reconsider their career by then.

Takito: But what if Yasue hadn’t been stung? As a SHSL Beekeeper, the best in the country, would not be totally unreasonable think she had been stung once or fewer?

Nahoko: [mumbles] Yes.

Hitomi: [puzzled expression] What do you mean by “once or fewer”? Wouldn’t once be enough to tell?

Kotori: [smiles] I can explain. You might already know that allergies are caused by the body overreacting to benign materials in the body. In essence, the immune system treats them like attacking bacteria, where antibodies are produced to identify them for the body’s own forces.
However, the first time the allergen enters the body, those identifying antibodies don’t exist; they can’t be prepared for a substance they haven’t seen.

Takito: …So the first time an allergic person is stung, their reaction would be indistinguishable from someone who isn’t allergic.

Pablo: [presses forehead] Now I remember… Yasue had been bragging to me about how she’d only been stung once… [sighs] I think it was when we first met. …Before all this killing even started.

*Pablo, I promise, I'll never think bad of you again…*

Nahoko: [heavy breathing, uncomfortable expression] Okay, so you’ve created a possibility. But it’s only that. A possibility.

Takito: It still puts your innocence into serious question.


Wataru: [crosses arms] Of course it’s serious! Everyone is talking serious. Very seriously.

Nahoko: [puts down phone, raises eyebrow] Wait, are you being serious?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yes or no, you’re a serious suspect. I want your testimony for both Bertrand’s murder and the murder proper.

Nahoko: [looks to the side, discontent] Fine. There’s nothing interesting about what happened to everything to me, anyway.

**NON-STOP DEBATE**

Nahoko: [discontent] I wasn’t there. Both times. It’s that simple.

Tamaki: [frowns] As much as I’d like to take your word for it, Nahoko, I can’t right now. We all need a more detailed explanation as to what you were doing.

Nahoko: [discontent] Well, you all know what I was doing the morning of the bee getting swatted. [smiles sneakily] I was upstairs teaching Wataru and Satoko how to dull blades the hour after breakfast. You both should be able to confirm that, right?

Satoko: [sulks slightly] Es la verdad. …Er, it’s the truth.

Wataru: [furrows brow, crossed arms] I too can confirm this, but… [points dramatically, yells] It also means you were in the perfect position to make dishonorable uses of my lighter!

Nahoko: [searching phone] Shh. [looks up] Stay calm. I didn’t do that. In fact, the lighter was gone by the time I was on my way out. [searching phone] It’s a big shame, I didn’t really think anything of it at the time.

Wataru: [furrows brow, crossed arms] Hmmrgh…

Tamaki: [frowns] That’s still not enough. What happened after you left?

Nahoko: [searching phone] I went to my room and did what I always do when I’m bored—play a game on my tablet. That’s not a crime, is it?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Fair enough, it isn’t. Please continue.

Nahoko: [smug grin, wags finger] Luckily for you, my next alibi is even simpler. I was in the dorm hall, also playing games, until about an hour beforehand. After that, I took a nap in my room. At least I tried, but the announcements were a little too loud for that.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] Does this satisfy your curiosity, Takito?

Takito: I don’t get how either of those count as alibis. She has nothing to prove she was doing either of those things.

Nahoko: [smug grin] Oh, is proof what you want? Take a look at this.

_Nahoko took out one of her tablets and displayed a photo. It was selfie of her and another one of her tablets, displaying a date, time, and high score. It was of an hour before the murder, and the score looked pretty high, though I didn’t really have any idea if it was or not._

Nahoko: [smug grin] **You can’t get a score that high without practicing at every opportunity.** That’s my alibi.

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] It’s certainly …unique.

_Nahoko must be pretty close to done if she’s calling that evidence. I have to show her lies for what they are, right here, right now!_

**DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**

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E3, T4

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! That’s a great story you made up there, but it has a mistake you should know about.

Nahoko: [coy smile] Oh, you mean how I shouldn’t have told it to an idiot, right?
Note to self: Don’t try to be witty around Nahoko.

Takito: No, I mean the part where you said you went to your room.

Nahoko: [angered] So? There’s no mistake in that.

Tamaki: [frowns] There is when we deliberately instructed you not to. If you started at the War Set and went your room, you would’ve crossed the room Bertrand was staying.

Wataru: [crosses arms] You’ve just admitted you broke an edict!

Pablo: [authoritative pose, furrows brow] If you aren’t the culprit in this murder, you can expect several chores ahead of you, Nahoko.

Nahoko: [grits teeth, mumbles expletives]

Takito: You don’t get to be Super High School Level by being dumb, Nahoko. You intentionally broke a rule and risked getting caught to do something you could’ve done safely. Either your judgement completely failed you, or you had another reason for getting close to Bertrand that day. And I think I know what it is.

Nahoko: [grits teeth, mumbles expletives louder]

Hitomi: [frowns, looks down] Nahoko… [stoic stare] Tell us. What were you doing?

Nahoko: [closes eyes, takes a deep breath] Tsk, tsk. [scowls at Takito] Can’t a girl get some privacy in her own room? That’s my response.

Takito: That’s your reason? You broke protocol for privacy?

Nahoko: [smug grin] You wanted a reason, and I gave one. Fuck off. Until you can directly connect
me to anything, don’t waste your time breathing.

She wants me to connect her to murder, huh? If I can substitute Nahoko as the killer into my vision of events, maybe I can finally figure out a piece of the puzzle…

Based on everything I know so far, can I figure out the murder weapon?

HANGMAN’S GAMBIT

TLAETB

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18:LTLAEBTELATELBATBTLEBALETBTLTBAEBTLELTABEELTB

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Takito: THAT’S IT! I know the murder weapon, and I can connect Nahoko to it!

Ryouta: [grips camera tight, stares in earnest] You c-c-can? D-do it!

Takito: I’ll give you this, Nahoko, you were clever. You used a weapon no one would ever think to use and hid it in a place no one would ever think to look. [dramatically points at Nahoko] But your cleverness runs out today!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If you’ve figured out the murder weapon, tell us already.

Takito: It’s her tablet. It has to be one her tablets.

Nahoko: [prepares to throw phone, grits teeth] It doesn’t have to be anything just because of your say-so. Put up or shut up, you cocksure little shit! [throws phone towards the floor] Fuck!
Hitomi:[shocked expression] Wow, she’s angry.

*What evidence do I know that can suggest Nahoko’s tablet was the murder weapon?*

( "Stolen Wheel" / “Noisy Air Vent” / “Clear Shard” )

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15:213111232131233123231231232131231231232131

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*There it is!*

Takito: How tough are your tablets, Nahoko?

Nahoko: [furrows brow, stares intently] The toughest. I hold every tool I own to the “est” standard.

Takito: I’m very sure they are, but even then, they would still break if you actively tried to break them. Especially the screen.

Nahoko: [furrows brow, stares intently] I don’t know what you’re playing at… [prepares to throw phone] But I assure, it’s in your best interest to back off. Now.

Takito: What I’m saying is, when you crushed Bertrand under the screen of your tablet, you pushed a little too hard. You cracked your screen, and a shard of glass just small enough that you wouldn’t notice it on the floor.

Satoko: [raises eyebrow, adjusts glasses] Hindi ko kow. Nahoko’s not the type to miss something like that.
Nahoko: [smug grin] Exactly!

Kotori: [pensive pose] But it fits well within the current model of events. It explains how Bertrand’s stinger poison stayed on the murder weapon. If the substance got within the cracks of a screen, it would denature before it escaped.

Okita: [bites rose, tilts head] Do you really think such a teeny tiny amount is enough to kill ‘er though? Doesn’t feel like it.

Pablo: [presses forehead, sighs] There really isn’t a need to theorize right now, you know. [authoritative pose] For once, we have a simple, elegant solution to this problem. [points at Nahoko] Nahoko, remove the casings on all your tablets.

Nahoko: [jolts] Huh?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] You heard me. If Takito is correct, and you shattered your screen swatting Bertrand, the telltale mark should be fairly obvious, no?

Well, crap. I’m kind of embarrassed for not having told her to do that myself.

Nahoko: [closes eyes, breathes deep] …

Takito: C’mon Nahoko. If you really are innocent, you can prove it now.

Nahoko: [opens eyes, stares ahead] Fine. [takes out tablet, opens it]

[camera cuts to a close-up of Nahoko’s tablet’s screen]

There it was. A series of circular cracks in the upper right of the screen, slowly becoming six individual lines spreading out in all directions, every one of them reaching the edge. There was even a small hole where the shard might have fallen out.
Hitomi: So it’s true…

Ryouta: N-nahoko, you k-killed them…

Nahoko: Don’t get ahead of yourselves.

[camera cuts back to Nahoko in the trial room]

Nahoko: [facepalms, grits teeth] It slipped off my shelf when I was going down the stairs. I was afraid you assholes would try and take this out of context.

Kotori: [wags finger] I think this perfectly within context, actually. There’s no need to lie right now.

Nahoko: [nervous sweats, loosens collar] But I’m not, aren’t I?

Kotori: [solemn stare] I don’t know if you are. [reaches into pocket, pulls out something small and clear] But I have the shard right here, and if we put it up to your tablet, we can find out.

Nahoko: [jolts upward, shivers, some devices fall off the shelf] …

Kotori: [solemn stare] So Nahoko, what’ll it be?

Nahoko: [looks down, sighs] …

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] Nahoko?

Nahoko: [claps slowly] You win. I admit it. I squashed that bee. I wanted to squish it from day one, and only since a few days ago did I have a foolproof plan to pull it off. I hate that subtle buzzing noise everywhere I go.
Takito: So there’s no denying it then. You’re the murderer here.

Nahoko: [wags finger] Nah, I don’t think so. I mean, I left that room alone for quite a while. Anyone could’ve come in and accidentally laid their murder weapon on that bee.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That’s incredibly ridiculous.

Nahoko: [smug grin] It’s possible though.

Pablo: [furrows brow] Barely.

Nahoko: [smug grin] Well believe me or not, it’s what happened.

Hitomi: [seething] Why should we believe you? You just admitted to lying a second ago! And you killed someone’s pet just because you didn’t like them! You’re a monster!

Nahoko: [stares intently] Because I couldn’t possibly have done the killing that matters.

**NON-STOP DEBATE**


Nahoko: [stares intently] It was impossible for me to get in and out of that room unseen. Period.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] We don’t need to know how. We can trace you that location and the time of the murder.

Nahoko: [chuckles] Can you? **Like I said, there’s no way to prove that bee poison specifically came from me.** [examines tablet, smug grin] Anyone could’ve accidentally gotten trace amounts on any part of them.
Tamaki: [frowns] That’s absolute nonsense, but even if it wasn’t, anything that could prove you couldn’t enter the crime scene would also absolve everyone else.

Nahoko: [smug grin] Well, you’re right. The killer couldn’t have been anyone on the outside. That leaves Takito, Okita, Wataru, Pablo, and Ryouta as suspects. [devilish stare] And if you ask me, Mr. Narita’s leading us on this entire time is quite suspicious…

I must’ve made her really angry…

Nahoko: [points at Takito, smug grin] You killed Yasue and Itsumi by sneaking through the vents ahead of time, and then created a scene to frame me! And to think, you would’ve gotten away with it, too, if Okita hadn’t looked in the vent and saw nothing there. It proves that I or anyone else couldn’t have escaped from the War Set.

Takito: That’s really weak. Honestly, I expected better.

Nahoko: [grits teeth, furrows brow, prepares to throw phone] The hell are you talking about? You looked in that vent yourself, didn’t you? You saw nothing there!

Kotori: [frowns] The weak part is your crazy theory about Takito. To start with, how was Takito even supposed to make those noises?

Takito: Yeah! I was 5 yards away and with other people both times!

Nahoko: [clutches collar, nervous sweat] How am I supposed to know? [angry stare] You know what, a rat was in the vent, luckily enough for you. That’s how those noises got made.

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E5,T4
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! Tsk, tsk, Nahoko.

Nahoko: [nervous sweating, clutches collar] Don’t tsk at me! You murderer! You have nothing hard against me!

Takito: Haven’t you figured it out? Okita’s Testimony doesn’t absolve you… [slams podium] It proves without a doubt your guilt!

Nahoko: [jumps back, devices fall from shelf] Nonsense! It was empty!

Okita: [bites rose, tilts head] I’m gonna have to agree with Nahoko with this one. All I saw was a spiderweb.

Takito: Don’t you know what that spiderweb was, though?

( “Bertrand’s Hive” / “Tripwires” / “Nahoko’s Tablet” / “Killer’s Clothes” )

Takito: The crack on Nahoko’s Tablet perfectly matches the appearance of a spiderweb! She had been pushing it up to the borders of the shaft and hiding behind it. That’s what you really saw.

Okita: [bites rose, raises eyebrow] I didn’t see the black screen of a tablet, mate. I saw the interior of a vent.
Takito: That’s because Nahoko displayed an image of the vent’s interior that she must’ve taken ahead of time. It’s also why the cobweb had disappeared after we discovered the body. It hadn’t been trampled; we were just finally able to see the real vent.

Nahoko: [jumps back, devices fall from shelf] That’s… That’s… ridiculous! Absolutely beyond the realm of possibility!

Kotori: [raises eyebrow] Really, Nahoko?

Nahoko: [takes deep breath] I’m positive. [smug grin] And here’s why…

Chapter End Notes

Nahoko is on the ropes, but there are still questions unanswered. What made her start killing now, and what is the final ace up her sleeve? Next Time!

Did you guess right? Do you have predictions or criticism? Comment Below!
Chapter 3 concludes right now!

You may think you know everything there is to know, but I assure you, you don't.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: Bedside Manner — School Trial Part 5

Nahoko: [smug grin] And here’s why… I couldn’t fit.

Pablo: [dismissive gesture] Nonsense! I could fit, and so could you!

Nahoko: [chuckles] No, no, no, that’s not what meant. Of course my body could fit. There’s no point hiding that… [grabs shelf] But my special shelf, on the other hand, would have trouble.

Satoko: [shakes head] That’s a non-issue. You could’ve just taken it off.

Nahoko: [wags finger] And leave decisive evidence behind? I don’t think so. [smug grin] I had to get it through in one piece, too, or I couldn’t be wearing it now.

Pablo: [presses forehead] This… This is a valid complaint.

Okita: [pulls collar, bites rose] I’m starting to have doubts about this, Takito… She arrived on the scene too quickly to have left it back in her room or anything.

Nahoko: [crosses arms, smug grin] So, Takito? Are you still convinced I could put a square peg into a round hole?

Takito: [shakes head sideways] If know you, you did something that meant you didn’t have to.
(“You hid your shelf nearby.” / “You withheld one of your shelf’s functions from us until now.” / “You made a new shelf designed to fit.” )

Takito: You couldn’t hide it without risking getting caught, and if the shelf could be compressed, you surely would’ve done it by now. The only way you made it past would be to make a completely new shelf. One that you could compress to fit inside a vent.

Nahoko: [chuckles] That’s the most ridiculous thing that’s come out of your mouth today. You all know that making a new shelf is completely within my ability, but I’d need the kind of tools Pablo would ban, and a workspace I could keep secret for at least a whole day. [wags finger] If I wanted to get out of here, it’d be easier dig a hole with my dinner spoon!

Takito: I don’t know about tools, but can tell you where your studio was. Right before I discovered the body, I found Yasue’s room ransacked, with a knife inside. It looked like someone had been doing work in there. Perhaps it was you? After all, who would go inside an unoccupied room?

Nahoko: [dismissive gesture, furrows brow] Liar! You didn’t find shit!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] He absolutely found shit. Tamaki and I verified it.

Nahoko: [prepares to throw phone] He doctored the scene, obviously! And even if he hadn’t, it still can’t prove anything! Nothing there connects back to me! [chuckles wildly] It’s been fun, but I’m the winner here! Without evidence, you get nothing! Nothing but death!

Hitomi: [looks down, sulks] …Nahoko? Is that you?
Nahoko: [points forward, chuckles wildly] Damn straight it is! The hero, the victor, standing before you to expose the true villain of this class trial!

She’s lost it completely, but she’s right about one thing: If I can’t come up with evidence that she made a new shelf, she’ll be the only one walking out alive.

I’ve got to do the impossible and make Nahoko admit defeat!

**PANIC TALK ACTION**

(Listen to this for the true Dangan Ronpa experience: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9_LdiIMvqI)

Nahoko: [wide malicious smile, crosses arms] I crush pissants like you everyday!

Nahoko: [points and laughs] You can’t negotiate a loss, loser!

Nahoko: [chuckles wildly] Shitweasel! I could buy your whole family!

Nahoko: [grips shelf, grits teeth, seething] Back in your corner, failure!

Nahoko: [prepares to throw phone] Weak! Weak, weak, weak, weak!

Nahoko: [crosses arms, furrows brow] Confess before I beat it out of you!

**FINAL SHOT**

Nahoko: [chuckles wildly] You can’t prove I made a new shelf! You can’t prove anything!

Ning
Takito: IT’S OVER! I can’t prove your guilt. I don’t have the evidence.

Nahoko: [chuckles wildly] Well, it’s about time you admitted it.

Takito: …But you can prove your guilt or innocence just fine.

Nahoko: [nervous sweats] What…? I don’t know what you’re talking about. [furrows brow] If I could’ve, I would’ve much, much earlier.

Takito: The test is simple. If you changed your shelf for the murder, and I very much think you did, you should still be wearing it.

Nahoko: [nervous sweats] Fair enough. I’m still wearing the one you met me in, though, and nothing’s gonna change that.

Takito: Prove it, then. There’s one thing the old shelf can do that the new one shouldn’t be able to. [dramatically points at Nahoko] If you are innocent, spin your shelf right now!

Nahoko: [staggers back] I… what… spin?

Takito: That’s right. I haven’t seen you spin that thing once since the murder, and normally you spin
it all the time! If you are innocent, you’ll still have the spinning shelf on you right now.

Nahoko: [nervous sweats, chuckles uncomfortably] Heh… eh…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Go on, spin it. We’re waiting.

Nahoko: [forced smile] Allow me.

_Nahoko took a deep breath, then grabbed hold of either side of her shelf. With a forceful grunt, she tried to shift the shelf. It only moved a little before snapping back into place._

Nahoko: [forced smile] Wait, it’s only stuck. Again…

_She tried to force it again. Nothing._

Nahoko: [forced smile] Again…

_And again, Nothing._


AgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgainAgain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Again
Nahoko: [wraps arms around self] No, no, that’s not what I meant. It was the thing before that.

Kotori: [tilts head, raises eyebrow] You couldn’t spin your shelf?

Nahoko: [wraps arms around self] Yeah, I failed to spin it. I failed to finish the trial. I haven’t failed in a long, long time. The last time I failed, my mother… she…

[camera shows a still black-and-white image of a young Nahoko holding a silver trophy]

Nahoko’s Mother: What is this?

Nahoko: It's a trophy, isn’t it?

Nahoko’s Mother: Did you earn this trophy?

Nahoko: Yes.

Nahoko’s Mother: How did you earn this trophy?

Nahoko: I got sec—

Nahoko’s Mother: You lost. You were weak, and you lost.

Nahoko: I—

Nahoko’s Mother: Repeat after me. Miyakes can never be weak. Miyakes can never lose.

Nahoko: Miyakes can never be weak. Miyakes can never lose.

Nahoko’s Mother: I will be first in everything I do. I will study and win every competition I am in.
Nahoko: I will be first in everything I do. I will study and win every competition I am in.

Nahoko’s Mother: I promise to dedicate my being to not being weak.

Nahoko: I promise to dedicate my being to not being weak.

[return to school trial]

Nahoko: [slight tears, arms around self] I promised my mother I would win. But early on, I had forgotten that promise. Then, at the end of last time, Monobear said something.

[flashback to last school trial]

Monobear: [sighs] Oh, look, the incompetent ones are speaking to me. Two attempts, and they still can’t even pull off a murder correctly. I think I’ll pass on responding.

[return to current school trial]

Nahoko: [grits teeth, makes fist] Monobear’s words… They made me remember. They instilled a drive in me to prove once again that I wasn’t weak. [sighs, wraps arms around self] But in the end, I suppose the truth was that I was always weak. Too weak to win. Just as weak as everyone else.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, piercing stare] Nobody is weak.

Nahoko: [looks up] Huh? Don’t bother with that.

Pablo: [authoritative pose, looks forward] Whatever you think I am doing to “help you”, I assure you, I am not. There is no way I could ever muster sympathies for someone crying about how they couldn’t get away with murder.

Nahoko: [slight tears, wraps arms around self] I understand. I’m truly a bit player, and any pity I
receive will be wasted.

Tamaki: [frowns] Akinori killed on accident, and Chiyo, at the very least, had revenge and remorse. You have nothing. I want you to remember that it was not your skill, but your choices, that made you weak. Killing was always the easy way out.

Pablo: [snaps fingers] Takito! Prove this to her. Show that nothing she could’ve done would have saved her. Show that murderers, even “perfect” ones, will never go unpunished!

Takito: Sure. I’m pretty certain I can visualize it.

CLIMAX INFEERENCE

(Music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5i0xxuHqrE)

It all started with a plot to kill Bertrand and leave Yasue depressed and defenseless. The culprit, knowing they would have to tutor Wataru and Satoko in a smoky room, used this to their advantage by stealing Wataru’s lighter and leaving their electronics somewhere else on the excuse of smoke damage. As soon as the lesson was over, they snuck into the office and closed the door tight.

The culprit opened Bertrand’s cage, letting him fly out, and held Wataru’s lighter up to the sprinkler system. With Bertrand weakened by the water, the culprit used their tablet to smash him against the counter surface, but unfortunately for them, their tablet cracked, leaving a shard of glass at the scene. Their enemy dispatched, the culprit fled the scene.

Soon after, they decided that Itsumi was the much more tempting target, and resolved to kill her while she was alone with the comatose Yasue. After building a specialized shelf to fit the small space, the culprit snuck through the vent, dodged some attempted slashes from Itsumi, and hit her with a lethal blow with their tablet. After going inside the doctor the scene, however, the impossible happened. Yasue woke up.

Yasue, having seen the culprit’s identity, couldn’t be allowed to live. The killer hit her to silence her, but instead of the sheer force that killed Itsumi, the bee venom still present on the tablet triggered an allergic reaction in Yasue, closing her air way and suffocating her. Their original plan ruined, the culprit quickly made Itsumi’s stone look like the murder weapon and crawled back into the vent.
Still, it wasn’t over yet. Okita and I were standing right outside the point the killer needed to pass through. The culprit, having planned for this, made a noise to attract our attention, then placed their tablet, with an image of the vent’s interior, up to where Okita and I were looking in. Sadly, we were both fooled, and as soon as we were gone, the killer made a second noise to confuse us and dispersed back into the crowd.

Only one person has access to the murder weapon of all three victims!

Nahoko Miyake, it could only be you!

CLIMAX INFRINGEMENT END

Takito: There you have it.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well said. Nahoko, do you have anything to refute in that statement?

Nahoko: [stands upright, stares straight ahead] No, I do not. He is correct.

Wataru: [crosses arms] Ah, so you still have some honor left.

Satoko: [furrows brow, grits teeth] Hardly any, really. [mumbles] Yes kartsum yem, vor mi ynker e dzez hamar…

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb, Kibogaman costume] [arms to side] Can someone who m-murders two in cold blood have honor in the first place? [strikes heroic pose] In my experience, the chances are slim to none!

Hitomi: [frowns, droops head] When you put it like that, it sounds like it’s impossible. But up until a few minutes ago, I had completely trusted Nahoko. [sighs, turns around, opens third eye] I guess I wanted to believe there was some part of her that was warm and not so ready to bite everyone around here.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Well after I’m done with her, you can be sure she’ll be cold all over! Upupupupu! Let’s get to the voting!
I picked Nahoko as the killer on the screen of my podium. Just as expected, the huge tablet behind Monobear showed a slot machine spinning and eventually hitting triple Nahokos. Digital coins spewed out of the machine’s bottom accompanied by the typical casino lights and sounds.

Monobear: [joyful pose] Ding, ding, ding! What a streak! [camera shows Nahoko looking down and away] The killer of two bastards and a bee, is none of than Nahoko Miyake, the broken broker! Upupupupu!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If I may make a request, Monobear?

Monobear: [lounging pose] Hmmm… Go ahead, but keep in mind, I may just do the opposite…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I want Nahoko’s execution to happen immediately.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! Why didn’t you say so earlier! Sure can do, kiddo!

Wataru: [motions to stop, grit teeths] Wait! She is entitled to her final words, like everyone else!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Really? I don’t think Itsumi or Yasue did. [stares contemptuously at Wataru] Besides, she had them earlier. We’ve already heard the trite about her mother and what she said about Monobear’s goading.

Tamaki: [frowns] I agree with Pablo. If Monobear’s words last time were powerful enough to convince her to murder, harsher treatment this time should be an effective deterrent, don’t you think?

Wataru: [crosses arms, furrows brow] I don’t know what cruelty they inflict upon criminals in La Espera, but in the nation I come from, we do not call for the execution of anyone, not matter what they have done!

Hitomi: [intense stare, hands on hips] Yeah! I thought we were having executions because Monobear made us, not because you want them!
Pablo: [authoritative pose] I do not want Nahoko dead. I want her gone. And you should, too, after what she has done!

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m very disappointed in the two of you, coming to the defense of her. Unless Nahoko has something important to say, I think she’d had her chance. [piercing glare] Monobear?

Nahoko: [heavy breathing, grabs podium tight] Wait! Wait, wait! I have something to say before I die!

Wataru: [crosses arms, furrows brow] See?

Nahoko: [nervous sweat, wraps arms around self] Takito didn’t get it all right. Yasue… Before she died, she spoke to me.

Kotori: [gasps] What? Why, how?

[camera shows a still image of Nahoko holding her tablet, looking at a freshly woken Yasue inside the tent]

Nahoko: The hell…? Monobear said you’d be asleep for this!

Yasue: …You killed Itsumi, didn’t you? You’ve murdered my best friend.

Nahoko: [mumbling] Fuck… I was going to frame the only person who couldn’t speak for herself, but I guess I have to improvise…

Yasue: [sighs] …You’re going to kill me too, now, aren’t you? I knew it would come to this, but I didn’t want to admit it.

Nahoko: Yeah. I am. Don’t try and fight it, either!

Yasue: [sighs] I don’t have the energy or hope to fight anything. As long as they are here, we’ll never win this game, anyway.
Nahoko: Wait, “they”? Who do you mean, they?

Yasue: I don’t really know myself. I overheard this person talking to someone else about the Mutual Killing. They said that everything was going “better than expected” and that if someone doesn’t win a class trial by the fifth one, they would “kill the lot” and “start over”.

Nahoko: Well, it’s a good thing I’m winning this right now, then. If you help me out, I can win even harder, too!

Yasue: I don’t know. These people… they have more power than all of us combined. At least one of them has to one of us, too. Promise me you’ll at least tell the others these people’s codenames. The two on the phone were “Mr. Johnson and Mr. Lincoln”, and they talked a lot about a “Mr. Carter”, though I don’t even know if any of them were misters… The two of them did something to their voices.

Nahoko: Why would I tell that to anyone in the group? As soon as I say it, they’d ask me where I’d got the information. I’d be signing my death warrant! And why do I even have to listen to you?

Yasue: Listen to me, Nahoko. No matter what either of us do now, we are both going to die. They want me dead. They chose me to put under for a reason. And you, with the way things are going, will never graduate the mutual—

Nahoko: I don’t have to listen to shit!

[The still on display fades to red, and a resounding whack is heard. The camera fades back in to Nahoko at the trial.]

Nahoko: In the end, she was right. I’m going to serve my final hours as a messenger. [sighs] A lowly task, becoming of a lowly intern.

Pablo: [presses forehead] For the last time, Nahoko. [makes fist, intense expression] Your self-pity isn’t fooling anyone! Neither is this nonsense message from the deceased!

Kotori: [pensive pose] At this point, she has no reason to lie. I’m obligated to believe her.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] She has every reason to lie to protect her reputation.

Kotori; [pensive pose] Well... I...

I don’t have anything to say to that. She very well could be lying to just look good. It was hard to know with her, but I wanted to believe in the good in people right then. I wanted to hard.

Monobear: [neutral pose] Are we done yapping, then? My gavel hand is getting antsy.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] As I said earlier, please continue.

Nahoko: [sighs, looks down] ...I don’t care what you think of me.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Hm?

Nahoko: [looks down] I know that’s what someone who cares what you think about them would say, but it’s the truth now. I have no self-worth left.

Monobear: [happy pose] Ahem... I’ve prepared a special punishment for our SHSL Day Trader, Nahoko Miyake.

Nahoko: [looks down] If you have any respect for me, I have a final request. Lose it. Hate me, and convince everyone you know to hate me, too.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Without further ado, it’s punishment time!

Nahoko: [stares forward desperately] Hate me with all of your heart!

Monobear: [hits button with gavel]
A metal claw reached out and took hold of Nahoko’s neck, pulling her back. She sighed, and with a slight frown on her face, allowed the claw to pull her into a dark room behind her.

Seconds later, Nahoko reappeared, looking displeased ahead at the camera. Slowly, it zoomed out, showing that Nahoko was strapped into a solid red roller coaster.

The camera then turned to face the left side of the coaster car, and zoomed out further, revealing the car had the profile of an arrow and was right up against a wall that looked like some sort of coordinate grid line graphs would go on.

I heard the sound of the brakes release, and the coaster started moving. It went gently up a small hill at first, but soon Nahoko hit the top. I could see the expression on Nahoko’s face turn sour.

Her descent was sudden and fast, but the camera kept up with her. The coaster went faster and faster downwards, and it felt like the coaster would run out of room soon, but it just kept going down at steeper and steeper slopes. Nahoko’s face appeared even more worried, and then suddenly she appeared shocked.

Within a half-second, the coaster hit a tiny ramp, and its inertia rocketed it from the tracks, making it fly far beyond the tracks. The camera had stopped tracking her car, and turned to look at it fly away. The last I saw of Nahoko was the coaster hitting a wall and exploding in the distance. A piece of shrapnel right into the camera, cutting the footage short.
Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! How did you like that one? I’m gonna have to get a new camera because of it, you know.

Wataru: [crosses arms, furrows brow] That was barbarian! It’s one thing to do that in a theme park simulator, but in reality?! How could you?

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! I thought you would have figured it out by now: it’s so dispensingly fun!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I hope you enjoyed your fun, because it ends now. There will be no further murders, that’s my guarantee!

Monobear: [neutral pose] …

Tamaki: [frowns] …

Okita: [bites lip, holds rose] …

Wataru: [looks down and to the side] …

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupupupu! That’s the richest thing I’ve ever heard!

Pablo: [staggers back] What? Are you laughing at my threats?

Monobear: [laughing pose] You don’t have the best track record on this stuff, kiddo… Need I remind you why we’re here?

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I… I have always been one tiny step away from creating a permanent murder free environment! And as the number of students dwindles, it becomes even easier!
Hitomi: [grimaces] Pablo! Are you actually suggesting these murders have helped us?!

Pablo: [nervous sweats, pulls collar] No! Absolutely not, I…!

Okita: [furrows brow, bites rose] Really? Then what were you saying, hotshot?

Tamaki: [frowns] He was giving you hope for the future. Our chances are better now than ever.

Okita: [furrows brow, bites rose] I’m not taking any hope made on the corpses of seven people. Fuck off.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Your insolence will not be forgotten, you know.

Okita: [furrows brow, bites rose, winds up arm] Sure, but neither will your black eye, shitba—

Monobear: [brandishes claw, jumps down from judge chair] SHUT UP!

Pablo: [staggers back] …

Okita: [bites lip, hold rose] …

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Do you two want to be held in contempt of court? Everyone out!

Everyone complied. I didn’t want to be in Monobear’s contempt, that was for sure. What happened to Yasue let me know that just because Monobear can’t kill us without proof of guilt, he can do everything else to make someone else do it. We were completely at his mercy.

I collected what I could for my memento collection. I took one of Yasue’s bedsheets, Itsumi’s special rock, and a phone from Nahoko that was by my feet at the end of the trial. I guess she threw it at me and I never noticed.
The rest of the day I spent in my room, thinking about what Yasue’s dying words meant. “Lincoln”, “Johnson”, and “Carter”. My memory was telling me those names were connected somehow, but I couldn’t figure it out. Whoever these people were, they were somehow experienced in this mutual killing.

It scared me too much. I went to bed at the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER THREE END

- 9 Students Remain -

Chapter End Notes

Chapter 3 is probably my favorite chapter, and I hope by now you can see why. Still, whether or not you loved it, I'd like to hear from you in the comments. Plus, at the time of me writing this, we have 99 kudos, and at the going rate, No. 100 is happening pretty soon. I'd like to thank everyone for joining me through another chapter.

Here's a preview of Chapter Four: The World At War

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????: It doesn't take a genius to see you never should have been trusted to be leader in the first place, Pablo. Starting now, I am establishing myself as the new leader of the Hope's Peak Survivors.

Pablo: On whose authority?!
2 years is a long time, huh?

Sorry to keep you waiting, but I've got some more time on my hands now, so I'll be working hard to finish the story on a more reasonable timetable.

Chapter 4 starts now!

Chapter 4: The World at War — (Ab)normal Day 1

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! You’ve all got a special breakfast waiting for you in the cafeteria today! Let’s give it our all again today, Upupupu!

This food… I don’t know how to feel about it. Would be disrespectful to the dead to eat it or refuse it?

My indecisiveness led me to spend an extra ten minutes in bed. Eventually, I realized I had to eat something, and got up.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

Tamaki was standing outside the door to the Cafeteria. Something was bothering her.
Takito: Tamaki? Has Monobear not let anyone in yet?

Tamaki: [shakes head] No, no, not at all. [frowns] Everyone is already inside, eating away. Everyone except of course, you, me, and…

Takito: ...and?

Tamaki: [frowns] ...and Pablo.

Takito: Where is he?

Tamaki: [frowns] He took a piece of toast and some sausage and headed up to 4th floor. He told me he wanted to get a head start on danger-proofing the new area, and nobody, not even myself, should go up there until he’s finished. [neutral expression] I know he can be off-putting at times, but he only wants to protect us all.

Takito: I know that. He’s just not that good at it…

Tamaki: [frowns] One last thing. Did you think of anything new about why that knife appeared in Yasue’s room?

Takito: No. I’m sorry.

Tamaki: [frowns] It’s okay. I wasn’t expecting much. You should really go eat. It’ll be cold soon.

[Move to Cafeteria]

*The breakfast feast meant to “reward” us for solving another case was there, and everyone sans Tamaki, Pablo, and myself were eating, just as Tamaki said. I got a plate and sat next to Kotori. Ryouta and Hitomi were there too.*

Takito: Yesterday was pretty bad, huh?
Kotori: [stops eating, frowns] Yeah…

Hitomi: [slumps over, closes eyes] I’m running out of friends…

Ryouta: [winces] We all are…

Dang… Shouldn’t have brought this up…

Takito: We, at least we got some information about who’s trapped us here.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Yes, from Yasue…

[flashback to the image of Nahoko with her tablet, standing over Yasue in the tent]

Yasue: I don’t really know myself. I overheard this person talking to someone else about the Mutual Killing. They said that everything was going “better than expected” and that if someone doesn’t win a class trial by the fifth one, they would “kill the lot” and “start over”.

Nahoko: Well, it’s a good thing I’m winning this right now, then. If you help me out, I can win even harder, too!

Yasue: I don’t know. These people… they have more power than all of us combined. At least one of them has to one of us, too. Promise me you’ll at least tell the others these people’s codenames. The two on the phone were “Mr. Johnson and Mr. Lincoln”, and they talked a lot about a “Mr. Carter”, though I don’t even know if any of them were misters… The two of them did something to their voices.
Ryouta: [holds camera, trembles] If s-someone doesn’t graduate by the f-fifth trial, th-they’ll k-k-kill us all…

Hitomi: [bites lip] Who are these “Mr. Johnson, Mr. Lincoln, and Mr. Carter” characters? [puts hands up] You don’t one of them could one of us, do you?

Kotori: [pensive pose] All we really know is what Yasue told Nahoko. But these codenames… I recognize them. They’re American Presidents.

Takito: So, our captors might be foreign?

Kotori: [pensive pose] Maybe. The chances aren’t much higher than they were before.

Ryouta: [holds camera, neutral expression] You p-probably shouldn’t tell W-wataru. [wincs] If he th-thinks there’s a f-foreign spy among us, w-well…

Hitomi: [shrugs shoulders] I don’t think he cares about other countries’ past governments enough to know.

_I looked over at Wataru. He was laughing with Satoko. I was glad he was at least happy, and didn’t want to ruin that, though I was worried something was deep inside him, waiting to come out. Just at that moment…_

Monobear: [laughing] Upupupupu! Enjoying your survivor’s pancakes?

Wataru: [crosses arms] I was, until just now, cretin. Your presence kills my appetite.

Monobear: [dismissive wave] Good! That’s just what I wanted, anyway! [neutral pose] You should already know by now, you have a brand spankin’ new floor to visit!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Of course I knew that. I just wanted to enjoy my food.
Monobear: [dismissive wave] Upupupu! Oh, don’t be such a spoilsport! Your buddy Pablo is already up there, doing who knows what! C’mon, get with the program already!

Wataru: [grits teeth, makes fist] Pablo…! He’s probably up there, inadvertently giving the next killer their means…

*Uh oh… Tamaki said Pablo didn’t want anyone else up there…*

Wataru: [grits teeth, makes fist] Hope’s Peak Students! Takito! We’re going up there right now! This museum needs some REAL security!

*Welp… Here we go…*

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

Tamaki: [frowns] Wataru! Where are you going?

Wataru: [crosses arms] I’m going to the new floor. To do your job for you. [walks off]

Tamaki: [frowns] My job is to not do that, come back here!

[Automoved to 3rd Floor, Industrial Hall Left]

Wataru: [thinking pose] This is the stairway to the new floor, is it not?

Tamaki: [frowns] Please, please, don’t go in there. Pablo has very good reasons for not wanting—

*Wataru walked up the stairs.*
Tamaki: [sighs, frowns] —you to go there.

[Automoved to 4th floor, Political Hall]

Satoko: [displeased, adjusts glasses] Pagaidi, ko? This isn’t that bad. Why would Pablo want to keep us away from this?

Tamaki: [enters, frowns] He wanted to make absolutely sure he would get to any dangerous elements first.

Hitomi: [turned around, third eye open] Where is he, anyway? I can’t see him anywhere!

Tamaki: [frowns] I’m ...unsure. Though it would be best if I were the one to find him.

???: Ho, ho! Yes, yes!

Okita: [grins, points with rose] Hey, didya hear that? Someone speaking over there!

I followed Okita’s rose to the first door on the right in the hallway. The door there was labeled “Security Room: Employees Only”.

???: If I connect this to the cameras there and there, I’d be able to cover this entire floor!

Takito: I think we found Pablo.

Tamaki: [neutral expression] Let me speak to him then. [frowns] I’d tell you to stay put, but I don’t think you would.

Wataru: [crosses arms] You heard her! Explore! If you find any dangerous objects, bring them to me for destruction! [makes fist, grits teeth] And not Pablo!
Guess we all answer to Wataru now. At least for a little while.

[INVESTIGATION START]

[Talk to Kotori]

Takito: You seem deep in thought about this hallway.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hmmm… Not really, but maybe I am. You should try looking around, too.

I examined the hallway. According to the giant text near the entrance, this was the “Political Hall”. Illustrations and text lined the walls, talking about the various systems of government Japan and other nations have, and how each of their legislatures work. Several famous politicians had portraits painted directly on the walls. At the end of the hallway, a section was laid out that listed prominent donors to the museum.

Takito: I don’t there’s anything in this hallway someone could use for murder. Not even a ficus or a bench.

Kotori: [pensive pose] True… [smiles] But that’s not what I’m thinking about. Have you taken a closer look at the cameras and doors?

The doors…

I did as she asked, and took a closer look at the doors and cameras.

There were six doorways I could see. One set of double doors that we came through from the 3rd floor, and at the opposite end, another set that presumably went to the 5th floor.

Hopefully, we’ll never have to use those…

At both the one-third and two-thirds points, there were two single doors on opposite sides of the
Like earlier, the first door the right went into some sort of Security Room. Both the near and far doors on the left went to an “Inventions Room”, and the far the door on the right went to the museum’s Gift Shop.

The security cameras on this floor also looked a little different. The ones we had been seeing up until this point looked like Monobear a little bit, but these seemed like generic security cameras. I wouldn’t be surprised if they were the ones used in the museum when it was still operational.

I counted four generic cameras in total. One was pointed at the Security Room door from further down the opposite (left) side of the hallway, and another was keeping track of both the far Invention Room door, and the Gift Shop door from the left side of hallway. It was connected to the previous camera, and faced toward the 5th floor stairway. The final two cameras were focused on the near Invention Room door, each looking at it from different sides on the right side of the hall.

Kotori: [smiles] You’ve noticed the strange cameras, too, haven’t you?

Takito: I don’t get it. Why would you focus two cameras on the door to a room you could just take another route to enter?

Kotori: [slight shrug] The world of museum curation may just be beyond our plane of thinking.

Well, in Modern Art, maybe, but it shouldn’t be here…

[Move to Inventions Room]

This room had several displays of labor-saving inventions, ranging from early chariots to early computers. Okita, Wataru, and Hitomi were inside, looking around, though only Wataru seemed especially serious about finding dangerous items.

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [hands up, excited] Hi, hi, hi, Takito!
Hitomi was lying down on a round shag carpet, moving as though she were making a snow angel.

Hitomi: [hands up, excited] It’s sooo comfy! I’m learning so much today! I think I’ll sleep right here tonight.

Takito: I don’t know how Monobear would feel about that…

Hitomi: [crosses arms, pouty face] Well, alright! I think I should be able to enjoy this exhibit!

Exhibit…?

I looked around, and sure enough, there was a small plaque bolted into the floor. It read:

“SHAG CARPET (SAFE TO TOUCH)
INVENTOR: UNKNOWN

WHILE EARLY SHAG CARPETS DATE TO THE MIDDLE AGES, MODERN SHAG CARPETS LIKE THIS WERE CREATED AND POPULARIZED IN THE 1960’S“

I kneeled down and felt the carpet’s edges. To my surprise, it lifted up. There didn’t seem to be anything holding down this exhibit.

Odd… I guess it’s not that expensive, though.

Hitomi: [gasps, hands up, excited] Wait, you can lift it up?! Then I can take it back to my room, and sleep in all night and day and night and day and… [flinches] Owww!

Takito: What wrong?

Hitomi: [frowns, looks down] I… got something in my back eye. I don’t think I like this carpet anymore.
It’s probably for the best this stays here, anyway.

[Talk to Wataru]

Wataru: [crosses arms] Takito! Have you anything in need of immediate and righteous destruction?

Takito: No, not really. I was just going to ask you the same question.

Wataru: [shakes head, crosses arms] I have found some things… but I fear they qualify as “Museum Property” and may not be destroyed. Take for example, this grindstone here.

With his metal arm, Wataru gestured toward a grindstone on display. Though the overall design looked ancient, the alloys and materials involved couldn’t be more than 20 years old.

Takito: I guess you could kill someone with that, but it doesn’t seem very efficient. You’d probably be caught, too.

Wataru: [scratches chin] Working with fireworks, I see everyday how seemingly benign objects can maim or kill. Add the wrong amount of phosphorus, and, well… [serious stare] You may need a new arm like mine.

Takito: Duly noted.

Wataru: [distraught expression, sighs] This must be what makes Pablo’s strategies failures. He cannot eliminate the danger inherent in everything. [stands up straight] Still, there are some things that can be done. I am very surprised that Pablo has not taken the time to confiscate Kotori’s plasma-tool-staff-object.

Takito: Yeah, it’s probably the most dangerous thing here. I don’t think he knows about it. And even if he did, he trusts Kotori.

Wataru: [crosses arms] He trusted Chiyo as well. [makes fist, grits teeth] She needs to surrender that tool immediately!
Takito: That’s something you’ll need to ask her about, then...

[Talk to Okita]

Okita: [snide smile, bites rose] Look here, Takito! This is what cars used to be like.

_Okita showed me a car that looked really old. It looked more like a motorized bench. A nearby plaque read:_

**“INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE VEHICLE (CAR)**

**INVENTOR: CARL BENZ**

**MADE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE IN 1886 (PATENTED 1879)”**

Takito: I didn’t know you were into cars, Okita.

Okita: [snide smile, bites rose] Oh, I’m not. I’m just into long, romantic drives. That’s not something I can typically get in the big city I’m from.

Takito: I guess this combines a carriage ride with a romantic park bench.

Okita: [snide smile, bites rose] Mmmm… Can’t you think any saucier than that? [poses] Are you one of those “volcel” weirdos or something? I mean, even Pablo has finally locked himself in a room for “private time”.

Takito: That is definitely not why he’s in there. And I don’t want to do things to voles, if that’s what that word means.

Okita: [snide smile, bites rose] That’s fine, I guess. I’ll just be here, thinking of old cars, romance movies, and things that happen in old cars in romance movies.
Takito: Please don’t give me a reason to bring bleach and a blacklight up here later.

[Move to Political Hall]

[Talk to Tamaki]

Takito: How’s it going? Are you smoothing things over with Pablo.

Tamaki: [smiles] Surprisingly, he doesn’t seem to care. Whatever he was looking for, he’s already found in that security room. He’s really happy about what he’s found there.

Takito: So, can I come in? *I kinda want to know what he’s so giddy about…*

Tamaki: [frowns] No, he still doesn’t want anybody in that room. Not even me…

Takito: Is something wrong between you two?

Tamaki: [frowns] It seems like he doesn’t trust me as much. Well, it doesn’t seem like it’s me he has a problem with as much as anyone who isn’t himself. He’s on sort of an individual streak, I suppose.

Takito: Yeah. It feels like even with his watch, his grip on the group is fracturing.

Tamaki: [neutral expression] Takito, I need to ask you for a favor. Hopefully, it isn’t too much.

Takito: It shouldn’t be. What is it?

Tamaki: [neutral expression] As much as you can, keep an eye on Pablo. Try to gain his trust a little, and tell me if he does anything, well, foolish.

Takito: I’ll try. *I should really do this for everybody.* But I don’t see how I could anything out of him you couldn’t.
Tamaki: [smiles] You’d be surprised. Now, run along please.

[Move to Gift Shop]

_The Gift Shop looked like any other, although it had plenty of merchandise related to Hope’s Peak as well. Some items were advertised as being made by SHSL students. Satoko and Ryouta were browsing._

[Talk to Ryouta]

Ryouta: [holding camera] H-hey, Takito.

Takito: Hey, Ryouta.

_Ryouta was standing next to Kibogaman action figures for sale._

Takito: Evaluating the merchandise, are we?

Ryouta: [holding camera, frowns] I g-guess so.

Takito: You guess so?

Ryouta [holding camera, frowns] It’s j-just… [drops smoke bomb, appears in Kibogaman costume] These action figures are for children to enjoy, they should hold my effigy, and know hope is there for them. [grabs head] But these figures… They’ll n-never be able to do that.

Takito: Wow… You must think a lot about your image as a superhero.

Ryouta [heroic pose] How do I not? My image is my most potent weapon in the fight for justice! [grabs head] But h-here, I cannot do much more than protect you all, to the best of my ab-bility.
Kind of like those dolls. I think I get why Ryouta was so interested in them.

[Talk to Satoko]

Satoko was hanging around the shop’s jewelry. That was the thing that always struck me as strange about museum gift shops; they have 100 yen items within a few yards of one million yen items.

Takito: I don’t think would Monobear care if you just took one of them, you know.

Satoko: [dismissive wave] Mai Mai e i iho la o Morona. This jewelry is trash. Half of it’s just common rocks like quartz or flint, polished to look nice.

Takito: You can tell that? As long they’re the same color, rocks just look like rocks to me.

Satoko: [slight smile] Kompreneble. When I’m not reviving a dead language, I like to collect, polish and occasionally resell gemstones. [adjusts glasses] Last I remember, I was getting ready to sell a sizeable bag of rubies, but if our memories really have been stolen, I’ve probably already sold them.

If the outside world is really like what we saw back when Takara went free, I doubt the money’s still there too.

Takito: When did you start doing this?

Satoko: [twiddles pencil in hair] When did I start… Dema ku min dest pê kir… Hmmm… [neutral pose] I don’t remember, really. It’s something I feel as though I’ve always been doing.

Takito: I get that. There are a lot of important events in my life I can’t remember, because I didn’t think they were important at the time.

I’m trying to remember when I first found my love for fine suits… And I can’t.
Everyone soon joined me in the Political Hall. We were all waiting for Pablo to finish whatever he was doing in there, or at least I was. I was pretty Hitomi was just ready for dinner.

Tamaki: [smiles] Good news, Wataru! I spoke with Pablo earlier today, and he—

Wataru: [crosses arms] I really have no desire to hear what a failed despotic foreigner thinks of my actions.

Tamaki: [frowns] Now, now. He only wants you to survive. He wants all of us to survive.

At that moment, Pablo came out of the door. He looked as proud as I had ever seen him.

Pablo: [smiles widely] Rest soundly tonight, everyone! I can now guarantee no murders will take place on this floor!

Okita: [raises eyebrow, bites rose] Really now?

Pablo: [smiles widely] Of course! Everyone, come inside right now

The Security Room was unappealing to the eye, as expected from a place the public wasn’t supposed to visit. There was an old-looking computer, and sitting next to it was a contraption that vaguely resembled a printer. One wall of the room was lined with non-lethal weapons like batons and tasers, the others were full of shelves, probably with old security records in them. A fire extinguisher was also sitting in the corner.
Ryouta: [winces] H-how does this make us s-safe… There’s t-tons of w-weapons in here…

Pablo: [smiles widely] Not to worry! I’ve spent my time in here gluing all those to the walls! There’s no way they’ll harm us now!

Satoko: [smirk] Oh, now I get it. He’s high.

Hitomi: [points] Ooh, ooh! What’s this crusty computer for? Didja figure that out?

Pablo: [smiles widely] I’m glad you take interest in this, Hitomi! It’s a camera monitoring system, independent of the one Monobear uses. You see, once I press this button to activate the metal detectors, any time a metal object passes through one of the doors in the hallway, any cameras pointed at the door will take a photograph.

Hitomi: [grumbles, pouty face] That seems kind of limited and dumb…

Wataru: [crosses arms] It’s quite situational. It will help, certainly, but to say this floor is murderproof?

Pablo couldn’t hear them, or at least chose not to.

Pablo: [smiles widely] So, without further ado… [presses button]

Computer: [flickers on] *whirrrrr….* SECURITY SYSTEM ONLINE *beep*

Monobear: [walks into the room] Upupupupupu! How’s it hanging, bastards? Do you know where all the glue went?

When Monobear entered, I heard a shutter sound from out in the hallway. The printer device then came to life, and spat out a photograph of Monobear’s back into a clear chute. The photo slid down the chute into the back of a box with a strong padlock.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] I may have heard some doubts earlier, but as you can see, photos taken of intruders are immediately fed into this strongbox, with no hope of interception. [smiles widely] I have the key in a secure location, and I have also changed the password on the computer to something only I know, so there is no possible way the system could be tampered with.

Okita: [raises eyebrow, bites rose] Hm? What if someone messed with the cameras directly.

Monobear: [laughing] Upupupu! Those are museum property! Destroy them at your own risk!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Besides that, the computer manual informed me the cameras are equipped with a gyroscope. If it moves, all of the cameras are designed to go off.

So, there’s really no getting around them if you’re a potential murderer…

Wataru: [crosses arms] This is better than I expected, but it will not be enough.

Pablo: [smiles widely] Hohohohoho! Same to you, too, friend! [exits]

Tamaki: [frowns] Please don’t take that as an insult. [exits]


Satoko: [shrugs shoulders] Eh. He’s okay.

We all left and had dinner. I don’t think any of us really thought Pablo’s camera system was the boon he did. Maybe after all this time, he was desperate for a win. We all kind of were.

Even as our numbers dwindled, more and more people seemed Pablo. Wataru, who already had suppressed his ego to allow himself bebossed around by foreigner, was beginning to tire of Pablo’s leadership and failure to stop the murders.

It felt like we were further from stopping the murders than ever. I crawled into bed as soon as I
could, and forced myself asleep.

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: So, as it turns out, a lot of animals wanna get in on the despair game.

Monobear: I mean, I can’t blame them. It’s pretty good.

Monobear: I offer a 12 week crash course on despair, available to anyone.

Monobear: Students can skip every class and study independently…

Monobear: ...provided they show up for the final exam.

Monobear: Which is, of course, another mutual killing game! Upupupu!

Monobear: There’s no better way to learn than by doing!

[Note: I've included a rough image of the 4th floor to help you visualize the camera/door situation better. Black lines are walls, brown boxes are doors, and red boxes are cameras. The blue marks show which way the cameras are facing and what they are focused on.]
Chapter End Notes

Tensions are rising at the museum...

Have theories/criticism/questions/Free Time votes?

Comment below!
Chapter 4: The World At War - (Ab)normal Days 2

Chapter Notes

This is a large update, with plenty of intrigue. We also get to the preview lines this time.

Tamaki and Hitomi get free time this round.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4: The World at War — (Ab)normal Day 2

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today, Upupupu!

Takito: [yawns] Maybe I’m a little distracted, but I really haven’t been learning that much from spending entire days in this museum.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

I sat down to eat and have conversation with Kotori, Satoko, and Ryouta.
Ryouta: [sulks] How m-many more fl-floors could this museum have?

Kotori: [pensive pose] I don’t know. Most museums have around 4 floors, but the floors in this one seem kind of small. Maybe we could find a pamphlet with a map somewhere.

Satoko: [stern expression] Nyet. I checked on the second day. Everything like that had been removed.

Takito: So we’re in the dark, then…

Pablo: [clears throat, offscreen] Attention, Attention!

*We all turned to look at Pablo up on the podium.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] While no dangerous objects that can be made safe were found in the new floor, the crucial backbone of our new security, the camera system, is still at risk. [intense expression, makes fist] Why, someone could destroy it at any moment!

Okita: [raises eyebrow] Didn’t you go into a huge rave yesterday about how it was tamper-proof and would save us all?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Of course it is tamperproof! Once a photo has been printed, it is impossible to open the lockbox without my key! [nervous] However, the old computer that allows the system to run… that needs protection.

*Tamaki entered, wheeling in the chore bingo machine on a cart, like she usually did.*

Tamaki: [smiles] That’s why, we’re picking two people today to guard the Security Room.

Hitomi: [looking with back eye] Two?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yes, two. If there were one, the guard may try to destroy the computer
themselves. In this manner, the guards can hold each other accountable.

Okita: [scratches chin, mumbles] So, in other words, you don’t trust us anymore.

Tamaki: [smiles] Let’s get the balls rolling! [rolls machine] Our guards for today are… Wataru! Hitomi!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Wonderful. As soon as you are done with your breakfast, please proceed to the door outside the Security Room.

**Wataru stood up.**

Wataru: [crosses arms] No.

Pablo: [staggers back] No? [authoritative pose] This is your duty! Do you want people to die?

Wataru: [crosses arms] No, I do not. I also refuse your ‘chore’.

Hitomi: [crosses arms, pouty face] I’m not gonna do it, either! Your plan doesn’t do anything!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Doesn’t do anything…? It single handedly prevents murders from occurring on the new floor!

Okita: [points with rose] It doesn’t do shit, and you know it! I don’t care how many folks you rule over back on your shitty island, but I’m not following anyone who’s bullshitting me!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] La Espera is a wonderful place of freedom and prosperity! For you to slander and insubordinate against it is a crime against human potential itself!

Wataru: [crosses arms] If that is so, [scowls at Pablo] than I am also a criminal!
Hitomi: [pouty face, crosses arms] Me too! I won’t be bossed around without a reason!

Wataru: [crosses arms, slight smile] Understand, Pablo? It doesn't take a genius to see you never should have been trusted to be leader in the first place, Pablo. Starting now, I am establishing myself as the new leader of the Hope's Peak Survivors. The Gensai Temporary Most Loyal to Japan Micro-Republic!

Pablo: [staggers back] On whose authority?

Wataru: [crosses arms] My own, as well as on anyone else who wishes to join me.

Hitomi: [excited expression, hands up] I’m in!

Okita: [bites rose, uncertain] I’ll join, but that name… Can we just call it the “Alternative Wataru Group” or something…?

Wataru: [thinking pose] Hrmmm… “AWG”…? [makes fist, intense expression] I LOVE IT! Come, let the SHSL Pyrotechnist ignite the fire for rebellion in each of your cells, and burn away your ties to failure!

Hitomi: [excited expression, hands up] Oh boy, oh boy! Who wants to join us!

_Nearly everyone else was silent._

Takito: Uh, maybe later.

Hitomi: [smiles] That’s okay! [points to self with thumb] Just talk to one of us if you want to join!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Seconded. You will soon come to realize, as have I, that there is no way to make this museum safe, nor is there a way to ‘wait out’ Monobear. [makes fist, intense expression] The only way out is a concentrated escape effort, and the more people involved, the faster an escape will be found!
Okita: [points with rose] The clock’s ticking. The longer you take to realize Pablo won’t save you, the more likely we’ll be reading a Monobear File about you. [smiles, bites rose] That’s not a threat, just a prediction.

*The three of them left. Before that moment, I never would thought they would get along with each other.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Escape… If those fools don’t get themselves killed accidentally breaking one of Monobear’s rules, they’ll enable another killing to happen.

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh dear. This isn’t good.

Pablo: [while walking away] I give all of my effort, all of my skill and passion, all of my ability and… [trails off into silence]

Tamaki: [frowns] Please excuse us.

*The last thing we need right now is a fracture. I hope this doesn’t escalate to where I think it could…*

Ryouta: [winces] Ooogg… Wh-what’s going to happen now?

Satoko: [adjusts glasses] I suppose Pablo’s just going to guard the security room himself.

Kotori: [frowns] We should stay away from him today. It’s probably a bad idea to go after Wataru, too.

Takito: Yeah… Who knows? Maybe this will all just fizzle out.

*[FREE TIME BEGINS]*

*[Move to 4th Floor]*

*[Talk to Hitomi]*
Hitomi: [heroic pose] Hey there, sidekick! Did you come to hang out?

*I decided to spend some time with Hitomi.*

Takito: So Hitomi, uh, how’s your life been?

Hitomi: [facing away, eye open] Well, I’m stuck in this museum for a while, but other than that it’s pretty okay.

*Is it impolite to ask about it?*

...

*Nah, I don’t think she would mind.*

Takito: Hitomi, what’s it like looking out all of your eyes at once?

Hitomi: [scratches head] Well, it isn’t really fun. [facing forward, using front eyes] I’m kinda looking at two completely different images at once, and they sorta blend together, you know?

*I don’t really ‘know’...*

Hitomi: [bites lip] Even though all my eyes are 20/20, I usually get a headache if I try using them all for more than a few minutes. It’s kind of embarrassing when it involves my special talent, you know?

*Embarrassment. That I know.*

Hitomi: [scratches head] Since I only have depth perception in the front, there’s also this REALLY weird thingie where something from my back gets almost, like, “textured” onto a shape I’m seeing with my front. [touching temples] It’s like, one of those puzzles where you have to get your eyes in just the right position to see this 3D outline, but if you don’t it’s just colors… [bites lip] You’ve
completely lost me, haven’t you?

Takito: No, no, I haven’t. You’re talking about a….

(“...stereoscope.” / “...visuaplexus.”/”...magic eye.”)

~~~~~

Takito: You’re talking about a magic eye puzzle, aren’t you?

Hitomi: [hands up] Yeah, yeah. Now you get it!

Takito: So, erm, Hitomi?

Hitomi: [facing away, eye open] Oooooh, what is it?

Takito: What do I look like with all your eyes open?

Hitomi: [facing forward] Hmmm… You look cubist.

Takito: Cubist?

Hitomi: [pouty face] You know… All sharp cornered and stuff.

*I don’t think even you know what you meant, Hitomi.*
As I was entering, I wondered if the members of the newly formed AWG would risk a confrontation to stop to eat. I couldn’t see them as I sat down, so I assumed they hadn’t. Then Okita entered.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] What are you doing here?

Okita: [bites rose, smug smile] Getting food. What else would I be doing? You aren’t gonna starve us, now are you?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No, I will not. Continue.

Okita entered the kitchen, then later returned.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That’s a large amount of food you have there.

Okita: [bites rose] ‘Course it is. It’s for three people.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] None of you are eating lunch here?

Okita: [bites rose, smug smile] Nah. [points with rose] Everyone’s afraid you’ll lecture them. Maybe we’ll come back for dinner though.

Pablo: [crosses arms] Hmph.

*Okita exited, and Pablo sat down, disgruntled. When I turned to face my food again, however, Tamaki and Kotori were sitting across from me, and both their faces looked worried.*

Kotori: [distraught] Takito… There’s something I need to tell you.

Tamaki: [frowns] Myself as well.

Takito: Okay. What is it?

Kotori: [looks at Tamaki] We should talk privately about this.

Tamaki: [frowns] My concern is also something best discussed privately.

*I waited until after lunch, and walked into my room. Tamaki wanted to speak first.*

Tamaki: [frowns] Takito, I need you to try to stop people from joining Wataru’s group thing.

Takito: Huh? Why me?

Tamaki: [frowns] Pablo, as you may have surmised, hasn’t been taking the last few deaths well. He feels as though he has very little control over anyone’s survival, and he’s become desperate.

*Hmm. Maybe all the confidence in the security system is him trying to convince himself that he’s effective.*
Tamaki: [frowns] After today’s defections, he’s going through all sorts of ranges of emotions to try and find one that will help him. In public, he puts on a brave face, but in private, he’s not well.

Takito: So if I help keep Wataru’s group from growing, he’ll feel better?

Tamaki: [frowns] It’s not about feeling better. It’s just if he continues like this, I don’t know if I can predict what he’ll do anymore. [solemn expression] And if I can’t predict him, I won’t be able to predict anything in this museum.

Takito: Okay. I’ll, uh, try.

I didn’t really feel like stopping Wataru’s group. I wasn’t even sure if I could. Even though Pablo’s reputation was steadily dropping, I wasn’t sure I had much more persuasive power than he did.

Tamaki: [bows] Thank you dearly.

Tamaki exited. Kotori came in soon after, but instead of coming to me, first waited until Tamaki had left the Dorm Hall.

Kotori: [distraught] Okay, she’s gone. Takito, I saw something very serious.

Kotori wouldn’t lie to me about something like this.

Takito: C’mon, what is it?

[Camera cuts to an image of Tamaki attempting to sneakily exit Pablo’s room.]

Kotori: I was walking down the hall, when I saw Tamaki alone. She was exiting Pablo’s room, and it didn’t look like she had anything with her. It at looked very suspicious.
Takito: Are you sure she hadn’t pocketed whatever she was trying to get?

Kotori: Maybe, but that’s not the scary thing I saw. As she was leaving the Dorm Hall…

[Camera cuts to an image of Kotori, behind a corner, looking at Tamaki bend over to pick something up]

Kotori: A knife fell out of Tamaki’s skirt. She picked it up very quickly, and then looked around to see if anyone saw her.

Takito: And you didn’t get caught?

[Camera returns to Kotori in Takito’s room]

Kotori: [sighs] No, thank goodness. But I think Tamaki’s up to something.

*The knife probably isn’t for Pablo… Why would Tamaki have it?*

Takito: I take it this wasn’t some butter knife, either.

Kotori: [distraught] I wish. It looked small, slender, and made for self-defense. It definitely wasn’t one of knives Monobear gave us, and it definitely wasn’t for food.

*So Tamaki’s been carrying a deadly weapon with her since who knows when… Her conversation just now; was she trying to play me?*

Takito: I’ll keep an eye on her.

Kotori: [frowns] Wait, aren’t you going to tell Pablo, or anyone?

Takito: I don’t know if that’s a good idea. If she’s confronted about it, she may do something drastic.
We should act normal until we can ask her safely.

Kotori: [nods head] Okay, but I have my doubts. Hiding a weapon can’t be good…

*Kotori left my room and continued on her way. I went outside into the Dorm Hall to check and see if Tamaki or anyone else had been listening in.*

Whew… All clear. After hearing about this, I think I better try to just leave Wataru’s recruitment drive alone. I don’t think he’ll get many more takers anyway.

[FREE TIME BEGINS]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

[Move to Kitchen]

[Talk to Tamaki]

Tamaki: [smiles] Hello Takito. If you haven’t heard, I’m very skilled at making time shared worthwhile.

*I decided to spend some time with Tamaki.*

Tamaki: [smiles] Takito! Please, try some of my deviled eggs.

*I took and ate one.*

Takito: Delicious! No wonder you’re the SHSL Hostess.
Tamaki: [smiles] Well, that, and my over 350 client organizations a year.

Takito: 350? So you’re hosting an event almost every night? *That’s pretty dedicated.*

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, sometimes I take mid-day jobs as well. And it’s not really that big compared to all the jobs I’m offered. That’s somewhere around 1000.

*If I had coffee, I’d be spitting it out right now.*

Takito: You only have a 35% acceptance rate?!

Tamaki: [smiles] Of course. I can’t work for just anyone.

Takito: Well, I mean that makes sense, but I always thought most businesses have an acceptance rate around 90%.

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, most businesses are only after profit. I have more than enough money to live comfortably, so I have other primary considerations.

Takito: Like what?

Tamaki: [smiles] First of all, there must be a minimum head count at your event. I do not work for fewer than 15 people. Secondly, while I do allow events for young children, I am not a babysitter. I require at least a 1 to 5 parent to child ratio. Lastly, and most importantly, I require strict adherence to the given theme. [retrieves plate of pretzels] A fun party event is fun. [retrieves plate of lobster] A formal event is formal.

Takito: Yeah… I think I get it. Do you think I could hire you for my graduation ceremony, or something?

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, let’s see. A graduation is a formal event. How formal are you willing to be?
Takito: I’m super formal! I mean, I know where all the forks go. The salad fork…

("...is on the far left." / "...is above the plate." / "...is on the far right.")

~~~~~

10:123123213123212312131231231

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Takito: The salad fork is on the far left.

Tamaki: [giggles, smiles] Well, you seem very formal. But in reality, I would already be doing an event for the graduating class of Hope’s Peak. I could make some recommendations for you, however.

Well, it’s not like I really needed her skills anyway.

Takito: How much is Hope’s Peak paying you, then?

Tamaki: [smiles] Nothing. Well, aside from the fact it’s tuition free, and the SHSL Host or Hostess has traditionally done such an event.

Takito: Nothing? So you’re just doing this because of customs?

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, customs and connections. It’s very common for graduates and the hostess of their graduating party to have storied business relationships.

Takito: So maybe I have chance to book you after all…

Tamaki: [smiles] Maybe you do. [waves] See you!
At dinner that night, Wataru and his AWG members had shown up, just as Okita had said they might. They were sitting by themselves as expected, and Wataru was eyeing the door, expecting Pablo’s entrance any moment now. I took my seat where I could get a good view of both Wataru and the door.

Pablo: [opens door, authoritative pose] Good evening.

Pablo sat down as soon as he could, not even going for food. He looked ragged and tired, but very much didn’t want to.

Satoko: [tilts head and stares] What’s up with him?

Ryouta: [looks down] I s-saw him earlier today. H-he’s been standing up straight in front of the security room all d-day.

No wonder he looks like he’ll give out. My legs would give out if I had to stand up five hours straight.

Takito: This is probably a good thing. If he’s too tired to stand, he’s too tired to fight with Wataru.

We continued watching. Strangely, Pablo seemed a sort of happy-tired, like someone fresh out of a sauna or hot spring. He turned to face Wataru.

Pablo: [relaxed, smiles widely] Ah, Wataru, I’m glad to see you’ve come to your senses.

Wataru: [looks down, grave expression] Come to my senses? I do not understand.
Uh-oh.

Pablo: [relaxed, smiles widely] I’m very pleased to see you’ve rejoined all of us, and stopped this splinter group nonsense.

Wataru: [chuckles] Oh, Pablo. We’re only here for food. We haven’t stopped anything.

Pablo: [eyes wide open] Huh? You’re just here to take food.

Hitomi: [pouty face, crosses arms] You aren’t gonna stop us, are you? I mean, that’d be super mean!

Okita: [bites rose, smug smile] Don’t worry, he didn’t stop me when I got lunch. [shrugs shoulders] Besides, if any of us starve, it might count as him murdering us. And we all know he won’t have that…

Pablo: [looks down, seething] Grrr….

Wataru: [stands up] I’m just about finished here, anyway.

Hitomi: [waves, excited expression] See ya’ll!

Okita: [bites rose] Parting is such sweet sorrow… Well, not when it comes to you, Pablo.

Pablo: [stands up, authoritative pose] Wait! Stop right there!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Hm?

Pablo: [flips open watch] Forget about this, did you? I had half-forgotten it myself.

...The nuclear watch!
Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] You wouldn’t! You can’t!

Hitomi: [cries] Eep!

Pablo: [authoritative pose, hand over button] It is absolutely imperative to our survival that we have your cooperation. I do not like to use such forceful measures, but the time has come for such an approach.

Wataru: [looks down, grave expression] … Heh. I should’ve done this earlier, admittedly.

*While everyone else was frozen with shock, Wataru walked slowly but purposefully toward Pablo.*

Pablo: [staggers back] Stop that! Don’t you know what this is?!

*Without hesitating, Wataru swept Pablo’s weakened and shaky legs, then took ahold of the arm with the nuclear watch. Tamaki ran over, and within the blink of an eye had a fork on Wataru’s carotid.*

Tamaki: [blank stare] That watch has the capability to destroy us all. Stop what you are doing.

Wataru: [grave expression] I know. I’m no stranger to electronics. It took me some time, but I finally recognized this model. And this model… has no button.

*Quickly and decisively, Wataru popped the supposed “nuclear” button off of Pablo’s watch, leaving a smooth metallic surface. Okita moved in and picked it up.*

Okita: [scratches chin, bites rose] Whaddya know, there’s no wires, or electrodes or anything. It’s just plastic.

Ryouta: [shaking, holds camera] Th-th-this wh-whole t-time… [faints]
Kotori: [sweating] So, that watch… It did nothing?

Wataru released Pablo.

Wataru: [shakes head, crossed arms] No.

Pablo: [frowns, slumped over] The watch really is connected to nuclear missiles. But the truth is, it only signals to launch at my location if it can no longer detect my heartbeat.

Satoko: [grits teeth, fists up] ¡Pensé que iba a morir! You monster!

Pablo: [frowns, slumped over] I wanted to ensure everyone would stick my plan, and not work against one another! That was all!

Satoko: [grits teeth, fists up] I wasn’t talking to you, Pablo.

Pablo: [staggers back] Huh?

Satoko: [grits teeth, fists up] You knew all this time, and said nothing, Wataru! And then, when finally do tell us, you tell us like this!

Wataru: [crosses arms] I regret that. But what’s done is done.

Satoko: [scowling] Fuck you!

Wataru and the rest of the AWG ignored Satoko and left. Pablo stood around awkwardly for a while, then went into the kitchen, presumably to eat alone. Tamaki followed him, and Kotori sat closer to the rest of us.

Kotori: [distraught] Hey, Takito.
Takito: Yeah?

Kotori: [distraught] Tamaki sure seemed quick to get at Wataru. If we’re ever going to confront her, we need more people.

Takito: So, you want to tell Ryouta and Satoko?

Ryouta: [holds camera] Tell us wh-what?

Satoko: [scowls] If you haven’t noticed, I’m not in the mood to kept out of any more loops. Niha min bêjin.

*We explained what Kotori saw with Tamaki earlier.*

Satoko: [scowls] Gah… Everyone’s keeping secrets.

Ryouta: [trembling] Oogh… What do we even do about it?

Takito: Once we have enough people, we confront her about it, I guess. Maybe we could get more information about why she’s carrying that knife around.

Kotori: [pensive pose] I’d like to, but I can’t just request a chance to see her use it.

Ryouta: [holds camera, looks around] M-maybe, if we search at n-night…

Satoko: [twiddles with pencil in hair] Yes, yes. She might think she’s safer at nighttime. If we stay up, we might be able to nab her. It’s the best idea we’ve got.

Kotori: [nods] Good. We’ll hide in groups of two tonight; two by her dorm door, and two behind the help desk in the foyer.
Takito: Got it. I’ll go with Satoko in the foyer.

*I wasn’t in the mood to stay up, but something told me it would mean life or death. The four of us acted natural until Pablo and Tamaki were in their rooms, and then split off into our pairs. Satoko and I waited behind the help desk. It was going okay, by which I mean nothing was happening, for about an hour.*

Satoko: [hand on head] Gehh… tão… cansado…

Takito: That means you’re sleepy, right?

Satoko: [neutral expression] Você sabe português?

Takito: Uh… No. I was using context clues, like your face.

Satoko: [eyes wide open, whispering] I hear someone walking! Get down!

...Tamaki!

*We both waited for the step noises to stop, then peered over the help desk to see who it was.*

...Monobear?

*Monobear was standing around, his back to us.*

Monobear: [neutral] Oh, what a long day of despair! Upupupupu! With the amount of discord in the group, there’s bound to be a murder soon! Well, I better take my snooze for a while…

*Monobear sat down, limp, and made a strange beeping jingle I hadn’t heard before.*

Satoko: [neutral expression] I’m gonna check it out.
Takito: Satoko, wait!

*It was no use. She went up to Monobear and stared at him. I followed, nervously.*

Takito: I really don’t think this is a good idea.

Satoko: [smirks] Calm down, he’s completely powered off.

*I felt his paw. It was cold, like she said.*

Takito: Do you we could destroy him here and now?

Satoko: [smirks] Worth a shot.

*Satoko stepped back and prepared for a running kick. But right as she her foot was about to land, the beeping jingle started up again.*

Satoko: [staggers back] Woah!

Monobear: [blushing] Hi, Hello, Hello! Monobear welcomes you to the wee hours of the night.

Takito: What was that about, Monobear?

Monobear: [blushing] Monobear does not know what you mean. [neutral] What Monobear knows is despair, nothing else. [tilts head] But Monobear would like to know what you two are doing so late at night. Seems super duper fantastic for despair, I’m sure!

Takito: Uh, yeah…
Satoko: [twiddles with pencil in hair] This is weirding me out. Let’s go to bed already.

Takito: Yeah, we have to go sleep now…

Monobear: [crying] Monobear wants to be friends! Ultra turbo crushing despair friends, but still friends! Come on, give Monobear a chance and all your effort for friendship!

*The two of us hurried back to the dorms. Something about that weird Monobear was more unnerving than the regular one. We told Ryouta and Kotori what we saw, and all of us decided to give up on Tamaki for the night.*

*As I thought of the many things threatening to bring about new body, I felt my eyelids grow heavy, and drifted off to sleep…*

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: A murder–suicide is an act in which an individual kills one or more other persons…

Monobear: …immediately before or at the same time as killing oneself.

Monobear: The combination of murder and suicide can take various forms, often linked to the first form:

Monobear: Murder linked with suicide of a mentally unstable person with a homicidal ideation;

Monobear: Murder which entails suicide, such as suicide bombing or driving a car with one or more passenger(s) over a precipice;

Monobear: Suicide after murder to escape state punishment(s);

Monobear: Suicide after murder as a form of self-punishment due to guilt;
Monobear: Suicide after (or before) murder by proxy;

Monobear: Suicide after or during murder inflicted by others;

Monobear: Murder to receive a death sentence willfully;

Monobear: Joint suicide in the form of killing the other with consent, and then killing oneself;

Monobear: Murder before suicide with the intent of preventing future pain and suffering of others including family members and oneself, such as a parent killing their children before ending their own life;

Monobear: Suicide-lawful killing has three conceivable forms:

Monobear: To murder one's assailant through proportionate self-defense killing oneself in the process;

Monobear: Lawful killing to prevent an individual from causing harm to others, in so doing killing oneself;

Monobear: Lawful killing indirectly resulting in or contributing to suicide.

Monobear: Many spree killings have ended in suicide, such as in many school shootings.

Monobear: Some cases of religiously-motivated suicides may also involve murder.

Monobear: All categorization amounts to forming somewhat arbitrary distinctions where relating to intention in the case of psychosis, where the intention(s) is/are more likely than not to be irrational.

Monobear: Ascertaining the legal intention (mens rea) is inapplicable to cases properly categorized as insanity.
The wheels are coming off Pablo's plans pretty fast now... And what's up with that Monobear?

Comments, theories, and Free Time Votes welcome below!
Chapter 4: The World at War - (Ab)normal Days 3

Chapter Notes

In this update, Monobear introduces a sinister new motive...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 4: The World at War — (Ab)normal Day 3

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today, Upupupu!

Gurgh… I suppose this how staying up late makes you feel.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

I sat down with Kotori, Ryouta, and Satoko for breakfast, which was about as normal as it could be. I looked around to get some handle on the politics going on. Wataru’s group was sitting very far away from Pablo and Tamaki, with the two sides occasionally glancing to see if the other was spying on them. I wondered to myself if we were supposed to be neutral, and if that was a good thing.

Ryouta: [looks around nervously] Do you think we should tell the others about what M-monobear did last night?
Kotori: [pensive pose] Probably. If someone else knows something that could help us escape, this could mean something to them.

Takito: I don’t know… I think if Pablo or Wataru caught on to something like this right now, they might do something rash.

Satoko: [scowls] I know Wataru would definitely screw it up. That overconfidence will kill us all any day now.

We debated telling the others some more, taking care that they wouldn’t overhear us. Before I knew it, breakfast was over, and Tamaki was wheeling out the chore machine.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] With a new day comes new security room guards. Tamaki, if you will.

Tamaki: [smiles] Certainly. 

Tamaki wheeled the machine until two balls came out.

Tamaki: [smiles] What a surprise! Hitomi and Wataru again today!

Wataru: [stern expression] …

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Go ahead, finish your meal.

Hitomi: [pouty face] …

Tamaki: [frowns] …

Okita: [bites rose, furrows brow] You really think any of us are going to do that?

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Well… [authoritative pose] It is very important to the safety of our group!
Hitomi: [pouty face] We’re doing something extra important today, and we don’t have time for that.

Wataru: [crosses arms] I find it difficult to believe this “surprise” is a coincidence. Not that it matters. None of us are guarding that room.

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] Please, don’t! I…

Tamaki: [frowns] Please calm down Pablo. In your heart, I don’t think you trust them to do represent you in their work anyway.

Pablo: [looks down, frowns] Hmm… You may be correct.

Tamaki: [smiles] Please, allow me to guard the security room today.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That seems to be the best.

He sure got over that quick…

Ryouta: [holds camera, sweating, whispering] T-takito… If sh-she is alone near that room, things could get b-bad…

Satoko: [scowls, whispering] Real bad.

Kotori: [frowns, whispering] We can’t afford to alert her now, though. If Pablo thinks he can’t trust Tamaki, that could also be really bad.

I could tell from the looks on Ryouta and Satoko’s faces they weren’t comforted by Kotori’s words.

Takito: [whispering] I’ll go up there and take a look at what she’s doing sometime today. You two could go too, if you want.
Satoko: [neutral, whispering] Byddaf yn mynd. I can keep an eye on her when you aren’t there.

Ryouta: [holds camera, whispering] I’ll be up there as well. It’s b-better if she can’t catch us alone.

Takito: [whispering] Cool.

_Glad that’s taken care of. I wonder what the others are doing…_

Wataru: [crosses arms] I am finished. When you are ready to meet me, do so at the meeting place we discussed earlier.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Wait! What is this meeting place? What is this extra important something you are doing?

Wataru: [crosses arms] We have no interest in telling you.

Hitomi: [turns around, opens back eye] I mean, Wataru and I don’t even know what the thing is yet!

Okita: [bites rose, furrows brow] Hitomi!

Hitomi: [wincles] Ooops! Sorry!

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] Okita! You aren’t planning to murder them, are you?

Okita: [bites rose, furrows brow] Of fucking course not! Especially not now!

Wataru: [crosses arms] I trust Okita much more than you, Pablo.

_The AWG members left the cafeteria and went to their meeting place, leaving Pablo with nothing._
Pablo: [authoritative pose] You four! Are you hiding secrets from me?

Takito: Um, no…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Excellent! Secrecy breeds murder, even outside of our predicament! Remember that!

*Pablo marched off, probably trying to find the secret Meeting Place of the AWG. I decided I would wait a little bit before checking on Tamaki, but Ryouta and Satoko didn’t. Kotori went off to do her own thing. In the meantime, I had some time to kill.*

**[FREE TIME START]**

[Move to 4th Floor]

[Move to Inventions Room]

[Talk to Satoko]

Satoko: [twiddles pencil in hair] Bonjur, Takito. Is there something you want from me?

*I decided to spend some time with Satoko.*

Takito: You sure know a lot of languages, huh?

Satoko: [smirks] Bet in vita tua est.

Takito: I’ll take that as a yes. What kind of languages don’t you know?
Satoko: [twiddles with pencil in hair] Mostly the dead ones, you know, the ones people don’t speak anymore. I still know quite a few of the dead ones, too, though.

Takito: Like Latin?

Satoko: [points with pencil] I just spoke to you in Latin!

Takito: Really? Sorry, I wouldn’t know.

Satoko: [chuckles] Bene est.

Takito: I take it that’s Latin again. Is that your favorite language?

Satoko: [shakes head] Nein. That would be Esperanto.

Takito: Esperanto? It sounds familiar, but my memory’s kinda fuzzy on it… That’s the one from…

(“...Estonia.” / “...Chile.” / “...Uruguay.” / “...Nowhere.”)

~~~~~

Takito: Now I remember! Esperanto was invented by someone, wasn’t it? So, you really think invented languages are the best?

Satoko: [shakes head] Ne. Well, all language is invented. [twiddles with pencil in hair] I just like Esperanto for what it represents. It was invented to be the universal language.
Takito: A universal language? Part of that seems weird.

Satoko: [smirks] Imagine it, though! A world without the barrier of language, without misunderstanding! Quelle est la beauté!

Takito: Well, it sounds nice, but wouldn’t put you out of a job? Not to mention, a lot of people would become detached from their cultures…

Satoko: [smirks] Well, my job would just become re-attaching them! I would translate the texts of the old world, and show them the past!

*All by herself?*

Takito: Well, that’s certainly one way to utopia, I guess.

Satoko: [neutral expression] ...But I won’t kid myself, I do wish Esperanto was more like Japanese.

Takito: I’d like that too.

*Huh. It seems even hundreds of languages later, she’s still the most fluent with her first.*

[FREE TIME ENDS]

*Now seems like a good enough time to check on Tamaki.*

[Move to Political Hall]

*I stared at Tamaki for a few minutes from the other end of the hall, I don’t when she noticed me, but.*
Tamaki: [smiles] Hello there, Takito. Is there something you would like to talk about.

Takito: No… Just keep doing what you’re doing.

*I tried to look to see if Tamaki seemed disappointed or upset because I had showed up, but her face was an impenetrable castle of calm.*

Tamaki: [smiles] You don’t have to watch from so far away, you know.

Takito: That’s okay. I’ll stay here.

*Gah! Whatever she wanted to do, if she wanted to do something, she’s probably done it by now. I’ll just have to check on what Ryouta and Satoko have seen later.*

*I waited until Tamaki looked away, and then turned to leave, but suddenly…*

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: I have a special announcement in the foyer in ten minutes! Don’t be late, or else! Upupupupu!

*It looked like talking with those two would have to wait.*

[Move to 1st Floor]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

*I was the last person there, though I was also originally the farthest, so it made sense.*
Takito: Did I miss anything?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No. I was the first here. Everything is exactly as I have found it.

Hitomi: [hands on hips] He had just found us at our secret meeting place when Monobear rang the announcements. You should’ve seen how fast he can run!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Of course I can run fast! If you can’t run quickly, you will lose the respect of your military!

While Pablo and the AWG were bantering, I turned to look at what I think was set up by Monobear.

There was a small stage with black curtains, and wooden planks on the sides with the kanji for words like “loyalty”, “honor”, “sacrifice”, “respect”, and other words that give the vague impression of seriousness and dedication.

Kotori: [pensive pose] What do you this is about?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If I had to guess, Monobear will attempt to persuade all of us to commit murder.

Wataru: [crosses arms] For the first time in a long time, you are probably correct.

Okita: [points with rose] Woah, woah, woah! It’s starting!

I followed Okita’s rose back to the little stage, and saw Monobear sitting in front of a bamboo screen, with a traditional Japanese black robe on. I looked close, and thought I could see tattoo-like markings on his chest, just barely poking out from under his robe. Was this a different Monobear?

Monobear: …
We all sat in silence and nervousness for a few minutes.

Satoko: [fiddling with pencil in hair] …

Monobear: …

Satoko: [scowls] Axaftin, xemgîn bike! What did you call us here for?

Monobear: …

Satoko: [scowls] Thuaj dicka!

Monobear: … Patience.

Okita: [bites rose, furrows brow] We’ve been pretty patient already.

Monobear: I am… a powerful bear. My words are not to be thrown around like shopping bags.

Wataru: [crosses arms] We’ve all seen your power firsthand, believe me. You could at least humor us by explaining your new clothes.

Monobear: …My clothes? …That is simple. [red eye shines] I, Monobear… Am now yakuza.

Pablo: [thinking pose] Ah, so this ordeal has been gang related?
Monobear: Upu.. Upu.. Upu.. There is no yakuza family involved here… Or at least, there wasn’t… I have started my own organization.

Tamaki: [frowns] That is unfortunate.

Monobear: Upu.. Upu.. Upu.. Oh, it is very fortunate, especially for you… [red eye shines] All of you are now my underlings!

Ryouta: [winces] N-no, please… Tattoo needles look p-painful…

Monobear: ...Calm, weak one. Tattoos will not be necessary… What is necessary… Is sacrifice… and devotion.

Okita: [bites rose, smirk] Yeah, I don’t think we’re ever liking you.

Monobear: Upu.. Upu.. Upu.. I don’t need to be liked… I need only be respected… You lot… You dishonor the Monobear name by refusing to kill… I demand reparations… I demand… [red eye shines] ...SACRIFICE!

Kotori: [frowns] Sacrifice…?

Monobear: Yes…

_The curtains closed over Monobear again, and after a few seconds, he reappeared with a miniature guillotine, with a hole just large enough for a large apple._

Monobear: I have no need… for disloyal underlings. ...You must prove your devotion to despair. I want sacrifice… I want… FINGERS.

Takito: You want us to cut off our fingers?! That blade looks old and rusty…

Monobear: Upu.. Upu.. Upu.. Of course… You must prove your devotion… to your lord… I will
check the collections bowl… at 5 pm every day… If there is not a new finger… I will dispose of my disloyal underlings…

Pablo: [staggers back] Disgusting! We’ve smelt the stench of rotting flesh enough for our lives.

Wataru: [crosses arms] Agreed, once more.

Monobear: Upu.. Upu.. Upu.. You will come to see… who demands your respect… Upu.. Upu.. Upu..

Monobear kept on laughing until the curtain closed, then stopped. The curtain eventually opened again, with no Monobear. The finger guillotine sat ominously in the stage’s center.

Satoko: [neutral expression] So, who’s going to do it?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] We don’t need to decide now. We have some time until 5 pm.

Wataru: [crosses arms] Hitomi, Okita! If either of you wish to do this, speak to me.

Everyone went their separate ways. I walked up to the finger guillotine. I thought about it, but the blade looked pretty rusty. I wasn’t brave enough.

I decided to wait around a bit for someone else to do it first.

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to 2nd Floor]

[Move to Cleaning Closet]

[Talk to Okita]
Okita: [bites rose, smirk] Well, if it isn’t Takito. Looking to be lucky in love?

I decided to spend some time with Okita.

Okita: [points with rose] Check it out, Takito. I found this box of fragrances earlier.

Takito: You mean perfumes?

Okita: [wags finger] No, no, no! I wouldn’t be interested in perfumes! I’m interested in manly colognes!

Takito: I don’t really know about colognes. What’s the difference between them and a perfume, anyway?

Okita: [bites rose, smirk] I don’t know, and I don’t care. What I do care about is a scent pleasing to the noses of fair ladies.

Okita opened the fragrance box. Several atomizers and a pamphlet was inside.

Okita: [bites rose, scratches chin] Now, you see, the best scent to use depends on who you’re trying to get with. You want something that’ll make her feel at home, in familiar—

Takito: Yeah, I’m not really in the dating game right now, Okita.

Okita: [points with rose, smug grin] Now, now. You could also use some of this for a job interview.

Takito: ...Okay? Continue.

Okita: [bites rose, scratches chin] If possible, do some research on the, uh, interviewer beforehand. You can use perfume if you want, but nothing that’s obviously perfume, and if they ask you, just say it’s cologne. Trust me, if you tell them you chose Lily Blossom scent, it doesn’t matter how much you’ve applied the Smcharvelt Friedrickdorf Method, it—
Takito: I don’t think this about jobs anymore. *Smcharvelt Friedrickdorf? Sounds like the villain in a steampunk movie*…

Okita: [bites rose, furrows brow] Well then, I suppose I’ll just keep my fragrance expertise to myself.

*Okita began picking up the atomizers, and sniffing them, until eventually he found one labelled ‘E6’.*

Okita: [bites rose, smirk] Here we are! A nice, neutral scent for whatever the occasion!

*Didn’t he just say you had to specialize…?*

Okita: [points with rose, smug grin] Please, Takito, have a sniff.

*The fragrance smelled like soap, the generic white kind. It was kind of overwhelming.*

Takito: This is a little strong? Are you sure it’s even cologne, and not some sort of air freshener?

Okita: [bites rose, furrows brow] Of course it’s cologne! It’s got that nice neutral, unassuming scent.

Takito: I’ll check the pamphlet, just to be sure… it’s E6, right?

Okita: [bites rose, smug grin] Yes, E6! Everywhere, Everytime, Everyplace, Everybody, Everyday, Everyone!

Takito: Well, if I’m reading this right, it doesn’t appear to be cologne.

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Woah, woah, it isn’t?
Takito: Yeah, well apparently the distinction between cologne and perfume is…

(“...location manufactured.”/ “...concentration.”/”...base fluid.”)

Takito: It’s the concentration of ‘aromatic compounds’. Cologne is much less concentrated than perfume.

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Hold on a second! What is this then? Cologne or Perfume?

Takito: Well, this is actually an in-between called “Eau de Toilette”.

Okita: [holds rose, nervous sweating] Aw man, you mean this is used to make bathrooms not smell like shit?!

Takito: I don’t really know if that’s true. But, if it really smells nice, and you like it…

Okita: [bites rose, rose droops] I don’t think I can impress a girl with toilet spray…

Takito: Well, I heard the SHSL Plumber is a girl. Maybe you could impress her…

Okita: [bites rose, rose droops] Thanks for the advice, but I think I’ll just keep searching…

Takito: [sighs] You can lead a horse to water, or watch while he goes up to it, but you can’t make him spray himself.
...Yeah, that’s a good idiom.

[FREE TIME ENDS]

It’s been a while, hasn’t it… Maybe I should check on that finger guillotine.

[Move to 1st Floor]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

There it is…

I checked the “collections bowl” Monobear had left. It was still empty. Nervously, I checked the clock. It read 4:00.

An hour left, and nobody’s done it yet. Should I…?

...

No, not now. I should probably tell Pablo it’s time to start considering who’s going to do this… He’s probably in the cafeteria.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

Pablo was sitting alone, concentrating so hard it looked like he would pass out.
Takito: Pablo?

Pablo: [intense expression] …

Takito: Pablo?

Pablo: [shakes head] My apologies. [authoritative pose] I was considering the finger sacrifice we have been forced into.

Takito: Is there someone you want to give up their finger?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] No, no, of course not. Commanding someone else to give up their finger would only be asking for more insubordination. I’m thinking about what Monobear wants with this scheme.

Takito: Well, doesn’t he want us to kill each other? That’s what he always wants.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I know he wants us to kill, but something about this seems uncharacteristically weak.

Takito: Wait, I don’t think cutting off fingers is weak. You can’t get them back.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Possibly, but at one finger per day, it will be several days before we run out of pinky fingers, and people making real sacrifices to their dexterity. Of course, I am fully prepared to prevent murders up until that point, but…

Takito: You don’t Monobear will be that patient. Got it.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Correct. I believe this is phase one of a stronger motivator to kill.

_Pablo’s been worrisome lately, but when it comes to this, he seems pretty persuasive…_
Takito: What are we going to do about today, then? Somebody still needs to give up a finger.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I will, of course. I consider it my ticket back to respect with Wataru and his associates!

Takito: Well, I can say it isn’t a little bit impressive.

Pablo: [smiles widely] Exactly! Now, before I go out there, could you please bring along—

Hitomi: [facing away, back eye open] Too late!

Pablo: [staggers back] Don’t do that!

Hitomi: [faces forward, pouty face, crosses arms] If I didn’t tell you, you would’ve cut off your finger for nothing!

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Huh?

Hitomi: [raises hands] Take a look!

*In the time we had been talking, Hitomi had apparently cut off her finger closest to the pinky on her right hand. The wound was entirely fresh.*

Hitomi: [hands raised, smiles] It doesn’t hurt nearly as much as you’d think. Or maybe that’s just my mutant nerves.

Pablo: [grits teeth, sweating] Hitomi! Keep that hand up in the air!

Hitomi: [tilts head] Heh?
Pablo: [grits teeth, sweating] Takito! Take this!

*Pablo tossed me a key.*

Pablo: [grits teeth, sweating] I spent this afternoon making a first-aid lockbox in the kitchen. Get it in here, and open it. I’ll make sure Hitomi doesn’t risk anymore chance of infection.

*I ran in and did as he asked. The box was heavier than I expected.*

Pablo: [grits teeth, sweating] Quickly! Open it! Get the rubbing alcohol, then the antibiotic, then the gauze!

*I opened one of the glass bottles of rubbing alcohol, and grabbed some antibiotic gel and gauze for Pablo. Within a few minutes, he had tied a small bandage around the nub when Hitomi’s finger used to be.*

Hitomi: [crosses arms, pouty face] Geez, what’s the big deal… I get cut all the time for lab samples. I heal up just fine, and they never use any bandages!

Takito: Are you sure they aren’t just studying you when they do that?

Hitomi: [droops] Oh… Maybe they are…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] By cutting off your finger, you had severed an artery, Hitomi. If you had gotten infected, or bled out, and I had been negligent, I might have been considered a “killer”. [makes fist, intense expression] … And I shall, never, never, on the Vargas name, let that happen!

Hitomi: [pensive pose] I’m not sure Monobear’s read that far in to the penal code, [smiles, raises arms] But thank you, Pablo!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Will you rejoin the group?
Hitomi: [facing away, back eye closed] No.

Pablo: [head in hands] …

Takito: Uh, Hitomi? Why did you decide to give up your finger?

Hitomi: [opens back eye] Mmmm… Isn’t it obvious? I have too many fingers already, silly!

*Can’t argue with that logic. Though, I’m not sure if there’s any logic you could argue with Hitomi…*

*I stuck around with Hitomi until dinner. Everyone else filed in, and gave thanks to Hitomi that they could go another day with their hands intact.*

*I thought I should check in with Ryouta and Satoko, and how their stakeout of Tamaki went.*

Satoko: [fiddling with pencil in hair] Ikke noget.

Ryouta: [sulks] If y-you couldn’t tell, she means with found n-nothing…

Takito: I had a similiar experience. Either we spooked her, or her motives for wanting to guard that room were pure.

Satoko: [fiddling with pencil in hair] Maybe. We’ll catch her in the act eventually.

*In the moment, I nodded my head and agreed. But as I went to sleep that night, I wasn’t truly sure. Whatever Tamaki was doing, she was good at it. Really good, and it felt like the fact she didn’t know we were on to her was the only thing keeping me alive.*

*I tried to comfort myself by thinking her plan wouldn’t come to fruition for a long time, but it only made me realize I had no idea when all this had started. The only thing I could truly say I knew was that Tamaki had a plan involving a knife.*
Eventually, I tired out my brain and drifted off to sleep.

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: You know, a funny thing happened a few years back.

Monobear: My local newspaper published my obituary by mistake.

Monobear: It was a full column. I certainly hadn’t paid for one, so I kept reading.

Monobear: It was full of glowing reviews of my character…

Monobear: …with lots of people calling me the best bear they ever met.

Monobear: I guess those suckers all ponied up to buy that space.

Monobear: Anyhoo, I decided I needed defend my image as the despair bear that day…

Monobear: And for the next morning paper, I bought tons and tons of classifieds…

Monobear: …in each one, I put out a hit on one of the people who mourned me. Upupupu!

Chapter End Notes

Free Time Votes, Comments, Questions, and Theories are welcome below!
Chapter 4: The World at War - (Ab)normal Days 4

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the wait. I'm back in school again, so things will be slower (but not 2 years slow, never again).

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4: The World at War — (Ab)normal Day 4

The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today, Upupupu!

Another day is here again. Somebody will have to give up a finger today.

Urgh… I shouldn’t think about that right before breakfast.

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

I sat with Kotori, Ryouta, and Satoko. The three of us briefed Kotori on the nothing we found out about Tamaki yesterday.

Kotori: [neutral] Nothing, huh?
Ryouta: [sulks] Sh-she’s just too good at hiding things…

Kotori: [pensive pose] Almost too good. Takito, do you think she wanted me to see her drop that knife?

Takito: I don’t get why she’d want to, though. Everyone makes mistakes eventually, I guess.

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] I’m with Kotori. She must be getting us to spy on her to give her some sort of alibi for something she’s set up in advance. It’s the only thing that makes sense.

Takito: Honestly, that seems kind of—

_Suddenly, I heard someone retching, and turned around just fast enough to see Hitomi vomit her breakfast._

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Urk… I haven’t been feeling that good…

Wataru: [stern expression] Please, eat these crackers. They should stop the vomiting.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] I don’t… really feel like eating…

_Pablo hurried over._

Pablo: [staggers back] Damn! The wound must have gotten infected.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] I don’t see any green or yellow stuff on it… It seems fine…

_I was pretty sure we did all we could, but Hitomi had been keeping it out in the open for a while._
Pablo: [authoritative pose] [sighs] Well, I suppose we’ll have to find some antibiotics you can ingest.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Blehh…

Wataru: [crosses arms] You know, Pablo, I’ve heard you were the one responsible for dressing her wound.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I did everything in my power to prevent this! Ask Takito, he was there!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Your best just isn’t good enough, it seems.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Like yours would be!

Monobear: [dismissive wave] Boys, boys! You’re both pretty!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Get out of here!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Looks like, you’re the only thing we agree on, Monobear. Leave.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! You all wish you could make me leave! I go where I please, and I tell you what I please.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Do you know why I… Hurk….

Monobear: [neutral pose] Of course, of course! It’s because of my fast acting Despairitis! I put it all over that guillotine.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I was right… Not only do you take our fingers, you also take our health!
Monobear: [laughing pose] I’ve been taking your health for a while now, buddy. It’s just over a wider period of time now.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Is there a cure?

Monobear: [neutral pose] Hmmm, I’m afraid not at the current juncture. It wouldn’t be very despairingly cruel if there was. In fact, it’s been specially engineered to kill suddenly at around 72 hours after introduction to the bloodstream.

Okita: [staggers back, rose petals fly] What?!

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] You mean… I’m going to…

*Hitomi threw up again.*

Monobear: [laughing pose] Yup! I had the SHSL Microbiologist cook this up just for you guys! He died making it! Well, I killed him after it was done, but that’s pretty much the same thing.

Wataru: [solemn expression] ...Bastard.

Monobear: [neutral pose] Of course, it wouldn’t be very sporting of me to have let Hitomi kill herself without warning, so I will say there is one way out.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] What…

Monobear: [red eye glows] I have another captive wrapping up a cure for me as we speak… And once there’s a murder, I’ll distribute it to everyone.

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh dear. You won’t kill this other person, now will you?

Monobear: [neutral pose] I don’t know. [laughing pose] How fast are you willing to kill? Upupupupupupu! See you ‘round, suckers!
Monobear left, physically running away this time, probably so he could track vomit everywhere for us to deal with.

Satoko: [scowls] What are we gonna do about this, then? If Hitomi keeps throwing up, she won’t last 3 days.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] I’ll… be fine. I only feel like this when I try to eat.

Hitomi looked like she was getting ahold of herself, but my appetite wasn’t coming back. I looked back toward my plate, and pushed my food around for a little bit until Pablo tapped me on the shoulder.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If you don’t mind, I require my first aid key back.

Takito: Oh, sorry. Here it is.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Thank you. If you require medical assistance, please speak to me, and I will provide.

Takito: Got it. Though that seems a little too slow for first aid.

Tamaki: [smiles] Takito, Pablo. I hope you haven’t been too spoiled on your breakfast.

Takito: I’m okay.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I can go without food for 12 days if needed, with no loss in sanity.

Tamaki: [smiles] That’s wonderful. My main reason for being here, though, is to ask you to allow me to stand guard at the Security Room one more day.
Takito: Woah, wait, aren’t you tired?

Tamaki: [smiles] No, no, no. Of course not.

Pablo: [strokes chin] Hmm… I would like to avoid the embarrassment of having Wataru and his comrades walk out on me again… [authoritative pose] I’ll allow it, but I want to guard as well today.

Tamaki: [smiles] Wonderful.

The two quickly darted off. I felt like I dodged a bullet when Pablo just decided to work with Tamaki today. I won’t have to keep an eye on her.

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Dorm Hall]

[Talk to Hitomi]

Hitomi: [heroic pose] Are you up for adventure? I always am!

I decided to spend some time with Hitomi.

Hitomi: [hands on hips] Aaaaaall right! [points at Takito] You asked me a question last time, so now it’s my turn!

Takito: Okay, shoot.

Hitomi: [scratches head] Um… What’s a hospital like?
Takito: A hospital? That’s kind of hard to describe.

Hitomi: [scratches head] So, you’ve never been to one, either?

Takito: Nah, I’ve gone to the hospital. More often than I’d like. It’s just… so normal that you don’t really think about it.

Hitomi: [droops over] Aww…

Takito: Well, I can try, still. Visiting a hospital means sitting a bed, eating bland food, and sometimes sitting in machines that scan you.

Hitomi: [droops over, sighs]

Takito: It’s not all bad, though. I mean, those are only the inpatient visits. Most of the time, you just get an x-ray or some other diagnostic thing.

Hitomi: [droops over] No, no, it’s not that, I was just hoping hospitals would be better for you than me.

Takito: Wait, they’re different for you?

Hitomi: [scratches head] Well, any hospital I go to has to know all my special mutant things. Some of them are more obvious than others. Most of the time, I go to research labs more than hospitals. [droops over] And, sometimes I can’t really pay or use insurance with them, y’know…

_It seems like Hitomi’s having trouble spitting it out. Maybe I should help her…_

(“They’ll make you fill out surveys” / “They’ll take your fluids.” / “They’ll make you wash dishes” )
Takito: They take samples of your blood as payment, don’t they?

Hitomi: [droops over] Yeah, I don’t really like it. It’s kinda dehumanizing, you know?

_Dang, Hitomi’s probably been poked and proded all her life. I wonder how she can stay so upbeat._

Hitomi: [points to self] Right now, I’m selling my blood to support my family, but when I’m graduated from Hope’s Peak, I want to find some way else to use my talent!

Takito: You really should. I can’t help but wonder if there aren’t other people in your shoes when it comes to medicine.

Hitomi: [eyes open wide] That’s right! Other mutants need it even more than me, don’t they, and I could help them! [points to self] I could be a nurse! I can see it now, an infirmary for mutants, run by me, Head Nurse Hitomi! I’ll be caring to the needs of the strange-bodied all across the world!

Takito: Err… You might want to start small, maybe just for a specific city for now. I don’t really know how people are studying mutation medicine…

Hitomi: [crosses arms, pouty face] You’ll see, with eyes in the back of my head, I could see double the patients any normal doctor can!

_She’s right. Well, she’s wrong, but I shouldn’t stomp all over Hitomi’s dreams._

Takito: Hey, that doesn’t mean I don’t believe in you. When we get out of here, Hitomi, I’ll help you build your clinic, okay?
Hitomi: [scratches head] All right. But you better! I'll be making sure!

Takito: I promise.

Hitomi: [hands on hips] Awesome!

[FREE TIME ENDS]

I was beginning to get hungry again, and I figure it would be a good idea to meet up with the others.

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Cafeteria]

When I entered the Cafeteria, it seemed like some other people had the same idea. I got my food and started eating.

I didn’t really have anything new to say to Kotori, Satoko, or Ryouta, so I kept quiet. They didn’t speak, so I assumed the same from them.

???: Hrk!

That was very clearly the sound of someone in pain. I turned around as fast as I could.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Hng…

Oh no, she’s going to start vomiting again. If she can’t keep something down soon, she might…

It was then I looked down and saw her clutching her right hand with her left. Blood was seeping
from between her fingers.

Shit, her wound must have reopened, too. It’s gone from bad to worse…

Pablo: [staggers back] No… [makes fist, intense expression] Hold on, Hitomi! I will redress your wound immediately!

Pablo ran away to fetch the first aid kit.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Oog… It hurts…

Wataru: [stern expression] Please, stay strong, Hitomi.

She’s really in pain…

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu… Don’t mind me, I’d hate to interrupt some prime despairing.

Satoko: [scowls] Fuck you. That’s Japanese for “fuck you.”

Wataru: [stern expression] Just do what you came here for and get on with it.

Monobear: [tilts head] Aww… That’s no fun. All I wanted to say is that the Despairitis is specially made to keep wounds from healing.

Takito: What the hell? So you’re just trying to make Hitomi suffer?!

Monobear: [tilts head] I dunno. I could ask you the same thing, considering you haven’t killed anyone yet. If you really want to ease her pain, just do one teensy murder, and she’ll be right as rain in an hour.

Grr…
Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] How many times to I need to tell you, Monobear! Under my supervision, there will be no more murders!

\textit{Pablo had snuck back in without me noticing.}

Monobear: [tilts head] Leaving her to die, are we then? I mean, I’m okay with that, but you should know that’s what you’re doing.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I am absolutely not doing that!

Monobear: [neutral pose] Eh, I’m not here to force the truth into you, kid. But she’s going to die soon if someone else doesn’t. [waves paw] Oh, and don’t forget to drop a finger off in the collection plate again today, Upupupupu!

\textit{Monobear disappeared in a puff of smoke.}

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Please, allow me to assist you, Hitomi.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Gurgh…

\textit{Within a few minutes, Pablo had reattached the bandages.}

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Thank you…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I have been told this might become a problem again. If you require my materials and aid, please use this.

\textit{Pablo handed Hitomi a small device with a button.}

Pablo: [authoritative pose] This is one of two beeping devices I found in the storage room. Anytime your wound reopens, please press that button to alert me. I will bring the first-aid kit as soon as possible.
Wataru: [stern expression] …

_I took a good look at Wataru. For some reason, he looked disapproving. Then, without warning, he left the room, his stride indicating he had something very specific he wanted to do._

Takito: Hey, where are you going, Wataru?

_No answer. He simply left instead._

[Automoved to Employee Hall]

[Automoved to Foyer]

_I went after him, along with a few other people. When I caught sight of him again, he was standing in front of the finger guillotine._

Takito: What are you doing, Wataru?

Wataru: [stern expression] What does it look like I am doing?

Tamaki: [frowns] You should really hold off on doing that until we’ve created a plan. Maybe Hitomi should give another finger, in order to keep the disease confined to her.

Wataru: [crosses arms] And give her another wound to open and make her suffer? Never. [grins] Besides, I don’t plan on getting infected.

_Huh?_

Kotori: [smiles] Oh, that’s what you’re going to do, is it?
Wataru: [grins] Yes.

Wataru raised his robotic arm.

Wataru: [grins] If I cut off fingers from this, nobody will get sick for the next five days.

I have to admit, I don’t know why we didn’t do this earlier…

Monobear: [laughing pose] Upupupu! Not so fast!

Damn it! Of course it can’t be that easy…

Monobear: [laughing pose] Silly, silly Wataru. Despairitis is an important part of the show here, and I can’t let you circumvent it like that. There needs to more of a sacrifice, y’know?

Wataru: [stern expression] A sacrifice? Do you need more mechanical fingers to count for a real one, is that it?

Monobear: [tilts head] Hmm… Maybe. Maybe just a little bit more than that.

Wataru: [stern expression] Fine then. [intense expression] HAVE THE WHOLE HAND!

Before I could realize what had happened, Wataru had shoved his entire mechanical hand inside the guillotine and let the blade fall. It took a few times for the wrist to be completely cut through, and it looked like Wataru was struggling. I could tell from his face that he was still feeling something like pain, even though it wasn’t a real hand.

Wataru: [breathes heavily] …

Damn…
Wataru: [intense expression] IS THAT ENOUGH FOR YOU?!

Monobear: [tilts head] Hmmm… Okay. It’s not like you could do it again.

*Monobear took the severed hand and ran off.*

Tamaki: [frowns] My, my. For something so bloodless, it certainly felt graphic.

Takito: Are you going to be okay, Wataru?

Wataru: [solemn expression] I’m fine.

*Wataru and the others quietly left. At the time, I struggled to know what to think.*

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to 2nd Floor]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Ryouta: [grips camera] H-hey Takito… Is there s-something on your mind?

*I decided to spend some time with Ryouta.*

Ryouta: [wincles] Geh!

Takito: Something wrong, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [grips camera, sulks] It’s j-just… I don’t kn-know if I can still be K-kibogaman after so
many people know he’s m-me…

Takito: I’ll keep your secret. And besides, I don’t if the academy is in the right shape to be concerned with that.

Ryouta: [grips camera, sulks] Oh, you’re probably right.

Takito: Y’know Ryouta, you don’t seem that interested in being Kibogaman. I mean, considering you are him.

Ryouta: [grips camera, sulks] Well, sometimes I wish I could g-go back to my old p-persona…

Takito: Old persona? Wait, you haven’t always been Kibogaman?

Ryouta: [shakes head, grips camera, sulks] No… B-before, I was the “Shibuya Kid”. I just sort of l-looked for illicit d-dealings. Most of the time, they would l-laugh at me, though…

Takito: Why? *I certainly wouldn’t laugh if Ryouta was out to get me.*

Ryouta: [grips camera, nervous sweating] Well, you kn-know… I’m short, and my v-voice hadn’t changed yet…

Takito: But then, you hit them with your…

(“Martial Arts”/*Phoenix Rounds”/”Magic Wand”)

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Takito: You hit them with your martial arts, right?

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb, appears in Kibogaman costume, heroic pose] Absolutely!
Takito: Okay, then how did you become Kibogaman?

Ryouta: [scratches chin] Oh, that’s easy. Kibogaman is a title passed down from one SHSL Superhero to the next. There are actually three other hero personas the school has, so that they could have a SHSL Superhero in each grade.

Takito: I get it. So, you’re going to give the title of Kibogaman to someone else soon, aren’t you?

Ryouta: [scratches chin] Well, I’d like to, but I-like you said...

Takito: Hope’s Peak probably won’t be giving you candidates anytime soon, huh?

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb, changes back to civilian clothes, sulks] Y-yeah… Once we get out of h-here… I’ll find someone soon, though…

Takito: I hope you do. We could really use some more heroes around here.

[FREE TIME END]

[Move to 1st Floor]

[Move to Geology Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

[Move to Employee Hall]
I sat down for dinner as usual. As I looked around to see where people were, the AWG, Pablo and Tamaki were actually sitting right next to each other, and everyone else was at the next table over. At first, it seemed like the division between Pablo and Wataru was over, but then I got a closer look at the events…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Here you are, Hitomi! A dinner, made especially digestible just for you!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Hitomi is not some sort of baby bird!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Are you implying that I would ever give Hitomi pre-chewed food? This has been smashed by meat tenderizers only!

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Urrg…

Wataru: [crosses arms] It doesn’t matter. It looks like she’s disgusted anyway.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Of course she looks disgusted! She’s sick!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Maybe you should give her something she’ll use. I’ve made a series of ice packs for her, and have even drawn a hot bath. [stern expression] I’ve given my day to make her experiences as comfortable as possible. What have you done, besides tried to make her vomit again?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Ice packs, and a hot bath? Does she have a fever or not, you, you…

Tamaki: [smiles, chuckles] You two really are giving it your best for Hitomi. It’s all very delightful, but I have my own quick request for you Pablo.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Hmm… Well, you have done much to secure the museum the past few days. I believe I will oblige. Tell me.
Tamaki: [smiles] Wonderful. All I want is to sleep in tomorrow morning. I’ve been working very hard, and believe I deserve some additional rest.

Pablo: [raises eyebrow] Why would you need to ask my permission to do such a thing?

Tamaki: [smiles] Well, I don’t want you to go looking for me when I’m not at breakfast tomorrow.

…! She’s giving herself time she can move around and still be “accounted” for! Dammit!

Tamaki: [smiles] You might wake me up.

Pablo: [scratches chin] Hmm… Well, I wouldn’t do this for anyone else, but since it’s you… I’ll allow it.

Takito: [under his breath] Crap! She’s going to strike tomorrow morning, and…

Kotori: [whispers, frowns] We can’t tell him.

Takito: Huh? You heard that?

Kotori: [frowns, looks to the side] If we try to tell Pablo what Tamaki’s doing, he won’t believe us.

Takito: [sighs] She’s probably right.

Kotori: [tilts head] Satoko, Ryouta, did you see anything important today?

Ryouta: [sulks] N-no…

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] Nothing on Tamaki, if that’s what you’re asking.
Takito: Wait, did you find something on someone else? Please don’t tell me there’s another person I have be cautious around…

Satoko: [Rolls eyes] It’s not as bad as you make it sound. Okita was just kind of weird around me, dak kollox.

Kotori: [Tilts head] Weird?


Takito: It took until now for him to stop flirting, huh?

Satoko: [Shrugs shoulders] Naneun jimjaghanda. When I asked him about why he stopped, he actually retched. He said it was ‘gross’.

Kotori: [Tilts head] Perhaps the sight of Hitomi put him off his… appetite.

Satoko: [Shrugs shoulders] Whatever. I’m not complaining.

On that note, I finished my meal and left for bed. Before I exited the Cafeteria, I took one last look at Hitomi. She was really in pain. I didn’t think Monobear was kidding about his “Despairitis”, and was a little relieved we were able avoid infecting someone else today.

There might come a time where I would have to go through that. I tried to put those thoughts out of my mind, and concentrate only going to sleep.

-MONOBEAR THEATER-

Monobear: A while back, I had this deal with a casino in my town.
Monobear: I would go into games, and do everything I could to try and make other people lose.

Monobear: In return, I would be reimbursed anything I lost that day, plus a little extra.

Monobear: Of course, just seeing those desparing gambling addicts was payment enough for me!

Monobear: But eventually, it all got kind of old.

Monobear: So I gave the casino the idea to give out fake cash to their winning customers…

Monobear: And then skipped town.

Monobear: Eventually, the casino got caught, and their despair was all over the front page.

Monobear: “...A robot bear told us to do it!” Upupupupu! Like anybody’d buy that one!

Chapter End Notes

It seems the full extent of the motive has come out...

What do you think? Comment below!
The next morning…

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: Good morning, you bastards! It’s a new day of learning at the museum! Let’s give it our all again today, Upupupu!

...We’re going to have to infect another person with Despairitis today, aren’t we?

I took a look at my own hand.

...Maybe?

...

...No. I don’t think I could bring myself to do that yet.
I walked in and took a seat. From the few glances I got at Hitomi, she looked like she was going to die any second.

Takito: She’s really going to die from this disease, isn’t she?

Kotori: [frowns, looks to the side] ...

Satoko: [bites lip] …

Ryouta: [sulks] …

Takito: Sorry.

Either Hitomi would die from her illness, or someone else was going to die to save her. One of us is going to die, and there’s nothing we could do about it. This kind of atmosphere didn’t make much for breakfast conversation.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Urgh… [violent coughing]

Pablo: [nervous sweating] …

Wataru: [solemn expression] …

Okita: [pulls at collar] …

After some time, Pablo stood up to address the group.
Pablo: [authoritative pose] I understand today is not a very welcoming day for any of us.

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] Eggh....

Pablo: [authoritative pose] However, we must maintain an order so that things do not get worse. Therefore, I ask one of you to look after the Security Room today.

Wataru: [stern expression] You do it. You and Tamaki are the only ones who believe it will do anything, after all.

*That’s right! Tamaki’s sleeping in today!*

*I looked around. I had hardly noticed she wasn’t there.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I would love to, but I believe in the need to emphasize we are a team and unit. I believe that sharing of tasks will strengthen our cohesion.

Wataru: [stern expression] Nobody’s interested in doing your chores anymore.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Well, certainly not rabblerouserers like you, but others—

Hitomi: [queasy, hunched over] I’ll do it.

Pablo: [staggers back] Hitomi?! [authoritative pose] I mean, look, Wataru! Even your ally agrees it is important.

Hitomi: [coughs violently]

Wataru: [shakes head, sighs] I suppose Hitomi has the right to do what she wishes, especially now.

Okita: [raises eyebrow, bites rose] Huh? Am I gonna have to be ‘that guy”? Hitomi’s in no condition
to do whatever you want her to, Pablo?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I don’t want her to do anything she doesn’t want to. She wants to do this.

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Oh, I get it. You’re all desperate to look good again, aren’t you? Lemme tell you, you’ve got no idea how to do that.

Pablo: [intense expression, makes fist] Hmph! As if you have any idea how to be likeable!

Pablo stormed off, and Hitomi slowly followed, presumably going to the Security Room. Okita and Wataru left in separate directions, mumbling angrily.

I had some time on my hands.

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to 3rd Floor]

[Move to Steam Engine Room]

[Talk to Pablo]

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Ah, Takito! I’m always happy to take time out for the people who need my guidance. [nervous sweating] Though, I may have to leave if someone else needs it more…

I decided to spend some time with Pablo.

Pablo: [scratches chin] Yes, what do you need from the esteemed ruler of La Espera today?

Takito: Well, about that, Pablo… You don’t really seem the dictator type.
Pablo: [scratches chin] Dictator type?

Takito: Well, you know, dictators are generally very serious and avoid personal confrontation.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I don’t get what you mean. I am incredibly serious. And personal confrontation is extremely important in governance! Once a day, I spend an hour hiding in a hallway closet and tell ministers their failings as they walk by!

… Ok then.

Takito: I guess what I meant to say is this: You seem like you have a decent grasp on morals, at least sometimes, so how do reconcile that with being a dictator?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Oh, I thought you of all people would have already understood, Takito. [makes fist, intense expression] For morals and fair society to survive, there must exist a kind and just authority!

Takito: Let’s assume that’s true for a moment. What makes you think you can be that authority?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Because I knew someone who could, and have spent 5 years absorbing their methods and teachings! That is why!

Takito: That person is…

(“your father” / “your mother” / “your Hope’s Peak teacher”)

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Takito: That person is your father, right? The previous dictator?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Absolutely!

Takito: Okay, so what kind of principles did your father teach you?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] The most important thing to be is firm, but fair, he would say! [makes fist, intense expression] So, six months after taking office, I instituted a strict fairness policy in La Espera!

*I'm almost scared to ask…*

Takito: Umm… What is this policy?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] There is a strict ratio upheld between citizens of different political ideologies. If there are more citizens of a certain ideology than the ratio dictates, they are shipped off to large boats to live on until they can be used to make the ratio work again.

Takito: Wait, why would you need to do that? I thought since you were the dictator, they wouldn’t be voting or deciding government things.

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Hmm…

Takito: Pablo?

Pablo: [nervous sweating] Hmmmmm....

*I cracked his rationale right open, didn’t I?*

[FREE TIME END]
At lunch, I walked in on Ryouta and Kotori discussing a plan.

Kotori: [tilts head, whispering] Are you sure about this, Ryouta? Didn’t we say we weren’t going to investigate Tamaki anymore?

Ryouta: [holds camera] B-b-but! She’s been alone in her r-room all morning! Don’t you think that’s s-suspicious?

Takito: Guys?

Kotori: [sighs] Ryouta…

Ryouta: [holds camera, winces] Sorry, sorry!

Takito: It’s okay. It’s not like I’ll be telling Tamaki about this.

Kotori: [sighs] Yeah, it’s probably okay to tell you. We want to peek into Tamaki’s room right after lunch, or at least, Ryouta does.

Ryouta: [holds camera, winces] It’s n-not in the way Okita w-would…!
Takito: No, no, I heard you earlier. You think it’s suspicious she still hasn’t gotten up.

Ryouta: [holds camera] Y-yeah… That’s why we should ch-check on her!

Kotori: [tilts head] I’m… less certain. If she’s planning a murder, she might kill us to keep us quiet.

Ryouta: [winces] Urk!

*Hmm… That’s possible, but Ryouta has a point. It isn’t good to let someone be alone for so long in this kind of situation. Plus, even if she isn’t planning a murder, she might’ve been…*

*No, I shouldn’t say that out loud.*

Takito: Wait, if I go with you, you won’t have to worry about that, right? She could only kill two people.

Kotori: [tilts head] That’s also true… And maybe if we just put our ears up to the door, she won’t notice.

Takito: Then it’s settled. Let’s make sure Tamaki is sleeping sound.

*[Move to Employee Hall]*

*[Move to Dorm Hall]*

*The three of us approached Tamaki’s door.*

Ryouta: [holds camera, trembling] Sh-she’s in there, isn’t she?
Takito: [whispering] Shh…! We don’t want her to hear us!

I put my ear up to the door, and held it there for a solid minute.

Nothing.

Kotori: [sulks, whispering] You didn’t hear anything either, I take it?

Takito: No.

Ryouta: [looks down, holding camera, whispering] N-nothing from me. Do you think she snuck out.

Takito: There’s only one way to check…

The peephole was dark, so I knew the lights were off. I grabbed the handle, and to my surprise it was unlocked. I slowly turned the handle, and…

...I saw Tamaki, asleep in her bed facing straight at the ceiling. I could see subtle chest movements telling me she was still breathing. My worst fears were gone, at least for now.

I closed the door quietly and faced the others.

Takito: She told us the truth. She was just sleeping.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Sleeping, huh? Even this late?

Takito: That’s what I saw.

Ryouta: [holds camera, frowns] You kn-know, maybe Tamaki isn’t pl-planning anything after all… I
f-feel like I br-broke into someone’s room for n-no reason…

_Ryouta languidly walked away._

Kotori: [shakes head, sighs] She’s good. We probably won’t get a chance to see her drop a knife like she did again.

Takito: Yeah… _I kinda feel the same way Ryouta felt about this._

Kotori: [neutral expression] Let’s go our separate ways for now.

_I watched Kotori leave, and wondered if she had that same guilt that Ryouta and I felt, and if her convictions from seeing Tamaki drop that knife had shriveled away._

[FREE TIME START]

[Move to Employee Hall]

[Move to Foyer]

[Talk to Kotori]

Kotori: [neutral pose] Takito! Is it something urgent, or do you just want to chat?

_I decided to spend some time with Kotori._

Takito: It must be especially hard for you to be cooped up here, huh?

Kotori: [tilts head] I don’t get what you mean.
Takito: Well, I mean, you SHSL-ers must like to use your talents, right? And this indoor museum isn’t exactly great for farming…

Kotori: [blushes, shakes head, chuckles] Takito, did you really think I got to be SHSL without learning how to grow plants inside?

Takito: Well, um, erm…

Kotori: [wags finger] I can. Lots of different plants actually. I don’t even need soil.

Takito: You don’t need sunlight, or soil? You really are the best in the country…

Kotori: [pensive pose] It’s not really that special. You can use any old light, not just sunlight, and growing without soil has been done many times before. [chuckles] I’ll still need plenty of water, though.

_I think I’ve heard of this! If I remember right, it’s called…_

(“Ageologic farming” / “Suspension farming” / “Hydroponic farming”)

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Takito: So you can do hydroponic farming, even in here?

Kotori: [wags finger] Oh, so you do know about growing things without soil!

Takito: Well, I mean… I only just now remembered it.
Kotori: [chuckles] That’s okay. When I say I could do it, that’s more of an exaggeration anyway. I need lots of different minerals in solution to do it right.

Takito: Yeah… we probably don’t have those.

Kotori: [looks down] I understand. To be honest, I was thinking of trying it out earlier.

Takito: Really?

Kotori: [looks down] Really. I couldn’t find any bananas, so I thought I’d try to grow a crop of them instead.

I could probably go for one too… I’ve forgot how good fresh tropical fruit tastes…

Kotori: [looks down] Before I even started looking for the minerals, though, I realized how long it takes to grow them might be an issue… And I didn’t want to implicitly resign myself to living here for ages like that.

Takito: [sighs] Wish I could be as optimistic as you sometimes.

Kotori: [chuckles] Don’t worry. I’ll be optimistic for the both of us.

Takito: [chuckles]

[FREE TIME ENDS]

It’s almost 4:30. I should go to the Cafeteria and see whose finger is getting the chopping block today.

I looked at my hand again, moving it around and flexing each digit. I gulped and steeled myself.
I took a quick look around. Wataru, Ryouta, and Satoko were there. Tamaki, rubbing her eyes, walked in behind me.

Tamaki: [smiles] Good afternoon, everyone! If any of you need anything, I am ready to assist again!

Wataru: [crosses arms] Hitomi probably could’ve used your help today, you know.

Okitat and Kotori also walked in behind me.

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Tamaki! Great to see you!

Satoko: [bites lip] Okita! Was ist deine Entschuldigung für deine Verspätung?

Okita: [points with rose] Why thank you, for what I assume is a complement!

Satoko: [bites lip] Very funny. You know what else is funny? Everyone dying because we didn’t choose a finger to give up in the next 15 minutes.

Okita: [bites rose, shrugs shoulders] Hey, don’t blame me now. If big bossman Pablo gets to be late, so can I?

Wataru: [cross arms] Pablo doesn’t ‘get to be’ late, Okita!

Okita: [points with rose] That’s my point, see?

Pablo walks in, hands behind his back.
Okita: [points with rose] What the hell do you think you’re doing, coming in late, endangering us all, huh? Huh, Pablo?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If you are worried about the finger issue, there is no need.

*Pablo suddenly held up his hands for us to see. His left pinky was missing.*

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I have made that sacrifice for you!

Wataru: [stern expression] …

Tamaki: [smiles] Why, thank you, Pablo.

Takito: Yeah… I have to admit it, I was worried I would have to contract that disease today.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Your praise is duly noted. Still, I really ought to be going into the kitchen to get myself one of the first aid kits…

Ryouta: [cowering, shaking] …

*Pablo briefly left for bandages in the kitchen.*

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] Ryouta, quelque chose ne va pas?

Ryouta: [cowering, shaking] D-D-D-disease… Hitomi…

… Oh fuck! Hitomi’s not here!

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleed] Shi-fuck!
Kotori: [nervous sweating] No, no, no, no… Do you think the disease could’ve gotten her early?

Wataru: [stern expression] Everyone, anyone! When was the last time you’ve seen Hitomi?

*None of us had an answer in the past few hours. Pablo walked in soon after, but he didn’t know either.*

Pablo: [scratches chin] Normally, I would also be concerned, but I don’t believe Monobear would break his own rules like this. He’s evil, certainly, but he’s been consistently evil.

Takito: Well, we’ll have to start at where she said she would be this morning. The 4th floor. C’mon, everyone up!

[Automoved to 4th floor]

*The eight of us entered the hallway, but found nothing out of the ordinary.*

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Everyone, let’s split up and search the floor! Tamaki, Takito, take the Inventions Room! Ryouta, Wataru and I will take the Security Room, and everyone else go to the gift shop!

*We ran for the doors. I met Tamaki at the closest entrance to the Inventions Room.*

What’s with this handle? It feels… hot for some reason.

Tamaki: [intense glare] Ready! On one, two…. Three!

*We opened the door and ran inside.*

There was a huge amount of smoke everywhere, causing Tamaki and I to cough. It was painful, but when the smoke cleared, part of me wished it had never ended.
Because when the smoke cleared…

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuGHonrmJmA]

I saw the clear shapes of a charred skull, and a burnt hand…

...with six fingers.

Chapter 4: The World at War

(Ab)normal days END

Chapter End Notes

Hitomi is gone, the group is now half the size it started as, and it will be even smaller by night’s end.

Who do you think did it?
Chapter 4: The World at War — Abnormal Days

Chapter Notes

A present for everyone! Feel free to open it before Christmas.

We're going to be investigating the murder of Hitomi in this update.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4: The World at War — Abnormal Days

_I was completely shocked. Before I had time to fully process what I saw before me, the Body Discovery Announcement rang out._

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: A body has been discovered! Following a brief period of investigation, we will commence our school trial.

Tamaki: [frowns] ...Hitomi...

_I heard someone kick down the door behind us._

Pablo: [authoritative pose] What *cough*, *cough*, happened in here?!

Wataru: [solemn expression] Hitomi died in a massive fire. That’s what.

Ryouta: [cowering, shaking] Th-that’s not r-really her, is it?

Takito: I’m sorry, but I don’t think it could be anyone else.
The other doorway swung open as well.

Kotori: [hunches over] *cough* *cough* Where is she? *cough* Where’s Hitomi?!

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Oh jeez, is that pile of ashes…?

Satoko: [seething] Vous les monstres! Pablo, Wataru you fucking shit assholes!

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Wait! I have nothing to do with this crime!

Wataru: [solemn expression] ...As do I. To snuff out the light of another citizen… I would never.

Satoko: [seething] It’s not that you killed her, though I wouldn’t be surprised. It’s your fucking fighting and your clique shit! [closes eyes, takes a deep breath] I don’t know why, but I know in my gut it’s what killed her.

Monobear: [laughing pose] Actually, that would be fire. Upupupupu!

Satoko: [seething] Fottiti anche tu!

Monobear: [brandishes claw] Hey, hey! I’m only doing you a service, you know.

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh dear. You’re really making a scene Monobear. Maybe you should just give us the file.

Monobear: [tilts head] File? Oh, yeah, the file. I think I put it around here somewhere…

Ryouta: [cowering, shaking] M-monobear… Is that really H-hitomi?

Monobear: [tilts head] Fraid so! Doot-doo-doo… Where did I put it? Ah, here it is!
Monobear handed everyone a copy of the Monobear File.

Ryouta: [cowering, shaking] Oogh…

Pablo: [grimaces, gulps] …

Wataru: [long sigh]

Monobear: [laughing pose] Allllllright! It’s Monobear File reading time!

**Monobear File 4: Hitomi Yunokawa**

*Cause of death: Burning alive*

*Time of death: Around 3 hours before discovery*

*Additional Info: The fire that killed Hitomi involved a liquid accelerant*

*Burned alive…*

*I shuddered with sympathy pains.*

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Gah… I can’t even imagine it.

Pablo: [intense stare, makes fist] Not even giving her the dignity of a painless death… Unforgivable! Absolutely unforgivable!

Satoko: [seething] Don’t forget, you caused this. You and Wataru.
Wataru: [solemn expression] Hrmph.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hey Pablo, isn’t there something that only specifically you can do? You know, to help the investigation?

Pablo: [scratches chin] Something only I can do…? That’s right! The camera!

*Pablo immediately ran off to the security room.*

Wataru: [stern expression] Good. He’s gone off.

Takito: It’s up to the rest of us to investigate, then.

[INVESTIGATION START]

[Examine Hitomi’s Body]

*This is disgusting…*

Takito: Hey, Kotori, could you come over here? This isn’t something I don’t want to be doing alone.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Hmm… [smiles] Well, I was going to take a look at her myself later anyway. It’ll be stronger in the trial if we each back each other up.

*And I really only wanted someone to keep me from gagging…*

[Examine Hitomi’s Head]

Takito: Huh. Hitomi’s face survived better than I thought it would.

*Hitomi’s face was black, red, and disgusting in texture, but her features were still largely intact.*
Her mouth and eyes were closed.

Kotori: [pensive pose] I see what you mean. She’s surprisingly peaceful-looking. Almost like she’s sleeping.

Takito: I hope she was sleeping, at least.

Kotori: [neutral expression] Well, I mean, that’s still not very likely. I think anybody would wake up if they were being burned alive.

Welp. There goes that happy thought.

[Examine Hitomi’s Hands]

Takito: Hey, have you seen Hitomi’s hands? They’re bent all weird.

Kotori: [eyes open wide] What? Wait, you’re right!

Takito: Her hands are both in strange shapes.

On Hitomi’s left hand, where still she had all her fingers, her pointer finger and ring finger were folded in, while the rest pointed straight out. On Hitomi’s right hand, she curled her fingers toward her palm. Her right thumb curl toward her palm as well, but in the opposite direction.

Takito: Something like this can’t have happened by accident.

Kotori: [nods head] I agree. But I don’t know what she was trying to tell us here.

Takito: I guess we’ll have to save this for the trial.

[Examine Hitomi’s Belts]
Takito: Is it me, or is Hitomi wearing her belts a little higher up than I remember?

Kotori: [pensive pose] No, no, I see it too. They’re practically around her arms.

*Hitomi’s belts were burnt all over, but only surface deep. They still held Hitomi’s arms tightly to her chest.*

Takito: Not that I’ve tested this before, but these belts seem just as strong as ever. They must be flame resistant or something. I’m kind of surprised Hitomi never told us. She really loved to talk about the little things about herself.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Something’s up, Takito. I’m only counting two belts on Hitomi.

*She was right. It was hard to tell with black-on-black, but there were only two belts on Hitomi’s body. I scanned the room for the last one.*

Takito: Ah, here it is!

*The third belt was lying perpendicular to Hitomi. Despite being farther away, every part of the third belt seemed just as burnt as the other two, and equally burnt all over.*

Kotori: [pensive pose] There’s something else, Takito. Take a look under Hitomi.

Takito: Huh? Is that…

*Underneath Hitomi was some sort of fiber mesh. It was fragile with burnt edges. I didn’t think I seen it before.*

Before I thought to ask Kotori what she thought, she started walking around to the other side of Hitomi.
Kotori: [pensive pose] It’s on this side, too.

Without warning, she started pulling on the mesh. I looked down to see the mesh on my side slip away, but it never happened.

Kotori: [furrows brow] This part isn’t as burnt. It’s been cut, it looks like.

I took a look at the piece Kotori was holding up. The part of the mesh that had been under Hitomi was white with black speckles, not fully black, and ended in an edge that looked much more straight than the burnt edges I had seen earlier.

I pulled out the part of the mesh on my side, and it looked identical.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Let me try something…

Kotori held the two unburnt ends of the mesh together to see if they would match. They didn’t.

Kotori: [furrows brow] Drat. There goes that theory…

Takito: Wait, what theory?

Kotori: [shakes head] Don’t worry about it. It was wrong.

Probably won’t get much more out her. I should move onto something else.

[Examine Hitomi’s Legs]

Takito: Do you think Hitomi was trying to get in the fetal position? Maybe to decrease her surface area?
Kotori: [raises eyebrow] What kind of question is that?

Takito: Well, I’m trying to find out why Hitomi’s knees are bent so much right now.

Kotori: [pensive pose] Well, I might have an answer to that…

Takito: Wait, how would you…

Kotori: [pensive pose] As a modern scientific agriculturalist, [clears throat], I study a lot of biology. This might get a little technical, so if you need me to go over something again, just say so.

Takito: Got it.

Kotori: [neutral expression] It may seem counterintuitive, but default state of your muscles is contraction, or flexing. You spend bodily supplies of ions in order to keep muscles in the “relaxed” state.

Takito: I think I understand. So if Hitomi has been dead for a long time, her body could run out of this ion, and all her muscles would tense up, right?

Kotori: [neutral expression] That’s right. This is what causes rigor mortis, and the “death grip” phenomenon, where it’s so hard to remove objects from a dead person’s hands.

Takito: So you think Hitomi’s legs ran out of the special ions?

Kotori: Well, no, only if the culprit moved Hitomi’s legs quickly after she died, this would happen. Rigor mortis doesn’t cause movement in the large muscles like this, only the small ones. It mostly just makes things harder to move.

Takito: I see.

[Leave Hitomi’s Body]
[Talk to Wataru]

Takito: Hey, Wataru. You know about fire, right?

Wataru: [solemn expression] Yes, I do, but mostly about how chemicals burn. [presses fingers to forehead] I could tell you what color each of the powders back in my studio burn, but I’m not as knowledgeable with forensic matters.

Takito: Oh. Sorry. *He probably doesn’t want to think about Hitomi the same way as black powder. I should’ve known.*

Wataru: [solemn expression] ...There is one thing I could tell you, though.

Takito: Tell me. Anything is going to help.

Wataru: [furrows brow, glares] This fire… It would not have spared anyone. The combination of the smoke and heat would be deadly a few minutes after it started.

Takito: How deadly?

Wataru: [furrows brow, glares] You’d have a minute, at most. Once the killer started it, they wouldn’t be able to control it.

Takito: So wait, why is the fire out now?

Wataru: [presses fingers to forehead] It ran out of fuel or oxygen. Those are the only options.

Takito: Thank you Wataru. I know Hitomi was your friend, and it must be hard to talk about this.

Wataru: [solemn expression] You are welcome, Takito. Though, it isn’t exactly Hitomi this event reminds me of…
Wataru began to rub the scar connecting what was left of his metal arm to his body.

Oh. I think I’ll leave him alone for now.

[Examine Fabric Pile]

Takito: ...Huh?

There was pile of white and grey pieces of fabric in the corner, stuffed away where they would be somewhat hard to see.

Takito: These are… These are sleeveless white shirts! Like the kind Hitomi likes to wear…

The grey pieces I had noticed were actually just the same white shirts covered in ash stains. Some pieces of clothing also seemed completely burnt, just grey patches with black burnt edges. One of the larger ones even had a round black burn stain in the middle.

Hmm… Some of these aren’t in Hitomi’s size. Did Monobear think we’d be here so long, we might change clothes sizes?

Maybe not. He has been pretty adamant about getting us to kill quickly.

[Talk to Okita]

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Takito! Psst! Get over here!

Takito: Uh… What are you so worried about? I mean, I know someone just died, but…

Okita: [tugs at collar, bites rose] Shhh! Don’t talk, look at this!
Okita pulled out a lighter, which I recognized as having belonged to Wataru in the last case.

Okita: [tugs at collar, bites rose] Wataru’s guilty, see? We have to be careful while he’s in the room!

Takito: Didn’t this happen when Bertrand died, and didn’t Wataru turn out to innocent? Where did you find this, anyway?

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] It was on the seat of the old car exhibit. Just sitting there.

Takito: Well, it probably is the murder weapon, but I don’t know if I’m willing to accuse Wataru just yet.

Okita: [bites rose, scowls] I’m still suspecting him. You know, I could never if was really a fan of hers during our group talks.

Guess we’ll both just have to wait for the trial, then.

[Move to Political Hall]

[Talk to Satoko]

Takito: Satoko, are you okay now?


Takito: Well, it’s ‘bene’ to see that you’re on track to getting there. Have you see anything interesting?

Satoko: [adjusts glasses] Damunt teu.
Takito: Excuse me?

Satoko: [clears throat] Above you.

Looking above me, I spied smoke damage on some of the ceiling tiles near the far doorway into the Inventions Room, across from the Gift Shop.

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] I don’t know how useful that information is, but it’s there. I couldn’t really find anything else worth looking at in this hallway.

I did a quick glance around to confirm. Like she said, everything was normal. The security camera showed no signs of tampering, and there were no other smoke damage patterns visible.

Satoko: [bites lip] Ugh… This never should have happened. Pablo… Wataru… Idioti…

Takito: You know, we all lost a friend just now. Even those two did.

Satoko: [bites lip] Nein. They didn’t lose a friend. Wataru lost a supporter, and Pablo lost a rebel. [glares] And maybe, just maybe, one of them lost her intentionally.

Takito: Well… I’ll think about that.

Nothing Satoko had said seemed false, but I really didn’t want to believe it. From my conversations, it still seemed like Wataru and Pablo cared for Hitomi, but I had made that assumption before, and had been very, very wrong.

I just hope I’m right for once.

[Move to Gift Shop]

Nobody was in the Gift Shop. I would have to do the investigating myself.
A thought went through my mind that something from this gift shop might have been used in the murder. I quickly checked both the action figures and the jewelry. The action figures were exactly as I remembered them being, and so were the jewels.

However, one of the plates containing the jewels had been smashed open.

Somebody was definitely in here. But wouldn’t a priceless stone display have some sort of alarm system?

Looking around further, I found an alarm siren just behind the counter. It looked perfectly operational, but I couldn’t say the same about the shutoff switch directly under it. It had been smashed down hard, to the point where it was dangling by the wire off the wall mount. The switch required grasping both sides of a lever to release a lock, and then pulling the lever down. There was also a puddle of ink under it.

I looked at a sign near the switch, which read: “Stained hands, Foiled plans”

I think I know about this! It’s ink that stains the skin on your hands so you’ll get caught if you try to turn the alarm off without gloves.

At that moment, I tried to remember if anyone’s hands were stained after we found the body. I couldn’t remember anyone with ink-stained hands, so the killer must have just outsmarted this device.

Tamaki: [smiles] It’s good that you found this too.

Takito: Gah! Don’t sneak up on me like that!

Tamaki: [frowns] My apologies. I was just examining some of the merchandise in the back. Don’t mind me.
Tamaki still made me somewhat suspicious of her, and I didn’t want to risk being alone with her for long.

[Move to Political Hall]

[Move to Security Room]

[Talk to Ryouta]

Takito: Found anything in here, Ryouta?

Ryouta: [sulks, holds camera] No… I’ve just been w-watching Pablo. It seems like getting the computer to work is more tr-trouble than he thought…

Takito: You’re just watching him, huh?

Ryouta: [cowers] Well, to be honest… [sulks, holds camera] I think he might be up to something. I want to make s-sure he isn’t tampering with evidence.

Takito: Oh. So you can’t be distracted, is that it?

Ryouta: [looks down] Y-yeah… [determined glare] B-but I made sure he hasn’t done anything f-funny! Everything, besides the computer, is exactly as I saw when I came in here b-before.

Takito: You mean before we even found the body?

Ryouta: [determined glare] Yeah! I came in at the exact same time as Pablo both times, so he could n-not have done anything.

Takito: That’s good to know. Do you think I could do some investigating now?
Ryouta: [looks down] That s-seems fine… But I would try not to b-bother Pablo…

I looked over at Pablo, who was engaged entirely with his computer.

Takito: I don’t think that’s going to be a problem.

[Examine Doorway]

Takito: Hm…? Hey Ryouta, there’s a bunch of weird stuff by the door here.

Ryouta: [holds camera] Y-yeah. I noticed those. I w-was afraid to get a good look at them with Pablo here…

I guess I’ll just have to get a good look myself.

All items were near the side of the door without hinges. The first and least interesting item was an overturned wooden three-legged stool. There was nothing else I could really say about it.

The other three seemed much more clearly relevant to the case.

Takito: Okay, I see three things that are really relevant. There’s a bunch of glass shards, and some of them have blood on them. There’s one of Hitomi’s shirts, also with blood.

Ryouta: [looks down] Urgh… I s-sensed blood when I first came to this floor. [holds camera] That’s wh-why I told Pablo I wanted to search this r-room…

Takito: The last thing I see here is…

I held the object in my hand and turned it around.
Takito: It’s Hitomi’s golden belt buckle. It doesn’t look burnt at all.

I had not really noticed before, but the buckle was heavier and bulkier than any belt buckle I’d ever seen. I checked to see if it had some sort of compartment, but no dice.

Ryouta: [holds camera] H-how…? How did that get in here?

Takito: I don’t know, Ryouta. I don’t know.

[Examine Desk]

I’ll have to be careful not to disturb Pablo here…

Pablo: [turns around, authoritative pose] Please do not bother me. [turns back around]

I guess the top of the desk is out, but what about the floor around it?

I bent down and looked at the floor near the desk where Pablo was working. It wasn’t long before I found a wrapper labelled “GAUZE” resting near one of the desk legs, just a little bit out of view. I signalled to Ryouta to get closer.

Takito: What do you make of this?

Ryouta: [sulks] I d-don’t really know, maybe—

Ryouta suddenly began to twitch his nose and sniff audibly.

Takito: Ryouta? Something wrong?

Ryouta: [holds camera] T-takito! Somebody bleed, right on this spot in the carpet here! I’m s-sure of it!
Takito: I don’t see anything. Could someone have cleaned it up?

Ryouta: [holds camera] I don’t th-think it was a lot of blood… maybe just a few drops. But somebody bl-bled here.

The more skeptical part of the brain didn’t believe him, but I had seen Ryouta’s Shark Sense in action before. I knew he couldn’t be lying about this.

Takito: Got it. A blood stain somebody might have wanted to hide will be super useful in the trial.

[INVESTIGATION END]

Announcements: Ding-dong, ding-dong! Ding-dong, ding-dong!

Monobear: It’s trial time! Upupupupupu! Who burnt your friend alive? Who’s going to the chopping block? Find out all this and more, when report to the Foyer for the Claaaaaass Trialllll! See ya! Upupupu!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Huzzah! Just in time!

Takito: The photos are finished?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] They’re as finished as they ever will be! I’ll be sharing them with everyone in the Foyer.

Pablo left for the Foyer, and I followed.

[Automoved to Foyer]

It wasn’t long after we got there that everyone gathered around Pablo to look at the developed photos.
Wataru: [solemn expression] Go on, show them.

Tamaki: [smiles] This will very quickly put the matter to rest, correct?

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] Wait! I need to get them in order! There’s a special code on each that tells me when they were printed.

*Pablo briefly shuffled the photos in his hands until he was satisfied, and then laid them in order for us to view.*

*The first image was Hitomi entering the Security Room.*

*The second image was Hitomi leaving the Security Room, holding something behind her back.*

*The third image was blocked by someone’s left hand. On the left side of the photo, I could see the door to the giftshop.*

*The fourth image was a blurry object floating in the hall just outside the door to the Invention Room near the third floor stairs.*

*The fifth image was the door to the Security Room. It was slightly ajar.*

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Aw, cripes. This doesn’t tell us shit!

Kotori: [tilts head] Do we get to know which camera took each shot.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Unfortunately, no. But it should be obvious from the perspective, no?

Monobear: [laughing pose] Hey, hey, hey! I opened the elevator for you guys ages ago! Get in, now!
We scrambled to get into the elevator. None of us wanted to make Monobear angry. Still, the pre-trial talks weren’t done yet.

Kotori: [whispering] Now’s our chance.

Takito: Huh?

Kotori tapped my shoulder and pointed toward Tamaki.

Kotori: [whispering] If we expose her during the class trial, she won’t be able to retaliate. All eyes will be on her.

It seemed like a smart plan at the time. But I thought back to what Tamaki and I saw in the Gift Shop. If I can’t count on Tamaki to verify that’s what was really in there, then we might not be able face this more immediate threat.

Stop Tamaki and risk acquitting Hitomi’s killer, or stop Hitomi’s killer and lose my chance to expose Tamaki? I was going to have to make a choice, and soon.

Takito: I’ll remember, Kotori. But let me take the lead on that, okay?

I gulped.

Chapter End Notes

Next time is Trial time. Will Takito follow Kotori’s advice? Is Tamaki innocent? And who killed Hitomi?

Stay Tuned!
Chapter 4: The World at War - School Trial Part 1

Chapter Notes

The Trial for the murder of Hitomi begins now!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 4: The World at War — School Trial Part 1

I stepped into the trial room with the others and looked around. Just like last time, the scenery had changed. It now had a bright blue 70’s-style aesthetic.

Looking around, I also noticed the portraits of the deceased Chiyo and Nahoko. Chiyo had an X made of pink sparkles over her face, and Nahoko’s portrait had an X made of stock ticker print.

I took my place at my podium. The sooner I can put this horrible incident behind me, the better.

Monobear: Before we begin, allow me to go over the rules of a school trial. If you are the mob, your goal is to uncover the culprit and vote for them as the killer. If you are the culprit, your goal is to mislead the mob and have them vote for someone else. [laughing pose] Win to survive, lose and you die! Upupupupu! Get crackin’, ya bastards!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] In my personal opinion, the security photographs are our best starting point. We must start there!

Okita: [raises eyebrow, points with rose] Heh? Didn’t we already look at those? Only Hitomi and somebody’s hand were ever on ‘em!

Wataru: [stern expression] I concur. Any more examination of these photos would be a pointless exercise in stroking the ego of a certain foreign despot.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I am not a despot, Wataru, so I would love to know who you
are talking about…

_Okita took another glance at Wataru._

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Y’know on second thought, maybe we didn’t look hard enough. [swishes rose] It never hurts to take a second pass, don’t you agree, mademoiselles?

Satoko: [scowls] Hey! C’est mon truc! ...But maybe we should take another run through the photos.

Kotori: [tilts head] Well, he is right. It can’t hurt.

Tamaki: [smiles] I also have no objections.

Okita: [swishes rose] Oh ho ho! It looks like the majority has ruled in favor! Back to the photos we go!

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Now then, let me just pass these around—

Monobear: [dismissive wave] Come now! What are we, cavemen?

_Monobear pressed a button on his seat, and the image of the first photo appeared on the screen we would watch executions on. For a slight moment, I felt a twinge in my stomach. It was almost like we were going to watch Hitomi die._

Monobear: [laughing pose] I took the liberty of remotely downloading all the photos to my own computer network! I would’ve told you, but it was so much fun to watch you struggle, Pablo! Upupupupupupupupu!

_Pablo looked shocked, and more than a little angry._

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Hmph… I suppose this is better. [clears throat] So, back to the photograph…
I looked at the photograph. It was a simple image of Hitomi walking into the Security Room. I made sure to scan it thoroughly, but I couldn’t find any strange details.

Takito: If I had to guess, this photo shows…

(“Hitomi going to tamper with photos” / “Hitomi going to her security position” / “Hitomi going to confront the murderer”)

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Takito: Considering it’s the very first image for the day, and that it only shows Hitomi, I’m guessing that it’s Hitomi taking her place as guard of the Security Room.

Ryouta: [holds camera] That does make sense. This is before any m-murder started happening…

Takito: I can’t say that for certain, but it seems likely, yeah.

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] Can you say what the second photo is then?

Monobear changed the slides, and I took another look. It was Hitomi leaving the Security Room, holding some object behind her back.

Takito: Sorry, I don’t know.

Kotori: [tilts head] What about the third?
Tamaki: [frowns] I do not think so. That’s the one obscured by the hand, correct?

*Monobear switched slides again, and Tamaki was correct. The killer had covered up anything interesting up with their hand.*

Wataru: [stern expression] I made it clear earlier these photographs were a waste of time. We haven’t learned anything from them but the obvious.

Pablo: [makes fist, intense expression] I don’t remember finishing, Wataru. There are still two photographs remaining.

Okita: [swishes rose] Yeah, yeah! Let’s take a good look at all of ‘em before we start saying stuff like that!

Wataru: [stern expression] Have it your way, fancy lad.

Okita: [bites rose] Hah! I’ll take that as a complement!

*After contemplating how great it was that Japan finally had its own Three Stooges, I saw Monobear switch slides to the fourth image, a blurry object hovering just outside the door to the Invention Room across from the Security Room. I thought about it for a moment, and realized it had to be…*

(“A camera misfire” / “Moisture in the air” / “A thrown metallic object”)

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Takito: I’m pretty sure I know what this next one is. It’s a metal object thrown out of the Invention
Satoko: [raises eyebrow] Que?

Takito: Being thrown explains both the blur and how it appears to be floating. It also has to be metal, or the photo wouldn’t trigger in the first place.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Hold on. If somebody threw an object out of that door, wouldn’t we have found it in the hallway.

Takito: I think I have a theory about that. Monobear, could you put up the last photo?

Monobear: [laughing pose] Sure thing!

Monobear switched slides to the final photo, a nearly empty image of the Security Room door, slightly ajar.

Takito: I think this image shows…

(“Bertrand’s Ghost” / “The thrown object hitting the security camera” / “The thrown object entering the Security Room”)

Takito: The object thrown in the fourth picture triggered the fifth picture by entering the Security Room. By the time the camera could react, it was already inside, out of the camera’s view.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Well, it makes some amount of sense. With that trajectory, it was headed toward the metal detector anyhow.
Tamaki: [frowns] Oh, Takito, I believe there is a major problem with your theory.

Takito: Huh?

Tamaki: [frowns] The door to the Security Room is somewhat heavy. If not held open, it will close by itself, and trying to throw anything against it will just cause the object to bounce right off.

Kotori: [neutral pose] I hate to say it, but she does have a point, Takito. We found the door shut.

_Dang, she really does… But maybe the killer held the door open with something. It was open in the photo…_

Takito: Fair enough, but what if the killer held the door open with this?

(“Stool” / “Glass Shards” / “Belt Buckle”)

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Takito: This is how it happened. The killer used the wooden stool Ryouta and I found to prop open the door some time in advance. Then, from the Invention Room, they threw the object at the stool, knocking it over into the Security Room. This let them get their throwing object into the Security Room without leaving the Invention Room and incriminating themselves on the camera.

Tamaki: [frowns] Hm. Well, yes, that is possible.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] That just brings my question up again. Why can’t we find the object?
Okita: [swishes rose] Yeah, if anything it would be even harder to hide now, since you’d have to go through a metal detector to get it!

*I don’t remember finding any sort of specialized metal throwing balls, but if my theory is correct, that object would have had to be inside the Security Room, and we must have had found it. Think, Takito, think!*

**HANGMAN’S GAMBIT**

LETKBBLECU

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Takito: There’s only one thing that makes sense as the thrown object. It has to be Hitomi’s belt buckle!

Ryouta: [holds camera] Wh-what?

Takito: Think about it. What’s the only metal thing we found in there that wasn’t there when the day started?

Pablo: [scratches chin] Hmm.. Well, when you put it that way, it seems obvious.

Wataru: [shakes head] There’s one thing you’ve forgotten to explain, however. [piercing glare] What was the point of this?

Takito: Huh?
Wataru: [piercing glare] You heard me, didn’t you? Why go through all this trouble to get a belt buckle into the Security Room?

Takito: I… uh… I honestly didn’t know.

Wataru: [piercing glare] Bounding forward into conclusions without considering their purpose... [slams podium] That isn’t how a proper citizen should act!

Takito: Hey, hey! I still know it had to have been done, and if we know that, there must be a reason, right, everyone?

I looked around. Everyone else was as confused as I was.

Takito: Uh, okay… Let’s just say why we think it might’ve happened, and maybe we’ll find something!

Please, please come through...

NON-STOP DEBATE


Pablo: [scratches chin] Do you know anything, Satoko? You’ve always got some sort of comment.

Satoko: [scowls] Don’t look at me for this stuff!

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh, that’s unfortunate. I thought you would’ve had some sort of illuminating language based insight. [smiles] If you are asking me, this was an attempt to destroy the computer that missed.

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Nah, that’s ridiculous. Nobody could aim that well. I bet they were testing,
for when they were just gonna get rid of the murder weapon by throwing it in there, but couldn’t ’cause they actually hit the stool on their dry run.

Wataru: [raises eyebrow] At this point, I wouldn’t rule out this belt business being a ruse to lead us in the wrong direction…

Ryouta: [holds camera] I d-don’t know… It seems like a lot of effort for a ruse. Though, maybe… They w-wanted to hide the crime scene?

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Can’t say they did a good job of that, can ya?

Kotori: [tilts head] It’s a long shot, but maybe there’s some evidence that ties the belt buckle being in the Invention Room to a specific culprit. What do you think, Takito?

Takito: I’m thinking… I’m thinking…

Debate ends, solution below

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E1, T4

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Takito: I CONCUR! Ryouta, I think you may be onto something. Remember the blood you sniffed out in the Security Room?

Ryouta: [drops smoke bomb, appears as Kibogaman, heroic pose] Of course I do! HIYA!

Takito: I think… someone was trying to draw attention to this room. I think they wanted to make us believe it was the scene of the crime, and that blood was part of it.
Ryouta: [looks to the side, touches fingertips together] Huh? Are you saying I was, erm, f-fooled? And wait, why couldn’t the Security Room be the actual scene of this heinous act against Hitomi?

Takito: Nobody was fooled, because nobody bought the Security Room as the crime scene. As for your second question…

(“Monobear File”/”Wataru’s Lighter”/ “Smoke Damaged Ceiling”/ “Gift Shop Vandalism”)

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Takito: It’s really simple. The Monobear File says without a doubt she died due to a fire, and the only place we found fire was in the Invention Room.

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] ¿Estás seguro? I mean, whoever did this spent all this effort on a trick so bad, nobody even remotely fell for it.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Yes. You would certainly think, if all this true, the killer might have tried to say the Security Room was the scene earlier on.

Takito: Dang… They both have good points, but I don’t know what else this throwing of the belt buckle could mean. Well, uh…

Okita: QUIT SCREWING AROUND!

CROSS SWORDS IMMINENT

Okita: [points with rose] You should really leave that to me, ohoho. [sniffs rose]

Takito: Do you have a point, Okita?

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Of course I do, monsieur. Your thinking of the event is too narrow.

Takito: Huh?

Okita: [points with rose] What if the murder ‘started’ in the Security Room, and ‘finished’ in the Invention Room?

Takito: What do you mean? Are you saying she was half burned alive in there?

Okita: [swishes rose] No, no, no. Hitomi was attacked in the Security Room and left unconscious, but then was brought over to the Invention Room to be burned.

Takito: Wait… What about the photographs? The last time we see Hitomi leave the Security Room, she’s alive and well!

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] That’s easy, friendo! She went back in after that photo was taken.

Takito: Ok, but that’s also wrong. Why aren’t there photos of this?

Okita: [bites rose, smirks] Also easy! *The killer destroyed the camera pointed at the Security Room!*

*Okita’s obviously full of shit, but I don’t think anyone checked to make sure that camera was still functioning… I’ll have to disprove him another way.*

**CROSS SWORDS ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW**
E5, T1

Takito: I’LL CUT THAT CLAIM TO PIECES! That’s impossible, Okita, and you should know.

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Uh-oh.

Takito: If the camera pointed at the Security Room was destroyed right after Hitomi left, why does our fifth photograph even exist?

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Yeah, I, uh, realized that myself about 30 seconds ago.

Wataru: [solemn expression] But suppose Okita was wrong about the camera. What is stopping the start of the murder from happening in the Security Room?

Takito: The camera, remember? If Hitomi had her belt buckle on when she still walked in—

Wataru: [motions to be silent] If? You presume too much. You will never fulfill your role as a good citizen this way.

Takito: I don’t know if it’s such a bad assumption. I mean, we know the room where Hitomi’s belt buckle was removed couldn’t have been....

(“Political Hall”/”Invention Room”/”Security Room”)

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Takito: So if it couldn’t have been in the Security Room, and you’re presuming Hitomi was attacked in there, she couldn’t have removed it anyway but willingly. Came you come up with a reason why she would do that?

Wataru: [stern expression] ...No. Carry on.

Takito: Honestly, I do think Okita may be onto something. Maybe the killer wasn’t trying to falsely present the Security Room as the murder scene, but the place where Hitomi was first attacked.

Tamaki: [smiles] If you hadn’t fallen for their trap, Okita, we would’ve never found out. Thank you very much.

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Heh, heh… I’m flattered.

Pablo: [scratches chin] This… doesn’t get us much anywhere, though. Let me choose someone else to change the subject, Takito [closes eyes, spins around, then points] You there, give us a new topic of discussion!

Takito: You’re pointing at me...

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Of course I am! You’re quite valuable at these class trials, are you not?

Takito: Well, we really should establish the murder weapon…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Of course, of course! Everybody! [strikes pose] Tell me what you think the murder weapon is!

NONSTOP DEBATE
Evidence Bullets: “Photo #1”, “Photo #2”, “Photo #3”, “Photo #4”, “Photo #5”

Okita: [bites rose, smug grin] This is easy peasy! **The murder weapon had to be the thing that set Hitomi on fire,** and what’s the only thing that can set things on fire we know?

Kotori: [tilts head] ...Did you find a box of matches earlier?

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] No, no! It’s Wataru’s lighter, dammit!

Tamaki: [frowns] Oh dear. Wataru, do you have anything to say for yourself?

Wataru: [stern expression] **My lighter was taken from me again.** And using it as the murder weapon would’ve been ...ill-advised.

Takito: Huh?

Wataru: [stern expression] The lighter’s chassis is metal. It would be impossible to smuggle it into the scene of the crime without being photographed. **There was no good opportunity to get the lighter inside,** so we can safely discount it.

Pablo: [scratches chin] I see... So, are there other possibilities for the murder weapon.

Tamaki: [smiles] I’m glad you asked. Takito and I can verify the existence of vandalism in the Gift Shop, leaving open access to a variety of flint-like stones. **Some of these could have been the murder weapon.**

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] It seems finicky, but I guess it could’ve worked. It’d still be a pretty big gamble though. How would you know which ones the metal detector wouldn’t notice?

Tamaki: [frowns] That is a concern, but must have been a way to tell **without setting off the cameras.** That’s the only way conceivable this murder could’ve happened.
Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! There’s a very good opportunity for a metal lighter to be smuggled into the Invention Room. Look at the third photograph again.

Wataru: [raises eyebrow] Hm? Oh…

Takito: We don’t know who or what went into the Invention Room at this time, because someone is obscuring the door with their hand. So, someone could’ve very well taken the lighter inside right then!

Wataru: [stern expression] …Fine. I rest my case. I just wanted to see Okita squirm for betraying me.

Okita: [points with rose] Hey! There are no sides in a class trial!

Wataru: [serious expression] Oh, is that how it is? You believe you don’t need allies? [makes fist] Answer this, then! Do you think it would’ve been possible to create that large of a fire with my puny lighter alone?

Okita: [bites rose, lip bleeds] Well if you’re askin’ that, I going to have to say no…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] I would kind of prefer a more definitive answer. Takito?

Why is it always me?
Takito: The lighter couldn’t have started the fire by itself, and here’s why.

(“Wataru’s Lighter”/”Monobear File”/”Hitomi’s Face”)

Takito: The Monobear File clearly says the killer used a liquid accelerant. So, the killer must have used something else in addition to the lighter.

Wataru: [crosses arms] Just as I said.

Pablo: [scratches chin] Hold on… I don’t know of any liquid accelerant in the premises. [authoritative pose] No gasoline, no lighter fluid…

Ryouta: [points energetically] Wait! Lighter fluid! Was the lighter emptied before it was used?

Kotori: [tilts head] I don’t think it would work after that.

Wataru: [crosses arms] Besides, my lighter doesn’t hold enough fuel to cover a person.

Takito: If the accelerant were especially weak, do you think there might’ve been another thing to help the fire get to size?

Wataru: [solemn expression] I don’t know. I may be a fire expert, and a proud example to my community, but I cannot tell you what happens behind closed doors.
Dammit. Is there something I remember that could’ve been used for tinder?

LOGICAL DIVE

What was found under Hitomi?

(“Fiber Mesh”/”Wataru’s Lighter”/ “Glass Shards”)

What was missing from the crime scene?

(“Original Car”/ “Kibogaman Action Figures” / “Shag Carpet”)

Where did the Fiber Mesh come from?

(“Tearing apart the Shag Carpet”/”Shredding the Shag Carpet”/”Burning the Shag Carpet”/”Bleaching the Shag Carpet”)

Takito: THAT’S IT! Shag carpets have plenty of loose, dry threads that would burn easily. If the killer poured their liquid accelerant onto the carpet, they could’ve definitely created a fire large enough to kill Hitomi.

Wataru: [crosses arms] Fair enough. That would’ve worked as tinder. [muttering] Ugh… I knew something bad would’ve come from such an eyesore…

Tamaki: [frowns] Hold on, now, Takito. Do you have any proof of this?

Kotori: [tilts head] Oh, that’s easy. Takito and I found a white mesh underneath Hitomi’s body. If you really think about what where it could’ve come from, and what wasn’t at the crime scene, the only answer’s that the white mesh was the bottom binding of carpet.

Tamaki: [frowns] It still seems like quite a leap… But as I cannot disprove it, I’ll refrain from any objections for now.

**Kotori looked back at me, and nodded, as if to say “We’re onto her!”**.

Pablo: [scratches chin] I understand that this carpet was flammable. I even thought it should be confiscated as a fire hazard when I first saw it. But how exactly do you think it was used here?

Ryouta: [heroic pose] Wonderful question! [looks to the side, touches fingertips together] I d-don’t really know how it was used. Other th-than as tinder, I mean.

Kotori: [grins] Takito and I examined the mesh. We can explain everything.

Takito: Well, she can explain everything. I just figured this out myself…
NONSTOP DEBATE


Kotori: [neutral expression] When we found Hitomi, there were two pieces of mesh lying underneath her.

Okita: [points with rose] Aha! So it couldn’t have been the carpet, then! There was only one of those!

Kotori: [shakes head] No, no. The carpet was burned apart.

Satoko: [furrows brow] Slow down a minute. I thought you said the binding didn’t burn!

Kotori: [neutral expression] Well, it did, but only in the areas on top of Hitomi. The carpet was wrapped around Hitomi, such that the ends were held together under the weight of Hitomi’s body.

Wataru: [crosses arms] And pressed under her body, those ends were protected from the fire, and failed to burn.

Kotori: [grins] Exactly! This explains why the edges facing away from Hitomi were rough, but the edges on the inside were clean and straight.

It’s a compelling theory…

Pablo: [authoritative pose] So, then, you believe that this accelerant in the Monobear File was sprinkled on the topside of the carpet, and it was burned there?

Kotori: [neutral expression] Yes, that’s my theory.

Pablo: [authoritative pose] Here’s my question: How did the killer not burn themselves?
Kotori: [tilts head] What do you mean?

Pablo: [authoritative pose] If the killer tried to use a lighter or a flint to ignite a shag carpet… Especially one with something like gasoline on it… Wouldn’t they burn their hand, even just a little bit? The killer must have burned their hand, and yet, everyone’s hands are clean.

Kotori: [sulks] Hm… I can’t answer that one. Maybe they used some sort of device?

DEBATE ENDS, SOLUTION BELOW

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E5, T6

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Takito: YOU’VE GOT THAT WRONG! I figured it out! I know why that belt was there!

Pablo: [scratches chin] Huh? Why am I wrong?

Takito: When Kotori and I were examining the body, we found three belts. Two of them were tied around Hitomi, but the third was different.

[flashback to Hitomi’s body]

The third belt was lying perpendicular to Hitomi. Despite being farther away, every part of the third belt seemed just as burnt as the other two, and equally burnt all over.

[return to Trial Room]
Takito: Then, when you said you didn’t think the killer could’ve directly burned the carpet, I realized —

Pablo: [wide smile] That the third belt was acting like a fuse! Brilliant thinking, Takito!

Takito: Yeah, that’s what I was gonna say. You sure said it first.

Ryouta: [points dramatically] Aha! So the accelerant was used on the carpet and the fuse belt in order to start the fire!

Satoko: [fiddles with pencil in hair] Une nuk e di… I don’t think belts are all that flammable.

Wataru: [solemn expression] I’ve used leather fuses sometimes before. They are effective, but only if you have put the appropriate effort into developing a good citizen’s patience. They last a very long time.

Tamaki: [neutral expression] Perhaps less with the accelerant?

Wataru: [solemn expression] ...Perhaps.

Okita: [twirling rose] Hey, didn’t you mention two other belts, what were those about?

Takito: Well, now that I think about it, they could’ve only been used for one thing…

(“Restraining Hitomi”/”Choking Hitomi”/”Burning Hitomi”)

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Takito: The belts were around her arms. There’s no way she was naturally wearing them like that, they must have been to keep her arms restrained and close to her chest.

Okita: [tilts head, bites rose] Heh? What do you mean restrained? Hitomi would never let someone just tie her up like that.

Kotori: [tilts head] Even in her weakened state, I think she would’ve been able to wriggle free. The belts didn’t look too tight.

Takito: *They’re right.* Well, if that’s the case, that tells us something else…

**HANGMAN’S GAMBIT**

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Takito: I don’t think Hitomi was conscious at the time she was restrained. The killer only did it to make sure she could be rolled up in the shag carpet.

Okita: [tilts head, bites rose] So she was knocked out?

Takito: Looks like it, yeah.

Okita: [points with rose] Then, then… This killer must have had considerable strength, non?
Takito: Okita, what are you doing?

Okita: [points with rose] There is no other option! The killer must be Wataru!

_Uh-oh._

Chapter End Notes

Questions, Theories?

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