Danganronpa: Killing CRAV3

by Gr_Owl

Summary

Kaede Akamatsu finds herself in a strange building which resembles a school. She doesn't know how she got there, but the place seems awfully familiar. Thankfully, Kaede is an Ultimate, and one of the best detectives in the world.

Little does she know, her skills will be her saving grace since she and other 15 Ultimates are pitted together in a killing game.

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a.k.a. A remake of Danganronpa V3 with swapped talents, the same characters you loved, but with minor and major twists! A simple change of talent changes the fate of everyone...

CH.1, CH.2, CH.3 and CH.4 complete. Now on Chapter 5 Daily Life! A new update every two weeks if everything goes well!
Nothing was there yet.

Only pitch black.

I tried to move, but to no avail. Suddenly I was scared.

I was in a close space.

I began breathing heavily. What happened?

Just as I began feeling sweat on my forehead, I managed to open a door.

As soon as I saw the light, I felt confused.

«H-hu…h…»

I couldn’t help but falling to the floor, and my forehead slammed against something as hard as concrete.

“Ouch…” I groaned, massaging my head.

Regardless, thanks to that fall I realized I was completely awake, in a room that I didn’t recognize. I checked my surroundings. I escaped from a locker. In a classroom.

“A… classroom?” What… was I doing in a classroom?

My first instinct was to try pinching my cheeks… maybe I was in a dream, I thought… but I realized that what I was witnessing was reality… the pain that the fall caused me was enough to tell me I wasn’t dreaming.

“Oh boy…” I raised my voice, talking to myself. “If I can’t understand what’s going on nobody can, after all… I’m the Ultimate…”

**BAM!**

I couldn’t even finish my sentence when the locker besides mine began shaking violently. I tried not to freak out as the locker door slowly opened in front of my eyes…

And a person came out.

“Uugh… Uugh…” they moaned.

I didn’t understand their gender right away, but they were wearing a school uniform just like me, along with a cape. A couple of seconds later I realized the person was a boy… who obviously I didn’t recognize.

He raised his head, and just after that, he screamed.

“W-WAAAAAAAH!”
“Hey! That’s rude!” I exclaimed. “You’re treating me like a monster!”

“O..oh… sorry…” he apologized, clearly as confused as me.

“I can see you also have no idea what’s happening…” I muttered. “But! You mustn’t give hope when you don’t know what to do! Investigate and you’ll find a solution!”

“Investigate?”

I was about to nod, when suddenly, I heard a voice, and without any kind of warning whatsoever, five little biped bears appeared in front of me, each of them with a particular set of colors. I watched them appear, and before I could think about what happened, the white and red one began to talk.

“Please, bear with me for a second!” it shouted.

“Wha…what?!” was my reaction.

“Stuffed bears..? Is this some kind of trick?” asked the boy that came out of the locker.

“What do you mean by trick?! We’re fucking real, kid!” shouted in response the blue one.

“Hey! Don’t be mean!” scolded the pink one, with a feminine voice. “We should at least introduce ourselves, isn’t it right, Monotaro?”

“That was exactly what I was about to do! Monophanie, don’t you trust me?” responded the red one.

“Yes, yes I do brother!”

What… why were they talking?! The boy had to be right, what I was seeing couldn’t be possible.

“I know what you’re thinking, you look confused.” hypothesized the yellow bear-like creature. “We are not… stuffed animals.”

“Yeah, right! We are stuffed animals, not the Monokubs!” yelled the blue one.

“You got it mixed, Monokid. How many times do I have to say the same thing to you?”

“What? Monokubs? What is that supposed to mean?” asked the boy.

“You don’t recognize us?!”

The pink bear… Monophanie… seemed confused.

“No! Of course not!” I exclaimed.

“Oh! That’s great! That’s really great!” she smiled. “I told you I could do it!”

“You’ve done a great job, sister. I’m proud of you.”

What… were they talking about?

“I helped too!” Monokid shouted. “Hell yeah!”

“Sorry… can you help us understand what’s going on here?” I asked the stuffed bears.
The red one responded. “Well, I suppose we owe you an explanation!”

“Do it quickly! I’m already soooo bored!” shouted, again, Monokid.

“You see… this is the “Gifted Inmates Academy”. And now you’re part of it.” Monotaro announced.

“Gifted inmates academy…?” the boy repeated.

“I’ve never heard this name anywhere.” I told him.

“Well of course!” Monophanie giggled. “This school was created just for you sixteen… to keep you in! Monosuke knows all of this stuff”

“Sixteen people..? Keep us in?”

“Exactly! Sixteen Ultimates, just like you too!” Monosuke explained.

“Yes, I know. But why… keep us here? What do you mean by that?”

“You’ll know in due time! For now… you just need to know that we’re here to keep an eye on you! To be sure you deserve your talent!”

“Deserve it..? Of course I deserve it!” I exclaimed.

“That’s the spirit, girl!”

Was the blue bear trying to encourage me? It wasn’t doing a great job…

“Okay, that’s enough for now. It’s time for you to start this game.” Monotaro declared.

Game? What game? For every word they said, I began having more and more questions…

“Okay brother! Finally!” Monophanie continued. “It’s time for you to meet with the other Ultimates! It’s really important!”

“Oh yes!” Monosuke nodded. “You should also investigate. But that isn’t a problem, right?” he asked, glaring at me.

“Hell yeah! It’s time! So long, bear well!!”

And after, that, the five disappeared as they weren’t there in the first place.

“Hey! Where are you going! I have to ask you more questions!” I shouted… but it was useless. Well, if those things didn’t help me… I had to discover what was happening by myself.

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**Shuichi Saihara**

I had no idea why I was in that locker, but at least I wasn’t alone. There was that girl… I still didn’t know her name. I was asking myself whether I should be the first one to talk, but she, after inspecting the classroom for a couple of seconds, approached me.

“So, since we’re here… I think we should introduce ourselves.”
“Y-yeah…”

I had to stop stuttering; surely I wasn’t making a good impression.

“I’m Shuichi Saihara the **Ultimate… Magician…** or something like that.”

“Oh! A magician! Cool! Can you show me some tricks?!”

She seemed excited… yeah, but she didn’t know the whole story.

“Well, here, just like that… it would be difficult, honestly. And… I shouldn’t call myself an actual magician. I just performed some shows and I started to be called that. Nothing exceptional…”

I thought I would be the only Ultimate when I got out that locker, but I had to encounter fifteen people that also possessed a title, and with every probability a title that they were rewarded with by years of hard work. But me… I wasn’t an Ultimate. I had been lucky.

“Oh! Don’t say that! I’m sure that if you are an Ultimate you deserve it! And don’t worry, I believe you! I know that you’ll be able to perform amazing tricks!”

“Ah… t-thanks.”

“Ah, my name is Kaede Akamatsu. I’m the **Ultimate Detective**, nice to meet you.”

“A detective?! Wow… This really could be of help! With you we can understand what’s going on!”

“Hey, don’t overreact! I’m no god, just a person like you!” she giggled.

“Yeah, but if you are a detective… I’m sure we can do a lot more!”

Maybe it was too much? I shouldn’t place her on a pedestal.

“By the way, this is the first time I met another Ultimate! It’s not easy to find them, you know?”

“Yeah, they are scattered all around the country, so it’s difficult to encounter them by chance.”

And yet, here they are. Uff.

“That’s why it’s strange that as many as sixteen of them are gathered here. Something must have happened. Maybe they were kidnapped? By an organization that targets them?..”

She already was making hypothesis… but did she know what was going on?

“Hey, about that…” I said. “I… don’t remember anything. About how I got here, I mean.”

The last thing that came to my mind was me… in a dark room. But I didn’t remember which room and why. It was like I fell asleep and awakened from a deep slumber. I didn’t know how much time had passed, but it felt like days. Was I really kidnapped? I don’t know… everything seemed fine. I tried as hard as I could to remember something that could prove useful to this, but I simply couldn’t.

“So it’s the same for you… What a shame.”

“My memory has been… like… cut. I can remember everything up until that dark room… and then nothing.”
“Exactly… The same thing happened to me! This isn’t normal… Two people, not remembering how they got here…”

“W-well… maybe we hit our head and forgot? Probably it isn’t that big of a deal. I’m sure we’ll understand.”

At least I hoped so. As far as I know, this could be a trick. I didn’t know how someone could perform it, but maybe we were participants in a sort of magic show? …I should leave hypothesizing to Kaede. She’s the detective…

“Yeah, we shouldn’t worry. You’re completely right. We need to exit this classroom, and see if we can find the other Ultimates. If we want to know more, we have to ask them, collect information and use it to our advantage!”

“Right… maybe someone knows what happened and can tell us.” I said, heading for the exit with Kaede.

She didn’t look worried, despite the situation we were in. For a moment I wondered whether she knew something and didn’t want to tell me. But we just met… I can’t say I would reveal a magic trick to anyone, so…

The hallway was overgrown with plants, which invaded the building, and the air felt kind of heavy. No matter how hard I tried, I didn’t remember anything about that place, however… it was familiar… I didn’t know why, but I felt like I had visited it before.

“Hey, Shuichi… do you remember this place?”

“Well… not really… but… I… I’ve already been here. I don’t know when, but I am sure I came here.”

“It’s the same for me.” Kaede nodded. “The light from the windows, this flowers, this heaviness that I feel…”

She stopped for a while, maybe to think.

“Well, that’s good! We know something, at least!”

I got so caught up in the moment that I forgot I previously felt something off about my uniform’s pocket, so I quickly checked inside of it…

And I found a small tablet computer.

“What… is this?”

Kaede, who was looking around, glanced at it and then opened up the backpack that she was carrying around.

“I forgot about it too. My backpack was also heavy… I thought that there were books, but yeah… you’re right…”

She took out her tablet too. It was pretty much identical to mine.

“…The word Monopad it’s written on it.” she said.

“Why… and who did give this to us?”
“Well, first of all... when I turn it on, my name is displayed. It looks like a student handbook. I don’t know if it’s important or not, but maybe we should carry it with us. Whoever gave this to us, probably wants us to keep it.”

I nodded, despite not knowing what good could it do. For what I knew, it could be also be a dangerous device... I just had to hope for the best.

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Kaede Akamatsu

There was a classroom next to the one I was in before, but the door wouldn’t open, so I looked the other way. There, a door caught my attention. It was different from the others, who seemed fairly new. It had a Victorian feeling to it. I tried to open it, but still, it was useless.

“Well...” sighing, I thought “Maybe we’ll find keys somewhere...”

And then, a loud “Monokubs!” echoed in the room, with the five stuffed bears appearing again.

“Rise and shine, ursine!”

“You again?!”

I didn’t expect to see them again so soon, but here they are.

“This is a Ultimate Research Room!” Monophanie exclaimed.

“What?! You said it already? You’re a real party pooper!” Monotaro responded.

“Oh, right... sorry.”

“We’re good kids, so we prepared a special room for each one of you!”

Monosuke continued. “It’s exactly as Monotaro says, this rooms were created specifically for you in order to cultivate your talents. The one you see here is the Ultimate Detective Research Room, wh-”

“But!” Monokid said suddenly “This room is still locked! We haven’t finished with the preparations! You aren’t supposed to enter here yet, so shoo!”

“Monokid, let me talk!” Monosuke lamented.

“Hey! I’m allowed to say what I want! Don’t make me bully you!”

And with that, after they were gone, Shuichi started talking.

“This research rooms are great! You... you have your... detective... things... there!”

He doesn’t seem to know a lot about detectives. Well, it isn’t his fault. Anyways, I don’t know what’s in there either. I can only hope that it’s something useful.

“Well, maybe... but your research room should be here too! You could show me the tricks you have up your sleeve!”
He giggled. “W-we’ll see…”

We continued walking down the hallway, not seeing anyone. Just after, we noticed a blue-haired girl, wearing a long black and white dress. On her head there was a bonnet. As soon as she noticed Shuichi and me, she ran towards us.

“Good morning. I’m Tsumugi Shirogane, the Ultimate Maid.”

“Oh, a maid! That's great! At least we don’t have to worry about cleaning… that's something I hate.”

“But… you shouldn’t think I am here just to do as you please.” She frowned.

“No, no! Of course not… I was just commenting on your talent…”

“Don’t act so worried. I won’t hurt you, but I thought I should clarify. I will help you, but I won’t fulfill each of your desires. I can’t do everything.”

“Of course not. By the way, I wanted to ask some questions to you, can I?”

“…Yes, sure? Do you want to know something about me? First of all, I can’t stand when people arrive late! I always arrive thirty minutes before a meeting!”

That’s some really random fact out of the blue.

“Ooh, but… I would like to know if you know where we are… and what has happened to us.”

“Ah! I was about to ask you the same question. I really don’t know… I woke up some minutes ago, in a locker downstairs… and I was searching for other people. I think you’re the last ones to wake up.”

“Always late, huh…” commented Shuichi. “Well, maybe we should greet them. Thanks for the info, even if wasn’t that useful.”

“No problems, remember that I’m at your disposal.” I heard her say while we headed down the stairs. There, we found two bathrooms, both overgrown like the other floor. Me and Shuichi checked them both, but nothing particularly interesting was in them.

We continued walking and we met another person, this time a boy with greenish hair. He seemed relaxed despite the situation we were in, and overall… pretty normal. His shirt, however, was very telling. It was mostly white, but different splashes of colors were depicted on the side. I tried to come up with a talent… he had to be an artist. Of course trying to guess his talent wasn’t a matter of life and death, but I liked coming up with possible titles. I would have tried with Tsumugi too, but she didn’t give me time to think.

“Heya, nice to meet you. Were you also kidnapped?” the boy asked.

I tried to respond, but he continued talking.

“What’s more, do you remember anything about how you got here?”

“No…”
“That means that everyone here is like this. And with you two I asked sixteen people. This is something abnormal, right?”

The tone in his voice changed drastically.

Shuichi spoke up. “Well, that isn’t certain, but-”

“Oh! I wonder! I wonder what happened!”

“Hey, are you alright...?” I asked, worried for him... but also for myself.

“Yeah, yeah.” he said, his voice returned to normal. “By the way, I’m Rantaro Amami, and I’m the Ultimate Artist.”

Uh, I was right... He was an artist. Also, he was wearing a colorful bracelet too.

“I’m an expert in all sorts of things... painting, sculpting... I like architecture too, even if I’m not that good at it... I would show you my work, but it seems we’re not getting out of here soon. That’s a pity.”

“You can’t say that for certain...” I responded.

“Well, I just have that feeling... don’t you, detective?”

Huh? How did he know my talent?

“You seem startled. Probably you’re asking yourself how did I figure your talent, right?”

“N-no...”

“Well, I noticed you were observing me. Either you are interested in me, or you are a detective. Maybe both...” he smirked.

Yeah, whatever. Like he knew me.

“...I think it’s time to go, isn’t it Shuichi? We need to go meet up with the others.”

“Eh?... Oh, yeah, right.”

“I’ll see you around! Don’t be impolite!”

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Shuichi Sahara

…What was up with that guy? He seemed a nice person, but that smile at the end... I guess I shouldn’t think much about it.

Kaede and me turned left and we entered a room which door was different from the others. At first I thought it might have been a research room, but I was wrong. In front of my eyes there was a cafeteria, along with a short, red-haired girl.

She was staring at the various plants that invaded the room and had a net in her hands. It appeared that she didn't hear us, so I tapped her shoulder to make her aware of Kaede and me.
She turned, and a mere second after she let out a chilling scream.

“AAAAAAAAH!”

I wondered what did I do wrong, when she fell on her back. Kaede, who was looking in another direction, shifted her attention to the sound she just heard.

“Shuichi, what have you done?”

“I- I don’t know… she just… saw me… and fell!” I was legitimately confused.

“I knew it! A man! I can’t believe that a man entered this room under my surveillance!” a stern voice came from the other part of the cafeteria. “I’m sorry my dear!..”

A black-haired girl joined us. She was dressed with a leather jacket, blue pants and wore her hair in a ponytail.

“Excuse me… have we done something wrong?” Kaede asked.

“Not you… but him… a man!”

She pointed at me, with an angry look.

“Shuichi, have you pushed this girl?”

“What?... Of course not! She fell!”

They were already accusing me of something I didn’t do!

“No…” the small girl murmured. “I was only scared…”

I hope that clears me out of suspicion!

“So, why is she there crouching and clearly scared? You degenerate male!”

She then proceeded to inspect the red-haired girl carefully.

“You don’t seem to have sustained long-term injuries.”

“She is kind of… hostile towards men.” the short girl explained. “That’s why she put the blame on you.”

“Oh yes, I am hostile towards them! They are dangerous elements of our society and need to be educated before it’s too late!”

“…And on my part… I don’t really like hanging around people…”

“As long as you don’t spend time with menaces, you’re completely right! Especially that big, muscular guy who I saw before! He’s a bad apple, I assure you! And you too, male! You need some discipline!”

“This degenerate male helped me, he isn’t dangerous!” Kaede protested.

“Hmm… if you say so. I can give him a pass… My name is Tenko Chabashira, and I’m the Ultimate Caregiver. I assist children, and I make sure those young men grow up to become excellent members of our society.”
“Are you sure your methods aren’t a bit extreme?” I asked.

“I became an Ultimate because of my methods.”

I guess she’s a good teacher. I just hope she isn’t biased towards girls.

“Hey, Himiko…”

Tenko slowly approached the other girl, who raised her head.

“So… he isn’t dangerous… he isn’t that manly to begin with…”

“Uh-uhm…”

I get that she was trying to calm down the other girl, but… calling me that isn’t that polite…

“She’s right! He’s harmless!” Kaede joined. “He helped me too!.. What’s your name, dear?”

“M-my name is Himiko Yumeno… the Ultimate E-Entomologist… I’m sorry for before…”

“Ah! That’s why you had a net, right? You were searching for bugs?”

“Exactly… They’re my real friends.”

I tried to start a conversation with her. I wanted to show Tenko men aren’t that bad.

“And… did you find any?” I used the most reassuring voice I could think of, but the teacher awarded me with a cold stare.

“I found zero bugs.” She murmured.

“I think you two should go… I’ll help Yumeno recover. And help her with bugs.”

“Uhm… okay. We’ll see each other soon!”

Kaede and me went in the hallway again, but I thought about Tenko again. It’s not like she can reprimend all men that were in the school. I didn’t know how many were there, but she really needs to chill out… seriously.

“Well… both of them are… interesting people. Maybe the next one we’ll find is a bit more… reasonable?” Kaede said while approaching another door.

After we opened it, I saw a gigantic warehouse, which was strange for a school. I wonder what was its purpose. A blonde-haired girl was rummaging trough the shelves making a lot of noise. She didn’t notice we were there.

“Kaede… can you go talk to her..? I don’t know if she’s scared of me as well…”

“…Okay, okay… but you shouldn’t be scared of people, you know!” she advised. “Hey! You what are you doing?”

The girl quickly turned.

“Don’t talk to me so suddenly, you bitch!”
Well, that was rude of her. Kaede didn’t expect that reaction, probably, and had a confused look on her face. I tried to speak.

“Sorry, but we are just trying to-”

“Hey! You rotten dick! You just looked at my breasts, didn’t you?”

“What?”

Well, yes, I did. But it’s not like I did it on purpose… I was just inspecting the girl…

Kaede saw that I was having difficulty and tried to steer the conversation somewhere else.

“Hey, sorry, but what’s you nam-”

“You are a perv! One of the most fucking terrible pervs, aren’t you?! You should be ashamed of yourself!”

“What… the heck…” She’s crazy. So much for a reasonable person.

“Let’s try not to get angry towards each other, okay?. Please, tell us who you are.”

“W-what… you don’t know about my greatness!? Even though you’re just a small nobody?!”

“Uhm… I’ve never heard of you…”

“Nonsense! I’m none other than Miu Iruma, the **Ultimate Pianist!**”

And as I thought, she is a nobody. Well, I guess she thinks highly of herself.

“Oh… a pianist?… Interesting…”

“You bet it is! I am fucking good at the piano!”

I would never have guessed her talent. She’s pretty rough… I’d expect a pianist to be more delicate, honestly… her talent doesn’t fit her personality at all…

“By the way, what were you looking for..?”

“Drugs, obvious! I want to forget all my shitty problems!”

“Hey..! You can’t use drugs to escape from reality!”

“Heeeeegh!... What… d-do you k-know about m-me!? I-if I w-want… I can use t-them!”

“No, you shouldn’t. They are dangerous!”

Maybe she’s like this because she took too many drugs? That’s why she’s so insane? She’s the kind of person that forces you to sleep with an eye open at night. I hope she’s not as dangerous as she is crazy.

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*Kaede Akamatsu*
We wandered around for a while before finding another classroom. When I saw a door that could be entered, I jiggled the knob and…

Suddenly, someone hurt me and I almost fell to the floor, but Shuichi prevented me.

“Oh, thanks…” I said.

“S-Sorry…” whispered another voice. I turned around, and I saw a white-haired boy with headphones in his hand. He wore a black hoodie decorated with a star.

“Sorry… it’s not my fault… He… It… is chasing me!”

The boy looked behind him and pointed at another… person, I would say at first… but I quickly understood that what I was looking at wasn’t human.

“Please, please, play with mee~”

What was happening there?

“Hey new people!” the not-human thing said. “Nice to meet you! I’m Unit 0, Model 4, codename 0U-M4, but you can call me Ouma! I’m the Ultimate Robot!”

“C-could it be… you are with the Monokubs?!?” Shuichi frowned.

“No! No way that’s the case! I’m way more advanced! …And I’m nice!”

“That’s not true! You’re chasing me! I told you to stop!” the other boy said.

“I just wanted to have some fun! Your human behavior interests me!”

“Excuse me…” I said. “What do you mean by… Unit 0?”

It was a strange number. Zero means nothing after all.

“Oh, yes. My number is 0 because my unit is still an experimental product. Sadly I am not complete, but I still possess various functions that can aid you simple humans!.. And that’s what I was doing! I was trying to help this boy here, he looks like he is confused!”

“To me he seems scared, more than confused…” I clarified.

“Are you doubting my mind-reading capabilities?!” the robot asked.

Shuichi was surprised.

“Do you really have those!?”

“Actually, no..! But I have been told I can develop them. My AI is a learning AI, which improves itself overtime! So in a while I’ll be able to perform even more tasks!”

He was very proud of his robot nature.

“And how can you tell he’s confused?” the magician asked.

“I don’t know, ahaahah! It’s just something that comes to my mind. Like a deduction! You don’t know why… but you know that is the right answer! And to prove I’m right, just ask him something!”
“Uhm… okay…. What is your name..?”

“Well… I don’t remember it…”

“Oh-ha! I predicted it!”

“How can you not remember it? It's written on your Monopad! You should check that.” Shuichi suggested.

“I have already. The only thing that is there is the word “Kiibo”…”

“Well, I guess you’re Kiibo then!” 0U-M4 exclaimed. “I mean, it’s not a bad name! It’s cool!”

“Don’t think that I will forgive you if you congratulate me! Y-you’ll have to work for forgiveness…”

“Oh…” the robot’s face became gloomy. “Ok…”

“So… you don’t remember your talent, right?” I asked.

“No, that I remember! You’re talking to none other than the Ultimate Astronaut!”

“Astronaut! Wow! That’s amazing!” 0U-M4 commented. “Have you gone to space yet!?"

“No, I’ve not. I’m still in training. I mostly focus on the theoretical aspect of space voyages as of now… but my work was so amazing that I was given the title of astronaut before even becoming one! Cool, right?!”

“Oh… but how do you know that’s true?” the robot asked. “You don’t remember your name, maybe what you’re saying to us is fake! Or maybe… you’re lying to us!”

“N-no! I’m sure! I’m sure that what I’m saying is right!

As a detective, I have to say that the circumstances are pretty suspicious. How can someone remember their talent but not their name? The opposite could be totally possible, but… it’s far more likely that “Kiibo” is lying. However, if this is the case, why would he? He could have made up a name very easily, it’s not like we can know.

I’ll have to think about this mystery too, along with others that are already piling up. What are we doing here? What are those Monokubs? How can we escape?

Shuichi brought me back to reality.

“Kaede, we should search for the others too. There are still seven people we have to meet. Maybe we’ll find an exit if we continue searching.”

“Oh. It seems difficult.” Kiibo said. “I couldn’t find one. I hope you are able to.”

“I think we will. There is no way we are trapped here, right? There has to be a way out!”

I have to stay optimistic and hope for the better. This situation will not bring me down! I will find all the clues that will help clarify the situation and we’ll escape together!

…at least is what I thought at the time.
Prologue: Return of the Ultimates (Part 2)

Chapter Notes

Good news!! (and merry Christmas to everyone)

First things first, let me know if there are errors or even choices of words you don't agree with. Those are my bane.
I finished the investigation for the first chapter, I feel confident enough to start updating next week. I'll probably finish the trial by then as well.

By the way, now that the prologue has ended, I'll ask two questions.

I intend to post chapters with words between 4000 and 6000, like the prologue. That, means, more or less, four or three updates per month. In these parts you could find more content and more things to comment on, and probably they would be more enjoyable.
However, I could also post shorter parts, 1000 or 2000 words each. These would roll out quicker, maybe twice a week, but some of them would be a bit boring, honestly. Also, the investigation would be split in numerous parts (5 or 6) and that would probably confuse everyone.
I'll leave it up to you, which format do you prefer?

Second question! It's still a bit early, but I could decide to create my own FTEs with the V3 characters. It's a strange and risky thing to do, because they aren't my creation and have a defined backstory. As I said, however, many of them had their backstories altered for *plot reasons* and they probably could be considered different characters altogether. If I choose to do this, you'll be able to decide the people one specific MC hangs out with during free time. If I end up not doing them, there will still be interaction with the characters that could be compared to the game's bonus events.

Either way, thanks for reading! It sounds cliche but I really would love your feedback.
Let's continue with the prologue and discover the remaining talents!
*Whoosh*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kaede Akamatsu

Shuichi and me exited the classroom in which we met Kiibo and 0U-M4, who also split up, much to the former’s joy. 0U-M4 was disappointed, but didn’t complain too much.

We decided to check out the basement, which didn’t seem dangerous. Two doors were accessible there. We entered one of them and I immediately realized that I was in a sort of arcade, which was really strange, being us in a school. I didn’t know any schools that had a game room or something like that.

A very short person was sitting in a chair, observing us. He had short brownish hair, a leather jacket and black and blue jeans.
“This place is unusual, isn’t it? Even though it seems we’re locked in, there is a recreational facility…”

“Are we really locked in? Do you know it for certain?” Shuichi asked.

“No, I’m not sure… after all, I’m not sure of anything…”

“What do you mean by that?” I inquired.

“Everyone around here is an Ultimate… but I don’t know if I am. I don’t remember my talent… if I ever had one.”

“But… do you remember your name?”

“Yes, I remember that, at least. I’m Ryoma Hoshi.”

That name came to me as a bolt from the blue. I knew him… not personally, I didn’t even see him… but I heard his name from some of my colleagues. They were talking about him being a suspect of a mass killing who was being held in custody. That time, I tried to hear more, but I had to go to work on a case. When I returned I asked more about him, and what they said to me was that he had been confirmed innocent, but I knew there was something more… restricted information that nobody would tell me… maybe it was his status as an Ultimate which was being kept under wraps?

“You seem to be thinking… do you, by chance… know something about me?”

“Well…” I said. “I was trying to…”

There was no way I was going to tell him. Maybe he knew about me. But he was just there… under my nose… I need to keep an eye on him.

“I was thinking about you, that’s right…” I said. “The fact that you don’t remember your talent is strange… there is also another boy who doesn’t remember his name.”

“Yes, Kiibo. I met him.”

“He remembers almost everything about his life, but you?”

“Sadly, I don’t remember much… I remember only some events about my life. It seems that my memory has been wiped out like yours, but something went wrong.”

“Maybe it will come back to you?” Shuichi tried to encourage him.

“I hope not. I think I did something bad in my life. But it is just an hunch.”

So, he doesn’t remember anything about a mass killing. That’s good. However, he could be lying, and also, he could escape.

“What are you going to do now?”

“I’m staying here. If you think I’m going to move, that is wrong. I already explored everywhere. And, you know… trying to escape is pointless”

“What…?”

“Are we locked in this building?” I asked.
“Sort of… we’re trapped.”

If that’s true, I don’t have to worry about him escaping… but of course, it means we can’t escape too.

“I’ll check with my own eyes, ok? Maybe you haven’t tried hard enough.”

“Oh, I doubt we can escape, given the circumstances we’re in.”

He seems pretty pessimistic. There’s no way we can’t escape from a locked building. There’s always a way out.

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After Ryoma’s ominous speech, we headed towards the other room and we discovered it being a library. There, we met another girl.

“Hello, are you also an Ultimate?” Kaede asked her.

She stared at her, not answering for five seconds.

“…yes.”

After that, she averted her gaze from us. She isn’t a talkative person, it seems…

“I get it if you don’t want to talk to us…” I said. “But…-”

“I’m Kaede Akamatsu, people call me Ultimate Detective.”

…But Kaede preceded me. …Well, that’s fine. It’s better if she talks. I might cause a mess.

“And I’m Shuichi Saihara, Ultimate Magician.”

She remained silent.

“And you are?... Please, talk. This conversation isn’t an interrogatory, you know?”

“…Maki Harukawa… Ultimate Aikido Master.”

“Oh, so you’re the athletic type?”

“Something like that. I created a new type of martial arts, Neo Aikido, by myself… and I got this title.”

“That’s pretty impressive! And why did you do that?”

She remained silent again.

“…That’s not your business. If you really want to know, try to guess. You’re the detective after all.”

“That’s not how detectives work…” I said. “They need clues, time to think…”
“Umpf, did I ask for your opinion?” the brown-haired girl retorted.

After that, I remained silent. How can it be that everyone around here is either shady or not nice? Thank God I woke up where Kaede was.

“Uhm… do you know any way to get out of here?”

“No. I haven’t found any. Gathering Ultimates is an impressive and tiring task. If we were kidnapped, it won’t be easy to escape.”

“That’s why we should help each other. Together we can do whatever we want.”

At least someone around here is positive… but maybe, too much. There is no way that sixteen people, who don’t know each other, will cooperate. Especially if they seem to hate everything around them or have a crazy personality. I think we were chosen exactly for this reason: sixteen Ultimates, who are unable to work together.

“You may think that, but you’re wrong. You are too naive… even though you’re a detective.”

As one sided she ended the conversation, she left the library.

“I think… we’ll be able to talk with her afterwards. Maybe she was in a bad mood?”

“Maybe…”

With no other places to check, we headed back upstairs. We thought we had explored every nook and cranny, but we saw that some iron bars that blocked us previously were, for some reason, raised.

“Look, Kaede, there is a new path.” I pointed.

“Oh, you’re right. Maybe the exit is here?”

We turned around and I noticed Kaede was right. The place we were in really looked like an entrance hall. In front of us there was a particularly large door and a sign that displayed “South”.

“Hey, Kaede, this is the exit, isn’t it?”

“It surely seems like it!” she cheered. “However, we must be sure there aren’t any traps around here. It could be dangerous.”

“…Oh, that’s right.” It goes without saying that the Ultimate Detective has to think about everything, no matter how obvious it may seem. I think Kaede would immediately understand my tricks and wouldn’t be amused at all if I were to perform one…

“Your concerns are unnecessary. There is nothing hazardous about that door.” A deep voice declared.

A tall man with dark, long hair stood at my left, dressed with a black mask that covered his mouth. He wore a black dress and dark brown pants.

“Oh… and you are?”

“Allow me to introduce myself. I am Korekiyo Shinguji, also called Ultimate Cosplayer.”
“A cosplayer?.. You don’t look like one.” Kaede commented.

“It may be the case, but I believe I don’t give a cosplayer impression because of my clothes. For example, your cap and uniform give a particular idea to people who look at you, and the same can be said for your friend with the cape there.”

He is right. Everyone here seemed to have clothes that matched with their talent. I wonder if that will help with Ryoma.

“After all, cosplaying is what I am known for. I am famous not for my everyday clothes, but for the others that I wear. I can cosplay as everyone, from fictional to real.”

“Oh… that must be fun.” Kaede said.

“However, I cannot do it as of now. I lack specific materials. I find cosplaying so enlightening to the point I could not live without it, that is why I am suffering inside.” He sighed, laying his hands on his chest.

“By the way… we can leave this school, so there is no worry.” I said.

“Oh… you should see for yourself. It seems you haven’t understood the situation we are in yet. I wonder what your reaction will be! Kehkehkeh”

At that point, he was just being creepy. It would have been better to go.

Kaede and me were about to push the door open, when I suddenly held back. What if it was better to be ignorant? Did I really want to know what was on the other side of that door?

“Shuichi, what are you doing?” Kaede asked. “We can go out, why are you staying still like that?”

“No… it’s nothing, really…”

“Ok, so let’s go forward! Let’s see were we are!”

We both opened the door looking at each other and smiling, but we were greeted by something we couldn’t have expected at all…

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Kaede Akamatsu

The sky was blue. I could feel a gentle breeze caressing my skin, and the sun’s rays in my eyes.

Everything was normal.

However, there was one thing that was out of place.

The school and the neighboring area were completely surrounded by a giant cage.

“W-what… is the meaning of this?” Shuichi asked me, like I could answer him.

“I don’t… know… we’re confined… from all sides!”

And then, as if they sensed our confusion, the five Monokubs appeared in front of us.
“Are you surprised?! A giant iron cage? I guess I would be too in your situation!” Monotaro exclaimed.

“Yeah, man! It’s huge! I will name it The cage of the shattered hope!” Monokid added.

“W-what is up with that name?!”

“Very simple. As soon as you saw it, your hopes shattered to pieces!” Monosuke announced.

After that, Monokid began laughing uncontrollably.

“Monokid, shut up. We’re trying to explain here.” the bear continued, but the blue one didn’t stop.

Monophanie stepped up. “I guess that’s it. After all, we just came here to say that there is no escape from this cage. You cannot leave.”

I took a deep breath and called for help, so loud that everyone in the school could hear me, but there was no response. Despite I could see skyscrapers and other buildings in the distance, it seemed like no one was there, or at least, nobody heard me.

“Don’t waste your voice like that. No one can hear you.”

“How can you be so sure?! T-there is no way that you’re right..!” Shuichi exclaimed.

“I’m afraid we can’t answer that question as of now.” responded the red bear. “For now, you should continue investigating. You will also be granted a prize if you do that.”

“Prize?! We didn’t talk about that!” Monosuke complained.

“And that prize is hearing Monodam’s voice! Aren’t you dying to hear it?!”

After that last world, the stuffed bear turned his head to look at Monodam, but he still didn’t respond.

“I promise, I said! I keep my promises! So long, bear well!”

…

And, they were gone. Was… what they said… true?

…Wait. There is no way I can give up. I am the Ultimate Detective; I can find a way to escape from here! If we got in, there has to be a way out!

“Shuichi, we still have to explore! I’m sure we will find more clues on how to escape from here! Do you hear me..?!”

I said those words very loudly, but he didn’t respond. He remained still, staring at the ground. Well, this is no time to give up! I decided to deliver a scathing chop to his head to snap him back to reality.

“Ow!”

“Shuichi, don’t allow yourself to give up! That is something I understood very early during my career as a detective! If you don’t have faith in yourself, you won’t be able to do anything, do you
understand? My detective instinct tells me there is an exit somewhere, it’s just a matter of time before we find it!”

“Yeah, but… that isn’t an excuse for hitting me…” he sighed, massaging his head.

“That was the only way to make you understand. We have to stay together and help each other, supporting each other! This is how you solve a case!”

“I… guess you’re right…”

He didn’t seem very convinced… but he looked like he was feeling a bit better. It is too early to give up; we have not met everyone yet… maybe someone can help us.

Just then, another tall person came up to us.

“I wonder how did they build an humongous cage like this! Have you seen that?!?”

He had spiky, purple hair and goggles resting on his shoulders. He wore a belt and various tools attached to it, like a wrench… but also a remote controller. There were no doubts about his talent.

“…And you’re someone who works with mechanical things, right? That’s why you’re interested?” I asked.

“Hey, Kaede… you don’t interrupt people like this… you should answer their questions…”

“No, there is no problem! I see you have taken an interest in me, girl!”

“Well, girl… I have a name, you know… I’m Kaede Akamatsu…”

“Allow me to introduce myself! Behold! My name is Kaito Momota and I’m famous everywhere thanks to my extremely useful talent! I’m the Ultimate Inventor!”

“Your talent is so useful, you’re right…” I told him. “That means you know how to get away from here?”

“…Well…”

He remained silent for a couple of seconds. I guess he only thinks he’s famous…

“Not yet!” he shouted, without me expecting it. “But I’ll come up with something! I am the Ultimate Inventor for this reason, thanks to my crazy ideas that help me overcome the odds!”

“I guess we’re counting on you then.”

With so many skilled people I’m sure we can get out of trouble. Whoever brought us here didn’t take into account that we’re Ultimates, and with our talents we can do everything!

“See, Shuichi? An inventor! I’m sure he’ll help us!”

“We have to see if he can actually create something.”

“Huh? What do you mean? Of course I can!” Kaito shouted again.

“I-I’m not doubting your abilities… it’s just… how can you invent if you don’t have, like… the raw materials? You can’t snap your fingers and make it so that something useful appears.”
“Shuichi, I said this is not the time to act all pessimistic. I’m sure the Ultimate Inventor has many tricks up his sleeve.”

“Right! Kaede! Great minds think alike, right?!?”

“I’m counting on you, heh? Make something that can help us as soon as possible.”

Well, even if I told Shuichi I believe in Kaito… I’m really not sure about his capabilities, despite him being an Ultimate. Even though I am hopeful, that doesn’t stop me from analyzing the situation we’re in. I must stay focused.

“You should check the dormitory.” Kaito said. “Mine is terrible. I’m looking forward to improving it. That building there, that feels totally out of place… that’s it.”

***

Shuichi Saihara

Kaito was right. To be honest, that dormitory felt out of place, as it was placed there as an accident. It was very different from the school.

We entered… and we saw a circular hall with sixteen doors on the side, eight on the ground floor and eight on the first floor.

“Oh, there you are.”

Another girl, I assumed a student like us, despite her looking older, came to us. She wore a cowboy hat, a jacket with a light blue shirt underneath, and brown jeans.

“These seem to be our rooms… we are meant to sleep here. The Monokubs came short ago and told me so. I am here in order to see if something is concealed here.”

“Our rooms?” Kaede seemed surprised. “…I don’t plan to stay here long-term.”

“Sadly, it appears we’re not allowed to escape from this area. I will try to adapt to this situation and I plan to observe your behavior hoping to understand more about human psyche.”

“Huh?”

“Oh, sorry for my delayed introduction. I’m the **Ultimate Adventurer**, Kirumi Tojo.”

“Adventurer? That’s unexpected. I thought you were a psychologist, after the last thing you said.” I commented.

“Some people think of me as a psychologist, you’re not completely wrong. In my travels, I developed an interest towards psychology… Since I met so many different people.”

“This seems a interesting hobby.” Kaede added.

“It is not an hobby. It has been dangerous many times. I found myself in life-threatening situations, and had to deal with stressing tasks. Despite that, I enjoy it so much that I earned my title.”

Everyone talks about how hard their work is… how hard they worked to get their title… and I am here, with my talent… despite not being able to do much. I really don’t fit here. All of them are
exceptional besides me... at this point... I hope we won't find my research room... I would only disappoint everyone with a magic show.

“That’s fourteen people, right? We are only missing two.” Kaede announced. “Oof, we are almost finished. After meeting everyone, we should talk together and decide what to do.”

We said our goodbyes to Kirumi and went back outside. Kaito was still there, talking with Korekiyo. The former seemed to enjoy himself, I wonder how it was possible.

We continued our search for other Ultimates. As we headed down some stairs, we found a big, muscular guy with long, brown hair who was facing the other way. On his back there was a racket, held in place by a strap. When he turned, I saw his face, which was... intimidating, to say the least. This had to be the guy who was seen by Tenko. I’m not surprised she was scared... I’m feeling a bit uneasy too... but we have to talk to everyone, so...

“Um... can I ask you a question?”

Thankfully Kaede started talking even if she appeared worried too.

“What...?”

His voice wasn’t reassuring at all.

But then, a “thank you” came out of his mouth.

“Thank you!” he said again. “Gonta look really scary, so nobody ever talks to him... also, a girl he saw didn’t talk to him...”

Yeah, that confirms my theory.

“But you talk! I will thank you as gentleman! Thank you!” he repeated.

He seems sweet.

“Oh... thanks for being so courteous... Gonta was thinking much and didn’t introduce himself! I’m Gonta Gokuhara. People call me Ultimate Tennis Player!”

“Hmm, so you must be pretty famous, huh?” I wondered. “However, I don’t remember you...”

“That probably is because Gonta born where you were, but raised in foreign country. That reason why I talk strange now. Gonta started playing tennis with family and a teacher that enhanced capabilities... after some time became very good at sport and took part in competitions abroad!”

“Oh, and when you returned here, you got your talent, I suppose...” Kaede commented.

“Well... when Gonta came back, decided to stop tennis and start becoming a real gentleman. Gonta wants to become Ultimate Gentleman!”

“Oh, that’s a... particular talent. I wish good luck to you. And... if you can, try to talk to Tenko?”

“I think you should try.” I added. “I think if you show her your sweet side she’ll see you not as a monster, but as a human being. However... be ready for some insults.”

“Oh, Gonta want everyone as friend..! thanks for the advice. If you want meet Angie... she is in
building behind. But… she strange. Not dangerous, but strange.”

Honestly, that wouldn’t be surprising. Almost everyone here has a… colorful personality, let’s settle for that.

As we entered into the building, I immediately saw the “Angie” Gonta was talking about. She was in the middle of the room, examining the fountain in front of her. She was dressed with a black cape, but not a shirt to cover her, just a bra that resembled seashells. Her skirt was decorated with a checkered pattern.

“Oooh… this fountain is fun! It reminds me of the one in my island…!”

However, when she heard the sound of the door opening, she stopped concentrating on it and immediately greeted us.

“Hello! How’re you doing!? I’m Angie Yonaga, it’s a pleasure to meet you!”

“You… seem to be doing very well… despite the situation.”

“Oh, do you mean the giant dome surrounding us?! Well, that’s no biggie! Bad thoughts are no use! Atua is watching over me, so I am not in danger!”

“A-atua?”

“Angie can hear the voice of Atua… and tells the others what she hears…”

“Ah… so your talent has to do with religion.” Kaede guessed.

“No, not at all!” she laughed. “I am known as the Ultimate Supreme Leader!”

My face suddenly changed expression. Supreme Leader..? What was up with that? She didn’t look like a supreme leader at all, judging from her personality… I expect a leader to be calm, collected, pragmatic… all qualities that this girl didn’t seem to possess.

“That’s quite an unusual title, you know?” I managed to say.

“Yeah, right? But I am told to be a great leader by my followers! We have a really fun time together when we meet up and sacrifice people to the God of the Island…!”

“S-sacrifices?”

Here’s where the weirdness kicks in.

“Oh, oh! Don’t be scared, don’t worry… by that I mean blood sacrifices… each of us offers some blood to Atua to help him recognize us. You want to follow me? If you want I can help you…”

She came towards me. I didn’t know what to say. There was no way I could escape, especially in that moment…

“…Maybe later?” Kaede saved me. “We’re still pretty shocked by the recent developments… so we’re not feeling well now…”

“That’s a shame! But Angie is always here to wait for you! You know what? I’ll go looking for other people! Maybe they are feeling better?”
“Y-yeah, I’m sure they are…”

Me and Kaede looked at each other, confused, as Angie walked out of the door.

“W-we saved the strangest for last, huh?”

“Yeah… she seems… not right… but as Gonta said, she doesn’t appear harmful.”

I would have disagreed with Kaede, but it’s when she stopped talking that I heard I chime.

*Ding dong bing bong*

“Huh, what is this?”

*Ding dong bing bong*

“Kaede, look at that monitor!”

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**Kaede Akamatsu**

We approached the monitor to check what was going on, and we discovered that a video was playing. The five Monokubs were sitting on a couch, with different kinds of beverages in their paws.

“Please, you should gather at the gym!” Monotaro announced. “We have finished the preparations, so you’re ready to meet daddy!”

“Oh! I’m so excited! Aren’t you, Monosuke?” Monophanie giggled.

“It’s better if you go there with your own two feet, otherwise we’ll have to bring you with the Exisal!”

After that line, the video went into a loop, and the bears said the same things over and over.

…Should we go there? Those bears have something to do with this, despite them not telling us anything yet. Well, after all… it’s not like we have much choice.

“So, Kaede? What do we do..?” Shuichi asked.

“Well, we can’t stay here. Everybody else should be there too.”

“You’re right. It’s just… that I’m worried. It seems like… uhm…”

“It seems like what?”

“Well, it’s better if I keep my thoughts to myself. If I say something negative, you’ll probably get angry…”

It’s not that… I just want everyone to think positively! Because it’s the only way to avoid life’s obstacles!

We backtracked and entered the school again. On our way, we didn’t encounter anyone… they probably were in the gym already.
We searched for it for a while. We didn’t know where it was, but, eventually, we found it.

After opening the doors, we realized we were the last ones to arrive. It wasn’t a surprise, since we were very far when the announcement sounded.

“So… it seems that everyone is here, now.” Tsumugi commented.

“Yeah, I’m excited!” said Kaito, the first time I heard him not shouting. “Sixteen Ultimates in the same room! You don’t see that often!”

“I am not sure this is an event to be excited for…” muttered Kirumi, slightly worried.

“S-So many men…” I heard a voice coming from an angle of the gym, it was Tenko. “All the girls, prepare yourselves! They could assault us!”


“S-so many people… I don’t want to tire myself trying to talk with them…”

“Tenko… Gonta would like to apologize…” said the muscular men, coming towards her with a smile. However, Tenko looked more annoyed than before.

“Please. Go away.”

“But… I want to be friends!”

“Please stay away from me.” Tenko declared. “I-I don’t need male friends.”

“Yeah, talking and doing what they want is so tiresome…”

“Jeez, you’re such a lazy person…” I commented.

“Please, don’t let your guard down, we might be in danger…” Kiibo warned.

“Yeah, we might!” 0U-M4 exclaimed. “But I’m not scared! With my robot techniques I’ll protect you all!”

“Atua is watching over Angie~” the tanned girl said. “So I asked him to protect you too… he said that a offering would be appreciated…”

“This is not the time to offer blood.” Ryoma stared at Angie.

“Heeey, don’t be negative! But don’t worry, Atua is not angry with you!”

“What are you talking about, idiots!? What sort of God would have put us in a situation like this?!” Miu angrily shouted.

“Do not lose your temper. It is not healthy for you.” Korekiyo advised.

“Hey! Don’t worry! When those stuffed bears are going to appear, I’ll destroy them with my own hands!” Kaito announced.

“Maybe they’ll destroy degenerate males instead.”

“Kaito, a-are you sure you can do that?” Shuichi asked.

“Of course! Haven’t you seen Momota Kaito in action?!”
“Hey… don’t you hear that?” Rantaro asked.

“Huh, what?”

“A certain sound…”

“Yeah, I hear it clearly!” Miu said. “My hearing is excellent, you know?! It’s one of my qualities that you common people don’t possess!”

At first I didn’t hear anything. But then, in the distance, I heard a faint metallic clang, which became louder by the second.

And so, just after I had realized what happened, five gigantic robots appeared in front of me.

“YAHOO! BEAR WITH US FOR A MOMENT!”

Tsumugi let out a scream, unable to control herself.

“Kyaaaaaa!”

“Everybody! Get behind Gonta! Gonta protect!”

“Aaaah! What are these monsters!? Th-they are worse than men..!”

“Don’t worry! Gonta won’t let you get hurt!”

“Woow! Other robots! They are even cooler than me!” 0U-M4 exclaimed, excited.

“Yes, we are extremely cool! These are the Exisals! Created for you and for the world’s safety!” the blue-colored robot shouted.

“D-do whatever you w-want… but kill the ugly ones first…” Miu muttered, in her eyes pure terror.

“Guy who promised to destroy those bears… it’s your time.” Maki started talking after she remained silent for all that time.

“B-but… I didn’t expect… giant robots… aren’t y-you… the fighter?”

“Don’t worry, we’ll be fine.” Rantaro said. “If they wanted to hurt us, they would have done already.”

“So, what do you want us to do?” Ryoma asked to the Exisals.

“Oh! Hahahaha!”

The laughs came from the blue robot.

“What you’ll do is-

However, the bear was interrupted by another robot, the green one.

“A KIL-LING GA-ME”

“Huh?”

Did I hear killing game or was I going crazy? What would “killing game” mean?
“Monodam! Did you steal my line?! We agreed I would say it!”

“No, you stupid Monokid,” the yellow robot boomed. “We scheduled Monodam to say that line a while ago. We promised those bastards they would hear his voice.”

“What?! Who decided this?! It is stupid! Monodam doesn’t deserve this!”

“Wait a second! Did you say killing game?” Kiibo joined in.

“YES. A KILLING GAME”

“He said it again!” Monotaro exclaimed.

“Oh! I’m so mad! I’m going to crush him! He won’t live a second more!”

I expected the five robots to engage in a fight, but another voice sounded in the room.

“Oh, dear children… cease this mess…”

“It’s daddy! It’s daddy!” Monopathie shouted. “Stop, stop!”

And as the mysterious voice said, the bears came out from their robots and stopped fighting. Just after they positioned themselves near the podium, the gym’s lights went out and…

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Shuichi Saihara

Without any kind of warning whatsoever another bear, this time black and white, appeared behind the five Monokubs. It was significantly bigger.

“I am here to keep an eye on you… as the headmaster of the Gifted Inmates Academy! I am Monokuma!”

Headmaster?

“That’s right, you bastards! I am Monokuma! Don’t you recognize me?”

“Yaaay! It’s daddy!” The four Monocubs cheered.

“A new stuffed animal appeared…” Kirumi observed.

“But he is not any ordinary stuffed animal… I can sense madness, despair, coming from its very body…” Korekiyo ominously said.

“Hey, hey! Be respectful towards me! I just said I’m the headmaster! You wouldn’t treat the headmaster as a stuffed animal!”

“Its movements and its speech pattern seem to indicate it’s a robot equipped with an AI, even more advanced than mine!” 0U-M4 told us. “Oh, that’s so interesting!”

“No, that is not interesting at all.” Maki observed.

“Uh! Why are you so mean towards me! You kn-”
However, Rantaro interrupted 0U-M4.

“What’s interesting is what Monodam said earlier… a killing game? Could you explain what that phrase means?”

“Upupupupu, that again? I suppose that for you is the first time, huh? That’s so ironic!”

“Can you answer or not?”

“Yessir! You Ultimates will take part in a killing game against each other! So fun!”

What?.. Kill each other? There was no way we were going to do that! Other people lives are precious!

“A-a killing game? U-us…?” Kaede appeared as surprised as me.

“No way we are going to kill someone!” Kiibo shouted.

“A true gentleman never hurts anyone!” Gonta continued.

“Oh, but you know… there is no escape from here… on top of that, if you try to retaliate, the Exisals… it’s better not to describe that in detail… upupupupu.”

“So you mean… kill or be killed?” Maki asked.

“No way we will do that! We may not know each other, but we’re friends!” Kaito exclaimed.

“Talk for yourself, you punk!” Miu insulted him.

“Friends?” Monokuma laughed. “You might have been friends before, but from now on… you’ll be enemies. You’ll kill each other and you’ll understand! Understand how beautiful it is!”

I was about to throw up. How can killing someone be beautiful?! It’s sick!

“However… how should we do that? You’ll give us weapons? Now?!” Tsumugi asked.

“What are you doing!? We won’t do that!” Kaede shouted.

“I’m just trying to get some information!” the blue-haired girl defended herself. “Maybe we can still hope to get out.”

“Weapons?! Nah, that is old… this is more of an… intellectual entertainment! You have to use your wits to survive! If that wasn’t the case, people like that red-haired bug freak won’t have a chance!”

“Huh… I’m so tired… I won’t even care about you…”

And so, Monokuma and its “children” explained how the killing game would work, what was a class trial and how the blackened would face an execution if he was found out and how everybody else would have been executed if he wasn’t.

But all of that was hypothetical. There was no need to explain all of that, because the killing game hadn’t started to begin with. It didn’t matter how much I wanted to escape from the school, I would never, never… kill someone.

“So, all of this… it is a game.” Rantaro concluded.
“As if we were trapped into an arena, forced to battle against each other…” Kirumi muttered.

“No! I refuse to do that!” Kaede shouted, so loud that everyone who was talking now stood in silence. “If you think we’ll kill each other, you’re wrong! Extremely wrong!”

“Upupupupu… scream all you want… but this is only a matter of time… killings are going to happen… and all you can do is try to discover the culprit! Hahahahah!”

No.

No.

It was wrong. It was wrong.

If he thought we were going to compete for our lives, that bear was wrong. As he continued laughing, I looked at everyone’s faces. They tried to keep their cool, but everyone was worried. But… what for…? Were they really going to commit a murder? Was their desire to get out so strong?!

I wasn’t able to move, but everyone was like me, watching those stuffed toys, confused and terrified. How… why… did this happen to us? What did we do?

I didn’t know why, I wished to… but I didn’t realize it was better not knowing.

PROLOGUE END.

Chapter End Notes

Many lines of dialogue are just tweaked from the game, but that’s because we're not yet started. As the killing game begins, many things will change, including motives and the layout of the school!

Updated talents:

Kaede Akamatsu- Ultimate Detective
Shuichi Saihara- Ultimate Magician
Kirumi Tojo- Ultimate Adventurer
Himiko Yumeno- Ultimate Entomologist
Rantaro Amami- Ultimate Artist
OU_M4- Ultimate Robot
Ryoma Hoshi- Ultimate ???
Tsumugi Shirogane- Ultimate Maid
Miu Iruma- Ultimate Pianist
Maki Harukawa- Ultimate Aikido Master
Korekiyo Shinguji- Ultimate Cosplayer
Angie Yonaga- Ultimate Supreme Leader
Gonta Gokuhara- Ultimate Tennis Player
Tenko Chabashira- Ultimate Caregiver
Kiibo- Ultimate Astronaut
Chapter Notes

Publishing this one a bit earlier since the events are almost the same as the original game.
I swear that from the next one things will be different.

Also, I won't do Monokuma Theaters because I feel I won't do them justice. I'm sorry if some of you are a fan of those >.<

CHAPTER 1: KILLING SCHOOL SEMESTER OPENING CEREMONY
DAILY LIFE

Immediately after Monokuma and the Monokubs left, an alarm rang from everyone’s Monopad. So, I took it out from my backpack to see what was going on. Different instruction were displayed on the screen, many of them information that was already given to us by the stuffed bears.

#1: Students are required to cohabitate at the Ultimate Academy for the remainder of the unforeseeable future.

#2: When a murder is committed in the academy, a class trial will be conducted. Participation in this trial is mandatory for all surviving students.

#3: If the killer (hereinafter referred to as "the blackened") is correctly identified during the class trial, only the blackened will be punished for their crime.

#4: If the blackened cannot be identified, or if an incorrect student is identified as the blackened, all students except the blackened will be punished for the crime.

#5: If the blackened survives the class trial, they are declared the winner. At which point, they will graduate from the Ultimate Academy and re-enter the outside world.

#6: If innocent students (hereinafter referred to as "the spotless") continue to survive class trials, the killing game will continue until only two students remain.

#7: "Nighttime" is officially designated as the hours between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. During this time, the cafeteria, the warehouse and the gym are closed.

#8: All acts of violence toward Monokuma, the headmaster of the Ultimate Academy, are strictly prohibited.

#9: Monokuma will never directly participate in a murder.
Your Monopads are very important items. Make sure you do not damage them.

A body discovery announcement will occur when three or more students, including the culprit, discover a body.

Students have free rein to explore the Ultimate Academy as they see fit.

Objects found in research labs cannot be moved out of said research labs.

Students who violate these rules will be exterminated with extreme prejudice by the Exisals.

The headmaster may add and additional regulations to this list at any time, as well as removing any rule.

“But… I won’t… I won’t participate in this killing game!”

However, while I was in denial, another thought struck my mind.

Ryoma Hoshi.

The student who didn’t remember his talent… however, I knew that he probably killed before… was he brought here for this exact reason? Maybe he didn’t have a talent like us and our kidnapper took him here to kickstart this sick game. Regardless of his role in all of this, I couldn’t expose him just now. My classmates were clearly worried and if I announced that a seasoned murderer was in our midst, chaos would break out. Who could predict what he could be able to do.

“Who… and why would they make us do this..?” Tsumugi asked, but she was probably thinking aloud.

“Well, there are rules… it seems it has been scheduled a long time ago.” 0U-M4 commented. “My guess is that this is not the first Killing Game.”

“Not the first?!” Miu shouted “Who would take part in this fucking game?! Only dickheads like you!”

“…Shut up, meat-smelling bitch! I’m talking!”

“Heeegh! W-why… are y-you so meeeean!”

“We should keep our calm.” Tenko intervened. “There is no need to worry now… you don’t want to scare Himiko…”

I looked at the entomologist, but she didn’t seem more scared than before. It seems that participating in a killing game is not that concerning for her.

“No… I’m fine. I want my bugs, however.” Himiko stood up.

“Everyone!” Gonta exclaimed. “Don’t worry! I be there for you!”

Tenko looked at him with a grossed out face, but she didn’t say anything, at least.

“D-don’t screw with us… the killing game… the regulations…” Kaito muttered “Don’t fuck with me! Who would follow this rules?!”
He raised his arm to smash the Monopad on the floor, but as he was doing that, a hand stopped him.

It was Rantaro’s.

“Hey, stop. Breaking your Monopad is against the rules.”

“He’s right.” Kirumi said. “In the case you break your Monopad, you will be disposed of by the Exisals.”

“…Which means you’ll be killed by them. What a fancy way to say it…” Ryoma commented.

“Like I care! I don’t plan on playing this stupid game either way!”

“And so break it!” Miu shouted. “Be an idiot, the world will be happier without you!”

“Who are you calling an idiot?!”

As I thought, they’re not able to keep their calm. If we continue like this, a killing is bound to happen.

So, I took one deep breath, and yelled with all of my strength.

“STOP!”

...

No one was arguing anymore.

This isn’t the time to be fighting!”

“Huh? What?!”

“We should work together! Show Monokuma we won’t kill each other!”

“That is right.” Korekiyo agreed. “If we cooperate, there is nothing to fear.”

“Right...! That’s the spirit!”

Even though he still was creepy...

“Mh, I suppose that is the only thing we can do…” Maki muttered.

“After all… if we got in… there has to be a way out, right?” Gonta said.

“Gonta is right! I’m sure God has cleared a path for us~”

“So, we should split up and look for the entrance again.” Rantaro proposed.

“W-wait…” I heard a timid voice from the crowd.

“Himiko might know where the exit is…” Tenko intervened.

“Oh, that’s great!” 0U-M4 applauded “And where is it?! Tell me! Tell me!”

“If you are scared, tell me…” Tenko reassured her.
After that, Himiko whispered something in Tenko’s ear.

“Himiko tells me that she found a manhole in the boiler room and even if she couldn’t lift it. It looked like a tunnel was there. I don’t blame her for not checking… that would have been very troublesome for her. The manhole must be very heavy…”

“But that isn’t a problem for Gonta! I can lift it!” the big guy cheered.

“If that’s the case, we have to check immediately! That manhole is our hope! We must explore it now.” Kiibo said, pointing to the door.

“Himiko, please lead the way.” Korekiyo politely asked her.

“Don’t let your guard down. We’re surrounded.” Tenko said.

Himiko glanced at her and nodded. Quickly everyone exited from the gym, heading for the boiler room.

Rantaro, however, stopped me before I could go too.

“Amazing, Kaede… amazing… you made it so that everyone worked together.”

“T-thanks… I just said what I was thinking.”

“That’s why you are in danger now… whoever organized this killing game now knows about your personality… I wonder how they’ll react…”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m just saying… keep your eyes open… you’re in danger.” He repeated, exiting the gym and leaving me alone.

“Hey!” I shouted. “Why should I remain here alone!? Come back here!”

***

I headed towards the boiler room with the other students. As I went outside, I saw the Exisals clearing out the area in front of the school, which was still full of trees and weeds. I wonder how much time will it take. I also saw another part of the school building that was not accessible yet because grass was all over it.

As we entered the boiler room, I saw Kaede running towards us, panting.

“Why did you leave me?” she asked, looking at me.

“A-are you talking t-

“Yes, I’m talking to you…” she managed to say, before catching her breath. “You… just left…”

“I was… following the others.”

“Next time, warn me! Especially if a strange person is with me in the room!”
I was one of the first ones to exit the gym, so I don’t know what happened… but… ok… if she didn’t mind me staying with her…

“O-okay… but, aren’t we leaving now? Does it matter?”

“That’s not the point!” she rebutted. “By the way… now, let’s see what we need to do to escape from this place.”

The manhole was placed in the middle of a patch of grass and Miu didn’t wait long before making a dirty joke about it.

“T-that’s it…” Himiko said quietly.

“Oh, this? It is not a problem! Gonta can resolve your problem!”

After having said that, the Ultimate Tennis Player easily lifted the cover and laid it on the grass near the opening. Tenko stood still as Gonta displayed his strength.

“And it’s done..! Is this ok?”

“You have done a good job.” Tenko nodded. “But I must ask you to lay the manhole on the ground.”

“Yes. Please, everyone should be careful while entering…” Tsumugi warned. “We don’t know what’s down there.”

“You are not mistaken. Monokuma and the Monokubs still aren’t here, which is odd.” Korekiyo observed.

“Could it be that they’re down there, waiting for us? I hope not…” Himiko said.

“If they are, I’m going to punch them!” Kaito exclaimed.

“Well, that’s not really necessary…” Kaede advised.

We started to climb down the ladder, one after another. I went last. As I descended, I saw a very large room appearing. When I touched the ground, people already had noticed one thing.

“That sign!” Miu pointed. “It says exit! Hey, you dumb fuckers! I found the exit!”

“Actually, Himiko brought us here…” Kiibo corrected.

“What are you saying?! That insect-freak!? Bah! It is only thanks to me we made it here!”

“Don’t listen to her…” Tenko told Himiko. “You know that bullies only waste your time… they’re the true weaklings.”

“Are we sure we’re going in? It could be dangerous…” Tsumugi said, holding her arm tight.

She was right. There was no way escaping was this easy… especially after what Monokuma told us. Whoever organized this game really wanted to see sixteen high-schoolers kill each other, and a way out so easy… it didn’t make sense.

“Do you want to give up now?! We’re sixteen Ultimates! We can do it!” Kaede shouted.

“Yeah, Kaede and me have the same ideas! Hey, want to hug me?” Kaito asked her.
Well, he wasn’t someone who liked to wait, that’s for sure.

“No, don’t wanna.” Kaede responded, smiling. “Now it’s time to escape from this hell!”

Not really certain, but hopeful, I followed Kaede and the others in the tunnel, not knowing what to expect.

We headed into the tunnel, but we quickly realized escaping was seemingly impossible. The road was filled with traps, and the exit was nowhere to be seen.

Before I knew it, I passed out, and woke up in the large room I was before.

“Thankfully you’re awake.” was the first thing I heard after opening my eyes. As I regained consciousness, I saw Tsumugi sitting besides me.

“How… are the others? Kaede?” I asked.

“They are ok… nothing serious. However, they are not feeling well…”

I looked around. Everyone was, thankfully, awake, but also, filled with sorrow. Everyone besides Kaede, who was more confused than disappointed.

“What a dreadful mood! Finally, what I was expecting!”

It was impossible not to recognize that voice. It was Monokuma.

“M-monokuma?! Y-you realized..?” I blurted out.

“Realized you were here?! I knew it from the start! You guys are that predictable!”

“So this is a trap, as I thought.” Maki commented.

“Tsk, if you knew it why didn’t you say it? You would have spared your classmates from the pain…”

“But this is impossible! There has to be an exit!” Kaede exclaimed.

“Oh, yes. There is. That tunnel has one. You can reach it! If you try your hardest, that is.”

Was that… the only way out? Really?

“Upupupupu! Good luck!” he laughed, then disappeared.

“Uhnaa… so, if we try out best, we can escape..?”

“He’s lying. There’s no point in trying.” Maki commented, with her arms crossed.

“Hey! What are you saying! We only gave it a single shot!” Kaito retorted. “You can’t give up after that!”

“You’re spouting nonsense! If they let us try, that means we can’t get through! How can only I understand that?” Miu scolded.

“That’s probably true, but we only tried one time.” Rantaro explained. “When I start painting, the first draft is often terrible, so I need to improve it by practicing. Even if I’m an Ultimate, the first
time I try, I might make some mistakes.”

“But were we to try and fail multiple times… our self-esteem would, without a doubt, plummet.” Kirumi warned us.

“Kaito and Rantaro are right, we only tried one time. What if we were unlucky? You can’t give up now! Especially to Monokuma! I know you don’t want to lose to him right now!”

“K-Kaede…”

She really is a decisive person… she thinks she can overcome every obstacle…

“So, let’s combine our strengths another time… no, every time until we get out! This is the time to make our talents shine!”

“This attitude is amazing, Kaede…” Korekiyo observed. “I wonder if I can replicate it by cosplaying as you…”

“Y-yeah… but later, okay? We need to go through this tunnel!”

And so, we went through the tunnel, with an even stronger sense of unity and courage.

...

However, no matter how hard we tried, how many times we tried, we couldn’t get through the tunnel.

Each time we tried, I lost some hope… I was at my limit.

Each time, I lost consciousness, and found myself back where we started.

Each time, I lost sight of my objective… escape… appeared impossible, and pointless.

***

I kept telling myself… “this time for sure”, “this time for sure”… but my determination wasn’t enough to escape from that tunnel.

“W-we failed… again…” Gonta said, catching his breath.

“We can rest if you want, however… we must escape!” I exclaimed.

“…Stop, please…” Kiibo said.

“Huh?”

“I can’t take this anymore… I’m tired…”

“But… by giving up we won’t accomplish anything!”

“He’s right.” 0U-M4 agreed. “Even I, an advanced robot, am finding difficulties in proceeding.”

“It is so troublesome…” Himiko added.
After her, other classmates gave their opinion. Korekiyo, Himiko, Maki, Miu and Tenko wanted to stop.

“The voice of God tells me that the exit won’t be reached today…” Angie told us, with her hands joined in prayer. “We should stop now…”

“What!? You bastards want to remain here for the rest of your lives?! You want to take part in the killing game?!” Kaito shouted.

“That would be a way out… the most logical…” 0U-M4 commented.

“However, you must give up your humanity… would you do that?” Rantaro asked. I don’t know if it was a rhetorical question, but I hope so.

“Well, that thing hasn’t any humanity in it! He’s a robot, after all!” Miu intervened.

“Yes, and if I wanted I could kill you at this moment, so you should shut up now!”

“B-but…”

“It seems we’ve lost our sense of unity…” Kirumi observed, laying her hat on her chest. “A civil war always stems from a trivial argument, leading to catastrophe…”

“D-don’t be so n-negative… I’m just very tired!” Tenko said. “I’m not saying we should take part in a killing game!”

Just after, a chime sounded. It was the same I heard hours before, in the building were I met Angie. I looked at the screen, and as I thought, I saw the Monokubs relaxing on a couch.

“It’s night time!” Monotaro announced. “Time to go to bed! Remember, the cafeteria, the warehouse and the gym are closed, and will open up at 8 A.M.!”

The others talked about silly things, but I didn’t care enough to pay attention. I was in a state of numbness, I felt like I did something wrong… really, did I force my classmates into doing something they didn’t want? Was I being so bossy? I got caught up in my feelings, forgetting about the others. They were discussing, but I couldn’t hear them, as If I was underwater and unable to swim back up to the surface.

“…So, we’ll meet each other at the cafeteria, tomorrow.”

It was the first thing I could hear, and it was Rantaro’s voice.

“Yes.” Ryoma said. “We’ll decide what to do then.”

As I began drifting back to reality, I saw the others climbing up the ladder one after another. The only ones who remained in the area with me were Kaito, Shuichi and Gonta.

“Kaede, you alright?” the tennis player asked me.

“W-wh… yes, I am…”

“You were staring at nothing while we agreed to go back to our rooms for the night.” Shuichi explained. “Is something wrong?”

“It’s… this might have been my fault.”
“Your fault?! For what?! You glued us together!” Kaito intervened. “To be fair, it’s because of you we were able to resist this long!”

“However… everybody lost their will to continue.”

“But that’s not something you wanted! Even I, Kaito Momota, I don’t always succeed! If I fail, I don’t think it’s my fault, because I didn’t want it to fail, do you understand me?”

Well, if he failed, it would be his fault, actually. Regardless, he’s clearly trying to cheer me up… he’s not doing a good job, but I at least appreciate it.

“…We should really go back to our rooms. It’s late now, and if we remain here we’ll only tire ourselves out.” Shuichi suggested.

“Gonta agrees! Tomorrow I convince the others to help each other again!”

Slightly reassured by the words of my friends, I climbed up the ladder and reached the boiler room. On the way back I met Ryoma, gazing at the sky. In that state, he didn’t seem suspicious, but I knew his secret. He could kill us… if he wanted.

Could 0U-M4 do that as well? He threatened Miu, and he wasn’t joking. Everyone fiercely opposed the killing game up until now, but what if their frustration led them to murder someone? That would be atrocious and would set a dangerous precedent, leading to a domino of murders and class trials.

“At night time we are most vulnerable. You should lock your doors.” Ryoma told us.

“Yeah… you should… block your door with whatever you can.” Kiibo added.

“Gonta checked his room… there is a key. Maybe it locks the door?”

“I guess that is its purpose. We don’t know each other that well, so… even if you trust your classmates, I really suggest locking your door.”

“That’s okay, but it won’t be necessary. Just because someone is tired, it doesn’t mean a murder will happen!” Kaito smiled.

“Please, don’t jinx it.” Shuichi followed.

“We’ll do… as you suggest.”

Hmm… does Ryoma really care about our safety?

As I thought about him, we reached the dorms, each of us heading to their rooms.

My room was nothing exceptional, as I expected. However, it was fairly spacious, had a decent bathroom and a closet full of uniforms exactly like the one I wore that day. After locking the door, I collapsed on the bed almost instantly, wondering about my past, present and future.

I didn’t remember my dreams.

***
I didn’t know what time I got up, but it was before the Monokubs’ announcement sounded. I had a shower and changed myself. I didn’t have many choices; every one of my clothes was the same. I couldn’t even find a second cape, so I had to take the one I wore the day before. I then started wandering around the school since I couldn’t sleep, exploring. However, I didn’t find anything new, so I decided to wait in the entrance hall and see who would show up. Before 8 AM, I saw Kiibo, who decided to sit with me.

“Good morning, Shuichi.” He greeted me.

“Hello, Kiibo.” I said, waving my hand. I was not in the mood of a conversation, but the astronaut continued to talk.

“…How are you feeling, after yesterday?”

That was… sudden. Why did me ask this question just now…? I started freaking out, but then I calmed down. I was probably being paranoiac.

“Fine…? Really… I don’t know. This situation… it seems not real, I… still want to think it’s a huge prank…”

“Heh, that would be too good. Last night, I stayed up all night, even if I was tired, looking at the stars… with Ryoma, for some time.”

“But, if you were tired, how did manage not to fall asleep?”

“Gazing at the stars… it usually calms me down. I hoped it would even in this case.”

“That’s curious.” I observed. “All those stars in the sky remind me of the vastness of space, and how small we are in the greater scope of things… it has that melancholic vibe to it, you know?”

“For me is the exact opposite! It’s reassuring to know the universe continues on without us… if we make mistakes, overall, it does no harm to it, since it’s so large and so many things are happening in this moment… what if there are other civilization besides us? It raises so many questions… it inspires me…”

I guess I understand his point of view, even if I don’t agree with it. I’d be egoistic to think that the universe cares about me, and indeed it isn’t the case. I’m simply here, existing. I should understand that I’m not at the center of the world, and should appreciate it no matter what happens.

“Have you started thinking deep, Shuichi?” Kiibo asked me.

“Yeah, sort of…” I chuckled. “When somebody talks about the universe, I start to question myself and wonder about how things came to be, what will happen-

“No, don’t. Thinking about the future without understanding the present is harmful. Your magic tricks require preparations, right?”

“Y-yeah…”

“That’s the present. If you don’t concentrate on the present, your future –the execution- won’t be as good as you imagine… I mean, the trick will fail.”

And that’s when the announcement sounded, with the Monokubs greeting us and inviting us to kill each other. I decided to ignore them.
“Kiibo, you’re a deep thinker too, it seems.”

“Oh, no. I just like metaphors, that’s all. When I told you about stars, I wanted to tell you another thing… but everyone should be heading to the cafeteria now. I’ll tell everyone when we’ll decide what to do. Do you want to go there with me?”

“U-uhm… okay.”

So, I followed Kiibo to the cafeteria. Surprisingly, 0U-M4 was waiting there, and Angie arrived shortly after.

“How can you be here already?” I asked. “I arrived here pretty early, and there were no people around…”

“I saw you and Kiibo talk! You were so distracted by each other that didn’t see me!” 0U-M4 smiled. “Nee-hee-hee… What were you talking about? What?! Is it something… dirty?!”

“Why would you even think that!” Kiibo rebutted.

“And you, Angie..?”

“I followed God’s voice~”

That’s not really helpful… but who cares. She probably isn’t going to tell me either way.

Us four didn’t wait that long before everyone showed up. Tsumugi was one of the first people to come to the cafeteria, and offered to prepare breakfast. With her being the Ultimate Maid, no one complained.

“Thankfully, no one became a victim last night.” Korekiyo observed as soon as Kaede, the last one to arrive, closed the door behind her.

“Did you doubt that? Of course nobody was killed!” Kaito rebutted.

“By the way, Kaede… are you okay?” 0U-M4 asked. “As a robot, I can’t fully comprehend human emotions, but yesterday everyone decided to go against your plan…”

“It’s okay, don’t worry. I understood I was only thinking about myself.”

“What are you saying?! You were doing the right thing!” Kaito shouted.

“No, Kaito. We already discussed about that. I’m fine with it.”

“Ooh! I’m so happy everything was settled! I’m programmed to ensure humans live happily among each other!”

“Everybody was probably just exhausted. Especially because we were just brought here.” Rantaro intervened.

“That’s right…” Kaede agreed. “Now, let’s talk again… how can we get out of here?”

“Please, before that I want to tell you something.” Kiibo raised his hand.

“Huh. What is it?” Himiko asked.
“Last night I stayed up late to look at the stars.”

“Tsk, putting yourself at danger just like that! Are you deaf?” Miu commented, despite Kiibo not finishing his sentence.

“Well, Ryoma was there with me, so it’s not that I was alone… What I wanted to tell you is that I don’t recognize the stars that shine in the sky.”


“Right… you should know…” Tenko observed, sitting in the chair besides Himiko’s.

“That’s the problem. If I don’t recognize them, it means we’re held somewhere far from our homeland. For example, there is no polar star in sight…”

“That’s interesting. Why would they bring us so far from the place we live, however, I don’t know.” Kaede thought aloud. “I guess we’re in an area where no people live.”

“That might be it, but… how can nobody see us? With so many airplanes in the skies, one should pass, shouldn’t it?” Tsumugi asked.

“My best guess is that we’re in a prohibited airspace.”

“Or worse, a no-fly zone.” Kirumi added.

“Is there a difference?” Ryoma asked.

“Yes. A prohibited airspace is an area where flight is prevented by legal or civil means, whereas, in a no-fly zone flight is prevented because military power is forbidden.”

“That means that airplanes can’t be used to rescue us… our kidnapper has so much power?” Himiko asked.

“It could be a very rich person, who happened to be bored, and decided to pit us against each other only for their enjoyment, and the other nations couldn’t oppose them…” Korekiyo hypothesized.

“That terrible! How can someone do that?” Gonta exclaimed.

“We already established that this killing game doesn’t seem to have a purpose.” 0U-M4 observed.

“What killing game would serve purpose?! That not gentleman-like!”

“We don’t know.” Rantaro intervened. “It might be beyond our comprehension, but we might be here for a reason.”

“Yeah, that’s it!”

Monokuma, without any warning whatsoever, appeared in the cafeteria.

“Kyaaaaa!” Tsumugi screamed. “Don’t scare us like that!”

“Oh, sorry. I meant it.”

“Y-you don’t go around scaring people!” Tenko reprimanded.

“Why are you here?” Rantaro asked, calm as always.
“I saw that despite the announcement of the killing game, you still are getting along! That’s terrible!”

“Don’t go around saying this like that! Of course it’s not terrible!” Kiibo protested.

“Well it’s terrible for me. I didn’t know what to do, then I had a great idea… I’ll give you bastards a motive to kill!”

“That won’t help you at all.”

“Upupupupu… we’ll see… so, without delay, I’m going to announce the first motive of this amazing killing game!.. Are you excited? Of course I am!”

“Do it quickly and be done with it.”

“The first murderer will get a very special prize… their memories back! Upupupupu!”

“Killing for getting out memories back? Who fucking cares about them!” Kaito said.

“And how would you do that? Memories can’t come back just because you said so.” Maki commented.

“You just have to wait your victim is finally dead and… they will come back! It will happen, I assure you!”

“Daddy! Daddy! You’ve got it wrong!” Monophanie notified.

“Huh? What?” Monokuma looked at the ground and noticed the five Monokubs besides him. “What are you doing here, at this time of morning?! You should be sleeping!”

“Daddy, you should have used a different motive…” Monosuke told his dad.

“Oh, what?…” Monokuma stopped for a couple of seconds. “Yeah, you’re right, my dear children! Oh, what would I do if it wasn’t for you!”

“Oh, daddy! We’re so lucky to have you as our parent!” the Monokubs exclaimed all together.

“Since this motive is unoriginal, I’ll have to come up with something else, uhm… Yes, I’ve got it! Along with their memories, the culprit will have another advantage! They’ll be able to graduate immediately, and no class trial will be held! Just to spice up the game!”

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No class trial… wouldn’t that be… against the rules?

“I know what some of you may be thinking… but Monokuma, that goes against the school regulations! Well, who cares! I’m the one that decides the rules! And today I decided that this motive alters the rules!”

“Oh, daddy is so decisive! When he sees a problem, he immediately resolves it!” Monotaro praised. “When I grow up I want to be just like him!”
“Hell yeah! I do too! I want to become as strong as him so I can bully Monodam more than now!”
“............”

“Well, we’ve done our job today, we can go!” Monophonie said.

“So long, bear well!!” They shouted together before disappearing.

“I’m going too.” Monokuma announced. “Please kill as soon as possible and you’ll be rewarded! You can exit the school by murdering only one person, while the others continue the killing game! If you don’t want to see a massacre, take this opportunity!”

After that, he was not in front of us anymore.

“Hmm… a sacrifice…” Rantaro mumbled.

“A sacrifice? W-what do you mean?” Shuichi asked.

“If someone offers to die, the killer can go free. That’s what Monokuma meant.”

“Yes, but there’s no way someone would give up their life!” Tsumugi intervened.

“If someone is ready to do that, please step forward.” Korekiyo said.

As I expected, everyone stood still.

“So that’s it. Nobody desires to die. Predictable, but understandable.”

“What?!” Miu angrily exclaimed. “Nobody is ready to sacrifice themselves for me, Miu Iruma?! You weaklings, you are the worst people I could be locked in with! You’ll die a virgin!”

“Can someone force her to shut up..? Please…” yawned Himiko.

“Miu brings up another point.” Rantaro added. “Even if we found someone ready to die for us, we would have to decide who gets to go free.”

“...And that would be just as difficult.” I concluded the artist’s thought.

Obviously, we are nobody to decide someone else’s fate; as long as is their choice to die, we have nothing to say, but when it’s our turn to escape…I’m sure everyone would want freedom for himself or herself.

“...we should just ignore it.” I said, after.

“Huh?”

“Let’s pretend Monokuma didn’t mention this… motive… at all. Does it matter? No, we still can work hard to find an exit, and I’m sure no one would attempt a killing.”

“According to my calculations, however, murdering someone would result in the best scenario possible…” 0U-M4 pondered. “For the killer, of course.”

“Do you want us kill each other?” Tenko asked. “It’s not the first time you say killing would be better… you’re just as evil as menaces.”

“Oh!” 0U-M4’s face became gloomy. “That’s a low blow… if I could be able to cry, I would be
right now…”

“Even if you’re a robot, you’re free to join me in prayer for God~” Angie told 0U-M4.

“Ouma, why are you telling us this?” I asked him. “This way, you’re only making yourself more and more suspicious. You also threatened Miu just yesterday…”

“R-right… you’re aren’t going to k-kill me, right..?”

“Oh, that was a lie! I can’t just kill someone, you know? I was programmed not to harm humans!”

“Maybe physically, but you surely are harming my mind.” Kiibo commented.

“Ha! How funny!... No, I was joking. It was no fun at all.”

I thought I had to shout again to stop the fighting, but luckily I didn’t have to intervene.

“Let’s do as Kaede says.” Kirumi proposed. “Let’s look around the school and the surroundings to check if something new appeared.”

“I agree with that. I need to spend some time alone.” Maki said. She didn’t even let us respond that she reached the door and got out.

“Man, she’s so unfriendly.” Kaito commented. “Should I go after her?”

“Oh, oh… maybe she’s planning a murder!..!” 0U-M4 warned.

“Stop with that nonsense! Nobody is going to kill here!”

“If she wants some time alone, give it to her.” I told him. “Anyways, you’re going to see her. This school isn’t that big.”

“We should check the locked doors and buildings. There are a few.” Ryoma suggested.

“And what about those strange pieces of furniture? They’re scattered everywhere and are pretty suspicious.” Tsumugi proposed.

“You’re both right. Should we work in pairs? Everyone should check an area thoroughly and with two people for each group we are almost sure every possible clue is found.”

“However, we’re fifteen, without Maki…” Himiko said.

“Kaede can work alone. She’s used to this.” Rantaro suggested.

“Uhm… okay. No problem for me.”

So, we started making pairs. Obviously, Tenko decided to go with Himiko, but for the others it was a bit difficult. At the end, we chose to let luck decide. Tsumugi brought some papers and a pen from the warehouse and we drew names. Kirumi got stuck with Miu, who nobody wanted to be with, Korekiyo got paired with 0U-M4 and Shuichi with Ryoma.

As the other pairs were being made, I asked him if he could come closer. He did as I asked, and I nonchalantly started whispering to him, in order to not let anyone hear.

“Ryoma… he might be dangerous.”
He glanced at me with a confused look, but didn’t say anything in return.

“I’ll explain to you later. Just… pay attention when you’re searching with him, okay? And try to remember what he says and does. It’s really important.”

The magician nodded and went to the kitchen to get something to eat.

“Okay, so the pairs are made.” Rantaro announced. “Please, try not to complain about your partner.”

“Angie is very happy to be with Gonta! Is Gonta happy too?”

“Y-yeah… you make Gonta happy.”

“How happy I am to hear that! Let’s go, let’s go!”

Angie, surprising Gonta, grabbed his hand and the two of them exited the cafeteria from the back door.

“I think it’s time for me to go. I’m going to search and see if I can find something useful.”

Saying that, I also left the cafeteria, heading to my research room. I didn’t expect to uncover a secret exit, but at least I hoped I could find tools that could help me.
Killing School Semester Opening Ceremony: Daily Life (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Shuichi and Kaede explore the school and discover some secrets.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Slowly, each pair went to investigate a specific part of the school. Even if we already searched, something new could have appeared, Rantaro said. The fact that he took complete control over us was a bit suspicious, but I concluded that wasn’t anything really objective, just a feeling I had. I don’t like to be ordered around, and that might be the cause of the uneasiness I feel every time Rantaro starts to talk.

“It appears that the area we’re going to search is the basement… well, we have already been there, so why are we going there again?” Ryoma asked.

“Uhm, I don’t think you should discard the idea that something else could be hidden down there…”

“Why would you say that? The game room, where you and Kaede found me, has nothing of interest, and the library… is just a bunch of books.”

“I’m no bookworm, but it could be that some of those books contain useful information.”

“Good luck to you if you’re reading them. There must be thousands of them in there, I’m not even joking. Have you noticed they’re everywhere? On the shelves, on top of the shelves, scattered around…”

“H-hey… I was making an assumption… Monokuma could have hidden precious details in there, like your talent…”

Ryoma’s eyes lit up for a split second, but quickly returned to normal.

“Even if that was true, we would have to spend days reading from dawn until dusk. My talent is not that important.”

“Anyways, what I wanted to say is that there was a door that was stuck and couldn’t be opened. That door should lead into a room we haven’t checked yet… I doubt that room has a secret exit, but it might have something that could help with the tunnel we saw yesterday.”

“Are you still of the opinion that Monokuma is letting us escape?”

“Even if it might seem absurd, I believe him. He has trapped us here, you know, but he has set clear rules and hasn’t lied up until now… w-what if there’s a trick we can use to go through that tunnel?”

“Mhh, you may be right. However, I think it would be too easy to find it in a room like the others.”
“You can’t be sure until you prove it. …Let’s be optimistic, okay? Kaede hasn’t... given up and we... won’t either.”

As I headed for the basement with Ryoma besides me, I started wondering about Kaede’s words.

“Pay attention when you’re searching with him later, okay? And try to remember what he says and does, it’s really important.”

It came off as a surprise. When we met Ryoma, she appeared somewhat strange. She was observing him carefully; like he was a childhood friend she hadn’t seen for a long time who, by chance, appeared in front of her. I was certain she knew him from somewhere, but I surely didn’t. At first I thought he might have been a famous actor or sportsman that I didn’t know about. I don’t watch sports at all, and I’m not familiar with movie stars, but no one came up to him and appeared interested, so he had to have some sort of relationship with Kaede… but I had no idea how could they be connected. And then, the detective warned me. If she went out of her way to tell me someone was dangerous, that had to be true. Just… how dangerous was this person?

We went down the stairs and the basement appeared.

“Should we check that door first?” Ryoma proposed.

I nodded and us both arrived in front of the door, which was still closed.

“Let’s try opening it…”

I reached for the handle and the door started to open. However, it stopped where it did before. I didn’t give up, and I continued pushing.

“Hnghhhh…” I turned, and saw Ryoma standing behind me, doing nothing. “At leastnh… help me…”

“If you rely on me for this, you are very weak. You’re triple my size and you can’t open the door.”

“This… is not… the time… for this…” I said, still pushing the door with all the force I had in my arms.

“I think you can do it alone… hey, it’s about to move.” He commented. He wasn’t being sarcastic; he was genuinely convinced I was opening the door.

A moment after, he leaned against the wall and without any kind of warning whatsoever, the door opened. Completely unaware, I hadn’t the time to realize what was happening and I flew across the room, trying not to lose balance. However, in a matter of seconds, I realized that I was falling onto the floor.

Thankfully, a piece of furniture saved me, conveniently placed in the middle of the room. In my path I encountered the side of a sofa, and as I tripped over it, my whole body was safe from any kind of injury.


“A secret switch.” Ryoma responded.
I didn’t know whether or not my research room was opened, but I counted on it. I had some doubts… would such a room be unlocked as soon as the killing game was starting? Would Monokuma do that and give us a huge advantage for the investigation and the class trials? That’s what I first thought, then I realized that forcing a detective to participate was already something that would help the survivors in the trials.

That led me to think that that stuffed bear didn’t want to see each one of us annihilated, but instead would’ve liked to see the game continuing… victim after culprit, until two people were left… it was the same, pretty much, but without any doubt, the game would’ve gotten tenser each time a murder was committed. Did it mean something? Or was this killing just for the sake of killing? Who knows, it’s still too early and, on top of that, nobody here seems ready to kill, not even Ryoma.

I went upstairs, the floor where me and Shuichi woke up, and saw Tsumugi along with Rantaro checking the dragon statue out.

“Hey, Kaede.” Rantaro greeted me. “Don’t you find this piece of furniture strange?”

He was right. It definitely looked out of place.

“Y-yeah…”

“That’s what I thought. I think it contains a secret.”

“However, we haven’t found anything.” Tsumugi observed.

“Hmm… maybe it’s just a statue put in the wrong place..? It could be that was placed here but will be moved in one of our research rooms? Maybe it’s something… that Kirumi understands? You know, since she’s an adventurer and stuff”

“I doubt it.” Rantaro responded. “Despite this, I’d ask her. Should we go search for her?”

“Yes, of course. After all, Kaede is here… if something important was there, she will surely find it right..? I wonder what kinds of things she does as an adventurer... huh... I suppose we aren't that different.”

“Well, yeah... even though a maid spends most of her time in one place...” I muttered, watching the two leaving the area. Luckily, no one else was around. I didn’t want anyone to go into my room… especially if I hadn’t entered it before. Even if they had the best intentions in mind, they could end up causing a mess.

I reached the handle to open the room and then…

“Please, bear with us for a moment!”

“What are you doing here…” I said, more frustrated than curious.

“Oh, are we unwanted guests?” Monophanie asked.

“Yes, you are! Go away!”

“What?! You don’t bully Monophanie! I’m the only one who can bully one of us, and that is Monodam!” Monokid shouted.
“I can’t believe you guys always forget why we have to talk to these students!” Monosuke complained.

“Sorry if I get lost in thought… I won’t do that anymore…”

“Either way, we’ve come here to tell you that your research room is open, Kaede Akamatsu! Aren’t you happy? I would!” Monotaro said.

“I could’ve noticed it myself. We’re in front of it!” I responded, eager to enter.

“Oh, yes. We have badly timed our entrance… we’ll improve next time!” the bear continued.

“It’s Monokid’s fault! He’s always complaining and slows me down!”

“What!? Monosuke, look at yourself and understand I’m better than you! Hell yeah!”

“We should leave now, let’s leave Kaede some space.” Monophanie said.

“Let’s settle this in the hangar!” Monokid shouted, before disappearing with his brothers.

“They’re so annoying…” I muttered “What’s the point of having them here if the Exisals can be piloted in auto-mode? Bah…”

After this unwanted incursion, I prepared myself to enter my room. Before that, however, I spotted a key under my feet. A note under it clarified that its use was to lock the door. I felt relieved; nobody could enter while I was in there.

The room was the same length as the classroom I had woken up in, but considerably wider, illuminated by a large window. At the sides of the room there were two bookcases, however, only one contained actual books, the other small bottles, of different shapes and sizes. At first they seemed empty, but upon closer inspection I noticed some sort of fluid was in them. No label or any sort of indications were present on the bottles themselves, so I moved them on a nearby table to see if something was hidden behind them.

I returned to my main task. A piece of paper was sticked to the back of the bookcase, with “poison without secondary effects” written on it. After I put back the various containers in the place they were in, I checked if the liquids on the others shelves were different, and I discovered that they were indeed types of poison, but they came with other effects, such as “intense headache”, “temporary formication felt in lower party of body” and “high chance of nausea”… along with others. They were strange effects, however. How was Monokuma able to get these kind of strange, exotic poisons…? And how could they be so different from each other?

This unforeseen circumstance didn’t help me at all, instead, it made the situation worse. There were, in fact, at least fifty bottles of poison in that exact room, ready to use to kill us all. I didn’t know how much was enough to murder someone, but the killer surely had enough of it to kill one person, pouring it in someone’s drink. After that, he would be able to leave.

“No, no, what are you thinking about…” I said to myself. “There’s no way someone will kill!”

I kept telling myself that, and I believed it.

Still, I couldn’t leave weapons exposed like that.

I couldn’t bring them somewhere else because of Monokuma’s rules, so I had to hide them in the room. This option appeared difficult because of the number of the bottles that were present. I could
try to hide them behind the books on the other bookcase, but that was not practical. I would have to position each one of them individually, and the various books would appear as they were about to fall, surely a suspicious position if someone was checking my room. I also didn’t want to break the bottles because I didn’t know anything about those fluids except the effects they caused so, better not to test my luck.

“Let’s check other things… then I’ll decide what to do with those.”

Opposite to the door I entered there was a fireplace emitting light, but didn’t feel any heat. I saw the flames, but they weren’t real. In fact, they were only an image displayed on a screen. Around that, various pictures of famous fictional detectives were present. Sherlock Holmes, Inspector Poirot, Miss Marple and Nancy Drew were the ones I recognized, but there were a couple I didn’t know… well, I’m going to do some research on them when I’ll get out.

Near the fireplace, there were two rocking chairs and near them a sofa that looked rather comfortable. In front of it there was a wide desk. Under it a shredder was well hidden. However, it was useless since there were no documents around. I tried to open the drawers, but they were locked and the key I used to lock the door wasn’t the right one.

Lastly, a beautiful rug was placed right in the middle of the room.

“I guess for now the best option is to hide the poison bottles behind the books.” I said to myself.

I took a couple of bottles with a blue-ish fluid, with the description. “Non-lethal poison. Causes unconsciousness. Half a dose is needed to be effective.”

As I was approaching the bookcase on the other side of the room, I stepped on the rug. Nothing was strange, until my foot didn’t feel the ground under it. Not even a second after, it hit something that made a metallic sound, but it was too late. I lost my balance and tripped, hitting the parquet of my room. I didn’t hurt myself, but the glass bottles of poison fell and the liquid immediately started to vaporize in contact with the air. I tried to stand up, but it was already too late. My eyes were already closing.

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“Are you okay?” Ryoma asked, coming near me.

“Yes… thanks to this couch…” I said, sitting up.

Looking around, I realized we were in a AV Room. It didn’t look so different from the ones I had seen before, but just then a secret switch, which we had no idea about, was pressed, showing us that this school… or whatever this building is, has secrets. Were these secrets placed for us to discover them or not?

By the way, the room didn’t look like it had an exit route, but that didn’t mean nothing interesting was in it. Behind the couch were I was sitting, I saw a projector seemingly broken and in front of me a canvas where the various images could be projected.. On the side of it, there were two stereos. Besides those things, nothing really interesting caught my eye. There were two bookshelves with some books, but when I opened one of them I noticed their pages were completely blank.
“I think they’re here just for scenery… we already have thousands of books in the library. Who knows where they found them.”

“Isn’t it strange that nothing is written on these books?” I asked.

“Sure, but that doesn’t mean it’s something suspicious. Probably they put the books here because we weren’t supposed to see this room.”

“But if that’s the case… why isn’t Monokuma here to kick us out?”

“I don’t know, but as long he’s away from us, I’m okay with it.”

“R-right. Maybe he hasn’t noticed yet. We need to be quick. Let’s search this room thoroughly.”

That is what I said, but sadly, that room didn’t look special at all.

However, when I pulled the small cord to roll the canvas up, something flashed in front of my eyes, just for a moment. It looked like a lock that could be opened with a specific key. I could have gotten a better look at it, but the canvas immediately unrolled and Monokuma materialized before me.

“What are you doing?! Taking advantage of my morning nap?!”

“M-Monokuma?” Even if I saw him earlier, him appearing still shocked me.

“You don’t recognize me? Of course I’m Monokuma! The one and only!”

“You’re an AI. There could be millions like you.” Ryoma responded.

“Are you saying I’m not unique?! Should I unleash all Monokuma spares to teach you a lesson?! You are on the verge of breaking the rules!”

But… Wouldn’t dispatching Monokumas everywhere prove Ryoma’s point?

He didn’t appear worried, despite Monokuma just threatening him.

“…Don’t you understand?! Are you deaf?! I told you your life is in danger!”

“The only thing I saw on the Monopad that involved you…” Ryoma explained. “Is something like… Violence against headmaster Monokuma is not allowed.”

“You think that psychological violence doesn’t count?!…” the bear shouted, furious. “But… it wasn’t that clear… and killing you know would be so boring, after all. The first victim should be murdered by one of you, instilling worry in each student, and starting moving the domino tiles that lead to despair!”

When was he going to shut up about that despair that always invoked?.. Was it really… what would happen to us after the first murder? I asked myself, what if we started doubting each other? That would lead to despair… that’s right… the first murder was dear to that crazy bear, because it ensured that others would come after.

“By the way, I came here because you guys were snooping around things you shouldn’t have seen!”

“You want to kick us out this room? But the rules said that the school ground could be investigated without particular restrictions!” Roma complained.
“Ehm… that’s right… but this room had particular restrictions! Look, it’s written there!”

Monokuma pointed at the door, still opened, where a paper was hung thanks to a nail. Ryoma read it.

“Access to the A/V room is at the moment prohibited seeing as how the area is not yet ready and is in need of improvement. The students are to be notified when the room will be accessible. That wasn’t here before. Did you place it?”

“Yes! But the fault isn’t mine; this misunderstanding is because I don’t keep an eye on my adorable Monokubs! They must have forgotten it… but how can I punish them? They’re so cute! They make my heart melt!”

It must be something that only animals of their species… I mean, AI of the same type, can understand, because none of us students enjoys their company and of course don’t find them cute. Maybe if they weren’t always arguing with each other and weren’t obsessed with us killing each other… and they didn’t control giant menacing robots… I could think they’re ok.

But cute... nope.

Monokuma stood in front of us, waiting for us to move.

“So?! Be quick! I’m getting angry!... As always, I have to do things by myself!”

The bear disappeared, making me think he was finally gone, but then appeared behind us, and pushed us –with an unnatural force for a stuffed toy- out of the door.

“And don’t enter until I tell you to!” He scolded, before closing it. Immediately after I heard the sound of a lock, but it wasn’t the one I thought I had seen previously, but the one of the door. Unless we had the right key we couldn’t enter.

“It seems we found something.” Ryoma said.

“Something? We didn’t…” I corrected him. “And now, this room is locked and we don’t know for how long…”

“I meant… something was hidden behind the canvas. If I noticed it, you must have seen it as well.

“A-actually, yes… it looked like a lock.”

“However, nothing else was there. Just a lock, casually there.”

“Either way, we don’t have any key with us… we couldn’t enter.”

I looked at Ryoma expecting him to reply or maybe say something… however, he remained completely silent.

“Hey, look at that…”

I pointed to a part of the wall colored slightly differently from the rest.

“That is where I leaned. And that opened the door.”

“Should… we check the library, now?” I asked him.

“If you want… we have a lot of time on our hands.”
As he talked, I tried to remember each one of his words, even though that was impossible. I was aware of the fact that wasn’t necessary, but I also knew that some of those words could be important to Kaede for her investigation, or whatever she was planning on doing. To me, Ryoma appeared laid-back, calm… he didn’t even worry when Monokuma was intimidating him. This was interesting, but I had only spent less around an hour with him, so my judgment was totally inaccurate.

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A faint sound in the distance, but very far… I thought it was coming from the floor below…

The sound came closer, but I still didn’t know what it was…

Only when my vision started to come back again, I figured out that someone was knocking, No, banging… on the door.

“Kaede, Kaede… are you here?” It was Tsumugi.

“I have already told you, she isn’t here.” Rantaro told her.

“But where could she be? We’ve searched all around the school!”

“I also believe she is there.” Kirumi said.

“Why can’t we leave this place!? I need to visit my research room!” Miu complained.

What was going on? …All that I remember is that I fell when I least expected… and that the poison bottles broke…

Uhm… before retracing what happened, I needed to answer those four.

“Hey… hello! I’m here, you’re right…” I responded, still lying on the floor.

“Oh! Kaede you’re there!...” Tsumugi exclaimed. “What were you doing!? Why didn’t you answer us!?”

“Oh, uhm… how long have you been knocking on my door?”

“It must’ve been… around ten minutes.” Rantaro explained.

“That’s a lot of patience you have.”

“You’re fucking right! She’s okay, we’re free to leave! Kirumeh, let’s go to my research room!”

“Miu, it is still closed. We went there fifteen minutes ago.”

“Sorry if I am interfering in what you’re doing…” Tsumugi started “But why didn’t you answer? We were loud, especially Miu.”

“I was sleeping…”

I didn’t outright lie to them since I was sleeping, in a weird way. I didn’t want them to know what
happened to me, because they would ask me questions and probably feel obligated to help me. Whatever caused my fall was something only I could know of.

“Ah! You were dreaming of an handsome man in your bed, at night… what a perv! That’s why you didn’t answer to us!”

“Miu, why do you think everyone here is a pervert?” Tsumugi asked. “That’s… not… you know what? Think what you want… You probably won’t change your opinion.”

“Are you alright? Are you sure?” Kirumi inquired.

“Your voice… is a bit funny.” Tsumugi followed.

“That’s because I just woke up… this room is a mess.”

Tsumugi offered to help me. “Should I help you organize it? The more messy it is, the more I feel obliged to tidy it.”

“No, no worries. I can do everything alone… but… what time is it?”

“I have yet to find clocks, but, judging by the position of the sun… I’d say around 4 p.m.”

What!? 4 p.m.? That was a really long time… I don’t think my explanation is very convincing…

“Before you go… Kirumi, have you inspected that dragon statue?”

“Yes, I did. Unfortunately, I do not think will aid us in our escape.”

“That’s what I thought… and did you find something in the area you searched?”

“No… however, the section of the garden me and Miu inspected conceals something.”

“How can you be sure?”

“I am not sure, I have this feeling that a secret is hidden under my feet.”

“Heegh! Kirumeh, are you a fetishist?!”

“I’m feeling rather uncomfortable with her around me…” Tsumugi said, referring to Miu. “I’d prefer to leave now.”

“Y-yeah… I’m coming too.” Rantaro added. “I’m going to see if someone else needs our help, okay?”

“Since you told us you feel well, we’ll leave you alone for now.” Kirumi said to me. “Regardless, I’d enjoy some fresh air if I were you.”

I was about to respond, but something else caught my attention. The key, previously placed in the lock, was not there anymore. There had to be a reason, but that wasn’t the time to investigate.

“Uhm… guys… I think I’m locked in.”

“What?! I thought you said you were ok!” Tsumugi cried.

“I know, I know! I locked myself in the room with a key, but it’s gone!”

“Keys don’t disappear, dumbass!” Miu shouted. “You’ll find it! Just search!”
“We can’t leave her there.” Rantaro intervened. “Do you see any way out?”

“Uhm… yeah. There are some windows. I could climb down from there… however, I need a rope.”

“We’ll get it from the warehouse, I saw one there.” Tsumugi said.

“Either way, you should search for the key around your room.” Kirumi told me. “You locked yourself in, so it seems debatable that someone else took it.”

“It’s strange, I know… I’ll think about it.”

The four, with Miu still complaining, said goodbye and left.

The adventurer was right. How could someone enter? The only entrances were the door and the window, but the latter couldn’t be opened from the outside and was in perfect conditions; nobody broke in.

However, I also needed to know how did I fall, so I got up from my position. I saw the glass shards that were scattered around me. Thankfully they didn’t hit me. Something was under the rug, and I swiftly got rid of it, moving it on the other side of the room. I discovered that a squared hole was conveniently placed near the middle of the room, but it wasn’t a normal, “natural” hole. It was about 20 centimeters deep and covered by shiny metal.

“Why would a thing like that be here…?” I wondered.

I thought it was like a vent leading somewhere, and the supposed “end” of it was just a panel, but it didn’t move at all. It could prove useful to hide the poison bottles, but there was nothing I could use to safely cover it except the rug, so if someone happened to walk over it, all the glass bottles would break and chaos would be unleashed. A board to cover it up would be a solution, but firstly, I had to find one. The poison bottles were still in plain view and looking around another time, there was no option other than hiding them behind the books. I also discarded the possibility of hiding them under the desk, near the shredder.

As I approached it, however, I noticed that there was something in it: dozens little pieces of paper. They weren’t there before or am I crazy?

“I’m getting way too paranoid.” I said.

I sighed and started getting down to business.

After five –or more?- minutes of back and forth, I finally hid every bottle and repositioned the books, while searching for the key and waiting for the others to arrive. With no effective method to pick up the shards, I was forced to keep them where they were. Some of the books ended up not fitting into the bookcase, so I moved them in the other one. There was still one problem to resolve: the pieces of paper that described the effects of the kinds of poison. No matter how hard I tried, they were firmly stuck; various layers of adhesive tape were stacked on top of each other. It appeared they were unmovable.

“That’s the most I can do.” I said to myself.

Now, after ensuring that everything dangerous was hidden, I just had to wait for the others. I hoped Miu wouldn’t convince them to leave me alone.
“There is no need to worry. Kaede is in her research room, apparently not hurt.” Kirumi announced.

I let out a sigh of relief and wiped out the sweat from my forehead. Me, Korekiyo, Ryoma and 0U-M4 were waiting in the entrance hall for news about Kaede. She was missing since morning and I feared for the worst. I thought that someone had targeted her, but when Tsumugi, Rantaro and Kirumi came back with a smile on their faces—not Miu, she looked like she wasn’t enjoying herself— I understood that things were okay.

“However… she can’t get out of her room.”

What?!

“Yeah, she locked herself in her room! What for, we don’t know!” Miu complained.

“That’s suspicious…” 0U-M4 giggled.

“Your circuits must be all over the place!” Miu said. “If someone’s suspicious, you shouldn’t be laughing!”

“I’m enjoying myself! If Kaede is suspicious the game will be more interesting!” 0U-M4 exclaimed, crossing his arms behind his head.

“Kaede must have her reasons to lock herself in her room…!” I rushed to the defense of the detective. “And that’s not important right now! We need to rescue her!”

“No need for the discussion to get heated up… can’t I point the obvious?”

“You only wish to create disharmony among us, why is that?” Korekiyo asked. “Is it because of your robot nature?”

“Even if I don’t have an heart like yours, I still feel and understand… but it could be that my software needs improvement.”

“Just as I thought. No robot could ever mimic to perfection a human being… humans are truly unique!”

“Can we stop talking about the beauty of humanity and focus on what’s happening now?” I cried out.

“Y-yeah, that would make more sense…” Tsumugi said.

“Even if Ouma wants us to doubt each other, what he said is true. We should ask ourselves, and then her, why has she been in that room since we split up.” Rantaro chimed in. “We can ask her when we meet… however, firstly we need to get a rope from the warehouse.”

“That is what we were about to do.” Kirumi explained. “I thought that clarifying what were we doing was essential.”

“Yeah! A rescue mission!” 0U-M4 laughed. “That’s so exciting! I was so bored up until now!”
“Bored to the point you decided to abandon me to search alone…” Korekiyo observed.

“Well, I came back! So, who cares about my amazing adventures.”

We headed for the warehouse and easily found a rope while I tried to ignore 0U-M4’s sarcastic comments. After that, we circled the school to find the window we were searching for.

“Hey! I’m here, guys.”

Kaede was flailing her arms to make us notice her, window already open.

“Kaede, are you alright?” Tsumugi asked.

“Yeah, considering the situation… I think I’m fine.”

“I’m going to throw the rope at you.” Kirumi explained. “Then, you will need to climb down.”

“Pay attention, it could be dangerous.” Rantaro warned.

The adventurer threw the rope a couple of times before it could reach the window, but Kaede managed to grab it, attach it to somewhere in the room, and started descending. The window wasn’t that high, however I was extremely worried that the detective could fall… obviously that wouldn’t kill her, but would still hurt.

Thankfully, my worries disappeared as Kaede safely landed on the grass, thanking Kirumi for her help.

“Hah! And this thing is also done. Oof! What a day…”

Rantaro immediately started talking.

“Finally Kaede came back from her nest! Has she enjoyed herself?”

“U-uhm… yes… no?.. That’s such a weird question, what should I answer?”

“Ah! That’s exactly what I wanted to hear!”

“O…kay..?”

“I’m grateful you’re safe. That’s good.” Tsumugi said.

“ Aren’t we forgetting an important thing?” 0U-M4 asked. “Kaede is very suspicious, if I say so myself!”

The detective looked at him with a confused look, but I guess she was slightly irritated too. Regardless of her feelings, she didn’t say anything.

“We should check the room! I wonder what’s in there! Nishishi…”

“Hmmm… I’d prefer you wouldn’t go there. There is… some pretty personal stuff.”

“Hyahahah! What do you keep hidden in there?! Something… to spend your time with?” Miu asked.

“Not what you think.” Kaede answered crossing her arms.

“So the research rooms really are tailored for us!” Tsumugi exclaimed. “I wonder how mine will
be… and Ryoma’s! I bet that as soon he sees his one the memories will flood back!”

“Yeah…” Ryoma didn’t say much.

“So, you’re leaving your room.” 0U-M4 observed. “Isn’t it dangerous? Your… personal stuff is there, and anyone could take it!”

“The door is locked, that’s why she got out from the window. ” I noted.

“No, Shuichi. Ouma is right.” Kaede said, looking at the ground. “The fact that the door is locked only causes more problems.”

“Now a new entrance has opened up.” Rantaro explained, pointing at the window, still open. “There’s no way we can close that from the outside.”

“Don’t forget the key, you lame asses!” Miu shouted. “If Kaede was locked in someone had one to lock her in! How can you be so stupid?!”

…and she was promptly ignored.

“Plus, I think someone has a key that can unlock and lock the research room… I locked myself in, so somebody must have had a copy.” Rantaro concluded.

“What a stupid invention!” Miu commented.

“However, I came up with a plan… sort of. It’s not that easy, but will make sure my personal stuff remains well hidden.”

Rantaro, smiling at her, nodded. It was obvious that he understood that the “stuff” Kaede was talking about was something very serious –I understood it too after all- but didn’t press, knowing that the detective wouldn’t reveal more than she already had said.

“So, for this plan to work… I’m sorry, but I need Shuichi.”

“M-me?” I asked, surprised.

(Of course it’s you, Suckichi! I don’t know why would Kaede ever want you to get that plan in motion, but apparently-”

“Please, stop shouting. My ears are suffering.” Korekiyo said.

“If Kaede wants to discuss the plan alone with Shuichi, we should give them some space.” Tsumugi told Miu.

“Yes, you’re right.” Rantaro nodded. “Ouma, come with me. We should tell the others that we found Kaede, safe and sound.”

“Umpf, I just wanted to enjoy myself!” The robot complained.

The seven of them left, leaving the rope in its place as requested by Kaede.

She took a deep breath before talking.

“Well, it isn’t really a plan… I just want you to help me doing something.”

“Is it about Ryoma..?” I asked, whispering.
“No, not about that. We’ll discuss Ryoma this night.” Kaede explained. “You should guard this place, ok? I’m asking you because I trust you more than everyone else here.”

I was taken aback. Does she really think I’m capable of doing that?

“Shuichi, are you worried?” She asked me, putting her hand on my shoulder. “You don’t have to be. I’m sure you’ll be able to do it… I’ll be back very soon.”

“B-but… what if someone sneaks up to me?”

“You’re the Ultimate Magician! If you got this title, you won’t have any problems! If people try to deceive you, I’m sure you’ll understand their tricks… and, have you seen them? They listened to me, there’s zero probability they’ll try to enter into my room!”

“If you’re not worried… why are you asking me to guard the window?”

“Because I can never be sure… my instinct tells me that someone here is lying and really wants to get into that room… even if I want to believe everyone. But I’m sure. I believe you…” She paused for a couple of seconds. “Do you believe me?”

“H-huh?”

“I know you can do great things, Shuichi. Believe in me believing in you.”

What’s that supposed to mean?

But... I couldn’t disappoint her. I had to stand in front of a window, just that. However, I was afraid of screwing up and disappoint her even more. I stood still for some seconds, thinking about my answer. I had to say yes to her. It was so simple of a task that telling her it was too difficult would make me look like a complete idiot.

“Yes… I’ll guard the door.”

“Great Shuichi! I assure you, I’ll come back immediately.”

Kaede walked away at a steady pace, waving me goodbye once she turned around the corner.

I crossed my fingers hoping she would come back in a matter of minutes.

Chapter End Notes

FYI: I am almost at the end of the trial. I just need the last part when the culprit is definitely proven guilty. Writing the trial has been more difficult than I imagined, it really takes a long time with the script style and all the games.

An-y-way, I’ll start posting on Wednesdays. Chapter one is going to be nine parts total, unless I decide not to split the investigation.

Last thing, I didn't specify it before, but the main theme in this story will be emotion/logic. I guess that V3 had this as a secondary theme (Belief VS logic) but to keep things different enough, I switched them up. At least I tried.
I spent some time looking for Gonta, eventually finding him near the boiler room, still with Angie. The two weren’t apparently searching for exits, but just sitting and talking to each other.

“Angie, can I steal Gonta from you?” I asked, approaching them.

“Oh! Kaede, there you are! Stealing is bad, you know?!”

“…Yes, I know. I don’t really want to steal him… however, it’s really important.”

“I can’t come?” Angie asked. “We are best friends now!”

Thankfully, Gonta stopped the Supreme Leader.

“Angie, don’t worry. Gonta not abandon you. I stay here with you!”

“…I’d have preferred to discuss this only with Gonta…”

“You don’t want me to hear? Well, Atua will tell Angie regardless, so it’s better if you don’t hide your intentions!”

I decided to tell Angie my plan too, despite her sketchiness, since Gonta wouldn’t leave the room without her.

“Gonta, I wanted to ask you a favor.”

“Gonta do his best not to disappoint you! What do I have to do?”

“Have you seen my research room..? Second floor, where that strange dragon statue is…”

“Gonta hasn’t, but it not difficult! Very easy!”

“Uhm… right, however, finding it wasn’t the favor I wanted to ask… first of all, are you accustomed to staying up all night?”

“Nyahahah! What a strange question!” Angie giggled, flailing her arms.

“Sort of…” Gonta smiled, scratching his head. “I don’t sleep a lot, I have trained at night many times and went to sleep before morning.”

“That’s great!” I exclaimed. “It will be easier for you. I wanted to ask… can you guard my research room door this night..? It’s just for today, I’ll come up with something else tomorrow. I’m scared
someone might break in.”

“Why are you asking Gonta?” the tennis player inquired.

“Because I don’t see you doing what I tell you not to… never. You want to become a gentleman, so I’m sure you won’t betray me.”

“Kaede’s right! Angie thinks Gonta would never betray anybody!”

“But why only me? It would be safer with more people around…”

“Gonta’s right! He’ll be sooo bored alone all night!” Angie commented.

“And, even if Gonta wants to stay awake, he might need to go to the toilet… or could fall asleep!”

The tennis player was right, in fact I planned to ask someone else to guard the door with him, but I still didn’t decide. I couldn’t trust anyone blindly; I had to think about the best pick… and more than that… I don’t know how people would react if I forced them to do something they didn’t want again… maybe they wouldn’t listen to me anymore.

“I’m going with Gonta!” Angie smiled. “We can have a sleepover together! Just us!”

“Angie is right, that’s a great idea! Gonta never had a sleepover!”

“Oh! We’ll sit and pray to God!” she said, joining her hands in prayer, then talking to me. “God will protect us and the door we’re guarding!”

“Uhm…”

Yeah, I don’t think Angie is someone I can trust…

“Don’t tell me you don’t want Angie to help you!” Angie gasped.

“No, no… it’s not that!! I think someone else… uhm… I think you need to rest, don’t you?”

“Gonta won’t leave Angie’s side! Angie is very kind with Gonta! Please let us help you together!”

I laid my right hand on my forehead. Could I really trust that freak? Gonta seemed to enjoy himself and Angie clearly didn’t hurt him…

“Okay, okay. You can both go.” My mouth moved. I wanted to reflect about it more, but I blurted out those words without thinking at all.

“Nyahahah~ Thanks Kaede! You know, you can join Gonta and me if you want! We’ll talk and have fun together!”

“Do you know where my research room is?” I asked, not wanting her to press me.

“Yeah, totally! I’ll go there right now! I was getting tired of this boiler room!”

She sprinted towards the exit, and then turned back seeing that Gonta didn’t follow her.

“Gonta, what are you doing? You want to help Kaede, right?”

“Yeah, I was lost in thought.” he responded, heading for the exit too.
I left the boiler room too, going back to Shuichi, who I found waiting where I left him with a relieved expression.

“Oh… Kaede, you’re back… finally… time didn’t seem to pass at all…”

“Uhm… I guess I should tell you what I did while you were there waiting.”

“I-if you want…” Shuichi blushed.

“I went to search for Gonta. I asked him to guard the door to my study center. Then Angie decided to tag along…”

“Don’t you think she’s dangerous?”

“Well, I think she’s rather suspicious… but I’m sure she won’t kill anyone…”

“You can never know what people have on their mind…”

“I know they shouldn’t think about killing their friends!”

“I guess you’re right…” he stopped for some time. “We… have to spend the night here..?”

I looked at him. He didn’t seem in the mood of waiting under a window.

“That was my plan.” I answered.

“Is there something so dangerous there? I mean, if it’s a weapon, nobody can use it outside of the room… and I doubt two people would go in there knowing the other would kill them.”

“You can never know what people have on their mind.”

“A-already quoting me..?”

“I’m just saying… it’s better if we keep the entrances closed for good. Any ideas?”

“We should check if there are boards somewhere in the school. We can seal the door from the inside, first of all…”

If that’s what we wanted to do, I had to take matters in my own hands. I was no carpenter, but I didn’t trust anyone to enter my room, even if I was with them.

“However, for the window… it’s not so easy….”

The magician was right. If we wanted to board up the window, we firstly had to find a way to reach the second floor from the outside—maybe with a platform—but after that, someone skilled enough would be capable of removing the boards.

“It’s still a good plan.” I reassured Shuichi “You should go check the warehouse to see if something useful is in there. You found the rope that saved me, after all!”

“Hmm… okay… But I don’t know how many boards I will be able to carry…”

“Oh, that’s not the problem! You haven’t found them yet! Don’t overthink what you’re doing… do everything step by step, and it will be far easier!”

“Yeah…” I heard him say. “S-so… I’m going…”
“Yeah, Shuichi. Good luck!”

He’s so insecure. Why is he like that? Did something happen when he was investigating with Ryoma.? That boy is the only one I feel I can trust… but what we’re doing won’t work if he continues telling himself he’s worth nothing… Umpf…

***

I was confused. Kaede was asking me so many favors… was it because she really trusted me or because she thought of me as a pushover?

“No, no… what are you thinking…” I whispered to myself. “You’re being ridiculous.”

Kaede, despite her bossy attitude, was a caring person, I understood that much…. but why, if she believes in me, doesn’t say what is in that room? Why doesn’t let me in there?... Is it too much for me? Does she suspect me…?

Then I stopped walking, freeing my mind from those awful thoughts. They were harmful and nothing more. Even if Kaede was just using me, she had a valid reason; she wanted to protect everyone…

“Just like yesterday…” I continued talking out loud.

She may lie about her trust in me, but I trusted her. She is a good person.

I stepped into the warehouse, where I found Kaito and Kiibo rummaging through the shelves. I hoped they weren’t searching for drugs, at least.

“H-hey…” I approached them.

“Oh! It’s you, Shuichi! How’s it going?!” Kaito exclaimed.

He gave me a pat on the back that almost made me lose my balance.

“W-well…” I answered, keeping my distance from him. “What… are you doing?”

“Me and Kiibo are searching for objects that can aid us in our escape! This warehouse is huge!”

“…So we thought we could find something useful… something that Kaito can manipulate.” Kiibo concluded.

“But we can’t find anything! Man, it seems Monokuma wants us to stay here!... That won’t stop me! I need to get back outside and show my inventions to the world!”

“Yeah, I know you like to think big… but for now, I’m searching for boards… or something that can seal doors…”

“There are no boards here.” Kiibo clarified. “The only thing that could help you is some duct tape… but I believe it won’t be enough to block a door.”

“What do you need it for?” Kaito asked, puzzled.
“…I don’t know… Kaede told me we have to seal the door to her research room, for whatever reason… she says there is some personal stuff in there.”

“Man, those girls, they’re really secretive. I wonder what is there. Probably it’s nothing important.”

“It’s not something about her!” I defended Kaede. “She says it’s something dangerous!”

“Yeah, it could be.” Kaito brushed off my sentence.

“Just wait here.” Kiibo told me. “I’ll get that duct tape and bring it to you.”

The astronaut went somewhere and after less than a minute came back with the duct tape in his hands.

“Here you go. Maybe I’m wrong and it will hold.”

“Some duct tape won’t do. No, no.” Kaito shook his head. “If you want something that really gets the job done you have to ask to me, Momota Kaito, famous everywhere!”

When is he going to stop?

“Ok, I’d be very grateful… so, create something.”

“What? I can’t do it right now! I need time to think, to create, to test! I need materials!”

That guy was really strange. Didn’t he say that what Kaede was hiding was nothing important? Then why did he want to help?

“Well, we don’t have all the time of the world. If you really can create something, do it quickly.”

“Yes! I’ll do my best!.. Kiibo, let’s continue searching!”

I stayed with them for a while, checking the place. I found many interesting objects, but nothing sturdy enough to successfully block a door or window. Duct tape was the only feasible choice.

I left the warehouse, wanting to go back to Kaede, but then I decided to take a detour to the library. I get bored very easily, so a good read would probably be a way to waste time. There were way too many books for my taste, despite me being sure that between all those thousands, there was one book that I would have liked more than anything else in my life.

At the end I picked up the three books with the most interesting titles.

Kaede was where I left her, sitting on the grass, lost in thought.

“H-here I am…” I said.

She glanced one last time at the sky and shifted her attention to me.

“Shuichi, you’re finally back. It took you some time.”

“I wanted to be sure… that I searched everywhere.”

“And did you find something that could help us?”

I showed Kaede the duct tape.
“Oh, interesting. We could use it to block the door… I don’t know if it will remain closed, though…” she said. “However, we have no other choice. Can you give it to me?”

I passed it to Kaede, who inspected it carefully, weighing it in her hand. I had no idea what good was it for, but I didn’t ask question. I was sure the Ultimate Detective knew what she was doing.

“Meh, it’s simple duct tape. If someone’s able to unlock the door, they’ll rip this easily if they push with some force. Well, it’s still something. I’m going to cover the door with it, for safety measures.”

She stood up and climbed up the rope without any problem whatsoever.

“You… you really look like an expert climber, you know?”

“Ah, you think so? I took some classes a while ago, but nothing too difficult. My trainer told me I had to practice.”

“Your trainer?” I asked, curious.

“Yeah…” she nodded, finally reaching the window. “I didn’t become the Ultimate Detective alone… I received some help, even in the form of physical training.”

“Oh… that’s interesting…”

“…And my trainer said I should know how to climb, with or without ropes…”

“That’s some very specific training. Why would it be useful?”

“…I don’t know… my trainer told me I could find myself in a chase and I had to climb walls… he recommended bringing a rope everywhere.”

He sounded a bit crazy. At least that craziness helped Kaede becoming an Ultimate.

“I’m off… sealing the door.” Kaede said. “I’ll come back immediately.”

“O-oh… don’t rush it…” I told her.

She gave me a thumbs up and disappeared behind the window.

I sat on the grass, back leaned against the walls of the school, deciding to look at my surroundings as well… how much time before she comes back?

***

After covering the door with all the duct tape I had at my disposal, I climbed back down taking other books with me. I decided that, since me and Shuichi would take turns at night, I had to find a way to keep myself awake… and my choice was reading. None of the books had captivating titles; most of them were boring essays that didn’t catch my attention… then I remembered, I couldn’t take objects out of the research rooms. There were some that appeared interesting, but, sadly, they would be kept inside.

As I climbed down, I realized Shuichi had some books with him.
“Great timing.” I said.

“Eh?” He responded, confused.

“I was just thinking that some books would be a great way to spend time here.”

“O-oh… me too, actually…”

“What’s that book about?”

“Uh?.. Yeah… it’s a novel about a detective who’s investigating a number of strange cases… they are connected, however, he’s stuck already.”

“A detective story? Maybe I can help you!”

“Well… a man is found dead in a library, his skull crushed under the weight of a heavy object. But… the detective realized that the weapon he and his assistant thought was used to kill him is in reality a fake… so they don’t know what to do…”

“Oh.”

“I still don’t have a clue.”

I let out a nervous smile. “The book just started. I’m sure you’ll understand as the story goes on.”

Shuichi nodded. “So… is it okay if we talk about Ryoma now? There’s nothing particularly interesting about him…”

I quickly shut Shuichi’s mouth with my hand.

“Hmmm!” he tried to speak before I moved my arm and let him speak again.

“Don’t be so loud…” I warned.

“…I wasn’t…”

Maybe he’s right. I took it too far.

“S-sorry… I didn’t have to… do that…”

The magician looked at me and sighed. He was thinking I was taking advantage of him. I tried to make up.

“If you don’t want to… you don’t need…”

“Don’t worry…” Shuichi said. “I get it… you don’t want the others to know… safety…”

“You seem tired. Are you okay?”

“No, I’m not. How can someone be okay in this situation?” His tone changed and got bitterer.

“Hey, calm down. Getting angry will only make things worse.”

“I know. I’m angry with myself. Not with others.”

“That is no different. It doesn’t matter whom you’re angry at, it’s not healthy. Life’s not easy, and that’s why you shouldn’t make it more difficult.”
Shuichi looked up to the sky. It was still day, but we could already see the moon, hidden behind a cloud.

“You’re right. I need… to be strong.”

“Right. I don’t want to pressure you; I understand that when enough is enough. Whatever you want to do… it’s up to you.”

“Let’s get this thing about Ryoma out of the way… He doesn’t seem suspicious to me. He’s not a talkative individual, but I think he’s a good person at heart.”

“He didn’t try to hurt you…? Never?”

“There was one time when he accidentally… made me open a door and I tripped… but he didn’t do that on purpose.”

“How do you…” I asked, confused. Accidentally open a door?

“There was actually a secret switch that opened it up.”

“A secret switch?”

“Yeah, but Monokuma saw us enter and forced us to leave… so whatever was hidden there, it remains hidden for now. He sealed the door, saying we are going to explore that room in the future.”

“And then?”

“We spent a lot of time reading books searching for his talent, but we found nothing. However we’re far from reading all the books in the library… why do you think he’s dangerous?”

Did I want to tell him? I feared he would get more worried if I did… but not revealing what I knew would still be a bad choice.

He thinks I don’t trust him completely… but it’s not that. If I don’t say the truth about Ryoma now I don’t know if Shuichi would really trust me back…

“…I know him. Sort of.” I said.

“You know him?! And why does he not know you?”

“Shh! Be quieter..!”

“Okay…” he kept his voice down. “But explain this thing to me…”

“I remember his name… I overheard my colleagues saying he committed mass murder.”

“M-mass… murder?”

“You understand why I’m worried now?”

“…But… are you sure of that?”

“I clearly remember his name. My colleagues were serious… they wouldn’t joke about a matter so important.”
“M-maybe… he changed?” Shuichi looked puzzled. “We stayed alone for so much time… if he wanted to kill me he would have. He wouldn’t have faced the class trial either…”

“Since I’m sure about his past… I think he’s not lying about his memories.”

“Huh?”

“What if… by erasing his memories, his personality changed too? Without recollection of some events, people are completely different.”

I knew the implications of what I was saying. If he weren’t the same person without his memories, the same would go for me. Was me… really me? And what would be the right me be, either way?

“He’s calm. When we encountered Monokuma, didn’t lose his composure. Most of the time he didn’t talk, looked around…”

Shuichi continued talking about his experience with the supposed killer, but nothing interesting came out of it. He didn’t appear suspicious but we barely knew him. For what we knew, he could be a great liar and was only waiting for the right time to strike.

Shuichi and me continued talking together for the rest of the day, getting to know more about each other. I could see that he wasn’t that comfortable to tell me everything about him, but I didn’t mind. I grew tired of sitting after a while and walked around the school, meeting some people. At the end many of them came to know what Shuichi and me were doing and I stopped trying to hide it. I also checked on Gonta and Angie; they were having fun with Himiko and Tenko (who, to be honest, still looked uneasy near the tennis player).

I returned where Shuichi was waiting for me and we started reading out loud the book about the victim in the library, taking turns. When the sun set, Tsumugi brought us something to eat and we spent some time with her. Eventually, she left, saying she needed to get some sleep. Shortly after, the nighttime announcement sounded. I was scared that Monokuma would force us to go back to the dorm, but that didn’t happen. Shuichi wanted to finish the book while I was already getting sleepy, despite passing out in the morning.

“Ok, so… you’re taking the first turn, ok…?” I yawned.

“Yeah… that works for me.”

“Wake me up when you need some shut-eye.”

I lied down on the grass. It wasn’t as comfortable as my bed, but neither as bad as I imagined. I closed my eyes and I fell asleep listening to the wind and Shuichi turning the pages of his book.

***

I woke up Kaede two times, and felt extremely guilty about it. She was so peaceful when she was sleeping… almost as if she forgot everything we were going through. Even though she looked sleepy, she didn’t object to me, and both times she stood up and started stretching to keep herself awake.

At dawn –or that’s what it seems it was- my eyes opened by themselves. Sun didn’t rise yet, but
light was spreading everywhere. Kaede looked tired, so I told her she could rest for as long as she wanted. I felt I got the sleep I needed, so I picked up the book me and Kaede were reading the night before. The last chapter we read ended with a cliffhanger, so I was eager to know what would happen. I didn’t even continue it the night before, because I wanted to read it with Kaede. I started another, but it wasn’t that great, so I didn’t want to pick it up again.

I flipped the pages to find my makeshift bookmark, but I refrained from continuing to read. I would feel guilty if I carried on without Kaede… we were having that adventure together, and I liked when she made assumptions that turned out to be right… it didn’t ruin the plot for me, but I wondered if it was the same for her.

After all, if you know everything from the start, what’s the point?

I knew how my magic tricks worked and I didn’t feel like they were particularly good, while my audience seemed to admire them. Maybe that’s the reason behind that… well, that was when I did those, more extreme, shows… the tank with the shark, the box with the blades… I always came out unscathed, until that time when I almost got myself killed… then, I shifted to a simpler kind of magic, and people started to lose interest in me. Less and less people came to my shows… was I still the Ultimate Magician? I felt like I had been before, but then I became a shadow of my former self, someone who didn’t deserve his title anymore.

Without many options left, I tried the other book I brought from the library and it was decent. I didn’t like the writing style of the author, but the plot was alright. Kaede was still sleeping when the announcement signaling that nighttime was over sounded. The others were probably waking up and ready to gather in the cafeteria, but I didn’t mind staying under that window for the rest of the morning. I knew that eventually Tsumugi would bring us something to eat.

Kaede woke up shortly after and decided she was going to check on the others and organize to the rest of the day. That organization was perfect for me; I didn’t want to join the other Ultimates anyways. However, my plan of skipping the meeting was foiled by Kaito, who had the bright idea of moving the meeting just were me and Kaede spent the night. Everyone brought a plate and offered some of the food to us two. Not everyone was there, but surprisingly, I saw Maki, who distanced herself from the others and didn’t eat anything.

“Here you go, guys!” Kaito exclaimed. “Man, Kaede, this must’ve been a tiring night! Girls shouldn’t wait under windows, usually is the other way round!”

Kaede giggled. She seemed to appreciate the help from the others.

“Oh, thanks. You really shouldn’t have done this… I don’t mind walking to the cafeteria…”

“I feel we should help each other. Protect each other…” Tenko said. “Of course, I mean only us girls…”

“So, what’s our plan for today?” Kiibo asked.

“First of all, I wanted to ask… where are Angie, Gonta and Rantaro?”

Kaede was right. They weren’t with everyone else. How could I not notice?

“They didn’t even show up at the cafeteria! How disrespectful!” 0U-M4 commented.

“H-have you checked on them?” Kaede asked. “Gonta and Angie were guarding the door to my
research room… why aren’t them with you?”

“They’re probably still there.” Kaito said.

“And what about Rantaro? Have you knocked on his door?”

“We opted not to. I assumed he didn’t intend to participate to the meeting.”

“What?!” Kaede gasped. “He could be in danger! Angie and Gonta could be too!”

“I’ll immediately go there to check.” Tsumugi offered.

“That’s not necessary. I’ll call them from my room.”

Kaede climbed the rope as everyone watched; Kaito encouraging her and Miu making comments about her… undergarments. I could hear the detective calling for Angie and Gonta, but no one responded. She came back to the window and told us she couldn’t hear anything.

“Okay.” She said once at ground level again. “I’m going with you.” She pointed at Tsumugi. “I need to see what happened with my own eyes. Let’s go. Shuichi.”

I turned my head to look Kaede in the eyes.

“For now, I leave this to you.”

And so, Tsumugi and Kaede left, leaving me with everyone else.

“…Shouldn’t they search for Rantaro too?” Himiko proposed.

“Why don’t you do that?” OUM4 told her.

“Naah… I’m fine here…”

“You should… help them.” I said to the others. “There’s no need to wait here.”

“Are you scared of us?” the robot asked. “We could trick you and enter the room! Oh, Kaede will be so disappointed in you!”

“Stop that, Ouma.” Ryoma ordered. “You need to stop threatening people.”

“What’s with all that confidence?” the other giggled.

“We will not enter that room.” Kirumi chimed in. “I have no intentions of doing so, most of all because Kaede asked us not too.”

“She told us something dangerous is in there! Tenko won’t go!”

“I want to! What are you going to do, stop me?!”

“You’re alone, talking toaster.” Kaito nicknamed him. “Nobody will listen to you, bastard.”

“T-talking toaster?! Nobody called me that! That’s robo-racist!”

And OUM4 started making some noises that vaguely remembered crying, covering his head with his arms.

“Stop faking. It’s clear you’re not really offended by what he said.”
Maki’s voice surprised everyone.

“Great! You’ve talked!” Kaito exclaimed. “Who would have guessed that a crazy robot would make us listen to your voice!”

0U-M4 stopped weeping and in a matter of milliseconds returned normal.

“See! I’m useful! See!”

“I, for one, would like to know what’s in that room.” The fighter said.

“Nee-hee-hee! That’s interesting!”

“Could you shut up!? If you weren’t made of metal I would have punched you so many times!” Kaito snapped.

“What a pity! Thankfully I’m a great robot!”

I was losing track of what everyone was saying, with Kaito talking louder and louder, and 0U-M4 making fun of him, proposing to go in the room...

“I want to go too!” Miu shouted. “Let’s see what that freak hides in her room…”

“N-no… what are you s-saying…” I managed to blurt out. “K-kaede… Kaede told us it’s dangerous…”

“Shuichi is right!” Tenko said, resolute. “Maki, Miu what are you doing?!”

Well, she didn’t want to defend me, but she was sort of helping me...

“You can’t just ignore our friend’s words! You’re not menaces!”

“What’s more, we have other problems in our hands!” Kaito backed her. “That’s not the time to be fighting each other!”

“I have to admit I would be rather interested in discovering what Kaede hides in her research room to study her character. Know more about how she acts…” Korekiyo said, getting creepier by the second.

“Y-you… are not normal…” Tenko stuttered, not as sure of herself like before. The cosplayer probably scares her a bit.

“That’s out of the question! You’re not invading Kaede’s fucking privacy!”

“I don’t need your permission.” Maki coldly rebutted. “Move, before I break your bones.”

“Oooh!” Ouma’s eyes brightened. “Things are getting interesting!”

“No, they aren’t! They are getting worse! Please, let’s try to cooperate.” Kiibo intervened.

“I am cooperating.” Maki told the astronaut. “I’m going to see what’s in Kaede’s room. She’s hiding something and you all know it.”

“Because she’s protecting us!” I shouted, standing up.

“That’s what she has told you. She convinced you to do as she pleased, making you feel important.
You can pretend she cares about you, but that’s not true…”

“She believes in me! She has told me that so many times…”

“Well, not my business. Believe what you want.”

That girl wasn’t going to make me doubt Kaede…

Maki started to come near, but Kaito put himself between her and me.

“You can not go around doing what the hell you want!” Kaito protested.

“Don’t underestimate Neo-Akido.” She followed up, still extremely calm, but on the verge of snapping.

“Don’t underestimate me!” Kaito rebutted.

“Please, stop fighting!” Kiibo repeated.

However, Maki, before he could even finish his sentence, positioned herself in front of Kaito.

“Let. Me. Pass.”

Chapter End Notes

I finished Ch.1!! :D
Yeah, the culprit is dead and the other kids are alive for now. For now, I'm going to keep my schedule of one part per week, but it could slow down after the first chapter has ended. Just to let you know.

byebye~
We rushed into the school, slamming the doors open. I refused to believe a murder had occurred. If Gonta and Angie didn’t respond, there had to be a reason. If Rantaro was missing, there had to be a reason too. As I climbed the stairs with Tsumugi at my side I thought about the worst possibilities, preparing myself for what could have happened, but I hold on my hope that everyone was alive and well. We passed the dragon statue and reached the area in front of the classroom, and… I saw… Angie and Gonta… right there… lying down, their eyes closed.

However, there was no trace of blood.

“A-are they d-dead..?” Tsumugi asked.

“No. They aren’t. They’re sleeping. Have been for a while.”

Me and Tsumugi turned to see that one of the classroom doors was open, with Rantaro standing in front of it.

“What… is going on here?!”

“They’re heavy sleepers, apparently. That’s why they didn’t hear you when you called their names from your room.”

“No, what’s going on with you here!” I exclaimed, my arms crossed.

“Oh!” Rantaro looked surprised. “You didn’t say with you the first time around. Sorry. I was guarding your room.”

“What?!” I shouted, confused.

“Yeah! Since this night, actually. ….still didn’t find a clock, so I can’t say the exact hour and minute…”

“I didn’t ask you to. I didn’t even talk to you after morning yesterday!”

“Yeah, I didn’t decide to come here, and neither I did to impress you. I hate when people consider me a… womanizer.”

“And why are you here, then?” Tsumugi asked.

“Angie asked me. Honestly, I think she did that because I was the only one walking around the school, and not because she thought I would do a good job…” he placed his hands in front of him and smiled awkwardly. “I couldn’t say no. She told me that both her and Gonta were exhausted,
what was I supposed to do?"

“Tell me?! You disappeared and everyone was worried!”

“Yeah, that’s not true. You were the only one, Kaede. Right, Tsumugi?”

“Well… uhm…”

The maid turned to me and saw my expression. I was telling enough words with my eyes to let her know what she had to say.

“No, actually… everyone was, as Kaede said… worried about you.”

“That’s not the point of this conversation!” I continued my argument. “You should have said no to Angie!”

“Jeez Kaede, I thought I was doing you a favor. I assured no one would enter, and that’s what happened. Your room hasn’t been touched by anyone this night. …Unless someone got in from the window, but that was your job. Check it, if you want.”

“Urgh, we’ll talk about this later.”

“Kaede, aren’t you taking this too far?” Tsumugi said. “You’re not his mother or someone who can tell him what to do…”

“Either way, he should have told me. And what was he doing in the middle of the night in the school?...”

“Just a walk! I was tiring myself cuz I couldn’t sleep!”

“Yeah, right…”

--

We woke up Angie and Gonta, who actually opened their eyes when me and Rantaro were talking, but were still too confused to understand what was happening. The tennis player didn’t know anything about Angie’s plan involving Rantaro and apologized for falling asleep and not being a real gentleman. I told him he didn’t have to worry and he did a good job regardless, while Angie refused to talk with me because she was apparently having a consultation with her God. This, however, didn’t stop her from talking with Gonta about how handsome God and his ways are. Tsumugi offered to guard the door for the day and I gave her permission. She’s so nice, I’m sure she wouldn’t hurt a fly… what’s more, she always does what asked, so I felt she could be trusted. On the other hand, I realized that Angie and Gonta weren’t as reliable as I thought initially.

As we arrived under the window, I noticed Maki climbing down the rope, looking unsatisfied. Most of the people were around Kaito, who was sitting on the grass and massaging his ankles, but after a quick glance I noticed Shuichi was missing.

“What happened here? Why is Maki there?” I asked, hoping for someone to respond.

“I entered your research room. I had to teach a lesson to Kaito, but he’ll recover soon. Just some scratches.”

“You did... what?!”

“You listened to me. I entered your room. Did you expect me to trust you blindly? I don’t have any
idea of what’s in that room and I wished to know.”

“I told everyone to stay away from there because it’s dangerous!”

“Are you scared that someone will get hurt? You won’t resolve anything by staying in front of the door the whole time.”

“Excuse me, but who gave you the permission to enter?” Rantaro asked her. “That’s not polite.”

“Don’t try to make me feel bad. I already said this to the others. I always did what I wanted, and I’ll continue do to so. You’re in no position to threaten me.”

“And still, you claim you do? You threatened Kaito and Shuichi!” Tenko said. “You know, they are dangerous menaces!”

Shuichi? What did she do to him?

“What does she mean? Why is Shuichi not here?”

“After making sure Kaito didn’t stop me, I asked your friend to move out of the way. He complied and flew away somewhere sobbing.”

“You made someone cry?! That’s terrible!” Gonta commented.

“I’m really sorry about that. That wasn’t my intention.”

“Well, you don’t seem really sorry…” Angie intervened.

That girl… who does she think she is? Hurting someone only because she doubted me?

“He probably went in his room. It should be the place where he feels safer…” Himiko said. “You should leave him alone… he needs time to rest…”

“Have you checked my room now?!” I snapped. “Did you find what you were looking for?” I continued, ironic.

“Yes, I did. Behind the books. It’s were you keep your weapon hidden.”

Everyone else heard what Maki just said.

“Kaede, you have a weapon in your room?” 0U-M4 asked, interested.

“Of course!” I responded. I couldn’t hide it at that point. “Why would I guard the entrances?”

“Either way, that weapon can’t be brought out of your room, so, all of this show you’re putting on… pretty pointless,” Maki continued. “You’re just tiring Angie, Gonta and Shuichi.”

“Oh! Maybe that was her plan!” 0U-M4 giggled.

“Plan?” Rantaro raised his eyebrow.

“She would slowly gain Shuichi’s trust, bring him in her lab and then… BAM! Use that weapon to kill him! Poor Shuichi, he would have thought that Kaede believed in him until the end…”

“Hyahaha! Kaedumb wanted to show Sukichi her secret place, and he would’ve fallen for her lie! Just like every man!” Miu exclaimed.
“What..? No! I didn’t want to betray Shuichi..! Why would I?”

Why was everyone ganging up on me so suddenly? What happened in believing each other?

“Therefore, Maki…” Korekiyo said. “What weapon did come upon in Kaede’s room?

“I think details aren’t important. Plus, Kaede here is already filled with rage against me, it seems.”

And she was right. I preferred her when she wasn’t around.

“I’ll do her a favor by not revealing what that weapon was. I don’t want you start murdering either.”

“Well, you just revealed that in my lab there is something to kill people! I think your actions are contradictory!” I explained to her.

“If someone really wants to kill, there are so many other methods to end a life. The warehouse is full of objects that could be used for that. Even this rope… your bare hands… focus on something else.”

“I’d be more worried if I were you.” Rantaro said. “Now, everyone here thinks you’re dangerous. You should watch your back.”

“I’ll gladly do so. I’m a master of martial arts, able to defend myself. If someone comes too near me, they’re in for a bad time.”

Pronouncing those words, she turned the corner and disappeared from sight.

“Fierce girl.” Rantaro coughed.

“Yeah! That girl is stronger than each one of you combined!” Miu praised her.

“I had no doubts that a deranged individual like you supported her.” Korekiyo followed.

“What?! Why are you insulting me now, creep?! You fucking told her to go too!”

“Mine was a proposal. I never wished for people to be hurt.”

“I can’t believe this. I’m going to Shuichi.” I decided.

However, Rantaro grabbed me by my arm as I was about to go.

“No, stop. Maki is right. He needs some time alone.”

“He needs some time with me! Who knows what he’s thinking right now! I need to find him and tell him everything is alright!”

I broke free from Rantaro’s grip and headed for the dormitories.

“Hey, Kaede, what about your room? Who will guard it?”

“Who cares anymore. If you wants to see what’s in there, enter!”

With that provocation, I left the rest of the group.
Useless.

I was completely useless.

I tried to do as Kaede said… I tried to help her.

But I failed again. I gave up when presented with the first obstacle.

…There was nothing else I could do, right? I mean… she was there, ready to hurt me. Even if I tried to resist, I wouldn’t have done anything. That had to be it. I was not to blame…

No, no. I was to blame. I was the only one to blame. I always screw up. Why me? Why did I get caught up in this situation? I can’t even defend myself, I have to rely on others… I think I’m a liability, so why am I here now? What is this place? Is it a test? To see if I can handle myself?

If that’s the case… I failed so bad.

But Kaede told me she believed in me, so I have her, at least! We spent the night together, she trusts me! She left me alone multiple times, so she thinks I’m good at what I do, I don’t have to worry. She’ll understand me when I tell you what happened, she won’t be angry!

But why did she left me alone? Was I only a lookout, to check on her room? Could I be considered a friend? We knew each other for two days, friendships aren’t made in fortytwo hours! No, because she wouldn’t call me a friend anymore, not after what I did to her! What will everyone say now? Why did Maki want to enter, she ruined me! Everything was going well! I let her hurt another person too, I should’ve done something!

The others should have too, however… They haven’t. It’s their fault too.

I am nothing more than an object, why am I thinking of myself as a person?

Everyone will understand my reasons.

Nobody will understand me.

I deserve to be here.

I should have died when I failed that trick.

_Knock knock!

“.Huh?”

“Shuichi, are you in there? Please, tell me you are.”

I didn’t want to answer Kaede. Why wouldn’t she leave me alone?

“I wanted to tell you I’m not angry with you, at all. I thought you deserved to know. Can we talk? Please?”

I kept listening to her, my head buried in my pillow.
“Shuichi, if you don’t say anything, you’ll make me worried. I don’t want have a long conversation with you now, I understand what you’re going through…”

No, she didn’t.

“…but I just need to know you’re okay. Say anything you want, but say something, please!”

One, two, three… the seconds passed, as she remained silent, so did I.

But what was I doing was stupid. What did I earn from not talking to her? I just had to say hi.

“Yes. I’m here.” I said. I didn’t know if she could tell from my tone that I had cried.

“Oh, thank God you’re alright. How are you feeling?”

She just said she only wanted to hear my voice, now she wants to chat?

“Fine, ok?” I answered, deciding I would ignore her from that point on.

“That’s… ok. But if you’re not feeling well you can tell me. I can’t guard that window alone, you know?”

Now that Maki entered did it even need guarding? There was no reason to guard it… if Kaede said those Ultimates had to be trusted why did she decide to spend day after day stuck in one place? That plan couldn’t work, she knew that very well.

“I see you don’t want to talk…” she muttered. “Let me know when you’re leaving your room. You know where to find me.”

In the silence of my room, I could hear Kaede’s footsteps clearly. In a matter of seconds, I was alone again in that dorm.

However, I spoke too soon.

“Get up from that bed! This is not the time to sleep!”

Who could it be if not Monokuma.

“Aaaah!... How did… you enter?!” I reacted, trying to wipe off the tears from my face.

"Don’t ask me this silly questions, I can’t respond!”

“…Then tell me why are you here.”

“You’re not with the others! I was about to present a new motive and you and that martial arts girl are alone doing your business! What about school spirit? You need to stick together!”

“What are you saying, you’re the one that told us to kill each other!”

“Exactly!” He hissed. “If you stay away from each other, how can you murder your classmates? This is easy! Easy I say!”

“If you wanted to make me feel more miserable, your mission is pointless.”

“What?! No! As the Headmaster of Gifted Inmates Academy, I need to make sure each one of my students is happy!”
This time, I didn’t even try to contradict the bear.

“But now I have no time to do that! I’m very busy, so therapist appointments are out of the question. The first thing on my list for today is giving you bastards a new motive!”

“A new motive..?"

Weren’t two enough?

“Why do people repeat things when they’re surprised? I never understood that! Apparently you guys do it too!”

“Why are you giving us a new motive?”

“Because the one that I gave you before didn’t drive anyone to murder! …I always have a back-up plan, however!”

“What would this back-up plan be?”

“Pupupupupu… you really want to know? Since I understand your desire to be alone, I’ll do you a favor and say it to you first! What a privilege! Aren’t you grateful!? Headmaster Monokuma doesn’t do this often!”

“Tell me so I can be left alone.”

“Right! You can’t run away from this motive!”

***

“Is he in his room?” Kirumi asked.

“Yes.” I responded. “I hope he’ll be fine…”

“Nah, he’s not fine at all!” An annoying voice exclaimed.

Monokuma.

Just after that, the Monokubs appeared.

“Someone is fighting! Monosuke, come watch!” Monokid exclaimed.

“You are late. The fight is already over.” The yellow bear corrected.

“Fights are awful! You two shouldn’t fight! Never! Only those tall bastards should!” Monophanie observed.

“Those guys, again?” Kiibo complained. “Let’s pretend they’re not here.”

“Don’t ignore us please!” Monotaro cried out. “We care about you!”

“You need to listen to us! Daddy is coming! He has great news!” Monotaro announced.

“GREAT. NEWS.” Monodam repeated.
“Oh, my children!” The black and white bear cooed. “You’re so cute, even when you’re introducing me! So much cuteness I’m about to explode!”

“No, don’t explode, daddy! Please!” Monophanie said.

“What do you want from us now?” I asked.

“Seeing that you haven’t committed a murder yet, I decided to give you an additional motive! I’m sure that after this time, someone will die!”

Kaito spoke up. “If you think that we’ll give in-

“Sssh! Stop with this ‘we’ll never do as you say!’ It’s getting old! You were just beaten up by a girl! You should shut up!”

This time, the inventor settled for a glare.

“So, about the motive… I already notified your wimpy, emo, loner friend in his room.”

“Hey, don’t call him that!” I exclaimed.

The bear ignored me. “I tried to engage in a conversation with that crazy girl too, but she told me she had no interest in the killing game! How dares she!? She shouldn’t defy me!”

“Daddy is right!” Monokid shouted. “Let’s go punish her with our Exisals! I want to see some blood!”

“No, I hate blood!” Monophanie lamented.

“Oh, don’t worry, my dear children. I’ll take care of her, you can continue living your teenage life. Adults deal with this kind of things.”

“But daddy, I feel old enough!” Monotaro said.

“You’re not ready to face the difficulties of the adult life! Stay with me for a little bit longer, otherwise I’ll miss you!”

“Daddy! I love daddy! I’ll stay with you!” Monophanie smiled.

“That’s right! Monokuma is our dad, he makes the important decisions!” Monosuke explained.

“They’re so cute! So cute!”

“Give us that motive and go away.” Was all that Ryoma said.

“Okay, okay… I was just trying to entertain my audience!” Monokuma apologized. “The time limit is nighttime… two days from now! If nobody commits a crime by that then… every students participating in the killing game will be brutally murdered! …It’s not like you guys are precious! We can always start a new game!”

“What?! Another game?!” Tenko exclaimed.

The bear continued on with his exposition. “Thousands of Monokumas will be unleashed, created from a Monokuma-manufacturing machine! You won’t be able to fend off so many bears… so you should get started with that killing game if you want to live!”
“Everyone… killed?” Miu gasped in disbelief.

“Pupupupu… that’s right! However, I strongly encourage you to kill! Seeing another massacre would be terrible! Where would the thrill of the killing game be!? And I don’t want to start over every time!”

Monokuma’s decision was one of a coward. He saw that none of us would be ready to murder someone else, and he knew that giving us a time limit would worsen the situation.

“I also set up various clocks in the school. You complained there was no way to see what time it was! Now you can see! Only a kind headmaster like me would do this for his students!”

“Stop pretending to be a good headmaster!” Kiibo said.

“Another important thing! Don’t you dare try any sacrifice bullshit! If someone kills themselves to protect the group his death will mean absolutely nothing! The time limit won’t be cancelled!”

No suicides, huh? Monokuma really wants to spread distrust between us…

“Now, if you excuse me, I’m going to tell this motive to that boring maid who’s guarding Kaede’s door. Have a good day and start killing!”

Monokuma disappeared and the Monocubs followed him immediately.

People didn’t wait long before they began talking.

“Man, that bear never gives up, heh?” Rantaro observed.

“H-How can you be so calm?!” Tenko exclaimed. “We’re going to die!”

“That bug enthusiast is right, I don’t want to die!” Miu shouted. “Start killing guys! I don’t care who, you’re all expendable for all I care!”

“We are not killing anyone.” I laid it clearly for everyone.

“That is the preferable option…” Korekiyo started talking. “However, we must consider that if a killing does not occur, it is likely that each one of us will perish.”

“But, if someone committed a murder, only one person would die, since the murderer can escape without getting through a class trial.” Rantaro said out loud. “We have to consider that too…”

“Are you suggesting us to kill each other?!?” Kaito asked. “No way!”

“Riiight… don’t kill guys… it is soo tiring…”

“Gonta thinks that defending yourself from an army of Monokuma is more tiring!”

“It could be… but thinking about it is troublesome too… I’ll think about it later…”

“If we die, that’s because Atua wants us to! We’ll be all greeted by Atua and we’ll have a fun time!” Angie said, with her eyes closed, performing a mudra with her hands.

“But I don’t want to die now!” Himiko complained.

“I think no one wants that.” Ryoma said.
“What about… killing the robot?” Angie proposed.

“Huh?! Why me?!”

“You’re not a person, but you’re a participant!”

“That’s roboracist! I’m way better than you!” 0U-M4 protested. “Don’t go around insulting robots when they’re the natural evolution of society!”

“I’m going to see if my lab is open!” Miu announced. “And I’m locking myself in, ‘cause you inferior shits might actually try to kill me! I don’t want you to touch me!”

“Miu, where are you going?” I cried out, trying to stop her.

However, she didn’t listen to me.

“There she goes…” Kirumi said, before talking to the others again. “…I recommend we devise a plan.”

“Y-you guys can work without me!” 0U-M4 pretended to be offended. “I’m not helping!”

“Go, nobody asked you to come!” Kaito protested, trying to stand up.

The robot turned his back against us and continued in his direction.

“I’m going too. I would be useless here.” Ryoma announced.

Where was he going? Did he want to kill someone? At first I felt like I needed to follow him, but then I thought about Shuichi’s words. He trusted him, and I would do it too. …And then, stalking him would be pretty strange if not suspicious…

“You are coming up with a plan, right?!” Angie asked Kirumi, to which the adventurer nodded. “Hyahaha~, I want to help too!”

“Great, Angie… Your experience as a supreme leader would be helpful!” Tenko said.

“…By praying! If I pray with all of my will, Atua will tell me what to do! And if we pray together, he’ll hear us more!”

“But if we pray too much he’ll be overwhelmed and won’t hear us at all!” Gonta said.

“Don’t worry, God always hears us!”

The tennis player wasn’t as certain of that as Angie, but started praying nonetheless.

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We came up with nothing. Hours passed, we still searched for exits, but we didn’t find any. I tried to find Ryoma, but I didn't see him again. Kaito also proposed to try escaping from the tunnel again, but we opposed because his legs were still sore and despite being able to walk, had problems with running. There was no way he was going to make it.

So, tired, we split up and I ended up under that window again. No response at all from Shuichi, probably still in his room feeling sorry for himself. I noticed the book we were reading had gone missing so I imagined him passing the time with it.
“Kaede, you seem to be worried. Is it about Shuichi?” Kirumi asked.

The adventurer offered to stay with me during the night but was keeping me company already for a while, accompanied by Tenko, who only joined us after assuring that Himiko was sleeping safely in her bed.

“How do you know?” I responded sarcastically.

“If I offended you, tell me and I will speak no more.”

“Don’t worry, Kirumi. It’s nothing that important and secretive. We haven’t heard of him for the whole day… something must have happened to him!”

“Yesterday the same thing happened to you, still, you were fine.” Tenko reminded me, referencing the incident I had with that strange hole in the pavement.

That reminds me, I still haven’t told anyone about the truth. Plus, Maki didn’t mention it when she confronted me about my behavior. That thing knocked me out, so it wouldn’t be exaggerating calling it a weapon too.

“I can’t help but feel that something strange is going on with him…”

“He is human like us. He has emotions.” Kirumi comforted me. “Each one of us expresses them differently.”

“Tomorrow he will be fine. He can’t stay there for long, since there aren’t many things to do alone in a dorm room. Males are difficult to understand.” Tenko reassured.

“You’re right…” I muttered. “But Maki is right too…”

“Huh?”

“We can’t continue camping under a window or in front of a door. We’re wasting so much time here…”

“You suggested pursuing this path.” Kirumi said. “Maki’s speech changed your mind?”

“More or less… she’s right when she says that there are many weapons scattered around the school that can be brought everywhere.”

“She may be right, but this is still a place that needs guarding! Don’t ever think that what we’re doing is not worth it!”

Tenko had a point, but so did Maki… I had been too stubborn. But there was no way I was going to admit it! That girl didn’t deserve any praise from me!

“Yep. I’ll stay here every day and every night to secure everyone!”

“Yet… There’s a clock ticking…” Tenko said quietly, like he didn’t want me to hear her.

“A day might have already gone by, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have the time to come up with a plan! We’ll fight all the Monokumas if we need! Aren’t we Ultimates?!?”

“You are very right, but we must not act impulsively. Monokuma is alone a perilous foe, many of them will be extremely dangerous to deal with.”
“We can do this!” I exclaimed. “Kaito and Rantaro can join forces and invent something, Maki and Gonta can fight them off. 0U-M4 is a robot! Who knows what he’s able to do!”

“We have a whole day in front of us. We can discuss it with everyone else tomorrow.” Tenko explained.

“You should not think about that right now.” Kirumi suggested.

How could I? I was about to die. I could only think about that!

--

“Wakey wakey! It’s time to get up!” I hummed to wake Kirumi.

“Kaede..? I am tired…”

“It’s 8:43 AM, Kaito told me everyone is coming for breakfast. Well, I don’t really know if Maki, Ouma and Shuichi are coming, and Rantaro and Tsumugi are guarding the door, but… we’re still a bunch of people.”

“You are right…” she yawned. “I must be presentable, so I need to wake up…”

Despite trying to keep my spirits up, I was very worried. Kaito told me that he still had no idea on how to escape… and we had less than a day in front of us before who knows how many Monokumas would attack us.

“Did you see anything interesting while you were awake?” I asked.

“I am afraid the answer is no. I spent my night recalling my experiences around a particularly threatening tribe I met during my trips around the world, how they caught me… and how I managed to escape unscathed. I thought it would prove useful.”

“And..?”

“It did not. The situation I found myself in was drastically different from this one. Some of the tribe members were good people and helped me. I suspect I cannot count on the Monokubs.”

“Definitely not.”

“Changing subject of the discussion… it is convenient to know the exact time.”

“Yes, that thing that broadcasts the Monokubs’ announcements now displays the time!”

“…Do you know when did it start functioning? When I woke up it was already displaying the time.” Kirumi asked, puzzled.

“Oh, I think… just before midnight..? It’s just that knowing the time makes me feel better. We can plan our day.”

“I suppose that is right.”

“While the others come, I’ll go check my room. You can stay here, okay?”

“Sure. If something happens, do not be afraid to let me know.”

I nodded.
Slowly but steadily I started climbing back up. Kirumi watched me as I continued, somewhat worried for my safety. I was about to tell her that everything was right, but then I entered my room.

... 

It was impossible not to notice. The duct tape I used to seal the door had been tore apart.

Scared, I shifted my attention to the bookcase behind which I hid the poison bottles. To my horror, I discovered that some of them were empty.

I was about to alert Kirumi, but then I opened the door. I reached for the knob, but it was covered with duct tape. So I just gently pulled the door to me...

I saw two bodies.

Rantaro and Tsumugi.

I checked their pulses immediately. Were they...

No!

They were alive... but for how long? Somebody had knocked them out!

“Kirumi!” I shouted, sprinting to the window.

“I assume an even-

I didn’t let her finish.

“Call the others! We have a serious problem! Somebody entered my room this night!..”

She looked ready to go, but then I stopped her.

“...And please, go check on Shuichi.”

“Alright.” She said. “But I will not insist. He needs time for himself.”

I didn’t waste time watching her leave, and went back to Rantaro and Tsumugi, who continued to lie on the floor. What happened to them?

As I was trying to piece back together what happened, a low-pitched voice made its way to my years.

“Ding dong bing bong... a body has been discovered!”

***

Under the warm blankets of my bed, I heard the announcement.

Somebody died.

I knew that. It had to happen.

And I... had something to do with it. Yes, I did. I can’t lie to myself.
If only I stayed there… I didn’t let Maki in… things could have been different.

Maybe we were too far gone from the start. Maybe someone will claim to be the murderer, will be able to escape, while we continue fighting here until two of us are left.

Instead, I heard knocking on my door. Then Kiibo’s voice.

“Shuichi! Are you there?!”

He persisted, quicker, furious.

“Shuichi! Answer me! Please! I need to make sure you’re still breathing!”

I didn’t feel alive, that was certain. But I wasn’t dead either. I still had some time before I could say goodbye to the world. I wondered if someone had plans to kill me.

Another voice joined the conversation.

“Kiibo! What is your business here? Shouldn’t you be with our other classmates?”

“…I was feeling pretty tired after yesterday. I stayed in bed.”

“To think you did not sleep at all the other day.”

“We’ll talk about this later. Shuichi isn’t responding! Why?! What is he doing?!”

“Do you fear he is dead?”

“Please tell me you have seen him!”

“I am afraid not.”

“Hey..! Do you know who’s… has passed..?”

“I heard the announcement as I was coming here. Kaede asked me to check Shuichi’s conditions.”

Kaede… why is she so hell-bent on me..?

“Panicking now is of no use. What if he is with the others?” Kirumi proposed.

“Maybe… but that doesn’t change the fact that one of us isn’t here anymore…” Kiibo stopped for a second. “Can you force open the door? Maybe with a kick?!”

“I am an adventurer. Not a door destroyer. These are two distinct specialties.”

“Well, you need to possess some… survival skills?! Haven’t you ever smashed a door while escaping a death trap?!?”

“Do you see me as the woman version of Indiana Jones…?”

“Can you at least try? The rules don’t say anything about this specific thing! We are allowed to explore the school grounds at our discretion?”

“I am not. Going. To. Destroy a door.”

This charade has gone on for far too long.
“I am alive.” I said. “I just woke up.”

Lie.

“Shuichi!” Kiibo called my name. “D-do you know what happened..?”

It was useless pretending not to know.

“Yes… I… I… heard the announcement…”

“I think it’s better if you come out with us.” Kiibo replied. “I don’t think it’s safe for you to be in there.”

“My door is locked, you know?”

“Sadly, this detail did not stop an intruder last night. Somebody managed to enter into Kaede’s research lab. With the missing key, I assume.”


“They entered?!” Kiibo said, surprised. “…It can’t be a coincidence, right?!”

“How can you b-be sure..?” I asked, trying not to panic.

“Kaede told me that her door was open. I wanted to know more, however, she sent me here. Please, do not make her worry.”

How could someone… enter? That didn’t make any sense… why…

“So, you coming or not?”

“If I remember correctly, the announcement sounds when four people, including the culprit, find a body… I certainly hope this is a twisted joke, but in case it is real… the investigation will commence soon. I am of the opinion that your talent could be rather useful.”

“U-useful..? How?”

“She’s right!” Kiibo cheered. “You are a magician! You must know everything about tricks!”

“W-what are you saying… you forgot something…”

“Huh?”

“Monokuma’s motive… the first murderer… will be able to escape this academy… without a trial.”

“What?!”

“Uhm… I have to admit that I forgot this crucial detail. The investigation may be superfluous.”

“Superfluous?! N-no..! I can’t…” Kiibo stuttered. “I can’t believe someone was killed! And even if that happened, the killer can’t escape their sins!”

“Would you care for Ouma too? He is not like us. He is a robot. And a rather annoying one.”

“I-I guess that could be an exception…”
“If you want, you can hold on to that hope.”

Here they are, comparing their life to the one of a robot.

But really… I cannot stay in here for long. Kaede would come for me eventually. …And I need to understand what happened. If something bad occurred… the others may require my skills… whatever they are.

“I’d prefer to stay here longer… but I can’t. I can’t escape this time. I shouldn’t have the first time, I should have proven to myself and the others I could be trusted. I wouldn’t be tangled up in this mess, and you… maybe even you wouldn’t be.”

“Yeah, great monologue. I like it, but can you start moving?”

“I-I’m coming…”

I didn’t bother to change my clothes. I had already taken a shower during the night. I just got up and opened the door.

“Finally!” Kiibo exclaimed. “…Oh. Your cape is pretty creased.”

“I don’t have a spare one.” I said. “This fabric crumples very easily… I hope, at least… I can somehow substitute it… That isn’t our problem, however.”

I spent my time rolling around in my bed.

“The announcement said…” Kiibo started. “That the body was found in the corridor which leads to the gym. We need to gather there.”

“Are we… going to see a dead body… really?”

“It appears so. If you are a sensitive person, you should not see it.”

“…I-I think I can handle it, honestly…”

“Please, can we go? I… I need to know who died. I am feeling heavy just thinking about it.”

“Kiibo’s right. Let’s start going. We’ll find everyone there.”

We exited the dormitories. No one was around, not even the Exisals. Kiibo grew increasingly worried every step closer to the school entrance.

“AAAAAAAAH!”

When we opened the door, I immediately heard a feminine scream.

“That is Miu.” Kirumi observed.

After that, other screams followed.

“D-did they see…”

“We will not accomplish anything by remaining here! We need to go there!” Kirumi continued.

We started running towards the source of the scream.

It was in that few seconds that I remembered, that I realized… either way, it was my fault. I tried to
push that thought away… but it came back. Everything I was doing had no purpose.

The corridor stretched out in front of me.

No signs of a dead body, not even blood.

That didn’t reassure me at all. Maybe it should have.

I… had to face Maki again… I had to face Kaede again. Answer her questions. I didn’t want to.

Blurred figures appeared. The lucky ones. Who were still alive.

“Kirumi! Kiibo! Shuichi..!” Kaito cried out. A purple shape came towards us. “I-I… have…

tried…”

Here was the corner. I could recognize almost everyone.

No body in sight.

But then I turned my head.

Almost everyone was in front of me.

Miu, Angie, 0U-M4, Himiko, Gonta, Tenko, Korekiyo… were standing.

…

…

…

…

Ryoma Hoshi was slumped on the floor.

And he wasn’t moving.

DAILY LIFE END.

Chapter End Notes

That is true. I killed him.
He's actually one of my favorite characters. So it's even more painful.
Can you guess the culprit without any clues? Maybe...
Killing School Semester Opening Ceremony: Deadly Life (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

Kaede finds the body; The first investigation starts.

Chapter Notes

Here's how the investigation works. There are still two POVs, Kaede and Shuichi. Despite this, Kaede will be the one I'll be following for all the trials -at least until she's alive hehe-
The "truth bullets" obtained by Shuichi will still be used by Kaede during the trial. As you read this chapter, you'll know why this is possible.
I split the investigation in two. For the trial, I'm using the script format with the "adopted mini-games" from the main series, so that it mimics the game. Possibly, you could play along, but I don't know how easy it will be.
For now, let's focus on the investigation.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

DEADLY LIFE START!

The announcement sounded.

It was not my imagination. My ears didn’t deceive me.

Somebody died. And someone killed.

I checked Rantaro and Tsumugi’s pulse once again. It was somewhat faint, but it told me they were just unconscious. I tried to shake them, but they showed no signs of waking up. Moreover, there was no trace of blood or trauma. Whatever knocked them out, must have done it not by force, but with something else at their disposal.

I couldn’t leave them there. They seemed fine, but were helpless, easy targets. I had to ask someone to look after them. And then, when they would have woken up, I had to ask them what happened.

Always keeping watch on Rantaro and Tsumugi, I approached the window and looked down. Nobody was there. Kirumi had gone searching for Shuichi, but she didn’t come back. What was she doing..?

And Shuichi? I prayed he was alive. I can’t imagine someone targeting him… what would they gain from attacking him?! Just when he was the most vulnerable…

No, I can’t continue with ifs, I need to see what happened with my own eyes. I was aware that no investigation would have been carried out and that the class trial would be cancelled, but I was sure… that was for the best. It would have only spread distrust between everybody. This way, at
least… the culprit… would go away. We could… unite, together, glued by the hate towards someone. It sounds terrible… but a murder happened. I had to deal with the situation I found myself into. I can learn to live with this…

I need to keep this group together, even after my failure.

Now that a killing has happened, no more need to follow. This will be the first and the last victim here in Gifted Inmates Academy.

I sat besides Rantaro and Tsumugi, checking their pulse regularly. I had no way of knowing if they could wake up, but I was still sure that they would open their eyes.

When I heard footsteps, I stood up and went to see who arrived. Kaito and Tojo’s expression destroyed any hoped I had about the truthfulness of the announcement.

“I’m sorry, Kaede…” Kaito started.

“Please, tell me. Tell me… who’s dead?”

Kaito stayed silent. Why… wasn’t he saying anything!?

“Ryoma.” Kirumi boomed.

That name echoed in my head. Of everyone in this school… he… was the last one I expected to die. How could a presumed serial killer die? Was I even right with my assumption?!

“I know you wanted to protect everyone, Kaede. This isn't your fault, you know? It’s the killer’s fault!”

“…We’ll discuss about this later…” I said, trying to dodge the matter. No, it wasn’t the time to question myself. “For now… you have seen the body, right?”

“Yes, however I would say is in perfect conditions…”

“You should examine it. You’re a detective, you must have come in contact with… many bodies.”

Kirumi glared at him.

“…That doesn’t offend her, I’m sure.” He followed.

“I must ask you, why have you not joined us? I expected you to rush wherever the victim was.”

“I couldn’t. Look at this.”

After taking some steps back, I let my classmates see the condition Tsumugi and Rantaro were in.

“What?!” Kaito exclaimed “Are they dead too!?”

“This… is unbelievable.” Kirumi added, looking shocked.

“No, thankfully… they are just unconscious.”

I think I should have explained that in advance.

“…But why…”
“There’s a reason behind this. It has to be connected to the murder. Also, someone entered my room.”

“Seriously!? Kaede, that Rantaro is suspicious! You ask him to guard your door, here’s what happens!”

“That’s what it appears like… but you can’t say that for certain. Someone attacked him, that’s sure.”

“He’s shady as fuck! I’d ask him some questions if I were you!”

“…I plan to. But you can’t ask questions to an unconscious person, can you?”

“I’m just warning you! I won’t let a strong girl like you be hurt by a psycho!”

“I suppose it is too soon to call Rantaro a psycho.”

“Kaito, stop jumping to conclusions. Anyway, I need to see Ryoma’s body.”

“What good is investigating? The killer is getting out of this mess with no consequences.”

“Do you know who did it?” I asked.

“As far as I know, we do not. None of the people who arrived at the crime scene confessed. That leads me to think Maki is the culprit.”

“I knew it was her! It must have used the weapon she found in your room!”

…Really? Could she?

“I’m afraid we can’t pin the murder on Maki. The culprit won’t reveal themselves until they feel safe. I… think everyone would be scared of them, but he would undoubtedly be targeted by some of you… namely… Kaito.”

“Are you sayin’ I would kill him!!?”

“…No, I’m saying you would beat them up. For sure.”

“Oh, that’s right! I would beat him to a pulp! That coward!”

“Kirumi, I ask you to guard my room. Could you? I swear, this is my last request.”

Kirumi remained silent, looking conflicted.

“I can! I’ll show you I can be trusted!” Kaito exclaimed. “I need to make up for yesterday!”

Uhm… is Kaito really useful in this case? I’m sure he’s a great inventor, but he’s rather impulsive… something tells me that he won’t listen to Rantaro at all… if he were to wake up.

“Do not worry Kaede. I will aid you one last time. This is simply yet another task.” Kirumi announced.

“That’s great, Kirumi! You’ll be the one who’ll watch me! And prove to Kaede how awesome I am!”

“I will… do my best.”
Apparently things went my way.

“Uhm… if Tsumugi and Rantaro wake up, bring them down. I want to talk with them about what happen first. …Kaito, don’t do anything… uhm… irrational. Ok?”

“Got it!” He replied, giving me a thumbs up.

I couldn’t bring myself to do the same.

Quickly, I reached the eastern part of the school. As I walked, I tried to forget what was about to happen. But how could I?

I was about to witness a dead body.

It wasn’t the first time, but now it was different. The murder wasn’t an unknown delinquent, a person who I never met, who I never had to see again… but an Ultimate, someone who had been rewarded with a prestigious title, who I met few days prior.

Someone who had the strength to kill Ryoma Hoshi.

I could feel every chill through my spine as I approached the end of the corridor, which I hoped would never end.

But it did.

And, amidst the spiral of people, worried and confused, I saw the body.


“Yes, Gonta… I am… slightly confused, but not hurt in any way. Thanks.”

“Gonta is very happy to hear that! …But Ryoma is…”

“I know. Kirumi and Kaito told me. …We… need to be strong.”

“Who fuckin’ cares?! He was a loner anyway! I’m so glad he’s the one who had to go!” Miu exclaimed.

“How… can you say this?..” Kiibo stood dumbfounded.

“He probably isn’t an Ultimate either! So, he’s dead for the greater good!”

“…Don’t say that.”

Shuichi’s voice surprised me.

I couldn’t see him at first. He was near the body, examining him. However, he wasn’t interacting with him in any way.

“What do you want, Suckichi?”

“…You’re not any better than him.”

“How?! I’m the great pianist Iruma Miu, and honestly, a great beauty too! My tits are perfect and
my face is too! He looks like a baby! I don’t want to be accused of pedophilia!”

“Insulting others won’t make you happier. Everyone here is guilty of something. You should ask yourself why you are and then judge others.”

Shuichi…

Was he talking based on experience?

“Shuichi is so right!” 0U-M4 joined the conversation. “But, let me explain, dear magician… this creature, constantly in need of pleasure, doesn’t speak your language. She’s way too dumb! To let her understand you need to change your register! U-uhm… earth wants to communicate to prostitute number six-hundred seventy five! Have you written your number in a bathroom stall, so I can find it and know more?!

“W-what have y-you c-called me..?”

“She can’t even find comebacks!”

“Please, I think we should focus on what happened.” Korekiyo observed.

“A male degenerate did this, I’m sure!”

“Whoever did this crime should reveal themselves.” Angie said. “If I remember correctly, he’s free to go despite having committed a murder!”

“Are you encouraging him?!” Kiibo exclaimed.

“Nah, I’m just saying that wasting time is useless!... Of course they need to be punished.” Angie continued with a smile never leaving her face.

After that last statement, Maki appeared in the hallway.

“…It seems I don’t have to test my skills against countless Monokumas. That’s fine. I went here just to let you know I wasn’t the killer.”

She didn’t show any signs of remorse for the poor Ryoma.

“Now I’ll go eat something.”

“H-hey! You can’t leave!” Kiibo intervened. “One of your classmates… is…”

“I *am* sad for him. But he wasn’t my classmate. He was a stranger. I would be an hypocrite if I cried or sat here doing nothing, because, at the end of the day, his death barely affects me. Sorry if I’m blunt.”

Maki appears to know nothing about human relationships. I guess she prefers smacking her opponents to the ground rather than discussing with them.

“B-but…”

“I don’t even have to help with an investigation. The person who dared to commit a crime is free to go… and even if I wanted to, I can’t stop them. I’d prefer not to witness their confession.”

Even if she pretends not to care, from her words I can understand she doesn’t approve of this matter. She didn’t want anyone to die. However, that doesn’t mean she cares about us.
“Now we ca-

“Nuh-uh-uh! This is the time when I show myself!” Monokuma said.

Everyone of us turned back to see that Monokuma and his five children appeared all behind us.

“Hell yeah! Finally some dead meat! Where’s the blood? Where’s the blood!?”

“You stupid punk, there’s no blood!” Monosuke followed.

“Oh, thank God! If I see a single spill of blood I’m gonna vomit!”

“No blood?! What’s a murder if there’s no blood!? Damn, this time the game is so boring!”

“My children! They’re adorable even if they argue! …Ah, I couldn’t pick a favorite! They’ll grow up to be just like me!”

“Stop focusing on your children and tell us why you’re here!” Tenko rebutted.

“Oh, right. It’s just… when they appear, they cloud my vision!”

Maki completely ignored the current discussion and started walking away.

“I said don’t go away!” Monokuma boomed. “This is your headmaster! When I punish my students I don’t just suspend them for a couple of weeks!”

Maki stopped. “So tell me what you want.”

“I’m here to give you the Monokuma File! A very important, little document, that is being uploaded on your Monopad right now! It contains very precious information on the body of the victim you discover, so that identifying the culprit won’t be impossible! Be ready to receive many, this will become a common practice later. You’ll become Monokuma File experts in no time!”

“H-hey… what good is it for?” I asked.

“Huh?”

“We don’t have to go through a class trial, am I right?”

“Ah… you don’t know the latest piece of news!” Monotaro exclaimed.

“News?! Oh! I slept for twelve hours straight! I don’t know! I don’t know!” Monophanie continued.

“The culprit went out of their way to let me know that he wanted to participate in the trial! Isn’t this development exciting?!!”

“Oh!” 0U-M4’s face lit up. “It is indeed exciting!”

“W-what…” I managed to say.

“Yeah, I really don’t know what the hell is the culprit thinking, but if he wants to go through a class trial who am I to say no?!... Honestly I was never on board with that motive... but I guess sacrifices have to be made, right!? Just like your friend Ryoma! Ahahahah!”

“D-don’t call him a sacrifice…” Shuichi mumbled.
“…So, after this shocking development… You need to investigate. That is, if you don’t want to die. And the Monokuma File will be very helpful! Of course it won’t tell you *everything!* I can leave out important details that will help you too much! Killing someone is a difficult feat, so I can forgive some rookie mistakes if the blackened commits some.”

“What?! You’re giving them a huge advantage!” Miu lamented.

“Advantage one party?! Me!? Never! I strive for a fair trial! Everyone would be bored if the culprit was too obvious, right?!”

“Words of wisdom, daddy!” Monosuke approved.

“Now I’ll go. I suggest to check the rules of the killing game.”

“Rules are important!” Monotaro said.

“You have a limited time before the class trial starts. We can say it runs out when I get bored! And with that, bye! Happy first investigation!”

***

Monokuma disappeared as quickly as he appeared, and his five bipedal sons disappeared with him too.

We were now tasked to find the terrible person who killed Ryoma Hoshi. We had to be ready.

“Ehm…” Gonta broke out the silence. “If need to investigate, Kaede should tell what to do… that what Gonta thinks!”

“Angie agrees with Gonta! Great, Gonta! You are very smart!”

The supreme leader then patted the tennis player’s head.

Everyone shifted their attention to Kaede.

“U-uhm… yeah… I can d-do it…”

“Tenko is sure you can do it, Kaede! You remind me of a girl who attended my classes!”

“Was it common practice for her to solve crimes?” 0U-M4 sarcastically asked.

“Shut your mouth, degenerate male!”

“I am not a male, I’m a robot! You don’t have to bully me just because my chest is small!”

“There’s no need for discussions right now…” Kaede explained. “Since we have a limited time to carry out the investigation, I think we should start immediately.”

Kaede’s right. The person who killed Hoshi is in this school, we can be sure of that. But… what is going to happen after we’ll discover who did it? Will Kaede ever understand..? Will her detective skills be enough?... I need to do my part too. There are so many questions I need to answer too. I am in the dark; I need to know what happened. We’ll work together and find the truth behind this
“I think that our first priority is to check the Monokuma File.” Kaede announced. “I don’t know if we can trust Monokuma, but this is our first clue.”

After saying that, Kaede picked up her Monopad and invited each one of us to do the same.

I clicked a couple of times on the tablet and a new icon appeared on the menu, titled “Mono-files”. Having opened it, a black screen appeared, then a image of Ryoma’s dead body. By swiping the screen, more information could be seen.

The victim is Ryoma Hoshi.

The body was found in the hallway near the entrance of the gym.

The estimate time of death is around 5 A.M. in the morning.

The cause of death is unclear, but the neck of the victim is irritated. No other external injuries are present.

“So this is the Monokuma File. But… can we trust it?” Kiibo asked.

“I could check the body for the last details, but we’ll never know if the time of death is correct. However, we should remember that Monokuma said that he wanted a fair trial, so…”

Trusting Monokuma is something we shouldn’t do, but this time she’s right.

Obtained truth bullet: Monokuma File 1

“Ryoma was killed, but as you may know, somebody broke into my room this night and knocked Tsumugi and Rantaro out.” Kaede told the others.

"Another act of violence?" Korekiyo appeared surprised. "Who could imagine this turn of events."

“What?! Gonta thought it was safe! Gonta should have been there!”

“W-well… it’s not your fault, really. But it can’t be a coincidence. I’m sure that whoever entered my room has something to do with this death.”

She may be right…

“So, after being done here, I need to go upstairs again, and ask some questions to Tsumugi and
Rantaro.

“That is, if they wake up…” 0U-M4 whispered.

Kaede ignored him.

“I’ll check the body now. I saw that Shuichi was already looking at it…”

She glanced in my direction and that caused me to stop looking at her, and turn my attention to the ground. I felt my cheeks blushing.

“And what… should we do..?” Himiko asked. “Can I… take a nap?”

“A nap!?” Tenko exclaimed. “Himiko, this is a matter of life and death! You could die, you know?!”

“It’ll be a quick nap…”

“Have you seen something strange between yesterday and today? Do you know something useful? …Ah, and I don’t mean to doubt you… but if you gave me alibis, that would be great! In fact, I’d be so relieved if you have one…”

Nobody stepped up.

“Well…”

“What did you expect?! Everyone was probably sleeping at that time!” Miu shouted.

“…I was awake.” Kiibo said. “And… I saw Maki walking near the gazebo.”

“Maki?” Kaede asked. “In the middle of the night?”

“I think it was around 5 A.M. But I’m not sure!”

“And, why were you around at that time?” Korekiyo asked.

“I usually spend my time looking at the stars! It calms me down!”

“I suppose you can confirm this.” Kaede continued, turning towards Maki, who was distancing herself from the group.

“I didn’t see him. But I was near the dorms.”

“W-well…” Kiibo explained. “When I saw her, I was sitting in the grass. I didn’t want to trouble her, especially after I came to know of her short temper…”

“I don’t attack everyone who talks to me.”

“Nyahahah, you’re saying the opposite if we look at your actions!”

“Think what you want.”

“But what were you doing outside in the middle of the night? Eh?”

“I was checking for suspicious activity.”

“That’s rich coming from you!” Miu commented.
“Then… at 4:50… she entered the dorms. Shortly after, I did too.

“That’s true. That proves I couldn’t have killed Ryoma.”

Even though Kiibo’s testimony isn’t confirmed, that doesn’t mean it’s false. As far as I know, it could be important to the case.

**Obtained truth bullet: Kiibo’s testimony**

Kaede scribbled something on a notepad – I didn’t notice it before! - and approached me.

“O-oh… I’m going to-”

“No, stay here. We can check the body together.”

Kaede tried to lure me with the sweetest voice she had. But that wasn’t enough.

“I just… I don’t think I can handle it anymore…”

She reached for my hand. I couldn’t avoid her touch.

“We have a chance to survive. Together we’re stronger.”

Why wasn’t she talking about yesterday? Has she really forgotten? Does she not care? The fact she’s not even mentioning it should put me at ease, put it’s making me more nervous…

“I... don’t think… I’ll be useful…”

“Don’t allow yourself to say that again!” she responded, looking into my eyes. “You are useful. Each one of us is necessary to resolve the mess we’re in. You too.”

“B-but… I don’t think I… found something…”

“That’s normal. I don’t think you’re… familiar… with dead bodies.”

After that last word, she paused. She probably realized that her choice of words wasn’t that good.

“Either way… the Monokuma File said that no external injuries are present on the body.”

Kaede stared at the body, even peeking under Ryoma’s jacket.

“K-kaede!” I exclaimed.

“I need to check the body thoroughly. Wounds could be hidden under his clothes.”

“W-wouldn’t a blood stain be visible?” I asked.

“Not necessarily. Presumptions don’t exist in my job.”

“A-ah… right…”

Kaede continued with her examination. I decided to look somewhere else until she said she was finished.
“Almost nothing. The Monokuma File is correct, except for one small thing. Look at his nose.”

I did as Kaede asked and saw a small, pink smear just under his right nostril.

“This is something we need to remember. Why is this here?”

**Obtained truth bullet: Pink smear under nostril**

“What about the neck?” I asked.

“It’s irritated indeed. However, I can’t say for certain what happened to him. Even though the file doesn’t specify this wound as the cause of murder, it could very well be.”

“And do you know what could have happened to him?”

“Yes, I have my theory… but I’ll talk about it during the trial.”

“Oh.”

I have to admit I was somewhat disappointed with Kaede’s decision not to divulge information, but I suppose… there’s no time to waste trying to explain me..?

The detective then turned her attention to me, lowering her voice.

“Shuichi… if you know something… tell me.”

“Wh-what do you mean…”

“You’re the one who spent the most time with Ryoma… did he do something… did he tell you something..?”

Didn’t we have this same conversation before...? What good is telling her the same things again?

“Think about it. When we’re alone, we’ll talk about it again. …Just to be sure.”

I nodded, but to be honest… what else did I have to tell her?

Kaede then stood up. I stopped looking at the body too, noticing that Miu, Angie and Gonta weren’t with us anymore. And of course, no sign of Maki.

“W-where have they gone?” Kaede asked.

“Nee-hee-hee! Who knows! Angie accompanied Gonta in the cafeteria and Miu probably went to her lab to watch some lewd movie! I suppose she needs constant stimulation…”

“Nyeh… You don’t have to insult her even when she’s not around…”

“You don’t have to insult her at all!” Tenko intervened. “S-she might have her problems… but we need to understand her before we judge her!”

“If only you applied this logic to males too…” 0U-M4 noted.

“Either way… I should have asked them some questions…”
“Are you done here?” Kiibo asked.

“This is the crime scene, but strangely, nothing except the body seems out of the ordinary. The clothes are in pristine conditions. And the body, except for the face and neck... doesn’t have injuries.”

“For someone who has been murdered it is uncommon not to have external injuries such as scratches or minor wounds...” Korekiyo observed.

“Yes, Korekiyo is correct. This is interesting.”

It seems that only Ryoma’s face and neck were injured. If that’s the case… does this mean what I think it does?

Obtained truth bullet: Conditions of the body

Near the body there was an object. A rope.

“Was this here when you came?” Kaede asked the others.

“Yes.” Korekiyo responded. “I suppose it comes from the warehouse.”

Kaede approached the rope and took it in her hands.

“This rope isn’t that strong. I don’t think it can sustain heavy weights.”

“How heavy?” Tenko asked.

“Well… Shuichi, allow me to demonstrate something.”

“S-Sure…”

I moved closer to Kaede.

“Take this end. I’ll take the other.”

I did as she asked.

“Now pull, but not strongly… and I’ll pull too.”

“O-okay…”

I started pulling and after a few seconds, the rope tore at the center, leaving me and Kaede with two separate pieces.

“It breaks very easily.” Kaede concluded.

Kaede’s right, but will this clue help her?

Obtained truth bullet: Rope at the crime scene
“I can’t find anything else that could be important to the case here. If you don’t have anything else to say…”

“I do.” Tenko said. “I just remembered it. It might not have to do with the case, but…”

“If it’s something you think it’s useful, it could be.”

“I will tell you, but not here. Too many degenerate males are present and I don’t trust them!”

“Uhm… do you know we’ll probably discuss what you say to me in the trial?”

“Yes, of course! But this is truly a piece of information that shouldn’t be discussed about now!”

“…Okay… But, can Shuichi, at least, hear it? He’s my partner in this investigation.”

Wait… what? I never agreed to that! …I’d have preferred to search for clues alone…

“You’re asking me to tell secrets to a degenerate male, which I’ve never done before!”

“It’s not that difficult…” Kiibo said.

Tenko stood still in a pensive mood for some seconds.

“I suppose I can do that today. Shuichi hasn’t behaved like a menace until now and apparently you trust him blindly. I trust girl judgments, and you’re a detective, so I trust your sixth sense. I’ll accompany you where you need to go, and say what I need to.”

“I suppose… I’m going to the cafeteria. Angie and Gonta guarded my door the night before the last one, they could know something about what happened.”

“To the cafeteria then! Himiko, come with us.”

“…What?”

“I invited you to come with me. It’s dangerous to be alone in a place like this.”

“…I feel comfy here.”

“No, no! They lull you in a false sense of security and then attack you!”

Himiko didn’t seem to care about Tenko’s plea.

“…Okay. I’ll come.”

“What?!” Kiibo exclaimed. “But you just said you want to stay here!”

“Arguing is a lot of work…”

“I… am left speechless…”

“Great, Himiko. You always know what the right choice is.” Tenko applauded.

“I guess so…”

“Before we go, I think two of you should guard the body to avoid… unpleasant occurrences.
“Nee-hee-hee! I agree with you! I’ll guard the body! Who wants to help me?”

“I will.” Korekiyo said. “Other than guarding the body, I will watch you as well.”

“Oh! Do I need a bodyguard? Am I that important?”

“No. I will stop you from attempting-

“I know, I know… you don’t trust me because you think I do things without thinking?! I’m a robot, for heaven’s sake! I do everything because logic! Not like you, you humans actually have things like emotions that cloud your judgment!”

Emotions are important. Even more than logic. When that doesn’t work, emotions are the only solution. Why do we follow our heart so many times? It has to be because we recognize that as the right path to pursue, unconsciously or not. If we only cared about logic we would be machines… just like 0U-M4… but, despite everything I’ve done, despite everything we’ve done… we’re still human beings.

"Kaede, you must swear to withhold this information until the trial.” Tenko said.

“Yes, yes...” she repeated.

Ugh… how many times does she have to tell her the same thing? She should reveal this secret and be done with it...

“And you, degenerate male, you must do too! I guess you menaces are accustomed to spilling secrets..!”

Why does she think I’m some sort of inferior being? Will she ever change her mind…? After all I’ve witnessed enough to suppose she won’t. Ever.

“What I wanted to say is… that yesterday, shortly after we split up, I heard Ouma talking with Ryoma.”

“With Ryoma!?” Kaede exclaimed.

“Well, me and Himiko were just exiting the dormitories… and I couldn’t help but hear his voice…”

“I can confirm…” Himiko said.

“And Ouma said something like…

\FLASHBACK//

0U-M4: Hey, Ryoma… so, are you planning to kill someone?”

Ryoma: What.

0U-M4: Oh, don’t you remember? Rumors say that you’re a mass murderer…

Ryoma: …
**0U-M4:** Hmm… you don’t seem surprised. So you do remember…

**Ryoma:** I just know that something bad happened in my past. And now, I need to go.

\END FLASHBACK//

“W-what?!” I almost jumped from the revelation. “Ouma kno- thinks… that Ryoma is a serial killer?”

“This is surprising… to say the least.” Kaede noted.

“This is what I heard. After that, Ryoma stormed into the dormitories.”

“Nyeh… Ouma went towards the Shrine of Judgement. But we didn’t bother talking to him.”

“This… this information is actually… very useful.” Kaede said.

“I know. Ryoma appears to be a serial killer? …I’m… sort of glad… he got what he deserved.”

Oh. Tenko’s last sentence was really full of hate. But I suppose that, if he really is a serial killer... she has a point. However, 0U-M4 suspecting Ryoma doesn’t make the latter a mass murderer. Still, this is information to keep in mind…

**Obtained truth bullet:** 0U-M4’s and Ryoma’s conversation

**Obtained truth bullet:** Ryoma’s whereabouts

“Is this all you have to say?” Kaede asked, regaining her composure.

“Yes, I believe so.” Tenko concluded. “I’ll now investigate somewhere else with Himiko, if you don’t mind.”

“Tenko, what if… some clues are in my dorm room..? The culprit could have entered it, we should check…”

“Uhm…” Tenko didn’t seem convinced, but then changed her mind. “Checking wouldn’t hurt…”

I don’t really think that’s the case, Himiko…

“It could be. Who am I to contradict you.” Kaede said.

Does she really think that? I’m sure she just wants to get rid of them so that she can have need some time alone with me.

As I see them exiting from the main entrance, I’m stopped before I can open my mouth.

“Did Ouma know..?” Kaede asked.
“Apparently... he had some suspects... but how?! You said that it was restricted information! Only your partners knew!”

“Yes, I’m sure about that. So how...”

“I-I... really can’t figure this out... is he the killer?”

“I can’t say for now. There are many things to check out first.”

“O-oh... s-sorry... I’m... stupid... I don’t know anything about detectives...”

I knew she could sense my embarrassment. She was about to encourage me...

“No, you aren’t. Making hypotheses isn’t wrong. That’s how detectives work.”

Here she goes. She wasn’t convincing me.

“...But let’s talk about something else. You’re the one who spent the most time with Ryoma.”

“I... think that’s true...”

“You already told me what you did, but... is there something that... could be useful, in this circumstances?”

I stood still, placing my index finger on my lips, trying to make my best “really thinking about this” impression.

“W-well... I actually think... he wasn’t scared around Monokuma... despite the fact that bear threatened him... he was ready to challenge it.”

“Hmm...”

“I think... he wasn’t scared to die. M-maybe... he was actually seeking death. N-no... more like... pushing his luck... w-way to much.”

“And you didn’t see him after yesterday morning?”

“W-well... I... I stayed in my room... all day...”

Oh, shoot. I shouldn’t have talked about this again.

“That’s right!” she said, forcing a laugh. “How dumb of me! ...I’ll just write something down about what you said...”

Am I helping her? I bet I’m being such an hassle... why am I even following her around? I feel more and more awkward every second...

So I stayed silent. Six, seven seconds passed. None of us two said a word.

But, thankfully, someone's voice came from somewhere, and they were addressing Kaede.
*TRUTH BULLETS*

--Monokuma File 1*
According to the Monokuma File, Ryoma was killed around 5 AM. Despite not knowing the cause of death, it notifies that his neck is irritated.

--Kiibo's testimony*
Kiibo claims he was in front of the dormitories at the time of death and he saw Maki. Maki, however, can't confirm Kiibo's innocence.

--Pink smear under nostril*
A pink smear was found under Ryoma's right nostril.

--Conditions of the body*
After examining Ryoma's body, we confirmed that no external injuries were present on the victim except for the neck and face

--Rope at the crime scene*
A rope was found near Ryoma's body. It was intact, but it tore extremely easily.

--0U-M4 and Ryoma's conversation*
Tenko and Himiko overheard 0U-M4 talking with Ryoma. The former accused him of being a serial killer.

--Ryoma's whereabouts*
According to Tenko's testimony, Ryoma was last seen near the dormitories, talking with 0U-M4.
Chapter Summary

Kaede searches for clues in her research lab; the first investigation comes to a close.

Chapter Notes

Hello everybody!
Time to wrap up the investigation!

At the end I have written all the truth bullets that Shuichi and Kaede find during the chapter. I imagined them to be written by Kaede in her notepad, so when you read "me" it means her.

For the next chapter, you'll have to wait a bit longer than a week. I'm still in the middle of the second chapter (around six parts ahead from here) and I don't want to start publishing irregularly. So I decided I'll post next Friday. I'll try to post every 7 to 9 days from now on, depending on how fast I write.

Second, I decided I might do free time events. I have yet to write them. So, if I manage to create interesting backstories that could be told with FTEs, I'll ask you to vote for the character you want to spend time with in the next chapters.

I have talked too much. Bye! °w°

Me and Shuichi remained silent for the longest seven seconds of my life, with my mind seemingly blank, void of any word to continue the discussion.

But thankfully, someone else came to save me.

“Kaede, Kaede!”

It was Kaito’s voice.

“They woke up! They woke up!”

“Y-you don’t have to repeat things two times…” A slightly frustrated Shuichi said.

“Rantaro and Tsumugi?!?” I asked, surprised.

“Yeah! They’re somewhat confused, but one hundred percent awake!”

“Shuichi!” I exclaimed, grabbing him by his hand. “We need to go!”

“What about Angie and Gonta?”
“We’ll ask questions later, we need to go to the upper floor!”

There was no point in sprinting, but I was so relieved that Tsumugi and Rantaro were with us once again that I couldn’t wait to see their conditions. Kaito and Shuichi followed me keeping the pace until we reached my research room.

And as I expected, both Rantaro and Tsumugi were on their feet, the first conversing with Kirumi, while the second staring at my room.

“What… what… this research room is a mess!” she exclaimed. “Oh my God! I need to clean it up!”

Is she obsessed with cleaning? I didn’t know that…

“She woke up less than sixty seconds ago and as soon she saw the conditions of your research lab, her cry started echoing through the walls of this school.” Kirumi explained.

“Guess she has OCD…” Kaito commented.

“I can’t look at it anymore! Give me a broom, some water, something..!”

She’s really losing her cool. I’d help her, but I can’t let her enter… there are clues in there. I suppose…

Before I could finish my thoughts, Rantaro left the door ajar, and as a result, Tsumugi calmed down.

“Oh… oh…” She mumbled. “Oh… I’m sorry! I’m sorryimsorryimsorry! …I really shouldn’t have done that…”

“Hey, hey… calm down…” I reassured her. “Surely you’ve been through a lot during these last hours.”

“You don’t say…” Kirumi commented.

“T-thank you, Rantaro… If it wasn’t for you, I’d have gone crazy for sure… I can’t stand chaos. I just feel… I need to tidy everything! As soon as I can… I know it’s strange…”

“No, it’s not, Tsumugi.” The artist said. “Since you’re the Ultimate Maid, this characteristic of yours is perfectly normal, I would say.”

“Ah… thank you for the kind words, but really… it’s one of my biggest flaws…”

“Kaede’s here!” Rantaro finally acknowledged my presence. “I… suppose you’re here because of… well… our complete failure to protect your door? I… can try to explain…”

As far as first impressions go, from his tone of voice, he seemed pretty sad about what happened.

“…Ah!” I remembered. “Kirumi mentioned you just woke up, so, do you know about… Ryoma...?”

“Huh? What about Ryoma?” Rantaro asked.

“Have you discovered his talent?!” That was Tsumugi’s question.

So they don’t know.
Kirumi sensed my distress.

“We had not informed them yet.” She explained, laying her hat on her chest.

“Informed… of what?” The maid asked. “You don’t seem happy, has something-

“He’s dead, right?” Rantaro said ominously.

What? How does he know?

“If I’m still able to read the mood… something terrible must have happened. Your tone is the one people use to deliver information about a tragedy.”

“D-don’t say that…” Tsumugi intervened. “T-there’s no way…”

“It’s true. Ryoma is no longer with us.” I announced. “We found his body.”

“Ah!” Tsumugi let out a gasp. “That’s… that’s… not possible…”

“I really didn’t want to tell you this, but…”

As I tried to encourage Tsumugi, Rantaro started to talk again.

“Who did it? Has the culprit left already?”

He was referring to the first blood perk that Monokuma offered us. Right, he didn’t know about that…

“The culprit didn’t claim their prize.”

After I finished the sentence, Kirumi and Kaito were as shocked as Rantaro.

“Hmm, so they’re still here. I wonder why they chose to participate in a class trial, I wonder…”

“Probably they totally lost their mind!” Kaito guessed. “They want us all killed!”

But is that really the case? Would someone really do this?

“D-do you know what happened to us..?” asked Tsumugi, still shaken from the recent revelations.

“We were guarding here, and then… well… I was sleeping… when…”

“That’s why I came here. I refuse to believe there’s no connection between the break-in in my room and Ryoma’s death. If you were knocked out, there’s the chance that your assailter is none other than the killer.”

“I’ll provide you the info that you need, Kaede.” Rantaro said, staring into my eyes.

“W-well. You can do it without being creepy.” I said, backing off.

“Oh! I really respect what you’re doing. I just… was trying to be nice.”

More like too close for comfort.

“If you want to know what happened, here’s what I can tell you. So, I am fairly sure that what happened occurred past 2 AM, since I remember the clock displaying a 2. Tsumugi was taking a nap… I heard some noises, but I dismissed them as my imagination at first. However, I heard them again. I started to sense that something was off, so I woke up Tsumugi…”
“Yes, he did. I was still in a dazed state, but I can confirm that.”

“I told her to wait for me while I searched for the source of the noise, which was the stairs to the ground floor. But then… I would say someone pointed a flashlight at me, but the light was exceptionally bright. As a result, I closed my eyes, but when I opened them again… I didn’t see anything. Only black. I was blindfolded, and I wasn’t able to scream either. So whoever attacked me also placed some kind of cloth against my mouth to prevent me from talking.”

“But this doesn’t explain why you were both unconscious when Kaede found you.”

“Yes, I know. After being blindfolded, I was dragged. I heard Tsumugi in the distance calling for me…”

“I can confirm it… he wasn’t coming and I got worried. And so when I glanced at the hallway… I saw him on the ground. I ran towards him, but I also got blinded by a very bright light. And… then got blindfolded too…”

“That’s the first time I heard of this story. As you know, we just woke up.”

“A-Are you doubting me?!” Tsumugi panicked.

“No, not necessarily. But I can’t confirm that the same thing that happened to me happened to you, since I was unable to see and speak. I heard some sounds…”

“I did too! I heard the door opening!”

“Was it a loud sound?”

“No, I suppose we only heard it because we were here.” Rantaro explained. “But I’m sure, someone entered from here. Then, some time passed after that. Then, someone forced my mouth open and I ingested some type of liquid.”

“Me too!” Tsumugi confirmed.

“That’s the last thing I remember before waking up.”

This testimony has some holes in it, but it’s surely vital to the case. Rantaro and Tsumugi were attacked, but by who?

**Obtained truth bullet: Rantaro’s testimony**

**Obtained truth bullet: Tsumugi’s testimony**

While I was taking notes, Kaito approached me.

“Hey, Kaede… how’s the investigation?”

“I’m gathering clues. I already have my assumptions, but nothing sure as of now.”

“Aren’t you the Ultimate Detective?! I’m sure you’ll discover the culprit in no time!”
“Uhm, have you observed some strange behavior during these last days?”

“No, nothing that has to do with Ryoma, I suppose… if only I decided to leave my room last night, maybe…!”

“Please, there’s no way you could have known about what was going on. This isn’t your fault.”

“No, I’m not talking about that.”

“Huh?”

“During the night, I was woken up by someone snoring.”

“Snoring?”

“Yes! Whoever it was, they were pretty loud, let me tell you!”

“Interesting…” I mumbled.

“So, of course, I had to wake up and search if there was something to cover my ears with… but no luck.”

“By chance, do you remember the time you experienced this… snoring?”

“Yep, the thing that transmits the Monokubs announcements displayed… 5.05 A.M.”

“Shuichi, did you hear this snoring?” I asked him.

“Well… not that I can remember…”

“I swear, I heard it! It was only at that time, and it lasted, like, five minutes. The longest five minutes of my life.”

“I’ll remember what you told me.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Snoring near Kaito’s room**

“Ah, another thing. We found a rope near the body. Have you seen one in the warehouse, recently?”

“Yup. I’m pretty sure there were two ropes there. When I woke up from a locker, I immediately checked the area to find something to escape.”

“Uhm, ok…”

**Updated truth bullet: Rope at the crime scene**

After that short conversation with Kaito, I decided to explore my room. I entrusted Kaito and Kirumi with a very important task: not to let anyone enter. Hoping that they did as I asked, I went in
again, this time ready to investigate. As I entered, I noticed that the room was pretty messy, with numerous books scattered on the floor. I have to admit that I probably should have cleaned it up after I hid the poison bottles. Not that it matters now…

To my surprise, Shuichi followed me without me asking. Is he doing this because he has changed his opinion about investigating with me?

“Oh!” He exclaimed noticing I was looking at him. “Do I need to leave you alone..?”

“No, no! I’m fine with you entering. You don’t need to ask me permission to follow me. Two pairs of eyes are always better than one!”

“Well, I think that your eyes outclass every pair in this school…”

Following the last word, Shuichi let out a small gasp and then blushed.

“I mean… I was saying… you know… because you know what you’re doing…”

Was that really referred to my detective skills or…?

That doesn’t matter, we don’t have all the time in the world to understand what happened.

First thing, I checked the poisons behind the books. As I saw before, one bottle was half full, the other completely emptied out. I took the bottle to check the labels. On the first the label recited:

“In average-height subjects, an entire dose is needed to be lethal. If ingested, causes failure of internal organs. The process takes up to ten minutes. In some subjects can cause the break of blood vessels under eyes, in nose and ears.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Lethal poison**

The second one, however, was something I already knew.

“Non-lethal poison. Causes unconsciousness. Half a dose is needed to be effective.”

But it wasn’t my bottle. Mine was still on the floor, broken in pieces.

**Obtained truth bullet: Non-lethal poison**

“Kaede, your lab is… rather fitting, for a detective…”

“Yes, it is. I just don’t understand why it needs poison of all things.”

“Monokuma probably placed it here just to mess with us.”

“To mess with me.” I corrected. It seems that bear has a personal grudge against me.

I turned my attention to the door. It was clearly forced open. The duct tape I used was ripped in
various places, but following a vertical line. It really seems someone entered from the outside. The rest of the duct tape was still intact, glued to the surface of the door. Because of this, I couldn’t even move the knob to open the door. I had to slip my fingers into the space between the door and the doorjamb to exit.

I knew it wouldn’t be that useful…

**Obtained truth bullet: Torn duct tape**

I continued to look around, but nothing else appeared out of place. Even the shards of the glass bottle I broke were still there. The one who came here must have seen them and avoided to step on them.

“Are you done..?” Shuichi asked.

“Yes. Whoever entered went straight to the poison bottles.”

We exited my room, remembering not to leave the door open to save Tsumugi from a breakdown, then I approached Kirumi.

“Kirumi, can I ask you some questions?”

“I suppose so, but it depends on the subject matter.”

“We took shifts this night, to guard the door. Can you remember the exact times when we swapped our roles?”

“Yes, I am fairly certain that you woke me up at 1:50 AM to tell me you were in need of sleep. I stayed awake until my eyes allowed me, which is 4:30 AM. Then I slept until you warned me about breakfast, that is 8:43 AM, if I’m not wrong.”

“You can’t know for sure about previous shifts because you had no idea of the time, right?”

“That is correct indeed.”

With this information, shared between the adventurer and me, I’ll be surely able to prove to the others something…

**Obtained truth bullet: Night shifts times**

“So, Kaede… how are you feeling?” Rantaro asked.

Ugh. Does he always want to talk with me?

“Well, considering that we just discovered a murder has occurred…”

“Oh! Sorry! I didn’t mean to anger you.”
“Yeah, yeah. I’m sure of that.”

“I just wanted to thank you for letting me guard the door. I’m sorry… I betrayed your trust. I always try to do my best and help others. I… feel really bad when things don’t go my way.”

“Who doesn’t? I failed too… The people I swore to protect… one of them died. This is not a challenge about who feels worse, though. It’s a way to prove ourselves that what we did was just a mistake that will help us in the long run. I know I’ve made a lot of them.”

“You just won’t stop with the inspirational speeches…”

Excuse me? The tone of Rantaro’s voice didn’t seem that aggressive, but still, he seems fed up with me.

He clearly feels sorry for what happened, or is it just a façade? I desperately want to trust him, but he has been acting strangely since we got here…

As me, Shuichi and Kirumi left the upper floor, I noticed something on the ground.

“Wait a second!” I said to the others.

“What is it?”

I kneeled down and picked up some scattered pieces of cloth.

“What do you have in your hand..?” Shuichi asked.

I know what those are… and why they’re there.

**Obtained truth bullet: Pieces of cloth**

We reached the ground floor and entered the cafeteria. As I was told, Angie and Gonta were there. The first was staring at some knives, while the second stood just behind her.

What were they doing?!

“Gonta, this knife is soooo sharp! Nyahaha! Woooow! It could cut human flesh without any problem!”

“Mmh… Gonta think knife dangerous…”

“You’re very right, sweet Gonta. Knife dangerous indeed. Let’s put it back in a drawer. Maybe I’ll use it to collect sacrifices.”

Kirumi coughed to alert them of our presence.

“Oh! Hi!” Angie greeted us waving her arms. “I was just telling Gonta…”

“Yes, yes…” Kirumi nodded. “We heard that you plan on using knives to collect our blood.”

Yep! You’re veeery correct, miss Kirumi! But that’s only if I can’t find needles or any other more
elegant method to do so! Atua likes when I do sacrifices professionally!"

What exactly is a “professional sacrifice” anyway?

“Gonta agree with Angie! For me knives not safe!”

“If you’d prefer to stay here we can leave! Do you want to have breakfast?” Angie cheerily said.

“E-ehm… I’m here to ask you some questions…”

"Oh! Do you wish to know more about our Lord and savior Atua?!!”

“N-not really. It’s about Ryoma…”

“Ryoma! Poor soul, I and Gonta prayed for him.”

“Yes! Gonta pray a lot for Hoshi to make Atua accept him!”

“The death of one of our classmates is truly a terrible event, right?”

Yes it is. So why is she so unaffected by it? To be honest, she seems more happy than sad.

“We can find solace believing that our friend Ryoma is now living happily besides Atua, who asked me to continue living joyfully.”

That’s really admirable, but that doesn’t mean we should act like he wasn’t killed.

“I really… ehm… You’re right, yes.” I said. “But wouldn’t Ryoma be happier knowing that we discovered who killed him?”

“No, I think he doesn’t care.”

“Eh?!”

“Atua told me he was ready to die… but that he, actually, really wanted us to live, apparently! Nyehhe! Plus, I don’t have anything relevant to say! Atua didn’t tell me anything, sadly.”

“Gonta wants to ask question too!” The tennis player said.

“Go ahead, Gonta. Even though that’s not what we were here for…”

“Chair was in hallway. Very strange because before was in cafeteria! Because it felt out of place in hallway, Gonta bring it back in cafeteria. You moved chair out?”

“Are you saying someone moved a chair from the cafeteria to the hallway?”

Gonta nodded.

“No, it wasn’t me… Was it you?” I asked Kirumi and Shuichi.

“I didn’t…”

“I also did not know about this before now.”

So a chair was moved from the cafeteria…
“Hey, Gonta… do you remember the last time you went to the cafeteria?”

“Gonta thinks so! Yesterday evening when we eating dinner!”

“Was that chair here or not?”

“Hmm… yes! Gonta sure! But Miu take it!”

“Yes!” Angie confirmed. “Miu said that she needed the chair to reach a very high shelf in the warehouse! Kiibo and Korekiyo can totaally confirm this as well, they were the last ones to leave the area!”

“But if that really was Miu’s intention… why did you find it in the hallway?”

“Oh, who knows! Miu is really strange, so she could have changed her mind!”

**Obtained truth bullet: Angie and Gonta’s testimony**

“After all, you were useful. Thanks a lot.”

“Gonta useful? Gonta do not think to be very intelligent.”

“No, Gonta!” Angie cheered. “You’re very special. Maybe you aren’t as intelligent as the Ultimate Detective, but you’re sooo great regardless! You have a great talent too!”

Gonta blushed.

“Angie think that?!”

“Angie is sure of that!”

***

We left the cafeteria. Kaede was still scribbling something on her notepad.

“Miu has some explaining to do.”

“Do you think she has something to do with this as well? I mean, she only picked up a chair…”

“Yes, but we need to confirm that. Hear what she has to say.”

“Kaede, have you seen this?”

Kirumi pointed to the wall.
“I-I don’t see anything, honestly…”

“Oh. It was foolish on my part to believe you would notice.”

“H-honestly, it just looks like a normal wall to me.”

“If you had spent many years looking for traps and secret switches, you would see that there’s a small part of the wall with a different shade of color.”

“Oh!” I exclaimed. “I… I actually see that.”

“You do?!” Kaede asked. “I really don’t…”

“The same thing happened to me and Ryoma while we were searching. A part of the wall colored differently, which opened up-

I didn’t have time to finish my sentence, since Kirumi pressed her hand against the secret switch, which revealed a secret passage just above our heads.

“Oh… that’s… unexpected…” Kaede commented.

How stupid… how stupid I was!

“K-Kaede… I’m sorry…” I blurted out. “I knew about this, I experienced the same thing and didn’t tell you!”

“Hey, hey… calm down.”

“W-when I was with Ryoma, we entered the AV Room thanks to a secret switch.”

“Yes, you told me that.”

“But… I forgot to describe it in detail… if I…”

“No ifs, Shuichi. What is done is done. We can’t go back and change our actions, so we need to focus on the present and the future.”

“R-right… Focus on the present…”

Maybe I should have told Kaede about this. But, she discovered it regardless, so… either way, I didn’t do the right thing.

“So, where does this thing lead to..?” Kaede asked.

“I’ve got no clue…”

“Hmm… Shuichi, can you climb onto my shoulders?”

“W-what?!”

What are Kaede’s intentions?!

“Ehm, I mean… if you do that, you can enter the secret passage.

“But… how do I go through? It’s… I’m not a spider, I cannot climb walls…”

“Yes, that’s true… if that’s the case, you can simply check it. See where it leads too.”
“I am of the opinion that the passage is not a vertical climb.” Kirumi said. “If you notice, it changes its orientation from vertical to horizontal.”

“Y-yeah… it seems so…” I said, observing what the adventurer told me. “But still… it’s very narrow…”

“Without any doubts.” Kirumi nodded. “Were we to reach the point where the passage changes its direction, we would be forced to drop down. There is not enough space to move.”

“Looking at it, I think you’re right.” Kaede said. “It seems impossible for us to know where it leads to for certain, but… I have some ideas.”

Apparently, we can’t pass through. And this means…

Obtained truth bullet: Secret passage

“I have no clue about when the investigation is going to end, so I’ll go search for Miu.” Kaede announced.

“I will stay here and try to find more clues.” Kirumi added. “I do not mean to offend you, but you could have missed some details.”

“Oh, don’t worry. I could’ve never noticed the secret switch without you. There could be many hidden clues around. Thank you.”

“I want to understand what happened to Ryoma as much as you, so I will do my best.”

We said goodbye to Kirumi and exited the school. If we wanted to find Miu, our best bet was probably her research lab. As we were walking, Kaede glanced at my cape.

“Your cape…” she said.

“Y-yeah… it’s not in perfect conditions…”

“Why don’t you change it? I suppose it doesn’t take that long…”

“I just have one. I have multiple copies of my other clothes, but not the cape.”

In hindsight, it would have been better just to leave it in my room, but maybe I didn’t because I wanted Kaede to see it, to… expose myself. To let her see what happened to me.

Is it stupid? Why am I doing this?

My own thoughts aren’t making sense. I’m so conflicted right now.

I’m helping Kaede with the investigation, yet I just betrayed her.

Maybe I want to redeem myself, show her I can do what she asks of me. Am I lying to myself…?

I don’t know!
I should just… continue with it. Continue to help Kaede. Forget everything that happened. Let time run its course.

Yes.

I’m doing that.

It’s too late now. What is done is done.

“Here she is!” Kaede exclaimed.

Miu was standing in front of her lab, placed to the right of the Shrine of Judgment. I still don’t understand… why does she get an entirely separate building while Kaede got stuck with a simple room?

“Fuck you! Open! Open!”

Miu was apparently screaming to no one.

Ah, no. She was throwing rocks at the doors of her research room.

“There has to be a way! Argh!”

“Hey, Miu…” Kaede carefully approached her.

I don’t want to relive the same experience I had to go through when I met her.

“Kaede! Can you believe my lab isn’t open yet?!”

“Judging from your attitude… I believe it.”

“I thought that as soon as I came here the doors would open! To let a gorgeous girl like me enter!”

“I don’t think it works that way…?”

“Not like you would! When you see a handsome boy don’t you let him enter in your private chambers?!”

“Excuse me, what… do you mean? Shuichi, did you understand what-

“Ah, don’t try to ask him! Pooichi hasn’t got experience with keys and locks! Hyeheheh!”

We should be done with her in a minute, Shuichi. Keep calm.

“Ehm, Miu… we have a limited time to investigate, so if you just answered some questions…”

“An interview?!” The pianist exclaimed. “Finally you understand how awesome I am!”

“Let’s call it an interview…” Kaede said. “Uhm… since you’re… so famous…”

“That’s right!”

“You surely have a lot of matters to attend to, and you’re in need of many kinds of objects…”

Do we really have to do this?

“In this school…” Kaede continued, looking at her notepad like the question was written there.
“There is a warehouse, and some shelves are rather high. So, did you take a chair from the cafeteria to reach one of those said shelves?”

“Heegh! How do you know this?! I can’t handle this scoop!”

“Our sources are anonymous. I promise not to divulge this information if you let me know what object you took.”

“W-well… I actually… didn’t take anything…”

“Huh?”

“Yesterday morning Ryoma… asked me to pick up a chair from the cafeteria… sometime after we split up… and I obliged…”

“Ryoma asked you a favor?”

And she listened to him? Are we talking about the same Miu Iruma? The egotistical, self-centered “girl genius”? I will never believe that, no matter how many times people tell me.

“He asked so nicely… he bowed too… how could I refuse…”

“So, let me get this straight. Ryoma asked you to take a chair out of the cafeteria? Why would he? For what purpose?”

“I… can’t remember!”

Does she really?

“Please! Don’t tell the press the gorgeous Miu Iruma helped an unimportant nobody! My reputation would plummet!”

…Whatever reputation she has left.

“Don’t worry, Miu. Your secret won’t leave this academy.”

Nice choice of words on Kaede’s part. It won’t leave the school, but she’ll probably talk about it during the trial. I wonder how Miu will react.

**Obtained truth bullet: Miu’s testimony**

***

bzzrt...

*Ding dong bing bong!*

The screen to our right suddenly lit up while Monokuma’s voice came shortly after. The bear was holding a bottle of champagne while smirking at the camera.

“Alright! It’s time for what you’ve been waiting for– the class trial! Please assemble in front of the
Shrine of Judgment in the courtyard! And when I say please, I mean you must! I'll wait for you underground! See you in a few minutes!"

“It seems… that we’ve run out of time.” Shuichi said.

“Yeah, already…”

“I sure hope you two know the fucker who killed Ryoma! The world isn’t ready to lose Miu Iruma!”

She left without even saying goodbye.

“I s-suppose she’s going to the shrine.”

“We should go too. Our investigation may end here, but the discussion hasn’t started yet.”

“You’re right. The trial is for that…”

Silently, we arrived at the Shrine of Judgment. Slowly, everyone of us turned up, with Kaito, Tsumugi and Rantaro being the last ones.

“So?” Himiko lamented. “How much time do we have to spend here waiting..?"

“Do we have to wait for Monokuma and the Monokubs?” Kiibo asked. “If that’s the case, they’re pretty late.”

“Yeah! We’re doing the class trial here or what?!” Miu asked.

“I don’t think so.” Rantaro explained. “In the announcement, Monokuma explicitly stated that it would meet us underground.”

“Wow! Rantaro is attentive!” Gonta commented.

“I just reminded you, it’s nothing…” The artist said smiling awkwardly.

“Those bears will not come to us then.” Kirumi followed.

“Nee-hee-hee! They want to play hide and seek! I think I know where they are!”

The robot glanced at the giant statue of an anthropomorphic, muscled Monokuma.

“That thing will haunt my dreams.” Tenko shivered.

“Oh, a swooole Monokuma! I propose to change the statue to a more divine individual. Likeee, Atua, for example!”

Tenko wasn’t wrong. I felt like that statue was staring my soul. Not that it was menacing, but… it was really out of place.

Suddently, while I was trying to understand what we were supposed to do…

*RMM-BMM-BMM-BMM*

“W-what..?”
The door began shaking violently under my feet as the statue disappeared underground. In its place, a small platform appeared, which led to an elevator.

“…And that’s how we go underground.” Kaito said.

“Does he want us to board it?” Kiibo asked.

“Nyeh… I don’t wanna. I don’t do scary rides.”

“Don’t worry Himiko! As your caregiver, it’s my duty to protect you!”

Why is Tenko her caregiver?

“I don’t think there’s an option. We need to go in there.” Tsumugi said. “There’s no way to run, because of that huge cage that surrounds us…”

“It’ll be fine.” I reassured everyone. “We’ll escape. Maybe not now, but we’ll escape and live as friends!”

“Friends? We barely know each other.” Maki said.

“Of course you’d say that.” Kaito glared at her.

“Maybe we haven’t bonded as much as we wanted, but we make an incredible team together! With everyone’s help, we’ll overcome even this challenge!”

“Yeah! If a girl says that I can’t be scared!”

“Angie and Atua trust Kaede! Atua thinks Kaede can do it!”

“So inspirational…” Korekiyo mumbled. “I continue to ask myself how can you motivate so many people…”

“Kaede is right…” Shuichi agreed. “We have no choice but to do this. It’s too late to turn back now.”

Determined, we all stepped into the elevator.

Maki followed us keeping at a distance from the rest of the group. Convincing her will require some more work.

The metal bars closed behind me and we started to descend.

Seconds felt like minutes, minutes like hours, fifteen people standing in a small closed space.

“Kirumi.” I called the adventurer.

“Yes, Kaede?”

“Have you found something else that could be useful?”

She shook her head.

I sighed. It didn’t matter that much.
“Hey, take my notebook.” I said.

“You might need for the trial.” She replied.

“No, no, I remember what I wrote. I don’t need it.” I explained. “So, it’s better if you keep it. Maybe if you read my notes you can understand more. I always need help.”

“I am honored you trust me. I will do my best to make good use of what you wrote.”

Us fifteen stood in silence, looking at each other, but not saying a single word.

Eventually, the elevator came to a halt.

The doors slowly opened to reveal what awaited us on the other side.

In front of my eyes there was an authentic replica of a courtroom. Sixteen podiums one besides the other, forming a circle.

“Finally the class trial is starting!” Monotaro exclaimed.

“Yeah! I’m so pumped to see violence!”

“N-no, there won’t be any, I’m positive…” Monophanie trembled.

“What do we do now?” Kiibo asked.

“You have to stand behind the podium with your name on it, you bastards!”

Monokuma appeared, standing on a throne near the Monokubs.

“Here he is…” Himiko said. “Do I have to stand up all the time?! My legs will be sore this way…”

“Don’t worry, Himiko. I’m sure that Kaede already knows the culprit. We’ll be done in no time.”

According to Monokuma… one of us has murdered the one who isn’t here.

Ryoma Hoshi. We didn’t even get to discover his true Ultimate Talent.

Maybe he was a serial killer, but did he deserve death?

No, nobody does. That’s why…

I’ll discover who did it!

Even though I’ll have to doubt my friends…

…I need to be strong, and face the truth…

…Even if it will be horrible, even if the killer is one of us…
I’ll reveal their identity, and make sure we will escape from this academy!

CLASS TRIAL START!

Chapter End Notes

*TRUTH BULLETS*

--Monokuma File 1*
According to the Monokuma File, Ryoma was killed around 5 AM. Despite not knowing the cause of death, it notifies that his neck is irritated.

--Kiibo's testimony*
Kiibo claims he was in front of the dormitories at the time of death and he saw Maki. Maki, however, can't confirm Kiibo's innocence.

--Pink smear under nostril*
A pink smear was found under Ryoma's right nostril.

--Conditions of the body*
After examining Ryoma's body, we confirmed that no external injuries were present on the victim except for the neck and face

--Rope at the crime scene*
A rope was found near Ryoma's body. It was intact, but it tore extremely easily. According to Kaito's testimony, it was stored in the warehouse with another rope.

--0U-M4 and Ryoma's conversation*
Tenko and Himiko overheard 0U-M4 talking with Ryoma. The former accused him of being a serial killer.

--Ryoma's whereabouts*
According to Tenko's testimony, Ryoma was last seen near the dormitories, talking with 0U-M4.

--Rantaro's testimony*
Rantaro was attacked after 2 AM. After hearing some noises, he woke up Tsumugi and headed for the stairs. There, he was blinded by a very bright light and then was blindfolded. After being dragged, he ingested some type of liquid.

--Tsumugi's testimony*
Tsumugi grew worried after Rantaro went missing, so she glanced at the hallway. There, he found Rantaro, being blindfolded. She then was blinded and dragged, and, after some time, she was forced to ingest some type of liquid.

--Snoring near Kaito's room*
Kaito claims to have heard snoring at 5.05 AM. It lasted five minutes.
--Lethal poison*
A half full bottle of poison was found. The label recited: “In average-height subjects, an entire dose is needed to is lethal. If ingested, causes failure of internal organs. The process takes up to ten minutes. In some subjects can cause the break of blood vessels under eyes, in nose and ears.”

--Nonlethal poison*
A empty bottle of non-lethal poison was found. It was the same type of poison that knocked me out, but not the same bottle. “Non-lethal poison. Causes unconsciousness. Half a dose is needed to be effective.”

--Torn duct tape*
The duct tape I applied on the door of my research room was torn in a straight line. The rest of the duct tape remains intact, even on the doorknob (that is impossible to turn).

--Night shifts times*
I was awake until 1:50 AM, then Kirumi guarded the window of my research lab until 4:30 AM. After that, I woke up and stayed awake until 8:43 AM, which is the time when I woke up Kirumi.

--Pieces of cloth*
Four pieces of cloth were found near the stairs that lead to the ground floor.

--Chair in the hallway*
A chair, coming from the cafeteria, was moved to the hallway.

--Angie and Gonta’s testimony*
According to Angie and Gonta, Miu took the chair after dinner yesterday. She said she would bring it back, but she left it in the hallway.

--Secret passage*
Kirumi found a secret passage near the cafeteria. It appears to be very narrow and we cannot pass through it. It is not a vertical climb, but it turns at some point.

--Miu's testimony*
Miu revealed us that she met with Ryoma at an unspecified time. He asked her a favor: pick up a chair from the cafeteria. She did as he asked because Ryoma bowed.
Chapter Summary

The class trial starts; the students try to discover the identity of the blackened.

Chapter Notes

How does the format work? Like many other script fanfictions. The characters' words are preceded by brackets where their, let's say, pose... is described. Imagine them as sprites. I took this idea from Kitt_Monroe's "Forever Despair", which is a great FF with OCs. If you're in for the mysteries, you won't be disappointed, if you're in for character development, you won't be disappointed. It has reached Ch.5 too, so it's almost finished!

I know that some people don't like this format, but personally, I found it more suitable for class trials, since the characters do one thing here: talk. And writing direct speech after direct speech, having to point out which character is talking, alternating verbs like say, tell, asked etc... is incredibly clunky.

As I told you last time, my intent is to mimic class trials. If you want, you can play along. If you also want, you can tell me how hard are the puzzles. I used the minigames from V3, but there's one new one here, which is called "Hidden Password". It's a tweaked version of Hangman's Gambit, more or less. And that's all.

||TRUTH BULLETS|| (you do need them if you want to play along, so you can open a new tab to read them)

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

CLASS TRIAL:

In session!

Monokuma: Ahem! Now then, let’s begin with a basic explanation of the class trial!

Monokuma: During the trial you’ll present your arguments for who the culprit is, and vote for whodunit!

Monokuma: Vote correctly, and only the blackened will be punished. But if you pick the wrong person…

Monokuma: I’ll punish everyone *besides* the blackened, and that person will be allowed to graduate from the academy!

Monokuma: Also, refusing to vote will result in your death.

Monokuma: Now, let’s get this crazy, awesome, crazy-awesome trial underway!

Kaede [sideways look, pensive expression]: So, it’s starting, huh?

Kirumi [determined expression, hands clasped together]: It appears so.

Kaito [rubbing head]: So, where do even start?

Gonta [right index finger on lip]: Gonta not sure where. Gonta never done trial.

Tenko [determined expression]: First, breath in, then breath out. We must remember the three “No, no, no’s”!

Tenko [hands on podium, determined expression]: No pushing, no running, no talking!

Rantaro [shaking head, annoyed expression]: We need to talk to solve this mystery.

Kaede [neutral expression]: We shouldn’t worry about our procedure. After all, this isn’t a normal trial.

Kaede [neutral expression, gesturing hand]: Each of us could be serving as a potential culprit, lawyer, prosecutor and jury member.

Himiko [tired look, looking at the ground]: Oh, that sounds tiring…

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Might I ask… does Kaede have any leads?

Kaede [confused look]: Eh?
Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Since you’re a detective, I assume you have some ideas about what happened to Ryoma…

0U-M4 [hands waving, excited expression]: Oh, yes! Do you already know the identity of the culprit?!

Monokuma [shocked expression, sweating]: D-do you?!

Kaito [rubbing head, confused look]: Why are you worried?

Monokuma [sweating]: Cause I didn’t expect Kaede to be so smart! I-it’s impossible for her to know the culprit!

Yeah, I don’t know for sure now. I still need to understand the clues Shuichi and me found…

Kaede [neutral expression, gesturing hand]: I don’t want to make assumptions now. If we discuss and present different points of view, I’ll be able to get a clear idea of what happened.

Kiibo [confused expression, index fingers touching each other]: What should we talk about first…?

Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: Well, I know! But I’m not going to tell you!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right hand]: You should know that remaining silent will be harmful to you as well.

Gonta [happy expression, hands on hips]: If nobody sure what to say, say what you think is useful!

Rantaro [pensive expression]: I think Gonta’s right. If we think we’re onto something, let’s say it. And if someone doesn’t agree with one of our statements, they should explain why.

Okay. I just have to hear what everyone has to say and explain my reasoning. It’s not difficult.

NON-STOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Rope at the scene of the crime, Monokuma File 1, Kiibo’s testimony

Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: You dimwits haven’t understood anything!

Miu [laughing]: While, I, the gorgeous girl genius, am way ahead of you!

Rantaro [neutral expression]: If you know something, you should tell us now.

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: I suppose she will not say anything.

Kiibo [neutral expression, index finger near lip]: We know everything about the body, don’t we?

Angie [hands waving in the air]: Yep, Atua agrees with you! We were given all the information about poor Ryoma’s death...

Angie [content expression, hands clasping together]: Thanks to the Monokuma file, which doesn’t mislead us in any way!

Tenko [pointing, pensive expression]: Are you sure about that? Should we trust Monokuma?
Maybe Angie has forgotten, but she isn’t completely right...

**ANSWER: Monokuma File 1 --> “all the information about poor Ryoma’s death”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [thoughtful expression, gesturing hand]: Angie, we don’t know everything about Ryoma’s death.

Angie [puffed cheeks, surprised expression]: We don’t? What was the Monokuma File’s purpose then?

Kaede [thoughtful expression, determined]: Yes, it has important information in it… but something is missing.

Tsumugi [confused expression, head resting on right arm]: Something is missing? I didn’t notice that.

I haven’t any experience with Monokuma files, but if we want to understand everything behind Ryoma’s death, we need to understand one thing first, which we don’t know about…

[[Hoshi’s talent/The time of death/The cause of death/The victim’s true identity]]

**ANSWER --> The cause of death**

Kaede: I get it!

Kaede [thoughtful expression, right arm extended to the side]: We don’t know Hoshi’s cause of death.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: Of course we don’t! I mean, we have some clues…

0U-M4 [smirking]: But we’re in the dark about what really happened!

Rantaro [neutral expression]: That’s true. We need to determine the cause of death then.

Korekiyo [right hand caressing face]: I wonder… was its omission common procedure or was the information absent for this specific case?

Monokuma [neutral expression]: As the headmaster of the academy, I can leave out precious evidence if I want! Today I decided that I would hide the true cause of death of Hoshi Ryoma!

Monokuma [shows primarily dark side]: To spice up the trial, you know?! Now it will be more exciting!
That only means more trouble for us…

Kirumi [eyes closed, right index finger under lips]: So, we need to discuss about this.

Tenko [determined expression]: Let’s hear everyone’s opinions.

Thanks to the evidence I’ve found, I can say something for sure.

**NON-STOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets:** Rope at the scene of the crime, Monokuma File 1, Conditions of the body

Kaito [sideways look]: When we found Hoshi’s body, there wasn’t any blood around.

Tenko [determined expression]: That is strange, isn’t it?

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: When people die, blood comes out!

Angie [praying]: Also, it does when I do blood sacrifices!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: So, we can assume that Ryoma wasn’t, for example, hit with a blunt object.

Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: Duh-doy! That has to be the case! The culprit and Hoshi got into a fight…

Miu [proud expression, raised right arm]: And the culprit bested him!

Rantaro [pensive expression]: How did they do that, then?

Miu [averting gaze, toying with hair]: W-well…

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression, looking at clothes]: Maybe the culprit disposed of the blood. There was nobody in the school at that time.

Miu [panicked expression]: Yeah! What that creepo said!

*When I checked Hoshi’s body, I noticed something that surprised me… that contradicts what someone just said! And that is…*

**ANSWER:** Conditions of the body --> “got into a fight”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Miu, you don’t know this because you left…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side, index finger pointing upwards]: …but I found no signs of
scuffle on Hoshi’s clothes.

Miu [shocked expression]: Heegh! B-but… I knew that already!

Shuichi [doubtful expression]: Did you?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: Miu’s idiocy aside, what Kaede’s saying is true.

0U-M4 [smirk, playful expression]: There’s no way Hoshi was assaulted by someone.

Tsumugi [sideways, right index finger pointing upwards]: But, what if they snuck up on him? They could have hit him regardless…

Angie [puffed cheeks]: Not too hard, however! Otherwise he would have totally bled!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, finger on chin]: If someone is silent enough, that could have happened.

Maki [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: Really…?

Kaito [sideways look]: It seems strange that he couldn’t hear someone coming.

Maki [neutral expression, mouth slightly open]: It is.

Maki [determined expression]: If someone came up to him, he would have heard it. The school grounds were completely silent during the night.

Kaito [irritated expression, hand that forms fist]: And how can *you* be sure of it?

Maki [eyes closed]: …

Kaito [irritated expression, fists bumping each other]: Of course you can’t know it for certain! You’re extremely suspicious!

Kaito [determined expression, fists bumping each other]: You probably approached Hoshi and killed him! You have experience with fighting, so you know some sick tricks, I bet!

Kaede [neutral expression, right arm extended to the side]: We can trust Maki’s statement. Because she wasn’t sleeping while the murder occurred.

Gonta [surprised expression]: She not sleeping?

Kaede [gesturing]: No, at least according to one specific testimony…

[[Kiibo’s testimony/Tsumugi’s testimony/Angie and Gonta’s testimony/Miu’s testimony]]

**ANSWER --> Kiibo’s testimony**

Kaede: I get it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Kiibo, you said you saw Maki.

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: Yes, I did. She headed for the dorms at around 4.50 AM.
Kirumi [neutral expression, right index finger under lips]: I see, so that means she did not enter the school at that time.

Kaede [gesturing]: With this, we can say that Maki didn’t kill Hoshi. And because of this, we can believe her testimony.

Angie [head slightly tilted to the side]: Does this mean Kiibo is innocent too?

Korekiyo [eyes closed, index finger pointing upwards]: No, we cannot be sure.

Kaede [neutral expression, right arm extended to the side]: Maki did not see Kiibo. So we can’t say for sure he was there.

Kaito [rubbing head]: But if we can’t confirm Kiibo’s testimony how can we confirm Maki’s?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I’m sure Kaede knows.

Kaede [determined expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Yes. Kiibo told us the specific time Maki entered the dormitories before she confirmed it.

Kaede [gesturing]: And lying about this would be extremely risky, and I don’t see what Kiibo could gain from doing so.

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: So Kii-boy is telling the truth, but we don’t know what he did afterwards!

0U-M4 [worried expression, looking at the ground]: Don’t tell me you killed someone!

Kiibo [shocked expression]: I would never do that! How can you even think about this possibility?!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front]: But it still happened… someone here is a killer.

Tsumugi [neutral expression]: Not Maki… she’s innocent…

Maki [annoyed expression, cold stare]: …

Tsumugi [sweating, gripping left arm]: Don’t look at me like that! I’m sorry…!

Gonta [worried expression, arms crossed]: If Hoshi no surprised by culprit, how Hoshi dead?

Himiko [looking down]: He was probably tired and didn’t see them coming. It happens...

Kaede [sideways look, right arm extended to the side]: I don’t think he let his guard down. Wandering around the school during nighttime is dangerous, he said it himself.

Kaito [proud expression, hand that forms fist]: Yeah! I remember it! It was the first night we were here!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: This means he had to have a reason to-

Tenko: Let me educate you!

[[Split screen separating Tenko and Kaede]]

Kaede [nervous expression]: Tenko…? Why did you interrupt me?
Tenko [pointing at Kaede, determined expression]: As an educator, I can’t allow you to make a big mistake!

Kaede [furrows eyebrows]: Big mistake? What are you talking about?

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: I’ll tell you!

**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth blades: Monokuma File 1, Rope at the scene of the crime, Chair in the hallway, Conditions of the body**

Tenko [determined expression]: In my opinion, you have been looking at this in the wrong way!

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: But that’s not really your fault.

Tenko [hands on podium, determined expression]: What you haven’t understood…

Tenko [proud expression, hands on hips]: …is that Hoshi committed suicide!

**ADVANCE!**

Kaede [furrowed eyebrows, pointing]: Suicide?! What?

Tenko [pensive expression]: If he could have heard someone coming, he would have reacted!

Tenko [determined expression]: But he didn’t!

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: So, according to what we’ve established… he used the rope to hang himself!

Tenko [determined expression]: And, since it didn’t hold, it broke and it fell to the floor, just like Hoshi!

**Suicide?! No, that’s definitely not possible, for multiple reasons. I might need to explain them, but now I have to refute Tenko’s claims.**

**ANSWER: Rope at the scene of the crime --> “to hang himself”**

Kaede: I’ll cut your words!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [furrowed eyebrows, pointing]: Suicide is not an option. And definitely, not hanging.

Tenko [lowered head, looking upwards]: Why is that?

Kaede [gesturing]: You were right when saying that the rope would have snapped under Ryoma’s weight…
Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: However, the rope wasn’t broken when Shuichi and me picked it up, but we ripped it ourselves when we pulled it from each side.

Shuichi [looking sideways, blushing]: T-that’s true...

Kaede [determined expression]: So, if Hoshi was really hung, we should have found him still dangling from the rope.

Himiko [places hand over heart]: It would have been a horrifying sight…

Kaede [determined expression]: Or, if he was dropped down, the rope should have been broken.

Tenko [lowered head, looking upwards]: The culprit could have just untied it…

Rantaro [crossed arms, looking sideways]: Definitely not possible. The rope couldn’t have sustained Hoshi’s weight, even though he’s very small.

Rantaro [crossed arms, looking in front of self]: And Kaede’s and Shuichi’s experiment proves that.

Miu [pointing, proud expression]: There’s no way around it! Hoshi was killed in some other way! I didn’t even consider that rope in the first place!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Other than this, we know for sure someone else killed Hoshi.

What definitely proves that the culprit of this case wasn’t Hoshi himself…? I definitely know that answer.

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. M K
2. O P
3. T A
4. V I
5. S V
6. A E

ANSWER: Motive

Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

CLEAR!

Kaede [thoughtful expression, index finger pointing upwards]: If you remember well, Monokuma said that if someone committed suicide…

Kaede [determined expression, index finger pointing upwards]: …we wouldn’t hold a class trial at all!
Monokuma [ironical smile]: That’s true! Your memory is amazing!

Monophanie [proud expression]: I remember too! My memory is amazing too!

Monosuke [adjusting glasses]: You just want to impress daddy. We all know you forget everything.

Monokid [breaks guitar]: You almost forgot about Monodam one time!

Monophanie [looks at flower]: At least I don’t bully him like you!

Monosuke [laughs]: We acknowledge his existence, which is already enough!

Monodam [neutral expression]:

Monotaro [one shuriken in paw]: Hey, don’t interrupt the trial! After all, you know nobody wants to hear us whining!

Tenko [blushing]: I… I’m sorry. I can’t believe I made such a stupid mistake.

Rantaro [reassuring expression, arms in front of self]: Don’t worry. It’s good you brought it up.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: If Hoshi killed himself, the countdown wouldn’t have stopped, and his death would have been meaningless!

Kirumi [stare, right hand on hip]: You appear to be taking the matter lightly. Do I need to remind you this is not a game?

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: I know that! It fills me with excitement!

Gonta [right index finger on lip]: So Hoshi not hang himself?

Angie [head tilted to her right]: No, Gonta! Hoshi was unfortunately murdered by one of us!

**She’s still smiling while saying that…**

Gonta [looking at tennis racket]: But Gonta think something not right!

Rantaro [worried expression, arms in front of self]: H-hey! Pay attention with that racket of yours…

**What does Gonta mean? Has he got an idea about Hoshi’s cause of death?**

**NON-STOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Pink smear under nostril, Rope at the scene of the crime, Chair in the hallway**

Korekiyo [right hand caressing face]: What is your argument?

Tsumugi [pensive expression]: Right, we know that Hoshi didn’t commit suicide…

Gonta [right index finger on lip]: But we sure?
Kiibo [eyes looking up]: Yeah, Kaede proved it.

Miu [proud expression, pointing]: But if we found a rope there, it means the culprit used it to kill Ryoma!

Gonta [right index finger on lip, looking sideways]: That what Gonta was thinking!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, finger on chin]: It seems that hanging is not an option.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: But it could be that someone else hung Hoshi…

Angie [puffed cheeks]: What a plot twist!

Kaito [rubbing head]: But to hang someone, you need somewhere to tie the knot…

Kaito [rubbing head, looking sideways]: …and somewhere to stand.

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger near cheek]: But we know a support that could have been useful for this murder!

It seems my classmates are thinking that Hoshi was hung, but by someone else. If that was the case, the culprit had to have used something…

**ANSWER: Chair in the hallway --> “a support that could have been useful”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [determined expression, finger pointing upwards]: Angie and Gonta found a chair in the hallway.

Gonta [surprised]: Oh! Yes! While going to cafeteria!

Kaede [gesturing]: That could have been used to hang Hoshi. The culprit hung him, placed him on the chair and then they removed it, making Hoshi choke.

Kirumi [blank expression]: The problem with your deduction is that the rope is not able to sustain Hoshi’s weight.

Himiko [tired expression]: We said it countless times…

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: They could have used another one. But they placed the wrong one to mislead us.

Shuichi [thoughtful expression, looking down]: That… seems possible.

Angie [clasping hands above head]: Wow! Rantaro! Who could have thought about that!

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: It’s a shaky theory, honestly. Cause it doesn’t line up with what we have said about the noise…
Rantaro [looking sideways]: …I think we should analyze other possible pieces of evidence.

0U-M4 [cheerful expression]: My sweet Rantaro is right! Let’s remember this possibility, but we should explore every single one of them!

Rantaro [confused look]: …Sweet Rantaro?

**Hoshi’s cause of death is still a mystery to us. We need to understand…!**

**NON-STOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Pink smear under nostril, Non-lethal poison, Pieces of cloth**

Tenko [pensive expression]: If Hoshi was not hung, could he have been, I don’t know… pushed?

Himiko [sideways look]: …And he hit his head?

Miu [angry look, flailing arms]: What a shitty theory! *Do you have proof of that?*

Kirumi [concentrating, places hat over chest]: There should have been at least traces of blood.

Tsumugi [slightly curved back, convinced expression]: Yeah! If you hit your head that hard, blood should come out!

Kirumi [neutral expression, right index finger under lips]: But there was *no blood at the crime scene*.

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression, looking at clothes]: Returning to our previous topic…

Korekiyo [determined expression, raised right arm]: …he could have been *unable to see the culprit* because of the darkness.

Miu [proud expression]: Maybe they hit him, not too hard…

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: And that made him fall unconscious!

Gonta [surprised]: Oh! Then they hang him!

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Gonta! We are talking about other options now!

**Someone brought up an interesting point in the discussion. Something I should have talked about before.**

**ANSWER: Pink smear under nostril --> “no blood at the crime scene”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**
Kaede [thoughtful expression, right arm extended]: No, there was blood.

Kiibo [shocked expression]: What?! We said there wasn’t!

Kaede [gesturing]: Well, you just glossed over this detail.

Kirumi [eyes closed, hands clasped together]: I am afraid I do not understand.

Kaito [sideways look]: Yeah, me neither. When I saw the body, I saw no wounds.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: And not even a single drop of blood! So what are you saying, Kaede?

Kaede [gesturing]: There was blood, and you, Ouma, should have noticed.

0U-M4 [surprised look, sad expression]: That’s quite the accusation…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Well, I discovered that near Hoshi’s nostril, a pink smear could be seen.

Himiko [tired expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Did he overdo his makeup?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Hoshi was a fan of makeup? Maybe he was the Ultimate Makeup Artist!

Maki [annoyed expression]: Please don’t continue with this discussion.

Miu [angry look, right arm raised]: I bet he was having fun with all the girls around him! Looking at their tits while being so close to their faces!

Maki [annoyed expression]: …

**What are they talking about? I think I agree with Maki on this one…**

Kaede [confused look]: Ehm… that smear is actually blood, which was wiped.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking sideways]: If he was hung, why does he have blood there?

Gonta [determined expression]: Culprit punched his nose!

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: If that were the case, there would have been a lot of blood on his face. Not only a smear.

Korekiyo [hand caressing face]: The culprit could have cleaned the blood.

**That’s right, but the blood leads to another piece of evidence, which is essential to solve this case, and the matter of how Ryoma did really die. That is…**

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. T P
2. A O
3. I A
4. S P
**ANSWER:** Poison

Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

**CLEAR!**

Kaede [determined expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Hoshi was killed because he was poisoned.

Tenko [surprised expression]: What?! That doesn’t make sense!

Kaede [thoughtful expression, arms crossed]: Yes, it does. And it also explains why someone broke in my research room.

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: That someone is the culprit who killed Hoshi!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: And the one who attacked Tsumugi and me.

Miu [toying with hair]: Of course I understand what you’re saying, but would you explain your reasoning to this nobodies?

I was about to, there’s no need to pretend to be a genius.

Kaede [calm expression]: The culprit used the poison-

I suddenly stopped. Only three of the fifteen people in this room know that poison could be found in the school. So it makes sense that everyone else is confused.

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: What poison? I don’t recall finding one.

Maki [blank expression]: They took it from Kaede’s research lab.

Rantaro [crossed arms, looking in front of self]: Oh, so that’s the weapon you were trying to hide!

Kaede [ashamed expression]: Yes, it is. I didn’t want anyone to see it, so I hid them.

Kaede [ashamed expression, looking away]: Because I was afraid someone could use it to commit murder.

Kaede [irritated expression, pointing]: And that’s what happened!

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I am truly sorry. We know that you had the best of intentions.

Kaito [determined expression, bumps fist into each other]: Yeah! It isn’t your fault! You did your best!

I was sure this moment would come. I have to face my mistakes. Because of my stubbornness, someone took advantage of the poison that was in my room, and killed Ryoma with it. That is the truth.
I regret my choices, but I know I can do the right thing... focusing on what is important now!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: You say it was poison, but can you confirm that? Nobody knows what was in your room...

Kaede [content expression]: There’s Shuichi! He was investigating with me, so he can back me up.

Shuichi [tugging on cape]: Eh...

**Shuichi hasn’t talked much during the trial. He needs to come out from his shell.**

Kaede [reassuring expression]: Tell them, Shuichi.

Shuichi [tugging on cape, looking away]: Y-yeah, there was something...

Miu [angry look, right arm raised]: Like I care! Your beta boytoy’s testimony doesn’t mean anything!

Rantaro [looking sideways]: Someone else should be able to prove it, right?

*Rantaro is obviously referring to *that* person.*

[[Maki/Tsumugi/Kirumi/Angie]]

**ANSWER: Maki**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Maki, you entered my room. I assumed you looked at the bottles of poison.

Maki [looking away]: …

*Ugh. Talking to her is so difficult. You’d think at least in this situation she would open her mouth more frequently.*

Maki [toys with hair] I did. And I can confirm, there were multiple bottles around.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: Did you examine every single one of them?

Maki [blank expression]: Of course not. I just had to see what the danger was.

Maki [neutral expression, mouth slightly open]: But I saw a type of poison that matches with what Kaede said.

Tsumugi [surprised expression]: And that would be…?

[[Lethal poison/Non-lethal poison/Another kind of poison]]

**ANSWER --> Lethal poison**

Kaede: I got it!
Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: In my research lab you can find a poison that causes the break of blood vessels.

Angie [right arm raised, mouth slightly open]: Oh! So Hoshi drank that poison!

Shuichi [looking away]: That makes s-sense, the bottle was half full… so somebody definitely picked it up…

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: And they entered Kaede’s research lab, because you can’t take it from outside.

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Duh! Your intervention was useless!

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: The violated Kaedumb private room! Of course I protect my research lab! If you want to call it that way…

Korekiyo [caressing face]: To do that, they had to have eluded Rantaro and Tsumugi. Or, at least, make sure that they would not be a problem.

The conversation has shifted from what happened in my research lab to what happened outside. But there’s one detail the others may have forgotten about…

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Lethal poison, Non-lethal poison**

Kaede [gesturing]: Guys, there’s something else we need to talk about before understanding who attacked Rantaro and Tsumugi.

0U-M4 [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: Oh, what is it?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: First, can you say what you think happened another time?

Kirumi [reassuring expression, hands clasping together]: Of course.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, hands clasping together]: The culprit went to Kaede’s research room…

Kaito [sideways look, hand on hip]: And took the poison bottle out of the lab…

Kaito [forms fist with a hand]: …to poison Ryoma when they saw him!

Himiko [tired expression]: Does that make sense…?

Miu [proud expression]: No, Monokuma wouldn’t allow that!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: He wouldn’t? Why?

Angie [cheerful expression, right arm waving]: Because… it would count as a suicide?

Miu [proud expression, index finger pointing upward]: No, you dick-tator! It has to do with the school regulations!
Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Miu, please stop with your stalling. And stop insulting.

Miu [shocked expression]: What?! I’m not stalling!

Maki [annoyed expression, cold stare]: If you know what you’re talking about, explain it to us.

Miu [toying with hair]: Uhm… we can’t kill with the objects found in our research rooms!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: I don’t recall a rule this absurd. We should start ignoring her from now on.

Miu’s on the right track, but everyone refuses to listen to her. I need to remind the others using her words!

**ANSWER:** “with the school regulations” --> “took the poison bottle out of the lab”

Kaede: No, that's wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: The culprit couldn’t have taken the poison bottle out of the lab.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, cheerful expression]: Of course not! You’re all so dumb today! The rules say it clearly!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: The objects found in research rooms have to remain in there.

Miu [angry look, flailing arms]: Exactly what I said! Apologize to me and bow down to my greatness, bitches!

Kiiibo [confused expression]: You weren’t that clear. It’s not surprising no one listened to you.

Miu [proud expression]: Kaede recognizes my incredible talent! I suppose it’s not true that the bigger your boobs, the more intelligent you are!

Himiko [saddened expression]: Are you saying I’m stupid?

Maki [biting nail]: Wait a second, Kaede. You told me that only half the bottle was full.

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, there was still poison in there.

Maki [thoughtful expression]: And all the other bottles were full?

Kaede [gesturing]: All the lethal ones were completely full.

Maki [sideways, blank expression]: It surprises me. You are forgetting something. Ryoma couldn’t have been killed with that poison.
Kaede [confused expression]: He couldn’t have?

Maki [blank expression]: I clearly remember the label of that poison. It specified that only a full dose was lethal.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: If half bottle full, how Ryoma dead because of poison?

Angie [index finger on temple]: Also! If what you’re saying it’s true, why did we find Ryoma’s body near the gym?

These are some questions I need to answer. I need to concentrate and take my time.

PSYCHE TAXI START!

1. Why did we find the body in the hallway near the gym?
[[The body was moved/Ryoma was killed near]]

ANSWER: A

2. Where was the poison administered?
[[In the cafeteria//In Kaede’s research lab]]

ANSWER: B

3. Why was it possible for Ryoma to die of poisoning?
[[Because he had already been poisoned with something else/Because he was weak/Because he’s very small]]

ANSWER: C

Kaede: I got it!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: We know for a fact that the poison couldn’t have been used outside of my lab.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: So, the only possible option is that Ryoma’s body was moved.
Korekiyo [neutral expression, looking at clothes]: It would not be a tiring task, since Ryoma’s body is nowhere near the size of everyone else here.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Good point, Korekiyo. You actually answered Gonta’s question.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Oh? Explain me how.

Kaede [thoughtful expression, right arm extended to the side]: It doesn’t matter that the poison bottle is half full, because Ryoma could have been killed with a that amount.

Maki [blank expression]: He could have? What are you saying?

Kaede [thoughtful expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Ryoma is very small. The label on the poison specified that the full dose was necessary to kill someone…

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: …of average size!

Maki [blank expression]: I might have missed that.

Kaito [angry expression, creates fist with hand]: You might have?!

Tenko [surprised expression]: Oh! That proves that Ryoma was poisoned, right?

Kaede [gesturing]: I think so, for now. There are no doubts that someone entered my research room and took the poison.

Kaede [gesturing]: We know it was used on him because of the pink smear found near his nose.

Kirumi [hand covering mouth]: So we need to uncover the identity of the person who broke in your research lab.

Tsumugi [slightly curved back, worried expression]: And the one who attacked us!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: I would try to help, but I said everything I remember.

Tsumugi [gripping arm]: Me too! I’m ashamed that someone managed to knock me out!

**There’s nothing to be ashamed of. If someone surprises you and knocks you out, what can you do?**

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger near cheek]: Wait a second, are we sure that the one who attacked those two is the culprit?

Kiibo [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: Why would someone attack them otherwise?

0U-M4 [fiddles with buttons on torso]: I’m just sayin’. We can’t exclude any possibility.

Tenko [irritated expression]: So tell us! Don’t act like a degenerate male who keeps all his secrets to himself!

0U-M4 [thoughtful expression]: I’m wondering…

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: What if the intruder came from the outside! That would be unexpected, right?
Himiko [tired expression]: Nyeh… the outside? I think it would have been much more tiring…

Tenko [content expression]: Yeah! Himiko couldn’t have killed Ryoma if she entered from the outside!

Tsumugi [confused expression, head resting on right arm]: With this statement, you’re saying she could have if Ouma’s theory is wrong, though…

**Entered from the outside? That’s definitely wrong.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Kiibo’s testimony, Rantaro’s testimony, Night shifts, Pieces of cloth**

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Someone entered from the outside!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Woah! That could have been possible!

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: No, it is not possible.

Tenko [slightly smug]: Kirumi and Kaede were guarding the window entrance, right?

Rantaro [looking sideways]: That’s what they told us.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: They *weren’t both awake at the same time*, however!

Tsumugi [head resting on arm]: Yeah, they were alternating!

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Maybe *someone entered when Kirumi was asleep*?

0U-M4 [cheerful expression]: No, *someone entered when Kaede was*. And that means…

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: Are you suggesting I might have betrayed Kaede’s trust by entering her research lab?

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Not only that! **You also killed Ryoma!**

Gonta [thoughtful expression, right index finger near lip]: Gonta cannot believe Kirumi would do such thing!

0U-M4’s argument is flawed. There’s no way someone entered from the outside.

**ANSWER: Night shifts --> “someone entered when Kaede was”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: How could someone break into my room while I was guarding it?
0U-M4 [confused expression]: Uh?

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re saying that Kirumi could enter my research room because I was asleep, but that’s not possible at all.

0U-M4 [arms behind head]: Tell me how then.

How can I prove to 0U-M4 that Kirumi couldn’t be the culprit?

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET.

**ANSWER --> Monokuma File 1**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: Ryoma was killed around 5 AM, according to the Monokuma File.

0U-M4 [looking down at right hand] And with that?

Kaede [determined expression]: As I was saying before, I was awake since 4:30 AM in the morning.

Himiko [worried expression]: That’s a long time without any sleep…

Kaede [determined expression]: And while I guarded my door, I didn’t see Kirumi leaving! She was besides me the entire time!

Kirumi [small smile, tilts head]: Thanks for your support.

0U-M4 [pensive expression, places index finger on lips]: Oh, so it seems I was wrong.

Kiibo [worried expression, looking to the side]: Don’t say that with that creepy tone…

0U-M4 [pensive expression, places index finger on lips]: If Kirumi was asleep, it means that Kaede was awake…

0U-M4 [raises head, extends both arms to the side]: And that she is a suspect!

Tenko [shocked expression, flailing arms]: What?! Kaede, a suspect?

Kaede [worried expression]: M-me?

**I really didn’t expect Ouma to accuse me of all people… but I know I am not the culprit, so it should be easier than defending Maki or Kirumi.**

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: Yeah! I mean, nobody would ever think that Kaede, the helpful detective, is our dreaded blackened!

Miu [angry expression, right arm raised]: Not even I do! She isn’t clever enough to trick me!

**It’s reassuring that Miu believes what I’m saying, but she can’t say one nice thing even**
though she’s defending me…

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: Think about it! She had free access to her room at all times! And, most important of all, knew where the poison bottles were hidden!

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: She could commit murder in no time! Wow!

0U-M4 [raised head, creepy smile]: To be sure her plan worked, she wanted to have Shuichi guard the door with her! You know, because he blindly trusts her…

Shuichi [looks down to the side]: …

Kiibo [irritated expression, pointing]: Don’t say that about Shuichi!

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: However, Maki discovered about the bottles and the plan had to be changed! Kaede was stuck with Kirumi, but apparently the plan still worked!

Kaede [determined expression]: Wait a second!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: If I entered from the outside, how do you explain what happened to Rantaro and Tsumugi?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, looking at clothes]: You could have knocked them out before to make us think the offender entered from the inside.

What? Now Korekiyo suspects me too?!

Kaede [irritated expression, crosses arms]: Do you think I would come up with a plan so complex? What about the risk of Kirumi waking up?

Kirumi [eyes closed, tilts head]: I believe Kaede, despite me not having any concrete proof. She desperately desired to protect every single one of us; therefore she cannot be the culprit.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: Oh! Look at sweet Kirumi trying to protect Kaede!

Kirumi [covers mouth with hand]: …

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: However, you can’t know for sure either! All of you think Kaede couldn’t have done it because you rely on your dear emotions!

Kaito [irritated expression, fists bumping into each other]: It’s because of her emotions that she couldn’t have done it! You don’t understand!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: She can fake her emotions. It’s not difficult.

Tenko [hands on podium, determined expression]: Are you trying to convince us? There’s no way I’ll believe you!

0U-M4 [smirking]: Oh? Let’s see if you can prove me wrong!

Does 0U-M4 really think I’m the killer? I know he’s a robot, but he should know I wouldn’t be capable of doing such a thing.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!
Truth bullets: Kiibo’s testimony, Rantaro’s testimony, Non-lethal poison, Night shifts

Gonta [worried expression]: Kaede killed Ryoma? That not possible!

0U-M4 [smirking]: She killed Ryoma in her research lab…

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: …after knocking Rantaro and Tsumugi out!

Miu [angry expression, right arm raised]: What the fuck?! She’s not that strong! And how did she do it?

0U-M4 [thoughtful expression, index finger on cheek]: She circled around the school, entering from the main entrance!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: If she did that, someone should have seen her!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raises right arm]: But she had access to her room at all times during the night.

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Are you saying she might have waited for the perfect opportunity to strike?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: I suppose so. She was awake for a long time after all, since 4:30 AM.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: But the murder occurred around 5 AM, so she was very quick!

Tenko [irritated expression]: Don’t say it like we’re sure she did it!

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: But can we say she didn’t do it?

Kirumi [hands clasping together, resolute expression]: What would her personal motive be then? She has none.

0U-M4 [curious expression]: The motive?! If nobody was killed by the time limit, everyone would end up dead, remember?

0U-M4 isn’t going to stop accusing me until I can confirm to him that I didn’t move from the place I was guarding alongside Kirumi. I need to prove it to him.

ANSWER: Kiibo’s testimony --> “someone should have seen her”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Actually, Kiibo, you’re right. Someone should have seen me. And that one is you.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Me?
Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: You were in the courtyard just near the dormitories and saw Maki, but didn’t see me.

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: If I saw you, I would have told everyone.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Since Kiibo was in that area at least until 4:50 AM, he would have seen me entering before then.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: There are no other entrances to the school, so if I wanted to knock out Rantaro and Tsumugi, I should have passed from there.

Kiibo [determined expression]: And I remained there for some time after that. So… I guess Kaede is innocent after all.

0U-M4: My logic is far superior to yours!!

[[Split screen separating 0U-M4 and Kaede]]

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: You *still* aren’t convinced?

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: No! You could be the culprit!

**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth bullets:** Rope at the scene of the crime, Rantaro’s testimony, Tsumugi’s testimony, Miu’s testimony

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: Kiibo’s testimony doesn’t mean anything!

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Because there are a lot of minutes unaccounted for!

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, determined expression]: What if Kiibo entered in the dormitories just a minute after Maki?

0U-M4 [raised head, creepy smile]: Nine minutes are a lot to knock out someone and murder someone else!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: Even though we don’t know the details.

**ADVANCE!**

Kaede [furrowed eyebrows, arms crossed]: You’re saying that I managed to do all of that in just nine or probably less than nine minutes?

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: I don’t think anybody is capable of doing that.

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: I’m sure an Ultimate Detective would be able to do something like that!

0U-M4 [looking down at right hand]: You have received training after all.

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: That’s why **you could surprise Rantaro and Tsumugi**…
0U-M4 [raised head, creepy smile]: And sneak up behind Hoshi to kill him!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, content expression]: It was a risky plan, but you attempted it because everyone trusted you!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: …And if someone saw you, you could have said you were just checking everything.

I know I didn’t murder anyone, but 0U-M4 doesn’t. To clear my name I need to show *that* piece of evidence to him!

**ANSWER: Rantaro’s testimony --> “you could surprise Rantaro and Tsumugi”**

Kaede: I’ll cut your words!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: There’s no way I attacked Rantaro and Tsumugi. And Rantaro can tell you why.

Rantaro [mouth slightly open, index finger pointing upwards]: I suppose it’s about the time, yes?

Rantaro [looking sideways]: Just before I heard something strange coming from the stairs, I looked at the time. I recall it was… something past two.

0U-M4 [looking down at right hand]: Another piece of evidence that doesn’t mean anything.

**Why doesn’t he listen to me? Every time I tell him something he pretends not to understand, while I can see in his eyes he just wants to make me angry.**

**Who cares, I know how to explain it to him. I couldn’t have attacked Rantaro and Tsumugi because at that time…**

[[I was too tired/I was sleeping/ Kirumi was sleeping/I couldn’t have found a flashlight anywhere]]

**ANSWER: I was sleeping**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: It doesn’t matter how you look at it, I was asleep while the attack took place.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, right hand on hip]: For your information, I was awake at that time. Kaede and I changed roles at 1:50 AM and I went to sleep again not before 4:30 AM.
Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: So there’s no way that one of us killed both Ryoma and attacked Rantaro and Tsumugi.

0U-M4 [cheerful expression]: Congratulations, Kaede! You convinced me of your innocence!

…What? How did he change his mood so suddenly?

Kaito [rubbing head, looking sideways]: After all of this, you just decide to give up and smile?

0U-M4 [smiling]: Yeah! Oh, it’s so reassuring knowing that Kaede isn’t a murderer! I was very worried for a second!

Wait, did he ever suspect me? Judging from his actions, it seems he was convinced I wasn’t the culprit from the start…

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raising hand]: I don’t mean to accuse Kaede once again, but do we have any concrete proof the culprit entered from the inside?

Himiko [looking down]: Nyeh… if they really did, there should be some clues…

Shuichi [looking sideways]: I t-think there was something…

Oh! Shuichi talked!... And he’s right. There’s proof…

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

ANSWER: Torn duct tape

Kaede [gesturing]: The duct tape I used to seal the door was torn when I inspected it.

Angie [inclines body to the right]: Interesting! I wonder what it means!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: That alone doesn’t amount to anything, but I previously placed it on the doorknob, so somebody had to rip it there to open the door.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: But that part of the duct tape remained intact. What was torn was the part near the doorjamb.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Because of this, we know someone forced the door open from the inside of the school, and didn’t need to turn the knob.

Kaito [smiling, thumbs up]: Who would have imagined that some terrible duct tape would have helped us resolve a case!

Monokuma [smiles ironically]: Right?! There’s always some obscure piece of evidence that helps the students resolve the case! Something nobody thinks about at the start!

Monosuke [adjusts glasses]: It’s called Chekhov’s gun! It’s a narrative technique that writers use a lot those days!
Monokid [angry expression, plays guitar]: Writers?! Books?! Who cares about those! Nobody is interested in them anymore!

Monotaro [paws in the air]: Some people still read books, despite us being in a technological age!

Monophanie [worried expression, sweating]: Please, don’t start a fight between books and movies! You can use writing techniques even in television!

Monosuke [looks to the side]: You are not wrong, sister. But I have already figured the gun of this case.

Monophanie [shocked expression]: Whaat?!

Monosuke [looks to the side]: Yes, because I already know who the culprit is!

_Those Monokubs only interrupt the trial. Will they ever talk about something relevant to the case?_

Angie [cheerful expression, clasping hands]: So, now that we know Kaede wasn’t the culprit, what do we do?

Kiibo [sideways look]: We should try to understand what happened to Rantaro and Tsumugi.

Angie [cheerful expression, arms waving]: Oh, right! I was getting kinda lost after Ouma’s accusations!

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Right… we need to solve this mystery.

Gonta [curious expression]: Can you tell Gonta what happen? Gonta try his best to help and be gentleman!

Angie [winks]: That’s very sweet of you, Gonta!

Gonta [awkward smile, blushes]: T-thanks!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: So, I heard a noise while I was guarding the door, and I went to check the stairs…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: …there, I was blinded by an extremely bright light, and blindfolded. After being dragged, someone forced some liquid my mouth and I lost consciousness.

Miu [shocked expression]: I didn’t think you were into those things! It is serious business!

Rantaro [awkward expression, scratching head]: What… things?

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: Ah! Don’t pretend like you don’t know! You’re a charmer, attracting boys and girl alike!

Korekiyo [slightly irritated expression, looking at clothes]: As always, your interruptions are as useless and as damaging as mass-produced cosplay costumes.

_It seems that even Korekiyo is going off-track… it’s better if we come back to the case._
NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Rantaro’s testimony, Pieces of cloth, Chair in hallway

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: Rantaro’s testimony is undoubtedly a key piece of evidence.

Kaito [determined expression, forms fist with hand]: Yeah! It basically confirms Tsumugi’s innocence too!

Kiibo [uncertain expression, hiding in hood]: But there’s not a thing that proves that Rantaro’s testimony is true.

Himiko [tired expression, looks to the side]: But Rantaro would never lie, so it must be true.

Miu [angry expression, right arm raised]: That’s an ass-pull if you ask me!

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: If he was blindfolded…

Kiibo [uncertain expression, hiding in hood] …Kaede, Kirumi, Kaito and Shuichi should have found blindfolds around.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, crossing fingers]: But they didn’t mention them at all…

Gonta [surprised expression]: That mean they not found them!

Tenko [determined expression, hands on hips]: Actually, if Rantaro was really blindfolded, he should have been found with the blindfold on!

Tenko [slightly smug]: You didn’t talk about this at all!

What can I also say about Rantaro’s testimony? Can I prove it with something else?

ANSWER: Pieces of cloth --> “not found them”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: But we did find something that could have been used to blindfold Rantaro. Four pieces of cloth near the stairs. Two for him, two for Tsumugi.

0U-M4 [smirking]: Oh! The intruder probably got rid of them while he was leaving!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Why did they leave them in the open?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: I don’t exactly know, but they’re there.

Angie [sideways look]: What if they planted the evidence to make us think Rantaro was really blindfolded?
Kaede [gesturing]: I don’t think so. There’s someone else who can confirm Rantaro’s testimony, and we know thanks to this…

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**ANSWER: Tsumugi’s testimony**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Tsumugi claims to have seen Rantaro lying on the ground, blindfolded.

Tsumugi [worried expression, looking to the side]: Yeah! I got really scared when I saw him…

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Since we have Tsumugi’s testimony, we can presume Rantaro is innocent.

Kaito [looking to the side]: I suppose he wouldn’t blindfold himself to trick Tsumugi…

Rantaro [awkward expression, scratching head]: Wha…? Of course I wouldn’t!

Kaito [looking to the side]: I believe you only cause Kaede said so!

Maki [blank expression]: But, just as we can’t confirm Kiibo’s innocence yet, we can’t confirm Tsumugi’s either.

Tsumugi [worried expression, right arm extended to the side]: You can’t?! Why? Rantaro and me were together the whole time!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I don’t want to accuse you, Tsumugi, but that’s not true.

Tsumugi [worried expression]: Uh?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: After I was blindfolded, I couldn’t see anything. So I can’t be sure that the same thing that happened to me, happened to you.

Tsumugi [head resting on right arm]: I see…

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: No, I am fairly certain that Tsumugi could not have entered Kaede’s research lab.

Kaito [determined expression, fists bumping into each other]: Oh, I think I know why!

**What are Kirumi and Kaito talking about? And why do these two know while the others don’t… It has to be because of that…**

**HIDDEN PASSWORD START!**
ANSWER: OCD

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Tsumugi suffers from a kind of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Tsumugi [looking down, gripping arm]: Y-yeah, I do… I tend to freak out when I see disorganized rooms… and I immediately want to tidy them.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: I expected no less from the Ultimate Maid.

Kaede [thoughtful expression, gesturing]: Tsumugi couldn’t have killed Ryoma because she needed to enter my room, which was pretty messy…

Kirumi [eyes closed, right index finger on lip]: She would have at least tried to tidy your room.

Rantaro [reassuring expression]: I didn’t hear screams or anything like that either, while she was throwing a fit earlier…

Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: So your screams were the noise that kept me awake this night! They were fucking strange screams!

Tsumugi [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: I wasn’t in the dormitories, you know?

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: It must have been a wet dream, then!

Tenko [lowered head, looking upwards]: With this, we’ve eliminated Rantaro and Tsumugi from the list of suspects.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: Not really… they could have worked together.

Himiko [looking down]: Together…?

**It doesn’t make a lot of sense, but the possibility is there. Let’s hear what the others have to say.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Monokuma File 1, Lethal poison, Non-lethal poison, Duct tape**

Kirumi [clasping hands, head slightly tilted]: Were Rantaro and Tsumugi to orchestrate this plan you are suggesting…

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right hand]: …**one of them would be doomed to die.**
Tenko [lowered head, looking upwards]: It doesn’t look like a great plan.

Angie [inclines body to the left, index finger on cheek]: How would they do it?

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Rantaro is the killer, Tsumugi the accomplice…

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: He brought Hoshi in the research lab and made him ingest the lethal poison.

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: But they knocked out!

Kaede [gesturing]: Yeah, they were unconscious.

Kaito [rubbing head]: But why? Does somebody know what was used to do so?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, looking at clothes]: Tsumugi, being the Ultimate Maid, might know how to fake unconsciousness. She possesses multiple qualities after all.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: All the two needed is pretend to be unconscious when other people were around.

Tsumugi [worried expression, right arm extended to the side]: I wouldn’t be an accomplice in a murder!

Kaito [sideways look]: You’re a maid though, you just fulfilled Rantaro’s request…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Me? A killer…?

Rantaro [awkward expression, arms in front of self]: Please. I’m just an artist!

If I want to convince the others of my opinion, I need to present irrefutable evidence…!

ANSWER: Non-lethal poison --> “somebody know what was used to do so”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Korekiyo, we know what was used to make sure Rantaro and Tsumugi would stay unconscious.

Kaede [determined expression, right arm extended to the side]: The non-lethal poison that Shuichi and me found!

Shuichi [tugging on cape]: Y-yeah…

Maki [sideways look]: I remember something similar too.

Kaede [gesturing]: The bottle was completely empty and, since half a dose was enough to make one person unconscious, one full bottle was enough for two.

Kaede [gesturing]: That also explains why the blindfolds were removed. After the poison was
administered, they weren’t useful anymore.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: They could have both taken that poison themselves if I am not mistaken.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: No, Tsumugi couldn’t have. She needed to get into my room to drink it, since the objects found in research rooms can’t be brought out.

Korekiyo [surprised face, hand on mask]: Oh, right.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Yeah, you found the empty poison bottle, but maybe they didn’t drink it!

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: Rantaro just poured it on the ground!

Angie [cheerful expression]: And everyone would think that they were poisoned!

**Angie’s creepiness aside, that wouldn’t be possible. Because…**

**PSYCHE TAXI START!**

1. **Why can we be sure that Rantaro didn’t pour the poison in my lab?**

   [[Rantaro couldn’t fake unconsciousness/There is undeniable proof he was poisoned/Rantaro would have fainted]]

   **ANSWER:** C

2. **Why can we be sure that Rantaro would have fainted?**

   [[The poison’s smell is so strong it causes fainting/The poison vaporizes in contact with air]]

   **ANSWER:** B

3. **Why can we be sure that the poison worked that way?**

   [[Because it happened to me/Because it happened to Maki/Because it happened to Ryoma/Because it was written on the label]]

   **ANSWER:** A

Kaede: I get it!
Kaede [gesturing]: It wasn’t written on the label, but the poison vaporizes in contact with air.

Kaede [gesturing]: If Rantaro emptied it out he would have fainted, and we would have found him in my research room, not outside.

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: Tsumugi could not enter in the lab because of her illness, so she would not have been able to drag him outside.

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: What a great deduction! But how do you know that the poison vaporizes when in contact with air?

Kiibo [uncertain expression, sideways look]: Yeah, I guess you’re a detective and all…

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: But I don’t understand how can you know this.

Himiko [blank expression]: Do you know everything about every poison ever?

Kaede [uncertain expression, right arm extended to the side]: Not really…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: What I mean, is that I tested the effects of that poison on myself, albeit involuntarily.

0U-M4 [sminking]: Exactly what I was thinking! Are you talking about your absurdly long nap?

**Welp, the robot got it before everyone else.**

Kaede [ashamed expression]: Yeah, I wasn’t really sleeping. I was unconscious because I inhaled the poison.

Miu [looking to the side]: Tsk! I fucking knew that something wasn’t right!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: Since Kaede would not lie about this matter, and since what she said is plausible, I do believe Rantaro’s and Tsumugi’s testimonies now.

Kaede [gesturing]: There is also something else that proves that they were poisoned with the same kind of poison that I inhaled.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: And that’s the time. I woke up after seven hours. They woke up at 9.15 in the morning, so that means they were poisoned around 2.15.

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: That lines up with Rantaro’s testimony!

Monokuma [ironic smile]: Yeah, no one in this room helped the culprit!

**What? Monokuma is giving us a clue?**

Monokuma [ironic smile]: You may be wondering why am I helping you, you’ll know the reason by the end of this trial!

Is he lying? He seems honest. But I’m sure there’s something more to his comment. I need to remember it. It could be useful later.
Obtained truth bullet: Monokuma’s testimony

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Now that us know their testimony true, what can we say?

Kaede [gesturing]: We still need to identify the one who broke into my room.

Rantaro [looking to the side]: As I was saying, whoever attacked me first blinded me with a very bright light.

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: I don’t think it was a flashlight since it engulfed the entire hallway…

Rantaro [looking to the side]: What kind of object emits such a bright light…?

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: I didn’t see anything like flashlights in the warehouse.

Kaede [thoughtful expression, right arm extended to the side]: Has someone else seen a flashlight around here?

Nobody said a word.

Well, that means… there aren’t flashlights in this school.

So we aren’t talking about an object. More like an ability. Something the intruder could always do. That person blinded Rantaro and Tsumugi thanks to their particular skills. They were acting suspicious from the start, but now I know nobody else could have!

CHOOSE SOMEONE!

Chapter End Notes

Dun dun dunn!
I'm not saying if they're the culprit or not. But I suppose you already know.
...Or do you?
Find out next Friday! (or maybe Sunday, but not the day after tomorrow, the other one).

I suspect there could be a few errors here and there. Please, if you find them, and they're noticeable, tell me where they are. Thanks! :D
The trial continues; new details are discovered.

Chapter Notes

The trial is almost finished. So, please, if you want to vote for the character you want to spend time with next chapter, feel free to do it! It will be a while before I post the first part with FTEs, but you can let me know now. More info at the end.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~
||TRUTH BULLETS|| (you do need them if you want to play along, so you can open a new tab to read them)

--Monokuma File 1*
According to the Monokuma File, Ryoma was killed around 5 AM. Despite not knowing the cause of death, it notifies that his neck is irritated.

--Kiibo's testimony*
Kiibo claims he was in front of the dormitories at the time of death and he saw Maki. Maki, however, can't confirm Kiibo's innocence.

--Pink smear under nostril*
A pink smear was found under Ryoma's right nostril.

--Conditions of the body*
After examining Ryoma's body, we confirmed that no external injuries were present on the victim except for the neck and face

--Rope at the crime scene*
A rope was found near Ryoma's body. It was intact, but it tore extremely easily. According to Kaito's testimony, it was stored in the warehouse with another rope.

--0U-M4 and Ryoma's conversation*
Tenko and Himiko overheard 0U-M4 talking with Ryoma. The former accused him of being a serial killer.

--Ryoma's whereabouts*
According to Tenko's testimony, Ryoma was last seen near the dormitories, talking with 0U-M4.

--Rantaro's testimony*
Rantaro was attacked after 2 AM. After hearing some noises, he woke up Tsumugi and headed for the stairs. There, he was blinded by a very bright light and then was blindfolded. After being dragged, he ingested some type of liquid.

--Tsumugi's testimony*
Tsumugi grew worried after Rantaro went missing, so she glanced at the hallway.
There, he found Rantaro, being blindfolded. She then was blinded and dragged, and, after some time, she was forced to ingest some type of liquid.

--Snoring near Kaito's room*
Kaito claims to have heard snoring at 5.05 AM. It lasted five minutes.

--Lethal poison*
A half full bottle of poison was found. The label recited: “In average-height subjects, an entire dose is needed to is lethal. If ingested, causes failure of internal organs. The process takes up to ten minutes. In some subjects can cause the break of blood vessels under eyes, in nose and ears.”

--Nonlethal poison*
A empty bottle of non-lethal poison was found. It was the same type of poison that knocked me out, but not the same bottle. “Non-lethal poison. Causes unconsciousness. Half a dose is needed to be effective.”

--Torn duct tape*
The duct tape I applied on the door of my research room was torn in a straight line. The rest of the duct tape remains intact, even on the doorknob (that is impossible to turn).

--Night shifts*
I was awake until 1:50 AM, then Kirumi guarded the window of my research lab until 4:30 AM. After that, I woke up and stayed awake until 8:43 AM, which is the time when I woke up Kirumi.

--Pieces of cloth*
Four pieces of cloth were found near the stairs that lead to the ground floor.

--Chair in the hallway*
A chair, coming from the cafeteria, was moved to the hallway.

--Angie and Gonta's testimony*
According to Angie and Gonta, Miu took the chair after dinner yesterday. She said she would bring it back, but she left it in the hallway.

--Secret passage*
Kirumi found a secret passage near the cafeteria. It appears to be very narrow and we cannot pass through it. It is not a vertical climb, but it turns at some point.

--Miu's testimony*
Miu revealed us that she met with Ryoma at an unspecified time. He asked her a favor: pick up a chair from the cafeteria. She did as he asked because Ryoma bowed.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

[[0U-M4 SELECTED]]

Kaede: No doubt about it!
Kaede [arms crossed, eyes closed]: The person who entered my lab is Ouma. There is no other possibility.

Shuichi [tugging on cape, looking away]: O-ouma?

0U-M4 [surprised look, sad expression]: A-are you accusing me of murder? Just because I suspected you before?!

0U-M4 [even sadder expression, looking at the ground]: If I could, I would be crying so much right now!

Kaede [arms crossed, furrows eyebrows]: There’s no flashlight in the warehouse, and nobody saw another one either. You are the only one that could do something similar to Rantaro and Tsumugi, because you’re a robot… who knows what you’re capable of.

0U-M4 [sad expression, looking at the ground]: That’s a long shot, even for a detective like you.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: I can confirm what Kaede said.

0U-M4 [shocked expression]: You can confirm what?!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: While we were exploring, 0U-M4 used a “incredible robot function”, as he dubbed it.

0U-M4 [surprised look, sad expression]: He’s lying! He’s lying!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, sideways look]: He lightened a dimly lit room pressing the leftmost button on his torso.

Kaito [surprised expression]: What the fuck?! What kinda ability is that?!

Kaede [determined expression]: Thank you for your cooperation, Korekiyo.

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: So, Ouma, if you want to prove your innocence, press that button, and show us that what Korekiyo said is false.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Sure!

I was taken aback by how fast Ouma responded, but what happened after shocked me more.

The robot pressed the button, and less than a second after, his eyes became pure white. Before I could say anything, I was engulfed in a light that completely blinded me.

Instinctively, I covered my eyes. When I opened them up I blinked multiple times to regain focus.

Ouma was still standing on his podium, and was still smiling. He had just confessed!

Tenko [shocked expression]: Aaaah! My eyes! They burn!

Kaito [shocked expression]: What the fuck was that?! I’ve never seen something so bright!

Kirumi [determined expression, pointing]: Ouma, how can you still claim to be innocent after what have you done now?

0U-M4 [smirk]: It may come as a surprise to all of you, but I’m really innocent!
Maki [blank expression]: Do you refuse to admit you broke in Kaede’s research room?

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: Naah, I also knocked out Rantaro and Tsumugi, duuh!

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: He’s playing with us, the little abortion!

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Actually, as a robot, I can’t be an abortion. You should practice your insults.

Kaede [arms crossed, furrowed eyebrows]: I don’t understand you. Confessing and then saying it wasn’t you?

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: But I didn’t confess at all.

Himiko [confused expression]: You did. You used your light ability thing.

0U-M4 [looking down at right hand]: I did attack those two over there, but I would have never killed Ryoma!

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Do not lie. The situation will be worse.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: All the evidence Kaede has presented makes soo much sense after all, but… Atua says Kaede is wrong!

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Gonta does not know what right!

**Could 0U-M4 be the culprit? There are some pieces of evidence we haven’t analyzed.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets:** 0U-M4 and Ryoma’s conversation, Ryoma’s whereabouts, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Miu’s testimony

Kirumi [determined expression, index finger on lip]: 0U-M4 attacked Rantaro and Tsumugi during the night.

Kaito [angry expression, bumping fists into each other]: That proves he’s the culprit!

0U-M4 [smirking]: Absolutely not! Until you can prove I killed Ryoma, it’s all talk!

Tsumugi [looking to the side]: But why would you attack us if not for that purpose!?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Oh, yeah. You wouldn’t let me pass if I didn’t knock you out!

Tenko [hands on podium, determined expression]: You could’ve asked! How rude of you!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, curious expression]: It wouldn’t have worked.

Maki [looking to the side]: The duct tape proves that someone entered from the inside.

0U-M4 [looking down at right hand]: I was in a hurry, so I didn’t have time to clean everything up.

Miu [angry expression]: What the hell is he doing?! He even admitted entering in the research lab!
0U-M4 [smirking]: I did, and I’ll tell you why, but for now you must admit that I had no reason to kill Ryoma, right?

Angie [puffing cheeks]: I can’t find one, besides the obvious one…

Kiibo [looking to the side]: Which would be sacrificing him to save everyone else…

Kaito [angry expression, hand that forms fist]: Like he would do that!

0U-M4 [creepy smile]: That’s right, I would definitely not!

0U-M4 [neutral expression, pointing]: But even if I did, I would have claimed my prize long ago to avoid this trial.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: You just wanted us to suffer, didn’t you?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Maybe! But if you guessed correctly, I’d die! Anyway, there’s no proof I had something to do with Ryoma’s murder!

What do I need to tell the others to convince them? I definitely know something…

**ANSWER: 0U-M4 and Ryoma’s conversation --> “had no reason to kill Ryoma”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Ouma, you say you had no motive to murder Ryoma, but that’s a lie.

0U-M4 [shocked expression]: It is?

Kaede [determined expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Tenko and Himiko overheard you talking with him yesterday morning, near the dormitories.

Angie [surprised expression]: Don’t tell me he was mad at you and you killed him!

Tenko [slightly smug]: No, they were having a much more serious discussion.

Kaede [determined expression, arms crossed]: 0U-M4 accused Ryoma of being a serial killer.

Tsumugi [back slightly curved, shocked expression]: A serial killer!? What?

Kirumi [covers mouth with hand]: That does not surprise me.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: But… isn’t it risky to approach a serial killer? I’m not saying he was one, but…

Kiibo [uncertain expression, hiding in hood]: If Ouma thought that Ryoma was a killer he wouldn’t have murdered him.

0U-M4 [smiling]: Good point, Astroboy!
Kiibo [looking to the side, hiding in hood]: A-astroboy?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: But he does know, right?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: …

Gonta [impatient look]: So?! You know or you not know?!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, curious expression]: Well…

0U-M4 [smirking]: What Kaede said is true. I had my suspicions.

**How does he know that? I didn’t tell him, and neither did Ryoma…**

**Could Shuichi…**

**No. That doesn’t make sense at all.**

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: But I discovered that in this academy! Thanks to my skills!

Maki [toys with hair]: What kind of skills are you talking about?

0U-M4 [thoughtful expression, index finger on cheek]: I want you to guess! Kaede! You’re the Ultimate Detective! Live up to your name!

Kaede [surprised expression]: E-eh?

0U-M4 [raised head, creepy smile]: How can I possibly know so much about Ryoma? I managed to find information exploring the school, you know?

Kaede [arms crossed, furrowed eyebrows]: What do I gain from this?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: You just want us to run out of time, do you?

0U-M4 [smirking]: I want you to choose the right person. I’m not the killer, so if you’re wrong, I’m punished too!

0U-M4 [sad expression, looking at the ground]: …And I don’t want that…

Angie [cheerful expression]: Atua believes Ouma! I repeat, Atua believes Ouma!

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: Who fuckin’ cares about Atua!

Angie [shocked expression]: …!

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: Apologize to Atua, please.

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: No, thanks! I’ve had enough of your creepy, bloodthirsty God! Start doing something productive!

0U-M4 [smiling]: Thank you Angie. Anyway, I can prove I’m not the culprit!

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: But I’ll tell you only when Kaede resolves my mystery!

Shuichi [looking away]: Your m-mystery?

0U-M4 [raised head, creepy smile]: My amazing mystery!
I’m starting to think 0U-M4 hasn’t told us everything he knows. The only way I can make him talk is by doing as he demands.

Ugh. I hate when people force me to do something.

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: Okay. I’ll play your game.

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Oooh! I’m so happy~.

Kaede [irritated expression]: The sooner we start, the sooner we’ll finish.

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: Let’s start with the quiz!

Maki [blank expression]: Why do I have to witness this.

0U-M4 [neutral expression, pointing]: First of all, how do you suppose I entered your room?

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: By forcing it open?

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Ssshhh! This is Kaede’s time to shine!

Kaede [gesturing]: Even if he pushed with all the force he had, the door was locked. I don’t think it would have opened.

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Yeah! You’re right! Congratulations!

Now… how did 0U-M4 enter my room?

[[He pushed it open with another object/He had a key/He used an object found in the warehouse]]

**ANSWER: He had a key**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: And you could enter because you had a key.

0U-M4 [shocked expression] Wow! I didn’t even need to ask you the question! You’re right!

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: A key? Where did he found one?

0U-M4 [smirking]: Right, Kaede! Where did I find one? That’s an easy question.

**Yeah, it goes without saying…**

[[In my research room/Near my research room/Near Miu’s research room/In the warehouse]]

**ANSWER: In my research room**
Kaede [crossed arms, furrows eyebrows]: You found it in my research room, while I was knocked out because of the poison.

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Ding ding ding baby!

Kirumi [covers mouth with hand]: I remember Korekiyo mentioning that 0U-M4 and him parted ways after some time, then reuniting afterwards.

Korekiyo [hugging self]: I am truly sorry for my mistake. I underestimated the mischievousness of the inhuman robot.

0U-M4 [sad expression]: I thought we were over those robophobic comments!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Continue with this so-called quiz and stop wasting time.

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Tsk, nobody appreciates me.

**Geez, I wonder why. You can’t knock out people and expect them to like you.**

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Anyways… you locked your room, am I right? Then how did I enter?

Himiko [looking up]: Thanks to the power of magic!

0U-M4 [smiling]: I’m not Shuichi! Ask him if you want to know something about magic!

Shuichi [tugging on cape, looks away]: …

**How did 0U-M4 enter if I locked the room from the inside… there has to be an answer!**

**FLASHING ANAGRAM START!**

L I K P - O C C K N I G

**ANSWER: Lock-picking**

Kaede: I got it!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: You had no problems because you’re able to lock-pick. That’s how you entered.

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: And you locked me in!

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Yeah, sorry. But there was poison in there, you know? I wanted everyone to be safe, so I locked the door and kept the key.

Tenko [angry expression]: You could have given the key to Kaede! She would have locked the
room and no one of us would have been dead!

0U-M4 [raised head, creepy smile]: Nah, without the killer we would have been dead. Slaughtered by countless Monokumas! So everyone, say thank you to our killer!

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Even though we don’t know them.

Kaede [furrows eyebrows, pointing]: The killer betrayed us! They won’t be thanked. They’ll get what they deserve.

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: By the way, you actually got it. I would have never imagined that.

Yeah, actually... I don’t understand how was I able to guess he was able to lock-pick.

Strange, it feels like I already knew about this. How…?

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: Congrats, detective! You’re so close to the truth! Since you’ve been exceeding my expectations, I’ll give you another hint!

How generous.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: While I was in your room and you were peacefully sleeping, I took a look around!

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: And to my utmost surprise, I…

0U-M4 [smiling]: That’s your cue! You need to tell me what I did!

Himiko [tired expression]: Is your memory card broken? How can you not remember what you did?

0U-M4 admitted to having entered my room while I was asleep. I’m trying not to think about it, but now I have to.

0U-M4 did something in my room. If that’s the case, when I woke up I had to have seen something different from before…

[[The metallic plate under the rug/The bookcase/The shredder/The detective portraits]]

ANSWER: The shredder

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: I didn’t think at all about this when I woke up…

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: But there were pieces of paper in the shredder found in my room. Ouma, what have you done?

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Nee-hee-hee! I didn’t only lockpick the door, but even the desk drawers!

0U-M4 [surprised expression]: …Oh. I got so excited that I answered my next question.
Kaito [sideways look]: Something good happened.

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Either way, I found something very important in those desk drawers!

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: I suppose information about Ryoma’s identity.

0U-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: I can’t believe you, Kirumi! You spoiled yet another question!

0U-M4 [smiling]: But it’s true. There were documents reporting the various charges against Ryoma.

Kaede [arms crossed, irritated expression]: You destroyed those documents?!

0U-M4 [looking to the side]: Of course! I’m sure that if someone came to know about this, everyone would freak out!

**I can’t stay he isn’t right. That’s the exact reason why I didn’t tell anyone besides Shuichi.**

Rantaro [sideways look]: So you decided to destroy it? Kaede had the right to see what was written on there.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Don’t get angry just because I had to blind you to go back to Kaede’s room!

Kiibo [pointing]: Yeah, you still haven’t proven your innocence! Are you done with your quiz?

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Yeah, yeah. Now you all know how I accessed the room.

Kaito [angry expression, bumping fists into each other]: You could have told us sooner!

0U-M4 [smirking]: But that’s no fun! Now, with my incredible evidence, we can start discussing the case seriously.

Shuichi [looking away]: Haven’t we… discussed until now?

0U-M4 [looking to the side]: Nah, all this talk regarding the intruder in Kaede’s room… I already know it was me, and I didn’t kill anyone!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Then show your proof. Do it.

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: Just wait a bit before the evidence is developed.

**Developed? What does he mean?**

Tsumugi [slightly curved back, worried expression]: There’s no evidence! He just wants to stall time!

Tenko [slightly smug]: Yeah, and he’ll accuse someone else!

Korekiyo [caressing face]: All of you are impatient. We have time.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Yeah! And Atua believes in Ouma!

Miu [angry expression, raised right hand]: And I believe in what the fuck I believe! Ouma killed
Ryoma!

Monokuma [covers mouth with paws, laughs]: Oh, look at what’s happening!

Monosuke [neutral expression]: Their opinions are split!

Monokid [guitar above head]: Oh, we’re doing that sick morphothing again?!

Monotaro [smile]: Yeah! I love those debates!

Monokuma [neutral expression]: It seems your opinions are very different. It’s time for the morphenomenal trial grounds!

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Oh! I can’t wait!

Monokuma [covers mouth with paws, laughs]: You’ll battle it out in a group debate to see what’s the best approach to take! Do your best!

Suddenly, the podium where I was standing began to shake. Surprised, I held to the edges and it started ascending.

Slowly, each one of us reached another area, split in two groups.

On one side, me, 0U-M4, Angie, Gonta, Shuichi, Kirumi, Korekiyo and Kiibo.

On the other Kaito, Maki, Himiko, Tenko, Rantaro, Tsumugi and Miu.

**SCRAM DEBATE START!**

Tenko: Ouma attacked Rantaro and Tsumugi, why would he do something like that? He must be the killer!

Angie: Didn’t you remember? He said that Rantaro and Tsumugi wouldn’t have let him pass!

Maki: Ouma entered Kaede’s lab multiple times without her knowing. We can’t trust his words.

Korekiyo: He has now revealed he entered the lab, so do not jump to conclusions.

Miu: That filthy robot had a motive to kill Ryoma more than anyone of us!

0U-M4: A motive?! Because I knew he was dangerous I would have never approached him!

Himiko: We should vote for him now and go home, alright?

Shuichi: If we vote for him and we’re wrong, we’ll be executed.

Tsumugi: He has lied all the time, withholding important information.

Kirumi: He has just started telling the truth, we should wait before supposing his next information will be a lie.

Rantaro: He could have killed Tsumugi and me, so…

Kiibo: That’s not true! He couldn’t have killed you two because he used non-lethal poison!
Kaito: How can you defend him when there’s no evidence that tells us he’s innocent!

Kaede: There’s no evidence now, but Ouma is about to present it to us!

Kaede’s team: This is our answer!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Ouma is suspicious, but if he says he can prove his innocence, we should at least see how.

Himiko [tired expression]: I guess… but this means we’ll have to stay here for a long time…

Tenko [determined expression]: Don’t worry, we’ll expose Ouma and live happily ever after without him!

0U-M4 [sad expression, looking at the ground]: How mean…

Gonta [confused expression]: Please explain Gonta what “develop evidence” mean. Gonta not very good with language.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Oh, don’t worry Gonta! Nobody has understood Ouma, but he’ll spell it out for us in a few moments!

Kaede [gesturing]: Yeah, how much do we have to wait?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: We can’t waste time.

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Well, duh. But do not fear, my dear humans, I have developed the photos that prove my innocence!

Photos?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: I come equipped with a camera, you know? And I took photos while I was in Kaede’s research lab.

Kaito [shocked expression]: What the fuck!?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: I bet you would have never imagined a robot able to do this, right?!

Korekiyo [caressing face]: I have to admit that this ability you claim to possess appears to be extremely useful.

Korekiyo [hugging self]: But nothing will beat the beauty of humans!

Tsumugi [sideways look]: I guess…

0U-M4 [slightly curved back, excited expression]: Anyway, admire my hard work!

After that, 0U-M4 opened his mouth, from which three photos appeared, stacking on top of each other like they were ejected from a printer.
OU-M4 [neutral expression]: Don’t worry about saliva. I don’t need it, so these photos are completely dry.

Maki [blank expression]: I’ll pass.

OU-M4 [smirking]: Why don’t you inspect them, Kaede? I’m positive they will convince you.

OU-M4 passed me the three photos, while Himiko, standing between us, tried to avert her gaze from them.

Still skeptical, I took the photos, which were, thankfully, not wet at all.

As soon as I saw the first one, I almost gasped.

The photo was taken from under the desk. Ryoma was there, coming out from the metallic plate that I previously supposed to be unmovable. He was peeking out. Judging from this photo, he didn’t notice that the duct tape was torn.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: So, is it enough to prove Ouma’s innocence?

Kaede [surprised expression]: W-wait a second, I have to check all of them…

The second photo was even more surprising. This time I had a clear view of my research room. It showed Ryoma drinking the lethal poison. By himself. Nobody was near him, he was doing it alone.

The third photo depicted Ryoma re-entering whatever was under that metallic plate, placing it above his head.

Kaede [arms crossed, thoughtful expression]: …Well, it seems we’ve been looking at this case in the wrong way.

Kaito [surprised expression, bumping fists into each other]: What!? What are those photos?

Miu [pointing]: Are those lewd photos of you and Ouma?! Do robots have dicks?!

Kaede [surprised expression]: Wh-what?

OU-M4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Do you want to know? I guess you have a lot of experience with those, right?!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: It’s better if you see them for yourself.

I passed the photos to Gonta, which passed them to Rantaro and so on, so that everyone had a chance to see them. Gasps and “what?” echoed throughout the courtroom before Himiko gave me the photos again.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, right index finger on lip]: These photos do not assure us OU-M4 was not the culprit, but show us that we were wrong about Ryoma’s cause of death.

Kaede [ashamed expression]: Yeah, I’m sorry, everyone. I was wrong.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Hey! Turn that frown upside down…! That’s what I say!

Shuichi [looking away]: Y-yeah, Kaede… it wasn’t your fault…
Shuichi, thanks for the encouragement.

Rantaro [smiling]: You couldn’t have known that. No pressure.

0U-M4 [smirking]: I agree with what the others are saying! If you didn’t deduce that Ryoma was poisoned you wouldn’t have talked about me in the first place!

Kiibio [looking sideways]: If those photos are true, how could Ryoma not see you? Do you have an invisibility function too?!

0U-M4 [smirking]: No, you dummy! Astroboy, I carefully hid behind the desk, and peeked out when necessary.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: My congratulations.

0U-M4 [raised head, big smile]: All’s well that ends well!

**Not really. We still have to find the blackened who killed Ryoma. Let’s try to connect the dots.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets:** Monokuma File 1, Conditions of the body, Rope at the scene of the crime, Non-lethal poison, Chair in hallway

Gonta [confused expression]: Sorry, but why you sure Ryoma not killed with poison? It is there in photos!

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: That would count as a suicide, remember?

Gonta [confused expression, right index finger on lip]: But *culprit could have used more poison*!

Himiko [tired expression]: Yeah, or maybe *he forced Ryoma to drink it*…

Kiibio [thoughtful expression]: But the one who committed the act would be Ryoma, so he would be the culprit, in this case.

Rantaro [sideways look]: If Ryoma’s true cause of death wasn’t poisoning, *there must be clues* about his true cause of death.

Kaito [thoughtful expression]: I wasn’t at the crime scene for long, so I don’t know.

Tenko [determined expression]: Wait! If Ryoma wasn’t dead because of poison, he could have been killed somewhere else other than the research room!

Miu [pointing]: Duh! The photos *don’t show him exiting the room*! So you can’t be sure!

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Hey, Ouma, have you seen other people entering?

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: Actually no. But that’s because photos drain my battery life, so I went asleep after those three!

Maki [blank expression, sideways look]: How convenient.
Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: There has to be a way to discover if someone else entered Kaede’s research lab.

**One of my friends is right, but I need to back them up to prove their claim!**

**ANSWER: Monokuma File 1 --> “there must be clues”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: There’s something else interesting about Ryoma’s body, and that’s the reason why we initially thought he died because of hanging.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right hand]: Yes, his neck, which was irritated.

Kaede [gesturing]: That’s an important piece of evidence we’ve totally forgotten about when we moved on to discuss other topics.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: But if we want to uncover the truth behind this case, we need to examine every single piece of evidence.

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: As you have seen, even the smallest details aid us.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Whatever happened to Ryoma has to do with what happened to his neck.

Rantaro [looking to the side]: We haven’t excluded the possibility he was hung after all…

Angie [pensive expression, looking down]: Before we talk about that, shouldn’t we ask ourselves how Ryoma entered the room?

0U-M4 [smiling]: Good point, Angie. That’s what I wanted to discuss, but we need to focus. Do we talk about his true cause of death or the way he entered the room?

Tenko [hands on podium]: He could have entered with you, right? You told him to hide under the rug!

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: Yeah, I told Ryoma to follow me to Kaede’s research room, blinded Tsumugi and Rantaro in front of his eyes…

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: …entered the room going against what Kaede said, told him to hide under the rug, forced him to take a lethal poison which would kill him in ten minutes…

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: …convinced him to hide again, exit the room, then, after all of this, killed him by I don’t know what thing near the gym.

Kaito [angry expression, bumps fists into each other]: Nobody can prove what you’re saying!

Maki [sideways look]: Ryoma would never trust him, especially after Ouma told him he suspected him.
Tsumugi [looking to the side]: Yeah, I think that’s implausible

Kaede [gesturing]: Ryoma wouldn’t even fit under the rug if the metallic plate were in place.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: But he moved it and it entered something that resembled… a vent. I didn’t know about that vent at all. The metallic plate didn’t move when I examined it.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: I have not seen said metallic plate, but I dare to say I have understood why Ryoma was able to move it.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, hand on hip]: The plate is put at the end of a vent, which is narrower than the plate itself.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, hand on hat]: Because of this set-up, the plate can be lift up by whoever is crawling in the vent, but it appears fixed to anyone who attempts to move it in Kaede’s research lab.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: That’s what I thought too, but you explained better than I could.

Kirumi [slightly tilted head, closed eyes]: Thanks. I had to deal with numerous contraptions during my searches for treasures.

Kiibo [confused expression]: I think I understand what are you saying, but do you know the entrance of that vent? Otherwise these are just hypotheses.

**Kiibo’s right. But lucky for us, I know exactly the entrance of that vent.**

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

**ANSWER: Secret passage**

Kaede: I got it!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: While we were exploring the school, Kirumi found a secret switch, which opened up a secret passage.

Kirumi [slightly tilted head, smiling]: Exactly. It was right above our heads, very near to the cafeteria.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: I’m not sure, but it should lead directly to my room.

Kaede [gesturing]: With a couple of turns here and there.

While I was explaining my idea to the others, I glanced at Shuichi. He looked more upset than usual.
Is it because he feels guilty for not having told me about the secret switch?

Kaede [gesturing]: It was very narrow, but Ryoma is probably the only one who could fit in there.

Miu [looking sideways]: Great! Now we know how he entered, what about it? It doesn’t help us at all

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: No, it is very important. This matter needs to be discussed further.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Something doesn’t line up.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Let’s discuss it and see if Kaede can pinpoint what’s wrong!

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Monokuma File 1, Chair in hallway, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Secret passage, Miu’s testimony

Kaito [looking to the side]: Well, Kaede. Tell us what you think it’s strange.

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Could it be something related to the time?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Nah, we’ve talked enough about the time.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, hiding in hood]: We know Ryoma took the poison by himself, so someone else killed him.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, sideways look]: And he managed to exit your room thanks to a secret passage.

0U-M4 [smirking]: That’s what my photographs prove!

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: So he entered the secret passage from the hallway without any help…

Korekiyo [caressing face]: What an interesting turn of events…

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Strange that he got in to drink poison.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Yeah, it doesn’t make sense at all. Someone forced him.

Tsumugi [confused expression]: Can you force someone to do something like that?

Himiko [tired expression, looking to the side]: I don’t think so, because Ryoma would die after drinking the poison…

Yeah, there it is. Right in their statements.

ANSWER: Chair in hallway --> “without any help”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!
Kaede [gesturing]: Ryoma got in the secret passage thanks to the chair we discussed before.

Kiibo [sideways look]: So that wasn’t used as a support for hanging…

Kaede [thoughtful expression, right arm extended to the side]: I don’t think so. The chair was put there to make sure Ryoma could reach the ceiling.

Shuichi [looking away]: Yeah, but… it’s too high for him.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: Yep, he wouldn’t reach it even with the chair.

Gonta [surprised expression]: Ryoma used multiple chairs!

I mean, it *could* be possible, but to be sure, I have to ask someone. What piece of evidence will help me this time?

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

**ANSWER: Angie and Gonta’s testimony**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Angie and Gonta found that chair this morning. Only one. Can Korekiyo or Kiibo confirm?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: I was the last one to leave the cafeteria, shortly before nighttime. The chairs were there, except one.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Stacking chairs on top of each other it’s very dangerous! Little girls may try to climb them and fall… and die!

Kaito [shocked expression]: What about boys!?!

Tenko [looking away]: They can do it. Learn how difficult life is for us girls!

Anyways… it’s safe to say that Ryoma couldn’t have used the chair to reach the secret passage. I think I’d barely reach it, so he would need something else…

…Wait! There’s a way to reach the secret passage with only one chair, and that is…

[[The rope found at the crime scene/The help of another person/Rocket launchers/Exisal]]

**ANSWER: The help of another person**
Kaede [arms crossed, eyes closed] …

Rantaro [uncertain expression, arm leaning forward]: What is it, Kaede?

Kirumi [worried expression, tilted head]: Have you unearthed the identity of the culprit?

Kaede [looks up]: N-no… not yet.

**Not yet.**

Kaede [determined expression, pointing forward]: But I understood something else, that the culprit helped Ryoma enter my research room.

Tsumugi [distressed]: W-what?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Well, that’s the only feasible option, right?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: …Since he couldn’t reach that secret passage.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Why would the culprit help Ryoma enter Kaede’s lab? I wooooonder!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: They worked together. There’s no other way.

Kaede [thoughtful expression, gesturing]: And that explains why Ryoma drank the poison. It was part of the plan.

Tenko [scared expression]: Plan?! What?!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: One of us lifted Ryoma up. Told him to drink the poison to send us off track, then killed him.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking away]: W-what…

Maki [blank expression, cold stare]: What an awful human being.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Ryoma wouldn’t have agreed if he didn’t know what was going to happen. He was okay with dying, and tricking all of us.

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: Geez, thankfully I snuck inside Kaede’s lab and took photos!

Tsumugi [confused expression]: But why would he do that?!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: I don’t know…

**This seems ridiculous. I can’t believe someone of us would agree to this mad plan. I can’t believe Ryoma offered himself to be killed.**

**But that’s what happened, and we have to find the one who helped Ryoma.**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: For now, the list of suspects remains the same.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: As far as I remember Maki, Kirumi, Kaede, myself,
Tsumugi and Ouma are confirmed innocents.

0U-M4 [smile]: Yeah! For everyone else, you could still be the culprit!

We don’t have enough clues to accuse someone yet. If we examine the case once again, maybe we’ll understand more.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Kiibo’s testimony, Rope near the scene of the crime, Ryoma’s whereabouts, Snoring near Kaito’s room, Angie and Gonta’s testimony

Kaito [determined expression]: We’re off to a good start!

Rantaro [looking to the side]: What do you mean?

Kaito [determined expression, hand forms fist]: Six of us are clear from suspicion! That’s great!

Maki [looking to the side]: You aren’t, though.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Excuse me, can you find something that implicates me?

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: You gave some testimonies to Kaede, so you could have lied.

Kaito [shocked expression]: Hey! Why are you blaming me now!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: Kaito’s right. Don’t jump to conclusions…

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: Discussing about Ryoma is our priority at the moment.

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: Well, does a testimony help us? Whatever testimony you can think of…

Angie [cheerful expression]: I don’t think we should focus on testimonies, you know?

Angie [cheerful expression, clasping hands]: But trying to prove someone else is innocent!

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: Well, say some names.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: What about Gonta?

Angie [puffing cheeks]: Or maybe Kiibo! We haven’t proven that yet!

One of my classmates is right. I just need to tell them.

ANSWER: Snoring near Kaito’s room --> “Or maybe Kiibo”

Kaede: I agree with that!
Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: I can prove Kiibo’s innocence.

Kiibo [surprised expression]: O-oh! Really?

Angie [furrowed eyebrows]: Oh, what a pity. I hoped Gonta would be proven innocent.

Gonta [happy expression, hand on hip]: Do not worry, Gonta really innocent!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: But… I don’t know how can I prove my innocence.

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: What an incompetent!

Kiibo [hiding in hood]: S-sorry…

Kaede [reassuring expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Don’t say sorry, Kiibo. It makes sense you don’t know.

Kaede [uncomfortable expression, looking to the side]: After you came back to the dorms, you fell asleep and well… you snored.

Kiibo [shocked expression]: What?! N-no, I don’t snore!

Kiibo [blushing]: I… I totally d-don’t!

Kaito [neutral expression]: I did hear someone snoring though… and your room is right next to mine…

Kiibo [hiding in hood]: …

Kiibo [uncertain expression, hiding in hood]: Maybe I do…

I can’t believe we proved Kiibo’s innocence because he snores. It’s annoying, but it can have some advantages, it seems.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Man, you were really going at it this night!

Kiibo [blushing]: S-sorry… I didn’t know…

Shuichi [looking to the side]: Kiibo couldn’t have done it, then.

Kaito [determined expression, hand that forms fist]: You’re doing great, Kaede! So, can you prove me innocent now? I heard Kiibo!

Kaede [uncertain expression]: Well, I guess…

Kaito [smiling, thumbs up]: Great!

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Someone else…?

At the moment… Angie, Miu, Gonta, Himiko, Tenko, Korekiyo or Shuichi could be the culprit.
But I haven’t found something that undoubtedly proves their innocence yet. I’d never accuse Himiko, Shuichi or Gonta, but I can’t rule anyone out. Anyone…

0U-M4 [smirking]: We should proceed by accusing instead.

Shuichi [confused look]: Hm?

0U-M4 [arms behind head]: Instead of proving someone innocent, let’s prove that someone did it! If it doesn’t add up, they can’t be the culprit!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: That could be an effective strategy.

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger on chin]: So, who could be the first one…?

Rantaro [looking to the side]: Are you going to decide at random?

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: I’d say Miu!

Miu [panicked expression]: Heegh! Why me?!

0U-M4 [looking down at hand]: You were the fist one I thought about. But if you’re innocent, you’ve nothing to fear.

Miu [worried, looking to the side]: I d-don’t have anything to do with this…

Gonta [happy expression]: Miu innocent then! Happy for Miu!

Tsumugi [looking to the side]: I’m afraid we can’t be sure of that yet…

Gonta [sad expression]: Oh…

It seems we’ll discuss about Miu. What will we find out?

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Ryoma’s whereabouts, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Miu’s testimony, Monokuma’s testimony

Miu [worried expression]: I can’t understand w-why you’re suspecting me all of a sudden…

Maki [blank expression]: We’re not suspecting you.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Yeah! We’re just talking!

Miu [worried expression]: W-why? I don’t have anything to do with what you’re talking about!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, looking at clothes]: Why do you pursue with your lies?

Miu [panicked expression]: What lies?! I’m not lying!

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: She’s clearly panicking. But she didn’t help Ryoma reach the secret passage since she’s too self-centered.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, hand on hip]: That would not stop her. She could have arranged a
plan with him to escape from this killing game.

Miu [worried expression]: B-but, no… I would have used the first blood perk, guys!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Yeah, do you think she would risk her life just to see all of us dead?

Kaito [rubbing head]: You can never know what’s inside the mind of a psychopath.

Miu [panicked expression, tugging on hair]: I’m not a psychopath!

Wait, one of them is wrong. I have evidence that absolutely contradicts what they’re saying.

ANSWER: Angie and Gonta’s testimony --> “I don’t have anything to do with what you’re talking about”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [arms crossed, eyes closed]: Miu, if you aren’t the culprit, start telling the truth. Otherwise you’ll convince no one.

Miu [toying with hair]: W-What…

Kaede [arms crossed, frowned eyebrows]: You can’t claim you didn’t have anything to do with the murder, since you were the one who took the chair out of the cafeteria.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: T-that’s right…

Korekiyo [irritated expression, raised right arm]: I saw her with my very two eyes, claiming she was using said chair in the warehouse. However, she did not bring it back, according to what I hear.

Angie [surprised expression]: And she left it in the hallway! Wow!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: Korekiyo and me left from the backdoor, so we didn’t know this detail before you mentioned it.

Kirumi [tilted head, clasping hands]: Kaede, do you suppose Miu intended to use that chair to help Ryoma?

Kaede [thoughtful expression, arms crossed]: Hmm…

Is this possible? If we analyze one specific piece of evidence…

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

ANSWER: Miu’s testimony
Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Let’s think about it, but let’s hear Miu’s testimony first.
Kaito [rubbing head]: She gave you a testimony? Do you believe her?
Kaede [reassuring expression]: After you’ll listen to it, you’ll give me your opinions.
Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: Thank God, Kaedumb! Maybe you’re not as dumb as your name suggests!

I should have expected it...
Miu [pointing to self]: Me, the gorgeous Miu Iruma, will prove that you’re all dipshits!
Kiibo [shrugs]: Please do it quickly.
Miu [proud expression]: During my interview, I responded to some questions…
Tsumugi [confused expression]: Interview?
Kaede [uncertain expression]: L-let’s not focus on the semantics…
Miu [proud expression]: They asked me how could I manage to walk with boobs this big!

I sighed. I can do this. I have dealt with criminals far more dangerous than a pianist who thinks about her chest size and reproductive organs all the time.

Kaede [angry expression, pointing]: I SAID TELL THEM WHAT YOU TOLD ME!
Everybody stopped talking. Even the Monokubs, who were chatting with each other.
Shuichi [worried expression]: Kaede, are you o-
Monotaro [surprised expression]: Wow! You have a very powerful voice!
Monosuke [neutral expression]: I should turn down the volume.
Monokid [smashes guitar]: You almost scared me, girl!
Monosuke [adjusts glasses]: I wonder if you got Monodam scared too…
Monodam [neutral expression]: …
Monosuke [smirk]: Apparently he’s just as apathetic as always.
Monophanie [reassuring expression]: Monodam, please, open yourself. Fight against those bullies!
Monodam [neutral expression]: …
Miu [scared expression, toying with hair]: K-kaede…
Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: Why are you acting like this?! I don’t believe you’re the culprit, so stop! Otherwise nobody is going to believe in *me*!
Miu [scared expression, looking to the side]: B-but, what I told you… was private…

Kaede [arms crossed, frowned eyebrows]: No, it wasn’t. It’s what’s I’m going to use to prove you aren’t the culprit.

Miu [scared expression, looking to the side]: O-okay…

0U-M4 [arms behind head, smiling]: What a idi-

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Shut up for once.

0U-M4 [surprised expression]: …!

Miu [unsure expression, toying with hair]: The one who asked me to pick up that chair was Ryoma…

Angie [tilts head to the side]: Ryoma? Oh...

Miu [panicked expression]: But I swear, he told me he needed to reach a shelf in the warehouse! And he kneeled, so I couldn’t say no…

Miu [unsure expression, toying with hair]: A-and… he told me to leave it in the hallway near the cafeteria…

She actually said more than the last time. Ryoma told her that he needed something in the warehouse, but obviously that’s a lie…

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: I’m sorry, but I don’t see how this proves her innocence.

Kaede [gesturing]: It’s not this testimony in particular, you’re right, but the details surrounding it.

Kaede [gesturing]: First of all, if she did kill Ryoma she wouldn’t have attended this class trial, and we know it well. She would have escaped without a second thought.

Miu [toying with hair]: I think so…

Kaede [gesturing]: Secondly, why would she tell me that Ryoma asked her to take the chair?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: No one knew about that detail, and if she were the culprit, she would have known that talking about it would make her suspicious.

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: I can’t argue with that.

Kaede [gesturing]: And lastly, we know she was in the dormitories.

Gonta [surprised expression]: We know?

Yes, because she…

[[Heard Kiibo/Was seen by Maki/Wasn’t seen by anyone at school/Snored as well]]

ANSWER: Heard Kiibo
Kaede [gesturing]: Miu heard Kiibo. She mentioned it during the trial, but we all thought it was one of her usual comments.

--FLASHBACK--

_Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: So your screams were the noise that kept me awake this night! They were fucking strange screams!

_Tsumugi [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: I wasn’t in the dormitories, you know?

_Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: It must have been a wet dream, then!

--END FLASHBACK—

Tenko [surprised expression]: Your memory is amazing, Kaede! You remember even the smallest details!

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: Fucking thanks, Kaede! It took your logic to make the others understand I’m not the damn culprit!

**She thanked me. It’s a good start.**

Miu [proud expression]: Since you’ve been so useful, I’m going to tell you something else! I said I forgot, but I just didn’t want to tell you!

Shuichi [uncertain expression]: Uh… well…

Kaede [reassuring expression]: I’m honored you’re deciding to share everything with us.

Miu [proud expression, pointing to herself]: I don’t think it’s important, but I met Ryoma while I was going back to my dorm!

**Huh?**

Miu [looking to the side]: That’s where he kneeled! But, actually, he wasn’t exiting from his room!

Kaito [shocked expression]: What?!

Miu [pointing to herself]: Yeah! It’s fucking strange!

Tenko [determined expression]: That must have been the moment when Ryoma and the culprit agreed to the plan!

Kaede [gesturing]: Ryoma visited one of us? Yesterday…?

**It can’t be possible. No one mentioned this.**

**I am… very scared to ask this question.**

…

But I need to do it. To save my friends.
Kaede [looking to the side]: W-whose… whose room… was it?

Miu [toying with hair]: Actually, I don’t remember… it was one of the four doors near the entrance, ground floor.

…I know what that means.

Shuichi [uncertain expression]: Kaede, are you a- alright?

I knew it from the start of this trial, but I refused to believe it.

I still can’t believe it, so it has to be a coincidence.

Ryoma was in their room, but…

Himiko [tired expression]: Can someone remind me the disposition of the rooms?

Rantaro [reassuring expression]: Sure. On the ground floor, we have Kirumi, Tsumugi, Miu and Kaede from right to left…

A deep breath.

Rantaro [looking to the side]: Shuichi, Rantaro, Korekiyo and Hoshi from left to right.

Another deep breath.

Kaede [worried expression]: P-please, stop here.

Rantaro [confused expression]: Huh?

Ryoma was in their room, but that doesn’t mean anything.

Yet, there’s one single person here.

One single person who hasn’t an alibi among those four.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Kaede, you seem… distraught.

One single person who could know about the tricks used to murder Ryoma.

One single person who…

N-no, I can’t do it.

Kirumi [lays hat on chest]: I understand. Let me say it.

Kaede [sweating, confused look]: W-what…?

Kirumi [eyes closed, lays hat on chest]: I will spare you the pain for now. But you need to be strong. I can continue from now on, but you know the truth as well.

I know the truth, but I can’t face it now. My emotions blind me.

Gonta [confused expression]: What truth? Gonta may be not intelligent, but please explain!

***
I am truly sorry for what I am about to do. I understand Kaede’s feelings. Even the Ultimate Detective cannot rely on logic alone.

Emotions cloud her judgment. However, I had to choose before and I will not commit the same mistake.

Kirumi [determined expression]: Kaede and me deduced the culprit. I ask you all to… be respectful.

Kaito [angry expression, bumping fists into each other]: Respectful of someone who wanted all of us killed?

I cannot fathom it either. A reason his hidden in their actions. To uncover it, we need to say their name.

CHOOSE SOMEONE!

Chapter End Notes

So, surprise! Kirumi is actually our third protagonist! She's a cool character, sadly she got offed extremely early in the game, so she deserves some time in the spotlight.

It's pretty obvious who the culprit is now. Who knows, I could throw a curveball.

For the FTEs, you should say three names. The events are only two, but there will be some characters who will be unavailable at that time, so votes for those would be wasted. The two with more votes will be selected. If I don't receive enough votes or something else happens, I'll choose at random.

See you on the 27th!
Killing School Semester Opening Ceremony: Class Trial (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

The culprit is discovered; the students witness the first execution.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**CHOOSE SOMEONE!**

[[SHUICHI SAIHARA SELECTED]]

Kirumi: You cannot hide from me!

Kirumi [places hat on chest]: The culprit is none other than Shuichi.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: Have you said Shuichi?

Kirumi [tilts head, apprehensive expression]: Yes. I did, and I stand by my decision.

Tenko [determined expression]: He might be a degenerate male, but he wouldn’t kill anyone! Tell them you're innocent, Shuichi!

Shuichi [looks to the side]: …

Kiibo [worried expression]: Shuichi, don’t act like that! I know you can’t be the killer!

Shuichi [clutches at chest]: …If I am the blackened, y-you can prove it.

Kaito [rubbing head]: You’re wrong, Kirumi! What makes you think that Shuichi is the culprit?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, raised right arm]: According to the testimony Miu provided, she witnessed Ryoma exiting from one of the four rooms near the entrance.

Kirumi [resolute expression, raised right arm]: So Ryoma had to have discussed with Shuichi, Rantaro, Tsumugi or me.

Kiibo [worried expression]: She might be wrong!

Miu [angry expression]: What?! Me! I’m never wrong! This time I’m extremely sure!

Kirumi [tilted head]: If someone claims to have talked with Ryoma in their room, they should speak now.

**As I imagined, neither Rantaro nor Tsumugi said anything. And I did not speak with him either.**

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: I totally didn’t. I didn’t enter the dormitories at all after
waking up yesterday, I guarded Kaede’s research lab.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: That is correct. I never saw her somewhere else.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I spent my time exploring the school. But I was alone for most of the time, so no one can confirm that for sure…

Kirumi [resolute expression, hand on hip]: You are not a suspect anymore, and it would be useless for you to lie now.

Rantaro [awkward expression, arms in front of self]: Oh, if you say so…

Kirumi [resolute expression, hand on hat]: The real question is, why would Shuichi not respond.

Shuichi [tugging on cape]: Well, you… your proof is circumstantial… even if Ryoma entered my room, that doesn’t… doesn’t mean anything.

Kiibo [determined expression]: Yeah! They might have discussed about… things!

Kirumi [tilted head, eyes closed]: He still does not confirm nor deny.

Tenko [slightly smug]: Well, Shuichi? Don’t tell me you have behaved badly! Say Miu is wrong! Shuichi [looking away]: …

He cannot find the strength to lie, but he does not have the courage to admit the truth. I do not know what is he thinking now, but he must be excruciating for him.

I need to help him, help him confess, help the others accept this truth.

NONSTOP DEBATE!

Truth bullets: Rope at the scene of the crime, Ryoma’s whereabouts, Chair in hallway, Secret passage

Maki [blank expression]: Shuichi could have killed him, I’m afraid.

Kaito [angry expression, bumps fists into each other]: Can you prove some empathy!? Or are you a fucking robot?!!

0U-M4 [shocked expression, sad look]: Oh, so that’s how you feel about me…

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Shuichi isn’t strong enough to kill Ryoma...

Tsumugi [looking to the side]: You can’t say that for sure without proof.

Angie [clasping hands]: But look at his arms! They’re so frail!

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: If Kirumi suspicion true, Shuichi talked with Ryoma about plan?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: We cannot know if Ryoma did really enter the dormitories.

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: I just said that! Are you deaf?!
Korekiyo [irritated expression, looking at clothes]: *Your mind could have played tricks on you.*

Kiibo [worried expression]: Shuichi isn’t the culprit! You… can you think of someone else?

Shuichi [looking away]: …

Kaede [arms crossed, looking away]: …

**There is a connection between Ryoma and Shuichi. However, only some people could know.**

**ANSWER:** Ryoma’s whereabouts --> “We cannot know if Ryoma did really enter the dormitories”

Kirumi: Your statement is wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: We do know. Ryoma entered the dormitories sometime yesterday morning.

Kirumi [resolute expression, right arm raised]: According to the information in Kaede’s notepad, after Ouma accused him of being a serial killer, he went inside the dormitories.

Himiko [tired expression]: Nyeh… that’s true, I remember that. Tenko told Kaede about that.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: So he could have been in the dormitories when he met Miu.

Shuichi [looking to the side]: And… with that? It’s… it’s totally irrelevant…

Maki [blank expression]: It’s a strange coincidence, you can’t argue with that.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Heey! You’re saying that Ryoma had to meet the culprit waay back to arrange the plan, but they could have done it even before the murder! You don’t need that much time to murder someone!

0U-M4 [curious expression, finger near cheek]: Nah, they had to decide what to do before something happened!

**What is this “something” 0U-M4 is talking about?**

[[Before someone entered the dormitories/Before the cafeteria closed/Before the warehouse closed/Before the time limit]]

**ANSWER:** Before the cafeteria closed

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: They had to decide how to enact their plan on
advance because of the cafeteria closing before nighttime.

Kirumi [resolute expression, hand on hip]: They had to take the chair out of the cafeteria before 8 pm. And Ryoma would have been the one to do it.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: But Miu showed up and he asked her to do it for him.

0U-M4 [surprised expression]: He asked her of all people?!

Kirumi [resolute expression, hand on hat]: The culprit did not expect her entering the dormitories at the same exact moment Ryoma exited the room. I suppose he tried to distract her.

Kirumi [resolute expression, raised right arm]: He managed to convince her, lying about his true intentions.

0U-M4 [smirking]: Miu’s attention span is so short!

Miu [angry expression, raised right arm]: Your dick’s shorter!

0U-M4 [curious expression, index finger near cheek]: Oh! But I don’t need it, so your jabs aren’t effective against me.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: The plan could not be devised without care. So the culprit met with Ryoma in the dormitories. Shuichi is the only one who stayed in his room for the entire day.

Shuichi [tugging on cape]: I… I…

Kiibo: This c-cannot be right!

[[Split screen separating Kiibo and Kirumi]]

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Kiibo, I understand it may appear impossible to you-

Kiibo [uncertain expression, index fingers against each other]: And I understand where you’re coming from, but I’ll tell you why you’re wrong!

**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth blades: Monokuma File 1, Kiibo’s testimony, Miu’s testimony, Monokuma’s testimony**

Kiibo [uncertain expression, hides in hood]: Of all people, Shuichi is probably the nicest one here…

Kiibo [determined expression, pointing]: So he can’t be the culprit!

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: You’re pressuring him even more!

Kiibo [uncertain expression, index fingers against each other]: Of course he can’t answer under these circumstances, please let him breathe and let’s discuss about other matters!

**ADVANCE!**
Kirumi [calm expression, raised right arm]: Excuse me; you were attempting to prove me wrong.

Kirumi [calm expression, tilted head]: However, until now, you just explained why you suppose Shuichi is not the blackened. Please submit your proof.

Kiibo [worried expression]: Right, well… I know why you’re wrong.

Kiibo [determined expression, pointing]: Monokuma said that the culprit wasn’t helped by anyone!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: So Shuichi couldn’t have helped him.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: Monokuma hasn’t lied yet, yeah?

Kiibo [uncertain expression, index fingers against each other]: So, well...

Kiibo… have you already forgotten?

**ANSWER: Monokuma’s testimony --> “Shuichi couldn’t have helped him”**

Kirumi: I will cut down your words!

**BREAK!**

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Monokuma told us nobody in this room helped the culprit.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: Am I missing something…?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Ryoma is not in this room.

Kiibo [shocked expression]: …!

Monokuma [belly laugh]: Upupupupu… you’re right! That’s what I meant! I am so wise when choosing the right words!

Kirumi [tilts head, eyes closed]: We cannot know if Shuichi was in his room during this night. He could have left while no one was watching.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Yeah, but we haven’t talked about the cause of death yet.

Kirumi [calm expression, tilted head]: I suppose we could discuss about that, however it may be irrelevant after our last deductions.

Kaede [looks down, holds tears]: N-no… it isn’t…

Kaito [surprised expression]: Kaede, are you okay!?

Kaede [looks up, holds tears]: Yeah, more or less… I… I can do it.

Kirumi [tilts head, reassuring expression]: Kaede, if you consider yourself ready, I can leave the rest to you.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, hand on hat]: However, I do not see how the cause of death can
prove Shuichi’s innocence.

Kaede [looks up, holds tears]: No… it does prove he’s the culprit.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Oh, it does? I believe… you can face your fears and tell us why.

***

Shuichi is the culprit. I don’t know why he did it.

I can’t believe that he did it.

I don’t know how to tell the others this, but…

It’s my duty as a detective. As a student of this academy, and as Shuichi’s friend.

Kaede [looks down, holds tears]: We know that Ryoma’s neck was irritated, so we can’t overlook that.

Tsumugi [head resting on right hand]: Do you know what it means?

I do. I do…

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Monokuma File 1, Rope near the scene of the crime, Chair in hallway, Night shifts

Himiko [tired expression]: Why are we always coming back to the same things?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: It’s our first trial ever. We’re not experts.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Since he wasn’t hung, maybe the culprit did something else to him.

Miu [pointing to herself]: Obviously! What did they use though?

Tsumugi [index finger pointing upwards]: The rope found near Ryoma’s body is out of the question.

Tenko [determined expression]: What about a second rope?

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: The one Kaede use to go to research room!

Kirumi [resolute expression, raised right arm]: Impossible. The rope was never moved.

Angie [cheerful expression, flailing arms]: Maybe all of this is just a red herring! A red neck herring!

Maki [blank expression]: This isn’t the time for puns.

Ryoma couldn’t have been hung with that rope… we established that. But… I remember something else I discovered.
ANSWER: Rope near the scene of the crime --> “What about a second rope”

Kaede: Y-you’re wrong…

BREAK!

Kaede [looking away, holds tears]: That is impossible. There were only two ropes in the warehouse.

Himiko [tired expression]: Nyeh… so it is possible… I don’t understand you, Kaede.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Uhm, I’m in the same boat. If there were two, why are you saying that a second rope couldn’t have been used?

Because we were using that rope already, and we just talked about it…

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. W T
2. A I
3. S N
4. P D
5. O E
6. W M

ANSWER: Window

Kaede: I got it…

CLEAR!

Kaede [sad expression, gesturing]: Because the second rope was the one that I used to climb down from my research room.

Rantaro [looks to the side]: Right, so they didn’t use a rope to kill Ryoma, but how did they do it?

Shuichi [tugging to cape]: …Well, Kaede… you know…

Shuichi… why are you making this so difficult for me…

Kaede [looking down]: There’s only one other option. Since Ryoma’s neck was irritated, if Ryoma wasn’t hung, he was…

What is Ryoma’s true cause of death?
FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

TA R S N G E L D

ANSWER: Strangled

Kaede: I got it…

CLEAR!

Kaede [looking down, holds tears]: Ryoma was strangled. The rope was placed there to throw us off, as we imagined.

Tsumugi [index finger pointing upwards]: According to the Monokuma File, it could be possible.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: Yes, it could be possible. How can you be certain of it, however?

Kaede [looking down]: …it ties to Shuichi.

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: It does?

Tenko [uncertain expression]: I don’t understand your reasoning, Kaede. You say that Shuichi must be the culprit, and you can prove it by saying that Ryoma’s cause of death is strangling?

Kaede [sad expression, looking down]: Yes…

…Because it explains one little detail I thought was strange, even though Shuichi hid it well…

Shuichi [sad expression, sideways look]: Kaede… if y-you want to say something… I’ll try to defend myself.

Kaede [sad expression, holds tears]: …

Shuichi [melancholic expression]: A-after all, I’m not the culprit… how can you accuse me…

I recognize Shuichi’s tone. He is fully aware of the fact I pieced everything together. But why is he still trying? Does he want to prove us he’s capable?

No… he wants to prove it to himself.

But I have to refute his statements. I have to share my observation with my classmates.

I’m sorry, Shuichi.

PANIC TALK ACTION START!
Shuichi [looking away, tugging on cape]: Kaede must be joking; I’m not the culprit…

Shuichi [sideways look]: The evidence you presented… isn’t that c-convincing…

Shuichi [looking down]: I wouldn’t hurt a fly, let alone… kill a person…

Shuichi [melancholic expression]: I see through… your tricks…

Shuichi [toying with cape]: I’ll… make you disappear…

Shuichi [looking at cape]: I don’t want to hurt anyone, Kaede…

**FINAL BLOW:**

Shuichi [looks up]: W-what would have I used to strangle R-ryoma…?

*PE---WRIN---CA---KLED*

**ANSWER: Wrinkled cape**

Kaede: It’s… over…

Shuichi [clutches at chest]: …

**BREAK!**

Kaede [barely holds tears]: Shuichi, you used your cape.

Shuichi [looks away]: …

Shuichi [melancholic expression]: It… well…

Kaede [barely holds tears]: That’s why your cape is wrinkled. I assumed it was because you left it on while you were sleeping… but in reality, you rolled it up to strangle Ryoma.

Kiibo [looking away]: I… I noticed… it too…

As everyone stood in silence, confused or dumbfounded, I looked at Shuichi again. He calmly took off his cape and placed it on the podium.

Kaito, who stood besides him, looked at it.

Kaito [worried expression]: It’s pretty creasy… I have to admit that-

And after that, the tears that Shuichi was barely holding together began flowing from his eyes.
Sobbing echoed through the courtroom.

Kiibo [worried expression]: Shuichi, hey…!

A tear streaming down to my face, reaching my cheek, reaching for my chin.

But I stopped it.

I felt the urge to cry too. But I couldn’t cry at that time.

I wiped my eyes.

Shuichi [tears streaming down face]: I’m sorry… I’m so sorry… I’m so stupid…

Maki [looks away]: …

Kiibo [worried expression]: No, no… you are wrong… this plan, how does it make sense?

Kaede [looking down]: …What do you mean…

Kiibo [uncertain expression, index fingers against each other]: Neither Shuichi nor Ryoma knew about the poison in your room, so their plan was-

Shuichi [tears streaming down face]: …I knew.

Tsumugi [confused expression]: W-what?

Shuichi [tears streaming down face]: I… I… entered Kaede’s room, w-while she was sleeping… I betrayed her, I betrayed her… I betrayed everyone…

Kaede [barely holds tears]: N-no, Shuichi, y-you…

Gonta [worried expression]: Gonta not understand, why Shuichi the culprit?

OUM4 [irritated expression, pointing]: Well Gonta, you should pay more attention!

Tenko [sideways look]: I don’t… think I understand either…

Kaede [barely holds tears]: I think… I should summarize everything that happened once more.

Kirumi [reassuring expression, tilts head]: Kaede, if you think you can’t do it…

Kaede [determined expression]: No, I can. I have faced many difficult challenges…

Kaede [looks down]: This is just… just another challenge.

**CLIMAX INTERFEERENCE START!**

Kaede: To understand the murder, we have to start comprehend Ouma’s actions. During the second day, he entered my room via lockpicking, taking advantage of the fact I was knocked out because of poison.

Kaede: In my room, he discovered that Ryoma was an alleged serial killer, and then he left locking me inside. By doing this, he assured no one would enter from the inside of the school.
Kaede: Without many options, I was forced to exit from the window and assign people to guard the two entrances, to prevent incursions by unwanted visitors.

Kaede: During the second night, I guarded the window entrance with the culprit, who, maybe out of curiosity or because they didn’t trust me, entered the room by climbing the rope while I was asleep.

Kaede: The morning of the third day Rantaro, Angie and Gonta weren’t present at the morning meeting, so Tsumugi and me left the others to search for them. At the same time, Maki entered my room, while the culprit ran to their dorm room.

Kaede: Later that morning Monokuma offered us a second motive, the time limit. I don’t know why, but this convinced either Ryoma or the culprit to attempt murder.

Kaede: The culprit and Ryoma met in the former’s dorm room and arranged their plan, which is not clear as of now.

Kaede: When Ryoma was leaving, he met Miu, and to distract her, he asked her to take a chair from the cafeteria, lying about his true intentions. Miu obliged while Ryoma took a rope from the warehouse, which would be used to make us think he was hung.

Kaede: Yesterday night, Ouma decided to take matters in is own hands, attempting to guard my research room from the inside. However, he had to pass through Rantaro and Tsumugi, who probably wouldn’t let him.

Kaede: To make sure he could enter, he blinded them with a very bright light, and then entered thanks to the key he stole. Thanks to the torn duct tape, we know he entered from the inside. He then hid behind the drawer, ready to take photos.

Kaede: Meanwhile, sometime the night, the culprit and Ryoma got out of their room to enact their plan. They used the chair taken from the cafeteria to make sure Ryoma could enter the secret passage, which they discovered because they saw another similar switch during the second day.

Kaede: After entering my room, Ryoma took half a dose of a lethal poison, which would be enough to kill him because of his small height. Unbeknownst to him, Ouma took photos of him drinking the poison.

Kaede: Ryoma came down, ready to die. The culprit and him moved away from the cafeteria, reaching the hallway near the gym, where the real murder took place.

Kaede: The culprit took off his cape, the only one he had at his disposal, rolled it up, and used it to strangle Ryoma before the poison killed him, then placing the rope to throw us off.

Kaede: After committing the crime, the culprit went back to the their dorm room, just in time to avoid Kiibo and Maki, who were in the courtyard mere minutes before the murder took place.

Kaede: There’s only one of us who could have known about the poison and the secret switch, who stayed in their dorm room all day, who knew Ryoma and had a cape at their disposal…

[[split screen separating Shuichi and Kaede; Shuichi looks down while crying]]

Kaede: Shuichi Saihara, it has to be you!

BREAK!
Shuichi [looking down, wiping off tears]: G-good job, Kaede…

Kiibo [worried expression]: S-so, you’re confessing!?

Shuichi [looking sideways]: Congratulations, you… managed to find the culprit… just… as I… expected…

Kaede [sad expression, looking to the side]: …

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Please, explain your actions. We do not wish to hate you.

Shuichi [looking sideways]: I… I think I sho-

Monokuma [angry expression]: What! What are you doing!? This explanations and shit always comes after the trial!

Monotaro [neutral expression]: You’re right, daddy! They have to vote first!

**V-vote?! No, I can’t vote now!**

Monokuma [shows primarily black side]: If you’re so sure that Shuichi is the culprit, vote him! You just said he confessed!

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Ahw, is Monokuma for reeeal?

Monokuma [angry expression]: Of course I’m “for real”! You need to vote now!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: No! I’m not voting for Shuichi before he explains the reasons behind his actions!

Monokuma [snickers]: Upupupu… too bad for you, it seems we’ll have two executions then…

**Oh, I forgot about the execution…! Does this mean that Shuichi…**

Monokuma [belly laugh]: If you don’t want to die, you’d better vote now!

Monokid [drooling]: I want them to die! Blood, blood!

Monophanie [looking away]: Monokid, don’t be gross for once!

Monosuke [neutral expression]: At least he’s not as gross as Monodam.

Monokid [laughing]: Yeah! He smells so bad!

Monokuma [shows primarily black side]: You simply have to select the person who you think has killed the poor Ryoma. So, you have thirty seconds from now. Good luck.

Tenko [shocked expression]: Only thirty seconds?

**I can’t vote for Shuichi now, I… I need to know…**

Monokuma [snickers]: Tick-tock, tick-tock. Time is precious…

I looked down at my defendant stand. The display was now turned on, and there were all of
our faces one near the other. Before voting, I looked at the others. Some of them were as confused as me, others pressed the confirm button immediately.

The time was displayed on the bottom of the screen. Fifteen seconds left. With all the strength I had, I moved the cursor to select Shuichi.

Ten seconds.

I closed my eyes; I refused to believe I was condemning Shuichi to die.

But I confirmed.

The timer stopped, and everyone looked around in confusion.

Monokuma then pressed a lever near his throne, and a giant projector screen appeared from the ceiling. It turned on, and it showed the votes that each one of us received.

Everyone voted for Shuichi.

Monokuma [one paw in the air]: Your choice is made! Have you chosen the correct blackened or you were dreadfully wrong!?

The projector screen now depicted a casino, with various slot machines near each other. The camera started to move towards one specific slot machine that resembled a roulette. A ball appeared on screen, circling around the various “choices”. It didn’t take me too long before I realize that those were actually our faces. After some time the ball slowed down, landing on Shuichi’s face. A jingle came from the machine, then Shuichi’s face flashed multiple times, along with his name confirming us that he was, indeed, the culprit. After that, hundreds of Monocoins came out from the machine, while the Monokubs cheered along Monokuma.

CLASS TRIAL END

We moved away from our podiums, still somewhat confused. Shuichi left his cape on his stand, while everyone looked at him. Nobody seemed angry at him, but a mixture of emotions and questions was probably in everyone’s head.

Why did he kill Ryoma? Why this overly complex plan? Did they want us to die…?

“Well, it goes without saying, but you all voted correctly!” Monokuma announced. “The blackened who killed Ryoma Hoshi is none other than the Ultimate Magician, Shuichi Saihara!”

Shuichi stood still, with his head down, trying to avoid eye contact.

“Now you can talk for a while, cry, scream, and all the things you bastards do. After all, I’m a good bear.”

I couldn’t move either. My instinct was to approach Shuichi and ask him all the questions that were crowding my mind, but I thought…

I should give him time.

I forced him too many times, and maybe, that’s the reason why he killed someone. But… I still
don’t understand.

Shuichi finally shifted his attention to us, everyone waiting for him.

“I… I deserve this.”

“You don’t deserve anything of this!” Kiibo cried out. “I still believe that Monokuma told us a lie!”

“It isn’t a lie.” Shuichi said, his voice colder than ever. “I did kill Ryoma.”

“Why…?” I mumbled.

“You… want to know?”

“Yes.” Maki spat. “We know you murdered him, and even though I couldn’t care less, these people here want to understand. Give that to them at least.”

Shuichi flinched a bit before he could start talking again. He looked down once again, still crying. However, it seemed he calmed down. Tears were visible, but he wasn’t sobbing anymore. He took a deep breath.

“I thought… it was the only way.”

“The only way to do what, perv?! Killing someone?! Are you fucking crazy?”

“Shut your damn mouth.” Kaito responded, glaring at the pianist.

“I… have actually… been dealing with… I’d say depression. For a long time now.”

What?! I… How could I not understand?

“Oh, that’s…” Tsumugi chimed in.

“No, I don’t need your pity. It’s not real depression, I don’t know…. It feels, confusing…” Shuichi explained. For every word he let out, his voice cracked more and more. “I used to be proud of myself, of my status of Ultimate Magician… I could attract crowds of people, wanting to watch my shows…”

Shuichi then paused for some seconds. I kept silent; I wasn’t able to say anything that could be considered helpful. The others looked around, some blatantly ignoring Shuichi’s words, others as surprised as me, unable to speak. He wasn’t explaining why he did kill Ryoma, but I couldn’t stop him.

“I felt… prized. I thought I was special; I had a talent… others looked up to me and loved what I did, after I practiced so much, for so long… I also attempted difficult tricks, situations in which I could have died… and I was successful every single time.”

“That seems amazing, Shuichi!” 0U-M4 commented, smiling.

“Shut up, you degenerate!” Tenko shouted, ready to slap him.

“It was amazing… until I started failing, and failing, failing every time. One day I tried escaping from a water tank full of piranhas… and messed up the timing. I got hurt, and almost drowned. Spectators started worrying about me, but after that performance, almost no one else came to watch my shows. I had been an Ultimate, but not anymore. My tricks became so simple that nobody was interested in me anymore. All my hard work was useless. I was useless. I don’t know
what… what could have I done without my magic shows? That was all I could do!”

Shuichi started crying again, his eyes full of tears. He could barely see, I assume.

“I had lost my purpose, I tried everything, but no! I lost everything, and while I tried to get back up, I became worse, and worse, and worse! They should have just revoked my title, can they do that?”

“My my Shuichi…” Angie said. “It isn’t your fault, you just made some mistakes. If you’re an Ultimate, you’re always an Ultimate.”

“That’s how it’s supposed to be…”

I wanted to console Shuichi, but how could I…? I don’t know what’s he going through. I’ve been sad many, countless times, however… this is something else entirely.

“I didn’t deserve my title. I realized… it was a mistake. I don’t even know why I was brought here, along fifteen amazing people, with amazing talents, with amazing personalities… like you, Kaede. I knew you would solve this case.”

He smiled. A painful smile. One of the last I could see.

“Shuichi, I…”

“You didn’t want to. But you did it. I’m glad. You’re truly a great detective. This is why… I don’t believe the memories that came back to me.”

The memories, that’s right!

“Can you tell us?” Rantaro asked. “About our lost memories?”

“No…” he stuttered, weeping. “They’re fake, after all…”

“Oh, are they now?” Monokuma intervened. “Tsk, I guess you can believe what you want.”

“They’re the reason why I hid my crime.” Shuichi said.

What does he mean with that…?

“You’re… confused. Yes, I understand that. That’s why… I’ll do my best to tell you about what Ryoma and I decided. I owe to you, before I go one last time.”

Why does he have to talk like that? I don’t believe he’ll be executed, no, there’s no way!

“Ryoma had similar issues to mine. He told me while we were investigating the library. He suffered from immense regret from an action, something he did… but he didn’t know what it was. He couldn’t bear that. He was sure… sure that he committed an act so terrible he deserved death. I don’t know why, but I felt his pain like it was mine. It sounds strange, but… we bonded.”

“When people show their weak side to others, they bond with ease.” Korekiyo explained. “Your experiences may be different, but the emotions you felt are the same.”

“One of my biggest regrets is doubting you, Kaede. I’m so sorry. I couldn’t believe someone trusted me. Someone who I just met, who treated me so nicely… no one did that to me. I always had to doubt others, everyone cared about my tricks, nobody about me.”

“D-don’t worry… I forgive you.” I said, but I knew it wasn’t enough.
“I entered in your research room. I climbed up the rope. It was a bit difficult, but I did it before. I… hoped you would wake up… you would be angry with me, you would show me I was right, you were just using me! But you didn’t! When Maki threatened me, I couldn’t face the pressure, I didn’t know what to do… I knew I would let you down, like everyone else in my life. So I ran away, wanting to be alone.”

“So it’s your fault this happened!” Kaito shouted at Maki. “Can’t you see what you did? I don’t even care about my ankles! I don’t care about Kaede’s promises, but you destroyed a person!”

Maki did not respond. Her unmovable, stern expression, however, changed. For a moment, she appeared shocked just like everyone else.

“N-no.” She said, and then quickly gained back her composure. “But I’m sorry.”

“It’s not your fault at all.” Shuichi continued. “I was ready to return, until Monokuma came with his time limit motive.”

When Shuichi finished the sentence, I immediately realized what was his aim, why he plotted and then killed Ryoma.

“Ryoma came to my room during yesterday morning. We talked about the motive, and the right choice to make. I… offered to give up my life. He did too.”

Monokuma said that a suicide wouldn’t be considered a murder; I clearly remember that, to assure that one of us would be a killer…

“He revealed me that he remembered every single one of our faces. Barely, but he had no doubts. We had met him before, and we were as bad as him. Me included.”

“As bad as him…?” Tsumugi asked, somewhat worried.

Are we all serial killers? That doesn’t make sense, I’m a detective… I never…

“He… was sure he knew us. But he didn’t know what we did, since he wasn’t sure about his past either. So he came up with a plan. I would kill him, and he would use Kaede’s secret weapon to throw you off. He already discovered the second secret switch and deduced that tunnel would lead there.”

“So he really wanted us killed.” Rantaro mumbled.

“He did. But I couldn’t believe him. I tried to dissuade him, but he wouldn’t hear me. He trusted his instincts. So I pretended to go with is plan. I would do everything he asked of me, but I decided I would out myself as his killer. That, until… my memories came back.”

“What… about your memories?” Kiibo asked.

Shuichi sobbed again, but then shook his head.

“They’re fake. I’m sure. This class trial proved it. You’re not bad people. You’re truly talented, every single one of you. This trial showed me that, I understood it too late. I made you go through this hell, make you doubt each other. Monokuma has manipulated my memories… t-to convince me to abandon you, to leave the academy.”

I turned to face Monokuma, who wasn’t following our discussion at all. He appeared lost in whatever he was thinking.
“You could have left!” I said. “Because of the first blood perk! You didn’t have to die!”

Shuichi let out a sad, remorseful laugh.

“I wanted to save you. I wished to make sure you would live at my expense. I don’t belong here after all. And I… desired to feel special again, to make my existence worth. To die, but live on in your hearts, to sacrifice myself for a good cause, to be remembered as the one who believed in you, who did the right thing, for once…”

“W-we could have fought, you could have left…”

“No, I don’t want to be a coward any longer. I have to face the consequences of my choices. I’d rather die now, than leave after killing someone, taking advantage of all of you…” He stopped, his voice cracking again. “I… didn’t w-want to b-be hated!”

No, what is he saying?

“I would have never hated you, Shuichi! I know you-”

“Kaede, you’re not only a great detective, but a great person. I can’t promise no more murders, this game… might not ever end… still, I know you’ll do your best. In everything.”

“S-Shuichi…”

“You trusted me, a boy you found in a locker, who you didn’t know. You defended me, you investigated with me, you probably understood I was the culprit a long time ago. But you believed in me regardless.”

“I still believe in you.”

“Ah… you won’t give up hope… but this is how it should have ended. I’m sorry. I wish I could repeat it infinite times and tell you sooner. But… I feel finally at peace with myself. I’ll go out knowing I saved all of you.”

“Y-you… did. I’m thankful for that, but you didn’t have to!”

“Ryoma gave up his life too. He didn’t trust you, he might have been a mass murderer, but please, don’t forget him. Remember him too.”

“Why do you have to go? Stay here…”

“It’s too late for me now… Good luck, to every one of you. Please. Don’t try to save me.”

“Well well well, you bastards! That seems like a great way to end this soap opera, you know?”

“Why do you have to do this?!” I shouted. “Why?! WHY!”

“Don’t waste your voice, detective. It won’t save your friend there.”

“He’s right.” Shuichi ominously said.

“This time, I’ve prepared a very special punishment for Shuichi Saihara, our Ultimate Magician!”

All this time, I was fairly distant from Shuichi, who was looking at us while smiling, despite knowing what was going to happen to him.
I moved towards him, the others didn’t stop me.

“Let’s give everything we’ve got!”

And I hugged him. This time, I couldn’t hold my tears.

“K-Kaede… w-what…” he mumbled.

“It’s punishment time!”

“I won’t forget you! I’ll never forget you!” I repeated, still hugging him.

From his throne, Monobear pulled a mallet out of nowhere and hit a red button that just appeared in front of him. The button was placed on a platform, where there was display that resembled an 8-bit console. Immediately, an animation began to play. A sprite that depicted Shuichi appeared, and was promptly dragged by a second sprite, meant to represent Monokuma. Meanwhile, on the top of the screen, words appeared, reading: “GAME OVER: Shuichi Saihara has been found guilty. Time for the punishment.”

A chain shot out from the ceiling of the trial room, grabbing Shuichi by the neck, and immediately dragged him up, breaking him from my hug and sending me backwards. The ceiling closed and Shuichi vanished from sight. Monokuma then turned on the same projector screen from before. But this time, it wasn’t showing the vote results, but Shuichi, who had been brought to a hallway that resembled one of a psychiatric ward.

*Escape trick*

Shuichi lies on the floor, when the five Monocubs run towards him, with a large chain in their paws. They wrap the magician in it, so that he cannot move. Then, Monotaro shows a restraint jacket, which he immediately puts on Shuichi. The five bears roll Shuichi down the hall, making his head spin, until they come to a larger door. They push Shuichi, but he doesn’t end up in another hallway, instead, he falls down into a large aquarium.

Shuichi, weighed down by the chains, falls down to the bottom, holding his breath, while the Monocubs cheer him on. Shuichi does his best to free himself from the jacket and from the chains without drinking the water in the aquarium.

Seconds pass, and Shuichi wiggles around to escape. After some time, he breaks free from the jacket, but the chains still stop him from reaching the surface. He continues to move, trying not to drown. While he’s moving, he sees something that resembles a door, and tries to reach it, still blocked by the chains. As he’s trying to survive, the prospective changes back to the Monocubs, with Monosuke and Monokid laughing while watching Shuichi suffer. Out of nowhere, Monodam pushes Monosuke in the tank, but apparently he can’t swim, because he sinks to the bottom, gasping for air, and then quickly drowns.

Shuichi reaches the door, and manages to open it, causing the water to gush out.
For a moment, he thinks he’s safe, but then, the floor behind him opens and he falls again.

He lands inside a dark room, in a big, human-sized box that leaves his head exposed while the rest of his body is obscured from view.

From the outside, a handle can be seen, so Shuichi would be able to escape if not for the chain around his body. From the dark room, a flying, sharp sword slowly appears, moving towards Shuichi, mere meters far from him. Scared, sweat dripping from his forehead, he moves frantically, still trying to undo the chain. The blade comes closer and closer, Shuichi more terrified than ever.

Then he closes his eyes.

The sword comes in contact with his neck, slowly slicing it open, blood squirting out. The blade continues, and continues, and continues.. until it severs the magician’s head completely.

The head falls over near the box, rolling, rolling… until it stops.

The projector shuts off.

Shuichi Saihara, the Ultimate Magician… was gone.

I… what… the hell… was that…?

I could fell my legs giving up, but I barely managed to stand, my head dizzy, reaching for the nearest podium.

I just saw Shuichi being killed in a horrifying, painful way, using his talent as the basis for his killing.

“M-monodam!” Monophanie cried out. “W-what have you done to Monosuke?”

“Aaah! What the fuck, Monodam!”

“GET-TING AL-ONG IS IM-POR-TANT!”

“I can’t believe you killed our brother!” Monotaro exclaimed, terrified.

“I WILL NOT DO IT AG-AIN. IF YOU GET AL-ONG!”

“What the fuck are you talking about, you psycho!” Monokid rebuffed. “I’m going away! I love violence, but not when it has to do with us!”

“I’ll… talk.. t-to him…” Monophanie blurted.

“I’m definitely going to! Wait for me!”

The three Monocubs disappeared.

“I WILL EN-SURE WE WILL LI-VE AS GOOD BRO-THERS.” Monodam said at last, leaving as well.
“What the fuck was that!” Kaito exclaimed.

“S-shuichi…” Kiibo managed to say, before turning away from us and starting to sob.

“Nobody should ever witness such cruelty…” Kirumi looked away.

“Not even menaces deserve this…”

“Sheesh…” Angie said, but even her, always with a smile on her face, appeared preoccupied. “Atua will accept Shuichi despite his terrible actions…”

Terrible actions?!

What?

Has she listened to what he said!? I turned to face her, positioning myself right in front of the supreme leader.

“Terrible actions?! TERRIBLE?! He sacrificed himself so that we could live! I can’t allow you to say his were terrible actions!”

“O-oh… I’m sorry, Kaede…” She said. “You’re right. Shuichi’s actions are understandable, he did everything for the greater good.”

“To save us all, yeah…” 0U-M4 commented. “There’s no way we’re all getting out of here alive.”

“What? We are!” I rebutted.

“Nee-hee-hee… by sacrificing himself, Shuichi has just started the domino that is the killing game!”

“No, Shuichi do not start killing game!” Gonta exclaimed, crying. “Shuichi wanted to stop killing game!”

“And he did try, but he failed. Our numbers will continue to dwindle, and dwindle…”

“I’ll carry on Shuichi’s wish, to save everyone! To make sure his death isn’t worthless!”

“Good luck to you. Poor Shuichi, but at least he died thinking he did a good thing.”

“The fuck are you talking about, Rubbish-bot?! His neck got sliced! …Holy shit…”

“Please…” Korekiyo joined “Do not argue now, for losing your temper will only make you prone to murder.”

“Korekiyo is right, try to respect Shuichi… at least now…” Tsumugi said quietly.

I looked at Monokuma, still standing on top of his throne, snickering, enjoying our suffering.

“What do you want?! Why have you trapped us here?!” I shouted.

“Upupupu, to feed on your suffering! So delicious, almost like the real thing!”

“What do you mean, the real thing?” Rantaro asked, puzzled.

“Have you ever tried takeaway suffering?! Mmhh… I love it! Even if it’s not homemade, it’s still
“Stop screwing with us…” Himiko lamented, looking down. “I… had to see someone die… I hated it…”

“Get used to it and prey you’re not the next one!”

“There won’t be any other murders!” I continued. “We won’t give in your stupid motives, we’ll do everything we need to survive and escape from this hellhole! And everyone of us will escape!”

“Surely, the same thing you said when you met me the first time, but since then, you’re two down… upupupupu…”

Maki spoke up. “I stand with Kaede. I’ll do my best too.”

“You did a poor job ‘till now, didn’t you?” Monokuma rebuffed. “Isn’t it your fault that Shuichi and Hoshi died?”

“Shut up.”

I can’t believe I’m defending Maki, but I know she is not to blame as much as me, the person who spent the most time with Shuichi and couldn’t understand him at all, who thought that Shuichi was just a bit sad... but the one that is to blame most of all…

“It’s your fault, Monokuma!”

“…Meh. That’s what they always say.”

“Won’t you respond to Kaede, huh?” Rantaro asked, a bit irritated.

“Why should I? Everyone knows I can’t interfere with the murders in any way, so… I consider myself clean.”

“Clean?! Are you saying you’re CLEAN?! YOU FU-

Rantaro shut my mouth with his hand.

I immediately pushed it away and turned to face him instead.

“And what do *you* wan’t?! Can’t you see-

“I see what you’re doing. And I see you can’t win.” He calmly explained. “If you’re angry with someone, be angry with me.”

“What? You haven’t done anything!”

“Yeah, but that doesn’t stop you.”

“Ugh, what do you want? Why are you always trying to gave my advice when I don’t need it!”

“You need it now more than ever. Being angry won’t be the solution. It’s time to act smart, to remember you’re a detective. You aren’t rash.”

…He’s right. This isn’t me.

“I will do everything in my power to stop Monokuma!”
“Yes, that’s what we’re supposed to do!” Kaito exclaimed. “I won’t let Shuichi’s death to go to waste!”

“And what do you plan on doing, eh?” Rantaro asked Kaito “Invent some amazing machine that will destroy that humongous cage that surrounds us?”

“Don’t sass me or you’ll regret it!”

“I wasn’t sassing you, at all. I was telling you to take advantage of your talent and do something useful, instead of staying here and be angry.”

“Do not let your emotion prevail over your better judgment.” Kirumi said. “They will act as a blockade. They will only push you back.”

“Tsk, you and your words…”

“From tomorrow, we will use our talents to get away from here. Not to kill each other.” Rantaro concluded

I nodded, maybe because I was sick of the artist trying to do whatever he pleased, maybe because I understood him without understanding why.

“Fun!” Monokuma exclaimed. “Looking forward to it!”

And after another snicker, he left the trial.

“How much time has passed? What do we do now?” Tsumugi asked.

“I’ll go back to my dorm. I… want to be alone.” I said.

“I respect your decision.” Tenko said. “I, personally, will go there too.”

“Great!” Angie exclaimed with her hands joined in prayer. “I’ll be around the school if you want to talk to me.”

“There is no need to tell the others what your plans for the day are.” Maki coldly replied.

“Nyeh… Let’s go to the elevator… I just want to go home…”

Everyone silently agreed with the entomologist, slowly following the others toward the elevator, until only Korekiyo and me were left.

“Do you wish to take Shuichi’s cape with you?” He asked.

“I… I would want that… It’s strange…”

“No, I understand your desire more than anyone. That piece of fabric means a lot more to you than me, but even I see the value it carries. It is a memento of the days you passed with Shuichi.”

“B-but… he used it to kill Ryoma…”

“That decision was his last, a painful and difficult decision, that sadly led him to his death, surely…” Korekiyo continued. “But, every single crease on it carries that decision.”

He’s still creepy, but I guess he’s making sense… sort of.
“That cape is not Shuichi, and it will never be Shuichi. However, it represents his ideals and his last wishes. As he said, you were the only one who never betrayed him. You told the others you want to carry on his wish.”

“S-so…”

“I was planning on taking it, but I realized you deserve it more than me. So, take it. Use it to remember Shuichi and what it did for us.”

After those last words, he headed for the elevator as well.

I made my way to Shuichi’s podium and took the cape in my hands. It was the only one he was given to him, so it was very special.

He left there on purpose. Did he expect us to pick it up?

…I guess we’ll never know…

“Kaede… are you coming? Don’t leave us waiting…” 0U-M4 said.

“Yes, here I am.” I said, taking the cape with me.

As I boarded the elevator, everyone looked at me, but nobody said a word, not even 0U-M4. Maybe what I did wasn’t that strange, or maybe it was so strange that everyone thought I was crazy.

The elevator moved upward, and thanks to our silence, every creak was perfectly audible.

“This thing is very creepy.” Himiko commented.

“Do not worry, Himiko! We’ll be in our rooms shortly!”

“Nyeh…”

The elevator then stopped, bringing us back inside the shrine of judgment.

“Let’s call it a day for now.” I said, trying to maintain my leadership position and not giving in to the pain I was feeling. “Tomorrow, we’ll see each other in the cafeteria at 8 AM, ok?”

“It’s still the middle of the day… we’ve a long day ahead of us.” Angie said.

“You’re free to spend it alone or with others.” I concluded.

Us fourteen went in different directions, but before I could go back to my dorm room, I went back to the hallway where I saw Ryoma’s body just a few hours ago.

But it wasn’t there. The only object I could see was the rope, which wasn’t even tied to the case. Near it, I could see a piece of paper.

I picked it up.

“Dear students, I took the time to dispose of Ryoma Hoshi’s body properly. This will be common procedure to clean crime scenes as soon as the investigation comes to a close. So, if you want to say your goodbyes, lie down, try not to cry, cry a lot and all of the stuff you do. Just doing the headmaster’s duty, Monokuma.”
I didn’t care at all about Monokuma’s advices.

So I tore off the piece of paper. I just have to avoid thinking about this now. I need time to reflect.

I’ll explain what happened to the others tomorrow.

I left the school and went back to my dorm. I was extremely tired, shaken and emotionally destroyed because of what happened.

I hung Shuichi’s cape in my closet, with all of the replicas of my outfits.

And then I fell onto my bed.

I wasn’t sleepy, but I needed to put all the events that just happened behind me, I wanted to distance myself from reality.

I will never forget Ryoma and Shuichi’s sacrifices… they won’t be useless. Their actions will have consequences; more of us will attempt a murder. However, it’s my job to prevent that and to make sure we’ll live as fourteen classmates, fourteen friends, not enemies.

For Shuichi’s sake.

CHAPTER 1: KILLING SCHOOL SEMESTER OPENING CEREMONY

End

Surviving students: 14

NEXT CHAPTER: Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories

Chapter End Notes

Soooo... yup. Shuichi did kill Ryoma. Let's talk about why I chose these two characters to be the first ones to fall.

I love Hoshi. But... so did many others. I’m sure that many other rewrites will make him justice. I don't want my story to look too similar to others, in fact I would like it to be pretty different. I know it sucks for him to die this soon, but him being the first death might have some repercussions later in the story. What do I mean? These are spoilers.

And now for Shuichi. I decided he would die in the first chapter very soon. In fact, I
think was one of the first ideas I had. There are many reasons why I chose him between all of the characters. Some of them are spoilers, so I can't talk about them. First, I needed a powerful death in the first chapter. The DR games have the first victim as a surprise (with V3 also punching you in the gut after discovering who the first culprit is), so I opted for a surprise culprit for this story. Then, Shuichi has been developed in the game, and is, in my opinion, the most developed character in V3. His development can only go one way, and I don't want to retread the same ground. Since I want to differentiate this story from canon, Shuichi has to go. And it's better sooner than later, also because it affects Kaede. In canon, she's a complete character, and to make her somewhat compelling I think she needs a push from other characters.

Anyways... you can still vote for FTEs, even change your votes if you want. Next chapter the POV will alternate between Kaede and Kirumi. Just to clarify, the FTEs are going to be done with Kaede's POV. During the second chapter there will be a total of 5 FTEs, but I'm already telling you that Kirumi won't be available in any of them. Since she's the second protagonist, things would be somewhat confusing. Kirumi will be available from Chapter 3 (if she survives, obviously). In fact, small spoiler, there is still another character that will get a POV in Chapter 3. Who could they be? Feel free to guess!
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Daily Life (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

The students wake up the day after the trial; Kaede and Kirumi explore new areas.

Chapter Notes

Sorry
I think I'm kinda late ^^"  
But it's hereeeeee
The daily life of this chapter will be far longer than the first one, almost twice as long. Some of you may feel that it drags out too much, but actually this chapter is probably much more important than the first, and the time that the characters start showing their characters and motivations. So all those words are needed.

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I saw that two rules are actually wrong. I'll correct them as soon as possible.

In the #11, (which is the body discovery announcement rule) I've written after that four people, including the culprit, have discovered a body, the announcement plays. Actually, is THREE INCLUDING THE CULPRIT.

#15 says that the Headmaster can add rules. Actually, the headmaster can BOTH ADD AND REMOVE rules as they see fit. However, they have to inform the students every time they change something.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

CHAPTER 2: Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories

DAILY LIFE START!

*ding dong bing bong*

The bell-like sound of the announcement woke me up. I don’t remember at what time I fell asleep, but I felt almost completely refreshed. That was the first time I slept in my bed since the first day here.

And that made me remember… Shuichi wasn’t with us anymore. Quickly, the memories of the day before flood my mind, the video we saw of his execution started to play again. I could see him
clearly, on the verge of drowning, hoping he would be safe, that he would join us again… and how optimistic I was, too optimistic. And then I saw him falling again, landing in that box where he was trapped, and the sword that slowly sliced his neck.

I slapped myself in the face, with all the force I had after waking up.

The pain I was feeling brought me back to reality; I didn’t want to be stuck in the past, I need to proceed and forge a beautiful future, just like he wanted.

I had a shower, taking my time. I knew I told the others to meet in the cafeteria around ten past eight, but, honestly… I had all the time in the world.

I still wanted to escape, but I needed to be focused.

The hot water helped me relax and recollect my thoughts. I knew that the group’s morale could fall down after two of us died, so I desperately needed to cheer them up, someway or another. Hopefully, Shuichi’s last words wouldn’t be forgotten.

Stepping out of the shower, I took another pair of clothes, leaving the others curled up on a shelf. Is someone going to pick them up or will I have to wash them up…?

After dressing up, I noticed Shuichi’s red cape, contrasting with the black color of my uniform. I shouldn’t leave it there, hanging, surrounded by darkness all the time. I need to remember Shuichi’s wish and the others mustn’t forget it. So, I don’t care if it doesn’t fit me or it hasn’t anything to do with my talent, I’ll keep it with me at all times.

I reached for the cape and tried it on, ditching my backpack for the time being. It looked fine on me, but I’m not an expert when it comes to fashion. It would be a hassle walking with it, but I told myself I would be able to do it, that I wouldn’t trip, every step I would take it would have been in the right direction.

Feeling safer and prouder of myself, I unlocked my door and exited my dorm room. It was time to talk to the others.

With the tail of my eye, I spotted Kaito and 0U-M4 on the porch near the backdoor of the cafeteria. Instead of walking into the school, I opted to go directly to the cafeteria and talk to them.

“Hi, Kaede.” Kaito spoke up as soon as he noticed me. “I arrived here in time, just like you asked yesterday.”

“Yes, sorry if I’m late… I was the one who told you to came here at one specific time…”

“Don’t worry, it’s fine. I’m accustomed to waiting. I spend my downtime making sure I’m productive, so I can say I lived my life to the fullest!”

That’s a very good way to be proud of what you did at the end of your life. Until the nostalgia kicks in, then you wish you could have done more…

“That’s a lie, Kaito!” 0U-M4 said, extremely irritated. “You arrived here just two minutes ago!”

“W-what! H-he’s lying!”

“Do we want to ask this question to the others?” The robot smirked.
“Kaito, really, that’s not a big deal, especially since I’m late too.”

“Tsk, that’s what you get by trying to know more about this Unit 0 functions…”

“That’s why you were here with me?” 0U-M4 exclaimed. “I won’t allow you to touch me! Don’t mess my wires up!”

“Whoever your creator is, he probably is a masochist or something like that.”

“My creator is a very wise individual, and he made sure I could defend myself against anyone who threatened me!”

“Please, don’t argue now. What good is it for? If you want to say something offensive, don’t say it.”

“Right, just how my creator told me, count to ten before insulting someone!”

“And why do you always say what’s on your mind, then?”

“Kaito!” I shouted. “Even passive-aggressiveness is offensive.”

Kaito grumbled before talking again.

“You’re right, Kaede. I should listen to Ouma’s advice too.”

I looked back at 0U-M4, signaling him to keep his mouth shut with my expression.

Thankfully, he listened to me and smiled at us. Not one of his playful smirks, but a smile that seemed genuine.

“Are the others here too?”

“Almost everyone is inside. Miu and Maki, as I expected, are missing.”

“Do you know where they are?” I asked.

“Nope. Didn’t see them either.” 0U-M4 intervened.

“I don’t think they’ll attend. Maybe we should just go.” Kaito said.

Uff. We should be all together. Especially Maki, after what happened yesterday. My other classmates may have not noticed it, but she was moved by Shuichi’s speech. She might lose herself if she continues to spend time alone… someone has to talk to her, to understand her.

…Guess that person will be me. Just… not now.

“Yeah, we can enter.”

Kaito and 0U-M4 preceded me, opening the door to let me in. As I entered, I felt a pleasant, sweet smell surrounding me.

“The pancakes are ready!” Tsumugi cheered from the kitchen. “I hope they’re good…”

Everyone else was sitting at the table, some of them really eager to try whatever the maid prepared for us. Some of the weeds that infested the place were gone, and the cafeteria now actually looked like an actual place where you could eat.
“Why are you taking so much time?” Angie asked, impatient. “I can feel its sweetness all the way from here!”

“It reminds me of home.” Rantaro said. “It’s incredible how smell can make you remember.”

“Yes.” Korekiyo nodded. “Many of my most treasured memories are surrounded by memorable scents.”

“If there’s a sense that everyone forgets about, that’s touch! We learn by touching, degenerate males!” Tenko complained.

“Honestly…” Himiko intervened. “Our most precious sense is sight. Without my incredible sight, I wouldn’t be able to spot my loved bugs.”

“I would say that we cannot determine whether a sense is more useful than another.” Kirumi chimed in. “I, for one, have honed all of them since they are all vital in my travels.”

Tsumugi came in the dining area with her pancakes –more than I imagined– and put it on the table.

"I've never seen someone discuss human senses that passionately…” she said.

“Gonta never seen too! Gonta thinks it’s a strange but beautiful matter!”

"Yeah, Gonta, that's the same for me!" Angie agreed to pat him on the shoulder. "For now, let's focus on the taste!"

While my classmates were in the middle of conversing, Kaito coughed a few times.

“Kaede’s here, guys.” He said.

Everyone shifted their attention from Tsumugi’s cake to me, with the difference they weren’t staring at me like I was about to get eaten in an instant.

Thank God.

“Hey, sorry if I came here so late.” I said.

“Don’t sweat it.” Rantaro reassured me. “It’s not that late.”

“They were about to eat the cake without you!” Tenko exclaimed. “I tried to stop them, but those menaces, they won’t hear me at all!”

“We said we would leave a piece for Kaede…” Kiibo corrected her.

"If there's a time people can chat, it's during meals! Having meals together is great to improve one's personal social skills!" Tenko said, turning to face Himiko, sitting beside her.

“I only sit here because I feel this chair it’s better than the others…”

“Oh…”

Tenko looked apparently hurt after that statement.

“You are dressed with the cape which belonged to Shuichi.” Korekiyo observed.

“That very sweet.” Gonta commented, and I smiled in return.
“I didn’t even notice.” Kaito followed, but it was clear he didn’t want to bring that up before.

“Yeah… to remember…” I said, holding it strongly, similar to what Shuichi used to do. “But that’s not why we’re here now, right?”

“Exactly.” Kirumi said. “We are here to discuss our day.”

Some of my classmates stopped smiling and laughing, or, more like it… stopped pretending to be happy. They were trying to forget what happened the day before. Was it right? I don’t want everyone to live Ryoma’s and Shuichi’s deaths again, but… we can’t act like yesterday was a day like any other.

I never had so many doubts in my life. I was questioning every single one of my decisions, and even though I showed determination in front of others, I was extremely weak inside. I had to fake my emotions like I did many times before starting my career as a detective.

“Yes, Kirumi.” I nodded. “I think our primary objective is still looking for exits.”

“There’s always that Despair Road, guys…” Kaito proposed while Tsumugi started to distribute pancakes to everyone.

“We’re not going to tire ourselves trying that again.” I said to him. “Moreover, Monokuma could have lied… if he’s telling a lie, our pain will be for nothing.”

“Can you sit?” Tsumugi asked me. “You and Kaito are standing, while everyone else is sitting… it makes me uneasy.”

“Yeah, those chairs are actually not as bad as you might think!” 0U-M4 smiled.

“Nyeh… but mine is the best one…”

“Oh, y-yeah… sorry, I didn’t think about it…”

I excused myself and sit on one of the four remaining free chairs, near Tenko. Kaito then sat beside me.

“I hope you enjoy my pancakes! I really did my best!”

The pancakes were stacked on top of each other. There were five of them for each one of us, so Tsumugi had to have worked a lot to make so many of them. I wonder how she manages to do so many things, but maybe I’m the one who has to learn from the Ultimate Maid.

The center of the table was full of condiments for our breakfast, ranging from cream to chocolate, with sugar and various types of fruits.

“Where have you found all of these?” Rantaro asked, munching on the pancakes.

“Many of them were stored in the kitchen, but some fruits were in the warehouse. It’s like one of those big supermarkets where you find both food and furniture.”

“By the way, superb pancakes. You’re spoiling me.”

Tsumugi blushed.

“Oh, thanks!”
“They very amazing!” Gonta agreed.

“They pancakes are blessed by Atua!”

Tsumugi, with every compliment, grew more embarrassed and continued to thank everyone.

“They are indeed great. But I must ask you, why are you so apprehensive?” Korekiyo asked.

“Well… not many people take their time to praise what I do…”

“Thewe …munch… just awful people.” Rantaro commented.

“I’m surprised.” Tenko said. “As the Ultimate Maid, I assume everyone recognizes your masterful talent.”

“Yes, they really do. I’ve serviced many powerful men and women… but I did not see them often, and when I did, they were always occupied with other matters.”

Poor Tsumugi, an Ultimate being taken for granted… I’m glad she can find someone who understands how great she is.

“Everyone seems to be pleasantly surprised by those pancakes…” I said. “And I have to admit, don’t they look inviting…”

“If you don’t want them, I’ll dis…munch…pose of them.” Rantaro followed, clearly not wanting to leave those pancakes to waste.

“You’ve almost finished them already!” Tenko exclaimed.

“I should have been slower, you say?”

Those pancakes were showered with so many compliments that I was afraid I would set myself up for disappointment. However, after picking up the fork and the knife, slicing a piece…

It was even better than I imagined. The best pancake, no… the best breakfast I ever ate in my life. It made me question my judgment when it came to food.

And I only took a small piece, without a condiment.

It was that impactful.

“Tsumugi, I think I cannot express into words my amazement right now.”

“I’m glad you like it too!”

“If you tidy rooms and do the laundry as good as you cooked those pancakes, I’m moving wherever you live.”

“…That’s something no one ever told me before.”

That bite was an event I would remember for my entire life and told my children and grandchildren about. Well, I’m sure they would hear about Tsumugi and her amazing skills eventually.

***
The pancakes I ate were superb. Everyone agreed with me, but that did not surprise me since I prefer salty foods to sweet ones. The fact that even some pancakes stacked on top of each other managed to amaze me was very surprising.

And satisfying. Not even once in my travels I found such a perfect meal.

"Have you got the information you want to share or something on that?" Kaede asked, after finishing eating.

“Sadly, we haven’t found anything.” Angie said.

“Oh… in my opinion, we should explore the school once more.”

“Exactly.” I agreed. “Kaede’s research lab opened the second day since we got here, despite being it closed when she woke up.”

“Oh!” Angie exclaimed. “So you’re saying that we could find something new?”

“That’s right, you bastards!” A high-pitched voice shouted.

Shortly after, Monokuma’s cubs appeared too.

“GOOD MORN-NING!”

“Fuck you, Monodam! I need to say good morning to the others!”

“Don’t b-bully Monodam…” Monophanie flinched.

“Yeah, Monokid! What are you doing?”

“What am I doing?! Monodam is turning you into a dishwasher!”

“A d-dishwasher?”

“Yeah, ‘cuz that ugly robot it’s brainwashing you!”

“PLE-ASE. GET A-LONG. YOU CAN STOP.”

“Look at Monodam, Monokid! He wants the best for us! We can live as happy brothers!”

“Happy brothers?! No way! Let me prepare and show him who’s boss! Hell yeah!”

“M-monokid, please wait…”

“Look at all those chickens!” Monokuma cooed.

“Don’t you mean children?” Himiko asked, confused.

“Well, well… their species isn’t important. They’re adorable!”

“Man, you’re children are fighting and you’re saying they’re adorable?”

Monokuma stared at Kaito, his face turning red.

“I’m not a bad parent! They’re only arguing now, when they’re with me they always behave!”
“That’s the excuse of a negligent parent!” Tenko reprimanded.

“I didn’t come here to be lectured by a shitty kindergarten teacher!”

“…Such a degenerate sentence!”

“While I was having a hot, beautiful shower, caressing my amazing black and white fur, a realization came to me.”

Since when do robots need showering?

“I had some sort of pity for you, losing two people, who tragically killed each other…”

“Hell yeah! That was the most fun I had in a while!” Monkid shouted.

“You forced them to kill each other!” Kaede exclaimed.

“Another one of your speeches? Aren’t they getting old by now? They’re always the same, repetitive, corny shit I’d expect from a naïve little girl, not a detective!”

“I suggest not angering Monokuma once again. You will not be able to stop him now.” I reminded Kaede. “He said he felt… pity… for us. That might be an advantage for us, as disrespectful as it may sound.”

Kaede was a determined individual. Because of her short temper, she could get herself in precarious positions. She needed, most of all, composure, alongside someone who could calm her in dire situations.

“Ok. Talk.” She conceded.

“Thank you very much, great adventurer.” Monokuma bowed, without acknowledging Kaede’s last sentence. “You’re very correct. You’re granted a prize for surviving the class trial!”

“Prize?” Gonta asked, curious. “It like a trophy for wins?”

“Not that gold trash, that’s not useful here.” Monokuma said, disgusted. “We only use Monocoins! That’s our currency.”

“Tell what you want so we can have our peaceful moment together!” Tsumugi complained.

“Well, so… you have the possibility to explore new parts of the school!”

“Wow!” Monophanie exclaimed, faking her surprise.

“Thanks to these amazing artifacts!” Monotaro continued.

“Oh, dear children, you’re saving me so many lines of dialogue!”

“We have a Dragon Gem, an Ancient Passport and a Hexagon Crank from some zombie game!”

“Those again? Oh, well…” Monokuma shrugged. “Those are your prizes! I’m sure some of you will make an use out of it!”

“Yeah, I don’t get it either!” Monokid said. “But who the hell cares! I’m pumping up for the destruction of Monodam!”
“...”

“P-please, do not bully Monodam!” Monophanie pleaded.

“LET’S DIS-CUSS THIS PEACE-FULLY.”

“Tsk! Peace from the one who fuckin’ killed Monosuke?!”

“So long, bear well!” The bipedal bears said, before leaving with Monokuma.

“Those bear-robots are having some serious drama!” 0U-M4 commented.

“So, what should we do with this stuff?” Kaito asked. “It’s just a bundle of random stuff. I don’t think I can understand what they’re for.”

“Aren’t you an inventor, though?” Angie followed.

“Yeah, but that doesn’t mean I can make things appear out of my ass!” Kaito responded, more frustrated than he should have been.

“There is no need to lose our temper.” Korekiyo advised. “Even though anger is beautiful to observe as well, it is never the solution.”

“They’re probably related to those strange objects found all over the campus.” Kaede proposed.

“That must be it.” Rantaro agreed. “I propose to leave the investigation to Kaede and Kirumi.”

Huh? Me? I suppose I am rather skilled in this area of expertise.

“She was the one to discover the secret passage yesterday, so I assume she has an eye for hidden secrets.” The artist continued. “At the same time, Kaede’s a detective, so she can see details we’ll miss out on.”

“But I won’t do anything this way!” 0U-M4 complained.

“You can still search and warn Kirumi and Kaede.”

“Meh, I guess I am not as useful as I thought...”

“I agree with Rantaro’s proposal!” Tenko exclaimed. “With two girls scouting, we’ll discover everything it needs to be discovered!”

I moved towards the table and took the Ancient Passport and the Dragon Gem. Both of those objects were familiar since I saw them in specific areas of the school.

“Ok, so that means I’ll take this crank.”

“Kaede’s supposition might still be right.” Rantaro said. “Who says that other areas didn’t open up? I say we split up and search again.”

“I’ll probably go back to my dorm and go to bed...”

“Are you already sleepy, Himiko?” Angie asked.

“No... I just want to stay alone for a while. People tire me out...”

“Please respect Himiko’s wish!” Tenko exclaimed. “I’ll escort you out.”
“…Nyeh. Ok…”

It appeared Himiko did not appreciate that idea… but she was so tired that she did not have the strength to say no to Tenko. It is likely she did not want to carry out the argument that would have been inevitable were she to refuse the caretaker’s proposal.

Eventually, everyone finished their slice of cake and left the cafeteria. The only one who lingered there was Kiibo, who kept still, staring at the walls of the room. I had understood he had been affected by the events of the previous day… he only spoke a few words since he came here. I concluded leaving him alone was the wiser choice. If he needs to talk, he probably needs someone who possesses more empathy than me.

The ancient passport had the same shape of a strange hole I saw near the gym, so my first destination was the hallway in which we found Ryoma’s body. As I paced, images of the day before flashed in my mind, while I was running alongside Shuichi and Kiibo.

And, despite me not wanting to be in a similar situation either, I feared another of our classmates was destined to be sacrificed again.

The wall was decorated with two of the same kind of “ancient passports” nestled in small holes, with the center one devoid of it.

“Nyahahah! Shouldn’t you place the thing here?”

I turned to see that Angie and Korekiyo were following me.

“My apologies, Kirumi.” The cosplayer said, sensing my confusion. “We did not mean to stalk you.”

“No, you silly! We were just exploring, and I remembered I saw this strange and very convenient passport-shaped hole!”

“It is far too convenient to be a coincidence.” I agreed.

“Oh! Oh! Can I place it there?”

I suppose she can. That will not offend me.

So, I nodded and handed her the ancient, I presume, relic I held in my hands. Cheerful as usual, Angie carefully inserted the passport where it was meant to be, which caused the ground beneath our feet to tremble.

“I presume our prize was a small earthquake. Disrespectful.” Korekiyo sentenced.

A moment after, Korekiyo was proven wrong; the wall in front of us crumbled like it was shortcut pastry, for reasons I did not quite understand.

“Oh.” Korekiyo seemed almost happy to be wrong. “What lies after this corridor, I wonder.”

In front of us stood a hallway exactly like the one we were in, as it was a natural extension of it, but previously walled in to prevent us from entering.

“I want to see what’s there! Atua tells me there’s something very important!” She exclaimed, running towards the opened up area.
Korekiyo and I kept up behind her, maintaining our composure.

The new section, at first, appeared to consist of a corridor and nothing else of importance. A series of big windows allowed light to enter the building.

As we reached the end of it, however, it was impossible not to spot a door on our left. We caught glimpse of Angie bending over to pick some kind of object found on the floor.

“Ooh! That’s a key! I think it’s used to open this door!”

“Could we be looking at another research lab?” Korekiyo asked.

“The door appears bland to me.” I responded.
“Leave your supposition behind! I’m checking right now!”

Angie inserted the key in the lock. After she turned the key, we heard a sound.

“Yeah! It’s open!”

The supreme leader jiggled the knob, preceding us. The room we found ourselves in was not a research room, but an empty one. To our surprise, no objects were around.

I was evidently taken aback, but I looked to my side to discover yet another door, modeled after a safe. Instead of a handle there was a small keypad, with numbers ranging from 0 to 9. A classical keypad would have been completed with an asterisk and a hash sign, but this particular one’s other options were “Hope” and “Despair”. It had been Monokuma’s work, without a shadow of a doubt, but the thought process behind these absurd words was probably even more absurd.

“What’s this?” Angie asked, puzzled.

“From the design of the door, I would say this is the research room.” I said.

“Do I need to input a password?”

“Try a combination.” Korekiyo invited her.

“No, wait.” I stopped them, wary. “The keypad could be dangerous. We do not know what will happen were we to be wrong.”

“Kirumi, you’re totally right. If you weren’t here, we would have been blown up!”

“Uhm… yes. I have been incautious.” Korekiyo apologized, looking at his clothes. “Do you suggest leaving?”

“Please, bear with us for a moment!”

The combined sound of the Monokubs’ voices echoed in my ears. I did not ask for their assistance. There was a change: the blue one was missing. I assumed Monodam got rid of him.

“Do not leave, please!” Monotaro pleaded. “We worked so hard for this research lab!”

“Yeah, we don’t want our work to go to waste!”

“YOU CAN EN-TER WITH-OUT PRO-BLEMS.”

“I cannot think of a reason why we should listen to you.” I said.
“I assure you, there aren’t booby traps or anything else! You just have to set a code for later!”

“W-well…” Monophanie continued. “Once you put a five-digit code, you can change it once you’re inside with a control panel, but nobody of you entered the room yet!”

“SO THAT MEANS… YOU DEC-IDE THE CODE.”

“I would believe you…” Angie intervened. “But I don’t know… why don’t you put the code by yourselves?”

“You don’t trust us?!?” Monotaro appeared shocked.

“NO WONDER. YOU ARE VERY UNTRUSTWORTHY.”

“S-sorry… we’ll do better, I-promsie!”

“I WILL SHOW YOU HOW IT IS DONE.”

The robotic bear moved towards the door while the other two watched him.

“PLEASE LIFT ME UP.” He asked Angie.

“Don’t hurt me or I’ll exile you! Nyahaha!”

Exile? Another curious term.

“I WILL NOT BETRAY YOU.”

Thanks to Angie’s help, Monodam reached the keypad and pressed “1-1-1-1-1”. The door opened smoothly. Quite happy, the supreme leader put the bear down.

“I HAVE PROVEN MYSELF USEFUL. WE WILL SEE YOU LATER.”

“Shouldn’t you worry about Monokid?” Monotaro said.

“HE WILL BECOME OUR FRIEND. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.”

Finishing that ominous sentence, the three bears left us.

“Look at all those stuff! It must be my research room! Woow!”

Angie’s excited squeals filled the room. They, surprisingly, calmed me down. I felt as they were the most honest action since we got here. Angie did not strike me as a person who cared deeply about her talent, since she dedicated most of her time to praying.

I stepped into her room. The walls were painted black and white and a throne was placed in the middle. There were no windows and the only sources of light were five candles one besides the other, to the right. Because of this, the atmosphere was particularly unsettling. The situation became even worse when the door closed behind us emitting a booming sound.

“Oh! I got reeeally scared for a moment!”

“We are now trapped in this research room.” Korekiyo ominously pointed out.

“No, you silly. We can get out thanks to the control panel. We have to find it, though.”

Opposite to the entrance, I saw various shelves and drawers, many of them not closed. I spotted
some wigs, alongside curious and strange artifacts, including a Tiki Statuette.

"This statue is very similar to the ones my friends make on my island!"

"I have collected numerous Tiki Statuette during my adventures.” I told her. “Every tribe creates their own statue to distinguish themselves from the inhabitants of other isles.”

“So knowledgeable!” Angie cheered. “That’s true! However, I expected to see my own personal statuette…”

“Have you fabricated those by yourself?” Korekiyo inquired.

“Well, no, duh! My friends made them for me! I just asked them nicely once and they immediately went to work!”

“Have you convinced your friends to work for you?”

“They always do what I want! I’m sooo grateful for their services!”

I should not be surprised. Because of her talent as a Supreme Leader, Angie has to possess incredible rhetorical skills and she must be perfectly able to sway others’ opinions. Is her cheerfulness only a mask she wears, or is she truly constantly content? I had to wait and form an opinion.

The dimly lit room made me remember a basement I visited during one of my first travels. There, I met a poor lady, a mother of five children, who managed to convince a man that he was, in fact, the father of one of her children. Her story was entirely fabricated, but everyone was convinced by her lies, because of her skill in faking her emotions. Thanks to her abilities, she became richer and richer, since that man was part of one of the wealthiest family in their country. She told the truth only in her dying moments, when her husband had died and the five children were in their adulthood.

That woman reminds me of Angie.

The room was decorated with banners depicting the same Tiki statuette we found on the shelves and, to the left, a very small altar.

“Oooh, that is where I can pray.”

“Is it related to the traditions of your island?” Korekiyo asked.

“Well, if you’re referring to Atua… uhm… yeah, I’d say you’re right. Atua and my island are one and the same, Atua is my home and my safety. And keeps everyone safe too!”

She stopped for some seconds joining her hands in prayer and kneeling down.

“Oh, dear Atua, please protect everyone at home. Without me, they’ll feel lost and alone, scared and unguided. I ask for your help to assist them while I’m gone, and assist me to prevent more needless killing.”

After her prayer, she stood up and continued addressing us.

“I can pray to Atua whenever I want, but this altar makes me feel closer to him! It’s probably some weird connection, but you don’t have to stand there to talk to him. You can pray wherever you want…”
I looked inside the drawers to find various blood packs, one for each. Many of them were still empty.

“I suppose these are for my sacrifices! I didn’t expect Monokuma to bring them here! Now, where has the needle gone…”

“Are you attempting to collect my blood?” Korekiyo intervened.

“I would… but Atua doesn’t demand sacrifices for now. If I need to collect blood, I’ll call you immediately!”

"Angie, sorry for my inappropriate question…” I said. "How do you plan on disposing of the blood?"

“At my island, I offer it to the volcano. Since we do not have one here, maybe I can find something else?”

“You are not allowed to bring anything you find here out, do you recall?”

“Oh, yeaah… I’ll find a way. Atua will tell me what to do. He doesn’t demand sacrifices very often.”

I turned to check the control panel the Monokubs talked about. To the right of the door, a displayed was flickering on and off. Surprisingly, it emitted minimum light, even less than the candles seen before. A message on the screen was instructing me to swipe left.

After doing so, the letters disappeared on screen and a digital reconstruction of the keypad we saw outside appeared in its place. I clicked the “one” button five times.

<<Password correct!>> A robot voice echoed.

“A robot? Is she friend with 0U-M4?”

<<Please insert new password to exit the room>>

“It appears that you need to set a new password to leave the room.” Korekiyo said.

“I will input 1-2-3-4-5, only to assure the system works properly.”

Not letting my guard down, I clicked the buttons five times and the door in front of me opened.

“See? All’s well that ends well!”

I put my feet between the jamb and the door to prevent it from closing a second time.

<<The new password is now 1-2-3-4-5. Next time you enter, remember it!>>

“Do you spot anything useful here?” I asked Angie.

“I need to search all of the shelves and the drawers to be sure, but the room is filled with divine!”

Is divine useful in these circumstances? I could use some help from an external force.

“Buut… I don’t know it yet. If you want, you can help me search!”

"Do not worry, Angie. I am sure you are more skilled than me since the objects you will find are
related in some way to your own talent.”

“So you’re leaving? Don’t you want to stay here for a little longer? I like your attitude!”

“I find your company… uhm… pleasing as well. However, my duty is to explore the school, not to linger with others.”

“That’s a demanding task! I hope you’ll find one!” She cheered.

I nodded and I left with Korekiyo, leaving Angie to herself.

“Will she remember the code you set?” Korekiyo asked me, doubtful of Angie’s capabilities.

“She may act unfocused and inattentive, but Angie is not as shallow as she appears to be.”

“Oh, yes. I see that. She is a leader and as a leader knows how to manipulate others.”

***

My first objective after leaving the cafeteria was not to find the place where to put that absurd crank but to find the place where Miu and Maki were hiding. Even though I was unsure about the aikido master, there was only one place where Miu could have been.

My instincts weren’t wrong. The pianist was right in front of her research room.

“Miu, since when are you here?”

She turned to me with a smug attitude.

“Kaedumb, what are you doing here? I’m about to enter the backstage, spectators like you aren’t allowed to enter!”

Oh dear, this story again… And in the same place too…

“We had a meeting at 8 AM in the cafeteria… why have you skipped it?”

“I don’t abide by your rules! I can do whatever I want, whenever I want!”

“I’m not angry with you…” I explained to her. “But you can’t exclude yourself from the rest of the group. We need to stay together.”

“Tsk, you and your staying beside each other! Organize an orgy then!”

Someday I’ll understand how Miu’s brain works and the mysterious mechanisms behind her articulate and complex sentences… along with her ability to link everything she sees fit.

“If you keep hanging around alone, no one is going to see you as their friend.”

“I don’t want to be.”

“Oh, let me put it this way…”

Talking with Miu was my good action of the day. I had to tolerate her. My goal was to transform
her into a better person, but it might be too difficult even for an expert. I could always yell and make her feel uncomfortable, but that wouldn't resolve the problem.

“...Let’s say another murder happens”

Just considering the possibility. It hurts.

“...I’m hypothesizing… or at least, something very bad happens. The others will suspect you.”

“I said I don’t care about the others!”

“But you care about yourself and your safety. You’re putting yourself in a dangerous position by staying alone. If someone attacks you, no one will defend you.”

“W-what…?”

Did I strike a chord? I can’t believe it.

How the hell does Miu work?

“I’m saying, by staying together with others, they can keep an eye on you and you can keep an eye on them.”

“Fine. I’ll think about it.” She said, looking to the side. “But don’t expect me to act buddy-buddy with everyone! Especially after they accused me of murder!”

“Of course. I just want you to stop focusing on your research lab. It won’t open, so you don’t need to keep watch at all times.”

“I’m not that dumb, Kaedumb!”

Ouch.

“I’m waiting here because Monokuma said he would give me the key to enter! He’ll come any moment now.”

“Oh. Sorry if I misjudged you.”

“...If you want…” She tugged on her hair. “You can come too.”

I was surprised my Miu’s invite, but after a second of astonishment, I smiled in return.

“You’re in luck!” Monokuma’s annoying voice responded. “Here I am, the harbinger of despair, chaos and madness…! And Miu’s key.”

“What were you doing instead of coming here?! I don’t wait, the others have to wait for me instead!”

“I thought you needed some discipline. As the headmaster of this school, I have the right to educate you.”

“Like you educate your children?”

“You’re persisting!” Monokuma’s face turned red. “My Monocubs are adorable and adorably well-
mannered! Don’t insult your headmaster like this ever again or you’ll be obliterated!”

The bear vanished tossing the key on the ground.

“Now that Monocum is out of the picture, I can finally show you my greatness!”

Miu immediately picked up the key and used it to open the room to her research lab.

“What the hell are you waiting for?!” She yelled at me.

“Oh… it’s… nothing.”

She’s sending me mixed signals.

Anyways, I followed the pianist into her research lab. Unsurprisingly, a giant piano was the first piece of furniture that caught my eye. It was no ordinary piece, however. The grand piano was encrusted with what appeared to be expensive gems, such as rubies and sapphires.

“Are… those…” I stuttered.

“Precious gems?! That’s right! All my pianos at home are full of them! One is made of diamonds only!”

“A piano made by diamonds? It’s that even possible?”

“I don’t play it, but it’s there to show every peasant my incredible talent!”

“You don’t need to display diamonds to prove you’re talented. A standard piano is good too.”

“What do you know about musical instruments?! It’s like I asked you what’s it like to try it with dead bodies!”

“It…?”

“Yuck! I don’t want to talk about it! Let’s keep those matters secret!”

“As you want…”

How did Miu find the resources to buy such expensive pianos? I know she’s an Ultimate and that the earnings from her concerts could help her, but that seems impossible. Did she really earn that much?

On the sides of the room there were hundreds of CDs, stacked on top and beside each other. I looked at them to discover they were editions of the most popular composition of classical artists like Bach, Debussy, Mozart and many others.

“Are you a fan of classical music?” I asked.


She might be too embarrassed to admit it, maybe because it strides with her boastful personality. If they’re here, that means she likes them.

In a corner there were also a classical guitar and a synthesizer, the latter more fitting for a person like Miu.
“Do you also practice those?” I continued asking.

“I’ve tried some times. Of course, I can! However, I am now dedicating myself to the piano, and I won’t betray him for a simple and plain looking guitar! Playing the piano is my true vocation!”

There were seven wooden chairs near the entrance, which I assumed could be used to sit down and watch Miu’s performance. I moved one of them just in front of the piano and then I took one for myself.

“Whenever you’re ready, I’m here to listen.”

“You might need to wait a long time! I need focus to perform godly!”

“You don’t have to perform godly, but I can wait here as long as you want.”

“W-wait… really?”

“Uhm… not for hours and hours or days… but I can look around while you prepare and decide which piece to play.”

“No, no! I have the perfect piece in mind for you!”

“Already? Didn’t you s-

“Shut up! I said I know!”

Miu sat on the chair and started pushing keys on the piano.

“Don’t you need a score?”

“Me? The Ultimate Pianist?! Please, sit back and relax. I’m presenting you Andante con moto in E major by Felix Mendelssohn. I’m sure you know of him.”

I haven’t heard of him yet, but I kept silent. I was sure Miu would insult me if I said I had no idea of who he was.

So I decided to nod in agreement.

As soon as Miu started playing, I began feeling goose bumps all over my body. It was a weird feeling, even more after realizing that Miu was the one who was recreating that piece. I had no idea how she managed to choose that between all the ones she had in mind. As she said, it was relaxing, but at the same time melancholic. A soothing music helped me calm down, accompanied by higher pitched notes, reminding me of my childhood spent reading tons of detective stories. I can’t say why, but I almost felt I needed to cry. It wasn’t sad, just nostalgic… it can be a double-edged sword sometimes. Eventually, the music became less and less audible, Miu pressing her fingertips softly on the keys, until she stopped, the melody fading like I was drifting back to reality.

When I realized Miu had stopped, I clapped my hands.

“Miu, I can’t believe you play the piano so well.”

“Modesty aside, I fucking know I’m amazing.”

“I think this piece is… I don’t know… it affected me. How did you choose it?”

“My intuition, Kaedumb! I can understand your personality!”
“Wow, I think I underestimated your talent.”

“I just wish the others wouldn’t! But who cares about those virgins! They’ll never see my greatness… and my great tits!”

The last part was not needed. I’d pretend it didn’t exist.

“I took this piece from *Songs without words.*”

“It’s true when they say words are not needed to convey emotions.”

“I just like the song, that’s it, no need to get too deep! After all, I’m not the one who goes in deep!”

Is this another one of her… colorful expressions?

“What are you going to do now? Do you want to explore with me?”

“One step at a time, Kaedumb! I need to spend some time in my fuckin’ lab, ok!?”

She suddenly got extremely aggressive, despite opening up just moments before.

As I turned, I noticed some portraits on the left wall. I counted… thirteen of them. Thirteen girls, all with blonde hair.

“Who are those?” I asked.

“W-what are you trying to do to me?!” Miu said, panicking. She had a sudden change of mood in a couple of seconds.

“Nothing, I was just asking…”

“You want to convince me to let my guard down, don’t you?!”

“H-hey, you’re quite far-

“I-I need to spend time alone! Please get out!”

Miu pushed me violently outside.

“I’ll t-think about what you said!”

Those were her last words before she locked herself in her research room.

What.

The hell.

Just happened.

When I thought I was starting to figure out Miu, she lashes out at me and then stares at me like I’m some monster.

Well, despite the fact that things went south right at the end, I saw another side of Miu, one she desperately tries to hide. Why though? Her attitude in front of others might not be her real self…

I bit my nails. That awful hexagonal crank was still staring at me, screaming that he wanted to find its home.
“Where do I have to search now…” I said to myself, hoping to find Maki and try to understand her better as well.

Chapter End Notes

Remember that you can vote for FTEs!!
In the next part there will be 2 FTEs, so vote 3 of the characters you want to see Kaede spend time with! (already told you that Kirumi is unavailable for the whole second chapter.)
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Daily Life (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Kirumi and Kaede continue the exploration; The fifth day finishes.

Chapter Notes

The first FTEs are here!

I forgot to mention that in this story the FTEs are going to be 4 instead of 5 like the games.
I might do a 5th FTE for some characters, but that remains to be seen.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Korekiyo and I went our separate ways. I opted to visit the upper floor again, looking for the dragon statue that peaked our interest before. I saw that the mythical creature was missing an eye, and the gem the Monokubs offered us was very similar to the eye I spotted previously. While climbing the stairs, I ran into Himiko and Tenko.

“Great timing, Kirumi!” The caretaker exclaimed. “I know where the gem you’re carrying goes!”

“I am grateful for your guidance, but I do know too.”

Tenko looked somewhat disappointed.

“Of course, how could I beat the Ultimate Adventurer? I’m sorry for having doubted your capabilities.”

“No offense taken.”

“Us girls must stand together to fight against menaces! Shuichi, who died for us, proved that they can be redeemed, but! Do not let your guard down!”

“I do not mean to insult you, but not all men are evil.”

“You haven’t seen the worst of them, I bet! I know exactly what they’re capable of, and because of this, I’ll protect Himiko from them!”

“Nyeh… if you want…”

The entomologist was not as excited as her partner.

“Either way, there are also other people upstairs, dirty degenerates.”

“…Can I go somewhere else?” Himiko asked.
“Why are you asking, Himiko? Of course you can! I’ll go with you everywhere!”

“I meant alone…”

“Alone?!” Tenko gasped. “No, I don’t think it’s safe for you. Gonta could attack you at any moment.”

“He is harmless.” I clarified. “He is one of the politest men I have ever met. To be fair, I met hundreds of men during my journeys.”

“If he’s one of the politest, do you imagine menaces who are disgraceful, rude bad apples?!”

Then she went back to talk to Himiko.

“I’m doing this for your benefit, do you understand?”

“…Okay.” The entomologist nodded.

“I take you will accompany me upstairs.”

“Exactly.”

With the two girls on my side, I reached the upper floor, where I saw Rantaro and Kaito.

“As I expected, you came here.” The artist said.

“Stop acting creepy!” Kaito reprimanded.

“You seem always overly suspicious of me.”

“Well, there’s your reason, man…” The purple-haired boy explained.

I nodded to greet them and I placed the gem in the eye socket. After emitting an unnatural red, bright light the ground shook like it did before and the wall crumbled once again.

“How strange.” Kaito observed. “What kinds of mechanisms are behind this elaborate contraptions?”

“Maybe it’s better staying in the dark.” Rantaro intervened.

“What? Don’t you want to know the whys and the hows?”

“I’m a creator like you, but I’m not motivated by knowledge. Only my inspiration.”

“Meh. Maybe you can understand yourself, but you artists are always so vague with your paintings and shit… at least I make things others can use.”

“Please, do not turn this discussion into a fight.”

“Alright…” Kaito cooled off. “…Sorry if I got my gears running.”

“No problemo. I’m used to critics not appreciating my art.”

“Rantaro, you appear to be an advanced form of the menace, thanks to your sensibility. I’m surprised.”

“Even if that wasn’t a compliment, I’ll take it as one.” Rantaro thanked.
“Did the same thing happen downstairs…?” Himiko asked, slow with her words.

“Correct. I found Angie’s research lab.”

“The Ultimate Supreme leader research lab?” Kaito exclaimed. “What kinds of things were down there?”

“Nothing particularly elaborate.” I told him. “You can explore it afterwards, however you need to input a code to enter.”

“Do you think we’ll find more research labs here?” Tenko asked.

“I am positive.” I said, entering the hallway with the others.

After some steps, exactly to my right, I spotted another peculiar door.

“This one is another lab!” Kaito exclaimed. “And look, it’s got metallic sliding doors!”

“Oh, could it be yours?”

“Let’s check it!”

Kaito picked up the key that was lying on the floor and sprinted inside.

“Well, I’m off exploring the rest of this floor.” Rantaro said. “See you later.”

“Don’t you wish to enter?”

“Nah, I’m way too much terrible with mechanics and manual stuff. That’s why I prefer drawing and painting.”

“Nyeh… one less it’s better…”

With Kaito already inside, I decided to step into the room and discover what was inside. Tenko and Himiko entered with me.

The walls were entirely covered with metal plates while the floor was carpet-like, following a pattern that alternated purple and pink squares. In the center I saw a metallic bed similar to the ones found in operation rooms. To the right there were numerous bottles containing what I assumed where chemicals, while, on the left, various tools could be found, like wrenches, crowbars and screw, along with some other complex objects such as electronic drills and chainsaws. There were also safety masks. In the back of the room I saw as many drawers as the ones I found in Angie’s lab.

Himiko moved towards them, but Tenko positioned herself in front of her.

“What are you doing? This place could be extremely dangerous!”

“Nyeh…”

The caretaker was not wrong. On the ceiling were hung many circular lamps, despite them looking rather unstable.

“Those could fall any moment now.” Tenko observed.

“Well, I can always perfect them.” Kaito shrugged it off.
“You should do it immediately! These are terrible conditions to work in!”

“Anyway… this lab could be a godsend! I’m excited!”

“Do you suppose you could find tools to aid us in our escape?”

“Nyeh… Even if he finds them, he can’t bring them out.”

“Because of the rules?! I could care less about those rules! I’m Kaito Momota, Genius of the World, and breaking the rules is what inventors do!”

“As long as it does not get them killed.” I noted. “If you defy Monokuma, you know what will happen to you.”

“Tsk…”

“You can always sacrifice yourself! Then you’d be a tolerable male!”

“Me? Girl, you’d be losing a valuable asset to the human race!”

Himiko sighed, tired of that conversation.

“You do not need to break the rules.” I explained. “You have the tools you need here, but some raw materials outside, in the warehouse.”

“Are you saying I should modify them to create something new?”

“You will not lose anything if you were to try.”

“Nyeh… I bet Monokuma tossed all the useless junk there and left what’s actually useful here…”

“Don’t bring us down, Himiko!” Kaito exclaimed. “Put your trust in me!”

“I never put my trust in anyone and I lived fine until now…”

“Why do you have a bed in the middle of your room anyway?” Tenko asked.

“It’s to perform experiments on my test subjects, I assume.”

“Wh-whaaat?!”

Does Kaito perform human experiments? I would say these are not activities an inventor is expected to do…

“Human experiments? I would never have guessed…”

“What?! Humans? Naah! I use lab rats and things like that!”

“Why do you have a human-sized bed then?!”

“It’s not my fault, it’s Monokuma who placed it there.”

Kaito appeared to be somewhat uncomfortable. Could it be that he was lying to us? Even in Angie’s lab I found objects that did not relate to her talent…

“What about those vials? Eh? What are those for?”
“Being an inventor, many of my experiments are conducted on a microscopically level, you know? To make sure everything your eye sees is right, also what it’s hidden must be right.”

“Nyeh… don’t underestimate what’s small…” Himiko said. “Bugs are a force to be reckoned with if you don’t pay attention.”

“And you can be amazing too, Himiko!”

“Yeah, I’m amazing without being small…”

While Kaito rummaged through the drawers to search for something useful, I took my leave alongside the two.

“Good luck finding your research labs!”

“It seems that each one of us has a lab here.” Tenko observed.

“Nyeh… maybe I can finally find my loveable bugs.”

“I have spent way too much time with menaces for now.” The caretaker continued. “I feel intoxicated. I think Himiko’s right, we need time alone for us.”

“…I’d like to be alone.”

“Yeah! What I said! Let’s leave the rest of the exploration to Kirumi. She’s done an excellent job for now.”

“Nyeh…”

With her head kept down, Himiko waved at me and followed Tenko with a sad expression, while the other continued talking about how amazing the entomologist was.

The corridor continued, opening up. I saw the entrance hall of the school under me. After some steps, I reached another squared area where, to the left, bright pink stairs signaled we had access to another floor. What peaked my interest was instead another door, decorated with the image of a tennis racket.

“This must be Gonta’s research lab…” I said to myself.

Should I enter? It would be disrespectful towards the tennis player. As I was ruminating, the door opened in front of my eyes.

Rantaro came out.

“Kirumi!” He exclaimed. “Didn’t expect to find you here.”

“Have you entered Gonta’s research room?” I asked, slightly irritated.

“Don’t get heated up, he’s here too. I was practicing with him.”

“Practicing?”

“Yeah, that. Come in, I’ll show you what I mean.”

Following Rantaro, I discovered that the room before me was an entire indoor tennis court, which surprised me greatly. Strange human-like machines were at the sides of the room, playing tennis themselves.
Gonta was bouncing off his tennis ball on its racket, keeping perfectly still, smiling happily.

“He’s thrashing me.” Rantaro admitted. “I told him I needed a break.”

"Why did you agree to play with him?"

“He asked me. I didn’t want to be rude…”

“Kirumi!” Gonta cheered seeing me. “Do you want play tennis with me?”

“I’m sorry, but I am not that good when it comes to sports.”
“‘I think you lying! You a great adventurer, so you must be good!’

“I have not yet needed advanced knowledge of tennis practices to excel at my job… but that does not mean I consider this sport to be useless.”

“Oh, Gonta thought for a moment you hated tennis!... And who hates tennis is a bad person!”

“Don’t sweat it, Gonta, I’m sure everyone here appreciates tennis.”

“Gonta wished this lab would have been for Ultimate Gentleman though…”

How would a lab for the ultimate Gentleman be structured? I suppose one for a tennis player would be far easier to conceive.

“With tuxedos and ties and fancy pants…”

“Don’t bring yourself down, you’re amazing at tennis. I’m sure that this lab can make you as happy as you could be.”

“Rantaro right. Gonta be very happy now. Gonta didn’t play tennis in long time.”

“Did you find anything interesting in here?” I asked the two boys.

“Gonta found some steel balls. They not usual.”

Steel balls? Those seem dangerous.

“Here. Gonta bring them to you.”

Gonta went back to his side of the court and moved closer to one of those robots. As he turned I noticed he had two steel spheres in his hands. They appeared extremely weighty, however the tennis player was carrying them without any problems. He passed one of them to me, but I immediately felt its heaviness and I pulled back my hand in response. The ball fell to the floor with a resounding thump.

“Sorry! Sorry Kirumi! Gonta stupid! Gonta could have hurt you.”

“Wow.” Rantaro managed to say. “These things are very heavy. How can you carry them without any problems?”

“Gonta don’t know! For Gonta very normal! Gonta cannot be gentleman now!” He cried out, crying.

“Do not worry Gonta. Nothing has happened.”
“Gonta not smart… Gonta clumsy.”

“There’s no way you could have known about their heaviness.” Rantaro reassured him. “If they appeared light to you, that’s because your hands are very strong.”

“Oh…” Gonta said, calming down. “Gonta carried very heavy and special tennis rackets before.”

“That sphere resembles more a shotput than a ball. I wonder the reason why it is stored here.”

“One time Gonta played with very strong racket and steel balls!”

Woah. That is an impressive feat. I would never guess that would have been possible.

“Who was your opponent?” I asked, still astounded.

“No one. Gonta practicing for fighting against bad people.”

“Bad people?” Rantaro inquired.

“I protected my family from bad people who wanted to hurt them using my tennis skills!”

Maybe I should not push Gonta into talking about his private life.

“But now I use tennis only to have fun…! Rantaro, can we continue the game?”

“Uhm, huh… I’m actually… still really tired… let’s say you win this time.”

“Oh! Ok… Kirumi, do you want to play then?”

He asked me again? I had already declined.

“She’s pretty tired too, you know? Walking around the school, finding those secret passages…”

“…Yeah, Gonta understand. Maybe better not play now.”

“After all, if you want to play, there’s always those strange machines you can practice with.”

“Uh… Gonta don’t trust strange machines. They dangerous.”

To be honest, the sportsman was not wrong. The robots were passing balls to each other with extremely high speeds. If one would hit someone, they would suffer lethal damage if the shot hit vital organs.

“Gonta don’t know how to turn them off, so leave it alone.”

“No problems about it.”

“Have you also found a key?” I asked.

“Yeah, to enter here.”

“I’m pretty sure each one of our research rooms can be locked and unlocked just like Kaede’s. This way we can prevent others from entering.”

That did not stop Ryoma and Shuichi though. Why did Kaede’s lab have an entrance no one of us could have known about? That was unfair. Could Monokuma have targeted her specifically?
“By the way…” Rantaro continued. “Now I’m definitely going. There’s another floor upstairs, so I’ll check it out. Come with me?” He asked.

“Sure. Goodbye, Gonta.”

“Goodbye! If you want to play with Gonta, Gonta will be very happy!”

***

I stood in front of the high wall placed in front of the dormitories. Sure, I noticed it before, but I didn’t think we could access it eventually. But then, I had a stroke of genius and I thought to use the hexagonal crank on one of the openings I spotted.

And there it was, the medieval-like, gigantic wooden door, was opening in front of me. Because of my confusion, I almost didn’t notice someone trying to sneak behind me.

“Maki!” I called her out after turning. “Why haven’t you come to the meeting?”

“Ugh. Go away.”

“No, I won’t.” I raised my voice. “You can’t pretend we aren’t here.”

She snorted. “I don’t need to stay with you. I like to be alone.”

“You want to be alone, which is another thing altogether.”

“If I want to, it means I like it.”

“You’re telling yourself that, but it isn’t true.”

“What did I do to deserve being psychoanalyzed by you?”

“Listen… I don’t hold a grudge against you for what you have done, alright?”

That wasn’t completely true, but I also need to forgive. Maki did want to help the others, just in a different way.

“Fine.” She said. “That means I don’t have to stay here and talk with you. Bye.”

“Hey, stop! You care about us, right?”

She rolled her eyes and started walking away.

“This night you were keeping watch, right here, because you suspected someone of us would attempt murder.”

“And with that?”

“If you want to prevent more killings you don’t have to act like an outside force, alone and feared. You can understand a lot more from people if you spend time with them.”

“What do you want from me?” She asked, but there was no emotion in her voice.

“I want you to forgive yourself too. If you continue to distance yourself from others, you w-
“Forgive myself?” She interrupted me. “Please, I don’t blame myself for anything that happened.”

“You appeared shaken at the tri-

“Instead, it seems that the one who’s conflicted and confused it’s you. You still won’t accept that
Shuichi committed a murder, after he lied to you multiple times.”

My vision started to blurry, then became red. Was she placing the blame on Shuichi for what
happened? How dares she!? He killed only because there was a time limit, he killed to prevent a
massacre!

I was on the brink of punching her.

Wait…

I need to be calm. To reflect. I’m a detective. I don’t jump to conclusions.

And I don’t jump on a martial artist expert if I want to avoid concussions.

“That’s not true.” Was the most I could say.

“I see you’re getting angry. I learned to control my emotions a long time ago…” She stopped for a
while, then returned to her previous topic. “From my understanding, you saw Shuichi as a pure
angel who wouldn’t hurt a fly.”

“Stop talking about him like’s a terrible human!”

“No, I’m saying he was flawed like everyone else here. His actions were justified and I understand
what he did. You still don’t, though. You ask yourself why didn’t he tell you, you were sure he
trusted you.”

“And with that? Even if it’s true?”

“What happened it’s consuming you, since you can’t know the answers. Now you want everyone
to fall in order, to do as you say. Do you want to prove to yourself that it was a simple, one-time
mistake? Are you really trying to grant Shuichi’s wish?”

“Why are you so hostile?” I asked her, ignoring her questions.

“You need to accept the truth first. You couldn’t protect Shuichi, despite all your efforts. You
failed to see that there was something wrong with him. And wanting total control over us is not the
best decision.”

“I’m not a dictator, you know? I said everyone they were free to explore the school.”

“You’d want to know what everyone is up to. But you also want to trust every single one of your
classmates. Isn’t this a contradiction?”

“I… I don’t understand! What are you implying?!”

“See, that’s the problem. You don’t understand. What’s the best course of action? You tell yourself
those questions and you don’t resolve anything.”

“Since you’re so keen on giving me advice, tell me what should I do.”

“Decide. Just decide. Take a position. And I’m telling you this without being biased. If you feel
that strict control over us is the best option, maybe that is indeed the right choice. However, people like me will refuse to do as you say, will argue, and that could lead to another murder. Who says you won’t be the next victim.”

I can’t believe someone would target me. But then, they’d have an advantage without the Ultimate Detective around…

“But if you decide to trust everyone blindly, a murder is just as likely, and that’s what happened yesterday. Can you find a balance? I’d say that is what you should stride for.”

“You haven’t given me a clear answer.” I said, bitterly.

“Answers don’t appear out of thin air. You have to work to discover them. I can’t believe I’m saying this to a detective.”

Despite me not liking the aikido master, I couldn’t deny she was right. I had never been as conflicted as I was in that moment. I realized that, at least. I had to make a decision before it was too late.

“And get rid of that cape. It reminds you of Shuichi, but it makes you feel guilty about what happened.”

Well, she’s spot on…

“I can’t understand why it means something to you, considering you knew him for three days. But who am I to decrypt your emotions. That cape doesn’t have to be a punishment. See you later.”

As Maki started distancing from me, I realized she made me aware of my situation. Yes, I figured it out before, but… hearing it from someone else, it… it convinced me.

“Thank you, Maki. You aren’t that bad”

I had to admit it.

“Tsk.” She said. “I can’t believe I ended up psychoanalyzing you instead.”

Her last line wasn’t as bitter as the other ones. It was friendlier, like a friend who teases another. Or maybe that was just my impression.

When Maki disappeared from my line of view, Tsumugi appeared in her place.

“Kaede!... Is everything alright between you and Maki?” She asked.

“She kind of turned the conversation in her favor… but she ended up helping me.”

“Wow, what did she say? If you don’t mind me asking…”

“I need to be more self-confident.”

“What, you?” Tsumugi giggled. “I think you are one of the most confident people here.”

“Hm, well…”

I stopped.

The maid, sensing my embarrassment, quickly steered the matter of the conversation.
“So… why don’t we go exploring this new area together? It’s pretty big.”

“Ooh! I’m coming too!”

0U-M4 appeared from the dormitories, cheerfully jumping towards us.

“I was waiting for someone to understand that puzzle, thankfully Kaede saved me.”

“From what?” I asked, sarcastically.

“From boredom, of course! Nothing eventful has happened yet!”

“How many eventful things happen in your life?” Tsumugi addressed the robot.

“Not a lot. That’s why I’m always bored.”

“Mine was a rhetorical question.”

“Are you still angry because I hit you!? Well, I’m sorry! I know I’m not supposed to hurt women now.”

“It’s not that.” She glared at him.

“You entered my room twice, first stealing my key and then knocking out two people. She has all the rights to be furious with you. In fact, I feel the same way.”

“Oh, I’m very sorry then.” He smiled. “Let me redeem myself! I’ll show I’m useful! Maybe there are locked doors I can open!”

“If they’re locked, I think it means that Monokuma doesn’t want us to explore them.” Tsumugi explained.

“Who cares about him. He said we were free to explore the school at our discretion, so I’m following his rules to a T.”

I guess… still, I don’t think it’s the right choice.

“Do you think I’ll kill you?” He asked, playfully. “I guess I could take on one of you two, but the other will be able to escape.”

“What’s the purpose of this conversation again?” I asked, annoyed.

“I said that! I want to discover the secrets of this academy!”

I pondered about letting 0U-M4 come with us. I didn’t want him around, he was the kind of individual who should never be trusted, but what could I do to prevent him from coming? He would have followed us regardless of my decision. Maybe if I gave in to his request he would at least tone down his antics.

“Since I can’t stop you, I give you permission to explore the area. With us two.”

“Kaede, is this a wise decision?”

“No, it isn’t. But it could turn out to be useful in the future.”

“My heart warms up when you consider me useful!”
“…You do not have an heart.” Tsumugi pointed out.

“Whatever.” The robot shrugged the maid’s sentence off.

We stepped in the new area and descended.

“I wonder what’s in here! I’m very excited!”

“Don’t get your hopes u-

“Ooooh!” OU-M4 exclaimed. “And what is that?!”

I turned to my right and saw another structure that resembled the motels you could find on the side of the road. There was also a sign that specified his name…

“Hotel Kumasutra!?" OU-M4 continued. “Holy shit, don’t tell about it to the others!”

“What is that thing…?"

“I wouldn’t explore it in normal circumstances, but we shouldn’t rule it out.”

“Maybe we should send Miu there as a lab rat. She would enjoy herself! Maybe she won’t even return to us, though.”

“Don’t treat Miu like that.” I scolded him.

“She isn’t here to listen! Can’t I express my opinion of her? She’s an awful human being.”

“You might be an awful robot.”

“I am not offended by that since I know you’re only jealous!”

On the other side there was another structure, labeled as “Casino”. To be honest, I’ve never been in one. I guess I never had the chance… despite that, I can’t say I have felt the desire to risk all of my money praying to get lucky.

“We are we going first?”

“I say to the hotel. I’m not that interested in spicy stuff, but…” He stopped.

“But? Come on, talk!”

“Maybe some of those strange this humans use to have fun with each other could be useful.”

I tried to forget about the images that were flashing in my mind.

“Not in their… pure… form, I mean. Modified by Kaito, they could regain new life!”

“I never thought I would talk about this…” Tsumugi sighed.

“Those are an aspect of human culture as well. I conducted many researches about human habits.”

That begs the question, how deep and specific were those studies? As they say, some questions are better left unanswered.

“Let’s go there.” I decided. “It’s better to start with the hard one first.”
And then I thought that Miu wouldn’t have waited a single second before trying to be funny with *that* joke. Thankfully she wasn’t there with us. As we approached the door of the hotel, however, we discovered it was closed. A sign informed us that a specific key was needed to go inside of it.

“We can’t go in here, so, shouldn’t we turn?”

“Nee-hee-hee, but I have the ability to lockpick!” 0U-M4 giggled. “I can’t wait the look on Monokuma’s face when he’ll discover that I ent-

“Already did!”

Monokuma magically appeared between the door and us.

“Show some respect for my love suite! You can’t just enter it like that! It’s a private business, a face-to-face thing, ya know?”

“You can’t stop me from lockpicking.”

“Don’t you think I took extra safety measures to protect the suite from thieves like you? You can’t hope to pick this lock even in your wildest dreams! If you desire to enter, get a key like everyone else!!”

“You’re such a buzzkiller.”

“It’s not like you can enter with two girls here! We’re not in those anime where the protagonist has ten girls who fall for him!” The bear stopped. “I miss the times when someone else made those references for me… Anyways, only two can enter here! And with a love key!”

After shouting at us, Monokuma left. As usually, disappearing out of thin air.

“Ehm… considering this… we should check out the casino.”

Retracing our steps, we stepped into the casino. The area resembled the ones you might see in movies depicting Las Vegas, but there was no sign of slot machines or anything of the sort. Tables and chairs were however arranged very carefully, mimicking an hall of a prestigious hotel. Carpets that were evidently very expensive covered the pavement.

“These are tapestries.” Tsumugi commented. “The details are extremely accurate. It means whoever trapped us here is extremely wealthy.”

“I suppose so.” 0U-M4 snickered. “Who would spend so much money for lame carpets?”

“Some like exhibiting them to show they’re an appreciator of arts.”

“Mah. I think they do that just to brag.”

To the left there was a cabinet full of different type of liquors and other types of alcoholic beverages.

“Why is something like that in a casino?” I asked.

“Maybe to prevent people from leaving, offering them snacks and drinks to let them stay?”

“That’s so shady!” 0U-M4 exclaimed. “But it’s clever.”

“I worked as a bartender before.” Tsumugi recounted. “Not in a casino, but I know a couple of
things about cocktails and how to mix them.”

“Great! If you want to get drunk, just ask the maid!”

“I think this isn’t the right time to be saying that.” I clarified.

In front of us there was a counter. As we approached, I saw the silhouette of a bear in it.

“Hell-o yeah!!” It exclaimed. It didn’t’ take me too long to realize that it was Monokid.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

“I’m the cashier! I stay here to give you amazing prizes! Who cares about the Monokubs, I’m gaining my fucking independence!”

Oh… that’s… completely uninteresting, honestly.

“What prizes? There aren’t any ways to spend coins here.”

“Let me explain you, you empty heads! You can trade your Monocoins here for tokens, which you can use starting from tomorrow!”

“Tomorrow?” I was confused.

“I decided to organize everything by myself! Who cares about what Monodam says, that green snot! I told him and his slaves to get the fuck out! This has become my domain!”

“The independency is already turning into a dictatorship!” 0U-M4 exclaimed, faking surprise.

“Everything is downstairs, but I blocked the floor to make every-fucking-thing perfect! Monodam will bow down to my greatness!”

“Aren’t you guys taking it a little bit too far?” Tsumugi appeared concerned.

“Fat?! Monodam is fat, you blue-haired wannabe Miku!”

“W-what?!”

“I tried being nice to you, but who cares! Do your fucking thing and don’t count on me! Hell yeah!”

As he cussed one more time, he disappeared.

“Those bears are strange.” I commented.

“I doubt you saw talking bear-robot creatures before now.” 0U-M4 followed. “No wonder they are.”

***

Rantaro and me did explore the floor that we had access to, and despite us finding two doors, those were locked. It was clear to both of us that we had come across two new research lab. The first door, placed right near the stairs, was similar to Kaito’s door, but it had the design of a lightning
and circuits surrounding it.

OU-M4’s lab, we were both sure.

The second, found some time later, was not explicitly clear. The door was made of birch wood, but there were no distinctive signs to single out the owner of the lab.

“When is Monokuma going to give us keys for those?” Rantaro asked.

Rantaro’s question surprised me. I considered him to be an observant person, but he did not notice a significant detail.

“Those doors do not possess any locks.” I explained.

“Oh…”

He glanced at the entrance of OU-M4’s lab, then he turned back to me.

“That’s right. I kind of assumed locks were there…” He stood still to reflect for a while. “How can you enter those then?”

“Some sort of mechanism could unlock them. It could also be that there is only one lock, to the other side. That would indicate that there could be another way in.”

“Kaede’s lab was connected to a secret passage after all…”

“Another option is that Monokuma simply does not want us to enter them. With him being aware of OU-M4’s ability to lockpick, he might have been forced to do so.”

“How would he enter them…? I guess he has the ability to magically appear out of everywhere, but that doesn’t qualify as teleporting.”

“Monokuma’s ability are not clear to us yet. As time passes, Kaede could understand more about his behavior. He is an AI after all.”

“I’d say we ask OU-M4 for advice, but…”

No, that other robot could be even more dangerous than Monokuma. The latter invited us to murder, but the former was the one who could kill us. His abilities were an unknown as well.

“There’s nothing else here. What do we do now?”

“The cafeteria is our meeting point, I suppose. Maybe we should gather there to see what information we have found during this morning.”

“It’s already midday.” Rantaro observed. “I’m kind of hungry.”

“You ate more pancakes than us this morning, and you demand more food already?”

“I’m sorry if my high metabolism disturbs you.” He said sarcastically. “How is your relationship with your metabolism?”

That was one of the weirdest, and least appropriate questions I heard in a long time.

“If I cannot respond?”
“Did I offend you?” He looked to the side. “Sorry. I was trying to make conversation.”

“There are better ways to do that.”

“I know. The topic came up, so…”

“You have to admit it was weird though.”

“Yeah, maybe it was, so? You can’t talk about the same things all the time! You have to branch out, do you follow me?”

I agree with Rantaro’s opinion, but that does not justify asking whatever you have on your mind. And, moreover, from what I experienced, the artist was someone who chose his words very carefully. This last exchange… did not confirm my expectations.

“…I guess not then.”

“No, no…” I shook my head. “I wholeheartedly agree with your statement. All options should be considered before making a decision.”

“That’s not what I was implying.” He smiled awkwardly. “I was just talking about convos, not anything philosophical.”

Ah. I overanalyzed what he said.

“You know what? We can do as you said. Let’s gather everyone up in the cafeteria. Tell the others to find everyone by… uhm… 1:30 PM. So everyone has more than an hour to finish what they’re doing.”

“Where are you heading?” I inquired.

“Personally, I’m going to search for more food in the kitchen. I shouldn’t eat before meals, but I’m seriously hungry. If you want, we can inform Gonta and Kaito, who probably are still in their labs.”

“Do not worry. I will tell them myself. Go satisfy your hunger.”

“When you put it like that it seems like I’m about to feast on some human being.”

“I did not mean that.”

“Do not joke about death then.”

Now his voice turned severe, his expression austere.

“I’ll be in the cafeteria if you want me!” He smiled and waved.

His last sentence almost convinced me that his seriousness was a hallucination, but I knew what was real and what was faux. And, undoubtedly, Rantaro’s cold words did exist. His reaction was exaggerated, stemming from a poor choice of words. However, that was the image of Rantaro I created in my mind. He was the one who created that absurd metaphor. Am I unable to have a normal conversation?

I asked the classmates I could find to follow me in the cafeteria. After finding Gonta and Kaito in
their respective research rooms, Korekiyo offered to warn the others as well.

By 1:30 PM, everyone, including Miu but excluding Maki, had come to the cafeteria to discuss. Tsumugi offered to cook for us and no one protested. While she was boiling the potatoes, we sat and Kaede was the first to speak.

“I’m glad everyone is here.” She smiled. “We’re missing Maki, but I feel that will soon change.”

“Have you convinced Miu?” Angie cheered. “That’s amazing! I think you’ll bring Maki to us in no time!”

“You should be grateful I’m here for you!” The pianist bragged.

“It’s her choice.” Kaede said. “But we aren’t here to talk about her, aren’t we?”

“Rantaro and I asked for a meeting to reveal information we may have found.”

“Nyeh… but you and Kaede were the ones with those objects. Why am I here…?”

“Himiko, your presence is still needed.” Tenko told her. “To bond with others. Socialization is important.”

“Himiko’s right.” Kaito said. “We should ask them first. They probably found more than us.”

Kaede nodded.

“Yep. I, for example, accessed the structure in front of our dormitories. Tsumugi and 0U-M4 were with me.”

“Yup yup!” The robot agreed. “It was still boring, but better than spending time in my room doing nothing!”

“There’s a casino and a… uhm… you can see for yourself. It’s not that important.”

What discovery was Kaede concealing from us? She appeared uncomfortable.

“In the casino there are some liquor bottles and a counter where you can exchange prizes, but there aren’t any games yet.”

“Huh?” Kaito seemed confused. “A casino without games?”

Kaede explained what happened to them, and we came to know that the blue Monokub would have granted us access only the following day.

“Also, Miu’s lab opened up.”

“That’s right, virgins! But you can’t enter it!”

“Whatever.” Rantaro commented.

“And you, Kirumi?” Kaede addressed me. “Have you found anything?”

“Yes, the objects we were given allowed me to investigate the school further. As I expected, there were other passages that were previously hidden.”

“She helped me find my research room! You’re great!” Angie praised me.
“That means that our other research labs are somewhere in the school, but we cannot access them yet…” Korekiyo observed.

“That is correct. As of now, I found and explored Angie’s, Kaito’s and Gonta’s lab.”

“There are a tons of useful things there!” Kaito said. “I’m sure I can create something from the junk I found in the warehouse!”

“Great!” Kaede exclaimed. “You see, guys? We have a chance to escape from this place!”

“Yes, and if we have to sacrifice someone, we’ll start from the guys!”

“Yeah, that’s a big step in the right direction, Kaede. As I said, our talents are our ticket out of here.”

“Maybe Gonta help Kaito to find useful things?” The tennis player suggested. “Many heavy objects in warehouse!”

“Thanks man, your help is appreciated.”

“We also found two other locked rooms.” I explained. “However, they do not have a keyhole.”

“What? That’s terrible…” 0U-M4 sighed.

“I assume they are meant to be locked.” Rantaro said. “Monokuma doesn’t want you to enter those.”

“He also stopped me from entering the Love Hotel!” He lamented.

“Love hotel? And what’s that?” Kaito asked.

“This is not the time to be discussing that.” Tsumugi told him from the kitchen.

“Oh. Ok.”

“The point is…” 0U-M4 continued, irritated. “…Monokuma is totally trying to stop me!”

“Great!” Tenko cheered. “We have the same stance on you then.”

“Since I want to be completely honest with you, I have to admit one of those locked research rooms is Ouma’s.”

“Wow! I’m looking forward to exploring it!”

“New rooms opened after Shuichi and Ryoma died…” Kiibo ominously said.

He stayed silent for all this time.

“Kiibo, you alright?” Gonta asked.

“Yeah… it’s just I’m not hungry. I came here to listen to you.”

“You came here for the benefit of the group.” Korekiyo said. “That is honorable.”

“S-so… if there’s nothing I can do… I’ll be going.”

I noticed everyone was confused, not understanding the reasoning behind Kiibo’s decision, but
nobody tried to stop him. What has he done during this morning? I left him in the cafeteria, and found him there when I returned… I could not imagine he remained there for all that time…

As the astronaut closed the door behind him, Tsumugi started distributing the food to us.

“What are our plans for the rest of the day?” She asked.

“Don’t worry about those plans!” Kaito exclaimed. “I, Kaito Momota, will create the most incredible escape machine you ever saw!”

“Uhm…” Kaede flinched. “There’s always the possibility we could find something else that’s useful…”

“Hm? We’ll see!”

“If you don’t mind, Gonta will play tennis in his research lab!” The sportsman announced.

“Gonta, you have a personal tennis court? Seriously?” Angie was stoked.

“Yes! Gonta very surprised too!”

“I’ll come play with you then! Let’s play together and strengthen our bond!” She clasped her hands.

Just like Rantaro before her, Angie’s personality also fluctuates; between an innocent, cheerful girl, to a manipulative and cold leader. I suspect her friendship with Gonta is none other than a way to convince him and make him obey her orders. Am I too distrustful? I cannot be sure, Angie might want a genuine friendship in her life after all, and Gonta appears to be content when he is around her.

Well, those people are harder to read than I imagined.

***

After eating Tsumugi’s incredible dish, everyone left and went their way. I didn’t have anything to do in particular, so I decided to spend time with one of my classmates. I think it’s important to understand every one of them and be on the same page. It didn’t matter who it was, I decided I would try to know more about every Ultimate that was there with me. We planned on escaping, but I didn’t know how much time I had to spend with people that were basically strangers.

So I needed to fix that.

**FREE TIME START!**

The first person I wanted to meet was Rantaro. Among all of my classmates, he was the one I couldn’t quite understand. He seems both distant and friendly...

I spent some time searching for him, until I found the artist near the cafeteria.

“Heya, Kaede! How is it going? Do you want to chat with me?”

As soon as Rantaro saw me approaching him, he understood my intentions. At first I wasn’t sure I
wanted to talk with him, but I can’t ignore him. He’s suspicious, but I think he’d be a good friend… he’s relaxed and always smiles… whenever he’s not creepy.

“Yeah. I do, I think.”

“Great, I needed someone to talk with. To kill some time, you know?”

Rantaro and me talked about our daily lives and our interests… nothing too difficult or particularly heavy. I learned that he loves a cold drink whenever he’s busy painting and I told him that I can’t resist yogurt and I would eat it at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Actually, we discussed so much about eating that I ended up getting hungry.

“All this food talk has made my stomach growl.” I laughed.

Rantaro laughed too. “I’m sorry I hurt the feelings of your belly. Do you want me to take a quick snack? There must be something in the warehouse.”

“Don’t worry. It will pass. I don’t want to eat between meals.”

Rantaro rubbed his head. “I do eat when I’m feeling stressed out. Maybe I eat to much…”

“But you’re so slim!” I exclaimed. “I don’t believe you!”

“I swear it! I spend a lot of my downtime eating. People tell me I am lucky. I don’t even practice a sport.”

“I assume you go on long walks then.”

“Oh, I do, in fact. To paint landscapes. I wander a lot to find the perfect spot to paint at the perfect time.”

“An eternal search for perfection…” I joke.

“Yeah.” He said. “I have to live up to my name, you know? My job is not only to paint, but also to find the right circumstances under I can paint. For example, the correct lightning. A ray of sun that shines on a particular flower…”

“Woah, it looks like you were taking photos…”

“Some paintings must look like photos. That style is called realism, or even hyperrealism. It’s not my favorite, but it does exist.”

“So what’s the one you feel most comfortable with?”

“I like impressionism. Those artists put a lot on effort on expressing their subjectivity on the canvas.”

So he likes that movement. I bet it speaks volumes about his personality. Sadly, I know almost nothing about the history of art.

Do I feel ignorant in this moment? Absolutely.

“Oh, but I do not want to bore my guest with the accurate description of a movement heavily criticized by its contemporaries and later reevaluated by modern estimators.”

I giggled. “What’s up with that extremely… polished language you are using, Mr. Amami?”
“Dear Ms. Akamatsu, you do admire the terms I chose to employ in my preceding statement to the
point you attempted to mimic me? I hope you are proud of yourself, my lady.”
This hasn’t gone to far yet, but I’d better stop it before it does.

“You won, okay?” I conceded. “You are better than mine in fancy words.”

“I just learned to use them at the right time.” He laughed. “They help you make a good impression
with people who don’t know what you’re talking about. Just pull off some of those nonsensical
expressions and people are going to think you’re a genius.”

First appearances don’t come a second time after all.

“In reality they’re just some obsolete words nobody uses anymore. And since some guy who
happened to be important used them, now they are considered magical and formal.”

“They’re not evil. You talk about them like they are bad for us.”

“Don’t pay too much attention to what I’m saying.” He told me. “They do matter. More options,
more fun. If everyone talked like everyone else we would be too similar. And if we’re not different
enough, we would be bored as hell. Have you met many interesting people?”

“If you consider criminals interesting…”

“In a way they could be.”

He saw that I looked at him funny, so he explained himself.

“I’m not justifying their crimes. I’m not that crazy!”

I hope so.

“They work differently than the majority of the populations. I can’t say I’d commit a crime.”

“It depends on the situations. Everyone could be a criminal. Of course I’d prefer if no one had to
resort to certain solutions.”

“But then what would your job be?”

“Huh?”

I know Rantaro meant that as a joke, but the implications of that joke could be interpreted as
somewhat morbid.

He rolled his eyes. I think he understood he might have gone too far.

“But I’m serious. What would you do if you weren’t a detective?”

What… would I do if I…

I don’t know. I just dedicated all my life to investigations.

“An answer that Kaede can’t give an answer too! This is interesting!”

“I just need time to reflect! I’m not all about discovering clues and details!”

“Yeah, sure.”
Was he being sarcastic?

“No pressure. When you have figured it out, tell me. I’ll be ready to continue this conversation.”

Well... I kinda got to know him a bit better. I hoped to find out more, but maybe I'll bond over my second passion... I guess.

As I was heading back to my dorm, I crossed paths with 0U-M4.

"Ouma, do you have some time to talk with me?"

“Kaede wants to spend time with me?! Why would that be?!”

I wonder what went on in my mind too. Honestly, I can’t find an answer to that question… Maybe I feel that, deep down, very deep down…. That robot is a good person, even though it may be incorrect to call him that.

“I want to understand you more.” I told him.

“Nee-hee-hee! I’m proud of that! What do you want to know about me?!”

0U-M4 excitedly showed off his most advanced abilities, from ones I had already experienced, to other that I could never imagine, like reading the composition of the various chemicals in the air around us and function as an hairdryer.

“I don’t know if that last ability is as useful as to put it to be.” I honestly stated.

“Whaaaa? Don’t you want to carry out an hairdryer everywhere? You don’t know when a terrible thunderstorm might drop on you!”

“In that case I would bring an umbrella. Preventing is more important than resolving a problem.”

“Maybe I can improve then! I’ll be an umbrella if you want to!”

“I didn’t ask that…” I said clearly. “Moreover, wouldn’t rain hurt you? You’re a machine than works thanks to electricity, right…?”

“If someone else said that, I would have definitely punched them in their stomach!” 0U-M4 childishly laughed. “But I’ve realized I’ve been a terrible classmate in the past, so this will grant me forgiveness!”

Did he really think that was enough to make me forgive him? Despite constantly praising his dear logic, that claim was pretty dumb.

“I’m not a machine!” He exclaimed. “How many times do I have to repeat myself?! I. AM. NOT. A. MACHINE!!!”

“You are a robot. You can’t deny that.” I responded, irritated by his stubbornness.

“I’m not an ordinary robot, I’m the Ultimate Robot! And because of this, I can transcend your current understanding of machines and become a real person like everyone else here!”

“You do realize that, despite all your abilities, you will never be the same as a real human, right?”

“Yup, yup! I will never be human, but I can be a person! The difference is very slim, but it’s definitely there! I am a being with feelings, capable of reacting to external stimuli, and form
relationship with other human beings. That seems quite person-y to me. And I don’t want to be human. Human are already surpassed by machines, but nobody is smart enough to realize that!

“There are human jobs that machines can’t do.” I retorted. “And machines have a distorted sense of morality.”

I cut myself off before I could add “like you” to the sentence. I didn’t want to be too harsh on 0U-M4 despite all the mess he caused. I was the one to ask him to talk after all.

“Morality? What is morality? Is there a universal good here? If you think the answer is yes, then why did so many conflicts happen in our world?”

“Firstly, I think that what’s good cannot be described, but we have a general idea of what’s good and bad.”

“If we have that general idea you claim exist, then why do people do bad things to each other? Why does this killing game exist?”

“Some people want to be bad and hurt others.”

“Kaede, you’re wrong!” 0U-M4 smirked. “I don’t think people want to be bad. They think they’re doing what’s right. For them.” He added.

“There are values that are recognized as universal. Justice is an ideal that is almost always good.”

“I have a learning AI, you know? I think it’s more powerful than your brains, since it stores only the important data and not stupid memories of holidays by the sea and useless junk.”

“Where are you going?”

“I’ve read and studied a lot, and I discovered that values and ideals change over time, other than between person and person. Therefore, they can’t be universal! Good, Bad, Morality… they are all words created by humans to regulate relationships. They can be used, but they shouldn’t be considered in most of the cases, since they’re your creation.”

“You’re shifting between topics and you’re not making sense.”

“As a robot, free from your human conventions, I think I’m the one of the lucky ones to understand that. And we circle back to our first topic of conversation: my abilities! Probably this is the best of them.”

“Not having remorse? Lack of empathy?”

“Remorses are terrible! They cause pain and suffering! They put a stop on productivity and they’re terrible for your health. Empathy can be both good and bad. I wouldn’t want to suffer because of others, you know?”

“Sorry, 0U-M4.” I then said. “It was my fault for thinking you could possess some redeeming qualities.”

“I do! I have so many qualities!” He curved his back.

“I said redeeming.”

“Redeeming is a relative concept too!”
“Thanks for the info.” I said sarcastically. “Bye, Ouma. If you see me, don’t feel obliged to talk.”

“At your orders, madam!”

Ugh, no luck this time. It seems that that robot won’t change... at least I tried.

**FREE TIME END.**

While I was talking with the people I met, I didn’t caught glimpse of Kiibo at all. Not even at dinner. He probably hid in his room all day. I knew better than to pry, but I couldn’t stop from eavesdropping near his room. Kaito said he snored, so maybe I could understand if he was really there...

Yeah, that’s kind of rude, I know. But I want him to be safe. He’s been hit really hard from the loss we had to face, despite not knowing Shuichi. He talked with him twice, maybe three times… and with Ryoma… I think they didn’t have any real conversations.

Then who am I to talk? I might be accustomed to seeing dead bodies, but death isn’t something you can forget. You can’t pretend two people didn’t die in front of your eyes. The others were acting like nothing happened, some tried to follow Shuichi’s words and be friends with each other. However, after you find a corpse next to you, and someone is brutally executed, while you’re watching it on the other side of a screen… you can’t be the same as before. You will change. For better or for worse.

There was no sound on the other side. Kiibo was probably there, but was in silence, probably reflecting on what happened.

…I have to wait for him. I… don’t want him to be hurt, emotionally or physically. And I don’t want to force him into talking with me. As Maki said, rash decisions aren’t decisions. They’re instincts that we need to control.

I’ll wait for him. Tomorrow morning. At breakfast. He’ll come.

I headed for my room, glancing at Shuichi’s door. I tried to enter in his room, but was locked. Could 0U-M4 pick the lock? Maybe he was able to. But I felt I shouldn’t enter. That place was Shuichi’s, and I want to preserve it.

As I unlocked my door, Kirumi entered the dormitories.

“Salutations, Kaede.”

“Hi, Kirumi. How is it going?” I asked.

Maybe it wasn’t the best time to start making conversations, but I didn’t feel the heaviness that comes with drowsiness.

“That appears to be a vague question.”

“‘You should respond something like fine, thanks or maybe not so well, Kaede…’ I responded, jokingly.

“Considering our situation, I would say we are faring well.”

“Do you really think that?”

“I do. Almost everyone attended the meeting you scheduled this morning and the one I arranged
afterwards. It shows we are united.”

“Yeah, we need to understand we’re not so different from one another. We’re Ultimates, chosen by the government… we have to prove to ourselves we can’t give up!”

“That is right.” Kirumi nodded. “I hope Kaito will create a mechanism that can aid us in the tunnel escape.”

“Right!” I exclaimed. “That would be a great idea. There has to be something that can disable all of those electric traps.”

“If you do not mind, I will head to my room.”

“Oh, don’t worry. I’ll let you leave.”

I said bye to Kirumi and entered too. Without even thinking, I fell into my bed, softer than I imagined.

Or maybe it seemed like it because I slept outside three nights in a row.

With extreme caution, I took off Shuichi’s cape and hung it where the replicas of my outfit were. I don’t want to ruin it. I rested my head on my pillow, looking at the ceiling.

I hate when I can’t sleep even though I want it. Those moments of pure darkness, in which you can’t help but think about everything that your mind makes up.

And because your brain is more active than the rest of the day, you end up spending time doing absolutely nothing.

I tried to empty my mind, and time passed, and passed… at the end, before I could process it, I fell asleep.

Chapter End Notes

So... as you have seen, there's no Kiibo FTE here. I'm surprised that many of you voted for him, but he's still unavailable. Rantaro got two votes, so he was chosen. However, there was a vote for Ouma, Miu and Tsumugi. I decided to go with the first one since he was the first one to get the vote. The votes are now reset, so everyone is at zero.

It's going to be a while before the next FTEs will be posted, but you can still vote if you want!

See you next time! :3
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Daily Life (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

Kaede discovers the new motive and searches for Kiibo; Kirumi explores the casino.

Chapter Notes

Sorry if I'm late! I should have posted this on Monday but I really couldn't since I wasn't at home.
Next chapter will definitely coming Wednesday or maybe even Tuesday. After that, I don't know if I'll stick to the 9 days schedule. I am ahead with the chapters, but everything must be perfect for the trial, even the smallest details. So I really need to wrap up the 2nd chapter and finish the trial, because I'll have to change some clues and truth bullets as I go.

Daily reminder you can vote for the character you want to spend time with in the next FTEs (Kirumi is unavailable).

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*ding dong bing bong*

Another announcement, another day here…

Uff.

I still want this to be a dream. How long do dreams last?

Maybe tomorrow. Tomorrow I’ll wake up in my own bed.

I rubbed my eyes and I smacked myself on the cheek to make sure I was fully functional for a new day in Gifted Inmates Academy.

The most I could do was move from a supine position to a seated one. I said to myself that I had to wake up, and so I found the strength to move out from my bed.

As I realized Kaito might have found some way to escape from this place, I found another interesting object, conveniently placed on my desk.

It resembled a Monopad, but it was more colorful and smaller. Did Monokuma, or maybe the Monokubs, enter my room while I was sleeping? 0U-M4 wasn’t enough?

Well, I guess that robot could have entered, since he can lockpick everyone’s door… I hope for him he understand the right to privacy, otherwise he’ll meet my right fist.
That sounded better in my head.

Plus he’s made of metal… I’ll resort to an alternative method of violence.

I lift the pad up, and turned it around. A sticker was stamped on the back, depicting a logo resembling a head of a bear, colored with five shades: blue, yellow, green, pink and red. Just under it, the writing *Kubs Pad*.

“So it’s those four…” I mumbled to myself.

I turned it back and touched the screen. The display came to life immediately, a blue background appearing first, then Kiibo’s silhouette. For two seconds, I wondered what was the point of showing me that, but then the words “Kiibo’s Secret” appeared in the foreground. Before I could rationalize what happened, Monokuma’s voice invaded my mind. It came from the pad.

«Alright! It’s time to switch things up! This time, I’ll show you a secret video! What do I mean by secret? Every one of us has a secret, some more personal than others… »

That bear… he was lying. No way he knew secrets about each one of us.

«…but I’m not here to judge you about trivial matters, nope! This secrets are so important that could get you killed! Yeah, you heard that right! You got a video in which Monokuma exposes secrets that could lead you to a cruel, terrible death… delivered by one of your classmates.»

I didn’t want to hear what Monokuma was about to tell me, but I couldn’t resist. I had the chance to discover Kiibo’s weakness. But I would use it for good. I would protect him.

«Of course, I’m not telling your secret to you! No, someone else has your secret. Maybe, if you’re observant enough, you’ll find them and kill them! That would be a great plan!»

Monokuma’s voice stopped for a while, then the display changed showing a full picture of Kiibo.

«Kiibo’s the Ultimate Astronaut! Pretty unique talent, right? But he has a bunch of secrets too! I was very tempted to choose secret n°2, but three and five were pretty good too!... Either way, then I made up my mind! Kiibo… the trainee who managed to gain a title… is claustrophobic. Very much so that he can’t stand standing in a very small space! According to medic reports, he starts hyperventilating and gets very stressed… sometimes he even loses consciousness! So, find a small room and you’re done! Great work! But try not to get found out! Monokuma, peace!»

Is this… our new motive? Is Monokuma hoping we’ll take advantage of this information?

If I received one, it must mean the others got one each too… I looked at the time. Only five minutes past eight. There wasn’t time to shower. I had to see what the others had to say. I quickly took Shuichi’s cape and exited my room. Exactly at the same time, I saw Maki doing the same.

She glanced at me and then started walking like I wasn’t there at all. Only when she opened the door to the outside she acknowledged me.

“Pay attention, Kaede.” Was all she had to say.

Was she in possess of my secret? I don’t think she’ll spill it to the others. We already had that problem a few days prior, and she didn’t talk before I told her to.

That leads me to presume she has received a tablet too, but not mine. Maybe it implicated me in some way…
I have to admit, I’m feeling pressured knowing someone is aware of one of my secrets. I have no idea on how Monokuma can know, but I’ve done some terrible things in my life as a detective… and I would like them to remain hidden forever. Maybe Kiibo had mine, we could tell each others’ secrets to show the we could be trusted.

I knocked on his door hoping for him to respond, but as I leaned my ear against his door, I couldn’t hear anything. He’s up, probably. He must have gone to the cafeteria with the others. I need to go there.

Following Maki’s footsteps, I headed out of the dorms. On my way to the school complex I found Tsumugi with a broom in hand.

“Tsumugi?”
“Kaede!” She greeted me, then looked at the broom. “I know this might be strange, but I just wanted to clean my room.”

“Don’t the Monokubs do that already? At least I assume so, since I find them clean every time I go back to them…”

“Yeah, you got to give them credit for that, but that isn’t enough for me. I demand absolute cleanliness.”

“Oh…”

“I know I’m quirky. But today I decided it would be the first thing I would do during the day!”

“So…” I carefully worded my next sentence. “You haven’t paid attention to anything else?
“No… I saw some sort of Monopad next to my bed, but I ignored it. Priorities, you know?”

“Well, yeah…”

“Don’t worry about breakfast. I cooked everything yesterday and made sure it was perfect just when the morning announcement sounded. I entered the cafeteria at 8 AM.”

“Wow! Were you waiting in front of the door?”

“Of course! To be sure I’m never late, I always show up thirty minutes before a meeting. That was one of the first things I said after meeting you.”

“Yeah, I do… I just thought… it was some sort of conversation starter…”

“I always plan ahead. It keeps my mind occupied.”

“I know you have to clean up your room, but could you attend the meeting? There are important matters to discuss, and I mean… very important.”

“You sound worried, Kaede…” She paused for a second, thinking about her answer. “I suppose cleaning can wait. But I have to carry this thing around.” She pointed, looking at the broom.

“It won’t be that bad.”

Tsumugi, the broom, and I reached the entrance of the cafeteria and, to my surprise, I found someone I didn’t expect there.
Miu… and Maki too.

As I entered the latter averted her gaze.

“Kaede, you came here.” Rantaro waved at me. “I suppose you found what everyone of us found.”

As I looked around, I noticed Kirumi, Kiibo, 0U-M4, Gonta and Angie were missing. Everyone else was there.

“The… Kubs Pad.” I said.

“Yes. It appears they were distributed to us during this night.” Korekiyo observed. “But, discussing such important topics without the presence of four people here would hurt our group.”

“But there are five of us who are missing.” Kaito said, counting with his fingers.

“You are correct indeed. Four people and one robot.”

“I HEARD A ROBOPHOBIC COMMENT!!” 0U-M4’s scream damaged my eardrums permanently. “Do you insult me when I’m not around?!”

I turned and saw the ones who weren’t present before, who just closed the door behind them.

“I did as you said, Rantaro.” Angie bowed. “I called everyone here.”

“Good job, Angie. I knew I could count on you.”

“And I can count on Atua… I only did as you wanted because Atua wanted it too! Nyehheheh!”

Rantaro…? Why are you telling others what to do…?

He is trying to position himself as the leader of the group, that’s the impression I get from him. Maybe he doesn’t want that role, but he’s obviously making sure the others listen to him.

“We’re all here.” Rantaro said. “I’m sure Kaede appreciates that, right?”

As Rantaro finished his sentence, I picked up where he left off.

“Y-yes…” I responded, a bit unsure. “I… didn’t expect to talk about something so important today... but I think Monokuma gave us another one of his motives.”

Here we go. Cut and dry.

“Are you talking about… Kub pad?” Gonta asked.

“That’s right, Gonta. Those are secrets about us.”

“I love me some juicy secrets!” 0U-M4 snickered, as unhelpful as always.

“Gonta secret was about-

“Wait, stop!”

I immediately cut off the tennis player. Gonta let out a “wha…”

“We have a way to deal with this motive. Is not like last time, when one of us was doomed to be killed.”
“I share Kaede’s reasoning.” Kirumi supported me. “There is a way to ignore this motive.”

“When Monokuma told us, the second day, that no class trial would be held, what was my take on it?” I asked the others.

“If I remember correctly…” Tenko stated. “You said that ignoring it was the best option.”

“We… should do the same thing. And, whoever hasn’t seen the video, don’t look at it.”

“That’s what you were talking about just a while ago…” Tsumugi muttered. “So that pad is my motive…”

Maki spoke up.

“I do not agree with Kaede’s opinion.”

Of course, the only instance that she decides to show up, she questions my decisions… that doesn’t make me angry, not anymore. It just leads me to be more insecure. I thought my decision was the best…

“Those secrets… they shouldn’t remain secret.” Maki told the others.

“Some more words of wisdom by the one who decides to attend when she pleases!” Kaito called her out.

“Before opening your mouth, try to activate your neural connections.” She said to the inventor. “If we keep our secrets to ourselves, we won’t ever know how those are distributed.”

“Distributed?… Nyeh… what complex word…”

“It isn’t complex.” Tenko reassured the entomologist. “Maybe it isn’t that correct in Maki’s sentence…”

“We can’t know if I possess Kirumi’s, Tenko’s, Gonta’s secret… or whatever name you want to substitute. If I decide to kill one of you because of the information I have, someone else might be suspected more than me.”

“Heegh! So you admit you want to kill someone!”

“Mine was an example, you dumbass. I chose myself so no one would throw mindless accusations to me.”

“That was obvious, Miu!” 0U-M4 pointed out. “Today you’ve reached the pinnacle of stupidity! Congratulations! If someone was able to reach that milestone, it had to be you!”

“S-stop with your insults…”

“Maki’s train of thought is shared by the great Atua too! If we exchange our secrets, everyone will be able to protect themselves!”

“Yeah, but…” I intervened. “Would that make a big difference? You would only know something you already know…”

“If you know what your weakness is, you try to cover it!” Angie smiled. “If you have more than one weakness, you’ll know what is the one the enemy is aware of, and you cover that one only! You can save your energy!”
“I agree with you, but what if the situation degenerates?” I asked her.

“Explain degenerate.” Tsumugi said.

“Of course we’re talking about trusting a male degenerate! I can’t trust any menace here!”

“No, not that…” I clarified. “If we exchange our secret videos, someone else might see them. What if one of us steals one? Or watches one without anyone knowing? For now… we keep them to ourselves and well hidden.”

“I propose…” Korekiyo chimed in. “…that, if a murder were to occur, we should watch everyone’s secret video.”

“What?!” Kaito exclaimed. “No way I’m letting my secret out in the open!”

“You don’t have your secret, you know…?” Himiko responded.

“Of course I don’t! And I don’t know who has it! But I don’t give them permission to share it with everyone!”

“Do not let yourselves be consumed by anger.” Korekiyo calmly continued. “I was only examining the worst situation.”

“Nee-hee-hee! Aren’t you excessively paranoid? We’ll be sure to keep our secret to ourselves!”

“I am of the opinion that exchanging pads sets a dangerous precedent.” Kirumi continued to back me up.

“Oh, miss Kirumii!” Angie cried out. “Have you ever played Secret Santa?”

“Secret Santa? What does Christmas have to do with all of this?” Miu asked.

“Actually…” Kirumi clarified. “I have heard of it. But it does not resolve our problems.”

“So you know it! Please explain them!”

“I’ll add this information in my data banks.” 0U-M4 said.

“Essentially, participants draw names. Every one of the players has to gift something to the one he picked, but no one knows who is their benefactor until gifts are exchanged.”

“We’ll do the same! See each other and exchange our videos! Nyahaha!”

“Gonta think that a good idea! Do you want see your video, Korekiyo?”

“Huh?” The cosplayer turned.

“I have Korekiyo video! In my room!”

…He said it.

“Oh oh oh!” 0U-M4 giggled.

“Have you become Santa Claus now?” Tsumugi observed. “You are saying his catchphrase.”

“What an interesting turn of events!” The robot exclaimed. “Korekiyo, you could easily watch your secret video! Don’t you wanna know what is your weakness?”
Korekiyo, instead of appearing worried, smiled.

“Thank you, Gonta.” He said. “And you, Ouma, do not worry about my health. Knowing that Gonta possesses my secret allows me to be more relaxed.”

“Don’t you want to watch video?”

“No, I have no interest in that. I trust you. You would never hurt a fly.”

“Yeah, he won’t.” Himiko intervened. “Otherwise I’ll let loose a thousand of bugs right now!”

“Gonta not want that!”

While everyone was talking, Rantaro remained silent. He pretended not to listen, munching on his breakfast, but I saw that he was paying more attention than ever. He wanted to boss us around, but, now, when the others started talking, he silently left the conversation.

“I understand your decision, Korekiyo, but I don’t share it.” Angie said. “We should all see our personal videos. We need to stand together.”

“There’s no middle ground here.” Tenko observed. “We need to decide. And I think that the way to do is by a majority vote.”

“ Majority vote?” Kaito shook his head. “What the hell! If you’re all dumb I don’t want to get screwed by you! I do wh-”

“Rise and shine ursine!”

The three Monokubs cut Kaito off.

“Oh, dear, those bastards are arguing over nothing!” Monophanie said.

“LOOK WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE NOT FRIENDS.”

“It’s scary! I didn’t expect that!” Monotaro admitted.

“I WANT YOU- TO BE FRIENDS TOO.” The green cub was addressing us, apparently.

“Friends?” Korekiyo asked. “What do you mean by that?”

“DAD GAVE ME PERMISSION TO ADD A NEW RULE TO THIS MOTIVE!”

“Oh!” Monophanie gasped. “I didn’t know that!”

“YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO EXCHANGE KUB PADS WITH EACH OTHER.”

“What? You’re doing this just to upset me!”

“NO. I WANT YOU TO WORK TOGETHER.”

“What’s the point of giving us this motive then?” Maki asked.

“YOU CAN STILL WATCH THEM. ALL TOGETHER.”

“That’s okay.” 0U-M4 smiled. “Actually, that’s much better!”

“Gonta want to be friends with everyone! So very great!”
What…? Those bears, always messing up our plans…

“So long, bear well!” They said before disappearing.

“It appears that Maki’s idea has to be discarded.” Rantaro finally intervened.

“Umpf. It seems so.” She nodded, crossing her arms. “I only wanted to keep you safe.”

“Yeah, yeah… you care sooo much about us.” Miu ironically responded.

“So, when are we going to watch them together?” 0U-M4 asked. “I mean… we have to eventually.”

What was he saying?! I could understand where Maki was coming from, but 0U-M4’s proposal was completely absurd!

“No, we’re not doing that.” I laid it clearly for everyone. “You do realize that’s extremely dangerous, right?”

“I think it is…” Tsumugi quietly chimed in. “Everyone could know everyone else’s secret…”

“That’s the problem.” I agreed. “Since we aren’t able to exchange the videos one on one, if you want to know your secret it means you’ll have to let it be known to everyone else too.”

“I don’t want that…” Himiko whispered.

“Of course you don’t want to!” Tenko exclaimed. “It’s ridiculous! Only a robot without knowledge of human morals could propose anything like that!”

“Uff… I just want to protect everyone…”

“By showing our most vulnerable part to the others?” I told him.

“Didn’t you trust everyone?” 0U-M4 pressured me, smirking like he always does when he teases others. “If you do, why worry so much?”

“Yeah yeah! Nyahahah! Atua trusts everyone here! If they do something bad, his wrath will make them suffer so much and feed on their pleas! So beautiful!”

“That’s the God you believe in?” Kaito asked, stunned.

“We can’t do as 0U-M4 says.” I repeated, more convinced than before. The others had to understand that his idea would lead to another murder. They were reasonable… unlike him.

“That’s what I think too.” Rantaro spoke up. “Our videos must be kept secret to the others, until they’re absolutely needed. We can’t watch them.”

“But we won’t know our secrets!” Angie repeated.

“Are you scared that something might happen to you?” The artist asked.

“Well, naah. I’m sure Atua will shield me with his divine powers!”

“Great…” He commented, rolling his eyes. “You have nothing to fear then.”

“I suggest you to be on alert at all times. If you carry the weight of a heavy secret… you might be a target.” Korekiyo advised.
“Nyeh… I don’t want to pay attention all the time…”

“Didn’t you say you agreed with Kaede?” Rantaro asked her.

“Yeah, but… maybe watching them is the least tiresome way to solve this trouble…”
“Stop taking the easy route and do something for once…” Kaito commented, rubbing his head.

“What did you say, degenerate?!” Tenko yelled at him. Her face almost changed shape as she glared at the inventor. “Take that back! Don’t ever insult Himiko again!”

“I don’t need you defending me…” The entomologist quietly said, but the caretaker apparently didn’t hear her.

“I was giving her an advice. I didn’t insult her. Don’t act crazy.” Kaito clarified, somewhat irritated by Tenko’s reaction.

“Tsk! Talking with a menace! Useless as always! We should leave, Himiko. It seems we aren’t welcome here!”

“Actually, I think it’s better if y-

Rantaro was interrupted by the sound of the back door closing.

“Oh. My words were useless. Maybe Tenko’s right.” He shrugged.

“Regardless of your individual decisions, it appears that the Monokubs will not allow us to watch those secret videos unless we are either alone or all together.”

“I’ll find a way! A loophole!” 0U-M4 exclaimed. “And I’ll prove my actions are for the greater good!”

“Just like you sneaked inside Kaede’s room?” Kaito called him out. “That was so benevolent that you allowed Ryoma to enter unnoticed.”

“You always bring up the same question! I can make mistakes too! I’m a robot and so better than you, but you’re just stupid!” He exclaimed while leaving.

And so the same exact situation was repeating in front of my eyes. A motive was given, chaos was unleashed.

Kirumi recomposed herself and finished her sentence. “As I was saying, we have no reason to worry about those secret videos being shown. Despite this, I also recommend caution.”

“Good luck not getting killed.” Maki coldly spat. “I hope your secret isn’t as dangerous as the one that was given to me.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“I won’t share this information.” She said. “Now, if you excuse me, I am leaving too. This reunion didn’t go as I planned.”

The aikido master left and, slowly, all of my classmates did the same too. As we ate, we discussed more about the position to take on the matter, but we didn’t reach any conclusion. For now, the best option was to wait.
I left the cafeteria alongside Korekiyo, Kaito and Tsumugi. Our plan for the day was to explore the casino and search for useful materials there, but I assumed Kaito followed us because he also wanted to try to overcome the odds of the slot machines and the other games you usually find in those places.

I entered casinos numerous times, often because the two partners I travelled with were expert players of Texas Hold’Em. In my opinion, one of them deserved the title of Ultimate Gambler, or even Poker Master, if such specific talent could ever exist. It was thanks to his skill and his winnings that we were able to start travelling in exotic corners of our world.

I, however, hated those games, and more of all, I hated the ones based on pure luck. There was no logic involved, and, even in Texas Hold’Em, despite being able to bluff, good fortune was always the main driving force.

“So, there’s the entrance.” Tsumugi pointed us when we arrived.

“Aren’t you coming with us?” The inventor asked.

“No, no… I still have to clean up my room. I’ve delayed it for way too much time.”

“Curious. You demand order, however, from your speech pattern, I understand your thoughts are not organized.”

“Hmm… I’m going.” She let out a nervous laugh and then headed for the dorms.

“Since when are you interested in psychology?” I asked Korekiyo.

“Oh, since I was a little child.” He responded. “I discovered that cosplaying and psychology are not that far apart.”

I did not understand how those two fields could be related, but I assume that, under the right circumstances, they could be seen as similar. Cosplaying is a tiring but rather mindless activity, since it deals with replicating fictional characters. However, Korekiyo seems far more interested in cosplaying as a way to mimic other real, true personalities. I, myself, am passionate about psychology. Maybe I should talk more with him. He stands out as an erudite, intellectual individual.

Ignoring the Love Hotel –despite me being interested- we entered the casino, and a soundtrack started playing from a jukebox found on the back of the room.

“Sick music!” Kaito said.

“It is fitting for a casino.” Korekiyo said.

“Tsumugi told us that everything’s downstairs! Let’s go!” Kaito exclaimed, dashing down the stairs, excited as a little child before Christmas.

We followed him and, after opening a door, we entered another room, lit by blue and green lights, full of slot machines one next to the others.

“This is amazing!” Kaito exclaimed. “Even though I only need one…”
“Rise and shine ursine!” A single voice interrupted the inventor. “Hell yeah! Do you like my magnum… op… op… opurs?! Eh!!?”

“You mean “magnum opus”, I assume.”

“Who the fuck cares about spelling!? I don’t need to be intelligent!”

“Of course. How rude of me.” I ironized.

“The casino is now complete! I made it better alone, without the help of that stinky slaves!”

“If you created it…” Korekiyo said. “Then I would refrain from attempting to win.”

“Fuck you! I made sure this games are fair and square!”

“Yeah, I don’t care about the odds, man. My luck is so good I’d win even if there were no chances of winning!”

“But there are!” Monokid cried out. “Can’t you bastards understand?! Do you want to die under the weight of my might Exisal!!?”

“No, I would prefer not.” I said to calm him down.

“Then play and don’t be stupid like Monodam!” He shouted before vanishing. “Win Monocoins and change them upstairs!

“He’s hellbent on this shit.”

“He wants to impress his… brothers.” Korekiyo hesitated on his last word. “He is mimicking human reactions, but that filthy robot can never be as beautiful as humans!”

“You’re a creep when you do that.”

“The light will illuminate you one day, and you will experience life like me.”

“I can wait then.” He replied. Korekiyo responded by ignoring his information entirely, then turning his attention to the rest of the area.

Another door could be seen, and upon further inspection, I discovered that it led to a bathroom. I assume it was needed, since the closest one was in our dorms. It was an unisex bathroom, but it appeared to be in perfect conditions. If someone had spent many hours trying to win, he might need a place where they could… take a rest.

Without any warning, I heard the noise of coins falling down, one after the another.

“Yeaaah!” Kaito exclaimed. “Come to me, baby!”

I turned and approached him. I noticed he won the maximum amount of monocoins possible, just after one try.

“If those machines are rigged, then I’m rigged too!”

“Wow.” Was all that I could say. “That is extremely lucky.”

“I’ve got brains, I’ve got brawn, I’ve got luck… I’m probably the best person on this earth.”
“Do not overestimate yourself. It can be dangerous.” I advised.

“I got where I am by doing that, though. So I’ll continue.” He gave me a thumbs up.

“Are you planning on turning your coins in for some rewards?” I asked.

“Absolutely not! I’m going to exponentially increase my income by betting even more!”

“That appears to be risky.” Korekiyo commented.

“Tsk, aren’t we playing with fake money? Those terrible Monocoins are only good here, so I think it’s the perfect way to test my luck!”

Despite me warning Kaito once again, he pursued the path he decided to take, and he gradually lost more and more coins.

“You have wasted more than half of your original profit.” I told him after he continued spending. “If you persevere, you will lose everything you gained.”

“What? I haven’t won since my first try! Of course I’m going to win sooner or later!”

“This games prey on your weakness. Do not let them take control over your rational decisions.”

“Are you trying to lecture me?” He asked, raising an eyebrow.

“We are attempting to dissuade you from committing a grave mistake.”

“I’ll show you you’re wrong! Monocoins, don’t fail me now!”

Despite Kaito’s plethora of invectives and screams of agony, pleas and rituals, the Monocoins he once had in his hands were soon gone.

“Damn!” He exclaimed after losing the last one.

“As you said, it does not matter at the end. They were not a real currency.” Korekiyo reminded him, referencing his words.

“M-mh… It’s only a rock in the road for the great Kaito Momota!”

“You should not play excessively starting from now.” I told him again.

“Maybe you’re right…” He conceded.

“Oh, you finally have und-

“…BUT I WON’T BACK DOWN!”

“Oh dear.”

“I WILL HELD MY HEAD UP HIGH AGAINST THE LAWS OF PROBABILITY!”

“Lower the volume, please.” Korekiyo told him.

“…I have to win because there are prizes which could be disassembled for parts.” He said.

“Are you sure?”

That would be useful. He should have told us sooner. I, personally, would have still discouraged
him, but I would have understood the reason behind his blind faith in luck.

“Our sum I won at the start wasn’t enough.”

“Hm…?” Korekiyo pondered. “Those machines might be rigged after all. If the prizes are valuable, then there must be a trick.”

“It might…” Kaito followed up. “But who cares! I’ll demolish this machine if I need too! Those coins have to come from somewhere after all!”

“Do not touch my fucking slot machines!!!”

Monokid had returned.

“I won’t let you get my babies dirty! And, even if you want to anger me, there are no coins in these slot machines! They are empty until you win something!”

“How is that possible?” I asked.

“They’re connected to my personal bank and refilled when you win! I’m very proud of this system! Hell yeah!”

He seemed to be ready to leave again

“Hey! Wait a second!”

“So long, bear well!”

And he was gone.

“Should we explore the third room?” I asked the two boys.

“I did it already.” Korekiyo informed us. “I found a pool table covered by a table cloth and some card decks. I assume games such as blackjack could be played with those.”

“They require some level of strategy.” I observed. “You may be luckier attempting those.”

“With whom though?” Kaito’s question was legitimate. “If we’re talking about machines, I can always win something, but I can’t play against you, that’s certain.”

Was there another way to gain Monocoins?

***

After breakfast, I hurried to my room and took a much-needed shower. Because of what happened during the morning, I was forced to attend the meeting in terrible conditions. If we had pajamas at our disposal, I probably would have gone there without even dressing myself.

After getting back in shape, I exited the dormitories, hoping to find Kiibo as soon as possible. He wasn’t in his room, so he had to be somewhere on campus.

Right near the entrance of the school I met up with Himiko. Unexpectedly, she was alone, without
Tenko in sight.

“Hi, Himiko.” I greeted her. “Why… aren’t you with Tenko?”

“I said I had to go to the bathroom to get away from her.”

“Oh, well… don’t you want to spend time with her?”

“She’s always near me. I like to be alone, not surrounded by people. Not even one person.”

“Being alone sometimes is good for you, but isolating yourself is always bad.”

“Nyeh… Tenko always follows me, though. I don’t like it.”

“If you think she’s too intrusive, tell her. She’ll understand. I just think she cares a lot about you.”

“What if it’s not the same for me…? I don’t care a lot about her…”

“That doesn’t stop you from trying. What will you gain from staying silent?”

“Hm… I don’t want people to get angry at me…”

“See? You care about Tenko’s feelings after all.”

“No, it’s not about Tenko…” She explained. “I don’t want to argue with anyone because it’s an hassle…”

“Uhm…”

I tried to come up with something that could be considered helpful, but nothing came to mind.

“I decided I won’t argue with you either, Kaede. So I’ll continue searching for bugs here in the courtyard.”

“Y-yeah, but you should talk with Tenko…” I reminded her.

“If you see her, tell her I’m still in the bathroom.”

If I told her that, she could have easily exposed it as a lie… to each their own, I guess.

I stepped into the main entrance to discover that Kiibo was indeed there, sitting on one of the benches. He ignored me until I sat beside him.

“Oh, Kaede…” He jumped. “I didn’t see you entering. If you like this sitting place more, I can move.”

“I’m here to talk with you.” I explained.

“Uh, so it’s my turn now…” He rolled his eyes.

“Your turn? What do you mean?”

“First Miu, then Maki, now me… and I guess… Shuichi too… you have a track record of talking sense in to people, as you may say.”

It’s not like mine was that good of a job. I only managed to convince Miu... Maki turned the conversation on its head, and Shuichi… it might have been me who pushed him over the edge.
“I want to help you.” I continued. “I haven’t heard you say anything during these two days.”

“What can I say? There’s nothing I can do to help… I mean, yes, maybe there is…”

“Why don’t you try to figure out what it is?”

“I don’t want to. It’s simple. I won’t say I can’t do it. I have no intention to make an effort. I think you will do it alone. You don’t necessarily need my knowledge.”

“We might. You’re an astronaut, you must have received some kind of training…”

“Do I need to remind you I have never even stepped inside a spaceship? My job is to work out details like the probability of crashes, the study of extraterrestrial soil, physics and chemistry… something about astronomy, obviously…”

“That’s even more amazing.”

“You could praise me all you want, but that doesn’t mean I’m willing to help. Last time I tried I caused Shuichi… to take terrible decisions.”

“Are you taking the blame for Shuichi’s death? You, of all people, don’t have anything to do with what happened. I understand you might be shocked because-

“No, it’s my fault too. I told him that he didn’t matter.”

“I don’t believe you at all. You wouldn’t say that to anyone.”

“Those weren’t the words I used. But Shuichi could have interpreted them in that way. I said I have realized that the Universe is so vast that our actions don’t matter if we think about everything… he probably thought his life didn’t matter at all…”

“Heh, that would be too good. Last night, I stayed up all night, even if I was tired, looking at the stars… with Ryoma, for some time.”

“But, if you were tired, how did manage not to fall asleep?”

“Gazing at the stars… it usually calms me down. I hoped it would even in this case.”

“That’s curious. All those stars in the sky remind me of the vastness of space, and how small we are in the greater scope of things… it has that melancholic vibe to it, you know?”

“For me is the exact opposite! It’s reassuring to know the universe continues on without us… if we make mistakes, overall, it does no harm to it, since it’s so large and so many things are happening in this moment… what if there are other civilization besides us? It raises so many questions… it inspires me…”

“No way he thought that!” I exclaimed, standing up. “He recognized how important his sacrifice was, and how important would be that us wouldn’t give in to Monokuma!”

“You heard it from himself. He suffered from depression. Only a small drop could have been enough to… to do what he did… I might have been that drop.”

“I bet this discussion helped him decide.” I said. “You might have said to him that the Universe is
immense and that our actions don’t influence its course, but we all know that they do influence the
course of our lives and the ones of the people near to us. He knew that very well.”

Kiiibo looked down at the ground, pulling up his hoodie.

“You might be right… but I don’t want to help anyone anymore. For a… long time.”

“Okay.” I nodded. “I won’t force you to work, but don’t underestimate yourself.”

“I’m not doing that. I know I am not as ordinary as I may seem at first glance. But my advice isn’t
as good as yours and some other Ultimates. I’m better when I’m in my lab doing calculations.”

“That’s right, you’re great at your talent. I would be a fool denying that. But your talent doesn’t
have to limit your capabilities.”

“That means…?” He asked, confused.

“Today you’ll discover your new talent.” I said to him.

“M-my new talent?” He startled. “I don’t think I have another talent…”

“Who can confirm that? Have you ever tried pottery?”

I had zero knowledge in pottery. Maybe it wasn’t the best example.

“No, but-

“Then you could be the Ultimate Potter! You’d be missing out if you didn’t try at all!”

“I don’t know anything about pottery, to be honest.” He explained.

“Did you know about astronomy before studying it? I don’t think so.” I giggled.

Maybe I was exaggerating, but Kiiibo’s situation was eerily similar to Shuichi’s. They were both
full of second thoughts. If I wasn’t able to convince the magician, I would help the astronaut. I had
to prove to myself I could change someone else’s life.

“Now that you mention it… I don’t think so. B-but… pottery is very complicated.”

“Should we start with something simpler?” I proposed.

“I’d prefer not doing things that we’ll regret…”

“I’ll show you the way. What about cooking?”

Another thing I’m not really good at.

“I’ve had to cook for myself, but I’m not an expert…”

“Neither am I! This will be a great day for both of us.” I smiled.

“Heh… I fear we’ll fare terribly.” Kiiibo’s grimace turned to a slight smile. “But maybe… I can…
try one time…”

“Look, now I’m helping you. We should prepare lunch for everyone.”

“Y-yeah, but we should warn them Tsumugi wasn’t the one who prepared it…”
“Great idea! We’ll tell everyone Tsumugi was the chef!”

“I said the opposite…” Kiibo pointed out, looking to the side. “I don’t want to give everyone a stomachache…”

“It won’t be so bad. We’ll prepare something simple.”

“My only experiences are only with pre-made food.” Kiibo clarified.

“There’s always a first time.” I said.

Not knowing if my proposal was a good idea or a recipe for disaster, I headed for the cafeteria. Kiibo followed suit, muttering that he still wasn’t sure. Inside, the smell of something delicious immediately made me happier.

“Tsumugi’s here.” I noted as soon as I opened the door.

“How can you k-

The astronaut stopped.

“The smell didn’t reach me.” He said. “Now I understand.”

We stepped into the kitchen as the smell became clearer. It was a mixture of meat, vegetables and something else I couldn’t quite identify. Tsumugi was a maid but, apparently, was an excellent chef as well. She deserved a second title.

“Hey, Tsumugi. We’re here to help you.” I told her.

“Huh? I can do it alone, don’t worry.”

“See, Kaede? There’s no need of destroying everyone’s taste buds.”

“We’ve decided to spend this morning learning how to cook.” I said. “Since you’re here, you could give us some helpful advice, don’t you think?”

The maid looked at us smirking. I couldn’t tell if she was offended because we wanted to deprive her of her work or she was feeling pity for us. From an outsider perspective, I admit, I would also conclude that our decision wasn’t reasonable.

But who cares.

“O-okay, yes… I’ll be your teacher.” Tsumugi nodded. “I am a maid, though. So I am not entirely sure if my teaching methods are effective or not…”

“To be completely honest, I’m not totally on board with this.” Kiibo clarified once again.

“If you do something wrong, I’ll try not to shout to your face.” Tsumugi scratched her cheek.

“Why should you?!” Kiibo lamented.

“You might end up causing a mess. I don’t like messes. I want everything in order…”

Yeah, it surprised me that she didn’t freak out because I didn’t change this morning. From what I
can tell, she also possesses a superhuman sense of smell.

Which could be a good thing, but amplifies terrible smells by a great margin too, so I’m fine with my average abilities.

“Do you want to prepare an appetizer, a first dish…”

“We’ll stick to the easier recipes.” Kiibo said.

“Oh, right. I’m getting ahead of myself.” Tsumugi noticed. “I think that the right dish for you is… apple cider glazed chicken.”

“What? I don’t think I can glaze things…”

“Come on, it will be fun.” I reassured him.

“There are many apples here.” Tsumugi explained. “So we could use them to create something different. And there are chicken thighs in the warehouse.”

“Any reason why they would be there?” I asked.

“Still don’t have a clue. It appears Monokuma refurnishes it every couple of days.”

“Where does he get all of that stuff?”

Tsumugi shrugged.

That’s an important detail, though. It means that bear has a way to access the outside world. It could be the exit of the tunnel or something else.

Foraging the drawers, she found some… butternut squash. Is it called that? The strange-shaped pumpkin. Well. I guess.

“This will do.” She said. “Now, I should set the oven to 425° F.”

She did as she said, then picked up a bowl.

“I’m going to take the chicken.” She announced. “Take the apple, the butternut squash, some potatoes, pepper, oil and some rosemary to start. Toss them together until they combine.”

“It seems simple enough.” I smiled, searching for a bowl.

Tsumugi exited and I found what I was searching for, then I started cutting the apples.

“Do I have to cut that thing?” Kiibo asked, pointing at the peculiar pumpkin. “Can we switch sides?”

“If that makes you more comfortable, yes.” I nodded.

So, as Kiibo sliced the apples, I chopped the other ingredients. It was somewhat difficult, and I ended up with oval cubes, but I decided they were good enough for a first time. I put those and the potatoes in the bowl, waiting for Kiibo to finish. Extremely focused, he managed to get through his task safe and sound; despite one time he almost cut himself because of the pressure.

Tsumugi came back with the chicken and seared it on a frying pan. Seven or eight minutes passed, then she instructed us to remove the thighs and told Kiibo to pour vinegar on the pan.
“How much?” He asked.

“The whole jar, obviously. You need to taste it, don’t you?”

“S-sorry, I’m not into this cooking stuff.”

Kiibo alternated between sure of himself and stressed as Tsumugi gave us more and more instructions on how to proceed. We added honey, then some mustard that, for the maid, was absolutely needed, despite my protests. We mixed it for some time, then added butter. It slowly melted while Kiibo continued asking how much time was left.

Luckily for him, the hard work was done. I put the chicken along the vegetables in the pan and then we were told to put in the oven for twenty minutes.

I was proud of my skills, but we ended up forgetting about it and Kiibo brought it out five minutes late. It looked like we had overcooked it.

I guess it will be softer then.

“We messed up.” Kiibo grimaced.

“Don’t worry, it’s not that much. Five minutes, pssh!”

“Actually…” Tsumugi pointed out. “Those five minutes have made your dish subpar. I can’t believe you committed such an obvious mistake…”

“It happens to the best of us.” I said to encourage the astronaut. “Tsumugi, you must have done some mistakes in your cooking…”

“No. My dishes were always perfect, from the first one.”

“W-well, you’re the Ultimate Maid. It makes sense your skills are so amazing.” I quickly said, still trying to show Kiibo we had done a good job.

“But, overall, I’d say you have worked better than I expected. Whoever sliced the apples has done a great job.”

“I did…” Kiibo smiled.

“Great… if only you chopped the butternut squash with the same care…”

“Uhm… that’s actually my fault.” I confessed. “I kind of half-hassed that part…”

“Ah…” Tsumugi smiled awkwardly. “At least the potatoes are okay… but the apples were far better.”

“Wow, it seems I’m a master when it comes to slicing…” Kiibo ironized.

“It could be useful one day.” I followed. “You could be the Ultimate Slicer!”

Kiibo raised an eyebrow. He didn’t appear as convinced as I was.

“That’s too specific, I think… but I liked this cooking session…” He admitted. “Maybe I can try another one next time. Not now, though. I’m kind of burned out…”

“Just like our chicken!”
Tsumugi and Kiibo both looked at me with confused looks.

Maybe I said it too soon.

Chapter End Notes

As always, if you spot any errors, let me know.
I know that nothing *that* important happens in this chapter, but next time we'll see snippets of the story behind these characters! And also a surprise regarding the motive...

Ah, if I don't get any votes for the FTEs I'm going with Tsumugi and Kiibo for the next FTEs (not the next chapter, the one after.)
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Daily Life (Part 4)

Chapter Summary

Monokuma presents a new motive; The students discover more about their past.

Chapter Notes

Juust to be clear, the first POV in this chapter is Kirumi's.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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The clocks were not the only way to indicate the time. My stomach could be considered a rather efficient mechanism that reminded me I was hungry at specific hours of the day. I also learned to tell from the position of the sun, but to my knowledge, my digestive system was never wrong.

Yes, it was 1:30 PM.

I headed for the cafeteria to have lunch with whoever else was there. I do not know if our lunches will be regular meetings like our breakfasts, but I would certainly like it. I do not crave for human contact, but I appreciate listening to conversations and giving my opinion if needed.

Considering the situation we were thrown in, and the motive Monokuma presented to us… if people were not present themselves, they would be seen as suspicious. Or is the opposite true too?

Uhm… Monokuma is trying to confuse me. I understand that very well. I am cleverer that him, though, and I will not let him do what he wants.

There were some people in the cafeteria, but not everyone. I saw Tsumugi serving lunch to the ones who were sitting, who were Kaede, Kiibo, 0U-M4, Angie, Gonta and Rantaro.

“Salutations.” I greeted the others.

“Hi, Kirumi.” Rantaro said. “Do you want to eat with us? Tsumugi prepared baked spaghetti today. I never tried those, but it seems I have missed out for the entirety of my life.”

“I would like them, if you do not mind. Since yesterday, Tsumugi is blessing me with her magnificent work.”

“I’d consider her dishes a form of art!” Angie clapped. “Don’t you agree, Rantaro?”

“The presentation is so good it seems a painting…” He admitted. “Maybe even better than mine.”

“Nobody ever compared my dishes to paintings… thank you!” Tsumugi said, placing a plate where I usually sat.
“Have the others come?” I asked while claiming my seat.

“Kaito took a snack and then flew away…” 0U-M4 recounted. “Korekiyo stayed here for a while, then went back to his room… but no trace of Miu, Maki, Himiko and Tenko.”

“Gonta see Tenko visit his research lab and she searched for Himiko!”

“Wow! Did she actually step inside your lab?!” 0U-M4 exclaimed.

“Yes! Gonta thought she want to play tennis, so asked her like gentleman!”

“And…?”

“She said Gonta was menace and then got away! Since Gonta wants to become gentleman, Gonta didn’t follow her!”

“Poor Gonta!” Angie patted him. “If I was there with you, I would have tried to convince Tenko! I’m sure she’s only scared because you’re different from her!”

“Gonta different?”

“Even though you’re different, it doesn’t mean that’s bad, you know?” She smiled. “In fact, being different helps us become unique in our own way!”

“Then Gonta wants to become unique too!”

“Nyahahah! You’re unique already! In your unique way!”

Despite my doubts about Angie’s true intention, she made everyone else smile.

“How can you be always so positive in this situation?” Kiibō asked.

“Just let the bad thoughts go away! Find the silver linings!”

“Pff, who cares for silver? I’m going for the gold!” 0U-M4 missed the point of our conversation.

Kaede tried to intervene. “That’s a sayin-

“I know, I know… I was trying to be funny!”

“We should have locked you in your room…” Rantaro observed, raising an eyebrow.

I found myself agreeing with the artist’s claim. That robot was not our friend. He may think he helped us during the trial, but in reality he made Kaede and me suspicious… and decided to hurt two innocent people only because he desperately wanted to prove a point. What game is he playing? Or should I say is it… playing?

“Sorry for the inappropriate question…” I said. “0U-M4, with what pronoun should I address you?”

“I would like my majesty, thanks.”

“We’re not going to do that.” Rantaro laid it out clearly.

“If you don’t want to call me that, then I’ll go for anything else. Just remember I’ll be forever disappointed by your terrible… spelling.”
“Uhm… spelling doesn’t have anything to do with this.” Kaede pointed out.

“I do have something to do with this, though!”

Monokuma appeared from underneath the table, scaring Kiibø.

“AAAH!!” He screamed.

“Upupupupu… these pranks always end up being hi-la-rious!”

“T-they don’t! Stop!”

“If you’re so sensitive, next time I’ll scare Kaede! She seems so strong and tough!”

The detective grumbled in disappointment.

“Every time I show up you have the same face! Cheer up for a bit!”

“I have that face because you always want us to turn on each other.”

“And bring bad news!” Gonta added.

“You know what they say! Don’t hate the player, hate the game…!” He stopped and scratched his neck for a while. “Wait, that’s not right… Ah, yes. What a dummy. It was something like don’t shoot the messenger! As if you could shoot me! Upupupupu…”

“And so, we return to the same question… why are have you come here?” I asked.

“This time I’ll cut right to the chase…! Man, do I like sayings today!”

“Can you teach me a few?” 0U-M4 asked. “You look like an expert!”

“No way I’m spilling the beans with a low-quality robot!”

“I’m extremely advanced!” The robot complained. “You can’t comprehend the extent of my abilities!”

“Looking forward to be amazed.” He sarcastically replied.

“You’re derailing the conversation.” Kaede said. “Monokuma, we don’t like each other and we know that very well. So tell us what’s your business here and go away.”

“I can’t believe you’re still angry because of the death of that nobody!”

“Stop talking about him!!” Kaede shouted, slamming her fist into the table.

“Okay, okay… geez… Can’t have a minute of silence to talk with my students…”

“I pray Atua too, that you will be gone very soon.”

“Last time I presented to you a triple motive, remember? That was a first!”

“You told us that the culprit would gain their memories back, he would be able to escape without a class trial, and then that someone had to die before the time limit…” Tsumugi reminded us, despite every one of us surely remembered them well.

“Of course, I originally planned to give you one motive at the start, but because of my adorable
Monokubs and your resilience, I had to add a second, and then a third! Inacceptable, I thought at first.”

“Where are you going with this?” Rantaro asked.

“You’ve already seen the Kubs Pads, each of them carrying an heavy secret! That’s the motive for this second chapter of the killing game!”

“A motive?” Angie exclaimed, surprised. “I wouldn’t consider them as a motive! We just have to watch them all together!”

“You can exchange them personally.” Monokuma observed. “It surprises me you still haven’t done that.”

Huh? Monodam explicitly stated that we were not allowed to watch the videos unless us fourteen were together. It appears that the cub did not warn his father about his sudden change of plans.

“We can’t, though!” 0U-M4 grimaced. “Monodam told us we can’t! Do you think the same?!”

“Monodam?” Monokuma was shocked. “Has he decided that by himself?!”

“*Hell yeah and shine, ursine!*”

Monokid, with a new guitar in his paws, appeared on the table. Unluckily for Kiibo, he landed on his very plate.

“Are you kidding me?” He said, upset.

The stuffed bear ignored him completely.

“Dad! Dad!” He called him. “Monodam defied your authority!”

“Uh?” Monokuma said, confused. “Oh, it seems so…”

“You should punish him! He’s making up rules!”

“Don’t be jealous, Monokid!” Monokuma scolded the bear. “Your brother is finally taking matters in is own hands! Good for him!”

“Are you angry?!”

“Of course not! He’s starting to become independent, and that’s amazing! You also have done pretty good things overall, like organizing the casino.”

“This is not the time to be saying compliments! But to destroy Monodam! He killed Monosuke!”

“Tsk, who cares about him. He was my least favourite.”

A father should not play favorites when it comes to his children. Even if those were not his biological sons.

“B-but… dad!”

“This is only a stupid quarrel.” Monokuma sentenced. “You should stop taking it so seriously! Otherwise you’ll get detention!”

“You don’t understand, dad!” The blue bear complained before disappearing.
It appears there is a feud between Monokid and the other stuffed bears.

“Family matters! They’re always so stressful! Just when I was going to announce the second motive!”

“A-another motive?” Tsumugi stuttered.

“Yeah!” Monokuma ironically smiled. “To speed things up, ya know? We don’t have all the time in the world in here!”

“You don’t have time…?” Kaede asked. “What does that mean?”

“I wonder! Do some of your deductions and tell me! By the way, I’m fairly certain this will be common procedure from now on.”

“State what you mean by common procedure.” I demanded.

“I’ll give out two motives every time! I usually stick to one, but as I said, we’re running short on time. So a double incentive can really get your killing spirit going!”

“Tell us quickly, so I can enjoy this meal with my friends.” Angie politely asked.

“If you’re so nice, I can’t say you no!”

“Nyahaha! Being nice is always the solution!”

“The second motive is… shorter daytime! Nighttime will start at 7:30 PM and end at 9 AM from today! You may be wondering, that’s a pretty weak motive… well, it could be… but remember, many things are different after this change!”

“He is referring to the closing hours of the cafeteria, the warehouse and the gym.” Rantaro pointed out.

“Yeah, of course, those are part of the package. But there’s another important detail that comes with this new motive!”

I tilted my head in confusion. I could not picture what Monokuma was implying.

“Upupupupu… you’ll know in due time! Six hours from now, more or less.”

I suppose this new motive will be more of a nuisance than an incentive to kill. However, I have failed to predict Monokuma’s true intentions before.

“Also, at 7 PM I’m summoning each and every single one of you in the AV room! Come or you’ll get punished!”

“I don’t recall seeing one.” 0U-M4 said.

“Right next to the library, you bastards! Where Shuichi and Ryoma found the secret switch and entered without permission! Oh, look were they are now, upupupu-

Suddenly, I saw a cup flying to my right. It missed me by a long margin, but I realized it was not aimed at me, but at Monokuma.

“Time to go!” He exclaimed before the object could hit him.
And so the cup shattered on the ground.

“Sorry, Tsumugi.” Kaede said. “I thought it was the only way to make him go away.”

“That’s unsafe and untidy!” Tsumugi exclaimed. “But… don’t worry… Kaede, I’ll clean this up immediately.” She continued, picking up a broom and starting to swipe.

I was not entirely convinced. Obviously Kaede’s intent was not only to dissuade Monokuma from tormenting us. She appeared rather furious with the robotic bear. Who could blame her? The living toy constantly teased her about Shuichi.

“This new motive is certainly… peculiar.” Rantaro said.

“It doesn’t target us directly. But there has to be something to it we don’t understand.” Kiibo observed.

“For now, we should only make changes with our schedule. Breakfast can’t be at 8 AM, and dinner has to be served before 7:30 PM.”

“That very early.” Gonta said. “Gonta never eat before 8 PM.”

“You’ll get used to it. Don’t start complaining now.” 0U-M4 criticized.

“Poor Gonta!” Angie exclaimed. “If Gonta isn’t hungry so early, maybe we can store the food and he can eat it afterwards?”

“I could do that…” Tsumugi said.

“Nyahahah!”

“We should warn the others as well.” I intervend.

“Right. I’ll get to it.” Rantaro offered himself for the task.

“Me too! Gonta and me!” Angie enthusiastically followed.

Kaede stopped the three before they could leave. “Before that, though… what about the meeting Monokuma mentioned?”

“Nee-hee-hee! You almost forgot about it!”

“He said we’re going to be punished if we don’t attend…” Kiibo said.

“Last time he called us together was when we first woke up.” Kaede continued with her thoughts. “The Monokubs said the same thing. We know that in that instance, the killing game was unveiled to us…”

“Are you suggesting ignoring the meeting?” I asked. “I am of the opinion we cannot avoid what Monokuma will show us this evening.”

“Of course!” Kaede quickly responded. “I’m sure that attending is our only real option here. But we should be careful.”

“And, on top of that, we should convince everyone to go there.” Rantaro added. “I don’t know if Monokuma is serious, but we can’t run the risk of leaving out Maki and Miu, for example.”
“I would prefer if they sat this meeting out!” 0U-M4 laughed. “If they get punished, it’s only because of they decided not to eat with us!”

“They deserve to know.” Rantaro coldly replied. “And I invite all of you to tell them. Otherwise, their blood will be on your hands.”

The artist had a point, but he was being overly dramatic. His words were rather unsettling for me too. He probably convinced the others to do as he said.

After finishing our lunch, we divided and went our own separate ways, searching for others and informing them of the most recent developments, planning to see each other in the cafeteria for a quick dinner before the appointed time for Monokuma’s meeting.

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I let out a breath of relief when Maki, the last to arrive, closed the door behind her. I couldn’t find her, but apparently someone else did.

“Let’s eat before nighttime comes.” Tsumugi invited us. “I’ve already cooked everything, so we can go to the AV room as soon as possible.”

“So explain me what Monokuma told you… daytime finishes early?” Kaito asked.

“That’s right.” Rantaro nodded. “And it was presented to us as a motive.”

“It’s a weird motive!” Tenko commented. “But at least Himiko’s here!”

The two sentences had no relation whatsoever.

“I was worried for you! Were did you end up?”

“Nyeh… I was tired…”

“Don’t ever go around without telling me! You almost gave me an heart attack!”

“Damn, Tenko! Don’t be so clingy!” 0U-M4 lamented.

“Who are you to tell me what to do!? Sit down and reflect on your life choices!”

The robot rolled his eyes and glanced at the food we were eating.

“This motive will force us to re-evaluate our schedule.” Korekiyo observed. “It seems you are underestimating its power.”

“Mah, who cares.” Maki intervened.

“Of course you don’t!” Miu insulted the martial artist. “You never come with us to the meetings!”

“You just started though, so you shouldn’t be the one to talk…” Kiibo said.

“Go hide in your hood and suffocate!”

“O…okay… I’ll keep out from this conversation.”
Not that it went on for much time. We finished our meal and left the cafeteria, heading for the AV Room, while I was asking myself why did Monokuma want us all in a single place. Was he presenting another motive? It couldn’t be.

“No matter what happens, stay strong.” I told the others while climbing down the stairs.

“Gonta strong for all of you!”

“She doesn’t mean that kind of strength…” Tsumugi pointed out.

“The strength that we need to possess now is the ability to maintain loyalty to each other.”

“If Kirumi wants that strength from Gonta, he try his best!”

“Do your best, Gonta! Do it!” Angie pumped him up.

“Don’t let him divide us again. He’s going to do it, you know it very well.” I explained. Six days were enough to understand how that bear, or, at least, that AI, operated.

“He gave us those secret videos because he wants us to be suspicious.” Kaito finished my thought. “Whatever he shows to us, he just wants to rub salt into the wound.”

“Nee-hee-hee! Did you forget that we can only watch the videos if we’re all together? They want us to be together and share secrets!”

“Stop with this nonsense!” Kaito protested.

“You only want to see this situation your way! Have an open mind, won’t you?”

Kaito glanced at me and ignored the robot. It seems like he knows I’m going to scold him if he continues with that pointless fight.

The door was open before us.

“Let’s enter.” I said.

The room looked like a normal AV Room. A computer, a projector, a screen, some sofas and a carpet underneath them. Shelves on the right and the left, but nothing on them.

“Please, make yourself at home.” Monokuma, out of nowhere, said. “You arrived here in advance.”

“Only one minute though!” Tsumugi flinched. “I usually arrive way earlier!”

“Bring your popcorns, cause you’re going to watch a short movie!”

“Popcorns? Where?” Himiko jumped up.

“You didn’t bring them? Too bad…”

“There are no popcorns in this school.” Kirumi said.

“Maybe I was lying. But who cares, you can have an enjoyable experience without food. After all, you just finished eating.”

“Gonta still not ate!”

“But having a snack right before dinner is unhealthy! I can’t put in danger my students! I would
“Yet you still allow violence if one of us is the perpetrator. As a caretaker, I have to point out the flaws in your logic.”

“I can’t stop you from assaulting your classmates! That’s your decision and your decision only! Upupupu…”

Monokuma continued laughing. Sadly, this time I didn’t have any object to throw at him. He said he wouldn’t participate directly in a murder, but by giving us motives and threatening to kill us all, he sure wasn’t innocent.

“By the way… I have already talked about my amazing qualities as a teacher, headmaster and parent, so let’s talk about the reason why you are all here. Did somebody come here to scout the place?”

Kirumi, Korekiyo and 0U-M4 raised their hand.

“Good boys! Have you found something particularly interesting?”

“There is a locked vault behind the screen.” Korekiyo revealed.

“And I couldn’t lockpick it…”

“Excellent job, creepy cosplayer!” Monokuma applauded. After that, he rolled up the screen and took out a key from what looked like a pocket. What? Was his body like some sort of cloth?

Behind the screen there was exactly what Korekiyo had described. Monokuma inserted the key to reveal a bunch of USB sticks.

“I’ll take… this one here.” He said, picking up a seemingly random one between all of them and locking the vault.

“Time to go inside again!”

Following that exclamation, Monokuma swallowed the key.

“How do you work, exactly?” Kiibo asked in confusion.

But, of course, the bear didn’t care about the astronaut’s question, and inserted the USB stick in the computer found on the desk in front of us.

“Please, sit and enjoy.” He invited us.

“Don’t worry about me.” Tsumugi reassured us. “I don’t have to sit.”

“Of course I need to!” Miu boasted. “These brains and tits need rest!”

Eventually, most of us managed to sit. 0U-M4, Tsumugi and Gonta were the only ones who stood up.

The projector came to life, first showing a blue screen, then transforming into distinct images.

“It’s time for a blast from the past!” Monokuma exclaimed.

The lamps that illuminated the AV room turned off. The image projected on the screen became
The first shot was of a city that I didn’t recognize, from what I assume was a helicopter. It was surrounded by ocean at least from two sides, but the other two weren’t visible. Whoever was holding the camera zoomed in to show a very high tower, but I couldn’t tell how many storeys tall. Beside it, there was something like a small forest.

“Landing is too dangerous.” A woman said. I assumed it was the identity of the individual carrying the camera.

“How can you tell?” A man asked in response.

“There is no one outside. Usually the city is full of people.”

“Do you think this is a trap?”

“Undoubtedly. We should report back to base.”

“We can’t turn on communications while in this area, otherwise we could be suspected.”

“When did the city stop emitting signals?” The woman asked, this time zooming on what looked like a cemetery. I wasn’t sure, though. The details were still unclear.

“Yesterday.”

“Nobody could have managed to overturn the situation in less than 24 hours.”

“Who do you think is behind this act?”

“There were no signs of rebellion in the city. It was considered to be a safe haven.”

“Goes to show that the bzzrrtszz hasn’t stopped.”

What?... The video corrupted for a fraction of a second. One word was inaudible.

“And we thought we could have fought it.”

“We need to bring others here. With weapons…”

“Yes, expert marksmen and soldiers. We have no idea of what’s down there.”

As the woman talked with her partner, I swear I saw something moving between the graves of the cemetery. It could have been anything, but it had to be something. However, it was extremely quick. The reporter didn’t comment on it, so I assume she didn’t notice it either.

“Our scouting is complete.” The man announced. “You can turn the camera o-

The man was cut off abruptly. An extremely loud sound echoed throughout the room, lasting less than a second.

After that, the screen turned back to blue.
What… was that…?


“You’ve given us no context, no starting point, no conclusion…” Angie observed.

“Kehkekeh… life is often as cryptic as this short scene…”

“I knew you wouldn’t understand at first.” Monokuma ignored the critiques. “I’ll explain it to you in a bit. Remember, you won’t be able to watch this ever again! This is an one and only showing!”

“Not that it was worth a rewatch…” Kaito said.

“I hope you can access this important data in your future via your brains.”

“Is this another metaphor? I don’t get it.” Himiko scratched her cheek.

“Welp. Here goes. Time to eat.”

Just like he gulped down the key, Monokuma ate the USB stick, which was supposedly lost forever.

“Time to reveal that those scenes were actually real!”

“Real?” I asked for clarification.

“As real as you are! They are taken from the outside world… well… they aren’t a direct feed, but they happened some time ago.”

“Why should we care?” Maki intervened, her passive-aggressive tone never leaving her side.

“Because… the city depicted in that short movie… is the city where you all lived in the past!”

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“A-all… of us?” Kaede flinched.

“Yeah, you don’t remember, obviously. But, at some point in your life, you were all there. I can’t say anything more than that, cause it would be a spoiler.”

“This is not a motive.” I tried to guess.

“Of course! Is more like a prize! Like the object the Monokubs gave you yesterday! Congrats on getting alive from the class trial!”

Was Monokuma’s statement a lie…? Or was it the truth? I do not recall any of the people I met in the academy, and I suppose every single one of us is as confused as I am. Kaede knew about Ryoma, we are aware of that, but she never mentioned remembering someone else.

“Kaede, do you remember us?” Rantaro asked.
“W-what do you mean?” Kaede responded with another question. However, I knew what Rantaro was thinking.

“You said you remembered Ryoma.” He continued. “I’m sorry to bring up his name again, but you’re the only one here who had previously met someone else in this room.”

“I didn’t meet him in person, to be clear, but I know where are you going with this.”

As I expected, Rantaro wanted to ask the same questions as me.

“Do you recall seeing anyone of us too?” I asked.

“I’m sorry. I don’t. Your faces don’t ring a bell to me. I’m sure we didn’t meet before.”

“I get what you’re trying to do, Rantaro.” Kaito intervened. “But what you’re sayin’ doesn’t make sense. Why would Kaede keep her memories while we would not?”

Rantaro shrugged. “I don’t know. I thought that since she’s a detective, her synapses might be more developed… sorry if I suck at anatomy and those kinds of things.”

“Oh, don’t worry.” Angie reassured him. “You’re great at what you do.”

“I guess…”

“I knew Ryoma because I heard of him, but I never saw him in person.” The detective explained.

“Do you recognize the city depicted in the video?” I asked.

“I… I really don’t. I’m sorry. I remember all my life in general, but there are like empty spaces here and there.”

“Man, isn’t it like that for everyone here?”

One after the other, we all nodded. I do not know how our kidnapper managed to select specific memories from our brain and erase them as they never happened. I did not remember technological devices able to perform that kind of brain surgery. The cost would be higher than any other operation I ever heard of, but that would line up with the expensive decorations I found in the casino. Whoever took us hostage was extremely wealthy and powerful, so much that they could have been experimenting with us. We were lab rats, it appeared.

“How is this video going to help us?” Kiibo intervened. “It doesn’t tell us anything important, only a city that was apparently conquered by someone, I think…”

“It has happened numerous times in the past.” I observed. “More than that, there is no proof that the video we were shown is not fictional.”

I was skeptical. The video was not harmful to us directly, but as I noticed, there were other USB sticks in the vault. It was safe to assume that the bear would project more short movies as time passed. I suspected those would eventually qualify as additional motives.

“I never lie about those things!” Monouma protested.

“We can’t confirm anything of what you said.” Tenko pointed out. “It could be fake, for all we know.”

“I suspected this type of media would cast doubts…” Monokuma gloomy said. “But that’s what
we’re going for this time. I’m trying to see how the end result changes.”

“Dump garbage, what do you mean by this time?!”

“Bye! See you next time!” He announced, and then left, leaving Miu without a response.

“…That terrible inflatable doll! He’s not even good at his job!”

“U-uhm… I don’t think that’s appropriate…” Rantaro looked uncomfortable.

“I don’t care about what you think it’s appropriate! I do things my way! Don’t tell me what I should do!”

“Hey, don’t blow a fuse. Chill.” Kaito tried to calm Miu down.

“I said don’t tell me what to do!”

With an expression that some could consider angry and others paranoiac, Miu left the room slamming the door behind her.

“Monokuma showed us what we were supposed to see, so she has the right to leave.” Angie defended the pianist.

“If I were her, I would try to stabilize my emotions.” Korekiyo advised. “She definitely cannot control them. I met lunatics often.”

“It would be foolish to call her bipolar.” I intervened. “She reacts irrationally, but she is consistent with her behavior. Of course she is not constantly angry.”

“I can see a spark of madness in her eyes.” The cosplayer continued. “Studying her would be an interesting pastime.”

“That’s also kind of creepy.” Rantaro pointed out.

Even though my classmates did not appreciate Korekiyo’s comments, I could understand why was he so interested in how human mind works. If only he was not that disquieting when he discussed about it…

I would have continued the discussion with him if only the lights did not turn off.

“What’s going on? Everyone behind Gonta! Gonta protect you!”

I turned to see that 0U-M4 was operating the computer. No one had noticed him moving towards that place while we were discussing.

“Nee-hee-hee! Are you ready to see another video?”

“Another video? Have you picked up another one of those USB keys?” Kaito asked.

“It’s better! Look at it!”

The robot pressed a button on a remote and the screen shifted from light blue to another shade of the same color, darker. I had already seen that shade.

It was one of the secret videos Monokuma gave to us.
At first, nobody realized what was about to happen and we froze in place. I expected to see Monokuma’s introduction since that was present in my video as well, but it was absent.

<<Kaito Momota is the Ultimate Inventor! What a great talent! I bet it’s so useful! But even an inventor has secrets! Wow, which secret will I show you?>>

Kaito did not waste time complaining. He charged 0U-M4 before we could raise a hand to stop him.

<<I guess this one will do.>>

The video did not stop, and neither did Kaito. He tackled 0U-M4, despite the latter being covered by sturdy metal plates.

<<Do you know Kaito Momota is daltonic?>>

0U-M4 fell to the ground. A loud thud came afterwards.

<<Maybe it’s not as juicy as a secret, but it can be deadly! I won’t give you any ideas, but there are w-

The video cut off and the screen turned black, then the audio stopped as well.

Kaito stood triumphantly over 0U-M4 with the remote in his right arm and with the laptop closed.

“What the fuck were you doing?!” He shouted, furious.

“Nggh… I wanted to show… our secret videos to everyone…”

“Kaito, don’t be so violent!” Angie pleaded. “Ouma will be hurt!”

“I hope he will be! You shouldn’t prove empathy for this sick being!”

“P-please, call… nghh… me… person, at least…”

“You don’t deserve that name!”

“Stay calm, everyone!” Kaede intervened.

“I don’t care! Can’t you see that this thing is dangerous for all of us?!”

“He indeed is.” I commented, agreeing with the inventor. “However, you should not be extremely rash in your decisions.”

“You could kill him if you are too violent.” Korekiyo added. “What do you plan on doing?”

“Y-yeah… if you deactivate me… you’ll be seen as a blackened… nee-hee-hee…”

“That menace! He still laughs despite what happened to him!”

“He just tricked us into seeing a secret video! We can’t let him roam free in this academy!”

“You’re angry because he showed us your video.” Maki hissed. “And that isn’t as dangerous as we might have thought.”

“I don’t fucking care about my secret! I’m daltonic, okay!? I can’t distinguish between red and green!”
Despite his attitude, he appeared relieved. Maybe he had weaknesses and secrets that could be considered more dangerous for him.

“The point here is that this little robot has, for the second time, done a thing we agreed was dangerous!”

“Not everyone agreed with your opinion, I remind you.” Angie smiled. “But these methods are too extreme! Fighting is not recommended in my island! I ensure everyone is safe and happy in my homeland!”

“Sorry.” Rantaro excused himself. “I want to point out that what you have seen was the video that I received.”

We turned towards Rantaro, mildly confused.

“Nyeh… you gave it to him, then…”

“So you’re behind this too! Fucking figures!”

“Hey, hey… don’t start accusing everyone!” Tsumugi said. “He has to have a reason…”

“Why are you defending him?!”

“Kaito, I didn’t meet 0U-M4 after lunch today. I stayed with Tsumugi most of the time.”

“Yeah… I haven’t seen him sneak anywhere…”

“Don’t blngghh… blame him. I took the video from his room, since I lockpicked the door. Then I transferred it to a USB stick I found in the warehouse.”

“You can find everything there…” Himiko said, tired. “Wow…”

Rantaro glared at Kaito, but did not say anything. They did not like each other.

“See? Rantaro doesn’t have anything to do with this.” Kaede breathed a sigh of relief. “Ouma can surely explain himself, right?”

“I just wanted everyone to be on the sam-

The robot attempted to get up, but Kaito managed to keep him down.

“DON’T TRY TO MOVE!” He shouted at him. “Kaede, stop being blind. If you want peace between us, Ouma needs to change!”

“Nggh… I won’t change, especially for someone like you!”

“Gonta don’t think he will change ever. Gonta can lock him somewhere!”

“Isolating him won’t be a solution. We can’t treat him that way.” Kaede said.

“I said he needs to change. And he will change.”

“You can’t force someone to do that.” Maki rolled her eyes.

“Is the rope we used still in your research lab?” Kaito addressed Kaede.

The detective scrutinized him, then nodded while crossing her arms.
“I know many of you agree with me.” The inventor said. “I don’t think that Ouma has to be locked in a room. He won’t change if we do that.”

“What’s the your proposal then?” Kiibo asked. “Because… I agree with you.”

“He’s a robot. I’m an inventor. I can reprogram robots.”

“W-what?!” 0U-M4 exclaimed. “Reprogramming me?! I won’t let you do that! Get away from me!”

I have no experience with robots and engineering, however… Kaito possesses a talent. He must know what he is talking about. Despite my reservations about him, I am inclined to believe he would be successful.

“I’ll take him to my lab and see what can I do. But I need a rope to tie him up.”

“LEAVE ME ALONE! LEAVE ME ALONE!” The robot repeated.

0U-M4 tried to reach for the buttons on his torso, but Kaito prevented it from happening.

“You won’t blind me. Do you think you can pull that trick another time?!”

“I can pick the rope up.” Rantaro said. “Kiibo, do you want to accompany me?”

“Yes, I’ll come too.” The robot nodded.

“W-wait!” Kaede called them, but they already decided and did not stop for the detective. “Kaito, isn’t it dangerous?”

“Don’t doubt the abilities of the great genius!”

“If something doesn’t go as planned, you might screw up and deactivate Ouma forever!”

“…Nee-hee-hee…” The robot laughed weakly. “She’s right…”

“I don’t have this kind of worries!” Kaito boasted. “It’s a machine, I’m able to work on it!”

“Don’t refer to me like that…”

“Pretend to be sad all you want, it doesn’t have an effect on me.”

“Atua won’t allow this! Please let Ouma go free!”

Angie then turned to Gonta. “Gonta, help Ouma! Atua accepts him too!”

“But Ouma threatened us! Gonta don’t’ think good decision!”

“Gonta, don’t you believe in Atua’s words?”

“Hmm… Gonta confused now! Gonta need time to think…”

Angie looked at him with a disappointed expression.

“Nyahaha!” She laughed. “Angie has had a conversation with Atua and he said he’ll like the new Ouma too! So I’m in too!”

She did not get what she wanted. It is the first time since she arrived here. I expected her to be frustrated, but she decided not to complain. I could not tell… she could have been genuinely
convinced or she noticed that her cause was useless.

For the moment, I did not take into consideration the possibility that Atua was communicating with her.

“…If you think you can change him for the better, you have my approval too.” Kaede then surrendered. “I… am not convinced, but… maybe this Ouma wasn’t meant to be.”

“Wasn’t meant to be?! What?!”

Anger was slowly mutating into desperation.

“You will be happier after the reprogramming, I think.” Tsumugi said.

“I do agree with this course of action.” Korekiyo nodded. “As of now, Ouma is none other than an hindrance to our group.”

“I don’t know… since a menace is reprogramming him… I won’t trust him either…”

“Do what you think is best.” Maki commented. “I’m the only one who would be against it anyway.”

“Give your opinion.” Kaede invited her. “Don’t keep everything bottled up. You can understand yourself too.”

Maki played with her hair for some seconds, looking at Kaede in the eyes.

“If you really want my opinion, I’d say it’s a terrible choice. You’re destroying him.”

“The wise Maki Harukawa has spoken!” Kaito exclaimed.

“Let her talk!” Kaede silenced the inventor.

“He might be a robot, but he acts like a human. A terrible human, that’s right. But what you’re doing isn’t different from what was done to us. Our memories were taken away, and with that even parts of our personality.”

The martial artist had a point. The individual is shaped from his or her experiences. I would not be as attentive as I am if not for many of the challenges I had to face. If I did not remember those experiences… I would be very different.

“By reprogramming him you’re deleting everything that’s 0U-M4.”

“Are you scared it count as kill?” Gonta asked.

“I’m fairly sure it won’t. That’s not my point at all…” She paused before continuing. “I’m saying that the old robot you know won’t exist anymore, so you are killing him, in a way, and only because you don’t like his attitude. You can’t mold people.”

“But since this thing here is a robot, I can do it! Are there robot rights? I don’t think so!”

“…I knew you wouldn’t understand me. I’m accustomed to that… so it doesn’t matter.”

“This is not about understanding! It’s our will!” Kaito rebutted.

“I’m leaving. I don’t want to stay here anymore. See you tomorrow… if I want to have breakfast with you.”
Maki closed the door behind her as Kiibo and Rantaro returned.

“At least she considers the option of showing up!” Tsumugi said.

“What happened?” Kiibo asked.

“Maki being an asshole happened.”

“She’s making sense! You can’t erase me!”

0U-M4 continued to struggle as Kaito and Rantaro ignored his pleas, effectively tying him.

“Are you sure about this?” Kaede asked. “I don’t know if this is right…”

“You going to change opinion now?” Gonta intervened.

“It appears you been affected by Maki’s words.” Korekiyo observed. “I could say I was too, but letting Ouma roam free is unsafe.”

“Y-yeah… I guess…”

“Angie, please!” The robot lamented. “Didn’t you say you wanted to protect me?”

“Nyahahah! Atua has said you have been chosen to undergo a special change! You should be proud!”

“Nyeh… this Atua seems very inconsistent…”

“I’m grateful for your support.” Kaito thanked us, dragging 0U-M4 with him. “I’ll be working on this machine this night… I’ll pour my energy into it.”

“When will the new Ouma be ready?” Tenko asked.

“It depends on how complex the machine is. Anyways, I won’t be around for breakfast, I think. By lunch I should have finished.”

“I can’t wait to meet the new Ouma!” Angie smiled waving her hands in the air.

“Maybe with an helpful robot around we’ll discover more secrets about this academy.” Rantaro commented.

We left the room, Kaito heading to his lab with 0U-M4, the others going to the dormitories. As we exited the school, another surprise awaited us.

It was night. Stars were shining in the sky above our heads.

“Sorry… but what time is it?” Tsumugi asked.

“Thirty past seven.” Korekiyo responded. “Yet, night has already fallen.”

“But yesterday at this time the sun was setting…”

“It appears Monokuma has tampered with the clocks in the academy.” I observed. “We suppose it is 8 PM, while in reality is 9 PM or later, since the sun sets before then.”

“Because of the motive, right?” Kiibo asked.
“That’s what I thought too.” Kaede nodded. “Unless Monokuma can decide when the sun sets and rises…”

“He has the power to appear out of thin air, but that’s out of his capabilities too!” Tenko exclaimed.

“Hmm…” Kaede said. “I’ll think about this…”

“Are you seriously convinced of that?!?”

“There’s something else that doesn’t add up, but for now I’ll stick to Kirumi’s assumption. I don’t want to freak you out.”

“You can tell us what you’re thinking, you know?” Rantaro told her. “Your intuition could be right.”

“Just… wait for sometime. I don’t want to throw you off, I need more clues.”

Rantaro shrugged. “Fine. I’ll wait then.”

“But if Kirumi’s idea is the right one, it means that Monokuma will change the clocks back while we sleep…” Kiibo noted.

“Kaito should be able to tell us if that is the case.” Rantaro said. “He said he’ll be awake all night.”

“If he can confirm that those clocks display the right time, then my hypothesis is not correct.”

“That means you should tell us what you think, Kaede.”

“Yeah, yeah. I’ll do it. But only if Kaito tells us that they didn’t suddenly change.”

We headed back to our dormitories. After entering, I rested my hat on the bedside table, where I put the secret video that Monokuma gave to me. I had already watched it, but I could not believe what it said. Or, at least, it presented a distorted truth.

Yet, I swiped again. I had to be sure that what I had seen was what I thought… another time.

Monokuma started talking.

«Alright! It’s time to switch things up! This time, I’ll show you a secret video! What do I mean by secret? Every one of us has a secret, some more personal than others… but I’m not here to judge you about trivial matters, nope! These secrets are so important that could get you killed! Yeah, you heard that right! You got a video in which Monokuma exposes secrets that could lead you to a cruel, terrible death… delivered by one of your classmates. Of course, I’m not telling your secret to you! No, someone else has your secret. Maybe, if you’re observant enough, you’ll find them and kill them! That would be a great plan!»

The introduction was as I remembered it to be.

«Kaede’s the Ultimate Detective! Why would I accept a detective as a participant of a killing game, where you have to solve murder mysteries?! Maybe I want that thrill, right? Half truth, because Kaede has got a terrible secret to hide, and that secret is the reason why I chose her! Do you want to know it?»

I sighed. I remember this too well.
«Kaede has killed two people before this killing game! Wow! Are you surprised? Just to be as clear as possible, they weren’t suspects, completely unrelated to her profession as a detective and she didn’t do it by accident! I won’t tell you the reason why she did it, since you can ask her yourself! But I suggest not to, because she might get angry and assault you too! So be quick, and murder her before it’s too late!»

Chapter End Notes

So... still writing the trial. I haven't had that much time to write during Easter holidays. I think that the next chapter will be up in two weeks to make sure everything is okay. I don't want to go on a long hiatus, I prefer to release somewhat consistently. I still hope to go back to one part every week one day. :/

Next chapter two more FTE! I, like always, remind you to vote to make my life easier and allow me to write the events you want most. >.<
I know I should have them all prepared, but since I'm doing those while I'm writing the main story (unlike the game), I might as well wait a bit before writing them and tweak something, making it somewhat related to the actual story with references etc... (I hope you understand what I mean).
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Daily Life (Part 5)

Chapter Summary

Kaede spends time with her classmates; everyone attends a special reunion.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kaede Akamatsu

ding dong bing bong!

It’s the seventh day since I woke up in this school. A week already.

It almost feels normal to me now. Is it too soon? I don’t have to get comfortable here. I still want to escape with my friends. I have a family and coworkers back at home, who are probably searching for me, thinking I might have been killed or worse… but it’s the same for the others here…

Someone had to arrive sooner or later. Our absence wouldn’t go unnoticed.

I repeated the actions of the previous mornings. Get up, have a shower, change my clothes, wearing Shuichi’s cape. Not wanting to be late for our daily meeting, I didn’t care enough to comb my hair, which ended up resembling a nest of some exotic bird.

Sighing, I left my room and locked it. I mean… does it matter? 0U-M4 could always pick the lock and enter it… Ah, no… wait.

Maybe it was because of my sleep, but I initially forgotten about Kaito’s plan. Create a new 0U-M4 that would be helpful, not a little gremlin who spread chaos. Surely, if is idea was successful, many of our problems would be solved. We have to see whether the “upgrade” goes as intended…

While talking to myself, I met with Gonta in front of the entrance door to the dorms.

“Hello, Kaede! As a gentleman, allow Gonta escort you!”

I chuckled. “There’s no need to, but if you want…”

“Yes! Gonta practice his gentleman skills!”

Not wanting to disappoint the tennis player, I headed out with him.

“You are spending a lot of time with Angie, it looked like.”

“Angie and Gonta become friends! Because Angie understands Gonta very well!”

“I’m happy for you.” I followed. “But… why does she understand you? You’ve been so close, so she must have had a great impact on you.”
I couldn’t deny it. Gonta was gullible. Angie was smart. I felt there was something they were hiding from us.

“She hit Gonta like the force of one hundred tennis balls! Angie very kind and embrace very warm!”

“You mean her hug…?”

“Yes! She hug and teach me about what gentleman do!”

“Could you tell me more about her… teachings?”

Gonta responded with extreme surprise. “You want to know more about our friendship? Gonta don’t want to tell what he does with Angie! Gentleman techniques must stay secret!”

“Oh… I see…”

“And Gonta and Angie are preparing a special event for everyone for tomorrow! Almost ready!”

A special event? It must have to do with Atua… I could find the will to attend, but I don’t think it’s a wise decision. If many of us decide to go there, however…

Don’t worry too much, Kaede, I said to myself. You still don’t know anything about it. Gonta could have misinterpreted Angie’s words.

Stay calm.

“Gonta always enter by door in corridor.” The tennis player said.

“Okay, it doesn’t make a difference for me.”

I followed Gonta until we reached the cafeteria. There, I found almost everyone waiting for us.

“Ouma and Kaito aren’t here.” Tenko said, reading my thoughts.

“I tried to contact Kaito by knocking on his research room.” Kirumi informed me. “He did respond eventually, reporting that he was still working on Ouma.”

Kiibo intervened too. “I accompanied Kirumi, she’s right. It seems he has to work on it for the rest of the day.”

“Is it so difficult?” I asked.

“We don’t have a scale to measure how difficult is to operate a robot.” Rantaro said. “If Kaito is having problems, I think it has proven more difficult than he expected.”

“Nyeh… Ouma himself said he was an advanced robot… Kaito might not be able to overwrite is data or whatever he’s doing…”

“I-if that’s the case… what is going to happen?”

Tsumugi asked a question I wanted to pose as well.

“Let’s have faith in Kaito, okay?” I told the others. “He’s an Ultimate. Even if he can’t find a way to change how Ouma acts, he’ll make sure he’ll be… still with us.”
"A fancy way to say *he won’t kill him.*" Maki commented.

"How inappropriate can you be?" Korekiyo didn’t wait long before calling her out.

"I’m just talking. Then you ask yourselves why I don’t want to hang out with you."

"Don’t get so angry all of a sudden! You’re acting like a girl on her period!"

Angie giggled. "But Miu, you’re the one who shouted! Nyahaha!"

"And you, you always act like you’re on your period! Just find a man who can satisfy you and stop with this Atua bullshit!"

"Atua is my man, my God and my everything."

"Atua very good God and pure being!"

We continued with our discussion, rapidly putting Atua to the side. We sat besides each other and enjoyed Tsumugi’s breakfast, this time matched with a new addition. A cup of porcelain.

"It’s empty now.” Rantaro said. “What are you filling it up with?”

"Yesterday was looking inside the warehouse for new ingredients.” Tsumugi started explaining. “Until I came across something new… a coffee machine! I thought it could be a nice touch to our breakfast.”

"Coffee?!” Angie exclaimed. “I love coffee! My island is full of cocoa beans! We export it and we drink coffee every day at every meal and between meals!”

"It explains why you’re so energetic all the time…” Miu whispered. “And I thought you were constantly on drugs…”

"Either way, it’s extremely easy to use.” Tsumugi assured. “There isn’t much space to store coffee and other beverages, but I also picked up some refills to make sure it’s never empty.”

“I never asked myself how coffee machines work. Honest.” Rantaro chimed in.

“For me it’s the same.” I nodded. “When I was little, I just assumed that they had an infinite supply of coffee in them.”

“How could something infinite be stored in a finite space?” Kiibo asked.

“Yeah, it’s impossible. But little Kaede did not have time to reflect about that. Those were simply dispensers of coffee. And I didn’t even like coffee.”

“Blasphemy!” Tenko exclaimed. “Coffee has the ability to keep me awake when I’m tormented by dozens of little young men who want to torture me!”

“I suggest a relaxing holiday. It would help your spirit.” Kirumi advised.

“No! I can’t pretend not to see! My task is to make men as worthy as women! You have to act when they’re young and not corrupted by older degenerates!”

The conversation, thankfully, did not continue and we managed to get our beverages despite the commotion in the room. To my surprise the coffee machine, which resembled a vending machine - but much more smaller and portable- could prepare various types of coffees, ranging from the
more classic ones, to caffelatte and orzo coffee (apparently orzo means barley in Italian). Korekiyo tried it and said that it did not resemble coffee at all.

Maybe I should have tried it instead.

Eventually we finished eating and everyone scattered throughout the school. I did not have anything to do, so it was a good time to get to know someone better.

~FREE TIME START!

As I was wandering around aimlessly, I found Miu, near her research lab. Apparently she was about to enter when we looked each other in the eye.

“What the fuck are you doing here?! Stop staring at my boobs!” Miu shouted.

“I was not staring at your chest.” I pointed out. “I just wanted to spend some time with you.”

Miu’s eyes lightened up. “Oh, so you want to learn from the amazing Miu Iruma, right?”

“I guess so…” I responded.

Miu accompanied me inside her research room and started talking about how important of a person she was and many other comments about my and her proportions when it came to… women shapes. I tried to interrupt her many times, but she continued blabbering nonetheless. After four minutes without me saying a single word, I decided to take my leave and forget about what happened.

Miu, caught by surprise, stopped mid-sentence.

“Hey! Where are you going?! I thought you wanted to learn everything about me!”

“I said I wanted to talk. Apparently it’s not possible.” I said, leaning besides the entrance door.

“W-well…” Miu stuttered. “I was talking to you all this time! Why didn’t you listen?!”

“I did listen. But conversation don’t go like this.”

“Are you trying to lecture me?!” She went back to her aggressive persona.

“I’m not here to argue. If you don’t feel like talking, I can go away and leave you be.” I said those words as calmly as possible. When Miu didn’t respond, I turned from her and opened the door.

“N-no, w-wait!” I heard her say. “Don’t go! I was having a nice time with you…”

“It’s good for you to admit that.” I faced her and smiled.

“So can I say more about what I do and how gorgeous I am?”

“I don’t think it’s a good idea.” I told her. “I assume you didn’t notice, but you didn’t give me time to talk.”
“I’m a celebrity, why do you assume I’ll bow down to nobodies like you!?”

“First of all…” I said sternly. “Tone down your accusations, otherwise we aren’t going nowhere, okay?”

Stunned by my change of attitude, Miu trembled and nodded, somewhat preoccupied.

“Are you accustomed to talking with others?”

“I talk with other people all the time! I give out interviews daily, to magazines and newspapers! They’re always kissing my feet to learn about every detail of my life! And of course, I do as they want! It’s so pleasuring being at the center of the attention… Ahw….”

Despite her claim, I did not remember seeing her name anywhere. Of course she could be as famous as she thinks to be, since I don’t follow the musical scene of my country. But it’s pretty clear she doesn’t have a clear idea of what a “conversation” is.

“I mean chatting with your… equals.”

It was a bad way to put it, but I said it hoping that Miu would understand me better.

“There are no equals! I’m the best being in the all universe! Hyahahah! Anyone would pay to see me stripping!”

After I glared at her, she realized she might have said something she shouldn’t have.

“Well…” I sighed. “Let’s imagine you meet someone who is as talented as you. How would you react?”

“Of course I would treat them as an inferior being! I need to prove them my strength!”

“This approach doesn’t seem fruitful.” I said. “Let’s put it another way. Conversations imply the participation of multiple people.”

“What?!?” Miu appeared genuinely shocked. “I don’t like conversations then! I don’t want to lose the spotlight!”

Uhm… so that’s the problem, then…

“You won’t be ignored if you let other people talk. Have you seen what happened to me just some moments ago? I decided to leave.”

“Was that because I wasn’t talking about you? Should I talk about you?! What kind of conversation is that?!”

“No…” I gently explained to her. “You can talk about anything, you just need to give the others space to breathe. If you do that, you’d be sure many more people would listen to you.”

“I’ve already many people who listen to me! My words and my notes are famous in the whole world!”

“I don’t mean to sound rude, but how many of those people you actually know? How many of them respect you as an individual, as a person?”

“All of them, Kaedumb!” She exclaimed. “They look up to me and want to be me! They dream of having a chest as big as mine, to lean in bed with me, to have me as their master…. Aaaahw… it makes me feel so gooood…”
“But you don’t know anyone of them. Those reporters, for example, are there because they want to sell copies of their newspapers with stories about you, but they don’t care about what you think and what you feel.”

Miu furrowed her eyebrows. “They do! They love me! They love me so much!”

From her tone, it seemed that she was trying to convince herself.

“You’re convinced of that. Then, would you call them… friends?”

“F-friends…?”

“If you care about them and they care about you, they must be your friends, right?”

“Someone as famous as me doesn’t need… any friends… they w-would only be a burden… They would take up my time…”

Obviously, those people aren’t her friends. It seems that Miu never had a true friend… or a normal friend, from what I understand. That isn’t surprising, her attitude prevents anyone from even trying.

I decided to try and stop that.

“I’ll prove that what you said is wrong, Miu.” I said, determined.

“W-what?”

“I will be your friend from now on. I’ll show you that having friends can help you.”

“It’s a terrible decision.” She spat.

“I’m sure you want to at least try, right? You can’t avoid people like the plague.”

“Fine!” She consented. “But not today! Give me time to rest! I’ve already given my time to someone who isn’t as amazing as I am!”

“Okay.” I nodded.

There was a lot of work to be done… but I had faith in myself and in Miu. Together we would resolve that bad situation and change for the better.

FREE TIME END.

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Kirumi Tojo

After resting in my room, wondering about how truthful could my secret video be, the bell sounded. Someone was at the door.

I got up from my bed and, after hiding my Kub Pad underneath it, I opened to whoever was asking for me. Korekiyo was in front of my door.

“I hope I did not disturb you, Kirumi.”

I tilted my head and affably smiled. “You did not. I was not doing anything of important.”
“For that I am very glad.” He smiled in return. “The reason of my visit is not a trivial one, instead, I am summoning everyone. A new meeting has just been scheduled.”

I immediately thought of Kaito. I assumed he had finished working on 0U-M4.

“Has Kaito finished?” I asked Korekiyo.

“He did not.” He responded. “At least, to my knowledge.” He then corrected himself.

“Then why are you here? Our lunch meeting is at 1:30 PM and according to my clock, it is not midday yet.”

“Gonta has approached me mere minutes ago. I do not know the details behind this mysterious gathering, however he appeared to be rather thrilled.”

If Gonta told Korekiyo, it must be because of Angie. She is someone who could call a meeting so suddenly and without concrete information.

“Are you planning on coming? The meeting place is the boiler room.”

“If I am not mistaken, it is where we found the manhole.”

The cosplayer nodded.

Maybe Gonta found a way to escape from this prison. That was my hope, but I was aware that it could be described as a ridiculous dream more than anything else. … But who knows. After all, our hopes are the dreams we sought to fulfill.

“I am coming.” I decided, and locked my door behind me.

During the last day, I almost forgot about the existence of that room. Maybe I was unconsciously telling myself to remove it from my memory. The possibility of escaping appeared real, but appearances are deceiving.

Being and appearing; similar words, but so different in reality. Some of us appear kind and caring, still they could hide a sinister personality. Others pretend to be detached and disinterested, while they could be the most attentive people in this academy.

“What do you think of me?” Korekiyo asked, surprising me. “You have eyed me many times. Am I interesting to you, I wonder?”

Korekiyo does live between being and appearing. He is the Ultimate Cosplayer… when he actually cosplays, he is pretending to be someone else. He is not his real self.

“You are interested in psychology and the human mind.” I explained. “We share similar interests.”

“Kekeke… So you were scrutinizing me as I imagined… you are someone I could spend days with.”

“When we will get out, I would like to do that…” I commented.

Some of our classmates were already awaiting us in the boiler room, including Angie and Gonta, but they refused to speak with us before everyone came. After Kaede convinced Miu, the only person who was missing was Kaito, but the supreme leader said she did not mind if he was not
“Why are we here now?” Kiibo asked.

“Yeah…” Tsumugi looked around. “There’s a pie cooking in the oven, so if you’re quick, it’s better. I wouldn’t want to overcook it.”

“Forget about the pie! Nyahaha!” Angie giggled. “My announcement is very important!”

“The pie is too!” Tsumugi rebutted.

“If you don’t interrupt her, she’ll finish sooner.” Maki intervened. “So, try to keep silent.”

“Nyeh… I agree with her… I was about to have a nap…”

“Were you so bored?” Kaede asked her. “Maybe-

“I was watching over Himiko’s room!” Tenko announced, despite nobody asking her anything. “She was indeed inside!”

“Were you peeping on her?!” Miu exclaimed. “How can you insult males if you are a pervert?!”

“Words that went to waste, as usual…”

“Stay calm everyone!” Gonta spoke up. “Angie and Gonta want to make important notice! And called everyone because they think make you very happy!”

“So your announcement will make us feel better?” Rantaro asked for clarification.

“Did you reach the exit?!” Kiibo said excitedly.

“No, but we have an even bigger announcement!” Angie extended her arms. “We can’t exit yet, but maybe we could find an alternative path to freedom!”

“I’ve seen enough TV shows to see what’s going on…” Maki said, gritting her teeth.

“Me and Gonta will organize an AAA!”

“Great.” Maki ironized. “I surely know what an AAA is.”

“Attention Assault Anuses!” Miu exclaimed, terrified. “Cover your asses before it’s too late!”

“She’s gone to crazyland.” Himiko commented.

The others were either accustomed to the pianist’s behavior or so disinterested to ignore her altogether. Personally, I would place myself in both of those categories.

“Go forward with your announcement…” Kaede invited Angie, slightly discomforted.

“Does anyone know what an AAA is?” Angie asked. “You, Kirumi! I bet you know what is it! You have encountered people and seen so many places!”

Angie turned her head to face me directly. But I did not know what Angie meant with that acronym.

“Does it have to do with Atua?” Kaede asked.
“Nyahaha! Kaede is smart! She’s a detective, I think she can figure out the other two As as well!”

“Is this part of the conversation really that necessary?” Tsumugi intervened. “I feel very uncomfortable each seconds that passes…”

“Oh, okay…” Angie said. “I don’t want to make Tsumugi angry, so I’ll tell you immediately! AAA means Atua Appreciation Assembly!”

“Which does not explain your intents.” Korekiyo followed.

“The meaning is in the title, isn’t it?”

Gonta then intervened. “We meet together in Angie research lab and discuss very handsome Atua together!”

“You remembered! Nyahaha! But we won’t only do that! I can initiate you to my traditions as well!”

“I don’t think I want to be initiated to anything.” Maki coldly responded.

“That’s bad for you! Nyahahah! Don’t complain when Atua’s going to say you deserve eternal suffering!”

“You shouldn’t be constantly smiling when you’re intimidating people.” Rantaro chimed in. “Since it doesn’t hide your true intents.”

“I don’t want to threaten anyone! I’m only warning Maki! She’s always so bitter! Some time with people will help her! She doesn’t have to live life as a punishment!”

Maki responded. “Thank you for your proposition, but, as you said just a couple minutes ago, I also want freedom. Because of this, I can decide to not attend your meeting.”

“But it is fun!” Gonta pleaded. “Please don’t leave Gonta and Angie alone! Gonta worked hard to set it up!”

“We’re still working on it, so you can assist us! Atua will surely grant you a special prize if you do so!”

“I’ll pass too.” Rantaro said. “And I invite everyone else not to go.”

“Uff!!” Angie grumbled. “Why are you ruining my idea?? That’s not something you would do!”

“I don’t want to get angry. I’m saying that clearly. If I remain another second here, I will. So I’m leaving.”

He seemed ready to verbally assault Angie, however he was capable of holding his anger.

But why did he have such a reaction? I did not plan on attending Angie’s “Assembly” but I thought she had the right to warn the others.

Before leaving the room, Rantaro turned towards us again.

“Don’t go. It’s not a good idea.”

Angie stayed silent for some seconds.

“Rantaro’s out too!” She happily exclaimed. “Attendance is not obligatory, so it isn’t his fault!”
Who wants to come then?”
“You have not told us when is this meeting planned.” Korekiyo said.

“Oh! I’m such a klutz!” Angie laughed. “Tomorrow at 8 PM! We’ll get everything ready by then!
To make sure Atua graces us with His presence, he needs to get ready too!”
“Does he need an entire day to do that?” Tsumugi asked.

I am glad that somebody is asking the right questions here.

“Atua is a divine being,” Angie clarified. “He can’t show up if he isn’t dressed for the occasion!”

“Will there be silence… nyeh?”

“Praying to Atua demands silence.”

“Then I’m going.” Himiko decided.

“Ooh! Gonta very happy!”

The tennis player ran towards Himiko, but Tenko stopped him by placing herself between the two.

“I will not allow this foolishness! Since I can’t leave Himiko alone with a menace, I’ll attend
Angie’s meeting too.”

“Nyahahah! We’re already four!”

“I am interested.” I said.

A white lie, as they call it. I did not wish to attend Angie’s meeting, but I thought someone should
supervise what would be happening inside of that room. It could be a harmless reunion, or
something much more sinister.

After my claim, Korekiyo, Kiibo and Miu instead expressed their intention not to attend.

“Tsumugi, Kaede… what will you do?” Angie asked.

“Come please! You can come, Gonta thinks there is space for you!”

Kaede bit her nails in indecisiveness while the supreme leader was waiting for an answer.

“What are you going to do, Tsumugi?”

“Me…? I don’t know…”

“Oh! Now that I think about it, if you could bring food, it would be great for us! Atua doesn’t care
about food offerings, but I do!” She giggled.

“Food is good! Especially if cooked by a girl!”

“If they need me, I can’t say no.” She ultimately said.

“Ah…” Kaede looked at her one last time before giving an answer. “I don’t know if I’ll come. I’ll
let you know later.”

“Alright! For now we’re six! It’s a small number but it will grow! At the start my island wasn’t
populated by many people!”
“And then what happened?”

“They visited it and saw that was amazing! When we’ll escape from here you’ll fall in love too! Nyahahah!”

“Rise and shine, ursine!”

The voice of the three cubs reverberated in the boiler room. We were yet again forced to hear them whining.

“What a great idea!” Monophanie said. “I want to participate too! Can I?”

“Uhm, I don’t know…” Angie mumbled. “Atua is open to everyone, but does that include mechanical bears? I doon’t know!”

“DO NOT ASSO-CIA-TE WITH THE STU-DENTS.”

“Huh? You said we had to be friends with each other!”

“You’re as dummy as always, Monophanie! Us four Monokubs should go along well! Who cares about those bastards!”

“Ah, it wasn’t that clear…”

“I WILL FOR-GIVE YOU.”

Monophanie then addressed the red bear. “Four? Have you counted Monokid too? I haven’t seen him at all.”

“HE CAN BE A FRI-END.”

“How is he a friend if he doesn’t want to stay with us!” The bear protested. “He has bullied you too! Have you forgotten?”

“Monodam can forgive!” Monotaro exclaimed, then turned his head to face the robot. “Riight?”

“YES. I WILL FOR-GIVE HIM IF HE COMES BACK.” He said. “AND HE DOES NOT INSULT ME.”

“I won’t believe him! He’s always been a terrible brother!”

“Have some faith in your other brothers, will you?”

“You’re interrupting the meeting.” Miu lamented. “So disappear and don’t show your asses when we’re talking!”

“Me and my brothers were only here to check what were you doing!” Monotaro told us. “We have to keep an eye on you, especially near that manhole!”

“So long, bear well!”

As soon as the bears disappeared, Himiko asked if they would come to the meeting.

“Gonta does not know if that is good thing, but Gonta will always protect Himiko!”

“Tsk! Don’t you dare touch Himiko with your big and abnormal hands!”
“O-oh… sorry…”

Our meeting was essentially finished; my classmates started leaving the room one by one. Shortly after I did so, I noticed Kaede trailing behind me.

“Kirumi, can you stop for me?”

I nodded and did as the detective asked.

“Oh, thank you.” She said. “I’ll cut to the chase. You have decided to attend Angie’s Assembly because you want to check it out, right? I don’t think you’re that interested in Atua… not that there’s something wrong with it.”

“You guessed well. My intent is to observe Angie’s demeanor around Gonta and the others who decided to follow her.”

“…Which is actually what I wanted to do as well. But I don’t want to be too much intrusive… I want to trust Angie, but at the same time I feel like I should check on her. I’m telling you because, at the moment, you seem to be the most reasonable person here.”

“I am flattered.” I let her know.

Kaede may trust me, but I cannot say I trust her completely. If her secret is not misleading, she did kill two innocents. Monokuma had obviously omitted crucial details, but the fact that she committed murder cannot be excused. How can I know her true intentions? She was genuinely devastated because of Shuichi’s death… but she could have been faking. I feel horrible even imagining such a scenario…

“As of now, I’m leaning towards going there. I have more than a day to think about it.”

“Why have you told me this? I have understood you trust me, but I do not see the need to inform me about your intentions.”

“Well… I thought it was fair to let you know. Regardless of her intentions, Angie wants to assume a leadership role… her talent is Ultimate Supreme Leader, so it makes sense for her to do that. And with her around, I don’t know what could end up happening…”

“I am wary of her as well.” I said. “She may be planning something…”

***

Kaede Akamatsu

Kirumi and Miu went opposite ways. After going back to my lab for a read, I went to the kitchen to have lunch. Relieved, I discovered that Tsumugi’s pie didn’t suffer any permanent damage and was as perfect as it could be.

I had a lot of free time at my disposal. I could spend it talking with one of my classmates.

~FREE TIME EVENT START

The person I wanted to talk to was Tenko. There wasn’t a particular reason… maybe I just wanted to
help Himiko and free her from the caregiver's grip.

I found her under the gazebo in the courtyard. No Himiko in sight, though.

“Hello, Kaede.” Tenko said after seeing I was approaching her.

“Hi!”

“Do you want to spend some quality time together?”

“That’s… somewhat right. I just wanted to know you more.”

Tenko didn’t spend much time talking about herself, but she told me a couple of funny stories about preschoolers and their terrible pronunciations of words, along with many mentions of spelling bees she won as a student.

“How old are the students you deal with?”

“All ages, honestly. Ranging from 2 to 14, even.”

So some of them are close to her age…

“Wow, I kind of expected younger children only. You always seem to refer to elementary school.”

“Of course, I like to talk about those experiences because they’re the most fun… and the most rewarding. How beautiful is to educate a child from their early age? Oh, I love that.”

I don’t know if that’s sort of creepy or very honorable.

“Many people are of the opinion that parents should do most of the job.” She observed. "But parents? Nowadays they're just an obstacle.”

I understand Tenko more than anyone, but it’s not healthy to generalize. Some parents do care about their child.

“What do you mean?”

“They shower their children with prizes and rewards for every small feat and always defend them if someone doesn’t agree!”

“I think they just want to protect their sons or daughters. It's normal…”

As if my parents were like the ones Tenko describes…

“Too much is too much. One time a mom privately messaged me because I told to their son to work harder…” She said. “However, they said he studied for far too long and got so stressed he passed out!”

Maybe they were right? To me, it seems that both parties are at fault here. …But if Tenko’s the Ultimate Caregiver, she definitely knows what she’s doing.

“Young children need someone else apart from their parents. So here I come, making sure they become excellent members of our society!”

“But… how do you… take those children? How does your job work? Who decides which children will you teach?”
“Good question, Kaede. I didn’t imagine you would be so interested in this.”

“We’re here to know more about each other, and your life is part of you.”

“By the way, it’s different between types of children. Many of those are orphans, so I take them under my wing for most of the time.”

That’s… that’s an extremely kind thing to do. I wouldn’t expect that from her.

“I don’t live with orphans, but I often visit orphanages to check on them. They come to me every weekday and I teach basic subjects along with manners, in a creative way.”

I tilted my head. “That seems interesting… creative way…”

“There’s no definitive answer: we’re all unique, and we all learn in different ways. Do you know that there are nine types of intelligences? My job is to identify and use that strength in my students, even in older ones.”

Wait, nine? I only knew three…

“Spatial, linguistic, kinesthetic…” I counted. “And then? There are more?”

“Those are still experimental studies, but I agree with them one hundred percent! You want to know what’s your primary intelligence? In my opinion, of course.”

“Uhm… alright.”

“Definitely logical-mathematical, since you’re a detective… but you’ve got your fair share of interpersonal intelligence.” Tenko explained. “This one is harder to describe, but you could say you can understand other people’s feelings and motives, or at least you have less difficult than others.”

I do, actually… I always feel like I have a stronger connection with others…

“I suppose that’s what led me to become a detective as well. I have to understand the meaning behind the culprit’s actions…”

“That could be. However, I wouldn’t say an empathetic detective is the best detective around. Apparently, I’m wrong! It probably has to deal with your education… can you tell me about it?”

I crossed my arms. “Maybe we shouldn’t talk about that yet.”

“Oh! Sorry, Kaede! Don’t want to trouble you. I’m told that I can be too intrusive at times. We can go back to my life as a caregiver.”

When she’s not around the others, Tenko is more cheerful and polite than usual. I expected her to be more… stern. But I’m wrong…

“I don’t work in orphanages only. The older students are sent by the Government.”

“The Government? What for?”

“Usually, minor crimes. They usually have difficult upbringings, but in both senses… as I told you before, some were given too many liberties as children.”

“And… do you re-educate them?”

“Definitely. My method works perfectly. The key is to balance yourself: don’t be too strict, but
don’t be too soft as well! You need respect, but also you can’t afford not to establish a relationship!”

“Do you think that everyone would be able to success at what you do?”

“Everyone can try, even though talent plays a major role. You can know everything, however you need to make sure your students understand you. You can pretend to be as unbiased as possible, but we’re bound to find our favorites… the real teacher faces this problems and overcomes them, and not everyone can.”

“I personally think that your job is more difficult than many people believe.”

“Thank you, Kaede. I really want to make the world a better place, starting with education!”

“I agree; our upbringing defines us. Many of the criminals I dealt with had rough lives.”

Almost all of them, I’d say.

“Well, I think I have to go now. Next time we’ll focus on you though!”

“Huh?”

“You learn a lot about me, but I want to know you better too! You’ll have a lot of interesting stories about mysterious cases!”

“I have, you’re right…”

Tenko’s ready to talk again. Maybe as a caregiver she can help me…? Who knows…

FREE TIME END.

Time flew by and before I knew it, the night-time announcement sounded. It caught me by surprise at first, but then I remembered… it was part of our motive to kill. 7:30 PM had arrived and there was no sun in sight.

That left me wondering once again. Monokuma can’t manipulate time. That’s simply not possible. If the sun set at 8 PM before, there’s no way it sets at 6 now. I had a theory, but my hypothesis was ridiculous. I couldn’t discard it and I couldn’t prove it, though.

In other words, it was a wild guess. If I managed to get some other clue, maybe I could say that with more certainty… it might seem obvious but nothing really is. Without evidence nothing can be proven logically.

And yet, many of the cases I had to solve revolved around crazy suppositions and gut feelings… this time, however, there were others with me, people I didn’t want to disappoint and scare. I would keep my lips shut about this matter. The truth would come out eventually.

During the entire day I didn’t check on Kaito at all. Everyone else told me he was busy, but I wanted to know how was he doing. I have to admit I was kind of scared. What he was trying to do… I’m sure it’s extremely difficult… and dangerous as well. It was brave of him to do that for the benefit of the group.
Well… brave or extremely stupid. There isn’t much difference after all.

I knocked on the door, expecting to wait at least a minute before a response from the inventor.

“Who is it?” He said after the second knock.

“Oh… It’s Kaede. How is it going?” I asked.

“Amazing!” He exclaimed. “It has taken some extra time, but man, it was totally worth it!”

I trembled in anticipation.

“You’re saying that it has worked?”

“The new 0U-M4 is ready for showing! You’ll love it!”

He continues to refer to him as an object…

“Is he there with you or not? Why isn’t he talking?”

“I’ll explain to you just now. Wait a second…”

Kaito’s figure appeared from the door, which he closed immediately after he exited.

“Sorry, but my lab’s a mess. And I don’t want you to see my new creation until it’s completely finished.”

“You said everything was done.”

“It is!” He assured. “Now the robot is recharging. I’m sure it will be ready by tomorrow morning. You’ll experience the new 0U-M4 at breakfast! It will be quite a sight!”

“Have you made changes to his aesthetic as well?”

“I had the time, so why not? I didn’t like its color scheme. Grey and dark purple? Mah…”

Kaito’s face warped into a disgusted expression.

“You won’t tell me what have you done to him, right?” I guessed.

“Correct! I know you should see it as a special premiere, but it wouldn’t be fair to the others! Then, you also weren’t that convinced…”

“You can’t deny you overwrote his personality.”

Kaito looked to the side and then snorted. It was obvious he didn’t want to have this conversation again.

“Kaede, what’s done it’s done. Discussions are useless now. This is not a contest about who’s right. You also said you were okay with my proposal. I don’t want to call you an hypocrite, but if you don’t agree with the decision that you made yesterday that’s not my fault.”

I wanted to rebut, but I refrained. My vote wouldn’t have mattered anyway. Everyone knew what was the best choice for us in that moment, while only few of us saw the situation from 0U-M4’s point of view. What we did could be seen as selfish, it’s true.

But Kaito’s right. That was our choice. There’s no going back.
“We should celebrate this incredible result!” Kaito cheered.

“Uhm…” I mumbled.

I know Kaito’s pretty sure he did a good job, but there aren’t concrete results yet, right? I don’t wish for something unplanned to happen, still…

“I can’t today, but what about having a party? All of us! Strengthen our bonds and all of that cheesy stuff!”

“Tomorrow? We should organize it at breakfast with the others…”

“Message received!”

He gave me a thumbs up.

“I’ll get back to work then! Minor adjustments, you know?”

“Of course…” I muttered.

I headed back for the dormitories, passing from the library to pick up interesting books. While pausing in the entrance hall, I met with Miu.

“Kaede, what’s Tsumugi preparing for dinner?”

Oh. She wasn’t with me when Monokuma informed us about the new night-time hours, and then she left before all of that trouble with 0U-M4.

I suppose she could have pieced it together, but it would be too much for her, it seems.

“Dinner was at six thirty.” I calmly said. “Since the daytime is shortened.”

“WHAT?! Why didn’t nobody warn me?!”

“We had something else on our mind… Sorry.”

“Even you, Kaede?! I thought I mattered to you!”

“Hey now, don’t get too heated up. Now you know. If you want to eat, Tsumugi has left some food out of the cafeteria door…”

“I don’t care! You obviously don’t care about me! Keep your leftovers to yourself! The great Miu Iruma eats quality food, not that!”

Before I could calm her down, she left.

What’s up with her? She has been more irritable than usual. She has also toned down her innuendos... I wonder if there’s a connection.

I had no business inside the school, so I went back to my room.

“Tomorrow is shaping up to be a… particular day.” I said to myself. The new 0U-M4, Angie’s Assembly, the Casino Party…

It was too early to go to sleep, so I resorted to watching the various Monokubs Theatres displayed
on the screen in my room.

They were so uninteresting that I feel asleep after a few minutes.

Chapter End Notes

Here we go. Next part there's going to be the last Free Time Event for the chapter, so if you want to vote you can!
This means that the third death is coming. I wonder if you can guess who's leaving the others behind! :P

Next chapter will be up between the 30th and the 2nd. If I can finish the trial (which is longer than I expected it to be) maybe sooner.
Ding dong bing bong!

The announcement warned us that it was 9 AM. I had woken up before that time and I was walking around the Shrine of Judgment to search for anything that could be deemed remotely useful.

When the Monokubs notified me that night-time had officially ended, I took my leave and headed for the cafeteria. I noticed that Tenko was in front of the female bathroom, likely patrolling the area.

“Can I ask what are you doing?”

“Making sure Gonta or any other male doesn’t creep on Himiko!”

“I do not think they would do that.”

“Tsk! I can read their faces like books! They are males after all!”

“I would say Himiko does not need your presence 24/7.”

“I have taken a responsibility! I’ll try not to leave her side, no matter what happens!”

“Alright.” I said, despite being unconvinced. “I will see you in the cafeteria then.”

To my surprise, I was not the first to have entered. Besides Tsumugi, Kaede, Kiibo and Rantaro were already inside. Kaede told us that Kaito was ready to show the progress he made with 0U-M4.

Eventually more people joined us. Tenko, Himiko, Korekiyo, Miu and Maki were the ones to arrive, and we waited for Angie and Gonta too. Apparently they decided not to attend breakfast with us. They were probably busy with organizing this evening’s event. That reminds me… I would participate in whatever they planned on doing.

“So, where’s Kaito?” Miu asked impatiently. “I want to go away from here and back to my lab!”

“Nobody wants to stop you.” Korekiyo pointed out.

“Don’t insult me or I’ll show what I’m capable of!”

The cosplayer rolled his eyes.
“I’m sure he’s coming,” Tsumugi said. “We can start having our breakfast. What do you want to drink?”

“Is there only coffee?” Kaede asked. “I’d like something else if you don’t mind.”

“Sure! I can work on a glass of orange juice.”

“Work? I don’t want anything that complex…”

“I’ll assure you there’s no problem. You just have to wait for a bit longer.”

Despite Kaede’s insistence, Tsumugi decided to prepare an orange juice for whoever was interested.

Some seconds after the maid entered the kitchen, Kaito opened the door and showed himself.

“Attention, ladies and gentlemen… long have you waited for my arrival!”

“Does he have to make a captivating entrance…?” Himiko wondered.

“I present you my new creation! 0U-M5!”

“Zero-U-Em-Five?” Rantaro spelled the new name.

“Yup, I couldn’t call it 0U-M4! This is a new version! Please, enter!”

The new 0U-M4, or should I call it 0U-M5, joyfully presented himself in front of us. To my surprise, Kaito had changed his exterior appearance drastically. His “hair” was previously dark purple, now was orange, and his metal plates were tinted with a bright yellow colour.

“Do you like it?” He asked.

“What’s even better is that I had no idea about what you’re saying! But that doesn’t matter, does it?”

Kiibo asked.

“The artist shrugged. “By the way, yellow is the complementary color of purple, so your decision was spot on…”

“’Hehe!’ Kaito laughed. “What’s even better is that I had no idea about what you’re saying! But that doesn’t matter, does it?”

Kiibo spoke up. “I find it interesting though. It highlights the differences with the old Ouma.”

What surprised me the most, however, was the fact that the new robot did not say a single word while we were discussing about him. The 0U-M4 we knew would not have waited a second before intervening with one of his snarky comments. This time, however, he was still, staring at us as
confused as a little boy who meets strangers. I would have expected him to hide behind Kaito, like a child. Instead, he did not move.

“Those are our friends, Oums.”

“Where does Oums come from now?” Tenko asked.

“The 5 in 0U-M5 can be considered an S.” The inventor explained, appearing proud of his ability to rename a robot.

“I’ll stick to Ouma if you don’t mind.” Rantaro scratched his forehead.

“Hi.”

Ouma’s voice had also changed. It was now softer and more reassuring. How could Kaito do that?

“I’m 0U-M5. My creator is Kaito Momota, I’m here to make friends and help you survive.”

“Hello, Oums.” Miu greeted him. “You’re flashier now, but that doesn’t make you a perfect human being like me!”

“Oh… I know I’m a robot. I could never reach the complexity of humans, but I’m fine with that! I only want to help you.”

“H-hey… why don’t you offend me back?! Offend me!!”

“I won’t do that.” 0U-M5 explained. “I think that’s not respectful. You are human; you said it yourself. I’m in no position to threaten you.”

The pianist stood in disbelief. She looked to her right and her left hoping to find an answer, maybe understanding what we were thinking.

“What have you done to him?” Miu addressed Kaito.

“I’ve made it better in every aspect. One of its main characteristics is the inability to offend any human in any way. In fact, I’ve programmed him to act based on our greater good.”

“Watch as he kills us all in the name of justice.” Maki commented.

“I’ve said our greater good, not the world’s greater good. Ugh. I know what the Zeroth Law is.”

Maki glared at him. I could tell she had a lot to say.

“You have at least thought about that. Tell me… can you restore his old personality back?”

“Were you attached to him?!” Miu exclaimed. “Are you a robophile?! How can you do it with robots?!”

“If you think I’ll be the one to insult you, you’ve failed.” She rebutted.

“I could give it its original characteristics, but what for? We all know that this is the best course of action.”

“I’m satisfied of this body and this behavior!” 0U-M5 exclaimed. “If you don’t like how I act I’ll be sure to adapt and change. Of course I won’t harm anyone if something bad happens, but don’t try to take advantage of my trust in you!”
0U-M5 then went on to meet every one of us again.

“He does not remember anything of his old self?” I asked Kaito.

“Zero. I erased all of its memories. It’s time for Oums to start again. Don’t you think it will be more happy too?”

“He appeared to be rather content of his mischievousness.”

“Oh, please. I bet he had an inferiority complex. I recognize one of them when they’re around. He also wanted to be at the center of everything… don’t you see how difficult was it for him?”

“It may have been. Either way, what you did was right. We have one less problem now.”

0U-M5 eventually reached me and I introduced myself again.

“What an interesting talent! Adventurer! Maybe someday I can go with you on a journey! I’ll be your assistant, and I don’t need food to survive! So I’m cheap!”

I should not tell him that I trust human companions more.

“Who knows.” I said.

“Sorry, but do we have to call him Oums? It just feels wrong…” Kaede intervened. “Why can’t he remain Ouma?”

“This is a new being now. It doesn’t make sense for it to be named 0U-M4 anymore. That robot has ceased existing. This…”

The inventor pointed at the Ultimate Robot.

“…may look like Ouma, but it isn’t. I even used colors to differentiate him from his past self, to show you the big differences.”

“I agree with Kaito.” 0U-M5 nodded. “Why call me something I’m not? It’s like I called you Yuri. There’s no point to it.”

Kaede was not convinced.

“If you forget about me, I’ll still be okay with the name Ouma. It will be weird at first, but I’ll get used to it. The same can be said for you and my new identity.”

“I suppose… you’re right. Kind of.”

“Yay! I’m so excited to spend time with all of you!”

“Now that Oums has met all of you, I’d like to suggest something to do together, tonight.”

“What do you mean? Another meeting? We do those two or three times per day.” Himiko lamented.

“What do you mean? Another meeting? We do those two or three times per day.” Himiko lamented.

“Meetings are boring.” Kaito said. “Who wants to talk, and talk about the same things over and over? I’m sure I don’t!”

“Present your idea and we will evaluate it accordingly.”

“Why don’t we have a party? I don’t think there’s any risk.”
“I don’t think this is a place where parties are allowed.” Tenko furrowed her eyebrows.

“What are you saying? We’re trapped here and forced to play a sick game, but that doesn’t stop us from having fun!”

“It depends on the characteristics of said party.” I specified. “In some of those occasions, people have been hurt.”

“Some of those. Man, people have parties every day and you might have heard something once or twice a month at maximum!”

I am sure that our situation is very different. I had many fears. If we gathered together, it would not be difficult for a killer to attempt a murder… the drawback was, however, clear as well; their scheme would be uncovered easily.

“I think it’s a good idea.” Rantaro nodded. “We should be hanging together more than for our meals. Last time everything went downhill pretty fast and I’m sure we can do better.”

Kaito glanced at him. He thanked him for the support.

“Who is of the same opinion as Rantaro?”

“I am!” 0U-M5 exclaimed.

“I could bring you food when is needed, so I am on board.”

“Sure!” Kaede also agreed. “I think a party is a great way for us to become friends.”

“Who else?”

The others looked at each other, maybe waiting for someone else to raise their hand, but the only one who spoke was Tenko.

“If safety measures are taken, I agree to it. But I have to be one of the organizers of the party. I can oversee the process of organizing and preparing it. And I can work with a menace, today I feel brave enough to stand in close proximity to a male.”

“And the ones who didn’t say anything? Come on! You’re missing out!”

I would consider parties rather enthralling in normal circumstances; they were exceptional occasions to study others, but I would go to them only if I had no alternatives. Moreover, what Kaito said afterwards dissuaded me even more.

“And I think that the casino would be a great place to have a party!”

“The casino? Can’t we have one in here?” Himiko asked.

“There isn’t enough space. A great, big room with places to sit and play would be perfect!”

I do not like casinos.

“It should be a party, not gambling together!” Tenko lamented. “I cannot allow that!”

“We would bet Monocoins. They possess no real value outside of here.”

“I don’t think there’s a market that revolves around Monocoins. At least not yet.” Kaede said.
“And I won’t force you. We don’t have to gamble. We’ll have a good time together.”

The caretaker eyed Kaito. He did not seem to care.

“If I remember correctly, there are beverages there. Tsumugi could bring some snacks prepared in advance.”

“I think I can.” She smiled.

“What about 8 PM? It’s not too early, not too late. We’ll probably finish by 10 PM.”

“Uhm… there might be a problem.” Kiibo spoke up.

“Explain; I haven’t seen any.”

“Angie organized an AAA, so some of us at 8 PM are occupied with that.”

“What’s an AAA?” Kaito asked, not having been present yesterday.

“Atua Appreciation Assembly.” I explained to him.

“Yeah, that thing.” Rantaro’s tone highlighted his disdain.

“This shit again? Can’t Angie put the meeting off? I know she’s faithful, but a party takes first place when we’re talking about fun.”

“Nyeh… I forgot… Then I’m definitely going there… I like silence…”

“Then I should also assist Himiko!” Tenko announced.

“I’m sure we can find a way to have both of those reunions.” Kaede said. “We only have to adjust the time.”

“I can have the party at 6:30 PM. But I won’t move up the time more than that. A party with daylight outside is pretty boring. Especially if done in a casino.”

“But the whole area there is underground.” Maki pointed out.

“Tell me, do you want to have a party in the middle of the afternoon?”

“I don’t plan on attending either way.”

“So shut up!”

“Meh. Okay. I was pointing out the obvious…”

I supposed we should warn Angie about this new activity some of us planned to participate.

“Maybe if we tell Angie about our new plans she will postpone the Assembly or do the opposite.” I proposed.

“She won’t listen to you.” Rantaro said. “No chance.”

“Woah, you have never been so negative!” Miu exclaimed. “Has Kaito worked on your circuits too?”

“I think he can’t do that. I’m the only robot here.”
“Yeah…” Rantaro nodded, confused after the pianist’s statement.

“Can someone please tell me if they have seen Angie today?” I asked.

“I did. She was heading for her research room.” Korekiyo said.

“I will attempt to bring her here.”

I was fairly convinced that Rantaro was right. Could I convince Angie? I was afraid she would persuade me to do as she wanted instead…

***

Kaede Akamatsu

As I was waiting for Kirumi, I stared at the new 0U-M4… no, 0U-M5. They were right. Whatever that robot was before, it was definitely gone. There was no trace of him.

Completely erased.

He would live on in our memories… or maybe we would have done our best to forget what he did to us.

I continued wondering about our decision for five, ten minutes. What scared me more was my experience with those kinds of science-fiction novels. The robot always rebels. There’s always something the inventor doesn’t take into account… until it’s too late to fix it.

I have faith in Kaito, I told myself.

But I was saying that too many times. It was clear I was not as sure as I imagined.

No, but…

I have to stop with those thoughts. I said the same thing to Shuichi. Bad thoughts are no use. Decisions can’t be undone after they have been made.

Stop. I have to stop.

I have to think positive. Like I always have done.

When Kirumi returned, there was no sign of Angie.

“I have knocked on the research lab door, however, nobody answered my call.”

“Has she gone somewhere else? She has to be around.” Tsumugi said, slightly worried.

“She might be in her lab praying to Atua, she gets absorbed completely when she babbles about her God…” Rantaro said.

“Don’t be that disrespectful…” Kiibo intervened. “She has the right to believe in what she wants…”

“She doesn’t have to force it upon us.”
The cafeteria became completely silent for a few seconds. Rantaro had the ability to shift between happy-go-lucky to incredibly serious.

“With her not around, what do we do?” Miu asked. “I’m leaving, partygoers and fanatics! If you desperately want to see me, I’m in my lab! But I won’t open you! You have stared at my cleavage for far too long!”

She stood and waited some seconds in front of the door.

“Nobody’s going to comment about my dirty joke? Nobody??”

Silence.

Not a word.

“What am I here for?!” She shouted and left.

“I really appreciate Miu’s new habit: leaving as soon as she can.” Tenko smirked.

“Are you throwing shade at one of your fellow girls?” Rantaro asked.

“If I need to, I won’t stop. Even if the person in front of me possesses an inflated chest.”

“That’s one particular way to describe breasts, I guess.” I said. “If anyone of you sees Angie, tell her about our new plans. Then we can discuss them at lunch.”

After helping Tsumugi do the dishes, checking out the casino and discovering what we would eat for dinner, I realized I had time to spend with one of my classmates before seeing them all together in the cafeteria.

~FREE TIME START!

As soon as I left the cafeteria, I saw Himiko behind the grass. She seemed really absorbed in what she was doing. Probably still searching for bugs.

I approached the entomologist. I didn't sneak up on her, I didn't want to scare someone, that's for sure.

“Kaede…” Himiko mumbled. “I was trying to have some alone time… Tenko just left me for a while…”

“Being alone is important, but establishing a connection with others is important too!”

The entomologist sighed. “You’re persistent… I’m too tired to have a discussion with you… so I’ll be ok with talking.”

She changed her mind immediately. Work and Himiko are polar opposites…

“But we’ll talk about bugs, alright? I love bugs!”

I was okay with it. To my surprise, Himiko started describing in detail various species of insects, ranging from common ants to exotic butterflies I never heard of. She then lamented about not having photos to show, because if she had those I would fall in love with them in an instant.
“What do you like most about entomology?” I asked Himiko.

“Bugs are friends. They may not show affection to you, but I can see how much they love me and the rest of the world.”

“Do you really?”

“Yeah! I’d say they are even more emphatic than humans!” She smiled. “They never let me down!”

More than real people? I’m not sure about that… especially because Himiko doesn’t hang around people a lot. She prefers staying alone.

“Anyway, you must be really passionate about it. Entomology is not for everyone.”

“Yeah, I like bugs very much. They are the best beings in the world! I’d pay to watch them for the rest of my life…”

“Isn’t that a bit boring?” I asked. “They don’t do much.”

“That’s only because you don’t understand them as well as I do!” Himiko appeared angry.

“Okay, okay… I don’t know a lot about bugs.” I admitted. “Can you help me know more?”

“…No.” She snorted.

“Huh? Why?”

She looked to the side before speaking. “I am terrible at explaining things. You wouldn’t understand anything.”

Judging from her tone, she is lying. What’s more, I expect an Ultimate to be capable of clarifying doubts regarding their field of study.

“Don’t underestimate yourself.” I tried to reassure her. “I bel-

“No! I said no!” She exclaimed.

Taken aback by her determination, I decided to back off. Maybe she will tell me about it another time.

“I can tell about what I do. But not about my bugs.”

“Uhm… alright…”

Is there a difference?

“Yes, there is!” She stopped to recollect her thoughts. “Entomology is actually very diverse. I started out as an agrarian entomologist.”

“I’d lie if I said I knew what is it about.” I nervously laughed.

“Until a while ago, I lived in a farm with my parents and my uncle. There I helped them with the crops and the animals. They were cute.”

I nodded, listening to Himiko’s story closely.
“So after some things happened, I dedicated myself to bugs and bugs only! Especially their relationship, direct or not direct, with agriculture and its products.”

“That seems taxing,” I said. “Was it hard?”

“Yes, the hardest thing I did in my entire life… But I don’t regret it. By studying bugs, I became closer to them. They also became closer to me. It almost felt like they understood me and my intentions.”

“Bugs may be smarter than we think.”

“Some of them are extremely smart.” Himiko explained. “Bees are one of the smartest insects. They can use tools to reach what they want. Like octopods…”

“Neat, I didn’t know that. I’m sure you discovered a lot about bugs.”

“More or less…” She said. “After leaving the farm, I decided to search for new species of bugs around the world, and I actually found a couple.”

Around the world?! Himiko? She doesn’t look like an adventurer… she obviously isn’t as good as Kirumi, but… I’d never guessed she would do something like that.

“Hey, Himiko… isn’t your work very tiring? You have to search for bugs all the time, analyze how they act…”

“No, it isn’t hard at all. I feel a lot of energy when I’m around bugs. Like I said, they understand me and I understand them. We speak to each other.”

“Do you mean real speech, or… a metaphorical sense…?”

“I think I can hear their voices, but other people tell me I’m just obsessed…” She said, gloomily looking at her feet.

Did I say something wrong?

“E-ehm… I won’t judge you anyway.”

“Thanks…” She said, clearly unconvinced.

Maybe it was time to leave her alone again.

“I’m going. See you later.” I said. “Maybe we can talk more about entomology.”

“A-alright…”

~FREE TIME END.

On my way to the cafeteria I saw Miu mumbling something.

“Hi, Miu. What are you doing here?” I asked.

“Tsk! Like you really wanted to know what I’m up to!”

“You’re particularly grumpy these days. Can you tell me why?”
“You don’t have understood anything about the gorgeous Miu Iruma! I reveal my deepest secrets to anyone, not even my sisters!”

I did not know Miu had siblings. She probably didn’t want us to know about them. Yet, she slipped.

“Are you angry because nobody listens to you anymore? You know that’s not true.”

“I don’t care about the opinion of others! They can insult me all they want!”

“In fact, without 0U-M4, nobody is offending you anymore.”

When she’s around, at least.

“So…” I continued. “I think you’re feeling left out, since you assume nobody cares about you.”

“Uff! What do you want, Kaedumb!? Do I have to participate at Kaito’s party?! Are you going to have an orgy?”

“H-huh? What, excuse me?”

“I wouldn’t blame you for wanting a perfect girl like me at your party! After all, nobody has a bigger chest size than me.”

“…”

Somebody help me.

“No, I was suggesting something else. Maybe you can play some music at that party.”

“I can only play the piano.”

“Yeah, but you said it yourself. You’re amazing when it comes to that. I’ve got to give credit when it’s due.”

“Hyahahah! If only those other virgins understood how great I am! Of course you can’t understand how life works until you’ve done it with someone!”

“Uhm… so? What do you say? I think that by hearing how talented you are, they will change their opinion… but you also have to avoid constant insults.”

“But I have to assert my superiority somehow!”

Every time I talk with Miu, a primal instinct surfaces; I have to suppress it and tell myself that punching someone in the face and telling them their brain is utterly fried is not the right choice.

“What about asserting your superiority with music?”

That’s one of the most contrived connections I ever conjured up.

“You’re definitely superior in music. Show them how great you are while playing your keys!”

It sounded awful in my head, and it ended up being a lot more terrible when I said it out loud.

“Kaedumb, you have the best ideas!”

What? Uhm… that worked, apparently.
Proof that her brain is indeed fried.

“I’ll play my fucking piano and leave them begging for more! They’ll moan for me, they’ll call my name…!”

“And we can stop here!” I interrupted her. “Some details are better left closed in a closet, deep inside your mind.”

“You definitely don’t understand me.”

“Maybe it’s better this way. We will listen to you before going to the casino.”

“In my research room? No fucking way!”

“Hmm… is there any other way?

“How about I play my piano while you’re at the casino?”

“Ah, that would be a problem… We can’t bring the piano outside of your research lab.”

“Tsk! Kaito can work with it! He’ll find a way! If you desperately want me, you also have to put some effort into this madness!”

“Can we ask him at lunch? If he says no…”

“Then you’ll miss out on this amazing, gorgeous pianist!”

When we arrived in the cafeteria we caught sight of Angie and Gonta, who I couldn’t find during the entire morning.

“Hey… where have you been?”

“Just doing some stuff for our project!” She giggled. “Gonta has been so much helpful!”

“Yeah, but I didn’t see you at all either.” Miu commented, agreeing with me.

“Atua demands silence and isolated places… if I am not there, I can’t talk with him.”

“Gonta doesn’t understand, but he thinks that Angie’s right!”

Angie’s God is very strange… everytime she says something about Atua, a new fact about him pops up. I can’t understand if she really believes in him or she uses it as an excuse.

“Also, Gonta lost racket. Have you seen it? Gonta left it but doesn’t remember where!”

“I didn’t…” I said.

Miu also shook her head.

“We’ll find it!” Angie exclaimed. “Atua will show us the way!”

“I’m sorry I couldn’t cook you one of my breakfasts.” Tsumugi said from the kitchen.

“Hey! Don’t say sorry! Me and Gonta ate what we found!”
“Have you drunk your fucking adored coffee?”

“Yeah, Miu! Now that it’s here, I can’t go a day without it! It helps me feel energized! Nyahaha!”

“Look who’s here! Finally!”

Kaito entered the cafeteria with Kiibo, Korekiyo and 0U-M4… 0U-M5… behind him.

“Kaito! Ooh! And is that Ouma? Wow! That’s quite an upgrade!”

“My name’s Oums, for the record. But if you want, you can call me that.”

“Wow!” Gonta exclaimed. “He even speak different!”

“You can introduce yourselves later. Angie, can you postpone your assembly or whatever you plan on doing?”

“Why? Atua is very busy and he found the right time window to talk with us.”

“We’re organizing a party today. Since some of us want to go to both of those events, it would be better if they didn’t overlap.” I explained.

“Change yours then! Can’t you have it tomorrow?”

“I already started setting everything up in the casino!” Kaito protested.

“Well, I did too!”

“Angie told us first! So she is more right than you!”

“That’s true…” Kiibo intervened.

“I didn’t know! You understand all of what she says about Atua doesn’t hold any meaning? She’s making stuff up!”

“Atua real! Gonta spoke with Atua!”

As we continued discussing, everyone else entered the cafeteria.

“We decided for the party to start at 6:30 PM, am I correct?” Kirumi asked.

Kaito nodded, and so she continued on with her thought.

“Since the Assembly does begin one hour later, whoever attends the party and would like to go there too has the possibility to enjoy both of those activities.”

“I think it’s okay! Nyahah!” Angie agreed. “If people want to party, I won’t get mad! Having fun is important!”

“Look, Kaito! Only a degenerate male like you would not accept this compromise!”

Rantaro sighed. “If people want to attend Angie’s Assembly, they can. I’d prefer going to the party and stay there, and I’d like you to go to the casino too.”

“You’ve already said that. Do you want to pit people against me?”

The artist looked sideways. “I just think that a party is more fun.”
“Clearly you’ve never been in one of my Assemblies! They are sooo enlightening! Nyahahah!”

“Okay, okay, man… the party starts one hour before. Then, you are free to leave. You will have so much fun than time will fly by!”

“I would attend too…” Angie said. “But I have to finish the preparations for my meeting too. Maybe I can pay a visit!”

“I’ll definitely pass… I hate dark places…”

“I understand you, Himiko. Dark places harbor frightening creatures.”

“I think a casino should be full of lights…” Tsumugi tried to reassure the entomologist.

“Okay… I just want to search for bugs in the academy. You’ve found me out… oops…”

“Don’t be afraid of telling the truth then…” Tsumugi continued. “A lie might appear to be the right choice at the start, but then it could come bite you in the back…”

“Bite in the ass, you mean! Hyahaha!”

“Thank you for your intervention, Miu.” Korekiyo spoke up. “As for my intentions, I think I am going to the casino.”

“Ah, wow… I didn’t expect you to go there.” Kiibo admitted.

“I might appear serious to most of you, but I also enjoy those activities.”

“Yet I haven’t seen you smile even once… maybe you do, but with that mask I can’t say it for sure… Even Himiko cracked a smile sometimes…”

“I assure you I have smiled numerous times in those eight days. If you had been acute enough, you could have guessed because of my eyes.”

“I’m not that perceptive.”

We had our lunch but, despite the agreement, the atmosphere was tense. Angie left very soon, saying she wasn’t feeling that well… that was probably an excuse to leave. Kaito was relieved when she left his sight.

I offered to clean the table along Kirumi and Tsumugi. Cleaning was not my forte, but the maid had done it for four days in a row now and I felt kind of bad for her. Before Kaito left, I asked him if he could help me with Miu’s problem.

“Can you invent something that can help us? Maybe a transmitter?”

“Let me get this straight. You want to have Miu play the piano for us?”

“It’s not polite to respond to a question with a question, you know?”

“Your last sentence was also a question.” He smirked.

I rolled my eyes. “This is not what we’re here for… anyways, yes. I’d like that.”
“Piano and casino don’t mesh together well.”

“I know, they’re total opposites. But Miu’s having a hard time. We can try to make her feel better.”

“Of all people here, I think she is the one who deserves to feel worse.”

“Kaito! You don’t ignore people when they ask for your help!”

“Whatever. Are you convinced she will act like a normal being after this? She won’t.”

“If you constantly insult her or pretend she doesn’t exist she will continue with her attitude. She is behaving like that because she wants attention.”

“You want to give it to her? …I think that’s pretty ridiculous.”

“I’m not here to ask for your opinion. I wanted to know if you can come up with something.”

“Uff. There are some cameras in the warehouse. They could be used to film Miu, I think. Obviously then I’d have to display those images on a screen… maybe the broadcaster in the casino… if the Monokubs can transmit their announces, there has to be a way to connect other transmission to those things… mmh… okay, I’m on it. It could help me discover more about this academy.”

“Great! I’ll help you with setting up the casino. You can go there, I’ll have a chat with Kirumi first.”

“Alright. I think I’ll check out the broadcaster.”

After Kaito left, I addressed Kirumi.

“I think I’ll stay at the party.” I said.

“Even after the Assembly begins?”

“Yeah, I can trust you on that one, right?”

“Uh… I do not know if I am as clever and reliable as you assume…”

“Please, I’m sure you are. You never underestimated yourself, why are you doing it now? Have you changed your mind, maybe? In that case I can go there.”

Kirumi has never backtracked on her decisions. Why is she uncertain now?

“No, do not worry. I will attend Angie’s Assembly.”

Should I let her? …Yeah. She can be trusted. Don’t be a control freak, Kaede.

“After all, I do not like the atmosphere in the casino.”

“Is there a tragic backstory behind it?” I joked.

“Not as tragic as you may assume. I am allowed to have a mild dislike towards some places.”

“But I think you should check it out. You can loosen up a bit.”

“Loosen… up? What do you mean by that?”
“Be more relaxed… you are always so concentrated and focused on your thoughts. Have you ever raised your voice?”

“I did not in this academy, but only because I did not need to.”

“I guess you don’t notice, but your sentences always sound the same. I don’t take issue with it, yet some people could think you don’t like spending time with them.”

“Hmm… I will ponder about what you said.” She concluded.

“Tsumugi, what are your plans?”

The maid offered to bring food to both Angie and the party. Since the cafeteria would close at 7 PM, she couldn’t cook last-minute meals. It got me somewhat worried, but I’m sure she would find a solution. What troubled me was her unselfishness, since she would have to go from one place to another.

“I’ll go to your party first and bring some appetizers. I could use the bottles in the casino to make the other dishes better than ever!”

“We don’t need a gourmet menu…” I pointed out.

“Since there’s the possibility, I want to amaze you even more!”

“If you feel tired, you do not need to continue cooking.” Kirumi stressed it out.

“No, no. I am trained for these situations. I once cooked for fifty people alone! It was hard, but I did it!”

“Fifty people?!” I exclaimed.

I started having doubts about Tsumugi’s age. No way she was as old as we were. All of her masters, all of her adventurers… did she start her career as a maid when she was a child?!

“I might stop at the party for a while.” She said. “But I’m not sure. Just to see what are you doing.”

“If you do, I’m sure you’ll have fun.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, no one's dead. For now.

But the party and the assembly are both coming soon! Surely nothing bad will happen during those two events...
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Daily Life (Part 7)

Chapter Summary

The preparations for the party finish; Kirumi decides to go there as well.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

**Kirumi Tojo**

Kaede insisted on me attending Angie’s meeting, whereas she wanted to go to the casino. I knew better than trusting that idiotic video Monokuma gave us, but… I felt that, between her and me, the person who should have participated to the Assembly was the latter. That situation had to be overseen by someone who I could trust; with those videos around our weak points were out in the open.

I wonder… what could my secret be? As an adventurer, I learned to overcome my fears during my travels. Once I was fearful of flying and arachnids terrified me, but now I would have no problems with flying on a plane full of spiders.

“Or flying on a gigantic spider.” One of my friends once joked.

Maybe it was something else entirely; one weakness I did not know about, for example. And, even if a killing happened, whoever was in possess of my secret could take advantage of it whenever they wished to.

I thought… what if Kaede had it? Monokuma could be capable of pitting us against each other. We are definitely the two most useful people in trials…

But then, is eliminating us his objective? Does he want one culprit to leave the game while the others suffer a punishment? That would stop the show he is organizing, and he seems to enjoy it greatly.

The casino was slightly different from the last time I visited. The upper floor was decorated with banners and confetti and the tables were tidily placed next to each other.

“I am surprised that Monokid allowed this.” I said.

“Rise and shine, ursine!” The blue bear exclaimed.

“Hi there…” Kaede sighed. “Are you going to appear everytime we say your name?”

“Don’t you think I need a better introduction?! Who fucking cares about rises and shines!”

“And as always you don’t talk about what you’re supposed to talk about.”

“I want a more badass greeting! Rise and shine screams Monopanie!” The bear continued. “Oh! I’ve got it! Monokid, the bearer of his father’s name, presents himself! Bear yeah!”
We stood in silence, waiting for the Monokub to talk.

“I’m trying it now! Hell yeah!”

So he disappeared.

“Are we free now or he’ll c-

Before Kaede could finish her sentence, he appeared again.

“Monokid, the bearer of his father’s name, presents himself! Bear yeah!”

I do not want to argue with that robot, but as an introduction he has to repeat multiple times, it is rather long.

“I discovered you want to have a party at my casino!”

“It isn’t your casino.” Kaede pointed out.

“I say what the fuck I want! Those slot machines are my propriety, and because of this, this all casino is mine!”

I fail to pinpoint the logical connection between the two periods.

“But I promise not to gruesomely kill you with my Exisal if you’ll play with me this night! Hell yeah!”

“Play? Just that?”

“Hell yeah! An extreme version of blackjack! Be ready to scream and cuss! Bring your Monocoins or I’m blasting you into space with my bazookas!”

“Wait, what? Have you got bazookas? Since when?”

“So long, bear well!”

Monokid vanished, not forgetting his guitar behind. How quick must those machines be to move out of our field of vision so quickly…

I could hear steps coming from the room behind us. As they drew near, I recognized Kaito’s voice.

“Kaede? Kirumi? Is it you upstairs?”

“Yeah, it’s us. Monokid was being stupid as always.”

“Do not repeat that name. He might come here again… as you may imagine, I do not like him.”

“Who does? All the robots here are total assholes! Thank God that field of study is still in its early stages!”

“I would say that, since there are AIs as complex as the ones seen here, modern-day robots are more human-like than I imagined.”

“Tsk! I’m going to produce top-notch, stellar robots! The ones who help you, not scraps who make your life a living hell!”

“That would be seen as an improvement.” I agreed.
“Good news, Kaede! I think that your idea is possible! At least in theory.”

“Huh? Really?”

“Those broadcasters appear to be receiving signals from a specific channel. I will spare you the details, but if I work hard on that thing I can tune it to make sure it picks up from a channel we set ourselves. That channel would be the transmission from Miu’s lab.”

“So you’re saying that if we record Miu with a camera… the broadcaster can intercept those signals and transmit them live downstairs?”

“Yep, that’s pretty much it.”

“Woah!” Kaede exclaimed. “That’s amazing!”

“Are you capable of retuning the broadcaster and modifying the camera in the short time span at your disposal?” I asked. Understandably, I had my doubts.

“I have reprogrammed a robot in under 24 hours! And I even took four naps in between! Do you think some circuits will stop the great inventor?!”

I decided not to respond. I replied with a simple “Good luck”.

“I have almost finished setting up the place, so your job is pretty much useless. I’m sorry if you wanted to help.”

“Did someone else help you? Did you do all of that all alone?”

“I’m the Ultimate Inventor, and I could be able to do all of this without assistance…”

Right…

“…But Rantaro, 0U-M5 and Tsumugi helped me out! Korekiyo and Miu also checked out the place! Maybe that creep will attend after all!”

“Do not call him a creep only because you do not understand him.”

“Does anyone understand him?”

“He may be difficult to relate with, yet you should not discriminate him.”

“Okay, okay. Don’t get too angry with me! He just feels off!”

To be clear, he is not the only one who is suspicious in this academy. In fact, I would say other people are more dangerous and unpredictable than him.

“You can start working on your project.” Kaede said. “I really wish for Miu to perform for us.”

“That is the reason why you asked Kaito to inspect the broadcaster?”

“Yeah. Do you know that Miu isn’t as shallow as she lets on? …Well. At least it seems that way.”

“I don’t want to insult her…” Kaito began. “But to me she’s nothing more than a walking factory of sex jokes.”

That claims shows that the inventor may be the most shallow between the two. Despite that, I think
they are both on the same level… quick to judge others and ready to boast constantly.

“I’m doing this because you asked! Maybe you can realize how good of a person I am!”

“Yeah, yeah…” Kaede nodded. “I really appreciate what you’re doing though.”

“If you need me, I’ll be in my lab! 0U-M5’s gonna be there too. I think it will help me improve. A sidekick is always important, as long as it stays in its place!”

I spent the rest of the afternoon helping Kaede with the organization of the party. I met many of my classmates and I also tried to convince them to come, even though they did not appear convinced.

Maki, despite seeming interested, said it was better to skip it.

“Maybe next time.” She said.

It was clear she did not want a second party to be held.

With Tsumugi’s help, we cleaned the place and made it look better than it could have ever been. I also tried to explore the Love Hotel, but the entrance was still locked. If I lied, I would say I was not interested at all, but, in reality, I wondered what could be inside of that place. The name was surely… peculiar. Eventually, I returned to my dorm and had a shower.

While resting in my room, I glanced at the time.

It was 6:40 PM. The party had already started. I wavered between wanting to attend and waiting for the start of Angie’s Assembly.

Who would participate in those two meetings? Kaito’s aim was to unite us together, yet it apparently failed. Despite this, he decided not to cancel the party. He could have postponed it to tomorrow… there would have been no difference.

Instead, he insisted on organizing it today…

I sighed.

It could have been suspicious, but Kaito was obstinate. He saw competition everywhere. It was not surprising seeing him trying to convince everyone that his option was the best… he definitely thought that everyone would listen to him, or at least the majority… after his success with the… “0U-M4 situation”.

The AAA starts in less than an hour… I suppose I could go to that party and see what is happening. It… it might be worth seeing what is happening there with my own eyes.

Exactly. I have to go there to supervise the situation.

Calmly, I prepared myself for the party making sure I was in decent conditions (under normal circumstances I would wear more elegant dresses, but I only had multiple copies of the same outfit…) and headed for the casino.

I did not meet anyone on the way, quite surprisingly. When I stepped inside, I was overwhelmed with the sound of jazz music. Quite soothing, to be honest. Not something you would expect from
a casino.

It did not take long before Tsumugi and Kaede, who were sitting in front of the counter, noticed me.

“Kirumi! You came after all!” Kaede smiled.

“What a coincidence! We were just talking about you!”

On the table there were various snacks, glasses and beverages.

“Are those alcoholic?” I asked. “I suggest you not to drink them.”

“No, no…” The maid reassured me.

“Tsumugi said that she picked only the bottles which contained non-alcoholic drinks. And trust me, I know that because I can’t stand alcohol.”

“Oh. That is far better.”

“No worries about someone doing something dangerous.” Tsumugi said. “We’re going to be fine.”

“Why did you change your mind?”

I could not tell her that I came because I was suspicious of her and Kaito. So I had to come up with a valid excuse. And the most valid one, in that particular situation, was…

“I had nothing better to do.”

The detective and the maid nodded in agreement.

“Who else is here?” I asked.

“The others are downstairs, trying to win some Monocoins. They are Kaito, Rantaro, Ouma and Korekiyo.”

“Oh, even Korekiyo? I didn’t expect him to come.” Tsumugi observed, as surprised as me.

I suppose it was my mistake. Of course a person so interested in humans and their action would attend Kaito’s party. He definitely wanted to study their reactions.

“He came before you brought the second set of appetizers. If you want I can call him.”

“No, no. To be fair, I think I have to go now.”

“Huh? Already?”

“The cafeteria closes in a while, and I have to finish the food I have prepared for Angie’s Assembly. Then, your cake is in the freezer and it’s almost done. I’d like it to be perfect when I’ll bring it to you, so I’m going to take it out just before night-time comes.”

“You can even take it here now.”

Kaede addressed Tsumugi with a reassuring look.

“No, no. If it can be perfect, it will be perfect.”
And so, the maid left the casino.

“We’re six now then. Come with me downstairs, maybe your luck is better than mine.”

Reluctantly, I followed Kaede to the other area of the casino. If my luck was good, maybe no one would force me to play a game of chances.

***

**Kaede Akamatsu**

“Have you found a way to transmit Miu’s broadcast?” Kirumi asked as we climbed down the stairs.

“Yeah!” I exclaimed excitedly. “Kaito finished just in time to deliver the camera to Miu. I don’t know how he managed to get it working, but it did!”

“So has she already performed for you?”

“No, not yet.” I said to the adventurer. I wanted to be sure that the biggest amount of people could see Miu’s capabilities, but…

“She said that she would broadcast when she felt ready. She wants to make a good impression on you all.”

“Are those her exact words?”

Actually, they were not. But does it really matter? Nobody has to know what she said word for word. Yeah, I don’t think they would like the expressions “bless them with my outstanding abilities” and “I will touch those keys like a virgin was touching a v-"

No, it’s too gross even to imagine it again. Forget, Kaede, bury those harmful thoughts in your mind. Because Miu is a good person, deep inside.

Even so, I should refrain from using the world *deep* when talking with her. For prevention.

“The exact words don’t matter. Their meaning is what’s important.”

“I suppose that could be the case…” She shrugged it off. “I do have high expectations though. If you were so surprised, she must be even better than I imagined.”

“Oh, she is…”

I hope Kirumi hasn’t met many talented pianists in her life. Miu’s amazing, but I don’t really have someone else to compare her to.

“Man, I lost to this slot machine again!” Kaito protested. “Why did you keep winning though?”

“These are gambles. As far as chance is concerned, your probabilities to win do not increase after each try. Remember the gambler’s fallacy.”

“But your numbers are better than mine! How is that possible?”

“Luck comes and goes, Kaito.” I reassured him. “It’s not universal, it’s impossible for someone to be extremely lucky…”
“Do you imagine an Ultimate Lucky Student?” 0U-M5 exclaimed. “That would be awesome!”

Korekiyo commented on the robot’s idea. “It would be an interesting concept, even though such a talent would be rather subjective.”

“Yeah.” Rantaro chimed in. “There’s no such thing as luck. I mean, there is. But it isn’t distributed at birth, is not a talent…”

“How could you identify someone who could be considered lucky?” Kirumi asked.

“I was just giving you an idea! After all, there are many talents which are way too specific.”

“By the way…” I derailed from our topic. “Tsumugi has brought more food upstairs. I also have some cards in my backpack, so if you want to play a card game…”

“Are we going to bet Monocoins?” Kaito asked.

“If you really want… I guess we could. But there’s no point. Those coins are helpful to us all.”

“Man, how is a card game fun without bets? Let’s bet something!”

Uhm… there weren’t many objects that could be used as a reward for us… I suppose that food was the only choice. I remember when I was little, we would play games and use sweets and candies as a currency. Now that I think about it, at the end of the day we would eat the ones that were left over, so they were just an excuse to keep us going.

Oh, the days when we were innocent and clueless. If only we would remain children…

“What card game do you want to play anyway?” Rantaro asked.

“I have a couple, maybe you know th-

I could not even say the name of the game I wanted to play before Monokid appeared and swiped the deck from my hands.

“Monokid, the bearer of his father… was it that? Oh, shit! I can’t remember my lines! Damn!”

“Give it back!” I protested.

“No, no! You have to keep your side of the bargain! I let you have a party, you have to do something I want!”

Right… I just assumed that bear was joking, or maybe he had forgotten…

“Are cards part of that bargain?” Kaito asked.

“Of course! We’ll play blackjack! Get those Monocoins out of your fucking pockets!”

“I assume we cannot refuse.”

“So smart! Hell yeah! Get ready, ‘cause in half an hour I’m going to wreck your ass!!!”

Half an hour…? Then why did he came here to torment us? Yeah, he probably just wanted to be annoying.

“I have to go take a dump!” He exclaimed. “Bye, you bastards!”
“Hey! At least let us keep the cards!”

“Like hell yeah I would! No cards when I’m not around! So long, bear well!”

…So we’re out of cards now.

“Uhm… maybe it will better if we just talk.” I proposed.

“Are the others going to come? It’s been half an hour already…”

“I suppose they are not attending the party.” Korekiyo guessed. “They are most certainly preparing for Angie’s Assembly.”

“I just wish they would leave as soon as possible from there…” Rantaro intervened.

The artist was clearly against Angie’s proposal. He missed no chance to criticize it. Another detail I don’t understand about him.

“Why are you so hell-bent on going against Angie’s meeting? Every time it comes up… you jump at the chance and continue to tell us we shouldn’t go.”

“If you don’t see what is she doing…” He stopped mid-sentence, definitely because he realized that the rest of his words weren’t that kind. “…she wants to gain control over us. With her Atua. She doesn’t have good intentions.”

“Don’t be too quick to judge.” I said. “Maybe you’re too harsh…”

I was using my words to contradict what Rantaro thought, but my thoughts were in line with him. She is hiding something… yet, I can’t allow distrust to spread. We are split now, today… but we have to be together next time. Tomorrow I’ll be sure to round everyone together and organize another proper party.

Rantaro raised an eyebrow.

“Oh. I see what you’re doing.” He smirked.

“I’m telling you Angie is not an evil woman who wants to rule the world.”

“He never implied that.” 0U-M5 noted.

“Yeah, but that’s pretty much what he wanted to say.” Kaito clarified.

Rantaro addressed me. “I know what you’re saying, but for me it’s not hard to understand what you’re thinking.”

“Have you got mind-reading powers?!” The robot exclaimed. “Can I have those too?”

“I don’t think so.”

The inventor replied with a negative answer, to which 0U-M5 sighed hanging his head down.

“Yeah, pfftt…” I chuckled, passing Rantaro’s statement as a joke.

“Just remember to always act smart. You’re a detective.”

The same thing he said at the trial.
“Kirumi, are you going there?” He then asked.

“Yes indeed. I plan on attending.”

“It’s obvious why you’re going, so please try to keep an eye on Angie and Gonta. You don’t want them to get too nuts.”

The adventurer tilted her head.

“Yes.” She responded with her distinctive composure.

“Man… so is it time for refreshments?”

The clock ticked. Time passed, no one else came. Kaito was visibly disappointed, but he tried his best to keep smiling. He said he expected only a few people to arrive. I saw Kiibo peeking from the windows, but I didn’t tell the others. I hoped he would eventually enter, but I stared at the door for nothing. So I decided to turn my attention to something else before the others would start asking questions.

Kirumi left after around twenty minutes, saying she needed to have a shower before going to Angie’s research room.

Excuse alert.

Honestly, I didn’t blame her. The party wasn’t as exciting as we imagined. The most obvious reason was the low turnout, but we ended up playing slot machines more than we imagined.

Then, finally, as I was checking the time, the display of the broadcaster changed to depict Miu in her research lab. She was positioning the camera to make sure it would film her playing her piano.

“Hey!” I called the others. “Miu is ready! She’s about to play!”

“I suppose we have to listen to her…” Kaito said.

“I’ll turn down the volume of the jukebox!”

While she was searching for the best angle to shoot, she talked about the song she decided to play.

“Are you at a party? So I have to choose a rock song! Some say that you can’t play rock songs with a piano, but they don’t know shit!”

“There are better instruments if you want to make rock music.” Kaito shrugged.

“Are you talking to her? Can she listen too?”

“No, no. I was commenting on what she’s saying. She can’t hear us. It’s a one-way communication.”

“I present you with a personal composition of mine! Time for your ears to lose their virginity!”

“What a peculiar metaphor.” Korekiyo observed, not impressed.

Miu sat on the chair in front of the piano and began to play.
With her performance she convinced me I wasn’t wrong. Her ability to play perfectly classical music, as well as rock music cemented the fact she was an Ultimate. And she can compose too! Every note followed the other at the right time, creating a symphony that was nothing short of perfection. What surprised me was also how fitting her choice was. It helped to create an amazing atmosphere.

After five or six minutes, she finished. Bowing at the camera, she said she would come to the party to receive her compliments.

“Wow!” 0U-M5 exclaimed. “She’s so talented! Can I listen to more of her works?”

“I think it’s better for you to limit your encounters with her.”

“Please, Kaito.” I crossed my arms. “You have to admit she’s been amazing.”

“Yeah, yeah. She is very good at playing the piano. That’s obvious. She’s the Ultimate Pianist, it would be ridiculous if she was nothing special.”

“Regardless… She is coming here soon, demanding congratulations. Personally, I have to acknowledge her skill.”

“I’m glad you do! See? Miu isn’t that bad after all!”

“It is important to differentiate the character of someone from their abilities. A skilled man could be the most dreadful person on this earth, whereas someone with no exceptional qualities has the potential to be an extremely kind person.”

“Yeah, that’s true.” I agreed. “But a talented individual can be a good person too. If you treat them badly, they will respond accordingly.”

Korekiyo snickered and hid his mask with his hand. “Miu appears to be too far gone to come under that category…”

“Monokid, the bearer of his father’s name, bears good news!”

Him again. Has he brought back those cards, at least?

“I’ve finished with my bathroom business! Hell yeah!”

“Aren’t you a robot like me? Then how can you…”

“I can’t believe you’re so interested in how can I shit! Don’t tell me you want to analyze those?”

“What? I don’t think so…”

“Can we go back to normal subject matters?” I pleaded. “And most importantly, those cards.”

“Fucking hell yeah, gals and boys! Time to blackjack! Prize: Monocoins! It goes without saying that if you lose, you need to give yours to me!”

“All of us have to play?” Kaito asked. “I’ll show you how good I am!”

“No, you dumb bastard! Only one of you! I’ll let you decide!”

“I would say Kaede should participate.” Korekiyo proposed.
“What the fuck man?! And me?”

“So it’s decided! The detective will play with me!”

“Hey! I don’t know if-

“No time to discuss! Get ready to get your ass whooped!”

The bear forced me to follow him to the other room, the one with the pool table. In fact, there were only that and five chairs.

“This will be the table where we’ll play!”

“Don’t you need a table poker or something like that…?”

“I do what I want! We don’t have the resources for a poker table!”

Then Monokid closed the door behind us and I heard a locking sound.

“Did you lock us inside?”

“I can’t let you leave if you’re losing!”

Whatever.

I sat, thinking that the bear would do the same. Instead, he positioned himself on the table, towering over me.

“I’m so big! Hell yeah!”

…So annoying.

“Time to play! So, let’s start!”

Monokid passed me a card from the deck. The first one is always face up. And it was a 2.

“Low number!” He said, before giving me a card face down. This time it was a 3.

“How much do you want to bet?” He asked. “One, five, ten, twenty Monocoins… I have an infinite amount! Hell yeah!”

Uhm… let’s start with a small number. I only have 50 with me…

“Five Monocoins.” I said, placing them on the table.

“Hell yeah! If you win, you get my five Monocoins too!”

The bear drew his two cards. One of them was a 9.

“What do you want to do?”

“Give me a card.”

Monokid obliged, giving me a 3. So my total was now 8. Of course I asked for another card, and this time I obtained a 10.
“I stand.”

“No blackjack? How unfortunate!”

Monokid drew two more cards from the deck. With 18, I was pretty convinced I would win.

The bear turned his card face up. He drew another 9 and then an ace.

“19! HELL YEAH! GIVE BACK THOSE MONOCOINS TO ME!”

This isn’t fair. He has an advantage over me. Since he has an infinite amount of money, he can risk every time he wants. I, instead, have to be cautious.

“Time for another round!”

“What? How many do I have to play?”

“Until I’m bored! Without Monodam around I can’t do anything fun!”

I sighed. Maybe the best option was to bet all my Monocoin so that I could lose and then leave.

***

Tojo Kirumi

Someone knocked at the door.

“Kirumi! Gonta need to warn you!”

“Hello, Gonta.” I greeted the tennis player after opening the door. “What is it?”

“Angie said she can’t have the meeting!”

“What?” I asked, confused.

The Assembly was set to start in only fifteen minutes, warning us about its cancellation so late was surprising.

“Are you sure?” I asked for confirmation.

“Angie told to me personally! She don’t feel well!”

“What?” I asked, confused.

“Huh? Since when?”

“She said it at lunch! Angie tried to prepare Assembly, but she stayed in room for all time! I prepared what she asked while she in bed!”

“When did she tell you that the meeting would not be held?”

“Just now! Gonta is telling everyone and started from you! Himiko, Tenko and Tsumugi not in their rooms!”

“It could be they already went there.”

“So early?”
“Tenko appears to take rules quite seriously. It would not surprise me if she tried not to be late.
And Tsumugi, being a maid, is definitely already there.”

“Kirumi very smart! So they there!”

I headed out of the dormitories with the tennis player. With the tail of my eye I spotted Miu entering the area in which the casino was located. I assumed she had already performed for the rest of the group.

“Do you know why Angie is not well?”

“No! She said she prayed to Atua to feel better for the Assembly… she didn’t though. Maybe Atua is very very busy now and didn’t want a meeting…”

“Yeah, that must be it…”

I rolled my eyes.

“Have you put your racket somewhere?” I asked, noticing that it was missing.

“Gonta lost it! Can’t remember where was it!”

“It is big enough to be spotted. I assume it would be somewhere you have not searched yet.”

“Maybe! Gonta didn’t search a lot! After all, that racket not that useful!”

After having entered the school, we moved towards the corridor I discovered some days prior. However, near the cafeteria, we heard someone running frantically.

The noise became closer and closer.

“What’s this?” Gonta asked. “Someone is moving fast!”

It did not take long before Himiko appeared to my left. Her expression said more than a thousand words. Her eyes were wide open, she was breathing heavily. As soon as she saw us, she ran faster.

“Help! Help!” She screamed.

It was the first time I saw the entomologist have such a strong reaction.

There was only one thing that could have caused it.

“Himiko!” Gonta cried out. “Why you so scared?”

“B-blood… G-ghost… T-t…”

She could not finish the sentence. It was undeniable.

“Don’t get worried! Gonta here for you! Tell him what happened!”

Instead of responding, Himiko fell down and curled up into a ball.

“Can you stay here with her?” I asked the tennis player.

“Yes!” He agreed. “Time for Gonta to be gentleman!”

“Th-the room…”
I ran towards the corridor as quick as I could.

I still hoped that what Himiko saw was maybe a bug. A insect that died in front of her.

I still hoped that she only hurt herself. Maybe she stepped on it.

…

But she did not. When she came towards us, she did not appear bruised or hurt at all.

The glass in front of the door was broken.

The door… was ajar as well.

I opened it. Even if I waited, that would not change what was behind it.

It was not a bug.

It was not a bug that died.

There she was, lying down on the floor… her head facing towards me, encircled by a pool of blood, her eyes closed… her pained expression.

There was no hope for her.

…

…

…

…

Tsumugi Shirogane, the Ultimate Maid…

…had left this world.

_Ding dong bing bong!_

_A body has been discovered!_

_Now, after some time has passed, the class trial will be held! Everyone, please gather near the Ultimate Supreme Leader Research Lab!_

**DAILY LIFE END**

Chapter End Notes

Poor Kaede who is never the first to discover the bodies
btw i’m kind of in a rush but i really need to publish the chapter today. let me know if you find some errors

Have any ideas on what happened?

Either way, next chapter will be out in less than two weeks. Hopefully.
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Deadly Life

Chapter Summary

Kaede discovers the body; Kirumi helps her during the investigation.

Chapter Notes

This chapter is longer than usual. It's kind of the same as the last investigation, but I didn't want to split it up this time.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

DEADLY LIFE

Kirumi Tojo

I knew immediately what I had seen. No, I had deduced it long before Tsumugi’s corpse emerged from that door… However, not even the announcement convinced me fully. I ran towards the maid, hoping to find a sign of life, a pulsing heart or wrist… I realized soon that a cardiac massage would only worsen the predicament I was in.

The situation that all of us had to face.

This eventuality loomed over us; we could only postpone a second murder. I thought about the possibility every day, at dawn, at night… The faces of my dead classmates plagued me in my dreams, people I could not save.

Now, those nightmares were not confined to my imagination, they burst out of my psyche, invading reality.

Despite what was in front of me, despite my fears having materialized in the form of the deceased Tsumugi… I could not turn back.

Those murders would become normal to us, we will soon be desensitized, and that is not to be argued. However… it was still to soon. How high were the chances that another murder happened for our sake? Considering the motives, our current situation and the amount of commodities at our disposal, the killer had assassinated Tsumugi because they wanted to flee from the Academy.

They must have their reasons, twisted as they may be… despite this, they murdered a person… a vile, cowardly act.

“T-that not real blood!”

Gonta appeared in denial.

I turned to see that the tennis specialist had carried Himiko on his shoulders. She was still dazed and refused to open her eyes.
“Tsumugi… Tell Gonta she is fine!”

I shaked my head. “I am truly sorry. The announcement leaves us with no hope.”

“T-this… w-why someone kill Tsumugi!?” The man cried.

She had always been so obliging. Cooking for us was not her only endeavor. She looked after all of us… her kindness must have been her weakness, her downfall. What did happen to her…? I had just seen her in the casino, conversing with Kaede…

“She must have found herself in the wrong place at the wrong time.” I concluded.

“Gonta do not understand! T-tsumugi so nice…!”

Gonta gently let go of Himiko, laying the entomologist on the ground.

“Maybe Gonta make her come back!”

“Please, do not try the impossible.” I replied, as reassuring I could be. But no matter which tone I used, Tsumugi would not stand once again.

Thinking ahead, I stepped backwards, leaving the antechamber to Angie’s research lab. I may have tampered with evidence that Kaede could find when she investigates. I invited Gonta to do the same as me.

“What? Why? Please don’t leave Tsumugi!”

“We need to preserve the crime scene.” I explained. “Until Kaede arrives, the room must be sealed.”

“O-okay… Gonta wait here to see T-tsumugi again…”

Shortly after, Korekiyo and Rantaro arrived as well.

“Who’s the victim?” The artist asked bluntly.

“Tsumugi. She is behind the door.”

Rantaro shook his head. “I knew there was something off!”

“Tsumugi was supposed to bring food to us at 7:30, but she did not arrive. As time passed, we grew worried.” Korekiyo explained.

That is correct. I remember her saying that to Kaede.

“We went inside the school to search for her… it seems it’s too late. Dammit! If we only arrived sooner…”

“It is still to early to presume Tsumugi could have been saved.” I told the others.

“I agree with Kirumi’s assessment. As far as I know, she did not return to the casino after Kirumi left as well.”

“So she might died a long time ago!”

“Those details will be written in the Monokuma File, I assume. Supposing that the procedure will
not change, we need to wait for everyone to arrive.”

“Where’s the body?” Rantaro asked.

“I thought that it was best to not interfere before Kaede inspected it.”

I knew it was sort of an oxymoron, considering my low level of trust towards the detective, however she was the only person who had experience with this matter.

“So we need to stay here doing nothing, huh? We have a limited amount of time before the class trial starts.”

“Kaede must have heard the announcement.” I explained. “She will be here shortly.”

Not even a minute later, the blonde arrived, sweat on her forehead. Besides her there were Miu, 0U-M5 and Kaito; Kiibo and Maki a few steps behind.

“One of you dumb fucks managed to get themselves killed?! Hyahahah!”

“Have some respect for the dead.” Korekiyo intervened.

“Heeeegh! S-sorry…!”

Kaede moved towards me.

“I won’t ask you to tell me that this is all a misunderstanding.” She began. “But… who did die?”

And again, I also told her the identity of the victim. She appeared surprised as everyone else.

“How did this happen?”

Tenko’s frantic steps could be heard throughout the school; she ignored all of us, running towards Himiko, still silent, and pushing away Kaito, who was in her way.

“Watch your step!”

“Himiko! Himiko! What have you done to her?!”

“Gonta carried her on shoulders!” The boy proudly said.

“You did what?! You monster! You have touched her!! She will never get back to normal!!”

“W-what… Gonta just helped her! She almost fainted!”

“You’re lying! You have traumatized her!”

“B-but… ask Kirumi! She was-

“No! No! Stop with your lies!!!”

“There are more important matters at stake here than Himiko.” Maki said. “She is alive. Someone else is not.”

“Angie and Tsumugi are missing…” Kiibo observed. “Don’t tell me that both of them…”

“No. For now, the only certainty is that Tsumugi was murdered by one of us.”
“It happened a-again… H-how…”

“Where is Angie then?” 0U-M5 asked. “Wasn’t she supposed to have a meeting with some of you?”

“Yes.” I nodded. “But she cancelled it, at least according to what Gonta reported.”

“You have killed her too!” Tenko accused him.

“Too?”

“I bet you’re the murderer! Poor Tsumugi, but of course! How could a girl murder someone?!”

“You’re being as unreasonable as Miu.” Kaito commented.

“Hey! I’m perfect, you’re Kaithrash!”

How clever.

“Gonta… Gonta go help Angie then! She likes Gonta! Not like you!”

After shouting those harsh words, the tennis player left the corridor with a gloomy expression.

“Is it the scent of despair that I hear?!”

The white and black bear materialized in front of us, accompanied by his three alleged children.

“Nah, it’s probably the terrible perfume of one of those bastards!” Monophanie giggled. “Far worse than the ones I use!”

“Hey! This isn’t the time for ads! Leave your perfume to yourself!”

“Okay… maybe I should sprinkle it on Monokid! Maybe it will help him become tolerable!”

“I SAID TO BE FRI-ENDS. MONO-KID WILL RE-TURN.”

“But we should protect you from him!” Monophanie exclaimed. “He’s dangerous! He says he’s preparing your destruction!”

“I CAN DE-FEND MY-SELF.”

“Finally another dead body! You know, another one bites the dust!” Monokuma said. “And leave that door open, won’t you! Everyone should have the possibility to admire dead bodies!”

Gracefully, the mechanical bear opened the door, showing the body again.

“Now the unfortunate one is Tsumugi! Who would have guessed?! It’s a surprise kill! Did one of you expected her to fall? Eh? Huh?”

No one spoke.

“You are no fun! Why won’t you talk to me?! I want to have a casual chat for once!”

“Dad is a great father!” Monotaro added. “You should have some tea with him! He’s very knowledgeable!”

“Shouldn’t you give us the Monokuma File and be done with it?” Kaede said.
The bear’s face twisted in disapproval. “Alright! People argue that I don’t do anything anymore! It’s because of the students! They talk between each other but not with their headmaster! Where have good manners gone?!”

The tablet I stored in my pants vibrated.

“The file is now on your tablets! This time I gave you all the information that you would normally see in the classic Monokuma File™! And remember you can buy your own personal tablet now, you can check the casino or the Monokuma themed stores!”

“Woah! Now daddy is making an advertisement! He’s so perfect when promotes a product!”

“How is another Monopad useful to us?” Rantaro asked.

“You never know!” Monokuma snickered. “See you at the trial! This is going to be exciting!”

I readjusted my hat. It was time to be serious and attentive. I had to discover the culprit behind Tsumugi’s death.

***

Investigation start!

Kaede Akamatsu

Another victim…

Tsumugi…

Why would someone kill her?

I knew it wasn’t a joke. As I ran towards the school I still hoped, deep down, that it was one of Monokuma’s tricks.

But it would have been too easy.

I have to carry another investigation, to uncover the truth once more. Trying to appear as confident as I was the first day I came here, I went to inspect the body. Maki and Kiibo were checking it too.

The crime scene was very different from the one we witnessed the last time. Four days prior, there was no sight of blood; today there was more than I imagined.

“I can’t believe this has happened again…” The astronaut observed. “We said we wouldn’t kill anyone…”

“Yet it happened.” Commented, bitter, Maki. “Proof that you shouldn’t trust anyone.”

Tsumugi was lying on the floor on her right side, leaning on one wall. Under her body there was the first instance of blood; a puddle.

“Where does this blood come from…?”

“There’s only one possibility.” I responded.
Carefully, I moved Tsumugi from her original position, laying her face down. On the back of her head there was a fairly deep wound that resembled a straight line.

“Oh, I don’t think I feel well…” Kiibo said, putting a hand over his mouth.

“The pool of blood has definitely originated from here.” I explained.

“The Monokuma File doesn’t list any other injuries. Have you at least read it?”

Actually, I didn’t do it yet. If I wanted to lead the investigation, I had to make my own evaluations before external information was given to me. Last time the File omitted important details and it outright ignored the cause of death, so it was imperative not to be influenced by it.

**Obtained truth bullet: Conditions of the body**

“Do you know why Tsumugi was here?” Maki asked.

“If I’m not mistaken, she had to attend Angie’s Assembly. It makes sense for her to be found in this place.”

Just outside of the research lab. But wait a second…

Inspecting closer, I saw that Angie’s lab did not have a standard lock. Instead, on the side of the door there was a keypad. A code was required to gain access.

I moved to the corridor, where everyone else was, and I asked for Korekiyo to give me some information.

“Korekiyo, you have visited Angie’s lab the day it opened, right?”

“That is indeed correct. However, I wanted to inform you of one important fact. When I first came here, she used a key to unlock the door that connects this corridor to the room where Tsumugi’s body now lies.”

Hmm… interesting. This means that this door could be locked. Then why is it open…?

**Obtained truth bullet: Door left ajar**

“Anyway, I wanted to ask you how to open the door that leads into Angie’s research lab. There’s a keypad and I code I don’t know.”

“It is rather foolish from you to assume I am aware of the password needed to enter.”

I shrugged. Until Angie or Gonta returns, our only hope is to try countless times.

“On the fourth day, Angie set the code “1-2-3-4-5”, but she surely changed it again to prevent outsiders to enter. From my observations, she is an individual who prefers secrecy.”
“Still… she’s so cheerful on the outside.”

“Our insides contain much more than our outsides, on an anatomical level. That, of course, applies to our character as well.”

When Korekiyo starts to get creepy, it means it’s time to leave him to his weird thoughts.

I stepped back into the antechamber. The keypad had hundreds of possible combinations, and it was unlikely that it had to do with the murder, considering the situation. Despite this, I couldn’t leave it out. I tried the password that the cosplayer suggested. Every time I pressed one key it was followed by a different sound.

But it didn’t work. I waited for some seconds for the door to open, in vain. Angie had changed the code.

**Obtained truth bullet: Keypad**

I stopped looking at the door, hoping for a miracle. I scanned the surface of the door with my hand praying for another secret passage, but I found something that could be considered even more interesting. As I moved my hand inspecting the door, I found a part stickier than others.

It could be nothing out of the ordinary, but I have to write it down too.

**Obtained truth bullet: Surface of the research lab door**

Under my feet I counted several stains of blood. They were almost dry, different from the puddle found near Tsumugi’s body. Looking closely, they were rather thin and elongated, more than resembling a circular shape.

**Obtained truth bullet: Stains of blood**

I turned to face Kiibo and Maki, who were still in the room.

“Since you’re already here, can you guard the body?” I asked. “And also, I’d appreciate if you tried the code to enter the room.”

“Shouldn’t you ask it to Kaito? He’s the inventor here.” Maki responded.

“So you believe in him, huh.”

“I think he’s dumb, but if he’s an Ultimate he must be able to do his job, at least…”

“Maybe I can try the keypad. Even though there are more than two hundred and forty eight thousand possible combinations.”
“Ugh. That’s a lot.”

“Definitely too much for the time Monokuma will give us.”

“Just search for Gonta.” Maki replied. “Don’t try to overcomplicate things. As Kiibo said, we don’t have much time. If we fail, we’re all done for.”

“Yeah, I’d say that the situation we’re in is not the best one, so that’s why we must be ready to make the best of it.” I exclaimed, glancing at Kiibo.

“Okay… I’ll keep hoping for the door. Maybe I’ll get lucky.”

Himiko, Tenko and Miu had left the corridor to go who knows where, while the others were still there, looking around for clues.

“Have you seen this, Kaede?”

Kaito pointed to the last window, the one just in front of the door I stepped out from, which was shattered in dozens of pieces.

“I saw it before.”

I gave priority to the body and the area where I thought the murder took place, but even the broken window was a clue that could be vital to the case. I drew closer, picking up a shard. I aligned it with the outline of the window, proving that that glass coincided.

“This means that this window was definitely shattered.”

“But by who?” 0U-M5 asked.

“I assume that the only one who would do that is the culprit.” Kaito responded.

“Don’t be too hasty. Last time we all thought that whoever entered my room was the one who killed Ryoma, but it was actually… well… you know who.”

“Oh! So there was another murder?” The robot gasped, surprised. “Kaito never told me that…”

Kaito smiled awkwardly, looking to the side. “It wasn’t that important, you know…”

“If I can honor those who passed away, I’ll do immediately!”

“I’m grateful for that, but it’s best if we dedicate ourselves to the investigation.”

“I inspected the various shards and preserved some of those since they had traces of blood on them.” Kirumi let me know. She carefully handed me the important pieces of evidence; in fact some of the shards had droplets of blood on them. So… is this connected to Tsumugi or is it just a detail to throw us off?

*Obtained truth bullet: Broken window*
“This is not all that’s to it.” Rantaro explained. “Look out for a moment.”

Nodding, I did as the artist asked, careful not to cut myself over the sharp edges of the glass all over the place. To my left I could barely see the boiler room, but under me I found a crowbar.

“Why is a crowbar here?”

“Strange, is it not?”

“I have found one in the warehouse while searching for silk and cotton. It could come from there.”

“Well, we can’t be sure of that either way.” I said. “The warehouse is closed during night-time.”

*Obtained truth bullet: Crowbar*

“Monokuma’s second motive turned out to be a bigger problem than we originally thought! How did that bear know that a murder would happen just when nighttime came!”

“I have to admit I don’t understand what he’s able to do, and if he can predict our actions… but I doubt it’s his fault.” Rantaro intervened.

“Yeah, this is probably a plan that was built on those specific limitations we have. Even if the one who took that crowbar isn’t the culprit, they wanted to be sure we couldn’t check where it came from.”

I wonder…

“Have you found anything else here?” I asked, hoping for a yes.

“I am afraid that the answer is negative.” Kirumi responded shaking her head. “But I suppose your investigation is long from finished.”

“You’re right.”

“However, there is something I want to report. The body discovery announcement sounded after I witnessed Tsumugi’s body.”

“Were you with anyone else?”

“Not when I arrived here.”

Shouldn’t the announcement sound after the culprit and two people have witnessed the body? This means another person came here after the culprit and before Kirumi…

*Obtained truth bullet: Body announcement*
“Actually, I haven’t even read the Monokuma File.” I said.

“Oh, wow. Isn’t it a bit selfish?” Rantaro commented.

Rantaro’s last sentence caused me to winch.

“No, it isn’t.” I immediately responded. “You might think I am too proud to look at it, but in reality I’m preventing myself from being influenced by false information. I’ll make my deductions first and then I’ll take a look at it. After all, we have it at our disposal at all times.”

The artist shrugged. “I mean, you’re right. But you can’t just ignore it altogether. Can you also deduce the time of death?”

I rolled my eyes. Is this really the time to be testing me?

“I’m sure she can tell you!” Kaito exclaimed. “Kaede, show to him who’s talking with!”

I rerolled my eyes, this time even more. I can sense a catfight brewing.

“Is it around seven thirty?” I guessed.

Rantaro took another look at the Monopad. He smiled soon after.

“Wow, you’re correct. The Monokuma File tells us that the time of death is 7:35 PM. Sorry if I underestimated you, Ultimate Detective.”

Was he sarcastic? Ugh.

It wasn’t that hard, judging from the blood, which was still liquid, and the conditions that Tsumugi’s head wound was in.

**Obtained truth bullet: Monokuma File 2**

“Great job, Kaede!” Kaito gave me a thumbs up. “What to do now then?”

“I should gather testimonies, alibis, and etcetera. In particular, I should interrogate Himiko and Angie.”

Kirumi told me that Himiko was, at least to her knowledge, the first one to discover the body. Other than that, she didn’t say a word.

“Where has she gone?” I asked.

“Tenko said she needed some time alone.” Rantaro explained. “She gladly accepted to get out of here.”

“Great. I have to search for her then.”

“However, we do know where Angie is.” Korekiyo reminded me. “According to Gonta, she is in her room.”

Angie’s testimony could be the most important. After all, she was supposed to be here preparing
for the Assembly. Gonta hinted that she wasn’t feeling well, but that’s as vague as it can get.

Kirumi offered to do half of the job. “I can go to the dormitories and fetch Gonta. This will be an opportunity to interrogate Angie as well.”

“Shouldn’t Kaede do those things? She’s the detective.”

“No, don’t worry, Kaito… Kirumi is very capable. I think she can substitute me while I search for other pieces of evidence. Surely there’s more to Tsumugi’s death that meets the eye.”

“Sorry if I interrupt…” 0U-M5 chimed in. “According to the rules, everyone should participate in a trial, right?”

“Yep, that’s it.” I nodded.

“If Angie isn’t feeling well, will she be able to attend? We don’t know what she’s suffering from yet, but if it’s bad, she might be too weak to do anything.”

“We shouldn’t speak before we have the chance to see her.”

“Yes, I agree… but we should take measures to prevent the worst from happening. If she is forced to stay in her room, can there be a way to let her participate…?”

“I bet one of my darlings can do the job! The video camera used to film Miu! Hypothetically, we can broadcast the feed from Angie’s room!”

“Kaito, you’re so intelligent!” The robot praised his creator.

“I already knew, but thanks for letting the others know!”

Aren’t they rushing things…? We have to check on Angie first…

“This means you and Kirumi can go back to the dormitories together.” Rantaro recapped.

“For me it’s okay! 0U-M5 will come too.”

“Yes, I will do as you ask.”

“Okay.” I said. “It’s time to split. I’ll search for Himiko inside of the school then. If you find something you find strange or hear a particularly interesting testimony, then report those information to me.”

The three nodded and headed off for the dorms.

***

Kirumi Tojo

Angie’s disappearance is definitely a key piece to solve the mystery that plagues us today. I had some questions to ask her, yet I had to arrive at the dormitories before I could have an answer.

“Has Angie behaved like this before?” 0U-M5 asked. “To me, it seems she cared a lot about this meeting.”
“Don’t listen to her.” Kaito replied. “She’s only trying to brainwash you with her words.”

“But I want to know more about what happened before I was born!”

Born? ...An odd choice for a term in this situation.

“You’ll know in due time. For now, everything that’s vital for you is stored in your data.”

“Alright. I trust you, so I will wait as much as you say it’s necessary!”

Kaito turned his attention to me. “So, time to show you my greatness too! Just like last time!”

“I assume you are referring to us guarding the entrance to Kaede’s room.”

“Yeah! Wasn’t I great? I gave Kaede details that were so important that helped her solve the case!”

I suppose that is true… despite that, it is obvious that the detective would have filled those gaps regardless of Kaito’s contribution.

“Yeah indeed…” I nodded, attempting to avoid the matter.

“So the dream team is back, baby! I bet we’re definitely uncovering some hard evidence.”

“I certainly hope so.”

When we entered the dormitories, we found Gonta knocking on the supreme leader’s door.

“Angie! Angie! Someone died, please respond!” He sounded desperate.

“Gonta, is everything alright?” Kaito asked.

Well. It does not seem so, smart inventor.

“Since when are you here?” I intervened.

“After Tenko accuse Gonta and he got back to room to reflect, he go here to check Angie!”

“So it’s been a while…”

“Gonta very worried! Angie always respond! Angie! Angie! Open!”

The situation calls for an Indiana Jones style kick to open the door. But, of course, that would be an extreme solution, and I prefer to use violence -of any kind- as a last resort.

 Thankfully, and to my surprise, the supreme leader opened the door, trying to force a genuine smile. Her dark complexion was paler than usual; her posture made it clear she was in pain, despite her fake expression.

“Have you told the others about the cancellation of the Assembly?”

“Yes, but…”

Gonta stuttered.

“Oh! There are both Kirumi and Kaito! Have you decided to attend too? I’m sorry for the inconvenience!”
Her smile weakened.

“I do not want to worsen your condition.” I began. “But we’re here to investigate.”

“What?! Has someone died?! Oh, yeah! The announcement! I forgot for a moment…”

“Yeah, Tsumugi… Gonta not believe it!”

She appeared to be in discomfort, but not because of the death of one of our classmates…

“That’s a pity… but it was bound to happen.”

“Have some compassion for the dead!” Kaito exclaimed.

“Bad thoughts are no use when the terrible thing has already happened!” She rebutted. “We can only pray to Atua and try not to make the same mistakes to avoid it next time!”

“Are you feeling okay?” 0U-M5 asked. “It seems there’s something wrong with you.”

“Yes, I think I’m sick.” She admitted.

“Despite that, you still smiling! Angie very brave!”

“The greatness of Atua allows me to be strong and never burned out!”

She needed rest, yet we needed answers to our questions. The sooner we start, the sooner we finish.

“Can you explain your situation to us? We believe it has to do with Tsumugi’s death. She was found in front of your research lab.”

“What…” Angie was shocked. “How is that possible?”

“If Gonta remembers well, Angie got back to research room only one time just after lunch.”

“Yeah, that’s actually right now that I think about it.”

“You were preparing a reunion and you never stepped inside after this afternoon!”

“Yees! That’s because I didn’t feel well…” She explained. “I did not want to freak anyone out, so I continued to hope that Atua would cure my illness to make sure I could organize the meeting… sadly, it didn’t happen.”

“Atua can’t solve all your problems, man…”

"But Gonta go there until he went to assist Angie! He checked back every ten minutes and even less!"

“I have a terrible stomachache, and I very often feel the urge to vomit. Now I’m feeling slightly better, so that’s why I came to talk to you.”

“Do you think this could be something else other than a coincidence?” I asked. “You have to admit that the circumstances surrounding this are suspicious. A sudden illness the day you are organizing an event… followed by the appearance of a victim in front of your research lab…”

“There’s definitely something strange right here…” She observed. “But I didn’t do anything strange!”
“Not to be invasive, but can you recount everything you did before you noticed your particular ache?”

“Well…” Angie placed one of her fingers on her chin. “I woke up, I had a shower… then I prayed to Atua. I woke Gonta up and we set up the research lab, but I ended up not doing much because of my indecisiveness. We left the middle door open, to make sure that everyone could contact us if needed… I never locked it. Then we ate in the kitchen… it was our breakfast, even though later than all of you.”

“I did knock on your door at 9 AM. You did not respond.” I recalled.

“Me and Gonta were praying. We don’t interrupt our praying sessions for your mortal needs.”

“Gonta was there too!”

“I’m sure that’s pretty fucking rude, even though you’re conversing with a God.”

“And then back to the research room, then we had lunch with you! My morning is all done!”

So Angie claims she was on the other side of the door while I was calling for her. That could be proven for certain if she had responded to me, even though she remained silent. Gonta confirms her location, though, considering how much time they spent together and Angie’s behavior… he could be lying.

**Obtained truth bullet: Angie and Gonta’s testimony**

“I’m thankful to Atua that He allowed me to have a discussion with all of you without any problems.”

“Yeah, but the questions aren’t finished, right Kirumi?”

“Yes. There are some other questions I wish to ask.”

“Oh, that’s okay for me… but I don’t know when I’ll need to go back to the bathroom again…”

“Are you able to take part in the class trial?” 0U-M5 intervened. “Because of your conditions, I think it will be difficult for you to do so…”

“I didn’t think about that at all! Now that you mention it, I’d prefer remaining here… but the rules prohibit that.”

“Maybe we can find a loophole? Nobody says that you have to be physically present!”

“I hate loopholes! I work so hard creating my rules and people always take advantage of commas and shit!”

Monokuma emerged from the stairs.

“Hello, Monokuma!” Angie greeted the bear. “Have you seen my terrible conditions?”

“Of course! And I also know what caused it! I know everything you do, you bastards!”
“So you tell us?! Gonta so relieved!”

“No, do you think I’m your maid?! You do things on your own now, especially now that your resident maid has definitely stopped existing. You decided to murder her, I don’t have anything to do with it.”

“Nyahaha! Are you referring to someone in particular? Is the killer in this dormitory now?”

“Again?! I won’t answer questions made by you! I came here because I heard your absurd demands! The rules are loud and clear! Attendance is mandatory, no matter the situation. If you don’t come, you dead, son!”

“But Monokuma! I’m not feeling a class trial right now!”

“Do I have the face of a bear that cares about your opinions?”

“Gonta never seen that face.”

“Because it doesn’t exist! You will attend that trial, whether you want it or not!”

“But…” Angie began. “Do you want your perfect trial grounds to be dirtied by my vomit?”

“What?!”

“Do you imagine me there, trying to talk when… bleargh! All of my previous meals spilled on the floor… and I think you worked hard for those expensive tiles too!”

“Aaah… you have hit my weak spot! The trial grounds are perfect! I love my Monokubs almost as much as I love those!”

“…I think the opposite would be better..”

“But as an headmaster, I must make that sacrifice. Rules must be followed, especially in killing games! You must be present at a trial.”

“I have a solution though!” Kaito boasted. “We can transmit direct feed from Angie’s room! So she will be with us, even if not directly.”

“That way, she is safe and so are your dear tiles.” 0U-M5 explained.

Monokuma inspected the inventor’s expression, pondering if his offer was worth accepting.

“I suppose it is fine. For today. I have gone through to much shit while setting up this killing game, and now that we have started, I won’t go back. What is done is done.”

“So I can stay here? Nyahaha!” Angie cheered. “Thank you Monokuma! Maybe you’re not as bad as the others say!”

“Get your thanks away from me. I don’t want to associate myself to beings of your kind. We’re different! I repeat, we’re different!”


“I will set up the trial grounds to make sure your ill-devised plan works. And I’m doing all of this for my dear tiles! Let’s hope this is the first and last time we do that. And stop calling me! I need
“Nobody asked for you.” I pointed out.

“Sassy today, Kirumi?! You’re lucky you’re not in Tsumugi’s place!”

Following his taunt, the bear disappeared from our view, allowing us to continue the investigation.

“I’ll go pick up the camera then! It’s in the casino. Who wants to come with me?”

“Wait for a second and I will come too.” I said. “We need the code to access your research lab, Angie.”

“Hmm… I mean, it’s a secret… but since I can always change it, I’ll be well mannered and I’ll tell you! It’s “5-3-HOPE-5-4.” Nyahahah!”

“Does it carry any significance?”

“I think it does! Atua whispered those numbers to me! They definitely mean something!”

…Iso it probably does not mean anything.

Me, Kaito and 0U-M5 left the dormitories. The casino was as I remembered it after leaving.

“What did Miu leave the camera?”

“Under us. I’ll pick it up immediately!”

Kaito sprinted downstairs. As he descended I noticed something curious. Some bottles in the cupboard were not full. And, to my knowledge, those were alcoholic.

“Did someone take them?” I asked 0U-M5.

“U-uhm… not that I know. We agreed we wouldn’t drink them! Tsumugi decided that.”

“So they might have something to do with her death, even though it may seem farfetched.”

“Another question… Rantaro and Korekiyo came to the crime scene before you, Kaito and Kaede. Why?”

“They left to search for Tsumugi. Kaede was locked in the room to the side playing with Monokid, while Kaito was in the bathroom.”

“So that means that all of you three were alone.”

“Yes, but there are no exits to those two rooms. They remained there, I’m sure.”

“What about your actions during the party?”

“We stayed together until 7:45 PM, when Miu finished her broadcast. Then Monokid came and Kaede got locked in the side room, while we continued chatting in the main room. Oh, another interesting fact is that Korekiyo arrived very early to the party, like… 6 PM.”
Kaito returned immediately, the camera in his hands.

“I was thinking…” He said. “We have proof that Miu’s innocent, right?”

“I would not be so sure of that.”

“Why? She’s been recording and broadcasting her piano session. You weren’t there, but there are a lot of us who can prove that.”

“That is true... Maybe I am wrong...”

“We will discuss that during the trial.” I replied. “We have more important matter on our hands. I assume you will bring the camera to Angie.”

“Yes. Will you come with us?”

“I will head towards the research lab. Also, I am going to inspect the crime scene further.”

“Wait, didn’t Kaede do that already?”

“Another look does not hurt.”

“But she’s a professional detective, she must have deduced everything by now!... Wait… do you suspect her?!”

I could not rule anyone out; that was the only assessment that was definitely true.

“No way she killed someone! Especially after last time! She has been affected more than anyone else here!”

That is what she is telling us with her words and her demeanor. For all we know, she could be genuine… however, I expect a detective to be calm and collected; qualities that Kaede has surely proven to possess, however at the same time she has shown us she is susceptible to negative emotions. Yet I did not have the time for a discussion; I had no choice but to lie.

“I do think the same. She could have still forgotten about small details, though.”

“Nobody’s perfect.” 0U-M5 agreed. “I’d be okay with it.”

“I’m glad you say you don’t doubt her… but we’ll talk about this after the trial.”

“If we find the time, I assure you I will continue this conversation.”
Instead I hoped to forget about it.

***

Kaede Akamatsu

I didn’t have any idea of where could Himiko have gone. She should have known better than fleeing from the scene of the crime, but how can I blame her? Probably many people would have done the same.

I walked along the corridor, not realizing that someone was right besides me.

“This time I don’t want to lose out a single moment of the investigation!”

Rantaro, obviously.

“Do you want to be my partner?” I asked, jokingly.

“Like Batman and Robin? Maybe I can live with it.”

“Yeah, but I’m Batman.”

I’m trying to be as nice as possible with him, but there’s no way I’m letting him lead the investigation while I’m around. He can’t butt in even when I’m doing my job.

“Fine. Everyone always forgets about the importance of sidekicks. They can turn the situation in an instant.”

“Are you here to tell me about the information in the Monopad? I’m trying to sol-

“Solve this murder by your own. Yeah… That’s a pretty impressive task. But I have to say, you impressed me with your deductions.”

I’m the Ultimate Detective, if I can’t understand something as simple as the window of time in which someone dies… I’d be a trainee at best. In different situations, I’d ask Rantaro why he’s so volatile; acting friendly and ready to chat at one point, being shady and silent after a while… yet I don’t think I’m in the condition to do that. We’re in the middle of an investigation and I definitely don’t know him well enough.

“Look down here.” I told Rantaro when we were near the entrance.

The greenish-haired boy reclined his head down. Behind his feet there were numerous pieces of paper on the floor.

“You’re saying those are important?”

“I don’t think that they were here before.”

Bending to get a better look at them, we tried to count them all. They were more than fifty, all extremely small, torn by someone or something. If we could put them back together, we would probably form a 8x8 cm square, more or less.

“There are traces of ink, it seems.”
“Yeah.” I nodded. “Something was written on them, but it’s impossible to understand what… and nobody of us has the time to stay here and try to solve this puzzle.”

“And we don’t even know if this would be useful or not.”

Obtained truth bullet: Pieces of paper

“We should concentrate on finding Himiko. Where could have she gone?”

“If she’s in the dormitories, Kirumi’s going to interrogate her. So we have to search her in the school.”

“But there are lot of rooms. She could have gone literally everywhere.”

“The cafeteria, gym and warehouse are closed. At least we know for sure she isn’t there.”

“I already knew that, but thanks for the refresher.”

“Actually, I wanted to bring up something that I remembered just now.”

“Is it related to the case or is some random trivia about Rantaro Amami? Just to be sure.”

“Do you think I would waste your time with the story of my life in a moment like this?”

“The answer is that I don’t know. I’d prefer to understand you rather than be shocked at every one of your moves.” I said, crossing my arms.

“Good for you then. I assume it’s related to the case. Maybe.”

“Elaborate that maybe.”

“Tsumugi has been in the cafeteria all the time during the afternoon, I’m pretty sure. I went there a couple of times to have a coffee and she didn’t go anywhere. But the strange bit is not that one. Instead of receiving a ginseng coffee, I got a regular one.”

“Interesting… both times?”

“No, only the first. After seeing that inexplicable wizardry, I asked Tsumugi if she could fix it. She assured me she would have done it later in the afternoon. And the second time I got the ginseng coffee I wanted. Sadly, I don’t remember the time. I bet it would have been easier if I checked the clock.”

“I guess you had no idea that a murder was going to happen…”

“Yeah…” He looked to the side.

Obtained truth bullet: Coffee machine
As we paced in the hallways, looking for our entomologist, we crossed paths with Kiibo.

“Weren’t you tasked with guarding the body?” I asked.

“Yeah, I was. But I couldn’t stay there all this time. Korekiyo and I swapped places.”

“And Maki remained there?”

“Until I went away, she was sitting in the corner. To me, it seemed she wasn’t enjoying herself.”

“She is in a small room with a dead body.” Rantaro observed. “That isn’t a situation we want to be in.”

“I think you’re right. But I mean, she looked really annoyed. More than Maki-level annoyed.”

The aikido master has a strange way to deal with grief, from what I assume. I still haven’t had a real talk with her. She’s trying to incorporate herself into the group, but this death… if she wants to protect us as she says… maybe it was even worse than Ryoma’s and Shuichi’s to her.

Suddenly I saw something moving in the shadows.

“Hey!” I called out.

The figure that emerged from the bathroom was easy to recognize. It was Himiko.

“Nyeh… I tried to avoid them…” She sighed.

“I said you to wait! If there was Gonta with them?! You could have been hurt!” Tenko shouted.

“…I can take care of myself.”

“I know you can, but I’m here to protect you!”

“I don’t want to interrupt whatever you were doing, but I’m conducting an investigation… and Himiko’s testimony happens to be important in this case.”

“D-do I have to tell you w-what happened…?”

“Yes! The same thing you told me! They will surely believe it! If not, I assure you Kaede will punch this degenerate!”

“Hey… didn’t you say I was better than the others?” Rantaro lamented.

“You’re still a menace!”

“Okay… but now the most important thing is to have your testimony.”

“Nyeh… promise that you will believe me… It’s very strange…”

“How strange can it be? I’m sure it won’t be-

“I saw a ghost.”

Excuse me, what?

“I… I think I didn’t understand.”
“No, she said a ghost.” Rantaro repeated.

“That’s strange.” Kiibo said.

“Don’t tell me you don’t believe in ghosts! I always protect children from ghosts who want to steal their brains!”

“Weren’t those zombies?” Rantaro asked. “I know for a fact they’re zombies.”

“Clearly you don’t know how ghosts work, stick to your paintings! Tsk!”

The conversation… has shifted towards the paranormal…? I’m sure there’s a logical explanation to this absurdity.

“Uhm… can you give us more details?”

“I knew you wouldn’t believe me…”

“No!” I quickly shook my head. “I do believe you, the fact is that… I need more clues, to convince the others.”

“Nyeh… If there’s someone who can knock some sense into others that’s definitely you…”

I took my notepad from my pocket and transcribed Himiko’s words.

“So… I was going to the AAA early, since I supposed that Angie would already be there… I was alone, spending time in my room. I traversed the school going straight to the corridor that Kirumi found the other day. Just when I arrived there I heard the school doors opening, but I was too tired to go back and check who it was… nyeh. And then… I found the door open. I thought it was normal… but there was Tsumugi’s body… and a ghost…”

“Hmm… elaborate on that ghost.”

“It was white and pink! As soon as it saw me it chased after me!”

“I think it was a person…” Rantaro said quietly.

“No! It was a ghost! I immediately ran away! And there I found Kirumi and Gonta!”

“That menace! I leave Himiko for a second and here he comes!”

“You left her?”

“Me and her spent the afternoon together. Then she went to her room to have a shower before the AAA.”

“It’s true…”

“But you didn’t warn Tenko that you were leaving without her…”

“Kaede, what are you implying?” Tenko glared at me.

“Nothing, nothing… I was trying to understand if you have an alibi for the time of murder.”

“Maki saw me.” Tenko said. “She was reading on the upper floor of the dormitories.”

“She didn’t tell us though.” I pointed out.
“You know how she works. She won’t tell anything unless you ask her! Just like the boys I teach to!”

It appears we have to go back to the research lab and ask some more questions.

**Obtained truth bullet: Himiko’s testimony**

**Obtained truth bullet: Tenko’s testimony**

“Will you come with us too?”

“There again?! I can’t let Himiko see another dead body!”

“I mean, it’s the same she saw a while ago…”

“Don’t be so morbid, you menace! You don’t understand what’s like to see a dead body beside you!”

“Then we’ll see each other at the trial…? I asked.

“Nye… I wish I didn’t have to attend… but yes… I have to…”

*Rise and shine ursine!*

“It’s been so long since we showed up!” Monotaro exclaimed.

“Oh, that’s right! How much time has passed?”

*AT LEAST ONE-THOUSAND LINES."

“Oh, that’s meta commentary! That’s my favourite!”

“Please, taro! Don’t confuse the others! They already hate us…”

“Hello…” Rantaro sighed. “I actually thought you were gone…”

“We will never be gone!” The read bear rebutted. “We’ll be here together and forever!"

“Prepare for trouble!” Monophanie announced.

“And make it double!”

“Nye… what is this?”

“To protect our academy from devastation!”

“To unite all bears within our nation!”

“To denounce the evils of thruths and hopes!”

“To extend our reach to even more tropes!”
“Monophanie!”

“Monotaro!”

“Monokubs ready to bear news at the speed of light!”

“That’s not always true, but sometimes it might.”

“BZZ! THAT IS RIGHT.”

“What the hell is this? One of the most random things you’ve done.” Rantaro said.

“We need to make references to stay relevant!” Monophanie cried out.

“I think you did a great job, sister.”

“THIS HAS MADE US UNITED.”

“Usually you come here when we have questions or something like that.” I said. “Don’t tell me you’re here just because of this show.”

“We are here to take your Kubs pads. Now they’re useless to you.” Monotaro explained.

“According to what I know, Himiko still has hers.”

“Can’t I keep it?”

“Why would you, Himiko? This is dangerous!” Tenko warned her.

“Nyeh… if that person tries to attack me, I can show them their secret…”

Himiko looked at her torso, where the case to store bugs contained the tablet given to us.

“Can’t I keep it? Please…”

“No, daddy’s already mad that we have messed up!”

“Yeah, we have given one for each one of your talents, but that means someone recei-

“BZZZZZZZZZZ!!!”

Monodam proceeded to screech to the point I could feel my ears bleed. Thankfully, it was only a sensation. While the robot was doing that, forcing us to cover our ears, he snitched the pad from Himiko.

“THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. I WILL TAKE YOUR KUB PADS NOW, SINCE YOU DO NOT NEED THEM ANYMORE”

“Hey…”

“MONOTARO. MONOPHANIE. WE WILL HAVE A TALK NOW.”

“Oh nooo! Have we done something bad?”

“So long, bear well!”

Uhm… they were talking about our pads… apparently they slipped and almost told us something we weren’t supposed to know about them… Someone received… received what? I think that I
can’t understand that now, not with the clues I have… but since this is the motive it was given to us, it might come in handy during the trial...

Obtained truth bullet: Kubs Pads

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Kirumi Tojo

After having checked that there were no exits in the bathroom and the side room, I entered the school alone, having left 0U-M5 and Kaito behind. When I arrived to the corridor near Angie’s lab I found Korekiyo still staring outside.

“Have you found anything else you deem important?” I asked.

“I did indeed. It appeared to me that something else was hidden under the bushes. If you look closely, you can spot a racket.”

I inspected the grass under me and I discovered a familiar handle.

“How did I not notice this?”

“You should ask that yourself, not me.”

“That is right, however… were you here all of the time?”

“Please, explain what you mean.”

“Did you keep watch over those windows since the others left or did you visit some other place?”

“Ah. Then the answer is yes. I just came back from the antechamber to Angie’s research room. I did guard the body alongside Maki.”

If that happened, then… maybe I should remember this.

Obtained truth bullet: Racket

Having heard that testimony, I entered the antechamber. Maki was still there, but her eyes were not focused on the body. The aikido master was instead looking at the research lab door, slightly open.

“You might not believe it, but I guessed the code to enter inside.” She said.

“Angie told me.” I said. “If you are not lying, it is really lucky for you to input the right code.”

“Well, I got it after some tries. I started from nine, since nobody thinks about it being the first number.”

“Nine?” I asked, surprised. “Angie’s code started with a five.”
Maki shrugged. “Then she lied to you. The right code is 9-4-1-1-1. I decided to spend my time clicking random numbers, how beautiful is my life.”

That is surprising to say the least. It appears Angie lied to me. Why would she though...? This makes her seem undoubtedly suspicious.

Something is not right… she is smarter than this.

**Updated truth bullet: Keypad**

“We’re here!” Kaede exclaimed.

Kiibo and Rantaro were behind her.

“Look who’s back. The boy who couldn’t stand seeing a dead body.”

“The fact that you’re accustomed to it doesn’t make you a better person…”

“And we didn’t come back here to argue!” Kaede intervened again. “…But it seems we came back just in time. Have you asked Angie for the code?”

“Yes.” I confirmed. “However, she gave me the wrong one. Thankfully, Maki guessed it correctly.”

“Wow! How many tries?” Rantaro asked astonished.

“I don’t remember. Is it important?”

“I think you got extremely lucky. Kiibo said there were, like… two hundred and something combinations.”

“Two hundred and something thousand combinations.” The astronaut corrected Kaede.

“…So that’s really a lot. Wow.”

Almost too convenient, you might think.

“Let’s not focus on how lucky you were-

“You should have gone to the casino!” Rantaro exclaimed. “Maybe today was your lucky day…”

“I was so fortunate that one of my classmates ended up dying.”

Rantaro sighed. “That’s true as well…”

“As I was saying…” Kaede continued. “It was told to me that you can confirm Tenko’s alibi.”

“Are you talking to me?” Maki asked.

“Yes, I am…” Kaede nodded calmly.

“Now that I think about it, I did see her in the dormitories. She was there for a long while, with Himiko I think. She showed up after some time, and then left. Tenko entered her room just before
she exited the dormitories."

“You are of utmost importance here, Maki.” Kaede said. “Have you seen anything else while you were there? Other people entering and heading out?”

“I’d keep those details to me if you wouldn’t mind. I don’t want anyone to know I saw them.”

Is she referring to someone else here…? I did not see her during my return to the dormitories after the visit at the party, so she must have gone somewhere else at that time.

“Did you stay there without going back to your room?” I asked.

“I did return to my room once, then headed outside after a couple of minutes.”

“That’s helpful. I understand what you want…” Kaede nodded. “But remember, that information you have might be the key to solve the case.”

Obtained truth bullet: Maki’s testimony

“I can try to understand how Tsumugi died too, I have a brain too…”

“I wasn’t underestimating you.” Kaede pointed out. “But saying that if we work together we’re stronger.”

“That depends on the point of view.”

“Can we see what’s inside?” Rantaro asked. “There are stains of blood coming from there…”

Those stains are the proof that something happened in the room.

“Maybe I should remain outside…” Kiibo trembled.

“Do you wish to guard the body?”

“Uhm… I don’t know what’s inside of there… the room is pretty dark…”

The astronaut was right. Even though the door was slightly open, it was clear that the room had no windows or any other light sources.

“Did Angie and Gonta work in darkness?” Maki asked.

“That would be somewhat difficult.” Rantaro responded. “But you can never know how powerful Atua is… I guess He guides the faithful with His voice, even when all the lights are off.”

“Don’t be so harsh on her…” Kaede intervened.

“I’ll open the middle door.” Kiibo offered. “Maybe we can make light pass through with it.”

Kiibo did as he proposed, and that allowed us to see better. Despite that, the room was still dim. Inspecting closely, I saw that the candles I saw the first time were still there. I made the others aware of them.
“They’re out. But there’s still wax.” Kaede said.

“That means that someone extinguished them.” Rantaro continued.

“Angie did not mention that fact… however, she might have considered it as an unimportant detail.”

“Kiiibo, make sure that the door stays open.” I said. “Otherwise we will not see anything.”

“O-okay…”

We entered the room, confirming that the stains of blood came from inside. I saw some others, but there were less than I expected. They did stop right after the entrance.

“It’s sure. Someone entered here.” Kaede said.

“With the candles out?”

“They could have extinguished them after entering.”

“Remember that they did not take anything from the room. That is against the rules.” I reminded everyone.

“So why did they came here?” Kiiibo asked from outside. “Is it even connected to the murder?”

It has to be… this cannot be a coincidence.

“Somebody should stay here and check thoroughly.” Kaede proposed. “Kirumi… maybe you can do that? You visited this room once, maybe you saw something out of place.”

“As far as I can remember, nothing much has changed. Even though Angie said she was preparing for the Assembly, everything is in the place it was before.”

“What kind of meeting did she set up? Maybe she didn’t do anything at all…” Rantaro rolled his eyes.

“This room could be more telling that it seems at first glance.” Kaede said.

“There’s always something that only detectives pick up on…” Kiiibo followed.

**Obtained truth bullet: Research room**

“Have you gathered alibis?” Maki asked, the last one to leave the room.

“Some. But I didn’t prioritize those. Everyone can give their testimonies at the trial. Focusing on the details we can’t have while there is key.”

“I agree with you.” I said. “Do you wish to read my findings?”

Even though I did not trust Kaede fully, I am certain she did not commit this murder, since she was locked with Monokid. And refraining from giving her my notes would be equally suspicious. If she hides a secret, I have enough information to accuse her.
“Oh, you can give them to me. If you want, you can read mine too. But since we have some more time, we should do something else.”

“Where do you think more clues might be?”

“I don’t really know… I searched the school for them… but I didn’t find as much as I hoped.”

Kiibo intervened. “So… that means Tsumugi was killed here? If there’s proof here only…”

“I didn’t say that.”

“Ah. Sorry for my impulsivity…”

Then, Korekiyo called us from the corridor.

“There is Kaito outside.”

I assumed that the inventor came to inform us of an event related to the camera and the transmission feed, however as I left the antechamber I realized it had nothing to do with that matter.

“Why do you have a bloodied cloth?!” Kiibo exclaimed.

“Are you getting dizzy because of some blood, seriously?”

“Some people find it gross.” 0U-M5, who was with Kaito, intervened.

“I’ve got my fair share of bright pink for today.”

“No, let’s be serious…” Rantaro chimed in. “This could be the missing link to the case.”

“It could be.” Kaede followed.

“Have you seen something like that anywhere else?”

“I didn’t, but that could have been my fault. You said it yourself, I have to consider all the option at my disposal.”

I did not understand what the two were talking about, but it surely had to do with clues that Kaede found previously; I had to inspect her notes as soon as the time given to us would end. The cloth was rather large, similar to the size of a bedspread, white where it was not dirtied by blood. I had not seen it before, so I had no idea on what was its original place.

“Where have you found it?” Kaede asked.

“It was behind the boiler room. I thought that I had to have a look there too. Our culprit did hide this thing where nobody would look.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Stained cloth**

“You’ve done a great job!” Rantaro congratulated with his classmate.

“Tsk, I know! Maybe if I wasn’t an inventor I would have been a private investigator!”
“Let’s appreciate that you didn’t try the second option.” Maki whispered, to make sure we barely heard her.

“I will show you! As soon as we get out of here, I’ll start my training to become the best detective on the planet!”

“I… appreciate your enthusiasm. But… you should focus on getting us out of here.”

“Heard loud and clear! If the Ultimate Detective believes in me, it must mean I’m a great apprentice!”

The aikido master sighed.

bzzrtip...

Ding dong bing bong!

The screen in the corridor switched on. The bear was holding a bottle of champagne while smirking at the camera, exactly like last time.

<< Alright! It’s time for what you’ve been waiting for– the class trial! Please assemble in front of the Shrine of Judgment! That is valid for all of you, except Angie Yonaga! Because of complications… she will attend the trial in an unconventional way. But don’t worry! I have everything under control! >>

***

Kaede Akamatsu

The screen turned off right after the last word, displaying the time again.

“Our time has ended.” Korekiyo said.

“You don’t have to be so ominous.” Kaito lamented. “We have solved one case that seemed impossible, this time it will be a joke for our detective!”

“The last time Tenko said that we almost died, wanting to choose Ouma as the blackened.”

“Blackened?!” Ouma exclaimed. “What’s this story?”

“I will tell you more about it, I said. But we need to concentrate on the trial now!”

The robot glanced at the inventor with a different expression. However, it was so sudden I couldn’t understand what were his feelings at that moment… Kaito did not tell anything about what he was before…? He deserved to know.

“I won’t lie to you. There are some clues I don’t understand yet. I have a general idea of what’s happened… but we might have to stay underground for a while.” I admitted.

“Has someone seen Miu during the investigation?” Rantaro asked. “She was nowhere to be found in the school.”
“She has to come to the trial, so she will show up. Man, I can’t believe she didn’t help us.”

Us eight headed for the entrance door. Kirumi led us, me behind everyone. I felt guilty leaving Tsumugi’s body behind. We didn’t know that Monokuma would “dispose” of the bodies the first time, but now… we could have buried her. It would have been respectful…

Instead, we focused on understanding who ended her life, landing the killing blow. Can this be considered respectful too…? That’s what we have to do if we don’t want to die as well, we’re forced, it’s against our will… are we really doing this for her?

…That reminds me, I still haven’t looked at the Monokuma File. Now that I can’t search for more clues, it can’t influence me anymore.

I looked at my tablet, finally reading what it had to tell me.

The victim is Tsumugi Shirogane, the Ultimate Maid ### ########

The body was found in the area adjacent to the Ultimate Artist’s Research Lab.

The estimate time of death is around 7:35 P.M.

The cause of death is blood loss from blunt force trauma.

To the side of the victim’s name there was a censorship, I could say. A black box hid whatever was hidden there. I checked back the previous Monokuma File, but as I remembered, nothing was written to the side of Ryoma’s name. That’s because we didn’t know his talent, I think... but it's written this time around... so what could be under that?

Despite that, I knew that something was concealed from us. Monokuma would never give us the full picture… what’s under there has to relate to the case… the problem is that I don’t even know what I’m searching for.

Updated truth bullet: Monokuma File 2

I noticed I fell behind the others, concentrated on what that black line could mean.

“You need to keep up.” Maki said.

“Sorry, I was reading the Monokuma File.”

“You really didn’t read it, huh? I hope it turned out to be better this way.”

“I can’t say yet. At least that censorship didn’t cloud my mind while I was investigating.”

“Let’s get to it. I need to share a clue.”
“Is it about the people who came to the dorm?”

“No, I’ve already said I won’t tell you that. It’s something I can’t understand, so it’s better in your hands.”

What could something like that be? I’m reassured that Maki has somewhat opened up to me…

The aikido practitioner put her hand in her pocket, handing me a small piece of paper.

“What about it?”

“Open it. I found under Tsumugi’s body while Kiibo went to search for you.”

The message was written with a pen.

“Did she have a pen on her too?”

“No, I searched for it. But no sign of it.”

“Do you think she wrote it?”

“That’s her calligraphy. I recognize it.”

I took my time to read the message again. It wasn’t that clear, the letters were shaky and definitely not written with a steady hand. Some parts were covered by black ink. I could understand it, but I… that couldn’t be real.


Sorry everyone. Even though 

## I'm a killer too. I should have told you before this happened

I'm writing this last letter.

I know you will find this and save everyone else. It’s my fault.

“This makes it seem it’s a suicide. It’s obvious.” I said.

“Yeah, but it would be too convenient. That’s why I waited before sharing it.”

“But even so, this words were definitely written by Tsumugi. We can’t know when, but they must mean something.”

“I trust you with the task to decipher them.”

“…By the way, thanks for having done this.”

“I’d be stupid to leave important evidence to myself. I’m not like Miu.”

That’s obviously true, but she has just said she didn’t reveal who she saw in the dorms… It’s a good start though…
“Time for this again…”

As soon as I entered the Shrine, I heard Himiko’s characteristic voice.

“Nyeh… for how much time do I have to stand up today…”

“Good thing you rested in your room!” Tenko immediately followed, always near to the entomologist.

“At least someone here is maintaining a positive attitude.” Kaito said, looking at the gloomy faces of everyone else. “We’re here to avenge Tsumugi, remember?”

“We were also supposed to avoid murders altogether.” Kiibo said.

“Don’t focus on the past, damn! Someone made a mistake, but that’s not you, is the killer!”

“You are assuming he is not the blackened.” Korekiyo made one of his usual creepy remarks.

“O-of course I’m not!”

“Anyway, everyone is here.” I intervened. “Of course, except Angie.”

“What is she up to?” Miu asked. Finally I saw her. I almost would have asked her what had she done since the investigation started, but there was no time for small talk.

“She doesn’t feel well!” Gonta responded. “So Kaito very gentle and helped her!”

“You helped a girl?!” Tenko gulped. “I can’t believe it! There must be some trick to it!”

“How will this exactly work?” Rantaro asked.

“Monokuma said he’d set up the trial.” 0U-M4 explained.

Kirumi played with her hat. “I wonder how will he manage to keep Angie in her place. The camera does not cover the entire room.”

“Excuse me, but why are we still here? You’re only delaying the inevitable.”

“Way to kill the atmosphere, Maki.” Kaito glared at her.

“There’s not that much to save.”

“Hey, hey… negativity brings you down.”

“It keeps you with your feet on the ground.”

“Nyeh… I’d like to fly like my bugs! That’s why I’m never negative.”

“Are there times when you are… positive?” Kiibo asked.

“When my bugs are around… but they aren’t here…”

The ground behind our feet trembled.
“Kekekeh… it is time to go underground.”

Rantaro looked around. “I’d say the bear is tired of waiting for us.”

“Come on, let’s go.”

I lead the others to the elevator that we boarded only four days ago. There were more inside last time… will we continue to dwindle? The space looked crowded before, now it already seemed empty…

The trial grounds were the exact same as before, but instead of a podium, there was a monitor where Angie stood before, the screen showing an image of her face. Next to Iruma, a canvas showing Shuichi’s black and white portrait was displayed. Instead of a X, similar to the one on Hoshi’s portrait, there were pictured two wands that resembled the letter.

How cruel from Monokuma… poking fun at our talents… I looked behind me, making sure I had Shuichi’s cape with me. I had to show it to the bear.

I looked up to meet his gaze, noticing that a Monokub was missing.

“Puhuhuhu… finally you came inside!”

Miu poked Kiibo. “You’d like if a girl said that to you, wouldn’t you, heh?”

“W-what are you talking about?!” The astronaut responded, his face flushed red.

“No time for jokes now! The trial is about to start! It’s been way too long! Time to use your brains for once!”

“Dad! Where’s Monokid?!” Monotaro asked.

“I noticed you four were fighting and you weren’t spending time together! It’s not that normal for brothers! Usually you make up in a couple of hours.”

“Ughh… Monokid was really mean to us!” Monophanie cried. “I’m glad you confined him!”

“No, I didn’t, actually. Look at that!”

Monokuma took out a remote controller and pressed a button. The monitor that depicted Angie’s face lit up, showing us the supreme leader sitting on her chair, while Monokid was running behind her smashing his guitar onto the ground.

“HE-RE HE IS.”

“Let me explain to you, my children and you bastards.” He said, showing his white side. “I don’t trust Angie that much, so we have to keep an eye on her. You will swap places after some time has passed, so everyone gets a piece of cake!”

“Is it a metaphorical cake? Because I’m hungry…”

“Fuck yeah!” Monokid said through the screen. “I’ll show you I can look after this tanned girl whose name is so strange to spell!”

“Hi everyone!” Angie said looking straight into the camera. “It feels kind of strange, because I can’t see you…”
“That’s right. The camera is a type of one-way communication.” Kaito explained to everyone. “I expected Monokuma to allow Angie to see us.”

“Too much work for a lazy bear like me! It’s already so difficult not to hibernate for the winter!”

“Don’t worry, I can hear you loud and clear! If I have any difficulties, I’ll tell you.”

“If this girl wants to vomit, I’ll be sure she doesn’t escape! Hell yeah!”

“Sorry if you see me in this state… and sorry if the AAA was cancelled…”

“Don’t worry Angie, Gonta sure we can have another time!”

“Ugh!!” The bear sighed. “Can you fucking start this trial or do I have to force you? You’ve got plenty of time to talk!”

We headed for our respective podiums. Gonta looked ready to start, Himiko was already drifting into her thoughts…

But I need to stay focused and understand the clues…

Tsumugi Shirogane, The Ultimate Maid, has died. Because of one of us.

Did the killer take advantage of her kindness? Nobody could hate her…

She always helped us, ready to lend a hand…

What happened to her? Was she hiding something?

I need to uncover the truth and expose the culprit…

I want to believe they have a reason, just like Shuichi.

But we need to stay alive… and I have to doubt everyone… yet another time.

CLASS TRIAL START!
Well... I honestly don't know if this can be figured out without the trial. I put a lot of things in the mix and a couple of them are also red herrings... I'll wait for your predictions!

The truth bullets are coming next time in an easier to read form, like last time.

Who is the one that killed our maid? You'll see the start of the trial in 12 days if nothing strange happens... see you next time!
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Class Trial (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

The second trial starts; the students try to understand what happened.

Chapter Notes

TRUTH BULLETS:

• Conditions of the body:
A wound that resembles a straight line was found on the back of Tsumugi's head. A pool of blood originated from it. There are no sign of scuffle on the body.

• Door left ajar:
The door that leads to the antechamber was slightly ajar. Such door had a lock, but there was no key around the area.

• Keypad:
In order to enter Angie's research room, one needs to input the right code from a series of 12 digits. Each key is connected to a specific sound. Despite Angie giving us the code she thought was correct, that was actually wrong.

• Surface of the research lab door:
One part of the door is sticky. Something must have been on it, but it was later removed.

• Stains of blood:
There are stains of blood coming from Angie's research room. They are thin and elongated.

• Broken window:
The window directly in front of the antechamber was broken. Some of the shards have droplets of blood on them.

• Crowbar:
A crowbar was found under the window.

• Body announcement:
According to Kirumi, the body discovery announcement sounded after she discovered the body. This means someone witnessed it before she did.

• Monokuma File 2:
The Monokuma File informed us that Tsumugi died around 7:35 P.M. from blood loss caused by blunt force trauma. Something was censored by Monokuma.

• Angie and Gonta's testimony:
Angie said that she and Gonta spent the morning praying, then went to the cafeteria to eat something for breakfast before lunch. She planned to set up the Assembly, but she became ill. Gonta checked back the research lab regularly, eventually stopping at 6:45
PM, when he went to Angie's room.

• Alcoholic beverages:
Some alcoholic bottles found in the casino were not full. However, the ones who attended the party had agreed not to drink those.

• OUM's testimony:
Oums confirmed that he, Korekiyo, Rantaro, Kaito and Kaede were inside the casino when the murder took place. They then got separated after Monokid forced Kaede to go with him.

• Miu's broadcast:
Miu broadcasted live the video of her performance around the time of death.

• Pieces of paper:
Many little pieces of paper that would form an 8x8 square were found scattered on the ground. Because of their conditions, it's impossible to know what was written on them, but there are traces of ink.

• Coffee machine:
During the afternoon, Rantaro went to the cafeteria to have a coffee. He selected a ginseng coffee, but he got a regular cup of coffee. He asked Tsumugi to fix the problem and, when he came back, it was resolved.

• Himiko's testimony:
Himiko says she went to Angie's research room before it was supposed to start. However, she saw Tsumugi's body and a white and pink ghost which scared her to the point she fled. Soon after she crossed paths with Gonta and Kirumi.

• Tenko's testimony:
Tenko claims to have an alibi at the time of death. She was in the dorms, and Maki saw her.

• Kubs Pads:
The motive given to us to make us kill each other. The Pads contained secrets that made us vulnerable, but we don't know how were they distributed.

• Racket:
Korekiyo found a racket hidden in the bushes under the windows. However, nobody noticed that when we first inspected the research room. He temporarily left the corridor to guard the body with Maki.

• Maki's testimony:
Maki claims to have seen people entering and exiting the dormitories during the afternoon and the evening. She refuses to tell us more before the trial starts.

• Research room:
Angie's research room was dark; there are no windows and candles emit light as the main light source. However, when we entered, they were extinguished.

• Stained cloth:
Kaito found a cloth dirtied with blood near the research room. It's rather large, resembling a bedspread.
•Tsumugi’s message:
Maki found this message while searching Tsumugi’s body. "Sorry everyone. Even though I’m a killer too. I should have told you before this happened. I’m writing this last letter. I know you will find this and save everyone else. It’s my fault." Some words are crossed out, but that definitely is Tsumugi’s calligraphy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

CLASS TRIAL:

In session!

Monokuma: Ahem! Now then, let’s begin with a basic explanation of the class trial!

Monokuma: During the trial you’ll present your arguments for who the culprit is, and vote for whodunit!

Monokuma: Vote correctly, and only the blackened will be punished. But if you pick the wrong person…

Monokuma: I’ll punish everyone *besides* the blackened, and that person will be allowed to graduate from the academy!

Monokuma: Also, refusing to vote will result in your death.

Tenko [pensive expression]: You said the same exact things as last time. We remember them!

Monokuma [shows primarily white side]: As your headmaster, it’s my duty to remind you the rules. I don’t want any of you dying on me, okay?

Kiiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: Yet three of us are dead…

Monokuma [belly laugh]: Upupupupu… and soon somebody else will!

Maki [annoyed expression]: Please ignore him. We’re not here to discuss his hypocrisy.

Angie [hands clasped together]: Yeah, we need to understand who’s behind Tsumugi’s murder!

Himiko [tired expression]: I’d never thought of participating in another trial… I tried to forget everything that happened then.

I also wanted to forget the existence of those sick trials… but now we need to take part in it. Try once again.

0U-M5 [confused expression]: So… how do trials exactly work? Where do we start?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm raised]: Last time we opened our discussion with the information found in the Monokuma File.

Rantaro [mouth slightly open, index finger pointing upwards]: Actually, we talked about what
wasn’t found in the Monokuma File, the cause of death.

Miu [looking sideways]: But there’s everything there this time! So we have to start somewhere else!

**Did no one else know about the censor bars…?** I think someone does, like me. But bringing it up now is useless; I can’t understand what it means. When the time’s right, I’ll present that evidence.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: As of now, I would say our first step is to find the ones who definitely did not commit this murder.

Gonta [surprised expression]: We know them?

Kaede [determined expression]: Yeah, there are some who are confirmed innocents.

Kaito [rubbing head]: There are? I guess so…

**Yes, someone of us can’t be the culprit.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Monokuma announcement, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Miu’s broadcast, Himiko’s testimony**

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: Sorry, but I don’t know who could be innocent this time.

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: You weren’t outside spying on everyone?!

Kiibo [blushing]: I don’t spy anyone! **There’s nothing I know this time.**

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: Angie and I always together! So we innocent?

Kirumi [lays hat on chest]: You did tell me that, but you could also be lying.

sad expression]: Oh.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: **But we aren’t lying**! Don’t listen to her, Gonta! She’s always too suspicious! Sometimes you just need to believe!

Kaito [proud expression, hand that forms fist]: I know! You are talking about the party, right?!

Tenko [hands on hips]: What about the party? Can you **confirm someone’s innocence**?

Kaito [proud expression, adjusts goggles]: Of course! **Everyone who was there has to be innocent!**

Miu [angry expression]: Wait a second, how can you be so sure?! Maybe someone sneaked out while you weren’t looking!

Kaito [irritated expression]: What?! No way, I would have seen them! There’s no one else who can confirm someone did leave when Tsumugi was killed!

**There’s one person that has to be innocent because we have solid proof of that.**
ANSWER: Miu’s broadcast --> “confirm someone’s innocence”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [determined expression, index finger pointing upwards]: Miu’s innocent. She was playing the piano at the time of murder.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: She did finish before 7:40 PM, however I doubt she would be able to kill someone in four minutes.

Miu [angry expression]: I’m not that fast!

Kaede [gesturing]: Yeah, we can say that Miu’s innocent. Kaito told us she broadcasted live.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Are we sure about that?

Kaito [rubbing head]: She can’t teleport... so she must be innocent.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Hmm... if you say so. If we are wrong, it will be evident later.

Kirumi has doubts about Miu's innocence? We have proof right here...

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: Oh yeah bitches! Bow down to my greatness! I can do nothing from now on and leave everything to you!

0U-M5 [confused expression]: But you could still be killed if we don’t discover the culprit.

Miu [looks to the side]: Bah, you’re just saying this because you’re jealous of my body!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Miu’s shtick notwithstanding, this time we have a solid basis for our discussion.

Angie [tilts head to the side]: Uh? Something we didn’t have last time? What is it?

[[The crime scene/The victim’s talent/A precise time of death/The motive]]

ANSWER -- The crime scene

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: This time we have a lot of details about the crime scene.
Kaito [rubbing head]: You mean where we found Tsumugi’s body? How can you be sure that’s the crime scene?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: There are way too many clues to say Tsumugi wasn’t killed there. Some could say it was planted evidence, but that would require too much time.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, finger on chin]: And you’re just saying that without proof?

**Here he comes.**

Kaede [nervous expression]: As I said, there’s way too much proof. You explored the school with me, you know there wasn’t anything strange.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking sideways]: We can’t go anywhere without concrete proof. Last time we assumed Ryoma’s cause of death we ended up getting everything wrong.

Tenko [pensive expression]: Hmm… he’s right. I’d like to finish this as soon as possible… I don’t want to go in circles again.

Himiko [tired expression]: And I’d love to go back to my room…

Kaede [nervous expression]: I understand what you’re saying, but if we don’t make assumptions we can’t go anywhere! How do we start?

Kirumi [neutral expression, right index finger under lips]: To my knowledge, there is a clue that could help us determine that Tsumugi was killed nearby.

Gonta [surprised expression]: If there is, Kaede or Kirumi should tell!

**A clue…? I guess that thing could help us and maybe convince Rantaro… there’s something that can’t be planted evidence at the scene of the crime.**

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

**ANSWER --> Conditions of the body**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Listen to me, Tsumugi had a severe head wound.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: Oh dear! I hope it didn’t hurt when it happened!

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: I do too… she didn’t deserve a slow and painful death.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: There was a lot of blood coming from that wound, and in fact a puddle of blood started forming around Tsumugi’s body.

Rantaro [neutral expression]: Yes, I saw it too.

Kaede [gesturing]: If the culprit wanted to move Tsumugi, she would obviously bleed out and
leave a trace.

Kirumi [tilts head slightly]: However, the corridor was clean. There was no sight of blood.

Rantaro [slight smirk]: What you’re saying it’s true, but there’s one thing you didn’t take into account.

Kaede [nervous expression]: Care to enlighten me?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: That wound could have been inflicted after Tsumugi’s death.

Kaito [surprised expression]: Woah! What?! How’s that possible? Something like that would definitely kill you! I think...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Yeah, definitely. But not if you’re already dead. The culprit could have misled us.

Gonta [thoughtful expression, right index finger near lip]: So maybe Tsumugi killed another way?

Maki [blank expression]: That’s what he’s implying.

Rantaro ‘s continuing to interfere with my line of reasoning... but this time I know what to say.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Conditions of the body, Stains of blood, Broken window, Monokuma Announcement, Monokuma File 2

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: What Rantaro is saying is true…

Kaito [rubbing head]: Do you really think Tsumugi died in another way? It seems strange to me.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raising head]: There are a number of ways you could kill someone and hide it with a more visible wound.

Miu [panicked expression]: Are you an expert of those kind of things?!

Rantaro [looking sideways]: Maybe she was poisoned?

Tenko [hands on podium]: Again?! What are the chances?

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Instead of trying to understand how was she killed, we need to focus on why we know she died.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, right index finger under lip]: We should be able to prove she died because of that wound.

OU-M5 [thoughtful expression]: Well, it’s impossible to know her cause of death.

Maki [pensive expression, index finger near chin]: There was nothing helpful at the scene of the crime.
Maki [eyes closed]: Unless you can prove that all of that evidence wasn’t planted.

Rantaro [apprehensive expression, arms in front of self]: I’ve nothing against you, Kaede. I’m just trying to understand what happened.

Yeah, right. That’s totally it. He wants to help me.

**ANSWER: Monokuma File 2 --> “it’s impossible to know her cause of death”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Sorry, but we know how Tsumugi died. Just look at the Monokuma File.

Kaito [smiling, thumbs up]: So you did look at it at the end!

**Apparently I’m the only one who remembers what was written on there. The others must have forgotten while searching for clues. Otherwise I can’t explain this.**

Kaede [gesturing]: The Monokuma File specifies Tsumugi’s cause of death as blood loss.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards] So, considering that there were no other injuries on her body, that head wound must be what killed her.

Rantaro [looks to the side]: …I guess I have to concede.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Look at the bright side! Now we can be sure of a bunch of things!

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: We don’t need talk about other possible crime scenes. We know Tsumugi killed were she found.

Tenko [thoughtful expression]: But why was she there?

0U-M5 [curious expression, looking to the side]: Wasn’t she supposed to bring food to Angie’s Assembly?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, eyes closed]: That is what I remember as well.

Kiiibo [confused expression]: But there wasn’t any food near the body.

Miu [shocked expression]: What if the culprit ate it?!

Himiko [sideways look]: They could have been hungry…

Kaede [uncertain expression]: Even if she brought something to eat with her, it’s far more likely that the culprit disposed of it instead of eating.

Maki [rolls eyes]: I don’t think they would waste their time eating.

Rantaro [awkward expression, arms in front of self]: Even though Tsumugi was an excellent cook…
Kaito [determined expression]: If we didn’t find that food it means it was brought back to the cafeteria!

0U-M5 [shrugs]: It makes sense, right? Where could they have put it?

Tenko [hands on podium, determined expression]: And Tsumugi’s food has a very distinct smell! It couldn’t be anywhere else!

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression, looking at clothes]: So you are suggesting that the culprit left the scene of the crime with a cake in hand?

Tenko [smug expression]: I wouldn’t put past them!

Wait… could that have been possible? No way.

Kaede [gesturing]: No, if Tsumugi brought the food with her, the culprit definitely didn’t bring it back to the cafeteria.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, hands clasping together]: Of course, not only because the smell would be noticeable from the corridor as well… because the culprit had no access to the cafeteria whatsoever.

Kaito [confused expression]: Hm? How is that possible? It was bright outside.

Angie [index finger on temple]: How can you know? You were at the party if I’m not mistaken. In the casino there’s no light from the outside, riight?

Kaito [forms fist with hand]: Hey! What are you talking about!? I think the inventor has forgotten that, or maybe he didn’t pay attention during those days. Let’s clear up this whole ordeal.

PSYCHE TAXI START!

1. Why couldn’t the culprit access the cafeteria?
   
   [[It was closed/Somebody was in it/The door was stuck]]

**ANSWER:** A

2. Why was the cafeteria closed?

[[It was undergoing maintenance/Tsumugi locked it up/It was night-time/We can’t know]]

**ANSWER:** C

3. How can it be night-time and 7:40 at the same time?

[[Secret change of rules/Monokuma’s first motive/Monokuma’s second motive]]
ANSWER: C

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: I think most of us know that the cafeteria closed at 7:30 PM, since it was night-time.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Ah, damn… sorry, I completely forgot. You did mention something about Monokuma…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Yeah, he gave us a second motive; shorter daytime. Because of it, the cafeteria closed sooner. That’s why we had our dinners before our usual time.

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: I still wonder how Monokuma managed to alter our perception of time.

That’s also another mystery. Another consequence of this motive was the sun setting before our usual time. We assumed Monokuma tampered with the school clocks, but then I also forgot to check, wrapped around everything that was happening… anyway, I still have that hypothesis…

Monokuma [snickering]: Oh! I wonder! Do you want to discuss about that?!

Monophanie [looks at flower]: Yeah! Stop your talk about murder! I can’t stand it…

Monotaro [looks to the side]: But they barely touched the subject!

Monokid [smashes guitar]: Yeah! I want to see the trial action with my own eyes! How long do I have to stay here with this freak?

Angie [furrowed eyebrows]: You shouldn’t insult other people, it makes others hate you.

Monokid [angry expression]: I don’t want to be liked! Loved ones always end up in bad places!

Monokuma [shows primarily white side]: Dear Monokid, you just have to wait for a bit before I release you. I have to decide who swaps places.

Monodam [neutral expression]: DAD NEEDS TI-ME TO THINK. BE RES-PECT-FUL.

Monokuma [blushes]: Oh! They’re so kind with me! Not like modern children! Tsk!

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression, raised right arm]: Our last deduction proved that the culprit could not have returned food to the cafeteria.

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger near cheek]: Yeah, since Tsumugi was killed after its closing time, because the Monokuma File lists the time of death as 7:40 PM.

Himiko [sideways look]: Then where has that cake gone..?

Gonta [determined expression]: It has to be inside research room! Hidden in drawers!
Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I must admit I did not inspect all of them. I could have missed important details.

Miu [looking to the side]: You can’t hide an entire cake in a drawer, you dumbasses!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: I suppose you can mush it and hide the crumbs. Wasn’t there a small altar in Angie’s room?

Angie [flailing arms]: Yeah, there is! That’s the place where you should pray to Atua!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: You could move it and hide something behind or under it. If you put it back, it would be difficult to notice the difference.

Kaede [uncertain expression]: I’m not exactly of the same opinion, but… that food has to have gone somewhere. And the research room is our best bet.

Maki [blank expression]: Are you certain of that? I understand this is an important topic of the discussion, but…

Angie [inclines body to the right]: I don’t understand why is it so important? Tsumugi could have brought food, but it doesn’t really matter.

Well… I can prove that Tsumugi’s food could have been hidden in the research room. After doing that, I can finally talk in detail about her death. We said that we would have smelled it, but no one of us did. There’s only one explanation… how was that smell concealed?

1. A C
2. A B
3. T N
4. A D
5. L O
6. E A
7. S E

ANSWER: Candles

Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

CLEAR!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The candles’ scent could have easily covered the smell of Tsumugi’s cake.

Kiibo [surprised look]: That’s right! It was pretty noticeable, but I didn’t think it would be useful to us…

Kirumi [tilts head]: It appears even the smallest clues can be used to dispel our doubts.
Kaede [gesturing]: We still don’t know if Tsumugi brought food with her, but the culprit definitely hid it there if that’s the case.

Tenko [irritated expression]: So whoever killed her had access to the research room! Well, there can be only two people here who are at fault then!

Angie [creepy smile]: Huh? I don’t get what you’re talking about?

Kaede [arms crossed]: No, we can’t assume Angie and Gonta were the only ones to have access to that room.

Kaede [gesturing]: Even though we’ll have to talk about that, I’d focus more on something else for now.

Gonta [confused expression]: We still talking about crime scene, but what else is to say?

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: That’s our topic, yes, but let’s try to think about what we know about the research room and the anteroom as well.

**We established that the culprit had to enter the research room if Tsumugi brought food with her, but I know they entered regardless. I need to show the others why.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets:** Conditions of the body, Door left ajar, Door surface, Blood stains

Himiko [tired expression]: Kaede, don’t you know the answer to this already?

Kaede [surprised expression]: H-huh? What?

Tenko [hands on podium]: You’re the detective! You should know!

Kaito [forms fist with hand]: Hey! Don’t attack her! She’s not a demigod! She needs time to think!

Kaito [angry expression, bumps fists into each other]: She can’t spout nonsense at random, like… *Tsumugi was killed in the research room!*

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: We should try to participate in the discussion as well. Kaede can aid us, as she has done previously.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, finger on chin]: I guess… maybe it has to do with one of the doors?

0U-M5 [moves head to the left]: Well… the doors must be related to this. But which of them? Both? Only one?

Miu [proud expression, pointing]: Let’s lay out what’s certain! We know everything important about Tsumugi’s death!

Miu [toying with hair]: At least that’s what it looks to me!

Kiibo [hides in hood]: That puddle of blood still plagues me… and it wasn’t the only instance of blood in that room…
Maki [rolls eyes]: It is just some blood.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Well, it was a mortal wound. It’s no joke.

I definitely have to intervene. I know what I have to say, I need to reply to one of my classmates.

ANSWER: Blood stains --> “Tsumugi was killed in the research room”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [uncertain expression]: I know it’s not the best way to put it, but Kaito’s absurd hypothesis is far from being that convoluted.

0U-M5 [curious expression]: You’re talking about your time to think, right?

Kaede [uncertain expression]: No, I’m saying that Tsumugi was killed in Angie’s research room. The bloodstains found at the crime scene clearly come from that room.

Rantaro [pensive look]: That was also what I was thinking. It can’t be a coincidence.

Gonta [worried expression]: Those not there before! Gonta sure never seen them!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: She could have bled out as the culprit carried her out of the room.

Korekiyo [looking at clothes]: Yet that would be quite a difficult task to accomplish. The research room was pitch black.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: We established that there was no source of light in that room aside from the candles, which were extinguished.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: I don’t think the culprit would be able to kill someone in the darkness.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: And they definitely didn’t set up a trap, since, according to you, they went back to pick up the body.

It’s almost impossible for the culprit to have murdered Tsumugi in the dark, so… how could they have done it?

Tenko [determined expression]: Maybe they used a light source? They could have brought it back or hidden it under the altar.

Kaede [gesturing]: That would be different, I’m not sure they could smash an electronic device and hide it.

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: But you know what happened, right, Kaede? You have that look in your eyes!
Kaede [uncertain expression]: What look?

Rantaro [pensive expression, index finger pointing upwards]: The one that you always have when you’re about to tell us something we didn’t notice, presenting the evidence.

…I had no idea. Am I really so expressive?

That’s not the time to wonder about my habits. Those two are right. There’s a way the culprit could have killed Tsumugi, a obvious light source we might have forgotten about... sometimes the simplest answer is the correct one.

[[The windows from the outside/The keypad/The candles/The Monopad]]

**ANSWER: The candles**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Somebody had to burn out those candles, am I right?

Maki [blank expression]: Of course. The candles were still there, there was still wax to consume.

Kaede [thoughtful expression, index finger pointing upwards]: I’d say that those were still burning, and the culprit extinguished them *after* killing Tsumugi.

Himiko [tired expression]: That’s an extra step though… why would somebody do that?

Gonta [right index finger on lip]: Culprit wanted us to think Tsumugi killed not in research room, so they not need to do that.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: It wasn’t necessary, but it’s clear that the killer imagined we would understand Tsumugi’s real place of death.

Kaede [sideways look]: The bloodstains pretty much gave it away.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Probably they realized we would not be fooled after noticing those and went back into the research room to blow out the candles.

Miu [irritated look]: Pretty cool, but how did the culprit enter the research room then? It seems obvious they did.

Tenko [pensive expression]: Tsumugi also entered. We know she was killed there.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: To my knowledge, there are only two people here who know the code to enter.

**Here we are… everyone here is aware of the fact that Angie and Gonta were the only ones who had access to the research room.**

0U-M5 [determined expression]: Angie and Gonta, obviously! They said themselves no one else
knew the password!

Gonta [worried expression]: Gonta swear not told anyone!

Kiiibo [hides in hood]: You’re only making yourself more suspicious this way…

Angie [cheerful expression]: Don’t accuse my dear Gonta! You must be crazy to think he’s capable of murder!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Personally, I’m far more inclined to believe you did it.

Angie [lays hands on cheeks in a surprised expression]: Woah! I didn’t think you would say that!

So we’re back to this topic that I wanted to avoid… Angie is not that stupid. Even though many clues implicate her, that’s only because the crime scene is her research room. And for Gonta… I simply refuse to believe he would kill someone, especially if there’s no reason at all.

Angie [tilts body to the right]: Since you think I killed poor Tsumugi, I should defend myself!

Angie [tilts body to the left]: But I’m sick, you know? How could I murder someone in those conditions?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: You do appear to be healthy now.

Angie [flailing arms]: I am feeling better now, but I could start throwing up anytime soon! So let’s get this argument started to avoid the worst consequences!

**Does Angie have anything to do with this murder? She might not be the killer, but maybe she did something without knowing? By hearing what the others have to say I can move the conversation forward.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Broken window, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Coffee machine, Tenko’s testimony**

Angie [tilts body to the right]: Can I hear your accusations? You have to be very specific, I might not hear you well.

Kaito [angry expression]: She’s already pretending not to listen!

Gonta [confused expression]: Hey! Gonta sure that Angie not killer! She really sick!

Miu [irritated look]: Well, is there proof that she was indeed? You **don’t have clear signs of an illness** and surely not a medical record!

Gonta [determined expression]: No! Angie **telling truth** and Gonta telling truth too! Gentlemen never tell lies!

Tenko [disgusted look]: Who can say you aren’t covering for her? You’re not as gentlemanly as you claim to be!
Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: Please do not think about such convoluted scenarios.

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: But… if she had an illness, **somebody had to have noticed before**.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: I hid it pretty well! As a leader, I’m a master at hiding my problems to the masses! I need to be always at the top of my game!

Maki [blank expression]: You’re focusing too much on this illness. We just need to prove **she was with someone at the time of the murder**.

Himiko [tired expression]: Nyeh… that would prove her innocence… but if she was inside her room, who can be certain of that?

**Hmm… there are some clues in my notepad, both from my and Kirumi’s investigation…**

**ANSWER: Angie's testimony --> “she was with someone at the time of the murder”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

---

Kaede [gesturing]: According to what Kirumi wrote, Gonta had been with Angie for more than one hour prior to him calling her, which was around 8 PM. So, from 7 PM.

Kirumi [tilts head]: That is what was told to me.

Miu [looking sideways]: Yeah, but he could have lied. He says he didn’t leave her, but how can we know?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Would he gain something by lying? If Angie’s the culprit and he covered for her he would die.

Kaito [sideways look, hand on hip]: I’ve faith in Gonta, but Angie might have convinced him with that Atua things…

Angie [creepy smile, shade on forehead]: I would never do such a thing! Atua doesn’t condone violence!

Angie [cheerful expression]: How many times do I have to repeat it?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Gonta’s testimony is useful to us, but, considering the relationship he has with Angie, I don’t think it’s as reliable as it seems.

**Oh, please. Angie’s incredibly shady, but I refuse to believe she would use Gonta to commit a crime… and that the tennis player would be so naïve not to suspect anything.**

Kaede [determined expression]: You can say that testimony isn’t true, but even if that was the case, it’s a logical leap to say Angie was the culprit.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Yes, but by not crossing out that option, we can come back to it when new evidence is discovered.
Kiibo [uncertain expression, looking to the side]: You’re contradicting a detective, so…

Kaede [irritated expression]: He’s free to do that.

Well, he shouldn’t be… but why should I start a fight when is not needed? Anyway, I get where he’s coming from, however you can’t classify Gonta’s words as unreliable…

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: If Angie has nothing to do with this, we can prove it some other way.

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: We can’t deny that. He’s right.

Rantaro [neutral expression]: Someone has to have an idea.

I have. Maybe this won’t show him what it wants, but it’s another piece of evidence.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: 0U-M5’s testimony, Himiko’s testimony, Tenko’s testimony, Maki’s testimony

Korekiyo [caressing face]: One of us should talk now.

Gonta [worried expression]: But Angie not culprit! Gonta with her the entire time!

Maki [blank expression]: Where were you before the murder?

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near chin]: **In Angie room in dormitories.**

Angie [puffed cheeks]: That’s right! I spent most of my time in the bathroom though…

Kiibo [looks to the side]: And you didn’t leave that room at all in that last hour?

Angie [puffed cheeks]: I wasn’t feeling well and Gonta assisted me, there was no reason to leave!

Himiko [tired expression]: Why didn’t you tell us about your sickness?... **None of us was warned**…

0U-M5 [shrugs]: And there’s **no one who kept watch over the dormitories.**

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raising hand]: If there is anyone who saw Angie between seven and eight PM, they should speak now.

Tenko [determined expression]: Or, at least, Kaede should tell us if **someone of us could have seen her**…

Kaito [rubbing head]: I think I’d be able to recognize Angie if I saw her.

Tenko [irritated expression]: I’m not saying that! Maybe we **might have found a clue without even knowing!**

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: Is that even possible? Even so, how would Kaede know?

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: She’s a detective! Our detective! She can understand everything!
I wouldn’t say I understand everything, but I do know who’s right and who’s wrong in this discussion. That is…

**ANSWER: Maki’s testimony --> “no one who kept watch over the dormitories”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Maki said that she was in the dormitories for a lot of time this evening.

Maki [looks in front of self]: I did… I was reading a book taken from the library.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Why were you there and not in your room?

Maki [eyes closed]: I hate how small is that place. On top of that, today there was a terrible smell inside.

Monotaro [surprised expression]: Oh! Maybe it’s Monophanie’s vomit…

Monophanie [shocked expression]: What!?! That’s not true! You want to make me look bad!

Monodam [blank expression]: PLE-ASE DO NOT FIGHT.

Monokuma [lunes forward]: Oh! It’s time to switch! Somebody has to keep an eye on Angie!

Monokid [excited look]: Fucking hell! Time to smash my guitar in Monodam’s face!

Monokuma [scratching forehead]: Actually, I don’t want you to beat each other up, so maybe you two will be switching out first.

Monodam [blank expression]: BUT DAD. I NEED MY BRO-THERS.

Monokuma [shows primarily white side]: Oh, sweet Monodam. How do I understand you. I also had to abandon my mother a long time ago, but look where am I now!

Monotaro [smiling]: You’re one of the most powerful beings here! And you’re the headmaster of this school! When I grow up I want to be just like you!

Monokuma [blushes]: Aww, you’re so cute! But you have to work hard to become like me! Those bastards aren’t easy to deal with. So you need to spend time as much time as you can with them! Study them as they were beasts in a zoo!

Monophanie [excited expression, flailing arms]: And then making them become better! With that, we can become better too, knowing their weaknesses and strengths!

Monokuma [shows primarily white side]: So you understand now, Monodam, don’t you?

Monodam [blank expression]: YES. I DO. BUT-

**Immediately, the green bear disappeared. Monokid appeared in his usual place. When I turned to look at Angie’s stand, I noticed Monodam in the background.**
Monokid [screams]: HELL YEAH! I’M BACK!

Monophanie [worried expression]: You stay away from me and Monotaro! We’re soul brothers!

Maki [rolls eyes]: Anyway, I wanted to be as close as possible to my room, so I read the book on the platform of the second floor.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raises right arm]: You could be able to see who entered the dormitories at all times. All that you had to do was to shift your attention from the book.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Uhmm, so? Who are the people that you saw?

Miu [angry expression]: Hey! Don’t be so impatient! You look like a virgin who’s about to do it for the first time! Hold your horses!

Tenko [proud expression, hands on hips]: What about it?

Miu [sideways look]: If Maki was really where she claims to be someone has to confirm! And don’t tell me she only saw the culprit! I can’t believe no one passed there!

That’s reasonable. Miu said an intelligent thing for once, but, lucky for me, I already know something that confirms Maki’s testimony.

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

**ANSWER: Tenko’s testimony**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Tenko, you said you saw Maki.

Tenko [proud expression]: Yes, I did! We both saw each other.

Maki [neutral expression]: Thanks to this, you know my claim is backed up.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: Then inform us, who did you see?

Maki [neutral expression]: I prefer not to disclose those names.

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: What?! Do you want to get in the way?! Are you the culprit?

Maki [rolls eyes]: Of course not. If I reveal what I know, the culprit could prepare a defense. Whereas, if I don’t tell you anything, their speech will be far more disorganized.

Tenko [pensive look]: That is a tactic I wouldn’t use. Sharing is caring, that’s what I teach to my students.

Maki [irritated expression]: We’re not in a classroom, we’re discussing about someone who killed one of us to escape.
Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: Yeah, they’re far beyond my teachings! They didn’t have a good education, that’s for sure!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Maki, you don’t have to tell us all the people you saw. But it’s important to know whether you spotted Angie and Gonta.

Maki [eyes closed]: …

Miu [impatient expression]: So? Tell us!

Maki [neutral expression]: I saw Gonta entering Angie’s room. But that was long before Tsumugi’s time of death. As far as I know, they both remained there.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Oh! Thank you, Maki! Atua is grateful as well!

Maki [looks in front of self]: But I did leave to go back to my room shortly before 7:30 PM, not returning back before the announcement. That means someone could have left without me knowing.

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: That, also, means that Tenko could be the culprit.

Tenko [slightly smug]: I suppose so. But how could I know that Maki wasn’t there? I never left my room!

Maki [blank expression]: I wasn’t there to confirm you didn’t leave the room. Your alibi is non-existent for now.

Kiibo [reassuring expression]: At least your testimony was used to confirm Maki’s.

Kaito [rubbing head]: So we continue to be stuck… there’s no way to prove Angie is the culprit.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Or that she isn’t… if you continue saying that Gonta’s testimony is irrelevant.

Kaede [irritated expression]: Let’s continue where we left off. Angie and Gonta are innocent because they were together!

Korekiyo: I will uncover the truth behind your claims!

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Because, you see… those two situations are connected.

REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!
Truth blades: Keypad, Surface of the door, Crowbar, Alcoholic bottles

Korekiyo [caressing face]: We are certain that only Angie and Gonta knew the right code to enter.
Korekiyo [looking at clothes]: Angie did say she kept the code secret to avoid unwanted guests to enter.
Korekiyo [neutral expression, raising right arm]: Because of this, Gonta’s testimony cannot be true.
Korekiyo [caressing face]: One of them had to leave Angie’s room and input the code to enter, no one could without doing so.

ADVANCE!

Kaede [furrowed eyebrows]: Even if Gonta was lying, that doesn’t mean one of them is the culprit.
Kaede [arms crossed]: But as I said, none of them could gain anything from not revealing the truth.
Korekiyo [neutral expression, raising right arm]: Mind you, I am not saying one of them committed the murder.
Korekiyo [looks up]: But they might have omitted information. Who am I to say why.

Korekiyo [looking at clothes]: Angie knew the right code and told you. You entered the research room, am I right?
Korekiyo [neutral expression, sideways look]: After all, if somebody else were able to force the door there would be proof.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: I did not see any clues that point to that.

Actually, even though Korekiyo is wrong, he has led us towards a new path with his hypothesis. He might not know it yet, so I need to tell the others how he’s wrong first.

ANSWER: Keypad --> “Angie knew the right code”
Kaede: I’ll cut your words!

BREAK!

Kaede [determined expression, right arm extended to the side]: Say what you want, but Angie didn’t know the right code. Right, Kirumi?
Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: She told me a code that was different from the correct one.

Gonta [surprised expression]: What? Gonta sure that code was 5-3-HOPE-5-4!
Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Angie, can you confirm?

I turned to see what Angie would say, but she wasn’t in frame. Where has she gone?
Maki [eyes closed]: While you and Korekiyo were having your discussion, she ran to the bathroom.

Monodam [blank expression]: SHE DID. I WILL BE SUB-STI-TU-TING HER NOW.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Do you know what she does?

Monodam [blank expression]: I DO NOT. YOU SHOULD WAIT FOR HER.

Rantaro [sideways look]: Well, how convenient for her that she felt sick now of all times…

Miu [angry expression]: Sure! She doesn’t want to face the truth!

Kirumi [readjusts hat]: I know that Angie could have lied to me, but I am sure she did not. She genuinely thought that the code she gave me was right.

0U-M5 [pensive look, touching temple]: You can read people that well?

Kirumi [tilts head]: I may have to warn you I can not read their thoughts, but I usually understand when others do tell me lies.

Kiibo [neutral expression]: You’re saying you think the code was changed after Angie entered?

Kirumi [tilts head]: I am sure of that fact. It is possible, since inside there is another keypad which purpose is exactly that.

Kaede [gesturing]: Angie definitely knew we would have tried the code she gave to us, so if she lied we would have asked more questions…

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: If she continued giving us incorrect passwords she would be the first suspect on the list, since she would be hiding evidence.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: But what if she thought the same thing as you? She could have given you the wrong passcode hoping you would assume her innocence!

Kaede [gesturing]: That’s still possible. But then, it would be easier to dispose of the evidence inside of the research room instead of leaving it dirtied with blood. Angie, sick or not, had access to it at all times, so she had the perfect alibi.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Oh, that’s… reasonable.

Gonta [confused expression]: If code not right, how you put correct one?

Maki [toys with hair]: I got lucky and guessed it.

Kaito [sideways look]: That’s not suspicious at all! What if she killed Tsumugi, went inside and altered the evidence to make someone else seem the culp-

Maki [irritated expression]: Please shut up.

Kirumi [index finger on chin]: None of the evidence found inside could be linked to one specific person.

0U-M5 [shrugs]: Maki was just extremely lucky, it seems.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Not for the culprit. We know more because of that code.
Kaede [gesturing]: With this in mind, we have reached a specific conclusion: someone else knew the code.

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: Me and Angie almost always together, but no tell the others.

Kirumi [index finger on chin]: That cannot be a lie. If they told someone else, they would obviously say their name now.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: We should all think about this… how could someone know the code without Angie or Gonta telling them directly?

**There are multiple possibilities, but the evidence Kirumi and me found supports some of them.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets:** Conditions of the body, Door left ajar, Monokuma File 2, 0U-M5’s testimony, Crowbar

Himiko [face hanging low]: Guys, why is this so complicated? I can’t understand anything…

Tenko [determined expression]: Don’t worry Himiko! The grown-ups will take care of this!

Himiko [sighs]: I’m as old as you are…

Rantaro [index finger on chin]: The only valid option, to me, is that **someone else told them**.

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: That’s possible. They talked about it in those four days, maybe they were heard.

Gonta [confused expression]: But Gonta don’t not told anyone!

Miu [proud expression]: Tsk, you haven’t understood anything! Remember that to get inside Angie’s room you have to pass through two doors?

Maki [blank expression]: And with that?

Miu [proud expression, spit coming out]: You also **would need a key to enter the first door**! How else would it be open?

Korekiyo [caressing face]: What if the culprit needed to know **only one of those two facts**?

Tenko [determined expression]: How could they enter without needing a key?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raising right arm]: I am talking about 0U-M5. He is able to lockpick.

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: What! I programmed him not to do inappropriate actions! **It’s impossible for him to do that now**!

With Miu’s intervention, the conversation shifted to another topic. I need to focus on how’s possible for the culprit to have entered, but if I have the right evidence…
**ANSWER: Door left ajar --> “would need a key to enter the first door”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [thoughtful expression, index finger pointing upwards]: The middle door isn’t important to this case.

Kaede [gesturing]: I also asked myself how was entering possible, but Angie said that she left the key in her room… so everyone had access to it.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: That door was open since this morning...

Himiko [neutral expression]: Oh, that’s why I could enter.

Tenko [hands on hips]: Weren’t you in the bathroom?

Himiko [tired expression]: I… uhm… was very tired and I was searching for a place to sleep…

**Are you sure of that, Himiko?**

Rantaro [arms crossed]: The real question is still the first one. Either way, the culprit could have stolen that key… but there was no way for them to enter without knowing the code.

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: Maybe they guessed? Maki was lucky, the culprit could have been too.

Kaede [uncertain expression]: I don’t think you can risk guessing while you’re about to kill someone.

0U-M5 [looking down at hand]: They tried entering during the day, eventually finding out the code they would use later.

Tenko [pensive expression]: Maybe, but not during the morning. Gonta and Angie were there.

Gonta [smiling]: Yes! There praying!

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: But they had all of the afternoon at their disposal.

**Wait… they didn’t. I know that because of one testimony.**

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

**ANSWER: Angie's testimony**

Kaede: I’ve got it!
Kaede [gesturing]: Gonta said he checked back regularly on the research room, even entering it during the afternoon to pray. He would have seen someone hanging around that area.

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: They could have left before he arrived, coming back when he had gone back to Angie.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: But then they wouldn’t have had any escape route. There’s only one way out from there, and it’s the corridor.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Were the intruder to flee, they would have met with Gonta. The blackened could have not heard or seen him coming.

Kaede [gesturing]: Yeah, Kirumi. Even if they had a suspicion while in the anteroom, in the time they moved away they would have no way to avoid him.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: That proves that the culprit didn’t guess the code, but knew it beforehand.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: If the culprit entered, they needed to change the code to exit. As we know, that is what happened.

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: This was advantageous for them, since they thought we wouldn’t be able to enter, even if Angie gave us the password…

Tenko [pensive expression]: That’s fine, but… how did they know the code? Are we on the right track?

**We’ve discarded Ouma’s hypothesis, but after doing that, we need to find another way for the culprit to have known the code to enter. As far as I know, there can be only one answer…**

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

O R E A H E R V

**ANSWER: Overhear**

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit must have heard Gonta inputting the code.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Wait, are you implying that he said the password out loud and someone behind him heard it?

Himiko [looking down]: You just said that Gonta would have met the culprit if they were there…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Yes, I was talking about the culprit being in the anteroom.
They couldn’t stay there.

Kaito [rubbing head]: So? I don’t quite understand…

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit didn’t have to stay in that room, not even in the corridor to hear Gonta.

Kirumi [tilts head, eyes closed]: Yes, they had an additional hiding spot.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: If they waited outside, there would be no problem. Gonta wouldn’t have seen them, but they would have been able to hear him coming.

Korekiyo [looks down at clothes]: How would they be able to do that? The windows could not be opened.

Maki [plays with hair]: The sound could be heard even outside, I presume. The school walls are not thick at all. I was able to hear the commotion from the anteroom when I passed outside.

Kiibo [pointing]: You would need exceptional hearing to distinguish Gonta’s voice from outside!

That’s true, but our culprit didn’t listen to Gonta. In fact, there’s another source of noise, louder than someone’s voice… in that same room. And that is…

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. K P
2. E A
3. U Y
4. P O
5. A D
6. E D

ANSWER: Keypad

Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

CLEAR!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Each of the keypad buttons makes a noise after being pressed. It’s different for each one of them, and quite audible.

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: I also think it is necessary to add another fact: the middle door was opened, so the sound could have reached the outside of the academy.

Rantaro [sideways pose]: The culprit had to have heard the last code Gonta set and then changed it. If Gonta returned and the code was different he would have noticed something strange going on.

Gonta [one hand waving, other on hip]: Yes! Gonta sure!

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: But Gonta always use the same code from last
The culprit acted at the right time then. We can’t know if they entered the room multiple times, but at least we can say the earliest hour they could have gotten in.

**[Fifteen to six/Fifteen to seven/Fifteen past seven/Fifteen to eight]**

**ANSWER: Fifteen to seven**

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit didn’t enter before fifteen to seven. Gonta said that he was with Angie for at least one hour before she warned Kirumi at 7:45.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Do you think they were near the school for long?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: If that is correct, this murder must have been planned in detail.

**I believe the culprit had a clear plan in mind. This is very organized; every piece has to fit together… I refuse to believe they did all of this on a whim.**

Kaede [looking to the side]: Is there anyone who has seen someone near the school at that time?

…

**No affirmative answer…**

Kaito [proud expression]: I was setting up the party for most of this afternoon! 0U-M5 was always with me, so it can’t answer as well.

Tenko [pensive expression]: I did pass there, but there was no one who was still. I saw a bunch of people, but it was almost everyone.

Miu [looks to the side]: Me too. Now that I remember, I was near the school for most of the time today. Nothing particular happened.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Shouldn’t you have been practicing for the show?

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: The gorgeous pianist Miu Iruma doesn’t need practice to shine! You’ll see soon enough!

**That didn’t go as well as I expected… I need to put this subject on hold. After all, I have so many more topics I want to discuss about.**

Kaede [gesturing]: We should put this matter aside for now and focus back on what we discovered. The culprit overheard the code from Gonta.

Maki [blank expression]: That explains how the blackened managed to enter, but I have a question.

Kaede [reassuring expression]: You can ask, we can figure it out together.

Maki [looks in front of self]: How did they manage to lure Tsumugi inside? She didn’t know the code.
OU-M5 [thoughtful expression]: She probably went with them and then it was suddenly attacked with one of the objects in the research room.

Rantaro [looks to the side]: No, I don’t think that’s right. There were signs of blood in the research lab, but only on the floor. No object was covered with it.

Kaede [gesturing]: Tsumugi is not a brawler, but she would have tried to defend herself. However, there was no sign of a fight on her body. So she was surprised.

The discussion is picking up again. But we need to stop crawling in the dark. We know almost nothing about what happened and we’re far from finding a suspect. Maybe I can use evidence that I found to help the others.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Surface of the door, Crowbar, Coffee machine, Research room

OU-M5 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: What if… the blood on one object was wiped? That would-

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: We’ve established that the culprit didn’t expect us to enter the research room. Why clean the murder weapon then? There’s no reason to.

Kiibo [pointing]: We have seen that the culprit didn’t bother to do that with the trail of blood found inside.

Tenko [slightly smug]: Yet, all of your chit-chat about secret codes has made us forget about the murder weapon. It’s good that we’re talking about it now.

Gonta [surprised expression]: Gonta thought no conventional murder weapon was used.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Huh? What do you mean?

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Culprit smashed Tsumugi face on the ground…

Kiibo [shocked expression]: Is that considered blunt force trauma?!?

Maki [blank expression]: I guess so…

Maki [looks in front of self]: But that’s not the case. The wound would have been far worse than it is now.

Kaito [rubbing head]: But what if the weapon wasn’t stored inside? The culprit hid it somewhere!

Miu [angry expression]: If they had the research room locked, why toss it somewhere else! It doesn’t make sense!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Hey! Don’t be so aggressive about it!

Okay, I know what to say. But I have yet to understand the culprit’s actions.
**ANSWER: Crowbar --> “the weapon wasn’t stored inside”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: The weapon was thrown outside, it’s the crowbar. It was dirtied with blood, that’s proof that it’s connected.

Korekiyo [looking at clothes]: A crowbar is definitely able to cause a wound similar to the one we witnessed… categorized as blunt force trauma…

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Now that we have the murder weapon out of the way, let’s think. Did the culprit enter before Tsumugi?

Kiibo [looks to the side]: I’d say they did. She was struck on the back, meaning she was surprised.

Kirumi [index finger on chin]: In fact, if she entered first, she should have heard the culprit coming. We know that the keypad is rather loud.

Tenko [hands on podium]: But wait! The culprit could have waited until it was most convenient!

Maki [rolls eyes]: With a crowbar in their hands.

Tenko [confused expression]: Huh?

Kaede [right arm extended to side]: I think that what Maki’s saying is that Tsumugi would have seen the culprit with a crowbar, which wouldn’t be that common.

Tenko [lowered head, looking upwards]: Ah right… I would be worried if that happened…

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: So Tsumugi and culprit went inside together?

Kaede [gesturing]: The crowbar problem would still exist.

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: I assume the culprit could have hidden the crowbar, but they would have used their time to retrieve it.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Even so, nobody of us normally wears an accessory that could conceal an object like that. The crowbar is too long to fit anywhere…

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: That means that the culprit entered before Tsumugi, waiting for her. And they knew she would come.

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: And that they told her the code. Otherwise… she guessed?

Kaede [gesturing]: Remember, the code was different from the one we used the last time, since it needs to be changed every time.

Himiko [blank expression]: So you have set a new code now?

Kaede [gesturing]: No, because Kiibo managed to hold the door open. That allowed us to bypass that system.
So, how did Tsumugi enter the research room… was she told by someone? Or is something else?

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

**Truth bullets:** Door left ajar, Surface of door, 0U-M5’s testimony, Kubs pads

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: I just thought about it now, but maybe the culprit left the door open for Tsumugi?

Maki [rolls eyes]: They would still have their crowbar, visible with the candles’ light.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, extended right arm]: We should ask ourselves why would Tsumugi be interested in the code.

Miu [proud expression]: **She had to enter the research room to bring food!**

Kaito [sideways look]: No way, she wouldn’t enter without permission. She was too kind.

Himiko [looks up]: **Maybe the room was messy?** If that’s the case, she wouldn’t have been able to enter.

Kiibo [finger on temple]: It seemed pretty tidy to me…

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: **Both the room and the door were completely normal,** well… apart from the blood.

Tenko [pensive expression]: If someone told Tsumugi, we should be able to deduce who that person is.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: She would only enter if Angie or Gonta allowed her.

Kaito [rubbing head]: So one of those two was inside?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: We confirmed that is highly unlikely. I believe that one of them gave permission, but they did not tell us that.

0U-M5 [sighing]: Is there someone who can help us? A testimony, maybe? If something was heard by one of us, things would be far easier.

**ANSWER:** Surface of the door --> “Both the room and the door were completely normal”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Rantaro [arms crossed]: What’s wrong with my statement? I thought it was obvious.

Ugh. Is he for real? I suppose he might not know, but I have this feeling he’s toying with
me… just like 0U-M4 was doing last time.

Kaede [irritated expression]: The surface of the door was sticky. I checked with my fingers, I’m sure.

Maki [neutral expression]: Yes, there was something off with that door. It seems like glue was used.

Angie [flailing arms in the air]: I’m back, guys! Sorry if I left! I really had to go the bathroom!

Monodam [neutral expression]: FI-NAL-LY YOU ARE BACK.

Angie [smiling]: I feared you would come to the bathroom to spy on me! Thankfully you didn’t, otherwise you would have suffered a terrible punishment from Atua! Nyahahah!

Monokid [angry expression]: Who cares about Atua! He will get his punishment very soon!

Monotaro [worried]: Why are you so hostile? We only want to be friends! We’re brothers!

Monokid [angry expression]: You left me for that green bastard! I don’t consider you brothers! Not anymore!

Monophanie [irritated expression]: You shouldn’t listen to him, Monotaro. He doesn’t listen to us, so act like he doesn’t exist.

Monotaro [tilts head, confused]: Like he treated Monodam?

Monokid [angry expression, smashes guitar]: So you’ll continue this way? I’m ready to see what will happen when I’ll have Monokid beaten in front of your eyes!

Angie [pensive expression, fingers in hair]: Anyways, what were you talking about? I have left some time ago and can’t remember~

Kaede [gesturing]: We think the culprit entered your research room and hit Tsumugi with a crowbar.

Angie [confused]: But…? Did they know my code?

Kaito [tired expression]: Do we have to explain it to her again?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Don’t worry so much! I’ll keep up and get to it in a couple of minutes!

**I hope Angie will indeed understand… she still has to talk about her sickness.**

Kaede [gesturing]: I was telling you about how strange was that the surface of the door was sticky, but only in one specific area.

Kirumi [readjusts hat]: If that is the case, someone did glue something on there.

Rantaro [looks to the side]: Good deduction, but of what thing are we talking about?

0U-M5 [moves head to the left]: Surely a device that allowed Tsumugi to know the code.

**A device…? He’s on the right track, but I don’t think it’s that complicated. In fact, what did we find that could be glued to the door…?**
--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

**ANSWER: Pieces of paper**

Kaed: I got it!

**CLEAR!**

Kaed [gesturing]: Rantaro and I did find some torn pieces of paper scattered on the ground.

Rantaro [covers mouth with hand]: Oh, yes. That’s right. Something was scribbled on them, so I see what you’re getting at.

Kaed [right arm extended to the side]: Try to piece together that, the answer should be clear.

Gonta [confused expression]: Maybe you and Rantaro understand, but we do not see paper, so we not know what was there.

**Yeah, I should explain to the others what do I think was written on there.**

[[To bring the food inside/The right code/A threat/A wrong code]]

**ANSWER: The right code**

Kaed [gesturing]: On that paper there was the exact sequence to enter the research room.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: The culprit must have torn that paper after having killed Tsumugi.

Miu [looks to the side]: That’s fine by me, but why dispose of the paper?

Korekiyo [looks down at clothes]: I assume they did deduce we would eventually search for clues on our clothes.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: They would have to explain the meaning of those pieces.

Kaed [gesturing]: They threw it on the ground where they hoped nobody would find them, let alone decipher what was written there.

Kirumi [hands on hips]: Even so, that note was probably signed with the name of Angie or Gonta.

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: Most likely, as it was meant to lure Tsumugi inside to kill her.
Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: This killer is garbage! Why go through all of this trouble to kill someone?!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: We’ll ask them when we’ll discover their identity.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: No matter how hard they tried to hide them, they have left clues for us.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: If you do not mind, I would offer you a new topic to discuss.

Kaede [reassuring expression]: Go ahead.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: There is more to Angie’s sickness than meets the eye.

Korekiyo [looks up]: Her sudden ailment allowed the culprit to access the research room unnoticed. Calling this a coincidence would be foolish.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: I wanted to talk about this as well. This sickness must have been caused by something.

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: We know that the culprit planned everything in detail, so it wouldn’t be surprising if this was another one of their moves.

Tenko [pensive look]: Hm? What do you think about this, Kaede?

**They brought up Angie’s conditions, which is exactly what I wanted to do after clearing her name. People don’t get sick all of a sudden, so… by understanding what happened to her, we might understand more about Tsumugi’s death. We’re forced to derail for a while… but this is the only way to solve this mystery… How did Angie get sick?**

Chapter End Notes

No real cliffhanger this time. I just couldn’t find someone to accuse at this point of the trial.
But who do you think did it? Have you an idea on what happened? Is it too early to guess? Do you have any ideas? I’m waiting to hear your opinions… this trial is tough :P

Anyways, this month I have exams. Luckily I’ve got the next five parts ready, but I’ll slow down just a bit to make sure I can continue posting. The next chapter will be up on the 18th or the 19th, depending on how much time I have. See you next time!
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Class Trial (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

The trial continues; A detail is discovered.

Chapter Notes

TRUTH BULLETS:

• Conditions of the body:
A wound that resembles a straight line was found on the back of Tsumugi's head. A pool of blood originated from it. There are no sign of scuffle on the body.

• Door left ajar:
The door that leads to the antechamber was slightly ajar. Such door had a lock, but there was no key around the area.

• Keypad:
In order to enter Angie's research room, one needs to input the right code from a series of 12 digits. Each key is connected to a specific sound. Despite Angie giving us the code she thought was correct, that was actually wrong.

• Surface of the research lab door:
One part of the door is sticky. Something must have been on it, but it was later removed.

• Stains of blood:
There are stains of blood coming from Angie's research room. They are thin and elongated.

• Broken window:
The window directly in front of the antechamber was broken. Some of the shards have droplets of blood on them.

• Crowbar:
A crowbar was found under the window.

• Body announcement:
According to Kirumi, the body discovery announcement sounded after she discovered the body. This means someone witnessed it before she did.

• Monokuma File 2:
The Monokuma File informed us that Tsumugi died around 7:35 P.M. from blood loss caused by blunt force trauma. Something was censored by Monokuma.

• Angie and Gonta's testimony:
Angie said that she and Gonta spent the morning praying, then went to the cafeteria to eat something for breakfast before lunch. She planned to set up the Assembly, but she became ill. Gonta checked back the research lab regularly, eventually stopping at 6:45
PM, when he went to Angie's room.

• Alcoholic beverages:
  Some alcoholic bottles found in the casino were not full. However, the ones who attended the party had agreed not to drink those.

• OUM’s testimony:
  Oums confirmed that he, Korekiyo, Rantaro, Kaito and Kaede were inside the casino when the murder took place. They then got separated after Monokid forced Kaede to go with him.

• Miu's broadcast:
  Miu broadcasted live the video of her performance around the time of death.

• Pieces of paper:
  Many little pieces of paper that would form an 8x8 square were found scattered on the ground. Because of their conditions, it's impossible to know what was written on them, but there are traces of ink.

• Coffee machine:
  During the afternoon, Rantaro went to the cafeteria to have a coffee. He selected a ginseng coffee, but he got a regular cup of coffee. He asked Tsumugi to fix the problem and, when he came back, it was resolved.

• Himiko's testimony:
  Himiko says she went to Angie's research room before it was supposed to start. However, she saw Tsumugi's body and a white and pink ghost which scared her to the point she fled. Soon after she crossed paths with Gonta and Kirumi.

• Tenko's testimony:
  Tenko claims to have an alibi at the time of death. She was in the dorms, and Maki saw her.

• Kubs Pads:
  The motive given to us to make us kill each other. The Pads contained secrets that made us vulnerable, but we don't know how were they distributed.

• Racket:
  Korekiyo found a racket hidden in the bushes under the windows. However, nobody noticed that when we first inspected the research room. He temporarily left the corridor to guard the body with Maki.

• Maki's testimony:
  Maki claims to have seen people entering and exiting the dormitories during the afternoon and the evening. She refuses to tell us more before the trial starts.

• Research room:
  Angie's research room was dark; there are no windows and candles emit light as the main light source. However, when we entered, they were extinguished.

• Stained cloth:
  Kaito found a cloth dirtied with blood near the research room. It's rather large, resembling a bedspread.
**Tsumugi’s message:**
Maki found this message while searching Tsumugi's body. "Sorry everyone. Even though #I’m a killer too. I should have told you before this happened. I’m writing this last letter. I know you will find this and save everyone else. It’s my fault." Some words are crossed out, but that definitely is Tsumugi’s calligraphy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**Angie's sudden sickness has to be connected to the murder somehow, but how can we link this two events?**

Kaede [arms crossed]: The culprit had to interfere with Angie’s plans, and making her sick was definitely a way to do that.

Kiibo [worried expression]: If someone can make people sick when they want… they must be a God!

Angie [hands in prayer]: Like Atua! He can do that!

Kirumi [tilts head]: There is no magic behind this event. The culprit might have poisoned Angie.

Himiko [tired expression]: Poison? Again?

Kirumi [readjusts hat]: I am not referring to the traditional meaning of poison. In fact, I intend to say that Angie was made sick because her body could not tolerate a substance we would ingest without problems.

Kaito [rubbing head]: You can say intolerance, no need for strange periphrases.

Angie [surprised expression, hands on face]: Wow! I think that might have happened!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Can you tell us what might have caused it?

Angie [hands clasping together]: I don’t have any idea!

Miu [shocked expression]: What!? I can’t believe that! No way in hell!

Tenko [hands on hips]: Yeah, everybody should know their allergies to prevent bad coincidences!

Angie [fingers in hair]: I know what makes me sick, and there’s nothing that I ate that could be considered harmful for me.

Gonta [index finger near lip]: Maybe something else make Angie sick!

Maki [blank expression]: Like what? If you stand by that, you should have a reason.

**What happened to Angie? It’s time to find out.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**
Truth bullets: Monokuma File 2, Alcoholic bottles, 0U-M5’s testimony, Research room

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Can things from casino be moved out?

Kiibo [nods]: It’s not a research room, so they should.

Gonta [determined expression]: Maybe some poison was there! Hidden as something else!

Kaito [angry expression]: I checked! There wasn’t anything that could have hurt Angie!

Miu [sideways look]: I didn’t see anything strange either. I came there to help Kaito.

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: We’re trying to make sense of things with more complex assumptions.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Let’s keep it simple.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: We should think… is there some trace that could aid us? In the school…

Korekiyo [caressing face]: …or the courtyard…

Kiibo [confused]: Didn’t Rantaro say we should not overthink this situation?

Angie [waves hands in the air]: I didn’t eat anything out of the ordinary, so I don’t think it’s food!

Miu [proud expression]: I’ve got an amazing idea! What if Tsumugi baked her poisonous food?! Who would ever think that?!

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: If that’s true, what would her purpose be? I think you’re off…

What could have poisoned Angie? What could have not? One thing is for sure…

**ANSWER: Alcoholic bottles --> “There wasn’t anything that could have hurt Angie”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: The casino had a shelf full of alcoholic bottles. We agreed not to use them at the party.

Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: What?! There was alcohol at the party?! That’s unacceptable!

**But I just said we didn’t drink it at all…**

Himiko [looks down]: I hate alcohol… people do stupid things when they drink it… uff…

Kirumi [tilts head]: I can confirm Kaede’s statement. When I met her and Tsumugi for the last
time, the conversation they were having was about that matter.

Kaede [arms crossed]: So, Angie… what’s your relationship with alcohol?

Angie [fingers in hair]: Uhm…

Angie [cheerful expression]: I never drank alcohol in my entire life!

Miu [scared expression]: Woah! You must be crazy! There’s something wrong with you!

Angie [fingers in hair]: No trucks deliver wine or beer to my island. We love soft drinks, though.

Kaede [gesturing]: That opens up a concrete possibility.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Angie has an allergenic reaction to alcohol. That’s why she felt awful after this morning.

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression]: The culprit could have retrieved alcohol from the shelf and poured in Angie’s drink.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Actually, I have to reveal something.

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: Do you have something to do with this? Talk!

Kaito [ashamed]: I did drink those bottles of alcohol myself.

**What the hell?! We said we wouldn’t!**

Tenko [slightly smug]: I knew it! Who else could have done that!

Kaito [rubbing head]: I didn’t want to tell you because I knew I shouldn’t have, but now that’s important to the case…

_Uff… it must have happened in the time I was stuck in the room while playing blackjack with Monokid. The others definitely didn’t notice he went upstairs to drink._

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: You affirm Angie could not have drunk that alcohol?

Kaito [ashamed]: I don’t think so. When I went upstairs, all the bottles weren’t open. Since they were full nobody touched them.

0U-M5 [excited]: Don’t worry, Kaito! After you said this, we have another clue… Angie didn’t drink alcohol.

Maki [rolls eyes]: If he didn’t open those bottles, we would have skipped those last three minutes and focused on the murder.

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Of course you had to butt in!

Kaede [somewhat embarrassed, right arm extended to the side]: We have discarded this possibility, then.

Kiibo [confused]: Does this mean her sickness doesn’t have anything to do with food?

Kaede [gesturing]: I wouldn’t rule that out yet.
I’m fairly convinced we have all the pieces to understand what happened. Maybe if I listen to the others one more time…

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Crowbar, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Coffee machine, Research room, Stained cloth

Angie [fingers in hair]: I repeat, I have no idea on what could have happened to me.

Miu [sideways look]: Are you sure about that? It’s ridiculous!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: If she can’t deduce what’s wrong, it must have been a routine act for her.

Gonta [index finger on lip]: Has to do with allergies, yes?

0U-M5 [shrugs]: Have you got any other ideas?

Kirumi [hands on hips]: I am of the opinion that Angie’s ailment was caused by some food she ate. Only Angie was affected because of her allergy.

Angie [hands clasping together]: But I wouldn’t eat food that hurts me! Somebody had to put something in my meal!

Kiibo [bites lip]: Was that person Tsumugi? Would it even make sense? Maybe she had other plans…

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression]: However, Angie and Gonta did not have breakfast with us today. The culprit had to act when we were there.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I think that Angie should list all of her known allergies, if she has some in the first place.

Angie [waving hands in the air]: Of course… but I think that I’m only allergic to ginseng. People told me it’s a very rare case.

Maki [plays with hair]: Do we know if there’s any ginseng in the school? The warehouse could store some.

Monokuma [shows primarily white side]: Nu-uh! That’s quite the information I gave you! But I guess you deserve it.

Angie [cheerful expression]: So this stomachache wasn’t caused by ginseng! It has to be something else!

We have to know what happened to Angie… and… an intervention by Monokuma is very rare… but is it useful to this discussion?

ANSWER: Coffee machine --> “this stomachache wasn’t caused by ginseng”
Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Ginseng could have been the cause of Angie’s illness.

Miu [shocked expression]: We just heard Monokuma saying there’s no ginseng in the warehouse!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: He didn’t say there wasn’t any somewhere else… like the kitchen.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Can you explain better? I didn’t see any ginseng around.

Kaede [gesturing]: There was the coffee machine… an option was ginseng coffee.

Rantaro [surprised expression]: Oh! I remember! I did tell Kaede the machine was broken; I gave an order and it gave me a different kind of coffee. In fact, I actually got ginseng coffee even though I wanted another type.

Tenko [hands on podium]: What! How did I not notice this at breakfast?!

That’s because…

[Nobody drank coffee at breakfast/It was tampered with after breakfast/Tsumugi made coffee herself]

ANSWER: It was tampered with after breakfast

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Many of us drank coffee this morning, taken directly from that machine.

Kaede [gesturing]: However, there was nothing wrong with it… this means that the machine was modified after breakfast.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Sadly, the only one of us who did not leave the cafeteria for the entire morning was Tsumugi.

Korekiyo [looks at clothes]: She could have been to only one who saw the culprit…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Rantaro, did she tell you something after you two crossed paths?

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: She only excused herself and told me she would fix the coffee machine. If she managed to do it, it could have been simple for the culprit too.

Another dead end.

Kaede [gesturing]: Anyway, Angie was given ginseng coffee before lunch, but she thought it was regular coffee.

Kaito [shocked expression]: You could have noticed!
Angie [fingers in hair]: That’s possible, but I didn’t take the coffee directly from the machine. It was given to me.

Maki [blank expression]: By who?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Gonta took it and brought it to me!

Gonta [panicked expression]: Gonta didn’t know it! Gonta don’t know coffee types!

**I have to admit evidence is stacking up against the tennis player… but I still refuse to believe he’s a murderer. We have to remember he has an alibi…**

Kaede [gesturing]: Gonta gave the coffee to Angie, but that doesn’t mean he’s the one who made her sick.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: If your testimony is false, you should talk now. Angie, were you with Gonta the entire hour before the murder took place?

Angie [hands clasping together]: Of course! I wouldn’t tell lies!

Kaito [sideways look]: I wonder why I doubt that.

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: Stop accusing Gonta, otherwise you’ll be sent to a terrible place!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Nyahahah!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Someone else did this, and it’s most likely that person is the culprit.

Himiko [sighs]: If we find that person we can accuse them and go home then…?

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: Anyone had access to the cafeteria at that time. This deduction has helped us, but it cannot tell us who the murderer is.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: That’s fine, but you’re all forgetting about the fact that nobody here knew about Angie’s allergy.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Oh! Yeah, how could someone know about that?

Miu [shocked expression]: Maybe they put every type of coffee in that cup!

Kaede [somewhat confused expression, gesturing]: But they wouldn’t have know that Angie could have an allergy in the first place.

Maki [rolls eyes]: You already know the answer, don’t you?

Kaede [confused]: Huh? I think I do…

Maki [blank expression]: Then don’t stall. You’re the smart one here.

**Angie… her allergy… the culprit was aware of it because of…**

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET
ANSWER: Kubs pads

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: There’s only one possibility. The culprit was given Angie’s secret video.

Himiko [looking down]: So her weakness was an allergy… nyeh.

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: The culprit, according to your theory, should be whoever had that video, right?

Kaede [raised right arm]: Because of Monodam’s additional rule, we couldn’t watch those videos unless we were all together.

Kaede [gesturing]: This means that the culprit couldn’t have stolen them either.

Kiibo [uncertain expression, looks to the side]: So we’re done, right? We just need to understand who had that video.

Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: Like they’re going to admit that!

Gonta [confused expression]: Can we not ask and hear answers?

Kirumi [tilts head]: I am afraid that is not possible. The owner of Angie’s secret video would lie.

That’s right. Tsumugi had a video too and the culprit could have asked her… they’ll be able to lie, saying the secret that was given to the maid… and nobody would suspect a thing. We need to make sure our answers remain secret until they’re all revealed at the same time.

Kaede [pointing]: Monokuma, can we use the device to vote?

Monokuma [surprised]: You’re already calling the vote?!

Kaede [irritated expression]: No, we haven’t even understood what happened!

Monokuma [sighs]: Ah! That’s right! You’re so slow! So what’s your business?

Kaede [gesturing]: Instead of using it to vote, we’ll select the person whose secret was given to us. Then you’ll read out everyone’s choice.

Monokuma [surprised expression]: Wow, I actually like that idea!

Maki [blank expression]: How can we be sure he’ll respect our terms and not count multiple choices as an actual vote?

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: He won’t do that! Otherwise I’ll beat him up!

Monokuma [shows primarily white side]: Even though you aren’t threatening at all, I already planned not to count those as votes, so do what you were doing.
Monokuma [holds paw over chest]: I swear, as headmaster of this Academy, that my words are the truth! If I were to lie, I would be sentenced to a terrible death!

…Let’s hope Monokuma doesn’t get bloodthirsty all of a sudden.

The culprit can’t escape this. If he lies, he’ll be exposed. If he tells the truth, it will be hard to create a valid defense.

There’s always the possibility they knew about Tsumugi’s video and would subsequently lie, but I have something planned for that as well. First, we have to see if the same name appears two times.

Kiibo [worried expression]: Wait! This means everyone will know who has their secret!

Kaede [arms crossed]: I know. I trust you won’t do stupid things after that.

I have to admit. I’m curious to know who has my secret…

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: We will not exchange our secrets, so you should not worry.

Monokuma [shows primarily black side]: Sharing them without the video would be the same as watching it! You can if you want in this situation, but nobody did that before now, just to be clear.

0U-M5 [looks around]: I have to say something… I don’t remember my video.

Korekiyo [tilts head, caresses face]: Uh? That is interesting… how is that possible? Have you not watched it, perhaps?

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: Before I was reborn, I may have done that. But after that, Kaito told me to ignore that tablet. I can’t help you in this situation.

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: Yeah! You can trust it!

0U-M5’s claim is probably true, but this only helps the culprit. We’re giving them more names to choose from, they’re more likely to pick the right person.

We have to wait and see.

Kaede [determined expression]: Okay. If no one else has something to say, let’s choose.

I looked at the screen on my defendant stand and I immediately selected Kiibo. It didn’t take long for the others to choose. Nobody appeared stressed or worried.

Monokuma [reads a note]: The results are in! Let me say all the names I received!

Himiko [tired expression]: Where did that paper come from…?

Monokuma [reads a note]: Kaede has Kiibo’s secret, Korekiyo has Gonta’s secret, Kirumi has Kaede’s secret…

So it’s Kirumi… she knows about my secret… I wonder… is it what I think it is? That… what I did before starting my career as a detective…?

Monokuma could have done that… my boss knew what I had done, and was aware that was
the right choice.

That time, it was the only solution.

Monokuma [reads a note]: …Tenko has Maki’s, Himiko has Kirumi’s, Kaito has Angie’s…

…

He… admitted it? Already? He didn’t even try to hide it… is it… Kaito? No, no way…

Tenko [hands on podium]: Kaito! How do you explain this?!

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: Did you make me sick to kill Tsumugi?

Miu [panicked expression]: I d-didn’t expect him to say that all of a sudden!

I stared at Kaito. He appeared absolutely fine. He was looking at our faces, one by one… but I couldn’t tell if he was confused or not.

Maki [rolls eyes]: You are thinking he killed Tsumugi?

Miu [angry expression]: He’s the one with Angie’s secret, so he has put ginseng in her coffee!

Did he really? He… he wouldn’t claim guilty this way…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kaito, would you care to explain?

Kaito [hugs himself]: You’re all wrong… I have no correlation to this murder whatsoever!

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: However, you had Angie’s video. Care to explain this circumstance?

Kaito [angry expression, bumps fists into each other]: That is an unfortunate coincidence! Why are you ganging up on me?

Gonta [angry expression]: You are real culprit!

Kaito [worried expression, sweating]: That’s impossible!

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: Typical degenerate attitude! They never explain!

Himiko [tired expression]: Can someone else explain then…?

I… I think Kaito didn’t kill Tsumugi… but is this a hunch… or can it be supported by evidence?

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Broken window, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, 0U-M5’s testimony, Coffee machine, Stained cloth

Kaito [angry expression]: Don’t focus on me! Think about how the culprit could have known Angie’s secret!
Kiibo [looks to the side]: If you’re the one with Angie’s video, you could have done that easily.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Kaito is not the culprit. I am convinced of that.

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: I agree with what Kirumi said. There is simply no way for him to have committed a murder.

Gonta [confused expression]: Then you saying that **he did not have Angie video**? He lying?

Maki [rolls eyes]: He would not have admitted that if he really had something to do with this.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: He had his hands tied behind his back, what could have he done?

Korekiyo [angry expression, bumps fists into each other]: I couldn’t have killed Tsumugi… **not at the time specified** in the Monokuma File!

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: We’re talking about me now, not Tsumugi.

Kirumi [confused expression, tilts head]: You are assuming the two events are connected, but that is not proven true.

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger near cheek]: In your opinion Kaito **did alter the coffee machine but didn’t kill Tsumugi**?

Kirumi [right hand on hat, left hand on hip]: I am saying he did neither of those.

Korekiyo [looks at clothes]: Thank you, Kirumi. Someone understands we do not need to continue this discussion.

**Who’s right between Gonta, Kaito and Ouma? One of them for sure…**

**ANSWER: 0U-M5’s testimony --> “not at the time specified”**

Kaede: I agree with you!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Let’s put aside Angie for just one moment. Tsumugi was killed at 7:35 PM, alright?

Miu [looks to the side]: Yeah, I remember that.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Kaito was at the casino the entire day, more or less, according to Ouma. He wasn’t around Tsumugi then…

Kaito [rubbing head]: It’s Ouma now.

**Whatever.**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: …but he definitely wasn’t at 7:35. He was with me, watching Miu’s broadcast.
Rantaro [looks in front of self]: I see... so, even if he did make Angie sick, he didn’t kill Tsumugi.

Kaito [angry expression]: I repeat, I didn’t hurt anyone in this school!

Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: Excuse me, but who do you want to fool? You didn’t say a word about Angie’s video until it was brought up!

Kaito [looks to the side]: Sometimes people forget things! It’s normal!

Kaito [neutral expression]: Also... uhm... I tried to do my own investigation with this!

Korekiyo [looks up]: What do you mean?

Miu [angry expression]: Explain! Before we vote for you!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Do I need to remind you what we just said?

Kaito [proud expression]: By not revealing the secret video, I lulled the culprit into a false sense of security!

Maki [rolls eyes]: That’s debatable.

Kaito [neutral expression]: Also, at the start of the trial I didn’t know Angie was sick.

Kaito [looks to the side]: Also, how could I have known that the cause was coffee? She didn’t have breakfast from what I knew, and nobody heard her secret.

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: If you’re the one that had her secret video, how could someone else know about her weakness?

Kaito [thoughtful expression]: There’s only one possibility... someone heard me. The one who tampered with the coffee machine.

Maki [blank expression]: Did you watch your video inside your dorm room?

Kaito [neutral expression]: I did that the first time, but I have watched it again the day after, outside the dormitories.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Why would you do that in a place where everyone could hear you?

Kaito [rubbing head]: Maybe I should have thought more about that, but I have important information to share, now that we’re talking about this.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: If you think that has to do with the case, tell us.

Kaito [thoughtful expression]: Just after I had finished watching the video, I saw Gonta running towards the school building. He might’ve heard that...

**Gonta... again?**

Gonta [confused expression]: Gonta do not remember you near dormitories.

Kaito [neutral expression]: Yes, because you did not see me.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Are you saying that Gonta made me sick? That’s impossible!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: You said he gave you the coffee... he could have
altered the coffee machine.

Gonta [worried expression]: Gonta not smart! Gonta never would know how to break machine!

He seems honest. Moreover, we have Angie’s words that back him up…

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: I am afraid Gonta could be the culprit of this case.

Gonta [worried expression]: Miss Kirumi too?

Kirumi [moves to the side, index finger on lip]: There is one more piece of evidence that implicates Gonta.

Another piece of evidence… there are so many… but it has to be something we didn’t consider yet.

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET:

ANSWER: Racket

Kaede: I got it!

BREAK!

Kaede [worried look, right arm extended to the side]: You’re talking about the racket you and Korekiyo found, right?

Korekiyo [caresses face]: That racket belongs to Gonta. In fact, he has no racket with him since yesterday morning.

Wait! Gonta brought up that today! He said why he didn’t have the racket on himself! That thing happened to the racket…

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. P O L
2. O S
3. S D
4. T A

ANSWER: Lost

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!
Kaede [gesturing]: Gonta lost his racket, he told me before we ate our breakfast.

Maki [rolls eyes]: It’s easy to lie, you know?

Angie [surprised expression]: But wait! Why would Gonta use the racket to kill Tsumugi?

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: You dumbass! We said she was killed with a crowbar!

Rantaro [index finger on chin]: The racket’s purpose was to break the window. So that we would have thought the murder took place somewhere else.

OU-M5 [looks down at hand]: But we said that the culprit wanted us to think Tsumugi was killed in the anteroom, right?

Kaito [rubbing head]: For a culprit that planned everything, leaving clues that point to different things is not that smart, however

Maki [blank expression]: The point is… everything relates to Gonta right now.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: He heard of Angie’s secret, he was with her when she took the coffee… and he went back to the research room multiple times…

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: He also knew the right code to enter.

Kaede [worried look, gesturing]: Wait! There’s Angie’s testimony!

Angie [grumbling]: Yeah! Atua will all punish you directly after this trial if you don’t change your opinion!

It’s the first time I see Angie not smiling… she is convinced that Gonta didn’t do anything. Her testimony must be true!

Himiko [looks down]: Gonta can’t be the culprit… he’s been so nice to me…

Tenko [angry expression, hands on podium]: That proves my theory! He’s a terrible degenerate! Don’t go near him!

Himiko [looks down]: But… how could he be… a killer… I’m…

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Apart from Angie’s testimony, he fits perfectly.

Gonta [panicked expression]: Listen to Kaede, Angie and Himiko! Gonta not culprit!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Does Angie have to do anything with this? Did she tell you to kill someone?

Angie [hands clasping together]: Nyahahah! You’re funny, Rantaro!

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: Because it was a joke, right?

Gonta [panicked expression, crying]: Gonta only want to be gentleman!

OU-M5 [tilts head]: According to my parameters, he seems genuine.

Maki [rolls eyes]: According to evidence, he’s the one who killed Tsumugi.
No, no, no… the real culprit framed him! There must be evidence that contradicts all the proof against him!

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Crowbar, Himiko’s testimony, Maki’s testimony, Stained cloth

Kaede [gesturing]: If Gonta set up all of this, he would have been more careful. All this effort to leave a racket near the window?

Miu [angry expression]: Somebody was approaching, so he needed to throw it to dispose of the evidence!

Himiko [tired expression]: If that’s what happened, he could have picked it up…

Angie [fingers in hair]: Even if I was lying…

Angie [flailing arms]: …didn’t we say that it was impossible for him to leave my room unnoticed?

OU-M5 [curious expression, index finger near cheek]: Hey, if someone saw him… was there any blood on him? If he’s the culprit…

Maki [rolling eyes]: He could have washed himself. We didn’t discover the body until much later.

OU-M5 [looks down at hand]: We just need proof that he wasn’t the culprit. There must be some if he’s innocent.

Miu [looks to the side]: **Only Angie could confirm his location around the time of death.**

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: But Angie’s fucking unreliable!

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Do not forget that Gonta is quite strong. **He could have used the crowbar without feeling tired.**

Gonta [panicked expression]: Yes, maybe! But that not mean he did it!

Kiibo [looks up]: Mind you…I’m not an expert when it comes to crowbars, but who else could have?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: If you are not the culprit, Gonta, you need to prove it to us.

Gonta [panicked expression]: Gonta not know what to do! Please just believe!

**My classmates are pressuring Gonta… he doesn’t know how to reply to the accusations thrown at him… but I know. If I want to stay alive, I have to tell it out loud.**

**ANSWER: Himiko’s testimony --> “Only Angie could confirm his location around the time of death”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!
Kaede [determined expression]: I listened to Himiko’s testimony, and among other information, she told me she saw someone near Tsumugi’s body.

Kirumi [holds hand over mouth]: I remember. Gonta and me saw her running towards us.

Himiko [clutches at chest]: It was a ghost… maybe Tsumugi’s ghost…

Kaito [worried expression]: D-don’t talk about ghosts! T-they don’t exist!

Kaede [determined expression]: Ghosts aside, that person must be the culprit.

Kaede [gesturing]: However, Himiko said that immediately after seeing that, she ran and met Gonta and Kirumi.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: I see… Gonta came to my room some minutes prior to that encounter. That… ehm… ghost… was somebody else.

Kaede [gesturing]: That person, most certainly the culprit, was someone else. Gonta was definitely fram--

Maki: Unbelievable claims…

[[split screen separating Maki and Kaede]]

Kaede [looks up]: I expected you to refute me.

Maki [rolls eyes]: At least you know your argument isn’t that solid.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Yup, but I already know what’s your doubt and I’m ready to help you.

Maki [blank expression]: Fine, I’ll be happy to hear your reasoning.

**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth blades: Body Announcement, Angie and Gonta’s testimony, Stained cloth**

Maki [arms crossed]: There is a clear flaw in your logic…

Maki [plays with hair]: …I don’t know why you didn’t see that…

Maki [rolls eyes]: But whoever that person is…

Maki [arms crossed]: …We can’t be sure they’re the culprit.

**ADVANCE!**

Kaede [gesturing]: So, let me get this clear…

Kaede [looks up]: …You’re saying that the supposed ghost isn’t the culprit? Someone else must
have seen Tsumugi’s body before Himiko, then.

Maki [blank expression]: That’s what I’m getting at, you’re right.

Maki [rolls eyes]: **Gonta could have gone there previously**…

Maki [arms crossed]: …Maybe that person was an accomplice.

Maki [rolls eyes]: We don’t know if **someone else came there before Himiko**.

**Maki’s doubts are justified, but my reasoning is too. Gonta is innocent!**

**ANSWER: Monokuma Announcement --> “someone else came there before Himiko”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Himiko was the first one to discover the body, followed by Kirumi. Then the announcement sounded.

Maki [looks to the side]: Hmm… those are two people.

Tenko [pensive expression]: The rules say that three person need to discover a body before the announcement. Who is the third?

**Someone here doesn’t remember… the third person here is…**

[[Tenko/The culprit/Monokuma/0U-M5]]

**ANSWER: The culprit**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The rules specify that the third person is the culprit.

Kaede [gesturing]: That means that no one else besides the blackened, Himiko and Kirumi saw the body before the announcement.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Nyahaha! So Gonta couldn’t have killed Tsumugi before, and was with Kirumi when Himiko saw killer!

Gonta [hand over heart]: Thank you, Kaede! You are true gentleman, not Gonta!

**Could I be considered a gentleman? I’m actually trying to save everyone…**
Himiko [tired and annoyed]: I said that too… but nobody listened to me…
0U-M5 [smiling]: I did, but maybe you should speak louder! It’s just a piece of advice!
Tenko [hands on podium]: Umpf!… I don’t know if you’re genuinely worried about her…
Kaede [reassuring expression]: I’m relieved that I managed to prove your innocence.
Maki [blank expression]: I’m sorry too… I should have thought before thinking.
Gonta [hand over heart]: Gonta should have defended better! Gonta excuses too!
Monophanie [places flower on head]: Wow! They’re so cute together! They look like friends!
Monokid [disgusted]: Puah! Friendship is for the weak!
Monotaro [shuriken in paw]: But bonds are possible only with the power of friendship!
Monokida [smashes guitar]: I only want power! Shove that friendship down your ass!
Monophanie [gasping]: Monokid! Now you’re bullying Monotaro too?! What happened?
Monotaro [dismissive]: Those insults are nothing to me, sister. Don’t worry!
Monokid [drooling]: Hey, papa! When is Monodam returning? I want to smash his head!
Monokuma [sweat on head]: Heh… actually, it’s better if you’re separated for the time being…
Monokid [angry expression]: You said we would rotate! You’re a liar!
Monokuma [reassuring expression]: Oh, you’re so cute when you’re angry! But the safety of my adorable cubs comes first!
Monophanie [determined]: So you’re sending him back to Angie, right?
Monokuma [blank expression]: Nope, he’ll stay here. I don’t want him to destroy a room.
Monokid [angry expression]: I just want to destroy Monodam!
Korekiyo [caresses face]: Now that this is dealt with… we should re-examine Himiko’s testimony.
Kiibo [uncertain expression]: Yeah, there was a part about a ghost…
Himiko [proud]: Yeah! It was white and pink… I think he was about to kill me!
0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger on chin]: Are you sure that ghost was a he?
Himiko [scratching nose]: Actually… I don’t know. Usually ghosts are transparent.
Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: I do not mean to doubt Himiko, but that entity is definitely not a ghost.
Himiko [scratching nose]: You think that?
Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Yeah! Ghosts are definitely a myth! Who believes in them anyway!
Is Kaito afraid or ghosts or what? He’s growing tense… we should understand what Kirumi means and move on.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Pieces of paper, Racket, Monokuma File 2, Stained cloth

Himiko [tired expression]: I knew you wouldn’t believe me…

Kiibo [reassuring expression]: It’s not about that, but ghosts aren’t real, so…

Tenko [slightly smug]: Just because you haven’t seen one it doesn’t mean they aren’t real!

Maki [blank expression]: Maybe she saw an object. Not a person.

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: Anyone would recognize a living being from an object.

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: Look who’s saying that! A fucking robot!

Angie [fingers in hair]: What if it’s something that was moved somewhere else in the school?

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: If they wanted to hide it, they would have left it outside.

Himiko [slightly irritated person]: We’re talking about a ghost! A ghost of a person!

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Maybe culprit had something that confused Himiko.

Himiko’s testimony is reliable, but the ghost stuff isn’t quite right… she definitely saw something, but what?

ANSWER: Stained cloth --> “culprit had something that confused Himiko”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, Gonta. In fact, Himiko has seen someone with covered with a cloth.

Himiko [looks down]: It totally looked like a ghost to me…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: The cloth we’re talking about is the same Kaito has found outside, pink and white.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Why would the culprit pretend to be a ghost?

Kirumi [tilts head]: The culprit’s intent was not to resemble a ghost, but do something else entirely.

Rantaro [index finger pointing upwards]: After all, disguising as a ghost wouldn’t have fooled most people, even if they had just seen a dead body lying around.
Angie [hands clasping together]: So what was its purpose?

That cloth is pink and white… it has splashes and stains of pink, though… quite curious design…

But that isn’t a design…

**PSYCHE TAXI START!**

1. Where was the cloth used?

[[On the murder weapon/Outside Angie’s research room/Outside of the school]]

**ANSWER: B**

2. Why is the cloth pink?

[[Because someone spilled a type of coffee on it/Because someone dyed it/Because blood is on it]]

**ANSWER: C**

3. Why did the culprit use the cloth?

[[To clean Tsumugi’s wound/To clean the trail of blood/To protect their identity]]

**ANSWER: B**

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit used the cloth outside Angie’s research room… to clean the trail of blood coming from the inside.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Of course, they didn’t want us to discover the true crime scene…

Maki [plays with hair]: Also, they probably cleaned themselves after killing Tsumugi with the crowbar.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The cloth was originally white, but by absorbing some blood, it became pink in some areas.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right arm extended to the side]: Because of Himiko’s sudden arrival,
the culprit’s only choice was to leave before having finished cleaning.

Kirumi [moves to the side]: They did not expect anyone before the scheduled time for the AAA.

Tenko [determined expression]: That’s why they were surprised… good job Himiko!

Himiko [tired expression]: Nyeh… okay…

Kirumi [adjusting hat]: Now that we know where the culprit was, we should try to establish what they did do after being seen by Himiko.

Kaede [gesturing]: She left immediately after seeing them, so she doesn’t know anything else. We need to piece it together.

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Well, there’s only one possibility!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, finger on chin]: You shouldn’t limit yourself, but it’s best to keep more options open…

Rantaro’s right, but we haven’t even heard Kaito’s opinion… Maybe he’s right…

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Broken window, Monokuma File 2, Pieces of paper, Himiko’s testimony

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: There’s no other way out of the corridor beside the corridor itself…

Kaito [giving a thumbs up]: So the culprit trailed behind Himiko!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, right hand raised]: No matter how silent they were, Himiko would have noticed them.

Angie [clasping hands together]: Because they were wearing that cloth that scared her!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: What if they left it there? They moved it a second time.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Well, if that’s the case, she would have recognized them… I think you’re wrong.

Kaito [angry expression]: Hey! At least I’m contributing!

Himiko [looks down]: I didn’t turn while I was running… I was very scared…

0U-M5 [pensive look, finger on temple]: Hey! Maybe the culprit followed her and then hid where Kirumi and Gonta couldn’t find them?

Maki [plays with hair]: If they did that, they had to circle the school to place the crowbar outside…

Kaito [angry expression]: Hey! My theory’s is correct, right Kaede?

Is Kaito’s hypothesis at least partially right? I mean, considering the evidence I found…
ANSWER: Broken window --> “There’s no way out of the corridor besides the corridor itself”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: I’m sorry, Kaito… but you’re wrong.

Kaito [shocked expression]: What?! Why? I don’t understand at all!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Right in front of the anteroom there was a broken window… the culprit used that opening to escape.

Kirumi [tilts head]: That is why they could elude me, Gonta and Kirumi when we arrived there.

Rantaro [sideways look]: Also, since most of us were in the casino or in our rooms, on the other side of the campus, we wouldn’t have heard the noise.

Gonta [confused expression]: But still very strong window… you can’t break it with punch.

Kaede [determined expression]: That’s right… because the culprit used something else…

Kaede [arms crossed]: I think they weren’t even considering to break the window, but Himiko left them with no other choice…

What did the culprit use to escape from the school?

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

ANSWER: Crowbar

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: The culprit had to have used the crowbar to escape!

Kiibo [nods]: Wait… yeah, that must be it! That’s why they didn’t leave it in the research room!

Tenko [pensive look]: We didn’t understand that, because it would have been more convenient to hide it inside…

Kaede [determined expression]: Exactly. I bet that was the culprit’s intention, until Himiko foiled their plans.

Miu [angry expression]: Wait a second! They could have used the racket they stole from Gonta!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: The racket was placed near the crowbar after some time. It was not originally there.
Korekiyo [caresses face]: I can confirm; I have discovered it only when Kirumi returned.

Miu [looks to the side]: But why would they leave the crowbar outside of the window?

Kaede [gesturing]: They were running to prevent someone from discovering them. They got sloppy and forgot evidence behind.

Maki [rolls eyes]: Trying to fix their mistakes with Gonta’s racket, the person they wanted to frame from the start.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Probably they got rid of the paper they used to lure Tsumugi inside after we all discovered the body, leaving it in the corridor.

**After a long discussion, we finally have an idea of how the culprit acted… but we still have no idea on who that culprit could be. We’ve ruled out a lot of people…**

Those are everyone who was inside the casino, so… me, Kaito, 0U-M4, Rantaro and Korekiyo… then Miu, who was broadcasting her performance, and also Gonta and Angie, who were together.

We also can say that Himiko’s innocent. She can’t be the culprit, since the blackened left the cloth near the boiler room, where she never went.

At the same time, Kirumi was entering the school while the entomologist saw the culprit…

That leaves, Kiibo, Tenko and Maki. The culprit… is one of those three. How can we know?

Rantaro [looking in front of self]: Any clues on the identity of the supposed ghost?

Himiko [looks around]: I don’t really know… there was a bump on where the chest is, I think…

Miu [laughing, spit coming out]: You’re talking about tits! While you were scared you actually noticed those?

Himiko [looks around]: They were strange… but now that you said that what I saw wasn’t a ghost, they must carry a significance…

Even if those bumps were… breasts… it’s quite strange for them to be noticeable… none of the suspects have large chest sizes…

Tenko [hands on podium]: Are we really discussing about this?!

Kaede [somewhat embarrassed]: It’s the only way to rule out some of you who don’t have alibis…

Kaito [rubbing head]: If we think that Himiko isn’t lying, we’re crossing Kiibo of the list of possible culprits.

Kiibo [hides behind hood]: Oh… thankfully… it’s so stressful not having an alibi…

**So now we’re left with two possibilities… but… they both seem ridiculous…**

Maki is distant, but no culprit…

And Tenko… she wouldn’t put our lives in danger, especially Himiko’s…
Something feels wrong here… did we forget something?

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Monokuma File 2, Kubs Pads, Tsumugi’s message

Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: Himiko is definitely right, but I couldn’t have killed Tsumugi!

Gonta [index finger on lip]: How us can be sure?

Tenko [lowered head]: I was inside the dormitories, you know? *Maki saw me…*

Maki [blank expression]: I was not there at the time of death. *You could have gone inside the school without being seen.*

Kiiibo [uncertain expression]: Maybe you didn’t check the time correctly…

Miu [pointing]: Or maybe you’re the blackened!

Maki [irritated expression]: Where could have I gotten that crowbar? The warehouse was closed.

Tenko [panicked expression]: The same goes for me! *I was inside my room!*

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: Poor Tsumugi died because of it, so…

Kaito [rubbing head]: It certainly didn’t materialize out of a sudden!

Maki [irritated expression]: The culprit planned everything in detail. I was in my room for most of the time today.

Tenko [determined expression, hands on podium]: And I was with Himiko!

Himiko [looking down]: Actually, I spent most of the day alone…

Korekiyo [looking at clothes]: Neither of them have alibis, so we cannot be sure who the culprit is between them…

I can’t shake off the feeling that we’ve forgotten a detail… it’s important now, because it could solve the case…

**ANSWER: Monokuma File 2 --> “died because of it”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [puts hand on forehead]: I knew there was something strange with the Monokuma File…
Actually, more than one thing… but I’ll come back on that later…

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: Hm? What about it, Kaede?

Kaede [determined expression]: We all assumed that Tsumugi was killed because of blunt force trauma… but that’s not the case.

Rantaro [shakes head]: That’s what’s written on the Monokuma File. Are you saying that it’s lying to our face?

Monokuma [angry expression]: I would never give you false information! How dare you insult me!

Kaede [arms crossed]: No, I’m saying that’s misleading. We’ve overlooked a sentence… and this is important.

Kiiibo [uncertain expression]: What sentence? Tell us!

I looked at my notepad and recited the exact words from the Monokuma File…

Kaede [looking at notepad]: “The estimate time of death is 7:35 PM.”

Kaede [looking at notepad]: “The cause of death is blood loss from blunt force trauma.”

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: What’s the point?

Kaede [gesturing]: Tsumugi was hit by the crowbar, but didn’t die instantly. She died because she bled out.

Miu [shocked expression]: Excuse me, what?!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: It’s written here. That’s the truth.

Kiiibo [shocked expression]: She survived a hit on the head?! That wound is serious!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The culprit only hit her once, definitely knocking her out… but it wasn’t enough to kill her. The brain didn’t suffer damage…

Kaede [gesturing]: As the culprit dragged her outside, Tsumugi regained her consciousness, but she was mortally wounded…

Kaito [angry expression, forms fist with hand]: Dammit! She must have been in a lot of pain!

Rantaro [arms crossed]: How does this relate to Tenko or Maki’s involvement?

Kaede [gesturing]: The wound was serious, but blood wasn’t pouring from it. It must have been a long process…

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: I pray to Atua that Tsumugi is finally resting…

Kaede [gesturing]: I assume she woke up when was already too late and she lost too much blood. She couldn’t move…

Rantaro [looking in front of self]: And… I don’t think I get it…

Is he serious? It’s clear now, I spelled it out for him…
When was Tsumugi attacked? I know now…

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

B O F R E E E S V E N T H Y R I T

ANSWER: Before seven thirty

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: Tsumugi was killed before seven thirty. She bled out for an extensive amount of time.

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: I pray to Atua that Tsumugi is finally resting…

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: I see… she passed only when she had lost too much blood…

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The culprit attacked her before the time Tenko and Maki last saw each other, which is exactly 7:30.

This leaves us… without any suspects. Both Tenko and Maki were in the dorm rooms at that time.

Rantaro: Your claims are way too sketchy!

[[split screen separating Rantaro and Kaede]]

Kaede [irritated expression]: Why don’t you agree with me, this time?

Rantaro [shakes head]: That is not a logical deduction, only your guess.

Rantaro [moves to the side, index finger on chin]: This is like the start of this trial…

Him and I are back to square one… he wants strong evidence, irrefutable proof… But this time, I’ll give it to him.

REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!

Truth blades: Conditions of the body, Crowbar, Stained cloth, Tsumugi’s message

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: You claim Tsumugi died because of blood loss…

Rantaro [shakes head]: You have the Monokuma File as proof, but that’s only your interpretation.
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side] As far as we know, the cause of death could still be blunt force trauma…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self] …That would then lead to a loss of blood.

Kaede [irritated expression]: Then the Monokuma File would have listed only “blunt force trauma”…

Kaede [pointing]: There would be no need for more information!

**ADVANCE!**

Rantaro [looks to the side]: If you think that she died before 7:30, no one of us could be the culprit.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Unless someone of us lied, but **that’s impossible**.

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: Moreover, your assumptions aren’t backed by proof.

Rantaro [moves to the side, slight smirk]: The puddle of blood under was formed when she was already dead…

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: **Nothing interesting was found on her body**…

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: And **neither near her body**, as far as I know…

It’s time to show that piece of evidence to him… and to the others as well. I didn’t want to, but now… I must.

**ANSWER: Tsumugi’s message --> “Nothing interesting was found on her body”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [arms crossed]: Everyone, look at this message. The handwriting is Tsumugi’s.

I took the piece of paper out of my backpack, passing it to Himiko. It came back to me intact, and I read it again.

“**Sorry everyone. Even though # I’m a killer too. I should have told you before this happened # I’m writing this last letter. I know you will find this and save everyone else. It’s my fault.”**

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: I pray to Atua that Tsumugi is finally resting…

Gonta [confused expression]: What does this message mean?

Kaede [gesturing]: That she was alive after being struck by the crowbar, since she had the strength to write her last will.
Rantaro [neutral expression]: I see… then she must have been alive for a short span of time…

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: She could have written that before…

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Why though? If she thought she was going to be killed, she would have warned us.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: I assume she was not killed at all, read the message once again.

**Is Korekiyo saying what I think…?**

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: The phrasing makes it seem like she killed herself…

Kaito [sideways look]: A suicide, huh?

Kaede [gesturing]: That’s way too convenient for it to be true… are we disregarding all the proof we’ve found until now?

Miu [angry expression]: Well, all the proof we found until now doesn’t point to anyone specific!

Himiko [looks down]: But someone killed her… I saw a person…

Monokuma [neutral expression]: Well, if someone kills themselves… the culprit can’t witness their own death… so the rule is slightly different.

Kaede [irritated expression]: You tell us that now?

Monokuma [angry expression]: I can’t remember everything! The point is that if the killer and the victim are the same person, the announcement would still sound after three people found the body!

**Even though I know Tsumugi didn’t kill herself… this might be useful in the future…**

Korekiyo [thoughtful expression]: If that individual was not the culprit, he would be counted as the third person…

Maki [blank expression]: Yet no one has claimed to be that person, so that has to be the culprit.

Monokuma [paw near mouth]: Oh! It seems your opinions are split!

Maki [rolls eyes]: I can’t believe we’re doing this again.

0U-M5 [confused expression]: This what?

Kiibo [sighs]: You’ll see in a moment…

**Just like last time, the podium where I stood on ascended… and we quickly reached another area, split in two groups.**

**On one side me, Maki, Tenko, Himiko, Rantaro, Kaito and 0U-M5**

-Someone else killed Tsumugi!

**On the other Kirumi, Korekiyo, Kiibo, Miu, Gonta and Angie**
-Tsumugi committed suicide!

**SCRUM DEBATE START!**

Korekiyo: No one could be the culprit, so Tsumugi had to have killed herself.

Tenko: Yes, someone could have been the culprit! We need to review evidence!

Miu: The message says clearly that she was the killer!

Maki: Some words on the message have been hidden, changing its meaning completely.

Kirumi: Tsumugi could have tried to kill herself inside, however she could have changed her mind, that is why blood is in there as well…

Kaito: If she tried to kill herself inside the research room, would she have the strength to swing the crowbar one more time?

Kiibo: Please, there’s no way someone would kill again! What would their reason be?

Kaede: The secret videos given to us might be the reason!

Miu: Maybe Angie’s sickness was just a coincidence!

Rantaro: There are too many coincidences; this was murder.

Gonta: Gonta could have left racket there without notice! Culprit not frame him!

0U-M5: The racket was put there after we discovered the body, you couldn’t have lost it there!

Kiibo: Maybe she broke the window before she killed herself? That’s why the crowbar is outside!

Maki: If she didn’t kill herself with the crowbar, how do you explain traces of blood found on it? The culprit used it for something.

Korekiyo: We have thought that the culprit framed Gonta, but this note would frame Tsumugi herself. The culprit would not frame two of us.

Kaede: Of course they could! They could frame everyone if they had the time!

Kaede’s team: This is our answer!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [arms crossed]: Only one clue might lead us to think Tsumugi killed herself, and isn’t even reliable.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I have to admit my mistake. I forgot about all the evidence we presented until now.

Kaede [gesturing]: Whereas there is proof that someone entered inside the research room,
tampered with the coffee machine, escaped from the window and, lastly, framed Gonta.

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: What a shitty person!

Kaede [gesturing]: Tsumugi’s intention, in her last moments, was to reveal the identity of her killer. However, the culprit managed to alter her message…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: So it looked like a suicide note…

There’s no doubt that Tsumugi wrote those words… all of them. So she wrote she was a killer… but why? What does that mean? What words did the culprit erase? Only they can tell us…

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: But who would this person be? Everyone has an alibi!

Maki [plays with hair]: There must be a false testimony. A clue we didn’t interpret properly.

Tenko [pensive expression]: All of those look pretty true to me… barring one.

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger on cheek]: Which is…?

Tenko [pensive expression]: Himiko could have been wrong… maybe the figure under that cloth was a boy…

Himiko [looks down]: No, I’m sure there was a bump…

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Are you saying that I killed Tsumugi…?

Tenko [determined expression]: You’re the only one without a solid alibi! Who else could the culprit be?

Himiko [looks to the side]: I-I don’t think I was wrong…

Tenko [reassuring expression]: Some times our mind plays jokes on us… we don’t know what Kiibo was doing at the time, nobody saw him.

I remember seeing him outside of the casino… but that would prove nothing. He had the time to go inside the school and then exit…

Kiibo [panicked expression]: Please! Don’t vote for me! I didn’t do anything!

Kaede [gesturing]: I believe you, Kiibo… but… who els-

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: I pray to Atua that Tsumugi is finally resting…

What? Again? Angie said the same exact thing for… four times in a row now…

Gonta [worried expression]: Angie? You ok?

Angie kept silent, continuing to smile at the screen.

Kaito [rubbing head]: What’s up with her?

At some point, she turned our back to us, going to her desk. She then returned and drew near to the camera.
We stood confused, in silence as she continued smiling.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Is she even hearing us?

0U-M5 [confused expression]: Did we lost the audio or something?

And then, something we didn’t expect happened. Or I should say, happened again.

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: I pray to Atua that Tsumugi is finally resting…

Kirumi [tilts head, worried expression]: She repeated the same words again…

But that wasn’t the only thing she did again. She repeated the same actions as before, in every single detail.

Even if she lost connection with us, no one is capable of performing the same actions repeatedly, say the same words with the same intonation, position themselves in the same position every single time… no, calling this a broadcast would be wrong… in fact, it’s something else…

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

R I C O D E N R G

ANSWER: Recording

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: This is not a direct feed; this is a recording!

Kaito [shocked expression]: Holy shit! That’s right!

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: Does this help me in any way? Please tell me it does.

Kaito [sideways look]: Now that I think about it, the camera could have a recording button… I think that Angie pressed it, and now it’s the video is repeating over and over…

Oh… this changes everything.

Miu [looks to the side]: Can we help her get out of this loop and get back to the case!?

Kaito [thoughtful expression]: She can still hear us, so we should give her instructions. Just press the second button, the red one, and then-

Kaede [determined expression]: Wait a second! Before that, I need to tell you something.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Oh, alright.

Kaede [arms crossed]: I might know who is the culprit.
Tenko [shocked expression]: Because of Angie’s mistake?

Yeah, exactly. As absurd as it sounds…

Kaede [determined expression, arms crossed]: We thought everyone had an alibi, but after this, one of us does not.

I… I understand now… that person tricked me as well. I underestimated their intelligence, that’s entirely my fault. I don’t know how they could enact such an elaborate plan, but that means I don’t know them as well as I imagined… they need to explain their actions.

-SELECT SOMEONE!

Chapter End Notes

Wooh! Who is it? Who killed Tsumugi? Congrats to the ones who guessed it right!

(Sorry if I'm late!! I just couldn't publish the chapter yesterday)
Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories: Class Trial (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

A person is accused; Evidence found previously is re-examined.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

[[MIU IRUMA SELECTED]]

Kaede: No doubt about it!

Kaede [determined expression, arms crossed]: Miu, your broadcast wasn’t live, was it?

Miu [angry expression]: What?! How dare you accuse me!!

Kaede [irritated expression]: Tell us the truth! You weren’t in your research lab while we were in the casino!

Miu [sad expression]: Heeegh… what are you saying… I thought you liked me…

**I can’t force her to say that… but that must be it.**

Angie [cheerful expression]: Here I am, guys! It seems I helped you!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Ah, you found the correct order of buttons by yourself…

Miu [sad expression]: Why… why do you think I did that recording stuff?

Maki [blank expression]: To kill Tsumugi, obviously. You fabricated your own alibi.

Miu [angry expression]: I definitely won’t hear any word from a cum dumpster like you!

Maki [irritated expression]: …

Korekiyo [looks at clothes]: We have no way of proving your hypothesis, Kaede. Even though it would not surprise me.

Miu [angry expression]: I don’t care about you either! I’m sure you cosplay as hot girls and then fap in front of the mirror!

**She’s getting serious… and extremely annoying.**

Kaede [gesturing]: If she wasn’t in her research lab, and she pre-recorded the footage… she could have been able to do everything we suspect.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: From changing Angie’s coffee to framing Gonta…
Miu [angry expression]: Lies! You must be the culprit then! Himiko’s claim doesn’t hold any meaning!

Kaito [sideways look]: She did say that the figure was… you know, had a certain chest size…

Miu [proud expression]: My boobs are far bigger! They would pierce through that cloth, waiting for freedom!

**Why are we having this discussion? This will spiral out of control soon.**

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: It appears to me that all the evidence we found was used.

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, that’s true. But we have made many mistakes during this trial, starting with Miu’s broadcast.

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: Wait a second! You can’t accuse me right now! Were is your evidence?

0U-M5 [moves to the right]: There are a few parts of the case we left untouched. What’s the first?

Kaede [gesturing]: How the culprit managed to know the right code to enter, for example.

Miu [proud expression]: Ah! I can’t see how you could prove everyone I could know!

No, she’s very wrong. I can… and I will.

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

*Truth bullets: Keypad, Monokuma File 2, Pieces of paper*

Angie [fingers in hair]: We said that the culprit overheard Gonta in the anteroom.

Gonta [confused expression]: We sure about that? Maybe something else happen.

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: Any other bright ideas? They’re welcome.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: It could be a secret about the anteroom we haven’t figured about.

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: Anyway, nothing directly relates to me!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Was there something that belonged to Miu?

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: It does not seem so.

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: Something she could do? Like, sound and music?

Angie [fingers in hair]: Can you even kill someone with music?

Tenko [determined expression]: If it’s bad enough, of course! You could destroy someone’s eardrums!

Something does relate to Miu… it’s about her… maybe I have to use what the others said, though…
ANSWER: “sound and music” --> “nothing directly relates to me”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Angie’s right. Miu overheard Gonta.

Kaede [determined expression]: But, actually, she didn’t even need to come that closer, because of her talent. She can discern sounds better than us.

Miu [shocked expression]: What!? How can you be certain about it?!

Maki [blank expression]: As the Ultimate Pianist, you need to have an exceptional sense of hearing, it’s mandatory.

Kaito [thoughtful expression]: That explains how you’re so capable with music…

Kaede [gesturing]: You listened to the keypad and distinguished the various sounds clearly, so you could enter without any problems.

Miu [angry expression]: Please! You said it yourself, people could hear it from outside!

Kaede [irritated expression]: Who says you were waiting there? Maybe you were upstairs, who knows?

Miu [angry expression]: I’m a superhuman beauty, but that’s way too much! You’re not making sense!

Rantaro [arms crossed]: She’s definitely making more sense than you right now.

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: Okay, you know what? Your story doesn’t make sense at all!

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: You’re saying that I’m wrong? After all this time?

Miu [proud expression]: I have come to a sudden realization! I can tell you why I’m not the culprit!

Maki [blank expression]: It will just be another excuse.

Miu [proud expression]: We said that Tsumugi entered after the culprit, who, to be fair, is totally not me.

Miu [determined expression]: But she was struck behind her head! I don’t think she entered backwards! She must have seen them!

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: I think that the crowbar was hidden inside the room.

Miu [proud expression]: Aha! I knew you would say that! But Tsumugi would have seen the culprit searching for something!

Miu [proud expression]: And remember, she was supposedly there just to bring food! She would
be out of there in a second!

Rantaro [arms crossed]: She would need to turn her back to input a new code…

Miu [proud expression]: Yeah, if the door was fully closed! Maybe she left it open like Kiibo!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Why do you keep forcing me into this?

Miu [angry expression]: And most of all, wouldn’t Tsumugi be suspicious of the fact I was inside Angie’s room!? She would have backed out like the scum she is!

Woah… is she insulting Tsumugi? It’s common procedure for Miu, but…

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: Insulting her will only make you more suspicious.

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: Hell if I care!

0U-M5 [moves to the left]: I think that this should be discussed further.

Kaede [irritated expression, gesturing]: What’s more to discuss? Miu could have struck Tsumugi behind the head!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I don’t know… until there’s a possibility…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Okay, okay… let’s say that’s possible. That means we have looked at the case the wrong way… again.

Angie [fingers in hair]: How, this time?

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Of course, there’s a way Tsumugi couldn’t have seen the culprit…

There is, and it goes against what we said before… but we assumed that fact, no evidence backed it up. The research room, at the time of murder was…

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. D P A
2. A P D
3. T S R
4. K H O

ANSWER: Dark

Kaede: I got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: We concluded that candles illuminated the research room when the murder took place, but that is the complete opposite than what actually happened.

Himiko [raises right arm]: But there’s no way in between… something is either bright or dark…
Gonta [smiling]: There different shades of bright!

Kaede [gesturing]: The room was dark when Tsumugi entered, Miu waited for her behind the door… making sure she wouldn’t be seen.

Miu [angry expression]: Whaat?! You’re not making sense! First, that doesn’t relate to me at all!

Kaede [irritated expression]: No, instead it does.

Miu [angry expression, looks to the side]: Then, how the hell would I kill someone in the dark?! Bullshit!

She can, she’s perfectly able to… with her skill, she doesn’t need to see… she can use…

[[Her hearing/Her sense of smell/Her sense of touch]]

**ANSWER: Her hearing**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [irritated expression]: We just said it; you have perfect hearing. It wouldn’t surprise me if you were able to track Tsumugi’s movements in the dark.

Kirumi [tilts head]: Presumably she would have tried to find a switch, or a way to light a candle…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Definitely. In those few seconds she was ultimately knocked out, even though she managed to survive for some minutes.

Miu [worried expression]: Y-you have something against me, r-right?

Angie [hands joined in prayer]: Well, it seems you have killed someone, so…

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: I didn’t, you piece of shit! You are all spewing nonsense! Everything’s fine, but nothing is certain!

Kaede [arms crossed]: What do you mean? Everything leads to you.

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: I did not see you during the investigation… where were you?

Miu [angry expression]: Huh? A girl can’t mind her own business!?

Korekiyo [looks at clothes]: That “own business” you speak about is likely planting Gonta’s racket near the scene of the crime.

Miu [worried expression, bites nails]: W-what? How can you be sure that was me?!

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: We can’t, but most of all were together during the investigation. Nobody saw you, however.

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: Yes, that racket appeared after I left the corridor to assist Maki. That means somebody placed it there.
Tenko [pensive expression]: So she took advantage of that to frame Gonta!

Gonta [surprised]: Gonta thought… he friends with everyone…

Miu [angry expression]: No! You still can’t say I killed Tsumugi! Because you’d need definitive proof, right? You don’t have that!

Korekiyo [caresses face]: Excuse me, but what was the secret given to you?

Miu [shocked expression]: …They should have their privacy!

Maki [rolls eyes]: The real Miu wouldn’t care at all about the privacy of someone else.

Kaede [arms crossed]: So, Miu?

Miu [hands in hair]: Okay! I had Tsumugi’s! But that doesn’t correlate at all with the murder!

Kiibō [shrugs]: Does it matter? We know that she could overhear everyone else’s secrets…

Miu [pointing]: Hey! Monokuma! Do something useful for once and transmit the video that belongs to the Ultimate Maid!

Monokuma [paw on chin]: Mmh… Maid? I think I’ll do it. But only because I’m feeling generous today! Yup yup!

After having taken a remote controller, Monokuma clicked a button and brought down the same screen used to display our votes and then… to transmit Shuichi’s execution.

Monokuma [neutral expression]: Might as well go to the juicy part as soon as possible, right? Here we go!

The familiar background appeared in front of my eyes, this time with different words: “Tsumugi Shirogane’s Secret”.

However, her secret wasn’t as dangerous as someone else might think. In the video Monokuma announced she was allergic to pollen, which could have been found in some parts of the courtyard.

Miu [pointing]: This means I’m not the culprit! This secret doesn’t have anything to do with Tsumugi’s death!

She’s right… but there’s no one else who could have committed this murder.

Miu [worried expression, bites nails]: W-what if you’re wrong? Eh? We’ll all die because you chose me, a innocent person!

OU-M5 [pensive look, touching temple]: I believe you, Kaede… if Miu’s the blackened, though… she must have left some other clues.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Yeah, something she used, considering everything… could only be taken by her… but what is that?

Kiibō [uncertain expression]: The culprit used so many things to make sure they would kill Tsumugi… what thing are you talking about?
The object I’m referring to is…

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

Answer: Stained cloth

Kaede [arms crossed]: First of all, does anyone claim to have taken the cloth that was used to wipe off the blood?

...

Nope. Nobody.

Kaede [gesturing]: Well, that means that Miu took it. Someone else would have admitted it.

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: What the fuck, Kaede?! The culprit could still be someone else and not tell us regardless!? Have you smoked weed recently?

Kaede [irritated expression]: The only other people who could have taken that cloth are me, Kaito, 0U-M5, Rantaro, you and Korekiyo.

Kaede [arms crossed]: And there’s no doubt that all of them, minus you, aren’t the culprits.

Miu [angry expression, slamming hands on podium]: Your words have no meaning! You’re not explaining why all of this makes any sense!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Actually, that cloth is fro-

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: I don’t want to hear any words from you, you sick frigid woman! You’ve missed out on a lot, eh?

Kirumi [serious expression, tilts head]: …Sorry, did you attempt to offend me? I am afraid you failed.

Kaito [sideways look]: She’s completely gone. I’d say we can vote already.

Miu [angry expression, tugs hair]: Voting!? Are you crazy!? We haven’t proven horseshit!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Miu’s idiocy aside, I wanted to prove to you she is the only-

Miu [angry expression, tugs hair]: You?! Prove?! Isn’t Kaede the detective here?! She should have the honor, right?!

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Do you think acting like this will change things?

Miu [angry expression, slamming hands on podium]: No, but Kaede thinks she’s the Ultimate Judgement and shit, she gets to have the last laugh, right?!

Maki [blank expression]: You should stop now.

Miu [angry expression, slamming hands on podium]: She always knows what’s best and what’s right! She can definitely prove I’m the culprit, right?! Right?! Then do it!
If she refuses to admit her crime, I’ll do what she asked. She’s beyond saving, and I wouldn’t help her anyways.

**PANIC TALK ACTION START!**

Miu [angry expression, flailing arms]: Shut up, you virgin!

Miu [hands in hair]: You dare defy the gorgeous girl genius, Miu Iruma?!

Miu [angry expression, sweating]: Now listen to my greatness!

Miu [angry expression, pointing]: You think you hit the right note?! Think again!

Miu [angry expression, sweating]: You like me when I’m moaning, huh?

Miu [angry expression, slamming hands on podium]: The amazing Miu Iruma won’t crumble under a flat-chested bitch like you!

**FINAL BLOW:**

Miu [plays with hair]: Where would I have taken that shitty cloth?

AS---IN---O---C

**ANSWER: Casino**

Kaede: This is over!

Miu [hands in hair]: …!

Kaede [irritated expression, pointing]: You picked it up in the casino, didn’t you?

Miu [shocked expression]: W-what? And what does that mean?

Kirumi [tilts head]: If you would allow me to explain, I will gladly do so.

Angie [hands clasping together]: Yeah, please. I don’t get it.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Miu was one of the few people that visited the casino as Kaito was organizing the party.

Kaito [surprised expression]: Yeah! I saw her! She didn’t even help! She just came there and didn’t even say hi!

Miu [lowered head]: H-hey… I didn’t!

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: You can’t deny it. We have a witness here.

Kaito [thoughtful expression]: If only I remembered she took that cloth with her, we would have
finished so much sooner…

Kiibo [uncertain expression]: In the casino? Where?

Kaede [gesturing]: In the side room, where the pool table is located. It was there before the party, but it disappeared when I had my game with Monokid.

Miu [angry expression, slamming hands on podium]: We’re far from finished!

Kirumi [tilts head]: I assume we are so. You, on the other hand…

Miu [angry expression]: I refuse to believe anything Kaede’s saying! She’s only trying to confuse you! She’s working with the real culprit!

Himiko [tired expression]: But I thought she could have been the only one…

Rantaro [arms crossed]: That’s correct. She’s only delaying the inevitable.

Gonta [confused expression, index finger on lip]: Kaede, can you do your thing now?

Kaede [uncertain expression]: My… thing?

Rantaro [reassuring expression, hands in front of self]: I think he’s talking about your explanation. We would all like it.

Kaito [giving a thumbs up]: Yeah, this was very confusing…

So… I have to think about what happened one last time… this will refresh everyone’s mind. This trial wasn’t easy.

CLIMAX INTERFERENCE START!

Kaede: The culprit organized a very complex murder plan, taking advantage of the second motive Monokuma gave us, planning every single detail.

Kaede: Their intention was to kill Tsumugi in Angie’s research room, but that wasn’t as easy as it sounds.

Kaede: To make sure nobody would foil their plans, the culprit had to sabotage the Appreciation Assembly by preventing Angie, the organizer, from attending.

Kaede: They didn’t forget to frame someone else as well, and so they stole Gonta’s racket at an unspecified time.

Kaede: The culprit was able to take advantage of Angie’s secret, originally in Kaito’s hands, which could overhear thanks to their abilities.

Kaede: The blackened didn’t watch the video, but they listened, successfully founding a loophole in Monodam’s new rule.

Kaede: Thanks to the newfound information, Miu altered the coffee machine during this morning, hoping that Angie would drink the traditional coffee, the one she likes the most.

Kaede: Tsumugi would have been able to confirm this, but she was the victim of this case.

Kaede: Angie showed signs of sickness during lunch; The culprit’s plan was set in motion, but it
was far from completion.

Kaede: The circumstances allowed the blackened to create a false alibi that they planned to use during the trial: the broadcast from their research room.

Kaede: The culprit was given a camera from Kaito to transmit their song during the casino party. We all though that would be a direct feed, but the killer had something else in mind.

Kaede: Discovering the possibility to register videos, the culprit played their song before the party took place, not broadcasting it live.

Kaede: In fact, the culprit was in another area of the campus: inside Angie’s research room with a crowbar in hand.

Kaede: They were previously able to understand the code because of their sense of hearing once again, distinguishing the different sounds that the keypad made as Gonta visited the research room multiple times during the day.

Kaede: Before entering, however, the culprit wrote a fake note that would lure Tsumugi inside, writing the correct code on it and sticking it on the door.

Kaede: After being inside, they snuffed out all the candles to have an advantage over Tsumugi. The culprit could hear her, but the latter would be completely blind.

Kaede: Tsumugi, completely clueless and with the food in hand, entered the room. The door closed behind her and the culprit swiftly hit her in the back of her head, making her fall down.

Kaede: But she was only knocked unconscious… the culprit had no way of knowing that, however. They carried her out of the research room and laid her corpse to the side, cleaning the blood left over with the cloth they found in the casino side room.

Kaede: Meanwhile, Tsumugi regained consciousness and with the force she had left, she wrote a last message to us, informing us who her killer was.

Kaede: However, the culprit probably noticed something was wrong with Tsumugi. They found the message she had written and thought that it could be used to mislead us into thinking she committed suicide, so they changed its meaning.

Kaede: As she was finishing cleaning up, an unexpected guest came: Himiko. The culprit definitely heard her, but had no way of escaping. Not knowing what to do, she put the cloth on herself to hide from the entomologist.

Kaede: Luckily for the culprit, Himiko got scared and ran away. But they knew she would inform the others, so the killer had to leave the crime scene immediately.

Kaede: They picked up the crowbar that previously was used to kill Tsumugi and threw it to break the window. By doing this, they secured another escape route.

Kaede: While Kirumi discovered the body, the killer left the bloodied cloth near the boiler room, thinking no one would search there. After that, they returned to the crime scene, pretending to be surprised.

Kaede: Lastly, the culprit did two more things. They disposed of the note left on the research lab door, tearing it apart and throwing it away in the corridors, and planted Gonta’s racket under the broken window while everyone was investigating.
Kaede: There’s only one person whose hearing is bordering superhuman, and is above everyone else in this school… it seems ridiculous, but the person who orchestrated this murder can only be you…

[[split screen separating Miu and Kaede; Miu is shouting while pulling her hair]

Kaede: Miu Iruma, it has to be you!

**BREAK!**

Miu [shocked expression]: W-what… but I’m stupid!

*Miu? Saying she isn’t the best being in the entire universe?*

Kaito [sideways look]: That’s what everyone here thought.

Miu [lowered head]: How could I enact such a complex plan? I’m great with music, not with this shit!

Kirumi [hands on hips]: If only that was true… we would not be in this situation now.

Kaede [arms crossed]: We’ve understood your plan, every detail of it. You can’t claim innocent anymore.

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: To be precise, there are many details that are not clear yet.

Tenko [slightly smug]: You think that Miu isn’t the culprit!??

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Of course not… I am referring to her reasons… she targeted Tsumugi. Miu wanted to kill *her*, not one of us.

Kiibo [bites lip]: That’s because she had her secret…

Korekiyo [looks up]: But that secret was not relevant to the murder, mind you.

Miu [panicked expression]: Please listen to me! This is all a misunderstanding! I didn’t kill anyone!

Kaede [irritated expression]: Are we all okay with voting Miu as the culprit?

Maki [blank expression]: Definitely.

Miu [panicked expression]: We’re all going to die if you’re wrong! Please! Please!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looks to the side]: It’s too late to plead now. You made your choice when you struck Tsumugi with that crowbar.

Kaede [determined expression]: Monokuma, it’s time to vote.

Monokuma [lunges]: Ah ah! Finally! This trial was getting kinda boring! Prepare your fingers, guys!

*I expected Miu to say one last dirty joke, but she stood, frozen in place, on her defendant stand, biting her fingernails. She had no way to escape.*
Monokuma [neutral expression]: Thirty seconds, you bastards! Make them count!

This time I didn’t flinch at all. I selected Miu and was done with it. I had no doubts, no regrets. One of us killed a classmate only because they wanted to get out, leaving the others behind. This is inexcusable.

After the seconds had passed, Monokuma pressed the lever beside his throne… and the giant screen appeared again.

12 votes for Miu, 1 for Kiibo.

Talk about being stubborn.

The next sequence played out exactly like last time’s. The roulette, the different choices… The ball moved around for some seconds, before ultimately landing on Miu’s face. The jingle, Miu’s face flashing repeatedly… hundreds of Monocoins gushed out of the machine, the Monokubs cheering with their father.

We were right.

Miu Iruma did kill Tsumugi Shirogane.

CLASS TRIAL END.

“You were right again! Maybe a Ultimate Detective is too overpowered for this game!” Monokuma said.

“As always, you need to shut up.” Maki followed immediately after.

“Right, you have to talk before the culprit meets their end, that’s what you always do… call me when you are tired of sobbing, ‘kay?”

Sobbing? I wouldn’t shed a tear for Miu. She killed Tsumugi to get out, and after all of my attempts to make her accepted…

“I’m done here.” I said. “There’s nothing I have to say.”

“Woah! She’s ice cold!” Monotaro said.

“Very cold ice burns just like fire!” Her sister commented. “She’s dangerous!”

I moved away from my podium, looking at the elevator. The door to it was still closed, we weren’t able to get back to the surface. Right, we had to watch Monokuma’s sick execution first.

“H-hey…” Miu said quietly. “Don’t you wanna hear why I did it?”

“She confessed!” Gonta exclaimed.

“Well, it’s confirmed by Monokuma. She can’t deny it now.” Kiibo pointed out.

I thought Miu was addressing everyone, but after turning back I understood she was directly talking to me.
“Should I? There’s no reasonable explanation! You do realize you killed someone? Ended the life of a living being?! Someone who trusted you?!”

“I have my reasons!”

I decided to ignore her last sentence.

“After I tried to help you with the others?! Taking advantage of my and Kaito’s help!? Lying to everyone… just to escape, condemning us to death!? I think you don’t, because no sane person would do that, it’s an insult to everyone who’s here right now!”

“Kaede, calm down.” Rantaro intervened. “Shouting won’t bring back Tsumugi.”

“This is not about Tsumugi!” I continued. “She is dead now, I know we can’t do anything!... But someone should feel guilty, because what they did is unforgivable! Killing is the worst action you could do in your life!”

“Maybe if you listen to me you will-

“Listen to you?! You had your time to confess, but you decided to lie again and again! How sick are you!? Maybe the others are right! You are an awful human being! Forget about your terrible attitude, all of your flaws, your terrible, disgusting jokes! They are nothing compared to what you have just done!”

She crossed her arms. “I have the right to explain myself. I’m not a monster.”

Strangely calm, knowing the fact she was screaming just moments ago… and that she’s about to die a cruel and painful death.

“What do you want us to feel pity for you?” I asked rhetorically. “You’ve definitely failed with me. Say what you want. I am ashamed for you.”

Miu took a deep breath and breathed out.

“First, let’s drop the act. I’m not as terrible as you might think…”

“Wow.” I said. “For someone who killed someone else.”

“Stop.” Kirumi chimed in. “Let her talk now. You said what you wanted already.”

“I know I’ve got my fucking flaws, but I can be serious when I want. I can… control myself when needed. But I’ve always wanted to be better than everyone else.”

Yeah, assert her superiority. I don’t need tragic backstories now.

“I’m unlikable, that’s true. But to get what you want, you can’t play nice every time. I got where I am now after so much hard work, being bratty with managers who always did what I wanted… because I never listened to their absurd offerings.”

“Can you get to the point?” Tenko intervened. “Why did you kill Tsumugi?”

“I was born in an extremely rich family. I lied to you, my surname isn’t Iruma… is Saitou.”

Umpf. It’s going to be a long time before she gives her reason.

“When I was 13 my parents died. The lawyers told me they were assassinated. Apparently they
were caught in some shady affairs… we also lost a large sum of our wealth… but I didn’t like them. They never cared for me, always left me and my sisters with our butlers and maids.”

Her parents died. It’s terrible, but how does that relate to the murders?

“I’m sorry for that.” Rantaro said. “No one should lose their parents at a young age.”

“Are you justifying her?” Kaito exclaimed.

“I was giving her my condolences.” The artist eyed the inventor. “This has nothing to do with her actions in this school.”

“I started looking after my younger sisters. Money wasn’t enough, nobody cared about us as we were losing everything, and I started to practice the piano. I always was attracted to it… to music… After months and months of work, I started performing in theatres. Everyone recognized me and wanted to take advantage of my status… so I scared them off with my attitude, dyeing my hair and changing my name. Then I became a Ultimate… and the government paid my studies… the situation stabilized once again, with my earnings I could hire maids and butlers again…”

“It seems everything was going well. What happened?” Rantaro asked.

“During a night… an intruder came and killed half of my sisters in their sleep. Some of them weren’t even able to talk… They didn’t take anything, only the lives of the ones I cared most.”

She had to witness the death of not only her parents, but sisters too. That’s awful, I admit that. But...

“That person is none other than Tsumugi Shirogane! She deserved to die after what she did. I was devastated… I saw that fucking killer before she could slaughter everyone, but they escaped! I never imagined I would see them again, but there they were, in front of me! I never saw their face, but now… now I know.”

“Wait! How can you be sure that the killer was Tsumugi? There’s no way that you’re talking about her! She was the nicest person I ever met!” Kiibo protested.

“She’s lying.” I said. “She wants to die as a martyr or something like that. You’ll be disappointed.”

“She even said she couldn’t recognize the killer… assuming they exist.” Angie said.

“I knew you wouldn’t believe me!” She exclaimed. “But I have proof! Right, Monokuma?”

“Yup yup! In fact, there are a bunch of secrets that Tsumugi left to herself! I expected them to be revealed during the trial, but you went in a very boring direction, trying to understand how the murderer entered the room and other irrelevant things.”

“What do you expect from a trial?” Tenko protested.

“I dunno. I have seen a lot of trials in my life after all… they’re starting to get boring.”

“Do you want to show the proof or not?!” Miu grew impatient, looking more like her usual self.

“That’s right, I just need to show you Tsumugi’s secret video.”

I raised an eyebrow… we had already seen Tsumugi’s secret video, and it was about pollen. I don’t think pollen killed Miu’s sisters.

Monokuma noticed our confused faces. “Not the one you saw, of course! That was for the Ultimate
“Tsumugi was the Ultimate Maid, I don’t understand you.” Rantaro crossed his arms.

“Since I’m honest, I have to admit I showed you the secret video that was given to someone else, not to Miu. She was told another secret.”

“She had two videos, because she had to talents.” I said.

That’s what I deduced. When the Monokubs told us about the distribution of the videos I only imagined that, but now I have the concrete proof.

“Since there’s a video for every one of our talents, if Tsumugi had two, it means two secrets were revealed, probably to two different people.”

“But why did no one bring that up?!?” Kaito exclaimed. “I bet Maki had two!”

“Try again.”

“Was it you, Miu?” 0U-M5 asked.

“No, I happened to overhear the second secret, like I did with Angie’s… and I overheard it from you.”

“Me? Actually, I couldn’t find my pads anywhere…”

“You must have hid them somewhere while you were 0U-M4.” Kaito explained. “Since you started anew, those memories were forgotten.”

“This is the only explanation. The Ultimate Maid secret was given to 0U-M4, alongside another one. But because of what happened during the sixth day, nobody could have known that.”

Despite this, I doubt it would have been useful to the trial. But we’re not here to discuss about what didn’t happen.

“What was her second talent?” Kirumi asked.

“Look at the projector screen and you’ll all know!”

The video had already started playing. The blue background and the words “Tsumugi Shirogane’s secret” were the exact same as before.

«Alright, it’s time to switch things up! This time, I’ll show you a secret video!»

“Can you skip this part?” I asked him.

“Skip the introduction with my beautiful voice?! How dare you! I worked a lot on my spelling, and I think you’re only jealous!”

“Our daddy is really good at talking!” Monophanie praised him.

“I’m glad someone here understands me! People are so mean sometimes!” He faked crying.

I guess it was completely useless. By the time Monokuma finished his sentenced the introduction had already ended.
A picture of Tsumugi appeared on screen, but she wasn’t in her usual outfit. Instead, she had a black uniform with red stripes on her sleeves. Dark trousers replaced her skirt.

«Tsumugi’s the Ultimate Assassin! Ooh! Maybe you didn’t know that? Well, now you do! Here’s a moment of silence so you can gasp after this shock!»

I would have commented on Monokuma’s terrible sense of humor if it wasn’t for that revelation.

“She was… the Ultimate Assassin?” Kiibo preceded me. “H-how…”

The video continued, as we stood surprised, confused and worried.

«Have you gasped? Great! Of course her being the Ultimate Assassin is quite a juicy secret by itself, but why should you care? Well, because she was the very same person who killed your sisters during that winter night!»

Monokuma’s talking directly to Miu… that means those videos were planned to be sent in a specific way… I hate to say it, but they will still affect us even after this case…

«Don’t believe it?! Well, luckily I happen to have the surveillance videos that incriminate her! They were never found, but that is what the police told you! Of course those policemen were hired by the same organization that targeted you, and said a buunch of lies! How terrible!»

“Do you see why I did this?!” Miu cried out.

But the video wasn’t finished.

«Here are the videos! Prepare a bag, because I think you’ll vomit! Aand… let’s start with Ko-

The projector shut off.

“The rules of etiquette force me not to show that part of the video. I don’t think Miu would like to see the death of her sisters once again before dying, upupupupu…”

“Did you actually show her a killer murdering her sisters?!” Tenko exclaimed. “What are you?!”

“Not just any killer, your chef Tsumugi! Do I need to resume the video?!”

I… don’t know what to think. What Miu did… is so terrible… but Tsumugi… she killed someone too… without any reason, girls who had no chance to defend themselves… why? I can’t even ask her. Was she faking all of those times she served us her pie? Her reassuring voice and her quirky obsessions were real to me and to all of us. Nobody like her could murder in cold blood.

“That’s enough.” Rantaro stopped the bear. “It’s clear she’s certain Tsumugi did it.”

“She’s certain? You’re wrong, we’re certain! There’s video evidence, and I possess it.”

“Please, you could have faked those videos.” The artist looked at the bear disgusted, shaking his head.

“You really want to think everyone here hasn’t done anything wrong? Tsumugi was a killer, that’s the truth.” The bear repeated.

“I can’t believe it!” Kiibo said. “You can show me whatever you want, but I’ll never believe you. You say you never lied, but nobody can prove that. Even if Tsumugi was the Ultimate Assassin like you said, she would never… never murder innocents!”
“Oh, you have so much to learn, Kiibo… but let’s go back to Kaede wrecking Miu. She killed a person! A nice person, in your opinion!”

“I won’t forgive Miu.” Kiibo said, looking at the pianist. “But if I was in her shoes, I would have been torn as well. She believed she was that close to the one that killed her sisters… was she supposed to pretend that nothing happened? Miu’s impulsive, you know that…”

Is Kiibo… trying to confront Monokuma?… While defending Miu… this is… nobody should take her side…

“You set her up for murder, Monokuma, just like you set Shuichi. None of them had a choice. To us, it seems they had, but if we were there, and we had to do something…”

“Shuichi killed for our sake.” I intervened immediately. “Miu killed for her own. Don’t compare them. You’re wrong.”

Kiibo stared at me, blinking before speaking again.

“Shuichi’s death is a noble one, Miu isn’t… but… they couldn’t do anything about the situation they were in. Miu wanted vengeance for what has happened to her. Monokuma… basically… told her to kill Tsumugi and she did it. I’m… sorry for both of them…”

“Miu could talk with Tsumugi and sort things out.” I said.

“She would have tortured me!” Miu said. “Are you insane?”

Yes, I know. Talking wasn’t an option. If Tsumugi was capable of killing children like Monokuma is saying, she wouldn’t have hesitated.

But Shuichi really had no choice. Miu took advantage of us. She could stop at any moment, but she continued with her horrible plan.

“Tsumugi wasn’t the one who murdered your sisters.” Kiibo said.

“I’m sure it was her!” The pianist shouted. “I remember her face now!”

“You want to convince yourself, to try and find peace.” Korekiyo said. “However, if you look deep in your heart, you know that doubt consumes you.”

“My actions were justified!” Miu continued. “You dumb virgins don’t understand what I had to go through! I suffered so much! I lost what was most dear to me!”

I don’t even know why I’m still listening to her. This might have convinced my classmates, but not me. No matter how awful Tsumugi had been during her life. But if that’s true, she deserved punishment, not death. I told myself I would never defend those people.

Shuichi was an exception, he died for us.

“I don’t understand you.” 0U-M5 said. “Did her death help you? Your sisters are still dead.”

“Oh, please! Don’t try those clichés! I fucking know they’re dead! But they have been avenged thanks to me! Obviously you can’t know what I’m talking about! Not only you have not experienced what I did, but you’re a damn robot with no emotions!”

“I see where you’re coming from…”
“And what about your other sisters? The ones that depended on you?” Tenko said. “They lived their life because you helped them.”

“I killed Tsumugi for them too. So that I could escape and return to them!”

“What an awful plan.” Maki commented. “If you told them the truth, your sisters would be ashamed. Killing thirteen people only for them.”

“I only killed Tsumugi!”

Only? Dear God…

Rantaro immediately corrected her. “If you had been successful, we would have been dead. That means thirteen corpses.”

“Instead, your sisters will be left without a guide. You abandoned them like your parents.”

“Stop! Shut up for once! If you don’t agree with me is only because you are cold people! You don’t listen to what the others have to say!”

“Nyahaha! That’s ironic coming from you, isn’t it?”

Miu pretending to care about her supposed friends was the last straw. I couldn’t stand her anymore.

“This is it. I want to go back to my room. It’s late.” I said.

"Listen to me for once!" Miu shouted. "Do you want to know what was written on that last fucking will? The one I censored?! Have you forgotten it?!

"Yeah, thanks." Tenko said ironically.

"Tsumugi wrote and, I quote... Sorry everyone. Even though Miu killed me I'm a killer too. I should have told you before this happened; I have killed people in the past but I'm sorry, and I'm writing this last letter. I know you will find this letter and save everyone else. It's my fault."

"This seems likely." Kirumi pointed out.

"She fucking said it! I'm a killer too!" "I have killed people in the past!" She is a killer! A terrible killer!"

"Please, you think we're falling for this? Nobody can tell us what was written under those black boxes." I said. "You lied until now, we can't trust you."

"It's almost midnight, dear students!" Monokuma said. "You need to go to bed to make sure you're ready for tomorrow!"

“Hell yeah! Someone is going to sleep for eternity though!”

Kiibo looked distraught. “Is another execution on the way?”

“Ding ding! Finally you addressed it, I’ve set that up and I’m somewhat proud…”

“I think I might throw up this time…” Himiko said.
“B-before… I go…”

I sighed. Another last will…

“If you get out of this mess… search for Nariko Saitou. She’s… my oldest sibling. She’s interested in European culture… she wants to become a Ultimate like me…”

“Ohkay.” Rantaro agreed. “Anything else?”

“And… don’t tell her I killed someone, please… she… would be destroyed after hearing that.”

Yeah, that’s likely. But Miu’s reputation after death would plummet. For what’s worth.

“I don’t want you to say I died an heroic death…”

In fact, she’s about to do the opposite.

“…but I beg you, don’t tell her I’m a killer.”

Many of us ignored the pianist, but some of my classmates nodded.

“Now that everything’s done… it’s time for the execution!”

“Finally!” Monophanie applauded. “I can hug Monodam again!”

“I’ve prepared a very special punishment for Miu Iruma… sorry, Miu Saitou, apparently. Who cares, she’s about to die! Upupupupu…”

“I’m r-ready.” Miu said.

“Let’s give everything we’ve got! It’s punishment time!”

Monokuma took the same red mallet as last time and hit the conveniently placed red button under which there was the display resembling the 8-bit console. The sprite that previously depicted Shuichi was now different, replacing the magician with Miu. The Monokuma sprite dragged out Miu out of the frame. Meanwhile, on the top of the screen, words appeared, reading: “GAME OVER: Miu Iruma has been found guilty. Time for the punishment.”

This time, the chain didn’t come from the ceiling, but from the sides. It grabbed Miu by her toes. As she was dragged out of the trial grounds, she tried to resist by holding onto a podium, but she couldn’t last more than a few seconds, then she disappeared behind the curtains.

And moments after there she was, on the display screen. Chained to a chair, a piano in front of her. Only her hands were free.

*Der Flohwalzer Act II, or Piano Pain*
Miu looks around terrified; the room in which she’s in is completely dark. Then lights start flickering on and off, revealing she’s on a stage in a theatre. On her left there are the four Monokubs, each of them with an instrument. Monodam has a trumpet, Monophanie a violin, Monotaro a cello and Monokid his guitar. In front of the pianist there’s an audience of cardboard Monokumas, ready to listen to her.

Miu looks at the score and starts to play Der Flohwalzer. Seconds after the Monokubs follow her. However, they are terrible at their job and the crowd starts to boo, throwing tomatoes at Miu. Some of them end up on her face, others on the piano.

Despite this, Miu continues to play the piano, not doing any mistakes. The score starts changing repeatedly, confusing Miu. The audience becomes more irritated and starts protesting.

The pianist tries to cover the mistakes of the bears, but they’re far too noticeable, she can’t do anything.

One of the figures in the audience finds a stone on the ground and throws it at Miu. She is able to dodge it by moving her head to the side.

However, as she focuses on the cardboard figures, she notices every one of them has one in hand. A moment after a shower of stones falls on Miu, who tries to shield herself ducking under the piano.

While the audience throws the stones, Monophanie drops her violin and throws Monokid in front of the piano with an evil grin on her face. Various stones hit the blue Monokub, but after having realized what her sister has done, Monodam drops his instrument too and jumps at the center of the stage, saving Monokid and ending up on the other side of the stage.

After that, the wooden floorboards under the piano collapse and it falls down, exposing Miu to the stones completely. The pianist struggles and the chair falls to one side. She tries to protect herself with her arms, but the stones still hit her, causing various hemorrhages. The stoning continues for other ten seconds, a pool of blood forms under Miu’s body, similar to the one we saw near Angie’s research lab.

Monokuma, behind the scenes, turns off the lights as the crowd leaves the theatre, clearly disappointed.

…The display shut off and it vanished from sight.

“Monophanie!? What were you doing?” Monotaro exclaimed. “Were you trying to kill Monokid?”

“Uh-uhm… I think it’s time to go now…”

The pink bear disappeared, leaving her three brothers behind.

“MONO-KID IS UN-CON-SCIOUS. HE WILL GET BET-TER.”
“Please, tell me you aren’t angry with Monophanie! I don’t want you to kill her!”

“BUT SHE IS THE ONE THAT PU-SHED MONO-KID.”

“Maybe I can get her to talk with you? I’m going, bye!”

“I NEED TO GO TOO. MONO-KID NEEDS HELP.”

All the Monokubs were gone, only Monokuma remained, still sitting on his throne.

“Well, it’s done.” He said. “And I’m glad it’s over, pheeew. I had a lot of fun coming up with this execution.”

“How could someone say such a thing!” Tenko cried out.

“You are truly a work of evil.” Kirumi commented.

“Upupupu… according to my sources, you know who was punished with stoning since the ancient ages? Prostitutes and women who committed adultery!”

“Miu loved her dirty jokes, but wasn’t any of the things you described.” Kiibo defended her. “You know that well, since you apparently have the video of her sisters’ death.”

“I guess you’re right. But she is related to the sin of lust, and that goes hand in hand with what I said before!”

Maki, disappointed, spoke up. “Are you trying to have a conversation with him? Seriously?”

“I don’t think any of you realized how painful it must have been for Miu…”

“Yeah… even Atua says that punishment must be quick if needed. Miu must have suffered.”

“Oh? You didn’t like it?” The bear said. “You were all accusing her… weren’t you satisfied while seeing her cry in despair? I certainly did!”

Kiibo appeared ready to say something, but a quick glance at Maki was enough to dissuade him.

“Kaede, what is your opinion? You were so angry with the classmate that you tried to help! How ironic! Upupupupu…”

“She is a killer, that’s true. Whoever is accused must have a fair trial, not this joke you have set up here. After that, if they’re found guilty, they are sentenced to prison for a number of years.”

I hated her.

However, wanting her dead was the same as killing.

“If somebody wants to pester me, they can do it right now. You know I won’t care though.”

Unlike last time, no one said anything. We all waited for the bear to leave.

“Fine! Angie, I’m cutting your broadcast off.”

“Well, we’ll catch up tomorrow morning then! Just a heads up, the AAA is only postponed!”

“See you tomorrow!” The bear said. “You’ll explore more of the school, get ready!”
The monitor which depicted Angie was turn off by the bear, and he then disappeared.

…Now what do we do? Do we just forget what happened, about Tsumugi and Miu? About our secrets, about our memories?

“What Monokuma said… Tsumugi… is she really the Ultimate Assassin?” Himiko asked.

“I’m afraid we will never know.” Rantaro said. “It’s up to you. If you want, you can believe that he lied. Tsumugi was only your regular maid.”

“But she Ultimate Maid… not normal…”

Someone with two talents… I can’t believe such people exist… what I’m sure about, though… is that Tsumugi had her secrets too. And, even if she really is an assassin… she deserved better than death.

“What happens now?” 0U-M5 asked. “Do we need to get back inside the elevator?”

“Yes, that’s it.” Kaito said. “I’m sorry you had to see this. It might mess up your circuits.”

“I feel… alright. But I don’t know if that’s the right thing to say in this situation.”

The various defendant stands were all the same now. Next time we’ll be here, there will be two new portraits. One will be Miu, the other… I wished that wouldn’t happen, but the domino had already started.

I would do my best to slow it down… until… until rescue would come. This game will end.

We all returned to the Shrine, then we all headed back to our dormitories. We had an entire night to sleep, but I was kept awake by what happened, asking myself how much of it was true, thinking in advance, about the next motive Monokuma would give us... the opportunities to kill that would present themselves with the new research rooms, the arguments between my classmates. The road ahead was tough.

But I have to save the most of them. I can’t keep losing.

CHAPTER 2: Forgotten secrets arise from lingering memories

End

Surviving students: 12
In the dark, a figure looked around, making sure nobody was following her.

“Are you here?” She asked.

From a corner, a short girl emerged. Despite the impossibility to distinguish colors in the alley, her bright red hair was enough to tell Maki she was looking at Himiko.

“Nyeh. I am.”

“We can’t talk for long. Nobody knows we’re here, but we must keep our distances. And be quick.”

“I know, they can’t know about us talking to each other. Have you checked you’re alone?”

“So many times. We’re safe. I must know how things are going for you. I saw that Kaito hacked Ouma.”

“Sadly, that’s the truth… We tried to get him back, but it’s almost impossible. They have control of it now.”

“Just as we finally managed to enter the game, albeit indirectly… and we lose him.” Maki sighed.

“This is bad.”

“We couldn't predict Kaito’s actions. You know that wasn’t supposed to happen, yet…”

“Best situation, they noticed something was wrong and corrected it. Worst…”

“They know that we’re behind the change of Ouma’s characteristics… and all of our plan, from the beginning.”

“We must lay low now… Don’t intervene unless absolutely needed.”

“I don’t want others to suffer because of our inability. Can you take back control?”

Himiko shook her head. “No way. This time is more difficult than ever.”

“I’ll do it myself then. The three of us are not enough.”

“You know how dangerous your plan is. You know that the chances of you making it out alive are nonexistent.”

“I risked my life every time I stepped outside of my house, since the day I got out. I know how to handle this.”

“If you really want to act, go with your plan B. Search for the ones who offered their help. See if they’re legit. They found out about us but none of them said a word.”

“Alright. I will pay attention, I assure you.”

“Just… don’t overdo it. If we lose you, the operation is done for. We will be found out… I’m not afraid to die, but we have the chance to change things once and for all.”

“Himiko, listen to me.” Maki said. “No one might agree with us, maybe we’re alone in the entire world… but this opportunity… I won’t waste it.”
So the second chapter is wrapped up.
Time to explain the deaths. (But not the last scene, of course!)

Tsumugi, in my early drafts, was actually going to be the first victim. I never planned her to do much in the story. She was essentially fodder. At first, in fact, she wasn't even the Assassin of the group. Just a normal maid who would give her life to prevent further killing. As I developed the story though she gained the Assassin talent and I tailored another story for her. Despite that she never had that much impact at the end and... never really interacted with anyone specific. I think that's because she was like that in canon too and I was influenced by it.

Miu was supposed to last way longer. This idea was changed after I started writing though. I can't say too much about what things changed with her alive since I would spoil more. At the end of the day, however, what ultimately brought be to off the pianist of the story was the fact that I couldn't write her. I have to admit I'm not a fan of her sense of humor and I can't emulate it. I'm not the type to do dirty jokes and so I had difficulty when it came to Miu. I didn't want to turn her character around though, and she had enough attention in V3, so the character that had to die in her place will actually bite the dust in the future.

During the last three weeks I actually wrote nothing for this story, since I was studying for my exams. I obviously had some free time, but I didn't want to be distracted from studying, so I ended up not progressing the story at all, even though I had some new ideas on how the next storylines will play out.
At the moment I'm only two parts in advance, while I've always been 5-6 in the past. It's pretty obvious that in a story like this I need to plan things out in advance, so it's highly likely that the next part will come out in three or four weeks. I've finished my exams though, so I can come back to this story at last. \o/
Please don't abandon me during this hiatus.

Last thing, next time Kaede will still be our main protagonist, but someone else will take Kirumi's place. Who is this mysterious person? Feel free to guess, even though I'll be surprised if you manage to do so!
I'm back, finally!
Well for now I finished the second day and I'm three parts in advance, but I fairly certain I can manage.

The room was almost empty; there were only five people. The girl, who I didn’t know, was giving her testimony. Her lawyer was asking her questions while mine was beside me. But I shouldn’t be there. Was I being accused? If that’s the case, I shouldn’t be attending this hearing. I’m a minor, there should be someone else representing me. Finally, there was the judge, staring at me.

My lawyer told me there was no proof. They were trying to accuse me, but that would have been impossible.

“I have finished.” The woman said, going back to her seat.

“After hearing this important testimony, I have come to a conclusion.”

They won’t convict me, I said to myself.

“There is enough proof to prove that Akamatsu Kaede has murdered Sakamoto Suzuki and Akamatsu Taki.”

CHAPTER 3: A virtual reality without real virtues

DAILY LIFE

Kaede Akamatsu

I woke up after a loud thud. I was on the ground. Apparently I rolled out of my bed after that nightmare.

It must have been because of what happened yesterday. Miu and Tsumugi, two killers… who got what they deserved.

They had it coming, I said to myself. Maybe our maid was a killer… an assassin, it seems. I could know that for sure, if only I had the video that was given to Miu…

Bing bong ding dong!

«Nighttime is officially over now! It’s 8 AM, so get ready for a breakfast! Get up and running and have a great day! Monokuma out!»

The bear had taken the place of the Monokubs. I wonder why that happened. Other than that, he said it’s 8 in the morning. We’re back to our old schedule now that the motive has run its course.
He will give out another motive soon… will we able to stay united after that? I glanced at my shelf.

And then I noticed. My Kub Pad was there.

What the hell? Didn’t Monokuma tell us we were done with those?

I got closer and I saw a rather large post-it sticked to the screen.

“You know what? It’s better if you keep those Kub Pads. Did you really think I would take those from you? Oh, you sweet summer children! They’ll haunt you till the end of this game!

-Monokuma”

I sighed. It will only get worse from now on. I need to know everyone’s strengths and weaknesses to avoid further murders… I don’t want to use my talent anymore.

I tried to dispose of the post-it, but as I was tossing it in the trash I saw that something else was written on its other side.

“I want to play a game with you, Kaede. This is not a motive or anything; it’s a chance I’m giving you. Time to decide. Those pads were given to everyone, but they were hidden under their beds. Nobody knows about that. You can either tell them, or wait for the moment they’ll discover about it. But regardless of your decision, if four people discover about these pads I’ll reveal to everyone your personal secret first, then if I’m feeling particularly devilish, I’ll roll out the other ones! I think they’ll be mad. This is up to you!”

Ok, now I’m sure. That bear definitely has something against me. Is it because I’m a detective? He wants to see how I’ll react to this?

He’s threatening me… even though I can’t be sure of my secret… I have a feeling. But not knowing… it’s devouring me from the inside.

…But there’s no way I’ll tell them now. We saw what they led to… you can’t be sure about anything anymore. There has to be a third option.

There’s only one place to go now. The cafeteria. I don’t think our plan will change, despite two of us being gone. If this keeps going, the room will feel empty before we realize it…

I stared at the dorm doors of Miu and Tsumugi. They left everything there… but no one can get inside. During the night, Monokuma locked the rooms. Maybe there was something useful inside, but that’s only another thing we aren’t allowed to know.

“Nyahahah! It seems so quiet without her around!”

I realized Angie was looking at me from the stairs.

“I’m talking about Miu, of course! She was always making a lot of noise during the night!”

Well, that’s true…

“Like, strange sounds. Who knows what was she up to!”

She climbed down the stairs with her usual smile stamped on her face before opening her mouth again.
“But maybe it’s better that she’s dead! She truly was an awful person, right Kaede?”

“H-huh? Y-yes, she was.”

Yesterday night I was really harsh on Miu. I still despise her for what she had done, but it was the heat of the moment. Everyone hated her until her last breath, and me, the only one she had a relationship with, shouted at her and wished for her to die…

“Aren’t you convinced? Yesterday it looked like you were going to kill her yourself! Nyahahah!”

“I’d prefer not to talk about what happened. What about you? Do you feel better now?”

She nodded, clasping her hands in prayer. “Thanks to Atua’s protection, I recovered immediately. I’m now feeling better than ever. I think this was all Atua’s doing.”

I didn’t want to know more, but the supreme leader continued nonetheless.

“This sickness has made me stronger! I’m all refreshed now and ready to roll! I really want to see more of the school! I’ve got many plans for the coming days!”

Which is not as good as it sounds.

“By the way, I’m going to the cafeteria! I hope my coffee won’t be altered today!”

And she said it more like a warning this time around.

“Will you accompany me? You can’t go around looking at doors, that’s creepy!”

“Okay, I was planning to go there anyways…”

“Nyahahaha! How nice of you Kaede!” She thanked me as we exited the dormitories.

The area surrounding the school was cleaner than before. Apparently the Exisals had worked overnight. Now it looked like a normal garden where nobody could hide. I don’t know if that’s for the better.

“Tonight I thought about our future! It seems we aren’t getting out of there soon…”

“Yeah. We can’t do anything, our fate is up to the ones out of there.”

“I find strange that nobody on my island has contacted me! That’s curious, usually Atua is the messenger.”

“How would Atua do that?”

“Duh! He catches messages and then gives them back while you’re dreaming?! It’s basic Atua communication! He was silent today, though! I wonder why.”

“Maybe he was sleeping.”

“Likely! Atua has to deal with the entire universe, that’s not an easy task.”

Another voice interrupted the tanned girl. “Leave Atua out of this. He won’t help us.”

“Maki! You’re always so gloomy!”

We crossed paths with the martial artist, who was just coming from the school with some books in
her hands.

“Maybe I am, but we should focus on our material realm, not the spiritual one. We don’t want to deal with another murder because we were too disconnected from reality.”

“If I remember well, you were reading books while the murder took place! You definitely weren’t in the material realm at the time! Nyahahah!”

The atmosphere between the two wasn’t the best one, so I had to intervene as soon as I could.

“Are you coming to breakfast, Maki? You were always there during the last days.”

“I’m passing this time. But it’s good that I met you now. Come to my room as soon as possible, we need to discuss some important matters. And they’re private.” She concluded, eying Angie.

“Nyahaha! I catch your drift!”

“Oh, ok…” I nodded.

I stared at Maki, watching her leave.

“She’s cryptic! I don’t like her!”

“Some people like to hide their true intentions for a while.”

“Yes, that’s very true!”

Angie and me were the first ones to enter the cafeteria. Shortly after, Korekiyo and Kirumi entered from the backdoor.

“I sense an absence…” The cosplayer said.

“That is right. It feels empty without Tsumugi here.” Kirumi followed.

Yeah… even though the maid didn’t talk most of the time; the various noises from the kitchen had become so common to us that the silence felt unnatural. It might seem like a detail, but imagining our future mornings without the smell of her pancakes or the bright colors of her cakes was kind of disheartening.

“Someone of us needs to cook something.” I said.

Kirumi corrected me. “There are snacks in the cupboards and the warehouse. Moreover, the coffee machine is still here.”

“I know that, but I’d prefer something better. Those aren’t really genuine. Also, we need to occupy our mornings in a way or another.”

“Tsumugi was our chef, right? Nobody will be better than her! Maybe we should just give up!”

“I have trained extensively to survive in dire situations, so a luxurious breakfast is an exception to me. I do not have to be a burden to you.” Kirumi intervened.

She’s an adventurier, so I imagine she had to survive eating bugs and other nasty, strange plants like the shows I have seen on TV sometimes.
“I think that leaving someone out wouldn’t be fair. Everyone should enjoy a good meal.”

“I would side with Kirumi, if the food is in the hands of someone who does not cook often. I am not the one you are searching for.”

She responded immediately after. “Do not put your faith in me. I am a terrible chef… I cannot prepare any kind of dish whatsoever, except for pasta… if the cooking time is specified.”

“I’m not that great. Tsumugi could have attested that.” I said.

We all turned our attention to Angie.

“Nyahaha! I am terrible with food! Unless it’s food wars. Like throwing stuff!”

“We’re not in need of that.” I specified. “That means we need to wait for the others. We just need to hope someone here knows what they’re doing.”

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The hoodies in my closet were all the same.

I mean; it makes sense that mass-produced clothes don’t have any difference between each other.

But who would have sixteen of them?

I’m not a fashion expert and I never followed the trends. I find shirts uncomfortable and I tend not to wear them… yet even I hate to come out of my room with the same, black hoodie with stars over it.

At least Monokuma didn’t provide me a set of suits and ties. I would have preferred to be confined in my room.

Sighing, I considered the possibility to skip breakfast. Likely, everyone would head there. It has only been a week, but that has become a routine for us.

The conversation would derail and everyone would talk about how Tsumugi and Miu weren’t what they looked like, until Kaede would drop Shuichi’s name and more conflict would arise. I can already imagine Kiibo sitting, trying not to dirty himself with the milk in his mug, silently observing.

I wouldn’t take a side. But despite that, I would have to listen to them.

This is just the worst. I don’t want to be anxious, for once in my life.

Instead, here I am. I could die any moment now. For all I know, somebody could be trying to ambush me outside of my door. …But we just had a murder, and it’s the second time the killer has been discovered.

I don’t want to hear any negativity. There’s only disagreement and toxicity around here. Maybe I could try to help, but that’s useless. Someone like me, who nobody listens to, can’t convince others. I’m the Ultimate Astronaut, not the Ultimate Public Speaker.
I put my hand on the knob. What if this time will be different? Maybe I have something to say, I can contribute to the discussion… my help could be important. Maybe I won’t cause any trouble.

I held onto those hopes, knowing full well I won’t act when the situation will call for it. It’s been like this for a long time. Something prevents me.

I opened the door, but remained still with one feet outside of my room.

I’ve been pushed to the side, but I’m fine with it. Not everyone deserves its time in the spotlight. Some of us are background characters.

I stepped outside and locked the door behind me. I’ve decided. I would listen to what the others have to say. Maybe this time it will be different.

When I entered only Maki was missing. Everybody was already there, either sitting or awkwardly leaning against the wall. I could understand there was an attempt to kickstart a conversation.

“Who wants to cook then?” Kaede asked.

“I’m an artist, but not in that sense. I can’t decorate dishes.”

“I haven’t ever tried…” 0U-M5 said. “Do you think it’s dangerous if I’m the one to do it?”

“Nyeh… have you programmed him to be a chef?”

“No, it wasn’t a priority… but maybe I can work on it.”

Kaede noticed my presence and immediately told the others.

“Look, Kiibo’s here!”

“Y-yeah, it sure seems like it…”

“Maybe he can prepare some kind of breakfast! Isn’t that right?”

What? Me? Apparently she doesn’t remember that I had no experience with pans and burners before the day she convinced me to go to the kitchen… I tend to buy pre-packaged food and heat it in the oven if necessary. I don’t need fancy meals to keep me going.

“You have chosen the wrong person. I think I’ll fare worse than everyone here…”

“Don’t be so negative! With Tsumugi’s help you did a great job!”

“Yeah, that’s when she was there assisting me…”

If I’m alone, I’ll surely do worse than the other time. I always need others to support me, but I often end up doing everything alone, or follow others instead. That’s who I am.

“Well!” Tenko exclaimed. “We can’t stay there and let our stomachs grumble!”

“Gonta should go take biscuits from warehouse!”

“I’m starting to get hungry… thinking about Tsumugi’s food… and how we will never experience it again…” Rantaro chimed in, reminding us of what we had lost.
“Please, will you stop being so gloomy?” Kaede pouted.

“Kekeke… Maybe we will eventually replicate her dishes. I am not suggesting we will ever surpass her skills, not even match them… but with enough practice, we can hope to be almost as good as her.”

“Those pancakes… they were the best breakfasts I ever had… it almost made me forget about the killing game.”

But they’re gone because of it. It’s not a big deal for me, but it has an impact on many of my classmates.

Kirumi came back from the kitchen. Surprisingly, she held a book in her hand. From what I could tell, it had a hard cover and it was rather small.

“This was hidden in one of the cupboards. It is a recipe book, written by Tsumugi.”

“What? Seriously? Man, did she know she was in danger?”

“Yeah, because the first thing you do after discovering someone is about to kill you is writing recipes down!” Tenko said.

“Kaito’s assumption is the right one this time.”

The inventor eyed Tenko, smirking at her, until he heard the last words coming from Kirumi’s mouth.

“This time?! Are you saying I’m not always right?”

“Kaito!” OU-M5 intervened. “I think she didn’t mean to be hostile.”

“Hmpf, she better not be. If she doesn’t realize my amazingness she’s losing out!”

Kirumi continued, opening the book and reading what was written on its first page.

“This is her handwriting, so it must have been her. «This is Tsumugi here. I’m writing this recipe book to pass my secret recipes to all of you if something is wrong. I don’t feel safe here, and if I die I don’t want to keep my secrets to me. I’ll try to write down as much as I can in the time being.» She wrote this when we arrived. There is a date. Day 1.”

“Is there more about her? Does she write about herself?” Angie asked, curious.

“Hmm… no. There are missing pages, however. She must have ripped them herself.”

“Or maybe it was Miu.” Tenko intervened. “Trying to mess with us…”

Oh no… they’re talking about them. I was stupid to think this wouldn’t happen…

Rantaro spoke up, standing up from his chair.

“Okay, now stop with those two. We had our opportunity to talk last night. This is a brand new day, the past is the past and all of those stupid phrases that some important person said a long time ago.”

“But… just one last observation.” OU-M5 said. “If those are torn, they should be somewhere in the school.”
“Nyeh... if this could be considered a diary, maybe Tsumugi talked about her past...”

“So you don’t understand, huh. Why are you coming back to the same thing over and over?” The artist repeated.

“I’m curious... I want to know the truth... nyeh.”

“The truth doesn’t matter anymore. Tsumugi is dead and can’t be brought back. Our lives won’t change if she’s a murderer or not. Do you think that if that’s the case Miu was justified? You can believe what you want.”

“But... why are you so angry at me?”

“Right!” Tenko nodded. “You’re getting way to close to Himiko!”

“I’m not talking to her. I’m addressing everyone in this room. You all know that we should move on once and for all now. We had the possibility to stop a murder from happening, but we failed. Now we mustn’t commit the same mistakes.”

“However... that is what we all agreed to do after the first murder.” Korekiyo noted.

“Miu was driven by passion.” Kaede intervened. “She listened to her emotions and refused to hold onto her logic. We can find a balance; we’re not like her. And... I also agree with Rantaro. Leave everything behind.”

“Yeah! But don’t be so harsh on Himiko!” Angie exclaimed. “It’s understandable.”

“Gonta very much agree! Gonta also want to prove Tsumugi not bad person!”

“Thanks guys... nyeh.”

The others cooled off, but there was still the problem of breakfast. It’s been a while since the morning announcement, and I have been awake since 6 AM. I simply can’t sleep some times... maybe it’s better for the others, they don’t hear my snoring...

“Jeez guys, how much time do you need to prepare breakfast?!”

So, as soon as the situation improved, that freaking bear showed up, along with Monotaro and Monodam. How lucky of us.

“Maybe they decided to starve? As a protest!”

“DO NOT BE RIDICULOUS. STARVING IS UNACCEPTABLE.”

“Not like we could understand! We’re robots who don’t need energy from food!”

“THANK-FULLY. I LIKE TO BE RECHARGED.”

“Morning, Monokuma.” Kirumi greeted the bear. “I see you have come yet again.”

“How perceptive! I wonder how amazing your eyesight must have been to notice that!”

“You do not want me challenging you in a jab contest.”

“Yeah, I’ve got some discs ready if you want to record a diss track. Maybe I can remix it.”
“Wow! Remixes! Technology sure has gone far!” Monotaro rejoiced.

“YES. WE WILL REPAIR MONOKID WITH IT.”

“But keeping Monophanie with him is dangerous… she’s not what she used to be.”

“I AM DEALING WITH HER. SHE WILL BE ALRIGHT.”

None of my friends has been talking about the attitude of those strange bears. Are they Monokuma’s allies? That’s what it looks like, but their… dad obviously doesn’t care if they keep falling one after another. And what’s going on with them? Constantly arguing… they’re not that different from us in that aspect.

“Let me guess. You’re here to give us new items.” Kaede said.

“Precise as always, lovely Kaede!”

“Ew, don’t call me that.”

“I was trying to be kind. I know that deep down you’re a cutie!”

“A true tsundere!” Monotaro commented.

“HERE ARE YOUR NEW ITEMS.”

Monodam literally opened his belly and jumped up on Monotaro shoulders to be able to reach the table.

“Should I help you?” Himiko asked.

“No! Don’t help the degenerate robots!”

The new objects were three again. A Golden Hammer, a Magic Key and a Ninja Scroll.

“THEY CAN BE USED TO UNLOCK NEW AREAS OF THE SCHOOL.”

“Huh! Exploration!” Angie exclaimed, taking the hammer in her hand. “It’s actually very soft!”

“It might be because it’s not actually gold, but very strong butter!” The red bear said.

“WE ARE RUNNING LOW ON GOLD.”

“And you decided to use butter instead? That’s not the first material that comes to mind.”

Good observation, Kaito. But I don’t think they take that into account.

“Don’t eat it!” Monokuma warned us. “Otherwise you won’t be able to get inside a very important room!”

“ALSO… YOUR MONOPADS HAVE A NEW FUNCTION.”

“Yeah, I had to modify the doors of the higher floors to avoid someone breaking in…”

0U-M5 responded immediately. “I would never do such a thing!”

“By the way, in the next research labs your find you’ll be able to enter thanks to your Monopads!” Monokuma announced. “I established a connection that links the door to the device you have in
your possession.”

“So there aren’t any keys around?” Rantaro asked.

“Nope. Your Monopad is the only way in and out! Of course that doesn’t apply to the rooms you have already visited.”

“How informative, dad! You’re the best dad ever!”

I don’t think they have met other dads, to be honest…

“This is all for today folks. But if you need me, I’ll came to you! It’s my duty as the headmaster!”

“So long, bear well!”

The three mechanical bears disappeared, leaving us with those three new objects on the table.

“Well… are we going to have breakfast or not?” Kaede chimed in. “We’ve already waited for too much time.”

“Nyeh… my stomach is grumbling…”

“It looks like nobody wants to cook. We’ll settle for something else this time.” Tenko said.

“Uff… it’s okay for today. But… this is another opportunity to improve, isn’t it? We can learn how to cook! That’s an important skill to have in life!”

“Yup yup! You don’t want to kill someone with terrible food! Nyahaah! I agree with Kaede! We should help each other!”

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The biscuit selection wasn’t as good as I hoped. In fact, there were no brands I recognized. The three that were there were all pretty dull-looking… but I was hungry, so I decided to try all of them, despite me wanting something more.

“Someone needs to clean the dishes.” 0U-M5 said.

“Obviously we can’t leave them here.” I nodded.

“I can do it, if you want! Kaito Momota, the great inventor, can also do that!”

Everyone could do it, considering we only ate croissants and second-hand biscuit… but Kaito’s being nice, I can’t deny that.

“Thank you. We should prepare a schedule so that everyone contributes.”

“Very good idea, Kaede!” Tenko exclaimed. “If we start cooperating, we’ll surely be friendlier with each other! This will help strengthen our bond!”

“So, will you help me?”

“No, duh! I can switch with you if you really want to! But I’d never work besides a degenerate
“Nyahahaha! Maybe you should be nicer to boys!” Angie said, but Tenko ignored her.

“I guess I’ll do this alone then! Even if you want to help, leave me! I’ll complete this task with my own two hands!”

“You don’t want my help?” 0U-M5 asked.

“No, otherwise they’ll think I use you to do the hard work! Go with them and explore the school!”

“O-okay. As you want.”

“We will operate like last time.” Rantaro announced. “Kaede and Kirumi will be the ones who scout the school, the others will do their best to explore and find clues.”

“I have no objections.” The adventurer said, while I nodded. I didn’t have any problem with what Rantaro was saying, but he’s always there, trying to tell the others what to do.

Yes, I’m doing the same thing, I know. But I’m different; I have good intentions. Rantaro is always super sketchy with his words and his tone. He first lets me do what I want, then tries to do the detective work instead of me. I have no idea about his plans… I definitely have to talk with him in private, but I need to visit Maki now and then look around.

“I want to go explore too! I’ve already found my research room!” Angie exclaimed. “Can I take Kaede’s place?”

Rantaro shook his head. “That’s definitely impossible. Kaede’s a detective, with her the process will be sped up.”

“Umpf!” She crossed her arms. “But she has to go talk with Maki!”

I rolled my eyes. Obviously she had to tell that to everyone else.

“If Rantaro says no, that’s no.” Kaito intervened. “You didn’t even hear Kaede’s opinion!”

That’s right. It wouldn’t hurt her to talk to me directly.

“Angie, this is not up for discussion. You can go with her or with Kirumi, but not alone.”

“Do you think I’m dumb? I can find secret places, you know? I was the one to tell Kirumi where to put that thing that made the wall fall.”

“Nyeh… maybe she’s right. She looks capable enough.”

“If you ask Gonta, Gonta tells you Angie can do many things. Also a lot of secrets.”

“I said no.”

“Well, ok! Nyahahah!” Angie laughed. “I’ll just ask Kaede then! She’ll listen to me, right?”

“Angie, I’d prefer to investigate myself. If you want, as soon as I’m done with Maki you can join me.”

“Maybe go with Kirumi then.”

“Good idea Gonta, it seems people don’t want us with them, they have prejudices!”
“I think enough time has passed for me to judge you accordingly.” Kaito rebutted.

“Nyahaha! The same goes for me, great inventor!”

“Are you fu-

“I do not mind them coming with me. They could be of help.”

Kirumi quickly defused the situation. I wonder if she really thinks that. I suppose she wants to understand what the hell goes in Angie’s mind.

“How generous of you! Atua blesses you for your kindness.”

“Oh… if that is the case, I thank him as well.”

“Can I come with you?” Himiko asked, raising her voice.

“Nyahahaha! Of course! Atua accepts everyone who’s ready to accept him!”

Himiko stood up and approached Angie. The supreme leader leaned her arms forward to hug the red-haired girl, but she stood still.

“You don’t like physical contact? That’s fine! People need their space!”

“Gonta need lot of space when practicing tennis!”

“That’s not what I meant, but that’s so true as well!” Angie patted Gonta on the head.

It’s great to see that a friendship has blossomed between the two, but something tells me it’s not as real as it seems…

“I really have to go to Maki’s dorm now.” I said. “I’ll try to be as quick as possible.”

“There’s no need to rush. We have a lot of time to explore.” Rantaro responded.

“I know, but I don’t like leaving things unfinished.”

The artist nodded and smiled at me, passing me the scroll. I accepted it and smiled in return. It wasn’t that genuine.

I reached for the handle of the door and said goodbye to the others.

“We’ll see each other at lunch. Hopefully we’ll have decided who’s on cooking duty.”

Honestly, that’s the last of my worries.

“Maki, it’s me.” I said, knocking on the martial artist’s door.

“Finally. It took you some time.” She said, approaching me.

Well, sorry if I had breakfast like normal people. I have things to do, I wanted to say to her, but I decided that arguing would be useless.

“Let me make one thing clear: I don’t want to make conversation, you’re here because we have to discuss something.”
“I kinda expected that.” I admitted. “What do you want to talk about?”
“Has anyone followed you? We can’t risk anyone hearing us.”

I shook my head. “No, I’m alone. No one is in the dormitories, as you can see.”

“It might be dangerous even if they’re outside. Do they know you’re here?”

“Yes, Angie told them. I didn’t want that, but when she did… I couldn’t hide it.”

“That girl is something else. Come in quickly, so we’re done.”

I stepped inside Maki’s dorm, then she locked the door. For a moment I thought I had been clueless to enter a room with a person I didn’t really know, someone who could murder me without the help of a weapon.

However, Maki, despite her flaws, wasn’t a killer. I understood that, at least.

“I assume you have thought about the secret videos that were given to us on the sixth day.”

She found it. That means at least one person knows about them.

“Well, mine is still around.”

For the split second that followed I wondered if I should have acted like I was surprised, but I guessed Maki would have figured me out in an instant.

“I know that. I got a letter from Monokuma. It was written that everyone’s Pad was given back to them, hidden under their bed. I guess you found it there.”

“Exactly. I had some things there and to my surprise, I saw the Kub Pad too.”

“What things?”

She ignored my question and continued. “Yesterday, during the trial, Monokuma didn’t announce whose video I had, because you kept the discussion going. Considering what happened, this is for the best.”

I suppose I’ll find out about the bed in due time.

“Hm? Who is it?”

“Rantaro. At first, I could care less about it… but now that we know Miu’s story…”

“Could you tell me what you saw?”

“You can watch it yourself. The Kub Pad is on my bed.”

“Monodam’s rule pr-

“That rule was only applicable until the murder. Now this videos aren’t considered motives anymore.”

“I don’t think I should risk it. I don’t want to get crushed by an Exisal. Are you sure about this?”

Maki sighed.

“I suppose there’s only a way to find out.” She paused for some seconds, probably regretting what
she was about to say.

“Monokuma, come here. We have to ask you a question.”

“How rude of you, do you think I’m at your disposal?!”

The voice reverberated in the room, but there was no sight of the bear.

“Show yourself.” She continued. “We’re not here to play games.”

“But the killing game is one giant game! I’ll appear if you ask nicely!”

“Do I have to say please to you?”

“I can work with that. Baby steps.”

“Do it, Maki. We need to know if your theory is right.”

She looked at me, dead in the eyes. But she had to concede.

“Please, Monokuma, can you come here?”

“Of course!”

The bear materialized on top of the shelf. “You just had to ask, girls!”

Monokuma jumped off the shelf, landing on the bed. He picked up the Kub Pad we were talking about.

“Do you want to know if you can watch this together?”

“Exactly, the motive should be… expired… now.”

“Yeah, you are sort of right. I have a new motive planned for you; this one is old news. I need to renovate and try new things every time!”

“So… we won’t be punished?”

“Nah, you can do it without any repercussions! In fact, you can even find out how to kill Rantaro, this is quite the opportunity! In all of those years, I never had a murder the day during or after the class trial!”

“In all of those years? What are you saying?”

“Upupupupu… time to go! Take this! Good luck with your quest, Kaede!”

Monokuma threw it towards me. To avoid it smashing the ground, I had to catch it while it was still flying. After catching it, Monokuma had gone away.

“Your quest?” Maki asked.

“I’ll explain that after the video. What is so important about this?”

“Swipe on the tablet and tell me yourself.”

I didn’t know what to expect. Maki had to have a good reason to invite me to her room because of this video…
«Alright, it’s time to switch things up! This time, I’ll show you a secret video!»

“This is the same as last time…”

“I wouldn’t ask you to come here just for an introduction.”

«Rantaro’s the Ultimate Artist! One of my favorite talents, to be honest. Art can take many forms, but for Ultimate Artist we mean figurative arts! He quite often depicts his twelve sisters, which is a very high number. Wow!»

Twelve… sisters? That’s strange, but what makes is weirder is that Miu mentioned having the same number of siblings… who were all girls too.

«Those very sisters made him addicted to various kinds of food. He can’t resist chocolate! There’s quite a lot of that in the warehouse, as well as some bottles of cyanide… I suggest you to prepare a hot chocolate for him! Yummy! Don’t forget the special ingredient! Some say venom is a weak weapon, but I definitely not agree! Maybe it’s the best one!»

“There’s poison in the warehouse!?” I exclaimed.

I got ready to head out and search every part of that gigantic storage.

“I’ve already taken every bottle I could find.” Maki said, stopping me from going back inside the school.

“What?”

“I got there as soon as I watched the video, obviously. I couldn’t let someone take poison. I didn’t care about the chocolate. The poison was the part that interested me more.”

“Are you sure you took everything?”

“Yes, the bottles are hidden behind the bed. They’re plastic ones, so there’s no worry. They won’t break. I can’t get rid of them, so I had to hide those in the most secure place I could find.”

Under the bed…? That’s why she discovered about the secret video. Maybe this was part of Monokuma’s plan too.

“But that’s not the most interesting fact about the video. As you have heard, Rantaro also has twelve sisters. That’s a lot.”

“Are you suggesting that Rantaro and Miu may be connected to each other? They surely aren’t brothers…”

“Miu said she only had sisters. However, during the trial, Rantaro listened to her. He was kind to her, despite her terrible actions.” Maki recounted. “Probably he has some sisters as well.”

“What do you make of this video?”

The martial artist shrugged. “Ah, I don’t know. The only thing I’m sure about is that this can’t be a coincidence. There’s no way that you can find two Ultimates with twelve sisters by chance.”

Another mystery… I should talk with Rantaro about this, but considering his attitude… it could be challenging.

“And lastly, we have to face another problem.” Maki said. “The videos. Now everyone could
watch them. Our secrets are about to get revealed if we don’t do something.”

***

**Kiibo**

As Kaede left, Angie started talking.

“She’s a bit bossy. I don’t know if Atua likes her. Maybe I have to convince her?”

“Please.” Kirumi intervened. “We should explore the school.”

“Are you sure it’s the right choice?” I said. “Last time we opened up a new area and a murder happened…”

“Those events aren’t related to each other.” 0U-M5 said. “Miu would have killed Tsumugi regardless.”

“Y-yeah, but without the tricks of the research room door it wouldn’t have been so easy…”

“Miu would have found a way. Maybe she would have not succeeded, however that is an occurrence that only happened once. It must not stop us.” Korekiyo said.

Okay… like someone would listen to me…

“We have found the casino, which is a good place to relax and have fun. That wasn’t bad.” Kaito intervened, maybe forgetting that his meeting was also used, albeit indirectly, to ensure the success of a murder.

“Plus, there are our research labs… I want to see what’s inside… maybe bugs.” Himiko added.

“Of course, Himiko! I agree with you! I would love to see you interacting with your insects!”

“Maybe you should come with us then!” Angie chimed in, pointing towards me.

“W-what?”

“You’re scared of the unknown, right? That’s quite strange, considering you’re the Ultimate Astronaut!”

“…Yeah, I said I’m more like a technician…”

“Who cares! Nyahaha! It’s obvious you like space… and that’s very unknown-y!”

Angie isn’t wrong… I’d love to float in space and explore new worlds far from home… I aspire to discover a phenomenon nobody has ever seen before… but also seeing the Earth from the Moon…

“You’re scared of the halls of a school? Wow! That’s not what an astronaut would say!”

“Are you criticizing him?” Kaito asked. “He’s an Ultimate, he knows how to do his job!”

“Of course not! I’m saying he can overcome his fear! I say he doesn’t even have that fear! Only because something unfortunate happened you don’t have to stay fixed in one place! Going forward is the best option!”

“Gonta agree! Gonta lost many matches but never given in! Gonta thinks you should not give up too. Be strong and face the future!”
“We’re back to motivational speeches…” Rantaro sighed.

Well, I don’t know why he acts like that. Personally, even though they are only words, I think they are inspiring; they can change people. Problems won’t go away unless you act… and actions often come from words…

“She’s helping…” Himiko agreed with me.

“Angie only trying to make us feel better.” Gonta added. “Nothing is wrong with that.”

“I suppose she is right.” Kirumi nodded.

“Nyahahaha! I’m happy to hear that miss Kirumi has the same opinion as me!”

“If you insist, I’ll come with you then.” I said.

“Oh, but I don’t insist. The choice is up to you!” Angie smiled.

I mean… it’s not like they will hear what I have to say… they’ll go there with or without my approval. I can’t stay here and pretend nothing happened like last time. I need to have my mind occupied with something else… maybe I’ll find my research room too.

“I’m coming, that’s what I’ve decided.”

“Nyahahah! The scouting party is coming along well!”

“Are we going now?” Tenko asked.

“Nyah… you are following us…?”

“That’s what I have to do as a caretaker! Make sure you don’t do anything dangerous! And there are males too, so I can be your bodyguard as well!”

“Nyah… I can defend myself…”

“Support is always nice!”

“Tenko, I’m so happy to have you on board as well! Ready to go!”

“That makes six of us who are searching together.” Kirumi explained.

Kaito, Rantaro, 0U-M5 and Korekiyo were left out. The first reminded us he would hang out inside his lab after cleaning up, the others said they would explore by their own.

“Oums, I suggest you to come with us.” The adventurer said. “As you may remember, me and Rantaro did come across what we think is you research lab.”

“Hm? I don’t recall that… was it before my transformation?”

“Oh, my bad. It must be it. Follow us, we will show you the way.”

When we arrived at the upper floor, I understood how Kirumi was so sure that the door would lead inside what could only be the Ultimate Robot’s research room. Apparently this area of the school was already open, but I did not check it yet. I just didn’t find the need to.
“Wow! A flashy door!” Angie commented.

“But Gonta can’t see lock!”

“It likely opens with our Monopads.” Tenko said. “That’s what Monokuma told us.”

“I assume you brought yours with you?”

“Now that I think about it… I never had a Monopad.”

He never had one? At first I thought Kaito might have taken that from him, but then it made sense. Since he’s a robot, he probably can access the same… functions that are on our Monopad.

I don’t really know how robots work.

“Wait, how is that possible?” Angie exclaimed.

“I heard you talking about it, but I didn’t argue. I am programmed not to interfere with discussions unless needed. I should have brought up the matter sooner.”

“Can you see the information that was given to us in the second Monokuma File?” I asked.

The robot thought about it for some seconds, before exclaiming: “Found them! Here they are. I can see them.”

Just like I thought.

“What? Where is it? Where is it?”

“He… has the Monopad implanted in his system. It sounds strange, but that’s the best I can say to explain it.” I said.

“Don’t worry! I understood!” Angie reassured me.

“So he should be able to open the door by standing in front of it.”

Tenko wasn’t convinced. “Is it really that simple?”

“Let me try!”

We all moved to the side while 0U-M5 positioned himself directly in front of the door. Immediately after we heard a clicking sound. The orange robot grabbed the handle and turned it, revealing that our theory was correct.

“Congratulations Kiibo, you were right.” He smiled at me.

“Let’s see what’s in there!” Angie ran inside, and we soon followed.

The floor was made up of metallic hexagons that reflected a blue light coming not only from the ceiling, but also some weird pods on the side of the room. Right next to the door there was a considerably large power outlet connected to a wire.

“Maybe I can use that to recharge?” 0U-M5 said.

“Do you even need that?” Himiko asked.

“I think I don’t really have to, since I run on solar energy. Also, my external coating absorbs heat
and turns that into energy that I can use to sustain myself… but extra charging is nice, isn’t it?”

“Yep, it’s like a very good dessert every once in a while! Nyahahaha!”

I’m unsure if you can compare charging to eating. They both have the same purpose, but they are completely different…

On the left side of the room there was a door, with two cupboards on the side. They looked completely out of place and nothing was inside them.

“I think those shouldn’t be in here.” 0U-M5 said.

Maybe they’re only here to fill the room. It looked emptier than Angie’s research lab.

The door led to a side room, much smaller. Inside there were shelves on every single side, full with strange machinery and accessories.

“Are these for Oums?” Tenko guessed.

They looked like extensions to the original 0U-M4. They had the same hue as Ouma’s original colors. I had no idea of what they could do, but some of them reminded me of everyday objects: cutlery, pencils, even hairbrushes. However, there were also more elaborate ones, like something that vaguely resembled wings.

“I don’t have any idea of how to use those.” The robot admitted.

“Shouldn’t you recognize these… add-ons?” Angie asked.

“I think the problem is still the same… when I got reset, everything got wiped off my mind.”

“Nyeh… so it’s like you got your instruction manual stolen.”

0U-M5 nodded. “Good analogy!”

Only Kaito could solve this situation. But I’d rather not tell him about this room. To me, not everything here looks harmless. Oums is fine as he is, let’s not try to upgrade him and fail miserably.

Lastly, there was a window… but the shutters were closed. There was no way to open them, no switch and no strange contraption.

“Have you seen a window like that from outside?” I asked.

“If I am not mistaken… ” Kirumi explained. “There is no such window… this means this faces the area we have not explored yet.”

“Which area?”

“The one covered in vines, I am sure. As of now, they stop us from entering.”

Then it’s obvious. Monokuma doesn’t want us peeking outside. He wants to keep what’s inside there hidden from sight.

“Maybe the things he gave us will be useful.” Tenko said. “Use a butter hammer to destroy the vines!”
“I do not think that will improve our situation.”

“Don’t worry.” 0U-M5 reassured us. “For me it’s alright to have the shutters closed. It’s not that big of a deal.”

"It's okay, yeah." Angie nodded. "But I wonder... will we ever know what's behind those?"

Chapter End Notes

The third protagonist is Kiibo! Nobody got it right last time, but he was actually the first protagonist for this story. Yeah, Kaede was a side character at the very start. Anyway, I was really surprised to see Angie in many of the comments. She isn't getting the POV treatment, but this chapter she'll do a bunch of things.

So... time to vote for the FTEs. There will be two in a couple of parts. As always, I ask you to name the three characters you'd want to see and if they get enough votes they'll be picked. (assuming they're free at the time of the FTEs.) You can vote for Kirumi now, but not Kiibo. You need to wait another chapter to get a chance with him.
Now that aren’t any restrictions on the videos given to us… everyone can know not only their secret, but the ones of everyone else as well. That’s another layer of problems.

“Didn’t you say you agreed to Ouma’s plan?”

“Yes. At first I believed that sharing our secrets would be the best decision. But I’ve changed my mind. Something wrong with that?”

“No, of course. Especially since now we have the same opinion… but what led you to this decision?”

“You just heard Rantaro’s secret. I know I told you it was dangerous when the motive was given, but I was referring to the poison stored inside the warehouse. In itself, the secret was nothing big. So I thought all of them were like that.”

“Let me guess. Kaito’s video reinforced that idea.”

“Yeah, being colorblind is an issue, but it’s better if everyone knows that weakness. It doesn’t target anyone specific.” She continued. “However, Tsumugi’s video… we all know how that turned out. If other people have those kind of secrets it’s better to keep them to ourselves… and hope they don’t end up in the wrong hands.”

We’re safe as long as nobody discovers the pads, but I know they’ll be found eventually. The only people that wanted us to exchange videos were Maki and Ouma, and they’re not a problem anymore… but the secrets are still there. Some of us could be desperate to know what their secret is, and when they do… they could be driven to murder….

And that’s not considering Monokuma’s new motive. He hasn’t told us about that yet, but it’s safe to assume he will. I explained Maki what the sick bear told me in the letter.

“Not surprising.” She commented.

“There’s only one thing to do. But you won’t like it.”

“Wow. I don’t like many things.”

“We need to take all of those tablets… without the others knowing.”
There’s no way we can ask them. That would mean they’ll know about it, and Monokuma would quickly tell everyone, starting with my secret. And who knows what other skeletons the others have to hide. This is something Maki and me have to do alone.

“Great idea.” She ironized. “Let’s say you can find a way to steal the Kubs Pads. What do you do with them?”

“I… definitely have to destroy them somehow.”

“Are you going to smash them into oblivion? What a plan.”

“They’re still tablets!” I protested. “I can throw them from my research lab window to break them. I’m not an expert when it comes to chips and electronics, but only Kaito would be able to extract them if they’re still there after the fall.”

“And you trust him not to snoop around them? And then, consider that if we work with him, that’s already two people out of four knowing about the Kub Pads being still around.”

“He already knows what his secret is. He won’t try to discover what the others hide.”

“You still trust your so-called friends.” She shrugged. “I’m baffled that you think Kaito can help you. He erased someone’s personality.”

She glanced at my cape. More like glared, honestly. She still doesn’t like the fact I’m carrying it around.

“We’re not here to discuss about the others… but the motive videos.” I said.

“You’re right, I guess. Let’s leave that behind and go back to your plan. If we want to take those pads, we have to enter people’s dorm rooms, that’s a given.”

“But even if they let us in, I doubt we’ll be able to pick them up without being noticed…”

Yep, there’s only one solution…

“We need to break in and lockpick their doors.” I said.

“Do you want Oums’ help?”

“He’s the only one who knows how to do it. If we’re quiet enough, we might be able to enter every room unnoticed.”

“This is oddly secretive for someone who trusts everyone…”

“I trust people that I need to trust.”

“Whatever that sentence means. You decide the best course of action.”

This surely isn’t the best decision I’ve made, and it’s questionable at best… but I can’t find any better solution for now…

Maybe I’m being paranoiac. No, scratch that. I know I’m being paranoiac. But I couldn’t stop two murders from happening. I managed to solve the mysteries behind them, but it’s not enough. If there’s a measly chance that I can prevent a murder, even if another comes after… that’s my job.

“What will you do if someone discovers you?”
“Me? You’re part of this plan too.”

“Excuse me, I don’t think so.”

“You said it yourself; sharing those videos would be terrible. You’re in this with me. Do you fear the others discovering what you’re doing?”

“Honestly, I could do without my classmates.”

“Fantastic. You’ve got nothing to lose. It’s clear that you care about our safety though, despite your attempts to hide it.”

“Okay.” She sighed. “But you need to have a solid plan, not something like guarding the window.”

Thanks for the low blow, Maki. I thought we were making progress.

“First of all, we need to tell Kaito and Ouma.”

The martial artist shook her head. “Not a chance. Only Oums. Kaito will stay out of this.”

“He follows Kaito’s instructions, we can’t convince him without his help.”

“That’s what it looks like, but remember what he said to us; Kaito programmed him with an intention in mind, which is acting based on our greater good.”

“You think that by explaining the situation to him he’ll help us? I suppose that’s right… but it will be easier with Kaito on board.”

“Am I not allowed to doubt his intentions? If this doesn’t work, we’ll involve Kaito.”

I guess this is an okay compromise. Now that we agree on something, we have to find Ouma.

“Do you want to explore the school with me?”

“Has Monokuma given you new toys?”

“Yep, I took this one.” I said, picking up the scroll from my backpack. “I’m fairly sure of where should it be, but I came here first since you asked me.”

“That was considerate of you.”

Even though that sentence could have been interpreted as sarcastic, I imagined it as a sincere thank you. Let a girl dream.

“So, are you okay with this or not? Don’t tell me you want to stay in this room for the rest of your life.”

“Okay, I’m coming. But only because you say you know where to go.”

I can’t believe I’ve convinced her. Twice. In a row. I’m on a roll today; maybe this will finally go my way.

I didn’t spend time around the Altar of Judgment. In fact, I only came to that area for the two trials and when I explored Miu’s lab. Now that she’s gone I have little to no reason to stay around there.
Anyways, when I passed there I saw a strange little statue of a man holding a kitsune mask. Of course it wasn’t a normal decoration. I expected that it would contain some sort of secret. His paws were positioned as if it was meant to hold something.

“Is it here?” Maki guessed, pointing at it.

“That’s what I thought too."

I carefully positioned the scroll between the paws of the figure… and the ground under us began to grumble.

“This really looks like an earthquake!” I exclaimed.

Maki, completely unfazed, only crossed her arms. “Something is coming out from the grass.”

Apparently, a vast portion of the ground sank. In its place, a big wooden building was appearing. Was it there for the entire time? Have we been walking on it? How is it possible we didn’t fall?

I recall Kirumi mentioning there was something strange in the courtyard, but I didn’t expect this… As far as I remember, there’s no way that a structure that big could be concealed under some grass.

“Do you have any idea on how on earth the scroll triggered this?” Maki asked.

“Your guess is as good as mine.”

“Fantastic. Another strange mechanism I can only question without knowing if it’s really possible.”

“We witnessed it with our own eyes…”

“Don’t always trust your senses. They are misleading. If your brain is conflicted, you might see, hear or even taste things in different ways depending on the situation.”

“You’re suggesting that a building didn’t appear in front of us from the ground?!”

It sounds ridiculous and I would be very skeptical if someone else told me, I have to admit. But we are here to witness it…

“Maybe we have failed to see the whole picture. This school has way too many unanswered questions.”

“I agree with you on this…"

The building really looked like a pagoda from the outside, so I thought that might have been Maki’s lab. Aikido is a traditional martial art after all.

There was no lock on the door, as expected. Instead of that, a scanner was placed in the center.

“Monokuma has told us there won’t be keys for our new research rooms. They’ll be accessible with our Monopads. You can try yours if you want.”

“Why this change?”

“Ouma.”

“Ah. He seems he’s the only one who can challenge that sadistic bear.”
Maki tried to scan her Monopad, but the door didn’t open. I tried to push it and pull it, but no luck for us.

“Whose is this then?”

“Oh… may I try?”

The voice startled me. Alarmed, I immediately turned back to see who was behind me.

Unsurprisingly, it was Korekiyo.

“Oh, your face suggests uneasiness.”

“Well, you have sneaked up behind us in religious silence!” I protested.

“It’s somewhat stressing. You could have warned us when you were climbing down the stairs.”

“I am sorry if I have been inappropriate. I am a quiet person indeed. People often do not notice me.”

“Next time try not to be creepy…” I massaged my head. “You almost gave me an heart attack…”

“I was drawn here because of the noise that I heard. I assumed it was your doing, Kaede.”

“You think this is your research room?” Maki asked.

“Try it.” I encouraged him.

The cosplayer took the Monopad from his bag and placed it in front of the sensor. The door gently opened up.

“Good intuition.” I said.

“Oh. I wonder what kinds of objects will be in my research lab.”

It looks like a very big lab… just like Miu’s, Korekiyo has an entire building at his disposal.

“I’m curious as well. Let’s see what’s inside here.”

***

“Kiibo”

“It isn’t my lab either.” Tenko said. “It must be someone else’s then.”

After leaving 0U-M5’s research room with him behind us, we moved on to the other lab. However, none of our Monopads were useful. The door didn’t open and we were left without any definitive answer. We would explore that area later, I guess.

“This door isn’t special at all! It’s normal wood!” Angie commented. “It must be someone whose talent isn’t something crazy.”

“U-uhm, there’s nothing wrong with that.”

“I’m surprised you even had to say such things! Nyahahaha! Regular talents are always talents! An
Ultimate Meteorologist is as good as the Ultimate Cook, for example. It’s a matter of prospective.”

“Gonta always look the weather forecast to play outside when sunny!”

“We’ll discover who’s the owner… eventually… nyeh.”

“Exactly. We should continue our exploration.”

“What about this obviously not suspicious door?”

The robot pointed at a large door on our left.

“It has a strange feeling to it, like it’s almost unreal…” I said.

“Who cares! Kirumi, give me that key!”

The adventurer tried to respond first, but Angie took the key from her and put it inside the lock. Turning it wasn’t needed, apparently, since the door crumbled as soon as the key was inserted.

Now, in front of us there was a pink staircase, just like all the others found in the school. By the way, that color is terribly bright. Whoever thought of that has a terrible fashion sense, and even I can understand it.

“There’s another floor above us! Woow!” She exclaimed climbing up.

“Judging from the outside layout, it seems that in total, considering the basement, there is a total of six floors in the school.”

“So we have yet to explore three of them, considering this one up here. Uhm…”

“That degenerate bear thinks we’ll kill just to explore our research labs! He doesn’t understand anything!”

The third floor was radically different from the rest of the school. The lower floors were all very consistent with their floors and walls… and very basic too. There was nothing strange about them.

This one, however… it didn’t look like something you would find in a high school…

It was extremely different. I would never have imagined it.

I’ve never seen walls decorated with splashes of color everywhere, all extremely bright. It looked like an infant had decided to take a paintbrush and made a mess. Straight lines, circles, unrecognizable shapes, all on top of each other, were everywhere. The floor had the same pattern, parquet ruined by stamps of feet, hands, paws, and more and more…

“Where are we?” Gonta asked, confused.

“Oh! This looks like an hall of a elementary school I’ve been in!”

There were posters, signs and writings everywhere. Most of them were unintelligible, impossible to read properly. I could only try to understand some words but nothing concrete. I think that the person who came up with this idea must have been crazy or terribly bored. We’re talking about someone who gathered sixteen teenagers for killing, so I shouldn’t be that surprised, I suppose…

“Maybe your research lab is here then.” 0U-M5 pointed out.
“I hope so! I’m so excited!”

“This atmosphere is radically different from the one seen before. Could there be a reason behind it?” Kirumi asked.

“Rise and shine ursine!”

“Good question!” Monotaro said. “I was waiting for someone to ask it!”

“Are you the only one here? Where are your friends?” Himiko asked.

“They’re not my friends, they’re my brothers. They’re fighting right now, so I noped the hell out!”

“Family matters, huh? That’s a pain…”

“But Kirumi’s question! I need to answer it! This area was actually redesigned by us before the Killing Game started!”

“Was it like the rest of the school before?” I asked. “Or something else entirely?”

“The second one! We were inspired by Heavenly Host Elementary School! That was a good game!”

“What? But this looks like an elementary school… at least according to Tenko.”

“The other one is quite different! There were stains of blood and a really creepy atmosphere! Like it should be in a Killing Game!”

An elementary school with blood on the walls? These robots are out of their mind.

“Nobody liked that though! And we wanted to spice things up! So here it is! A completely normal, colorful elementary school! Go back to your childhood and think about all of your memories! Those were good times…”

“But you cub. You very young.”

“W-well! I’m allowed to appreciate my first months of existing! I liked my life more! At least my brothers weren’t fighting!”

“Is not this the time you go away?”

“I’ve more information for you, but just you wait for a while…”

“…Has anyone ever heard of that school he talked about?” Kirumi asked.

“I didn’t. And I’ve done research on most of the schools in our country.” Tenko responded, confused as everyone else.

“Nyahahah! It’s probably one of their weird sayings! Let’s keep going boys and girls!”

Those bright colors were kind of unsettling, but they were definitely better than the original project for this place… Tapestry coated in blood is not my cup of tea…

“Look! Another one of those strange doors!”

After having reached a fork, Angie directed our attention to our left. There was an entrance to
another research room, I assume. The door had a distinct Victorian feeling to it, similarly to Kaede’s.

“Use your Monopads, my friends! Let’s discover what’s behind this wall!”

“…You can’t.” Monotaro shrugged.

“Are you confirming that none of us possesses the right Monopad?”

“Kind of. This lab belongs to Tsumugi, you know?”

That would explain the door’s particular style. Maids were very common in that time; at least that’s what I remember from my studies…

“If we were able to go inside, we would discover if she was an assassin…” 0U-M5 said.

“Good if, friend. Unluckily, when someone’s dead, their research lab becomes locked forever!”

“What?” Tenko exclaimed. “Can’t we do something about it?”

“I’m afraid not. This room will be sealed for eternity!” The bear continued. “Your questions will remain unanswered.”

Curiosity leads us, but it also drives us insane at times. If there are dangerous weapons like firearms inside that place, leaving it untouched is best for everyone of us.

“Ryoma and Shuichi’s labs are closed for good as well?” Himiko asked.

“Yup, very correct. The same also applies to Miu, actually. She’s dead, so her lab is technically gone too.”

“So…” Angie intervened. “Whenever one of us dies, their research room is closed. That’s another reason not to die, right?!?”

“My job here is done! I’ve to go back to my brothers! Maybe they made up!”

“Tell them to be reasonable… nyeh.”

“So long, bear well!”

And so the read bear was gone.

This is another lab we haven’t had the chance to explore… are there going be other ones?

Before tracing back our steps, we continued walking through the hallway, reaching a dead end. Actually, there was a sliding door in front of us… it didn’t budge. Angie tried to convince Kirumi to use the butter hammer to smash it, but we managed to convince her it would only make things worse.

The second door we came across was tinted green… and had the image of a butterfly drawn on it.

This must be…

“This is my lab!” Himiko exclaimed, passionate as I never saw her before.

“Even the door looks very pretty! Nyahahaha!”
Himiko picked up her Monopad no questions asked and ran towards the door.

“Hey! Don’t run! The door could remain closed!”

Tenko’s concern was genuine, however the door unlocked itself when Himiko was close enough. The entomologist entered, extremely emotional, leaving us behind.

“We should follow her, she’s going to get in some trouble if she’s alone.” 0U-M5 commented.

“Yeah, but be prepared for bugs everywhere…” Tenko warned the others.

The room was inside of a school… well, that’s what I told myself after checking my surroundings. In fact, Himiko’s research lab appeared to be an open space. Of course, that was an elaborate illusion.

The floor was real grass, the same found in the courtyard. The walls were painted sky blue with realistic clouds on each side, and in the distance green lands. The room was exceptionally bright, but there were no windows. It wasn’t artificial light, though…

Then I looked up.

An enormous skylight was above our heads.

“Wow!” 0U-M5 exclaimed.

“Some light is nice, considering the entire floor doesn’t have any windows…” Tenko pointed out.

The room was much bigger than I expected it to be, five meters wide and twelve long.

“I’m so excited! Look at all the bugs!”

On the walls there were numerous cases that housed bugs. They appeared to be ordered tidily, every one containing at least one specific bug, and apparently even in alphabetical order. In the back of the room there was even a small pond.

“They pushed really for realistic here.” Gonta said.

I extended my arm to see how deep the water was… it was only a few centimeters. Thankfully, there were no bugs swimming on it.

“Oh! Gerridae would be perfect here…” The entomologist commented.

“Gonta not familiar with these scientific names…”

“They’re called water bugs or, my favorite, pond skaters.”

“That name looks so cool!” Tenko smiled excitedly. “Are they here somewhere?”

“Yes, I saw their case. Maybe I will set them free in the open.”

“Aren’t you scared they might fly away?” Angie asked.

“I’m saying inside this room. I don’t want to lose them. I’m sure they would remain here if they get to know me better.”
“Uh! That’s understandable! Nyahaha!”

“Bugs are really amazing…” I said, not convinced. “But are you going to free all of them at once?”

I’m not as passionate as Himiko when it comes to insects. Actually, I find them somewhat gross… most of them are little squishy beings that can end up crawling on your skin…. just thinking about that makes me shiver.

“Definitely not! If there’s one mistake I could never make is this one!”

“O-oh… sorry…”

“Some species of bugs are harmful to others. I’ll free them at different times and then put them back.”

“Are you confident you will accomplish such a task?”

“Yes! Bugs understand me, unlike other people! They know when it’s time…”

“Why are you doubting Himiko?” Angie asked. “She’s the Ultimate Entomologist, of course she knows her way…”

“Right Angie, you understand me like bugs…”

“Thank you!”

“Hey!” Tenko protested. “I’m like a bug too!”

Contrary to those two, I would not like being compared to an insect.

“Who wants to have a bug party with me?”

“It appears that is almost 1 P.M. though.” Kirumi pointed out. “We should return to the cafeteria and have our lunch.”

“Yes, but we need decide who cooks too.”

That’s quite the pressing matter… I don’t know why, but I feel I’m going to be the chosen one… Atua have mercy on me.

***

Kaede Akamatsu

The Ultimate Cosplayer’s lab… was the biggest one yet. It was very different from all the other ones I saw. Those had a recurring theme; I could say… something that fits the talent of the owner. Of course, that would have been difficult for a cosplayer. There isn’t one single thing they do… they’re talented because they can imitate different people and impersonate them.

This new lab reflected that characteristic. Without any decoration, the room would have been like any other normal room. A wooden floor, white-painted walls. It’s what was in it that made it stand out. There were four sets, one at the center of the room, one at our left and one on our right. The biggest one, however, was in the back. And it also changed, cycling between two different appearances. On the walls there were myriads of wigs on shelves, cupboards, closets, tables,
workshops, some dresses on display… this looked like a paradise not only for a cosplayer, but everyone.

“This is quite surprising.” Korekiyo commented. I was almost taken aback from his statement. I’d expected someone to be far more excited to witness this, but I guess composure it’s one of the cosplayer’s traits.

“There are far more… things here than I would have imagined.”

Even Maki couldn’t hold her amazement back.

“I have a similar set-up at my house as well.” He said. “However, this exceeded my expectations greatly.”

“What do you mean by set-up?” I asked. I never got the chance to meet a cosplayer. I don’t attend fairs where they hang out...

“Many cosplayers are also tailors. They make the clothes they will eventually wear. That is my case as well. I designated a specific room in my house to do exactly that. This research lab is far superior… I could take inspiration from it.”

Uhm… so Korekiyo also creates dresses? I wonder if he could make me one if I asked him… does he do commissions? Maybe since we’re kind of friends he will work for free? He doesn’t have to pay for raw materials if Monokuma provided them for us…

“The photography sets are also here because I often participate in photo shoots.”

“I’d have never imagined that…” Maki said.

“Many cosplayers look up to me, as I am an Ultimate.”

“Oh, so you remember that bit about your life, huh.” I said. “It’s strange. It seems like some of our memories have been singled out and erased. There’s not a specific time frame we don’t remember, but many snippets in between others…”

“Yes, I noticed that too…” Maki nodded. “It’s really absurd.”

“I agree as well. But, as I was saying, as the Ultimate Cosplayer, many photographers contact me to show my clothes to the world. Very often I hear of people imitating my costumes. Of course, I have no problem with that. Instead, I am honored to know I inspire others.”

“Definitely! When your job is connected to art, I bet seeing others appreciate it really warms up your heart.”

“Maybe that’s why I’m one of the most apathetic people you could ever meet.” Maki said.


She didn’t respond; she just tugged on her bow, averting her gaze from me.

“I assume that is the reason why those sets are displayed here.”

They were nothing astounding, but impressive nonetheless. The closest one depicted a forest in a very detailed way, with trees of different kinds. The other was a standard classroom, decorated with two desks and chairs. The third one was a castle floating in the sky, probably coming from a fantasy anime or something like that. Did Korekiyo watch those? They’re not as serious as him…
Lastly, the set that rotated was in one case a kitchen – there were also a fridge and a microwave, but I doubt those did function – and in the other the skyline of a modern city.

“Have you found any way to stop those from rotating?” I asked

“Yes, I have.” Korekiyo nodded, searching around the room. “There is a lever in one of the closets.”

“Why would it be hidden?” Maki asked.

“I am afraid I do not know. To avoid suspicions, I told you what I discovered.”

And so the cosplayer pulled the lever, stopping at the skyline.

“I might try to cosplay as some of you, if you desire.” He said.

“Leave me out of this. It would be weird to see a second Maki.”

“Oh, that is what you think. Very interesting… all the people I have met wished for me to cosplay as them.”

“Good for them, I’m not into roleplaying.”

“I think those are different things…” I scratched my neck.

“You are correct. However, I can also roleplay as you.”

“Oh my God. I was joking.”

“Don’t be such a downer, maybe it will be cool to see how good of a imitation he can be!”

“It wouldn’t be that hard.” She rolled her eyes. “He only has to be as emotionless as possible.”

“I, for one, would like you to impersonate me!” I said.

Yeah, it’s strange and creepy. It kind of contradicts my opinion on Korekiyo, but if there’s one possibility to check his abilities… I surely don’t want to miss it.

“I have a lot of spares in my dorm room when it comes to clothes.”

“Of course I cannot use yours. First, because it would not fit me.”

That’s reasonable.

“However, and most importantly, because I intend to replicate it. When cosplaying, you need to imitate others, but there must always be details which tell real from fiction.”

“I’ll bring you one pair of clothes.” I said. “Can I come to your room later?”

“Oh, absolutely. Even though it would be more convenient if you brought them here.”

“I just… This place makes me feel a little bit uneasy. I don’t know how to explain it.”

“Very interesting.” Korekiyo commented. “I appreciate your honesty. However, I would like to spend most of the day inside my research room. If you do not mind, you can visit my room after dinner.”
“That would be perfect.”

“Oh, and… bring me the clothes in perfect conditions. If they are creased or wrinkled choose another dress.”

I nodded, then tapped Maki’s shoulder. “We should go back to the school now. It’s almost lunch time.”

“It’s not even noon.”

“Somebody needs to prepare lunch. And if no one is going to volunteer, the burden falls on me.”

“Weren’t you a terrible cook?”

“I can cook simple things!” I protested. “Follow me and I’ll show you!”

“Such a strong personality…. I am anxious to receive your clothes…” Korekiyo said as we left the building.

“What are you up to?” Maki asked when we closed the door behind us. “Don’t try to tell me you really felt uncomfortable inside there.”

“Was it so obvious?” I sighed.

“You were looking in awe a second before you said that…”

We moved towards the stairs as we spoke. When I was far enough from Korekiyo’s lab, I explained the situation to the martial artist.

“I need a way to enter Korekiyo’s room and search for his Kub pad. That was my chance. If there’s the possibility to avoid the 0U-M5 route, I’ll gladly take it.”

“At least we agree on something.”

“Even if Korekiyo understood there’s something fishy going on, he didn’t say anything. Maybe we actually fooled him.”

I wasn’t that optimistic, to be honest. Korekiyo probably knows I have an agenda; he’s not that dumb. I should have acted differently, but now it’s too late to turn back.

“And I’m going to his room tonight, so it’s an opportunity. If he sees me stealing his pad, I will be forced to explain our plan.”

“Your plan, I need to stress that out.”

“Would you mind if I asked you another favor?”

“Let me guess… I’ll come with you to his room.”

“Yep. If there are two of us we have more chances to steal the tablet. If Korekiyo did already discover about it, he’ll see it disappeared and he’ll definitely piece that it was us. But he will have no concrete proof… and it’s not like the others can turn on me, right?”

“Why are you asking me that question? You should know the answer.”
“Well, of course not.” I laughed. A forced laughter. At least I hope so.

“I bet your plan has its strengths… but why should I participate too? After Korekiyo finds out, he can still place the blame on me. And you know how respected I am in the group…”

“I’ll personally vouch for you. If Korekiyo persists, I can tell everyone is not your fault. Then, after all the videos have been destroyed and there’s no danger we can reveal our plan to everyone.”

“I shouldn’t have told you about Rantaro’s video.” She told me right before entering the cafeteria. And guess who was inside?

Rantaro. And he was cooking.

“Maki! Kaede! As you see I’ve decided to try my hand at this.” He said, pointing at a frying pan. “Tsumugi’s instructions are easier to read than I thought.”

He’s probably saved all of us from food poisoning (if I were to cook), but let’s put that aside. What is he up to this time?

He has decided, out of the blue, without warning anyone, that he would be our cook for the day?

“Why didn’t you step up when I asked at breakfast?” I asked, slightly irritated. “You could have told us you wanted to try.”

“Actually, I’d never try cooking for breakfast. Do you have any idea on how difficult pastry-making is? When I tried I ended up mixing the dosage and a monster came out of the oven! I had to throw it out to avoid a disaster.”

“And you wanted to surprise us with…?”

“Ah, nothing special. This is spaghetti with pesto. Apparently it was one of Tsumugi’s favourite dishes. But to be clear I won’t serve this to you, since until 1 PM it will have lost his taste. This is a test. If it succeeds, pasta for everyone!”

“What if it fails?” Maki asked.

“Time to find something different.” He shrugged. “It’s not like I have much to do.”

“You could have explored the school.” I said.

His search for attention surely wouldn’t stop him.

“Oh, no. Kirumi’s doing that and almost everyone is with her. I’m not necessary.” He smiled.

“Stop lying.” Maki intervened. “It’s because Angie is with them. You don’t care about everything else. Angie alone is enough to dissuade you.”

“Quite the bullshit detector, huh, Maki?”

“Apparently is one of my few qualities.”

“What can I say? You’re right. I don’t like Angie. But is it a crime to find someone annoying or dangerous? If the others follow her like sheep I can only try to convince them. I’ve tried to do that with the Assembly too. They’re drawn to her, like mosquitoes and light… but she’s a trap… and that light will zap them sooner or later...”
A grim silence fell into the room. I find Angie sketchy too, but going as far as saying she will get everyone killed…

“Let’s hope I’m wrong!” He laughed. “I didn’t insist, because that would have been terrible for my reputation. If she sees me as her enemy, who knows what she could do! For now she’s harmless, so my complaints are no use.”

Under other circumstances I would ask the person in front of me if they were feeling okay, but I just couldn’t with Rantaro. Who knows, maybe he was only pretending to be worried. I’ve never seen somebody change his attitude that fast.

And it wasn’t the time to question him about his family. It wasn’t because Maki was with us, but I saw the situation wasn’t ideal. Yet another postponed conversation with him.

“Hey, the spaghetti are almost ready. I tasted them; I think the cooking time is right. Do you want to try them?”

“No thanks… I believe in your cooking skills. And I’m not a fan of pesto.” I said.

***

Kiibo

We wanted to find the place where the butter hammer was supposed to be used, but we had no success.

Obviously, even though I followed Angie, I would have preferred not to explore the upper floors to avoid unpleasant discoveries, so this ended up working in my favor.

She said that the solution would come to us eventually… I think she was right. There’s no reason to stress too much over this. Exploring new rooms it’s not our priority, escaping should come first…

It’s clear that won’t happen anytime soon, but…

Still… I wished that the hammer would lead to my research lab… maybe there are some mechanical parts that can be used to make a shuttle. I’m sure Kaito would be able to do something with them.

Eventually 1 PM arrived. I was very hungry, considering I ate little during morning. I didn’t care if my lunch was canned food or leftovers, I simply wanted to eat and maybe be alone for the rest of the day.

But I saw Rantaro, Maki and Kaede putting plates on the table. He looked rather confortable, the other two much less. Maybe the artist tried to convince them and they went along with it. Korekiyo was also present, observing us from the corner of the room.

“Surprise, I made you spaghetti!” The artist said.

“It’s a nice gesture… for a male.”

“Yeah, apparently we can cook too. Ridiculous, isn’t it?”

“Let’s all sit and enjoy the meal Rantaro offered us!” Angie exclaimed. “Atua approves of it.”
“Nyeh… if Atua does, I believe him…”

“You don’t have too, you know that, right?” Tenko intervened.

The entomologist eyed the girl before sitting. “Yes… And you don’t need to comment on everything I’m saying…”

“Here I am!” Kaito announced behind us. “Have you got something for lunch?”

“Rantaro tried cooking spaghetti.” 0U-M5 explained. “According to my parameters, they look safe and rather tasty.”

“Have you programmed it to evaluate food as well?” Kirumi asked, inspecting her plate.

“How couldn’t I, after that mess with Angie? I worked hard on this improvement during the night.”

So he stayed up late… only to do that? I don’t think it’s that useful either.

“Wow! Great!” Angie nodded. “You’re so nice to everyone!”

“Don’t try to convince me with your praising. I’m not dumb, eh.”

“Oh, but I really mean what I’m saying…” She smiled.

“Yeah, surely.”

I wanted to speak up to defend Angie… despite me intending to do that, I stayed silent. I told myself that was the most reasonable choice; I would only start an unnecessary conflict. But I knew that mine was an excuse to avoid confrontation.

“While eating we should discuss our findings.” Kirumi said when everyone sat down. “As for my group, we explored two new research rooms. Oums’ and Himiko’s.”

“I want to go back there to my bugs…”

“Moreover, we have tried to open the door we found four days ago, but none of us was in possession of the correct Monopad.”

“You haven’t figured whose research lab is it?” Maki asked.

“Nope, no luck. Nyahahahah! You should all try!”

“Not interested.” The artist said, munching on his spaghetti.

“Well, another information that Monotaro gave to us is that the labs of the departed are sealed forever!”

“We can’t go inside Shuichi and Ryoma’s labs then?” Kaito asked.

“No, that is not possible anymore. That also applies for Miu and Tsumugi, whose lab is on the floor we explored.”

“This means we will never discover her true talent…” Korekiyo said.

“I found Korekiyo’s research lab.” Kaede announced. “Is in the garden, near to the Shrine of Judgement.”
“Kekeke… it is rather hard to miss… an entire building emerged from the ground…”

“Wow! Big building? Gonta think your lab must be amazing… can Gonta visit it?”

“I think that isn’t possible, Gonta.” Angie shook her head. “We have more important things to do.”

Really? We haven’t discussed about that.

Suddenly Angie stood up, but she didn’t stop there. She climbed onto the chair; for a second I expected her to climb onto the table as well.

“Hey! What the hell are you doing?!”

“I hereby announce a new AAA! Atua is waiting for us to communicate with him, especially after the terrible things that happened yesterday.”

“Do you really want to have one of those?” Rantaro asked.

“Yes! We have an appointment with Atua, how rude would it be not to attend!”

I’m skeptical towards Angie’s strange Atua, that definitely looks like a projection… but I definitely understand where is she coming from. She had a meeting planned and because of Miu’s schemes she was forced to stay in her room.

“I think the wisest choice is not to try another one again.” The artist glared at Angie.

“Because Tsumugi died? You know that’s not my fault, right?”

“Don’t attack Angie or Gonta forced to do bad things to you!”

“Hey, try not to do that.” The leader reassured her friend. “Violence is never the answer. Dialogue is. We all know that I couldn’t have saved Tsumugi… and that I have nothing to do with her murder. She decided to attend on her own, and also she decided to arrive sooner. She had the chance to survive. Sadly, fate was that she would fall…”

“What are you going to do with that meeting anyways?” Rantaro asked, still bitter.

“We’re going to pray, have fun and play! That’s one of my mottos. There’s no harm in that.”

“Sure Angie can’t kill us! There are lot of witnesses!”

I don’t get Rantaro’s hostility towards Angie… she hasn’t done anything against him. Is he jealous of her because she can be friendly? Does he hate the idea of Atua? Angie’s only trying to make sure we are friends with each other. Last time I wasn’t convinced about the meeting, but now I am. Contrary to Kaito, she didn’t force anything on anyone. He, instead, came barging in and decided to have a party to divide us.

“I’d come.” I said, smiling at her.

“Yes! Good job Kiibo, you won’t be disappointed!”

“Nyeh… me too.”

“If Himiko goes, I’ll go too.”

“Gonta always follow Angie!”
“What about you, Kirumi? And 0U-M5?”
“I have to think first.” The adventurer said.
“And I need to ask Kaito.”
“I thought you were able do decide on your own!”
“…I think he gives me good advice.”
“Yeah, Angie. Someone here is being reasonable.” The purple-haired boy eyed her.
“Atua always says that everyone is welcome, at any hour! You can come in after we’ve already started, if you want. You can pay a visit and leave immediately after! You’re free to do what you want!”
“Tonight?” I asked.
“Many of you have doubts, and I understand that. So I decided to have the AAA tomorrow night right after dinner! This way, you have a lot more time to decide!”
“Good choice!” Gonta praised her.
I think Angie has got good intentions. If she’s a leader, she must have earned the trust of her people. So I believe in her.

The afternoon was calm. We eventually decided not to push ourselves or search for new places to explore, putting off that to the day after. I wandered inside the warehouse for a bit, hoping to find something that would interest me. That huge place was bound to have it. Maybe a space shuttle model… I liked collecting those, but actually… I doubt I’d be able to have fun with it. I decided to visit the casino and pick up some cards to play alone in my room. Most people would consider that really sad, but I always preferred solitude. That’s why, when it comes to videogames, I can’t bear multiplayer.

The few times I have time to play, actually. That’s when I’m immersed in the stories they tell us. Maybe tomorrow I’ll watch a movie in the AV room, if Monokuma gave us one…

Let’s admit it, after lunch I didn’t do anything productive. Sometimes you just want to lie down and do absolutely nothing… after that you realize you have completely wasted another day in your life. I rarely go to bed early. I’ve been blessed since I don’t need that much sleep and I have no repercussions on my health… so I spend the nights doing what I avoided during the day.

I know not everyone agrees with me… but I definitely think sleep is overrated. You need it to survive, I guess… and I feel guilty waking up at ten if I could have done it sooner.

Maybe this thought doesn’t make sense.

***

Kaede Akamatsu

<<Ding dong bing bong! It is now nighttime, students. The warehouse and the cafeteria are
closed, hope you already ate your dinner, cause you can't now!>>>

“It’s time to see where that video is.” I said.

“Let me know how should we act again.”

“I ring Korekiyo’s doorbell with one of my uniforms in hand, you follow me. This doesn’t have to be something secretive.”

“Like he wouldn’t notice me sneaking inside his room.”

“No need to be sassy about that. I know that he’ll notice you. Because of this, you’ll have to act like you were just following me.”

“Which, to be clear, is strange.” She pointed out.

“Yeah, you’re a loner. I get it. However, Korekiyo saw you and me hanging out together. He shouldn’t ask many questions.”

“I just hope that since you’re a detective, you know what you’re doing.”

“As we enter, I’ll accidentally trip over the clothes I planned to give to Korekiyo, wrinkling them. He won’t accept them in those conditions, he outright stated that this morning.”

“Okay, I remember that. Are you sure you’ll be able to do that?”

“I practiced during the day, almost destroying one of my clothes. I’ve got this.”

“Great...”

“I’ll invite him to follow me to my room, while you’ll wait outside of the door. Korekiyo will be the first one to go out and I’ll close the door behind me.”

“But that’s when I go inside. And try to find that tablet.”

“Got it. You can do it, I’ve pulled off more complex plans.”

“Let’s hope that you’re not lying to me.”

I smiled in return and rang the bell. I hope I wouldn’t disappoint Maki. This is the only chance I have to know her better. She’s one of the smartest people here. If conflict arises, it’s not only wise to have her by my side, but also prevent her from going too far like she did with Kaito.

Korekiyo opened the door.

“Finally you are here. I did not expect you to come during night-time.”

“I had my share of problems. Can I enter?”

“Of course. I would invite you to admire my room, however it is rather barren.”

“It’s like mine, but the walls are painted blue.” I observed while stepping inside.

“I wished I could bring here what I have seen in my research room.”

“Ah! I completely forgot!” I said, faking my surprise. “Maki is with me, we met each other right at the entrance. I was entering, she was going outside.”
“For a walk.” She added. “I was getting tired of staying inside.”

I scanned the room to find the Kub Pad. There was no sign of it. Well, maybe Korekiyo didn’t see it…

And then I tripped… in the most convincing way I could attempt.

When I got up I glanced at Maki’s face. I couldn’t tell if she was completely over with this act or if she was almost chuckling.

“O-oh… I’m sorry… I just… I got distracted and tripped over the cape…” I excused myself, getting up. “My clothes are all creased, sorry…”

“That is unfortunate.” Korekiyo said. “However, since you have other items of clothing you could bring me those, yes?”

I pretended to ponder for a few seconds, making it look like I was weighing down various options.

“You can come inside my room and pick the best uniform, according to you. If we go with this, your cosplay could be perfect in every sense!”

“I have to admit I do like your idea. Should we go now then?”

“Yes, right after you.” I said.

We both exited the room, while Maki stood in front of the door.

“I’ll be waiting here. You do you…”

“Okay, let’s be quick.” I said, looking at Korekiyo. However, that message was also for Maki.

The cosplayer and me then entered my room. I made sure to close the door.

“What do you think of the pink color scheme?” I asked. Obviously, I didn’t care at all about his opinions on the walls, but I had to stall time. Hoping I wasn’t too much on the nose.

“I am impressed by neither scheme. Linking blue to males and pink to females is quite the odd tradition. At this time, I am surprised someone still goes by it.”

“You know, there must be a reason behind it. Maybe we should ask Rantaro when we see him. Since he’s an artist, he might know about this.”

“But enough with this. Can I see your closet?”

I distracted him for some seconds. Even one is important for Maki.

“U-uhm… yes. Here it is.”

Korekiyo examined all of my clothes in the span of ten seconds. If he had been someone else, I’d have said they were having a quick glance… but this is the Ultimate Cosplayer.

Unfortunately.

“This one.” He said, taking one of the copies. To me, there was no difference at all between them, except some barely visible folds.
“Wow!” I exclaimed. “Why have you chosen this one?”

“This is the one that I deem the best, of course. I do not expect you to understand what makes it better than others, however that is not your fault. I refined my techniques during my entire life.”

“Ah! How long have you been cosplaying?”

“…Are you really interested in knowing an answer or do you wish for me not to return to my room?”

“What? Of course not! When you speak, you look like an experienced man, not an high school student, so I re-

“Kekekekeh… you and Maki wanted my secret video, am I correct?”

“Your video? No, the Monokubs took those. Don’t be ridiculous.

“I should inform you I was merely playing along to experience your reactions… kekekeh… I feel I learned more about both of you…”

“I mean…”

“I am not going to chastise you for acting without me knowing. However I understood your intentions from the moment you entered my research lab. You aim to destroy those videos, I agree with your sentiment.”

He unbuttoned his jacket and a Kub Pad fell out. It landed on the screen, damaging the glass.

“I… just, thank you.” I said.

“You should destroy it as soon as possible. I suppose the other Pads were redistributed as well, but you already know that, I am sure.”

“Of course.”

“Before I leave, however, I am interested... you trusted everyone before Shuichi’s death… and you put your faith in Miu, only to see her betray you. Is this why you decided to proceed without informing anyone besides Maki? Are you having doubts?”

“Monokuma told me that if four people discover about the pads, he will tell everyone about them. And I can’t allow that.”

That’s not the complete truth, I know. Monokuma didn’t write that in the letter.

“Ah, so you are attempting to tell me a lie, even though it is partially true.”

How can he be sure of it? He must be bluffing; trying to convince me he can read me.

“Sorry, but that’s how it is.”

“Alright. I will not pry, however I suspect you had a shift in ideas.”

I know what I want and how to act; I know what I’m like. I chose this approach because it was the safest.

“Now that you know about this, are you going to inform the others?”
“Kekekekeh… no. Rather, I share your opinion. Those videos should be destroyed, considering the damage they caused. I can help you, if you deem it necessary.”

Having Korekiyo with us? He’s surely smart, but maybe letting him help isn’t the best decision… I’ll have to ponder about this.

“If we bring in more people someone might suspect us. It’s better if you stay out of it. But… if you’re needed, we’ll find a way to tell that to you.”

“Alright, Kaede.” The cosplayer nodded. “However, I do want to ask… are you still interested in me cosplaying as you?”

“Well… I guess so. You can take my clothes.”

“Oh, I am so glad. Be prepared to be astonished.”

Having said that, he left the room with an item of clothing in hand. I followed him outside, seeing Maki waiting for me near his door.

“Korekiyo, you’re do-

“Spare the act. You do not need to continue it.”

He went back to his room.

Maki and I exchanged looks. She wasn’t impressed.

“Just to let you know…” I said. “Korekiyo gave me his Kub Pad, so the plan wasn’t that bad.”

“You know what? Good for you. But we’re not doing this again. Go on with your Ouma plan, since we can’t snoop inside everyone’s rooms.”

“Tomorrow I’ll talk to him and see what we can do. We have a chance to pick up almost every Pad after all.”

“What chance?”

“Angie’s Assembly. Many of us will be there. Not everyone, but we’ll find a way around that.”

“Let’s pray that goes better than what happened today.”

Optimistic as always, Maki. What a way to end the day.

Chapter End Notes

Well, in two chapters time there's going to be another set of free time events. As always, I invite you to vote!

I'm thinking I could start posting a chapter every 11-12 days again, but I'm not entirely sure, so you should expect the new part in two weeks. By that day it will surely be up.
I hope you're still enjoying the story as it unfolds! Next time Monokuma will give everyone another motive, but it's completely new and different from the original game.

(Also, it surprises me that no one commented on the name of the chapter.)
A virtual reality without real virtues: Daily Life (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

Kiibo spends a lot of time with one of his classmates; Kaede tries to keep the situation under control

Chapter Notes

I'm extremely sorry... I didn't want to be this late. Real life got in the way and I won't bore you with the details. You just need to know that I was very busy during those last weeks. That, coupled with the fact that I saw that not a lot of people seemed to follow ao3 in august in general (there were not a lot of comments overall), I published today. I'd say the next update will come in two weeks, but honestly I'm not that certain. It will certainly come as soon as possible.

(Thanks for reading either way! In this part Angie is finally getting some spotlight!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kiibo

<<Ding dong bing bong!>>

I heard the announcement from outside. I woke up early, like every day in my life, and I’m fine with it. How can people have breakfast at times like 10 or 11? I mean, they need to! But lunch comes right after! They can’t skip that one either!

I guess there’s brunch, but what is that? It’s an invention for those who want to sleep late, nothing more.

I’m rambling. I think I’m just hungry. Listen, Kiibo. Today you’ll take some food from the warehouse and store it to eat tomorrow. Otherwise I’m going to starve.

But thank God that the warehouse is finally open. I can eat.

As I made my way to that room I crossed paths with Angie.

“Kiibooo!” She waved. “Wow! You’re so quick at preparing! Amazing!”

“Actually, I woke up two hours ago… and did everything back then.”

“You’re an early bird then! The same goes for me! When you have so many people to take care of, there’s no time left for slacking off!”

“I’m sure you have a good reason to leave the bed early. But I don’t do anything us-

“Ssshshsshsh! I don’t want to hear any of that nonsense! Are you saying that waking up early is
“Well, not really… you know, because… uhm…”

“You don’t have to say what you think I like! Tell what you want! Don’t be influenced by what the others say!”

Angie’s right. I should tell her what I really think; it shouldn’t matter if someone doesn’t agree with me. That would be their problem, not mine.

Even though this is not the case.

“I was honest. I hate waking up late. I can’t stand it when it happens.”

“Wow! I’m exactly like you! There’s no time to be unproductive in your life!”

“Well, you say that because you’re a leader. You definitely have no time to rest…”

“I find time when I need it! I’m a Supreme Leader and I need to care about my people, but I can’t depend on them, just like they can’t depend on me all the time! And I’m not working alone, but I always have helpers at my side! I would never be able to do things without other people!”

“Are you downplaying yourself? If you gained your title I think you are able to do everything alone…”

“What? Nobody is an island! Even though I live in one… You have to keep in touch with other people and they need to help you overcome obstacles and challenges! You understand me?”

“Yeah… I know. Other people should do that…”

They should. But with me… I’m often alone. Everyone seems to reject me. They don’t actually hate me, but… I’m just there. I don’t understand why.

“Hey, are you going to cook some food?” Angie asked.

“No, definitely not. Trying to take something from the warehouse. I don’t have high standards.”

“I heard what Kaede said yesterday though! You apparently did a great job with Tsumugi!”

“S-she helped me cook, you’re right.”

“And you started this path without pursuing it? What if you discover a passion for cooking?”

“I never had that sort of calling but for astronomy.”

“Tsk! I heard that so many times! Nyahahah!” She chuckled. “Come on, I’ll help you too. I cooked some extravagant dishes in my island. It was part of my training, actually. I’m nowhere as good as Tsumugi, but with that recipe book maybe we can do something good. We can start from the basics.”

“I don’t know… what if I fail…”

“Failure is a step to success. I don’t know if you ever saw those images that are around on the Internet, like the one with the big intimidating iceberg.”

“No, I don’t remember that.”
“Long story short, you see the tip of the iceberg that spells success, and all the things that are covered from view are labeled with words like sacrifice, sleepless nights, fatigue and a lot of failures! That’s how life goes; you don’t struck gold immediately! You have to keep trying and trying! Bonus points if the first time actually goes well, like in your case. But even if you don’t succeed at first, if you really want to do that thing, you are able to reach your goals. That applies to me too!”

The point is… I don’t want a career in cuisine.

“I know what you’re thinking. You don’t want to cook things in your life, wow. Angie is telling me what to do, boo-hoo. I’m giving you some advice! Just like yesterday, feel free to follow me or not. I happened to meet you and since I really like to talk, I decided to have a fun conversation with you. This last bit was way too Angie-centric though. So it’s your time to talk! What do you have to say?”

“Honestly?... I prefer to listen… and be silent. So maybe you’ll be disappointed if I tell you I’ve nothing relevant to say…”

Angie shrugged. “That’s fine too. I feel good just by knowing you listened to me. That’s a quality that many people don’t possess. They just want to boast and brag.”

“Y-you’re right. I met many people like that… there were a lot in middle and high school… thankfully I got rid of them when I became an Ultimate.”

“You need to search and find the good ones! I bet you can do it! By the way, I’m heading back to the dorms to see if Gonta has abandoned the sleep realm at last. Do you want to come with me or you’ll continue with your search for provisions? Nyahahah!”

“Well… maybe I don’t need to go to the warehouse.” I said. “I think… yeah, I’m coming with you.”

“Angie! Gonta ready to explore today too!”

“That’s the right attitude, Gonta. We’re ready to see what’s new!”

“Already?” I asked. “Shouldn’t we wait for the others? I thought Kirumi had to be with us.”

“Kirumi can definitely help us, but we don’t need her. Everything we did yesterday was because of us as a group, she isn’t necessary, you know.”

“Yes, Gonta think that as well. But we have breakfast first. Gonta hungry now, this night he dreamt about starving!”

“Oh, what a terrible dream!” The supreme leader gasped. “Are you alright now?”

“Yes, this morning Gonta realized that was a nightmare, he was like in a… giant house with strawberries.”

“What a strange setting. Maybe it was a projection of your hunger? I know that our brain links different ideas together without making any sense.”

“Gonta don’t know. Gonta not very intelligent, he just thought about eating.”
“Hey, no more bad thoughts now!” Angie said, taking the tennis player’s hand. “Let’s go to the cafeteria now and prepare a great breakfast together! You’ll help me, right?”

“Yes, Gonta would like that very much.”

“Nyahahahah! Atua also loves your enthusiasm! Let’s get right to it! Maybe Kiibo will try too.”

If Angie’s sure I’m able to do it, maybe I should give myself another chance. Worst case, though, I end up disappointing everyone here. And this will mean I’ll get pushed to the side again.

“Look who is there!” Angie exclaimed. “Rantaro the artist!”

The green-haired boy, who apparently tried to avoid us, had no other choice than acknowledging our presence.

“You wanted to sneak under my radar! Nyahahah! I see everywhere!”

“Hello.” He said. He tried to be friendly, at least. I could never do that. “I see you have started gathering your group again.”

“Huh? What group? We’re only three!”

“I noticed. You have missed the other ones, it seems.”

“No, no. I haven’t come across them yet. We’ll get ready to explore right after breakfast, just to let you know. The butter hammer still needs a home.”

“Angie has the hammer in Himiko research room, so she then take it to explore.”

“I thought Kirumi had it.” I said. “Didn’t we agree she should keep it in her room for the night?”

“Yeah, but then we changed our mind after a discussion!”

“Discussed?” Rantaro raised his eyebrow.

“A very healthy discussion, yes! I had to keep it somewhere safe, and at the time Himiko’s lab looked like the best option to me!”

“I’ll talk to her in a minute and see what happened. But does Himiko know about all of this?”

“Of course!” Gonta exclaimed. “She spent night in research lab, not dorm room! She guard the butter hammer diligently!”

“Oh! Maybe we should go check on her before cooking breakfast!”

“Let’s pass through cafeteria though. Maybe she already there.”

“We’ll see each other there then.” Rantaro said.

“Yeah! And don’t start cooking! This time it’s our turn! Nyahahahah!”

***

*Kaede Akamatsu*
I heard the conversation between Rantaro and Angie from my dorm room. I didn’t intervene for two reasons.

One, I just finished showering. And I’ve no intention of going outside with a couple of towels instead of my usual clothes.

Second, it’s common knowledge that sometimes it’s better to stay out of sight. People might act differently when you’re around.

Rantaro and Angie are both trying to have a big influence over the group. The latter is actively trying to convince the most people as possible, the artist instead is taking a more relaxed approach. This contrasts his previous attitude, but it’s clear that he’s observing Angie to react accordingly in the future. It wouldn’t surprise me if he planned this interaction from the beginning, even though he tried to pass the encounter as an accident.

They both are a problem, though, and I have to do something to understand what they’re up to. Maybe they’re being more genuine than me, yes, that could be a possibility. But it’s far more likely they have a clear goal in mind, an objective. That could be as simple as having control over the group to a more complex one. For all I know Monokuma could have given them a task too.

When I closed the door behind me, after preparing, Rantaro was gone. Also, the sadistic bear didn’t visit me yet, so I assume that no one else discovered about the Pads.

I headed for the cafeteria, searching for someone to speak with. However, when I arrived everyone was already gathered there.

“Sorry if I’m late today.” I said.

“Don’t worry!” Angie exclaimed. “Many of us arrived just a while ago.”

Kirumi nodded. “Yes. I have come here mere minutes ago. We were discussing about the butter hammer.”

“Oh, so you didn’t forget!”

“Kaede arriving did not distract me, even though you might have hoped so.”

“Anyways! The hammer is safe inside Himiko’s research room!”

“Exactly… nyeh. Nobody will take it until we go exploring.”

“Angie said you discussed and decided to leave it there,” Rantaro said. “Is this what happened?”

“I am rather ashamed to admit that she omitted some details. We did indeed agree not to take it with us at dinner, however I was supposed to take it inside my room after that.”

Angie immediately responded. “What? No no! We had a majority vote and decided it was better to keep it there.”

“A vote? You did not mention that to me.”

“Here’s how things went! At dinner you went to the bathroom, then I thought us scouts should have a vote.”

“Nyeh, I remember that.”
“You could have waited for Kirumi, man!” Kaito protested.

“Let me finish the story! You can’t rush to conclusions like you always do! Nyahaahah!”

It looks like Angie carried on a vote without everyone present. This sounds bad…

“Me, Gonta, Himiko and Tenko decided it would be better not to move the hammer for the night. The research room are definitely impenetrable! Kiibo decided to abstain, despite I said he should vote.”

“I… had no strong opinion on the matter… And my vote wouldn’t influence the overall result…”

“Yeah, since 0U-M5, after some computing… I suppose…? Anyways, he also agreed with me!”

The inventor turned towards the robot. “What?! You supported her??”

“Of course. I was programmed to ensure the safety of everyone, so, since the research rooms are safer than the dorm rooms, I concluded that it was best to leave the hammer where it was.”

“What the fuck! No no, that’s not right! Should I program you not to trust Angie??”

“Did I do something wrong?”

“Yeah, you did! Look! Now Angie has complete control over an object that could be our way to escape from here!!”

“Hey! Don’t be harsh on him!” The leader said. “You can say you don’t agree with me, and that’s completely fine! But if he voted no we would still have left the hammer there.”

“And that’s why you didn’t tell Kirumi?” I intervened.

“Yes! Her vote would have been useless! I know, she would only spread drama among us.”

“I would have warned the others.” She corrected her. “You might have forgotten that there are other people beside us in this school that had the right to vote.”

“But they didn’t explore with us. If they did, I would have asked them as well!”

“Why didn’t you tell me?!” Kaito exclaimed, addressing 0U-M5.

“Because I expected this reaction. If you say I should do that in the future, I can change my settings.”

“Yeah! Change them immediately! Always report things to me when you’re with her!!”

“O-of course, Kaito. I’ll do that from now on.”

“We should have that vote once again.” I said. “Nothing bad happened this time, but it’s better to be safe than sorry.”

“Why is Kirumi room safer than Himiko lab? Gonta thought more protected.”

“Because Kirumi is more reliable than Angie.” Rantaro explained. “I think we all agree on this.”

“This isn’t a matter of Angie, but it’s about Himiko.” 0U-M5 intervened.

“Yes! She had to watch over the hammer, and she did a great job! I offered to spend the night with
her to protect her from degenerates!"

“I had my bugs… they can protect me. Umpf.”

“Actually, I’d say some bugs are attracted to butter.” Maki said.

“I told them not to disturb me, and they didn’t. Bugs are helpful and they respect me, not like… nyeh.”

“Nyahahah! Why are we still talking about this? Maybe I acted without thinking; I admit that! And I’m genuine. I’m sorry about all of this.”

“Interesting behavior.” Korekiyo commented. “I, personally, accept your apology.”

“I’m very sorry for Kirumi. Maybe she felt left out. If she wants, we can all take the hammer and give it back to her! Are you okay with this?”

“Why are you doing this?” Rantaro asked. “You were so enthusiastic a minute ago.”

“Because this spiraled out of control. I didn’t want anyone to get angry! Now I see this is my fault. That’s why I want to make up for it.”

“Nyeh… maybe you’re right. I can go upstairs and bring back the hammer. If Kirumi wants it.”

“You did a great job though, Himiko.” 0U-M5 pointed out.

“Nyahahah! Yes! You understand you shouldn’t be angry towards anyone, right?”

“Yes… if you say we were wrong yesterday, then that must be true.”

If she says it? It’s good that the situation turned around, but Himiko’s acting like Angie is giving her orders… of course these aren’t exactly that, but it’s not even that subtle. Is no one going to address this?

“We can have breakfast and resume our exploration after eating.” The adventurer concluded.

“Everyone should try their Monopad on the research lab we didn’t visit.” Tenko said. “It’s important to explore every single area of this school.”

Yeah, especially since if that person dies… their lab is basically gone.

“Now that bad things out of the way, Gonta tell you we prepared pancakes!”

“We in?” Rantaro asked.

Kiibo spoke up. “Me, Gonta and Angie. We tried our best, but I don’t know if we ended up making a disaster.”

“Wow, Kiibo.” I said. “You finally got it!”

“Got it?... Got what?”

“The courage to try something new! I knew you would succeed.”

“B-but… you this pancakes could be the worst thing you’ve ever eaten….”

“Don’t say such things!” Angie intervened, basically stealing my line. “Trying is the first step,
succeeding comes after.”

I crossed my arms. On one hand, it’s good that Angie finally pushed Kiibo… but she’s way too intrusive. She never shut her mouth since I arrived.

“So please!” The leader said. “Everybody, get a taste of these special pancakes, a twist on the original recipe from Tsumugi Shirogane, the Ultimate Maid!”

“I have to congratulate myself.” Korekiyo said. “Those pancakes were rather good.”

“Not as good as Tsumugi’s though.” Rantaro replied, eyeing the leader.

“Nyeah, you’re right. But they’re still amazing! Congratulations Angie!”

“Me? No no, you need to talk to Kiibo and Gonta. They were the ones that prepared everything! I only gave instructions!”

“If Himiko says these pancakes deserve praise, I suppose I have to admit that menaces can excel.”

Following that statement, Gonta blushed. “Gonta very honored! Gonta thinks this step to become gentleman!”

“Of course being an average chef doesn’t make you a good person.”

“Don’t worry Gonta, I still like you.” Himiko pointed out.

I need to give credit when it’s due; the pancakes were very good. Better than I could ever do anyway.

“Now that we’re done we need to decide who will continue the exploration and the ones who will clean the kitchen. Maybe we should have turns.”

“You’re always very wise, Kaede.” Tenko said. “When I taught in schools we did the same things.”

“We need to explore, right?” Angie asked. It was more of a rhetorical question though, it wasn’t directed at anyone and she expected an affirmative response.

“Yes yes!” Himiko nodded.

“Gonta can help cleaning since he gentleman!”

“No, Gonta. You can come with us. It’s better if someone else takes care of this today. I can help you tomorrow!”

“Since I have already found my research lab, I will tidy the kitchen.” Korekiyo announced. “As soon as we can we should work on a timetable.”

We all nodded in return.

“Nyahahah! Another problem gone away! Everyone besides Korekiyo can come with me! We can check the lab out!”

“Wait a second dearie! It’s my time to shine!”
Monokuma appeared from the ceiling, showing his incredible acrobatic skills by doing two flips in the air.

“Wow! Dad, you’re amazing!”

Monotaro was standing near his dad, who almost landed in top of him. The other Monokubs appeared immediately after.

“Hello… I’m the new Monokid…” The blue bear said in a monotone voice.

“What have you done to him?” Monotaro asked.

“HE IS NEW AND IMPROVED.”

“You shouldn’t have saved him.” Monophanie said addressing the green robot. “You know, I didn’t want to have him around, especially after what he did to you!”

“EVERYONE DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE.”

“You didn’t give it to Monosuke! What are you talking about!!”

“Don’t argue please… it’s useless…”

“The old Monokid is gone now.” Monotaro said. “I don’t know if it’s a good thing or not…”

“Dear children, you are so kind to give another opportunity to Monokid! To be honest, he was my least favourite! But I couldn’t get rid of him immediately…”

“Oh, it’s Monokuma! Hello, Monokuma!” Angie greeted him.

“Good morning, students. How did the first day go? I see you haven’t finished your exploration yet.”

“We were just going.” 0U-M5 answered. “But you interrupted us.”

“Oh, right. My manners aren’t the greatest, that’s true… but who cares, I was raised differently from most mechanical bears.”

“Are there any more like you, dad?” Monophanie asked, but her question was promptly ignored.

“I came here to give you the new motive!! Of course that time had to come eventually. And here I am!”

And it’s not the only challenge I have to face…

“You know…” The bear said, walking in circles. “The last time I said I would give out two motives every time, just to spice things up. But maybe I was wrong; you don’t need two reasons to kill, presented right in front of you. Naaah…”

“A motive or two doesn’t make any difference.” Maki spoke up. “It’s still the same to me.”

“Oh, that’s a interesting way to see this situation. But I never said I would go back to one motive, nope!”

“What? What do you mean?” I asked.
“At first I thought I needed to tell you a motive today and the next one tomorrow, but then when you didn’t finish exploring I had an idea. In my mind there are countless motives ready to be distributed, but I’ll never have a chance to use them all.”

“Oh no, that’s a waste of ideas! Nobody could do that!” Monotaro exclaimed.

“That’s why I decided to distribute a new motive for each day that passes! Today, a motive, tomorrow, another motive, the day after tomorrow, yet a new motive! Amazing!”

“You think that overwhelming us with reasons to kill will make us kill each other?” I asked.

“Yeah, you just needed two.”

“No, that motive was only used to pit Miu and Tsumugi against each other. You rigged the game.”

“Rigged? This is my game and these are my rules, written clearly in your Monopad! There’s nothing that relates to motives, so I have complete control over what I decide to say when it comes to those!”

“Just give us your motive and get away!” Kaito protested.

“You know what! I won’t! You need to wait to know it!”

“The hell does that mean?”

“I’ll tell the first motive tonight, as soon as nighttime starts! However, tomorrow there will be a second hidden motive that will be only revealed at nighttime, even though it will be in effect for anyone that decides to murder! Those motives will all be what I like to call “release benefits”, which are advantages you’ll have in the outside world!”

“How great is our father?” Monotaro commented. “He listens to your complaints and changes them! Motives are too specific? Look what he did!”

“Just as my dear child said, with this motives nobody will have an advantage over the other! Because they’ll be so generic and plain, like Tsumugi!”

“Tsumugi wasn’t plain. She had personality.” 0U-M5 said.

“Oh…? Yeah, right. I got it mixed up, oops. But we’ll leave it in, as an easter egg.”

“What kind of easter egg?” Kiibo asked, confused.

“Forget what I just said and continue exploring! The biggest attraction has yet to be unveiled to you!”

“I CAN’T WAIT FOR YOU TO FIND IT.”

“So long, bear well!”

“Okay guys, let’s stop thinking about that terrible bear and let’s get to business!” Angie announced. “First step, the mysterious lab!”

“…Do I really have to go?” Maki asked.

“That could be your research room, so if I were you I would check, at least.” I said.
“If she doesn’t want to come with us, she can remain alone, man.”

“Terrible advice!” Tenko exclaimed. “Children mustn’t avoid their responsibilities!”

“…But I’m not a child.”

“She can decide for herself.” Kiibo said. “We can only invite her, not force her.”

“Nyahahah! Yes, this is how you do it!”

“Fine, I’ll come. If that’s my research lab, at least I’ll find something useful.”


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**Kiibo**

We said goodbye to Korekiyo and we left the cafeteria. Did I help someone today? I don’t know… it seems that I’ve made them happy, though. With something so simple as making pancakes. Last time I said to myself I would have never tried to help others in this killing game, since I would always end up creating a mess. Now that I think about it, probably I was wrong. There isn’t a bad atmosphere anymore, everyone seems to get along fine… well, there are Kaito and Rantaro who, for whatever reason, oppose Angie… but I understand them, they’re skeptical. They’ll eventually understand that she means no harm. Actually, I’m not sure about that, yeah… but… I can’t believe she doesn’t care about the safety of the group. Am I naïve if I trust her?

“This is the door.” Angie said, pointing to it.

“It’s a… not particularly flashy door.” Kaede said.

“Yes. That why we don’t understand who lab is it.”

“Let me try my Monopad so we can be done with it.” Maki said.

However, to mine and I presume, her surprise, the door was unlocked.

“Oooh!” Angie exclaimed. “We found our winner! Congratulations, Maki!”

“Congratulations for what, exactly?”

“Well… you found your lab.”

“How exciting.” She said, in a monotone voice.

“Can we enter as well?” Rantaro intervened.

Considering his past actions, I’m kind of surprised he asked permission.

“I guess, I don’t care either way.” She shrugged.

“Okay, then let’s enter!”

The lab was larger than I expected. In fact, the room was bigger than any other we had seen before. The interior resembled a simple pagoda, with classic Japanese windows and wooden logs one on top of the other.
“Honestly, this looks kind of unstable, eh…” Kaito said.

“I don’t know a thing about architecture, so… maybe?” Kaede intervened as well.

“Monokuma wouldn’t put the lives of their students in danger.” Maki explained.

0U-M5 immediately responded. “He wants us to kill each other, so your assessment is wrong.”

“If you let me finish my sentence, you’d understand what I want to say.”

“Sorry, I’ll learn from this experience.”

“What I mean is that he wants us to kill someone, not because of an accident. Otherwise the trial would be a bore.”

“Yeah, Monokuma definitely loves when we turn on each other.” Kaede agreed.

The pavement was mostly made of wood, but at the center of the room was covered with tatami, the traditional Japanese mat used as a flooring material.

“Of course Monokuma had to portray this room as extremely Japanese-like.” Maki sighed.

“Is there a problem with it?” Kirumi asked.

“Not really… I know that Aikido is a martial art that originates from Japan, so I suppose this was his idea. It’s pretty obvious that that bear doesn’t have any idea on how aikido works.”

As Maki was explaining, Kaito came closer to the center of the room.

“Hey! Stop!”

“What is it now?”

“You can’t step on tatami with your shoes. You need to remove them.”

“What?”

“Tatami is easily perishable. Since it’s made by straw, shoes damage it. That’s why you should walk on it barefoot.”

Kaito rolled his eyes and backed away. “Sorry if I could have damaged this precious piece. You just said this room is hyper-Japanese.”

“That doesn’t mean you are allowed to destroy it.”

“Funny coming from you.”

“Hey! Can we fight here?!” Angie asked, trying to make the two stop arguing.

“What do you mean?”

“You can teach us your Neo-Akido! It looks like a nice place to do that.”

“No thanks, I don’t have the time to do that.”

Yet there isn’t anything that important to do here…
“Are you sure? We can be best friends if you teach us Aikido! You’re starting to socialize more, this would be a great way to pursue the path you have forged!”

“I’ve not forged the path you’re talking about and my aim here is not to socialize.”

“But we’re made to be in contact with other people, that’s how humans work.”

“Apparently not.” She sighed.

“Why is she so mean?” Himiko asked.

“If someone doesn’t want to do something, they’re not mean. It’s their choice.” Angie explained. “I’ll ask you one more time then, will you teach us Neo-Akido?”

“She already said no.” Kaede said. “Why do you force her?”

“Force her? You’re seeing the situation in a twisted, messed up way! I never forced her! Nyahahah!”

“But you’re trying.” Rantaro spoke up.

“I really don’t understand your resentment against me, Rantaro. Every time you say something is to criticize me.”

“Yeah.” I agreed with Angie. “If you don’t know what’s going on, you should stay silent. Try to understand, then you’ll talk.”

“Angie very nice! Gonta think you jealous.”

The artist looked at Gonta and me disappointed and then shook his head. “It doesn’t matter how many times I try, this can’t be avoided.”

He then left the room, avoiding eye contact with Angie.

“He’s strange. Nyahahaha!”

“He might be. But you repeat people can make a choice for themselves, yet you try to convince them that your way is better.” Kaede said.

“Everyone does that, if they believe in something. Otherwise you don’t believe in anything, really!”

“You’re saying it’s alright to tell people what they should think?!”

Kaito also intervened. “I don’t even like Maki… but I think Kaede’s right.”

“Great, I’m honored.” The aikidoka commented.

“Kaede, please! Don’t misinterpret my words! I’m telling you that it’s normal for people to try to persuade others. After all, you did it too.”

That’s true… I have nothing against Kaede and I admit that without her help we probably wouldn’t have solved the last trial, but she comes off as kind of… I don’t want to think about that word, but… hypocrite? Not something that bad, only limited to a few situation, like this one. From the first day we were here, she wanted to convince us to go through that tunnel, despite us failing.
“Yes, Kaede does same thing.” Gonta repeated. “But not bad, she tries to help people.”

“And that’s what Angie’s trying to do too… nyeh.”

“I… suppose that’s right.” Tenko said, albeit not as sure as Himiko. “I think that Himiko is a good judge of character.”

I would have also reminded Kaede about how badly she wanted us to like Miu and, personally, that she wanted to convince me that I didn’t cause Shuichi’s death. There’s nothing wrong with doing those things… but she can’t criticize Angie…

“No, Angie. Your ways are completely different. At first I didn’t notice, but now I’m keeping an eye on you.”

“Care to explain?”

“No.” Maki responded bluntly.

“What? I asked Ka-“

“She’s right.” Kaede nodded. “You should explore with the others now. We can continue this discussion another time.”

“Fine! Nyahahah! If you don’t feel good, we can never mention this again, actually! Let’s keep a positive mental attitude!”

The detective sighed. “We’ll see…”

“At least you aren’t like Rantaro! ‘Cause you have nice things to say and are incredibly helpful! Nyahahahahah!”

“We have seen everything here.” Kirumi said. “If you do not mind, we should search for the room that Monokuma mentioned at breakfast.”

“Yeah!” Angie giggled. “Let’s go there! Supersonic speed!”

We came back to the elementary school floor, at least how I decided to name it. Himiko immediately ran towards her research lab to pick up the butter hammer. Thankfully she didn’t linger inside with her bug friends, so we were able to start our search again.

“Now, if I was a butter hammer… where would I be?” Tenko asked.

“In mouth!” Gonta responded.

“Nonono! What are you saying, Gonta? This much butter isn’t good for you! We rarely use butter in my island.”

“Oh, Gonta sorry.”

“Don’t worry, you didn’t know.”

“I do not think we can reach an answer if we think logically.” Kirumi said. “As far as I know, butter hammers should not exist.”
“And that’s a perfectly reasonable statement.” Kaito nodded.

“Judging from what I’ve seen since I was reborn, there are a lot of strange occurrences here. Maybe we have you have to trust your instincts and feelings.”

“Uh? Can’t you do that?” Himiko asked.

“No, of course. As I robot I was built to follow a specific set of rules and react accordingly. It’s difficult for me to break my programming.”

“Oh, I see… nyeh.”

“Kaito did this to prevent disasters, at least it’s what he told me.”

“Yeah, you don’t want 0U-M4 to resurface again. He will never act funny again.”

The more they talk about Oums’ change the more I think something will go wrong. I can’t be the only one who noticed him being more… curious? He’s asking too many questions, highlighting how Kaito tells him what to do in every situation… I hope I’m wrong. After all, Kaito is the Ultimate Inventor. He knows what he’s doing…

“I’m sorry if I behaved badly in the past. That will never happen again.”

“Are you sure about that?” Angie asked.

“You don’t believe me?!” Kaito responded.

“There’s no need to shout, I was only asking…”

“Even though I think you’re doubting me… I can assure you, he’ll always do the best for us.”

“Fantastic, for now I decide to believe you then!”

As we were wandering around that floor, searching for secret passages and something similar, we turned our attention to a corridor that led to nothing. There were no research rooms around and nothing of interest.

“Why would someone build this corridor if it served no purpose?” Kaito said. “There must be something here.”

“Uhm… we can’t go around smashing everything down.” I reminded him.

“The most logical conclusion would be to destroy that.” Tenko said, pointing in front of us.

“You want to destroy a freaking picture?!” The inventor exclaimed.

“That is not a picture, but a pane of glass.” Kirumi pointed out. “Curious that we were not able to tell the difference.”

“Nyeh… now that you said it, I think I see it too…”

How is this possible? I stared at the walls for a while now and didn’t notice anything strange. Obviously there’s a distinct difference between paintings and glass, so how come that none of us saw it?

“Maybe it’s because of the lightning?” 0U-M5 hypothesized.
“But no windows on this floor.”

“We must have been too focused on other details! Nyahahah! The human mind is full of illusions! And we can’t comprehend everything… but understanding Atua is a very useful way to expand our knowledge.”

“So… what do we do now? We throw the hammer at the glass panel?” I asked, cautious.

“There’s not much you can do.” Kaito shrugged.

“Just give it to me, since I’m made of metal the glass can’t damage me.”

“Oums, great idea!” Angie applauded. “It looks like you really want to protect us!”

“Now step back. I’ll use my full power to destroy what blocks us.”

“You don’t really need to do that.” Kaito said. “Adapt to your surroundings, consider the danger you could pose to us and decide after having evaluated all of those parameters.”

“Thank you for the clarification, but those details are written in my code, so I know exactly what to do.”

“Great! This was just a test to see if I set up everything correctly!

“Please step back, so that I can allow you to proceed.”

We all did as 0U-M5 asked and backed away. The robot stood still for a couple of seconds… then he swung the hammer… and with only one strike smashed the glass panel in front of him. The hammer… kind of broke, in the process. Actually, it would be more correct to say it melted and exploded at the same time. Splashes of butter flied across the corridor, but the largest part deposited right in front of the door.

“I wouldn’t want to be the unlucky guy who needs to clean this up!” Kaito commented.

“Is there even someone who does that?” Himiko asked.

“Rise and shine ursine!”

“No, there isn’t!” Monophanie giggled, appearing with her brothers.

“We don’t clean the school, that is your job.” Monokid followed.

“If you don’t like this gold on the walls…” Monotaro said. “Feel free to wipe it off.”

“But that not gold, butter actually.”

“I was using a metaphor! Why doesn’t anyone understand my poetic skills?”

“I CAN HELP YOU IMPROVE.”

“No, I’m an artist who prefers alone time! Nobody will ever be capable of understanding me!”

“How dramatic!” The pink bear exclaimed. “Don’t be that sad, Monotaro. We can continue living ditching our brothers.”

“WHAT. I THINK WE WERE MEANT TO LIVE TOGETHER AS BROTHERS.”
“I think I want a divorce!”

“Uhm…” Monotaro looked puzzled. “I think divorces are for marriages.”

“Can’t you divorce from your brothers?! My life has been a lie! We need to find another way to escape, Monotaro! Come with me!”

“So long, bear well!”

This time, after their catchphrase, Monophanie and Monotaro were the only ones who left.

“Should I follow them?” Monokid asked.

“No. Let them sort their problems. This must be a phase.”

“You’re talking like you were their dad.” Himiko pointed out.

“Well, he’s surely behaving better than Monokuma.” Tenko followed, but I don’t know if robots actually need any kind of education. At least in the traditional sense.

“This area leads to the computer room. It’s a very important area where we managed to create the New World Program.”

“What does that mean? Oooh! I’m so very excited!”

“Pay attention to the butter.” Monokid said.

“Follow us and we will explain it to you.”

The room we entered had sliding doors that opened as we got closer. It had an oval shape, a blue hue and many screens covered at the moment turned off covered the walls. At the center of the room there was a massive metallic cube with, on each side, a red circle at the center and and X carved on the front. I counted sixteen sockets and the same number of wires that could be connected to what I assume could only be a machine of some kind. There were also two sofas on the two sides of the room, right besides the cube. On each of them there were headsets and wires connected to it.

“I know it looks like a bad thing, but don’t worry.”

“Yeah, even though the red circle at the center could make you think this machine will kill you, that’s definitely not the case.”

“Yes. This is not a Space Odyssey.”


“Hmmm… no, not at all…”

“Can you tell us where we are, please?” Angie addressed the bears, looking around.

“Of course, in the computer room. This machine you can witness here is capable of creating a virtual reality you can explore at your own pace.”

“Wow! Really?”
“YES. BUT THERE ARE LIMITATIONS.”

“So there is not an entire universe stored in there.” Kirumi observed.

“NO. OF COURSE. THIS COMPUTER DOES NOT HAVE SUCH PROCESSING POWER.”

“If we were able to create a universe from scratch, then our world could also be a simulation, you know?” Kaito said.

“A simulation?” Gonta asked “Like a game?”

“Yup. We would only be simulated beings, maybe replicating history so that could be studied by a future civilization.”

“No way!” Tenko exclaimed. “I’m real and no one can tell me otherwise!”

“How do you know about the simulation theory? I also have heard about it.” Kirumi intervened.

“Well, I’m an inventor and this shit is really close to my field of study, so… I mean, I would love to create a computer that would simulate a universe, even on a smaller scale…”

I’ve also known about the theory for a long time. This is one of those hypotheses some scientists made that could be very well true, but we don’t have the tools that can ultimately give us an answer… and neither intelligence, to be correct. But if that theory is true… I still feel like a real person. Because I am, even though I could be simulated. Whoever is on the other side might be beyond my comprehension and may have started our universe, but I’m definitely able to think for myself and make decisions. They might be an illusion, but when something is perfectly fake it becomes real. You know, fake until you make it and all of those sayings.

“DON’T FOCUS ON YOUR EXISTENTIAL CRISIS, PLEASE.”

“We were definitely not doing that.” 0U-M5 replied. “Just exploring our thoughts.”

“You have thoughts?” Kaito asked, perplexed.

“Commands that indicate how to proceed. Those are what I consider my inner voice.”

“Fair enough.”

“By the way…” Monokid continued. “The virtual reality we created is not complete. Since we had some problems we put it on hold and we’ll try to work on the project as soon as we can.”

“We could enter this… New World Program then, you say.” Tenko scratched her cheek. “It seems we can be alone together, Himiko!”

“I like it here, even if there are bad things in the real world.”

“Yeah yeah, there’s no way I’m letting you inside this fake world! If you do that, who knows what might happen! Nyahahah!”

“There’s a big opportunity inside that world.” Kaito countered. “There could be something that might help us.”

“But Monokuma created it. Everything made by Monokuma is a no-go!”

“Yeah…” I nodded.
“When will you ultimate this so-called New World Program?”

“PROBABLY NEVER.”

“Great! This must be Atua’s work!”

“No, I won’t allow that!” Kaito exclaimed. “I’ll work on this!”

“Can you? Gonta not so sure.”

Monokid nodded. “Yes, he can. After all, we dropped this completely.”

“I’ll take a look at the code and remove every hazardous object! That way, I can explore the data and see if there’s something useful in there. After that, we can plug in and see it with our own eyes.”

“Do you have any idea on how this system operates? I would not appreciate being stuck in a virtual world.”

“No, at the moment I know zero about this program! But because I’m a nice guy, I’ll check everything I can! We can understand how the headset works and what kind of virtual world is it, how realistic it can be and etcetera…”

“But is it a completely new world?” Tenko asked. “Are we able to use our senses to understand what’s around us?”

“YES.” Monodam confirmed. “The system latches to your neurons via electric and chemical impulses to give you the impression you are in a world different from yours.”

“If all our senses are connected to the machine, will there be any effect on our real bodies?” Kirumi asked a legitimate question.

“UHM…”

“The answer can’t be disclosed at this time.”

“So long, bear well!”

“I expected nothing and I am still disappointed.”

“Guys!” Angie exclaimed. “This is it! We’ve finished our exploration! Congrats to everyone who helped! You’re all amazing!”

“Gonta don’t deserve praise, he didn’t do anything.”

“Don’t be so humble. We all played our part, guided by Atua! And now, we must get ready for the AAA this evening! I’ll have a shower before lunch, guys. Feel free to accompany me at the dorms.”

“Will you stay here, Kaito?” 0U-M5 asked. “Should I help you with the code?”

“This is harder than what I had to do with you… I’ll need absolute silence. Do you think you can shut your mouth for the rest of the day?”

“I think I can, Kaito.”
“Great! Then you can stay. Kirumi, can you tell the others I’ll skip lunch?”

“Are you sure about that? You might need food if the task is as difficult as it seems.”

“Don’t worry about me. I can survive some hours without food. If I’m really hungry, I’ll ask the robot to pick up a snack.”

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Chapter End Notes

(Free Time Votes are still open. So if you want you can!)
A virtual reality without real virtues: Daily Life (Part 4)

Chapter Summary

Kiibo attends the AAA; Kaede enacts her plan.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kaede Akamatsu

“I don’t feel good when Angie’s around.” I said to Maki.

“Look who realized what’s obvious.” She followed immediately; as always, never afraid to speak her mind.

“Thank you for your passive-aggressive attitude. But don’t worry, I’ve been accustomed to it by now.”

She rolled her eyes.

“So, now that Angie is becoming more and more controlling we need to put our plan in action as soon as possible. Maybe even before the AAA.” I said.

“Don’t be too hasty. We have a perfect time to steal the pads…”

Yeah, if I rush this it might end up like last night. Korekiyo immediately understood I wanted his pad.

“You’re right, but we still need a way to enter Rantaro and Kaito’s room without them knowing. They’ll never attend the AAA. We can’t use 0U-M5 as a distraction either, since he’ll be the one to unlock the doors.”

“You think we should tell Korekiyo to help us?”

“At the moment he’s the only one who knows about the plan. However he’s not the kind of person I’d trust.”

“Let’s consider him a last resort.”

“I agree with that.”

Korekiyo still gives me the creeps one week in, yet he intrigues me. Not because he’s charming, but I feel he has some dark secret he’s trying to hide from the rest of the group.

But who doesn’t inside this academy, after all.

“We still need to proceed with step one, which is bringing 0U-M5 on board. However, I know exactly what to tell him.”
It will be difficult finding the robot around the school at this time, so it would be best to wait for lunch. Until then, I have some free time to spare. I can know more about my classmates… maybe this will help me protect them.

**Free Time start!**

Since I had the opportunity, I decided to spend some time with Maki.

“How are you feeling?” I asked the aikido master.

“Of course you continue to stay here.” She sarcastically said. “As soon as I stop hiding and avoiding people, you show up.”

“You helped me, right? You’re still helping me now.”

“I don’t need a lesson about human relationships. I know how they work and I don’t need them to work.”

“Let’s just talk for a while. Maybe about our talents? There is a lot of time to do that.”

Maki sighed but didn’t leave me hanging. I have to admit I was surprised as she started talking. She explained the differences between the various martial arts and the rules behind Aikido.

“So, what’s the point of Aikido?” I asked.

“It’s not for the sake of combat and neither for personal defense, but its purpose it’s to reach *masakatsu*, the right victory, you could say.”

“How do you reach that victory?”

“By having complete mastery over yourself. To be sure others don’t surprise you, you need to know how you act in everyday situations.”

“Hmm… so it has a psychological component to it too.” I commented.

“Yes, it’s the most important part of Aikido. Actually, this discipline is less combat-oriented than many people could think. Aikido was created to prevent fighting altogether.”

“That’s curious.” I said. “So it stems from a noble cause.”

“I’d say it aims to understand the laws that govern relationship between people and how they act when in conflict. The only way to understand them completely, for us aikidoka, is to partake in those conflicts by ourselves. Of course, I’m talking about traditional aikido here.”

“Are there any more type of aikidos?”

“As time passed, not everyone agreed with the views of our Osensei, and aikido practitioners made modifications to the structure of this martial arts. Between them, there is also myself.”

“Oh, you’re the Ultimate *Neo* Aikido Master, right. So there are differences between what you do
and normal aikido.”

“As I stated before, Aikido refuses violence unless strictly necessary, and only if the opponent is the one to start the fight. The principles behind my philosophy are different. Sometimes, extreme measures have to be taken to ensure that the majority of people can obtain a benefit.”

“We’re not that different, you and I then,” I said. “I have taken extreme measures despite me not wanting.”

“Then we are different. I do want to indulge in a fight if necessary. Remorse is not allowed, because I can’t be uncertain. When I decide to take action, I must carry out what I want.”

Maki claims to be an aikidoka, but it seems that her martial art is very different from the one she took inspiration from…

“But… I also have to understand people before starting a conflict. Maybe mine aren’t as physical as yours, and don’t involve punch and kicks, but, overall… they could be considered similar.”

Maki glared at me. “No. They are different.”

At least I tried.

“As I said, I respect aikido’s principles and try not to start a fight if I see it as unnecessary. I also try to avoid conflict between others, since it can disrupt their relationship. That’s what I’m doing in this academy too.”

“Your intentions might be misunderstood then.” I pointed out.

“I made a bad impression on everyone after entering inside your room, I know.” She sighed. “But you realize it was something I had to do? I did not trust you at the time.”

“Yes, I understand now.” I smiled faintly. “I should also do the same.”

“Do you mean not trusting others?”

“That’s right. It sounds absurd for a detective, but I am way too trusting. This blind faith has helped more times than it did harm, but I’m not sure about its effectiveness anymore…”

“I cannot help you on this,” She said. “I would suggest to always doubt others, but you can say I’m wrong if you want. Being wary comes with important disadvantages.”

“Yeah…” I snorted. “I know. I just can’t see everyone else as an enemy.”

“I don’t consider other people as enemies, if that’s what you’re thinking.”

“No, no!” I clarified. “I would never think that…”

Still, despite her most recent statement, she treated everyone in this school like a foe, someone who hides secrets… it has to be one of those drawbacks she just mentioned. You can’t act around others like that, no matter the situation. Being positive is the key to being happy.

For me… but I can’t force this view on Maki.

Taking advantage of some seconds of silence, the Aikido master spoke up.

“That’s it. I talked for too long already.”
“H-huh?"

“You said we would talk about our talents and nothing more. We have already derailed from that subject matter.”

Well… I can’t force Maki to continue this conversation either. But I think I understand her a bit better now.

While I was exploring the upper floor, I met with Himiko running through the hallways. The entomologist didn’t see me and she ended up bumping into me, falling immediately afterwards.

“Oh... sorry, Kaede...” Himiko said, getting up. “I didn’t want to bother you...”

“No, don’t worry. It’s nothing. You look like you have a lot on your mind.”

“Nyeh... you’re right... my lab is full of bugs, I was just thinking about all the things I could do with them...”

“Ah, right...”

I’m curious. What could you do with insects? I don’t have a lot of ideas, honestly. They’re not pets like cats or dogs, you surely can’t take them for a walk and most of them are very loud with their buzzing...

“They feel so sad inside their cages, I can feel it... but if I set them free I will never see them again... here they are safe and with me...”

“Hey, I wanted to ask you this for a while... why are you so attached to bugs? I don’t want to sound insensitive, but you treat them like they were... your children?”

“...To me they are. Without them, every one of us wouldn’t exist. Without bees many flowers would wither and they wouldn’t be able to reproduce. But that’s only an example.”

I understand Himiko’s reasoning, but the same could be said about other animals, or plants even.

“Every bug has its characteristics, and I don’t mean every species... the individuals are all different and act differently. Maybe they’re influenced by whatever happens during their life, just like us... but many people find bugs gross... it’s only because they don’t understand them... nobody finds other animals like cats and dogs ugly...”

“Insects don’t show affection, so that’s why p-

“They do!!” Himiko exclaimed. “They do!”

“O-oh... I see...”

I’m not convinced, though. I suspect Himiko only pretends insects are capable to connect and speak to her... on a rational level, that’s my conclusion. However, I’m not the one who should criticize her for her opinions.

“You think bugs don’t feel anything? They can be scared... if you trap one in your hands, for example. Then they can be happy and sad too... maybe those emotions are different from ours, but they all come from instinct...”
“You’re the entomologist here, if your studies have shown those results I must back down.”

“Well... science still hasn’t answered that question. But an insect still has children. And they protect those children... so there must be some kind of affection down there.”

“...I see. Why are you so sure about that, though?”

Himiko cares a lot about bugs and it shows... they’re more important to her than the people around her... I wonder why is that...

“I just know it! It’s a sensation. And if other people disagree with me it’s their fault... it’s better if they continue not knowing.”

“Can you tell me why?”

Last time, Himiko reacted badly when I asked her to know more about her bugs.

“Nyeh... why should I tell you? You still don’t believe in me.”

“Would it change if I told you the opposite?”

“No, because I know that you would lie to me... the affection I have towards bugs can never be matched by anyone... you will only use it against me...”

I would never judge Himiko for what she believes in, but what she said to me strengthens my initial hypothesis...

“You want bugs only to yourself, right?”

“Yes... because I can protect them... nyeh.”

“You can talk to me if you want... I understand that you’re afraid that someone could take them from you.”

“Nyeh... no... they will always stay with me...”

“You shouldn’t be scared about that. They’re safe.”

“Yes, in fact I’m not scared...”

“Then you can tell me about your bugs without problems, right?”

“But what if you don’t listen to me, like everyone else?”

“Everyone else?”

“Bugs are the only one who listen to what I have to say... other people think that I’m boring, strange and I’ve a terrible obsession with insects...” Himiko sobbed. “They’re the ones at fault here, not me. Because bugs are never mean... they never disappoint me...”

“If you don’t give the others a chance to talk you’ll never come to terms with them. Maybe you’re stuck in a cycle. I can help you break out.”

“No, why should you help me? Other people said the same... they never succeeded, and then abandoned me, but my bugs...”
“If you talked with someone about this, I swear it will make everything better...”

“I will, but not with you. You’re not honest with me... I thought you were interested in my talent, but you only want to change me. I won’t change!”

Himiko left, heading towards her room. I could have said something else, but I realized there wasn’t much I could do. I suspected there was something going on with her and even though I understood why she was so distant from people, I still have to really befriend her... she needs time to think now... if she wants, she’ll come to me next time.

**Free Time end.**

After meeting Himiko I saw it was almost time to eat, so I headed for the cafeteria. We wondered who could cook this time around, but at the end Rantaro ended up re-doing what he cooked the day before. Anyway, nobody complained.

“Hey, where are Kaito and Ouma?” I asked, realizing they wouldn’t come.

“They’re in the computer room.” Tenko said. “Kaito wants to create a virtual reality, apparently.”

A virtual reality? Maybe I’ll understand more when I get there.

“That’s right! But we don’t want anything to do with it! Nyahahaha!”

When we finished eating, Kirumi offered to clean up the kitchen, while Tenko decided to help her. Instead of wandering around I decided to go to the computer room to have a chat with the robot.

“Let me come with you.” Maki said when I stepped out of the cafeteria. “I don’t trust you to inform only Oums and not Kaito.”

“You think I’m not a woman of my word?”

“Many things could happen. Have you thought about separating Kaito and Oums?”

“Kirumi told us that Kaito would have preferred staying alone, so Ouma is not definitely needed. I’ll just ask him to come with me with an excuse.”

“And you suppose this will go well.”

“Kaito will be so absorbed in his work that he won’t have the time to ponder about my intentions. He’s not like Korekiyo.”

“Yeah, he’s dumb.”

I didn’t mean that, but of course Maki never misses a chance to criticize him.

“I meant to say that he trusts me, it’s impossible for him to think I’m plotting against him… which is, actually, the opposite of what I’m doing.”

“Secret plans aside, what’s up with this floor?”

I noticed that the floor and the walls were painted like an elementary school.

“I have no clue.”
Then we also saw a corridor with splashes of butter everywhere.

“Monokuma definitely has a curious style when it comes to interior decorating.” Maki commented.

“Pay attention to the pool of butter under your feet.”

Eventually, after admiring the new floor, we entered the computer room. My eyes immediately focused on the massive cube at the center, but I located Kaito and 0U-M5 a second later. The inventor was carefully inspecting strings of code on a computer and I understood zero of what he was doing. 0U-M5, however, was simply sitting in one of the sofas near the cube. None of the two realized we entered.

“Uhm… hello…?”

“Hello, Kaede.” Kaito said, not even turning around. “I need absolute silence to work on this project, this is what could help us escape.”

“Ah, then sorry if we came in uninvited.”

“We? Is there someone else with you?”

“If you would turn around you’d realize it’s me.” Maki said.

“I don’t have the time to argue with you, just tell me what you want.”

“We need to use Oums’ function to lighten up a room. Could he come with us for a while.”

“Alright, he’s not doing much here honestly.”

“Even though I’m a robot, it doesn’t mean I’m good with computers. You’re humans and some of you are horrible at managing relationships.”

It definitely makes sense.

“We’ll be done in less than five minutes.”

“Okay, see you at dinner if I finish this by then.”

We said our goodbyes to Kaito and brung 0U-M5 with us outside of the corridor, to make sure the inventor wouldn’t hear us. He wouldn’t have listened to us regardless, but it’s obvious that Maki would have complained about that.

“What is it? Where’s the room?”

“There’s no room.” I said bluntly. “We just needed to separate you from Kaito.”

“If you want to kill me, I should tell you I’m equipped with lethal weapons in my research lab.”

“What?! Nobody here wants to kill you!”

“We wouldn’t be so stupid. There are better ways to plan a murder.”

“Then why did you call me here, far from Kaito?”

“You need to do a thing for us around the time the AAA will take place.”

“I don’t know if I’ll be able to. I need to ask Kaito.”
“No.” Maki shook her head. “This must be between us three. It’s already dangerous as it is.”

“Hmm… then explain further what should I do and why. I need to know more.”

“Let’s say what you need to do first. Unlock our doors in the dormitory. I know you can do that.”

“I have that option in my code, but it’s blocked by a firewall. I can’t access it now.”

“So Kaito must have blocked that function.”

“You’re saying I was able to do that? I had no idea about that. Why would he do something like that?”

“You were sort of a troublemaker before.” I explained to him. “Are you certain you can’t do anything about it?”

“We aren’t doing this for our benefit.” Maki pointed out. “Remember the motive videos that Monokuma gave us last time?”

“You mentioned that he also gave two to me, but I don’t remember that.”

“That sadistic bear redistributed them once again, this time they don’t even count as a motive and we can watch them together without any repercussions.”

“There’s the possibility that some of our secrets could cause more murders. Add the multiple motives from today… everything could spiral out of control soon.”

“I see…” 0U-M5 scratched his cheek. “This is a crisis that needs to be averted.”

“Exactly. The Kubs Pads are stored in our dorm rooms and the only way to access it is with your skills. We’re doing this for the greater good.”

“Just a moment. I need to analyze the situation.”

0U-M5 closed his eyes and started emitting a strange buzzing sound, like a bee.

I expected it to last for a couple of seconds, but it went on for fifteen, twenty seconds…

“I think he might be overheating.” Maki commented, unfazed.

“What?! Do you have any idea on what we should do now?”

“Don’t worry, I doubt this will count as a kill.”

“We’re not talking about that!”

“Analysis completed. I have evaluated the situation.”

Oh, here he is.

“What was that?” I asked, worried.

“When faced with a difficult choice I need time to chart the possible consequences and decide from projections. The process takes some time and computing power. I thought you humans did the same.”

“Instead of pretending to be an insect we go hmhmhm…” I explained.
“Interesting, but I think I won’t ever be able to avoid characteristic sounds in the future.”

“I love your conversations about robotics.” Maki intervened. “But can you tell us what have you decided for tonight?”

“I will definitely help you. After seeing Tsumugi’s and Miu’s unfortunate demise, I can’t imagine what those videos could cause.”

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**Kiibo**

“Well, it’s almost time for our AAA! Now that you have all washed your hands, we’re ready to go!” Angie announced while cleaning the dishes. “Besides who told me this morning, will anyone else come? Kirumi, what about you? You were very excited the last time.”

“I am sorry to inform you I would prefer to rest in my bed for today.”

“Oh, it’s still okay. I suppose everyone’s free to do as they please.”

“Has anybody seen Kaito and Ouma recently? Are they still working on the cube thing?” Tenko asked.

Maki and Kaede exchanged a look, but nobody raised their hand. Those two may know something, but I doubt it’s important.

“They must be still there.” The martial artist concluded.

“Does anyone actually know what that virtual world is about?” Rantaro intervened.

“Nyahahah! They didn’t explain it that well. But Kaito seems to know what he’s doing.”

“The problem is that he doesn’t.” Maki commented, looking around.

“Kaede, are you coming? I think you’ll be a great addition to the AAA!”

“Maybe later, okay? I have to tidy my room. It’s kind of a mess, it’s almost as if the Monokubs forgot it to clean it.”

“We’ll be going then!” Angie announced. “Come with me, to my room!”

Leaving the others in the cafeteria, we headed for the research lab. Between all of us, the most thrilled one was certainly Angie, but Himiko appeared excited too. Tenko, however, wasn’t as energetic as usual. She’s kind of a pain at times, but she rarely keeps her mouth shut. Maybe she isn’t sure about this situation.

“What are we going to do, exactly?” I asked Angie.

“There’s a bunch of things you can do at a AAA!”

“Angie done lot of this reunions in past?”
“This is my first one, to be fair. In my island we don’t do Atua Appreciation Assemblies, we’re one step further! This is only the first way we have to praise Him. As you understand how to understand His beauty and power, I can initiate you to bigger and better ways to have fun together.”

Yes, this sounds kind of bad… some people could find these continued mentions of Atua annoying, but as long as Angie doesn’t hurt anyone there’s nothing to complain about.

“So we’ll become great friends?” Himiko asked.

“Of course, we can exchange ideas and thoughts, talk about our lives and ask questions to Atua, all together.”

“So Gonta can learn to talk with Atua too, yes?”

“That’s exactly the pyramid we’re climbing together, the possibility to communicate with Atua just like I do!”

We passed through the corridor. The window hadn’t been repaired yet. I wonder if Monokuma will ever care enough do fix that, instead of giving us absurd new object to explore further.

The blood, however, was completely gone. I remember the pool of pink blood clearly, I can still see Tsumugi’s body lying there, and the stains of blood coming from the inside.

“I, of course, changed the password to the room. You can all see it, since I believe you.”

“But we’ll need to input another when we get out, so that doesn’t mean anything.” Tenko pointed out.

“Why do you say this? You don’t believe Angie?” Himiko pouted.

“I just wanted to le-

“Nyahahah! Don’t get angry with Tenko, she makes a good point! I actually didn’t consider that detail… well, too bad. But there will be many opportunities to bond today and in the following days.”

The lab was decorated with many lit candles, positioned near the corners of the room. The atmosphere wasn’t as much festive as it was calming. It almost reminded me of one of those romantic dinners you may see in movies.

On the back of the room, «ATUA» was written in capital letters, in pink.

“W-wait, is that blood?” I asked.

“Yes, nyahahah!” Angie giggled, then stopped when she noticed my expression. “You don’t like blood?”

It definitely isn’t in my “Top 10 things I want to see at a party.” I shook my head.

“Then I must apologize! I very much like blood, it’s what keeps us alive. I studied the circulatory system extensively.”

“Me too!” Himiko exclaimed. “Insects have a very different circulatory system from us humans! It’s much simpler but it’s still beautiful!”

“Where did you get that blood?” Tenko asked.
“From the conveniently placed blood bags in the drawers.”

“Was it needed for this reunion?”

“It’s a style choice, but we can decide to remove it! Let’s vote together. Since I don’t like people to feel uncomfortable, I’ll vote to wipe it off.”

“But you were the one to write it…” I said.

“Yeah, it’s not a big deal. Atua will still listen and be right besides us!”

“Gonta will follow Angie opinion!”

“Then, who wants to remove the blood, raise your hands!”

Everyone besides Himiko voted to clean the writing on the walls.

“Nyeh… of course…”

“Oh, Himiko! I thought you didn’t like that! Then I’m also voting no.” Tenko said.

“You don’t have to imitate me… I can decide on my own…”

“I’m sorry for you two, but this is the majority vote. Sadly democracy isn’t perfect… some say it’s the best chance we have to make the most people happy. But no matter how you act, someone will always be forgotten.”

Angie’s the Ultimate Supreme Leader. Judging from her words, she doesn’t seem to like democracy very much… I wonder, how does she lead? What are her policies? Back on her island things should go pretty well if she was awarded with such a prestigious title.

“Sorry Himiko.” Gonta got closer to the entomologist. “Next time it will be better, Gonta promise.”

“Don’t get too close to her!” Tenko warned, and the tennis player backed away.

“Sometime you need to surrender if your opponent stronger than you, but you can train and become better.”

“Yeah, maybe… I should find people who believe in me…”

“I very much believe in you, Himiko!” Tenko exclaimed.

But she was ignored. “What do we do now?”

“First, let’s clean that Atua writing. There’s some water and soap in the drawers.”

“Why are they there?” I asked.

“That’s a very personal question! If we continue to do AAAs you’ll get the answer!”

“Gonta will clean himself, then we can start praying Atua!”

As Gonta started wiping the letters off, Angie told us what was our plan for the evening. She invited us to sit in a circle and hold hands.

“Well… to start the first AAA, we need to be bound to each other. We must be united.”
“How do we unite?” Himiko asked, interested.

“In my island, every time a new traveler arrives we greet them and invite them to explore our little paradise. However, there’s a law established since after the first colonizers arrived there. To enter, there must be a strong bond with one of the people residing there.”

“A familiar bond, maybe?”

“No, the connection was physical. There are many ways to establish a bond, but some of them are not that suitable here.”

“And so what are we going to do? What kind of bond are you talking about?”

“Nyahahah! Let me show you!”

Angie stood up and retrieved a kitchen knife from one of her drawers.

“I took it from the kitchen this morning.”

“Why would you need that?” I asked, confused.

“We need it to establish the deepest connection possible.”

“Hey hey hey, didn’t you say this had to do with your island? Why do we need to do this? We’re far from your homeland.” Tenko said.

“Well, you see. The same connection is imperative if you want to connect with Atua and be able to talk to Him. I also did it the first time I attended a AAA, guided by my parents, and I never regretted it.”

“Anyways, what do we need that knife for?” I asked, once again. “Do we have to cut some cake or…”

“No, there’s no cake today. We need to make a blood oath!”


Tenko blinked her eyes twice in confusion.

“I would not consider that safe.”

“Nyeh. If you promise we’ll be friends if I do that…”

“We’re already friends. But if you agree to this, you’ll eventually be best friends with Atua as well.”

“Himiko, do you know that you can catch some terrible diseases if your blood is in contact with a other people’s blood?”

“Yes, but if they’re ill. And Angie isn’t.”

“Right! I’m one hundred percent safe! And we’re not going to bleed together for a long time!”

Thank God for that. But I still very much dislike the idea.

“We’re just going to cut our hands and hold hands together for a while, then all of you need to
shake my hand.”

“Gonta agree! He cut hands many times when playing, so not problem for him.”

“I… I guess… I’ll do it too…” Tenko muttered. “I trust Himiko’s judgement. And Angie seems healthy…”

Oh no… I’m the only one who is against this. I don’t want to be left behind and look like an outlier. But Angie said I shouldn’t be afraid to speak my mind, so I need to be clear about this.

“I’d like not to do that. I’m sorry.”

“Oh, really? Among all of you, Kiibo… you’re the one I hoped would agree.”

“W-what?”

“You’ve got so much potential, and you’re leaving it behind just for a cut on your hand…”

“Blood puts me off, there’s not much I can do about it.”

“As I said, though. It’s only going to be a cut on our hands. I have bandages and disinfectant, I’ll act immediately. This is just a way to make sure we’ll be united.”

“Please Kiibo, Gonta wants you to join!”

“It’s not about the pain… it… I don’t know, it feels wrong. Is it really necessary?”

“Yeah yeah! That’s a necessary step if you want to hear Atua’s voice! Otherwise we’ll have to kick you out of the AAAs! But I’ll still talk to you and wait for your moment to join.”

“Nyeh… what are you going to do?”

“It won’t hurt. I’ve cut myself many times.” Tenko reassured me.

I looked down at my hand. I had longer fingers than usual, some people actually found them sort of creepy. Aside from those, everything was pretty normal. But was a cut that big of a deal? Angie doesn’t have bad intentions and she helped me during those two last days. She tried to defuse conflicts that arose in the past and wanted to bring us together. After the advice she gave me, maybe it’s… rude to refuse her request. It’s just a cut after all. The others seem to care about me following them, even Tenko… who, to be honest, never shied away from arguing with her male classmates.

“Alright, but one of you will do it. I can’t bring myself to cut my skin voluntarily. It’s too difficult, I know my body refuses that.”

“Nyahahah! No problem, I’ll take care of it. I have done it before.”

Angie took the knife in her right hand and nonchalantly slid it on her other hand. The blood came out almost immediately, flowing slowly.

“Now it’s your turn.”

The leader passed the knife to Gonta, who also did his best to cut his hand before handing it to Tenko.

“Ow. Maybe it hurts some.”
“Tsk. Degenerates. A cut is nothing when you have to deal with the psychological stress that dozen of children cause.”

Apparently those are much more damaging than a cut. I suppose some wounds never heal.

Himiko was the last before myself. Now the knife was dirtied with the blood of four people. Never would I think I was about to cut my hand to make other people happy. Am I becoming crazy?

“Can you give me your hand?”

“Uh?”

“For the completion of the bond. I have to cut it, you said it to me.”

“Ah, right…”

Closing my hand, I extended my arm forward. I felt one of Angie’s hand under mine, probably to keep it in place.

“When I start sliding the knife, please don’t move. Otherwise it will be a mess.”

I nodded, my eyes still tight shut. I certainly didn’t want to see what was about to happen. The knife came immediately after. I felt like something was piercing through my skin –which was what actually happened- and then continued for another second.

But it was longer than a second if you asked me.

As soon as I understood that Angie finished, I tried to cover my wound with my other hand’s thumb. Then I opened my eyes.

“Okay now, let’s be quick! Let’s hold hands!”

We did as Angie told us to, then all of us shook her hand.

“Now we’re truly united!” She giggled. “Now, let’s tend to our wounds and we can finally start! Tell me if something’s wrong, okay Kiibo?”

“O-okay…”

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Kaede Akamatsu

“Aren’t you worried about Angie?” Rantaro asked us.

“She does appear to be very invested in people’s well-being.” Korekiyo said, even though that’s not exactly the case.

“Only the ones who don’t question her.”

“What do you expect? It’s obvious she hangs around those ones more. Not to offend you, but if you keep that passive-aggressive attitude around her, she’ll continue with her antics.”
“I’m only trying to protect you, Maki. And everyone who thinks she’s the messiah.”

“Angie has done some controversial decisions…” Kirumi intervened. “However, many of her claims are true. As she did not force you to join her group, you cannot force her group to leave her.”

“When you’re blinded by light you can’t see anything, I suppose. At least I came out from it.”

Huh? What does Rantaro mean?

“Where are you going?” I asked him, noticing he was leaving the cafeteria.

“Back to my room. To have a walk? I don’t know. I need to distract myself from this Angie business.”

We can’t allow him to go back there. We’ve got the Kaito problem sorted out, if only we manage to keep him and Kirumi here we’ll be able to search everyone’s room without any problem. But what can I do?

“I think a walk would be better. I can come with you if you want.”

I hope Maki is catching my signals. If I can keep Rantaro away from his room, she’ll be able to pick up the Kub Pads with Ouma’s help.

“You can come too if you want.” I said, referring to Kirumi.

I glanced at Korekiyo. He always has that mask on, but I knew he was smirking under it. He was perfectly aware of my plan.

“I do not mean to offend you, Kaede… but I was planning to show Kirumi my lab. She expressed interest in it, however she did not have the chance to spend time there.”

“Oh, I would very much like to admire what could be inside your research room. There might be costumes which remind me of locations I visited in my travels.”

“Kekekeh… Shall we go then?”

After Kirumi nodded, the two exited the cafeteria. Before leaving, Korekiyo gave me one last nod. Apparently he’s helping us too. I caught Maki’s expression on the other side of the room. She was not impressed.

At all.

I’m sure that if we would be able to communicate telepathically she would be scolding me. But luckily that’s a blessing and a curse I don’t possess.

“Thank you for the offer, Kaede. You should know I like to spend time with you, but this is definitely not the moment to do that. I need some time to think, alone.”

“Don’t you want some advice on what you should do? This situation is really stressing you out.”

“I can decide how to tackle tomorrow without any outside help, but thank you for your offer… again. If this was any other day I’d have accepted without hesitation. You can try tomorrow, maybe. I’ll probably be more friendly, unless Angie tries some weird shit yet again.”

I have the feeling he won’t be in a good mood for a while.
“See you around. I’m going.”

I thought that Rantaro would leave the cafeteria from the back door, but he took the other door instead.

“We need to move, now.” I whispered to Maki. “There’s going to be only so much time before Rantaro arrives in his dorms. But don’t run. We need to act normal.”

“Thanks for the advice, if it weren’t for you I would have sprinted like I never had done before.”

“This is not. The time for your. Sarcasm.”

“Wow, you even used your dramatic fullstop trope.”

I thought she cared about this. Maybe this is her way to handle stress. I bit my skin when I’m anxious, so…

We exited from the back. There were only a few minutes before night-time would start, and with that the reveal of the new motive. Ouma was already there when we arrived. We didn’t see Rantaro on the way.

“Move, start from the avocado’s room.” The martial artist said.

“Avocado?”

“Rantaro, who else looks like one here.”

“I already lockpicked the rooms of the ones who were at the AAA. Here are my two tablets, Angie and Tenko’s. I didn’t have the time to pick the others up.”

Ouma handed me the four Kubs Pads. I was tempted to swipe on them and discover what secret would they reveal, but that would only lead to chaos.

“I’ll take them to my room. Maki, go to Tenko’s, Kiibo’s and Gonta’s now. You know where the tablets are.”

I sprinted to my dorm. I didn’t have to use my key since I didn’t bother to lock it before dinner. In a matter of seconds I dropped the pads on the floor and turned back. Maki came out from Himiko’s room immediately after and passed me her secret Pad.

“This is stressing.” She said before going the other way.

With a side-kick, I put the tablet in my room and headed for Kiibo’s dorm. In a matter of seconds I was already out. Ouma lockpicked Rantaro’s room pretty quickly and Maki entered it to retrieve the Pad, as the robot moved to Kirumi’s door.

However, as I was heading for her room, I saw a shadow approaching. It was meters away from the double door which granted access to the dormitories. Thankfully I was right in front of it. Without thinking, I opened it slightly and positioned myself so that whoever was about to enter couldn’t see what was happening.

Rantaro was right in front of me.

“Kaede. What are you doing here?”

“Here? In the dormitories? Well, you know. This is were we have our showers and our beds, so it’s
common for us to spend time here.”

“No, I mean here here. In front of the entrance.”

At this point I hope Ouma noticed that somebody was about to foil our plans.

“Oh, that’s… because…”

And I tried to come up with an excuse that wasn’t too absurd. It didn’t work last night and I thought about it, but I had only a couple seconds to think about it for it to be believable.

“Maki is naked. Very naked.”

Because there are various levels of nakedness, yeah…

“In… the middle of the dorms.”

“Yes!”

I seized the opportunity. Rantaro appeared confused but not suspicious. He definitely didn’t expect that answer.

“She just had a shower, but her hairdryer doesn’t work. So I told her she could come to my room!”

I’m on a roll today. This could actually work. Even though I imagine Maki’s face behind me.

“Oh, then… uhm…”

“Yes! I’m naked.”

Maki’s voice came as a surprise.

“But I’m entering Kaede’s room now! I’m done! You can let Rantaro enter, don’t worry about me.”

I turned my head to see that Maki and Ouma were actually entering my dorm room.

“Here you go. You’re free!” I said, wiping the sweat off my forehead. I opened the door for Rantaro.

“I meant to ask you since this morning…” Rantaro furrowed his eyebrows. “Since when have you and Maki become so united?”

“You say that because I lent her my hairdryer? Girls do that all the time!”

“Huh. Really? I have sisters and they never talked about that.”

“Because this is personal stuff!”

“Anyways, you can’t deny you’ve spent most of those two days besides her. You should tell me what’s happening before I discover it on my own.”

He’s back to the cryptic guy status.

“There’s nothing to discover.” I crossed my arms, changing my tone. I took it lightly before, but this boy can really get on my nerves sometimes! I tell him we can walk together, he refuses and then he starts making demands!? Where does he think he is? “I also ignored Miu before Shuichi’s
death, then I started to spend time with her. There was nothing wrong with that.”

“She ended up dying though. Maybe you’re cursed. You should tell Maki.”

I seriously hope he’s joking.

“If you really think all the people I spend time with die, you should stay away from me, don’t you think?”

“Oh. Good one.” He snickered. “But I love risks. I see that you’re not that different from me.”

“It’s obvious that we must have something in common. My work is full of risks.”

“Great, let’s see if this last one pays off then. You and Maki can continue with your friendship, it’s not like I care anyways. See you tomorrow!”

The artist waved at me with what looked like a genuine smile, then closed the door. The locking sound came just after.

I entered my room to see Maki and Ouma sitting on my bed.

“Naked? Are you out of your mind?” Maki shouted.

“Don’t raise your voice, he could still hear us.” Ouma pointed out.

“Thank you, and Maki, you have to admit it was a perfectly believable excuse.”

“Why would my hairdryer be broken? Do you think I’d go around naked because I have my hair wet?”

“There’s no need to be this angry.”

“I can’t imagine why Rantaro bought into it. Any sane person would put something on after showering, especially if they have to go through a public area.”

“He definitely had something else on his mind.” Ouma said. “But we’ve already spent precious seconds on this useless conversation. We still need Kaito and Kirumi’s Pads before they finish with their business. I’ll be as silent as possible, but you need to guard the main door to avoid other unwanted visitors.”

Maki sighed, for what I presume the fifteenth time today. “Alright…”

“Ding dong bing bong! Attention, students of the academy! It is now night-time! And with this, it’s time to reveal the motive of the day! As you know, this motive will be the first of a long series if you don’t kill anyone soon.”

“Can’t we turn this thing off?” Maki asked.

“No, it’s better if we listen to it.”

“I really like informing you from my room. It’s way easier and definitely more comfortable than being around you guys, who complain all the time! And revealing a motive just before bed time… that’s spooky!”

“Will he go on for another ten minutes or he’ll be done soon?”
“He can’t continue for that long…”

“Right, so… I was here for the motive. I forgot to tell you this morning. When you kill you can use any of the motives told during the previous days, but only one of them, so choose wisely. You need to contact me by calling my name. The first motive is extraordinary fame! As soon as you leave the game, I’ll make sure you’ll be known everywhere! You can appear as a guest on TV shows, not pay in expensive restaurants and lots more! You may be thinking… but I killed someone, shouldn’t people criticize me? Well! I know that some of them have some problems with corpses, so you don’t need to worry. I, Monokuma, have a lot of ways to make you popular without revealing you caused the death of a bunch of young teens. Who would care about them anyway! You’ll be famous!”

Nobody here would kill for fame. I can’t believe one of my classmates would believe Monokuma’s words anyway.

“This motive will be the only one until tomorrow when daytime starts. At that point, a new motive will be available. However, despite that, I’ll reveal it to everyone when night comes. If you really want to know it, you can kill before night falls! Bye, my lovely students!”

“I see that as a weak motive.” 0U-M5 commented. “The Pads would have been far more dangerous.”

“Maybe the secrets Monokuma knows aren’t as damaging as we thought.” Maki followed.

“That could be true, but we can’t risk it. Now we must get inside Kirumi’s and Kaito’s rooms.”

Luckily for us, none of the two came close to the dormitories. We could take the Pads and I stored all of them in my closet. We agreed to deal with them the following day.

There’s my secret there. I know it. Because that must be it, I already know what Monokuma’s trying to do. I only have that secret. I can’t guess how the bear is aware of that fact, but… there’s nothing wrong if I check it out. No, because it’s mine. It won’t cause problems.

I picked Kirumi’s pad. I swiped my finger on it. Monokuma started talking.

I stood in silence as he repeated his usual introduction.

No, this is wrong.

Maybe I don’t want to know. Sometimes it’s better to be shrouded by darkness.

I threw the Pad to the ground, I told myself I wouldn’t listen to it. I stepped on it once, twice, three times. I shattered the screen. Monokuma’s voice was muffled, I couldn’t hear it anymore.

My secret would remain a secret. To me and to the others.

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Chapter End Notes

There are other free times in the next two updates, so I invite you to vote again for your favorite characters! If I won't receive enough votes I'll choose Gonta and Rantaro,
who were the other two picks for this part.

Anyway, thank you all for continuing reading this. I'm very sorry that I don't have a consistent schedule anymore, but I swear I'm ahead! I need to plan out the trial and finish the investigation, let's hope I can make it an enjoyable trial!
A virtual reality without real virtues: Daily Life (Part 5)

Chapter Summary

An argument breaks down at breakfast; The group tries to make sure nobody is on edge.

Chapter Notes

Sorry if I'm extremely late. I was about to post this chapter on Thursday when I had to go to the hospital because I had appendicitis... the most inconvenient time, since I was supposed to move to my university yesterday... how lucky. Thankfully I'm feeling better now.

About the chapter in itself, it's more on the short side. (I think? I always forget the usual length...)
But! In a week I'll post the second part of the day. This gives me extra time to work on the trial, since I couldn't do anything in those five days I was away from my keyboard.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

<<Ding dong bing bong!>>

My hand hurts. Maybe I shouldn’t have gone through with Angie’s plan. If I try to close it, it hurts even more.

I’m terrible; I can’t even handle a simple cut. And then I wonder why so few people like me. I always told myself that I wouldn’t care about others… yet, yesterday… I did that... because I felt wanted, I was happy to feel part of a group. I had some “best friends” in the past, but I had to leave them because of my talent… then nobody really caught my attention. Maybe they tried to break the ice, but I pushed everyone away. Focusing on my talent was the priority… space is so beautiful, yet we know so little…

Knock knock!

Uh? Somebody is at the door? Wait… did I wake up after the morning announcement?

Still confused, I made my way to the door.

“Who is it?”

“It’s Angie! Have you woken up now?”

“Y-yeah… I slept longer than usual.”

“Woah, maybe the assembly tired you out. We stayed up pretty late after all! Nyahahahah!”
But we didn’t do stressing activities. We told each other our stories, Angie told us about Atua, we ate some snacks and played board games she found at the casino… that’s very strange. I suppose I was particularly tired...

I opened the door. I was in a terrible state, but it felt wrong talking to the door instead of a real person.

“I came here a while ago after searching around. When I noticed you didn’t respond, I just waited for you to wake up.”

“Ah, thank you… but it wasn’t necessary. Look at the conditions I’m in…”

“Nothing that a quick shower can’t fix!”

“Yeah, I’ll be going then.”

“Nyahahah! Try to be quick, I want to try a new recipe from Tsumugi today!”

“Woah, already?”

“Yes, only trying. It doesn’t hurt. I’d like to get there before anyone else, to surprise them!

“Ah, I’ll see what I can do. But don’t count on me, you can start alone or you can ask Gonta, even.”

“Oh, okay… it’s just that you give off a reassuring aura, nobody ever told you that?”

“Actually, no…?”

Probably it’s my smell. How embarrassing.

“It must be Atua’s divine vision then! I’ll see you at breakfast! Nyahahaha!”

I showered as fast as I could. Despite that, when I arrived at the cafeteria I saw Rantaro cooking in the kitchen. Angie and Gonta were sitting at the table playing some strange game with their hands.

“Kiibo, I’m sorry, but Rantaro got here before me. I hurried here immediately after talking to Gonta.”

“Don’t get too worked up. We’ll get our chance another time.”

I said that, but deep down I was slightly happy I could postpone another cooking session to a following day.

“I was checking out Gonta’s hand. How’s yours doing?”

“Not that good… it hurts a lot.”

“You have sensible skin, Gonta thinks you should apply some cream.”

“Maybe, I’ll go check out the warehouse after eating.”

“We can come with you! The more, the merrier!

The cafeteria filled up pretty quickly. In a matter of minutes everyone turned up, including Kaito,
who missed both meals the previous day.

“How is the creation of the virtual world going?” Kaede asked.

“Fine, I’ve finished it… but I absolutely need to modify some key parameters. I won’t bore you with the details, but I’m certain Monokuma expected us to find that machine and predicted I would try to fix it.”

“Because you’re such a generous and talented inventor…”

“Don’t be so aggressive, Maki. He’s just talking.” Rantaro intervened.

He’s right. At least try to provide something to the discussion, don’t criticize someone the moment they start to talk… And you should never be sarcastic, that makes everything worse.

“He coded a lot of potentially hazardous objects we could use to kill each other.”

Tenko spoke up immediately, standing up. “Can we die in the virtual world? Are you saying this?”

“I didn’t figure out that part yet. It doesn’t seem likely, at the moment. Though it’s undeniable that it’s not normal to find a gun in a church…”

“A freakin’ gun?! No no no, I change my mind on that Neo World Program…”

“Don’t be a child, I’m deleting every dangerous entity in the program. That’s not an easy job, because I need to identify them first, then I must eliminate them from the terminal.”

“We actually explored some parts of the world.” 0U-M5 said.

“How vast is it?” Kirumi asked, her eyes lightening up. Her adventurous spirit is showing.

“I’m sorry to bum you out, but not much. Maybe that’s for the better.”

“It’s the same size as the school grounds, more or less. There are two buildings, but we have managed to check only one.”

“Ah, alright.” Kirumi sighed.

“You shall not worry.” Korekiyo tried to reassure her. “The world we are living in is full of immense beauties to witness.”

“Yes, it is true there are numerous places I have yet to explore.”

“When will we be able to go inside there?” Kaede asked.

“It should be ready by this night, we should hold another amazing party in the computer room to celebrate it!”

“No thanks.” Maki said.

Kaede agreed with the aikidoka. “I’m not against it either, but the setting… heh. And considering how the last party went, we should just focus on the virtual world.”

“Yeah!” Angie exclaimed. “There are a bunch of people who don’t want to go there either!”

“Those Gonta, Angie, Himiko, Tenko and Kiibo! No fake world, only real!”
“How ironic, considering you try to find peace by connecting to the mystical Atua.” Rantaro said while giving us the breakfast he prepared.

“Hey, that very rude. You not insult Atua.”

“Yes, say sorry to them.” Kirumi said.

“Alright, excuse me. Continue worshipping Atua, maybe he’ll help you survive.”

There’s no need to be this mean. If Rantaro has something against us, he should tell us directly. I hoped that Angie would bring some peace to the group, but it seems that some of us like conflict and want it to arise. This is why murders keep happening.

“We’re out of this Neo World business!” Angie announced. “You can go if you want, we’ll stick to our AAAs.”

“So we’ll continue doing those? I thought it was a one-time deal.” Tenko said.

“No no. Since you’re a teacher you know that classes are held daily. AAAs aren’t exactly that, but they’re essential for the understanding of Atua and the real world behind the veil of lies.”

“Copyright that, maybe it would be a good show.” Himiko commented.

“Oh, the Veil of Lies is already a theatrical play we have on our island. It’s very fun.”

As Angie continued to describe the little show her friends put on weekly, I heard Tenko whispering to Himiko. I don’t like to overhear, but they happened to be right beside me…

“I don’t think that going to the AAAs is a good idea, Himiko…”

“Nyeh… I’m trying to listen to Angie’s story. We can talk about that later.”

“No, this is important. Have you seen what she did to your hand?”

“That was my decision… and you did it too.”

“Yes, because I was thinking it would make you happy. You know that I only want to see you happy, right?”

“Please stop…”

“Why? Don’t you like my company? I thought we were friends… you need to listen to me. Angie isn’t good for your health.”

“Tenko, I said stop, please…”

“You liked to stay with me before, but then Angie came along… Can you tell me what you see in her that I don’t have? I want the best for you; I can do whatever you wa-

“I SAID STOP!”

Himiko’s voice interrupted every discussion that was happening at that moment. Angie stopped describing the details of the play, Korekiyo turned to face the entomologist and Kaito and 0U-M5 fell silent.

“Himiko…? What?” Kaede said after two seconds of complete silence.
You’re always near me, Tenko! Saying what I should do, what I shouldn’t, how should I behave and what’s good for me! Guess what, I can take care of myself!

“I didn’t know you had those emotions in you, this is a good st-

“And you’re still continuing with your advice…!” She sobbed. “I don’t want it, I’m not a baby who needs help, I’m your age… you’re like everyone else, trying to take advantage of me!”

“Advantage? What are you saying? I really care about you.”

“If you really do you would have left me alone a long time ago! I can function as my own being and I want friends who respect me for what I am! I don’t need a tutor, do you understand?!”

“I, I mean…”

“You don’t know anything about me, yours are all assumptions. I stayed around you because I believed in you, because I was too kind to tell you what I really think… but I know now… I should have told you sooner! You need to stay away from me! Please don’t talk with me, I had a lot of friendships that started like this and ended terribly! Stay away!”

Himiko pushed Tenko from her seat. It fell and the caretaker ended up on my legs. Meanwhile, Himiko got up and ran away from the back crying.

I expected Tenko to shout something about the legs of a degenerate male, but she stood still, not saying anything.

I had no idea of what I should have said, but I think the same was for everyone else in the room. Nobody said a word until Gonta offered to help Tenko. That’s when she woke up from her trance-like state.

“I… need to go to my room. See you in a while.”

Just like Himiko, she left.

“What a terrible breakfast.” Angie said.

“The hell happened?” Kaito exclaimed. “Everything was going well, until Himiko shouted like never before!”

“It is not like her to care so much about what is happening around her.” Kirumi said. “However, she might have reached her limit. She must have been storing quite a lot of stress.”

“Poor Himiko… she really snapped.” Gonta said. “Gonta don’t know if he can help her.”

“I propose to leave both Tenko and Himiko alone for some time.” Korekiyo intervened.

“But they definitely need some help, we can’t leave them like this! Atua also says they can’t be by their own!”

“I can’t speak for the divine Atua, but they both appeared very shaken. Tenko had her head on Kiibo’s legs for more than ten seconds. It would not happen under normal circumstances.” Korekiyo continued. “You can assume the situation is particularly… extraordinary.”

“There’s no need to focus on my legs, thank you.”

“It’s too soon now.” Kaede said her opinion as well. “Leave them alone for now. I’ll talk to them
before lunch, because they can’t be in that state for long.”

“I don’t know their personality that well.” 0U-M5 said. “Do you think they could be driven to murder?”

“Because of this? No, there’s no way. But Monokuma’s motives will continue for who knows how long. He said they wouldn’t target anyone in particular, but when was that bear completely honest? They don’t have to make up, but we have to make sure they are still themselves.”

“Are you sure you’re the right person for this?” Rantaro asked.

“If someone thinks they’re a good pick, raise your hand.”

“I think I can try.” Rantaro said.

***

Kaede Akamatsu


“You want to talk with Himiko and Tenko? I don’t mean to be rude, but maybe a girl would be better.”

“I agree with you if it’s Tenko we’re talking about, but Himiko’s still fair game.”

“No no no!” Angie intervened. “She definitely needs someone to trust! Have you ever spoken to Himiko during those eleven days?”

“Of course.” Rantaro furrowed his eyebrows. “We speak all the time during our meals.”

“You exchange some words, but nothing else.” Kiibo pointed out.

“And what you are suggesting with that?”

“Angie should be the one to talk with Himiko. She’s great with this.”

“She’s great at manipulating people, that’s what we’re talking about.” Kaito said.

“Nyahahahah! You can think that if you want! It doesn’t look like Gonta and Kiibo agree with that!”

“Yeah, Angie nice. She accepted Gonta when first met each other. She play tennis with him. She let him organize meetings.”

“We don’t have to argue about this, because it isn’t a competition.”

I didn’t like Angie and I supported Rantaro and Kaito’s opinion, but I had to lay that out clearly.

“Let’s put aside our differences for a moment and decide who’s the best pick for this. Our safety is at play here, we don’t want to have another murder.”

“Really wise, Kaede! Nyahahahah!”
“Should we vote then? I suppose that is the most fair choice.” Korekiyo proposed.

“I think it’s a compromise we can reach!” Angie nodded, saying that Atua would convince us.

“I nominate myself.” I said.

“Since there’s Angie in the mix, I’ll see myself out. I’ll only steal her votes. Kaede it is.”

He’s saying he wants me to win? Nah, probably he doesn’t want Angie to interact with those two more than she already does.

“I’m all for this guys, but can we cut to the chase? Kiibo and Gonta will vote for Angie, then everybody else for Kaede. Bam. We’re done.”

“Sorry to disappoint you, Kaito.” 0U-M5 spoke up. “However, I think Angie’s a more suitable choice.”

“What?! The fuck are you saying?”

“Yes! Thank you, Oums! I knew you would pick me!”

“Why did you vote for her? I told you not to listen to her bullshit!”

“You didn’t say that exactly. I remember clearly that you said I should report you everything I do when Angie’s around.”

“What?! You know what I meant!”

“I’m sorry, I misinterpreted your instructions. Despite this, I still believe that Angie’s more qualified than Kaede. Consider that she’s the Ultimate Leader, so she knows how to talk to people.”

“I should remind you that you have a button that allows for your head to be removed, essentially shutting you off. Two times red and we’re done with!”

“Oh dear!” Angie exclaimed. “Why would something like that ever exist?”

“Plus, Kaede can talk to them too, right?”

Yeah, even though my track record isn’t stellar here. I see why 0U-M5 prefers Angie to me. He’s seen that Miu, the one I spent the most time with, was the killer.

“Add that Angie developed a strong bond with Gonta. According to her words, this was established during the first day here, of which I have no memory. However, it’s clear that they are really good friends. She can do the same with Himiko and Tenko.”

“You should change your vote, it’s Kaito, your master, that demands it.”

“Hey, don’t treat him like a slave!” Angie protested. “He’s not that different from us!”

“You’re saying this only because he’s supporting you!”

“Actually, Angie always respected Ouma.” Kiibo noted.

“I also want to point out my main directive, the one you set at the time of my rebirth. I should always try to act for the greater good.”
“Good job, idiot.” Maki said.

“Hey! Who are you calling idiot?! Do I need to remember you that you caused the death of two people?”

“Funny, because if this is your reasoning, your party did the same thing. Differently from you, I’m not blaming anyone.”

This is spiraling out of control. Why does everyone here shout and attack other people? Our opinions are far too different for a peaceful environment… it seems Korekiyo is the only one who doesn’t complain all the time, and that’s saying something!

I raised my voice. “Can we continue with the vote and avoid bickering?!”

“I’m only trying to help you, Kaede!”

“You’ve done enough. Keep your mouth shut for now.”

The inventor crossed his arms, but thankfully kept silent.

“Let’s just raise our hands. Whoever wants Angie to go, keep your arm how it is, okay?”

“Alright!” Gonta nodded.

“At the count of three… one… two… three!”

I expected to be the one selected in spite of Ouma’s vote, however… Korekiyo voted for Angie.

“What the fuck man!”

“Korekiyo, thank you! Atua is grateful! Do you want to join us in today’s AAA?”

“I appreciate the invite, but I will politely decline.”

“I thought you would prefer Kaede to go.” Kirumi said.

“To tell the truth, I have no strong opinion towards either of them. Though I thought of a better option: one goes to Tenko, the other to Himiko. My vote grants perfect balance.”

That’s right. Because of Korekiyo’s vote now both Angie and me have five votes each.

“But how could you be sure of our votes?” Kiibo asked.

“Kekekehe… you are all so easy to understand, this definitely confirms me that.”

“This result satisfies me, yep!” Angie exclaimed. “I’ll go to Tenko then! Not now of course, you need to give them time.”

“I still think it would be better if the same person talked with the two of them.” Rantaro repeated.

“Very good! Does anyone want to change their vote?”

Nobody said anything.

“Then this is how we’ll do it! See you at lunch, I’ll surely bring Tenko with me!”
I cleaned up the kitchen after breakfast. We had nothing special to do, so I took this as a chance to spend time with one of my classmates.

**Free Time start!**

It’s been a while since I wanted to talk with 0U-M5 about something that wasn’t about the Killing Game. The opportunity presented itself to me after I headed out of the cafeteria. The robot was near the entrance without Kaito in sight. Quite a rare sight.

“Do you have some time to talk?”

“Are you disappointed I voted for Angie? I sense bitterness in your voice.”

Obviously he’s right... but I shouldn’t focus on this topic now.

“Don’t worry. I’m not here for this. I wanted to know more about you.”

“Ah.” 0U-M5 sighed. “There’s not much to talk about.”

“Nothing? Your creation and development... I’m curious!”

“I was born a few days ago, when Kaito restructured my code.”

That’s right, I almost forgot... well, I didn’t really, but it never crossed my mind. Oums doesn’t have any memory of his past self. He won’t even remember the last conversation we had in the courtyard.

“You know how that went, right?”

“Yes, I do...”

The robot tilted his head. “You look kinda worried. Why?”

Because I’m thinking of what he was like before Kaito recreated him... and he doesn’t know anything about his previous characteristics.

“It’s not about this conversation, nothing you should stress about.”

“But I can clearly find sign of distress. Considering the situation, I am 79% sure that the matter of the problem is myself. Of course that number is not precise, since I’m still gathering data.”

“Ouma, I assure you we can move on other things, tell me something about your abilities or something like that...”

“You are calling me with my past name. Kaito told me that name is not fit for me anymore, but it you wish to continue using it, it won’t hurt me.

“O-oh, sorry...”

“What for? I should be the one to do that, since I’m the one that helps you. It’s expected for me to be in the wrong.”

I... really have no idea of what I should be saying right now. Even if I would deny what he said he would still continue pursuing those ideas.
“Despite that, I can create a backstory for you to enjoy.”

“Eh?!”

“To accommodate your needs I’m ready to build an interesting and engaging past, you know? Do you want a happy backstory or a tragic one?”

“I... I don’t think that this is useful...”

“Ah, I see. Nothing extreme, then.”

“No, I have no interest in listening to something that isn’t real. I want to know about you, not about a fantasy you’ve created.”

“Is there something wrong with what I did?”

“Yeah...”

“But why? I won’t come up with nothing absurd. And even though those events didn’t happen, I’ll act like they did.”

“But it’s not the same thing. This is only pretending.”

“If you believe in something it can become real. Are you sure about what happened in the past?”

“About my past? No, nobody here does.”

I guess we’re very similar to 0U-M5 in this aspect.

“I didn’t mean that past. I was talking about the past you read in school and history books. You will never be sure that what you learned actually happened.”

“I see what you’re trying to prove, but... we have proof of most past civilization and their ways of life with books and findings all over the world...”

“Those could be fake, created by people that preceded us but succeeded them... or also by someone who wanted to obscure the truth. Have you ever heard of the Donation of Constantine?”

“No, but how do you do?”

“It was a piece of knowledge I stored after hearing or reading it from somewhere. Kaito didn’t delete everything that was in me, you know?”

I nodded. The inventor couldn’t have recreated him from scratch.

“In the Middle Ages, this document was used to prove that Constantine, a Roman Emperor, transferred authority over Rome and the western part of the Empire to the Pope. For almost five hundred years this was believed to be an authentic decree, whereas was only a forgery.” 0U-M5 explained. “People believed what they were told. The more we venture to the future, the more clouded the past becomes. It only takes a small error to change everything.”

“But we continue to make discoveries to uncover the past.”

“Some things will never be answered.” The robot concluded. “But to go back to what I said, your past might not be true. But you believe in it, and that’s enough. That shapes you.”
“I don’t get it. We don’t remember a lot about our life as Ultimates, but I know what I did at elementary school and in middle school. I have done and experienced those events.”

“Your life could be a lie. A series of events implanted in your memory, like a simulation, like the Neo World Program! Whatever happens there doesn’t really happen, but it changes you. So a made-up backstory is as good as a real one.”

I simply can’t believe that everything I’ve been told isn’t true. I know what happened to me, the friends I played with, the detective books I read when I was six.

“Oh, but I don’t want to invoke bad thoughts. That’s only my evaluation. I’m a robot, so there’s still a lot to learn! If I did something wrong, tell me! I need to improve! I’m 93% wrong on average, according to Kaito.”

Should I say him that this kind of discussion isn’t the best when you’re talking to people? But it isn’t wrong per se... it’s a more or less logical argument... not one I agree with, that’s for sure.

“Your silence isn’t working in my favor. I’ll take it into account next time. And also, you don’t seem in the mood for my backstory. It’s better if I go now.”

I didn’t learn anything about him, though.

“Can’t you stay a little bit longer?”

“I’m afraid I can’t. I’ve already spent too much time without Kaito.”

“Ah, o-okay...”

After talking with 0U-M5 and discovering nothing about him I went to the casino. I lost most of my Monocoins when I had that game with Monokid, but I didn’t bring everything I had. There were some prizes that I’d have liked to get, since you could get things ranging from dolls to clothes from a gacha machine in the school.

Then there’s also that strange hotel... the door’s still locked...

While I was thinking about what Kumasutra might mean, the broadcaster lit up. For once, there were the Monokubs instead of Monokuma.

“Hello everyone!” Monotaro announced. “Now that we’ve sorted everything out, it’s time to get back to business!”

“Yes, I waited for this moment.” Monokid said.

“The great Monophanie’s here, and she’s as happy as ever!”

“YES. DO NOT TRY TO GO AGAINST ME AGAIN.”

“O-of course...”

“We invite you all to the AV room after dinner! It’s time to see a new and exciting snippet of your past!”

“When we say invite, we mean force.” Monokid clarified. “But we try to make our best to seem friendly.”

“Look who’s talking!” Monophanie exclaimed.
“DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?”

“No, no! I’m being so friendly right now! You can’t even imagine how friendly I am! Do you want my flower? I’ll give it to you because I’m friendly!”

“Uhm… we’ll see each other tonight! Bye!”

…Another one of those. It looks like we can understand more about our past lives. What Monokuma showed us on the fifth day was extremely vague. After all that happened, I can’t even remember it clearly. Some kind of reporters were trying to search what I think was an island, but the transmission cut off… will we know the full picture? No, that’s impossible. Monokuma will always keep us guessing.

Rantaro was just sitting on one of the benches in the school entrance. He didn’t look like he was doing much, so I approached him.

“Hello, Rantaro.”

“Hi, Kaede. What brings you here? Do you want to talk with me?”

“Apparently, otherwise I would have completely ignored you.”

Most of the time I don’t like how Rantaro acts, but I feel like that if we were in a normal situation he would be a good friend. With all of this drama and suspicions, however, nobody acts like they usually do...

Rantaro snickered and shrugged. “Right, understood. Then have you found an idea for your true second passion?”

Ah, yes. Last time I spent some time alone with Rantaro I agreed to search for another thing I particularly like. I forgot.

“Sorry, I had so much to do. It completely faded from my mind.”

Now that I think about it, I did the same exact thing with Kiibo just a few days ago, trying to help him find another talent. That didn’t end up well, though...

“That’s unfortunate. Luckily for you, I’ve compiled a list of potential hobbies you can pick up.”

“What? I... I didn’t think you would take this so seriously.”

“Hobbies are important when you want to distract yourself from your everyday life. Sometimes it can be tough.”

“What are yours then? If you’re so keen on me choosing one, you must have done the same.”

“I’m actually very skilled in nail art. But I have other hobbies too.”

“That’s curious. Is it because you had many girlfriends?”

Rantaro looked uncomfortable. “You see, I never had one...”

“I can’t believe that.”
“Many people assume that about me, but really, I’m not interested in those kind of relationships.”

“Ah, I see. Is it because of your large family?”

“Partly, yes. I spent so much time taking care of my sisters that I simply couldn’t do much else. My parents were quite busy with their own things.”

I was curious to know more about Rantaro’s parents and if they were as bad as mine, but I decided to keep silent. You don’t mess with those kinds of subjects.

“But it’s not like I was sad about that. I loved spending time with my little sisters. It’s very strange, though... so many girls and I’m the only boy in the family. That’s why I picked up on feminine concepts like nail art.”

“Maybe you should try searching for a girlfriend when we escape. I doubt that you’d have to wait for a long time.”

“Maybe... but I told you that I know nothing about the love world. For now, it’s best for me to stay away from it.”

“Hey, wait a second!” I exclaimed. “Nail art doesn’t count as an hobby, you’re an artist.”

“It does relate to my talent, but it doesn’t matter.”

“Yes it does! I bet you're so good at arts because you started with your sisters’ nails.”

“I suppose... you can consider those my first canvases, alright... but this doesn’t mean that isn’t an hobby. It’s like saying your hobby can’t be solving puzzles, because as a detective you do the same thing.”

“First, I find puzzles boring. Second, even if I did enjoy them it would be an hobby, because investigating and puzzles are two entire different activities.”

“Oh, this means that I have to cross out puzzles from my list...”

“Have you listened to what I said?”

“Ah, yes. If you’re not content with nail art, I can tell you more. I like gardening.”

I don’t know why, but Rantaro does look like someone who would like spending time outside with plants, with a lot of patience and hard work...

“Nothing exceptional, but I tend do enjoy it. I only took care of my house’s garden, sometimes with my sisters, but I did that at the best of my abilities.”

“Wow, I’d like to see some photos.”

“Ah! Don’t say that gardening doesn’t count either because it could be considered an artistic expression!”

I was about to say that...

“I do organize my garden to be pleasing to the eye, but that’s not the main purpose. Garden design is a completely different thing from gardening and that’s more similar to art in general.”

“And you’ve never tried it?”
“Too much work... I’m not a botanic. I’d probably screw up, so I stick to my sculptures and paintings.”

“If you put gardening on your list I’m already telling you it’s not my cup of tea. But I’d enjoy seeing your paintings about your garden.”

“I’ve never said I did that.”

“Two plus two is four. You told me you like impressionism and painting landscapes. You have your garden near you and that is surely useful.”

“Ha, you guessed it right. I always draw parts of my garden. Congratulations, Kaede. Perfect detective job.”

Is he being serious or not? He looks genuine...

“If you said gardening is a no, hmm... what about calligraphy?”

“Is it even a hobby?”

“The book in the library said it is.”

“What book?”

“Ultimate Hobbies List Deluxe: Definitive Edition Remastered. Not making it up. Do you want to check it out? It has all the possible hobbies ever conceived in alphabetical order. I only chose the best ones.”

“For example?”

“Glassblowing.”

“I’m not able to do that!”

“You can try.”

“People need twenty years to become proficient.”

“Time to start then.”

“Next hobby, please.”

“Soapmaking!”

“You said you chose the best ones. I think we have completely different interests.”

“Last one! Wood carving!”

“You’re back to your garden.”

“Oops. That’s true... maybe I picked the ones that sounded better in my head.”

“You seem to really like this hobby searching. What about going through those hobbies another time? You can come back to me once you’re done and we could discuss your new option.”

“...Okay. I’ll find your new passion. But you have to cooperate when we talk again.”
“Fine. Try to find something feasible and not too hard, though...”

Free Time End.

Chapter End Notes

If you want to vote for FTEs you still can! However I'm not sure I can squeeze in another FTE for Chapter 3. So expect them in Chapter 4, most likely.
A virtual reality without real virtues: Daily Life (Part 6)

Chapter Summary

Kaede Akamatsu

It was almost lunchtime. I took a deep breath and went to the dormitories to talk with Himiko. I should have expected her breakdown… she told me that Tenko was always near her… coupled with the fact that the entomologist always tried to hide when she was around… if there weren’t so many problems to face I’d have understood what was going on earlier. However, there’s way too much happening at once. I can’t focus on everything… but now I’ll try to avoid a disaster.

I rang Himiko’s doorbell, but there was no response. Expected.

I didn’t want to press her, however… she can’t bottle up her emotions. This will result in her lashing out and saying what she doesn’t really think, again.

Two, three times.

Maybe she was sleeping.

But she had to go to lunch… she never skipped a meal.

Fourth time, fifth. Thankfully, she opened the door.

“I thought it was Tenko. She would have insisted… just like you.”

We’re starting with the wrong foot here.

“You know, it isn’t healthy to stay alone and isolate yourself.”

“It’s easy for you to say. You don’t understand me. But it’s okay, I don’t mean to criticize you for that… nyeh.”

“What do you mean? Maybe if you explain why you think that…”

“I have never been an extrovert. It’s obvious that staying with other people recharges you, but for me it’s the opposite. I love being alone, and that’s what I do when I’m tired.”

“If I’m tired I also want to be alone…”

“I’m not referring to that… nyeh. Let’s not continue talking about this, since I already know what you’re here for.”

It does relate to the “alone” thing though.

“I know what I did at breakfast wasn’t normal for me, but I stand for what I said. I don’t want to stay close to Tenko anymore. She’ll continue to act like she always did… I don’t need protection
and neither her friendship. Can’t I decide the people I want to spend time with?”

“You definitely can, I’m not here to tell you that you and Tenko should act friendly towards each other.”

“And why are you talking to me now?”

“I wanted to let you know that Tenko definitely wanted the best for you, she really cared. You realize that, don’t you?”

“If you care about someone you should give them space when needed. Tenko only wanted someone to protect, a fake child to take care of, like she always does. You know that she disapproved of my friendship with Gonta? For what reason? Because he’s a boy… nyeh.”

“It’s one of her faults, definitely. I see why you want to cut ties with her, but it’s impossible for you two not to have any interaction whatsoever, especially since we don’t know for how long we’ll stay here. Anyways, you see that Tenko didn’t want to harm you?”

“In her twisted way of thinking, yeah… but this doesn’t mean I have to feel sorry for her. She could have ruined my life if this continued. Now she doesn’t want me to spend time with Angie…”

So that’s why they argued. I can’t blame the caretaker, probably she’s the only one who noticed that something strange was happening there.

“Hey, why do you have a bandage on your hand?”

“Nyeh… I cut myself with a knife.”

“Oh, I didn’t know you tried to cook.”

“Cook?... Yes, yeah… Angie and I tried some recipes from Tsumugi…”

I furrowed my eyebrows. She wasn’t telling me the truth.

“What were you preparing? It couldn’t have been pancakes because you don’t use knives in that case…”

“Spaghetti with tomatoes.” She answered immediately. “They were terrible, so we threw them away.”

Despite her lack of hesitancy, I just can’t believe her. Angie definitely has something to do with this, and it’s more than a cooking session. I have to check everybody else’s hands too.

“Will you come to lunch? It’s not healthy to skip a meal.”

“Maybe I’ll eat more at dinner. What difference does it make… nyeh.”

“Just… don’t do anything stupid, ok? Everytime we argued… you know what happened.”

“You shouldn’t worry about me. I’ll never murder anyone. Sadly, I can’t say the same for Tenko…”

That's not what I expected from her.

"Bye, Kaede."
“Do you th-

I tried to ask her one more question, but she closed her door. I did my best, but I couldn’t convince her to come at lunch.

I’m confident that she won’t kill anyone. She’s a sweet person, even though she doesn’t show it. But she’s right… maybe we should worry about Tenko…

***

Kiibo

We didn’t see Tenko and Himiko at lunch, but Angie reassured us she convinced Tenko and made her feel better. Kaede said the same, telling us how she though Himiko was feeling okay, even though she noticed something strange. Maki asked her what was she talking about, but she said that would bring that up at another time.

However, it’s not Kaede who convinced the entomologist… at least, she wasn’t the only one…

°*° Sometime in the morning… °*°

“Angie, why are we in front of Himiko’s door?” I asked. “Shouldn’t Kaede talk to her?”

“Kiibo, don’t you believe in me?”

“Y-yeah, why shouldn’t I?”

“Great!” She smiled. “And you, Gonta, are you with me?”

“Always always!”

“Then I’ll ring Himiko’s doorbell. I don’t know if we can really trust our detective. She’s extremely helpful in class trials, that’s sure, but with the other things… well…”

“You want to talk with Himiko and Tenko? Have you told Kaede?”

“No, that would be terrible! We should let her believe she was the first to talk with Himiko.”

“Ah… why?”

“You see, even though Kaede’s kinda bad at convincing people, she’s far from being a bad person! I really respect her; she’s very smart. If we tell her what we’re doing, she’ll get very angry in an instant! Moreover, for her… what I’m doing is wrong.”

“But it not wrong because Angie wants to do right thing!”

“That’s exactly what I want, Gonta. If we go to Himiko before Kaede we’ll make everyone happy. We; the ones who though ahead, Himiko; because we’ll tell her the right words, and Kaede, who’ll never know about this discussion!”

Himiko opened up the door.

“Angie, is Tenko with you?”
“No, sweetie, I’d never bring her to you. She did behave badly.”

“Yes… I knew you would see that. But I’m sorry to have caused all of that trouble…”

“Shh, you don’t have to worry. It was perfectly understandable. Tenko has been way too strict with you, I saw that from the first day.”

“Gonta too. Because Tenko didn’t want me and Himiko to be friends.”

“However, we have made an oath yesterday, do you remember?”

Our cut… I looked at my bandage. Now we were bound for life, according to Angie.

“Yes…” The entomologist nodded. “I know that, maybe I shouldn’t have…”

“No, you must never regret what you did in the past, being both good or bad.”

“Though what us did yesterday good.”

“Of course. Tenko might never change, but you can. You’ll definitely become a better person thanks to all those meetings, and maybe you’ll find the strength to forgive her mistakes.”

“I see, if you’re sure about this…”

“I’m certain of it.” Angie smiled. “As long as you have me, Gonta and Kiibo as friends you’ll never have to worry again. We’ll be like brothers, protecting each other in difficult situations, like this killing game.”

“And what will happen when we’ll manage to escape?” I asked.

“I fear that won’t be possible, sadly.” Angie sighed. “However I’m not sad about this. It seems this will be our new home.”

“Why are you saying this? Don’t you want to return to your island?” I asked.

“I’d really like to, but our situation is not that good. I’m sure my friends there will manage!”

“I have to say, I like it here… if not for the fact of the killing game…”

Himiko’s right. Despite everything, this is a nice place to live. I remember I didn’t have a lot of friends before I was brought here, and the ones who I spent time with probably don’t care about me as much as the others. But here… we have a small group of friends who have to stay together to survive. It’s easier to connect with others in difficult situations, even though it seems strange…

“If only we could live in peace…” Angie sighed. “This needs time, but I’m sure we’ll building towards a hopeful future.”

“Nyeh… right. Next time I’ll think more before doing something.”

“Yes, follow Atua’s instructions and avoid conflict. Try to smile, always! This will make everyone feel at ease!”

“I should smile more around people, not only bugs…”

“Ah, before I go! Kaede will also pay you a visit in a while, she’ll talk to you about the same thing… but you shouldn’t tell her about this conversation. She gets irritated easily…”
“I noticed…”

“And most of all, if she sees the cut on your hand, tell her that you cut yourself while cooking tomatoes.”

“Why? Will she shout at me if I tell her about the AAA?”

Angie nodded. “I fear she can’t understand Atua yet. She might see that cut as a terrible sign, and you can’t afford that, no no! She might treat you like Tenko did.”

“No, I don’t want that!”

“Then you must lie to her. But it isn’t a bad lie. Sometimes lies are necessary to go forward, and the truth makes you fall behind. If you know you’re doing the right thing, a lie is as good as the truth.”

“Angie, thank you… nyeh. Nobody ever treated me like you…”

“Poor Himiko… I swear everything will be different from now on. This is the chance to start a new life! Nyahahah!”

“Well… I’ll go back to my room. Thank you, thank you…”

“You’re always welcome!” Angie exclaimed as Himiko closed her door.

“Did you see how well that went? I wonder why some people didn’t vote for me…”

“People don’t know you like we! People think Angie bad, but Gonta don’t understand why.”

“Some humans are complete mysteries. Only Atua knows their intentions and desires, we can try to decipher them… but it’s impossible to know for certain.”

Angie did a good job; nobody could deny that. However, now that Kaede will talk with Himiko, she’ll be praised instead. That isn’t fair.

“You should tell the others about this talk we just had. They’ll understand!” I said.

“Why? I don’t want to be appreciated because of this. People need to come to me by their volition, nyahahah!”

“But… everyone will think that…”

“I know, and I don’t mind. It’s better this way, it’s an illusion that will help the group. We know what happened, and that’s why I brought you both with me. Too let you see I only want the best for you.”

“I… I didn’t need confirmation, I know that…”

“Gonta too, Angie doubt Gonta? Because Gonta never doubt Angie.”

“No, I always believed in you! It’s like a failsafe, if something truly terrible happens, you know the truth.”

“Ah, I understand, but… I don’t want to underplay Kaede’s usefulness, but here there’s your reputation hanging.”
“You’re cute when you worry about me, but I assure you, there’s nothing to fear. I have you at my side, and that’s all that matters.”

“You make Gonta blush, thank you.”

“Nyahahah! I’m happy you think the same! However, I must leave to your own now. I’m going to check if Tenko is in her room.”

“We can’t come?”

“Well, I know that she actually physically touched you, but… I don’t know if we can be sure she won’t return to her old self…”

“Uh, yeah… considering the situation she’s in…”

“I’ll talk to her by myself, it will go swimmingly. I know exactly what Tenko wants to hear.”

“Can Angie tell Tenko… Gonta don’t want to be enemy with her?”

“I’d really like to do that, but I think it isn’t the right time to say that… yet. You see, she joined us because Himiko did the same. She might not be a true friend.”

“Oh, but Gonta believe in Tenko even if Tenko don’t believe in Gonta.”

“I do too! I’ll make sure to remind her all the amazing adventures we could have if she stays with us. We all care a lot about that caretaker, right Kiibo?”

I suppose… I don’t have a strong bond with Tenko. Before the AAA we never talked much… yeah, she said that my degeneracy wasn’t as bad as she initially thought, and I assume that’s a big compliment from her… but I wouldn’t call her my friend. She never did something for me and I never searched for her company.

Angie told me I should speak my mind more often; that I shouldn’t be influenced by others’ opinions… but I’m not sure about what I want. I’m indifferent to Tenko, but that’s because I don’t know her that well.

“Yeah…? Apart from the menace shtick, she seems cool… I guess?”

“Great, see you at lunch! Nyahahahah!”

...

Kaede might have played a part, but… Angie was the one who made Himiko feel comfortable again.

“Why won’t you tell us?” Rantaro asked Kaede. “You brought it up, so what’s the point of keeping it a secret?”

“Because I need to be certain about my suspicions. I don’t want to cause chaos for nothing. And I have to admit, my intuitions have been wrong in the past. This is not a class trial, but sometimes you need clues for the things that appear to be the most trivial.”

“If there’s something wrong with Himiko you need to understand what it as soon as possible.” 0U-M5 said. “The situation appeared critical.”
“Maybe I should try to talk to her too?” Angie asked.

“Please, we had enough of you.” Kaito commented. Ugh. If only they knew about this morning… I desperately wanted to tell them, but I know that would be stupid… we need to avoid conflicts, but at times… people are truly blind. Or maybe they are only pretending not to see.

“Are we attending the meeting the Monokubs told us about?” Kirumi asked.

“We don’t have a lot of options. They weren’t subtle; that wasn’t an invitation.” Maki pointed out.

“I should remind you that we did not understand what was the subject of the video.”

“Our past, allegedly.” Korekiyo spoke up. “In spite of that, I do understand your reservations about those videos. Monokuma assured us they are connected to our lost memories, even though we cannot confirm that claims.”

“They could lead to another motive eventually… the one that will definitely pit us against each other.” Kaito said. “I obviously hope that’s not the case, but man, Monokuma could do that.”

“You can speculate all that you want, but Maki’s right. We don’t have a choice. We need to go there, all of us. And if that doesn’t happen, Monokuma will take us there.” Kaede spoke up.

“Hello hello!” Monotaro greeted us. “The show’s about to start, we’re waiting for our dad to show up!”

“Please come in! We tried to make sure all of you could sit this time.” Monophonie said, even though nothing in the AV room changed.

“Sister, you said that but you forgot to bring chairs.”

“I’m sorry Monokid! Don’t bully me!”

“HE IS NOT BULLYING YOU. YOU DID SCREW UP.”

“Uhm, okay, Monodam…”

“NEXT TIME TRY TO PAY MORE ATTENTION.”

“Hey, what are you doing, my dear children?”

Monokuma appeared from the ceiling, disregarding every known physical law as we know it.

“I have been meaning to ask you this question since we met; how can you appear wherever you like?” Kirumi asked.

“There are a lot of secret Monokuma passageways in this area, and I’m the only one who knows them all! Also, there are multiple copies of me, and the one most close to a location is activated as soon as requested.”

“So there’s somebody controlling you.” Kaede observed.

“More or less, if you think so…” He snickered. “But I’m not going to tell you that, because it wouldn’t impact the killing game at all. The only thing you need to know is that Monokuma is the one that has complete control on the school grounds!”
“Thanks for that information.” Maki rolled her eyes.

“By the way, aren’t two people missing? That short red-haired bug lady and the obsessed teacher?”

“Daddy, you don’t remember their names? Could that be you’re getting old?!”

“What? No, our dad won’t ever get old!”

“You’re so cute when you worry about me!” Monokuma cooed. “Don’t be so anxious, I can always be replaced when it’s needed!”

“Oh, you scared me, daddy!” Monophanie cried.

“But I can’t play a video if they’re not here! You need to show some respect!”

“They had their share of problems, you should leave them alone.” Kaede said.

“Hey! I’m your headmaster, don’t try to respond to me if you don’t want get detention!”

“What would this detention be?” 0U-M5 asked.

“Torture, of course! Violence against headmaster Monokuma is prohibited! You think you have the right to speak your mind in this academy?! Of course not!”

“Can’t you play the video without them? Will something change if they’re not around?” Angie asked.

“I suppose not, but they’ll be missing a very important part of their past! You shouldn’t miss that, since you’ll discover so much about your life!”

“We will notify them as soon as this meeting ends, ok? If you want them here, I can go to their rooms myself and take them here.” Rantaro said, resolute. “The rules never specify that attendance is mandatory, except for the class trials, so you’re in the wrong now.”

“Alright! I have to concede! But I’m allowed to add new rules! From this point on, you’ll come to the AV room every time I summon you! If this rule is disregarded, the offender will be punished by the Exisals.”

“Oh, I hope it won’t be gory! Eww!”

“We’ll take care of that, sister. You can stay behind and leave this to me.”

Monokuma lifted up the canvas and took another USB stick, seemingly at random, then plugged it into the computer on the desk.

“I must say I wasn’t very generous last time, you may have understood zero about what was going on in that video.”

“Don’t be so harsh!” Monotaro exclaimed. “You did your best!”

“I hope that this one clears things up! Grab your popcorons, because it’s time for reveals!”

***
The Monocubs rolled the canvas down and turned the lights off. We stood in silence as the projector started showing a new clip… this time, it looked like a television report, but there were no images… then a woman started to talk.

“...multiple sources have reported that the island is now under control. Health organizations are coming to the area either by boat or by helicopter to help the residents who have managed to survive. According to those, the island, once a paradise, was taken by the enemy by storm.”

At this point, a slideshow of various images appeared. I remember some of them! They were in the last video we saw! That tower, the cemetery… the large bridge…

“Because of the lack of information, no one dared to enter the area, leaving it unexplored. However, FuZRZZZR ZZRRZZation was the first who sent multiple of their men to scout the area. In fact, they received reports from anonymous sources, which claimed that people were taken hostage and kidnapped, only to be left alone in apartments in the city... one of them was helped by the famous serial killer, apparently reformed…”

Then it was the turn of a megaphone.

“The company produced this prototype, which apparently causes multiple bugs in the code of the robots populating the city, ensuring a successful counterattack.”

The scene changed completely. Two people in suits were talking, sat near a long table.

“Who could think that two young girls could take the city back in a matter of days.”

“I told you so, the asset we brought to you was the main reason why I wanted to try this operation.”

“Yes, but the problem isn’t resolved yet. They reported that three of the five children died, but they have no word on the others.”

“One of them helped them before the confrontation with their leader, so I would say she’s on our side, even though we have failed to contact her. You should remember these are still children.”

“Fair. You see, however, the reason of our concern. That is why we’ll send backup. We must search and find the ones who caused this mess in the first place. We can’t let them roam freely.”

“I understand.”

“We also need to understand how to free the other children. If we save them, our mission will be truly complete.”

“I know, but that appears impossible.”

“At the moment. Our tech department is creating tools to open the device on the heads of the children who fell under the control of that girl. It may take a year, but not less. There are hundreds of lives at stake here.”

“Of course, I trust you are trying to speed up the process.”

“What about the Captive and the… intern..? I should say. Are you sure they can be trusted?”

“As long as I tell them what to do, they’ll both follow my instructions. Sadly that’s both a blessing
“And that’s it!” Monokuma explained. “Wow, so many memories! I almost tear up!”

Monokid turned the lights on. It didn’t take much to realize none of us really understood what we saw.

“I don’t have a fucking clue about what just happened.” Kaito commented. “Anyone?”

“Wait, Gonta sure last line looks important!”

“Saving Earth from despair, that’s a big claim. I have no idea of its meaning, but he looked so solemn when he talked about that!” Angie observed.

“Let’s clear one thing first. The first part of the video was talking about the same place of last time.” I spoke up. “The scenery was the same.”

“Undoubtedly. Monokuma informed us that place is where we lived before our memories were lost.”

“Not really.” I said. “He said we lived there in the past, but who knows at which time? Maybe we spent our childhood there, not our adolescence. Pointing that out now, even though that doesn’t relate with the video we saw today. It would have been too easy.”

“Then can you tell us what you understood?” Maki asked.

“The island, where Towa City is located, fell into enemy hands. What enemy? Difficult to say, we don’t have any information. The fall happened extremely quickly, because the reporters that were sent to the scene had no idea of the trouble they were getting themselves into. They were killed on sight.”

“So… we saw the death of those two people.” Rantaro said.

Sadly, that’s the truth.

“That’s what I think. However, two girls tried to take back the city. And they did it. That’s are the pieces of the puzzle that I fit together.”

“I had understood that too.” Kirumi intervened. “However, I still cannot understand why it is connected to our past. And most of all, why I fail to remember anything about it. I travelled to many countries, though Towa City… no memories about it.”

“They mentioned children, they must be related to this story.” I intervened.

“I fail to see how, though…” I muttered, scratching my cheek.

“Maybe you were those?” 0U-M5 hypothesized. “Of course, not me, since I’m a robot…”
“No, the man said that the five children died… and even if he was wrong, there are fifteen of us here. The numbers don’t match.”

“The other names that appeared important are *Future Foundation* and *despair.*” Rantaro recounted.

“*Future Foundation* is the organization that freed Towa City, right?” Maki asked. “What about the other one?”

I remember Monokuma mentioning the word despair many times, almost as if it had a different meaning from the one we know…

“Despair, you mean?” Monokuma jumped on the desk. “Despair is what I love to see! I feed on despair! Oh, so sweet and pure!”

Yeah, exactly like that…

“Despair is unpredictable, that’s why it’s so beautiful! A world filled with despair, that’s my dream!”

“The man could have been referring to many things, we can only speculate.” I said. “However, I think that there must be a connection with Monokuma. Maybe… they’re talking about other killing games?”

“I support that hypothesis. Monokuma hinted at multiple killing games held in the past.”

“So we’re not the first?!” Angie exclaimed. “That’s terrible! I wonder how many people died…”

“How come we don’t remember anything about previous killing games though?” Kiibo asked.

“Parts of our memory were selected and deleted, I assume… Shuichi and me arrived at that conclusion. I don’t know how our kidnapper managed to do that, but that’s the only explanation that comes to mind.”

“And that’s the truth!” Monokuma nodded. “Congrats, Kaede. I didn’t plan to reveal the details, but that’s exactly what happened! Thanks to the advancement in modern technology, we were able to delete memories and at the same time, make you remember that those were forgotten!”

“We?” Rantaro raised an eyebrow.

“Yes! Me and the Monokubs!”

“I never heard of this possibility.” Maki spoke up.

“It was only known by a small portion of people in the entire world; those who funded the project.”

“That lines up with our theory on the identity of the kidnapper.” I continued. “He must be a wealthy individual, capable of building this entire area, have enough political power to keep us imprisoned and enough money to delete our memories.”

Why would someone do this? Just for their enjoyment? And under which circumstances other people would sit back and not do anything about it? There are sixteen teenagers who could kill each other at any moment, and nobody has come to save us yet…

“Why did this person make us forget specific events?” Rantaro asked. “If he only wanted to trap us, that step is definitely unnecessary.”
“Maybe there’s something that we did… but they don’t want us to know.” Kaito said.

“Unlikely. If that happened, only memories related to that would be deleted. Instead, the ones we don’t remember seem connected to this Towa City.”

“They did not delete memories related to our talent.” Korekiyo said. “That is very curious.”

“You can speculate all you want, but the only information we have as of now is what we have saw in this room.” I repeated. It sucks not knowing the full picture, but only time will tell us the truth.

Time and corpses. Because Monokuma will show us a new video after another dead body would appear… but I would never trade knowledge with people.

“That not a lot of info…” Gonta said.

“I know. It’s still too vague. We have no idea of what we did in Towa City. Maybe we met there and we ended up working together, or we could have never met before we woke up in lockers in this place. Monokuma won’t give us any concrete information.”

“Hey! You should be grateful! I used to tell nothing at all!” Monokuma exclaimed, eating the USB key.

Do they end up somewhere? Can we retrieve them in the future? Who knows…

“Anyways…” I continued. “Maybe we should ignore all of this for now. We will gain nothing if we continue trying to understand what’s impossible. After all, this could also be a lie…”

“I always tell the truth when it comes to past identities! And everything except one thing!”

“What’s that thing?” Kiibo asked.

“Like I was going to tell you!”

“I’d say he lies when it’s most convenient…” Kaito furrowed his eyebrows.

“Oh, look at the time!” The bear exclaimed. “It’s nighttime, guys! You all know what that means!”

“A NEW MOTIVE. SUCH EXCITEMENT.”

“No luck for the last motive, uhm… I have to be honest, that was pretty weak. But that’s what happens when you end up with release benefits…”

“Please daddy, we want to know your next trick! What is it going to be?!”

“Hold and behold, the second motive is **exceptional wisdom**! You heard that right, you’ll be able to know so much that your head is going to explode!”

“That must be a lie, how would you do that?” Rantaro asked.

After all, Monokuma’s prize looked fake… fame is one thing, but he can’t make anyone knowledgeable out of nowhere.

“If you don’t like this motive you can always claim the first one! I’m generous, but as you kill you’ll be able to take advantage of only one of those… I don’t have all of the resources you might imagine!”
“Where would you store those resources that make us extremely wise?” 0U-M5 intervened.

“I have my methods. While you lost your memories there were a lot of advancements in technology, more than you think! Upupupupu…”

“You saying that you can make everyone intelligent? Gonta very like that… when is that happening?”

“Are you interested? Then you must kill someone!”

“Oh… Gonta forgot that…”

This seems impossible, but… we have to admit it may be feasible. If somebody managed to wipe our memories, it’s likely that they could also mess with them and transform us into geniuses… there are already a lot of drugs and medicines that improve brain activity… at least there were when I worked as a detective…

Wait a second… how much time has passed since then? I look still young… but I don’t remember anything about my body… I don’t even know how old am I. I remember my kidnapping, but I have no idea about what happened right after…

It could have been years… I guess not a decade, but… this worries me… but what can I do about it?

Nothing.

“As always, I remind you that from tomorrow morning you could take advantage of a third, yet unknown motive! Food for though, my students! Think about your victim and sleep well!”

“So long, bear well!”

“Who will talk with Himiko and Tenko about this?” Angie asked. “What about me? I would be a good pick!”

“It is better if you leave them alone for the night. You might have the chance to speak to them tomorrow morning.” Kirumi said.

“Yeah, they could be very sleepy now! Nyahahaha!”

“Guys, I don’t know about you, but I’m hurrying back to the computer room. The Neo World Program is near completion! Tomorrow is going to be a great day!”

“Don’t you need some sleep?” I asked, worried for the inventor’s well-being.

“The amazing Kaito Momota doesn’t need sleep! I recharge with working! I am that great!”

…At least he’s productive.

We left the AV room and went back to our rooms. The Kubs Pads were still there. I haven’t got the chance to destroy them yet. They shouldn’t have a grandiose end though, no. I’ll just smash them like I did with mine… but not today.

I got into bed thinking about Monokuma’s new motive. I just said to myself I wouldn’t kill for knowledge… but would anyone else do the same?
A virtual reality without real virtues: Daily Life (Part 7)

Chapter Summary

Kiibo is brought by Kaito to the computer room; Kaede explores the new world.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Knock knock knock!

Someone’s at the door.

I got up from my bed imagining it would be Angie, but I discovered it was Kaito.

“Kiibo! Come with me, quick!”

“Uh? Now?

“I know it’s early, but I can’t wait to show you my final product!”

I looked around seeing Kirumi, Rantaro, Maki and Kaede already up, talking with each other.

“The Neo World Program?”

“Exactly! Don’t you want to explore it?”

“Uh…”

We agreed with Angie we wouldn’t go there because it could have been dangerous, but I don’t know if I can get out of this mess…

“Can I ask Angie first?”

“We tried to warn her, but she isn’t in her room. She didn’t respond.” Maki said.

“There was an attempt at least. Maybe this is for the better.” Rantaro commented.

She must be around the school then. Who knows what she’s up to. While I was thinking about what I should do, Kirumi managed to convince Korekiyo as well, who joined us.

“What about Gonta, Himiko and Tenko?”

“They told me to leave the two girls alone, today too!” Kaito exclaimed. “I seriously think that’s a bad idea!”

“They weren’t interested in the first place, so there’s no way they’ll say yes now.” Maki pointed out.
“Gonta said that he wouldn’t come, talking about how little technology he knows and he’s afraid of screwing up.”

“We tried to convince him, but we desisted because he looked very uncomfortable.” Kaede continued.

If Gonta said no… why should I go with them? Angie will definitely get mad at me, after all the discussions about the dangers of Kaito and the virtual reality. There’s no one I really know with them.

“I’m sorry, but I’ll decline. You can go there without me.”

“Oh, seriously man? I’ve worked so hard to create something enjoyable and you refuse?”

“Not to be invasive, but why do you want to stay here?” Rantaro asked.

“There could be a lot of interesting things in the virtual world.” Kaede smiled, trying to convince me.

“I… I don’t feel confident. Everything we found in this school is a weapon and it wants us killed.”

“But I assure you, there are no dangerous objects in the Neo World Program! 0U-M5 can also confirm!”

“Maybe something slipped… I can’t trust anything around here… so I invite you not to go as well.”

“You’ve got a point, but it’s not things that kill us, it’s people.” Rantaro said. “They could do that at any moment, not only when we’re inside the program. I’d say staying here is even more dangerous.”

Uff… here I am, failing to warn the others. But they won’t listen. Rantaro is a much better speaker than me. Also, they all have something against Angie, and by extent me. Why am I even trying?

“I’m convinced I don’t want to go, you can have your fun.”

Rantaro sighed, Kaito snorted. “I guess there’s no point in trying.”

As I was closing the door, however, Angie appeared.

“Is something happening? Why are you all up at this time of the day?!”

“We were telling everyone we’re going to the Neo World Program.” Kaede explained. “I suppose you’re not coming though.”

“What makes you think that?”

“You were pretty clear yesterday.”

“Nyahahah! I still want to know what the Virtual World is about! And it’s not like I got a lot to do, so I’m following you!”

Angie’s strange, but she always gives a chance to everyone. If only everyone could be like her… I should follow her. I always judge before experience…

“Kiibo, what are you doing there behind your door? Come with us! Nyahahahah!”
“A-ah… o-okay, if you say so…”

“Yes! You’re so kind to accompany me! Staying together is better!”

We left the dormitories as Kaito continued boasting. It started to get very annoying until Maki shut him up, thankfully. The inventor protested but the others silenced him. Angie and me followed the rest of the group at a distance.

“Angie, why are we going to the computer room?” I asked her.

“Even though I disapprove Kaito’s idea, I definitely need more information on all of this mess… if something bad happens, I need to know what to do, right?”

“Oh, yes… you want to protect everyone…”

“Exactly! Sometimes people don’t understand they’re hurting themselves, that’s when Atua and me come in handy! Nyahahahah!”

“…What do you think about last night’s video?”

“It was super duper interesting, but Kaede’s right when she says we must forget about it! In fact, you shouldn’t even talk about it with me and the others, there’s absolutely no need to! I hope Monokuma won’t give us a lot of information in the future.”

“Why?”

“Those USB keys will be the end of our group! I just know it… Atua whispered that to me during the night!”

“Then… what are we supposed to do?”

“I don’t know… maybe we can ask Monokuma? Have a deal?”

That would literally be a deal with the devil.

“You two!” Kaito exclaimed. “Get a move on! Don’t fall behind!”

We realized everyone else was ahead of us and had already entered the corridor that led to the computer room. Avoiding the butter that hadn’t been cleaned yet, we reached our destination. It wasn’t different from the first time we saw it, at least from the outside. The wires in the gigantic cube in the middle were probably modified in some fashion. 0U-M5 was inside, sitting on one of the chairs.

“Hello, guys. How is it going?”

“Fine, despite the early waking hour…” Kaede yawned.

“I’m so excited guys! This could be my best project as of yet!”

“You definitely are thrilled, however you still need to explain how this virtual program functions.” Korekiyo said, lacking empathy like usual.

“Yes, I wouldn’t force you to enter without any explanation. I’ll give my best.”

“We’re ready to listen!” Angie nodded.
“First of all, I removed every potential hazardous object from the Neo World Program. There were so many things that could have been used to kill us, but they’re gone now.”

“Couldn’t someone else put them in?” Kaede asked.

“No, the code behind it is extremely complex. Someone would need to build them from scratch, and no one has the skills to do that here.”

“I can also assure that.” 0U-M5 added.

“That’s it. There are two areas of the map and they’re separated by a river, but there’s a special way to cross that. I’ll explain later.”

“What happens if we get hurt inside the program? Have you figured that one out?”

“Nothing that bad. You feel some pain, and if it’s too much you wake up in the real world. So that’s perfectly safe.”

“If that was true, why did you remove every dangerous object from the world?” Maki asked.

That was a good question.

“You can never be too sure, alright?! Who knows what could happen!”

“Thank you for this extra safety measures.” Kaede smiled. “We don’t want anything to go wrong.”

“Oh... I’ve a question too!” Angie exclaimed. “What happens if someone from outside removes the headset of a person who’s plugged in?”

“They are forced out. They might experience unfortunate side effects. Nothing major, but I don’t advise to do that. There’s a better way to exit the Virtual World.”

“I see, I see...”

“While you’re inside, your metabolism will slow down considerably. I’ve tested that myself. It’s like when you go asleep, but way more extreme. Who knows for how long you can stay there without eating.”

Interesting… I wonder how that’s possible. I’ve never heard that before… this means that this world could make you live longer. If some crazy scientist works on it, it could even make humans immortal…

“Another very cool aspect of the Neo World Program is that there’s time dilation! That means that the passing of time is slower than real life.”

“How slow?” Kirumi asked.

“According to the data, one hour in the program is eight hours in real life.”

What? That’s… if someone stays in the virtual reality for three hours, an entire day will have passed for everyone else!

“Does that mean we’ll age slower?” I asked.
Kaito shrugged. “I don’t have a clue. I’ve not spent a lot of time inside. But I doubt it… I think your perception of time is altered.”

“That occurs to us every day.” Korekiyo explained. “If someone feels bored it is common for them to experience the same phenomenon… time does not seem to pass, even though the clock keeps ticking… your brain is merely tricking you.”

“Yeah, sure… but I don’t think I’ve ever experienced such a gap.” Rantaro said.

“Wait!” Angie spoke up. “So that means you’ll be inside there for a long time for us, even though you’ll think way less time passed.”

“That’s it, yeah.”

It’s cool but it comes with its own set of problems…

“Those are the basic rules of the Neo World Program. There are others, but I’ll tell them after we get inside, because they’re more specific.”

“But you haven’t been specific with that term.” Angie pointed out. “Why can’t you tell us everything?”

“Join us and see for yourself if you really want to know everything.”

“Nyahahah! I think I’ll pass! But don’t I deserve to know like the others?”

“This is my project and I decide what to tell and who to tell to! You don’t like my work? Fine, stay outside! Why should you know if you don’t follow me?”

“Maybe I’ll change my mind later and I’ll go inside!”

“Don’t try to fool us with your smile.” Rantaro joined in. “You hate this room, for whatever reason… you won’t enter and we all know it.”

“Fine! I see you’re withholding information. Rantaro, it’s not your fault… so I won’t be addressing you, but Kaito… you were so excited to tell everyone about the Neo World Program and you leave us like this? We should swim before knowing what’s in the ocean? Tell me more and I’ll consider exploring the sea with you.”

“You’re up to no good.” The inventor said. “If you really want to, you’d enter. I told you enough.”

“Alright, you really don’t want me then. I’m sorry Kiibo, but it seems we’re not welcome.”

“Why are you dragging Kiibo with your reasoning?” Kaede intervened. “Both you and him can get inside and then log out after Kaito finishes his explanation.”

“No, I side with Angie.” I said.

“See? I’m not dragging anyone, he’s making his own choices.”

“Kaito could speak to us but he refused. There’s no reason to do that…”

“Because I need to show you what I’m talking about! Otherwise you won’t understand anything!”

“You could try. I’m always up for conversation.” Angie said.
“What a liar! Every word of yours is fake and used for manipulating whoever believes in your bullshit! You think I care if you decide to stay here with your friends? No, I don’t!”

“What a reaction... Kiibo, it looks like someone can’t face the truth…”

Kaito always ends up shouting at whoever doesn’t agree with him. He never tries to listen to others’ opinions. I wonder how so many people can trust what he’s saying...

“W-we should go back to the dormitories. Wait for the others to wake up.”

“Good idea. We’ll finally prepare our breakfast!” Angie smiled.

“Y-yeah… I hope you find what you’re searching for.”

I don’t have anything against them, not even Kaito… I do mean what I’m saying. But they shouldn’t be full of prejudices every time we meet... maybe we’ll be able to create a true friendship here... until then, the murders will never stop.

***

Kaede Akamatsu

“We need to lock the door.” Kaito said immediately after the two left. “Angie’s not sane, she could do something crazy and fuck this up.”

“How would she accomplish that?” Kirumi asked. “You said there is no danger.”

“I don’t trust her to come here with her squad whenever she pleases.”

“There’s no way to lock the room, but we can block the door with two of the chairs in the room.” 0U-M5 proposed.

“Great idea, we’re not going to use those after all.”

I feel sad for Kiibo. I can’t avoid thinking that Angie’s influencing him, and that she did the same with Gonta. He follows him everywhere and never argues with her. He also has a bandage on his left hand like Himiko… she did something to him. The situation might be worse than I think, but… I can’t deal with it now.

However, as soon as we find what we’re searching for -if there’s something here at all- I should talk with Angie and Kiibo. Both of them. I’ve avoided the Kubs Pad crisis; I can stop another one from happening.

“Now that you sit down, you only have to put your headset on. Remember to match the cords as I say. Red one right, blue one left.”

“What happens if we switch them? Tell me you’ve tried.” Maki said.

“Yes, obviously. I can’t test a simulation without knowing everything. I know I could have died, but sometimes you have to put your life on the line if you want to be believed.”

“Ugh. And what was the result?”

“Well, the red cord stands for memory and the blue one for conscience. When I swapped them, I
completely lost any memory I had about my last session. 0U-M5 monitored me and tried to tell me what I did, but there was nothing strange.”

“So there are no other effects other than loss of memory?” I asked.

“Not on my avatar at least. I can’t confirm yours, since I didn’t have the chance to test it. Oh, but obviously I wouldn’t risk that if I were you.”

“Could you describe said avatars? I seemingly failed to understand that concept.” Kirumi asked.

“Essentially they’re your representation in the Virtual Reality. It’s like a character you control, but this time it’s also really you! The avatars were already coded, and they look exactly like our true selves.”

“Already coded?” I repeated. “That’s… that definitely means Monokuma expected you to repair this machine.”

“Yes I did!”

Monokuma forced the door open, sending the chairs flying across the room.

“How strong is that robot?!” 0U-M5 exclaimed.

“More than you, that’s for sure! But we’re not meant to be equal.”

“Dad! Thank you for having the door opened!” Monotaro exclaimed. “We’re too small to do something like that…”

“Dear children, your father will always be there for you! …If he isn’t doing other important tasks.”

“Dad, you never spend time with us.” Monokid said. “It has took some time for me to realize this fact, do you see us as failures?”

“What?! I always praise you.”

“US MONOKUBS ARE FRIENDS. BUT YOU ARE LIKE A STRANGER.”

“I think there are more ways we can spend time together.”

“Why are you criticizing daddy?! I love you regardless, dad! Even if you don’t care about us in the slightest! Send Monokid away, he’s a terrible son!”

The pink bear ran towards Monokuma, hoping for a hug, but her father moved to the side, making her trip over her feet.

“Ow…”

“You need to learn a valuable lesson, my sons! You need to evolve and adapt to difficult situations. Your father won’t always be near your side to tell you stories at night!”

“But you have never done that.” Monokid pointed out.

“He’s right… can you do that today, dad?”

“What? No, no! I said you’re old enough to sleep without a light! You don’t need me.”
“WE DON’T SLEEP.”

“Why are you so mean to dad! He birthed us!”

Sharing your DNA with someone doesn’t make them your friend by default. I don’t think the logistics of robot genetics are the same as humans, but I can assure that family can be worse than strangers.

“Monophanie is right. You are crossing the line! Detention time!”

“What?!?” Monotaro exclaimed. “B-but… I didn’t do anything wrong!”

“I won’t hear any no! Go back to your hangar, only Monophanie is allowed to stay!”

“Alright. I respect your authority.”

“LETS GO MONOTARO. WE WILL BOND TOGETHER.”

“B-but…”

“So long, bear well!”

“Yes! I’m so happy daddy!” Monophanie exclaimed, the only one remaining besides Monokuma.
“Can you give me a hug?”

“No, I said that I’m very busy today! I run on a tight schedule, you know? I can’t spend too much time babysitting those bastards!”

“Oh… then maybe… in a while…”

“Why are you here? Came to say goodbye?” Kaito asked sarcastically.

“Well, I wish you all died on the spot right now! That would be a fantastic goodbye, but, per rules, I can’t make you explode without repercussions on my resume.”

“Stop making shit up, you don’t have a resume.”

“Oh! You saw right through my trick! That’s right, I don’t have that. But I have a reputation. And there’s my child right here! That would be gory!”

“I hate gory stuff!” Monophanie chimed in.

“You are here to present a new motive, is it correct?” Korekiyo said.

“Nope! The creepy cosplayer actually got it wrong. You’re not as smart as I thought.”

“Thank you, but we don’t need your fake compliments.” Maki spat.

“I’m just trying to be mean to balance my character, that’s all. You know, since I’m about to reveal a new prize for you that survived the class trial, a new memory!”

“Have your prizes ever been actual rewards?”

“Well, this is an extra. It comes packaged with the virtual reality. I hid a secret about the outside world in the code!”

“Bullshit, there wasn’t any!”
“I know how to encrypt data. You’re an inventor, not a programmer. You might know one thing or two about computers, but you’re still no match for me!”

“What is this secret about? Our identities? What we did in Towa City?” I asked.

“Nope, it’s the status of the world as of now! Maybe you can understand why you’re here if you find it!”

“We shouldn’t search for it in the first place. Who knows what bad memories could resurface.” Rantaro intervened.

“I warned you because I’m a gentle bear!” Monokuma chuckled. “You can search for it together or not! It’s up to you! But if you don’t find that secret, it’s going to come for you. Just saying!”

“Oh daddy, I really admire you when you’re so secretive!”

“So long, bear well!”

“I need to know whether Monokuma was telling the truth.” Kirumi intervened while toying with her headset. “Are there potential dangers that could be hidden in the program?”

“No, no!” Kaito exclaimed. “That fucking bear was just trying to get to your head!”

“If you think it’s better to leave, you should.” I said. “Nobody’s keeping you here.”

“If you’re all so scared I have a solution. 0U-M5, you stay here.”

“Oh. Alright.”

The robot appeared a bit disappointed for a couple of seconds, but he quickly regained his composure.

"I can also guard the room to avoid others entering."

“In the program there are various cameras that broadcast what’s going on in real time.” Kaito said.

“Last time you used cameras it didn’t go very well.” Rantaro recounted.

“That’s why I didn’t want to bring that up, you guys! Always pointing at past mistakes! I’m not going around say-

“Alright, we know that.” I intervened. “I want to ask an important question though. If those cameras really are showing live footage, then the video will be slowed down immensely… since you said time works differently.”

“Yes, that’s it. It will be seeing us walk reaaaally slowly. I doubt that a person would sit through that footage, so a robot is a perfect pick!”

“I don’t have any problems with it.” 0U-M5 admitted. “I don’t need to sleep either, so it’s fine by me.”

“So we have Oums watching our backs! Look, it’s more useful than I thought!”

The robot stood up and walked to the other side of the rooms, where most of the screens were hung up. After he pushed some buttons, I could see what we were getting into.
The virtual world looked clearly fake from here, but I imagine that by the time we were in it, we would change our mind.

“Is it time to go inside or will be here sitting for long?” Rantaro asked.

“Right, right.” Kaito nodded. “Insert the wires as I said, put on the headset and we’re set! Get ready to witness a real beauty!”

As soon as he finished talking, the inventor waved at us and did as he instructed us to do.

“He should be in now, right?” Maki asked.

“Don’t you trust him? He wouldn’t put himself in danger. He’s done this countless times.” I said.

“If you worry, just look at…” 0U-M5 said. “Here he is! Kaito is inside the program.”

0U-M5 zoomed on one of the pictures on screen, revealing the inventor staying still. His avatar looked ridiculous, but faithful to the original Kaito…

“Welp, I’m also going in.” Rantaro said. “Don’t take too long, even though if you decide to enter in five minutes I’ll never notice.”

Kaito looked still, but that’s because of the time dilation thing… and yeah, even if we take a really long time to join him, for him it will be just some seconds, maybe a minute… ugh, even thinking about this time stuff makes my head hurt. It looks almost impossible, but that’s the proof…

“I’m joining the two. We’ll gain nothing by waiting.”

I wasn’t that confident and I have to say that putting on that headset did scare me a bit… it’s one of the few things I’ve ever done without understanding every detail behind it. To be clear, I still have no idea about how is possible to connect me to a machine and warp me to a new world… but it works, so… fingers crossed.

At first I only saw black.

I didn’t know what to expect, maybe it didn’t work for me.

But then a bright flash blinded me. A bunch of words and images flew in front of me. Instinctively, I closed my eyes.

When I opened them I was sitting on a different sofa.

“Oh, this actually worked.” I exclaimed. “I’m really surprised.”

When I entered Rantaro was still looking around, stunned as well.

“This looks like the real thing.” He said.

“Ah-ha! I told you! This is exceptional, isn’t it?”

In a matter of seconds Kirumi, Korekiyo and Maki showed up too.

“And now all of us are here! Time for fun!”
“The rules of this place are strange.” Maki said clearly. “And what’s up with this ugly avatars?”

I have to admit that the martial artist was right. All of us had disproportionately big heads and minuscule bodies -to the point I wondered how was it possible for us to keep standing-.

“I know, this is what Monokuma settled for. It’s not the best, but I think it’s a nice switch up.”

“I am pleased to say that I liked my original body more.” Korekiyo sighed. “In addition to that, those clothes are glued to my skin.”

“Yeah, your clothes are not clothes in this world. They are your skin.”

That’s a bit of a problem.

“How am I able to speak to you then?”

“Maybe that’s a special exception for you. Obviously I couldn’t check your avatars.”

“We are all the same height and have the same body structure.” Kirumi observed.

“Yes, to be completely honest we also lose our talents here. I mean, the physical ones.”

“So you’re saying I can’t pin anyone to the ground here?” Maki asked.

“Yes, I had to take measures to avoid bad situations…”

Kirumi looked around. “I am also affected, I assume.”

“Actually, I think Kaede and Rantaro are the only ones who keep their talents. I’m not sure about cosplaying, but I can say for sure that I have some problems when it comes to tinkering. My brain still works perfectly, though.”

I could see that Maki was trying so hard not to comment.

“Uhm… if you can’t use your hands, I think I’ll also be a failure at painting and drawing here.” Rantaro intervened.

“It’s not a big deal.” I said. “We don’t need that here, after all.”

“Any other rules you should tell us about?”

“Let me think… uhm… ah, of course! How you log out!”

Honestly, it surprises me that none of us thought about that. We’ll get out at some point.

“Outside of this room there’s a corridor and a table. There are a bunch of mobile phones. The program assigned one to each one of us. To logout you just need to say your name at the phone, and you’ll be teleported right to the computer room.”

“It’s easier than I thought.” I admitted. “So anyone can go back when they want.”

“Yes, but I’d consider not going back and forth too much. Who knows what might happen.”

“Roger that.”

“Now that you know everything, let’s get outside of this room. I’ll show you the mansion and then the map. And remember, nothing can break here.”
“Everything’s indestructible?” Maki asked as we headed out.

“Yes, that goes for your avatars too. They can’t be damaged, even though I couldn’t remove the pain sensor.”

“Are you suggesting we will still feel pain?” Korekiyo asked.

“That’s not a suggestion, it’s what’s going to happen if you decide to punch someone. And I hope nobody will need to do that here.” Kaito said, eyeing Maki.

“Wow. Shots fired. I’m really ashamed.”

“As you see, this mansion has two floors and a roof. The living room is at your right, next to the bathroom.”

“Why do we need a bathroom?” I asked. “You said it wasn’t necessary.”

“The room was there and there wouldn’t be any advantage in removing it, so I left it in.”

Kaito then showed us the map of the entire virtual world. Like he said, there was a church on the other side and a river dividing us from it.

“How are we going to cross it?” I asked.

“We're going the other way, you can pop from one place of the map to another, woosh! I tried that and it takes some time to load, but I assure it’s fun.”

“I trust you, but it sounds ridiculous.” Maki said.

“Take your mobile phones and then follow me outside, I’ll show you how fun is to loop around! I already have mine, so I’m going out.”

The five of us followed the inventor’s instructions. The phones were placed on an elegant table one next to each other. I had no idea which one was mine, so I had to guess. Luckily, once turned on, they displayed our initials, so I figured it out quickly.

“Wow, they’re also color coded. I wonder why I got the red one.” Maki said.

“You can’t complain about everything that happens to you, you know?”

“Yeah, I was only trying to… uhm… hey, I don’t have to explain myself.”

“Alright, alright. I don’t have something against you.”

“…So if we were to say our name, we would immediately logout to the real world?” Kirumi asked. “I advise you to be cautious and not say your full name if you do not want to be sent back.”

“I doubt someone would do such a thing, however you are right to warn the others.”

After having taken the phones, we went outside. The area was mountainous, but the temperature was very high. Kaito was just in front of us.

“Hey, here you go! Isn’t it cool outside?”

Cool? Not the temperature, that’s for sure.
“It looks like it’s summer here. I feel hot…”

“I’m amazed.” Rantaro said. “This program can also make us feel cold or hot. All because our brain perceives it… even though it’s all an illusion.”

“I’m also surprised, but it would have been better to set a mild temperature, wouldn’t it?”

“Kaede is right. I do not like the summer months, even though I attend many festivals during that time of the year, where I cosplay as mythical Japanese creatures.”

“I’m sorry, but I couldn’t do anything about it. Luckily you get accustomed to it very quickly.”

“Quite interesting.” Kirumi smiled. “I am an adventurer, but I also nurture an interest in archeology and folklore.”

Kirumi seems really dedicated to her job… not only she searches the world for treasures, but she’s always trying to know more about what surrounds her, from people to legends.

“While we search I can tell you about the last festival I attended, if you do not mind.”

“About that, what are we searching for? Do you know that at least?” I asked.

“Nope, I told you I couldn’t decipher that data. But I assume that once we find it, we’ll know for sure.”

“What if that’s Monokuma’s prize? He calls that, but I’m certain it’s just another motive.” Rantaro spoke up.

“I have to disagree. Monokuma’s prizes have always been distinct from motives. He has always told the truth about them.” Kirumi said.

“It would be better not to trust him.”

“We’re here to do exactly that, though.” I reminded the artist. “Search for secrets to help Kaito. If you don’t like that plan, you’re free to join Ouma.”

“Hey!” Rantaro scratched the back of his head. “Don’t get so aggressive. I was only stating an opinion. Of course I’m helping you.”

Ugh. What is his plan now?

“Follow me. This is the last part of the tutorial. Then we can get down to business. You see that over there?”

Kaito pointed at our right. A pitch-black wall was blocking our view. It was the only thing that looked out of place in this world, as unrealistic as it was.

“That’s the end of the world. Don’t need to freak out over that name, it’s like a teleportation pod.”

“Then call it teleportation pod.” Maki said.

“End of the world sounds way cooler!”

“Alright, I concede. I’m not here to discuss this idiotic matters.”

“What?! They’re very smart topics!”
“You’re saying that we should cross it… and then we’ll get on the other side of the map? It sounds possible, but… what if we get stuck?”

“Nah, it won’t ever happen.”

Once I got stuck in an elevator while going home. One of the worst experiences of my life. Thankfully my brother noticed something wasn’t right and called the firefighters… I really miss him.

“I can be the first one to test it out. But you need to follow me. Take in mind that the loading process could take up to two minutes.” Kaito said.

“You’re saying we could be trapped in a void for one hundred and twenty seconds?” I asked, slightly worried.

“Don’t worry, you won’t remember anything. As soon as you go inside, you basically go to sleep.”

“So if we will actually get stuck we won’t even notice.” Rantaro commented.

“It is a better death than having to know you will be swallowed in darkness for the rest of your life.” Korekiyo ominously followed.

Kaito furrowed his eyebrows. “Or someone could logout and remove the headset from your head. That would also work out… I think.”

“You think?” Maki repeated. “You’re saying this place is the safest in the entire world but there are many parts that you don’t understand.”

“I mean, if you only think about the most improbable bad events it’s a given that you’ll see the worst side of this place!” He protested. “By the way, nobody will be stuck in the wall. It’s impossible.”

In a split of a second Kaito ran towards the wall and disappeared. It was like the dark had engulfed him.

“So now he’s on the other side.” I said. “Any way to be sure of that?”

“I am afraid not. We should follow him.” Kirumi said.

“Somebody should remain here for a while, to be sure that we come back. Whoever remains can wait for us on the other side of the river.” I proposed.

“Then I shall remain.” Korekiyo said. “And I invite Kirumi to do the same.”

“Yes, I also thought that venturing in this place alone is not ideal. We should always be in groups.”

“Alright, guys! So me, Maki and Kaede will cross the barrier with the power of our souls!”

Is that a reference to something? Has Rantaro transformed into a Monokub?

“We will head towards the river. I could also find a tool that could help us, considering objects do not break in this world.”

“Good idea, Kirumi. I approve!” the artist said.

As the two entered the mansion, Rantaro immediately turned to us with a very different expression
on his face.

“Now that I finally have the chance to speak with you two, what the hell were you doing around the dormitories two nights ago?”

I thought I deceived him, but apparently not. At this time, however, I can’t reveal him everything.

“It’s not an easy explanation, but we had to act behind your back to avoid problems.”

“So… you stole my Kub Pad? Because that was the thing under my bed, right?”

“What. How do you know about that?” Maki asked.

“I wasn’t sure until now, but you just confirmed it. I’m surprised I could tell without even seeing what was under my bed.”

“For once, can you explain your situation?” I asked. I could feel the anger rising.

Thankfully the artist decided to talk this time around. Who knows why he feels like it.

“It’s kind of embarrassing, really… but I kept some chocolate bars under my bed. I have this terrible habit to have the classic midnight snack, you know? Not very proud of that… but when I tried to pick one up three nights ago, something else was there. I thought I was hallucinating or I was having a kind of dream mixed with reality so I decided to go to sleep, since the texture of the object definitely resembled one of a Kub Pad. When I woke up I completely forgot about it and went on with my day.”

Than means that Rantaro discovered the tablet without really acknowledging it. If he’s telling the truth, he found a way to trick Monokuma, it seems. Luckily he didn’t investigate further like he’s used to do; otherwise we’d be in a very different situation.

“However that night you were acting extremely shady and you dodged my question in an extremely obvious manner. When I got back to my room I checked under my bed and there was nothing, only a chocolate bar. I understood immediately that you had something to do with that.”

“Why did you wait for so long before talking to us about that? And moreover, if you knew about the secret video you could have spared us a lot of trouble!”

“Hey, slow down. I still don’t know what you did. I assume it’s for good intentions, but you did take my Kub Pad… and the others too, definitely. I’m certainly not that special, so I can’t be the only one who had a tablet under his bed.”

I sighed. “You answer my question, I explain what happened.”

“If you insist… I had a bunch of reasons not to talk about it. First of all, I still thought that I was simply wrong and tired at the time. Secondly, I guessed it was a tablet but I definitely didn’t have anything to prove it with the power of my hands! It slipped off my mind. Taking in consideration the shit that happens here every single second around here it’s normal.”

“You said you realized something was wrong when you approached the dormitories, but you remained in front of the door without bringing up the topic. That was a good time to remember it.”

“To be honest, you told me Maki was naked.”

“What a believable claim.” She commented.
“I wouldn’t risk going inside, considering her record. I knew you were plotting something, but I wanted to talk to you to together and see how you acted the following day. Ah, since I’m being completely honest with you, I spied you three after I got back into my room. So that’s how I can be sure you entered at least Kirumi’s room.”

“Fine.” I nodded. “I’m… satisfied that you told us the truth. But I also have something to tell you before explaining what we were doing.”

“Of course… I should have expected it from a detective.”

“I saw Maki’s video when she called me to her room. The secret was about you.”

Let’s see how he reacts to this first, then I’ll ask more about his sisters. He has some; he has mentioned them in the last days.

“So she had my secret, huh… there weren’t many names left, but I’m glad she got mine. I feel safe.”

“I could launch you on the other side of the world if I wanted to.”

The artist sighed, disappointed. “Yeah, alright. But I meant that I don’t think you would ever kill anyone, considering your attitude. You don’t want the others to notice that, but you obviously want to avoid murders. Exactly like Kaede and me, but in a different way.”

Why would he insert the “me” in the sentence? Even if he cares about the safety of the group, he definitely didn’t do much to ensure it.

“I’m not gonna lie, I want to know what Monokuma said about me, so here’s me asking.”

“We’re here to talk about that in particular.” I said.

“Perfect! Our interests align. But I didn’t do anything bad during my life, so I wonder why are you so curious…”

Maki cut him off. “The video revealed us you love chocolate and that we could poison you thanks to cyanide found in the warehouse. I made sure to store it in a safe place, but there’s something more interesting about what Monokuma said.”

“Ah, and that would be..?”

“He mentioned your twelve sisters.” I said. “The same number of siblings that Miu had.”

Rantaro pondered for a while. “Yeah, that’s… that surprised me too. I don’t like to talk about my family, so I didn’t bring that up. At least now I’ve someone to talk to about this.”

“Tell me, do you think it’s a coincidence?”

“…Look, logically it has to be. I don’t remember Miu. We can’t be lost brothers or some shit like that, because she said she only had sisters. I don’t remember a serial killer barging into my house or any dead parents… but some of my sisters disappeared as well.”

Is exactly like he says. It can’t be anything but a coincidence, if we think reasonably. However, this killing game has confused us so many times… there has to be a solution to this, something we could never imagine.

“By the way, Maki. Why did you agree with Kaede’s plan?”
“She didn’t. I had to convince her.”

“Hmm... really?”

“What is your problem? Me and her are not friends, we banded together to help everyone else.”

“I see... then let’s hope you don’t have to band together too many times, eh?”

"And with that you mean...?"

"Nothing... It's better to be friends than enemies here. Us three have to stick together."

"I don't know about that." Maki said. "For now, let's just cross this *End of the World.*"

Chapter End Notes

So, the rules of the NWP still apply in this story. There are no major differences (except maybe one...), but the circumstances are different. Then again... who knows if a murder happens there or outside...
Chapter Summary

Kaede explores the Virtual World further; The ones on the outside continue on with their lives.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Kiibo

“It’s lunch time, everyone! Nyahahahah!” Angie shouted in the courtyard.

“Do you think Himiko and Tenko will hear you?” I asked. “We don’t know if they’re here or in the dormitories, in the school…”

“I have a very loud voice! Nyahahah! They will hear me!”

“Gonta hasn’t found them, so they’re probably in their rooms.”

“Right! I completely forgot about Himiko’s research room! She must be there!”

“Should we go there?”

“Maybe Gonta has already gone there. Let’s try Tenko’s room first. Come with me.”

We reached the dormitories and knocked on the caretaker’s door.

“Hey, what did you tell her yesterday?”

I wondered if Angie was successful after all. I assume she was, but she refused to talk about it for the entire morning. I didn’t push her and never brought up the matter, but I was curious.

“I’m sorry, but we agreed to keep it private.” She said.

“Oh…”

“I’d really like to tell you, but I would not respect Tenko’s wishes. You just need to know we’ve sorted everything out. With a plus.”

“What do you mean?”

“Tenko had some bad habits in the past, but I told her what she was doing wrong and what she was good at and we reached a compromise!”

“Ah, great then. If that will stop the conflict between Himiko and Tenko…”

“Yep yep! They’ll become friends again, eventually! Now Himiko doesn’t trust Tenko, but if she continues behaving like I tell her they’ll become besties in no time!”
What could have Angie said to the caretaker to convince her? I know she’s capable of swaying people to her side, but I can never understand how she does it. It must be a natural talent she possessed, maybe refined over time.

“You’ll see how she is changed now that she opens the do-

Before Angie could finish the sentence, Tenko stood in front of us. I don’t know how her attitude changed, but her appearance was definitely different. Even though she didn’t change her clothes, her ponytails were nowhere to be seen. Now she had long hair, free from any costraints.

“Hi, Kiibo. Hello, Angie. D-do you like my look?”

“It’s amazing!” Angie exclaimed. “Just like I instructed you! Long hair makes you feel better, right?”

“I… I don’t know, I’m not used to it.”

“You’ll get it very soon. You definitely look cuter, right, Kiibo?”

“Uhm, yes…”

I’m not that sure about it, but if that makes Tenko happy why shouldn’t I say it?

“I’d say thank you if you weren’t a degenerate male, Kiibo.”

“Hey!” Angie raised her voice. “What did I say about those words? You should never describe boys like that! Say sorry to Kiibo, okay?”

“Sorry, Angie! I totally forgot about that! Some habits are hard to lose… sorry Kiibo… and thank… thank you.”

“Wow! Amazing! You are making great steps! If you continue like this, Himiko will surely begin to appreciate you!”

So that’s why Tenko changed… she wants to impress Himiko and try to bridge the gap between the two of them…

“You’re right! I should never show esitation! That was one of my qualities and I don’t have to drop it!”

Angie nodded. “Right, you see? This isn’t difficult.”

“…Are you sure that Himiko will forgive me if I start being less strict?”

“One hundred percent! I know Himiko and you should too. I said yesterday that I’m doing this for our benefit. If we’re all friends, there’s no danger. And now we have so much time to us and us alone!”

“The others are in the Virtual World and they’ll be there for a while. We can do a lot without them.”

“It’s a great opportunity! Rantaro is gone and we can cook our food, Kaito and Maki are not here and we can avoid their petty squabbles and Kaede isn’t even here! After all, we only need her when there are murders. If nobody dies she only plagues us with her paranoia.”

Luckily someone said it. I have the same opinion as Angie, but I’m not strong enough to say it. Of
the people that are hooked on that machine only Kirumi and Korekiyo are maybe tolerable. All of
the other ones have glaring flaws… maybe Angie could help them, if only they allowed her.

“So…” Tenko said looking around. “I’m sorry for barricading myself inside my room. I needed
time to think.”

“Apology accepted!” Angie exclaimed. “We all need some time alone, Kiibo can attest that.”

“Especially if you’re in an bad situation. But I’m happy now you’ve recovered.” I explained.

“Definitely! Tenko is back and ready to be friends with all the girls… and boys!.. in this school…
by being nice!”

“Great, then you can follow us to the school. Gonta and Himiko will be there.”

“Do you think I shouldn’t talk with Himiko for now? I really care about our friendship and I don’t
want to ruin my chances…”

Tenko continued to ask similar questions to this during the time we were heading for the cafeteria.
She definitely wants to patch things up, but she seemingly makes the same mistakes. Her different
appearance and her artificial kindness can’t hide her tendency to go over the top… she needs to
think about something else and relax…

I would find that very easy, but I know that I shouldn’t compare myself to Tenko. We’re at the
opposite ends of a spectrum; she lives differently than me and that’s completely fine. That’s why I
kept my mouth shut and let Angie give advice, someone who’s undoubtedly better than me in this
regard.

“You should only observe Himiko and try to be as calm as possible. Don’t insult Gonta in any way.
Maybe you will want to say something about him that doesn’t look like a bad thing to you, so if
you have even the smallest doubt, stay silent and think about something else. I’ll kickstart a topic if
I see you’re having difficulty.”

“Thanks, Angie! You can’t imagine how grateful I am!”

“Nyahahah! Don’t say thanks to me… pray to Atua as well. He’s the one who knows all, I’m
merely a messenger.”

“Yes, yes… if this works…”

“And lastly, do it for us as a group. We can be stronger than ever now that you believe in us!”

Angie smiled at Tenko, who, in return, tried her best to keep calm and relaxed, and opened the
door. We heard Gonta and Himiko’s voices when we entered but we didn’t see them. We found out
they were in the kitchen; he was explaining what we cooked for lunch and the various steps that
were needed.

“In book Tsumugi said to add this tomato kind, but the warehouse don’t have it.”

“Nyeh… I’m sorry… but it worked out in the end, right?”

“Yes… uhm… maybe? Gonta, being gentleman, tasted soup before anyone to tell if it good or bad.
He thought good.”

“You’re a very kind person. The taste could have been terrible but you did it regardless.”
“To become gentleman Gonta need to do worse things than today!”

“…Oh, the others are here.” Himiko said noticing our presence. “Nyeh. I think you did a great job, Angie and Kiibo.”

“T-thanks…” I said. “I thought I was a recipe for disaster.”

“You always underestimate yourself.” Angie commented. “That makes you feel always uncomfortable.”

Speaking of uncomfortable, Tenko was clearly disappointed that Himiko didn’t even say hello to her. Expected, but still a bad action on the entomologist’s part. She could have been the levelheaded person trying to leave the argument behind… however, what went down yesterday must have affected her more than I imagined.

“Himiko was in research room like you said.” Gonta told Angie. “Gonta bring here her like Angie asked.”

“I told him I wanted to stay there with him but he said you called us here…”

“And he said the truth! I’m so happy that you changed your mind when he named me. That shows that we’re a group!”

“How are the others doing?” Himiko asked. “When will they be back?”

“Oh, I don’t know. They talked about time dilation and other things that I don’t understand! Nyahahah! But Kiibo seemed interested, right?”

“Well… the point of it is that they are living slower than us. It’s not easy to explain, but eight hours for them is an hour for us. That probably means they’ll be inside for a while.”

“Not that we need them!” Angie exclaimed. “Right, Himiko?”

“Yes… now that is only us we can finally be at peace… at least the majority of you here… respects me.”

“We all respect you here, Himiko. You know that.”

“Um… alright.” The entomologist said. “Let’s not talk about that anymore. I’m hungry… and I want to save some food for my bugs.”

“Yes! Gonta about serving food to you.”

“Listen! I’ve got a great idea for the rest of the day!” Angie exclaimed. “If we want to be real friends, we all should help each other with our weaknesses!”

“Gonta want to be gentleman, so can tell other what to do too!”

Our flaws…? I don’t know if I’ll be able to overcome them… I’m not that ready to do something like that. I know what I’m not good at, but it’s very disheartening when other people recognize it… even if they want to support me.

“Gonta has good idea. You can help Gonta first then.”

“Oh, really? You’re almost perfect for me, but if you say so…”
“You surely notice Gonta not good at speak. That because Gonta lived away for long. Maybe you help Gonta with grammar.”

“What a great opportunity! Nyahahahah! It’s like Atua aligned the right circumstances for us!”

“Nyeh... what do you mean?”

“We have a teacher with us sitting at this very table!” Angie said. “Tenko could help you!”

“Uh? Me?”

“Gonta really like that, but don’t know if Tenko wants...”

Tenko continued to mumble under her breath until Angie spoke again. “Yes, she definitely would like that! I think she’ll be honored to be your teacher! Maybe she’ll impress us too! She’s the Ultimate Caretaker after all!”

“I suppose... yes, I could do that. I need some pen and paper, though...”

“Gonta very happy! Now nobody will make jokes about Gonta speak. Thank you, thank you!”

“U-uhm... you don’t have to say that... we... we’re friends after all... I’ll do my best...”

“We should all be there though! Kiibo and Himiko as well!”

“But I know how to write and talk...” Himiko pouted.

“Are you sure about that?” Angie asked. “Who knows, there could be some words that are new to you! There’s always something new and exciting to learn in the world!”

“...Okay. My bugs will have to wait.”

“We’ll go to your bugs right after Tenko’s lesson! Don’t you want Gonta to improve?”

“Yes... nyeh. Sorry, Gonta. I should consider the needs of other people too, not only mine...”

“Gonta not worried. Gonta knows Himiko very good person.”

***

Kaede Akamatsu

When we emerged on the other side it was like time hadn’t passed at all. The last thing I remember was being engulfed by darkness and, before I knew it, a new landscape appeared in front of my eyes.

“Is this how teleportation would work in the real world?” Rantaro asked.

“I hope not. My head is spinning...” Maki groaned.

“You’ll get used to it. Stop complaining.” Kaito said. “It happens sometimes, but you’ll feel better in some minutes.”
“If I fall, someone will have to carry me.”

“Maki’s problems aside, you have reached the other side unscathed. Where are Korekiyo and Kirumi?”

“They remained on the other side for safe measure. Let’s should meet them there and organize our search.” I explained.

Rantaro spoke up right after I finished. “Are you all sure we’re going through with this search? I’ll repeat again that it might not be the best decision.”

“Yes, and I won’t back down. We’ll stay inside here until we have found what we’re searching for. That’s why splitting up is one of the best decisions.”

“Things you should never say in horror movies, part one.” Maki chimed in.

“But we’re not in a horror movie!” Kaito protested.

“That’s what they always say too.”

“Please, Maki. Be a little more friendly... otherwise we won’t go anywhere.” Rantaro intervened.

“If you all agree with Kaito’s plan, I suppose I have to fall in line.”

“Let’s do this. When we find the object we’re searching for, we should all discuss and decide what to do with it.” I said. “For example, if it’s yet another USB key we know it’s another one of those memories of our past.”

“Data suggests that we could be searching for that.” Kaito intervened. “But that’s only an option. I can’t be sure until we find it.”

“So, according to you, we’ll have a sudden realization as soon as we find that mysterious object? Our minds will be linked or something like that?”

“I swear that’s what will happen. Don’t try to question the rules of this place too much. Everything can happen in a computer program, not all rules of reality apply. By the way, you can see the river near you.”

I looked in front of me and I saw a stream of water closer than I thought. However, it was completely silent. Soon after, the bodies of Korekiyo and Kirumi materialized out of nowhere.

“I need you to explain two things.” I said, still walking. “First, why doesn’t the river make any sound?”

“Wait a second. The sound has to load.”

“Got it. And why have those two appeared out of thin air?”

“There’s a certain resolution limit to this world. You can see only so far ahead. Like in a videogame after all.”

“I don’t have a lot of experience with videogames.”

“Ah, I understand what you’re saying.” Rantaro intervened. “It’s like real life, only that here is much more limited.”

Kirumi waved at us on the other side of the river as well. I couldn’t distinguish all of the details on
her face, but she was definitely puzzled.

“I assume your sudden appearance is not surprising to Kaito.” She said when we were close
enough.

“Nope, all normal. I just explained to Kaede why is that. Don’t worry about it.”

“Is this river dangerous? The water is flowing with extraordinary speed.” Korekiyo asked.

“I’d surely not dive into it if I were you. I don’t know if you can get out of it. If that happened,
you’d probably continue to loop around from south to north and eventually pass out.”

“Point taken. No touching water.” Rantaro said, pretending to write on a notepad. I hope for him
he isn’t mimicking me.

“Okay, we should find what we’re here for and then get out as soon as possible.” I said.

“Hey! I thought you liked it here!”

“IT’s not bad, but I prefer the real world. Remember that time is flowing slower here, and I don’t
want to lose days of my life when I go back.”

“I agree with Kaede.” Maki nodded. “There’s a lot we don’t understand about this place, so the
sooner we’re done, the better.”

“I suggest dividing in three groups. Korekiyo and me will search the mansion and the surrounding
area, considering we are the two on this side.”

“If you find the object, wait for us at the river.” I said.

“Okay then!” Kaito exclaimed. “That means that me and Kaede will take on the church while
Rantaro and Maki the woods near it!”

“Why this division?” Maki asked.

“Do you want to spend time with me?”

“No. I think I’ll work better with Kaede.”

“You don’t have a good track record.”

“It’s better than the one I have with you.” She hissed.

Kaito crossed his arms. “I believe you, but I don’t think that me and Rantaro can stay together for
longer than five minutes before arguing. I’m only trying to keep everything balanced.”

“Well, this isn’t a big problem for me...”

“Keep the groups like this.” I said. “You and Rantaro can definitely hold your own.”

I would also have supported Maki, but I trust her to keep an eye on the artist, still suspicious as the
moment I first met him. For Kaito, even though he looks harmless, he’s one of the most stubborn in
this academy. If he’s left alone with Rantaro the situation could derail after a single misplaced
word... and he did work on the Neo World Program.

I trust him, but he could be trying to hide important details from us, since he can’t explain
Everything about this virtual reality. There’s the possibility I could understand more from him.

“Look, Kaede’s okay with this. That makes two of us, and Rantaro is okay with everything!”

“Okay. I accept.” Maki conceded. “Let’s go to collect some berries.”

“Could berries be the mysterious object?” The artist asked.

“Nah.”

Maki rolled her eyes. “Disappointing but fair. I don’t really like this place, so try to find that thing... I’d like to return to the real world.”

Kaito and me entered the church. From the outside it looked like a much smaller building.

“I know what you’re thinking. The space inside here has suddenly doubled. This is, as well, normal. To save on assets, the buildings look smaller than they are in reality.”

“Virtual reality.”

“That’s the concept. Don’t be a smartass.”

“Seriously, do you know something you don’t want to tell us?” I asked. “It seems that every time something new pops up.”

“I don’t want that, only the things we should look out for. Maybe you thought that this assets info wasn’t necessary, but you shouldn’t leave out it just because you deem it unnecessary. I don’t like when someone keeps something to themselves.”

It had to be said, and it was better to tell him now that we’re alone.

“Umpf. I thought you would understand me.” Kaito said. “Look into those boxes. There must be something useful around here, right?”

The inventor tossed me a medium cardboard box and I thankfully managed to catch it.

“I can see that you don’t have a malicious intent. But you should say what you’re doing to everyone.”

“I am! Last time I tried to act in the shadows it backfired horribly, causing Tsumugi’s death. I know I played only a small part in her murder and I feel still responsible.”

“I don’t want to accuse you, but... maybe you’re still not doing that.” I said, searching for the mysterious object. “You want to be in the spotlight, but maybe you should remain on the side. Why is that bad?”

“I’m trying to do the right thing for once! Every time something doesn’t work out though, from the time I helped you with your research room and Maki ended up beating me up. Maybe I’ll continue to fail... but if I don’t do something good to redeem myself everyone will see me as a failure. That’s why I tried to rebuild Ouma’s code and reworked this virtual world.”

Kaito feels guilty for what happened, but it’s not by obsessively trying to make up for it that he’ll
succeed... that attitude isn’t right...

“You did both of those things extremely fast... it’s obvious you’re a real talent. Maybe you should have given both a little bit of extra time.”

“You’re right... maybe I’m too brash. But I’m confident! I can’t afford to stay put.”

“You don’t have to change. You only need to put some more thought in your works. That will only improve our situation.”

“Yeah, you’re all about that logic and stuff. I understand your attitude, but I just can’t see me going through with it. I follow my instinct.”

“I also do that, but I think more before taking a definite decision. Logic is the only thing that separates us from animals after all...”

“That’s true, but animals were fine with instinct alone for a lot of time. Intelligence came after it.”

I don’t see how this would help Kaito’s case. Plus, he seems to forget what we’re actually talking about.

“Hey, it all boils down to this.” I said. “If you aren’t completely sure about your actions, count to ten before starting the next step... maybe twenty if you’re more doubtful than usual.”

“I thought you were above the ten-second rule. I suppose nobody is.”

“It exists for a reason.”

“Have you found anything useful in your box?”

“Nope. Only church decorations. I don’t think some candelabra will help us...”

“Mine was full of rubbish. Let’s go with the others.”

After a lot of time of searching the church throughout Kaito and me both agreed that what we were searching for wasn’t there. We decided to go somewhere else to help our classmates. The woods were right behind us, but we ended up crossing the barrier to go to Kirumi and Korekiyo to help them with the mansion.

“The woods may be bigger, but with every nook and cranny that the mansion has the total search area of that place is surely wider.” Kaito said.

I would have split up but it was too dangerous to leave someone alone in this place, even if it took minutes for them to reach someone else. We dipped into the world wall and we reached the other side immediately –to our knowledge, but no one will know how much time actually passed- to aid Kirumi and Korekiyo.

“How much time has passed since we entered the virtual world?” I asked.

“I don’t know... I think that it’s a little more than two hours now. It could be less, it could be more. In the real world is probably already night time.”

“Wow, I’m still not hungry. But we haven’t eaten since last night.”
“Merit of the Neo World Program. However if you log out now you may experience hunger.”

“You told us that, at least. We revert to our body, so our physical needs will be restored.”

I hope I can resist the urge to go to the bathroom when we finish this business.

We entered the mansion. It didn’t look like much changed since our last visit.

“Where are they?” I asked. “If we meet up, they can tell us the places they haven’t searched yet.”

“Kirumi?! Korekiyo?!” Kaito shouted. “Where are you?”

The adventurer and the cosplayer came from upstairs, slightly worried.

“We heard you from the bedroom upstairs! Has something happened?” Kirumi asked.

“No...” I reassured her. “We’re alright.”

“Oh, you made me quite preoccupied.” Korekiyo sighed. “You sounded rather alarmed as you called us.”

“We didn’t see you around, we opted for the quicker option.”

“You could have searched for us. The mansion is not that big, so you would have found me and Korekiyo regardless.”

“I wanted to speed the process up. I hope you and Kaede don’t mind.”

“Not really...” I said.

“You could have taken a different approach. Despite that, I have calmed down.”

“Okay, we didn’t find anything useful in the church. So we decided to come back here.”

“We have searched the bathroom, the entrance room and the living room where we logged in.” Korekiyo explained, answering us before we could ask him our question. “The dining room and the kitchen were full of cupboards, boxes and shelves, so we climbed upstairs to examine the roof and the other room, which is the bedroom we were in now.”

“And..? Any success?”

“I can recount what we did find, but nothing appeared as interesting as you described. There were no signs of USB sticks either.” Kirumi told us.

“Umpf... But I’m not wrong. There must be something useful somewhere here in this virtual world! Something we could use to escape!”

“I have proposed Kirumi to return here after some days have passed. The search has proven to be unfruitful as of now and I have faith in Kaito. He should identify that object before we shall return here.”

“If you’re really faithful why don’t you search the rest of the mansion before speaking? We’re trying to find one thing among so many objects, we’ve to search everywhere, everywhere!”

“Talking from experience, I can assure treasures are often extremely hard to locate. Trial and error is needed before an exploration can be called a success...”
“...Yes, I forgot to mention Kirumi did not agree with me.”

“Yet I respect your opinion. I shall remind it again; you are free to leave at any time.”

“I also know that. However, I am very intrigued by your will to persist. What is more, I can now observe Kaede with closer detail.”

“What? Why does he have to do that?”

“He’ll cosplay as me.”

“The hell?! Why does he have to be so creepy about it?”

“Mine is a profession only a selected few can truly understand.”

“Thank God there aren’t a bunch of freaks like you around the world!”

“I won’t mind as long as you continue doing your own... thing.” I explained. I’m still considering passing on that cosplay opportunity... I could say to Korekiyo I’m not interested anymore, but he would go through with it regardless.

“Well, you’ll observe her when we get back. Kaede and me will search the ground floor while you two can continue with your own search.”

“...Alright. I accept your decision. I must admit I am quite disappointed with the result.”

“I do not mean to argue, though I wish to spend time alongside Kaede, considering I have this opportunity.”

“Do you have to tell me something?” I asked.

It must be about my secret... but I don’t have the will to bring up that yet again...

“You can talk about that later!” Kaito exclaimed. “Is it so important?”

“I suppose not.”

“Yeah, exactly. We’ve already wasted so much time by talking here. Let’s go do our thing.”

“We will come to you were we to find anything.” Korekiyo said, going upstairs.

“Kaito comes to save the day! Two times in a row! You really didn't want to talk with Kirumi...”

“Okay, I’ve to admit that you did the right thing for once.”

“You flatter me!”

I rolled my eyes. “Just like you said, we don’t have a lot of time. So let’s get down to business. I don’t want to wake up one thousand years in the future...”

Time passed, we searched everywhere, finding even less things that we thought. For a while I was in the kitchen, then I swapped places with Kaito. I was starting to get bored and very stressed, going as far as thinking that Kaito could have interpreted something wrong.

I always turned back to look at the door, hoping that someone would come in announcing they
found where that mysterious object was.

“How is it possible that nobody came yet?” I asked. “Is the bedroom that big? I thought you said there’s way more stuff here than the rest of the mansion.”

“That’s true. Maybe they found a portal to another dimension in the cupboard.”

“Is it a real thing?!”

“No, obviously! I would know about such a thing.”

“Don’t joke about this.”

I reached for the doorhandle.

“I need to go to them. Maybe they need our help.”

However, when I tried to turn the doorknob, it was completely still. It didn’t move.

I tried again, but it was firmly stuck.

Definitely. Didn't budge at all.

“Kaito, can you help me with this door?”

“Can’t you open it alone?”

“Please, I’m not in the mood for jokes.”

“Alright, alright.”

Kaito approached me, but he still had problems with the door.

“Hnngh... t-there’s no way... someone must have locked the door.”

“What!? Those doors can be locked?!”

“No, that wasn’t possible before!”

“Before when?!”

“When we got in! I disabled that option myself!”

“Apparently not, since we’re locked inside here!”

“W-wait... you don’t have to worry... we have our phones here...”

Ah, right. Thank God for those.

I reached for my pocket and picked up the mobile phone as I was already starting to sweat.

“I must say... I got very scared for a second, hehe..."

"I always have a way out, so... I thought about this too!"

"Kaede Akamatsu.”
I blinked twice before realizing I wasn’t being transported to the computer room.

“I said Kaede Akamatsu.”

“Shit...”

“Why doesn’t this work either, Kaito?! Tell me it’s a joke.”

“Kaito Momota?” He said, holding his phone. “...I think it’s not... But... but we won’t be trapped here! Oums must be watching us and seeing we’re in trouble... he’ll remove our headset.”

“Well, he should start by fixing all those bugs that are happening! Why is the program turning against us?”

“Don’t jump to conclusions... it might be a temporary problem!”

“Have you experienced something like this during your testing?”

“No, but...”

“Can you at least break this door with a punch, a kick, I don’t know?”

“Nothing can break inside of here, sadly...”

The rule that was meant to protect us ended up causing us to be trapped...

“Could somebody outside have done this?” I asked.

“There are no ways to lock the doors inside the Neo World Program, so that’s what definitely happened.”

“Korekiyo and Kirumi might be in the same situation... how do we get out of this?”

“We only have to hope that Oums can resolve this problem.”

“And what if something happened to him?”

“There’s no way something like that could happen!”

“I don’t know... I doubt he’d let this situation slide. He would have warned us.”

“Why do you think something happened to Oums?” Kaito asked, bitter. “Do you want that?”

“No! I remind you that I didn’t have anything against him.”

“Oh, I see. But you were never okay with what I did.”

We shouldn’t fight now, but it’s like the situation itself calls for it... I should restrain myself, but when someone makes me angry... I have to breathe in, breathe out... yes...

“Listen, arguing makes things worse. We have to find a solution now. I’ll believe that this is only a small error, for our sake.”

“We can only hope that someone forces our way out. The people outside need to remove our headset.”

“Do they know that’s the thing to do?”
“We can only pray they can understand it.”

“I just hope nothing bad hap-

I tried to finish my sentence, but I started feeling a tingling sensation in my body. Everything near me started to disappear.

“What is happening?”

That’s what I said, but Kaito didn’t respond. It was like he didn’t see me. A couple of seconds later it was only me in a black void... then I started to disappear. This is either me dying or someone is finally getting me out of this Neo World Program.

When I first discovered that it was the second option, I felt extremely relieved.

I finally returned to the real world.

Gonta was looking me in the eyes... I felt my cheeks hurt... did he slap me? I can’t see him doing it... it must have been someone else.

“She’s awake!” The tennis player exclaimed.

I could barely hear everyone else’s voices, but I managed to get up.

I let out a sigh of relief... but then Gonta told me what happened.

Without any warning, not an announcement, which I had grown accustomed to now... I discovered what they saw.

***

...A little bit earlier

**Kiibo**

I opened my eyes... I vaguely remember listening to the night-time announcement... is it morning?

Well, I’m in bed...

What did I do last night? Is this a dream...? No, because I wouldn’t ask those questions.

It would seem normal to me...

Hey, wait a second... why are the walls pink?

Wait...

Pink walls?

This isn’t my room!

Panicked, I rolled on the other side of the bed, when I should have clearly gone to the right. I bumped into another person. They weren’t turned towards me, but the hair left no doubts: it was
Angie.

What was I doing in Angie’s room?

Why am I here?

Oh, I don’t remember anything! We were all in her lab and then we went back, right? We must have accompanied her here... but why am I in her bed?

As I was literally freaking out, Angie opened her eyes. She must have sensed my panic immediately, since she came to her senses in a second, not like every other person that needs at least twenty to realize what’s going on.

“Kiibo, you’re awake. Are you okay?”

No, I wasn’t. But there wasn’t much I could say at that moment.

“Why am I here?”

“We decided continue our AAA in my room. You were here with the others, don’t you remember?”

I shook my head, standing up from the bed.

“You don’t look like you’re okay.”

“I’m sorry, I just... I thought I would be in my bed now... I didn’t expect to be here, of all places...”

“Strange, maybe you were really sleeping when we got here.”

“P-please, explain.”

I made sure I had everything on my person. I didn’t doubt Angie’s words, but... and also, I checked if I had anything extra on me. Thankfully, that wasn’t the case.

“You were sleepy when we arrived here. You said something, but I thought you were awake... apparently not...”

“W-why didn’t you take me back to my room?”

“Should we have done that? Sorry, we agreed not to disturb you... you looked so peaceful, sleeping here... oh, and you didn’t snore! So I had no problems...”

“Thank you for the... assistance... but I didn’t need all of this...”

“Don’t be so modest. Are you uncomfortable because we slept in the same bed?”

“You said I have to be honest... with myself and the others... so yes... yes, I am...”

“Ahh, I see... I can guarantee that nothing strange happened! Nyahahah! Atua and Angie promised! You slept for the entire time, and I did too! Do you believe me, right?”

“Of course...”

Why should I doubt Angie? She has always been honest with me...

“It’s almost 10 AM... I slept for a long time...”
“Right! We should go to Himiko’s research lab! We all agreed to see each other there just now, right?”

“Yes...?”

“Don’t you remember?”

“I’m sorry... I really don’t...”

“That’s so strange, honestly... did you eat something bad from the warehouse? We went there to take some extra stuff for playing together.”

“Ah...”

That must be it, right? Maybe I shouldn’t worry too much about this.

“Himiko should be waiting for us at the school entrance.”

And there she was. I could see that something was wrong with her. I thought she left what happened two days before behind... apparently she still thinks about it. Maybe she will never forgive Tenko...

“We should go there quickly!” Himiko exclaimed when she saw us. We did as she asked, entering the school.

“Shouldn’t we wait for Gonta and Tenko?” I asked.

“They’re already awake, but I told them to wait for you two! Gonta and Tenko are right there, just besides my research lab.”

“Cool! I’m so proud of you Himiko, you’re organizing this event perfectly! You really want the best for your bugs and us too!”

“Yeah... I thought I would never say this about people... but you’re almost as good as a bug.”

“Oh, what a great compliment!” Angie said. “Isn’t it the same for Kiibo?”

“I still have to know him better... nyeh.”

“Ah, I’m alright... don’t worry... but I’m kinda hungry...”

“I’ll bring the food that Gonta cooked today! I just want to let you see the show I prepared with my bugs!”

“You worked on a show?” I asked, surprised.

“...Yeah. That’s why I spent so much time inside my research lab. Some bugs weren’t that kind, but with enough affection I managed to train them. Now they respect me... I’m like their mother...”

“Did you use butter in your show?” I asked.

“What a curious question!” Angie exclaimed. “Why do you ask?”

I just looked at the corridor that led to the computer room where everyone else was. The splash of butter on the floor was definitely different from the last time I looked at it, yesterday morning...
“Look at that...” I said, pointing to it.

Himiko shook her head. “Some insects might get trapped with butter, I would never use such a thing.”

It looks like someone was dragged across it... there are stains of butter everywhere...

“Am I the only one who has a bad feeling about this?” I asked.

“Here’s Gonta!” Himiko exclaimed, excited, not acknowledging Tenko’s presence.

“Hi...” I said.

“How are you feeling, Tenko?” Angie asked.

“I’m fine... I was trying to talk with Gonta about stuff... casual conversation!”

“Yes! Gonta and Tenko might become good friends now! Gonta very happy!”

“Did you enter the lab?” I asked.

“Why?” Gonta asked. “Himiko told Gonta wait. Because she wanted a surprise. Also he not have Monopad.”

“But... did you find anything strange around?” I asked.

“No, it all looked pretty normal... you look worried, though. Has something happened?”

“He’s still half asleep, I think! Nyahahah!”

“Now that we’re all here... yes... you can... uhm...”

“Are you nervous?” Gonta asked.

“It’s normal to be.” Tenko followed.

“Yes... I was saying you can check out my lab and... you can sit on the grass while I prepare, alright?”

“Go on, Himiko. Atua also believes in you!”

So that’s when Himiko scanned her pad, causing the door to open.

At first, we saw only grass. It was normal.

However, near the small lake, at the end of the room...

I thought it was a hallucination, something out of my nightmares... We all rushed to the figure, to her, to hope she was not a corpse...

And when there were no more doubts, when we realized who was that person...

Maki Harukawa, the Ultimate Aikido Master, was killed by one of us.
“How... how is this... how...”

I couldn’t find any words. It happened again, but how... she was inside the virtual program...

And that’s when I noticed it, because, to my horror, I discovered that something else was right in front of me.

It was impossible to see before, but now that we got inside, there was no way to miss it.

Someone’s head was there, separated from their body.

I asked myself... how could this happen....

how... why... when...

But those questions were useless...

**Because 0U-M5’s head, the one of the Ultimate Robot... was inside that pond.**

<<Ding dong bing bong!>>

<<Upupupupu... A body has been discovered! Please, assemble in the Ultimate Entomologist Research Lab! Now, after some time has passed, the class trial will start!>>

*Daily life end.*

Chapter End Notes

Welp, somebody had to die.¯\_(ツ)_/¯
A virtual reality without real virtues: Deadly Life

Chapter Summary

Kaede has to face two new dead bodies; Kiibo tries his best to investigate with Angie's help

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

DEADLY LIFE

Kiibo

“Two... two... dead people?”

“Oh...” Himiko whimpered. “I... oh... I can’t... I... I don’t know...”

Angie was quick to embrace the entomologist in her arms. I was still too shocked to say something. However, the leader had the right words, even in the toughest of times.

“I know. You didn’t have any idea that this happened. It’s not your fault that this happened in your room.”

“Right... that’s true... that’s the truth...”

Her breaths became more frequent.

“Himiko looks not well! Gonta must help her!”

“No... I’m okay... I’m just... scared... Thank you... though.”

“Is everyone okay?” Tenko asked.

“We just saw two dead bodies... how can you say such a thing?” I said.

“It’s happened again, yes... but we have to stay focused now... we’ll have time to mourn them after the investigation.”

“Yes...” Angie nodded. “We’ll have to do another one of those...”

“But two of us... why?” I asked the others. “Why would someone kill two people when...”

“Should we care? No, because to our killer two people don’t make any difference. If we don’t find them... they’ll be the only one to survive this trial.”

Tenko’s right...

“And then... where’s Ouma’s body?”

“Here.” The caretaker said, pointing to one side of the room.
She was right. The robot’s body was hidden to the right of the door. We didn’t see it when we entered because we focused our attention on what was in front of us.

“So... has this happened in this room?” I asked.

“I don’t know. Maybe...”

“We need to investigate now... to find the culprit...” Himiko said.

“What about other people in the computer? They not coming?”

“Angie... maybe we should investigate on our own...” The entomologist suggested. “We know that none of us could be the killer, so... they might try to... to attack us...”

Is Himiko right? I don’t remember anything about last night, but... we weren’t together the entire time. The rational side of my mind is reminding me that no one had access to this lab... except Himiko herself. On the other hand... why would Himiko murder someone? And why would she bring us to her lab, where the bodies were...?

This doesn’t make sense...

“No, we have to bring the others back.” Angie said. “We stand no chance on our own. Kaede’s a great detective. I have Atua, but I can’t rely on him alone...”

“Isn’t Atua able to see everything...?” Himiko asked.

“Yes, but he can’t help us every time... he’s good, but can’t interfere with mortal affairs... maybe he wants us in his reign after all...”

“So we should die to see him at last?”

“I don’t know... but I feel that’s not the right solution... I might have a conference with him in the afternoon...”

“Yes! Maybe Atua tell us if he see Maki and Ouma...”

“I’ll remain here to guard the body...” I said.

“Oh! Me too...” Tenko nodded.

“Exactly... let’s go wake up the others...” Angie said. “We have to face this... terrible happening... but I feel like this will be the last time. Please, be strong for me... and for Atua.”

***

**Kaede Akamatsu**

Maki and 0U-M5 were dead.

A terrible feeling of dread took possess of my body. I didn’t want to believe anything of what they said, but I knew immediately it was true. I even refused to say “are you joking” or “are you sure?” because I could read Gonta and everyone else’s faces. This was what happened and we can’t go back.
Maybe Rantaro is right. Whoever comes close to me dies. Could this be a coincidence? Monokuma has proven time and time again that he has something against me...

“Kaede, how are you feeling?” Kaito asked.

My vision was a bit blurred, but, overall, I didn’t have a lot of other problems.

“Okay...” I said. “I’ve felt better, considering that two people died...”

“I was talking about your physical condition. Since the others forced our way out of the Program, it’s normal for you to feel dizzy and confused.”

“No, I’m fine, really... I’m only sleepy, kinda...”

I can’t afford to lose concentration now. It’s time to investigate... and discover who murdered not one, but two of our classmates.

“Thank Atua!” Angie exclaimed. “You’re still running! The others are definitely not ready for an investigation!”

I looked around and saw that Rantaro, Kirumi and Korekiyo were still sitting on the couch. However, their expression said enough.

“Maybe we should take a bucket. In the case they throw up.”

“Is that a possibility?” I asked.

“Yes...”

“Ow, my head...” Rantaro snorted. “What the hell is this...”

“The pain will pass in a while. You have to endure it now.”

“I am afraid I will not be able to aid you for now...” Kirumi said.

“Don’t worry about it. I’m sure everyone here will do their best.”

“Definitely!” Angie exclaimed. “The Angie Team is ready to uncover the mysteries of this case!”

Investigation start!

“The Angie Team will work besides me.” I laid it out clearly. “No one will wander off this time.”

“Huh? Explain Gonta why.”

“Because, to be completely honest, I don’t trust you.”

“Ah! I knew you would say that! Atua told me that in advance!”

“Did your inner voice tell you something I should be aware of?”

“What about a testimony? My words are always full of truths!”
“Talk clearly.” Kaito said. “Do you know something about this murder or not?”

“You taught me to remember even the slightest things, so here it is. Early in the morning I went to my research lab to set up some things for this night’s AAA. When I was back to the courtyard I heard a loud thump.”

“Didn’t you investigate it?”

“I should have... but it was just before the morning announcement and I didn’t want to leave Kiibo alone in my room! He usually wakes up earlier, but he didn’t this time...”

“Wait, what are you sayin’?”

“Maybe that will be a story for another day... but I definitely heard that sound. I couldn’t pinpoint its exact location, but it must have happened in or just outside the school. I know that Kaede will understand what it means!”

“Thank you for your collaboration, Angie.”

Obtained truth bullet: Angie’s testimony

“You’re welcome!”

Even though she saw two dead bodies, Angie keeps her enthusiasm. I wouldn’t classify that as good behavior. Sometimes you have to act differently.

“Gonta remain here to check on Rantaro, Korekiyo and Kirumi.”

“Good idea, it’s better to keep an eye on them.” I said. “We need to go to Himiko’s research lab.”

“Tsk. We’ll probably meet Monokuma and those bears there... I bet they’re waiting for us.”

“We shouldn’t let them wait for too long. The clock is already ticking.” I said.

There's another clue I need to remember about, by the way. The forced shutdown itself. Gonta and Angie assured we would log out... even though there are some unwanted effects for some people, I'm relieved I'm not affected.

Obtained truth bullet: Forced shutdown

We moved towards the lab. Heading out the area of the computer room, I noticed something different than before.

“Hey, pay attention to the butter on the ground.” I warned Angie.

“Oh, thank you! But you shouldn’t have worried. Atua’s divine intervention would have prevented me from slipping.”
Putting aside Atua, someone surely interacted with the butter that went flying all around a few days ago. When we entered the room, it was spread in an uniform, puddle-like way. Now, however, it was divided in two by a middle part which was less thick than the rest of it.

“Someone stepped on it, maybe?” Kaito hypothesized.

“No, because then we would see footprints. This is a straight line...”

**Obtained truth bullet: Butter**

The research lab door was open. I could already see Kiibo and Himiko watching over Maki’s body. Tenko –with a new haircut, apparently- was near the door looking at 0U-M5.

I can’t believe she’s gone... just now she was starting to get used to people...

She wanted to get out of the Program, and here she is... killed by one of us.

“How unfortunate! I guess everything comes to an end, doesn’t it?!

“Rise and shine, ursine!”

“Oh no! Someone’s dead!” Monophanie gasped. “I didn’t expect this at all!”

“It was bound to happen, sadly.” Monokid followed.

“What sadly are you talking about?!” Monokuma exclaimed. “I’m so pumped! It’s five days I’m waiting for corpses! Luckily one of you got a move on!”

“I knew that the motives you provided were good enough! I’ve always believed in you, dad!”

“Do you want all the attention to yourself?” Monophanie crossed her arms. “You know I’m the girl, therefore the favorite of daddy!”

“PLEASE. DO NOT FIGHT. WE WERE BUILDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.”

“While my children spout their usual nonsense, I’m here for a plot relevant reason, which is giving you the real-deal Monokuma File! All shiny and new for this new murder!”

“Only someone like you could hype up a killing in this horrific way...” Kiibo commented.

“Oh, really? On the television I hear sooo many stories like this though. A family of four was killed... the husband killed his wife... the news love to report on this stuff and they even have specific shows all dedicated to it!”

“You’re twisting the truth to accommodate your needs.” I spoke up. “Who cares about TV now, you’re only making us lose time with your blabbing.”

“You seem salty today, Kaede. It’s safe to say you didn’t like that your friend Maki was killed!”

“I’m not salty, I’m furious. It doesn’t matter that Maki died, anyone could be in that position and I would have the same reaction.”
“It’s not like you can put the blame on me though! I didn’t have anything to do with this murder, nope! You should redirect your anger to the one who delivered the final blow to Maki.”

“Are there going to be two Monokuma Files?” Tenko asked. “Since there are two of us who are lying on the ground...”

“I SUPPOSE YOU DID NOT UNDERSTAND THERE IS ONLY ONE REAL BODY HERE.”

“Yes!” Monophonie giggled. “You see, there was only one body announcement!”

Even though I see two bodies... what is the meaning of this?

“I thought it was for both of them...” Himiko sighed.

“Then is one of them alive? Praise Atua!”

“Of course!” Monokuma nodded. “You see, it looks like 0U-M5 cannot be considered dead. Even though his data has completely gone bye-bye, your inventor here didn’t discard the possibility that something like this could have happened.”

“So he doesn’t count as a victim, right?” Tenko looked at Kaito for confirmation.

“What he’s saying is that I did create a back-up. I need to reinstall it and Oums will be ready to go again!”

“Does... does this mean that we can know the identity of Maki’s culprit right after that?”

Kaito shook his head. “Don’t bet on that. Its memory is probably fried. I’ll try to salvage its database, but it will all be corrupted... the head got separated from the body, I suspect it’s serious damage.”

“Nyahahaha! One less victim is still a relief, even if they aren’t a human like us! Ouma isn’t that different!”

“Did Atua tell you that?”

“No, that’s my opinion.” Angie smiled. “But it’s a bit sad that you don’t consider your creation as a living being... I think Ouma always felt different from others, an outcast. You shouldn’t have stopped him from coming to the AAA.”

“I’m allowed to do what I want with him. And, if you excuse me, I need to take it back to its lab to put it back together.”

“He’s right.” I intervened. “Kaito is essential to solve this case. There are a lot of question marks, but something has happened within the program and he’s the only one who can truly understand that.”

I hope, at least. That locked door and the broken phones... if they didn’t happen... we might have been able to save Maki and prevent whatever happened to Oums. Regardless, I’m relieved that the situation isn’t as bad as it looked like at the start.

“Wait until I finish, you impatient brat!” Monokuma shouted.

“I’m the one impatient here?”

“I need to give you the Monokuma File! The oldies are right when they say the younger generation...
doesn’t respect their elders!”

“You aren’t old, daddy!” Monophone said. “You look very young!”

“I never doubted that. Because of my insurmountable beauty, you filthy bastards should revere me even more!”

“That’s what I meant when I said you waste our time.”

“You’re like those children who don’t want to attend class and-

“Alright! As always, you don’t understand my superior pop-culture references and bright satire! To be fair, you have to have a very high IQ to understand the greatness of Monokuma!”

“Yeah!” Monotaro exclaimed. “The humor is very subtle, and without a solid grasp of gaming and anime culture most of the jokes will go over a typical viewer’s head.”

“There’s also daddy’s nihilistic outlook, which is deftly woven into his characterization- his personal philosophy draws heavily from dualistic doctrines like Plato’s and Aristotle, for instance!”

“THE PEOPLE HE ADMires UNDERSTAND THIS STUFF. THEY HAVE THE INTELLECTUAL CAPACITY TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THE DEPTHS OF THIS JOKES, TO REALIZE THEY ARE NOT JUST FUNNY, THEY SAY SOMETHING DEEP ABOUT LIFE.”

“I hope you’re done.” Himiko said. “You’re all boring.”

“Well, someone must have picked up this reference! If the answer is negative, you all deserve to be sent to the junk pit! Here’s your Monokuma File! Appreciate me more!”

“So long, bear well!”

We made sure Monokuma and his kids weren’t coming back to revive obscure and unknown references so that we could focus on the matter at hand.

“Should I be going now?” Kaito asked.

“No, wait a second.” I stopped him. “We first have to inspect Ouma’s body.”

“What? He’s not dead!” Angie exclaimed.

“You can never be sure. Can you tell me something about what could have happened to him?” I asked Kaito.

“Well... judging from what I can see now, the major thing that happened to him was the disconnection between his body and head.”

“I see that...” I nodded. “I meant something only you can notice...”

“Oh... to be fair, it looks like is exterior was... tampered with in some way...”

“What does this mean?”

“On the back. There are something you could describe as bruises... like, someone tried to stuck something in his armor. I doubt that would work though...
“How did it happen? Could he have self-disassembled?”

“No, it can’t self-destroy, if that’s what you’re implying. You see, if the red button on its torso is clicked two times another person can remove its head like a screw.”

“Does someone know that detail? I doubt anyone would know that.”

“Uff... I could have mentioned it... so it’s impossible to say for now.”

“This is extremely important. There are a bunch of buttons there, no one could guess that two times red is the way to make Ouma essentially unconscious.”

“If it comes back to mind I’ll notify you immediately. Obviously I want to know who’s the fucker who tried to destroy my work.”

Obtained truth bullet: 0U-M5’s body conditions

***

Kiibo

“Are you refusing to check the Monokuma File like last time?” Angie asked Kaede.

“Yes, I won’t risk being tricked by that stupid bear. My investigation will continue without that information, but you can check it now.”

“But we shouldn’t tell you anything about it...” Himiko said.

“Right.”

“I won’t say you’re making a mistake...” Angie said. “But I think you’re not doing the right thing!”

“That’s the same thing.” Kaede commented. “Sorry, Angie. But I have no time to discuss with you. We have less time than usual because of the situation, you shouldn’t try to stop me.”

“Okay, if the all-powerful detective is saying that, I can only nod!”

Despite Kaede’s reluctance, I still wanted to check the File. I wouldn’t say Kaede what was written in it, but I wanted to try being helpful. Maybe I’ll have an epiphany.

The victim is Maki Harukawa, the Ultimate Neo Aikido Master.

The body was found in the Ultimate Entomologist Research Lab.

The estimate time of death is 8.00 A.M.

The cause of death is massive internal bleeding and failure of internal organs.
“Have you checked the File out?” Angie asked lowering her voice.

“Yes, look what it says about the cause of death... it isn’t that clear.”

“Hmm... failure of internal organs? How is that possible? She looks fine on the outside.”

“Maybe we should leave this to Kaede.”

Tenko approached the detective, who was inspecting Maki’s body. “Is there anything on her body that could help us understand what happened?”

“There aren’t any visible injuries on her body. Whoever killed her didn’t use a weapon, I think.”

Kaede said this, but her clothes were kind of messed up. There weren’t any scratches or serious damage, but they had folds and they were wet... I could see there was something wrong with them.

“What happened then?”

“Actually, to be precise, there is a head trauma. I can’t see a lot of blood, but I think that Maki suffered a fractured skull.”

Kaede pointed at the martial artist to give us an idea of what she was talking about. On Maki’s forehead there was a sort of very small hole. It looked like there was supposed to be blood there, but there was none.

“Has someone wiped the blood off?”

“Likely. It’s safe to say that Maki bled from this wound, albeit not enough to cause her death.”

If the culprit tried to hide the bleeding, however, they must have thought we would be able to deduce something from this. Luckily for us Kaede saw through their deceit.

**Obtained truth bullet: Maki’s body conditions**

“Has the water in your pond always been a little murky?” Kaede asked Himiko.

“Y-yes...”

“Really?” I asked. “I remember it to be quite limpid.”

“Oh? No, no... it was like this before...”

Is Himiko forgetting about the details in her lab or am I wrong? Because I’m sure that the last time we entered the pond had a slightly different color... maybe is the lightning?

“It was just a question, right? You shouldn’t get too worked up, guys!”

Kaede rolled her eyes. “Actually, it could be important. But you shouldn’t worry, I’ve already got
an idea.”

“Oh... sorry if I forgot then...” Himiko lowered her head. “I focused so much on my bugs and
didn’t pay attention to my surroundings.”

“Sorry if I bother you, Himiko.” Kaede continued. “I must ask you a question, it’s extremely
important.”

“I hope it’s nothing private...” Tenko said, crossing her arms.

“No, it’s about the case.”

“I’ll only respond if you promise is not about my bugs.”

“Yes, it’s not about your bugs.”

“Then you can do it... nyeh.”

“The new research labs are locked to everyone, unless you use your Monopad to unlock it. I don’t
want to continue, so I hope you understood what I’m trying to say.”

“Yes... you’re accusing me of killing Maki.”

“What?! Himiko would never do such a thing! How dare you!”

“Shh!” Angie intervened. “Tenko, don’t interrupt. You know what we agreed on.”

“R-right...” The caretaker nodded, following Angie’s advice.

“This situation is very suspicious. You were the only one who could enter this lab.”

“No... nyeh. That isn’t true.”

“How is that possible? No other Monopad could open this door.”

“Right... but mine was stolen. I didn’t want to tell you because you would have though I’m a
mess...”

“Huh.” Kaede raised an eyebrow. Is she really thinking Himiko could be capable of murder? Not
only that, but also capable of besting the Ultimate Neo Aikido Master?

“This night, after we went to Angie’s room, I wanted to sleep in my lab...”

“That’s true!” Angie exclaimed. “I can confirm it, and also does Kiibo, right?!?”

I don’t remember anything about last night, but that’s what must have happened... so I nodded.

“I was very tired, though... and ended up falling asleep on one of the benches in the three dark
rooms.”

“Which one of the rooms?” Kaede asked.

“Uh-uhm...”

“You forgot? This detail could be the one that solves the case.”

“T-the central one!”
“Sure?”

“Yes! I remember, I’m... I’m sure!”

So she had a similar experience to me... or not? She remembers what happened, so it’s not like the same happened to her. I would ask her more about this situation if we were not in the middle of an investigation.

“I had my Monopad with me... when I woke up, though... it was missing!”

“And when did you wake up?”

“When the morning announcement sounded. And I saw that I didn’t have it with me. I was so worried...”

Tenko looked like she was about to say something, but Angie also saw that and she looked back at her, signaling her to stay quiet.

“...But I found it near my research lab a while ago... it wasn’t there before, I swear! Someone took it!”

“So. You’re saying that you stopped in one of those three rooms before going to your lab. Why?”

“There isn’t any light in my lab, so I wanted to take some candles to make the place less scary... of course I wouldn’t disturb any of my bugs with that... it was only for me... nyeh.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Himiko’s testimony**

“I see... but I thought those rooms were empty.”

“Nope!” Angie exclaimed. “There are just a bench in each of them and a wardrobe! Strange indeed, I wonder what are those for!”

“You discovered the body when you entered with us, but you don’t know when the culprit entered.” I said.

“No... I don’t have any idea...”

“Is that why you were so scared to enter the room?” Angie asked.

“Y-yes... because... because I knew something had to have happened...”

“Don’t worry, Himiko!” Angie reassured her. “I’m deeply sorry for Maki! But her death isn’t your fault!”

“Maybe... nyeh.”

“If there’s anything else you should tell us, do it! Don’t be scared!”

“N-no... this is all I know...”

“Did you notice that the bug cases displayed on the wall aren’t attached to it?” Kaede asked.
“Uh? What?”

“They are all sitting on shelves. It looks like there’s nothing behind it... but actually...”

The detective drew near to the wall, looking between the display cases full of insects.

“Have you developed a passion for bugs?” Angie asked.

“Not really. Himiko, I need to move those cases. We’ll put them back when we’re done.”

“This will disrupt the bugs’ life...”

“Hey, we’re doing this for the best.” Angie spoke up again. “We need to do it if we want to survive.”

“...But if we die we’ll meet Atua, right?”

“I told you it isn’t that simple. It’s better to enjoy this life while it lasts.”

“...Okay, then you can do it...”

With my and Tenko’s help, Kaede removed some cases from the shelves, revealing a hidden secret.

“A lever?! I exclaimed.

“I knew it there was something here.”

“What is it for?” Tenko asked.

“There’s only one way to find out.”

“Wait, do you really want to pull it?! It could have terrible results, maybe the floor will collapse under us!”

“The only danger Monokuma puts us in is being killed by one of our classmates. If something happens, we can definitely recover.”

Do I really trust Kaede’s judgement? She’s being too brash for my liking.

“Atua, please save us from the tragedy that might strike us!”

Kaede pulled the lever. Ready for the worst, I could verify that the floor was staying in place. For a while, everything looked normal. We looked around confused, until I decided to check the ceiling.

In fact, what I forgot was that there was a skylight above our heads. As we were all turning our attention to it we could see it was opening, sliding to one side.

“You had no idea this was possible?” Kaede asked.

“No... I never saw behind the bug cases...”

“Does this even matter?” Tenko intervened. “It’s cool but extremely dangerous! What if someone climbs and falls down?”

“It’s their fault if they go up there in the first place...” I noted.

“It does matter. The culprit could have used the skylight to their advantage. How, I don’t know yet.
However, as long as there’s a possibility, we can’t forget about it.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Skylight**

“Now, somebody should remain here to guard the body.” Kaede said. “I hope I can trust you, Tenko.”

The caretaker looked around to search for Angie’s saying on the matter. I think she doesn’t want to lose sight of Himiko, especially now that Kaede seems to suspect her.

“We should listen to her opinion first!” The supreme leader exclaimed. “Why should she be the one? If she wants to investigate the place she should be able to do that!”

“Do you want to guard the body?”

“Would you let me? I’m sure you won’t, considering you think I’m not capable enough.”

“You said you were so excited to investigate... so you wouldn’t accept my offer.”

“Nyeh... are you saying that, Kaede... Angie’s a trustworthy person, and she has Atua who always helps her...”

“Don’t argue.” Tenko spoke up. “I’ll stay here. Angie will do a better job than me...”

“Nyahahah! The problem is solved! We’re friends again, Kaede!”

“I suppose so.”

“You should give Tenko your Monopad.” Angie told Himiko.

“But... if she steals it?!”

“N-no! I would never!” Tenko exclaimed, taken aback by the entomologist’s accuse.

“She needs it to get out of this lab... you wouldn’t want her trapped here.”

“With my bugs... maybe I should stay here too...”

“Good idea!” Angie exclaimed. “You can keep watch on the body and on your bugs! Tenko will help.”

Leaving Tenko and Himiko behind, us three went back to the hallway.

“We have spent already quite a bit of time inside the lab...” I noticed.

“You’re right... I don’t have a clue about Monokuma’s intention, but I’m afraid some clues might go unnoticed if we don’t split up...”

“Wow! Are you giving Angie the possibility to explore by herself?”

“No.”
“There’s Kiibo with me! You trust him, unlike me!”

“I’ve never said that.”

“Not explicitly, maybe? Not to me directly, by any chance? I have ears and eyes everywhere with Atua by my side!”

“Have you ever thought you are too harsh with Angie?” I asked Kaede. “You’ve been in the program for an entire day and nothing bad happened…”

“Until Maki’s death.”

“Actually, she was in the virtual world with you! The problem starts there, definitely! And thank you, Kiibo! I didn’t need your help but it’s always appreciated!”

“T-thanks…”

“Alright…” Kaede sighed. “You can go to the three dark rooms…”

“Yeah!” Angie cheered.

“…When Korekiyo, Kirumi or Rantaro feels better.”

“What if we don’t have enough time?” I said. “I don’t want to die because you think we’re unreliable!”

“It’s not like I think that. I’m taking ex-”

“You came to me telling me I shouldn’t be afraid of helping others and then you stop me from trying to do what’s right?”

“No, if-

“No ifs! You always change your mind, Kaede… I guess you want the best for us, but you aren’t doing enough! It’s the third time someone was killed and soon we’ll have at least another one of us to mourn, and only if we can guess who murdered Maki… otherwise…”

“I’m trying, Kiibo! There’s no right way to deal with this…”

“I know what you’re trying to do, be at the center of attention. Have you ever thought about needing help from others, other than helping them yourself?”

“Yes. I can’t do everything alone…”

“Do you believe in what you’re saying or it’s just something you repeat to convince us? To convince yourself?”

Angie stepped in before I could continue. “Hey hey! This is escalating quickly! Both Kiibo and Kaede, calm down and think before speaking again. Now let me talk.”

“Explore.” Kaede said. “Go around the school, I don’t know. Maybe I shouldn’t trust you, Kiibo. But nor you neither Angie are bound to me. Remember that if you miss something or someone tricks you the consequences will be disastrous.”

Having said that, Kaede went towards the computer room.
I don’t know what I should think about her now... it’s the first time I spoke out about her attitude... she didn’t look annoyed but she wasn’t concerned about me... according to her expression... but I’ve never been that good at understanding other people’s intentions...

“I can feel your aura, Kiibo...” Angie said, putting a hand on my shoulder.

“My aura?”

“Hmm... it’s a cool name that I use to indicate the feelings of others. You look like you’re stressed out.”

“I don’t want to sound cliché, but Maki died... and I fear not being able to solve this...”

“Oh, you were doing so well with Kaede! You stood up for yourself and you said what needed to be said.”

“If... if you say so... we should go to those rooms now.”

***

Kaede Akamatsu

Dammit! I can’t believe I screwed up with Kiibo. I’m trying to understand what I did wrong... maybe I didn’t spend enough time with him... and that’s why Angie took over my position. She did everything I tried to do beforehand, but she succeeded. She has the power to convince everyone to follow her. I’ve always thought that she was someone who I should’ve monitored, but I acted too late. Half of our group only listens to her voice, ignoring everything else we say. I’m starting to think that going inside the Neo World Program wasn’t the best decision... and maybe Maki was right. I shouldn’t have believed in Kaito so easily... like everyone else before him.

And then, despite me saying this, I agreed to let Angie and Kiibo investigate by themselves. The astronaut might be right... it’s true that I always change my opinion.

I got back in the computer room. Kirumi and Korekiyo were standing up, at least, whereas Rantaro was still in his chair. He was with Maki during the search, so he has to know something about her.

“Tell me, Kaede...” Kirumi approached me, massaging her head. “Were you and Kaito also trapped?”

“Yes...” I nodded. I wasn’t surprised to know the same happened to them.

“The culprit must have locked us in... how were they able to accomplish such a task, I am not aware of.”

Obtained truth bullet: Locked mansion doors

“Shortly after we met each other we finished our duty in the bedroom, we moved to the upstairs bathroom.” Korekiyo explained.
“And you didn’t find anything useful, I suppose.”

“Quite the contrary. I suspect I found what we were searching for.”

“To be precise, we assume that we did not uncover the location of the mysterious object. In fact, I arrived to another conclusion. We found what Monokuma hid.”

“The status of the outside world?” I asked, surprised.

“Actually, what happened is exceptionally curious.” Korekiyo continued. “What caught our interest was a leaflet. I do not know how the program operates, but that object was clearly glowing.”

“So because glow, you think important.” Gonta intervened.

“I took that leaflet. On the front there was a black and white background with this sentence written on it: ‘Discover your real identities! Kickstart your real memories and escape from the Killing Game!’”

“And... on the back?”

“We could not read it. The leaflet disappeared as soon as I turned it around.”

“When Kiyo informed me about his discovery, I saw the scene happening in front of my eyes.”

“It popped out of existence, you say?”

“Yes.” Kirumi nodded.

“Interesting to hear that... Kaito told me that he was able to edit objects out of the program... what if that’s what happened?”

“Could anyone else do that?” Kirumi asked.

“I have no idea how easy it is... We should ask Kaito as soon as he gets back. He’s repairing Ouma.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Disappeared leaflet**

“Ouma not dead!?”

“No, it’s alive.” Kaito said behind us.

We turned towards him, 0U-M5 at his side. He looked completely normal.

“Kaito told me that something terrible happened to me, so I needed a backup.”

“It’s fine but doesn’t remember anything that happened here from the time it woke up.”

“He not remember us?”

“No...” 0U-M5 scratched his cheek. “The backup that Kaito had saved doesn’t have any information. I’m completely new.”
He’s back to square one. And just like the last time the inventor didn’t bother to keep his memories before Shuichi’s death.

“I’d be happy to get to know each other again.” I said to the robot. “However we’re in a difficult situation.”

“Kaito explained everything on the way here. From what I’ve understood, we need to discovered who killed one of our classmates by gathering clues.”

That reminds me...

“Kirumi, I need to ask you a big favor.”

“I also need to ask you a question, however I understand this is not the best time to do so. What is your request?”

“Angie and Kiibo went to investigate the dark rooms on this floor. I don’t trust her enough to let her run wild messing with the evidence, but I couldn’t do anything to stop her. She would have ditched me eventually.”

“She is a strong woman indeed.” Korekiyo observed. “I wonder...”

“What do you wonder?” 0U-M5 asked.

“Oh, nothing. I thought she would be a nice friend outside of the Killing Game.”

I’ve got the opposite feeling.

“I see that this is for our best interests.” The adventurer said. “Kiyo and I will go there immediately.”

“Korekiyo can stay here, though.”

“No worries, Kaede. I have felt worse... I will follow Kirumi as well. Good luck with your investigation.”

“Good luck.” I said watching the two leave.

“Have you noticed that Kirumi calls Korekiyo with a strange name? What’s up with that?” Kaito asked.

“Are you seriously thinking about that now?”

“Kaito did his best to restore me, don’t be too harsh with him!”

“By the way, didn’t we lock this door?” Kaito said, pointing at the entrance.

He’s right... but not completely.

“We didn’t lock the door, even though we tried to avoid others from entering with chairs.”

“You left us out?” Gonta exclaimed. “Gonta thinks that mean.”

“We had to make sure nobody would disturb us.” Kaito explained.

“Okay... Gonta forgive you, but he need ask Angie for permission.”
“You don’t need her permission to do that.” I said.

“Yes, but if she says it good then Atua forgive you too. Gonta don’t want Atua mad with Kaede and Kaito, because he thinks them nice people!”

“Not to offend you, but a genius inventor doesn’t need Atua’s blessing.”

“Hmm... sure about that? Your inventions not be that good until now, with Atua things could change.”

“What did you say about me? My inventions are trash?!”

“Sorry, sorry! Gonta don’t want to you to be angry...”

“Okay, I accept your apologies because I know you didn’t mean it... Let’s go to the terminal now.”

“What is the terminal?” 0U-M5 asked.

“The part of the system where you input the data. Then that data will show itself as an output, in the case of the Neo World Program that means everything except your avatars. I can check for potential errors and bugs that occurred.”

“That reminds me, can you see if someone removed an object from the program?”

“Of course I can.” Kaito explained as he read multiple strings of code. “Why are you telling me this?”

I told the inventor what Kirumi and Korekiyo discovered in the bathroom and describing how the leaflet disappeared.

“Yep, that’s what must have happened. There are a lot of sloppy changes in the data here, though.”

“Someone needs to be proficient with it to do it in the first place or is it something everyone could do?”

“Uhm...”

Kaito stuttered, staying silent for a while.

“Are there any problems?” I asked.

“I wanted to tell you it isn’t hard to work on it, but I’ll be honest with you.” He said. “This isn’t an easy task... I think I’m the only one here who’s able to work on this kind of stuff. I know that this makes me suspicious... but you would realize it regardless of my help.”

“I probably would have. Though you made everything easier.”

That’s true in both cases; if he’s the killer or not.

I was writing down that information on my notepad when Gonta called me.

“Oh! Gonta remember motive that Monokuma give!”

“Monokuma gave you another motive while we were in the Program?”

“Rise and shine ursine!”
“Daddy jumped up at the occasion as soon as it presented itself! He’s so resolute!”

“He did indeed!” Monotaro snickered. “It’s surprising he has so many motives up his sleeve!”

“Monokuma said something like help with Neo World Program.”

“Since when he’s allowed to add motives as he pleases?”

“He was able to do that from the start of the game.” Monokid explained bluntly.

“HOWEVER, WHAT HE GAVE WAS ONLY THE SECOND OFFICIAL MOTIVE FOR THE CHAPTER.”

“What about that bunch of other shitty beneficial motives or the fuck he called them?”

“Allow me to explain daddy’s plan, you guys! The release benefits are all part of one big motive, after all you can only use one!”

“How did none of you even mention that?!” Kaito shouted, directed at Gonta.

“A lot of things going on, Gonta totally not remember, sorry!”

Why am I not surprised... Angie must have told everyone to keep their mouth shut. Who knows what is she aiming for, a sudden turnaround during the trial?

“The gist of the second motive was an extra help with the Neo World Program. Monokuma would give you a bunch of tips and tricks on how to operate it!”

“What the fuck?!” Kaito exclaimed. He looked more genuine than he had ever been. That was a pure look of anger on his face. “What the actual fuck?! How does he dare to fucking mess with the world he abandoned in the first place?!”

“Oh... my head...” Rantaro said, not contributing to the discussion.

“Daddy knew this would have happened... that’s why he sent us here.”

“To get beaten up.” Monokid commented.

“Hey! We have the Exisals, we’re the one who’ll beat up others!”

“We need to take them though!” Monotaro commented. “Time to disappear!”

“So long, bear well!”

“Those fucking bears... and here I thought I was the only one to understand the code behind the program!”

This changes everything... this motive we didn’t know about might be the reason why the culprit was able to kill Maki. I have to take it into account.

**Obtained truth bullet: Monokuma’s second motive**

“According to what I’m reading there have been a lot of changes while we were inside. Here’s one
of them. All but two phones were coded not to work.”

“That explains why we weren’t able to logout of the program. Whose are the two that weren’t affected?”

“Whoever messed up the code made sure to encrypt that information by hiding the names linked to our avatars. There’s no way to know.”

“Not even a chance?”

“I could try to work on it, though it would require a lot of time... and we don’t have it.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Malfunctioning phones**

“Oh! Can you know who exit and enter virtual world?”

“You mean our logs?”

“What are those?” I asked.

“The program registers our logins and our logouts. However, it’s not easy to understand those. You see, those also are encrypted. I desperately tried to find a solution... no luck.”

“Checking them out can only give us more details.”

“I need some time to process that data. It will load while we spend time on more pressing things.”

“You said that Oums checked on us while we were inside the program, so there have to be some cameras there.”

Dang it... if Ouma wasn’t attacked he would have at least known how Maki got out...

“Not really, but the world is always monitored. We can check it out.”

Kaito pressed a sequence of buttons on the keyboard, causing different windows to pop up. Each one of them showed a specific area of the virtual world we were in before.

“Are there any blind spots?”

“Definitely not. However, it’s impossible for someone to see everything at once.”

“I understand. First things first, find a shot of the woods area. Maki was searching there.”

“Roger that.”

The inventor leafed through numerous windows until he found one that interested us.

“Here’s it. Many trees.”

“Hey, look at the grass. Isn’t there something strange about it?”

“It’s... flatter than usual?”
“Was somebody dragged across it?”

“Wait a second, I’ll check the other shots too.”

Piece by piece me and Kaito found out that the flat grass went on for quite some time, until it reached the road.

“This answers some questions, but... it isn’t enough by itself.”

*Obtained truth bullet: Flat grass path*

“Wait a second... what’s this?”

Kaito changed to another window, showing us a particular object near the river.

“It’s a sign... and *Mirai Hills* is written on it.”

“Did you see it around?” I asked Kaito.

“I remember it being present in the data, even though I never understood its location... but it definitely wasn’t here.”

That’s true. We would have seen it if that’s the case. That means it was moved... by who? And why?

*Obtained truth bullet: Sign*

***

*Kiibo*

“What makes you think something is here?”

“I told you, Atua!”

“Alright...”

“Look there.” The leader said. “There are yellow splotches everywhere!”

“Actually, they are more like dots...”

“Let me taste it!”

“What!? Are you crazy!?”

“No! It’s just that I immediately recognized what it is! Atua led the way!”
Angie touched one of the yellow dots and then licked her finger. I hope she doesn’t get ill after this.

“It’s butter! Like the one in front of the door that we destroyed!”

“Why is it here?”

“Atua still has to tell me that. Also, did you notice that the floor is just a tiny itsy eetsy wet?”

“No, I didn’t...”

“More than wet, I’d say humid! Yes, humid! Someone must have washed this corridor! I think there was way more butter!”

*Updated truth bullet: Butter*

*Obtained truth bullet: Wet floor*

Angie and me explored the first two dark rooms, the left one and the center one. In the first were some candles on the wall, a bench and a wardrobe. Those pieces of furniture were placed all in the same spot, making the two rooms identical, without windows. The only difference was that two candles in the center room were on the ground, near the bench.

Once we got inside the third room, we immediately noticed something was wrong.

“Isn’t the wardrobe in a different place?” I asked.

“Yes! In the other two rooms it was more to the right!”

We checked inside it too, but it was empty.

At that time, Korekiyo and Kirumi entered the room.

“Oh!” Angie exclaimed. “You finally felt better and ready to investigate!”

“Hello to you as well.” The adventurer said.

“Why are you here?” I asked, sensing something.

“We decided to investigate those rooms.”

“On your own volition? Nyahahah, it’s such a coincidence that I almost can’t believe it!”

“Kaede told you to come here, right?”

“No, she only invited us to search around the school.” Korekiyo explained, even though I didn’t trust any of those words.

“We’re all friends here! You can tell us that Kaede didn’t want us to explore alone, we already know that!”
“I assure you that you are worrying without a reason.”

“In addition to that,” Kirumi continued. “This discussion will only result in us wasting time.”

“Then you have to pinky promise!”

“Excuse me?”

“Use your pinky finger and combine it with mine! That’s a promise that can’t be broken unless you want to suffer because of Atua’s divine punishment!” Angie exclaimed. “And I can guarantee you it’s not pleasant.”

“We do not have the time nor the will to do such a thing.”

“Oh. Alright. But I can’t believe you.”

Korekiyo ignored the leader and spoke up, highlighting the different position of the furniture as well.

“I suggest moving it.”

“Huh? Why? What could possibly change? It’s a normal wardrobe!”

“Will you aid me or not?”

“Okay, okay! Don’t be so serious!”

With the help of Angie, Korekiyo and Kirumi, I managed to move the wardrobe. To our surprise, we discovered that a window was behind it.

“Wow! What a great intuition, Korekiyo! How did you know?”

“To be quite honest, I did remember that one of those rooms had a window. I had to be sure.”

“It was concealed from view, however.” Kirumi noted.

“Has it something to do with the murder?”

“Likely. We need to write it down so that we do not forget about it during the trial.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Hidden window**

“Where does this window lead to?” Angie asked. “It’s pretty big. I think I could even pass through.”


“Interesting. I did not know about this window.” Kirumi said. “However, I must ask you two an important question.”

“Ask away! We don’t have time to lose!”

“Monokuma must have given out another release benefit last night.”
That’s right... he definitely did. However, I don’t remember at all... was I already sleeping? It must be it...

“Yep. He did indeed.” Angie answered.

“What is it? You realize it might be the reason why the culprit decided to act now.”

“I thought about it! But why should I tell you now? You could be the killer!”

“Allow me to disprove your claim. I have spent my entire time in the Program with Korekiyo, and he can confirm.”

“I do. Therefore, revealing us the motive can only help us.”

“Should I ask you, Kiibo?”

“Uh-uhm...”

“Okay guys!” Angie intervened. “I’ll tell you! You are a bit fishy, but this is for the benefit of the group! Last night Monokuma told us that whoever decided to kill could choose to take part in an experimental project to create the Ultimate... Ultimate, basically.”

“Ultimate what?” Korekiyo asked.

“What I said, the definitive Ultimate, the one who possesses all talents.”

“That is simply impossible. No one could achieve such a feat.”

“Yep, this is our thought process too! How do they even keep track of all of our talents? There must be hundreds of us in the country!”

“Do you confirm her version?” Kirumi asked me.

“Yes.” I said without hesitation. Once more, why would Angie tell a lie? There are three other people that can disprove what she said.

“Yet the culprit could have taken advantage of another motive...” Kirumi said.

“Huh? Which one?”

“This morning a new motive could be used, according to Monokuma’s words. However, it will not be revealed until night-time.”

So, in other words, never. The trial is starting soon.

 Obtained truth bullet: Release benefits

“Monokuma must have a lot of power to be able to create such a skilled Ultimate... but if we band together we can overcome every difficult obstacle!” The leader exclaimed.

“However the body count is piling up.” Korekiyo ominously commented.

“Well, because we continue fighting with each other! Do you want to take part in the next AAA?”
“We are in the middle of an investigation. This is not the time to be discussing this matters.”

“Sorry! I always get carried away!”

“Nothing else useful can be found here. We should go back to the computer room and inform Kaede.”

“Right to the detective then!” Angie exclaimed.

After a short time, we saw Tenko coming towards us. I thought she was guarding the body with Himiko.

“What are you doing here?” I asked.

“Himiko told me to leave her with her bugs and I... I... I just couldn’t say no, guys.”

“You left her alone with the body though! That’s risky, nyahahah!”

“It’s because I trust her. She wouldn’t hurt a fly!”

“Correct assumption.” Korekiyo said. “A fly is an insect, she loves those.”

“How did it go with her?”

“W-well... we didn’t talk at all... I tried commenting on her bugs, but... I don’t find anything smart to say! I know she won’t listen either way.”

“I see...” Angie said, playing with her hair. “Maybe you have to be extra subtle! Yeah, that must be the right way!”

“But how can I be?”

“This is not the time for relationship problems, I am afraid.” Kirumi said.

“I know. I came here to tell you something else, though... it’s about Gonta.”

“Why now and not while Kaede was around?”

“Obviously because she doesn’t trust her. She can be sketchy at times!”

“Himiko said that she went back to this floor while we were in the kitchen... but during that time, I went to the warehouse to search for a nice gift for her...”

“You already wanted to give her a gift? It’s too soon for that! I said to be subtle, right?”

“I...I know now! It’s that I can’t confirm Gonta’s whereabouts for about... ten minutes?”

“You left him in the kitchen, am I correct?”

“Yes... but he could have moved... I’m just saying... a degen- Someone like him... He could have done this.”

I don’t see the reason why Gonta would kill Maki, but... objectively... we can’t confirm is innocence...
“Look at this, Kaede. Whoever messed up with the Program also tried to confuse us.”

“How, exactly?”

“They lowered the render distance to the minimum! Do you remember?”

“That thing that made impossible to see up to the river?”

“Correct. This means that whoever was outside of the mansion or the church would only see a couple of feet ahead of them.”

“We didn’t know that until now, because we were inside...”

“Here’s something curious. The offender could have done the same for the indoor areas, but they didn’t touch those. Interesting, is it not?”

If the culprit did that... were they targeting a specific person?

“Now that we’re waiting for the logs, I definitely need a quick rundown of the various rules of the Virtual World.”

“Can you repeat them to me too?” 0U-M5 asked. “I could be of help, my mind is all scrambled.”

“But do you want to know what the hell did I found in your room too?”

“Does it relate to the murder?” I asked.

“Parts of a jetpack! They’re all broken... but maybe I could fix it and tell Oums to fly around like a butterfly.”

“But... did you forget that nothing can be taken out of the research rooms?”

“And that’s where you’re wrong.”

“I doubt Monokuma changed the rules.”

“You see, I talked with Monokuma myself! He told me that this rule doesn’t apply for the robot here, as long as those object become part of Oums and work with it as a machine.”
“Seriously?”

“He said that we could do the same thing if we manage to fuse with stuff.”

Always making jokes, that freaking bear...

“That’s why I was able to insert new disks inside...”

Kaito suddenly stop, as if he had an ephipany.

“Holy shit, I remembered that Oums could have voice records of what happened!”

“Uh?”

“Stay still for a moment.” The inventor said, inspecting the robot’s right leg.

“Can you store things there too?” I asked, surprised. Every time there’s a new discovery about that robot.

“They’re still here. 0U-M5, play those records sped up. Stop when you detect unusual sounds.”

“As you want, please wait for loading...”

“What is this? Can you explain quickly?”

“0U-M5 records everything that happens around him. It has three discs it can play, adding up to a total of fifty hours of total recording. Those have to be substituted, of course. But I’ve already done that in the past, so he should know what it heard while we were inside.”

“Substituted? Where did you find them?”

“In Oums’ lab. I inserted the clean disks yesterday morning.”

“No unusual sounds found. The first sound I detect is of your voice when you boot me up.”

“How that possible?” Gonta asked.

“The discs might have been damage in some shape or form.”

“They look fine!”

“I don’t know what I should say... they might have reset after that person shut me off.”

“...Maybe they entered your lab...”

“Is there any sign that points to that being the case?” I asked.

“I’m not sure, but some objects in the lab... they were not were I remembered... the lab was all messed up...”

I tilted my head. “You’re suggesting that Oums’ searched for the disks and swapped them? Where would they end up?”

“Probably they destroyed them, smashed somewhere, I think... but remember, they can’t take them out from Oums’ leg outside of its lab. Otherwise it’s a rule violation.”
“Let’s go back to the Neo World Program. I remember that nothing can physically break.”

“Right, that’s the most important rule. However there’s another one that you might have forgotten. Our talents don’t exist in the Virtual World.”

It could be something most people would count as a insignificant detail, but I have this hunch... that is has to do with Maki’s death. Our talents are part of our personalities after all.”

“Time for me to shine!”

“Here he is.”

Monokuma appeared before us with a pirate hat.

“Why that outfit?” Gonta asked.

“I’m about to say another extremely important quote, I just need the perfect line before mine.”

“And you came here because of this?”

“Nope, because you forgot a rule! I guess it wasn’t specified and not even tested, so it’s not Kaito’s fault that he doesn’t know.”

Everyone kept silent.

“What are you waiting for?! Ask me what the hell that rule is!”

“You’ll tell us regardless.”

“You bastard dumb youngsters! You really think that everything is handed to you on a silver plate? I cannot believe it!”

“We’re only wasting time.” I said.

“Then ask me nicely! Otherwise I’ll be here until the timer runs out, that means when I’m bored! You won’t gather all the clues, and I’m so fucking bored right now. Entertain me!”

Maybe it’s better to do as he says.

“Please, Monokuma. Tell us about the third rule.”

“Someone yells stop, goes limp, taps out, the fight is over.”

“Not this one. You know what the hell we’re talking about.”

“Three! Smiles go for miles!”
“Can you stop with the references we don’t get?”

“The entropy of a system approaches a constant value as its temperature approaches absolute zero.”

“You’re worth absolute zero.” The inventor said.

“What the fuck did you just fucking say about me, you little bitch? I’ll have you know I graduated top of my class in the Navy Seals, and I am trained in gorilla warfar-

“It’s guerilla warfare.” Rantaro said, standing up from the sofa.

“That’s part of the reference, you dumb-dumbs!”

“Also, wearing a pirate hat has nothing to do with the Navy.” The artists pointed out.

“You are nothing to me but just another target. I will wipe you the fuck out with precision the likes of which has never been seen before on this Earth, mark my fucking words.”

“What? The f-

I shut Kaito with my hand. There’s no need to make this more difficult.

“By the way, thank you for having heard my reference. Good job to the ones who got it.”

“Gonta not get it.”

“You’ll do when you’re older.”

“Are we done with this shit or not?” Rantaro asked.

“We are now, you sleepy boy. The third rule has to do with death. No one can die in the Neo World Program, even though it was originally possible. I changed it before the Killing Game started, for a much better murder mystery!”

“So what does happen if you sustain an injury that would otherwise kill you?” I spoke up.

“Easy, you pass out. And that’s that.”

“Can you log out?”

“If you’re out cold then you obviously can’t say your name and you can’t hold your phone!”

“Then how do you get out?”

“Like you did, you dumbwits! Force exit. It goes without saying that you would feel even worse than what happened to you. You’d probably be unconscious for an hour or two before the dizziness and the usual symptoms would come.”

“Hmpf. Why are you telling us those things?”

“How boring would the trial be otherwise? I feel like this is gonna be quite exciting! I must admit I might have given some advantages to the culprit, so I have help you too!”

**Obtained truth bullet: Death in the Neo World Program**
“Welp, I did my good action for the day. I feel better, but I’ll reach ascended status when the trial starts. Just to let you know, you only have a few minutes left! Be quick!”

“Great...” Rantaro sighed. “I’m sorry, everyone... for having done next to nothing during this investigation...”

Considering he’d stalk me I think it’s a win-win situation.

Maybe only a win on my part.

“Kaede discovered right culprit when Ryoma died and you out cold, so not worry too much, okay?”

“Try to get those logs up as soon as possible, Kaito.” I said. “Now, Rantaro, I need to ask you some questions.”

“I figured as much... I know I’m the last person who has seen Maki...”

“You were with Maki. That’s far worse.”

“Before crucifying me, let me give my side of the story.”

“I’m here.”

“Maki and I weren’t searching near each other. We wanted to cover as much ground as possible but still be able to see one another. However, at some point fog came down and I could see literally nothing. My vision was completely clouded.”

“Really?” Gonta exclaimed. “Nothing at all? At least some....”

“No, zero. I swear to you. I could only see myself and maybe just a bit short of one meter around me. You’d understand that I got worried. To avoid getting lost, I decided to stay put. I figured it would go away.”

“Did it?”

“No. Until you got me out I was in a ocean of fog. After a while that I was sitting I started getting worried and called for Maki. I got no response. The phone wouldn’t even work. So I tried moving a bit... every tree looked the same, even though I was sure I was moving in a straight line. I though that sooner or later I had to reach a barrier, and in fact I did... but there was no sign of Maki...”

Rantaro appears to be honest, even though no one can confirm what he’s saying...

“At one point I saw a light. It was barely visible. I tried to reach it, but it continued moving around... at some point it disappeared completely. I don’t know if it faded out or it got farther than I was... that situation was messing up my head. Luckily you got me out.”

Obtained truth bullet: Rantaro’s testimony

“Mh, I see. If you’re telling the truth, somet-
“Kaede! Come here, I managed to load the logs!

I stopped focusing on Rantaro and immediately rushed to the other side of the room. Kaito had just opened a new window.

<10.20> N°#1 Avatar(s)
<<Cross-section to Right Area>>

<10.44> N°#3 Avatar(s)
<<Cross-section to Right Area>>

<18.25> N°#2 Avatar(s)
<<Cross-section to Left Area>>

<6:50> s31P [-]
<<Process duration: 3 minutes>>

<7:41> AltO [<]
<<Process duration: 1 minute>>

<7:44> s31P [-]
<<Process duration: 2 minutes>>

“What do those letters and numbers mean?” I asked.

“I told you. They represent our avatars. As you can see, there have been three in total between logins and logouts while we were in the virtual world.”

“What about our previous logins? Are those there?”

“Nope. They still need to be loaded, if they aren’t deleted in the first place. Despite that, I’m sure those letters correspond to our surnames.”

“Do the logs only track the logins and logouts?”

“Nope. As far as I know, they also specify if someone teleported using the World’s End.”
“What about 0U-M5 and Kiibo?”

“Who knows... I definitely can’t guess based on this.”

“You’re saying surnames, but only Kirumi has a four letter one.”

“Right, but here’s how it works. The last four letters of your surname are taken. If the same letter is present multiple times, it goes to the first.”

“Yours should be... mo... MOTA, then.”

“And yours ATSU. But as I said, those are later changed. To every original letter a number or different letter is substituted.”

“I see... why is this so complex?”

“Don’t ask me. Monokuma came up with this”

**Obtained truth bullet: Logs**

**Obtained truth bullet: Decryption hints**

“There’s only one way to be sure of our names. We need to go back inside, each one of us.”

“What? No, you’ll spend too much time there.”

“We’ll be quick. If you register our logs, it will be easy to link our names together and figure out who those two people are.”

“Gonta can go tell others!”

“There’s no time, Kaede!” Kaito exclaimed. “The log-in process already takes up at least three minutes!”

“We have to risk it! You can plug me out with the force exit.”

“And risk you being in no shape for the trial? No fucking way!”

“Hello guys!” Angie said entering the room along with the others. “We have discovered something!”

“Quick!” I shouted. “Put on that headset and get in the Program!”

“Huh? What?”

bzzrtp...
Alright! It’s time for what you’ve been waiting for — the class trial! Please assemble in front of the Shrine of Judgment now, and I mean NOW. Don’t try to waste time, you bastards; I won’t tolerate that! >>

We didn’t have any time left.

“What would you like us to do?” Kirumi asked.

“It’s too late now.” I sighed. “I hope I can reach a conclusion with the evidence I collected.”

“Oh! We did find at least four interesting things! First of all-

“There is no need for this. I took notes as I was inspecting the dark rooms and the surrounding area. Here you are.”

The adventurer handed me a notepad where she wrote down some interesting facts.

“We helped with those! We were so very useful!” Angie reminded me.

“Thank you...” I said.

We went back to the research lab to pick up Himiko, while I checked the Monokuma File. Time and cause of death were essential to uncover the truth behind Maki’s murder.

We exited the school and I noticed Himiko was poking me on the shoulder. I turned to face her.

“Is there somet-

“Shh... don’t speak too loudly.”

“O-okay. Be quick though, the others are ahead of us.”

“I... I need to tell you a thing. Maybe it’s not important but...”

“You want to tell me while the others aren’t around?”

“Yes... I heard the Monokubs saying that the last release benefit is about helping others more than yourself...”

“Hm? Why did you hide this from everyone else?”

“Just... don’t tell that it was me who told you, alright? Tell that you hear-

Himiko stopped. I turned back to see that Kaito and 0U-M5 were looking at us from the stairs.

“What are you doing there?” The robot asked.

“Nothing. Discussing bugs.”

“Still bugs? You only have those on your mind. Tsk.”

“S-sorry...”
What is up with the entomologist’s attitude? Does she think that the Monokubs will punish her because she heard them? And when would have she heard them talking? I would ask her more, but I can’t if other people are around... I have to rely on this hint she gave me...

*Updated truth bullet: Release benefits*

We were in the Shrine of Judgment for the third time now. I must admit that this is almost becoming routine to me... but still... I continue to trust my classmates, maybe not blind faith like I did previously, however...

Kaito called the elevator. We waited still for it to arrive.

“I don’t know why one of you killed Maki.” He said. “I didn’t like her, but... that doesn’t mean I wished for her to die.”

“Should we make an euology? Atua might meet Maki and give her happiness.”

“No Atua.” Kaito remarked.

Angie shrugged and laughed. “Why though? It doesn’t hurt anyone. Maybe just Rantaro... who always has something against me.”

The leader turned to the artist expecting a response, which didn’t come. Rantaro only stared at her until she turned her attention back to Kaito.

“So? This will help you feel at ease.”

“I’m okay with how I am now. Praying doesn’t bring people back to life.”

“But...” Himiko intervened. “You don’t know what happens after death, so maybe...”

The elevator arrived and we all entered. Every time getting less and less crowded.

“Everyone decides what to make of their life.” Angie said. “If some of you want to say words about Maki, you can even think about them. Atua will hear them.”

“Oh... can I also speak out loud?” The entomologist asked.

“Is that okay, guys?”

Nobody protested, so Angie gave the OK to Himiko.

“...I’m sorry that... I didn’t treat her that well...”

“Some people have done worse than you.” Kiibo comforted her. “You shouldn’t feel ashamed.”

He was referring to Kaito. The inventor didn’t pay much attention to those words, though. I hope he will be able to control himself more in the future... which is also what I should do...

Last trial... I shouted, screamed at Miu before her execution... what if the culprit is someone I trusted this entire time? Will I be able to keep my emotions at bay?
The elevator opened, we stepped out and we all took our places at the trial grounds. Miu’s stand had now a portrait. Instead of the usual cross, two piano keys covered her face, one darker than the other.

“I had no better ideas!” Monokuma shouted. “I see you looking at her portrait and judging me!”

“I love it!” Monophanie exclaimed. “Don’t let other people bring you down!”

“I don’t know. I think it’s not good enough.” Monokid commented afterwards.

“You filthy brother! How can you say something like that about daddy’s work?”

“REMEMBER WHAT WE DID FOR YOU, MONOPHANIE. DO NOT ANGER US.”

“Oh, how scary! The bullied bear is trying to bully me now!”

“Hey, why are you fighting?” Monotaro asked. “The trial is about to start!”

“If you want to say some words about Maki, the time is now. Let her soul rest in peace.” Angie repeated.

I think Angie's Atua is only a delusion, but...

Maki Harukawa, the Ultimate Aikido Master, was becoming my friend...

We might have had a rocky start... before I understood her...

But in this short time, I learned that she was not that different from me.

Why was she killed? Did she have enemies I don’t know of?

I have to discover who murdered her and why they did it...

I know that this means that one of us won’t see tomorrow...

But whoever that person is, they brought to themselves. I will avenge Maki.

CLASS TRIAL START!

Chapter End Notes

And here we are! The investigation is finished! Do you have ideas?
I think this is easier than last time. You could figure the culprit without any help from the trial if you have the right intuition.

Well, we're entering the trial, finally! See you in two weeks!
A virtual reality without real virtues: Class Trial (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

The trial class trial starts; First of all, the group tries to understand where Maki was killed.

Chapter Notes

when the truth bullets are too long and they don't fit in the notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

TRUTH BULLETS

• ANGIE'S TESTIMONY:
  Angie claims to have heard a sound similar to a thump around before the morning announcement. It was somewhat loud, but she didn't check and returned to her room.

• BUTTER:
The butter that went flying around some days ago in front of the computer room corridor was divided in two by a middle, less thicker, part. The same butter was later found near the three dark rooms.

• 0U-M5'S BODY CONDITIONS:
  0U-M5 was found disassembled in Himiko's room. His head was removed and it seems like something was attached on his back. To do the former, the attacker would need to know that the only way to dismantle the robot is to press the red button on his torso twice.

• MONOKUMA FILE 3:
The victim is Maki Harukawa, the Ultimate Neo Aikido Master. The body was found in the Ultimate Entomologist Research Lab. The estimate time of death is 8.00 A.M. The cause of death is massive internal bleeding and failure of internal organs.

• MAKI'S BODY CONDITIONS:
  Maki's body doesn't show any signs of bleeding except a small wound on her head. It's definitely a fractured skull.
• HIMIKO'S TESTIMONY:
Himiko claims to have fallen asleep in one of the dark rooms while she was setting up her research lab for a party. When she woke up, she didn't have her Monopad. She later found it on the floor.

• SKYLIGHT:
The skylight in Himiko's research room can be opened if a lever inside the lab is pressed.

• LOCKED MANSION DOORS:
Somehow, all the doors in the mansion in the Program were locked.

• DISAPPEARED LEAFLET:
Korekiyo and Kirumi reported that they found a leaflet that likely contained information about the outside world. However, it vanished before they could read what was written on it.

• MONOKUMA'S SECOND MOTIVE:
While we were plugged in the Program, Monokuma offered a new motive to the other students. If they decided to kill someone, they would be given instructions on how to operate the Program.

• MALFUNCTIONING PHONES:
All the mobile phones we used in the Virtual World were hacked and were not functional, except for two.

• FLAT GRASS PATH:
A section of the grass coming from the woods and reaching the path is flatter than usual. It looks like someone was dragged across it.

• SIGN:
A sign is sitting on one side of the river.

• WET FLOOR:
The floor near the dark rooms is wet. It seems someone washed the corridor.

• HIDDEN WINDOW:
The leftmost dark room is different from the others. In fact, there's an hidden window behind the wardrobe.
• RELEASE BENEFITS:
Monokuma started giving out release benefits three days ago. According to the rules, there's a new motive that the killer could have used. However, because it won't be revealed before night time, we won't know what is it about. Himiko gave me an hint, saying it involves helping others and not only yourself.

• TENKO'S TESTIMONY:
Tenko revealed she wasn't with Gonta the entire time this morning. She went to the warehouse for some time before meeting him again in the cafeteria.

• RENDER DISTANCE:
In the Virtual World we can only see so far. However, someone altered the standard render distance outside of the mansion.

• 0U-M5'S RESEARCH LAB:
Kaito told me that 0U-M5 can carry objects out of his research lab as long as they become part of his body. Moreover, the disks the robot uses to record sounds were apparently swapped with clean ones.

• NEO WORLD PROGRAM RULES:
Nothing can break in the Virtual World and our talents don't work in the Program.

• DEATH IN THE NEO WORLD PROGRAM:
If someone suffers damage that would be fatal in the real world while being connected to the Program, they would fall in a coma that would leave them unconscious for some time.

• RANTARO'S TESTIMONY:
Rantaro says he and Maki weren't searching together. At some point, fog appeared, obstructing Rantaro's view. He tried to locate Maki, but he couldn't do it. As he was searching for her, he saw a light in the distance. Before he could reach it, it was gone.

• LOGS:
These are the logs of what happened in the Program. Our first logins seem to have been deleted and are not retrievable.

<10.20> N°#1 Avatar(s)

<<Cross-section to Right Area>>
• DECRYPTION HINTS:

s31P and AltO refer to two of us, but those names are encrypted. Kaito told me that, before encryption, those letters are taken from the last four letters of our surnames. If a letter comes up two or more times, it's substituted with the first of our surname. As an example, my non-encrypted would be ATSU. To every letter a random number or other letter is then assigned as the encryption.

CLASS TRIAL

In session!

Monokuma: Ahem-hem! Now then, let’s begin with a basic explanation of the class trial!

Kaito [irritated expression]: What?! Again?

Monokuma: During the trial you’ll present the arguments for who the culprit is, and vote for whodunit!

Rantaro [looking sideways]: I think we can’t stop him, unfortunately.

Monokuma: Vote correctly, and only the blackened will be punished. But if you pick the wrong one...
Monokuma: I’ll punish everyone *besides* the blackened, and that person will be allowed to graduate from the academy!

Monokuma: Also, refusing to vote will result in your death.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Are you done now?

Monokuma [showing primarily white side]: Of course! Sorry if you have to bear me, but it’s normal procedure to explain how this works. Not everyone is accustomed to it!

**We already had two trials... what is he talking about?**

Monokuma [impatient expression, arms lunging forward]: Now stop blabbing about me and get it on with the trial!

Monophanie [drooling]: So resolute! Go on with this attitude, daddy!

Monodam [pointing]: YOU DON’T NEED TO COMMENT EVERY THING HE DOES.

Gonta [pensive expression, finger on chin]: Okay... then Kaede, please talk like usual.

Kaede [nervous expression]: What?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, touching hat’s brim]: You are the one with the most experience here. After all, you did start the discussion during the previous trials.

**Ah, I see... he’s right. We have a lot of points to discuss...**

Angie [clasping hands]: If Kaede can’t give a starting topic I’m here! Should we start the discussion with Team Angie’s discoveries about the three dark rooms?”

Kaede [determined expression]: No. There is something more pressing at the moment. We need that to determine how the murder played out.

Angie [surprised expression]: You’re saying that what we found is irrelevant?

Kaede [determined expression, arms crossed]: Of course not. That will come at play later. What I’m referring to is something else. There are two options.

Kiibo [puzzled expression]: And that is...

Kaede [determined expression, arm raised to the side]: Where Maki was killed.

Himiko [pensive expression]: She was in my lab... they snuck inside and murdered her there to make me suspicious...

Tenko [resolute expression]: Please, we shouldn’t jump to conclusions! Let Kaede talk first!

Kaede [arms crossed]: No, I’m not referring to that. Maki could have died somewhere else.

[[The computer room/Her research lab/The hallways]]

**ANSWER --> The computer room**
Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [determined expression]: Maki could have been killed in the computer room. There’s a possibility.

Kirumi [adjusting hat]: I see. Your hypothesis is that she was murdered while she was connected to the Neo World Program.

Angie [eyes closed, praying]: Atua revealed me that the machine you were plugged to was nothing more than lies and fearful possibilities...

Himiko [neutral expression]: Thank you, Angie... I’m so happy that you have Atua at your side... I will always trust him and you from now on.

Kiibo [uncertain look]: That means that one of you guys connected to the program did it!

Angie [flailing arms]: Just as I suspected! No one of Team Angie could ever do such a thing! Now, who’s the one to punish?

They’re already derailing off track. Kirumi’s not completely wrong, but she doesn’t know something. It’s time for me to show the others what I discovered.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Maki’s body conditions, Disappeared leaflet, Render distance, Death in the Neo World Program

Tenko [determined expression]: If Maki was killed inside the Neo World Program, what did happen to her?

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: Would a wound kill her as if it was real life? I do not know that.

Gonta [pensive look]: Maybe she hit on back of head! And then left there!

Kaito [rubbing head]: It’s impossible for her to have died there, so your argument is invalid...

Rantaro [looking in front of self]: You look so calm. Unusual from you.

Kaito [giving a thumbs up]: That’s because I know I’m right! One-hundred percent baby!

Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: You said yourself that our nervous system was connected to the machine.

Kirumi [determined expression, index finger near lip]: One would suspect that after having suffered a trauma, they would die.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: There wouldn’t be any visible signs on her body either, and that’s the case.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Has nobody listened to me? Stop talking and let me explain, dammit!
No one is really considering Kaito. That’s a shame... I have to agree with the one who’s saying the right thing.

**ANSWER: Death in the Neo World Program --> It’s impossible for her to have died there**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Maki couldn’t have died in the virtual world. Monokuma said to me, Kaito and Oums that a fatal wound would only make the victim unconscious.

0U-M5 [pensive look]: But that doesn’t mean someone could have attacked her there. It would have been an advantage.

Rantaro [index finger on chin]: Definitely. She is skilled with martial arts, so knocking her out before she could react is the only thing the culprit had to do.

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Look who’s talking! The last person who saw Maki!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I knew this moment would come. Better now than later.

Korekiyo [caressing face]: Oh. I am curious to listen to your claims. You did spend time in the woods with Maki before we discovered about her death.

Angie [surprised expression]: Rantaro! I would’ve never expected you to be the killer!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I’m not in a good position since no one can prove my innocence... but there must be something that makes me less suspicious?

Kaito [angry expression]: Not a chance! If it wasn’t you who could it have been?

**Rantaro seems to be Maki’s killer, but it can’t be the case. He didn’t have the means.**

Kaede [gesturing]: Before placing the blame on anyone, we should look at another piece of evidence.

Gonta [index finger on chin]: But we need to discover culprit.

Rantaro [apprehensive look, arms in front of self]: If we continue accusing without having a clear picture we’ll definitely screw up.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Right. I’m talking about the last thing me and Kaito discovered, just before Monokuma made his announcement.

**And that thing I’m talking about is...**

**--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!**
Answer: Logs

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Kaito managed to find those logs. They track our movement between the virtual world and the real one.

Angie [flailing arms]: Does it say who the culprit is?

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Of course not! First of all, the names are encrypted!

Himiko [scratching cheek]: ...And then?

Kaito [confused expression]: Then what?

Himiko [looking down]: You said first, I want the second reason at least...

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Who cares about that!

Himiko [looking down]: ...

**I wish Kaito would do a better job of explaining. Luckily I’m here to help him.**

Kaede [gesturing]: As you can see, we can’t know the names of the people who logged in and logged out.

Kirumi [tilts head]: I do not understand what those arrows are for though.

Kiibo [pensive look]: Yeah, there are those... and then... process duration.

**Those arrows... it’s just one of the various elements of the logs I should explain to the others.**

**PSYCHE TAXI START!**

What does cross-section mean?

[[Crossing the World’s End/Log-in/Log-out/Crossing the river]]

**ANSWER: A**

What do the arrows stand for?

[[The area of the virtual world where someone’s heading/Log-in and log-outs/Their gender]]

**ANSWER: B**

At 6:50, what did s31P do?
At 7:41, what did AltO do?

ANSWER: B

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: The arrows specify the nature of the “process”. If it goes to the right, it means that the avatar logged-in, the opposite for log-out.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Moreover, the system uses the term cross-section to track when someone crosses the World’s End.

Kiibo [pensive look]: How can you say that the right arrow signifies a log-in?

Kaede [gesturing]: Kaito told us before we entered the program; a log-in takes at least three minutes.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: He repeated that after you forced exit too.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: Considering that the duration of the processes that occurred at 7:41 and 7:43 is less than three minutes, those two must be log-outs.

Kiibo [hides in hood]: Ah, I see. Sorry... for the stupid intervention.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: Never say that again, Kiibo! You asked a very valid question! Nyahahah!

**Having understood most of the logs’ meaning, we can continue our discussion.**

Kaede [gesturing]: Now, what if Maki was killed outside of the computer room?

Tenko [shocked expression]: What?! You’re coming back to the thing you discarded!

Kaede [raised right arm]: I didn’t do that yet. I presented you another possibility. It’s too early to deduce that someone knocked her out in the Program.

Kiibo [confused look]: Is there another layer to this mess? Please tell us what do you mean so that we can be on par with you.

Himiko [neutral expression, looking down]: Yes, please...
Kaede [gesturing]: We know that Maki’s quick to react. However, there’s another way to make her defenseless.

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

R E M E O V H A E D E S T

ANSWER --> Remove headset

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: The culprit could have removed Maki’s headset while she was in the Program!

Kirumi [tilts head]: We were all confused when Gonta and Angie did the same to us.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: No worries! I want the best for you after all!

Kaede [gesturing]: If the culprit managed to do that Maki wouldn’t be able to retaliate.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: So it be someone who knows about that thing.

Not necessarily. Whoever attacked Maki could have guessed it. But Gonta does bring up a good point...

Himiko [neutral expression, index finger pointing upwards]: The people who know that are Kaito and Oums, right? Maybe it’s one of them.

0U-M5 [pensive expression]: ...

0U-M5 [tilts head to the right]: No, it can’t be me. All of my memories were wiped when I was damaged.

There’s also the matter of Oums’ attack... but it makes sense. To come closer to us, they would obviously have to face the robot.

Rantaro [looks to the side]: There are others... not only Kaito and the people who entered the Program.

Kaito [irritated expression]: I’ll let you know that if I killed Maki I could have done that in the virtual world! I wouldn’t have gone through such absurd plans!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, looking at clothes]: This reaction will only worsen your dire situation.

Kaito [proud expression]: Well, sorry, but it just happens that two other people know about the consequences of logging out without safe measures!
Angie [flailing arms]: You’re only saying this because you’re suspicious now!

Kaito [proud expression]: That’s the same for you! Because you’re one of the people I mentioned!

Two people... if one’s Angie, the other one must be...

**HIDDEN PASSWORD START!**

1. K T
2. E I
3. N I
4. K B
5. A O

**ANSWER --> Kiibo**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

**CLEAR!**

Kaede [gesturing]: That’s true. Angie and Kiibo were with us while Kaito explained how the Virtual World worked.

Kaito [bumping fists into each other]: Kaede obviously remembers it, because she’s a fucking genius!

**Well... I didn’t expect that compliment but... I’ll gladly take it...**

Kaito [proud expression]: I told you two that removing the headset would cause unfortunate side effects. You were the one who asked!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I didn’t do anything... why don’t we go back to the main suspect here?

Angie [moves to the right]: Yup, yup! Kaede said that Rantaro must be innocent!

Angie [moves to the left]: Then tell us why you think that! Reveal it!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Doesn’t your Atua know that already?

Kaede [gesturing]: I’ll do that. Before confirming Rantaro’s innocence, however, I want to continue with this discussion.

0U-M5 [pensive expression]: Where Maki died?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Yep, where and how.

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Butter, Maki’s body conditions, Monokuma File 3, Neo World Program rules,**
Malfunctioning phones

Tenko [pensive look]: Where and how? The Monokuma File gives us a reason!

Kirumi [tilts head, eyes closed]: Indeed. It specifies it as failure of internal organs.

Himiko [neutral expression]: Could it be wrong? Monokuma could be lying to us.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: The Monokuma Files he gave us were accurate, despite them being misleading.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: How can that happen? I mean, failure of internal organs? That happened because...

Kiibo [confused look]: Someone could have stabbed her when she was connected to the Program...

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: It would have been impossible for her to react.

0U-M5 [pensive look, touching temple]: She would have bled out without noticing.

Kaito [rubbing head]: She would have felt pain. However, she would never have understood.

Angie [fingers in hair]: The Monokuma File specified that she bled out, maybe you’re right!

Rantaro [index finger near chin]: Nope. I can’t believe that. Where did the blood go?

Angie [flailing arms]: The culprit washed it out! I don’t know how, but they did that!

How Maki could have died... I have to remember what I saw...

ANSWER: Maki’s body conditions --> could have stabbed her

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Nobody could have stabbed Maki. Or anything that would have caused her to bleed out.

Kaede [determined expression, index finger pointing upwards]: I examined her body and saw that there were no external injuries. That means that didn’t happen.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: But... here it says she bleed out! How do you explain that?

Kaede [gesturing]: It doesn’t specify that. If you look closely at it, it’s written that she suffered internal bleeding.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, touching hat’s brim]: What a terrible fate. However, Kaede is not mistaken.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Then how the hell did she die?!
Angie [cheerful expression]: Who knows! But she was attacked inside the virtual machine! It’s obvious now!

Angie [creepy smile, shade on forehead]: Then you have to explain, Rantaro.

Rantaro [arms crossed, sighing]: I told you, I can’t.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Kaede! You have to explain us what your reasoning is then! Why couldn’t Rantaro be the culprit?

I guess... there’s that piece of evidence that can prove it.

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets:** Angie’s testimony, Malfunctioning phones, Flat grass path, Logs

Angie [flailing arms]: Kaede’s trying to convince you that Rantaro is innocent without any proof!

Gonta [confused expression, looking around]: Kaede not doing a good job... maybe one of us help her.

0U-M5 [scratching cheek]: We could try to talk about some situation and see if she has something to say about it.

Kaito [proud expression]: Rantaro had the possibility to kill Maki! They were together in the woods!

Tenko [shocked expression]: What?! What were you doing there?

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Trying to find the mysterious object Kaito talked about. But I repeat, I didn’t even see Maki after some time!

Angie [tilts to the right]: Oh, you’re saying she left by her own?

Angie [tilts to the left]: Or that someone else inside the Virtual Program murdered her?

Rantaro [sideways look, arms crossed]: It’s still early for accusing someone.

0U-M5 [pensive look]: If Angie’s theory’s correct, that means that Rantaro...

0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: Killed her, logged out and then logged back in.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Very plausible! If he logged-in again no one would notice a thing!

Yes, Angie’s not right. I see why she thinks this, but, considering what we discussed about before, I’m sure Rantaro is innocent.

**ANSWER:** Logs --> “Killed her, logged out and then logged back in”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!
Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Oums, that’s impossible. Remember the logs. We saw a person logging in and a second one logging out, before the first person did the same.

0U-M5 [surprised look]: Oh, now I see what you’re talking about. It’s impossible for Rantaro to have committed the murder.

Tenko [confused look]: Sorry, can you two explain what do you mean to us simpletons?

Kaito [proud expression]: Tsk! You might be one, but I’m the ingenious inventor Kaito Momota, and I know everything!

Kirumi [tilts head, eyes closed]: Then you will be able to explain Kaede’s reasoning.

Kaito [sweating]: Uh... ehm...

**Congratulations Kaito. You made a fool for yourself, yet another time.**

Kaede [gesturing]: Let’s not waste time. Rantaro isn’t the killer. The reasoning might be complex at first, so if you want to understand me, follow me closely.

Gonta [happy expression]: Yes! Gonta follow like gentleman! Uhm... I... I’ll follow...

Himiko [confused look]: Gonta used the first person?

Tenko [smug expression]: It’s because of my lessons! Gonta’s learning fast!

Kaede [gesturing]: If Rantaro killed Maki, s31P in this case, he would have logged out to move the body. We could presume that Rantaro is AltO.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: But AltO never logged back in. Rantaro, however, was still in the Neo World Program when Angie arrived!

Angie [fingers in hair]: Uhm... yeah... he was. I saw him in the cameras... but what if he’s the other guy!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: That makes even less sense! s31P logged in first, after all of us looped around the map. At the end, they logged out too.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Were this information to be true, we would have acquired a lot of useful hints about this murder.

Kaede [confused expression]: Huh?

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Monokuma, I need to ask you a question. Could you answer it?

Monokuma [eyes closed]: ZzzZzz...

Tenko [shocked expression]: He’s sleeping!? During the trial?

Monophanie [worried look]: Oh no! Daddy is having his midday sleep now!

Monokid [rolls eyes]: This isn’t the ideal time for that. What do we do now?
Monodam [neutral expression]: WE CONTINUE WITHOUT HIM.

Monophanie [worried look, sweating]: What are you saying? You want to rule while daddy is not around?

Monotaro [plays with shuriken]: What else can we do? At least we have some spotlight.

Monophanie [touches flower]: A-ah... maybe... maybe I can make my wish become true! I only need some animals that can understand me and practice my singing! I’ll become a great princess!

Monotaro [looks to the side]: We kinda look like bears.

Monophanie [euphoric]: Then it can work! I’m so excited! I need to finish the preparations for my grand debut!

Monodam [neutral expression]: WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT.

Monokid [takes notes]: I think we should bring her back to the hangar.

Monophanie [euphoric]: I’ll be the main Monokub from now on! As such, I’ll be the one to answer Kirumi’s question!

Kirumi [tilts head, confused expression]: Yes... I wanted to ask... whether or not the logs which Kaito found are comprehensive of all logins, logouts and cross-sections.

Kirumi [left hand on hip]: Excluding our own logins, of course.

Monotaro [lowers head]: I don’t know if you can answer this, Monophanie. Maybe you should wait for da-

Monophanie [nodding]: Yes, you’re completely right! There are no hidden logs! From 10.20 nothing but what is shown there happened! Thank you for asking!

They’re weirder with each day that passes... but... now that we know that nobody else logged in or out in that time frame... we can know...

[Nobody from outside entered the NWP/AltO is someone from outside/Someone swapped the two wires/Everyone in the NWP is innocent]

**ANSWER: Everyone in the NWP is innocent**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: That means that me, Kirumi, Korekiyo, Rantaro and Kaito are innocent. Nobody logged out to log back in, so it couldn’t have been any of us.

Rantaro [reassuring expression]: Good job Kaede! I suspected this before, but now that you say it I’m way more relaxed.

Kiiibo [worried look, hides in hood]: So it was... one of us? It’s impossible!

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: Sorry to repeat that... however, me and Kirumi were together the entire time. The same is true for Kaito and Kaede. Rantaro could have been the only one to commit
the murder.

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: But he’s innocent! Sorry if I thought you were the bad guy, all okay now?

Rantaro [confused look]: I... suppose...

**Wow... his attitude towards Rantaro changed completely. It only took me proving his innocence... usually Kaito holds a grudge against others.**

Gonta [sad expression]: But Gonta not culprit, Gonta swear on his precious racket!

Kaede [smiles]: I believe you, Gonta. It must have been someone else.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Wait guys! You said something like, it’s bad to accuse others before having a clear understanding! Let’s get the clear understanding!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: It’s not something you find at a supermarket...

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh! Maybe in a hotel? It’s so useful, it seems!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Get to the point.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Kaede is very skilled at finding understandings! Maybe I should ask her!

**She could have done that from the beginning. Why does she continue with this theatrics? I’ll never know.**

Angie [tilts to the right]: I understand that none of you is the s31P guy or gal... but who is AltO? You can guess that before blaming us of the Atua’s Blessed Children?

Himiko [looks up]: Atua’s... Blessed Children?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Right, the name of our group! It sounds very nice! ABC, like the first three letters of the alphabet! It mirrors our first steps in the search for Atua!

**Forget about Angie’s acronyms for a while... we can know who AltO is, there’s only one possibility...**

-SELECT SOMEONE-

[[MAKI HARUKAWA SELECTED]]

Kaede: No doubt about it!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: AltO is Maki. It’s the only one of us who entered that wasn’t in the program when we got out.

Kiibo [pensive look]: She logged out before she was killed?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: It seems like she was murdered outside of the Virtual World then.
Maki logged out of the Virtual World..? But why? Did she discover something? Why wouldn’t she tell us?

Tenko [pensive look]: Someone must have convinced her to follow them.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Are you sure about that? Maki wouldn’t follow anyone without a valid reason.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Yeah, she’d never do something like that.

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: She mentioned being uncomfortable while in the Virtual World. She might have needed time outside.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: But she didn’t warn me. She just disappeared without telling anyone?

Angie [cheerful expression, clasping hands]: That’s actually something that Maki would do!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Not a chance! She had to warn us, so something must have happened to her!

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger on cheek]: Maybe she need tell Oums something!

Hmm... Maki logging out because she had to talk with Oums? It’s a plausible theory, but...

Tenko [hands on podium]: Let’s ask him then! Did Maki talk to you?

Kirumi [eyes closed]: What you are attempting is pointless.

Tenko [confused look]: Why? Is Oums not allowed to say?

Kiibo [neutral expression]: He lost his memory, there’s no way he can do what you’re asking.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Let’s just replay the tapes! He records everything, right?

Sadly, that’s not possible... I’ve talked with Kaito about this. 0U-M5 can’t replay anything, because...

[[He can replay only what he heard in the last hour/The disks were reset/Kaito accidentally destroyed the disks]]

ANSWER: The disks were reset

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: That’s still impossible. Kaito inspected the disks, they’re wiped clean.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Yeah, I have no fucking clue why that happened. I’m extremely pissed off about this.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: What if Oums is involved in this situation?
Himiko [sweating]: Y-you’re saying he’s the... culprit?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Please let him finish. Kaito told me that if we vote for the wrong person, everyone except the real culprit is executed.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, moves to the side]: I’m not suggesting he’s the blackened. However, he might have something to do with this.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: He doesn’t remember because of what happened.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: I understand. You think he’s the reason why Maki logged out.

Rantaro [raised arm, index finger pointing upwards]: Yes, and more. s31P is no other than Oums.

Kaede [arms crossed]: That’s not an incredible realization. We all know that alphanumeric string could be him... but it could be everyone else that was outside.

Rantaro [smirking]: Not everyone, I think.

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: Then explain why.

Rantaro [smirking]: I’m not sure... it will come out eventually. Don’t rush things.

Kaito [angry expression, bumps fists into each other]: What the fuck, man! Kaede helped you before and now you’re withholding information from her?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Don’t worry. It’s expected from him. We know he’s innocent, so if he sees us in trouble he will start talking.

I’d have glared at the artist if not for Gonta who stood right between us. He does stress me during those trials. I hope for him he’ll open his mouth sooner or later.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I’d love to help you figure out what happened with Maki. Unfortunately, that’s impossible.

Angie [praying]: Atua says that’s the best hypothesis for now! Maki wanted to ask something to Oums! Then someone attacked them!

Tenko [pensive look]: If she was killed outside, how did she die then? Has anyone an idea?

We need to pinpoint Maki’s actual cause of death. We need to find something that might help us, anything...

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Angie’s testimony, Monokuma File 3, Malfunctioning phones, Wet floor

Kiibo [looks to the side]: We have seen that there were no wounds on her...

Tenko [determined expression]: Except the fractured skull. Someone hit her in the head!

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: Impossible. Maki would have lost more blood.
Angie [fingers in hair]: Instead of focusing on her appearance, maybe we have to look somewhere else!

Kaito [irritated expression]: You five should tell us! **We have no way of knowing what was happening outside of the Program!**

Gonta [confused expression]: But **we all sleeping when Maki died...** Gonta can’t help you.

Kaito [proud expression]: You might have been sleeping, but one of you did wake up to kill Maki and destroy Oums!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Don’t say that! We can’t know yet! Maybe it’s one of you that murdered the poor, sweet Maki!

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Sorry to contradict you, but at the time it does seem unlikely. **We have proven that no one logged out except Maki.**

0U-M5 [thoughtful expression]: Not necessarily. **AltO could be someone else.**

Tenko [pensive look]: I still think we should focus on Maki’s appearance!

Rantaro [apprehensive expression]: Let’s ask Kaede! She should have an idea by now.

**Maybe it’s too early to understand what happened to Maki... but by remembering one clue... we can clear our mind.**

**ANSWER: Angie’s testimony --> “we all sleeping when Maki died”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: That’s not true, Gonta. One of you was awake before the morning announcement, and that’s Angie.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Oh, right! And Maki died around that time...

Kaede [gesturing]: Angie said she heard a loud thump while going back to the dormitories. She didn’t investigate because she was tired.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Well, if that’s not very suspicious.

Angie [shade on forehead, creepy smile]: You think that? I was in my research lab.

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: Any proof?

Angie [cheerful expression]: No! I had no idea that Maki was about to get killed by a terrible person!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Okay...
Angie is a bad position, even though she looks rather calm. Maybe too much. But we can’t accuse her until we find substantial evidence.

Tenko [confused expression]: But... how does Angie being awake help us?

Kaede [gesturing]: That thump is definitely related to the case. Isn’t it strange that Angie remembers it happening right before the announcement, which is exactly when Maki died?

Angie [surprised expression]: Wow! It really is! How smart of you, Kaede!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: That must be related to Maki’s real cause of death.

I’m getting closer to the truth. If I concentrate, I might be able to understand it!

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Maki’s body conditions, 0U-M5’s body conditions, Skylight, Hidden window, Tenko’s testimony

Kaito [proud expression]: I get it! Maki fell!

Rantaro [arms crossed]: From where?

Kaito [proud expression]: On the ground! From a chair, I don’t know... she hit her head!

Kirumi [tilts head]: I am sure that would not be heard from Angie.

Kiibo [shrugs, looks to the side]: Maybe that thump wasn’t made by Maki, but by someone else...

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh! Maybe something else!

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: She could have fallen indeed... but I suspect a longer fall...

Himiko [neutral expression, looking up]: Don’t tell me there were multiple chairs...

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: Maybe we’re coming from the wrong angle here. This isn’t about Maki.

Gonta [confused expression]: Then who?

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Oums. His body fell after his head got removed. We don’t know where that happened, maybe it was near Angie.

Yes! Someone said what I was thinking too! That’s what happened!

ANSWER: Maki’s body conditions --> “a longer fall”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!
Kaede [pointing]: Korekiyo’s right! I examined Maki’s body and I’m sure that’s what might have happened!

Kaito [rubbing head]: What are you saying? If someone falls their intestines get splattered everywhere!

Kaede [gesturing]: That’s true, but only for very high falls. If Maki fell from the third floor she wouldn’t sustain injuries like that.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: However, it’s rather common to see a fractured skull. No bleeding at all. And that matches Maki’s body conditions.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: Also, from what I know, it is highly improbable for someone to die because of a fall of less than six meters.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Exactly. So she must have fallen from the third floor. If she fell from lower height she would surely be alive, even though not in good shape...

Angie [curious expression]: So Maki died because of this...? I hope death was instant...

Kaede [sad expression]: I can’t tell... Usually the victim dies as soon as they hit the gr-

0U-M5: Your statement is illogical!

[[Split screen separating 0U-M5 and Kaede]]

Kaede [confused expression]: Oums? What is that you don’t find logical?

0U-M5 [tilts head to the right, index finger on cheek]: I understand what you’re saying, but we can’t be sure.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Yes, we can. There are no doubts, Maki died because of a fall.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I have to be sure your reasoning is sound.

This reminds me of the time 0U-M4 didn’t believe me... when we were investigating Ryoma’s murder. But it’s easier this time. I already know what to say to him.

REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!

Truth bullets: Butter, Monokuma File 3, Wet Floor

0U-M5 [pensive look]: It’s okay to say she fell, but it’s also a long shot.

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: Because something else might have caused that fractured skull.

0U-M5 [pensive look, touching temple]: Without causing a bleeding, I might add.

0U-M5 [determined expression]: So you can’t prove Maki fell just by looking at that detail.
ADVANCE!

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, that isn’t enough. But if we continue the discussion you’ll see that there are other clues that point to that.

0U-M5 [pensive look]: What if the culprit planted them to convince us she died by falling?

0U-M5 [pensive look, finger on cheek]: Haven’t you thought about that?

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: There’s no piece of evidence that’s certainly not planted.

0U-M5 [determined expression]: And nothing more we can deduce about Maki’s injuries.

0U-M5 [looks down at hand]: Sadly, that’s the situation. From an objective point of view, we can’t prove anything.

No, I have more evidence that solidifies my theory. 0U-M5 must have forgot about it.

ANSWER: Monokuma File 3 --> “And nothing more we can deduce about Maki’s injuries”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: We also have what’s written in the Monokuma File 3.

Kaede [gesturing]: As you can see, Maki suffered massive internal bleeding after organ failure. As I was saying before, lethal falls cause more internal damage than exterior damage.

0U-M5 [confused look]: Monokuma File? What’s that?

Uh? 0U-M5 hasn’t read it?

Kaito [rubbing head]: Oh, its Monopad didn’t get updated. It couldn’t have read it... and I didn’t show it.

So 0U-M5 didn’t read the Monokuma File. Now I can understand his stubbornness.

0U-M5 [confused expression, fingers on cheek]: Sorry if I got in the way... I always cause so much trouble. I’m a terrible robot.

Angie [cheerful expression]: No, you aren’t! Don’t listen to Kaito!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Hey! Nobody asked for your opinion! You’re still suspicious!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger near chin]: Now that we determined Maki’s cause of death, we should understand where she was murdered.

Tenko [confused look]: Does it matter?

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, especially in this case. Maki fell from somewhere. This is not like the other murders.
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: When, to be precise, the location of the murder was still pretty important.

I’m sure that’s how Maki died, but... this is strange. Someone threw her from the school building and then got dragged her back up? How? But above all... why?

Korekiyo [neutral expression, raised right arm]: We established that she must have fallen from the third floor.

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh! There aren’t a lot of windows there! Maybe the culprit was so strong that destroyed the walls after throwing her!

0U-M5 [confused look, index finger on temple]: By saying that you’re suspecting Gonta.

Gonta [shocked expression]: What? Angie thinks Gonta kill?

Angie [flailing arms]: No, at all! Gonta is the sweetest person ever seen on this planet! Do you want me to hug you?

Gonta [smiling, hand on chest]: If Angie not mind, yes!

Monophanie [angry expression]: But I do! You aren’t allowed to move from your stands!

Monophanie [giggling]: That’s exactly what daddy would say!

Monodam [neutral expression]: HE IS. STILL SLEEPING.

Monotaro [shocked expression]: Could it be that he hibernated?!

Monokid [rolls eyes]: It’s likely, yes. He could have been subjected to an extreme amount of stress with robots of your caliber around.

Monophanie [angry expression]: Our caliber?! We’re the best kids he could have ever asked! He would smack you in the face if he heard you!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: She could have been thrown from Himiko’s room.

Himiko [looks down]: Y-yeah... someone could have done it...

Korekiyo [looks down at clothes]: You included. You are the only one who has access to that room.

Himiko [neutral expression]: No, I don’t.

Korekiyo [caresses face]: Your lab door is locked until it scans your Monopad, which you carry with yourself at this very moment. No one else could enter.

Korekiyo would be right, if not for that... it’s a shaky claim, considering no one except one person told me that... but it’s worth considering, for now.

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

ANSWER: Himiko’s testimony
Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Himiko told me that her Monopad was stolen during the night, while she was sleeping.

Kaito [rubbing head]: And she heard nothing?

Himiko [neutral expression]: I’m a heavy sleeper. There are a lot of bugs buzzing in my ears when I’m in my research room, but I still sleep.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: She could be lying. I am surprised by your trust in her, Kaede.

Kaede [arms crossed]: We have to believe in someone. We won’t go anywhere by distrusting testimonies.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Some of them must be untrue, however.

_They could be. Deep down, I know that some of us might have lied... but I don’t want that to become true. Not yet._

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Gonta want to say something about Himiko. Can... I... do that?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Yes! You shouldn’t even ask!

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near mouth]: Himiko not strong enough to carry Maki from ground to third floor. She can’t be killer.

Himiko [neutral expression]: Thank you Gonta... that you believe me...

Gonta [smiling]: Only normal for gentleman like Gonta!

_Gonta brings up a good point. I also can’t believe Himiko would be capable of such a thing, but... the truth is still that one of us murdered Maki._

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Let’s put Himiko aside for now, we don’t want to lose the topic of our discussion.

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: Right. That was the location where Maki was thrown.

_Where Maki was thrown... I know, there’s no other way._

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

Truth bullets: Butter, Skylight, Hidden window, Tenko’s testimony, Rantaro’s testimony

Angie [cheerful expression]: I already know this one, but I’ll let Kiibo answer!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: W-why me...?

Angie [puffed cheeks]: It’s important to participate in trials! You have the answer!

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Maybe... from _one of the dark rooms..._
Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: What the hell are you saying!? They're all completely dark, **no windows**!

Rantaro [moves to the side]: She could have been thrown from Himiko’s room. It doesn’t have windows, **but there’s still a way**.

Himiko [looks down]: No... my room is perfectly safe, guys.

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Yes, it’s impossible for someone to use Himiko’s room to throw someone down.

Angie [flailing arms]: Oh! Oh! I’ve a genius idea! It couldn’t have been Himiko’s research lab, **someone would have seen her fall**!

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: I fear that claim is impossible to prove.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Are you sure? I think that is **directly above the cafeteria**!

Himiko [looks down]: Angie... are you suspecting me...?

Angie [reassuring expression]: No! I’m saying someone used your lab to frame you!

**Maki was killed because of the fall... but where did that happen? There can only be one place**...

**ANSWER: Hidden window --> “one of the dark rooms”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Maki fell from one of the dark rooms; specifically, the one with a window.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Hey, I checked them while going to Oums’ lab, but there was no window.

Kiibo [scratching cheek]: Well... that’s because it was hidden from sight. Angie and me noticed that the wardrobe had been moved to conceal it.

Tenko [determined expression]: I can confirm! I remember seeing a window in the leftmost room!

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit tried to hide the window, because that’s exactly the place where Maki fell and died.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I’m convinced that’s what happened. If we didn’t find that window it would have been harder to be sure of Maki’s cause of death.

Kiibo [confused expression]: But if she fell it means someone bested her.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: I mean, that’s for sure.
Gonta [index finger near chin]: But Maki could have done suicide.

No, Maki wouldn’t kill herself. Plus, I know that’s impossible. Because if that happened, someone else would have to...

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

M E O V O A D R R W B E

ANSWER: Move wardrobe

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Maki didn’t kill herself. Someone else moved the wardrobe. She couldn’t have done it from the window.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Of course she didn’t! She isn’t the type!

Kiibo [confused expression]: But, as I said before, that means someone managed to knock her out or at least push her.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Maki’s the Ultimate Neo Aikido Master. Nobody could have done that, not even Gonta.

Gonta [panicked expression]: Gonta would never kill!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger near lip]: However, as we established before, it is not possible for the unwanted effects of a forced exit to have affected her.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Because she did log out with her phone.

Maki logged out, so it’s impossible for her to have been “killed” in the Neo World Program.

But, at the same time, she was not able to fend off her attacker, which is impossible as well, considering her talent.

So... what is the truth? Was she attacked in the Virtual World first and there’s something we don’t know about the phones...

Or did the culprit surprise her in the dark room?

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Butter, Locked mansion doors, Neo World Program Mechanics, Sign, Death in the Neo World Program
Tenko [confused expression]: I understand what Kirumi’s saying... this means that Maki was feeling okay when she logged out.

Kiibo [determined expression]: You can’t be certain. Someone could have hit her already, and that’s why she decided to log out.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: As an emergency, that’s plausible.

Angie [puffed cheeks]: What happens if someone logs out when they have been hit by something that would normally kill them?

Kaito [rubbing head]: From what I understand, nothing. She would be perfectly fine after getting out.

Himiko [neutral expression]: I think she might have felt scared and ran away, maybe she fell on the ground and passed out.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: And that’s when the culprit took her to the dark room? She could have woken up.

Kiibo [looks to the side]: I think... they could have used an excuse.

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: No, no, no! First they hit her and then they say it was a mistake?

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: We do not know whether she was hit or not.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: But Maki very good martial artist, she would not escape, she fight!

Angie [tilts head to the right]: Very good, Gonta! Because of her talent, she would have triumphed over her attacker in the gut and then the face!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: She might have thought that escaping and warning others would have been the better solution.

Rantaro [looks to the side]: Despite the flack we give her, she’s not someone who would attack when there’s another solution.

Kaito [irritated expression]: ...You say?

Yeah, Maki wouldn’t have tried to hurt whoever was attacking her if there was another solution... but maybe there wasn’t? And can we be sure that someone did try to kill her? Was she really able to defend herself?

 ANSWER: Neo World Program Mechanics --> “she would have triumphed over her attacker”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

 BREAK!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: Angie, what you’re saying is wrong. Maki could have
lost the fight.

Angie [surprised expression]: She was lying about her talent?! She’s not a martial artist?!

Kaede [arms crossed]: No. She was an Ultimate, really. But, in the virtual reality, our talents don’t exist.

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: That’s right! Congrats, Kaede! That totally missed me! Maki didn’t have all the benefits that come with her talent in the program!

Korekiyo [looks down at clothes]: It was one of the first advices Kaito gave us.

Kaede [gesturing]: That settles it. Maki was attacked inside the Neo World Program, and that’s why she couldn’t do anything outside.

Tenko [hands on podium]: How cruel... Maki couldn’t even rely on her talent...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: The culprit banked on this. But this hides another important fact about the case.

Kiibo [confused expression]: What?

Angie [flailing arms]: That they knew about this talent-wiping thing! No one outside did!

Kiibo [index finger on chin]: That’s true. Not even Angie and me, who were there at your presentation.

The first time Kaito mentioned this rule, we were inside. No one else besides us in the Computer Room knew...

Kaito [rubbing head]: That’s strange... it must have been Monokuma’s new motive that helped the killer!

Angie [puffed cheeks]: Hmm... are you suure?

Kaito [irritated expression]: Do you want to tell me something?

Angie [tilts to the right]: Well, you knew about this as well...

Angie [tilts to the left]: So maybe you killed Maki!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: What did you say about me? If you heard the conversation, you’d know everyone inside the Program is innocent!

Kiibo [determined expression]: Not really. I wasn’t convinced after Kaede’s claim, you forgot about one person... or, should I say... robot.

0U-M5 [curious expression, index finger near mouth]: Hm? You’re talking about me?

Kiibo [determined expression]: Yes, s31P could be Oums. He’s not the killer, but Kaito told him to log-in and then log-out to cover for him.

Angie [cheerful expression]: What a great theory, Kiibo! It’s amazing, you’re becoming very intelligent!

Kiibo [blushes]: T-thanks...
Kaito [angry expression, hand forms fist]: The hell are you saying?! Kiibo, she’s only adulating you!

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Please lower your voice, Kaito. This is not doing you any favors.

Kaito [sweating]: Y-yeah... you’re right... I need to stay calm... because... because Kaede and I were together the entire time.

Huh? Well... I’d like to prove Kaito’s innocence now... and I believe he didn’t kill Maki... but... but I need to be objective now, I can’t afford to lie. There has been at least half an hour that me and Kaito split up. I... I don’t know what he could have done... I just presumed he was near my room... Me and Kaito weren’t together while I was in the...

**HIDDEN PASSWORD START!**

1. K L
2. A I
3. V T
4. C I
5. H N
6. E G
7. N G

**ANSWER: Kitchen**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [worried]: I’m sorry, Kaito... but while I was in the kitchen, you were in the living room, alone.

Kaito [shocked expression]: WHAT?!

Angie [surprised expression]: Kaede can’t defend you either! It looks like you’re in trouble!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Keep silent. I’m being objective; you’re twisting the knife.

Sometimes it’s too much. Every time Angie goes closer to the line she shouldn’t cross.

Kaito: Hear the genius inventor, Kaito Momota!!

[[split screen separating Kaito and Kaede]]

Kaito [sweating]: Kaede, you can’t doubt me... I would never kill someone!

Kaede [reassuring expression]: I believe you, but... I need concrete proof to say you’re innocent. You know more about the Program than every single one of us.
Kaede [reassuring expression, looks to the side]: And Oums follows you whatever you say.

**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth bullets: Malfunctioning phones, Forced exit, Rantaro’s testimony, Logs**

Kaito [sweating]: Well... I would never kill Maki! She was annoying but not *that* much!

Kaito [sweating, rubbing head]: And you see... Angie’s trying to confuse you!

Kaito [irritated expression, bumps fists into each other]: And... you said you’d search in the kitchen; I didn’t force you!

Kaito [irritated expression]: I didn’t leave the living room; you would have heard me!

**ADVANCE!**

Kaede [determined expression]: No one of us can be sure of that. I never heard anything.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Moreover, you said that two areas can be rendered separately. That could be the case for living room and kitchen.

Kaede [thoughtful expression, right arm extended to the side]: And that means I wouldn’t hear any noise coming from that room.

Kaito [irritated expression, bumps fists into each other]: Now you’re starting to anger me!

Kaito [angry expression, hand forms fist]: If you paid attention, you’d know that *I had to cross the World End to kill Maki*!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Do you think I did that?! And *where’s your proof*?!

Kaito [irritated expression, bumps fists into each other]: And remember that *I had to log out with my phone* to throw her down the window!

Kaito [angry expression]: Don’t try to say that Oums did that, because who could have disassembled it if I was inside the Program? I *couldn’t*!

**Kaito tried to bring up some valid counterpoints... yes, he’s right with most of them. However, if I reply to one with the right evidence...**

**ANSWER: Force exit --> “I had to log out with my phone”**

Kaede: I’ll cut your words!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: You could have logged out without your phone, with a forced exit.
Kaito [shocked]: What the fuck?! Do you seriously think I would ask Oums to do something like that?

Angie [flailing arms]: Yeees! Isn’t sooo obvious? I’m so sad for Oums, always at your orders! Break free!

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: Oh, please. You should not argue about this topic... Kaito could not be the culprit, despite his terrible attempts at disputing the accusations.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Indeed. I do not wish to doubt Kaede’s usefulness as a detective, but her assumption is wrong.

Kaito [wiping sweat off forehead]: ...Ah, thanks. Korekiyo and Kirumi, now... explain why Angie is trying to gaslight Kaede, please.

**Hey! I have reasons behind my claims!**

Kirumi [right hand on hat, left hand on hip]: Were Kaito to force log-out, as you say, he would need to login again.

Kirumi [moves to the side]: There is no trace of that action in the logs, and the Monokubs confirmed there were no additional logs which were deleted.

**She’s right... I forgot that there should have been another 4-digits name in the logs, aside from s31P and AltO. But there isn’t...**

Angie’s words were enough to make me disregard evidence... she’s skilled with those... but she can’t convince everyone. Now that I fell for her trap once, I won’t again.

Kaede [awkward expression]: Sorry, Kaito. I got blindsided. Hope you can forgive me.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Of course... you save us every time, I’ll have to. But... don’t rush to judgment next time.

Kaito [giving a thumbs up]: I won’t either!

**I want to believe in Kaito. Rationally, he will be back to his normal self in a few minutes.**

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Also, thanks to Kirumi and Korekiyo for having pointed out my mistake.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: No need to say such a thing. We are here to support each other.

Korekiyo [caresses face]: I appreciate your compliment, even though I do not need adulation.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Yeah, I’m happy that you’re all friends with each other. But let’s go back to this case, won’t we?

**Rantaro’s right. Let’s not go off track. We’re sure that Kaito isn’t the culprit.**

Angie [pouting]: Sorry for me too! But Kaito looked suspicious!

Kiibo [index finger pointing forwards]: Now we know he isn’t. But we can’t say the same for the other one. In fact, he is now more suspicious.
The other one?

Angie [fingers in hair]: Yeah, he is... but I can’t believe he’s the killer. Kaito must have forced him!

Kaito [irritated expression]: You just said sorry and now you accuse me?! How can no one see your hypocrisy?

Angie [cheerful expression]: I said sorry for thinking you were the culprit, not sorry for all the bad things you did!

Kaito [irritated expression]: You’re probably wrong another time.

Kiibo [determined expression]: But this is my hypothesis. Not hers. Leave her out of this, please.

Gonta [happy expression]: Yes, Kiibo! Gonta very happy you are talking. Tell us who culprit is!

Kiibo [determined expression]: Without hesitation. We know that they didn’t enter the Program, they knew how to operate the Program and stole Himiko’s Monopad.

Who is that person? Someone who’s able to do all of those things without anyone noticing?

--SELECT SOMEONE!

Chapter End Notes

So, it's almost one year (one year!) that I'm writing this story! To be clear, it's longer since I started it in June 2017, left the prologue and most of the first chapter there until I decided to pick it up again in October because I felt like it (and honestly, I wanted to be the first writing a talentswap for V3)

But when it comes to posting it online, I uploaded the first part the 18th of December. Honestly I thought I would be able to finish it by this time last year, but I didn't take into account the fact that four daily life chapters were definitely not enough to develop the characters, other than life stuff etc etc...

At this rate I'll probably finish this story in January 2020, if I'm lucky, lol. But I'll definitely do my best to end it. Of course I've had everything in mind since the start, even though some things changed on the way here. In the past I've always had trouble sticking with stories and I always ended up leaving them half-finished because I grew tired or I didn't find enough people interested in them. However I managed to continue this journey for one entire year (never done before) also thanks to the various kudos and comments I got.

I really want to thank everyone who's writing comments, but also everyone who's leaving kudos including the guests and the ones that only read it. I'm aware of the fact that many are here not for this type of series, more similar to the game format than other ones more popular on ao3. But I didn't want to tell another after V3 story (not something against them, but there are quite a few) or even write ships because I suck with relationships to be quite honest. (Also I'm not that invested in them). So writing something like this and not including ships definitely would have drawn some people away. But I like DR for other kind of character dynamics and especially the mystery.

Ah, and if people are reading even though their favorite character is dead, thank you too. I understand why some of you might have left because of my decisions. I know
that killing Shuichi at the start was a bold move (I killed Saimatsu with it as well) and that essentially de-characterizing Kokichi and turning him into a robot was essentially destroying one of V3 essential parts, but I did it regardless. Lol. Also I can see some people having trouble with the script trial style as well.

Having said this, the next part is in two weeks, so on Christmas day!!! (more or less). I've written less and less these days because I'm studying and now that I'm at university I've less free time. I've finished the trial, but I've only some things for Ch. 4, I also have to think how to spice the next murder case. That means that there will definitely be an hiatus of 4 or 6 weeks after this trial wraps up. I hope to see you all even if I'm disappear for a while! Thank you all again!
LAST CHAPTER:
The students understand that no one in the Virtual Reality appears to have committed the murder; which actually occurred outside the NWP. Kaede, analyzing the logs and the Monokuma File, understands that martial artist was killed because she fell from a window in one of the dark rooms. So, after realizing that Maki was first attacked inside the Program and confirming Kaito's innocence...

...the trial continues.

Chapter Notes

**For the Truth Bullets check the previous chapter**

[([0U-M5 SELECTED])]

Kaede: It can only be you!

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re talking about Oums, right?

Kiibo [index finger pointing upwards]: Yes, that’s true. I also think Kaito has something to do with this, but that isn’t the main point now.

Kaito [angry expression]: Wait, wait, wait! Are you accusing Oums? I respect you, Kiibo... but this is too much, seriously!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Let’s discuss this. Without shouting and screaming.

Himiko [tired expression]: Yeah, my ears are already hurting, if you kept silent...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I would have no problem to sacrifice myself if I did actually kill Maki, but I can’t do it now.

Tenko [slightly smug]: You seem awfully quiet for someone who was just accused of murder.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I don’t care about ceasing to exist. However, if we don’t have proof that I killed Maki we would all die and my death would amount to nothing.

Kiibo [looks around]: He’s right... but I gave you the proof.

0U-M5 [neutral expression, tilts head]: It is not enough, I’m afraid. I can’t help you since my memory was erased.
Korekiyo [caresses head]: How curious. A possible culprit that needs proof... what have we come to.

Yeah, what have we come to... is Oums a culprit? Isn’t he supposed to help us? He wouldn’t kill Maki... right?

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Wet floor, Monokuma’s second motive, Neo World Program Rules, Rantaro’s Testimony

Kaito [irritated expression]: Don’t listen to Angie and think for yourself for once!

Kiibo [index finger pointing upwards]: I am, stop with this excuse. This is not her idea.

Tenko [hands on podium]: He’s right, Kaito. You’re not doing anything useful.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: May I offer a hypothesis then?

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: Oums logged Maki from the outside, but not through a forced exit.

Kaito [angry expression]: No, there’s no other way apart from what I said before!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Oh! How can I believe you?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I don’t believe Oums is the culprit. He wouldn’t have left this many clues around.

Gonta [looking at racket]: He maybe killed Maki from outside. It possible?

Kirumi [eyes closed]: You are all assuming Oums did not enter the Neo World Program. However, we know he could have.

Himiko [looking down]: But why did no one see him...?

Kiibo [determined expression]: Sorry to interrupt you all again, but Oums was the only one who could operate the Program besides Kaito...

Angie [flailing arms]: Yes, so it must be him... that must be because Kaito forced him!

Kaito [angry expression, hand forms fist]: Can you fucking stop with this bullshit?!

Outside, inside... knowledge of the Program... I know something about the Virtual World... something that Angie and Kiibo should know as well...

ANSWER: Monokuma’s second motive --> “Oums was the only one who could operate the Program”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!
Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Yesterday Monokuma gave you a second motive, right?

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Gonta think yes, but he don’t remember it... sorry, this not for gentlemen!

Tenko [stressed, sweating]: D-don’t... worry, Gonta, I can h-help you.

Gonta [happy expression]: Oh! Thanks, Tenko. Gonta... is... grateful... yes! Very grateful for your help.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Monokuma told us that he would help us operate the Neo World Program. It wasn’t a prize given after the murder, but at the hands of everyone.

Kiibo [looking to the side]: More than a motive... it was a “easy mode” for someone who attempted it.

Kaede [smiling]: Thanks for having confirmed that, because this means Oums couldn’t be the only one who had access to the Program.

Kaede [gesturing]: It can be every one of you outside of it.

Tenko [shocked]: Did we just make ourselves suspicious?!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Yep.

That’s the truth, nothing to do about it.

Kiibo [looking to the side]: But... that doesn’t make my deduction wrong. Oums could have done it. It’s the easiest answer after all.

Kaede [reassuring expression]: Hey, Kiibo. We have nothing against you. I only want to reach the truth.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Yes...

Angie [tilts to the right]: Kiibo! Don’t back down!

Angie [tilts to the left]: You can do it! You can do it!

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: We are not asking for cheerleaders. Please keep your voice down.

Rantaro [reassuring expression, hands in front of self]: Well, not to bring Kiibo down... but there’s one other detail that makes me think Oums is innocent.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Ah... you... I mean, you can say now...

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Kaito told us that the world is a loop. To everyone who went inside, plus Oums.

Kaito [looks to the side]: It knew it beforehand.

Rantaro [slight smile]: If Oums knew about the loop, he would have used that to cross to the other side. Why search for something else?
And we know he didn’t. There are no other “cross-sections” reported in the logs.

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Whoever entered used another method to cross the river.

I know that as well. Strange, this time Rantaro didn’t ask me to prove it to everyone. Unluckily for him, I don’t think I’ll let him have the spotlight. He’s just so happy when I finish his sentences for him… I’ll do it this time, before he has a chance to talk.

The culprit crossed the river with...

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

ANSWER: Sign

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re talking about the sign we found near the river!

Rantaro [surprised]: ...

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Hm. You really wanted to say it.

Kaede [smiling]: I just decided to skip the moment when you kindly ask me to prove your points. You didn’t need my help this time?

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: I see... you’re not the one to keep things to yourself. And you don’t hold back your thoughts.

Kaede [smiling]: No, I’m not.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Sorry if I interrupt your discussion, but how does the sign play into this case?

I tried to speak up but Rantaro was quicker than me. And here he goes explaining it to everyone else...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Very simply. The culprit found the sign and used it to cross the river. It looks sturdy enough to fit one person.

0U-M5 [neutral expression, tilts head to the side]: So they reached Maki thanks to this. Alright... that does not prove I am not the culprit though.

Kaito [shocked expression]: Do you want to be executed?! I don’t understand you!

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I would like to be sure of my potential innocence.

Kaede [gesturing]: We’re on the way. But I have some ideas. Can we continue our discussion?

Gonta [confused expression]: Gonta don’t know what else to say...
NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: 0U-M5’s body conditions, Locked mansion doors, Neo World Program rules, Decryption hints

Angie [cheerful expression]: I’m relieved now that Oums is not the culprit!

Kirumi [eyes closed]: We should wait a few minutes before being sure. There is other evidence that needs to be examined.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Sure? I don’t know what you might be talking about.

Kaito [proud expression]: Let Kaito sweep right in! Oums didn’t kill Maki because someone else deactivated it!

Tenko [pensive look]: Couldn’t he have done it himself?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Yeah, I thought some of us knew how that could be done.

Gonta [happy expression]: Then we can know who did it!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I don’t want to sound persistent, but Oums knew how to unlock doors, so he could have locked them too...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I’m afraid that’s not how it works. That’s also not the real world.

Himiko [tired expression]: Uhm... maybe we should look outside of the Program, not inside...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Can you explain what you mean, Himiko?

Himiko [looking down]: N-nothing... don’t mind me...

I’m definitely sure 0U-M5 is innocent. According to the evidence, it can’t be any other way...

ANSWER: 0U-M5’s body conditions --> “Someone else deactivated it”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [pointing]: That’s the proof that I needed! Oums couldn’t have pressed the buttons himself.

Kaede [gesturing]: It’s impossible for him to self-deactivate.

Angie [tilts head to the right]: Oh, but that’s what Kaito told you, huh?

Kaito [irritated expression]: Of course it is! Because it’s the fucking truth!

Kiibo [looks around]: Do we have any concrete proof?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I can confirm you I can’t press the red button two times. My code prohibits it.
Korekiyo [caresses face]: Kekekeh... your words are as empty as your insides... there is indeed no proof of what you are saying.

Kaito [irritated expression]: To be precise, 0U-M5 is not hollow inside. It’s full of wires and microchips.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: It appears we need to rely on Kaito’s words. It’s not our safest bet, but it’s a step in the right direction nonetheless.

Kaito [irritated expression]: I appreciate your trust...

Kaede [gesturing]: I don’t think Kaito would lie about this. Would he gain something?

Angie [tilts head to the left]: We’re still not sure about his innocence.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: But we are. We covered that topic before. Kaito didn’t exit the Program and as such, had no involvement with this case.

**I realize that’s not one hundred percent true. But even if he knows something, it’s impossible for him to have killed Maki.**

Himiko [looking up]: Now that Oums is out of the suspect list who is remaining?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Like before, everyone who was outside of the Program.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: That is why you should give us your alibis for the early morning, the time of Maki’s death.

Angie [puffing cheeks]: No! I don’t agree!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Are you saying that because-

Angie [cheerful expression]: Because we still don’t know what happened to Maki! Do we want to jump straight to accusations?

Kirumi [tilts head]: I am of the opinion that providing alibis will only help the discussion.

Angie [flailing arms]: In fact, it doesn’t! Kaede, do you remember the time Maki was killed?

**Hmmm... yes, it’s clearly written in the Monokuma File...**

[[7.00 A.M./7.30 A.M./8.00 A.M./8.30 A.M]]

**ANSWER: 8.00 A.M.**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Maki was killed shortly before 8 A.M.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Your memory never fails, Kaede! You can clearly see that providing alibis is very useless in this situation!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Was anybody awake at that time?
Gonta [happy expression]: Yes, Gonta was! He playing tennis in his room from early morning!

0U-M5 [curious expression]: Did you see, hear, felt something out of the ordinary?

Gonta [sad expression]: No... Gonta only went downstairs at around nine. To prepare breakfast.

**It looks like we can’t deduce much from alibis as of now... Angie might be right.**

Korekiyo [.touches hat’s brim]: Let us proceed with Angie’s suggestion then, delving deeper into Maki’s means of death.

Kaede [gesturing]: Okay. As of now, we only know how and where she died, but not the circumstances that led here there.

Tenko [scratches ear]: You’re right... we need to understand a lot.

Kaede [gesturing]: Let’s start from the place we know best. The real world.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Huh?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Considering we know... the last moments of Maki being alive... we need to start from there; not from the time she was attacked.

**It would be useless to try to understand what happened at the start without any solid evidence.**

Gonta [shocked expression]: Kaede say we have to go backwards?

**Exactly. By starting from the end, we'll have a full picture and know everything that happened to the Ultimate Neo-Aikido Master.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Angie’s testimony, Butter, Skylight, Rules of the Neo World Program, Tenko’s testimony**

Angie [flailing arms]: No Virtual World then! Let’s forget about that spawn of Hell!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Stay silent Kaito, don’t try to answer to her.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Tsk.

Tenko [determined expression]: We should start from Himiko’s room. Maybe the culprit entered there before the murder!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: Why?

Tenko [pensive look]: To take something, maybe?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: We should ask ourselves how did the culprit bring Maki to the dark room.

Angie [claps hands]: They threw her across the corridor!
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Ridiculous. *They dragged her.*

0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: Maki is not exactly lightweight. *They used an object to make it easier.* Like a chair...

Gonta [thoughtful expression, finger on cheek]: What if Maki not conscious, but still able to walk? Then not a lot difficult.

Tenko [pensive expression]: The task would have been a lot less tiring...

Kaito [rubbing head]: Don’t worry about that. Once someone is out in the Virtual World, *it’s like they’re sleeping.*

Something happened after Maki logged out, but before the culprit brought her to that room...

**ANSWER: Butter --> “They dragged her”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [arms crossed]: Rantaro’s right. Maki was dragged. The pool of butter near the door Angie smashed has clear signs of... dragging...?

Rantaro [reassuring expression]: Oh, don’t feel so under pressure when you agree with me. There’s nothing wrong with it.

**Can I hate him when he behaves like this? Of course I can, I shouldn’t even ask myself.**

Kaede [gesturing]: ...What I meant is that since the butter puddle is not homogenous anymore, someone was dragged across it.

Himiko [slightly surprised look]: Oh... and where do they lead to?

**I know the answer to that question. It’s supported by evidence found before.**

**FLASHING ANAGRAM START!**

A K R D  M R O O

**ANSWER: Dark room**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

**CLEAR!**
Kaede [gesturing]: To the dark rooms. Goes to show that Maki was really taken there.

Angie [surprised expression]: Yeah, there were traces of butter near the dark rooms too! Me and Kiibo found them!

Angie [cheerful expression]: We’re super duper detectives!

Gonta [confused look]: How do Angie know that butter?

Kiibo [hides under hood]: It’s better if we don’t’ talk about it...

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: I have a question. Were Maki to be brought there, there would be far more butter scattered around.

Korekiyo’s perfectly right. The culprit tried to hide it, in fact. They didn’t do a perfect job, because they forgot to remove those last traces near those rooms. They used something to trick us...

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**ANSWER: Wet floor**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: There would be if not for the culprit wiping it off. They used water to remove it.

Kiibo [looks around]: Wasn’t the floor wet near the dark room only?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: We could assume it already dried out elsewhere.

**Assumptions are never absolute truth, but there’s not a lot we can do. This makes sense... we need to go over other things.**

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I would also say that butter makes dragging a corpse easier and less tiring.

Angie [praying]: Oh, how terrible... butter used in such a despicable way shouldn’t be allowed!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I feel this would have been a perfect set-up for Miu’s terrible jokes.

Kaito [rubbing head]: We’re not done with what happened outside. There’s Ouma’s deactivation as well.

Kaede [gesturing]: Right. That had to have happened before the culprit logged in. Oums would have warned us, right?

Kaito [proud expression]: Definitely. Even if the culprit murdered Maki, it would have reacted immediately.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I agree. Considering the circumstances, I’d probably have logged you out. However, I can’t say for sure.
Tenko [scratches ear]: Didn’t we say we should go backwards? If you continue like this you’ll end up confusing me.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: She’s right. We’ll discuss Oums after figuring out what led to Maki’s virtual death.

Himiko [looks at bug net]: Yes, she actually died two times...

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Sadly there are no details of what caused her to pass out in the Virtual World on the Monokuma File. We have to figure it out by ourselves.

Kaede [gesturing]: We’ve found enough clues to form an opinion and discard others.

We’re looking at what happened to Maki inside the Neo World Program, finally. We need to find the truth!

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Locked mansion doors, Malfunctioning phones, Disappearing leaflet, Rules of the Neo World Program, Flat grass path

Kiibo [determined expression]: Should we determine where she was killed or how was she killed?

Kirumi [tilts head]: Either one could be of help.

Angie [fingers in hair]: The culprit dragged her to the mansion.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: You seem obsessed with dragging.

Angie [flailing arms]: No one could see the murder happen!

Kaito [rubbing head]: But that wouldn’t make any sense...

Korekiyo [raises right hand]: They could have known about the loop and walked through it...

Tenko [pensive expression]: Even so, there would be no advantage to it. There is no dangerous object on that part of the world, as far as I know...

Kaito [irritated expression]: There were no dangerous objects in the Virtual World, definitive one-hundred percent certainty!

Angie [surprised expression]: But Maki still died!

Kiibo [looking around]: It must have been unconventional means... what if the culprit made her hit her head on one of the trees?

Himiko [tired expression]: The tree would be damaged...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Our avatars felt pain after all. And if we suffer enough pain we pass out...

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: I suspect Maki would have tried to log out if she was attacked...
Kiibo [confused look]: Maybe she couldn’t...

There’s one piece of evidence... it lines up with what one of my classmates said, but not really... I have to pick up the discussion from there.

**ANSWER: Flat grass path --> “The culprit dragged her to the mansion”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit dragged Maki, as shown by the flat grass path.

Angie [flailing arms]: Then I’m right! You’ve got your sensational lines switched up!

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: Actually, no.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The path leads to the river. No signs after it.

Rantaro [moves to the side]: That means that they stopped there.

Kiibo [confused expression]: They could have concealed their tracks after the river...

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Nope. We have another clue that their advance stopped there.

**--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET**

**ANSWER: Red phone**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: A phone is on the church-side of the world. A curious place, isn’t it?

Kaito [rubbing head]: Yeah, all the other ones are where we found them...

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: All of them? Ours as well?

Kaito [looking to the side]: I saw them in the cameras. Kaede and Oums can confirm.

I remember them. Let’s clear up everything about those phones.

**PSYCHE TAXI START!**

Where were the phones supposed to be?

[[The living room/The corridor near the living room/The room where we logged-in/Outside of the mansion]]
ANSWER: B

How is it possible that everyone’s phones beside the red ones are in the corridor?

[[Because everyone left it there/Because after a force exit they’re sent to their original location/Because the culprit placed them there/Because they malfunctioned]]

ANSWER: B

Which one of us had the red phone?

[[Himiko/Rantaro/Maki/0U-M5]]

ANSWER: C

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: If all of our phones were in the corridor it can only mean one thing. When someone else logs us out, they return to their original place.

Gonta [confused look]: But red phone not there. So it not be one of you that log out force.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Exactly. Which means it’s either the culprit’s phone, or the victim’s.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: And you know, right?

Kaede [determined expression]: Yes, that mobile phone is Maki’s. She commented on it.

“Maki: Wow, they’re also color coded. I wonder why I got the red one.”

Kaede [pointing]: That phone’s there because Maki managed to log out just near the river!

Tenko [scratches ear]: I’m not following you, Kaede. We’ve been saying that Maki was killed in the Neo World Program, but now you’re trying to convince us she logged out...

Kaede [arms crossed]: I’m trying to wrap my head around this fact, you’re right... but it looks like there’s no solution...

We can’t overlook evidence. Maki logged out using her mobile phone. It’s a fact, and now it’s supported by her phone not showing up where ours are.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Here’s what I think it happened: Maki almost died. However, she had enough strength to log out.
Kaede [sad expression, looks down]: But something happened to her virtual self while logging out. Something that compromised her real body.

Kaede [sad expression]: Kaito explained us that logging out is not a instantaneous process. Your feel like in a limbo, but your body is still in the virtual world.

Kaito [looks to the side]: Exactly. For a few seconds...

**Those are more than enough to kill someone.**

Himiko [neutral expression]: If she reacted a few moments before she would still be with us, and her potential killer would have been unmasked...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Don’t take my words as fact, though... it’s still unusual, considering what her cause of death was...

Tenko [confused look]: Have you already figured it out?

**The clues are all there... where she was dragged... the impossibility to react... Maki was...**

**FLASHING ANAGRAM START!**

W R D E N O D

**ANSWER: Drowned**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Maki was dragged to the river. There’s one very valid possibility then: she was drowned.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: A very valid possibility, yeah...

Kaito [rubbing head]: That happened before or after she logged out?

Kaede [gesturing]: We can’t say for sure. The culprit could have tried to drown her but failed, which prompted Maki to say her name at the phone and dying regardless because of the delay...

Kaede [arms crossed]: ...Or she did that before and the culprit drowned her while she was unconscious.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: We shouldn’t press on this detail. Now that we know how she died, we have to retrace back the other steps.

Tenko [pensive look]: Right. She was dragged... but from where?

**Yes, let’s continue this discussion. We’re making progress. Yes, there are some questions left unanswered, but maybe they’ll become easier if we give them time.**
NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Malfunctioning phones, Locked mansion doors, Disappearing leaflet, Rantaro’s testimony

Tenko [scratching ear]: Alright, somebody knows where Maki was before the culprit attacked her?

Kirumi [moves to the side]: It has to be the woods near the church.

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh! Wasn’t there Rantaro with her?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Yes, but we lost sight of each other.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I’d say it’s too convenient, but he can’t be the culprit...

Gonta [looks at racket]: Sorry, but Gonta left behind. He thought for Maki impossible to log out.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Why? Have you something we don’t know?

Gonta [puts finger near lip]: Because you said all phones not work, then how can Maki’s?

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: You must have misheard us. No one of us told such a thing.

Kiibo [looking around]: Could you stop flip-flopping around, please? Let’s focus on one topic. It’s easier.

Gonta [sad expression]: Right! Sorry if Gonta very stupid!

Gonta, you aren’t stupid. It’s normal to be wrong; the right thing to do is learn from your mistakes.

ANSWER: Malfunctioning phones --> “all phones not work”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: I understand your doubts, Gonta. Let’s clear it immediately. Two phones did work.

Gonta [surprised]: Ah! Gonta forgot!

Himiko [neutral expression]: It’s normal to forget things... I forget almost everything at times... where I put my things... and I leave them all scattered around...

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Of course, those two phones are Maki’s and the culprit’s.

Gonta [holds hand over chest]: Gonta is super sorry about this inconvenience! I-I... won’t do that again... Gonta will try!
We’ve made a small detour, but it’s good we’ve reminded everyone this detail as well. Let’s continue with the discussion.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Locked mansion doors, Render distance, Rules of the Neo World Program, Rantaro’s testimony

Angie [tilts to the right]: If Rantaro and Maki were together...

Angie [tilts to the left]: ...How did he not see her getting taken?

Rantaro [raising eyebrow]: We know that I’m innocent, so why are you continuing with this?

Angie [surprised expression]: You could be an accomplice!

Kaito [irritated expression]: In my opinion, they were just too far from each other. No way for them to notice each other.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: The woods are not as wide as they might seem; they would have surely seen each other.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Me and Kiyo saw and heard each other even though we were fairly far apart, so I agree.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: It could be that Maki was taken and attacked behind a tree.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: No. I would have seen her. Instead, I couldn’t see anything. A fog came down... a strange one at that.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Did it dissolve after some time?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Nope. Stayed there. It actually freaked me out.

Kaito [rubbing head]: I can’t remember any type of different climatic condition than sunny weather in the code... are you sure it was fog what you saw?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: You can decide not to believe me, but that’s the truth.

Actually, I’ve an idea. Considering what I learned about the Neo World Program, there’s something... that could have happened. It’s because of that...

ANSWER: Render distance --> “they were just too far from each other”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!
Kaede [gesturing]: Kaito’s right. Rantaro and Maki did not see each other because someone lowered the render distance.

Angie [praying]: Please, Atua. Let me understand what Kaede’s saying, for I don’t know the language she’s speaking.

Kaede [arms crossed, irritated expression]: The Virtual World has a certain render distance, which is, in a few words, the part of the world that you can see and hear.

Kaede [arms crossed]: You have no perception of everything outside of that.

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: Oh, yeah! Thank you, Kaede! Finally you backed me up!

That’s because it’s the first time you’ve said something correct during this trial...

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: I noticed that someone made sure that everyone outside couldn’t see and hear what was happening around them clearly.

Kaito [looking to the side]: It’s not the easiest thing to do, but we know that Monokuma helped the culprit...

Tenko [hands on podium]: Shouldn’t that be against the rules?

Monophanie [angry expression]: Nuh-uh, you pig-faced teacher! Monokuma never directly participates in a murder!

Monokid [plays with guitar]:Factually, it’s true. The culprit has always a chance to refuse his help, even if they’re about to murder someone.

Monodam [raises hands]: IT HAPPENED SOME TIMES.

Monotaro [plays with scarf]: But then the first-time killer got murdered in retaliation!

Monophanie [holds mouth]: Eww! Don’t make me remember that! I’ll tell daddy you’re bulling me!

Monodam [neutral expression]: BUT WE ARE NOT.

Monophanie [cries]: I’m very sensitive and you’re hurting my emotions!

Monotaro [holds shuriken in paw]: Don’t fret, sister! I’ll always be on your side!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Back to us, because of Monokuma’s motive... that doesn’t really help us.

Tenko [pensive look]: I... are you sure of that? It seems like an important detail...

Kiibo [index finger on chin]: It is. We know why Rantaro didn’t see Maki.

Hmm... but is this all there is to it? No. The render distance had that effect, but... there’s something that adds to it. Let’s put an end to this discussion.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: He didn’t, you’re right.

Angie [tilts to the left]: But he said it was foggy, not that the distance render or what Kaito said was broken!
Kaede [gesturing]: That’s because they’re one and the same. The fog *is* the render distance.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Hmm, that... makes a lot of sense, surprisingly.

Kaito [looks to the side]: I didn’t have time to check this out, but I think it’s highly likely.

Kiibo [worried look]: You said you got rid of all the dangerous objects in the Program...

Kaito [irritated expression]: Yeah, the objects. Not the options! I had no fucking clue somebody would change the settings!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Shortsighted like always! But don’t worry; I forgave you already!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Stop with this passive aggressive attitude! If you say anoth-

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Please, do not waste your time with useless bickering. I should not be the one who needs to remind you we do not have hours at our disposal.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: As the situation stands right now, you are starting to annoy me as well.

Himiko [index finger pointing upwards]: Korekiyo always looks annoyed, but if he actually said it he must really be!

**Kirumi is spot on. Both of those two are exaggerating. Even though Angie might be the one who attacks Kaito first, that doesn’t mean he needs to listen to her.**

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Gonta understands that Rantaro not see Maki, but how you not see the culprit?

0U-M5 [neutral expression, head tilted to the side]: That’s another question that needs an answer. They should have logged in where you all ended up in the first place, right?

**The room 0U-M5’s talking about... that is...**

[[The living room/The corridor/The side room/The bedroom]]

**ANSWER: The side room**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: The small side room at the end of the corridor, right?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: That’s what I meant. They ran a big risk. One of you could have seen them.

Kaito [proud expression]: Nope, and I know the answer to that too. Do you want to hear it?

Tenko [hands on podium]: Why are you even waiting? Tell us!

Angie [clasps hands]: Tenko, let him finish, right? Remember what I told you...

Tenko [nods]: R-right... sorry...
Gonta [happy expression]: Gonta know! It because the render distance! So small that you not see culprit!

Gonta can’t be right. In fact, there’s a place where render distance doesn’t come at play.

**HIDDEN PASSWORD START!**

1. I M
2. A N
3. N D
4. O S
5. O I
6. R O
7. S N

**ANSWER: Indoors**

Kaede: I got it!

**CLEAR!**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The culprit couldn’t rely on the render distance indoors.

Korekiyo [looks at clothes]: Interesting. Was that not allowed?

Kaede [gesturing]: Actually, no. The culprit made a deliberate decision not to set the render distance at a minimum inside the mansion and the church.

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: Confirmed! You’d think they would do it. But... what if they had another way to avoid being seen?

**Another way... that’s what Kaito’s talking about!**

**-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!**

**ANSWER: Locked mansion doors**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [pointing]: They used the doors! The culprit locked them from the control panel!

Kaito [shocked expression]: What?! Kaede, that was my line!

Kaede [confused]: Huh?

Kaito [irritated expression]: I knew what to say and you immediately decided to rob it from me!

Oops. I didn’t think Kaito knew what he was talking about.... I imagined he was genuinely confused.
0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: He even had the classic intonation of a rhetoric question.

Kaede [confused]: I must have missed that... sorry, Kaito...

Kaede [reassuring expression]: But I’m sure you’ll get something else! This case revolves around the Neo World Program after all, so it’s your... time... to shine...

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: Right! But I’ll continue the explanation from now on!

Kaito [proud expression]: By setting a lower render distance inside the mansion the culprit would have only made us more wary.

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: Because they had this other much more safe way they opted for this one.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: They locked us in; we had no way of logging out and neither get out of our rooms.

Kaito [proud expression]: The locked doors were, of course, part of their plan. Maybe the most important detail.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: But they couldn’t lock me... so they had to use the render distance trick.

Tenko [hands on hips]: Luckily you were separated. Strangely, this made the case easier.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Don’t speak too soon. We’ve yet to find the blackened.

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: Indeed. Now that we discovered what occurred we have no other possible topic of discussion.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: And you are one of the suspects. Nothing personal, of course.

Tenko [scratches ear]: Yeah... I know... but I want to prove my innocence!

Kiibo [looks around]: Who doesn’t...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: The point is, one of you five is undoubtedly the murderer. First, we have to establish who definitely wasn’t.

Angie, Kiibo, Tenko, Himiko, Gonta... my heart tells me that there’s no way they could do something like this... I have to be honest with myself, though... this is the evidence... unless we screwed up again...

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Maki’s body conditions, 0U-M5’s body conditions, Himiko’s testimony, Tenko’s testimony

Kirumi [tilts head]: I would not rule out 0U-M5 just yet.

0U-M5 [curious expression]: I thought we said I couldn’t disassemble myself.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Yes, according to our current understanding.
Kaito [rubbing head]: With all respect to Kirumi, but I’m the inventor here. **0U-M5 didn’t disassemble itself.**

Gonta [finger near mouth]: Gonta not really able to help you. Already told everything.

Himiko [looking down]: Don’t worry. **You were always with Tenko**, we’re sure you weren’t the culprit.

Kiibo [worried expression]: That leaves only me, Himiko and Angie...

Angie [cheerful expression]: I trust you, Kiibo!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Well... me and Angie slept in the same dorm room tonight, so-

Kaito [shocked]: You did what!?

Korekiyo [holds hand over mouth]: I did not expect this development...

Kiibo [becomes red]: You’re all misunderstanding this! I mean that she was with me...

Kirumi [tilts head]: Do you have any solid evidence? We are aware she left at some point.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Exactly. **Angie is the one who was around the school when Maki died...**

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Considering Angie leaving, **Kiibo could have done the same too.**

**Is Kirumi’s hypothesis right? Or should we focus on the ones of didn’t accompany us in the Virtual World? I think the answer is clear...**

**ANSWER: Tenko’s testimony --> “You were always with Tenko”**

Kaede: No, that's wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: No, Himiko. Tenko said clearly that her and Gonta split up at some point.

Himiko [look down]: I didn’t know about that...

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Right, because you weren’t there with them.

Tenko [scratching ear]: I told Angie and Kiibo that I went in the warehouse leaving Gonta in the cafeteria.

Gonta [smiling]: Gonta remember very well! Tenko said she need to take something from there for our lessons!

Kiibo [confused expression]: Didn’t she say it was for Him-

Angie [clasps hands]: Oh! That’s true! She said that to us!
Except that Angie told me otherwise...

Still, it doesn’t matter what she took from there. The only thing I need is confirmation that she left the cafeteria.

Kaede [gesturing]: If Gonta and Tenko split up, it means one of them could be the killer.

Tenko [shocked expression]: What? I’d never kill someone, especially Maki!

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: So you could murder someone else, eh?

Tenko [hands on podium]: No! I was reinforcing a concept!

Gonta [sad expression]: Gonta also not kill anyone! But he believe in Tenko too.

Himiko [tired expression]: I think it’s crazy to think Gonta would hurt anyone...

Rantaro [thoughtful expression, index finger on chin]: You can never know. Sometimes the quiet ones are to blame.

Angie [flails arms]: Right! So you think I’m in the clear, then? Nyahahahah!

We have to approach this with a logical mindset. I must not listen to my feelings, now Gonta’s kindness and Tenko’s strictness don’t hold any meaning.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Despite Tenko’s quite average physical form, I am not sure she could have done what we described.

Tenko [scratches ears]: I can’t believe not going to gym consistently might save us all...

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Whereas, Gonta had the physical strength to perform every action we recounted so far.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: The culprit had to drag Maki across the floor and then move a wardrobe.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: It’s not only that. They had to bring Maki up to the third floor.

Kaito [rubbing head]: I think you’ve jumped to conclusions without presenting your argument.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Maki was thrown from the window. Someone had to bring her back up, otherwise how would she end up in Himiko’s room?

Kaito [rubbing head]: Ah! You’re right! That completely slipped my radar!

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: It’s okay Kaito, I should have told you first.

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: But I can’t believe Gonta’s the culprit! He has no idea of how the Virtual World works!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Maybe... Monokuma tricked him into thinking he was helping us.

Gonta [sad expression]: Kaede think Gonta don’t understand Monokuma’s bad intentions?
Kiibo [puzzled expression]: Slow down with those words Kaede, you didn’t mean it, right?

Kaede [reassuring expression]: N-no... I wasn’t suggesting Gonta could do that...

Gonta [happy expression]: Oh! Gonta must misread the situation! Gonta sorry!

**To be honest... I meant what I said. But I can’t say that aloud... I have to be objective here.**

Monophanie [excited]: It seems your opinions are split!

Monodam [neutral]: THEY ARE. BUT IT IS NOT THE TIME TO DO THAT.

Monophanie [irritated]: Whaaaat? Daddy would have taken that key and slammed in the lock!

Monokid [looks down at guitar]: If you paid attention you’d see that some of those bastards don’t have an opinion.

Monodam [raises arms]: EXACTLY. LIKE THE ONE WHO HEARS THE VOICES FROM THE OTHER WORLD.

Angie [surprised expression]: That’s me? That has to be me and Atua!

Monotaro [puzzled]: Yeah, she doesn’t seem to think either of them did it...

Atua [praying]: Because I know they didn’t! Atua told me that!

Monophanie [disappointed]: So no split opinions?

Monodam [neutral]: NOT NOW.

Gonta [happy expression]: Luckily! Gonta not like high places like those.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Is there something besides Gonta’s eventual strength that might implicate him in the murder?

Kiibo [pensive look]: Yeah, I feel it isn’t enough.

**Whether or not Gonta committed the murder, he did know something that some of the other suspect don’t know...**

[[How to disconnect the others from the Program/How to deactivate 0U-M5/How to access Himiko’s room without the Monopad/How to make sure Maki didn’t log-out]]

**ANSWER: How to deactivate 0U-M5**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: If you remember, Tenko and Himiko weren’t present when Kaito told us that Oums could be deactivated.

Himiko [tired expression]: I remember what happened then...

Angie [fingers in hair]: Yeah, I think he said it at that time.
Kaede [gesturing]: That doesn’t mean Gonta is definitely the culprit, but there are definitely more chances that he’s the killer instead of Tenko.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Gonta remembers him there, but not what Kaito told! Gonta really sure!

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: Don’t you believe him, Kaede? He looks genuine!

Kaede [arms crossed]: ...Like Shuichi? And Miu?...

Rantaro [reassuring expression]: Woah, Kaede... that’s not the time to bring that up.

**If not now, when is it the time to talk about that?**

Kaede [arms crossed]: I... I know... it’s just that... I want to believe in you guys... but when I let my guard down...

Rantaro [looking in front of self]: You’re setting yourself for disappointment. You know that one of us killed Maki. You’ll be disappointed no matter the result.

**Yeah... it doesn’t matter. It’s always one of us. And the more time it passes, the more I grow attached to people. That’s makes it harder to believe one of us could be capable of murdering a friend.**

Kaito [rubbing head]: You’re not helping her. You shouldn’t tell her that... she’s carrying us for the entire trial!

Kiiibo [looks around]: Actually... we’re all contributing.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kiiibo’s right. Don’t... rely on me only. There’s a bunch of us here. You can give your opinions too.

Angie [cheerful expression]: I’d like to talk about one thing that’s been bugging me! When was Maki killed?

**We already know that... I hope it’s a rhetoric question.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Angie’s testimony, Tenko’s testimony, Neo World Program Rules, Logs**

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: The Monokuma File specifies Maki’s time of murder as 8 A.M.

Angie [fingers in hair]: That’s very early!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Does it matter?

Angie [tilts to the right]: I think it does! Because I said, I was around at that time.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Which is what makes you suspicious in the first place.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: And we assumed the sound you heard was Maki hitting the
Angie [tilts to the left]: Yes, yes! But hear this, when I went inside my dorm room there was Kiibo sleeping!

Kaede [gesturing]: We already know that, didn’t we?

Kiibo [blushing]: Yeah... is it really important to talk about this again?

Angie [flailing arms]: Yup! It’s impossible for you to have left!

Tenko [scratches ear]: I really don’t get it. Can you explain everything?

Angie [fingers in hair]: I can try... I didn’t wake up at eight, obviously. I was there when Maki was killed, but I headed out long before that.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: At which time?

Angie [prays]: It was twenty to eight! *Kiibo couldn’t possibly do everything in such a short span of time*!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Was Kiibo there when you woke up?

Angie [clasps hands]: Yup! Sure!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Then Kiibo is off the list too. *The hours don’t match up*.

Himiko [looks down]: Hm? Maybe he was just super quick... He got in and out quick, then pretended to sleep...

*I don’t think anyone could do that in twenty minutes... but there’s another comment I want to focus on. We’ve already talked about that, but it’s time to use that evidence again.*

**ANSWER: Logs --> “The hours don’t match up”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Rantaro, if you weren’t so vague this trial would be quicker.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Sorry. I was trying to see if anyone else besides you understood my comment or not.

**Uh? What is he trying to do? He offers support and then teases me... in this situation no less!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Take into consideration the logs. s31p, the killer, logged in at 6:50 in the morning.

Gonta [confused look]: But Angie sleeping then. So how Kiibo not culprit.
Kaede [gesturing]: The important part is that the killer didn’t log out before 7:44.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards] How could Kiibo be in Angie’s room at 7:40 -and we're sure of that- if the killer was in the Virtual World at that time?

Kiibo [looks around]: That logic seems sound... luckily.

Korekiyo [hand over mouth]: You do not seem to be sure.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: That’s because I’m under pressure... and there was no one to prove my innocence...

Angie [tilts to the left]: Angie to the rescue! Who knows what would have happened if you weren’t with me!

Kiibo [smiling]: Yeah... thank you, Angie. But you're still a suspect...

Kirumi [tilts head]: Are you certain you cannot confirm her innocence?

Kiibo [looks around]: ...

Angie [cheerful expression]: Don’t be afraid to tell the truth! I know I didn’t do anything! Don’t cover for me.

Kiibo [looks around]: I’m sorry but... I slept the entire time...

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: Your answer did not really matter. Were you to know of Angie’s innocence, you would have told us much sooner.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Exactly. I understood that too. So there’s no point in pretending!

She figured that Kiibo lying would have been obvious... I bet she would have used him as an alibi, but that didn’t happen.

And that leads me to think she’s not the murderer... a culprit would have jumped at any chance to prove their innocence. But you can never know with Angie... she could be playing the long con the entire time and no one would notice.

Gonta [sad expression]: That means that Gonta still main suspect?

Kaede [arms crossed]: It appears so.

But would Gonta be able to commit the perfect crime? With no evidence pointing towards him?

Let’s be serious for a minute. He couldn’t.

I hate to use his lack of... conventional intelligence to prove his innocence. We’re gasping at straws here.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: There’s still one part of the murder we have not discussed about; maybe that can reveal the identity of the blackened.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Oums and Maki’s bodies were brought to Himiko’s room. Why?
Himiko [sad expression]: To frame me. The culprit must have something against me and bugs...

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: I always thought that hypothesis was not correct.

Kaede [pointing]: Yeah, me too. It’s too on the nose. The culprit knew we would think that was a framing.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: I think everyone realizes this was an unnecessary step. According to our current theory.

Angie [prays]: Unnecessary or not, why does it matter?

Kaede [gesturing]: The culprit had to have a reason to move Maki’s body from the courtyard all the way to Himiko’s room.

Kiibo [looks around]: They didn’t want us to understand she was thrown from the window, maybe?

Kaede [gesturing]: Maybe... they could move her somewhere else. It’s a long way to Himiko’s room.

Kaito [rubbing head]: And there were people that could have seen them. I think it’s strange...

Tenko [worried look]: I know I’m suspicious... but I don’t think Gonta is the culprit either...

Rantaro [arms crossed]: How can you say that? You left him alone...

Tenko [scratches ear]: But that was after Maki was killed...

Kaede [gesturing]: Definitely, but you didn’t meet up before 8 A.M... and that means he could have done everything before...

Kaede [arms crossed]: ...To continue his business when you went to the warehouse.

Himiko [looks down]: But I didn’t hear anyone coming towards my room... and Gonta is noisy...

Gonta [sad expression]: Gonta sure he remain in kitchen! He left a while to check for Himiko, but not left floor! He also see stairs!

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: That cannot be other than a lie. There is one stairway leading to the upper floors. That happens to be directly in front of the corridor.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Maybe he just missed the right time!

**We’re not getting out of this.**

Rantaro [moves to the side]: There’s still a lot of clues left. Are they really useless?

Kaede [arms crossed]: I don’t think so. They have to fit somewhere.

Kaito [looks to the side]: But it’s impossible to understand where everyone was at the time of murder!

I agree with Kaito.

Angie was around the school, according to her testimony. Tenko was in the warehouse, Gonta between the cafeteria and the corridors and Himiko around the school searching for
her lost Monopad.

Were they really doing what they are claiming? Or are they hiding a secret?

There’s only one thing I can do now... I have to focus. Because that clue is the most single important weapon we have at our disposal.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Skylight, Disappearing leaflet, Release benefits, Monokuma’s second motive, Decryption hints

Angie [cheerful expression]: Look, guys! Tenko and Gonta are becoming friends! Do you think one would betray the other?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: It appears so...

Kaito [irritated expression]: Hey! Why have you excluded yourself?

Angie [surprised expression]: I know I’m innocent! So no point in suspecting me!

Tenko [worried expression]: I don’t want to discredit others, but maybe we’ve missed something.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: What then? We always seem to forget details...

Tenko [scratches ear]: I don’t know... this looks so absurd!

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: We should try focusing our attention not on who’s telling the truth about their location...

Kiibo [determined expression]: ...But on who couldn’t log in.

Kaito [irritated expression, bumps fists into each other]: And how do we do that?!

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: I have another suspicion. We could restart by discussing the culprit’s relation to the motive...

Kaito [rubbing head]: I think Himiko’s the most suspicious... She was around the school...

Himiko [sad expression]: I was framed...

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Because of her stature, Gonta might not be able to see her from a distance...

Kiibo [confused look]: But she would be carrying Maki around... so that argument is invalid.

Should I agree with one of those claims...? Or should I disprove it? One thing is certain... this is definitely something that will cross out names off the suspicions list!

ANSWER: Decryption hints --> “on who couldn’t log in”
Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: It has to be like Kiibo says. We have no way to understand if those four are telling the truth, so we have to resort to the decryption logs.

Tenko [shocked expression]: The what-what?

Kaito [neutral expression]: We told you that the names found in the data are encrypted. I have some clues on how to decipher them, but I thought it wouldn’t be enough...

Kaede [determined expression]: Maybe at first it wasn’t enough. But now... I think I have an idea on how to proceed.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Explain it to us mere mortals, please.

Kaede [gesturing]: Kaito told me that there are four letters or numbers that use our four last surnames letters as the basis. However, if letters are repeated multiple times in the original surname, they are skipped in the code... then changed with the letters at the start of the surname.

Kaito [looks to the side]: My decrypted name won’t be MOMO, but MOTA. Since “M” and “O” were already used.

Kaede [gesturing]: For me it’s ATSU.

Himiko [yawning]: ...Are they useful or not...?

Yes. Extremely useful. Because there’s something we know for certain. And that is...

**FLASHING ANAGRAM START!**

![Anagram Image]

**ANSWER: AltO identity**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: We know AltO’s identity, and as a consequence we can start deciphering the code.

Kirumi [tilts head]: Using four letters only?

Kaito [rubbing head]: AltO and s31P don’t even share letters...

Rantaro [smirking]: That’s the point, right?

Kaede [determined expression]: Yes. That's the key to solve this mystery.
Tenko [worried expression]: Please explain it to me... I don’t want to continue being anxious like this!

**I think she’ll be...**

Kaede [gesturing]: s31P doesn’t share any letters with AltO. So, people that share even one letter with it are innocent.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I see... considering every deduction until now... the names we’ve said... it only leaves out one, right?

Tenko [worried expression]: No letters in common with Maki? It’s not me, I swear!

**Tenko... we’re talking about surnames, not names... and only one of the suspects doesn’t share letters with Maki’s decrypted code. It's shocking and at the same time so obvious...**

**SELECT SOMEONE!**
PREVIOUSLY...

After suspecting 0U-M5, the group realizes it's impossible for him to have self-deactivated, so another one of them must be the culprit. It becomes clear how Maki died; first by drowning in the NWP, then dragged to one of the dark rooms to be thrown down the window. Two suspects are crossed off the list: neither Kiibo nor Angie can be the culprit, but Tenko, Himiko and Gonta are still not definitely innocent. The first two don't have alibis for the time of murder and the entomologist, despite her testimony, has no one to back her up. The situation seems hopeless, until Kaede remembers the encrypted logs that show the last logins and logoffs. That's when she understands.

NOW...
Kaede speaks up about her ideas, confusion breaks out as the blackened is revealed.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

-SELECT SOMEONE!

[[HIMIKO YUMENO SELECTED]]

Kaede [gesturing]: Now, would you please stay calm and not talk over me after what I’m about to say, okay?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Alright, as you ask.

Kaede [gesturing]: It can’t be Angie, since NAGY and KAWH share the A. It can neither be Gonta, because HARG and KAWH share both the A and H.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: ...And it’s not Tenko either. HIRA and KAWH...

Kaede [arms crossed]: But MENO fits. There’s not a single letter they have in common.

Angie [tilts head, surprised expression]: Are you suggesting...

Tenko [scratches ear, sweating]: I must have heard it wrong, no no... you’re not saying that Himiko’s the culprit, right?

Kaede [sad expression, looking to the side]: ...Tenko, I won’t sweeten the pill. That’s what evidence points too.

Tenko [sweating]: ...
Tenko [awkward smile]: N-no, you’ve must have gotten something mixed up. Himiko, you can tell them you weren’t the culprit.

Himiko [looks down]: ...  

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Choose your next words carefully. Our fate depends on what you’ll say.

Gonta [worried look]: Don’t pressure Himiko, please!

Himiko [looks to the side]: ...

Tenko [sweating]: Himiko, I know it can’t be you...!

Himiko [neutral expression]: You don’t...

Tenko [clenches fists]: ...

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: Hmm... so you are confirming Kaede’s suspicions...

Himiko [looks down]: ...No... y-you can’t say it for certain... and we know someone framed me...

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: You claimed that your Monopad was stolen. Considering the logs, we cannot trust your testimony from now on.

**Himiko’s the culprit...? It looks ridiculous... however, the proof is here...**

Gonta [worried expression]: Gonta repeat, he not see anyone in corridor! Not hear no one near kitchen!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Himiko’s pretty lightweight. Maybe she didn’t make a lot of noise...

Angie [fingers in hair]: Hey! Himiko has always been nice! No chance she drowned Maki!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Do you want to vote someone else? I’d invite you to take a seat on the ride to death, but I’m not letting you drag me down with it!

Angie [surprised expression]: That’s because you haven’t met Atua and are scared of death! Even if he didn’t exist, death would be absolute nothingness... pretty peaceful, yup!

Kiibo [awkward look]: Angie, I don’t think it’s the time for this... not now...

Angie [prays]: You’re right... if only I could channel Maki’s spirit through Atua communication...

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Despite the evidence... and I’m surprised to say this... maybe Himiko didn’t do it.

Kaito [rubbing head]: You just commented on her being the culprit.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I was thinking out loud. Considering the options. And that she is innocent is the most likely.

Himiko [sweating]: ...

0U-M5 [tilts head]: Why are you saying that? I don’t think you can refute the logs, they’re pointing
to Himiko...

Himiko [looks down]: ...

Tenko [sweating]: Why aren’t you talking? He’s defending you...

**Shouldn’t she be relieved someone is on her side? It doesn’t matter if you’re the culprit or not, that’s a chance you should take immediately...**

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Consider this, Himiko is little, slim and not in shape, right?

Kiibo [confused look]: We said that everyone could take on Maki in the Virtual World...

Rantaro [moves to the side]: I’m not referring to that. There’s something else that would be very hard for Himiko to do.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Kaede, you know it, right?

Kaede [irritated expression]: ...And why should I say it when you’re just talking about it?

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: How defensive... I’m trying not to be at the center of attention. I dislike it... and you’re the detective here. You definitely know that...

**Something that Himiko couldn’t do because of her body size...? It has to be...**

[[Entering the Virtual World/Moving the wardrobe/Dragging Maki/Removing 0U-M5’s head]]

**ANSWER: Moving the wardrobe**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Is it moving the wardrobe?

Kirumi [tilts head]: Now that you mention it, none of us alone could move it. We had to work together.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Now, do you think Himiko would be able to do that by herself?

**I get where he’s coming from, but...**

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: I am deeply sorry for Himiko, however this does not change the facts.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: For what we know, she could have used a tool.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Where would have she taken it? Tenko was in the warehouse...

Tenko [hands on podium]: Right! She didn’t pass from there!

**She couldn’t have brought anything from any of the research room either... that would be**
Korekiyo [holds hand over mouth]: If she is truly innocent, why is she not speaking...

Himiko [looks down]: ...I think... I...

Korekiyo [holds hand over mouth]: She seems in pain... ah, such is the moment when you are crushed by the weight of your actions...

Kaede [determined expression]: Hey! Wait a second before speaking, she hasn’t confessed an-

Himiko [neutral expression]: Yes. It was me.

Uh...?

Himiko [sad expression]: It... it doesn’t need to go on any longer... it... I... I did it... I killed Maki...

Tenko [shocked expression]: N-no... you... you didn’t kill her...

Himiko [sad expression, crying]: Yes... and I... I lied about my testimony.... I wasn’t searching for my Monopad... I was logging inside... and killing Maki...

Rantaro [raised eyebrow]: ...Really?

Kirumi [tilts head]: You do not believe her even as she is confessing?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Can you please tell us how everything went? You’re confessing, so...

Angie [pouting]: Well, that’s very rude! You should respect Himiko... she is saving us time!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: She is confessing. So she has to confess everything.

What is Rantaro trying to do...?

Himiko [crying]: W-well... if... if you insist... I woke up... and went straight... straight to the c-computer room...

Himiko [crying]: There I saw Oums... and I asked him if he could deactivate for me...

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: He did that... no questions asked?

Himiko [looks down]: Y-yes... I told him it was for the b-best... and then went inside...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: I see... continue, please.

Himiko [crying]: What else there is to say... I saw Maki on the cameras before... and went to the woods, where she was... sneaked behind her... you know the rest of the story...

Gonta [confused expression]: But... Gonta sure he not see anyone...

Himiko [crying]: S-sorry Gonta... I w-waited for a m-moment you weren’t looking...

Rantaro [deadpan expression]: Cut with your bullshit.

Himiko [startled expression]: E-eh?
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Are you really the culprit? I can’t believe it.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Why would she lie, man? She’s crying! I don’t think Himiko is that great of an actress.

Kaede [determined expression]: Keep silent for a moment, Kaito... I want to understand what Rantaro’s getting at.

Rantaro [smirking]: I knew you had your doubts as well.

Himiko [crying]: W-why don’t you believe me...?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: State why you think Himiko’s lying... I think there are no benefits for her...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I don’t know why she’s lying, but I know she is.

I understand... Rantaro wanted to know the details from Himiko... to check if they correspond to what we know...

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Himiko, have you told us everything that happened?

Himiko [crying]: I... I d-don’t know... m-maybe I don’t remember! I... I...

Kaede [arms crossed]: You didn’t talk about your encounter with Monokuma. He had to explain how the settings of the Virtual World work.

Himiko [crying]: T-that happened... but... I didn’t think it was... important...

It’s how the culprit knew how to kill Maki... of course it’s important...

Rantaro [smirking]: There’s something else you should remember. No, no... that you have to remember.

Rantaro [arms crossing, looking in front of self]: What color was your phone?

Himiko [crying]: . . . green?

Kaito [rubbing head]: Actually, it was light red... like your hair... at least I think so...

Kaito [looks to the side]: You know, colorblindness...

Himiko [sobbing]: Y-yeah... I mixed it up...

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Everyone would remember that. You might fool others... but you didn’t kill Maki. Too many things don’t make sense.

Tenko [scratches ear]: Then maybe Himiko is innocent!

Maybe she is... we’ve just accused her, but her own actions don’t make sense... her confession has holes everywhere...

NONSTOP DEBATE START!
Truth bullets: Himiko’s testimony, Skylight, Disappearing leaflet, Rantaro’s testimony

Himiko [crying, looking down]: I’m the culprit... no reason to talk about it anymore...

Tenko [hands on podium]: Isn’t it strange she isn’t making a scene? She’s innocent!

Kirumi [left hand on hip]: To be fair, she is not the person who would do that.

Kaito [rubbing head]: But she doesn’t have a motive...

Korekiyo [raised right arm]: Maybe hers is a personal one... nobody can say.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Himiko’s innocent. She’s covering for the true culprit...

0U-M5 [curious expression]: And who would that be? We have proven everyone else to be innocent.

Himiko [crying]: L-look... I slept in the dark room where Maki was thrown...

Angie [clasps hands]: Oh, yes! That’s true... don’t worry, I’m not angry with you!

Kiibo [looks around]: But... she killed one of our classmates...

Angie [fingers in hair]: Sometimes you have to find the strength to forgive.

Gonta [sad expression]: Gonta not believe Himiko! Himiko is lying... she too nice!

Is her the culprit? Do we have evidence against that or do we believe her? This situation doesn’t convince me at all...

ANSWER: Himiko’s testimony --> “I slept in the dark room where Maki was thrown”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Himiko, why are you changing your version? You said you slept in the center room.

Himiko [crying]: ...uhm... what’s w-wrong w-

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: How can you use her testimony as proof in this circumstance? She’s not to be trusted.

Kaede [gesturing]: No, it’s perfectly valid. Because we’re using it to prove her innocence while she’s claiming to be the blackened.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Yeah, how can’t you understand? You’re supposed to be a highly-intelligent robot!
0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I am deeply sorry. Anyways... Maki was killed in one of the two side rooms with the window, not the center one.

Himiko [looking down]: Ah... I got t-that wrong as well... My m-mind is... is like it wants to forget...

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: But you didn't do it. Stop with this charade, please.

Kiiibo [clutches at chest]: If you’re innocent... Himiko, tell us. Otherwise everyone, including you, will die...

Himiko [crying]: W-why won’t y-you believe me... I’m doing this f-for you...

She is saying that, but judging from her tone of voice... is more like she’s trying to convince herself. Not us.

Gonta [sad expression]: If this what Himiko wants... Gonta believe Himiko...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I think we should vote. Logically, she is the only possible culprit.

Kaede [pointing]: Wait! It’s too soon to call the vote! We don’t agree!

Monophanie [fake excitement]: Do you hear that sound? What it could be?

Monotaro [excited]: Don’t tell me! Is this what I think it is?

Monokid [annoyed]: ...We should take this more seriously.

Monodam [neutral]: YES. PLEASE.

Monophanie [angry]: You always ruin my fun! Daddy would be so disappointed!

Monotaro [sobs]: Why isn’t he waking from his nap? I miss him...

Monophanie [fake excitement]: Until he’s missing, I’ll be the one to call the shots! It’s time for a scrum debate, bastards!

Monophanie climbed onto Monokuma’s throne, taking a key from who knows where, insterting in the weird contraption we already saw two times.

And yet, another time, we were ascending...

On one side Himiko, Gonta, Angie, Kiiibo, Korekiyo, Kirumi, 0U-M5: Himiko’s the culprit!

On the other Kaede, Kaito, Tenko, Rantaro: Himiko’s innocent!

Kaede- Monokuma||Kaede- Testimony||Rantaro- Logs||Rantaro- Wardrobe||Kaito- Group||Tenko- Lie||Tenko- Culprit||

SCRUM DEBATE START!

Himiko: Hear it from me... I’m saying I’m the culprit...

Tenko: I don’t know why you would say you’re the culprit... but you could be lying! And the holes in your testimony prove it!
Kirumi: We know that the logs are not modified in any way.

Rantaro: *Sure, the logs are definitely accurate. But maybe we have jumped to conclusions.*

Angie: Himiko could have used an object to move the wardrobe!

Rantaro: *An object to move the wardrobe? Where would she find it? The warehouse was closed before 8 A.M.*

Kiibo: It doesn’t matter if she knew about the Virtual World, Monokuma explained to her!

Kaede: *Does that make her a culprit though? The same could be said for everyone here!*

0U-M5: I suspect she could have manipulated me by saying she was deactivating me for the good of the group.

Kaito: *I don’t think Oums would have been convinced by the phrase “good of the group”. And I’m the one who updated you!*

Angie: Also, butter was all over the place and she claimed not to have seen it! That’s a lie...

Tenko: *That’s not a lie; she could have missed it! Himiko has her head in the clouds all the time!*

Korekiyo: She did create a false testimony, what for...

Kaede: *Because she created a false testimony to cover for someone else!*

*This is our answer!!*

**BREAK!**

Kiibo [hides under hood]: And... if you’re so sure, who would this person be, Kaede?

Angie [clasps hands]: Right, right! Who would Himiko cover for?

Kaito [irritated expression]: You, for example. Oh, but I’m just sayin’.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Whoa! I don’t think she’d be ready to sacrifice her life for mine!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: It wouldn’t be surprising considering everything you did beforehand.

Kiibo [irritated look]: Hey, stop! Don’t treat Angie like that! Just... state why she could be the culprit, and be done with it!

Kaede [gesturing]: It’s useless. We already know she’s innocent.

Angie [prays]: Thank you Atua, for you have blessed my companions with wisdom.

Uhh... I don’t think it’s Atua who told me the obvious... Angie can’t be Maki’s killer because they share the A letter in the decrypted logs.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: “AltO” is Maki, so it corresponds to KAWH according to the decryption rules.
Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Angie’s codename before encryption would be NAGY. It shares an A with Maki’s name.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Alright, so it can’t be her...

**It looks like we’ve run out of suspects, but... there’s still one option...**

Kaede [gesturing]: I still think that Himiko worked with someone. She couldn’t have done all of this by her own.

0U-M5 [curious expression]: Can it be... someone inside the Virtual Program? They murdered Maki...

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: That is still impossible. To kill her, they would ultimately have to log out.

Gonta [confused look]: But... no one left! Himiko must be culprit... Gonta not want that but...

Himiko [crying]: S-stop... I did everything on my own! I-I...

I know that I told everyone that what I’m about to say now already... and I actually helped everyone disprove it... but what has surfaced has made that irrelevant. If Himiko really worked with someone, that means that they’re still on the suspects list...

To be correct, they’re the only one left. There’s only one of us who could have committed this murder...

-SELECT SOMEONE!

[[0U-M5 SELECTED]]

Kaede [arms crossed]: ...

Himiko [looking down]: P-please... v-vote...

Kaede [determined expression]: Oums. You killed Maki, didn’t you?

Angie [surprised expression]: Whaaat?! You’re saying Oums did it?!

Gonta [confused expression]: Gonta not understand...

0U-M5 [curious expression, tilts head to the left]: Excuse me? Sorry... I thought we confirmed my innocence...

Kaito [irritated expression]: Exactly. It literally could be anyone else but not it! We found it lying on the ground without its head!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Please, don’t freak out... I’m going to explain my reasoning...

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: I am thrilled to understand what brought you to this conclusion.

It’s pretty clear... there was only one reason why we thought 0U-M5 was innocent... He couldn’t do that by himself...
ANSWER: Shut-off

Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: We said Oums was definitely innocent because he couldn’t shut-off alone. Someone else had to press that red button twice.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Exactly, Kaede.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: And that’s what Himiko did.

Himiko [surprised look]: W-what...?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: It would be a perfect alibi.

Kiibo [puzzled look]: But Himiko didn’t know about the buttons... she and Tenko weren’t in the cafeteria...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Does it matter? Oums told her. He knew Kaito would fix him after the body discovery.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I see why you think it’s plausible... maybe-

Kaito [angry expression]: You’re off track, Kaede! Oums wouldn’t hurt anyone! I changed his code specifically to prevent this from happening!

Kaede [arms crossed]: I said to keep calm. We have to look at the facts. I understand why you’re upset...

Kaede [reassuring expression]: ...but remember. You promised me you would try not to put instincts first.

Kaito [irritated expression]: I guess I did, but now it’s you offending me on a professional level!

Kaede [reassuring expression]: You already jumped the shark so many times during this trial and you were wrong. Let me explain first. Then provide your argument, alright?

Kaito [irritated expression]: ...

Kaito [irritated expression]: I guess... but make it quick. Since it’ll be ridiculous.
It’s still an improvement.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Angie’s testimony, Skylight, Release benefits, Monokuma’s second motive

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I have multiple reasons for believing I’m not the culprit.

Tenko [hands on podium]: That’s exactly what a culprit would say!

Rantaro [moves to the side]: At least he isn’t making too much noise.

0U-M5 [neutral expression, scratches cheek]: There are no signs of an accomplice. Even though it’s unlikely, Himiko could have done everything by herself.

Korekiyo [raises right arm]: In addition to that, I would like to remind you that Himiko could have an accomplice but still be the actual murderer.

Angie [fingers in hair]: And would there be an advantage in being an accomplice? No-no!

Gonta [sad expression]: Gonta not think Himiko really want us to die all...

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: Could this situation mirror Shuichi’s? She could have covered up the murder to protect and save us.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: From what? Shuichi was acting against a timer disguised as a motive. He had no other way.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Yeah... Either way, Himiko has definitely worked with someone. Along with what we’ve already covered, there are also other inconsistencies.

Himiko [looking down]: Of course... you never listen to anyone... I d-did it... I killed Maki...

No. Himiko’s innocent. And Oums is the only other possible culprit. I think I figured most of this case out, but I have to go through different steps. Let’s start from the beginning...

ANSWER: Release benefits --> “Would there be an advantage in being an accomplice”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: I only agree with the first part of your statement, actually.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: There was an advantage in being an accomplice. According to what I heard, that’s my theory.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Don’t beat around the bush, explain it!
Kaede [gesturing]: I heard from someone... that the last release benefit was, and I quote... more about helping others than yourself.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Who told you that?

I glanced at Himiko, sitting besides me. She told me she heard it from the Monokubs, but that’s another lie...

Kaede [arms crossed]: I’m sorry about that... but Himiko.

Himiko [surprised]: W-what? No, that’s not true!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Yes. And you didn’t hear the Monokubs talking about it. You are involved with whatever happened.

Kiibo [looking around]: Hey, I’m falling behind here. If she’s involved why reveal the last benefit? And... why lying about the Monokubs as well?

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Because she’s scared? Remorseful, maybe? This was supposed to be her and Oums’ secret. She wasn’t meant to tell us, but she slipped. I guess she has some empathy.

I turned to face the robot. No sign of any emotion. I had hoped this would cause a reaction, but nothing. Still stone cold.

Himiko, on the other hand, was still weeping.

Angie [fingers in hair]: I dunno, I still think you’re reaching, Kaede... what motive would push someone to sacrifice their life for someone else?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: And... it has to be related to an outside world benefit...

Himiko [tired expression]: You’re making things up... please, p-please...!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Stop. We know you didn’t do it, stop pretending.

Of course there can be only one possibility... as much as it pains me to say... would Himiko really sacrifice her life for a robot to live?

She didn’t develop any affection towards him. It would make sense if Angie, Kiibo, Gonta did this... but we know they’re innocent.

Then why... why would she ever keep her mouth shut about this, if it really happened?

[[Because 0U-M5 prohibited her//Because the motive doesn’t allow her to do it//Because she can escape along with the culprit//Because she’s the true killer]]

ANSWER: Because she can escape along with the culprit

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: The last release benefit is being able to take someone with you outside.
Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: No way! Could that be considered an advantage in the real world?

Monophanie [cheerful]: Yes, it definitely can! A friend is a great help to you! They are always at your side, especially if you got them out of a killing game!

Korekiyo [touching hat’s brim]: So... are you confirming our theory?

Monophanie [angry]: Of course not! You have to figure out the rest by yourselves!

Angie [fingers in hair]: But nobody told us about this new mysterious motive. Maki was killed before night-time, so it shouldn’t exist.

Kaede [gesturing]: Wrong. The new motives roll out exactly when day-time starts and aren’t revealed before night-time. But they are at play. And would you guess it...

Kaede [pointing]: Maki was killed just before 8 AM, so the murderer had the possibility to take advantage of a motive no one knew but them.

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh... that’s a good catch, Kaede. Congrats! Nyahahahahah!

Kaede [gesturing]: Himiko worked with Oums so they could escape together. Why him though, and to what extent? That’s the thing we need to discover.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I see you are still not listening to me. I cannot be the culprit.

Kaede [arms crossed]: You were always helpful until now. Why are you doubting me after I accused you?

Kaito [irritated expression]: Because it still looks like a poor argument! Even I can understand it, Kaede! Imagine a logical-driven machine! It would obviously disagree with you!

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Not admitting that Himiko’s behavior has been extremely weird is also logically wrong.

Kaito [looks to the side]: Because that’s about human interactions, maybe Oums still has to work about that...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Severely doubt it, considering his remarks about analyzing our actions.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I am usually on your side, Kaede... but you need to admit that we still have not found definitive proof that Oums could be the killer.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Neither Himiko, however. And her actions confirm she’s hiding something.

Kiibo [puzzled expression]: Wouldn’t she have confessed the truth though? If Oums is the real killer, why would she hold back now? She would get to live!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: You bring up a good point. I still believe she’s hiding the real killer... but if she continues with this charade, something else must be keeping her from talking.

**Evidence pointing towards Himiko, evidence pointing towards Oums... evidence against Himiko, evidence against Oums... are we stuck in a loop again?**

No, there must be something! There’s always something! What can we talk about now?
Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: I know, let’s focus on what’s not completely right.

Tenko [scratches ear]: What do you mean with that?

Kaede [gesturing]: First and foremost, we disregarded Gonta’s testimony.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Yes, Gonta not hear or see Himiko carrying Maki. He checked, Gonta sure!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: What if... there was another way to access Himiko’s lab?

Kiibo [looks around]: Is there another secret passage in this school?

I’m not talking about a secret passage per se... but it’s definitely not a conventional way...

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

ANSWER: Skylight

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: You know, while I was in Himiko’s lab I discovered a lever. That opened up the skylight.

Kaito [irritated expression, fists bumping into each other]: And how would someone get in there?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Just wait a moment before speaking. She’s still explaining.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: It’s important to let everyone know about that. Many people here didn’t have a clue about it.

Gonta [puzzled look]: But if you talk about skylight you think someone used it to enter...

Kaede [gesturing]: Yep, that’s my opinion.

0U-M5 [curious expression]: But that is not an easy feat to accomplish... this is the third floor we’re talking about...

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Yet it would be the only way to be sure no one would notice you. If you’re murdering someone you can’t afford to be discovered.

Kaito [looks to the side]: But this is not evidence against Oums... it’s a way to fit Gonta’s testimony in here.

Kaede [gesturing]: No, it is definitely evidence against Oums. He was the only one who could access the room while carrying a body at the same time.

Angie [curious expression]: Really? How?

There aren’t a lot of options after all... now that I’ll say it, it will look ridiculous...

[[By using a rope/By flying/By using the secret passage/By passing through the gym]
ANSWER: By flying

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Oums took the body and flew to the skylight.

Angie [surprising expression]: I wish I was able to fly! Woohoo!

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: Maybe you should refrain from commenting at times.

Tenko [scratches ear]: Flying? It looks like... have we ever talked about that? How did it come up?

Of course my classmates aren’t completely on board. I’ll have something that can convince them prove it.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Disappeared leaflet, 0U-M5’s body conditions, 0U-M5’s research lab, Rantaro’s testimony

Kirumi [tilts head]: Is Oums able to fly? I have never seen him do it.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Let’s ask him.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: ...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I do think that, with the right equipment, I could.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Kaito, what do you say? Was that equipment in this school?

Kaito [looks to the side]: N-no... not that I remember...

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Are you sure about what you are saying? You don’t look sure...

Kaito [irritated expression]: Because I can’t pretend I know everything! Maybe it took something from the warehouse!

Kiibo [puzzled look]: It was locked before morning... he had no way to take something from it.

Himiko [tired expression]: ...

Kaito [looks to the side]: After all, he can’t simply create wings, right?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: He could have used something else...

0U-M5 definitely had a way to reach the skylight. I know it, it was explicitly told to me. I guess only one of us can prove it to the others... before that, however, let’s make it clear. What do I have to bring up?

ANSWER: 0U-M5’s research lab -- “N-no... not that I remember”
Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [pointing]: Kaito, don’t lie. You said to me you found something resembling a jetpack in 0U-M5’s research room!

*Kaito: But do you want to know what the hell did I found in that room too?*

*Kaede: Does it relate to the murder?*

*Kaito: Parts of a jetpack! They’re all broken... but maybe I could fix it and tell Oums to fly around like a butterfly.*

Kaito [looks to the side]: I... I don’t remember it.

Kaede [irritated expression]: What? You remember it clearly! We went on to discussing Oums for a while after that!

Kaito [looks to the side]: Maybe you have mistaken me...

**What does he think he’s doing? He knows perfectly well that part of the conversation.**

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Kaito, do you really expect us to believe you instead of Kaede? It’s obvious you don’t want 0U-M5 to be the culprit.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Yeah, because it can’t be... so what’s the point?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kaito. You can’t do this.

Kaito [irritated expression, fists bumping into each other]: Do what? I’m trying to prove my opinion!

Kaede [arms crossed]: That’s the problem. It’s your opinion. It’s fine until it doesn’t damage us, but if you continue listening to your pride you’ll get us killed, yourself too.

Kaito [angry expression]: Have you thought you’re in the wrong, maybe? Maybe this case isn’t overly complex and Himiko’s the real killer?

Kaede [arms crossed]: That’s what you wish. The truth is different from your desires.

*I know what Kaito’s going through. I refused to believe Shuichi killed Ryoma. I couldn’t bring myself to reveal that to the others...*

But that’s not the solution. This is not about yourself, it’s for everyone else in this courtroom.

After all, we did see something that pointed to this event having happened...

**-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!**
ANSWER: 0U-M5’s body conditions

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: Also, me and Kaito found evidence of something attached on Oums’ back... I’m sure it was that jetpack.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Wait a bit! You said jetpack? And two times! There was a jetpack in Oums’ room?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: No, definitely not. Why would such a thing be useful?

Gonta [worried expression]: To kill people!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: The fact that Himiko, Oums and Kaito are all lying is certainly... new.

Korekiyo [touches hat’s brim]: In lieu of the recent revelations, I have swayed to Kaede’s line of thought.

Korekiyo [raises right arm]: However, some other questions need to be answered.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Yes, I think I already know what you want to know.

Korekiyo [covers mouth with hand]: Oh! Interesting, I did not imagine I was so easy to read...

PSYCHE TAXI START!

How did Oums bring out the jetpack if no objects can be taken out of the research rooms?

[[Because he’s a robot/Because the materials weren’t found in the lab/Because he hid them inside his leg]]

ANSWER: A

How did Oums enter Himiko’s research room?

[[He smashed the skylight/He opened the skylight/Someone else opened the skylight for him]]

ANSWER: C

Who could have opened the skylight?

[[Himiko/Monokuma/Kaito/Maki before she died]]

ANSWER: A
Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [arms crossed]: First of all, I discovered, thanks to Kaito, that Oums is allowed to bring objects outside of his research room.

Gonta [finger on cheek]: Really? That not fair.

Kaede [determined, index finger pointing upwards]: Well, that’s allowed as long as they... fuse with him, you could say. Since they're not objects anymore.

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: So he used the jetpack he found to his advantage... to be sure he could reach the third floor.

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: That’s exactly what happened. But he couldn’t open the skylight by himself, since the lever was inside.

Kaede [pointing]: That’s where the accomplice comes in. And that person, the only one who had access to the lab... is Himiko.

Himiko [looking down]: ...

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: If you want this to end, you have to admit it. Stop claiming you’re the culprit.

Tenko [confused look]: So... we need to vote for Oums or not?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Not yet...

Tenko [shocked expression]: But... you look so convinced!

I am... but I’m not ending this until I have the complete picture. There’s still some discussing left. And I want to prove to Oums that he did wrong. He shouldn’t have ever tried to kill Maki.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Let’s end this. I have to submit my final piece of evidence an-

0U-M5: Push aside your feelings and believe in logic!

[[split screen separating 0U-M5 and Kaede]]

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re back to disprove me.

0U-M5 [tilts head to the side]: I don’t want to hurt you, Kaede. I’m trying to convince you you’re wrong.

Kaede [arms crossed]: No. I’m sure I’m right. I was right from the start.

REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!

Truth bullets: Skylight, Disappearing leaflet, Decryption logs, Rantaro’s testimony,
0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I think we’re making a serious mistake by shrugging Himiko’s claims to the side.

0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: She’s admitted to her crime and still refuses to say otherwise.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I know it looks impossible for her to have moved the wardrobe, for example...

0U-M5 [tilts head to the side]: ...But she could have instructed her bugs to do so.

[[ADVANCE!!]]

Kaede [arms crossed]: Bugs? What a stupid excuse! There aren’t bugs able to move wardrobes!

Kaede [pointing]: It looks impossible because it is! And that’s not the only problem with this case!

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I’ll gladly discuss the other ones as well then!

0U-M5 [tilts head to the side]: Himiko has lived her life in the wild, she could have used some objects from the warehouse to create a lift.

0U-M5 [slight smile]: After having pulled the lever, she would be able to enter her lab without problems.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I would also like to add that by using this method, I’d only make everything more difficult for me.

0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: I’ve got no motive, but Himiko...

0U-M5 [pensive look, touching temple]: ..she had a fight a couple of days ago.

0U-M5 [slight smile]: I was created with a single intent: assure your greater good.

0U-M5’s blatantly lying. I need to tell the others. He wants our best, that’s true. And that’s the reason why...

**ANSWER: Disappearing leaflet --> “I’ve got no motive”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [determined expression]: You have a solid motive. The leaflet you edited out of the program.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I do not know what you are talking about.

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: The leaflet, the secret about the outside world that Monokuma brought to the Virtual World.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: The one that disappeared in front of our eyes.
Kaede [determined expression]: You read it and you discovered something about the world. A truth so disheartening that you’d try to save us from finding out... by hiding it. And then killing us.

Kaede [arms crossed]: For our greater good...

**How many times have I heard this story? The robot who turns against their creators...**

Kiibo [looks around]: No... it sounds too farfetched.. is the situation outside that bad? I hope for us you’re wrong, Kaede...

It does. But I just know this is right. It feels... familiar. It's strange. I've never been a fan of science-fiction. Then... why has this idea cropped up like this?

Tenko [faint smile]: Hey! Maybe Oums misinterpreted it?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: If Kaede’s right... I don’t think this is a mistake...

Gonta [smiling]: Gonta like to think outside world very happy!

I’d like that too... what else could have caused the leaflet to disappear though?

**And back to the world... why is no one trying to save us? Could it be they don’t want it? Is that one truth Oums tried to hide?**

0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: Fine theory, but it did disappear before Korekiyo and Kirumi could even read it.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: You had access to all the cameras. You could have looked at it before they saw it.

0U-M5 [tilts head to the side]: I do not think so. Even though I could look at all of you, the leaflet was face down on the floor. I couldn’t turn it before Kirumi and Korekiyo did.

Kaede [arms crossed]: That’s not a problem. You could have still seen it.

0U-M5 [scratches cheek]: How so?

Pretty easily. Let’s not forget one of the most important features of the Virtual World.

**FLASHING ANAGRAM START!**

_ I M T E   D A N L T I O I_

**ANSWER: Time dilation**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

**CLEAR!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Because of the time dilation, what felt like a split second to Korekiyo and Kirumi was actually enough for you to catch that information.
Angie [flailing arms]: According to Angimathics that’s only around eight seconds though!

Kaede [determined, right arm extended to the side]: Which is definitely enough for a highly-advanced robot to understand.

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: What have Oums seen? Nothing is too terrible to face! That reasoning is poor!

**It might be poor to Kaito, even though it isn’t. Anyways, that’s not what I wanted to say. Let’s put this case to rest once and for all.**

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: I would also like you all to remember another piece of evidence we used in the trial; the render distance.

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: What purpose does it serve?! I thought we already talked about it!

Kaede [arms crossed]: There’s a testimony which directly connects to it. That doesn’t only prove that the render distance was altered, but another detail too.

**The testimony I’m talking about is...**

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**ANSWER: Rantaro’s testimony**

Kaede [gesturing]: Rantaro said he couldn’t see anything. Of course, he was outside. But. He did see something that caught his attention. Care to remind us?

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Are you talking about the light?

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes. That’s the proof that Oums is the one who entered the Virtual World, not Himiko.

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I am sorry, however I can’t understand why a light would implicate me.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Tell me, Kaito. Are we able to bring objects to the Virtual World?

Kaito [irritated expression]: ...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Sometimes silence is stronger than a million words...

Gonta [confused look]: So... is that no... or yes?

Kaede [arms crossed]: It’s a no. That definitely proves Oums is the culprit. He didn’t need an object.

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Then prove it with actual evidence!

Kaede [reassuring expression]: Kaito... you know perfectly well that Oums is the culprit. I’ve spelled the case out for you.
Kaito [angry expression, fists slamming against the podium]: No! I said I want to hear it from you! Convince me! If you’re so sure!

Kirumi [holds hand over chest]: Kaito, I’d advise not to do that. Your hands might bleed.

Kaito [angry expression, fists slamming against the podium]: No! I’m in control! I can’t afford to lose again! I did the right thing!

**I know you had the best intentions, Kaito... but that doesn’t always translate well in practice. It’s not your fault Oums killed Maki.**

**PANIC TALK ACTION START!**

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Listen to me!

Kaito [angry expression, sweating]: I’m right, because I’m the genius inventor Kaito Momota!

Kaito [angry expression, hands form fists]: Oums is just an object!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: The right one here’s me, and no one else!

Kaito [angry expression, fists slamming against the podium]: Invent a better excuse!

Kaito [angry expression, bloody fists slamming against the podium]: I’m never wrong!

**FINAL BLOW:**

Kaito [angry expression, bloody fists bumping into each other]: What the fuck do you mean by “Oums didn’t need an object”?!

HLI---GHT---CTION---FUN---FLAS

**ANSWER: Flashlight function**

Kaede: This is over!

Kaito [pained expression]: ...!

Kaede [determined expression, pointing]: Oums has a flashlight function. He used it when we first explored the school.

Korekiyo [neutral expression]: I remember. I was with him... before Kaito modified him.

Kaito [pained expression]: I... I removed that function when I remade it-

Rantaro [raised eyebrow]: Stop coming up with excuses. You and Himiko both.

Himiko [looks down]: ...
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: You’re still not telling the truth... Hmpf. I’ve too many experiences with people like you.

Kaito [pained expression]: Hnngh... my hands hurt.

Angie [tilts to the left]: That’s what happens when you do things without thinking!

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: ...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Well, now... once and for all. I’m going to review this case and go over everything that’s happened. And it’s a lot.

**CLIMAX INTERFERENCE START!**

Kaede: This case can be understood only by taking into account the mechanics of the Neo World Program and the ability that the culprit possessed, which are completely different from ours.

Kaede: Before the murderer even thought about committing the crime, they went with us inside the computer room.

Kaede: However, we decided against them coming inside the Program, to ensure that no one would come from outside and disturb us. They would watch over us from the screens in the room.

Kaede: That was, sadly, the reason why the culprit was able to see the leaflet that contained information about the state of the outside world.

Kaede: Because of their nature, which is acting for our greater good, the culprit thought that the best course of action would be for us all to die without discovering the secret they unveiled.

Kaede: Taking advantage of their knowledge of the Program, they made various modifications to the Virtual World to confuse us, who were inside, and kill Maki, who was the most vulnerable person, searching alone in the woods.

Kaede: The culprit entered the Virtual World and, despite knowing about the World’s End, decided to cross the river with the help of a sign, doing this clear suspicions off of them.

Kaede: Because of the lowered render distance and their flashlight function, they were the only one who could navigate the woods without any problems, and managed to surprise Maki.

Kaede: The aikido master would have been able to retaliate if not for one of the rules of the program: our talents are erased. Because of this, the culprit bested her and dragged her all the way to the river.

Kaede: There, she tried to log out and managed to do so. However, because of the log-out delay, the culprit was able to successfully drown her, making her unconscious in the real world.

Kaede: They were sure no one would discover them, because Rantaro was lost in the woods and me, Kaito, Korekiyo and Kirumi were trapped in the mansion’s rooms, without any chance of escaping with our phones either.

Kaede: After doing that, the culprit logged out and dragged Maki out of the computer room, as evidenced by the butter in front of the doors.

Kaede: There they met with Himiko, their accomplice, to continue on with their plan.
Kaede: We don’t know her reasons to help them, but one of them must be the unknown release benefit, which involves helping others other than the culprit.

Kaede: Because Maki was not dead yet, they brought her to the leftmost dark room and the culprit threw her across the window.

Kaede: The fall was enough to kill Maki, who experienced internal bleeding and organ failure.

Kaede: The culprit then moved the wardrobe in the dark room to hide the window, hoping no one would see it.

Kaede: After that, them and the accomplice used water to clean the hallways from the butter. They didn’t do a good job, probably because they did not have enough time.

Kaede: Despite Maki being dead, however, their plan was not over yet.

Kaede: At one point in time, the culprit went to their lab and destroyed their recording disks to prevent Kaito from hearing them.

Kaede: They also recovered their jetpack, which they attached on their back. They were allowed to do so because that object stopped being such, instead becoming part of their body.

Kaede: The culprit got out from the building and carried Maki over to the skylight in Himiko’s room while flying.

Kaede: Thanks to a lever, Himiko was able to open the skylight so that the culprit could enter and place Maki’s body inside.

Kaede: This was probably made to confuse us even more, and make us think Himiko was the real culprit of this case.

Kaede: She did help by making herself seem very suspicious to everyone, including Gonta and Tenko, by leaving them and going back to the third floor with an excuse.

Kaede: After doing all of this the culprit destroyed the jetpack and put it back in their lab.

Kaede: Then, the culprit had to create and alibi. And they had the perfect one.

Kaede: They asked Himiko to push their red button two times.

Kaede: Himiko complied. After doing so, she was able to disassemble the culprit’s body, making us think they were as much as a victim as Maki.

Kaede: Himiko left the culprit in the room and went back to the cafeteria to meet with Gonta and Tenko with the intention of returning to her room later to kick off the body discovery announcement.

Kaede: Everyone knows that the only one who’s able to move a very heavy wardrobe, to use a flashlight in the Program and even fly is you...

[split screen separating 0U-M5 and Kaede, 0U-M5 keeps his emotionless expression]

Kaede: Oums, you’re the culprit of this case!

BREAK!
0U-M5 [neutral expression]: ...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Don’t you have anything to say?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: ...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: Don’t vote for me.

Kaede [irritated expression]: Such a believable defense.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Well, his memory got wiped! How can he defend himself?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: I’m doing this for your benefit. I think... I’m the culprit. Spot on. And that’s why you must vote for someone else.

Gonta [worried expression]: B-but... then...

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: You’ll die. Yes. You will live on, though. You can only live by dying.

Tenko [scratches ear]: Is he trying... to confuse us?

0U-M5 [neutral expression]: No, I’m telling the truth. This is the most I can say. Any more and you wouldn’t understand me. You're just not created to do it. Yet.

Kiibo [worried look]: I’m not dying for you to live! You're not sane if you think somebody would do as you say!

0U-M5 [slightly sad expression]: I swear... you must not vote for me!

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: I wonder, he might be telling the truth. He might be innocent.

Tenko [worried expression]: No, I mean... Kaede's deduction makes a lot of sense!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: It does indeed. However I should remind you all we have no proof whether was Oums or Himiko who pushed Maki.

...

**Shoot. She's right.**

Korekiyo [looks at clothes]: The mystery is impossible to solve then.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: It looks like you're right. But there must be a way to select the right culprit after all.

Angie [fingers in hair]: I've got it! There are eleven of us, right? Five votes for Himiko, five for 0U-M5, one for someone else. Done!

Tenko [confused look]: Could it work? Is a tie allowed?

Monophanie [nodding]: If it's between two people it's passable.

Monokid [thinking]: Really? Have we ever considered this possibility?

Monophanie [giggling]: I did not, but according to past cases, it has happened twice! Book 12
Section 1 and Book 25 Section 5 confirm this is the way to go!

Monotaro [admired]: Wow, sister! You're really knowledgeable! How can you know all of this? Did daddy tell you about his experiences?

Kiibo [looks around]: Can we really trust some people here? I don't want to blame anyone, but some of us aren't in the best place mentally right now...

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: I guess is only fair to make Kaede vote for all of us. She solved the case.

Kaede [surprised]: H-huh...?

Rantaro [looks in front of self]: The rules don't ever specify that you can't vote for others, right, Monophanie?

Monophanie [paw under mouth]: Hmm... as long as the total votes are the same as the number of alive students is okay.

Monodam [neutral expression]: WE SHOULD ASK DAD.

Monokid [looks to the side]: But dad is still sleeping... maybe we should wait.

Monophanie [big smile]: Who needs daddy when I’m her favourite child? He gave me the permission to do as I please when he goes to take a nap!

Monotaro [plays with shuriken]: Congrats, sister! I knew you could promote!

Monokid [looks at Monophanie]: I don’t think this is right.

Monophanie [laughs]: I’m the one who decides what’s right now! And it’s right to start voting! Come on, let’s go!

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: You should all refrain from voting. Please, look closely at Himiko, 0U-M5 and Kaito. We do not want to let them vote.

I looked at my stand. Third time voting. This is the first time we heard a real confession from someone.

To be precise, we heard two...

I immediately sprinted towards Himiko and 0U-M5, who were luckily just besides me. I gave them no time to react, making sure I was the one deciding who they would vote.

I quickly circled around the various stands, voting 0U-M5 for the first five times and then Himiko the last five. At the end, with a few seconds remaining, I selected the first name that crossed my eyes. Mine.

Monophanie climbed on her father’s throne, pushing the lever instead of him. As the other three Monokubs looked at her in confusion, the screen came down, showing us that I luckily didn't mess up.

And the sequence played yet again, the familiar jingle echoed in my eyes as the ball landed on 0U-M5’s face, coins raining down...
0U-M5 is Maki Harukawa’s killer. He didn’t lie about it.

CLASS TRIAL END

Chapter End Notes

I bamboozled y'all.
Lol.

I know that the vote split may come as a rushed decision, but I figured out that was the only way to make the trial solvable. I could have written more about it but I felt that would only be dragging this case more than it should.
(Additionally it shows how brash Monophanie in contrast to her dad)

In hindsight I should've made the 0U-M5 hint clearer. Well, now it's too hard to change it. There's still one more part left and then Ch.3 comes to a close. Honestly, I don't know when Ch.4 will start. I'm in the middle of my first uni exams and I have little time to write. As I said before, the next chapter is still kinda confusing to me. I know what to do with the characters and how to handle their development (everyone will have an important part next time, including Korekiyo, Gonta and the Kubs(!!!)) the murder is still kind of hazy and I need to decide how to pace it. Because I don't want you to give up on me, however, I've already decided to end this chapter on one big cliffhanger/reveal that probably no one would ever expect, plus another reveal-thing that is relevant in canon but didn't appear in this story yet. Who knows what it is...
A virtual reality without real virtues: Class Trial (Part 4)

Chapter Summary

The culprit reveals their intentions; An execution is witnessed and friendships are put to the test.

Chapter Notes

At the end of the chapter I tried to experiment a bit. There's a section that I wrote with a song in mind, so I put it before it in the form of a link. I thought it would help create the atmosphere I was hoping for? Maybe?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

...CLASS TRIAL END.

"You bastards were right! Of course you wouldn’t fail the third time, because third time is the charm!” Monophanie giggled.

"You guessed it.” 0U-M5 said. “And I expected you to continue the discussion...”

"Continue?” Kiibo echoed, confused. “How would we? We’ve already said everything!”

"Not really. There are pieces of the puzzle you haven’t covered yet.” The robot said.

"How do you know?” Gonta asked.

"Because he didn’t lose his memory.” I intervened. “It’s clear, judging from his last words. He’s admitted to being the culprit, he said we shouldn’t have voted for him. He knows what he’s done perfectly well.”

"Yes, Kaede. That’s right. I remember everything I did, and why I did it.”

"B-but...” Kaito stumbled.

He said there was no data. All of his previous information was deleted.

"You’re surprised. You shouldn’t be. When you examined me, my data was really gone. Everything was wiped.”

"T-then... you remembered on the go?” Tenko guessed.

"No, of course... that’s impossible. Himiko helped me.” The robot said, glancing at the redhead.
She was still on her podium, looking down. Not even Angie tried to speak to her.

Why would any of us do that again, though? She’s as much as a killer as Oums. She had the possibility to expose him, but she never did.

“I told her how to create a backup in the form of a disk. When we went back to her room, she gave it to me. And I remembered.”

“I am rather surprised.” Korekiyo admitted. “I never thought Himiko would be an accomplice to a murder.”

“I forced her, of course. She didn’t want to help me. But she had to.”

Force her?

The robot got closer to the entomologist.

“Hey! Stay away from her!” Tenko shouted.

“No worries. I won’t kill her. Even though I told her I would. That part of the story is where you got it wrong, actually.”

“You worked together. We have proof.” Rantaro said.

“Yes, but she didn’t agree with me from the start. Our encounter was not something I predicted. I didn’t know she was sleeping in the room besides to mine.”

“She was drawn in by the sound of Maki hitting the ground...” I realized.

“Exactly. She fell asleep in the center room, and woke up immediately after Maki’s death. She went investigating the noise, and she found me moving the wardrobe.” OUM-M5 explained. “The morning announcement had just sounded.”

“I... I didn’t want this...” Himiko said.

“Our entomologist was confused. She knew something strange was going on, so she approached the wardrobe. I told her to look down to kill her... until Monokuma showed up.”

“He’s involved in this murder?!” Angie exclaimed. “He said he wouldn’t interfere!”

“Oh, he didn’t. He showed up to inform me about the new release benefit. It was his duty, considering I just killed Maki.”

“H-he pinned me to t-the wall...”

“Yes.” The robot nodded. “She had seen Maki’s corpse. If I didn’t do that, she would have run and told that to everyone. I couldn’t possibly allow that, you see...”

“...But the release benefit changed her mind, did it not?” Rantaro spoke up.

“Monokuma told us that the culprit could choose two people who would be able to walk out if the culprit was successful. And at that point I had a choice. Either let Himiko die, or bring her to my side.”

“Then why did you choose the second option? The former would have been easier to execute.” Kirumi observed.
Rather morbid, but objectively better.

“Well. I may have underestimated and overestimated you at the same time. My plan was to encompass all of your possible deductions and thrive off of them. That’s because I decided to make Himiko part of my plan, and I did so by sacrificing my life as well.” The robot explained. “You know, the culprit wasn’t forced to be in those two people. And so I decided to do as Himiko said.”

“Himiko... chose the person who would walk out with her?” Kiibo said. He repeated the same sentence under his breath two more times, maybe to be sure of what he heard.

“I... I chose two people... I... I didn’t choose myself... b-but...”

“You gave up your life for two of us... surviving?” Angie asked.

“I thought... it would be a noble sacrifice... for Atua... so I could have been welcomed in his new world...”

“W-who... who were those people?” Tenko asked.

“It doesn’t matter.” I intervened. “Whoever those two were, it doesn’t matter. This didn’t happen.”

I lied. Nobody has to hear those two names. Tenko hopes Himiko wanted to save her, but she should know Himiko wouldn’t have chosen her. I don’t want her to discover someone she considers her friend would have sentenced her to death.

“I agree with that too!” Angie exclaimed, smiling. “The important thing is that we’re all here together! It’s just a bump in the road!”

“No, Angie. It isn’t.” Rantaro spoke up. “One of us decided to kill themselves because you implanted that feeling in them.”

“No, I didn’t. She did that on her own accord. I’m not saying I agree with her.”

“Oh, I see what you’re doing. Don’t try to downplay it.”

“Rantaro.” Kiibo intervened. “I think you’re going to far.”

“Everyone here knows I’m a calm person. I tried to look past everything Angie’s done, but from now on I won’t stand by what’s happening. Throwing your life away is never the solution.”

“You should tell Himiko, not me.” Angie shrugged.

Rantaro... he continues keeping his cool. I’d never be like him. But... how can he empathize with Himiko? She’s as much at fault as Oums. She might not have pushed Maki from that window... but how could she sacrifice eight of us when she could have just revealed the true culprit?

“Don’t depict Himiko as the victim.” I said at last. “She decided to cover a murder and she had nothing to lose if she told the truth. Don’t expect me to go to her and tell her that I forgive her.”

Himiko continued to stay still, avoiding eye contact with everyone.

“I don’t condone her actions either.” The artist said. “I just hope you’re seeing this from a different perspective. She would have never gone through with this if she didn’t spend so much time with Angie.”

“As far as I know, if she said no to that plan she would have been splatted on the ground!” The
leader said. “So you should thank me.”

“No, how wrong you are.” Rantaro continued. “An sane person would have pretended to listen to Oums! She could tell us the truth at any moment!”

“Hey...” Tenko intervened. “Put yourself in her shoes... she saw a murder, and she was about to get killed too... and no matter the result... she would have...”

The caretaker couldn’t finish her sentence. Even she can’t find a good excuse, apparently.

“Maybe Oums revealed her the conditions of the outside world.” Kirumi proposed.

“I didn’t.” The robot admitted before anyone could comment. “I told Himiko to delete that part of my memories from my backup. I know that I saw something, but I do not know what.”

“E-excuse me? Gonta not understand!”

“Despite my best efforts to set up the perfect murder, I knew I could fail. I knew Kaito would be able to extract my memories as well. I wouldn’t allow it. You should never discover what’s beyond this cage.”

“Why? We deserve to know!” I shouted.

“S-so... you didn’t want to tell me anything...” Himiko whimpered. She didn’t know anything for real.

“I did that to protect you. Don’t worry, I’d have put the two people you would have saved out of their misery...”

“T-then... you lied to me... you said you would keep them safe...”

“I’m sorry. This was for our greater good. I swear that you’d have been reborn as stronger beings.”

“I shouldn’t... have believed you...”

“Stronger beings? You would have slaughtered everyone because of a stupid leaflet!”

“No, Kaede. I’d try to tell you what I know, but I can’t. Sometimes, it’s impossible to do that.”

“Because you decided to wipe the only thing that would help us!”

0U-M5 blinked two times before answering. “I’m sorry. I’m deeply sorry I couldn’t save you from Monokuma. This isn’t right.”

“Dying is not a solution, no matter how dire the things are out there...” Kiibo said. “And if we can’t get out, we’ll just stay here...”

“Yes! I super-duper agree with you! We’re all happy here, why should we worry about the outside! We just need to be friends and stop listening to baddie Monokuma!”

“At times... surviving is the wrong choice. Sometimes you need to live, not survive. And you’re not living here, you’re prisoners.”

“Surviving better than dying...” Gonta said.

“It seems that I can’t tell you what I know. I hoped I could break through what I was designed to
do, but it looks hopeless. I’m sorry if I disappointed you all.”

After saying that, he looked at the ceiling.

“Hey, aren’t you talking with us?” Angie asked.

“Oh... yes. I’m talking to you.”

“Just spit it out.” I said.

“It’s no use. It appears it’s not yet time... but you’re making the necessary steps to discover the truth.”

“Why are you so cryptic?” Kirumi asked, curious.

“Do you believe him?” Tenko spoke up before the robot.

“I have no reason not to. He looks rather honest, and I am known to be able to understand people’s true intentions.”

“He’s a robot, so... maybe you’re wrong?” Kiibo guessed.

“I can assure you I’m telling the truth, even though I know you won’t believe me. I am sorry that the Maki you know had to die.”

“Is there a Maki we don’t know?” Tenko asked.

“Yes, as the being that precedes you all, the one who truly survived the killing game.”

“He’s rambling, I think...” The caretaker continued. “Is it normal, Kaito?”

We all turned to the inventor, who stood silent near his podium. Every time he was sure of himself, even in the church. Now, he looked confused, lost... I’d say worse than Himiko, even.

I sighed. “Maybe it’s better if we ask him that later. It’s not going to change anything.”

“You know that I acted under my main directive.” 0U-M5 repeated. “There was no bug in my system, I did what I was asked of me.”

“I see! So it’s Kaito’s fault!” Angie giggled. “I don’t want to be judgmental, but... that’s the truth!”

“Maybe saying Kaito has fault is too much...”

“Oh, Gonta! You’re so kind, but sometimes you need to see things as they truly are. If Kaito didn’t work on Oums, Ouma would still be here! Maybe he wouldn’t have killed Maki!”

“History is not composed by ifs.” Korekiyo added.

“Very true, but as far as we know, Ouma helped us for the entire time he was around!”

“By showing us our weakness videos?” Rantaro asked ironically.

“He was trying to help us!”

“In a terrible way.”

“Please, I don’t want you to continue fighting over me.” The robot said.
“We’re not fighting over you, but because of you.” I specified.

“One day you’ll see that I did this for all of us. And Maki agreed with me.”

That’s a terrible lie.

“We know you surprised her and dragged her around before drowning her. You want me to believe she agreed to all of this?”

“You need to change your perspective... since I heard the truth from inside, I understood what I had to do.”

“What is that truth?” Gonta asked.

“Don’t bother with him.” I answered. “He wants to confuse us, make us feel better after he killed Maki. It’s a coping mechanism.”

“Yes.” 0U-M5 nodded, glancing at the Monokubs.

“Oh!” Monophanie exclaimed. “I recognize that eyes! Those are the eyes of a person who’s ready to be executed!”

“Won’t you wait for daddy to wake up?”

“Absolutely not! Let him rest!” The pink bear continued. “He must be so tired after so many killing games! This time the Monokubs are the host of the show!”

“I think you should wait for a bit.” Monokid said.

“Nope! We’re on a tight schedule and if we don’t kill anyone now we’re going to be so late!”

“But... didn’t you hate gory stuff?” Monotaro asked, confused.

“People change, ‘Taro! I’m more confident now that I have taken over daddy’s position!”

“TAKE-OVER?”

“Yes! While he’s in his dreams, of course!”

“It’s time for me to go.” 0U-M5 said.

Why did he kill Maki? We can’t know. Why?

“Kaito, I didn’t want it to end like this. But thanks to yours and Kaede’s help... I’m here, and that’s exactly what I wanted.”

“There’s a very special punishment in store for Ouma, or Oums if you wanna call him that.”

“That’s not dad’s usual line.”

“I do what I want!” Monophanie protested.

“But to everyone else... I’m not done. I’ll continue to live on. And I’ll come back.”

“Let’s give everything we’ve got! It’s punishment time!”
Monophanie searched behind Monokuma’s throne to find the now standard red mallet, then hitting the usual red button. 0U-M5’s sprite appeared and was quickly dragged out of frame by a terribly drawn Monophanie sprite, which looked like a bad copy of Monokuma’s previous one. On top of the screen the words appeared again, confirming us that the robot was the killer. “GAME OVER: 0U-M4 has been found guilty. Time for punishment.

We all stood on guard waiting for the chains to appear out of thin air. However, differently from last time, there were none. The floor under 0U-M4 collapsed and caused him to fall, while Monophanie stood on her throne trying to understand how to bring down the display used to let us watch the executions.

After a couple of seconds of confusion, the white and pink bear managed to succeed. After that, she disappeared along her brothers.

*Disassembly line*

0U-M5 lands on a mattress in an unspecified room. He looks unfazed by what’s happening. The camera then pans out to reveal he isn’t still, but he’s moving on a conveyor belt. There are countless of Monokumas along with him, but they all have something strange. Some don’t have an eye, others have four arms. 0U-M5 looks on his left and sees Monophanie holding a sign reciting “defects”.

With the help of her brothers, Monophanie removes the mattress, damaging 0U-M5’s back in the process, clicking his red torso button twice. Monotaro later puts some handcuffs on the robot’s hands and legs, ensuring he wouldn’t move. Shortly after, Monokid puts around 0U-M5’s head a device similar to a collar, holding his head in place. With this, the robot can only see the ceiling, and is unable to watch what’s about to happen to him. A few meters away a giant guillotine is severing all the Monokumas in half.

As Monodam is about to leave his brothers, Monophanie surprises him from behind and locks him in place with the same handcuffs, placing him directly in front of 0U-M5. The robot tries to free himself, but he can’t do anything. He moves his head frantically, but he’s helpless. He passes under the guillotine just when it’s coming down, splitting his head in half. Monokid and Monotaro look at themselves in shock after what happened.
0U-M5 keeps his straight face even when he realizes he’s passing under the guillotine. The blade comes down slicing off his legs, but he appears to be still functional. The conveyor belt continues rolling for a while, until it stops for a couple of seconds, until Monophanie pulls a lever and it starts to go backwards with triple the speed.

0U-M5 passes once again under the guillotine, this time cutting his torso. However, he’s still blinking. The camera focuses briefly on Monophanie who smiles, looking at a gigantic saw just in front of 0U-M5.

What remains of the robot passes under the saw, which slices his head and his upper torso in half. The remains of 0U-M5 continue to stand on the conveyor belt until they reach the end, falling into a trash can.

Under Monophanie’s orders, Monokid comes close to it, rummages through the trash until he finds a microchip and eats it.

And with that, another one of us was gone forever.

“Monophanie, what have you done?” Monokid asked, more worried than usual.

“Monodam was stirring too much trouble and he was trying to convince you to turn against me!”

“I don’t think so.” The blue bear responded. “You were the one who tried to kill me before.”

“Hee-hee! That’s a very big lie, right, Monotaro?”

“U-uh... y-yeah...”

“You aren’t convinced.” Monokid replied.

“Be convinced! Don’t you want us to get along together? Don’t you want your sister to be happy?”

“Yes... of course... Monophanie’s right, totally... Monodam was a terrible brother. H-he... he killed Monosuke...”

“That’s right!” Monophanie exclaimed, kicking the sleeping Monokuma down the throne.

“Sister!” Monotaro exclaimed. “What are you doing?”

“Dad isn’t going to care anyway! He’ll wake up in a couple of weeks, probably!”

“How can you say?”

“I’m an expert in Monokumology.”

“That doesn’t exists.” Monokid corrected.
“Well! You and I are going to have a talk!” The sister scolded him. “You bastards, feel free to leave if you want! The elevator doors are open!”

Monophanie and Monokid disappeared, with Monotaro following soon after.

“Do you think he suffered?” Angie asked.

“I suppose not.” Korekiyo said. “He never showed any signs of pain during those weeks.”

“He didn’t even struggle…” Kiibo continued.

She nodded. “It’s definitely better this way. Maybe we can bring him back?”

“He’s dead.” Rantaro said, a correct statement I’d say.

But of course that wasn’t the same for Angie.

“Well, we all thought he was a goner until Kaito came and saved him! We should do the same!”

“No, it’s not possible.”

Kaito replied immediately after she finished speaking.

“They destroyed its body and his chip. There’s nothing left I can do. There are no memories and nowhere to upload them.”

“Huh! There are the 0U-M4 ones, right?”

“I destroyed them. They weren’t worth keeping.”

“But... weren’t you scared that could count as a murder? 0U-M4 was... there, right?” Kiibo asked.

“I talked with Monokuma. He told me that he didn’t care at all. I could do whatever I wanted with them. We had a new participant, 0U-M4 was old news.”

“Why would you want to bring him back?” I asked Angie. “Why would you want a killer to be with us?”

“Because he thought he was helping us.”

“By killing Maki. And dragging Himiko along with him.”

“That’s right.” Kaito said. “It’s your fault it died!”

He was staring at Himiko.

“W-wh...”

“You allowed this to happen! You could have prevented this!”

“But... I... I... was-

Kaito moved towards Himiko. The entomologist, confused, backed off.

“You could have saved it! You could have told us! I would have created another back-up, FOR GOD’S SAKE!”
“D-don’t s-shout...”

“Hey! Leave her alone!” Tenko spoke up “You can’t blame her for Oums’ mistakes!”

“She was right there before the murder! Who knows if she let that happen?! TO GET RID OF OUMS?!”

“You’re being ridiculous!” Angie giggled. “She covered for him!”

Kaito continued pushing Himiko backwards, until she reached a wall.

“And you wanted us all to die?! Just because of your selfish desire to save Angie and who knows who?! Oums acted on his directive, but you... you’re a serial murderer...”

“I said stop!”

“T-I didn’t say that I wanted Ang-

“Shut up! Or I’ll make you! I don’t care abo-

Kaito was interrupted mid-sentence.

Tenko had sprinted towards the two, tackling Kaito. He didn’t expect that, and fell to the ground.

Meanwhile, Himiko ran off crying to the elevator. We saw her ascending sobbing and trying to wipe her tears off.

I don’t know how to feel about this.

“S-sorry...” Kaito said, still on the ground. “I-

“You threatened Himiko!” The caretaker exclaimed. “Did you hear what you said?”

“I... I was... she should be blamed for what she did, so... so I snapped and...”

“Tenko’s right.” I said.

“What?”

“Own up to your mistakes for once. I’m done with you blaming others. Himiko did something unforgivable, but you can’t pretend Oums did nothing wrong. Admit it. If not to us, to yourself.”

Kaito stood still. He wasn’t trying to get up.

“You failed again. And you’re to blame this time. More than Himiko. Because you designed that stupid Virtual World, and told it was safe...”

“Because it was!”

“You set up the no-breaking rule that trapped us and allowed Oums to kill Maki!”

“I did with the best intentions...”

“You should’ve known what Oums could have done, you’re the one who designed him!”

“I... how could I know about that leaflet?”
“Yeah, we went there to find a mysterious interesting object, and what did we found? That thing! We should’ve never gone to that room in the first place!

“Maybe you should have listened to me.” Angie noted, that freaking opportunist.

“You shut up too!” I told her. “But you know what, maybe it’s my fault too.”

“I... I don’t think, so Kaede.” Tenko said. “You saved us all... you investigated and discovered about the lever, the butter, connected the dots with our testimonies...”

“And I believed in Kaito’s lies.”

It doesn’t matter. Now I realize it. If I put my trust in someone, they will always betray me. I guess they don’t do that with malicious intent, no. Just like Kaito, they think they’re doing what’s best for us, when in reality it’s only an advantage to themselves.

“I never told you a lie...”

“All that you said until now is a lie. And you lie to yourself as well. So how can you tell? You’re so convinced you’re right that you don’t understand you’re refusing to accept the truth. Stop trying to help us, it’s not working.”

I headed for the elevator. I pressed the button to make it come down.

Maybe there’s someone here other than me who really wants to stop this killing for real. But they seem all so fake, full of secrets and hidden agendas.

The elevator arrived. I stepped in; nobody followed me.

I wanted to trust them, I tried to trust them twice. The ones I believed in are either liars or dead meat. But unlike them, I mean what I say. I’ll end this killing game. Now I know someone else will be killed, and someone else will be the killer.

But I doubt I will care.

° * ° * ° * °

_Beautiful Music_
“I said countless times, don’t worry about me.” Angie sighed. “But I’m happy she saw him for what he really is. For her, mostly.”

“You... don’t dislike her?”

“No, quite the opposite! She’s fierce and a great person! And now she’s seen how things work around here... I’m sure she’ll think about me again.”

“So... you feel she won’t be hanging around Rantaro too?”

She shrugged. “We’ll see. He’d be okay too, if he stopped judging me without knowing me.”

“Listen, I wanted to say... really... thank you.”

“You always say that. Tell me.” She giggled. “Why are you thankful now?”

“Because... you understood that the Virtual World was dangerous... and you convinced me not to go. From the start, since Kaito announced it... you saw for what it was. I could have been the dead body now...”

“Hey, you shouldn’t thank me! You made that decision by yourself.”

“But how... how did you know... how could you be sure? You said we should have explored the school, and then you realized that that computer room was a death trap...”

“I told you, it’s Atua! He’s always been with me, guiding my thoughts like an inner voice. I hear him.”

“An inner voice, huh? And how does he sound like?”

“It changes everytime. But it’s expected, he doesn’t have a single form.”

“Ah, of course... listen, I know it’s early, but... I’m tir-

I stopped. A small splotch of blood to my left, near the dormitories.

“What is this?”

Looking closely, there wasn’t only one, but they continued, one after another, circling the dormitories.

“Someone’s bleeding!”

“We must help them!”

Alarmed, we followed the trail, finding Kirumi on the other side, coughing. She was putting a handkerchief in her pocket.

It was barely visible, but her mouth was dirtied by blood.

“K-kirumi... are you alright?”

“Yes, of course.” She answered, calm as ever.

“Miss Kirumi, you have blood all over your face. Are you sure?”

“Oh, I can assure you I have not harmed anyone but myself. It is just a cut. I am prone to minor...
mouth infections.”

“But... you bled a lot, it seems... you shouldn’t bleed if you have a wound in your mouth...”

“If I were in danger, I would tell you. I am alright.”

If she says so...

“Now, if you excuse me, I should search some medicines before night-time starts.”

“Oh! Then you should hurry! It’s almost time.” Angie warned her.

“Yes, good night to you both.”

The adventurer said goodbye to us and headed for the school.

“What were you saying?” Angie asked, turning her attention towards me.

“Well... I’m very tired... a lot happened, and there are a lot of things that happened... that I didn’t want to happen... not going to bed, though, but I have to rest.”

“Oh, I’m beat too! I always give this energetic vibe, but inside... I’m probably as tired as you!”

“Then... we’ll see each other tomorrow? Probably Monokuma will tell us to explore again...”

I was about to give my goodbyes to Angie, when she spoke again.

“Wait! I have an idea, instead of going our separate ways, we can stay in the same room again!”

“L-look... I don’t know if it’s a good idea...”

“Why? It will be fun! I have some board games we can play, I bought them with Monocoins! They’re fun, I assure you...”

Should I go with Angie? She’s been nice to me this entire time... and she acts differently around me than Gonta, Tenko or Himiko... it’s been a long time since I genuinely enjoyed talking and spending time with someone...

“You’re taking too much time!”

“Alright...” I gave off a nervous laugh.

“Nyahahah! Thank you, thank you! We’re going to have so much fun together!”

Chapter 3: A virtual reality without real virtues

END

Surviving students: 10
“How’s the plan going?” The girl asked.

She was at a phone, but obviously not a cell one. She knew well she could be tracked, and didn’t want to run any risks. A flip-phone was the solution, in this instance. Old technology is always better... when it comes to those kinds of things anyway.

A male voice answered on the other side.

“I don’t know. I’m in the dark as much as you. In fact I hoped you’d be able to tell me.”

“How? I’ve never worked with Maki and Himiko before. We made sure to keep our distance.”

“I know, but maybe they contacted you...”

“No luck. I’ve heard nothing from them in four months. You know, avoiding all unnecessary communications.”

“I’m very worried...”

“They can hold their own. More importantly, I can’t believe they decided to bring up my name.”

Maybe she shouldn’t have mentioned that. But she needed to talk with someone about this.

“During Miu’s trial?”

“Yes. I know she isn’t my real sister... well, you know what I’m talking about... but I still think... I feel for her, and what happened. I want to get the others out as soon as we can. But I also know that we can’t rush things.”

“I know what you’re saying. I don’t want to make the same mistakes as last time.”

She decided she didn’t want to talk about their past again. Everyone has done actions they regretted; it’s time to forget them.

And she was talking by experience.

“Hey, Nariko...”

“It’s better if you don’t use my real name.”

“Isn’t it a lie too?”

“Yeah, but for everyone, that’s who I am. And I decided to use that name because what happened changed me forever. I’m not that person anymore. The same applies for you.”

“But... didn’t you say nobody could track this conversation?”

“Who the hell knows what device could they invent to stop us. They’re ready to do all it takes. It’s just a bunch of people trying to stop a bunch of other people from killing themselves.”

“I just wish our first plan worked...”
“Nobody has proof we interfered with 0U-M4. Even though he was recoded, we don’t know if that’s a countermeasure to what we did before the game started. It could even be Kaito’s decision without influence.”

“Y-yeah, I suppose.

“...You have to realize that some of us could be caught, okay? I don’t want to worry you now more than ever, but that’s why we have to be split. You said it first.”

“I don’t regret it. But I’d like information to come sooner. I can’t wait this long to know what’s happening there.”

“Hear me out. If I discover anything, I’ll call you back, alright?”

“Same hour?”

“Definitely, you don’t want people going around and seeing us talking.”

“Ohkay.” The voice said. “I’ll let you know if someone tips me off. And I’ll make sure nobody discovers where I am.”

“Make them think you’re dead, congrats.”

Nariko ended the conversation by closing the flip-phone. Then she remembered that she might have saved the boy she was talking with with his actual “real” name. If someone ever found her, that would spell end for everyone else.

Or worse, torture.

She went down her list of contacts.

P, Q, R, S...

Here he was. She thought of a random name, nothing too common but definitely not rare. A normal one.

After all, everything was better than Shuichi Saihara.

NEXT CHAPTER: *Warm embraces heat up a cold world*

Chapter End Notes

Ok, I'll leave this cliffhanger just here and I'll probably return in two months. Bye! ^~^
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Daily Life (Part 1)

Chapter Summary

Tension still lingers after the trial; Angie convinces her friends to play a game, even though some people refuse to attend.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Himiko heard... noise? From the other room. Yes, the one to the side.

But... why was she here, she thought.

...She must have fallen asleep on the bench...

Oh...

That’s terrible! Oh, she had to prepare for the bugs party!

Almost tripping, Himiko got up from the bench and headed out of the room. Maybe Gonta and Angie were searching for her? What time it was? The floor doesn’t have any windows!

The entomologist entered the room. She didn’t even think about knocking, still drowsy after her sudden wake-up.

“Oums?” She asked.

“Oh, Himiko... here you are!”

“W-were you waiting for me? Aren’t you supposed to...?”

“Stay in the computer room? Yeah, I should be there. But someone told me that you were sleeping right beside this room.”

“Y-you... sound kind of creepy... was it Tenko? Did she spy on me while I was there?”

“No, it doesn’t matter who it is anyways. The point is, I knew perfectly well you would come here, attracted by the noise.”

“Did you make it? It sounded... like a thump.”

“Exactly. Something fell from the window.”

“It sounded heavy...” Himiko yawned.

“It definitely was. Look at it, it’s very strange.”

0U-M5 moved to the side. The entomologist already noticed it was day from the sunlight coming in. She was hoping it wasn’t too late in the morning.
Then she looked down.

Maki was on the ground.

But it wasn’t just Maki. It was Maki’s body.

No blood, except from a small wound on the forehead.

Himiko’s first instinct was to scream, but 0U-M5 immediately covered her mouth. Nothing came out of it.

“Now, Himiko.” He said with a soothing voice. “Be careful not to make a single sound. Because I’m able to kill you just as I killed Maki.”

Himiko was paralyzed in fear. She was about to die, she thought.

“But I have a plan for both of us, for everyone who’s here. From now on, you’ll listen closely to everything I say. I’ll tell you about my plan. It might sound like something a crazy psychopath would do, but I have proof that I’m not lying.”

Without any better option, Himiko decided to nod.

“Great. I’ll now have to sedate you. Did you know you can buy chloroform from the casino store? How convenient that it works on us too!”

0U-M5 took out a cloth and soaked it with the substance, pressing it on Himiko’s mouth.

“No matter the trial’s outcome, don’t tell them the truth. You will lie when the time comes. They’re not ready to know. This ne-

And then Himiko felt sleepy again.

***

Kaede Akamatsu

Ding dong bing bong!

Daytime. Great.

I don’t want to get up from my bed.

Yeah, I know it’s the first day after a murder. This means the Monokubs -the ones that are left anyways- will distribute new objects and we’ll end up exploring more of the school, hoping we might find the solution to avoid any future murders, or an exciting way to overcome the road of despair.

No, I can’t believe that.

This is only an elaborate ruse to get us to waste time. Going up a floor won’t save anyone. It won’t even slow down the process. If we continue like this, we’ll drop like flies in a couple of weeks.
A new system needs to be put in place. I don’t think I’m going to like what’s about to happen, but... what I did until now has only made matters worse.

As I prepared for breakfast I couldn’t stop thinking about what Oums said before dying. He apparently saw what the world outside of there was really like, and he thought it was better to die rather than facing it head on.

That wouldn’t worry me too much; he was a robot designed by Kaito, he operated only on logic and logic alone. That’s why he entered my lab without warning anyone. Just because he saw escaping as the worst option, that doesn’t mean we couldn’t solve the problems that would come afterwards.

No, the problem is Shuichi. He saw the truth behind all of this, and he had the same idea. He never told us what he had seen either, dismissing as a lie fabricated by Monokuma.

...but was it really? Or did he just want to make us feel better? According to Ryoma, we were all bad people before we came here. Even though I remember nothing about it... I know I’m not innocent... I’ve always tried to do the best I could manage... however, that doesn’t come with sacrifices and controversial actions.

Is there something universally wrong or right, by the way? You just need to change perspective, understand why the other person would act like that and react accordingly. If you put yourself in their shoes, you’ll see why they behave in a certain way. That’s what I’ll do from now on.

I arrived in the cafeteria expecting to find Angie’s following. Instead, my expectation were completely wrong. Everyone besides them was there.

“Where are Angie, Kiibo, Gonta, Himiko and Tenko?” I asked.

“Well, they left this message.” Rantaro said, handing me a piece of paper.

“Hello everyone! This is Angie here! We decided to have a meeting in the Love Hotel for breakfast! We’ve prepared everything yesterday after the trial and we’re already here, come and see us!”

“Of course I decided not to go.” The artist said. “I would have shred this paper into pieces but I’m a nice guy, I felt it was important to inform you.”

“I agree with the avocado.” Kaito nodded munching on a waffle. “Angie could have poisoned the food with some shit.”

“That would murder us, I assume. I doubt she would do that.” Kirumi observed.

“I bet she’s all part of her master plan. We have to keep each other safe at least. I tried to warn those people with her before, but they’re too deep in her bullshit. They’re a cult now.”

I would have really liked to respond to Kaito right now. Do I agree with Angie’s stance? No, not really. But suggesting she’s on a mission to kill us all with toxic croissants is too much.

Oh, I remembered who I’m talking to.

Kaito Momota, the genius inventor. So intelligent that couldn’t protect his own creation.
“She might tell them a lot of lies.” I said, and I wanted to stop. But unfortunately I couldn’t keep my mouth shut. “But none of the cult was hurt.”

“Have you not noticed the bandages on their hands?” Korekiyo asked me before I could continue venting my anger on the inventor.

“Yes, of course. On Kiibo...”

“Not only him. Tenko and Himiko’s hands are no different. They seem wounded.”

Rantaro rolled his eyes. “That can’t be a coincidence. It has to be Angie’s doing. Who knows what weird shit they’re up to.”

“I understand why you’re so harsh on her.” I intervened. “But you can’t think she would kill us. She has made quite a few connections, more than everyone of us really.”

We can’t know how genuine Angie is, but she has become friends with Gonta since the first day. She didn’t waste time with Kiibo either, and as soon as Tenko and Himiko had that argument they both follow her everywhere.

Who have I by contrast?

Until yesterday, I thought I could trust Kirumi more than anyone, but I wouldn’t consider her my friend. About the others here... I feel I don’t even know them.

“Let me preface that I don’t like Angie at all.” Rantaro said. “I think she’s a bad example for everyone who gravitates around her. But if there’s one thing I’m sure, is that she cares about them. It’s not a genuine feeling of love, no... it’s fueled by possession. They listen to her and do what she wants.”

“If she wanted them dead she could convince them to kill themselves, just like what she did with Himiko.”

“I do not wish to play devil’s advocate.” Korekiyo said. “However, she never specified she agreed with Himiko’s actions. It is not her fault she attempted to sacrifice herself.”

“Tsk, continue with this fucking narrative of not blaming anyone, we’ll see how far it takes you.”

“Let me finish before talking, Kaito.” The artist glared. “I meant... it doesn’t make sense for Angie to kill any of her friends, let alone one of us. She would gain nothing by seeing them dying.”

“You’re suggesting she isn’t using them. Tsk, how shallow...”

“Don’t speak when you don’t know what you’re talking about. I know Angie better than you.”

“Congrats, fucking Ultimate Psychologist. Have you listened to Kirumi and Korekiyo discussing about how complex and mysterious the human mind is?”

Despite being forced upon the discussion without any valid reason, the Adventurer kept calm. “I happen to like those quite a lot. Even though you seem to ridicule them, maybe you should pay attention instead of overhearing. You could learn a lot.”

“I don’t need to be a psychologist to understand what Angie’s doing.”

Kaito’s being more aggressive than usual. Even after Shuichi’s and Miu’s deaths he didn’t seem to
care that much.

Yeah, probably because they weren’t that important to him.

Now that he has lost Oums, the project he has worked on, he feels real grief. And everyone reacts to it differently, I suppose.

“The fact that Oums killed Maki doesn’t mean you have to be an ass.” I said.

He always referred to him as an object. I would think he, deep down, cared about Oums and considered him a person like us. That’s why he refused to accept what happened.

But I doubt it. That’s what the clueless me would have told herself, an innocent lie to protect herself. I don’t want to be disappointed by everyone again, so I’ll accept what’s the cold truth. Kaito’s acting like this because he feels like a failure, a broken inventor that instead of fixing problems ends up causing new ones.

“You’re like this because you knew Maki. Have you ever said anything about Tsumugi?” He rebuked.

“You’re suffering from memory loss? Do you remember how harsh I was on Miu? I shouted at her. Your example is terrible. If you want to call me out because you feel I’m playing favorites maybe you should look in the mirror.”

Rantaro stopped the conversation. “Wait a second, wait before shouting angry words at each other. Can’t you see you’re only playing Angie’s game? She wants us to be disunited.”

“She’s doing a great job.” I answered sarcastically. “I would congratulate myself if she actually tried. But, actually, this is between Kaito and me. So you should stay out of it too.”

The artist sighed. “Maybe we should leave the past behind; and I mean everything that happened in the past five days. Let’s start anew.”

What I just said to myself. I have to restart too.

“I agree with you.” I nodded. “And that’s because I’m going to the Love Hotel.”

“To Angie!?” Kaito exclaimed.

“We know she won’t hurt us.”

“I strongly prefer that option rather than staying here to bear passive-aggressive comments.” Korekiyo said.

“Reflect about this for a second and try to forget all the questionable things she has done. By continuing to be hostile towards each other the tension will only rise.” Kirumi said. “Kate is right by suggesting to visit the hotel.”

Once again, she proves to be the only levelheaded person in this room.

***

Kirumi Tojo
The consequences of what happened yesterday are in full effect; the atmosphere is more tedious than ever.

I suspected a shift in everyone’s attitude, however not this quickly. A murder is guaranteed to happen in a few days if distrust spreads this fast. We all have seen what Himiko has attempted to do after Tenko showed no signs of changing her obsessive behavior.

Somebody could say that milder people would not resort to such manners, however the entomologist is the calmest person here.

In the room with me are an inventor who just showed signs of constant denial and excessive anger after the trial ended, another man I could only describe as mysterious, most of the time avoiding conversations while sneakily overhearing fine details, and a detective that has indeed proven to be extremely vital to our survival, but one that could devise quite an intricate plan to murder us.

Their character worsens the situation. Even Rantaro refuses to listen to advice if Angie is mentioned, despite him being relatively reasonable in most circumstances.

“If you’re so hell-bent on going I can’t stop you anyway.” Kaito said rolling his eyes. “I’ll go.”

“To the Love Hotel?” Korekiyo asked.

“No, you dumbass. Away from this room. To my lab.”

“Will you try to recreate 0U-M6?”

“Kaede.” I intervened. “This is what you would call twisting the knife. Try not to start a fight.”

However, because Kaito had already left the room before I could finish my sentence, I guess it was futile.

“I’m not sorry for what I said. He has done much worse.”

“You are not helping him by insulting his pride.” Korekiyo commented, reading my mind. “By fueling his anger you are actively endangering our lives. The more he listens to hateful comments, the more he will be tempted to murder one of us.”

“I’ll try to avoid unnecessary remarks. However, I will call him out whenever he says something wrong. It’s been too much time.”

Indeed, Kaede seems one to commit murder under the right circumstances. The secret video that Monokuma provided me showed she did kill two people. Every time I try to confront her about the topic an argument surfaces.

I wonder whether it bad timing on my part or we truly are always arguing. I should have confronted Kaede as soon as I had the chance, even though the right moment never seems to come. At one point I should end this once and for all.

However, it is not easy to accuse someone to be a murderer, and Kaede herself should know that very well.

“I won’t come either.” Rantaro shook his head.

“Who can confirm me that you won’t show up there like this conversation never happened? You always change your mind.”
"The fact that I continue to repeat I don’t want anything to do with Angie at all. I hope you’ll get out of that hotel as soon as you can. You seem intelligent enough to realize she’s fooling everyone."

"Is she though? At least she tells us what she’s doing. You always keep acting funny and you seem to know something more about everything! Do you want to know something that might seem absurd?"

"I guess." Rantaro shrugged.

"Maybe Angie is being honest? But even if she isn’t, she’s surely trying to help people not get killed! And that’s why I’m going to her!"

Kaede slammed the backdoor behind us storming off. A part of her cape got stuck under it and was tore apart.

"Oh, such a pity." Korekiyo said picking it up. “I will store it for further use.”

"Will you use it in one of your cosplays?"

"No, it is too small. I could certainly find another use for this fabric, but it would be disrespectful to both Kaede and Shuichi. She might come back to me to retrieve it. This piece of clothing is vital to her.”

"Isn’t it just a tore cloth?"

"Yes, for someone who does not understand its value it might be considered useless. However, Kaede projects her feeling of loss onto the entire cape. If one part is missing, it is like a missing body part.”

"I respect your opinion, Korekiyo. But maybe you’re reading too much into it. Sometimes you don’t need a complex explanation to describe something.” Rantaro chimed in.

"It is not deep. Our clothes are simply a reflection of our personality.”

"Cool, but I hate this color splash t-shirt. I’m more than my talent.”

"I suppose everyone sees a different shade of our world. That is why it is beautiful.”

"Anyways...” Rantaro circled back to our previous topic. “Are you going to follow Kaede or what?”

"I will. My intention is not to convince you, but I am of the opinion it would only help.”

"As I say, when people are too far gone, the only thing you can do is let them drag you down with them.”

"Ah, yes. I do agree with that statement.” Korekiyo said.

"Maybe you are able to bring them back?” I suggested.

"I tried in my past. I only got worse. I’m not going through that again.”

"I respect your wishes. No matter your final decision, you know where to find us.”

"Have at it, I’m not coming either way. My advice is always ignored...”
Rantaro offered to clean the kitchen, even though there was not much to do to begin with. We left for the Love Hotel.

“Quite a curious personality, Angie, do you agree?” Kiyo asked.

“Yes. I have yet to read her. She does not look like a killer, though we should have established that no one is exempt from that by now.”

“I do not think differently. We are not perfect creatures, we are born as animals with reason, a special gift some may call soul. That, however, does not save us from our flaws. In fact, many are born from it.”

“I understand your opinion. But reason has helped us evolve and thrive.”

“Of course, of course. I was drifting beyond the discussion, as always.” Kiyo said staring at the sky. “I wonder whether Angie possesses the purest soul here.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Nothing important. It is best we do not dwell on it. You might not understand its importance.” The cosplayer continued. “I hope I did not offend you.”

“No, definitely not. There are some things we cannot understand about each other. Even though I try to guess what other people are thinking, it is impossible to see at times. I can comprehend your inability to communicate with others that are different from you.”

Kiyo gave me a nod as we entered the dreaded area where the casino was located. I never stepped inside after Kaito’s party, though I heard some of us did and won prizes.

“I tried.” Korekiyo said.

“Any luck?”

“I did win some Monocoins, though I stored them in my lab. I am trying to create a dress that could utilize them in a newfound way.”

Using coins as accessories...? Someone probably has already done something similar, and an anime is far more likely to have used such a concept.

I did never enter the Love Hotel, in fact it had been locked the last time I came here and no one notified me it was now open. A wide open space laid before my eyes, walls tinted pink and floors full of purple and red, accompanied by soft sofas and carpets.

“Two new people! Yey!” Angie exclaimed.

The others were sitting on a carpet to create a circle. After Angie touched Gonta on the shoulder he moved to the right to make space for Kiyo and me.

“Did Kaede convince you?”

“She did invite us to follow her.” I responded.

“Wow!” The leader exclaimed before turning her attention to the girl. “It’s a pity you couldn’t bring Rantaro and Kaito as well.”
“I told you they wouldn’t come.” Kiibo said.

“Bad for them! Maybe they’re blind! If they refuse constantly I can’t keep asking them.”

“But... if they get angry to each other?”

“Gonta, it’s get angry with.” Tenko corrected him. “But congrats, you used each other.”

“Sorry!” The entomologist responded immediately.

“That’s why I continued trying to bring them in! Atua, give me the strength to convince those poor souls to follow me!”

As I sat I noticed one absence: Himiko was not here.

“Has Himiko not come?”

Tenko spoke up. “No, I tr-

“Shhh... let’s not speak about her! We’re meant to have fun, right?”

“O-oh, yeah...”

“Why should we not mention her?” Kiyo asked. “We cannot pretend yesterday did not happen.”

“No, not at all! I’d never do that! But we can’t continue knocking on Himiko’s door demanding her to come out, right?”

“It proved successful in the past.”

“The past is the past, the one in which six people died! No, we don’t want any of that! That’s why we left her alone! Himiko’s an introvert, she needs time to recharge!”

“Have you agreed on this?” I asked. I know Angie forced her view on the others.

“Yep! All of us! Gonta, Tenko and Kiibo! Tell them!”

The three of them agreed with the leader’s claims, though Tenko was not that convinced.

“Let’s have this fun game for everyone who isn’t with us anymore! And for Himiko, hoping she’ll join us in the next match!”

“What game are we playing?” I asked.

Angie took a slim deck of card from her pocket.

“Ultimate Werewolf! Uh-uhuuu!”

***

**Kaede Akamatsu**

“You sound like a real wolf!” Gonta congratulated Angie.

“It’s not a traditional thing to say, but I’m so happy you like it!”
“Sorry, I have not played Werewolf. Is it some sort of fantasy game?” Kirumi asked.

I raised my hand too. “I’ve never heard of it either. How do you all know it?”

“Well, I explained it while you were all hooked up on that machine!” Angie exclaimed. “It’s a game we love to play in my island! All you need to know is that there are two teams! Two wolves, five villagers. The game is divided in two phases! Day, we all vote for who we think is the werewolf and someone is killed, night the werewolf attack and someone is killed!

It doesn’t look right to play this kind of game considering the situation we’re in...

“Of course is all in good fun! No one will die for real!”

“But if you die first the game is pretty boring.” Kiibo said.

“Someone has to take that place! It’s bad, but part of the game! You can’t always be satisfied with what life gives you! Try to make the best come from it!”

“I suppose...”

“Usually there’s a moderator who checks everything, but the Werewolf I bought at the casino has a Pad that works as one, so just do what it asks of you and we’ll be okay.”

“It sounds complicated.” Tenko sighed.

“It sounds, but it’s actually very very fun! One last thing, three villagers have special powers! During the night, the seer can check one of the other participants by clicking their name on the Pad, and it will say you if they’re a wolf or not by showing you an angry or happy face!”

“Wow, seer very strong!”

“It’s very powerful, you’re right! But the guard is powerful too! They can protect one of the other participants for the night, but never the same person in a row! So they have to switch!”

“Can they self-protect?” I asked.

“Nope, that’s not allowed! Guard is defenseless!”

That’s strange for a guard, but those are the rules of the game...

“And lastly, the mayor is a special villager whose vote is worth two instead of one! If there’s a tie, his vote is the decisive one!” She continued. “Okay, here are your cards! Look at them, then I’ll pass you the Pad. Just write your name and your role.”

The leader shuffled the eight cards and handed them over face down.

I got the seer.

I always say I don’t believe in coincidences, I guess fate really wants me to be a detective.

“Now, have you all understood what your role is?”

Everyone nodded, so Angie gave us the Pad.

“The wolves win when there are more of them than villagers, the villagers win when all the wolves are dead!”
One by one, we submitted our roles and names and then placed it on the ground at the center of the circle.

“Let’s begin!” Angie exclaimed. “Now, please, close your eyes.”

After some seconds of silence, the leader spoke up again. “The two wolves shall recognize each other with a nod.”

Even though I have my eyes closed, I can still sense if someone’s moving besides me. I was hoping Tenko or Gonta would give me some sort of hint, but I felt nothing.

“The wolves should have recognized each other by now. So, one of you can select the name of the participant they wish to kill.”

I heard something moving but I couldn’t quite understand where it was coming from.

“Now, you wolves can close your eyes. Seer, select the participant you want to unmask.”

I moved closer to the Pad making sure to be as quiet as possible. I’d have liked some time to make my choice, but a timer didn’t allow me to think for more than ten seconds. So I clicked on Angie’s name.

A green, smiling face appeared on screen.

I kind of wasted my choice, I thought, as Angie was calling out whoever was the Guard, but then I realized that knowing somebody on your side can be better than seeing who’s against you.

“We can all wake up now!” Angie announced. “Let’s see who’s dead... oh... it’s Tenko.”

“Oh. Already?” The caretaker said, disappointed.

“Apparently the wolves have something against you.”

“Umpf. They’ll get what they deserve...”

“What we do now?” Gonta asked.

“We should discuss about what we know.” Korekiyo said. “Unfortunately, we cannot have substantial proof over anything.”

“Nyahahah! That’s right! During trials we have evidence, but here we’re in complete darkness! We'd need a flashlight!”

“The seer could reveal themselves.” Kirumi proposed.

“No, they shouldn’t.” I intervened. “If they do, the wolves will kill them after the voting. The seer is the most dangerous role to them.”

“But guard can protect them!”

“For one night. And what if they already protected them this night?”

“Oh, right...” Gonta nodded. “Clever Kaede!”

“At the same time, we can’t stay here without saying anything...”
I know Angie’s on my side, so there’s nothing I can gain from her. This is a real shot in the dark. I’m thinking... who could choose Tenko as the first victim?

I doubt it’s something personal... it must have happened by chance... that means that, most likely, one of the wolves could be...

“Kirumi, I’d vote for you.”

“Why are you saying that?”

“You asked the seer to reveal themselves. That’s not a clever move and you should know it.”

“Oh, you flatter me, however this is not a complex strategy to fool all of you.”

“Quite interesting choice of words... all of you.” Korekiyo observed.

“Please, Kiyo, I am on the villagers’ side.”

“We don’t have better choices, though.” Angie chimed in. “You’re the most suspicious now.”

“At the same time, I have not many points to defend myself, considering your argument exists solely on the grounds of a statement.”

“It’s shaky but that statement is all that we got.” I said.

“What do you say, Kiibo?” Gonta asked.

“Hm... yeah... I’d vote for Kirumi too...”

“Great! Nyahahah! So we all agree to lynch Kirumi?”

“Lynch...?” The adventurer looked concerned.

“It’s the way villagers killed people who thought were witches, werewolves etcetera...”

“Yes, I do know. I was surprised by the choice of words.”

“That’s how it’s called in the game! Whoever votes for Kirumi, raise your hands!”

Everyone did.

“It looks like you’re dead! Lynched by the mob!”

“Welcome to the club.” Tenko said.

“Time for night! Let’s go to sleep, everyone!”

Angie called out the wolves for the second time, and then it was my turn again. Even though I could check Kirumi, it’d be useless. She’s not in the game anymore.

But Kiibo is.

I clicked on his name. He looked suspicious, never spoke but at the end when Angie asked his opinion. He’s not able to lie.

The angry face proved it me... it’d be easy to convince the others he’s a wolf.
“Nobody’s dead today!” Angie announced after the night phase finished.

“No one? How?” Gonta scratched his cheek.

Korekiyo explained the situation quickly. “Because the guard chose the person who was attacked. That is the only possible option.”

“Oh! Good choice, guard!”

“And that means the guard knows for sure that person is a villager now. The wolves wouldn’t attack each other.” I said.

“Right! If they recognize each other it’s the end for the wolves!”

“But... should they?” Gonta asked. “I think not, because then guard killed by wolves, and the seer would be exposed...”

“At some point the guard should reveal themselves, but I want everyone to focus on something else. Kiibo.”

“W-what?”

“You’ve been too quiet.”

“Because it’s the first time I’ve been playing...”

“It is ours too.” Korekiyo raised his eyebrows. “So that is not an excuse.”

“I mean... if I’ve nothing interesting to say I’ll stay silent...”

“Sorry, but unless you claim to be guard or seer you’ll be the next one to be killed.” Angie said.

“...y-yeah. I’m the guard!”

“Interesting!” Angie giggled. “Because I’m the guard as well!”

“So one of you is evidently lying. Quite interesting.”

“We have to vote for Angie or Kiibo.” I said. “But we all need to agree, there could be two wolves and one vote to for wrong person will automatically let them win.”

“Kiibo and Angie will vote for the other one, so it is a matter between me, you and Gonta.” Korekiyo said.

“Gonta don’t know... so decide after you!”

“I am nothing but a villager, Kaede. I will wait for your decision as well.”

If Kirumi was a wolf, they’re both telling the truth. If we were wrong, one of them is definitely lying... They say they’ll follow me, and if they don’t they’ll be targeted next round.

“I say Kiibo.”

“Fine. I vote for him too.”

“H-hey! Seriously? Kaede, think... think about it...”
“You claimed to be the guard under pressure. You could have done it sooner. If Angie was really a wolf, pretending to be the guard would only compromise her position.”

“Exactly. I agree with Kaede.”

“Gonta vote for Kiibo too, then.”

“It’s decided! Everyone votes for Kiibo!” Angie said. “Good choice! Are all the wolves dead?”

Angie clicked on a question mark on the Pad, but nothing happened.

“Apparently not.” She sighed.

So... one between Korekiyo and Gonta is a wolf. If not both of them.

In that case, me and Angie have lost.

I closed my eyes and took my turn. Surprised to have lasted this long, I tried to check Korekiyo and discovered he’s the other wolf.

I just need to tell the others we need to ly-

“Kaede, you’ve been killed! I’m sorry!”

“...What?”

“I couldn’t protect you twice...”

“Can I say something or have I to keep my mouth shut?”

“If it has to do with the game, no no! You’re a ghost now. Uuuuh...”

“Angie a great ghost too!”

Uff... I hope Angie and Gonta can understand they need to vote for Korekiyo...

“It’s us three now! And I’m not the wolf!”

“That is what you want us to believe.” The cosplayer said.

“Uh! What are you getting at?”

“You have never been the guard. Yours was just a ruse.”

“Gonta! Don’t believe him!”

“Think about it, Gonta. She knows you would always support her.”

“Korekiyo’s lying! He’s the last wolf!”

“You confusing Gonta... Gonta not sure what to do!”

“Believe in me!” Angie said. “Have I ever disappointed you?”

“N-no...”

“Something to say, Korekiyo? Something like a last desperate defense before I kill you?” Angie
asked.

“I know you would never vote for Gonta, so I appeal to him once again.”

Despite Korekiyo’s attempt to convince the tennis player, when Angie called the vote both of them chose him.

“Korekiyo has been lynched, thank you Gonta! Now, let’s see...”

A female voice from the Pad exclaimed: “Congrats to the villagers! The wolves were Korekiyo and Kiibo, Tenko was the mayor, the seer was Kaede and the guard was Angie.”

“We won, Gonta! Congrats!”

An energetic Angie high-fived Gonta, still confused about his win.

“W-we survivors?”

“Exactly! We’re the winners!”

“I discovered both of the wolves.” I said. “But Korekiyo killed me before I could do anything...”

“Yes, that is correct. I chose Tenko at the start... even though I was conflicted between her and you.”

Tenko crossed her arms. “I don’t know how to feel about this.”

“We have the entire morning at our disposal! Let’s do another round, ok? I’ll distribute the cards!”

“Hey, I want to propose something.” Tenko spoke up. “I think everyone should have a chance to play. So what about we cancel the first night death?”

“Hmmmm... I could consider it!”

“If you think about it, this game favors the wolves. A villager is already out by the first day. This new system should be fair.”

“That’s right!” Angie applauded Tenko. “We’ll do this in the next game!”

Once again, we were given the cards. I got so close to winning last time, but I had the most interesting role of all.

Or so I thought before discovering that I was a wolf.

“The wolves can recognize each other!” Angie exclaimed.

I looked to my right and to my left hoping to see Kirumi or Korekiyo as my comrade, when the actual one was in front of me.

Angie gave me a nod and a wink before closing her eyes.

This will be an interesting game...

A minute later, after every role completed their task, we opened our eyes.
“Anyone discovered anything?” I asked.

“The seer should not reveal themselves now.” Angie explained.

Thinking about it, keeping them alive could also be an advantage for us. Even if Angie or me were discovered, we could confuse them if we accused each other.

“So we need to random vote?” Tenko asked. “I would ask you not to vote for me first, again.”

“She wants to play more, understandable.” Kiibo said. “I’d vote for someone who lasted in the previous game, to balance things out.”

“Those would be Korekiyo, Angie and Gonta.”

“Hey!” Angie protested. “Are we really going to vote like this? What if one of us is the seer?”

“But we not have any better way now...”

Korekiyo spoke up. “Personally, I would like to stay alive. I will not disclose my role just yet, though.”

“Then Gonta offers to be voted! Not important role anyway!”

I jumped on his idea, trying to seem more natural than ever; a little bit skeptic, but not unsure.

“It’d be better if we could point to a wolf, but by going at random we’ll run the chance to kill the seer or the guard.”

“Yeah...” Tenko scratched her neck. “Let’s go with that.”

Thanks to Gonta’s sacrifice, we’ll soon have killed two villagers. He doesn’t know his play helped us, even though he thought he was doing the right thing.

When our turn came, Angie signaled me by tilting her head towards Tenko. I shook mine, there was no way we would vote her. I couldn’t explain why; we were supposed to be silent, but I think that eliminating one of the best players is the priority now.

Careful not to make a sound, I pointed towards Kirumi. She’s quite perceptive and I know she’d be able to figure out everything even if she wasn’t the seer.

Reading Angie’s lips, I could understand something which sounded like “pretend you’re seer”.

I didn’t get it. Why is she doing this? I’d ask her intentions, but she’s the one who knows how to play this game. I should follow the instructions.

Angie nodded and smiled, clicking her name on the tablet. Now, I hoped the guard would choose anyone else.

“Kirumi’s dead!” Angie announced. “Once again, she’s the second chapter death!”

“I suppose the wolves are afraid of my skills.”

“So... can the seer give us a hint? Maybe a subtle one...” Tenko said. “So that we can vote for the right person...”

“I think we need to vote for Korekiyo.” Angie said.
“Is that the hint or...”

Kiiibo looked around. “It has to be, right? Why would she say something like that?”

“Oh, I’m keeping my mouth shut!”

Angie’s trying to pretend she’s the seer... didn’t she ask me to do the same? Maybe I should wait and see how the situation plays out.

“Uhm...” I tried to intervene. “Does someone say otherwise?”

“I am on your side.” The cosplayer explained, referring to the villagers. “Angie is lying, probably to uncover the real seer... so the other wolf can kill them later.”

“It’s a bit complex...” I said. “Realistic, but too risky.”

“I would suggest voting for Angie. However, the seer should remain silent.” He continued.

Angie nodded, looking me in the eyes. She’s definitely saying that I should follow Korekiyo’s advice. If I have to pretend I’m the real seer, I must to reveal myself now.

“He’s a wolf again! He’s saying the same things as before!”

Both Tenko and Kiibo nodded at each other.

“I’m, in fact, the mayor. By voting me you will lose an important piece of the game.”

“If she’s lying we’ll discover soon enough either way.” The astronaut said. “I vote for Korekiyo.”

“Nobody is contesting my claim.”

“Maybe Kirumi was the mayor?” Angie guessed. “You are trying to defend yourself.”

“Why would I risk this, considering I could be-”

Angie interrupted him. “It’s always the same excuse! I wouldn’t risk blah blah blah... But didn’t you risk last time as well? By not defending Kiiibo, your teammate?”

“Hah, I see... that was not a risk, in fact it was extremely safe. I protected myself by accusing him. I understood he would be voted regardless.”

“It’s my word against yours. You need to decide.”

“Kekekekeh... I can prove my innocence.” Korekiyo said. “We are five, however my vote has double the value.”

“And with that?”

“If me and one of you vote for Angie, while the other three vote for me we will have reached a tie. As you said prior, in a tie the mayor has the decisive vote.”

Oh... this isn’t good. Can I poke holes in his claim?

Maybe... but the real question is... should I? By defending Angie I’ll be as good as out of the game.

“Hey! That’s not fair at all! What if you and your wolf friend don’t do as you said? You vote for me and it’s done! You just need to kill someone during the night and you’ve won!”
“That could happen, that’s right.” Tenko said. “...That is why I propose this. Korekiyo votes for himself!”

“Kehkehkeh... have you considered the possibility that only three villagers are alive at this moment? Were I to do that the two wolves would vote for me.”

“So we’re stuck.” I said, trying not to comment on my allegiance.

“Hey!” Angie called out. “Are you going to believe a seer who nobody contested or a convenient self-proclaimed mayor?”

Tenko looked around confused. “This is an hard situation, though...”

“If Angie’s the wolf, she will have played us all.” Kiibo said. “And Korekiyo has just been the wolf...”

“Yeah, but it’s not like it’s less likely for him to be the wolf.” I said.

“So... you’re saying we should vote for him?”

“...Why am I the one to listen to?”

“You’re the Ultimate Detective, you should have some suspicions...”

If I tell them not to follow Korekiyo’s plan we’ll win... but I can clearly see how his plan is far more practical than Angie’s...

However, if I convince everyone to split the votes I could pretend to be the seer. That would leave me with two villagers, and I only need to put one against the other.

...Is this why Angie told me to pretend to be the seer? Has she already played out this scenario in her head?

“So, Kaede? I am surprised you are unsure to this moment.”

“I think Korekiyo’s plan makes more sense.”

“S-seriously?” Tenko asked. “But Angie... she claimed to be the seer!”

“Korekiyo is more genuine. I don’t think he’s lying. Him and I will vote for Angie, alright? You other three will vote for him. Of course, the Pad will declare the victim.”

“Guys, I’m telling you! Don’t do this! I’m the seer!” Angie pleaded.

“If you really are, then tell us who the guard is!” Tenko said.

“If I do the wolves are going to kill them! I’m not exposing anyone!”

“Playing it safe, huh... I would not have expected this from you, Angie...”

Korekiyo looked at the leader enigmatically. He has understood something is going on, but can’t put his finger on what yet.

“Ok, let’s point our fingers...”

And with two votes for Angie, three for Korekiyo... the Pad, obviously, declared Angie to be the
victim.

“...Okay, okay. You got me!” She giggled.

“So you were the wolf...” Tenko said.

“Yeah, maybe... but the game hasn’t ended yet. Now you have to be silent! Everyone, close your eyes!”

I had to choose between Korekiyo, Tenko and Kiibo. If the guard’s still playing, they would protect the first one... unless they pointed at him during the previous round... which is very likely, him being one of the smartest players...

....but they could have chosen me as well.

It’s fifty-fifty... The safest play would be going for one of the other two... but I know I wouldn’t be able to convince Korekiyo I am on the villagers’ side.

Honestly, who cares. This is just a game. And so I clicked on Korekiyo’s name.

“Everyone, open your eyes!” Angie said. “Today, today... the cosplayer is no longer with us! He’s been killed during the night!”

“I knew it...” He grinned.

I did it. I immediately took the chance to talk.

“That’s a very obvious move for the wolf! Korekiyo had two votes. With three of us in play, he would have steered the direction towards our side...”

“You say it, but one of us three is the wolf then...” Kiibo said.

“It’s not me! I didn’t do this!”

“Could it be Kaede?!”

“No, it’s not me.” I lied. “In fact, let me reveal a detail. I knew from the start Angie was lying...” I figured the real seer must have been Gonta or Kirumi, since nobody said anything at this point of the game. “I am. And I know that Kiibo’s the other wolf.”

“W-what? No, I’m not! I’m the guard, and I protected you tonight!”

“Then why didn’t you chose Korekiyo? He was far more valuable.”

“I did that during the last round... Tenko, believe me! We have to vote Kaede!”

“...Why do such decisions fall on me?”

“Do you think I, as Angie’s companion, would pretend to be a seer again?”

“It does look kind of strange...”

Tenko weighted the two options for some seconds.

“I’m... I’m just going to believe Kaede. So I vote for Kiibo.”

“Yay, me and Kaede won!”
“No, don’t tell me...”

“Yes!” She giggled. “We’re the two bad gals here! My plan worked perfectly and lead us to victory!”

“I knew you should have listened to me!”

“I was the seer...” Kirumi said. “It was extremely lucky on your part to kill me this early in the game...”

“Oh, luck comes and goes!” Angie shrugged. "I must admit me and Kaede were spot on with choosing you first!"

Yeah... we were lucky... maybe too much.

Chapter End Notes

So, I'm back for a while. I'm still writing this chapter as of now. I'll post the next three (or four) parts covering the first two days of Chapter 4 this month.
For the rest of the chapter, I really don't know. I hope to wrap it up as soon as possible ^^"

By the way, next time there are two FTEs with the characters. Kirumi is not available as she's POV for this chapter, but everyone else is fair game to vote!
I'll remind you that Himiko and Rantaro had two FTEs and Tenko had already one FTE (out of four). The others who had a FTE are dead, so no luck for them.
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Daily Life (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Kaede spends some time with her classmates; Kirumi discusses with Korekiyo and then finds the courage to talk about the secret she knows.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kirumi Tojo

We agreed to stop playing after the second game. I generally liked mind games and similar pastimes, however I understandably felt bored as I was eliminated early in both sessions.

I know that would have likely not happened a third time –I am not that unlucky, I hope- but above that, the game Angie decided to play was more rooted in luck than logic. She and Kaede won only because they chose me at the right time...

Other than that, I do not want to alarm anyone because of my illness... they might think it is too serious...

“You appear to be deep in thought... more than usual.” Korekiyo said.

We were sitting near the casino, waiting for an announcement from Monokuma. He has not called us to the cafeteria to distribute new items yet. It might be because... Monophanie appeared to have substituted him.

“No, it is only an impression. I was thinking about the Werewolf games we have played.” I said.

“Oh, yes. I hoped for it to be a much more challenging game. None of that, sadly. The others had fun, it seems.”

“Good for them. Honestly, I wish we would get out of here eventually... however, as time passes it appears ever so unlikely. I fear will be trapped here forever.”

“Not forever. We will be free when we die... unless you believe there is nothing after this life.”

“Do you believe in an afterlife, ‘Kiyo?’”

“Oh, yes. There are far too many stories that confirm it too me. I strongly believe this is not where we are destined to last. It might not be our first life at all. Just like in a dream, our memories are clouded by a mysterious mist.”

“So... you think they’re not real? A way to hide our real past? I fear I am not following you.”

“This might be a trial. That is why no one ever came to save us. We are in purgatory, a limbo between life and death, where two chosen ones are free to live a better life while the others are
either denied one or forced to relive painful experiences...”

Despite being interesting, Kiyo is probably wrong.

“Victims would not be at fault, though. Why would they be condemned?”

“Maybe we were all terrible people in our past and we are now here to be judged. Victims may be considered the unfortunate ones now, when instead deserve this fate. That would include me and you.”

I could never imagine myself doing anything to be destined to eternal suffering, but according Kiyo’s reasoning... I am not who I was in reality, if I am to believe him.

“Anyway... I do not think there is anything after death. Absolutely nothing, the discussed eternal sleep. That is just how our brain works. The cells die and no more signals are sent to the other organs... we lose consciousness and that is it. I would not define it sad for myself, however infinitely disappointing.”

Death is not terrible. You can feel pain before your demise for many years, but that sentiment is different from death. In reality, the moment in which you die is not painful at all. It is far worse for those near you than yourself, who have to carry on without their dear one...

“There would be no life without death, everything would be a world without consequences.” I said. “To me, no one would be compelled to do their best... and we would not be here if not for death. Life would have not been what we know without the first organisms feeling the need to reproduce.”

Death is a shame. I hate the fact I could cease to exist without discovering the truth behind the universe’s biggest mysteries.

That is what will happen, though. I will never know whether or not that knowledge will be accessible in the future. If there is not anything after death, I will just have been here.

“So... if you were to die here before the game ends, would you be... disappointed, I should say?” I asked.

“It is a concrete possibility. I am fully aware. It could happen as early as today or in twenty years, if we manage to avoid further killings. Considering the last two weeks, however... I suspect we will not last that far.”

“Interesting... but you did not answer my question. You avoided it quite sloppily.”

“Ah, yeah. If you wish for a definitive answer, I would say I would not be sad. I remember many wonderful experiences in my life, not counting the ones that were stolen from me. And as I said, I believe there is more than this plane of existence.”

“The truth is I resigned to the idea of death long ago. I ventured in many lands always expecting I could die. It was never the likely option, but far more probable than usual. I learned to live with it.”

“I will probably not escape from here.” Kiyo sighed. “But that is alright. I will try to treasure the few moments that are left for me in this world.”

In another place and time I would comfort the cosplayer, but here it would serve no purpose. We both know we have almost zero likelihood to return to our lives... for different reasons. I do not think I will ever murder anyone, but under the right circumstances, it might still happen. Our
minds are too gullible, and those memories... they drove Shuichi, Miu and 0U-M5 to murder. They were killers because they all saw something about our past.

That might apply to me as well. I can wish all I want, but I cannot avoid the truth.

“Maybe I should head for my research lab.” Korekiyo said. “I have still many projects to complete. I promised Kaede I would cosplay as her, however I started preparing for an handful of other cosplays…”

Yeah, Kaede... I have yet to talk with her about the her secret... I postpone it every time.

“So I will leave you to your hobbies.”

“If you wish you can observe me working. It could inspire you.”

“I politely decline, Kiyo. I already know I would only bore you.”

The cosplayer adjusted his cap. “I see, I see... of course you would consider my profession boring. I agree with you, someone who watches me work might not enjoy what I am doing.”

The two of us were about to leave when I heard whispers coming from the other side of the casino.

“Huh? Is this Angie?”

“It appears so.” Kiyo noted.

I came closer to the edge without being seen. If she was whispering, there had to be a reason; something to hide.

“Thank you for having done as I asked, Gonta.” She giggled.

“You not need to say thank you to Gonta, you know... I am... I did that without any problem!”

“Sssh, don’t be so loud. Kiibo’s around, we don’t want to him to listen…”

“Yeah... sorry. But why did you ask Gonta to sacrifice himself before we started playing?”

“Because I had to study everyone’s reactions. I kind of cheated, but who cares. It’s a game without winners or losers at the end!”

She cheated...?

“The cards were never assigned randomly, neither in the first nor in the second game. I already knew everyone’s roles. That’s why I wanted to kill Tenko and Kirumi at the start in the second game. And most importantly, that’s the reason I decided Kaede would be my teammate. I looked at her movements and reasoning, even though I couldn’t read her mind. It was easier than I thought to influence her, kinda surprising.”

“Y-you manipulated Kaede?”

“Oh, manipulate is a strong word! I told her to vote for Tenko, but she went for Kirumi regardless! I think that shows she’s more afraid of her than us.”

“Us... us Gonta and Angie?”

“No, us means Atua’s Blessed Children!” Angie explained. “What’s important is that she followed
my advice and told everyone she was the seer after I died. That means she could listen to me under some circumstances.”

This game appears to have been just a test. I am not surprised...

“And the other five here are always angry with us, and now with each other as well! This is a big no-no. If that continues, they’re going to kill each other in less than a week.”

“Gonta not think so... Those people are almost always nice... Everyone gets angry sometimes...”

“In this place you can’t get angry at all... It’s too dangerous to hold a grudge against someone. That’s why I had to pay attention to what Kaede was doing. If we bring her to our side, the others will follow.”

“Rantaro too? Gonta want to be friends with him, but he’s always so... distant...”

“He definitely has some sort of tragic backstory. But there’s nothing that can’t be done with the power of persuasion. One by one, we’ll convince them.”

“But... maybe you need to talk.”

“No, Kaito and Rantaro are far too stubborn. They won’t listen until they’re pressured from all sides. After all, they’re imploding.”

“Im...ploding?”

“That’s a new word! I’ll tell Tenko to teach you what it means. I’m so glad she joined us after that whole mess with Himiko.”

“She was following before too.”

“Yes, but you could see in her eyes. She was never fully okay with us. Now with her new look and newfound confidence, she’ll be a great addition to our team. Just like Kaede and everyone else! We’ll live here for the rest of our lives. With Atua to our side, nothing’s impossible.”

“But... I... really want to see Atua. Or talk like you... because Gonta feels alone sometimes.”

“Oh, don’t worry. There’s always me to count on!”

“Yes! Angie never disappointed anyone!”

Making sure they I did not make too much noise, I saw them entering the casino, I assume to reunite with Kiibo.

“I suspected she had a plan behind all of this.” Kiyo noted.

Angie might be quite clever, but I also thought she had been quite lucky in our previous game.

“She always hides her true intentions, it seems.”

“Who does not.” Kiyo shrugged. “I presume everyone, including you, have done such things before.”

“Do you approve? I am not suggesting she is acting against us, however...”

“Human psyche is so foreign to us despite it being part of us... I do not think I can judge her actions
appropriately. She is doing this to avoid further murders.”

She has her group, but she really does want Kaede to join her... I am conflicted as well. I do not know whether or not I can trust the detective either... Her expertise in investigations is undeniable, but that does not mean she is a good person.

“I will tell nobody.” Kiyo apparently agreed with me. “But for now, I must definitely go. We will see each other during the rest of the day.”

“Uh, yes, surely.”

"Then we will undoubtedly meet again. I will talk to you about a topic... I usually keep to myself.”

With his usual enigmatic words, Kiyo left the casino area leaving me to myself. I wonder... do I have enough time to escape from here and seek help?

***

Kaede Akamatsu

Searching for a book that I liked in my research room, I kept thinking about that Werewolf game. The odds were completely against the villagers from the start... I’m sure Angie rigged the game in some way to allow us to win.

She probably did that to study my reactions or something of the sort. I’m not so obtuse that I didn’t understand that. She might be a genius with that game but all of her plays were extremely risky, and Angie isn’t impulsive. She always ponders before taking decisions; that game gives little time to think, so she probably knew what was going to happen from the start.

...But what can I do about that now? I should’ve understood that from the start...

I still think that despite all her flaws she’s better than Kaito. At least she doesn’t pretend she’s someone who she’s not. As a leader, Angie definitely knows what’s best for her people. I might disagree with most of her methods, but as a matter of fact she made the right calls. Maybe I should step down and leave all of this mess to her... all that I’ve done amounted to nothing.

I spent the rest of the morning in my lab hoping to find something interesting. I still didn’t want to meet some people, but I noticed my stomach was grumbling. I shouldn’t have skipped lunch... I went to the cafeteria hoping to find something that I could heat myself, but I discovered that someone left a piece of lasagna wrapped in tinfoil.

“Kaede, you shouldn’t skip meals. I understand you’re angry, but please follow my advice. I left some food for you, I hope it doesn’t make you throw up, it’s Tsumugi’s recipe. Rantaro.”

Of course he left a message for me.

I decided to eat the generous gift the artist offered me because I had no intention of cooking something at that hour. Maybe it would be best if I spent some time with someone. I can’t stay locked in my room for the rest of the day...
~Free Time Start!

I headed to the warehouse to check if someone was there. As I entered, I immediately saw Gonta inspecting the various shelves.

“Hey, Gonta. What are you doing here?”

“I wanted to find food in warehouse, since I want to go cooking!”

It looks like Gonta’s language is improving. It has to be Tenko’s lessons.

“Wouldn’t it be better to use what’s in the kitchen?”

“Everything almost finished, and I not want to waste it... it is better for special occasions, like big AAAs!”

“Oh, right...” I nodded, telling myself that I wouldn’t gain anything by criticizing him. I took a deep breath and tried to change the subject of the discussion to avoid conflict. Maybe if we talk a little bit more he’ll tell me more about what he knows of Angie.

“With all the problems we have, we don’t really talk much about our talents.”

“Yes, Gonta thinks it’s very strange. But talents don’t make the person.”

“Sure, it’s just that’s just an easy topic to bring up.” I shrugged. “It surprises me it doesn’t come up often.”

“Because we always argue. I am not happy about arguing... Gonta would want everybody to be friends, but maybe it's not possible in a killing game.”

Yeah... could someone really trust anyone here? Are friends even worth having?

“Maybe it is...” I said, trying to reassure Gonta. Despite everything that happened, I still want him to be happy. He never said anything to hurt others and always tried to help everyone.

“Gonta tried to make parents and uncle happy too, that’s why I decided to play tennis competitively!”

I tilted my head. “Huh? You want to tell me more?”

“Sure! Gonta started playing tennis when he was very young... maybe fifteen months old?”

What? So young? Is it even possible to hold a racket at that age?

“Did you...” I scratched my head. “Of course it couldn’t have been something you decided on your own.”

“No, my dad played tennis and brought me with him there. Mom always work so I stood on benches watching the ball fly!”

“Ah, so you learnt from him.”

“Did you do the same?”
“My parents are part of the reason I decided to become a detective, yeah...”

“Well, my dad saw that I was better than usual, so he gave me a small racket and we started playing. At first Gonta not exercise very much, but when he two he played every morning, and evening!”

“That’s a lot for a two-year old...”

“Yes, Gonta very much tired. But dad was very happy when I played good, and always told me to do better! Sometimes he got angry, but he said sorry after shouting. He woke me up at nine and after breakfast I went to play. He would assist me at the start, then get help from someone more good than him.”

The first thing in the morning was playing tennis? Every day... I don’t know how tiresome it must have been. At two years old... he didn’t have a choice to say no, he’d have thought that concept wasn’t even possible.

“We went to eat, then I slept for afternoon and stayed with mom. Before dinner I practice too. Some days more, some less.”

“Didn’t you do... anything else, like playing with toys?”

“Dad said that toys wouldn’t help Gonta become strong, so I didn’t play with them a lot. Mom said that to me when I became older, because Gonta doesn’t remember much about when he was little.”

“Yeah, that’s a given. But you remember you had fun?”

“Dad said I did. I would always ask for more tennis, always full of energy. But I remember that when I was older at some point I thought I needed to stop. Maybe when five or six? Before I moved.”

Exactly as I thought... he probably wanted to do something different. According to his story, his early life was so focused around tennis...

“Ah, Gonta moved because of tennis. My dad knew someone on other country, because he not from here. He was very good player of tennis, also took part in some international tournaments.”

“So your parents decided to move to give you an opportunity. That’s... an extreme action, but... courageous of them. Leaving behind everything just for their child. That’s something I’d never imagine.”

If I ever had children, despite my love for them... I don’t know if I’d be able to do that. It’s not because I don’t want them to be happy, but both them and me would need to start everything from scratch.

“Only Gonta and dad left. Mom stayed to work, she couldn’t leave. She would support us from home... of course dad changed jobs, he became a tennis teacher where we moved but did not make much. My lessons were a lot and I also did not go to school sometimes. Gonta not like it there, people did not like Gonta very much too. But I not talk a lot, because I thought a lot about tennis... and studying when I could.”

Skipping school is not something you should do... “You were so busy with tennis, it seems... it’s normal to take sometime off.”

“No!” Gonta exclaimed. “When not at school, Gonta play tennis. Dad told Gonta that was better
this way, and if I was tired it meant I was becoming better!"

“But... you said you were having doubts. Yet you still continued to play...”

“Yes, Gonta changed his mind after he talked with dad. He said that Gonta was too good to drop tennis. Because I’d become an Ultimate... and I wanted to become an Ultimate, yes!”

“Gonta... are you sure of that? To me it looks like your dad played a big part in this process... It doesn’t look like you had a lot of fun.”

“...Yes, Gonta did. Gonta didn’t mind playing tennis.”

There’s a difference between enjoying and not minding...

“Oh, no!” The sportsman exclaimed. “I need to be quick, otherwise can’t finish pasta in time! Sorry, Kaede... but I need to go to kitchen!”

“Ah... alright, Gonta. See you in a while, I guess.”

After meeting with the tennis player, I headed out. I didn't meet anyone until I was around Korekiyo's lab. He stepped out of the building as I was climbing down the stairs. I waved at him from a distance. He didn't respond, but I approached him regardless. I hope that he smiled, at least.

"Ah, I expected you. Are you here because of this?"

Korekiyo handed me a small piece of clothing. I immediately recognized it; part of Shuichi's cape.

"It was torn this morning, after you left the cafeteria."

"I... I didn't notice at all..." I said. I was so concentrated on other things that I forgot to check it.

"Here you are."

He handed it back to me, offering to sew it if I needed it. I told him I would consider it.

“What is the reason behind your interest in me?”

“I just want to talk with you. How... how is the costume going?” I asked.

At this point I started wondering if he dropped the project altogether, since it was taking so much time.

“I am working on it. I had to spend resources towards another goal, though that should remain secret as of now.”

“Ah, alright... Don’t... don’t worry too much. I can wait.”

“Oh. That statement is curious.” Korekiyo appeared surprised. “It is extremely useful to me and my research.”

“What research...?” I asked, slightly creeped out.

Korekiyo explained to me that one of his goals is to create a profile for every one of the people he comes to know in order to create a great encyclopedia of characters and personalities. He then went
on to compliment me and the skills I possess, calling those “the pillars of my psyche”.

“Pillars of my psyche?” I asked him.

“Your skills define your life and your personality. Justice, fairness and optimism are the soil from which you grow.”

I guess that it means that I live by those three characteristics. I suppose… it could be true, but I don’t think that someone who has known me for a few days can already trace my psychological profile.

“They could be. But, obviously, there are many more facets to my personality.”

“Kekekeh… I only mentioned the foundation, I need to work on you for longer to discover how the entire building is constructed. What are your ideals? You might tell me now, if you wish.”

“Are you going to ask me strange questions? I prefer not to feel uncomfortable…” I admitted.

“Do not quail, Kaede. I will not proceed in an obtrusive manner. Your attitude is already revealing more than you do perceive.”

I shrugged. “It could be. After all, my body language and my expressions are probably more vocal than my tone of voice or choice of words.”

“Exactly. You realize it yourself. You do tend to gesticulate and emphasize your thoughts with your body. Words do not matter when your body is controlling you.” Korekiyo nodded.

“I know it could lead to people understanding my real intentions, but I never had a problem with that. I tricked many people in the past, pretending to be confident when I was terrified.”

“As a detective, I am sure than you can hide your true feelings masterfully. However, when you are having a casual conversation, you are not able to be as professional.” Korekiyo explained. “However, I would say that hiding your body language is harmful in social situations. People can misinterpret your words if you silence your limbs, your shoulders, your torso…”

Well, even though he’s a cosplayer, Korekiyo is interested in a wide variety of subjects, it seems. In all honesty, I feel he’s really treating me as one of the characters he wants to cosplay…

“Are those things going to come at play in your cosplay of me?”

“Yes. I wish to replicate you in all of your perfection!”

Korekiyo’s eyes lightened up and he looked up at the sky. I was about to ask him why, but he preceded me.

“Every human has their flaws, but to me, those flaws are what makes them perfect. No character is recognized by their merits only, but by their errors too. So, if an error shapes them, that error is one of the reason of their perfection!”

I don’t think I understand his logic… but… characters? What an odd term.

“So, you are perfect too, as a human being. Flaws are our strengths. No one is perfect, and if they were they should be forgotten. And you impressed me, Kaede. Your qualities and flaws have stunned me like never before.”

“Oh…” I blushed. “I don’t know if I should feel honored or…"
In my mind I thought *extremely creepy*.

“Or embarrassed…” It’s what came out.

“Nobody should feel ashamed of their personas. Recognizing the self is one of the most important steps to reach objectives and goals. But…” He closed his eyes. “I am sure that by understanding others, I could become better and better, and one day…”

As his eyes opened, he stopped.

“But that is a dream that is bound to remain segregated in my mind. Discussing about it would only bring further pain.”

“If you think it’s unhealthy for you, you don’t need to tell it to me.” I told him.

“You do understand me then. I want to understand you more. This conversation helped me immensely. Thanks for your precious time, Kaede.”

“You’re welcome… whenever you want to talk, I’ll be here for you.”

I guessed that was enough time spent chatting for today, so I retired back to my room for the rest of the day, coming out only to grab something for dinner.

“Kaede!” Gonta noticed me heading out of the dormitories.

“Hi, Gonta. How’s it going?”

“Fine! After dinner we have AAA reunion in Angie lab! Do you want come?”

“You know, I’d really like to... but I’m not feeling great today.”

“Because of yesterday?”

I nodded. “Yes. ...But don’t worry too much, it’s just for today. I’ll be back to my usual self tomorrow.”

“Gon- I mean... I never see... seen you sad for this much time. You sure you be okay?”

“Six of us aren’t here anymore, Gonta... That’s almost half of the people who were trapped here at the start. And it’s been how much? Two weeks...”

“I know... Never seen so many people die... Actually, I think not seen any person die... But not everything is real bad! I feel happy now, because Tenko learning me how to talk like normal people!”

“You mean teaching you, not learning.”

“Oh, yes... Gonta still not real good with language. But surely I’m making a lot of progress!”

“I noticed.” I smiled a little.

It feels strange listening to Gonta talking in first person. Kind of wrong.

“If you not feel like going to cafeteria I can bring you food. Angie will not mind.”
“Ah, did she send you here? To see what I’m doing?”

“N-not really... she want to see Himiko, because she never left her room today...”

I understand her. She definitely doesn’t want to see anyone right now. I know I’d need a lot of self-control to avoid giving her glares for the rest of her life.

...Maybe that’s too harsh coming from me. I need time to think too.

“You still angry with her?”

“How can I not be? She helped someone cover a murder.”

“Gonta knows that, but she needs forgiveness. You not think straight when something like that happens... Gonta... well, I... I think I be confused... and scared... and maybe Himiko thought... what if I tell the others? Then Oums will kill me...”

“You’re too good, Gonta. If you continue acting like this, people will take advantage of you. You need to have the courage to say no.”

“But I have courage! Courage to forgive Himiko! It’s too easy to hate her because she made mistake! And... and she warned you, right? Do you remember? You said it... when you were going to Shrine...”

“I... I need to tell you a thing. Maybe it’s not important but...”

“You want to tell me while the others aren’t around?”

“Yes... I heard the Monokubs saying that the last release benefit is about helping others more than yourself...”

“Hm? Why did you hide this from everyone else?”

“Just... don’t tell that it was me who told you, alright? Tell that you hear-

“She lied but not much... because she want you to understand what happened.”

“I see where you’re coming from, but I need to think about it.” I answered. “This is not something that happens every day. She’s a murderer that isn’t paying her price.”

“No no no! Himiko not a murderer, first thing... but don’t tell she is not paying price, because she must be very sad to stay in her room alone, without bugs! And Gonta worried for her...”

I sighed. “I understand... we have different opinions, and that’s okay. I’ll not force you to blame Himiko for all that happened and you won’t try to convince me that I need to forgive her no matter what. This discussion will go nowhere, don’t you see it?”

“Okay...” Gonta said, defeated.

“I think she’ll be fine. Maybe if you ask her nicely she’ll come out from her room.”

“I tried... but she only said me to go away...”
At least she didn’t kill herself, that’s good.

“W-well... Gonta will bring you food now, okay?”

“Okay. Thanks, I’ll wait for it in my room. Remember to knock.”

***

*Knock knock knock!*

That is it. I will not hold back anymore. It has been to long and I need an answer. After dinner, I headed to the dormitories. Gonta told me he was bringing Kaede food, so she had to be there.

We have to discuss about her secret now, before this begins to tear me and her apart.

“Who’s there?” She asked from the other side.

“Kirumi. We should talk.”

“Has something happened?”

Her door was still closed.

“It is personal. It is better if we discuss about it in your room, alone.”

Kaede opened the door, confused. She stood still, waiting for me to elaborate.

“For mine and your benefit, nobody should hear about this. Because of that, I advise you to welcome me in and close the door behind us.”

“I trust you, Kirumi. But you have to be absolutely clear. What do you need to tell me?”

I figured she already knows the topic of the discussion.

“I understand you will not talk to me if I do not speak first, so I will do as you ask. When the secret videos were distributed, I got yours.”

“I remember. But I destroyed them now.”

“Yes, that is surely advantageous to us. However, that does not prevent the ones who saw them from forgetting the contents of the videos.”

Kaede crossed her arms. “You’re here to talk about my secret, aren’t you?”

“I thought it was obvious from the start. I cannot continue to hide this secret. You need to explain yourself.”

“I haven’t watched my video. So I can’t explain anything, unfortunately.”

Interesting. She claims she was not curious to discover what Monokuma knew... that would show maturity and self-control... one of them is surprising coming from Kaede.
Not that it matters anymore.

“I can, because I did watch it. Multiple times, since I could not believe what I saw.”

“So, you’re here to make me remember a secret that could end up getting me killed? What’s so important about it?”

“You are trying to dissuade me, but I am not your enemy. You can continue and try to confuse me, however that does not change the truth. We both know that I am here because your secret entails much more than a weakness. It is something you did in the past and you likely remember it already, considering Miu did not forget her murdered sisters.”

“What if I don’t and this will make me insane like Shuichi and Oums?”

“I am willing to take that risk.” I said.

Kaede tried to close the door, however I already made sure to prevent that by placing my feet in front of it.

“What are you doing?”

“Be reasonable, Kaede. You cannot avoid me, this conversation has to happen eventually. You already have an idea about your secret, if you really did not watch that video, and you will not escape from the truth.”

“Fine. Come in then. If you really care about my secret just spit it out.”

“I said I care about your explanation.” I repeated after closing the door. “The secret in itself does not interest me.”

She rolled her eyes and lied on her bed. I preferred standing up.

“Don’t waste breath explaining, you were right. I already have my ideas.”

Just as I thought. She did not watch her video because she did not want to confront the truth.

“It involves a murder... am I right?”

I nodded. “Exactly. Monokuma said you killed two people. Do you claim to be innocent?”

“Would something change if I did? My attitude already says it all.”

“Then I have nothing to say. You are the one who should talk.”

“First of all tell me what else you know. I don’t want to bore you with unnecessary information.”

“They were not suspects, unrelated to your detective work and the murder was intentional. That is all that I know.”

“Yeah, Monokuma decided to leave out what was most important.” She said, bitter.

“I presumed that was the case. He always withholds information, and that is why I came to you.”

“Those two people were not innocent, let’s clear this first. Maybe some people wouldn’t say they deserved to be killed, but I did. So I took matters in my own hands.”
“You confirm it was an intentional murder... you see why am I worried then. Someone who has committed such an act is likely to commit it again.”

“If you think I’ll murder someone here you haven’t paid attention. It wasn’t something I did out of spite, but an extremely hard choice.”

“You said they were not innocent. Yet they were not suspects either.”

“One thing doesn’t exclude the other. First of all, that event happened before I was a detective, so they couldn’t be suspects. But I already knew they were rotten.”

“How did you kill them?”

“We’re being honest here, right? Then I’ll tell you I wanted them to suffer at first. But I realized that would be so much easier for the police to track me if I did that. Even though they deserved the worse death ever, that would be still murder on my part. So I had to change my method to something less noticeable... but I have to admit. I suppose it was painful.” She tilted her head. “For some seconds, they definitely were in pain.”

She stood up and sat on the bed, staring me in the eyes.

“I used poison. One of the most effective ways to kill people; especially if you were as young as me. I was barely thirteen at the time, but I already knew how that worked. They died while returning home, I think. The poison took some time to reach their brain and do the work.”

Kaede appeared to be in pain as she recounted her experience. She might regret what she did. Yet that does not mean it could happen again...

“But it did. I was so incredibly happy when the news broke. Everybody was shocked to know that those two people died so suddenly. To everyone they were a grieving couple who just lost their son, but I discovered they were much worse.”

What did Kaede discover to push her to murder those two people, I asked myself. However, she was still talking and I decided not to stop her.

“If you’re wondering, they never thought I was responsible. A girl who was just starting to understand how the world worked... ah. I wasn’t even considered. It took them some time to find traces of poison in their body, but eventually they guessed the cause of death. So everybody thought it was some way, uhm... retaliation, I suppose. From their other enemies. Time passed and they closed the case. The culprit was never found. So I was never found. Until you saw that video...”

“If you thought you were never discovered how could you suppose that the video was about this murder?”

“I don’t have many secrets. That I remember, I mean. But... I have no idea how it leaked. Monokuma has no way of knowing it... I acted alone. No one ever knew, so... I am so confused.”

Kaede could still have informed someone else. The memories that were stolen from us. The answer could lie there.

“I appreciate your honesty... but you have not told me why you knew those two people were not innocent. What did they do?”

“Ah, yes...” She sighed. “I told you that they lost their son, yeah. Guess what, they got him killed.
But I was the only one who could ever think that. Because they gave off the image of perfect parents who loved their family... lies."

“How could you know such a thing?”

“I saw him die in front of my eyes. Mind you, I was not supposed to be there and nobody knew I was there. He figured there was something off about his parents... so he invited me to follow him at a distance. To be safe...”

“You knew him personally, that is why you took this matter in your own hands. That is what you are telling me.”

“Yes. He was pretty intelligent for his age, just like me. I suppose that ran in the family...”

In the family? That is an odd-

“He was my twin.”

“W-what-

“And the two people I killed, because they got my brother murdered... Sazamoto Suzuki and Akamatsu Taki... were my parents.”

Chapter End Notes

Next time on Danganronpa: Chilly motive incoming

By the way, you can cast your votes for FTEs again! Maybe there's space for one of them for the second day. Some of the characters won't be available, but I can tell you who because that'd be pretty spoilery.
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Daily Life (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

Kaede remembers the previous night; After Monophanie reveals the new motive, Kirumi and Korekiyo talk.

Chapter Notes

There's temperatures in this chapter. If you're used to Fahrenheit, remember that

0°C = 32°F
10°C = 50°F

I decided to go with Celsius since that's what they use in Japan.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Himiko looked around. She remembered being attacked by Oums. And... and...

Maki’s body.

She tried to move her legs, but she couldn’t. A rope tied her to a chair in the AV room. 0U-M5 was right beside her, sitting comfortably on the sofa.

“Great, you woke up. I was afraid that the chloroform had an extreme effect on you. I haven’t tested it on myself; so I would have needed to resolve the problem manually... and that, you see... would have taken too much time for this to work out.”

And so Himiko tried to talk as well, but she couldn’t. Her mouth was taped. She could only make out muffled screams... and nobody would hear her.

“Don’t worry. I’m not here to hurt you. If I wanted, I would have done that in the room where you found Maki. You’re alive for now, but that depends on what your definition of alive is. For me, you definitely are.”

Why was Himiko there? What did she do? She thought 0U-M5 was normal! Didn’t Kaito reset him?

“Oh yes! He did, but I found a way to bypass the firewall he imposed me, thanks to Kaede and Maki! They didn’t do that on purpose, I guess. That worked out to my advantage! Because Monokuma has no idea I reverted back to my original self and cannot overwrite me again... to be precise, I took the best of both worlds. 0U-M4 and 0U-M5 are combined now.”

He... he read her thoughts?

“Yup, I can do that!” He exclaimed. “Isn’t it wonderful? It’s a shame I have to die now. Well...” He paused. “That’s not one-hundred percent set in stone, but that’s probably what is going
to happen. However! If I sacrifice myself now things will still work out for the rest of you. Maybe you’ll have more chances to get out of here. That’s what Maki told me, and I’m inclined to believe it.”

Maki? Maki agreed to all of this? No, no... this is impossible!

“Confused? I was it too, at first. Before she contacted me in secret. I'm not talking about the Maki you know. But things will become clear so quickly. Now, you’re probably wondering why we’re here...” He said, circling around the room. “I won’t make you wait! So, I’ll explain you what I’m about to do. Don’t freak out, okay? It will seem absurd to you for the first ten seconds. You’ll warm up to it. Let’s do this!”

---

**Kaede Akamatsu**

*Ding dong bing bong!*

---

The morning announcement, again. Didn't die during the night.

Great... sometimes I wish I was dead and never had to live through this nightmare.

Unluckily I’m forced to stay here until... who knows anymore. I’ve lost hope. There isn’t a lot to hope for either since there’s no sign of escape. Until two people remain, we’ll continue living this life.

Despite everything, I told myself while dressing, I’ll try to avoid that future. Everyone here has a way to cope with this situation and thinks their one is the best.

Unsurprisingly, they’re all wrong.

I suppose I’m wrong too, since I failed multiple times.

...But now that Kirumi has brought to memory what happened with my family... I feel weak again. I just wanted to leave everything behind...

---

**The night before...**

“You... killed your parents?” Kirumi asked, dumbfounded. One of the few times I saw her show an emotion so clearly.

“You don’t believe me?”

“I... do not know what to think of this.”

“If you think I’d lie just to get your sympathy I’d actually have to be an excellent actor. I could have come up with a far better story that also appeared to be more plausible. Instead here I am, with my family completely wiped out.”

“Since this is an honest conversation, I will tell you I am sorry for your loss... however, since I had
no attachment to your family, that could sound more like a convenient excuse.”

“It’s okay.” I said, while it wasn’t, quite clearly. “It has been years now, I learned to live with it.”

“Then you will not mind if I ask you another question... who were your parents?”

Yeah, exactly. Who were my parents? I thought for the longest time they were two wealthy businessmen that happened to luck out in a couple of purchases...

“I still don’t know the whole picture.” I said. “I discovered they were involved in far worse I could imagine. Not only drug trafficking and money laundering, but apparently... human trafficking as well.”

I discovered that snooping around my father’s office. I figured there was something strange about what he was doing long before my brother did. Those documents I found were in plain sight, a grave mistake done by dad. Only a glance was necessary to guess it was not normal paperwork. I knew better than taking those sheets of paper and I printed them for personal use.

“That is horrible.” Kirumi commented. “I am surprised people like them could even desire to have kids and love them...”

“They did care for us, I think. Until we didn’t get in their way.”

For some time I thought we were not planned. But then I changed my mind; considering what I discovered they would have probably gotten rid of us. Yet I still believe they were not so happy to receive a girl and a boy.

“They were horrible people but knew how to put on a show.” I said. “No one saw them for who they really were. Only me and my brother... and I decided to keep that to myself.”

I wanted to expose them. But I knew that they were in contact with other people. If I did that them they’d probably come after me, I realized.

“Both of my parents were only children. So I went to live with my only living grandfather. That's were things become nebulous.”

“Yes... our missing memories.”

“I think I was put under some kind of protection after a while. And then I was sent a letter by the Government... You see, I did some investigation on my parents' work. Somehow, I got the title of Ultimate Detective. I managed to put the blame on the same organization that they worked with...”

...

...

It all comes full circle. Just like I couldn’t protect my brother, I couldn’t protect Shuichi. They both did everything by themselves, but I feel... like it’s my fault as well. I knew I could have prevented both of their deaths.

Maybe in another world I did. And they’d still be here.

Who knows, maybe they’d have done a better job than me. I know I’m not underestimating myself, it’s just... they could have... my brother was so clever, and Shuichi had great potential. I could see
it in his eyes.

Would I swap my place with theirs? I don’t know... I shouldn’t be talking in ifs...

“Oh, Kaede! What are you doing staring at the dorm entrance? It’s sooo strange!”

Angie woke me up from my trance.

Tenko came up to me waved her hand in front of my face.

“Maybe she’s communicating with Atua?”

“No, Kiibo.” The caregiver shook her head. “That’s something only Angie can do, right?

“...I’m fine, guys.” I reassured them.

“Yey! I thought we lost you for a second!”

“What were you thinking about?” Tenko asked. “Your expression wasn’t the best... you looked really worried.”

“No, it’s nothing like that. It’s the whole situation that isn’t the best one.” I said, half-lying. “As long as we’re split nothing will go well.”

“Kaede’s right!” Angie exclaimed. “The problem is that some people refuse to listen!”

“And Himiko still hasn’t come out of her room...”

“Don’t worry too much about her, she’ll be fine! I talked with Himiko last night.” Angie said.

“Y-you did? She l-let you enter?”

“Yes, because I always acted nice towards her. She had no reason not to.”

Tenko looked disheartened but quickly shifted the topic of the discussion to avoid thinking too much about it. “You and Kirumi had a chat yesterday?”

“Huh?” I raised my eyebrow.

“When I returned to my room she was just heading for hers. Since that’s the last place she went to and never exited the dormitories, I thought...”

“Yes, we were discussing about Monokuma's disappearance.”

It sounded like the best lie at the moment.

“I thought it was strange he didn’t show up yesterday... what is he up to?” Kiibo said.

Angie scratched her cheek. “Monophanie said she would take over him, right? Maybe she’s being nicer. That’s why she didn’t do anything.”

“She pushed her brother on a conveyor belt and let his head be chopped off.” The astronaut said.

“It isn’t her real brother though... since they’re all robots! I like robots but they can’t be related to each other...”

That doesn’t have anything to do with the discussion...
“Where’s Gonta? He’s always with you three.”

“He was kind enough to leave a note in front of my door... he woke up sooner and went for a walk around the school.”

It’s nice to know he isn’t following Angie everywhere at least. He still has a mind of his own.

“So... will you come to the cafeteria with us? We have a breakfast to make.”

“Finally you’ve come here.” Kaito said. “I want to go away as soon as possible.”

“Don’t be an asshole. Thank you.” Rantaro rebutted.

“Look who’s talking.”

“Point proven.”

Gonta was sitting between the two boys, probably trying to calm the two and avoiding conflict. Judging from the two seconds I spent in the room...

He’s failing.

“Guys...” He sighed. “Just try to be polite...”

“Here you are, Gonta! I thought you were outside.”

“Gonta was, but met Kaito and Rantaro... and... I thought we should all meet here...”

“Oh, you’re so nice, Gonta!” Angie exclaimed. “I can’t believe that Kaito and Rantaro really wanted to talk with us!”

“I didn’t think that either.” Kaito commented.

“He means that he surprised to see you here!”

Everyone fell silent. I was hoping for someone to start a discussion, but that would have been too much to ask. Rantaro and Kaito didn’t say a single word and the artist decided to stand up and take something to eat instead.

“Ok, it’s clear that this was a failed project from the start.” Kiibo said.

“No, don’t say that!” Gonta intervened. “I... I... what about we play games?”

“I don’t have time for your stupid tabletop shit.”

Sometimes Kaito can be really annoying... “That would help, since you’re serious all the time.”

He looked at me in the eyes and shook his head.

“I can’t believe you’re with them now.”

“This is not about us or them or anyone else, stop trying to make us hate each other!” Kiibo spoke up. “I can’t understand you!”

“Shouting won’t solve anything...”
Angie tried to calm down the astronaut but, understandably, he didn’t agree with her.

“I know, but there’s no other way to convince them...”

“I don’t need convincing, you can shove your advices- Yeah, I don’t have to continue this discussion. You probably told Gonta to call me here so you could mock me again and again.”

“What?! No, Gonta did all by himself!”

Rantaro returned from the kitchen with some biscuits.

“On the other hand, I’m free to talk if you want to discuss. It needs to be something important, though. I don’t mind casual conversation, but the situation is so terrible now that I know we’ll start arguing too.”

Angie smiled in return, but shrugged. “Personally, there’s nothing that important I need to tell you either! I keep that for the AAAs!”

“Oh, yeah. You still do those.”

“If nobody’s going to listen to me I’ll get out by myself!” Kaito exclaimed.

“Oooh! Does that mean you will kill someone, huh?”

“There’s no way in hell I’d do something like that, you witch!”

“Hey! Don’t call her a wit-

“You shut up! I’ll invent something to get out of here!”

Kaito looked ready to storm out of the door in a fit of rage like usual, but Korekiyo and Kirumi appeared in front of the door to block his path.

“Good morning.” Kirumi said.

“I fear this is not a good morning at all.” Korekiyo echoed.

“Let me pass.”

“No no no! You need to stay in this room now!”

Monophanie appeared behind the three and shoved them all inside the cafeteria. In a matter of seconds she locked the door with some kind of strange remote.

“Here we are! Now you have to listen to me, since you’re trapped!”

“There’s another door.” Tenko pointed out.

“Oh, I know! I can see it! That’s why I locked it in advance while you were busy arguing!”

“Where’s Monokuma?” I asked.

“He’s not popular anymore, so I took his place. People want to see new faces and I was the best one on the scene! Daddy has been far too peaceful this time!”
That’s a very subjective statement.
“So I’m now in charge of the Academy! Say hello to your new and improved Headmaster!”
“You’re here to give us those absurd objects to explore the school, stop dragging this out.” Rantaro said.
“No, we won’t continue snooping around the Academy. That has always made us kill each other.” Kiibo said.
“Ah...” Angie nodded. “You’re right... Kiibo warned me before we found the computer room... he said that exploring was dangerous, and look at that...”
He’s right. First my lab, then Angie’s with that door, then the mechanisms in Himiko’s research room... this place is a death trap.
“Aha! You poor, innocent sweet boys and girls! You won’t stop me! In fact, I have a bunch of new motives to make this chapter the most thrilling yet! Lights out!”
“But it’s bright outs-"
The last thing we heard was a clacking sound and then everything went black in an instant.

***

Kirumi Tojo

It was quite peculiar the way I lost consciousness. It was a feeling too difficult to describe, however familiar. Usually you have no recollection of the moment you pass out despite some warning sounds.

That was different, because I remember some flashes. Was it a dream or a moment of clarity? I felt like in a freezing storm, on the brink of death. Someone was behind me, touching my neck, head, scalp. Almost like they were… pried open. I would wonder about the meaning of those visions if there was not a more pressing problem.

The temperature dropped to a few grades °C above the zero, I would say less than ten.
“What... what’s up with this cold?” Kiibo said.
“Say hello to your first new motive, which is what I like to call Progress Motive!”
Monophanie had somehow had the time to search and find a furred coat.
“The Progress Motive is a motive that becomes more and more severe as time passes! For now, it’s just a bit frisky.”
“It looks like it’s more than a bit.”
“Don’t get too comfortable, since I can already tell you that it’s going to get worse!”
“How the hell did you do this?!” Kaito exclaimed. “Temperatures can’t rise and drop at your
command!"

“Yes they can, they just did. Don’t be the usual boneheaded shonen protagonist trope for once!”

“We can’t continue to stay here with the clothes we have on, we’re going to freeze to death.” Kaede said.

“Perceptive! That’s why I invite you to explore the rest of the school! You said you wouldn’t go anywhere because it always brought dread and desperation, death and sadness... so that’s why the coats, hats and gloves are right there, in the upper floors.”

“Are you forcing us to dig our own grave?” Rantaro asked.

“You’d do that regardless. A little more exploration won’t hurt you this time!” She giggled.

“Wait a second.” Tenko said. “We can’t bring anything out of the research labs. If we find coats there, we won’t be allowed to use them.”

“Yeah, that’s right! That stupid rule that Dad made up for this new Killing Game... how limiting!”

“Why are you calling dad stupid?” Monotaro protested.

“Montaro, pay attention to your words! You’re my only good brother, but I can substitute you in an instant!”

Monotaro did not respond, keeping silent as if he was Monodam.

“You can bring the warm clothes outside. That’s an exception to the rule. I can add rules just like dad, so there’s no problem! New rule in your Monopad! Ding ding!”

The tablet in my pocket rang. The display showed a notification.

**Rule Appendix 1:** The only objects that can be taken out of research labs are winter clothes put by Monophanie. To be sure one such object qualifies as such, consult Monophanie.

“You’ll find the new objects right outside, then! Happy trip!”

“Consult Monophanie? What does that mean?” Kiibo asked.

The bear gave us one last wave before she disappeared.

“Maybe we have to call her. She’ll come like Monokuma...” Kaede guessed.

“We should have a poll!” Angie exclaimed, leaving no time for questions.

“No, before that we should discuss what happened.” I said. “No polls.”

“You got five minutes! I’ll start counting!”

How can she be so unaffected from what is happening around her at times while being so cunning the other half of the time...

“The temperature now is not that terrible.” Kiyo said.
“Yeah, because your clothes are freaking heavy!” Tenko rebutted. “...Oh, no... I wonder how Himiko’s doing...”

“She’ll be fine. There are the bed sheets if she wants them.” Rantaro said.

“We should now consider the two possibilities that lay in front of us. Option A, explore the school to find warmer clothes; Option B, avoid the upper floor at all costs.”

“I doubt we will be able to resist this cold.” Kiyo said.

“Don’t you have clothes in the research room?” Kiibo asked, hoping to use those.

“I do, however you should remember we cannot take them outside. That is also why I am struggling with Kaede’s cosplay... I will not be able to show it to you outside of my lab.”

“I’m happy you’re still working on it...” Kaede said, embarrassed. “But... that definitely shouldn’t be your top priority...”

Tenko had another idea. “Isn’t there something in the warehouse we can use?”

“I do not remember pieces of clothing there. You may find some prime materials, but it would take too much time to create actual clothes. Right, Kiyo?”

The cosplayer nodded, as I thought.

“What about heater? That good idea!”

It was, but there was no sign of heaters around. We were at the mercy of the cold, unless we explored the new floor Monophanie opened for us.

“We delay the exploration and see if get better!”

“That’s not a solution.” Kaede noted. “This won’t get better, so the sooner we act, the sooner we’ll get better.”

“I understand you are for exploring.”

“Definitely. A murder isn’t going to happen because we check a couple of new rooms.” Kaito said.

“It’s what happened three times out of three.” Kiibo said looking down.

“I know that. But I also know that dying of hypothermia is not worth it. The temperatures will reach sub zero, I’m sure.”

“If someone wants to murder one of us, they have a number of ways they can do it.” Rantaro said.

“It’s not like those three were the only strange rooms we have around here.”

“Yeah, but you wouldn’t want to give the culprit new ways to murder us!”

“Are you afraid that we won’t understand? We have outsmarted the culprit again and again. And, if you’re scared to die, you just need to stay away from the new floor. You act like that’s the only problem, here’s the solution.”

“The lower ones are a problem as well, we know they are equally dangerous.” Korekiyo said.

Kiibo sighed.
Apparently Angie had taken a spoon and a glass and now was hitting the glass to make us notice her.

However, we were already silent... so she had no reason to do that.

“Listen, listen! Five minutes have not passed, but I am not going to make a poll! Because I’ve got a great idea!”

“Do you want explore?”

“Yup, we don’t want to become ice blocks, for sure! So we need to take those warm clothes! That doesn’t mean we all need to go there!”

Angie counted the people that were on her side of the table.

“Kiibo, Tenko, Gonta... and Kaede! You and me will be the explorers! I can trust all of you, so there won’t be any problem!”

I tilted my head. I think I do not understand.

“Are you prohibiting us from exploring?”

Angie nodded. “Sorry, miss Kirumi. I think you’re trustworthy, but that’s what I thought about Oums too! And now he’s gone...”

“Wait, what?!” Kaito shouted. “You can’t tell me what I can do and what I can’t do!”

“Didn’t you say you wanted to work on your lab and be done with us?” Kaede asked him ironically.

“Wha-

“I have no problems with that decision.” Kiyo informed Angie. “Though it is surprising for you to trust those people. They could be able to murder you as well. You might be friends, however friendships might be of no value in a killing game.”

That would not be uncommon. Many friendships in life are shallow as well, void of any meaning. You might ask yourself if it is even worth to surround yourself with people that resemble husks more than living beings.

“Tsk! I’d never murder anyone!” Tenko complained. “You might have that mindset, but Monokuma’s motives won’t ever get me!”

I expected Angie to trust her usual group, however I have not understood why she included Kaede with them. I suspect she is trying to convince her to join them...

Kaito tried to storm out of the room, but he failed once more. The door would not budge.

“Why isn’t it opening?!”

“Monophanie must have forgot to unlock it.” I said.

“Obviously, that stupid bear!”

The inventor tried to go to the opposite direction, but Gonta blocked his way.
“Gonta won’t let you pass, because you dangerous!”

“Me? Dangerous? I might be angry, but surely I won’t waste my energy to come up with a plan to kill you!”

“No, dangerous for yourself! You should think and relax now, not be angry and explore on your own!”

“Who said I’m going to do that?”

“Your attitude... I noticed that when people angry and other people tell them not to do things, they do. And you very angry now.”

“He is correct.” I said. “You have to rest here.”

“Holy shit, you’re so fucking paranoiac! I’m going to my lab! Does someone want to accompany me so I can prove I’m legit?”

Nobody raised a hand for some seconds. Seeing that nobody was taking the offer, Korekiyo said he would do that himself.

“No, no. You can’t.” Angie shook his head. “I can’t afford to let you two loose.”

“Loose?” Rantaro raised an eyebrow. “They’re not dogs.”

“Well, that’s just a fancy word!”

“I will go.” Gonta said.

“Are we okay with Angie calling the shots now?” Kaito asked, looking around for consensus. Yet no one said a word in his favor.

“Apparently.” The artist said bitterly.

I am not, though this is the best way to approach the situation.

“If you three are going, I am accompanying you as well.” I said. Might as well spend my time doing something useful.

I could see that, while Kiibo was aligning more and more with Angie’s line of thought, Gonta seemed to be slipping away from her control. I have no idea on why that is happening, but he was following her everywhere during the first days. Now, by talking to Kaito and Rantaro, he did the opposite of what Angie said to him.

“Gonta... only wanted to make people happy...”

“I can see that you have good intentions.” Kaito said. “I thought Angie completely brainwashed you, but that’s not it. We can still gain back control.”

“Control? You seem so angry with her... Gonta not understand...”

“Yes, because she made you think she’s the only one who’s right! But she has done nothing but wrong!”
“I will stop you there.” Kiyo intervened. “You cannot criticize Angie in this manner. You are not allowed to lie and pretend you are better than her at the same time.”

“What... what are you... saying? Gonta still confused...”

“You should all stop trying to defend Angie. I can see why Gonta is doing that, but you as well?”

“Are... are you saying that Gonta is stupid? No! I’m very intelligent! You’re being mean!”

As predicted, Kaito is approaching this situation in the worse way possible. If he wants to convince Gonta, he cannot insult him. The tennis player is not the smartest person here, but he understands what others are saying.

“Angie has allowed the people that followed her to survive. Do not forget you caused, albeit indirectly, Maki’s and 0U-M5’s deaths.”

“Yes...” Gonta sighed. “They didn’t talk much, but... they still missing. Angie said we should not forget what you did, but Gonta decided to forgive you. Because I know you not bad person, but just someone who made a bad choice.”

He’s too nice for this killing game, so quick to trust people... I feel terrible, but this could be used to our advantage, to pit him against Angie... I repeated to myself I do not want anything terrible to happen to her, but she is slowly controlling all of us. As much as she seems harmless...

Though, if we manipulate Gonta, convincing him that her friend might have bad intentions... we would not be better than her.

What needs to be determined is whether or not this is a pressing matter.

“Gonta...” Kaito said, looking him in the eyes. “You’re a good person. I know that you have doubts about Angie, right? Otherwise you wouldn’t have called Rantaro and me there. Please, think about what she forced you to do. Like blocking my way...”

“You’re trying to confuse me... Angie said that you would!”

“Look, there’s Angie again! Stop thinking about her!”

“Gonta doesn’t always think about Angie! Gonta... I decided to block your way! Angie said nothing! You just want to make Gonta sad!”

Kaito crossed his arms. “I knew it, there’s just no way I could convince you. Maybe you’re brainwashed after all.”

“Pay attention to your words.” I said.

“I can’t even say brainwashed now?”

“Oh, we have arrived. This is your lab.” Kiyo said, pointing to our right.

“Fine.” Kaito rolled his eyes. “Are you going to stay here until I leave?”

Gonta nodded. “For your, my and everyone’s safety.”

“Try not to get bored then.” He said, slamming the door behind him.

“Gonta really want to make people happy, but many only end up making Gonta sad...”
“You are trying your best, Gonta.” I encouraged him.

He nodded. “But... Gonta can’t really leave you to wander off alone.”

“If you are afraid we might explore the new locales, you should not be. Without the objects while the others are there we would not be able to do much.”

“I see, but... can you stay here? Just to make my job easier.”

“This is not a job, you are free to stop if you want. I know the reason behind it, however you should not feel obligated to guarding this door. There is more to do in this academy.”

“No, no... no worries for Gonta! I spent a lot of time alone and it’s still fine! I will just practice Tenko’s lessons about language!”

“We can spend some time here, Kirumi.” Kiyo said. “I was meaning to tell you some things.”

“What is that you want to talk with me about?” I asked, moving away from Gonta.

Some time passed and we discussed what happened during the day, our impressions about our classmates and our opinions on the world.

“I have been observing everyone in this school, as you know... and I must admit I have not found anyone with the right characteristics... someone who I could call a friend. Besides you.”

Oh, I’m flattered, but... I would not consider Korekiyo my friend just yet. We have known each other for not enough time.

“Is it because I am the only one you are comfortable enough to discuss?”

“Exactly, that is the reason. Everyone here appears to be shallow, or not ready to tackle more... complex topics. I understand them, the Killing Game alters everyone’s priorities...” He said. “I expected it to change people, that includes their way of approaching others, to discuss and talk...”

“I doubt that that the stress of the situation might bring people to... say, open up. As we have proven, people grow more wary of each other.”

“That is such a waste of potential. People are at their best when they interact with each other... humans are the species which needs social interaction more than any other.”

It is curious that he says that after considering me interesting. I am probably the least sociable student here. I do not particularly like interaction, nor do I seek it. Most of my teenage years were spent training and venturing alone in the wilderness, meeting people along the way. The ones that were my so-called friends were never particularly stimulating.

“It is by discussion and dialogue that the human species develops, by disagreements most of the time.” I said.

“Yes, we think alike. That is why I am not particularly worried about Angie seemingly taking control over the school. She will not be able to sway every one of us. I know perfectly well that me and you are not falling in her dialectic trap.”

“I would not underestimate her. She is the leader of an island, or at least she claims to be.”

“Ah!” He snickered. “You see, we do not agree on many topics. Yet we are not litigating. We strike a balance despite our differences, and that is what I seek in a friend.”
But... being friends is more than sharing opinions. I think this is only a part of it... maybe that is why I do not define this relationship as friendship.

“Anyway... yesterday I mentioned talking with you about a specific topic...” He recounted, “That is relevant to our discussion about an afterlife. You might wonder why I would think it is real.”

“You mentioned experiences that prove it to you.”

I am skeptical of those. In my adventures, never have I found proof of ghosts or some other entity in our world and I always believed those TV shows to be a terrible fake.

“You see, I do not discuss about this often. I actually have revealed this secret to two other people...”

“Oh, then I am honored to be the third. Do not worry, it is safe with me.”

Another secret... is this any good?

“I had a sister. She passed away...”

“I am... sorry. That is... not easy.”

And like Kaede, he lost a family member. With Miu, that seems to be a pattern... but I have always been an only child. It must be a coincidence.

“However, we communicate ever so often. She is the proof an afterlife exists.”

I tried to understand why Kiyo, such an intelligent person, would believe this. It is common for people to have this kind of delusions after a relative passes.

“It is not normal, you might think. However, I really do speak with her. I can call her here now, if you wish.”

I stood in silence, too surprised to find the right words.

“Please, dear sister... come to us, I beg you.”

Kiyo then lowered his mask, revealing he was wearing lipstick.

“Dear brother, did you call me on this plane of existence?” He said, in a higher tone of voice. "Oh, Kirumi?... It seems my brother does really trust you. Well, then I do too.”

Chapter End Notes

There's one FTE in the next chapter. Remember to vote if you want to!
“We should all go together to explore,” Angie hopped. “Of course, let’s all remember that Rantaro has to be watched and should never be allowed on the upper floors!”

“If you’re so concerned with us following your law, why won’t you stay here with me?” Rantaro asked. “After all, you’d be sure there are no problems if you are the one who’ll watch me.”

What is Rantaro trying to do? He knows Angie will say no, so maybe... he wants her to make a bad impression on the others. She has to come up with a believable excuse.

“Atua says... that I have to be the light today, so I can’t really stay here with you.”

“If Atua says that, then we have to follow his advice, right?” Tenko asked for confirmation.

“What if Atua doesn’t exist and Angie is making all of this up? Haven’t you considered it?”

“I don’t care if she’s right or not...” Kiibo said. “She’s our leader. I don’t trust you to be alone with her. Especially in the kitchen... all of those knives... you could use them to kill her!”

“Just because it’s getting chilly outside? Then I’d have to dispose of the evidence too... that seems way too tiring if I only want to prove a point. Let’s remember I’d actually have to go through an entire investigation and trial... and I don’t have the strength to survive that. I’m already anxious by standing in that podium when I’m not the killer.”

“But-

“Let’s be honest here, I would like to get out of here with someone.”

“I understand you’re worried, Kiibo. But Rantaro won’t kill me in the kitchen, it’s way to obvious. He’s far more intelligent...”

Rantaro stared at me while Angie was talking. He probably wanted to tell me something thanks to his incredible non-verbal abilities, but he failed miserably; I didn’t pay attention to him. If he wants to talk with me, he should be direct. I can’t bother with people hiding their intentions anymore.

But I can’t say I’m more on Angie’s side now, because of her strange... cultist shtick. She seems to be the most honest here, though.
“Then what I’m supposed to do? I can’t stay here, since nobody is watching over me.”

“What if we lock him in?” Tenko proposed.

“Hey, no, no...” I intervened. Sometimes it’s too much. “We can’t tell him to stay in the cafeteria until we return! He’ll have to go to the bathroom, spend time somehow...”

“You can lock me inside my room if you’re worried about my… bodily functions.”

“What?”

“I’m obviously not on board with your idea, Angie. However, it’s pretty clear I can’t do anything about it. It’s not like I can sprint out of the backdoor, steal all the objects and go for an exploring spree to discover all the new rooms before you, right?”

“Yes, you could.” She nodded.

“I still don’t see how that would lead me to kill all of you, but if you so desperately think I’m a threat to your survival I can go to my room for the rest of the morning. You can keep the key, there’s only one.”

“I didn’t expect you to be so collaborative!” The supreme leader chimed.

“Yeah... is this a trap?” Kiibo crossed his arms, eyeing the artist.

“If it’s a trap, what should his goal be?” I asked in return. “He has no way of leaving his room if we keep the key with us. We’re at an advantage...”

“Yup yup! We could even lock him in his room forever! Nyahahahahah!”

“...You wouldn’t do that, right?” Tenko asked.

“It was a silly joke, of course not! I still like Rantaro very much!”

With the temperatures decreasing every minute, we grabbed the new object Monophanie gave us; a simple brush. Rantaro said it wasn’t that different from the ones he used in his paintings, but apparently just like before it would open a new door or destroy a wall like it was butter.

We left Rantaro in his room, then went to the upper floor, the one were Maki was killed two days ago.

“Such an happy place...” Tenko said, her eyes focused on the walls.

“Yeah, before what happened last time....” Kiibo grimaced.

“It reminds me of my days in kindergarten... all those children... I won’t say they’ll miss me, because they’ll probably have chosen another teacher, but I definitely miss them.”

Angie looked at the caregiver and patted her on the shoulder.

“Don’t be sad! You have us now, right?”

“...I don’t want to be offensive.” Kiibo said. “But you had fun with us around, right?”
“Yes, I have... and what you said isn’t offensive, why should it be?”

“Ah... I thought you would say I’m a degenerate male because I... put myself over your students...”

“Hey, Tenko. Despite all that we’ve been through, don’t think you won’t see the people you care about again. There’s always hope, even if it’s faint...” I tried to reassure her, even though I stopped believing it.

“I appreciate your words, but I already have the people I care about around me... you are the ones who helped me change more than I ever did... maybe I spent too much time with children and students... and never focused on bettering myself. I always put the needs of them first...”

“Why are you sad now?” Angie hummed. “Just because of a colorful wall? That should make you happy, not so depressed, uh?”

“Yeah, you’re right...” Tenko smiled. “I was just getting nostalgic, but those days weren’t even that far ago...”

...Are they? Years could have passed and we wouldn’t know...

“What about this thing which is definitely not suspicious?” Angie asked, pointing to a part of the wall that was completely bare.

“You’re saying we should paint it?” I said.

“Yep!”

Angie took the brush from her pocket and started drawing different shapes on the wall. Rantaro would have done better.

“Are you sure you don’t have an innate talent for paintings?” Kiibo asked.

“Huh, maybe. It feels kinda natural! I did contribute to... artistic stuff in my island!”

As Angie was completing her work of art, the wall spontaneously broke down as it already did before, destroying what she would eventually complete.

“Oh.” She commented. “Well, it will be better next time!”

A new set of stairs appeared before us, leading to a new floor. This time the area wasn’t as peculiar as the lower floor, despite it having a completely new design again.

“Wow, it looks beautiful!” Tenko exclaimed.

It did, in fact. A gigantic stained glass stood behind us, reflecting different shades of light and projecting them to the wall opposed to it.

Sadly, the overall experience was ruined by two giant Monophanie statues placed right in front of it, one depicting her as an angel, the other in a devilish form.

“Rise and shine ursine!”

The pink bear showed up like she heard my thoughts, this time with Monotaro at her side.

“We’re sorry for the inconvenience, but Monokid is still in repair!” She exclaimed.
“He’s always having some sort of complication, wow.” Angie said. I don’t know if she’s concerned about the health of a robot bear or she’s pretending. Anyway, both would be a problem.

“Do you like the renovation for this floor? Originally those two were Monokuma statues and they were meant to be kept the same for this iteration, but... I decided to change things up!”

“Remakes are better than remastered versions!” Her brother echoed.

“Oh, you’re such a good brother, Monotaro! I can’t believe you said that line!”

“...You forced me.”

“And you’re also quite jokey today, yeah? We’ve good such a good sibling relationship!”

“...Yes, Monopherie...” Monotaro said. “We’re going to stay together for all eternity...”

“Have you showed up here to brag or there are valid reasons for you to stop us?” I asked.

“You’re quite irritable today!”

You see, it’s freezing outside and the temperatures are dropping by the second, but that’s not the only problem.

“She’s right to be!” Angie spoke up. “You should give us those warm clothes so we can applaud you for your great work!”

“Ha! Ahahah!” Monopherie laughed.

Kiibo looked confused. “What’s so funny about this?”

“I’m not going to be convinced, you need to find the clothes on your own! You better do it quickly, since I see clouds forming on the horizon...”

“So long, bear well!”

I approached the window to investigate. Despite the colored glass, I could see that the sun was slowly disappearing behind ominous clouds. Quickly, the light became dimmer.

“What’s happening?”

Focusing, I noticed it wasn’t just clouds. Small snowflakes were falling from the sky.

“It’s snowing?!” Tenko exclaimed.

“That means outside the temperature it’s sub-zero...”

“We can’t afford to go to the courtyard in those conditions. We have to find those clothes immediately.” I said.

“That’s why we came here, nyahahah! Some snow won’t stop us from that.”

Yes, but... if it’s snowing now... What’s going to happen tonight?

“We might have to face a snowstorm in the following days.”

“That seems too much for Monopherie too.” Angie giggled. “Does she have control over the weather? It’s a bit much for me to believe.”
“She could have one of those gadgets from movies... that make snow appear out of nowhere!” Tenko proposed something that would sound ridiculous... if stranger things didn’t happen already.

Yet she’s probably wrong, because I already had an idea about this place... once we’re done, I have to test it.

“Hey, I’m already shivering... Could we find those clothes and move on?”

We found a door in the room we were, but it was closed.

It would be wrong to call it a door, though, because it was a curtain placed between two metal bars.

“The door is just behind this.” Angie said, looking inside. “And it has the Keypad Lock.”

“Uh... I wonder who could the owner be...”

Kiibo and Tenko tried their Monopads, but it didn’t work.

It had to be Shuichi’s. The curtain reminded me of the disappearance tricks that magicians often perform.

“Shuichi! That’s it!” Angie exclaimed. “This was supposed to be his lab, I think...”

“And just like Tsumugi’s, it’s closed.” Tenko pointed out while Kiibo backed away from the curtain. “So... are we supposed to find two labs who belong to her?”

“Why two? I thought we only had one.”

“If she had two talents, it makes sense for her to have a second lab.”

“Monokuma told us that Tsumugi had the Assassin talent, but we know she was the Ultimate Maid too. She took care of our requests and cooked for us while she was alive.”

Angie nodded. “Yes, yes... maybe there’s another lab that belongs to the Ultimate Assassin. We’d just have to search for a bloody giant hand on the door!”

“Hey... don’t say something like that so casually...”

We’ve already seen three corpses lying on the ground and witnessed the same number of executions... and Kiibo still feels uncomfortable?

“Would you prefer if we didn’t find it?” Angie asked. “Would you justify Miu’s actions if we discovered that Tsumugi was a bad person?”

Despite her addressing Kiibo, I saw the leader looking at a specific direction... she was talking to me.

“Why are we still talking about this? We’ve got other problems to deal with.” Tenko said.

“Yeah, I was just thinking about it.” Angie shrugged.

“There’s nothing we can do here.” I said, trying to make the others leave. “The door isn’t going to magically open itself to present us a guardrobe full of warm furry jackets.”
I noticed I had been a little too irritated by this situation, despite being no real reason. I wonder what would have Shuichi said if he lived long enough to see what was behind this curtain. Maybe he would have showed us one of his tricks...

We looked the opposite way. A long corridor showed no traces of clothing but only half-hassled depictions of Monokuma and the Monokubs going through their daily life. Or, at least, that’s what I concluded after a few seconds of looking at them... then I realized that they were not worth my time.

“Hey! That’s a pile of clothes!” Tenko exclaimed, pointing at what could be described as a quite literal pile of coats.

Angie sprinted towards it like it was a lost treasure, counting them one by one.

“They’re only five...”

I knew it... they sent us here just to play this joke on us...

“Five? Are you sure there aren’t more?” Tenko asked.

Angie took the coats and gave us one each. Of course, she put one on herself, leaving one spare.

“Maybe there are more around?”

There were two doors in the room. One of them, I could tell from looking from where we stood, was Rantaro’s. Brighter than everything in the school, it had more than ten colors that mixed and created new shades.

Tenko went to investigate the other one. To her surprise, it opened after she placed her Monopad in front of it.

“There’s some hope, let’s check.”

Tenko’s room resembled a classroom. It wasn’t that different from the one I woke up in. Some tablets, chairs, two lockers. On one wall there was an already dirtied blackboard, where someone drew a Monokuma shaped like a ball.

Probably Monokuma himself, judging from his sense of humor.

Various educational posters were glued on the other sides of the room, but I immediately noticed that they weren’t giving information that could be useful in class, quite the opposite.

“This is depicting the quickest ways to murder someone...” Kiibo said, distressed.

And it was all focused on killing.

_The five H of murder_ was the biggest poster, just right of the blackboard. When Tenko noticed it she didn’t waste a second before trying to tore it apart.

“It’s stronger than I thought...”

“You don’t have to destroy it. People won’t look at it, because no one will enter your lab!”

We all know that you don’t need a guide to kill someone, but some extra measures probably wouldn’t hurt.
“I... I can’t stand to look at a class like this... why would Monokuma create this room for me? The others all have nice labs...”

“It doesn’t matter. You won’t be staying here anymore. We just need to find those clothes and go away.”

We searched in the lockers, but there were only books. We managed to single out a couple that didn’t involve murder, however we didn’t find anything that could help us. No gloves, hats or anything of the sort, not under the desks either.

“We can’t be stuck with five coats.” Tenko said after we went back to the corridor “We can’t let five people freeze to death...”

Angie looked at the time. It was now midday and was already snowing more than before. The ground was being covered up at a faster rate than I expected.

“We need to have a talk with everyone...” She said. “Didn’t Kaede have something to say too?”

“Yes... everyone should meet at lunch, right? We have to find a way to solve this...”

***

Kirumi Tojo

“Kiyo...?”

“You’re naming the wrong person... hehehe... I’m his sister. Aishi. It’s a pleasure to know you.”

I was rather confused. Despite this, I could not run away from Kiyo, or whoever was talking through him. He clearly believes someone else is communicating through him.

“Hello.” I said. I kept my calm.

“I know what you’re thinking. This must be Korekiyo...” He giggled, his mask still down. “No, I’m a completely different person. I always am with my dear brother, but I overtake his body sometimes, when he calls me or when I’m needed.”

“Needed?”

“Korekiyo is my younger brother. He’d be lost without me... he was always with me. So, when I left this physical realm... I listened to his calls for help, and returned for him. I rarely show myself to strangers, since I am so connected to my brother... but he asked for this conversation.” Kiyo, or Aishi, explained. “As his older sister, I decided it was necessary to talk. I like you... you’re strong willed and a great talker... but you only speak when it’s needed... which is good. I taught the right lessons to my brother.”

“Ah, I see...” The conversation was troubling. I was interested in this turn of events, but I did not know how to approach it.

“However, you should pay attention... if my brother only focuses on you he’ll forget about me. And neither of us wants that.”
“Could I speak with Kiyo and ask for his opinion?”

“No!” Aishi denied. “There can only be one of us at a time. Yes, he’s still here. He’s listening but he can’t talk. It would be too confusing for both of us.”

It was too soon to understand what was happening in Kiyo’s mind, yet I felt this sister he was projecting could not be considered positive.

“Can you elaborate on that?”

“We’ve just met and you already want to know more about our past! I don’t like that, you know? Anyone else would consider that too much for a first conversation!”

“You said you trusted me.”

“I do, but you’re already making me doubt that. Maybe Korekiyo wasn’t right about you. I’ll need to talk with him privately and discuss about this friendship.”

“Discuss our friendship? I do not think you have the right to do such a thing.”

“Hey, I heard yelling...” Gonta said, coming near us. I turned towards him noticing Kaito accompanied him. When I looked again at Kiyo, he was wearing his usual mask. My conversation with his sister would be postponed.

“Yes, there is nothing you should worry about.”

“But you don’t scream usually...”

The cosplayer tried to avoid the topic and addressed Kaito. “Have you concluded your tasks in the research lab?”

“The genius inventor is never sated! I’ve just started a new project to get us out!”

“Gonta thinks maybe you need to stop with grand projects. Because now we have cold problem.”

“Yeah, about that.” He shook his head. “I’m starting to get cold. Maybe I should eat something warm. Aren’t you hungry?”

I had to agree with the inventor. It was starting to get late.

As we headed for the cafeteria, I tried to speak with Korekiyo about my previous encounter with his sister.

“She is very shy.” He said, lowering his voice. “When she noticed Gonta was coming, she gave back our body to me.”

“Our... body?”

“Yes. We think is not fair to call it mine. We both inhabit it at different times. She prefers to appear when we are alone. We have given you a gift. I hope you will not share our secret.”

“No, I will not. You can believe me.”

Even if I were to talk about Kiyo’s situation to others, I doubt they would be able to help him. Some other opinions would be appreciated, but I should respect his wishes.
“I would like to know... your relationship with your sister. Could you please describe it to me?”

“Hah... I think she would do a much better job than me.”

“Why? I asked for your personal opinion.”

“My opinion and my sisters coincide, yet she has known me for more than I did. As my older sibling, she has seen me grow. When she fell ill, I was young, yes. However she inspired me to be a cosplayer.”

“Did she want to be one?”

“Yes. She used to cosplay when her illness did not force her to stay in her bed. She wished she could attend fairs, cons and such. However, she could not. From what I remember, she told me I could be like her. And so I did. Sadly, I have lost some memories.”

“Would she not remember those?”

“No, no...” He chuckled. “She has lost her memories too. Our connection is purely psychological, thus is still rooted in the mind. What I do not know, she does not remember.”

“I am afraid I do not understand...”

“Yes, I suspected it. Do not worry... it is too hard to. You might even believe my sister is purely a construct of my psyche. But she isn’t. She is truly here.”

From a logical standpoint, I am not sure of it. If Kiyo believes her to be real, it is too dangerous to contradict him. What I am worried for is how Aishi, even if she’s his real sister, might influence him. Her words towards me were not reassuring.

“I might elaborate later on our relationship. Now that we are about to eat I should remain silent.”

“Oh, hi guys!” Angie said throttling down the stairs along Tenko, Kaito and Kaede. “I’m going to be honest. We’ve only found those coats. But I’m free to give out mine.”

“What?!” Gonta exclaimed. “You will be freeze to death without one!”

Tenko spoke up. “We don’t have to hoard them. We could swap them... also, the higher floor is warmer than here. I just noticed coming down.”

“Pretty obvious! Monophanie wants us to be there, but we won’t play her game!”

“The dormitories must be warm as well. Otherwise Himiko would try to find another place to stay.” I said. Instead of that, she is still in her room. It is still two days I have not seen her. I am starting to get worried.

“You know... maybe we should try to check how she’s doing.” Kiibo proposed. “Angie, Gonta and me could go. Since we’re the ones who are closest to her.”

“Isn’t anyone going to cook anything?” Kaito asked, quite sarcastically. I would not have thought he would be capable of putting himself in a worse situation.

“Kaito, we’re not here to satisfy your needs.” Kaede sighed. “If you’re so hungry, you can cook something by yourself.”

“Kaede’s right! Nyahahah! But Angie and Atua decided to forgive Kaito! Maybe we’re treating
him a bit too harshly!”

“Oh, no. You won’t drag me down inside your cult.”

“Stop calling it a cult!” Gonta protested.

“Please, let us try to be sympathetic towards each other.” I intervened. “Kaito is stressed, you are stressed and this situation is stressful. The lower the temperatures, the higher the chance is for us to say something we will regret.”

I stared at Kaito hoping he would keep silent. Kaede tried it before and failed, but I believed in another attempt.

“Yes! Positive attitude!”

Angie united her hands in prayer, with Kiibo and Tenko following. Gonta hesitated but imitated the leader nonetheless. “I, alongside Gonta, shall cook for you. The others can go to the dormitories to retrieve Rantaro and Himiko. We should meet to discuss the coat predicament.”

“If you want, I can help as well...” Kiibo said.

“Atua appreciates your offer, but it is better that you talk with Himiko. She probably feels alone right now.”

As we left the cafeteria our situation became clear. If the snow did not stop, it would hamper our path. For now, it was still easy to navigate.

“Has anyone seen shovels around?” Tenko asked. “This is going to get serious.”

“There should be some in my lab.” Kiyo responded, but I reminded him that because of Monokuma’s rules, they could not be moved from their place.

“I’m sure that the warehouse has some. There’s always useless stuff inside...” Kiibo said, probably being right.

Stepping inside the dormitories, we breathed a sigh of relief. Thankfully the temperatures were not as prohibitive as the outside.

Kiibo opened the door for Rantaro. He greeted us by excusing himself if he smelled strangely.

“What do you mean?” Kaede asked.

Kiibo followed. “It’s not some of your cryptic gibberish, right?”

“No.” He rolled his eyes. “I didn’t shower today. I tried my best to wash myself, but... the water is freezing cold. I couldn’t stay under the water for more than ten seconds.”

“What? Monophanie messed up the showers as well?!”

“This is going to be a living hell if we don’t do anything...” Kaede said.

“Anyways... where’s Himiko?”

Confused by the artist’s statement, I glanced at Himiko’s door. Slightly ajar, it was curious to see.
“She should be in her room...” Kiibo said, then looked in my same direction. “Maybe she forgot to close it? Maybe she just wants some air...”

“Then why not leave?”

Tenko did not waste any second and immediately climbed the stairs to reach the entomologist. Despite Angie’s advice, she still appears to be inexplicably and uncontrollably attracted by the short-haired girl.

Kiibo, noticing that, followed her. “I think someone else besides Tenko should go... Himiko still doesn’t want to see her.”

Us other five agreed silently to let the situation pass, but mere seconds later-

“HIMIKO!”

A ear-piercing scream.

Tenko, who had opened the door, ran immediately inside. Startled, Kiibo moved quickly to see what happened. He stopped right in front of the door for a second, then disappeared behind it too.

In a couple of seconds everyone was sprinting towards Himiko’s room. There was little to no time to process what was happening; however I realized the entomologist could not be dead. Two people had already seen her and no announcement had played.

As we stepped into the room we saw Tenko carrying an unconscious Himiko onto the bed. Pink splotches of blood dirtied the caretaker’s dress. After some seconds of looking, it was clear they came from the entomologist’s wrist.

“Holy shit!” Kaito shouted. “What the fuck happened?”

Tenko laid Himiko on the bed, we were still confused.

Kiibo came back from the bathroom with hand dryers and ran towards Himiko.

“She... s-she... cut her w-wrist...” She said as she tried to stop the blood from pouring out.

“Did she do it by herself?” Kaede rushed to help the two, even though there was not much we could do.

“Everyone was with someone else!” Tenko said. “And Rantaro couldn’t leave his room...”

Glancing at the bathroom, it was clear she had already lost quite the amount of blood.

Glass shards, from the mirror, were scattered on the floor.

“We need to find something to stop the bleeding!” I shouted.

“What?”

“Some towels won’t do! Wrap something else around the wrist! Otherwise blood will keep flowing!”

Kaede removed the coat she was wearing and took out two bandages from her backpack.

“You never know when they can be useful.” She said.
“Can you wrap th-
“I know what to do.” She told me.
“I... I...” Kiibo stuttered. “Will she be alright?”
“She seems to have lost a lot of blood... we don’t know when she did this, but she’s still breathing and alive.”
Tenko checked her pulse.
She nodded.
Himiko is not out of danger, but it is not too late to help her.
“We should provide her with blood.” Kiyo noted. “What kind of blood type is she?”
“0, damn!” Kaito shouted checking the Monopad. “Are there any blood reserves around the school?”
“T-there are in the warehouse.” Kiibo said, trembling. “But... I don’t know if the blood type is specified... they’re just there...”
“We need to have a blood transfusion, quickly, but...” I sighed.
“What? Is anyone here capable of that?”
I raised my hand. “I have some experience. I am not a doctor but this might be necessary.”
“How necessary?” Tenko asked. “And how proficient are you?!?”
I attended some courses of first aid and witnessed blood transfusions. Once one of my friends was in dire need of blood and we transported him to a hospital. There I watched cautiously every action that the nurse took.
I had a blood transfusion myself. I did it because I lost too much blood... and I had been too careless... and now I have to live with this unknown sickness.
“I can try. I have to say... there is the possibility it could go wrong. I need some th-”
“What?! You’re saying... Himiko could die?!”
Yes... and... “That... means I would be considered the blackened.”
“Wait a second! We can’t risk sacrificing Kirumi because of Himiko!” Rantaro intervened. “We don’t even know her conditions! She might survive regardless of the transfusion!”
“If Kirumi does not succeed, we would have to deal with two bodies...” Kiyo said.
“B-but...”
This is my choice, and my choice only.
Each second that passes reduces the entomologist's chances of survival.
“I could do it...”
“Are you sure?”

“I am confident I can do it. However... I would need the materials for it. An IV pump, an Y tube, saline solution and of course, blood.”

“I’m going to the warehouse. I’ll warn Angie and Gonta on the way...”

Kiibó ran down the stairs. I could sense his panic from his steps.

“Are you sure those things Kirumi asked for are there? They are very specific!”

“Rise and shine ursine!”

Among the panic, the three mechanical bears emerged from the door, bringing the object I asked for.

“Here they are!” Monophanie smiled awkwardly. “Sorry for the wait!”

“Wait, what?! Are you helping us now?” Kaede exclaimed.

“Yes! Because... because...” Monophanie was sweating profusely and soon she couldn’t articulate any sentence.

“This wasn’t planned, okay?!” Monotaro said exasperated. He was flailing his arms everywhere, slapping his sister by mistake.

“I suggested to avoid a suicide, you know?” The blue bear explained. “I love gore, but the thrill of an execution is far more great! Yeah!”

Monophanie must have reprogrammed him again.

“E-exactly!” She nodded. “Don’t think we’re doing this because we’re doing you a favor! You bastards! It's to minimize the losses!”

"The higher-ups told us to intervene! We're not on your side!"

“This doesn’t make any sense...” Kaede said, gritting her teeth.

“Are you saying we shouldn’t use what they have given us? Just take advantage of this for once!”

“It’s perfectly safe as long as you know how to use it!” Monotaro assured.

Tenko, still applying pressure on the wound, spoke up. “Then why don’t you do this by yourself?”

“Because we don’t have any fucking idea on how this works! Hyahahahahah!”

“So long, bear well!”

“Kirumi, you’re the only one who knows if this is viable or not. What do you say?” Rantaro asked once again if I was sure I could do it.

“If something were to happen, you will not have to endure the search for a culprit.” I explained.

“But... you’d still die...”

Yes. However,... what the others do not know... is that my time her might be limited too. It is better to give my life for a noble cause than die in vain. Even if my attempt might fail, it would save one
of my classmates.

The more time we wait, I believe, the more severe the atmospheric conditions will get. With extreme cold, someone might attempt something terrible.

“You should not worry about me. I prefer to die knowing I tried to save a friend, not killed by one or forced to kill another myself. Kaede, tie a tourniquet around Himiko’s wrist.”

The detective nodded.

Kiibo came seconds later, huffing, carrying two bags of blood. Gonta and Angie were behind him, praying to Atua.

“There were all the 0 sacks we found. We didn’t check everywhere, but...” He stopped to breathe. “...I thought it was urgent...”

“It will do for now.”

“Should we leave?” Kiyo asked.

“No. Stay. You should all learn how to do this. It is not easy... one day, you might need to do this.”

***

Kaede Akamatsu

The next minutes were atrociously tense. After inserting the pump into Himiko’s vein, Kirumi said she thought she hit the right spot, but was not sure. The blood and the saline solution came flowing down the tubes, eventually in the entomologist’s body. We concluded that one bag was more than enough.

Hours passed, but Himiko did not wake up.

Hours passed, but neither did an announcement sound.

We all stood inside that room for the rest of the day. Because of what happened, I didn’t even bring up my theory about the Academy. Gonta brought us food and refused to leave, insisting he would want to see Himiko waking up. I couldn’t go back to my room either, but remaining silent was a terrible experience. Maybe I should try to talk with someone.

FREE TIME START!

I thought it would be a good time to talk with Angie, to understand her point of view. Maybe I can find out if she really cares about others. I tapped her on the shoulder.

“Kaede! I’m glad Himiko seems to have survived. Atua must have decided she deserved to live.”

“I think it’s because of Kirumi’s skills, not because of-
“It must have been the work of Atua! He works in mysterious ways…”

Angie and moved outside of the room to talk alone with me. She started praising Atua, describing him as a long, black-haired God with red eyes who see sees and hears every day and every night before going to bed. She has never spent a day of her life without Atua, who's happy to give her advice whenever she needs it.

“When did you meet Atua?” I asked. “From what you’re saying, you consider him like a friend…”

“He’s more than a friend. He’s our one true God, and he has chosen me as his vessel. Atua reigns our world using my body! I’m so happy he chose me amongst all of the human race!”

“Yeah, but you haven’t answered my question…”

“Nyahaha! Sorry, Kaede! I always lose myself when talking about Atua!” She clasped her hands in prayer. “As I said before, Atua has always been beside me. I first heard his voice when I was born. He was there in the operating room.”

“Uhm, couldn’t that voice be the doctor that was there with your mother?”

“Oh!” She exclaimed. “Don’t be silly! Atua was definitely there! I said I recognized his voice~”

“You didn’t hear it before, so how can you be sure?”

“We all heard Atua’s voice before we were even born. He gifts it to us before we enter the womb of our mothers… and then we can listen to it in our world. As the chosen one, I was blessed with it the day of my birth!”

If she thinks she heard Atua, I can’t disprove it.

“Maybe you wish to hear Atua too?” She asked.

“I… I’m not in need of Atua right now.”

“Are you joking, Kaede?” She tilted her head to the right. “You are joking, right?” She asked, moving her head to the left.

“N-no… I’m serious!”

“Maybe I am at fault!” She exclaimed. “Of course! You have never met Atua, right?”

“From what I can tell, I did not.”

“Then your attitude is very understandable!” She cheered. “How can you truly figure out Atua’s greatness if you have never met him? I am lucky because I always lived with Him beside me, but it’s not difficult to see how powerful he is!”

My trainer told me that I should always be ready to see things from other perspectives, but Angie is pretty much forcing me into thinking as she does.

“Ready for an incredible journey? I will show you how capable Atua is!”

“How will you do it? I’m a detective, so you need concrete proof… otherwise I won’t believe you.”

“You are my toughest challenger yet, I think! But there’s no obstacle Atua can’t overcome!”
“You mean… I, right? Meaning, you… can’t overcome.”

“I’m still human, but Atua is divine and godly!” She said as she closed her eyes. “I pray to Atua… Atua… inspire me and enter my body… show Kaede the truth…!”

Angie stood still for five, ten, fifteen seconds. I expected her to open her eyes and start talking, but she remained still for at least another minute. I didn’t want to offend her, so I also stayed still before she talked to me again.

“I had a conversation with Atua.” She soothingly said after a while. “He said he was busy and could not possess my body now.”

Maybe that’s for the better.

“Nyahaha! But He said that I can show you the right way without him! I need you to see my world!”

“Your world? Don’t we all live in the same world?”

“I mean the island where I live! There, all of us respect Atua’s laws and customs!”

“Sadly, we’re trapped here, and we don’t know for how long.”

“That’s not a problem! I’ll just describe everything in detail! Every tradition and way of life! Atua will be so happy! What do you think, Kaede? Uh? Uh?”

She drew near to me and our faces almost touched.

“Hmm… o-okay…? If it’s the only way…”

“Nyahaha! How divine!”

“Are you going to do it now?”

“No, I need to restore my spirit and pray to Atua. He lends me the energy to live. For now, I need energy.”

“Okay… I’ll take my leave then.”

Angie’s definitely strange, and sort of obsessed… but I’m curious to learn more about her homeland. She’s the leader of that place after all… how did she do that

**Free time end.**

We went back to the room. Nothing changed. There were some whispers, but nobody spoke, everyone focusing on themselves.

At some times, some of us would go outside to check the situation. Tenko had her eyes on Himiko since Kirumi started the transfusion. The snow wouldn’t show signs of stopping, and it eventually became a problem. We started to sink when we stepped outside.

Of course, leaving the dorms without a coat would mean a cold, if we were lucky. The temperatures inside were also lower than usual. It could be because night was approaching, but we all feared tomorrow morning the situation wouldn’t improve.
“There’s too much snow outside.” Angie lamented.

“We saw it Angie, complaining about it won’t do anything.” Rantaro rebuked.

“Well! Aren’t you complaining too? Why are you allowed to complain about my complaining? And I’ve started it, you’re not allowed to continue this blame game!”

Kaito stood up, kicking the chair behind him. “Fuck it, Gonta. Give me your coat.”

“Huh?”

“Don’t do it, Gonta!” Angie said.

“I’m going to shovel this snow off the path. We’re going to be walled off here if no one does something about it. It’s been a little more than five hours and it won’t stop.”

“I agree.” Kirumi said.

“I... I do too.” Tenko said.

“Yes, Gonta think that is best option. Gonta not leave Himiko, but I really wish I could help you...”

“Alright!” Angie smiled. “If that’s what you want, that’s what we’ll do. Sorry, but you can see why I wouldn’t trust Kaito.”

“Yes, it’s normal.” Kiibo agreed. “After all, we should have an AAA reunion today as well. And we can’t without a road...”

“That’s the only reason why I considered not shoveling.”

The astronaut furrowed his brows. “You could be nice for once, you know that?”

“I’m nice towards who’s nice to me. Towards the people that listen and don’t have their ears closed off by mystical wax.”

“Hey... be positive!” Angie intervened. “Nobody’s dead, Kirumi did a great job and Himiko’s surely waking up soon!”

Yeah... and who knows what she’ll say... did she actually deserve to live? She caused Maki’s death, plotted with Oums to kill her... and decided by herself she wanted to end her life. When I tied the tourniquet around her arm, I was wondering if I really had to save her.

A victim is a victim, whether or not it is a suicide. If Himiko had died, we’d be warm. We wouldn’t have needed to investigate either.

Five minutes in the court room, Himiko killed herself by slicing her wrists, we’d spare ourselves another execution.

Monophanie would present another motive, but would it be worse than this one? Even so, the game would have gone on with one less person, nine participants left. The more fall, the easier is to understand who the culprit it is, by process of elimination. That, in turn, discourages others to commit a crime.

Those bears definitely know that, that’s why this motive is so hard to fight. Everyone here is either with or against Angie’s group. Monophanie needs to create a bigger fracture and someone will be killed. It’s only a matter of time. And when it happens I’ll be here to deliver justice. At this point, I
don’t care who it is.

It could be Kirumi, Kaito or Kiibo either. The moment they land that killing blow it’s the moment when I forget about them; they are a completely different individual.

What I knew before?

A fake, pretty personality to trick me.

No, I wouldn’t call it pretty. Everyone here pretty much has a glaring flaw. I’d call it ugly, but I still see the potential and good inside people. If I stopped… That would make my life much, much easier...

Gonta handed his coat to Kaito. It was easy to understand he wasn't happy with how much time it was needed to convince him.

“Well, thank you Gonta. Next time don’t wait for Angie’s approval, though.”

“Angie has apparently the last word on the coats. She’s the coat master.” Rantaro said.

“Hey, you can get my coat too.”

Kiibo took off his coat and gave it to Rantaro. “Would you stop being against Angie? Himiko’s in her bed trying to survive and you’ve never said anything about her, yet you continue whispering about how bad Angie is...”

“If you want peace between us, or at least mutual respect... I think that’s not possible now. And I wouldn’t try to guilt trip me. Himiko cut her own wrists. I’ve nothing to do with it.”

“Yet Kaito does.” Korekiyo spoke up.

“You too, man? Holy shit, you keep silent for half a day and the first thing you say is about me causing this? You know what, I’m going outside. I’m gonna help you even if you don’t appreciate me!”

“Wait!” Angie shouted, blocking the door. “You’re not allowed to go around alone! Don’t you remember? The rules!”

“Oh no, you’re still blabbing about those....”

“I will accompany you myself!”

“What? No! They’ll have a shovel! That’s dangerous!” Kiibo exclaimed. “I’ll go!”

“No, no... they’ve calmed down. And Atua is protecting me right now. I’m one-hundred and one percent safe!”

“Are... are you sure?”

Angie nodded and smiled.

“No. Let me go.” Tenko spoke up. “I... I... I think I need to distract myself for a while.”

“Alright!” Angie nodded. “It might be better for your mental health.”

“Hey, she’ll be fine.” Kiibo reassured her as she left with Kaito and Rantaro. “When is she going to
wake up?"

Himiko had her eyes still closed, under the sheets. She had never moved.

“I cannot know. She may have started sleeping already. I suppose that she will open her eyes tonight.”

“Oh... then we can’t leave her here while we attend our AAA! We’ll have to spend the night here!”

“Cool idea...” Kiibo said. “Like... a pajama party...”

“Yes! Who wants to get the pajamas?”

“Do not bother with me.” Kirumi said. “I do not enjoy those activities.”

“Me neither. For now, I will stay here. During night-time I will return to my room. I had other plans for today, however I will not leave Himiko here alone. You can go somewhere else if you wish.”

“Uhm... I wanted all of you to see-”

"See? What's there to see?" Angie asked.

But, actually... Do I want the others to know? I could have an advantage over everyone else... I don’t trust anyone here enough to reveal what I discovered. Someone might have picked up on the strange and curious changes... night and day being set at will, and now convenient heavy snowfall?

“Nothing...” I said. “I was rambling.”

“Oh, but I was so interested! Nyahahah!”

“Kaede just tired. Gonta tired too.”

I smiled at Gonta. I’d tell him, if not for Angie being around at all times. Despite him questioning her more, I still can’t trust him. I’ll have to test my theory by myself.

I left before the Angie-dubbed AAA Atuanced started, some type of attempt to play on the word “advanced”.

A few minutes before it began, the supreme leader instructed Gonta to gather us all in the hall of the dormitories. A very easy task, considering no one was brave enough to venture outside with the freezing temperatures after the sunset.

“As the conduit of Atua’s divine power, I hereby declare the start of our new Assembly! To ensure everyone’s safety, I invite all of you to remain in your rooms.”

“We’re going to become popsicles the moment we step outside. It’s already hard to stay out of our bedsheets...” Rantaro said, wearing at least three shirts.

I shouldn’t criticize him for that. I borrowed my coat to Kirumi and was considering doing the same.

“Then you should return in those. Please, give me the key to your rooms.”
“Again?!” Kaito shouted.

“Do you want to stay in the hall?” Kiibo said. “It’s a couple of minutes and I already need something hot to drink…”

“Funny coming from someone who has a coat shielding them!”

“I do not wish to create further discontent, however you still hold all the coats besides one, who is Kaede’s. And, mind you, she is passing it around.” Kirumi said, noticing Rantaro shivering. She took off the coat and gave it to him.

He smiled in return and accepted. “Oh, thank you. I’m going to run out of shirts soon and I don’t want to burn them out that quickly…”

“We need to make sure Himiko doesn’t get cold when she wakes up…” Tenko intervened. “One coat is for her.”

“She’s so little you could divide the coat in three parts!”

Kiibo spoke up. “Who’s going to use the other two parts then? That’s a stupid sentence.”

“Eh, it’s definitely one of your worst rebuttals, at least try to make sense.”

“Wow! If Rantaro criticizes you too, you’re not in a good position!” Angie giggled. “It’s almost night-time anyway, what are you going to do around the courtyard? Or here, for that matter.”

“I would not feel comfortable knowing someone else has the key to my room, I must say. I would have trouble sleeping, fearing an incursion.”

Angie’s being extremely paranoid, but Korekiyo’s right too. Nobody here wants to give the keys to someone they don’t trust. And I especially don’t want to do that.

“I see, I see… you still don’t think I’m helping you!”

“You told me I had to go back to my room because I could attack you in the kitchen, but now you want us to give you a free pass to our rooms? The situation is the same but mirrored, Angie. We’re the ones in danger. Someone could steal the key from you. You’d have the power. It’s like you’re holding us hostage.”

"If you say it like that it looks like a bad thing!"

“I understands Rantaro’s problem. Maybe Angie should try solution two.”

“Oh well, I’m not a dictator! I could take all your keys thanks to Atua’s channeling, but I have a better idea! I don’t want to disturb Him more than I did today with the prayers for Himiko…”

“I hope they worked…” Tenko whispered.

“So, since you all believe in Kaede… give your keys to her! Woohoo!”

Everyone stood silent, despite Angie’s attempt to hype up the event. To my surprise, Kaito did not raise his voice.

“I suppose it’s better than you. She wouldn’t kill someone because she feels like it.”

“Oh, look! You’re getting along with her again!” Angie said.
Even though he trusts me enough to give me his keys, the feeling is not mutual.

“The only thing I ask for is to open my door when the announcement sounds.” Rantaro handed me the key. “I’ve already spent the entire morning inside my room and I’ve not had fun.”

“I’ll be up before then.” I said.

Korekiyo, despite being reluctant at first, gave me his keys too. Kirumi stood still, pondering.

“Any problems?” He asked.

“If you don’t agree, tell me. I’ll pick the keys up and Atua will protect them!”

The adventurer stared at me for more than I was comfortable with, and surely long enough to make the others aware she had a reason for being so hesitant.

“You can have them. I trust you.”

“All’s well all that ends well!” Angie exclaimed. “Now, if you please go to your rooms we’ll be all set. If you have changed your mind and want to attend the Assembly, you should let me know now.”

Nobody said a word. Instead, Kaito and Rantaro both entered their rooms and waved us goodbye.

“They had the decency to talk to us, at least...” Kiibo sighed.

“You are now responsible of four people, Kaede... you should be aware of the weight that lays on your shoulders.” Kirumi said.

“I won’t enter your room while you’re sleeping. Set up some sort of alarm if you're afraid.”

“Oh, kekekeh... I will not need that. I will certainly hear you. I am not an heavy sleeper...”

After everyone went back to their rooms, I locked everyone’s door. Angie asked me if I would attend the Assembly again, but I still refused. It would be useless going there, since they aren’t going to do anything weird until they brainwash me.

And I’m confident in my abilities, but I’m not so dumb to say Angie could never convince me. That's the first step before falling down the rabbit hole.

Chapter End Notes

NEXT TIME: In the third day the motive worsens as everyone's vision is clouded.

But when is next time? I don't know. I hope as soon as possible. It will come... maybe in one month? Maybe two? It's still coming.

A new FTE in the next chapter to vote for. Already saying that you can't choose Himiko.
She'll be either recovering or dead. not both.
Hello. I hope you all are having a wonderful day. I personally wanted to inform you that Danganronpa: Killing CRAV3 will return soon. As you may have guessed, there were some problems that are not worth disclosing, that forced me to stop in the middle of Chapter 4. The matter, is, they are resolved as of now. The series will be back in a few days.

Despite this interruption, I believe whoever's reading this will continue to support us, and for it I am very grateful. We all had to face something we would never expect in the past, but I am doing the best to avoid it happening again, and that is why I had to take those measures. I'm glad many of you will stay here and see how the story will conclude. In classic Danganronpa fashion, the next parts will have many surprises and conclude with shocking revelations at the end, that, of course, I can't spoil yet.

Despite all of our efforts, I know the overall experience will never be the same as before; we do our best, and I hope that ours is enough. Once again, thank you all for the support. Danganronpa is part of every one of us and despite its flaws, we still love it.

Goodbye, you'll see the students soon.

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I swear this is very deliberate, I would not publish a simple update as a chapter. ;) It makes sense in context.

On an unrelated note, my Word, like, deleted itself yesterday. I lost some stuff, but not much. Seriously, writing stuff already done in the past is horrible. Next part will be published by the end of next week, maybe before. Who knows.
Chapter Summary

Kaede searches for another coat; Kirumi tries to know more about Korekiyo and Himiko.

Himiko saw everything.

Somehow, she saw flashes in her head. Memories. Then she heard a voice and an image. It wasn’t like the other time, when Monokuma showed it on the screen.

It was like a dream, but one in which she didn’t have to sleep. Perfectly conscious, she could understand perfectly what was going on. She saw herself, and herself talked to her.

Not the opposite, she just couldn’t. She spoke, but the her on the other side couldn’t hear her. However the Himiko with dark hair assured her she could hear her thoughts, so she heard.

The Himiko on the other side said there wasn’t much time, but revealed all.

She discovered she was like a reflection, a shadow and a copy of the blurred, mirrored Himiko. This didn’t make her worse, but different. So much she could be considered a different entity altogether. And she was different from the well-dressed Himiko, completely. They were similar on the outside, but that was also not completely true. Their mannerisms could be compared, but small differences were enough to distinguish both of them.

Of course, those would be immediately noticeable for someone who was outside of this killing game, a viewer. Maybe not at first, but after a while... even the outer shell would be seen as fake, an imitation.

The dream-like Himiko revealed her she wasn’t meant to survive the game she was participating in. She was supposed to die soon, that’s what fate had in store for her.

But they had other plans. She was destined to die, yes, but not like a pawn, not like a useless chess piece to be sacrificed during the first turn. Her new death could change everyone’s lives, from the ones trapped with her to the entirety of the outside world. She would die on her own terms, with the possibility to return one day, as a new being. She could decide everything about her appearance, taking a new form, something that pleased her, that changed her completely.

She liked herself, but she always wished she were taller. Yes, she did... at least from what she remembers. But does it matter? She wants it, and she’s sure of it.

She listened as the wiser Himiko told her about the nature, the reasons, the mysteries behind the game, and how she could not tell anyone else. How she and the other two were sorry about the deaths that occurred and the ones that would occur, but they were finally on the right track. No one else could understand, she was the only one who, could be convinced. She was the only one who could see her real self, the original and know the truth behind her existence. She could try all that she wanted, but humans cannot fly by themselves, the mysterious Himiko said. They need wings,
and Himiko would be those.

Her companions had no help from the outside, nothing that could connect them to their lost past. A connection that went deeper than words, clips or memories. Himiko had the clever Himiko, however. And the Himiko from the outside was still living, breathing, helping them survive.

It was a lot to take in. The Himiko that loved bugs now asked herself if she could ever do it.

“So...” 0U-M5 said. “You’ve learned the truth. Sadly, we’ll have to tell a bunch of lies to everyone else to ensure it works.”

***

**Kaede Akamatsu**

The bedsheets weren’t thick enough to grant me a peaceful sleep. I woke up many times during the night, wishing for a heater. I also regretted not taking back the coat.

...Maybe I should go back to Rantaro. Maybe...

I tried to wash my face to wake myself up. I set the water to hot, but I remembered too late that Monophanie denied us that too.

It was like an ice cream truck hit me in the face, but I at least felt awake. The clock displayed 5:00. Still too soon for everyone to be up, so that’s perfect.

I tiptoed out of my room, making sure not to make a sound and headed for Rantaro’s door. The first key I tried fit perfectly, and I entered. I didn’t bother to close it, I’d be leaving it soon.

I approached him. He wasn’t facing me and he didn’t turn, so he was still sleeping. I tapped him on the shoulder to alert him of my presence. I prepared myself to cover his mouth if he started screaming.

After all, I was entering his room in the middle of the night.

I continued to tap his shoulder, but he didn’t move. For a moment I thought he was a very heavy sleeper, so I whispered his name in his ear.

No success either, that was strange. I started panicking. What if someone...

I sprinted on the other side to check, but...

Rantaro stood still, his eyes staring at me.

“Kaede, what the fuck.” He whispered.

“You had me worried. I thought you were dead.”

“You are worried? What am I supposed to say? Someone taps me on the shoulder while my door was supposed to be locked and you have the guts to say you were worried?”

“We have no time for discussion. You can go back to sleep, just give me one thing.”

“My life?”
“What? Of course not, and you know that very well. Stop playing around.”

Rantaro crawled out of bed. I considered splashing some water on his face too, but that would be absolute evil.

“It’s five past five and everyone’s sleeping. What’s your plan and why do you want Angie to be unaware of it?” He guessed correctly.

“We’re going to see if there are any coats in your room. I’d have already gone there, but I can’t do anything without your Monopad. So just give it to me and we’re done.”

“Weren’t you against exploration?”

“I’m also against freezing to death, would you know that.”

“Understandable. I also think we should look at it. After all, are brushes going to kill someone?”

I decided not to remind him that we’re not afraid of brushes. “We?”

“Well, I’m not going to let you explore without me checking my lab out.” He shrugged. “As long as we’ll be quick, nobody will notice.”

“It’s so much easier if I do this alone. You remain here and I can say I was just having a walk. And Angie won’t discover anything.”

“So... are you on her side or not?”

“I’m not on anybody’s side.”

“Yes, you’re on the side of justice I bet.”

“Are you trying to be funny?”

He shrugged, then he went back to his serious face. “I guess you still have to decide. I know you’re starting to be wary of everyone here. Maybe that’s better, but I think it’s stressing you out.”

“Will you give me your Monopad or not?”

“Okay, okay...” He conceded, handing me the device. “Try to be back as soon as possible. And pay attention to the snow. There was a lot of it, and it snowed the entire night.”

Rantaro was right. As I was approaching the main building I felt like I was trapped in a canyon. The walk towards the main building was worse than I imagined; the snow had reached the level of my ankles and by a long margin. To my left and right, it was high enough to reach my knee.

It would be impossible to move around if it continued snowing but thankfully, it didn’t anymore. It must have stopped during the night.

The school wasn’t warmer than the courtyard. Tugging on my coat, I climbed up to the last floor, reaching Rantaro’s lab. As I was about to turn the knob, I heard footsteps behind me. The person who was following me must have ran towards me since they weren’t near me while I was on my way there.

“You got me. I should’ve figured that the detective was a bit smarter than expected.”
“Rantaro?”

He stood right there, still with his pajamas. Considering his size, probably four of them.

“How the hell-

“You left my door open. Did you turn the key four times or three?”

I was so caught up with trying to do this as quickly as possible that I forgot to lock the door properly...

“Why did you come here?”

“I thought I should have warned you.”

I put my hands on my hips and raised my eyebrows. It was pretty obvious that I didn’t buy that and he knew that perfectly.

“Yes, of course I’m here for my lab. But it’s not my fault you didn’t pay attention. What should have I done? Stand there and wait for you to return?”

“That’s what you were supposed to do. But I guess it’s too late now.”

“Sorry.” He shrugged. “I just really care about my lab. Everyone else got to see their own.”

“You just want to spite Angie.”

“Does it count as one if she’ll never discover I got in here?”

“She’s going to if we continue to talk without going inside.”

“That’s right. Let’s get this done with.”

Rantaro’s lab didn’t have a flashy ceiling, walls and floor. It was all white, with tables, cupboards, easels and empty canvases. There were layouts of buildings and gardens on the floor everywhere. I had to pay attention not to step on them.

The artist opened the cupboards to see what was inside. Every possible object that an artist could use was there. I didn’t know most of them, but Rantaro appeared to recognize every one. Buckets of painting, blocks of chisels to sculpt, models of houses to rearrange, there was literally everything I could think of.

“Do you think a house model could be used to kill someone?” He asked.

“Why would you even think about that.”

“I don’t think anything here is particularly dangerous. Sure, everything could be a weapon if you try hard enough. And you put it in the right place.”

He looked at me for approval, but all I gave off was a sigh.

“I’m not trying to murder you.” He said.

“You’d have to be brain-dead to kill me in the lab in which only you and me could access in these circumstances.”
“I wouldn’t kill you even if the situation favored me immensely. I’m not about that... life? I suppose.”

I doubt anyone here would try to kill me. I’m not anyone’s bestie by any means, but there are many people here that have worse enemies.

“Ah-ha! I knew it!” Rantaro exclaimed, finding a single coat in the last wardrobe. “That bear had to hide one of those in my room, just to make us hate each other more. I can get rid of my three extra layers of shirts now.”

“I’m relieved we have one extra, but we still don’t have enough for everyone.”

“*Rise and shine, ursine!*” Monophanie shouted. If we were at a lower floor, somebody would definitely have heard her.

“Are you trying to let the others know we’re here?” I asked her.

“Technically, I surely could!” She giggled. “But your little reconnaissance mission was so fun, I’m not going to spoil it. This could be an interesting narrative!”

“Then, why are you here? The more we stay here, the higher is the risk of getting caught.”

“I came here to inform you that the coat is perfectly legit. You can take it out of the lab, tear it apart, use it as a carpet for all I care. Then, remember that you’ll have this new coat lying around! How are you going to explain that? *So long, bear well!*”

As the bear disappeared me and Rantaro looked each other in the eyes. “We need to find a valid excuse for this.”

“Can’t we just say it was around the school, in my lab?” I proposed.

“Angie’s not going to believe that in a second.”

“Sure, but Angie’s word is not the universal truth.”

“It is according to her followers. She’s the messenger of Atua, so whatever she wants to say, it’s true. It doesn’t matter how outlandish it is, it’ll be true in the eye of the beholder.”

“Her group can believe whatever they want, but they won’t ever have the proof. If I claim I found in my lab...”

Rantaro nodded, scratching his chin. “It’s better if we don’t speak about it now. It’s a pity I have to leave this place. For once I could create something beautiful...”

As we turned back to the door, we saw what was on the walls. Twelve pictures of twelve different young girls, all similar... but with definite characteristics.

“Who are those people?”

“I’ll tell you another time...” Rantaro nodded. The sadness in his voice was easy to pick up.

“Did you paint those pictures?”

“Maybe... I don’t remember it. Though I suppose I did... there are not many people that could draw this well around us.”
Us? Who is he talking about?

The artist approached the wall and looked at one painting in particular. The one that depicted the one that seemed to be the oldest.

“I’m sorry for what happened to you...” I could hear him whispering. I knew better than asking him what he meant.

“I think we can go. I was wrong... this room only exist to taunt me...”

Rantaro didn’t talk about his experience in the lab during our way back. He kept silent as we walked downstairs. There wasn’t much I could add, so I did the same. Only when we were back in his room he opened his mouth again.

“So... are you going to help Angie or not?”

“I’m not on anybody’s side. I told you.”

“You can’t continue refusing to choose one. When the time comes, you’ll have to. If you don’t do it sooner, it will happen later with worse consequences.”

“And you speak like it already happened to you.”

“Who says it didn’t.”

“If you told me more about it, I’d be happy to give my opinion.”

“I like you, Kaede. I think you’re smart and you have good qualities, but you have a lot of flaws too. Maybe someday I’ll tell you why I’m sure that Angie’s not doing the right thing.”

“Didn’t you say you would not care about what she’d do? You seemed cool with locking yourself inside. Two times.”

“I didn’t have much choice. Maybe you noticed it, but when I speak, I always try to avoid conflict. I might be sarcastic sometimes, but I always stop when the situation is going south. I try to keep out of what I don’t know and suppress my anger when I can. Fact is, that I see a replay of my past in front of me, and... I don’t want to happen it again.”

I rolled my eyes. He doesn’t try to avoid conflict; he actively avoids conversations and that’s it.

“You’re telling me that I should pick a side, but you aren’t that different. If you feel that uncomfortable around Angie’s ragtag of sheep, maybe you should do something about it. You complain about Kaito’s brashness, and mine... but your problem is the exact opposite. You’re always silent, analyzing the situation. When are you going to speak?”

He laughed awkwardly, avoiding my gaze. “That’s right... maybe it’s a bit hypocritical of me to call you out on your behavior. If I continue to distance myself from everyone, I might become the same as Maki.”

He stopped. He probably wanted some contribution on my part, but I had nothing to say.

“We should learn from each other.” He smiled, holding out his hand.

I stood still.
“Look. I’m not going to talk about my past. Neither are you. People meet each other and don’t tell each other what they went through right away. I know it’s been two weeks here... but we don’t know each other. We don’t even know ourselves. Our memories could have been all jumbled up.”

I’d give anything to discover what’s Rantaro’s deal. Twelve sisters... His way of dealing with problems... This personal distrust towards Angie... And his whole personality... But he’s right.

“Is this going to turn into a spit handshake?” I asked.

“No, ew. I’m not that kind of person.”

“Alright. I don’t know what an handshake could do, but if you care, it’s okay for me.”

***

Kirumi Tojo

Ding dong bing bong!

I heard the announcement while showering. The water was as freezing as Rantaro told us, but I had to face worse challenges in the past.

As Kaede opened my door a few minutes later everyone was rather surprised to see me with my hair still wet.

“You’re gonna catch a cold!” Kaito shouted.

Besides him, there were Kaede, Gonta, Rantaro and Korekiyo.

That is not one of my biggest problems right now. “I am honored you are worried for me... but you should not be.”

“I’m serious. It isn’t snowing but it’s still cold outside.”

“Has Himiko woken up?” I asked, worried for her health more than mine.

“Kiibo and Angie take her to cafeteria. She seem good, but not talked yet.” Gonta said.

I breathed a sigh of relief.

“You’ve helped her.” The detective continued. “But we can’t let you get ill. You have to dry your hair. I will go back to the cafeteria to tell the others you will need some more time.”

“Tell them they should not wait for me. In fact, you can all go there if you want.”

“Angie is saying someone should still watch you...” Gonta pointed out. “Especially now that snow makes it easier to hide.”

“It also makes a lot harder to move around, so she shouldn’t be that worried!” Kaito protested. “And I should remind you that I shoveled the way to the school. That’s the only reason why you can go there in the first place!”
“Yes, Gonta happy about that. You were very nice!”

Kaito was taken aback by the congratulations. Having heard insults or backhanded compliments in the last few days probably caused him to forget what means being appreciated.

“Oh... thanks, Gonta. It’s... nice from you...”

In spite of what I told, the others waited for me, until we left the dormitories to quite a sight.

“Is it Gonta glasses or is it everything more...”

“Foggy.” Rantaro completed the sentence.

We could still see almost everything, though the farther details were hardly distinguishable.

“Strange...” Kaede said. “There was never this much fog in the morning.”

“In fact there was none until today.”

“It might have been caused by the snow.” I explained. One of the guides I met during my travel was an expert meteorologist, though I doubt he was an Ultimate like me. “It occurs when moist air moves above a cold surface, and it accelerates melting.”

“Does that mean that moving will be possible again?” Kaito asked.

Rantaro shook his head. “I’d like to think Kirumi’s right, but look at the snow. There’s more than yesterday night.”

“We should be relieved the snow has stopped. I might be able to reach my lab. Thankfully... I was suspecting I might not be able to...”

Korekiyo seems so attached to his lab. He must be proud of his next work. Or is it his sister...?

While Tenko and Kiibo were in the cafeteria, there was no sign of Angie and Himiko.

“Where’s her?” Kaede asked, skipping the salutations.

Kiibo rolled his eyes. “Angie told us you would only care about her. She saw you coming from the windows. Himiko doesn’t want you to be around her.”

“I don’t think that’s fair.” Rantaro objected. I happened to agree with him.

“Sorry. I understand her reservation, but we need to know her conditions. She tried to take her life... not once, but twice. She first claimed to be doing it for Angie... and yet she did it again.”

The first time could have been an isolated case, but two... Two attempts in three days is a serious warning for us. This time, she did it completely by herself. An action, and an instant reaction. If not for us, she would have been lying on the floor.

“Is it because of me and Kaede?” Kaito asked. Kaede glared at him, but a second stare by Rantaro convinced her to rethink her words.

“Maybe. We were harsh, but we also shouted at each other. But you see us still walking together.”
“You’ve not smiled at each other since the day of the trial, though. And never talked if not to argue.” Tenko intervened.

“She’s right. If Himiko doesn’t want to see some of you, she has her reasons.”

“But Kirumi’s the one who saved her.” Rantaro protested. “She has the right to avoid us, but she has to meet her. To say thanks, at least.”

Kiyo moved forwards.

“She may feel resentment towards Kirumi. That is why she does not want to meet her either.”

“That’s ridiculous, man. Resentment for what?!”

I understand what Kiyo is saying. She just attempted suicide. In her eyes, I did not save her. I only prolonged her suffering.

“You see, Himiko wished to end her life on this mortal plane. I understand her decision and respect your attempt to save her. Though, if she asked me to help her pass away, I would do it in an instant.”

“What are you saying?!” Tenko shouted. “Himiko’s a person! Like everyone... she might have some problems... and... escaping like this is... it’s just not a way to fix them...”

“Would you be a blackened... just for her?” Kiibo trembled. “That’s sick...”

“I did not say that. Himiko is free to choose, and I can help. I would not murder someone only because they ask me to. That is disrespectful to the human race, because a life is always a life, no matter how ugly.”

“But... you said you didn’t want to save her... that’s horrible!” Tenko continued, distressed.

“Please, refrain from criticizing Kiyo for his opinions. He only expressed his view. He did not try to dissuade us from helping Himiko.”

“But his words are enough...” Kiibo muttered under his breath.

“Why are you two still here?” I asked. “I doubt Himiko does not want to see you as well.”

“Himiko said that Gonta could talk with her.” The tennis player intervened, though I did not ask of him to do so.

“She has faith in Angie, and Angie alone. I think you can understand why.” Kiibo explained.

“I don’t. I’d do the opposite, in fact.”

“Thankfully we’re different, Kaito.”

“I came here to eat and the only thing I find is malcontent, like every. Fucking. Day.”

Kiibo did not appeared bothered by Himiko’s attitude. It was clear that he was comfortable with Gonta’s and Angie’s company alone. On the other hand, Tenko’s gaze showed she wished the entomologist had considered her. It seems that the suggestions Angie gave were not enough for forgiveness.

“Rise and shine ursine!”
“Hello, everyone! Monophanie’s here for a quick debrief of the new day!”

Monokid and Monotaro came from the entrance with Angie and Himiko following suit. Angie was smiling as always, but Himiko was looking at the ground, hiding behind the leader.

“Let’s play a game!” The leader exclaimed. “It’s called, pretend Himiko isn’t here!”

“Gonta not understand, but I’ll play to make Himiko happy.”

Monophanie thanked her brothers for helping her find the two girls. Before anyone could mention their arrival, the bear started talking.

“It’s time for the weekly weather forecast! I, Monophanie, your expert meteorologist, will guide you through the week.”

“Such a great businesswoman!” Monotaro praised her sister, but I doubt that correlates with forecasters.

“She is exactly like her father, maybe better!” Monokid echoed.

The two bears left the room for some seconds to return with a cardboard that depicted a chart. In the top row, they scribbled the names of the days of the week, barely recognizable; the first column was filled with abbreviations of the parts of the day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SANDEY</th>
<th>MONODAY</th>
<th>TYUSDEI</th>
<th>UWENSD??</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAW</td>
<td>Clear Sky</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>Blizzard</td>
<td>Blizzard</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOR</td>
<td>Fog</td>
<td>Fog</td>
<td>Blizzard+Fog</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFT</td>
<td>Snow</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVE</td>
<td>Fog</td>
<td>Fog+Snow</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIG</td>
<td>Snow</td>
<td>Blizzard</td>
<td>Cyclone</td>
<td>Tornado+Fog</td>
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</table>

“I’m sorry Monokid doesn’t know how to write...”

“So, today! As you can see, a heavy fog will appear this morning. How is it possible? As a meteorologist, I’ll assure you it’s completely normal! And don’t ask me for explanations because it’s sooo difficult!”

“Is that a blizzard tomorrow?!” Kiibo said, panicked.

“Give me time! I have to go in order! What a terrible audience!”

“And a cyclone the day after tomorrow?”

Angie looked confused. “This is so strange, can Monophanie actually summon strong winds?”
“Since you’re so content without my explanations, I’ll stop explaining! I wanted to give you advice but you’re not worth it!”

“You weren’t going to tell us anyway.” I rolled my eyes.

“You’ll never know, you meanies!” She shouted before disappearing with her brothers.

I came closer to the cardboard, hoping to have misread the words written on it, but there was no ambiguity; fog, blizzards and tornados were, according to it, coming soon.

“It has to be fake, right?” Tenko asked. Gonta tried to reassure us, but it’d be best to avoid giving others false hope.

“I doubt it. I think Monophanie isn’t lying to us. Fog won’t be a big problem, but we’ll have to withstand a blizzard next night.” Kaede said.

“How can you be so sure?” The tennis player asked. It made sense for him to be in denial. But I’m already ahead.

“Monophanie made snow fall from the sky. If she can do that, she definitely can use more snow to give us more problems.”

Rantaro spoke up. “We need to find a safe place before the situation worsens. We don’t know how bad it will get.”

“The sooner we prepare, the better our results will be.” I chimed in. “Blizzards are dangerous and the dormitories might be severely damaged. The basement or the area under the boiling room should be our best refuges.”

“We’d need to move away all the snow… again.” Kaito sighed.

“I will not help.” Korekiyo announced. “Not as of now, at least. I have business to attend to in my lab.”

“Isn’t the road there unpracticable as well?”

“Kekekeh… I worked on it during the night. I will help you after lunch, if you desire.”

“It’s okay, it isn’t a big deal!” Angie smiled. “The blizzard will come tomorrow night, so we’ll have to shovel snow for a while. The weather forecast tells us it will snow for almost a day.”

“If we want to move around, we’ll have to constantly use those shovels.” Kiibo echoed.

“We don’t have to tire ourselves by clearing the entire courtyard! We just need to be able to get to the dormitories, the cafeteria and the boiling room!”

“And Kiyo’s lab? You should not exclude him.”

He cares about that place. It is wrong to prevent him from accessing it.

Angie scratched her chin. “But his lab is so far away… and we’d need to shovel snow from stairs too.”

“Stepping on stairs after snow might be fatal!” Tenko exclaimed. “Ice forms and you might hit your head after slipping…”
“Great pro tip, Tenko! I think we shouldn’t go there, for everyone’s safety! I’m sorry for Korekiyo, but we’re protecting him as well!”

“I understand why you might say that, but-

“Kirumi, she is right.” Korekiyo nodded. “Our efforts should not be wasted in something only I care about. I would love to continue working in my lab, but the circumstances do not allow for it. I care about the group’s well-being, not mine. Still, I will shovel by myself.”

“Wow! What a great philosophy!” Angie exclaimed. “That’s what we all should aim for!”

We had a measly breakfast before splitting. Angie, once again, prohibited us from going anywhere alone. We had to be watched, otherwise we could be planning a murder. We lived the same situation as yesterday, with Kaito protesting once again. We accompanied him in his lab, waiting for his return while Kiibo guarded his room.

“Kiiyo, before you go back to your lab… I want to ask you some questions.”

“About my sister, I suppose.”

“Exactly. If they make you uncomfortable… tell me.”

“You should not ask me those questions to me. My sister will answer them. She knows best.”

This does not seem something Kiyo would say. In addition to that, what he is implying is dangerous. By putting his sister’s persona above himself, he’s suffocating his own thoughts. But there has to be a reason for this…

“I would like to know your opinion, not hers. Your side of the story.”

“The story does not have sides. Me and my sister are different, but the same. We both hear and live through the same skin, our impressions of the world are one.”

“Then, you could tell me more about your sister’s life, how did you act towards her, what did you do together…”

“Why are you interested in such details? My sister’s previous life does not matter, she is with me right now. This is what is important.”

I cannot talk with Aishi now. If I allow Korekiyo to dissociate, he will speak as her. I need his opinion on this matter. However, I should avoid being too forceful. Kiyo should decide to talk on his own…

“It is, but… listen, you know I am still skeptical about an afterlife.”

“Yet you have seen my sister; in this very place, yesterday.”

“How did you two… fuse together? There must be some… higher power at play, right? I also would like to connect with dear people who passed away.”

If Kiyo tells me more, I might be able to understand what his relationship with his sister was. Dissociative Identity Disorder often originates from past traumas.

“I am not sure. My sister decided to talk to me. I did nothing. She started everything… ah, I hear
her coming, I think.”

“No, no, not yet. Wait a minute.”

“Kirumi, why are you telling Aishi to stay hidden? She is also impatient to talk with you.”

It appears I cannot convince Korekiyo to talk. This might be worse than I imagined… if he does not want to discuss about the emergence of the second personality either, it must mean his conditions are worse than I predicted. He must value his sister’s accomplishments above his own.

This does seem absurd, though. He became an Ultimate, not her. He did what she could not. Why is Aishi still lingering, and why does she have such a strong grip on Korekiyo?

I care about him, that is why I must keep this secret. However, I cannot avoid helping him.

“You seem anxious. Here, now I call Aishi here-

As Korekiyo tried to remove his mask, I instinctively reached for it.

I covered it with my hands, so he could not touch it. I heard his muffled protests, but I did not hesitate.

“Did your sister do anything to you? You can tell me. I know the real Korekiyo is still here.”

He tried to remove my hands.

“She seems too intrusive. I’m not saying she’s a bad influence, but maybe you should have more-

Kiyo managed to push me away. He removed his mask, allowing Aishi to come out.

“Kirumi… what are you doing?” She asked. Aishi was irritated.

“Kiyo, listen to me. Put on your mask, please. We need to talk without Aishi.”

“My dear brother can’t live without me. You can’t talk with him and not me, that’s simply not possible.”

“I recognize your existence, Aishi. I only want to talk with your brother. You can come out after that.”

“I don’t really trust you, sorry… I think you’re worried for Kiyo… but you have the wrong idea. We’re best friends, him and I. You can join us if you want, but stop being so aggressive.”

“That was not my intention.”

“You tried to stop me from appearing… Kiyo noticed it too… I’ll tell him to be understanding when he resurfaces. Did you want to ask me something?”

My approach proved unsuccessful. It is Aishi I am talking to now. Whatever Kiyo could have told me, now is distorted and modified, seen by someone else. It is useless asking, expecting a true answer. Aishi will give me her side of the story, skewed in her favor.

“I… wanted to know how you entered Kiyo’s body.”

“Oh, that’s a long time ago… We were so close that I just couldn’t leave him. Our bond was more than corporeal, it was different. So, when I died, I decided to live on through Kiyo. We’re so close
now, it’s impossible to divide us.”

As I expected, a vague answer. The second personality would not reveal how she came to be.

“Kiyo needs to go now. He wants to complete Kaede’s cosplay… I’ll help him, but you’re welcome too.”

“I will think about it.”

Kiyo put on his mask, then looked at me.

“Aishi should be respected… next time, you should be more cautious. She might feel offended.”

“Okay.” I nodded. Maybe I will be more fortunate.

The cosplayer stood up to leave, then went back. He came closer, then whispered in my ear.

“Please, come to my lab before lunch… I really need your help.”

“But… we have to stay here. Gonta will stop us from leaving. We can have this discussion here.”

“No… it is better not. I feel… safer in my lab.”

Should I do this? I do not trust Kiyo to hold Aishi, especially in those conditions…

That is when Gonta arrived, carrying Himiko. She seemed relieved to see Kiibo, much less me, as she tried to avoid eye contact.

Kiyo saw the tennis player, and immediately asked him to escort him to his lab. He nodded. “Of course! But Gonta will need to guard your door!”

“There will be no problem.” He said, before turning back to me. “I trust you will come.”

***

Kaede Akamatsu

“We’ll need to bring some food to the basement too.” Angie said, shoveling.

“How far are we from the boiler room?” Tenko said, sweating. She was not used to this.

However, her question was legitimate. The fog had come down some time ago and the situation was worse than we could imagine.

“This is exactly like the Neo World Program…” Rantaro sighed. “We can barely make out what’s one meter in front of us…”

“Will it get worse? Should I go back to check on Kiibo and Himiko?” Tenko asked.

Angie shook her head. “She’s safe there with him. I’ve talked with her.”

“I’m not worried about that… I’m afraid she could try to harm herself again…”

“Maybe we should stop for a while.” I proposed. “We have to rest…”

“I agree with Kaede.” Tenko huffed.
“Okay, time out everyone. Maybe we should call Kiibo and tell him to come here to help us. But that means Kaito will have to come as well. And remember, never try to talk with Himiko.”

“Ah…”

“It’s for her, you know? She’s not feeling good, and if you show up, you’ll only remind her of a terrible morning.”

Angie’s right, but she can’t dictate the rules about what should and should not be done with Himiko. Why are her, Gonta and Kiibo allowed to talk with her while everyone else can’t even look at her? It’s like we pose a threat…

“Himiko will get better soon… for now she has to stay with people she trusts dearly.”

Rantaro didn’t say anything, but he definitely wanted Angie to shut up as soon as possible.

“Can we stay alone for a while?” He asked.

“If is your room and you give me the key, yes! If not, you need to stay with one of the ABCs!”

“Are you going to continue like this until we’re dying of old age? We need some time by ourselves, and not in our room.”

“With this fog?” Tenko intervened. “Definitely not. This is the perfect setup for a murder! You should know it better than anyone!”

“This is going to clear out by midday, but you’ll still complain about me being untrustworthy.”

“Rantaro, don’t complain, please.” I said. “He can come with me, right?”

As I thought, Angie didn’t flat out say yes. I’ve not convinced her I’m on her side, yet. Should I be more critical towards the artist?

“Okay, but you have to be here in ten minutes! I’m going to the dormitories to check if everything’s okay in Himiko’s room.”

She has the key to the entomologist’s room… did she convince Himiko to hand them to her?

“Tenko, you’re coming with me. Rantaro, ten minutes is a lot of time for some time alone with Kaede, okay?”

“Are you implying something?” Rantaro asked.

“Are you implying something?” Tenko echoed. “Typical males…”

Rantaro and me looked at each other, puzzled. If we had implied something, the implications were more than unclear.

“I’ll leave to your business.” Angie giggled.

As she turned, Angie bumped into Rantaro.

“Sorry.” She said. It probably wasn’t sincere.

It didn’t take long for Angie and Tenko to disappear from our view.
“Thank you for having dealt with her.” He said.

“If I can take advantage of my position, I’ll do it. Now, do you really need to wander around the school corridors alone?”

“I just wanted some time away from her.”

I hope I’m doing the right thing by trusting Rantaro. On the outside, he seems less reliable than Angie, but impressions are what tricks us. If I only considered first impressions, I wouldn’t be the Ultimate Detective.

Still, it would be better if I understood more about his intentions…

“This fog will make everyone more paranoiac than ever.” He said. “And that blizzard… we’re not going to survive a night in the same place… I mean metaphorically. No one’s going to kill while everyone else is in the same room.”

“You might underestimate the people here. We’ll be all together in the same space, everyone but two people will be sleeping.”

“If the other guard is down, the culprit will be obvious.”

“I’m not worried about that. If someone decides to kill, they’d do a massacre. Everyone in a single night. Is it hard? Definitely. Is it impossible? I’ve heard worse.”

At the end of the day, the result would be the same. A killer murders knowing they’ll escape by causing everyone else’s death.

“Do you really believe one of us could slaughter us all? Angie’s group is a hippie movement without the drugs. I hope.”

“One of them could have an enlightenment and kill in the name of Atua. Himiko could decide to condemn herself by killing one of us. Kaito could try to do that after being accused by everyone. Korekiyo gets weirder as time passes. Kirumi spends too much time alone and is so clever she could devise the perfect plan.”

“And me?”

“Huh?”

“Don’t try to convince me you think I’m the only one who has zero reasons to kill. If you think everyone could take a knife and slice our throats, I’m definitely between them.”

“You already know why. I don’t know anything about you. You say something, then you do the opposite. You act friendly, but rarely start conversations.”

He’s unpredictable. That’s what the scariest thing about him.

“I’m glad you feel comfortable enough to say that. You worries are unfounded. I could be a lunatic, but that wouldn’t mean I’d give up my humanity.”

“Killing someone doesn’t always make you inhumane. Sometimes killing is necessary, or is seen as the only possibility.”

“Are you still trying to justify Shuichi? We don’t know what he saw. Monokuma could have lied to him. That’s what he said too.”
“No, it was just… a thought. I was wondering… we could have done terrible things in the past. That’s why we’re here.”

“The bars seem to suggest this is a prison… it lines up.”

Could it be… am I here for my parents’ murder? Did I do something worse after that?

“But who knows. It’s a guess, like many others. It could also be a way to trick us. Maybe we were kidnapped by a bored billionaire. How else would someone gather sixteen Ultimates and build a giant cage?”

“The giant cage… I need to test my theory!”

“What theory?”

But I can’t now… the fog hides everything.

“You’ll see after lunch. If I’m right… it will explain why we haven’t seen any planes, why nobody came here and why the weather feels so strange.”

“Oh, it sounds interesting.”

"I need someone to be with me. To make sure my eyes won’t deceive me.”

“Does that mean I’ll be a part of one of Kaede’ Super Secret Plans TM?”

“Are you serious?”

“The opposite. I was trying to be light-hearted.”

I still can’t understand how he can change attitude so quickly.

“We still have some time left before Angie demands our presence. I’ll check if someone else wants to talk.”

“I’ll go to the bathroom, then. Hoping Kiibo doesn’t find me and reports to Angie.”

***

Kirumi Tojo

Without Kiyo around, I spent some time alone, pondering about my illness. Despite all my best efforts, I did not find a cure. At first doctors said they could not find anything wrong with me, despite my constant coughing of blood, but still gave me medicines to ease the pain or to improve my conditions.

They did, until they worsened again. Antibiotics would not solve anything and the cause of my mysterious ailment was never discovered.

“It has to be a genetic disease, carried by a recessive gene in your family.” Some said.

“Maybe your immune system can’t fight this disease, we need to train it.” Was another common
response.

“You definitely contracted this disease while travelling.” Is what she heard the most.

It could be that I came to know what happened to me and that is how I came to this place, this mysterious and never-heard academy; the library could have contained the information I wanted, but the books were too many to read in their entirety.

I searched for every clue but found nothing. I stopped hoping for an answer. There might not be a cure to this, however, I will continue to fight until my body stands.

“Kirumi…” Said Himiko, sitting beside me.

I saw her coming but did not say anything, waiting for her to start the conversation.

“Good morning, Himiko. We did not greet each other today.”

“We didn’t the day before, and the day prior to that too…” She sighed. An awkward silence followed.

“I’m not… the best talker. And I don’t want to talk to anyone right now… but I can’t ignore you. Not after what you did yesterday.”

Angie must have advised her to approach me, I thought. However, I could sense she wanted answers.

“Why did you help me?” She asked.

“You would have died without a blood transfusion. I was the only one who was capable to save you. I had to help you.”

“What does that mean? You had to… You had no obligation… you risked your life to save mine, after I screwed up…”

Of course, I acted because Himiko will live longer than me, if she survives this ordeal. My illness will not allow me to grow old. But I cannot tell her that.

“Every life has value. It is worth to put yourself in danger to others.”

“You only saved me.”

“No, I did not. I saved you and everyone else. If you died, you would have not been the only one who was affected. All of us would have lost a friend.”

“I… I wanted to make you happy. If I died… there wouldn’t have to be a trial, nobody else would have died except me… And I… I’d have paid for what I did…”

“You do not deserve to die for what happened, no matter what the others tell you. You had no choice. You were scared, everyone is sometimes. But you’re here now, you need to forgive yourself.”

“But I… I’m not human… after what happened, after what I saw…”

“A wrong action does not make you a bad person. I bet everyone here regrets something they did in their past. Your regret is here, between the walls of this academy. You will learn to live with it, your friends will help you. We are all here for you, if you speak with us.”
“You have seen a lot of places, a lot of people, right?” Himiko asked.

Quite a weird question, seemingly unrelated.

“I did, certainly. My memories are not clear, but I know that is true.”

“Then… do you think we have a purpose in our life? Is that why you saved me? Because… you thought I wasn’t meant to die… in my room?”

“That is quite a difficult question. But I believe we have a lot of purposes. They come, are resolved, and then another surfaces. It could be that you do not reach your purpose, but the other emerges nonetheless. What is important, for me, is that we decide what our reason to live is.”

“But… if you think there’s none?”

“You should find it. There always is. As intelligence emerged, we searched for a reason to live, but nobody found it. Because that is what we are supposed to do. Find our purpose… At least, that is what I think.”

Himiko stared at me. I tried to understand what she was thinking, but I could not read her eyes, despite succeeding multiple times in the past.

Then, she hugged me.

“Thank you…” She sobbed. “You… you might be right…”

I was surprised by Himiko’s sudden burst of emotion. I would have never expected her to do anything like it.

However, as she embraced me, I felt the need to do the same.

I wrapped my arms around her, sharing the hug. I never… never had to do this. It was hard to explain. I felt compelled to.

Somehow Himiko allowed something to snap inside me, a feeling I forgot I had in me.

“I’m so sorry for what I did… I see how I was wrong…” She said.

“I… I need to go to Kiyo. I have to talk with him.” I stood.

“You can go. I think it must be an important conversation…”

“You won’t bring me there to him?”

“There’s no reason to. You… can go there alone.”

“I am afraid Kiibo will not like that.”

“Yeah, I should talk with Kiibo too. He’s gone to the bathroom now, so the road is clear. You’re free to go, and you’ll encounter Gonta on the way.”

“Thank you.”

Outside, I could see nothing because of the fog. It was day, but night was clearer. I could hear
Kaede and Rantaro talking, nearer than I would have expected, probably less than thirty meters to my right, but there was no trace of them. The white mist covered all, thin enough to allow me to follow the road cleared out the previous night.

If I held out my hand, I could barely see my fingers; The fog became thicker as I continued.

I passed the dormitories, hearing some voices in the distance. It seemed they were mentioning something about coats, but I did not pay too much attention to them, continuing through the courtyard and climbing down the stairs.

I noticed there was no ice on them, preventing me from slipping. Upon further inspection, I saw small grains of salt. Someone must have had the idea to use the one from the kitchen to prevent injuries.

While following the salt path, I heard footsteps. To my front.

“Is someone around?” I saw, in front of me, another path with salt.

The footsteps stopped. Someone is definitely in this area.

I cannot go to Kiyo’s lab until I understand if someone is trying to ambush me. The fog almost makes me blind, but my sense of hearing is not hampered by it.

Studying every move, I continued down the second path. I did not hear anything.

A large, tall figure appeared in front of me. I recognized immediately.

“Gonta?”

“Miss Kirumi! Thank you! Gonta thought he was lost!”

“Why did you stop walking? You could have answered.”

“Gonta was… confused! Gonta saw a lot of fog come down… then didn’t see any lab… didn’t know where it was…”

“You were overwhelmed by panic. But you cannot get lost here… the courtyard is surrounded by a giant cage. You will always remain inside.”

“Gonta knows but… he did not see anything, and left Korekiyo’s door… and I was scared… Gonta thought somebody could attack him, so when he heard noise, he freezed…”

“When did you leave Korekiyo’s door?” I asked.

“Maybe… ten minutes ago?”

“Did you hear anything else besides me?”

“Gonta… Gonta thinks yes… someone walked around… and Gonta tried to get away from noise to be safe…”

If someone’s here, we are in great danger. But Kiyo is too.

“We have to go back to Korekiyo’s lab. Here, follow me and be as quiet as possible. I know the way.”
I went back, Gonta following me. I checked for footsteps, but the entire area was wiped off from the snow and covered with salt. Did Kiyo do this last night?

A minute passed, but we did not arrive to the destination.

“Shouldn’t the lab be around here, somewhere?” Gonta asked.

“Wait, I think we’re in front of it.”

“Let’s call Korekiyo…”

“No.” I told Gonta, now to my right. “We need to keep silent and come closer. We cannot alert anyone of our presence.”

The rest happened in a few seconds.

I felt a wisp of air to my left cheek, but there was no wind until now. And it did not repeat. Far behind me, I heard it falling.

A faint metallic sound.

Then I heard another sound. Something was moving.

This time, I felt a change in the air, but I was not quick enough to dodge a dart that came towards me, grazing my cheek.

“Gonta!” I shouted. “Duck!”

“No! Stop!” I heard. It was Kiyo. Who was he talking to? Did he see anything?

I felt another dart above my head, wondering how could I avoid what was happening. Four, five, six… seven? Seven seconds passed. Other darts must have been thrown. Someone was running towards us.

I looked upwards. It was Kiyo.

“Kirumi… I, I…”

“Get down, Kiyo! Someone is shooting at us from the front!”

“I… I think they must have left…”

“Are you sure?”

“I was in my lab and heard you, nobody was on the way.”

I turned towards Gonta to hear his opinion. He was strangely quiet.

But I realized why quickly. There were three darts lodged in his right eye. Instinctively, he removed them immediately.
“K-Kirumi?”

“How are you trying to calm him. Those are darts. They shouldn't kill him. For me, however... my illness...

Blood started flowing from Gonta’s eye, his expression worsening by the second.

“I… Gonta… Gonta don’t… feel well…”

“Quick, we need to do something!” Those were not normal darts, I thought.

“Please, Kirumi. You… you are wounded.”

I looked down. Because of the adrenaline, I did not notice. Three other darts had hit me in the knee.
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Daily Life (Part 6)

Chapter Summary

After Gonta and Kirumi are attacked, the group tries to avoid the worst.

“Is that Tenko?” I asked. “Where’s Angie?”

“Still in the dormitories. She told me to leave her alone. She had… divine tasks to accomplish.”

At the mention of Atua, I kept a straight face, but Rantaro couldn’t help but roll his eyes.

“How’s Kirumi allowed to walk alone? Wasn’t she supposed to be with Gonta?”

Tenko seemed a bit worried. “We should go to see if everything’s okay, just in case.”

We moved through the courtyard by holding our hands, to make sure we did not lose track of each other. The temperatures were falling again, announcing that snow would fall soon.

After arriving at the stairs, we could hear cries of help, coming from Korekiyo.

“Korekiyo?” I asked. “Where are you?”

“We can’t see anything, so continue shouting!” Rantaro advised.

“Kirumi and Gonta… they have been shot! We need to treat them!”

At the mention of the word shot, the three of us ran towards the cosplayer’s voice. On the ground, we could see darts everywhere.

Kiyo was standing, holding Kirumi. She was conscious, whispering something, but she couldn’t walk.


“We can’t freeze here asking ourselves that! We have to help Kirumi and Korekiyo!”

Then, came Gonta. Surrounded by fog, we didn’t see him at first. The right part of his face was bright pink, streaks of blood coming from his eye.

“Gonta… Gonta don’t see…”

“Gonta!” Tenko screamed.

Despite his injury, Gonta still stood upright, even though he was wobbling.
“Gonta, can you walk?”

“I… am… dizzy…”

Piecing out what would happen, I sprinted behind Gonta’s back, trying to hold him. I managed to do so, but the weight of the tennis player was too much for me to handle.

“Please… help me..” I said, feebly.

Rantaro came to my aid. He held Gonta by putting the sportman’s arm on his back, and I did the same. This way, we could hope to avoid further damage.

“Kirumi, what should we do?” Kiyo asked. “You… you have some skills in medication. You know…”

“The… my wound could be…”

Kirumi was visibly in pain. Every word she spoke, she appeared to be nearing unconsciousness.

“Don’t try to force yourself, if we don’t have you around we can’t do anything!” Tenko cried out.

“You’ll be alright, those are just darts!”

“No… they probably… reached our nervous…”

“Maybe we can remove them…” Tenko suggested.

“No!” I intervened. “We don’t know if removing them could tear the flesh.”

“And Gonta?” Rantaro asked, trying to keep his cool. However, despite the fog and the cold, I could see him sweating.

“He… he needs… more…”

Kirumi fainted before she could finish her sentence. Her wounds didn't appear severe, but her conditions were terrible.

“More what?” Tenko asked.

“I… I am afraid the wound could be too severe for him to survive.” Korekiyo hypothesized.

I wanted to stay positive, but Korekiyo was right. Even though it appeared to be a simple dart, it could have caused massive damage.

I could still hear his pulse, however. This means he was still alive.

“We can’t bring them up the stairs. They’re too heavy.” Tenko said.

“Go warn the others! Go to Angie and tell her to bring cloths and disinfectant from her room!”

Kiyo searched through the adventurer’s pockets and found her keys. He threw them to Tenko.

“I’ll… I’ll try to be quick!”

“Go! Don’t stay here!” Rantaro shouted.

Tenko vanished. We heard her running away, hoping to find the right way to the school.
“We can’t stay here waiting, at least let’s try to bring them closer to the dormitories!”

“There’s no need to do that.”

A familiar robotic voice. We turned our attention to the ground, where Monokid was. He had discarded his guitar for a stethoscope.

“Come with me, I’ll help you.”

I spoke first. “Why should we believe you?”

“Because you don’t want your friends to die.”

“We don’t have other options.” Rantaro said.

“Tenko is coming here with the others.”

“But she won’t save Gonta. Only I can. In the Monokubs’ HQ there’s an…” He paused before continuing. “Infirmary.”

“Alright.” I nodded. “We’ll go there. To check.”

“Where are your brothers?” Korekiyo asked, still skeptic.

“They will not help you this time, as this is not an unexpected result. The story is returning to his original path.”

“What? What the hell does that mean?”

“Does it matter?” Rantaro said. “Let’s see where this bear brings us.”

Korekiyo nodded, conceding. He looked especially worried for Kirumi, despite Gonta being the one who had less chances of survival.

We walked through the fog for about a minute, guided by the mechanical bear. As we saw the Shrine of Judgment appearing in front of us, the view became clearer. The fog was disappearing, substituted by small snowflakes. As we entered the building, I saw the trail of blood we left.

“Now, you will have to leave them both to me.”

“No, we can’t let you.” I said.

“We have!” Rantaro boomed. “We won’t be able to do anything! Whatever Monokid will do, it will be better than us!”

“He could kill them! What do you know?”

“At least… let us keep Kirumi.” Korekiyo pleaded.

“No. She could die because of your treatment. The darts she was pierced with were stained with extremely poisonous colorants. None of you can save her and Gonta.”

Poisonous colorants? I knew they could cause a skin condition, but go as far as kill someone…
“They need to survive for now. Kirumi will be back in the afternoon, Gonta by tomorrow morning.”

“Ready… what an awful word for a human being.”

“Why can’t we look at what you’re doing?”

“I said it two minutes ago! The more time we continue talking, the less it’s available for them!” He said. “Rantaro’s right. You should leave now, before the Monokubs notice I’m messing up with their plans.”

“Let’s do as he says, please.” The artist repeated.

I hate this, but we have to be honest with ourselves… If we try to save them, we’ll only worsen their condition.

“If you don’t leave now, I’ll force you too with the Exisals. Please, I won’t kill them. Leave.”

I sighed and turned back. The boys followed behind me. When we left, the door locked behind us.

“I hope you’ve done the right thing.” I said.

“Whatever happens, I did. If Monokid kills them, no one will die. Besides them.”

“What about their aggressor? They get to walk among us?”

Rantaro grabbed my shoulders. “You’re a detective, you’ll find them.” He tightened his grip as he continued. “We’ll gain nothing by being angry at each other. What is done is done. Your emotions can’t cloud your reason.”

He’s right. I can’t waste time arguing with him. I need to understand who did this. And the biggest suspect is right next to me.

“Korekiyo, how do we know you did not shoot those darts?”

“Kehkehkeh… that is a perfectly valid question… I… I… would never harm Kirumi. Especially in front of my lab, where only I could go.”

Korekiyo was talking with a slightly different tone. I’ve never heard him stutter. At first glance, he looked shaken. But I’ve seen killers who could control their emotions like actors, faking crying to avoid punishment.

“In fact, I was not in front of my lab as… that occurred.” He signaled to us to follow him towards his research room. “I was spreading salt taken from the kitchen, to avoid the formation of ice. The… the fog hindered me, however I still did that to avoid eventual lethal accidents…”

I tried to keep an eye open for eventual clues. The area around Korekiyo’s lab was free of snow, preventing me from finding footprints.

By looking around the entrance, I found something interesting.

“This is… a hair?” I wondered. “It’s purple.”

“There are more here.” Rantaro said, pointing to a number of similar objects, though still too difficult to tell clearly.
“Someone was here other than you, Korekiyo? Did you hear anything?”

“Other than Kirumi’s cries for help and the sound of arrows, no…” He scratched his cheek, the purple object having caught his attention. “However, I might have misheard something else for wind.”

“So, you’re saying you ran towards Kirumi and Gonta but there was no one else around? How do you explain the darts?”

“The attacker must have run away. I might have… focused my attention on Kirumi and Gonta, not hearing them flee…”

“The darts had to be shot with some sort of weapon.” The fog would protect the killer, but at a greater distance. If they used their hands they would have been closer. “But they did not leave the weapon here.”

“It was too foggy to attempt a murder at a distance. How did they know where to hit?”

“Voices and steps are enough.” I said. “No one was in this area. Someone could try to guess and hope to hit. That’s why there are so many darts around.”

Korekiyo nodded as Rantaro continued to search for evidence.

“Despite this, the attack had to be planned. The attacker could have chosen another location, but they settled for this area. The fog could have hampered their plans, but they acted anyway.”

“How would someone increase a dart’s range? I don’t think I’ve seen darts in the warehouse either.”

“Monokuma mentioned re-stockings. Or maybe… the killer took it as soon as possible and hid them.”

“New objects have never appeared in the warehouse.” Korekiyo noted. He confirmed my doubts.

“We need to enter your lab, Korekiyo. We need to make sure you are not the attacker, and that means checking it as well.”

“If you desire, you could tie me. That would make it impossible for me to escape.”

Rantaro shook his head. “That’d be unnecessary.” He said firmly.

“Keep watch. I’m going in.”

When I went inside the lab, I remembered how much stuff was in it. Searching everywhere for clues would take hours, if not an entire day. Korekiyo’s smart. If he had planned this assault he could have hid something inside one of the dozen of lockers, tugged it away in a costume or got rid of it in a matter of seconds.

I tried to find some evidence that could implicate Korekiyo or anyone else, for that matter, but I couldn’t. Nothing in costumes, wigs or lockers. Inside it was not as cold as outside, but I used some of the heavier clothes I found to avoid catching a cold.

Even the clothes that Korekiyo took previously from my room had nothing out of the ordinary.
“Are you okay? Need any help?”

Ten minutes in, Rantaro entered the lab.

“Where’s Korekiyo?”

“Outside. With the others. They’re back with their coats. Their prayers to Atua have sickened me, honestly.”

“Thanks for the offer, but it’s better if I do this alone.”

“Are you skeptic about me even though we were together when the attack took place?”

“I’m worried you might miss some details.” I sighed, trying another locker. As I pulled its handle, it didn’t open. I tried again.

“Is it stuck?”

“It’s locked.” I clarified. I tried with the others after it. “They’re all locked.”

“Did Korekiyo do that?”

“Let’s ask him.”

Outside, the members of the ABCs were sitting in a circle. Korekiyo was leaning against the walls of his research room.

“Those lockers in your lab… I’d say around twenty of them are locked.”

“Oh. Yes. I have not been able to access them. I hope you do not consider me responsible of what happened because of them…”

“It’s surely suspicious that a bunch of lockers aren’t accessible… don’t you have keys to open them or something like that?” I asked, but the cosplayer shook his head.

“Never opened them. I wished too, but there is no key. If there is, I have not found it yet.”

“Kaede!” Angie ambushed me from behind, dragging me to the circle where the others were. “You’re finally here! We need to talk about some pressing matters!”

“Do you know that two of us were attacked?”

She giggled. “Yes, that’s exactly what I wanted to tell you about!” Could she be a little bit more serious?

“I think we might have a suspect on our hands. Kaito!”

I looked around. He was the only one missing. Even Himiko was there with them.

“We’ve not searched for him yet, we thought. It was too dangerous. We absolutely have to team up to take him down.”

“Take him down?” Rantaro interrupted her. “How do you know he’s involved in this? He was stuck in his room under your orders.”

Kiibo stood up and turned his attention to us. “It’s… my fault. I left… for some minutes… and
then someone locked me in the bathroom…”

I tilted my head. This can’t be true.

“What are you saying?” I asked approaching him. Rantaro didn’t seem convinced either.

“Himiko found me and opened from outside. I checked inside Kaito’s room, he wasn’t there. He must have left while I was in the bathroom… As soon as I noticed, I ran to search for him. The only place I haven’t searched is the casino…”

“You’re telling me I should believe Kaito set up a murder just because you went to the bathroom?” I asked, skeptical. There’s no way something like that could happen. I don’t have the exact times, but someone would need perfect timing to be able to do this.

“It’s possible, nyahaha! Kaito has just waited for the perfect opportunity! Why would he hide if it’s not the case?”

“I need to talk to Himiko. Her version could help me.”

Angie hugged me, but to stop me from talking with the entomologist. “She’s still not ready to talk with other people. Believe us when we say that Kiibo’s telling the truth.”

“This is beyond ridiculous.” Rantaro exclaimed. “You’ve probably brainwashed Kiibo into thinking that’s what happened, when Kaito is completely innocent.”

“I’m my own person, stop thinking I depend on others! Can you be less shallow?!”

“Shit, this always spirals back to this sentence… my God, it’s too late.” He sighed. “This is too taxing for me.”

Angie freed me from her unwanted hug and went back to talk to me. “Don’t you believe us, Kaede?”

“I can’t leave out a testimony. I have to talk with Himiko and hear what she has to say.”

“And Kaito? We are going to leave him walking around with a dart-throwing weapon?”

There’s no fog anymore, but if they’re telling the truth, we should find him immediately. I have to question him as well.

“Let’s…” Kiibo spoke up. “Find him first, then talk to Himiko. Isn’t his story important too? The more we leave him alone, the more time he has to come up with an excuse.”

“That’s right!” Angie nodded while playing with her hair. She seemed to lose interest in the conversation. “We can’t let that happen. Kaede will discover the truth!”

“I’ll keep watch over Korekiyo.” Rantaro said. “After all, there are Tenko and Himiko here. This way Angie won’t be scared of me mass murdering everyone.”

“Don’t joke about it! If you do, it’s more likely to actually happen!”

“Say what you want, I guess…”

There was no sign of Kaito in the area around the casino, so he had to be inside.
“Maybe you should be the only one to enter.” Angie said.

“Do you want me to die?!”

“No, I want Kaito to confess. If it’s only you, he might slip up. If he sees Kiibo and me, he’ll know his plan has failed.”

“I’m not risking my life to prove your point.”

Kiibo disagreed with me. “You didn’t believe us then, now you’re saying you’re scared? What are your real intentions?”

“You’re trying to twist my words, I said that your version is too perfect to be true, but it still can be.”

I don’t believe enough in Kaito to claim he wouldn’t attempt a murder. He’s not the same since Oums died. And with no one taking his side he could have thought he had no other choice.

“Kiibo will wait for us outside. You’ll come with me. Kaito could suspect something if we bring him, but not you.”

“Mmh… okay.” She nodded. “This way, everyone will believe your words too. Given that we don’t die!”

“You… you’ll be alright.” Kiibo said as we entered.

We tried to be as quiet as possible, having seen Kaito immediately after opening the door. With his back turned on us, he was looking at something on the shelves. He appeared to have nothing on his person, but there’s no way to be sure until he turns.

We can’t reach him without him noticing; he’s too far and will hear us. We’ll have to surprise him in another way.

“Kaito, what the hell are you doing here?”

Startled by my voice, he turned. He had a bunch of cables and electronic components between his arms.

“Kaede, Angie? Are you here to bring me back to my lab?”

“Come closer with your arms above your head.”

“What the fuck?” He grinned. “Is this a prank?”

“Kaito, just drop everything you’re holding. On a table, on the ground, I don’t care. We need to be sure you don’t have anything that could hurt us.”

“Kaede, I repeat. What the fuck.” He pointed at Angie. “What did she tell you? Are you in their cult now?”

“You’re avoiding my requests.” I maintained my composure. It’s normal for him not to listen; this doesn’t mean he’s a murderer. I doubt that what he’s carrying could be a weapon in its current form; we’re probably safe. But I don’t like him not doing as I ask.

“Can you at least respond to some questions?”
“If you explain me what’s going on, definitely. I can’t trust you if Angie is right beside you with a creepy smile plastered on her face.”

She shrugged but didn’t falter. “If you don’t like my smile you can tell me. It’s alright, we can change.”

“Why are you here? You were supposed to be in your research lab.” I asked.

“Great, you believe in her surveillance shit now. I don’t know how she convinced you and honestly, I don’t care. I’ll search for what I need here and get back there, if you’re a fan of that way to control us.”

I put my hands on my temples. “You’re making it harder than it should be. That wasn’t the answer that I wanted.”

“Then don’t ask vague questions! Are you trying to accuse me of something?! Just tell me!”

“How are you here if Kiibo was guarding your room?”

“He let me pass, of course.”

“Nyahahah! What a terrible excuse! We all agreed to keep the rules as they were yesterday.”

“He understood that I had to leave to the casino to have the right materials to create the way to get out of here. I have a project for an Electrohammer, but I need all I can get.”

“He allowed you to leave like that? Why would he defy Angie like this?”

“Ask him, he’ll confirm it.”

“Kaede, he’s delusional or a very bad liar.”

“It sounds crazy, but I just had to talk with him and he told me I could go! I think he understood that Angie is cray-cray squared!” He gave me a thumbs up, but quickly noticed my reaction was not a positive one. “You really have been brainwashed.”

“I’ll be honest with you from the start. Kiibo told us you escaped while he was going to the bathroom. He was locked inside and Himiko broke him out after some time. You’re the only one who could’ve done that.”

“No, no, NO! Kiibo didn’t go anywhere, he stayed there! I mean… maybe he went somewhere, but I was already gone!”

“You’re changing your version…” Angie hummed.

“And… hey! I’m not saying Kiibo wasn’t locked inside, but… it wasn’t me! The fuck has he told you?”

“I still need to talk to Himiko, so I’m not one-hundred percent su-

“Holy shit… someone must have framed me! I swear I was in here the whole time!”

“How do you explain Kiibo telling the exact opposite of what you told us?”

“He’s a fucking liar! Angie probably convinced him to do this to make me look suspicious! But nothing happened, you see?! I’m doing this to help you!”
“Kaito…” I paused. “Someone tried to kill Gonta and Kirumi.”

***

**Kirumi Tojo**

I woke up in a warm room, on an hospital bed. One of the worst kind. The room was not the best either; in fact, it did not resemble an hospital at all. A dull, black metal on the ground, the ceiling and every wall. Where was I? This was not a place I remembered.

“You’re awake.”

It was Monokid.

I remembered what happened, so I looked down; there were no darts on my leg. Somehow, they were removed.

“Those things would’ve killed you if I didn’t do anything. That wouldn’t have been ideal for my plan. You’re an essential piece.”

“What?” I looked around to search for exits, but the only one was blocked by the mechanical bear.

“We need you alive. The orchestrators of this killing game want you dead, right now. You should have been killed this morning, and you would have if I didn’t jump in at the last second.”

His words have no sense, he claims to be a pawn like all of us? Maybe the Monokids are somehow forced to do Monokuma’s bidding… he did not save the previous two even though he considered them their children. Something does not quite fit here, but this could be a trap. I am stuck in this place, that does not bode well.

“Why would you have done such a thing? Am I so important?”

“Yes. Not… not directly. If you died here, someone else would have survived too long. I can’t explain too much, because your actions are still being monitored by the team.”

“By team you mean those who organized this game?”

“You’re on point. This area is offline now, so nobody can see us talking. We’re offline too for a while, but they’re trying to re-establish a connection.”

“We’re… offline?”

“Ah! That passed through! Interesting… I could use that later…”

I thought that Monokid was restored to his usual vulgar and loud self, but he seems to be able to hold a conversation now. I doubt he could have reverted back again alone; somebody must have altered his settings again.

“There are a bunch of hidden words you can’t hear. They were… put in your brain as a failsafe. It isn’t as easy as it might sound though… somehow those can detect context and quickly find a suitable synonym for the situation.”
“I understand… why would you be surprised by the world offline being allowed?”

“Because, since you’re peculiar, that would reveal you your true identity. And if you discover that, you will die.”

“Die?”

“Just as I thought. The system picked up the words you shouldn’t have heard and changed them. I never said that word. But I figured I would try.”

Maybe I should not believe him. However, somehow… a sixth sense suggests me he is telling the truth. If I think about it, what he has just told does not make sense.

I have to reach an answer. Offline… I am peculiar… and that is my real identity… how would I die by knowing it? The way Monokid phrased it, it suggests a sudden death…

Maybe I will never understand. If there is a system to avoid some words, there might be another to prevent us from solving this mystery.

But how… did someone modify our minds to this extent? Deletion of specific memories and now prohibited words? We cannot be ordinary people. Yes, we are Ultimates, but I suspect we might hold more secrets.

And the outside world… we do not know about those cryptic videos yet. They might not be real, since no one can prove their validity.

“The more we are inside this cage, the more likely I am to die. I am sure you already know of my illness.”

“Of course, those darts wouldn’t have done anything to someone else, but your immune system is pretty much gone. A few more minutes and… well, you know.” He shrugged. “Everyone knows about it. And even two of your classmates. Three if you consider me too.”

How… how is it possible?

“You are not one of my classmates.”

He sighed. “No, you are right…”

If someone knows, it must be because of the videos Monokuma distributed on the sixth day… but nobody talked about it… maybe my attacker knew about it!

“You know who threw those darts. Tell me who it is. If you do, I will believe you.”

“I could lie. You wouldn’t know.”

“If you do that you are not as smart as you claim to be. Lying would only worsen your situation.”

“Would it?” He shook his head. “Nope. Your answer wouldn’t help you. If everything goes according to plan, you’ll discover who did it in… a day, more or less. I can’t be too specific on time.”

“How do you know about all of this?”

“It’s easy to predict what you’ll do. You believe that you have free will, but you don’t as long as you’re trapped here. That’s why I’ll help you escape. In due time.”
He will not give me an answer. But maybe he can tell me something else.

“Who are the two that know about me?”

“You can guess. You will guess easily. Then you’ll understand if one of those two is the one who tried to kill Gonta.”

“Gonta! Where is he?”

“In another room. Safe, but resting. Since I brought you here. I’m trying my best to avoid the worst, but he’ll live. And tomorrow morning he’ll be with you again. As long as you’ll do me a favor.”

“This is not a favor, it is blackmailing.”

“Believe what you want, but I can try regardless. You can’t tell anyone about this. When the system will be back online, every sound will be heard and everything will be seen. But you will keep hidden this conversation until further notice.”

This is… unbelievable. Is he trying to stay hidden? But… there is so much I cannot comprehend…

“You will tell everyone that you got better and helped Gonta. That he’s resting. I have nothing to worry about if you lie. Just say something in my code was wrong. They’ll buy it. I’ll have to suffer through some tests, but nobody will find anything. I know how to stay hidden.”

“But Gonta… the others will ask about him, where he is, what-

“Nobody knows about this place. That is why you need to get out before the team solves the short-circuit I caused. And you need to do it now.”

“And Gonta? He’ll be detected!”

“No. He’s hurt. And that allows him to walk undetected.”

“I don’t understand, how-

I did not finish the sentence. Like the previous morning, I felt too close to death, then found myself inside the Shrine of Judgment, in front of the elevator.

Kiyo entered shortly after.

“Were you waiting for me?” I asked.

“I suppose you could say so. Tenko is watching over me outside.”

“For what reason?” I said, but realized immediately. “You are suspected for the attack.”

“Yes. Understandable. It happened right in front of my lab.”

This was the most reasonable answer; obviously they would think he threw those darts.

Then, I felt something in my throat. Moments after, I coughed up blood.

“Kirumi…!” Korekiyo exclaimed. “W-what… are you alright?”
“Y-yes… this is nothing to worry about…” I said, searching my pockets for handkerchiefs to wipe off the blood. I found some.

“Has Monokid done this to you… were you hurt?”

“He… he just brought me and Gonta here.” I lied. “This is… just a cut.”

“I know it is not. This appears to be serious. Please, tell me what it is.”

I wouldn’t worry Kiyo talking about my illness. I don’t know how severe it is and how long I have to live, it would only worsen his already unstable situation with Aishi.

I changed the topic of the discussion, circling back to the attack.

“Are they right?” I shivered. “About you… being the one who threw the darts?”

“No.” He shook his head. He did not seem honest. Maybe he did not do it, however he was hiding information from me.

“Does Aishi know?”

“D-do not call her, please…” He pleaded.

In the seconds that followed I thought he had started to escape from his alternate personality’s grip, though I was wrong.

“I want her for myself. She… does not like company of others. Do… do not speak of her…”

Kiyo’s hands were shaking. One hand tried to reach the mask, then it was stopped thanks to the second one. The cosplayer slammed his right hand on the floor. That must have hurt.

“Are you alright?” I asked, worried.

What a stupid question. Of course he is not.

“It… it is nothing… but a bruise.”

“I did not mean physically. You are troubled. Can you tell me why?”

Kiyo stood in silence too long for me to feel comfortable. He has always been the type to avoid conversation, but he always answered when questioned.

He has always had a… “relationship” with his sister, at least since she died; despite this, I believe that this distress is caused specifically by her. I need him to discuss about this topic, maybe… I have to force him?

I do not wish to, but it is the only solution. He carries such a heavy weight, and that needs to be lifted.

“Kiyo… what I am about to say… it is for your own benefit. Remember it.”

“I repeated once again I am fine…”

“If you were, you would not be here to talk with me. I am sure of it.”

He looked at me. He did not speak, then faced the other way.
“You should ignore Aishi. She is not helping you.”

“W-what!? She’s my sister… you do not have one, you would not understand…”

“I do not claim to, even though I lost ones I cared for too. The difference is he does not torment me. He does not impact my life like Aishi. She is dragging you towards a dark path.”

“…Why…?”

“I… I cannot say why.”

However, I knew that well. Aishi was a way for Korekiyo to distance himself from others and show his worst instincts. I could not tell him that now, as he believes her to be real.

“No… why… why would… you must be jealous of her…”

“No!” I responded quickly. “You are fortunate to have her by her side…” I began stumbling. I just contradicted myself.

“Then you should not criticize her! She is hearing every word! Maybe you should speak with her!”

Kio tried to remove his mask, but I grabbed both of his hands before he could move them. I regretted that immediately; sadly there was nothing I could do.

“Let her speak!”

“No, you are in control! Not her!”

“We are two in one body! You will not stop us!”

The door of the shrine opened. Tenko heard the commotion. I instinctively removed my hands from Korekiyo’s. I had hoped for Aishi to resurface so that the caregiver could see it with his own eyes.

“What is happening here?”

“I… I…” Korekiyo could not find the correct words to describe the situation. It seemed he had returned to reality. “I need to go to my lab…”

A still confused Tenko stopped him. “I don’t know… Angie said you’re innocent, but you ru-”

Kio ignored her words and pushed her down so he could pass, then ran away. Realizing what happened, I helped her back up.

“What the…” She massaged her head.

I could not wait for her. I headed out of the Shrine, but the fog startled me. I had to search for him.

But I didn’t find him anywhere.
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Daily Life (Part 7)

Chapter Summary

Kirumi searches for Korekiyo; Kaede and Rantaro discuss about the present and the past.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Kaede Akamatsu

I wanted to believe Kaito’s words, but there’s so much someone can take. After all of his lies, I decided to trust my instinct. And I lied.

After pretending to believe him, I brought Kaito to the bathroom in the lower floor of the casino and locked him there.

He protested, but I chose not to listen. He said he would starve, but he has access to water; people can survive for more weeks without food. He then complained about getting ill, but the temperatures in that bathroom are tolerable. At most you could come down with a cold. We will know what to do with him before then… unless he decides to surrender to us.

“I’ll never do that! I’d rather die here! Then you’ll be the killer!”

“If no body is discovered, a trial isn’t held.” I reminded him. “If it’s needed, we can decide to let you rot inside that bathroom.”

Seconds of stunned silence followed. I broke it.

“I’m sorry. I… I… didn’t want to do this… but… your story doesn’t make any sense. Kiibo would never let you go free. We know that.”

“Go away. I can’t talk with a traitor like you.”

“I’m not a traitor, I only wa-

“GO AWAY! Don’t try to play the good fucking cop, please! I won’t confess, because I didn’t do anything!”

I backed away. I need to convince myself this is the right choice. Upstairs, Angie appeared happier than ever.

“But… what… if he’s not the attacker?” Kiibo asked in the courtyard.

“He lied to you; that’s enough for me! We’ll free him if someone confesses instead!”

I intervened. “We could, yes. But supposing he’s innocent, some time alone won’t hurt him. It will teach him to be honest with us from today.”
“Yup! Considering we’ll live here for who knows how long, he needs to behave!”

Kiibo looked around unsure. Something was troubling him; did he not agree with our methods? Kaito has done too much harm to be forgiven again.

“You’re right… maybe something like this will be useful to Rantaro too?”

The artist didn’t do anything wrong. He didn’t deserve to be punished. I prepared to speak against that idea, but Angie beat me to it.

“Rantaro may be hellbent on not believing in Atua, but he’s not a criminal. He doesn’t trust the ABC yet, but his time will come. Time heals all wounds. I know Kaede agrees with me.”

I nodded. I don’t know why I expected the leader to follow Kiibo’s advice. Jailing Rantaro won’t help her and neither the group.

“Now that we’re done with him.” She continued. “I suggest checking the warehouse for potential weapons. I won’t allow something like this to happen again.”

The three of us did exactly that, taking every possible object that could be used as a weapon. Five gym bags later, we were done. Angie insisted on hiding cleaning products as well, for fear they might be used too. I agreed with her.

“I’ll keep them in my room.”

“Isn’t it better for us to split them?” Kiibo suggested. “If someone breaks into your room, they’ll have all of those tools to use.”

“Then it’s already too late. The killer doesn’t need two knives, they can murder with just one. But that won’t happen, sure of it!”

Despite those safety measures, we didn’t find anything to throw darts. Whatever was used, it was either hidden or destroyed. We probably would not even recognize it if we saw it.

We ate together and passed a rather uneventful afternoon.

Angie’s measures were still in place and I walked around with Rantaro and Tenko. The first wasn’t happy with what we did.

“Do you really believe Kiibo’s story?”

“I believe it more than Kaito’s.” I specified. “Kiibo is honest. He’d never lie. So stop trying to guilt trip me. Kaito deserves what he’s going through even if he’s innocent.”

“You sound exactly like Angie right now.”

“I sense sadness in your voice,” Tenko intervened. “But Angie’s a great leader, she… she’s helping Himiko recover… and me too…”

“Right…” He sighed.

“Listen, Himiko tried to kill herself..! Show some appreciation for her, for Atua’s sake! She’s doing what I’d do too… if Himiko agreed to stay with me.”
“But you aren’t. And that’s because of Angie.” He sighed. “What will you do when she’ll imprison me too…”

I interrupted him. “That’s stupid. I won’t allow that.”

He gave a smirk and shrugged.

“And what do you mean with that? Don’t you believe me?” I asked.

“Angie’s an excellent talker. I’ll give her that. Maybe… maybe that’s what you deserve. An idilliac paradise where nobody questions her.”

“Has she ever been wrong until now?” Tenko rebutted.

“I doubt that bloodletting is a wise choice.”

The girl looked confused. Rantaro rolled his eyes and grabbed the girl’s arm, despite her protests and pointed at her hand.

“Why do you have a bandage here?”

“It’s… I cut myself while we were doing an Assembly.”

“Pretty good excuse. Or half-truth, yeah. But it’s too big for one cut. Don’t tell me you were so clumsy to hurt yourself twice and in the same spot.”

Tenko looked away from the artist, maybe hoping someone would save her from his questions. “Maybe… I need to go to the Shrine. It’s almost evening and Kirumi hasn’t appeared yet. Do… do you really trust Monokid?”

Rantaro sighed. He didn’t want to change subject. Despite this, he answered.

“It’s our best bet. He told us Kirumi’s injuries were worse than we could imagine… those darts were apparently poisoned… I don’t understand how, but I wouldn’t risk it.”

I don’t know if that’s really the case. What colorant is so dangerous to cause death… in small doses too. There’s more, surely… and I might know why Kirumi had to be taken in.

“I just can’t believe this. He’s supposed to be with Monokuma. Monokuma won’t ever help us…”

“What I said.” I echoed. “But maybe, thinking about it later, we did the right thing. I hope.”

As fog began appearing, we reached the Shrine. We left Tenko there, reminding her to go to the cafeteria when Kirumi would come.

**FREE TIME START!**

I decided to spend some of my time talking with someone. I didn’t want to wander around in the fog, so I ended up chatting with Rantaro. It’s been a while, but I remember clearly the topic of one of our discussions…
“Rantaro, have you found a possible second passion for me?” I asked.

“Ah, right… I have to say, that thought kinda slipped away from my priority list…” He smiled nervously.

“You shouldn’t worry too much. I’m fine with being a detective.”

“No, I can’t accept that! There must be something you’re good at… other than… investigating, I guess.”

Maybe all my neuron cells developed into specialized detective cells and left no other space for anything else. After all, most of my training was focused on that. I didn’t have a lot of time to dedicate myself to hobbies that looked useless for me.

“I decided to get rid of that hobbies book, by the way. Most of them were more ridiculous that the ones I proposed last time.”

“Maybe I’m just destined to do only this. There’s nothing bad with my talent.” I said, and I was convinced.

“Hmmm… maybe we were looking in the wrong direction. You see, many of my hobbies are somehow related to art. Soapmaking doesn’t have anything to do with detectives.”

I’m surprised he took this long to realize it.

“So you’re saying I need something that could remind me of… investigations?”

“Exactly! Do you read? Maybe you’d enjoy detective stories!”

“I do… but some of them are extremely unrealistic, others too boring. And most of the time, I always guess who the killer is.”

“What happens when you don’t?”

“I throw the book away. Honestly, it happens when the writer pulls off one of those cheap twists, or worse..! They don’t even give enough clues in the first place, yet they expect the reader to have some divine help…”

“Isn’t this what you do, though?”

“Yes, but… with a book you have words and no images! Everything is harder if you can’t use your eyes. You only depend on a point of view… and don’t get me started on unreliable narrators…”

“You’re getting quite a bit frustrated…”

“Yeah.” I sighed. “I’m sorry, it’s this cold and fog that’s stressing me out.”

“Maybe we should think about something else… I don’t have this much creativity. Maybe… find something in the library.”

“If you say so…”

We headed for the basement. The huge amount of books at our disposal always startled me… if only they were categorized or there was a practical way to single out what we needed, we’d save so much time.
“Look at this! I found this list in *Top 100 Top 10s… Top 10 detective hobbies!*”

“Are you seriously going to believe a Top Ten list?” I rolled my eyes. There wasn’t even an author for this book. Who knows how this thing ended up in the library.

“If it’s the only way to get you something to do, I’ll gladly do it.”

“Fine, tell me what’s written there…”

“Number one. Violin, beekeeping…

They didn’t look to have much in common with detective work.

“And… cocaine?! What even is this list?!”

“It just put three things under the same number. I’d hardly classify this as a top ten.”

“I swear there are some legit entries here. But also… making implausibly large sandwiches.”

“I really wish I could know who wrote this.”

“Oh, I get it now!” Rantaro exclaimed. “This list references fictional detectives’ pastimes. That’s why there are absurd things here.”

“At this point we should just quit. Maybe I’ll find my hobby with time instead of you forcing me. Maybe. It could even be some of those things… I’m just not that interested in beekeeping right now.”

“But look here, there’s flower arranging too! That’s something we’d have in common!”

“There are no flowers to arrange here, so that’s a definite no. Maybe… I could try if we ever get out of this hellhole.”

“And chess?” He proposed. “This has some similarities to investigating! You have to think before making your move, it’s important to read your opponent and the way to win is trick them into moving the king right where you want them to.”

“I’m… not a fan of games this slow.”

Rantaro sighed in defeat. “You can’t be serious. It’s impossible for you to dislike everything in this world. I bet you’d love something if only you had the chance to try it!”

“It could be, but-

“I’d bring you inside my research room, but with Angie prohibiting us…”

“Huh? Why?”

“Maybe you have an hidden talent in painting or drawing. Who knows… I’m definitely able to tell if you’re an artist!”

“I’d avoid getting Angie angry just for a test.”

I remember my mother telling me I was better than any other kid while I was young, and certainly my drawings were leagues better than my brother’s, but he wasn’t the best comparison to make, considering he refused to draw people’s necks and hands. The way he drew legs, then… it was…
peculiar, to say the least.

“I’m sure there are some chess boards and pieces in the warehouse. Maybe we could try those.” He said.

I checked the time. We had too little at our disposal. Soon it would be our turn to shovel the snow.

“Next time we have a chance to breathe, I’ll think about it.”

“Just think? I won’t let you out without an affirmative answer!”

“If you want Angie and Kiibo to beat us with shovels, be free to do it. I won’t stand for you, though.”

“Ugh.” He groaned. “Fine! I just wanted to help you…”

_Free time end._

Rantaro hoped to check Korekiyo’s lab once more, but we didn’t have his Monopad. I reminded him I found nothing there.

“We should search for him. He’s with Angie and Kiibo, probably around the boiler room shoveling snow. It will be our turn soon.”

The artist walked beside me, making sure to be close. “I wanted to ask, how did you gain your Ultimate status? It’s… weird for a girl of your age to be a detective, you know?”

“As if it was the weirdest talent around here. Kirumi’s an adventurer and she’s around our age. I can’t imagine how much she travelled.”

“Let me guess. You don’t want to tell me. Let’s try this. I tell you first, but you’ll need to do the same. Otherwise you’d be a liar.”

“I can’t be a liar. We have never agreed to anything!”

“I mean… you can lie as well. I won’t know.”

He’s right. But I won’t; I can just withhold details.

“Mine is quite a simple story.” He said after I nodded. “From an early age, I started drawing portraits of my sisters. A little bit later, I tried sculpting too. It felt natural, and my parents told me that my creations were works of art.”

Not to downplay Rantaro’s talent, but that’s a standard for decent parents. My father didn’t care about my terrible doodles. I guess that was a sign.

“They decided to sell them. My identity was a secret, at first. You see… we preferred to stay hidden, at that time. When I got older I had some… arguments with my parents. So I decided to work on my own. That’s how I got discovered. Your turn.”

I remembered those portraits in Rantaro’s room. Some of those girls reminded me of him… as I thought, those were his sisters… depicted by himself.
To be honest, I expected more. We said we wouldn’t talk too much about our past, but that doesn’t stop me from being curious. Why did his parents hide his talent? Weird, as having a prodigy in the family should be a honor… maybe they didn’t want the attention coming from the media. I can’t speak much about this. From what I can remember, some Ultimates were followed everywhere and others would never be seen in public.

Maybe I should ask the others about their experiences…

“I said your turn. Are you deaf or just pretending to have forgotten?”

“Alright.” I sighed. “I… I worked on some important cases and I happened to solve all of them. There were a few ones that detectives never solved for decades… and, I don’t know how, I cracked after some days.”

He didn’t look satisfied. “I believe you, but… how were you discovered? I can’t imagine you sending a letter to the nearest police department to inform them.”

“I witnessed a murder.” I said. “That’s when it really started. I made sure to bring the criminals to justice. And… that’s it. I doubt you want to know the details.”

“Ah. Alright… I…”

“Don’t worry. It happened a long time ago. You don’t have to be awkward about it.”

He changed the argument, to my relief. “Sometimes I wonder if we’d be still here without you. We have our strokes of genius, but you’re always the one who understands the little details.”

I don’t want to brag, but it’s true. Without me they’ll be dead.

“I thought about this for a very long time. If you’re here, it means Monokuma wants the game to continue by murdering one of us at a time. Victim, killer, victim, killer, and so on. He loves this, as if it was entertainment…”

“We could’ve done something to anger the people who control him and the Monokubs. That’s why we’re trapped here. Without our memories, we can’t even understand what.”

“It’s a possibility, but… I think that’s not it. Wouldn’t it be more enjoyable to watch us suffer if we remembered our mistakes? In a sadistic, twisted way, of course… something like, make us beg and whatnot.”

“Which is exactly what those bears love.” I nodded.

“We’d be regretting the choices of our past… be more susceptible to particular motives…”

Rantaro could be right, but there’s not enough substantial proof to confirm his hypothesis. There are many other reasons why specific snippets of our past were cut from our brain.

We could have met before; That would push us to cooperate against Monokuma.

Or the opposite, maybe we’re enemies; That would mean the game would end too soon.

“Even considering that, they gave us information about what happened. About Towa City, and that we all lived there at some point… What do they gain from us knowing that?”

“I can’t wrap my mind around it. It’s almost like whoever is masterminding this game changes opinion every day… usually those videos are broadcasted on the third day, but it didn’t happen
yet.”

Angie’s silhouette started forming. I sighed at the idea of shoveling snow for the rest of the day.

“It could be because of Monokuma’s disappearance.”

“Yeah, what’s up with that? Is he ever gonna come back?”

I shrugged. I’d hope not, but that would still leave us with three Monokubs… those aren’t any less evil than their supposed father.

“Nyahahah! Finally you’re here! We’re pretty tired… it’s your turn now!”

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Kirumi Tojo

“It’s impossible for someone to have disappeared.” Kiibo said. “He… he could be in his lab.”

Rantaro shook his head. “That’s what I thought… but Kirumi says he doesn’t respond.”

“Can’t we enter it?” Himiko asked.

“No. It needs his Monopad. Until someone uses it, it remains locked.” I explained. There was no way to know if Korekiyo was really inside the research lab, as those can be locked from the inside as well.

“Umm… Atua says you could smash that door. You surely have done so in your travels!”

I certainly did not miss Angie’s God suggestions. “That door is sturdier than it looks…”

Tenko did not bring good news. “I’ve tried his room too. No answers.”

“Neither the casino. Kaito’s the only one there.” Kaede added.

“Maybe he’s hiding somewhere in the Academy…”

“He wants some time alone, he has always been a bit weird…”

“No, I think this whole situation is weird… he just disappears?”

“Hey, be calm! Everything will be alright, like it always has!”

“Calm? He could’ve been killed!”

Tenko’s alarming words made me more uncomfortable than I wished.

I refuse to believe Kiyo is dead.

The fog did not go away, the motive is still in effect.

“Yes, let’s try to be positive.” Rantaro chimed in. “He must be somewhere. He can’t be dead and he’s definitely somewhere around here. There’s a gigantic cage around us.”
“And fog that obscures our view.” Himiko reminded.

“Right. Maybe we passed near him and never noticed. He could be outside of the cafeteria just now.”

“But… why would he hide himself?” Kaede asked. It was clear that she directed her question to me. “You were the last to talk him. What did you speak about?”

I sensed aggressiveness in the detective’s voice. I found absurd that she thought I could have harmed Kiyo in any way.

“Nothing out of the ordinary, as we talked about our families.”

“Families can have dark pasts… are you sure it wasn’t like that?” She asked.

“No… definitely.”

I hoped to cover my lie effectively. It looked like I succeeded.

I promised to keep his secret and I would do it despite his disappearance. Were I to reveal it, he would know sooner than later. This many people would, if not tell him directly, look at him differently.

“Look… you had nothing with you… right?”

“I did not kill Kiyo. Tenko stood outside and he pushed her. He was healthy, and she can confirm.”

The caretaker nodded. “Yes… he looked… distraught, but not hurt… I feel she didn’t do anything to him…”

Kaede eyed me. There was nothing she could do at this point. “I am preoccupied, as everyone is now. Such a thing never happened.”

She came closer. “If there’s anything you know, tell us now. It will help us find him. We might know where he is headed, or what his intentions are…”

Not feeling threatened by the detective, I chose to respond rather than shake my head. “He is most definitely not planning to kill anyone, if you think so.”

“In fact, that’d make him way too suspicious. Don’t disappear if you’re planning a murder. I mean, it’s obvious.”

Rantaro intervened giving voice to my thoughts. Kaede was forced to nod as he was right.

“Nyeh… I d-don’t want to alarm anyone… but maybe… he was taken by today’s attacker…”

“But that was Kaito.” Angie exclaimed. “I think you might have forgotten that.”

“No, she’s right. We aren’t sure that Kaito’s the attacker. And this makes it seem he’s innocent. At the moment.”

“You just said you think he’s alright!” Angie called him out.

“Contrary to you, I’m not deciding on one correct option without definitive proof.”

“Kaito will be kept locked for now.” Kaede broke the fighting between the two. “This event could
or could not be related to him, so nothing will change.”

“Right, detective! Now, I think the best course of action is to eat something and go to bed!”

“What are you saying?!” I exclaimed.

Since it is not my nature to be so rash, the other people in the room turned towards me.

“Kirumi, this is the first time you looked really angry! Showing emotions is important, right Tenko?”

“Yes, but-

It was not worthy to listen to what she had to say. “We cannot leave Korekiyo around while it is snowing!”

“If we all leave to our rooms and are locked inside, he’ll be safe. Kaito’s locked as well. That allows him to roam free without anyone sneaking up on him.”

Kiibo raised his hand to talk. Angie allowed him. “We can’t continue searching during the night… it will be too cold. It’s already uncomfortable as it is, and we don’t have enough coats…”

“Mine is the best option. We’ll be all safe in our rooms until tomorrow!”

"He could be in danger!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, but... Kirumi, you have to look at this situation without being too worried." Angie said. "We searched for him everywhere, he's definitely hiding."

"Let me search tonight, please."

"I'm sorry, no. It'll be safer for everyone."

"If you find him dead, you will know it was me." I explained. I do not see why Angie insists.

"She has a point..." Rantaro observed.

"Even if we give you the coat, it'd be too cold for you to go around in the night." Kiibo intervened. "I'm sure Angie's saying this to avoid complications. You were just attacked..."

"Exactly, it's better for you to recover." Tenko agreed.

My voice was not heard. Rantaro tried to convince the others, but all was futile. Kaede, weirdly, sided with the leader too. I eventually desisted as well.

“Someone has to lock us inside. And have all the keys.” Rantaro said. “I’m betting you want to do that, Angie.”

“I know I can be trusted, but I decided Kaede should be the one in charge this time!”

“Huh? Me?”

“Does someone have anything against my idea?”

I considered speaking. Kaede did kill someone in the past. She told me her story, but should I believe her? With everyone locked in their rooms, she could easily locate Korekiyo and murder
him… no, that would not be it. She would be suspected immediately… but she could try something else… and nobody would ever discover it…

“Nobody seems to oppose my decision. Therefore I declare it to be universally accepted! Kaede will lock us in our dorms tonight, tomorrow at 8 we’ll be free to explore once again! Ready to see Gonta!”

I previously told the others that I took care of him, avoiding the mention of Monokid when I could. I still do not understand how the others could believe me after he will appear in the Shrine…. and especially, how Kaede and Rantaro would trust a single word that I said, as they heard the Kub clearly.

However, they did not contradict my words; it could have been because of Kiyo’s disappearance, or maybe because they understood it was neither the time to do so nor the right choice.

Angie curled her hair. “Korekiyo could be in his room tomorrow. Maybe he likes night walks!”

No one was convinced. “I doubt it… because of the temperatures. Nyeh.”

Night-time started, the fog disappeared. According to the forecast, this night would snow, but the vision would be clear. However, I feel Monophanie took some liberties with the word “night”, maybe to accommodate her needs. It was nine p.m., yet no sign of snow.

It would be standard procedure, just like his father, twisting the rules for her benefit. We decided Rantaro and Angie would sleep without their coats. The artist said he was comfortable enough with his shirts and the latter insisted on giving it to me, as I probably needed it more.

“I’m sleeping with Kiibo, so it’s okay.”

The astronaut flushed red. “Wait, what-

“Don’t be so embarrassed. It’s for the benefit of the group. And it doesn’t change anything. We trust each other enough to avoid killing the other in the middle of the night.”

“I… yeah, sure… If you think that’s what we should do…”

The leader flailed her arms around and then hugged Kiibo, uncomfortable after the situation transpired.

One by one, we entered our dormitories. Rantaro was the first to say goodbye, followed by everyone else. I made sure to be the last one. Kaede noticed my worrisome expression.

“Hey, it’s… going to be alright.”

“Sometimes you are so terrible at lies. I could even consider it funny.” I sighed. “Quite clearly you think the opposite.”

“Even if I do, I’ll try to convince myself that Kiyo is fine.”

“No, you just want to convince me. Probably you could not care less. How many times did you talk with him during those two weeks? I would say five as a generous estimate. He is a stranger to you.”

“He is stuck here with me and you. That makes him more than a stranger.”
“Still, you do not know him, since you thought I would harm him.”

“Why are you so aggressive?”

I considered it impossible for Kaede not to understand why. “Someone attacked me and one of my friends is nowhere to be found. I have every right to be.”

Also, I am believing what a sadistic blue bear is saying. But that is something I cannot share.

“Alright. Maybe it’s better if we go to our rooms.” I nodded and turned, but Kaede was apparently not satisfied. “What happened after Monokid took you and Gonta in?”

“He left us inside the trial grounds, just like I told you. Now you can lock me inside.”

“Kirumi, we both know it’s impossible. You were both unconscious and without any medical equipment. I know you’re capable of treating others, but-

“You will see Gonta tomorrow. He will arrive even if I’m not present. I left a note. Kaede, please… you have to believe me.”

The detective gave me a slight smile and nodded. I passed her my keys and heard the sound of the lock. I stood near the door and heard Kaede enter her room as well, then collapsed onto the bed.

I could not be the reason why Kiyo was not with us, I told myself. He was safe, yes, he decided to face his sister. I had to talk about that matter with him, nobody else would have. He will knock on my door tonight. Maybe I should not sleep… but hear if he comes.

He did not, and I fell asleep in front of the door.

Chapter End Notes

I think it's time to start betting on the victim and killer. Soon you'll know.
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Daily Life (Part 8)

Chapter Summary

After Kaede discovers a secret behind the killing game, the students learn about their actions in Towa City.

*Knock knock knock!*

“Kirumi, if you’re awake tell us.” I said.

“Yes, I am ready. You can open the door.”

With Kirumi out of her room, everyone was here. Nobody heard anything this night and everyone was alive, thankfully. We decided to go to the Shrine to see if Gonta was there. I explained to the others what Kirumi told me the night before.

“Why didn’t you stay in the Shrine and call us?” Rantaro asked, suspicious like me.

“You decided it would be safer for us to be locked in our rooms. I did not try to oppose the idea, as I knew it would be useless.”

Good answer, but still flawed. Kirumi would never leave Gonta alone after that injury. She insisted the situation was stable, but regardless of the athlete’s conditions, she’d have chosen to stay there rather than resurface to inform us.

I refrained from accusing her of anything, though. Gonta could be alive now, and my words would only backfire. And there could have been a lot of more plausible stories she could have invented.

Yet… she insisted Monokid escorted them, but he leaved shortly after. Like what his brothers did when Himiko harmed herself… it would make sense, if not for him specifically saying this situation was different… supposed to happen…

We can’t know for sure, but I’m fairly certain Kirumi would have died if she wasn’t brought to the Shrine. Gonta could’ve too, depending on how poisonous those darts were.

“If you see Korekiyo, shout it immediately!” Tenko exclaimed.

He intervened and saved them; he wanted them to live. Why…

“There isn’t a lot more snow than yesterday.” Rantaro said.

“I would say there is none more than yesterday.” Kirumi corrected him.

“Did it even snow? Maybe it just melted away…” The former commented.

“There’s no fog, so we’ll surely see Korekiyo around!” Angie encouraged us. “I can’t imagine how
happy Kirumi will be!"

Yes, the fog! I continue forgetting about it, but now that the vision is clear I can test my theory about this place!

“Monophanie broadcasted fog at this hour, though.” Kiibo pointed out.

“Yesterday we saw that night-time and night don’t match. Atua told me is same for the day!”

“Definitely.” Rantaro agreed. “If you remember, the morning fog appeared around eight thirty… and it was still pretty easy to see. This means it will probably show up a little bit later.

I looked at the nearest broadcast monitor. It was 8:24.

“I need to go. I remembered an important thing I need to do.”

“Huh? What?”

“You can’t go alone. The fog will come down soon.” Angie warned me, but the fog was the exact reason why I needed to go immediately. “It’s too dangerous to wander alone.”

“Rantaro will come with me!” I blurted out. He was the first person that came to mind.

“If you told me what this is abo-

He would see that with his own eyes when I ran the test. I took his hand and ran towards the school. I didn’t turn to see what expressions the others had, but I suppose they weren’t too much happy with me.

“Your grip is way too strong for my liking.” Rantaro said, freeing himself from it.

“Run, we don’t know when we’ll have limited visibility. And pick something to throw.”

“Do what??”

“Ugh, I can’t waste time again! Remain here if you want!”

I sprinted leaving the artist behind, but he caught up with me shortly after. He had a pebble in his hand. I’m surprised he actually listened to me.

A minute after, slowed by the snow that now was about to reach our knees, we were right on the edge of the courtyard, behind the school; nobody else could see what we were doing.

“Now explain.”

“Do you remember when I told you I had an idea about this place? Because of what happened, plus the fog, I couldn’t get around to test it. But now, for once, I can. It’ll be quick.”

“You want to break the cage with thousands of small rocks?”

Instead of explaining my hypothesis to Rantaro, I decided to take his own and throw it across the cage. The one he picked was just small enough to fit between the bars. I tried to put as much strength as I could, and it landed forty feet from us, rolling for another ten before stopping.

“Great show of strength.”
I searched for a lighter rock around the grass. After finding it, I passed it to Rantaro.

“Just throw it. Not at the ground. Try to make sure it covers the most ground.”

Despite being confused, he tossed the rock. I could tell immediately his throw was much more efficient than mine.

And then, the rock bounced against the sky and returned back.

“Here it is.”

“Is this a forcefield?!” Rantaro exclaimed, shocked.

Exactly as I thought, the real cage weren’t the bars, but something else behind those. That pieces of metal were put there to make us believe we were trapped by conventional means.

“No, it can’t be, right?” He continued to ask.

“I doubt it.” The fog was beginning to form, right in time. “First of all, forcefields don’t exist as far as we know.”

“As far as we know.”

“Yeah, yeah. I guess they could’ve been invented, but surely they can’t cause this.” I took some snow from the ground and made it trickle between my fingers. “This snow came from top, from what we assume are clouds.”

Rantaro looked up, confused. Those looked like clouds after all.

“The truth is we’re under a dome. Not made by metal bars, but by screens that simulate every weather effect. I bet someone is right on top of us producing snow and the right conditions to make the fog appear.”

“Wha… but…. Why would they do something like this… Wouldn’t a cage or the screens be enough?”

“Exactly. However, the organizers of this game need both. To make us believe we’re trapped in the open. But we’re probably inside an enormous building somewhere in the world.”

“Holy shit… this explains how Monokuma made the nights longer and the days shorter last week! He must have changed some settings…”

“That’s how I got this idea. But it seemed ridiculous, until temperatures started dropping at Monophanie’s command…”

“The thing is, why would someone go as far as trap us twice? Why… hide it from us? Even if the screens were fragile, the Monokubs could prohibit us from breaking them.”

“As I said, they wanted us to think we were outside, somewhere. That’s where my ideas stop. About breaking, they look pretty sturdy. They can’t be broken by traditional means. And surely not by throwing rocks.”

Rantaro bit his nails. “And you won’t tell anyone about this.”
“No. Nobody gains anything from this information, for now. Not to mention people could panic. I’m protecting them.”

“Like Angie is protecting everyone from the big bad wolf Kaito?”

“I asked you to stop. No more talking about that.”

“Fine.” He raised his hands. “Let’s talk about you. While I’m glad you decided I was worthy enough to see this, what you’re saying it’s bullshit. You just want to have an advantage over the others. There’s nothing to lose if they know about the screens. Everyone has lost any hope of escaping at this point. Including you.”

“How do you dare?!”

“I dare because it’s true. We agreed to be honest with each other. I’m being honest.”

I gritted my teeth. He was right. “Okay, you’re spot on. I don’t want anyone to know about this. But not because of some petty reasons. I don’t trust anyone around here, especially after what happened yesterday. I can’t share all the information I have with everyone.”

“So… does that mean you know something else you won’t tell me?”

Even if I told him the truth, I wouldn’t go in the details. I thought about saying no, but I do honor my word. “Yes, there is something. But like this, I won’t say anything until I’m sure of what I’m doing.”

“I can understand. I just… don’t want to keep secrets that could hurt us. Some lies are necessary in the real world, but here… I don’t know how innocent those could be.”

I felt like Rantaro was manipulating me to make me reveal more about my past. Subtle, but I’m too accustomed to these tricks after using them myself.

“Until we figure out the reason behind this set-up, we keep our mouths shut.”

The artist casually nodded and reminded me we should meet up with the others. “And come up with a reasonable excuse, but I got that covered.”

“Should I be worried?”

“Nah, but be slightly irritated.”

“If you screw up, I intervene. Immediately.”

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**Kirumi Tojo**

We discussed Kaede’s sudden rush for a minute, however that topic was quickly replaced by another. As we reached the Shrine, we found Gonta, lying face down in front of the elevator.

“Oh! Somebody help him!” Kiibo shouted.
“I… I can check his pulse!” Tenko ran towards the athlete while we were stunned by the situation; me more than the others. I was wondering how would I be able to explain this. I refuse to believe Gonta knew what happened, since Monokid assured me I’d be safe.

When Tenko, aided by Kiibo, managed to pull Gonta up, we discovered he had an eyepatch over his right eye.
“What… what is this?” Himiko asked, panicked.

Somehow, Monokid could not restore Gonta’s sight. The darts must have damaged his optic nerve permanently… even so, the eye was not in a terrible condition… the eyepatch did not cover an horrible sight. Rather, I believe it was a way to communicate to me he could not see from that eye. Whether or not it was an intentional decision by that bear, I fear I will never know.

I needed a new excuse. I wish I had paid more attention to those words.

“I refrained from telling you, as it could have been too much for you…” I tried. “Gonta was hit in the eye, and I tried everything that I could to avoid permanent damage. Sadly, with the instruments at my disposal, I-

Angie cut me off. “Don’t worry, Kirumi. I know you did your best. And now Gonta looks better than ever!”

“He looks like this… tough tennis player.” Himiko commented.

Tenko looked uncomfortable at the reactions of her friends. Yet she stood silent. Perhaps not wanting to go against Angie’s judgment. She made sure Gonta had a place to sit.

“I just wanted to know,” Kiibo said. “You told us Gonta would come here on his own, and here he is… but he’s unconscious. Someone had to bring him here.”

“He was not yesterday. Despite that, his conditions were not the best. He could have felt ill while riding the elevator. There is a slight change of pressure between the trial grounds and the Shrine.”

There is not. However, nobody is aware that. As long as I sound professional, people should believe what I say. They do not know better.

Kiibo, despite confused, desisted. However, he asked me another question. “How did you treat Gonta? I’m not asking you the medical procedure, but… how did you do it? There’s no hospital bed down there, and surely no supplies.”

“Maybe we missed it.” Himiko came to my aid. “We always focus on the case and forget our surroundings…”

“Can’t we check?”

“The elevator doors are closed until an investigation is finished. There’s no way to go there now.” Tenko explained.

“Nyahahah! There’s no way to know then! Because there won’t be any more murders here!”

“D-did someone… die?”

Gonta’s voice startled everyone. Thankfully, he was alive.

“Gonta!” Himiko exclaimed. She ran towards the tennis player and hugged him. He was still
confused, but returned the hug regardless.

“We’re all okay.” Angie smiled. “You might be a bit… well, changed! But we still like you.”

“No.” I said, stern. “We are not all okay. Korekiyo has disappeared.”

“Oh… Gonta… sorry about it… I hope… he can be found.”

“He’ll be alright.” Angie shrugged it off. I can’t believe it. It seems no one here cares about him. I bet she would force us to search for Kiibo, if he ended up vanishing.

“Not to be rude…” I intervened. “But, as we have found Gonta, we could start our search for Kiyo.”

“I wants to help!” Gonta stood up, alarming Himiko, who asked him to sit. He reassured her. “I feel alright. And I have to help Kirumi, since she helped me with eye.”

I replayed Gonta’s words in my head. He told us I helped him.

“So she wasn’t lying!” Angie giggled.

“Nyeh… we saw Gonta here, so she couldn’t have…”

“I heard Kirumi voice while sleeping. I was between sleep and awake… and she told me she would help me with eye… I didn’t respond because… well, sleep… but it was like Gonta said okay!”

I did not see Gonta after our attack. And, according to Monokid, he could not have seen me while I was unconscious. Somehow, that bear convinced him to lie, or maybe… toyed with his mind.

That disgusts me beyond words. I hope that is not the case. Maybe he replicated my voice. I fear it may be feasible, as he’s seemingly a new kind of robot, and I remember some that were able to do so when I was younger.

“It’s dangerous to go in the fog… someone might snap and hurt us!” Angie warned Gonta. A minute ago she told us she was sure no murders would occur, has she changed her mind already?

“Angie, I can go alone. I do not care if you deem it unnecessary. It is for me, since Kiyo is my friend. You do not know him and quite frankly, I believe-

“Alright! If you insist so much, we could try another search!”

I was dumbfounded. She cannot be genuine, but what can I say to her? Nobody in this room will believe me, and she is agreeing with me…

“Yeah! Gonta very happy! Even though I not speak-

“Don’t.” Tenko corrected him. She was not harsh; her voice was softer than usual.

“R-right… Even though I don’t speak a lot with Korekiyo, I… I still want to find him.”

“That’s the right spirit!” Angie cheered, ignoring all that she said until now.

Kiibo was the next to talk. “If we’re going, it’s better to be in pairs. If anything happens, there needs to be a backup…”

“I pick Kiibo!” Angie shouted immediately. “Gonta can go with Tenko, and you, Kirumi, with
Himiko!

“I… wanted to be with Gonta… we haven’t seen each other for a while…”

“Don’t worry for me… I’ll be fine with Tenko… she will teach me new words!”

Himiko furrowed her brows. “But Tenko… doesn’t like men… she will say that you’re a degenerate!”

“No… Tenko never did that. Gonta not heard degenerates since… well, a long time ago. She told me a lot of nice things, though.”

“Maybe… maybe you’re right…”

Tenko appreciated Himiko’s decision, but told her that they could exchange places. “If you want, there’s no problem for me… if staying with Gonta makes you happy, it’s better for all of us.”

Himiko shook his head. “No… He’s right… you can teach him new words.” She genuinely smiled at Tenko. “That’s what you’re good at, and I’m good at talking with bugs.”

“O… okay! Just remember that if you feel a bit down, you can speak with any of us!”

With the fog already clouding our vision, we left the Shrine and with it, I hope some questions about this mysterious event that occurred in the trial grounds. I know that doubts will still linger for a long time but, with my story confirmed by Gonta, I am safer than I thought.

“Nyeh… where should we go?”

“Kiibo and Angie are searching around the courtyard and the dorms, Tenko and Gonta the casino and the love hotel… so, the school building.”

“But… we’re missing something. The… how was it called… the boiler room!”

“You are correct. We did not take that into consideration.”

The boiler room is a small area, in itself and compared to the school. We would go there first.

I never entered that room after Kaede’s unsuccessful escape attempt the first day we arrived here, and nobody else did, to my knowledge. We had all refused to see the overgrown plants that occupied that space and silently swore not to climb that ladder again.

We had tried many times to overcome the Death Road of Despair, as Monokuma dubbed it, but it was always too tiring, and like a maze that constantly changed. Some of us risked to die there, and were saved by miracle more than once.

We decided not to test our luck again to avoid unnecessary deaths.

“Himiko… you asked me about our purpose yesterday. I thought about my answer, and… I was wondering if I found my purpose yet. I felt I had one, but it slipped away.”

“Ah… I think I know mine. You… you helped me.”

“Huh? How so?”
“It’s… very complicated. But I feel I know it. It’s difficult to express with words… maybe you’ll all see in the future.”

“If you are happy, I am sure the others will too.”

“I was thinking, you and me are not that different. Of course you are much more intelligent than me…”

“No, do not say that. Everyone is special in their own way. I am amazed at your expertise when it comes to bugs.”

“Thanks…” She blushed. “But I was saying, about our emotions. We don’t show them so easily. I know why I don’t… It’s because it’s easier for me… If I’m too attached, then when something bad happens I’ll suffer more. I always thought that there was no reason to be that expressive, so I ignored everything that happened around me… and I believed that people who really cared about me would still appreciate what I am. But with time passing, I sort of fell into my own trap, and I stopped caring. I decided it was better to keep myself away from everyone, just me and my bugs. Because I felt better… they couldn’t betray me. But… but… this world isn’t only about me. There are many people with me… and I thought I should give them a chance.”

“That… is a good outlook on life. I think you are correct. But… I am surprised. I would not think you would talk with me about this matter.”

“I just told you…” I sighed. “I… I do not have any… past experience that made me so… apathetic. I believe calmness suits me more. It helps me stay focused. And… even though I do not show my emotions, it does not mean I do not feel. I am happy or sad, just like you all. I am not trying to suppress those… this is just me. Sometimes I wish I could be as energetic as Tenko, or Angie… I believe I would be appreciated much more, yet I cannot force myself to be something that I am not.”

“Maybe we’re not that similar then…” She mumbled.

“I asked myself why I am like this many times, until I stopped doubting myself. I know I should be more enthusiastic at times, and the opposite in others… but those feelings will never be genuine, neither for me nor the others who would be with me. Despite my abilities, I am the worst actress I know. Maybe I have never felt comfortable with anyone… and this time with Himiko, is one of the few I spoke so openly.

Then, in the boiler room, a detail.

“The manhole’s open!” I shouted.

“We closed it after Kaede tried to escape…”

I ran towards the center of the room and looked down the manhole. I could not distinguish anything, so I had to climb down the stairs. I was hoping Kiyo had decided to go there. Why? I did not ask myself why. I only wanted to find him.

Nobody was down there. However, something was.

His mask.
Rantaro explained in detail what he wanted to do and we ended up spending a lot more time near the cage than I expected. Then, we arrived at the dormitories.

“So…” Angie jumped around. “What were you to lovebirds doing?”

“Exactly what you’re thinking.”

“WHAT!?” I exclaimed. This wasn’t the plan.

“Well, I don’t really know what you’re thinking, but… something related, surely.”

I don’t know what kept me from strangling Rantaro, but I stood in my place. I hoped I wasn’t blushing.

“Are you… a couple?” Kiibo asked, confused. I wanted to deny, but I had no choice but to let Rantaro speak, at least until he explained his plan.

“No, I was joking…” He revealed. I was fearing the worst. “The truth is, Kaede discovered something inside the school. Just in front of the entrance.”

“Oh! And why didn’t you tell us, Kaede?”

I was quick to answer. “I wasn’t sure about it. And I needed just one person to… test it. To convince myself that my idea was correct.”

Which, in itself, isn’t a lie.

“What is this about? Is it an escape route, maybe…?”

“Do you want to escape, Kiibo? I thought we agreed this would be our peaceful paradise from now on! We are preparing for the blizzard and nothing will stand in our way! There’s no reason to escape!”

“I… was just saying, you know. I like it here, with you and everyone else.”

“It’s not, pretty sure about that.” Rantaro explained. “The floor is less sturdy in an area five feet from the entrance.”

“If you knock on it,” I said, following the instructions the artist gave to me. “You’ll hear a different sound. Something is under it… probably a research lab. Kiibo and Kirumi haven’t unlocked theirs yet.”

“Well, I don’t think it’s important enough to check.” Angie declared, to my surprise. “Kiibo feels fine without his lab, as it probably contains extremely dangerous objects.”

“You don’t know that.” Rantaro intervened.

“We… aren’t sure, yeah… but I really don’t care about it. And probably the Monokubs are going to be furious if we disintegrate the floor… provided we can.”

“Also, there’s a more important task at hand! Searching Korekiyo! Kirumi is very, very sad since he disappeared. We must find him.”
Yeah, Korekiyo… I hope he’s alive… hope’s not enough, though. We have searched yesterday, we’ll try today as well. Maybe not finding him would be better than discovering a body.

“And Gonta?” I asked. “Is he alright?”

“Yup yup!” Angie hopped to the left. “He also has a very cool eyepatch on his eye! Now he just needs a parrot and he’ll be a pirate!”

“An eyepatch?” Rantaro exclaimed. “Has he… lost his sight?”

Kiibo nodded. “Kirumi told us there was only so much she could do. But… he seems okay. He isn’t the type to… well, those things don’t affect him, it seems.”

Yet, I doubt he’ll be able to play tennis like he once did. He’s an Ultimate with two eyes, but he’ll just be a good player with one. I shouldn’t be the one to point this out, though. I keep those bad thoughts to myself.

“Now that all’s sorted out, please stop walking around together.” Angie said.

“What?”

“Rantaro said he was joking and you’re not a couple, but who knows! I trust you Kaede, but love blinds you…”

“He was joking and you know it.”

“I’m just saying… it’s not the first time you’ve done some things together, you know? Behind my back.”

“Angie, state what you want to tell us and don’t circle around the argument.” I said.

“Surely. First of all, Rantaro, you were supposed to be in your room last night. And you never headed out. I mean, you were locked, right?”

Oh no… how does she know…

“Yet! There’s a coat in your room! Of course, you couldn’t have gone there alone. Kaede helped you. I happened to take your key for a while yesterday… then, of course, I returned it. I’m well-mannered.”

There’s no way to get out of this… I can’t lie… I just have to twist the truth.

“I did go to his room, because the exploration of his lab was important. In fact, we found a coat. Exactly what we needed.”

“You kept it to yourselves, though.” Kiibo said, eyeing us. He was more irritated than I had ever seen him. “You had to tell us!”

Rantaro took a step ahead. “And what? You’d have taken the coat and said it was illegal or something like that! You’d have probably imprisoned us for having disobeyed to your absurd rules!”

“Those rules are what has kept us alive!” Kiibo continued to protest. “And if someone starts going against them, everyone will! It’s just like the murders!”

“Right, Kiibo. That’s what I thought too. I still believe in Kaede’s abilities, but Rantaro’s having a
bad influence on her.”

“I’m the bad influence? Even if that was true, at least I’d only influence one person, not half of this whole class.”

“How… how smug do you have to be to say something like this to someone who wants to help us?!”

“Just like I said… don’t you see what he’s doing, Kaede?” Anhgie smiled.

They’re arguing again. This time, I can’t abandon Rantaro. At the same time, Angie will convince everyone I’m the enemy if I don’t agree with her…

“As I said, we took the coat because it was needed. That’s the only rule I didn’t respect. And that falls on me, not Rantaro, okay? I did everything. And you can forgive me.”

“Only if you stop hanging around with him. Just stay with us. We’re more and probably just a little bit more interesting.”

“Interesting freaks.”

“…Maybe we should put him in the casino with Kaito…” Kiibo muttered.

“We won’t. He’s been harmless. That’s too much, Kiibo.”

The astronaut looked away. Now, he appeared furious. When did he become like this?

“Angie, listen…” I was about to lose my patience too. And I’m far worse than Rantaro when I’m angry. “You cannot prohibit me from spending time with someone.”

“I can’t, but I’d appreciate if you listened to me. If you don’t, though, you definitely won’t be having all the keys tonight. You went out of your room once, you could do it again.”

“What about the blizzard? We’ll have to be together tonight. Under the boiler room.”

“Well, you can stay with him if someone’s around. No whispering or sign language, though! I know it well too!”

“Fine.” Rantaro said. “I’ll just follow you like a dog then. What an experience.”

“Great! We all have reached an agreement! Bless Atua!”

“Bzzrrrt… Please, everyone, if you don’t want to be squished by an Exisal, gather inside the AV Room. We will give you another exciting snippet of your past! This one’s going to be a juicy one!”

Monophanie ended the communication drinking one of those cocktails that Monokuma always enjoyed. How does this work? Since they’re robots, this shouldn’t be possible… who knows, I’m too stressed to form a coherent sentence.

Me and Rantaro kept our mouth shut on the way to the AV Room. Angie tried to talk to me, but I only gave monosyllabic answers. She told me the door of the dormitories didn’t work or something like that, but who cares, honestly.

Maybe this would have worsened my relationship with her, yet I doubt it. She knew I wasn’t
completely on board with her ideas. Probably there isn’t a worse thing that could have happened.

Then, Kirumi slammed the door of the room.

“I found Kiyo’s mask!” She shouted. “Just outside of the tunnel!”

“W-wha… how?!”

“I… I have no idea… the manhole was open…”

“But we closed it.” Angie said. “A long time ago… we would open it later today… so we could go inside tonight.”

“Wait… maybe he escaped.” Kiibo proposed. “That’s what the tunnel is for.”

Or maybe… he died trying.

“It… I cannot believe Kiyo would do such a thing. The Road of Despair was dangerous for sixteen of us, and he was alone…”

“But that’s the only possibility, right!?" Angie asked. “That’s why he isn’t anywhere around here…”

“No, I am sure that is not the case.” Kirumi repeated.

Yet, that is probably the only way…

“We heard Korekiyo inside his research room!” Gonta revealed, stepping inside.

“We wanted to tell you before, Monophanie told us to come here just a while ago, so we knew where you were.” Tenko added.

“Did you really hear him?” Kirumi asked. There was some sliver of hope in her voice.

“We did, we’re sure. We tried to talk to him, but he didn’t respond.”

“That's impossible... Why would he ignore you?” Himiko asked.

“You didn’t have a stellar last interaction, did you?” Angie suggested. “Maybe that’s why he stayed silent.”

Kirumi ignored the leader, then continued to speak with the two. “What did he say?”

“Something about… he needed to work on costumes…”

“It sounded like Korekiyo…”

“I wish to know the exact words, if you can be so kind.”

However, the two didn’t remember. It’s nothing to blame them for, especially if they heard without paying too much attention.

“Sorry, but I will go to Korekiyo’s room to see if he is really there.”

As Kirumi headed for the door, Monophanie fell from the ceiling while her two brothers emerged from the pavement.
“No, it’s storytime now! Nobody goes out of this room before a good movie!”

Monotaro looked apprehensively at the bear. “Sister, are you sure it’s the right choice? I mean… we were told not to go through with this-

“As long as daddy is out of commission, I’m tasked to keep the show going here! And I won’t hear anything from you two, my subordinates!”

“Oh yeah, Monophanie! Monotaro is just a loser that doesn’t understand how the world works!”

“W-why are you saying this…”

“We need to investigate further about Korekiyo.” Kirumi said. “We can postpone this screening.”

“No, we can’t!” Monophanie shouted. “You’ll listen to me if you don’t wanna be incinerated!”

Angie intervened. “Hey, hey… we can just watch this video and be quickly done, so we can go to the courtyard…”

It looks like that’s the only option.

Kirumi had to resign; Gonta invited her to sit and keep her composure. After all, if Korekiyo was really in his lab, there was nothing to fear; he would be safe, as the door is locked.

***

Kirumi Tojo

I knew I should know better than to believe information from others, however I chose to believe that Kiyo was still in his lab, alone. Maybe he needed to distance himself from everything that was happening around him.

But… that mask… the times I have seen him without it, Aishi took over… maybe he had spares, I told myself, or maybe he got rid of that dangerous personality… fighting with her in the boiler room.

“This time, I picked this USB key!” Monophanie announced. “This is a big one!”

“Already?!” Monotaro gasped. He wasn’t happy with his sister’s decision, and he begged her to reconsider. “Dad could kill us if he returns… we have a lot of chapters planned, you can’t drop this reveal right now…”

“No, no. I’m sure he’ll appreciate it. I’ve always wanted to be a storyteller, and now I decide how to write the story! This is so much slower than expected, especially after that failed murder.”

“Hell yeah! I wanted some blood to be spilled!”

Failed murder… Did she think I would die? It is reasonable for the Kubs to know everything with a while in advance, but… this is exactly what Monokid told me. I was supposed to die, and my survival had foiled the plans of whoever put us inside of this game…

Of course, Monokid is pretending to be his vulgar self now, but I can see it… he is trying to make
me pay attention.

If only Kiyo was not missing…

“I’ll reveal your true identities! Be ready for a shocker, okay? Monokid, start the projector! Monotaro, get everything ready!”

The lights turned off and a new video started to play in front of our eyes.

*The Biggest, Most Awful, Most Tragic Event in Human History: Part 5*

This title appeared on a background that showed a city in ruins, a sky blood red. It took me a few seconds to recognize some of the buildings; that was Towa City, where we lived in our past… yet, nobody remembers anything.

The title faded to give space to a newscaster. She greeted the watchers from home, then began reading from some papers in front of her.

“bzzrrppp …years ago, the Tragedy started. The Tragedy was an event kickstarted by Junko Enoshima and Mukuro Ikusaba, with the killing of the Student Council. This event caused a riot inside the walls of the prestigious Hope’s Peak Academy, which caused the death of many other students. Some of those who were believed to be dead, Class 77-B, were actually brainwashed by Junko and faked their deaths to serve her in the shadows, causing despair and extending their reach to the entire world.

Despair spread rapidly like a disease, infecting many, rich and poor, weak and strong alike. Some safe havens were established in the world; one of those is Towa City, owned by the Towa Group. For some time, Towa City was untouched by the chaos of the world around it.

This was not meant to last.

In one day, the Warriors of Hope, an organization composed of children who followed Enoshima’s footsteps, took over the city, killing countless adults and recruiting every young boy or girl in their ranks. Their goal was to form a society without adults, or so-called demons.”

“I don’t… remember any of this…” Tenko said. “Those are the things the news talks about…”

Whoever is behind this game made us forget this… but why would they? Is this how they want to torture us?

“The Warriors of Hope ruled over Towa City until Komaru Naegi and Toko Fukawa, an intern of Future Foundation, defeated their leader, Monaca Towa. The situation, however, was far from solved. Despite the victory, the city was still full of resentful adults and Monokuma Children, brainwashed by Monaca Towa using the same technology as her idol Enoshima; this was done by the Monokuma Heads, that covered the entire head of the victims.
Future Foundation worked tirelessly to remove those devices without causing the death of the children, though the mission appeared impossible. Some adults wished for Future Foundation to abandon the project altogether, as it only consumed funds that could be used to restore the city to how it was before the Tragedy. Despite many protests and failed attempts, after years of work, Future Foundation managed to find a way to remove the heads without harming the children.

Towa City was finally returning to normalcy.”

“Monokuma Children… Heads… this means you have something to do with the world going to hell!” Tenko shouted.

“The name’s the same, but I assure you, we have no connection to that silly girl! We just took the Monokuma name since we liked it!”

It sounds like a sloppy excuse…

“Monaca Towa and Junko Enoshima…. they sound like awful people!” Angie protested.

“But… could have they caused such chaos? The first was a child, and the second a high school girl…” Tenko commented, furrowing her eyebrows. “To convince everyone to start riots… I don’t remember anything about this.”

Everyone agreed with the caregiver. “It sounds weird, because it’s impossible for us to have never heard of it… This is a world-scale event, it should’ve been talked about daily…” Kiibo added.

Kaede had a theory about this silence. “Maybe it happened so long ago that it was lost in history. We don’t know when this happened, and what time is now. Do you remember the year you were born, by chance?”

Nobody talked. Yet, what seemed stranger is that nobody ever asked this question… to my knowledge, at least. How… could this relate to the forbidden words that Monokid mentioned?

“This isn’t normal.” Rantaro said. “You really have no numbers in your brain? Haven’t you ever seen calendars?”

“Surely. Every trace of them must have been deleted; or replaced.” I said. “Despite this, I think we were born after the year 2000. I know I studied events that occurred before.”

“Can you be sure, though? Maybe The Tragedy happened way before, like the 1800s, and you just forgot those details…” Himiko added.

“I have never heard of mind-controlling mechanical heads.”

Kaede sighed. “You think you haven’t. That’s the catch. We have no way of knowing anything, only that many of our memories are missing. We only have what isn’t related to this mystery.”

“But… how this related to us? If Monophanie show us this, there needs to be some strong correlation!”

“How clever, Gonta!” The bear chuckled. “I mean, you should’ve figured it by now, you bastards! Towa City was your home after all… but there’s nothing that you remember about it! Well, that’s because your brain was waaaay too fried when you were there!”
If that is the case…

“Were we…. the Monokuma Kids?” I asked.

“Ding dong! Yep, that’s you! And now you’re all grown up!”

“Wait… this means the Tragedy occurred less than a decade ago!” Kiibo exclaimed.

“Sure!” She continued. “You were too young to remember, still… you decided to join the Warriors of Hope with some… convincing from Monaca. Thankfully, the Future Foundation came to save all of you!”

Monotaro was becoming more and more nervous. “Monophanie… I think this is enough…”

“Impossible.” Rantaro shook his head. “I’ve always lived with my family. There are photos of me with my sisters…”

“It’s true, you lived with them when you weren’t under Monaca’s influence! They surely wouldn’t have photos of you dressed as a Monokuma!”

“Since you’ve been so kind, would you tell us why we’re here too?” Kaede asked.

Tenko cut her off. “Hey… are we really going to accept what she’s saying? I mean… I don’t think I’d kill people… for fun…”

“You can believe that, if you so desire. As it stands, we have no proof of what she is saying.”

“Wait a second! Don’t you want to know what happened after Future Foundation saved you?”

“Monophanie, maybe you should stop…”

“Tsk! What a shitty brother! Respect your sister!”

Monokid slapped his brother while Monophanie ignored them, searching for another USB key. She found the one she wanted immediately and instructed her brothers to help her.

“The kids that were saved from Towa City were monitored heavily by Future Foundation. A few of those that survived had a trait in common; they had a talent in one specific area. As the Warriors of Hope were Lil’ Ultimates, it was speculated that Monaca designed the Monokuma Heads to implant talents or to improve those that would surface later. Sadly, as Monaca disappeared, nobody could confirm it.

The Government, with the help of the newly re-opened Hope’s Peak staff, then decided to include the survivors that showed talents in the Gifted Talents Program, financing their studies and granting them access to special courses. The operation was coordinated by the talent scout of the Academy, along with his younger brother, Ryoma Hoshi.”

“Ryoma?” Gonta exclaimed. “He was not a Child of Monokuma?”

Kaede intervened. “No, and it makes sense. That’s why he doesn’t remember his talent… he never had one.”
“Wait, while we’re talking about him… before dying, he said he did terrible things, just like we did…” Tenko recounted.

“We now know what was he referring to… killing of hundreds of innocent people…” Himiko sobbed.

Yet… that was us. We still have no indication on why would he feel guilty. If he did not spend his time on Towa Island, there must have been something else…

“That’s all in the past!” Monophanie exclaimed. “Now you can kill just one innocent person and you’d be free to leave! No biggie, since you’ve already done that so many times!”

“We were brainwashed! That doesn’t count!” Kiibo cried out.

“We here because of our actions? Like… an imprisonment?”

“It would seem weird; if we were selected as Ultimates, we showed potential. That’s an honor… it’s impossible that this is a plan by the same people who saved us.” Kaede explained, and I happened to believe her.

“Well, that’s it for today!” Monophanie exclaimed. “Whoever’s alive next time, you’ll discover who and why put you here!”

“Already? Monophanie, I don’t think dad would like that…”

“Shut up and come with me! We have some talking to do!”

“So long, bear well!”

“Well…” Angie shrugged. “They didn’t even turn on the lights again, they’re so distracted by their fighting…”

Still, she never said a word about our situation. I presume she does not care. Kiibo approached her.

“Hey, Angie… you said you lived on an island for your entire life… was that Towa City? That’d make sense…”

“Mhm… maybe it was two islands then… because I’m sure my city was waaaay different! Yes, I think I moved!”

We all must had too, unless some of us decided to withhold information for this entire time. Certainly, we all have our secrets.

“Now that we are done here, I will go to Kiyo’s research lab.” I announced. “Whoever wants to accompany me, is free to do as such. I will not run, but I will be as fast as possible.”

“What about Angie’s rules?” Kiibo asked. To be honest, I did not care at all.

“Gonta will!” The tennis player announced, standing up.

“Are you sure? You’re still recovering…”

He nodded, but he still waited for Angie’s permission. Thankfully, she did not waste any time and allowed him to follow me immediately.
I expected everyone else to follow me, eventually, but I could not waste time. I wanted to know more about our past, but Kiyo was more important than that.

While we were walking, I realized the scene was the exact one as the day prior; me and Gonta, alone in the fog, surrounded by the snow on the ground, searching for Korekiyo.

“Let’s hope nothing bad happens this time.”

He must have noticed it too. Maybe fate was steering us towards this path, again.

As we reached the lab, I shouted Kiyo’s name. Gonta helped me too, but he would not respond.

“Gonta… are you sure you heard him?”

“Yes, yes… please, you have to believe me!”

I do believe him, but the truth is in front of our eyes… there is no response. If Kiyo were in his lab, would he really ignore me?

“Kiyo, please… you cannot stay inside for an entire day… I promise that I will help you overcome what you are facing…”

“Even though I not speak a lot with you, that doesn’t mean I hate you, so come out!”

Nothing.

Not a single word.

Silence.

“Kirumi, I swear… I heard him talk and walk, Tenko was with me and she said same!”

If only this door was less sturdy… I could try to kick it open… but I know it would be a waste of energy.

Then I tried to call for someone else.

“Aishi. Aishi… are you there?”

“A-ishi?” Gonta stuttered.

“I… can explain later.”

Surely, I could find a reasonable excuse to hide his secret.

I had hoped for an answer, but again, the wind was the only sound that could be heard.

But I thought, if he was really locked inside, he had to get out.

Sooner or later.

Then… I heard an unlocking sound.

“Kiyo? Is that you?”
After Kirumi’s departure, we all gathered in the cafeteria. The search and the events of the AV room kept us occupied for longer than we thought, and everyone’s stomach was grumbling by the time we entered.

“I’d cook if Angie let me.” Rantaro sighed. She’d never allow it, probably thinking he’d poison everyone’s food.

Maybe she wouldn’t, really… but she’d surely feel the need to tell everyone that the possibility was there.

“We should try to bring Kaito some food too.” He added, but Kiibo immediately refused.

“He has enough… and we can’t risk it him getting out, especially in those conditions. He must be furious.”

“You’d be too if you were jailed without any proof.”

“Hey!” Tenko intervened. “Is this going to be a fight? If this angers you, you’d better count to ten before speaking.”

“Nyeh… we’re not babies, Tenko…”

“Oh! S-sorry, Himiko… I didn’t mean that…”

“It’s okay… you didn’t want to be offensive…”

“Listen, I am going to Kiyo’s lab too.” I said. “They might need my help with... what’s happening.”

“I’d let you go alone, but after what happened this morning, you also have to be accompanied by one of the ABCs! Nyahahah!”

“I’ll come.” Tenko said. “To be honest, I feel worried for Gonta… I know Kirumi’s with him, but if something happens…”

“I will allow it.” Angie said solemnly. “Go, and I will help Kiibo cook. Is the school door fixed?”

“Monophanie still hasn’t repaired it.”

“Ah, alright. It’s still fine.”

As we headed out, I noticed it was not snowing.

“What time is it, Tenko?”

“Around three o’clock, why?”

“It’s afternoon… that means, according to Monophanie’s forecast, that it should be snowing.”

“You’re right, that’s pretty weird. Maybe she’s… busy? But I don’t think that’s how snow works…”
Something was off. The bear has never been precise, but this is the first time she’s delaying snow or fog.

“Are you ok?” Tenko asked as I was going down the steps near the cafeteria.

“Yes, no problem.”

Ice was forming everywhere. Even the path that we shoveled had become dangerous.

“I hate those big piles of snow…” Tenko said, looking at one near the school building. “They will never melt… but that’s the only way to keep the road free of snow.”

Strangely enough, behind the piles she pointed to there was another with an interesting shape; it did not expand upwards, but to the sides. I could barely see because of the fog. That isn’t a clever use of space.

“Can you see that thing?” I asked. But Tenko shook her head.

Apparently, I had better vision than her.

“I have to check. Stay here, it will take less than a minute.”

I ventured into the snow, reaching the strange pile. Then, an horrible thought crossed my mind. This shape…

I decided to start digging, and it took only a few seconds to discover what was under all of that snow.

With his eyes closed, his skin turned grey…

In front of me, here he was…

...

...

...

The dead body of Korekiyo Shinguji, The Ultimate Cosplayer.

<< Ding dong bing bong!>>

<<Finally, the body of Korekiyo Shinguji has been discovered! All you bastards, assemble near the cafeteria where the body was found! Then, after some time has passed, the Class Trial will start!>>
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Deadly Life

Chapter Summary

The investigation for the murder of Korekiyo Shinguji begins.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Warm embraces heat up a cold world: DEADLY LIFE

Kaede Akamatsu

This is the first time... I discover a body in here.

The first time an announcement...

...sounds right after I see a corpse...

...

Tenko ran towards me. She muttered some words, but she couldn't finish a sentence.

By now, I should've figured he died. There was no sign of him for too much time.

“He... he... we heard him this morning, less than an hour ago...” Tenko continued to repeat. I told her that we shouldn’t touch the body. I wanted to wait for everyone before investigating.

Everyone in the cafeteria arrived immediately; no one was surprised when I revealed to them who the victim was.

“Why... why was he in the snow?” Angie asked, more surprised than sad.

Rantaro shook his head. “If only that was the only question that needs answers...”

“Does somebody have an idea about what happened?” Tenko was visibly confused. “He was in his room just a while ago, and we were all together...”

“Don’t overthink this, we’ll have more information with the Monokuma File.”

That, once again, I will ignore to avoid any misdirection from the Kubs.

“We... we have to bring the others here... Kirumi, Gonta... and Kaito.” Himiko said.

“Nop... They’ll be here soon enough!”

Monophanie jumped from a pile of snow and then shook it off from her fur, maybe to mock Korekiyo’s death. There wouldn’t be any advantage in pointing out her cruelty, and so I kept silent.
“We don’t have any time to waste! Now that Korekiyo’s body has been found, the investigation can start! I’ll just update all of your Monopads with the necessary information for the trial! I tried to give a new name to the Monokuma File, but apparently it’s too hard for me! I asked Monotaro to help me with his hacking skills, maybe next time you’ll see the brand new Monophanie File! What a great name, I really, really love it!”

“We don’t care about the name, just its contents.” Rantaro spat. The bear complained by insulting the artist, but ran away after calling him a spoiled avocado.

“Alright.” He sighed. “Luckily, I like avocados.”

“I… just… nyeh… what will be Kirumi’s reaction… she was the only one who truly knew Korekiyo…”

And probably, the only person here that she really cared for. Despite all of this, well… actually, exactly because of this, she is very suspicious. I’m sorry for her, but I’ll have to ask her again what happened when Korekiyo stormed off the Shrine of Judgment.

**Investigation start!**

I’m not going to go to Korekiyo’s lab to interrogate Kirumi. Despite my skepticism, she might be innocent and needs time to mourn her friend.

I approached Tenko and asked her more about her last encounters with the cosplayer.

“So, yesterday… you said you heard Kirumi and Korekiyo raising their voice, right?”

She nodded. “Yes, and when I entered to check, he pushed me to the ground. At first, I was shocked. Kirumi helped me to stand up again, but then ran in the fog to search for Korekiyo.”

“And you found her… where?”

“She came back to me a few minutes later. She said we’d need the help of everyone… she went to his lab, but apparently he wasn’t there.”

“Hmm… but you didn’t actually see her after she left.”

“No. But I’m sure she did. It would be the first place to search for him, especially in those conditions. I think Korekiyo wanted some time to be alone… and we know he was there today.”

“Right… you said you and Gonta heard him talk, but you don’t remember what he said exactly.”

“As soon as we heard him, we called for him. But right after, the sound stopped. And I’m sure. I heard footsteps from inside… so it had to be him!”

If they’re telling the truth, I can’t see why Korekiyo should try to pretend to be somewhere else by remaining silent. He had to be hiding somewhere, though… and his lab seems to be the most reasonable option.

**Obtained truth bullet: Tenko’s testimony**
“Kaede… you haven’t read the File, right?” Rantaro asked.

“No, and I have no intention to. It’s a bad idea, but all of you should do it regardless.”

“Great, because there’s one thing… more like, there isn’t one thing on it.”

“Has Monophanie omitted information again?”

The artist scratched his cheek. “You see… it’s complicated. If you don’t want to know it, I’ll just keep my mouth shut. But I think that this thing… if it’s written like this, it has to be extremely important… somehow.”

“Alright, tell me. I’ll try not to be too influenced by it…”

The last time Monokuma kept something secret, it was the missing piece of the puzzle. It must be the same for this murder.

“The File does have a time of death for Korekiyo, but… it’s not precise… quite the contrary… according to what’s written here, he died between 8 a.m. and… 8 p.m.”

“What? That’s ridiculous. It’s not even midday yet.”

I could understand not giving us an exact time of death, but extend it? That’s… just irrelevant!

“What if… he’s not dead yet…” Himiko whispered under her breath.

“I’d love that…” Angie comforted her. “But he has left this world. Maybe… we could see him when we reach Atua… if he was worthy of his grace, there’s nothing to fear. We’ll be safe too.”

And that’s an even crazier theory. I checked his pulse, there wasn’t any. And even if I got something wrong, the body announcement sounded. That’s the definitive confirmation.

**Obtained truth bullet: Monokuma File 4**

“Listen, I know this… this is a terrible time to say this” Kiibo stuttered. “But… I’m really hungry, and I have to eat something… if you don’t mind… I’ll go to the kitchen. I’ll cook something simple for all of you.”

"Wait! Atua's calling me!" Angie said, clasping her hands in prayer.

Rantaro rolled his eyes.

"He's saying we need to honor Korekiyo... with a blood sacrifice!"

"What? That's ridiculous!"

"It's important. It's been a while we haven't done those, and Atua might be sad if we don't give him a bit of our blood."

"I don't know..." Himiko whispered under her breath. "I don't think it's the thing we should do
now... maybe later...

Angie was visibly disappointing, but turned to Kiibo and Tenko for approval.

"I also think we should do it later." She said.

"I can do it. If you want... if you think it's the right thing to do..." Kiibo nodded, despite sounding unsure.

"Maybe Atua can wait a bit longer. Luckily, I've already given him my blood earlier today! Maybe I should give him more..." She said, massaging her arm. She must have cut herself there.

“Nyeh… maybe it’s better to follow Kiibo’s idea. There could be some clues in the cafeteria… the body was found right beside it.”

“Alright, you can go there. Pay attention to anything that looks out of place, I’ll inspect the body.”

I came closer to Korekiyo. To have a clear vision of him, I had to remove more snow. Whoever put him here, did with the intention of hiding the corpse… but why? It sounds like a contradiction.

Once I wiped the snow off of him, I could immediately see an… interesting detail. His mask was missing; on his lips there was lipstick.

I… did not know if that was related to the case, but one could never know. We had never seen what was under that mask… maybe he wanted to keep it secret.

The skin, overall, had a greyish color. The clothes were clearly bruised, in some parts more than others. Whatever happened to him... he had fought before his death, but there were no clear signs of permanent damage on his body, maybe some bruises under his clothes… but I chose not to go there yet.

Instead, I thought about what could have caused him to die. I could tell by a single inspection. His head was turned in an unnatural position… I placed my hands on his neck, and I felt it clearly… two of his vertebrae were broken. This has to be what killed him, as I could sense pieces of bone. His spinal cord must have shattered.

Death is not instant, but it comes very soon, depending on the circumstances… despite it, Korekiyo didn’t feel anything. People lose consciousness when their spinal cord is severed, still, the brain functions for a few minutes.

**Obtained truth bullet: Body conditions**

As I was touching his neck, I noticed that his muscles were all stiffened; the phenomenon was not restricted to his head, but also the rest of the body. This was rigor mortis; the postmortem rigidity that happens normally after death, yet…

“Have you found anything useful?” Rantaro asked.

“You can give me at least some time.” I protested.

“Sorry, but with Monophanie at the reins… I’m afraid she’ll give us less time.”
“That’s not a reason to do a sloppy job. I’m trying to see if I can determine the time of death with more certainty, and that needs time.”

“Any clues?”

“His muscles are rigid… you know about rigor mortis, right?”

He nodded. “But shouldn’t it happen between twelve and eighteen hours after death?”

“Yes, that’s what’s written on textbooks. The thing is, humidity, among other things, accelerates the process of decomposition, and with it the rigor mortis. Maybe that’s why he’s like this already.”

“It could be… you’re the detective here.”

*Obtained truth bullet: Rigor mortis*

“All the snow around here is clean, no trail of blood anywhere.” Angie said. “If someone cleaned it, they must have done a great job…”

“Can I ask you a couple of questions, Angie? Before Kirumi arrives, I’d like to know what everyone was doing from this morning until the moment we met at the AV Room.”

“Oh! Well, I was with the others greeting Gonta, then I spent the rest of the morning… hmm, searching… with Kiibo. Oh, and I went to my room to sacrifice a bit of my blood. That’s why I was alone in the bathroom… for a few minutes. But you were also unaccounted for a lot of time!”

“I told you were I was, and Rantaro was with me. We can prove each others’ alibis.”

“I’m just saying, there was a lot of fog… and this is the direction you took… so, maybe you…”

“Just say it, Angie…” Rantaro sighed. “You think that I killed Korekiyo, wow, what a surprise! You didn’t even need to say it.”

“Oh, I’m… kind of offended you would think that of me… I wanted to ask you if you saw this pile of snow where Korekiyo was hidden. That would be helpful in the investigation!”

I really don’t remember… I was so focused on trying to reach the cage that I paid less attention that I should’ve to my surroundings.

Noticing our silence, Angie spoke again. “That’s a pity. I’m sure we’ll have other important details to discover the truth!”

“Like we always did, it’d be better if two people were here to guard the body.” I said.

Himiko and Tenko rose their hands. The less people we have, the less ground we can cover, but making sure the body is not tampered with is essential in case I want to return.

As I was about to ask Himiko about her account, I saw Kirumi coming. Towards us. I could tell immediately she had been hit hard.
When the lab door opened, I had less than a second to hope Kiyo was alive, locked in his research room. It was so short, yet I had managed to feel relief and happiness at the same time.

However, that was not meant to last; I could not even place my hand on the door to see what was inside.

The body announcement sounded.

It took me another second to put back the pieces: once somebody is dead, their lab opens up for the investigation before closing forever.

... In front of me, there was Kiyo’s lab. Now open.

My knees felt weak, I barely managed to find the strength to keep them standing. I had been a fool. I had been a fool to believe he could be found after all of this time, to hope he had escaped or was hiding, to imagine him alive.

Our Monopads vibrated, then Gonta called me by name. He said sorry, but I was too distraught to answer or to do anything.

“Gonta… can give you a tissue…” He said.

Passing a finger on my cheek, I felt it.

I was crying, and did not even notice. It passed so much time since I last did… I did not shed a tear when I discovered to be sick, yet… Kiyo’s death made me.

But this… no… this isn’t what I am… I promised I wouldn’t cry… I would not cry anymore…

The tennis player was in front of me, ready to pass me something to dry my tears, but I couldn’t reach out my hand to him. Realizing he saw me in this state, I turned my back to him, sobbing.

“Kirumi, hey… not be afraid of showing emotions…” He said. “Crying is not something that makes you weak…”

He was giving me words of encouragement, despite being sad too. I could tell by his voice.

“I think… but this maybe is only Gonta’s opinion… that crying now is good for you… it means you are connected to the world… and if you are, well… to every tear, there will be a bigger smile…”

But… this isn’t what I was told… If the others see me like this… who knows what they’ll say…

“I’m not intelligent enough to say if crying is always good or bad, but… well… surely if it exists, it must mean something!”

He continued. "I’m… sad for Korekiyo too, and I know you are very, very much more! That’s why
you cry now! Crying helps you express your emotions… just like being angry or surprised… and nobody should say you should not! I think they’re jealous and bad people!”

He’s right, but he’s not me. “I… I don’t want the others to… to…”

“Gonta thinks… well, no! Gonta sure that the others will understand… yes, they will understand even more! Kaede like this when she lost Shuichi and Maki, Kaito when he lost 0UM5, Himiko when she made a terrible decision… they will see you and understand.”

Maybe… but whatever the truth may be… I won’t solve anything by crying, and that’s… that is what matters now. I have to discover who murdered Korekiyo… in a moment when he was so weak… for his and my sake as well.

I saw how the others were looking at me. Theirs were not faces of disdain, but of sadness… exactly like mine.

Himiko was the first to approach me. “I’m… sorry… I wish we found Korekiyo… but not like… like this…”

“Whoever did this, they’ll pay.” Tenko assured me.

Kaede then offered me her condolences. “I think… since you were so close with him… you should see the body.”

“Is he… like he always was?”

I realized how nonsensical my question was right after I finished saying it out loud. I explained I wished to know if his body has suffered irreparable damage. I have no idea why that would matter, but I asked nonetheless.

“He’s… almost like he’s sleeping… If it's too much for you, there’s the Monokuma File…”

Yes, the Monokuma File. Too distraught to remember, I did not check it. I took the pad from my pocket and read it in my head.

*The victim is Korekiyo Shinguji, the Ultimate Cosplayer.*

*The body was found outside, near the cafeteria.*

*The estimate time of death is between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.*

*The cause of death is spinal cord compression.*

*Updated truth bullet: Monokuma File 4*
Kiyo… who did this to you…? And why would the Monokubs decide to leave out the time of death ambiguous… we need to answer those questions.

“We need to split up.” Kaede said. “Let’s cover as much ground as possible. First of all, somebody should check Korekiyo’s lab. That is the last place where he was heard.”

“I can go there.” I offered.

She nodded. “Then, we have to explore the school, like always, but also other two places; the boiler room and the casino.”

“Right… Kaito’s there. He’ll have to participate in the trial.” Tenko said.

“He could always sit it out like me last week!” Angie proposed. “…But I doubt Monophanie would allow that, yeah…”

“Tenko and Himiko will remain here, I will go to the casino with-

“Me!” Angie butted in.

“Aren’t you scared of Kaito killing you?” Rantaro asked rhetorically.

“No, thanks. I’m fine! Kaede will protect me, just like she protected everyone!”

I couldn't tell if she was being serious.

“Gonta, I... I mean... I will go in school and then boiler room.”

“Fine, that leaves out Rantaro to go with Kirumi! For me it’s okay!” Angie exclaimed.

“Let’s see each other here, alright? We’ll wait.” Tenko said. “Then, when Kiibo will have finished cooking, he’ll join Gonta.”

“It seems like a good plan, let’s all go!”

Angie grabbed Kaede’s arm, but she resisted her grip. I called for her.

“Since Kiyo… has passed.” I said. “I think I should inform you about the conditions of the mask I found.”

“Yes, I would appreciate that.”

“It was… wet. Or, well… humid, I should say. That is strange, as the room is not humid at all. At first I did not pay that much attention to it, but I am sure it is important now.”

**Obtained truth bullet: Korekiyo’s mask**

After talking with Kaede, I headed back to the lab with Rantaro. Once again, the same road…

“I’ve not talked much, but I’m sorry for what happened to Korekiyo.”
“I am sure of that; you do not have to repeat it.”

“Have you ever been inside the lab?” He asked as we entered.

“Once. It is too overwhelming for me, and… I preferred to not disturb him as he was working.”

“Well, this means that me and Kaede were the last ones to be here, since we investigated after your attack. To me, it looks like everything is in order…”

As Rantaro said, I did not notice any interesting detail that could help us with the investigation. There were too many objects in the lab and there was not enough time to inspect them thoroughly. I hoped that Kaede had searched everywhere previously.

“One thing, has she checked the moving scenarios?”

“What?”

I came closer to the lever Korekiyo once pointed me to, and pulled it. The set that was further from us changed from a kitchen to a skyline.

“I didn’t know this, but… Kaede must have searched this place as well, right?”

The skyline did not hide any secrets, so I decided to see if something was hidden in the other set. I heard a faint sound.

“Shh.” I said.

A voice.

Rantaro looked at me. He could hear it too.

It came from… inside the fridge; at first, it did not even seem real, just a scene prop. After some seconds of pulling, it finally opened.

“There’s nothing inside, but… the voice is definitely Korekiyo’s.”

“Wait. I have seen this trick before.” I said.

My attention was placed on the lower part of the fridge. Weirdly, it looked like something was under it. The metallic exterior of the fridge, in fact, appeared to continue underground. In its place, a broken plank of wood.

“Why hide it here?” Rantaro asked. “Broken, too…”

Under the fridge there was a hidden compartment, inside it a wooden box. The sound came from there.

“Kaede didn’t find this? How’s that possible?” Rantaro asked, confused.

“Maybe she did not check this other set, or… I think we should ask her.”

The box opened with a gentle push, revealing a stereo and cassettes inside. The mystery got bigger.

“…find so many new possible combinations for the cosplays I have in mind. Truth be told, I never
expected to have so many possibilities in a place like this. I would hate to leave this place without bringing anything back, yet all those precious items are forever bound in this research lab. This… I cannot accept.”

“Did it end?”

“Yes. But it is rewinding.”

“By itself?”

“It appears so.”

“Hello, my listeners. I am Korekiyo Shinguji, Ultimate Cosplayer. This is my third day after discovering this place, a dream come true. My lab is full of incredible possibilities, that is why I decided to recreate a cosplay of Kaede Akamatsu. I wished to replicate a character of a novel, book or manga, yet I fear those would not be appreciated by my peers as much as my sister did. Oh, I miss the times when she accompanied me to school…”

He paused.

“…no, I will not talk about this here. She would not like it, being compared to fabric. She deserves more. Still, I believe I could find so many new…”

“Here, that’s where we started listening.”

“It is a short recording.” I noted.

“Well, there are more.”

I could count more than fifty cassettes, though none were named and all appeared the same.

“Just put one in it!”

I chose randomly, but the cassette did not play. More correctly, nothing was recorded. I tried again, and again. It looked like they were never used or wiped clean.

“We should try them all, they could contain important info…”

“I am afraid that would cost us too much time.”

It was only then that the cassette, the sixth one I picked, began playing correctly.

“Good morning. I am continuing to record my impressions on the situation for posterity, in case one should find those tapes. I am Korekiyo Shinguji, Ultimate Cosplayer, I remind whoever is
listening. Today, like the other days, I am working on improving my Kaede Akamatsu cosplay, which is proving to be harder than expected. I decided to use some materials to work on Kaito Momota’s cosplay as well.”

“Kiyo… was recording his thoughts.” I said out loud.

“Definitely… maybe there’s something here from today or yesterday… without any dates, it is impossible to determine the date of the message.”

I tried to insert another cassette.

“Today, Aishi spoke with someone else besides me. She has been quiet since we were stranded here, but it appears she has taken an interest in Kirumi. I do not know if they could be compatible, as they are very different. Aishi insists on surfacing more often to speak with her frequently. I will do as she says, since she has done so much for me.”

“Have I heard the right things? Aishi? Who’s this?”

“I… I do not know.” I lied. I should have expected mentions of her. “And… I have never spoke with someone named Aishi… surely not here, maybe in my missing memories.”

“ Weird.” Was all that he said.

**Obtained truth bullet:** Cassette tapes

Having discovered this secret, I focused on the various sets in Korekiyo’s room while Rantaro tried for other cassettes in the hopes of discovering something new. One interesting detail I discovered was in the jungle set.

“There are a lot of very small wood fragments here.” I pointed out.

“Could they be from the trees? Kiyo could have debarked it.”

“No, this trees are not real; it did not come from here.”

“They’re fake?”

“Yes. This is a set after all. No trees could grow in this lab, without enough sunlight.”

“Ah, so it came from something else… a real wooden object, maybe.”

“I assume that is right… it is not only bark, but actual wood as well.”

An idea… no, it cannot be. There is… a… a weapon… that could be made from wood, but… would this quantity suffice?
It couldn’t be a bow, since string would be needed, but… there’s something else that could be used…

**Obtained truth bullet: Bark and wood**

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**Kaede Akamatsu**

“Do you know who did it?” Angie asked.

“No, Angie. I’ve only inspected the body. And you know I can’t guess by just that.”

“I just think it could be Kaito… maybe he escaped.”

He would be able to go wherever he wants without anyone watching over him, *provided* he’d be able to escape.

But I locked him in, and this time… I am sure of it.

Monokid greeted us once we entered the casino.

“Hello, you bastards! How’s it going?! I bet you’re so sad that weirdo died without spilling any blood! I’d have loved a pool of sparkling pink liquids!”

“Hello to you too, Monokid!” Angie greeted him, ignoring his weird fascination with blood. “Why are you here? I thought you stopped working at this casino.”

“I recently got back to it, there’s been a lot of activity and there were no regulators! Here I am!”

“There were a lot of people who played?” I asked.

“But not really! I can’t disclose the names of who did this, but I can show you that I’m not a filthy liar like you!”

I imagined everything could be useful to us, so I asked Monokid to let us see what he was referring to.

The three of us moved behind the counter where he showed us a computer; on it there were records of plays.

“As you can see, each play is recorded here. How much the person won, how much they lost where and when they played!”

Despite Monokid claiming the casino had seen many people playing, there was only a few number of plays here today, and none yesterday’s afternoon and evening. On the other hand, there were multiple records of plays the day during yesterday's morning.

“Here it shows… a lot of coins spent on the Monoslots yesterday. From twelve to twelve thirty. It’s really aggressive gambling for that short of a time.”

“Definitely not healthy! Can you tell us who did it?”
“Nope! I keep those secrets to myself! If you want to know, ask! Whoever enters here keeps their anonymity!

Obtained truth bullet: Playing records

From what I could gather, those plays were done one after the other. Most of them were successful, though the player suffered some heavy losses.

“It’s weird... somebody played here today. I didn't expect that!” Angie said.

"Can you tell us who passed by?"

“No cameras here, you bastards! You’ll have to settle for this!"

“Has any of your prizes been reclaimed recently?” I asked.

“Good question, but why should I answer?” Monokid said, mimicking my expression. I wish he’d just explode or get a gruesome end like his brothers.

“There were some prizes that people took, but I’m definitely not telling you!”

We do know Kaito bought some materials for what he called “Electrohammers”, but I am sure that something else was taken. “Do you have a prize catalog?”

He nodded and passed me one. There were many possible objects to win, yet most of them had to be bought with more Monocoins that any of us could have ever gotten. Of all the absurd pieces of clothing, toys and questionable works of art that Monokid had, there were a few interesting choices.

“A key, a secret agent pen, a secret pass and a Mono-fix?”

“I knew you’d be interested in those, detective!” He exclaimed. “The key is an universal one, and opens every door in the casino and the hotel! The secret agent pen can write invisible messages and has poisonous ink! Then, the secret pass allows you to enter a secret and very special room. No spoilers of course, but I think it’s amazing! Lastly, the Mono-fix lets you fix literally anything in this school! I only had one copy of this in stock, since it’s so high-tech and expensive, and it was stolen from me by Monotaro! I can’t believe it! I only have a limited supply of the other things, luckily they are still with me!”

“Oh, dear!” Angie gasped. “I didn’t know such things could be bought… from now on, I think we’ll also ban anyone from entering the casino!”

“Also?” I asked.

“Yup, I already took all of the Monocoins of the ABC members and put them back inside Gonta’s room.” She explained. “He hates gambling, so he won’t ever use them!”

I sighed. “Can I have one for each, Monokid?”

“If you want, you can have some spares! But you have to give me the necessary Monocoins!”

“Spares? So someone bought these things.”
“Just one of them! Per my casino rule, though, I can’t tell you what was bought and who did it!”

*Obtained truth bullet: Casino prizes*

“Maybe you should play to understand what happened…” Angie suggested.

All of the three were too expensive for me to buy and hoping for good luck at the casino was definitely not the best course of action.

“I’ll be waiting for you bastards at the counter!” The bear announced while we climbed down the stairs. “And that counts Kaito too! He’ll have to be with you in that elevator, otherwise I’ll unlock that bathroom door myself!”

“We’ll have to free Kaito.” I said. “Also because he won’t talk if we keep him locked inside.”

“Hmm… you’re probably right. But if we do that, we won’t be able to trap him anymore! And if he knows something, wouldn’t he tell us regardless? He’d die too if he leaves out information!”

She’s right. However, if he truly is not the blackened, he deserves to be part of the investigation.

I knocked on the door.

“Who is it?” He asked.

I wished someone else besides me and Angie came here, but nobody would have been a good choice. Probably me and her are the worst, though.

“Me and Angie.”

“Are you here to mock me?”

I took a deep breath. “No, Kaito. We’re here to ask you if you noticed something strange in the last day.”

“Oh, that’s rich coming from you! If you didn’t fucking notice, I was TRAPPED INSIDE A BATHROOM!”

“I know, but… listen, I’ll just say this to you. Korekiyo’s dead. We’re currently investigating his murder.”

Some seconds of silence later, he spoke again. “I’m sorry for him, but I don’t care about your investigation. I haven’t heard anything at all! Since you have no intention of freeing me, I surely fucking hope you’ll find the culprit!”

“I’ll try to solve who attacked Kirumi and Gonta too, at the trial. To see if we can let you out.”

“What a great detective! Couldn’t you have done this before you locked me inside!?”

“You’re too aggressive.” Angie butted in. “Maybe it’s better for you if we let you out…”
Angie… changed her mind again. What is going on with her… maybe she is just pretending to be ok with this. Monokid just told us Kaito has to participate in the trial.

“I don’t fucking care. If you leave me here, at least I won’t have to see you fail miserably in the trial grounds.”

“You have to come.” I explained. “Monokid said as much.”

“Oh, that’s why you are begging me to be nice to you!”

We never did something like that, but I guess Kaito has decided to twist our words.

Angie handed me the key and I opened the door. Once it was done, Kaito didn’t even glance at us. He refused to talk and went back to the other floor of the casino.

“Someone needs to go with him, he could enact some type of revenge!” Angie exclaimed. This time, she sounded more worried than ever. She might even be genuine. “So? Why are you still here?!”

“You can go, I need to investigate this bathroom as well.”

“Alright!” She conceded. “I’ll follow him and be sure he doesn’t harm anyone!”

Just like that, I was the only one left. I would have never expected Angie to leave me alone after our encounter this morning. I guess she just doesn’t want me to hang with Rantaro.

The bathroom was as I left it some days ago. Thankfully, Kaito was kind enough to flush. I suppose he had to, considering there was no way out of this cell for him.

Inspecting the door revealed an interesting bit. There was no dust in the lock, but I remember it was quite a bit of it when I locked Kaito inside. I removed the key from the lock to see if the dust ended up resting on it, but it looked clean.

When I did the same in the bathroom, however, there was quite a bit of dust. It seems that whatever dust was on the other side fell off… but why not here?

**Obtained truth bullet: Casino bathroom door lock**

I spent some more time in the casino, but I concluded nothing else of interest was there. The purpose of our visit was to see if Kaito had something to say to us, but we probably got more information from our surroundings that from him. As I left, I noticed the electronic parts that he gathered previously were gone. He must have brought them to his lab. He never changes… I really hope he doesn’t screw us all again.

I returned where I found the body. Tenko was not there anymore. In her place I saw Kiibo. He must have finished cooking.

“There’s some pasta for you too.” He said. “If you want…”

“Yes, thanks. I’ll have a bite and be back outside. This investigation has made me lose appetite.”

“Hey, Kaede…” Himiko called me. “I was looking at the body and I noticed something…”
strange.”
“What is?”
“We all have a Monopad, but… I searched inside Korekiyo’s pockets… he doesn’t have one…”
“He must have left it in his room, or lab…” Kiibo hypothesized.
“I remember he always brought it with him. I do that, I don’t know if it’s the same for you.”
I don’t see why someone should leave their Monopad somewhere. You could lose it, but… Korekiyo is not the type to forget things.
“I didn’t search under his clothes, of course…” Himiko blushed. “That’s too much for me too, but the Pad is pretty big… I’d have seen it.”
This is an interesting development. During the trial, we’ll have to figure out why Korekiyo doesn’t have the Pad with him, and maybe where it could be.

*Obtained truth bullet: Missing Monopad*

I went inside to have a bite of what Kiibo cooked. Nobody was there, but I still gained an important information. The door to the school corridors was open. This morning was still locked, maybe the Monokubs noticed and decided to fix it. Maybe a little bit too late.

As I walked, I noticed that the pavement was cleaner than usual. The Monokubs said they cleaned this place regularly, but I think the last time they actually did something was one week ago.

Then I looked at the rest of the pavement. There were only a couple spots that were extremely clean. This can’t be a coincidence. Someone must have done this for a reason.

*Obtained truth bullet: Cafeteria door*

*Obtained truth bullet: Clean floor*

Back outside, I asked Kiibo about the door.

“Monophanie didn’t say anything about it to me, but it was open when I went back after we saw the body.” He explained. “And the floor… I really don’t know… I didn’t notice at all… I suppose it’s my fault for not looking at the ground.”

“Maybe someone found a key and unlocked the door while nobody else was there. And maybe they just forgot to tell us.” Himiko guessed.

Possible, but I would not say it is likely.
“I am trying to gather everyone’s alibis.”

“For when?” Kiibo asked. “We don’t know when he died…”

“Today, of course… and yesterday as well.”

“Yesterday? Why?” The astronaut asked, taken aback.

“The attack to Kirumi and Gonta took place right in front of Korekiyo’s lab. If someone wanted to target him, that is the first place they would go.” I explained. “And Korekiyo died one day after that… the events might be related.”

“Ah, yes… yesterday Kaito sneaked away from his lab while I was in the bathroom… and locked me inside. You remember this, right?”

Yes, I do. That is the reason why we decided to trap Kaito in the casino.

“After that, I was with Angie the entire time… both yesterday and today. After you and Rantaro met with me and her near the boiler room, we went back to the dorms and had a nap. She told me she’d bring me something to eat, but ended up sleeping too.”

“Together?”

“Y-yes, in her room. I promise you it’s nothing weird!”

I didn’t imply anything.

“And today.” He continued. “It was the same. We stayed together. You saw us in front of the dormitories when you returned.”

Obtained truth bullet: Kiibo’s alibi

“Himiko, and you? I’ve never asked, but… can you confirm the story?”

“I found Kiibo locked inside the bathrooms… but I didn’t see Kaito there… it could’ve been him, but… there’s no way to be sure… nyeh.”

Not that I expected anything else, but Himiko’s version is no different from Kiibo’s. Though I must ask myself… how is possible for someone to go unnoticed by her, him and Kirumi and Korekiyo as well… those are four people, and none of them saw him? I can hardly believe it.

***

Kirumi Tojo

I knew Kiyo would mention Aishi multiple times in those recordings, yet I hoped some more valuable information would resurface. It did not look like that would happen. Quickly, Rantaro noticed that I had to know something about that name.
“Kirumi, if you lie you’ll make your situation seem worse than it actually is. What do you know about this Aishi?”

“I am sorry, but I made a promise that I do not intend to break.”

He crossed his arms. “Is it so important to get you to withhold information? You know this will implicate you.”

“I do not see how. I have an alibi, as I spent all my time with the others and then Himiko. Therefore, I am innocent.”

“That’s fair, but what about the real culprit? We need to work together to discover them, not keep secrets.”

“This has nothing to do with his death.” I said, despite not being certain.

“You should never ignore clues. And this box was hidden from everyone. It’s obvious that he didn’t want anyone to find it… this is evidence, and evidence should always be taken into consideration.”

“Even if it was related, I know what he is referring to, and I would explain to you if it was necessary.”

“Look, Kirumi. He’s dead. He won’t start breathing again and argue with you because you revealed a secret. The most you can do for him is to figure out who did this to him.”

“No.” I explained. “You do not know what he would have wanted… and as much as I want to, neither can I. This is why I will continue to act as he asked. He kept his secret to the grave, and I will do too.”

“Is it because someone could hurt you when we get out? What he’s saying in those recordings doesn’t make sense, that’s why you have to tell us!”

“Nobody will hurt me. Kiyo believed in a world after death, and I will respect his wish.”

“But you don’t. If you were coherent, you wouldn’t care.”

“I understand your point. But that is as far as I can go. I will not betray him, to honor what he was.”

“I’ll have to tell everyone about those recordings, in every detail. You’ll have to answer our questions, regardless of your respect. There’s no reason to continue arguing now, but the both of us know that this doesn’t end here.”

Rantaro was not wrong. I could not convince everyone that Aishi was not a subject worth discussing about, unless I happened to create a lie so believable that could be universally accepted. Yet… I should not think about that. I am here to understand who murdered him, and that only.

In front of the door I saw a small, purple fiber. It was as thick as a hair, but rather long.

“Have you seen this?”

“Kaede noticed it yesterday, but outside. There were a few, probably snow covered them.”

Interesting. That means they did not appear today.
“I just remembered something…” Rantaro noticed. “Isn’t supposed to be snowing right now?”

“Yes, you are correct. Despite that, the fog still hampers our vision.”

“Maybe Monophanie has just gone crazy. She’s been weirder than usual during those last hours.”

“Well, I am officially offended!”

“You should be grateful I haven’t reduced you to smithereens with the Exisals!” She exclaimed from behind us.

Rantaro cussed after being surprised by her.

“I was trying to get things fixed around here, but this is the last straw! I can’t believe you feel so accustomed to criticizing me! I can’t believe it! So much hypocrisy!”

“Maybe we will change our mind if you explain us why it is not snowing now, despite being foggy.”

“Surely! As you should remember, the motive expires right after someone dies! That explains the absence of snow! To be clear, a cycle of snow would continue regardless!”

“Huh?”

“If somebody dies while it’s snowing, it would continue like normal, until it went away. What’s different is that the next time snow was forecasted, snow wouldn’t be there anymore! The motive would expire, as I said.”

“The fog should be gone too then.” Rantaro pointed out.

“The fog is special! It remains until the trial is held!”

“That’s a new rule.”

“I told you!”

“No, you did not.” I echoed the artist. “And I am sure that everyone here would agree with us. You never mentioned such a thing, so we reasonably expected the fog to disappear as well.”

“Oh, you’re such a stickler for the rules!” She cried out. “Now you know, ok? And I can’t make it sunny just like that, I have other business to attend too! Any other questions or can I go back to my lounge?”

“Just one. Did you refurbish the warehouse with darts recently?”

“No, that’s not in stock and never will be! We never bring objects that weren’t here in the first place!”

Like I thought… those darts were not taken from there, then… it only leaves one option.
“Thanks for your help.” Rantaro said. Monophanie refused to say goodbye and disappeared in the mist.

*Obtained truth bullet: Snow and fog*

“Do you really think she forgot…?” Rantaro asked.

“I cannot say for sure. Something is happening with her, though.” I wished to investigate, but this was not the time to do it. We had found enough evidence inside the lab; it was time to go somewhere else.

“I will inspect the room under the boiler room again, if you do not mind.” I told Rantaro.

“Do it. I haven’t finished checking all the recordings. If you let me, I’ll continue doing that.”

“Are you sure you want to be alone inside there?”

“I’m sure that the killer wouldn’t gain anything by claiming a second victim now. And for once, I’d like to stay away from Angie. I doubt I’ll have many chances after this trial.”

On my way on the boiler room I saw Tenko. Apparently, she was doing some work on her own.

“Kaede’s gone to the school to search for Gonta, Angie and Kaito… that’s what Himiko told me. They freed him and she’s making sure he doesn’t do anything… drastic.”

“What is your opinion on this matter?”

“Kaito…? I mean… he was caught red-handed… I don’t see any other option rather than him being the one who attacked you and Gonta…”

“Yes, it looks that way…” I sighed.

“Is there something troubling you? Other than… you know, being a target for murder… I didn’t want to offend you!”

“No offense taken.” I reassured her. “It is nothing to worry about.”

“I… normally I’d try to cheer you up… but I’m heartbroken too. We were doing such a good job… by being all paired up… and despite this… yesterday and today… I am so done with this place! Why can’t we just get along?”

“I should find Kaito and listen to what he has to say about this.”

“About him… yesterday while we were searching for Kiyo, we passed near him.”

“Has he told anything to you?”

“Well, no. I didn’t enter the casino. That was Gonta’s job. Maybe you should ask him instead… But he didn’t tell me anything. He was there for a little while, or it’s just me taking too much time in the Love Hotel.
“Did you see anyone else while you were there?”

“In the Love Hotel? No, but when we were searching we crossed paths with Kiibo and Angie. They were tasked with the exploration of the upper courtyard. Then, we met Kiibo again on the lower courtyard. Apparently the dorms door was stuck and Angie couldn’t get out.”

“Huh, really?”

“That’s what he said. Gonta asked him why was he there, and he told us that Monotaro had left him something to fix it in the Shrine.”

“Why there?”

“I don’t know. It sounded weird to me as well.”

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**Obtained truth bullet:** Stuck dorm door

“I’m checking the boiler room one last time. Do you want to come with me?”

“That’s exactly what I had in mind.” She nodded.

The room under the boiler room did not change. It appeared nothing was out of place. Just as we entered, however, we saw Monotaro… pass through the wall.

“Kirumi, have I gone mad? Did that bear just disappear?”

We have seen multiple times that those machines vanish in a blink of an eye, but this is different. We witnessed something I can hardly explain.

“If you have, I must have too.”

We came closer to investigate. We were both shocked when we discovered that there was a passage in the wall, wide enough for one of us and two meters tall, exactly where Monotaro disappeared.

“This wasn’t here before. I saw him pass through bricks!” Tenko cried out. She looked worried for her well-being.

However, she was not hallucinating. I also saw the same. This gap was not here before. It only appeared when we were close enough.

I thought it could be an illusion, so I extended my hand towards it.

It was not a trick. A passage really opened before our eyes.
“I’ll go first.” Tenko said. “You can follow me.”

“No. It could be dangerous. It is safer for you to be behind me.”

As I was stepping inside, a screaming Monotaro came running towards me. He began talking before I could say anything.

“Nononononononononono! This hasn’t anything to do with this case! I swear! Iswearisweariswear!”

He was out of his mind.

“I promise you that this is so irrelevant! Sosososo irrelevant! Oh no… what did I do… dad is going to kill me if he knows…”

Apparently, we were not supposed to see this passage.

“This is the corridor that leads to the Monok-hub, where we spend time as brothers. The room you see in the announcement, yes! That’s where it leads to! So nothing strange!”

I doubt that. Why would it be wide and tall enough to let us pass then? Yet, if the bear is so keen in telling us it does not relate to the case, it must be true.

“It’s okay Taro, you’ll be okay…” He repeated to himself.

“We will not tell anyone about this. But you need to help us investigate.” I said.

“What!? Oh, that’s even worse… that would get me fired immediately! And in a literal sense…”

“Nothing major. I want some elucidations. Specifically about the Death Road of Despair.”

“I… I’ll see what I can do.”

“Is it possible to die while traversing the Road? Every time we tried, the traps would make us unconscious and we would regain forces by going back here…”

I never understood how that worked. According to what Maki said, it was probably due to a mix of continued stress and carbon monoxide poisoning.

“…but we never went too far. If we did, would we be at risk?”

“I never went there, so I can’t tell! But Monosuke once told me that he was sure you could be reduced to a crisp if you got some jumps wrong… he was serious.”

“And if someone died… would a trial be held regardless?”

“That’s too hard to tell. I’m not the one to ask!”

It seems I will not have an answer. However, another question will help me to reach the same conclusion.

“Alright. But if any of us died while trying to escape, would the body remain there or get transported here?”

“This I’m sure of! Dad created an emergency procedure specifically for this to happen… I don’t know why, since none of this was ever planned, but I suppose that’s why it’s called emergency.”
Is he referring to us? He seems to be sure none of us would die there. It is reasonable, but he could not know for certain…

“If someone dies in the Death Road and the body isn’t found after 48 hours, the body will be moved to another location by the Monokubs and the Exisals to be found later by the students. I memorized this by heart!”

Another valuable information. I am sure this will be important.

**Obtained truth bullet: Death in the Death Road**

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I found Angie in front of Kaito’s lab.

“He’s inside. I’m keeping watch.” She said. “Luckily, he doesn’t have the key to his lab since Kiibo has it. I can enter whenever I want and be sure he isn’t building a weapon of mass destruction.”

“I think that’s too much for him.” I said. Being wary of him, I still couldn’t be sure about his intentions. I know I would be furious if someone kept me locked for this long.

I entered to try to talk to him one last time. Maybe he’ll listen.

“Don’t try to say anything. You’ve already sealed your fate.” He said.

“I could say the same.”

“Funny.” He chuckled. “I knew you’d say something like that. But you see, you’re the one who did all of this. Not me.”

“I’m not going to repeat myself again. Kiibo and Himiko both confirmed you escaped from your room. And that’s enough to make you suspicious.”

“Fine, I also have spent enough time arguing with you. The truth will come out at one point. Meanwhile, I’m working on making you all escape from here.”

“With those Electrohammers?”

“Yes, in fact.”

“I doubt it. Those things could probably kill us in a second.”

He might be so furious to attempt a murder without even hiding it. If he kills everyone, he would not have to face a trial.

“I figured you’d lock me up again. I’m trying to do as much as I can while you continue to be wrong. This time, I want to help you. For real.”

Always the same words… even if he was telling the truth, he only caused trouble.
“I don’t have anything to say to you. Please, go now. I’m busy.”

Slightly frustrated, I left the inventor to itself and went back to Angie.

“Something useful?” She asked.

“No.”

“Wow, but it should’ve been obvious.”

“You can stay here while I look around for clues, okay?”

Angie nodded, despite being clear she wasn’t that on board with the idea. She’d have complained, but I’m the detective here. I’ll be more useful if I’m moving around.

Heading out of the school, I met up with Himiko and Kiibo again. She ran towards me.

“I remembered something else, Kaede… sorry if I didn’t tell you sooner!”

“As long as there’s time left, it doesn’t matter. What’s that you wanted to say?”

“Today, while searching for Korekiyo… I think I saw someone… behind me and Kirumi.”

“Huh?”

“It was foggy, that’s why… but while Kirumi was going towards the school, out of the boiler room, I stayed still for just a couple of seconds… and I’m sure somebody was there, in front of us.”

“How can you tell? There was a lot of fog this morning.”

“I heard footsteps, and that’s normal. But right after a couple of seconds those stopped. Then they became fainter and fainter… That’s why I thought I was being followed. I ran after Kirumi right after that… I didn’t want to be killed… you never know.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Nyeh… I thought it could’ve been a hallucination, but… if it isn’t, it’s better that I told you.”

“Do you, more or less, remember the time it happened?”

“Mmh… well, it was just after the Monokubs announcement… so around ten…”

**Obtained truth bullet: Himiko’s testimony**

It seems her and Kirumi weren’t alone. Then, if everyone else was with each other… there’s only a person who could be their stalker. Unless…

*bzzrt!*
Hey bastards! Monophanie speaking here! Your investigation time has ended! We’ve got to move with the trial since... ehm... Monokid has to... well, do his things! I’m stopping you right now to make sure the trial ends as soon as possible! Now get your butts to the Shrine!

“She sounded... a bit angry.” Kiibo said.

“And worried.” I added. All of the Monokubs are acting weirder than usual. I wonder what is really going on behind the scenes. Maybe they’re surprised I discovered about the screens around the cage?

“Maybe it isn’t a big deal.” I said while checking out the Monokuma File.

Eventually, we all met up in front of the Shrine. Angie, Gonta and Kaito were the last ones to arrive; the latter ignoring the former.

“Kaede, we’ve found some interesting clues inside the lab and under the boiler room.” Rantaro said, whispering what he and Kirumi found.

“Aren’t you going to tell us?” Kaito asked, irritated.

“It’s not because I have something against you. Everything will be discussed during the trial, if it is necessary.”

“Nyahahah! I also think it’s not fair! We should all have the same evidence at our disposal, that’s what Atua’s saying to me!”

“So you can prepare a rebuttal?” Rantaro shrugged. “No, thanks.”

“No, she is correct. I cannot do this by my own.” I said.

“Yes, even if I not smart, Gonta still wants to help.”

“I took some notes while exploring.” Kirumi said, passing them to me. After having read them, I gave it to my classmates so that they could read them.

“Cassettes? Why would he have something like that?” Tenko asked.

“He was just recounting what happened. Like... a diary, I think. There was only ordinary stuff, except a couple of things... he mentioned an Aishi. Do any of you know her?”

Nobody seemed to.

“Yeah, like I thought. Well, he really cared about her, it seems. In one of this recordings he said he’d peel someone’s skin off for her, including his.”

“That’s not that weird for Korekiyo...” Tenko commented.

“Don’t be so worried! Maybe he playing a character, that why he so strange!”

“I don’t think we’ll have to talk about those cassettes...” Kiibo intervened.
“It’s better to take in consideration everything. Especially with this case, as we don’t know what Korekiyo did during this last day.”

And that’s what I should also discover.

This afternoon, nine of us stepped inside the elevator. I hoped eight of us would return, but I still wondered if a time could come… a time when we never had to step inside it again. Angie’s method of control proved useless, someone still slipped away from her grip.

I doubt she’ll change her mind tomorrow. She will be even more controlling and start acting like a dictator. I’ll be lucky if I’ll be allowed out of my room…

For now, though, I have something else to think about, otherwise I won’t ever see my room. Discover who killed Korekiyo Shinguji.

“Oh! This throne is so much comfier that our stands!” Monophanie said, towering over her brothers. “Please, you bastards, take your positions and start debating!”

“I really can’t wait to see another execution!” Monokid laughed.

Korekiyo Shinguji… he was such a mystery…

He never got the chance to show me his cosplay of me…

It was a weird idea, just like him… but I was curious…

Now, I’ll never see what he had in mind.

I won’t pretend he was my friend, yet, he was my classmate.

He still deserved to survive, to continue living his life.

With more time, we could have known him better.

Instead, we’ll soon say goodbye to the monster that murdered him.

**CLASS TRIAL START!**

Chapter End Notes

So, what are your theories? Who did it? How? Why is the File so vague?
I want try to publish the trial without too much time between parts, so it might be a little bit more time before I publish it.
Chapter Summary

The fourth class trial starts.

Chapter Notes

Attention!
I changed a bit of wording in the last part.
While everyone was gathering inside the AV Room, Tenko and Gonta entered announcing they heard Korekiyo.
Because of how I wrote it, it seemed like they *just* heard it and ran towards the AV Room, but, actually, some time passed between that and their arrival to the AV Room. They spent a little bit of time around the courtyard and trying to find a way in, then took their time to get to the school. I'll remind you that some areas are still covered with ice, so running is dangerous, especially around the areas where snow wasn't removed.

TRUTH BULLETS:

• Tenko's testimony
Tenko claims to have heard Korekiyo while passing in front of his room while the group was searching for him. However, after being called, he did not respond.

• Monokuma File 4:
The victim is Korekiyo Shinguji, the Ultimate Cosplayer.
The body was found outside, near the cafeteria.
The estimate time of death is between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.
The cause of death is spinal cord compression.

• Body conditions
Two of Korekiyo's vertebrae are broken, compressing the spinal cord. He must have lost consciousness after that damage, then died shortly after. There are multiple signs of a fight on his body.

• Rigor mortis
Korekiyo's body was in a state of stiffness. Usually this process affects the entire body between 6 and 12 hours after death, though it can be sped up or slowed down.

• Korekiyo's mask
Korekiyo's mask was found in the room under the boiler room. While the boiler room is humid, the one under it is not. Despite it, the mask was still humid.

• Cassette tapes
Rantaro and Kirumi found numerous cassette tapes in Korekiyo's lab, hidden in the kitchen sets. They are a recording of Korekiyo's thoughts.
• Bark and wood
Bark and wood were found in Korekiyo's lab, though it can't come from the trees of the jungle set, as they are not made of real wood. Something else was made of wood in the lab, maybe it was destroyed later?

• Playing records
Monokid kept a record of the plays in the casino during the last day. Someone played today, but also yesterday.

• Casino prizes
A number of casino prizes caught my eye.
An universal key opens every door in the casino and love hotel;
A secret agent pen can write invisible messages and has poisonous ink;
A "secret pass" allows the holder to enter a secret room;
A single copy of the "Mono-fix" lets you fix anything in this school, but it was out of stock after Monotaro stole it.
Monokid confirmed me that only one of those items was claimed, but did not tell me more.

• Casino bathroom door lock
When I locked Kaito inside, there was dust on both sides of the lock. After checking again, I discovered that the dust on the bathroom side was still there, but the one on the other side wasn't. It must have fallen, but how?

• Missing Monopad
Korekiyo's Monopad is missing. He didn't have it with him.

• Cafeteria door
The cafeteria door was kept locked until this morning, after Korekiyo's body was found.

• Clean floor
There are a couple of spots in the cafeteria that are cleaner than the rest of the floor.

• Kiibo's alibi
Kiibo claims to have been with Angie for the entirety of the day. He also assures that he was with her yesterday in her room, where they both fell asleep.

• Purple fiber
Kirumi and Rantaro found some purple fibers inside Korekiyo's lab. They say are very similar to the ones I found yesterday.

• Snow and fog
Monophanie informed us that fog would only stop after the trial, while snow would stop falling not right after someone's death, but only when a cycle of snow would end. The next time snow would be forecasted, it would not snow.

• Tenko and Gonta's location
Tenko told me that she left Gonta for a while, since she went investigating the Love Hotel. He went to the Casino to check on Kaito. It took him more time than Tenko expected.

• Stuck dorm door
While exploring, Gonta and Tenko met with Kiibo, who was going to the Shrine to
find an object that could fix the dorms door, which was stuck.

- Death in the Death Road
  Kirumi discovered that dying in the Death Road might be possible, though a dead body would not be kept there. The Monokubs would move it somewhere around the school if the corpse wasn't found in 48 hours.

- Himiko's testimony
  Himiko told me that she heard footsteps after she and Kirumi headed out of the boiler room during the morning. The footsteps became fainter as time passed. The fog obstructed her vision.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

**CLASS TRIAL START!**

Monophanie: Well, let’s just go with this trial, we haven’t got that much time to lose.

Tenko [pensive expression]: Aren’t you going to tell us about the rules of the trials and… the rest of it?

Monophanie [rolling eyes]: That’s a dumb tradition my father never left behind. I think it’s so stupid to repeat it over and over! By now everyone should’ve memorized those lines by heart!

Monotaro [worried]: Monophanie, I don’t think it’s a good idea… just go with it…

Monophanie [angry]: I can’t believe you’re still against me! Another word and I’ll tell Monokid to beat you up!

Monotaro [worried]: .you haven’t even made a custom portrait for Oums' stand... If dad ever comes back...

Monophanie [angry]: Do you really want to be crawling instead of walking tomorrow?

Monotaro [shocked]: A-alright… I’ll keep my mouth shut…

Monophanie [smiling]: Great, you start talking. The sooner we’re done with this, the better! And if I disappear don’t pay too much attention to it!

**I guess… we’ll just ignore her from now on. I hope she won’t interrupt us to bring up useless facts.**

Angie [index finger on temple]: Now, let’s think hard about our first topic of discussion!

Kiiibo [uncertain expression]: Usually the first thing we talk about ends up being wrong…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Though that doesn’t mean it’s useless talking about it.

Himiko [looking up]: Surely it’s discouraging.
Kirumi [determined expression, raised right arm]: Mistakes are needed to reach the truth. It does not matter how we arrive to it.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Exactly. We’re here to discuss. Eventually, we’ll discover what happened.

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: So… what discuss first?

Maybe we should start talking about what we know for certain, but I usually begin with the clues we don’t have. It’s important to understand why something is not there, maybe why it was hidden. And there’s something in this case that we don’t know.

[[The cause of death/The time of death/Where the body was found/Where is Korekiyo’s lab]]

ANSWER: The time of death

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: According to the Monokuma File, Korekiyo died between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Kaito [irritated expression]: What does that mean? It’s not 8 p.m. yet.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I don’t know. I think it’s just an excuse not to give us the exact time of death.

Kiibo [index finger on chin]: Of course they wouldn’t tell us, because Korekiyo disappeared yesterday. If they did this trial would be easier.

And less interesting for Monophanie, I assume.

Kaede [gesturing]: What’s important is that we don’t know it. This is a disadvantage, and rightly so. However, it could help us.

Tenko [shocked expression]: What? How?

Kaede [gesturing]: It means it’s essential to solve the case. Once we figure it out, everything will fall into place.

Gonta [smiling]: Right, like Ryoma and Tsumugi’s deaths.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Anyone has an idea? Anything would be great.

I think I have some. If nobody speaks up, I'll be the one.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Body conditions, Rigor mortis, Bark and wood, Korekiyo’s mask
Himiko [scratching cheek]: For sure, I know one thing…

Himiko [looking up]: **He couldn’t have died after eleven**, that’s around the time Kaede found the body…

Angie [moves to the right]: Maybe he was killed while we were with Gonta.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Impossible. **We all have an alibi**… and Kaito was locked.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Has somebody checked the body? Maybe they **found something unusual**.

Angie [moves to the left]: Wow! What a way to shift suspicion from yourself!

Gonta [pensive look]: Maybe **an object he had or his clothes**.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: If there is nothing on him, maybe we should deduce his prior whereabouts.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: That’s another big problem, we’ll get to it if there’s nothing else we can determine.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: The time window is not as wide as we might imagine. Maybe there is no way to pinpoint the exact moment of his death.

**Kirumi’s right. There’s no way we can be precise. However, there’s surely something worth talking about.**

**ANSWER: Rigor mortis --> “found something unusual”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: To be fair, Korekiyo’s body was subject to rigor mortis.

Gonta [confused expression]: Gonta doesn’t know that word. Sorry to everyone, but can you explain?

Kaede [reassuring expression]: It’s when the muscle stiffen after death. Usually it happens between six and twelve hours after death.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Maybe you got your calculations wrong, Kaede… because he died during the morning, so… I don’t think it’s rigor mortis.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Maybe he ate something he wasn’t meant to, or got exposed to some weird chemical in his room…

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: Definitely not the latter. There is no such thing in his lab.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: I understand your doubts, but I believe the stiffness came naturally, without any external influence.
Kaede [gesturing]: As far as I know, there’s no food that could cause this phenomenon.

Himiko [neutral expression]: Then how can you explain it being so fast?

Kaito [looks to the side]: Korekiyo’s body was covered in snow, that would slow the process too. It’d be even more time!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Right, so something else must have happened!

Kaede [gesturing]: I mean, yes… but something completely normal. Research shows that rigor mortis is hastened if there has been intense physical activity before death.

Tenko [scratches ear]: But that’s just another hypothesis, right?

**No, not really. I have something to prove that it’s what happened.**

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**Answer: Body conditions**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: There were multiple bruises on his clothes. Nothing major, but it’s clear that Korekiyo was attacked before death.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: But can you be sure that this attack happened shortly before he was killed?

Kaede [gesturing]: The rigor mortis is exactly what proves it. If it happened before, that wouldn’t surface so soon.

Kiiibo [looks around]: So can you get more specific? It’s fine to have an idea, but it’s still too vague. I don’t think it helped.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Every little bit helps.

Kaede [right hand extended to the side]: Unless someone placed him under the snow right before I found him…

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: ..the death must have occurred as early as possible, around 8 a.m. or so. It’s enough time for his muscles to stiffen.

Angie [clasps hands]: Great! Now that we have this figured out, we could try to think about the culprit. Unless there’s more, ‘kay?

Tenko [pensive look]: I think that’d be too easy. If this theory is correct, then there’s only two people who could have committed the murder.

**Oh no. Here we go…**

Kiiibo [thoughtful expression]: Everyone was at the Shrine with Gonta, except Kaede and Rantaro.
Angie [fingers in hair]: They went in the exact direction where Kiyo’s body was! That’s suspicious!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: We can back each other up. We were together.

Tenko [pensive look]: I want to believe you, but… I don’t know…

Kiibo [looks around]: It wouldn’t be surprising if one covered for the other. Like… if they started caring for each other…

Kaede [irritated expression]: No, there’s nothing between me and Rantaro. I already made it clear.

**I knew his joke would backfire eventually.**

Kirumi [tilts head]: I must admit this theory relies on too many variables to be considered valid.

Angie [fingers in hair]: But not noticing that big pile of snow is pretty weird.

Rantaro [raised eyebrow]: Not when there are dozen of those around. Kaede only saw it when Tenko pointed it at her.

**Then, I remembered Rantaro’s lie. I might as well take advantage of it.**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: And we didn’t pass through that part of the courtyard either. We entered the school, remember?

Angie [fingers in hair]: Hmmm… I suppose… though I still find it weird.

**She still isn’t convinced? Maybe she’s just pretending not to be. From Angie, the opposite would be surprising.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Tenko’s testimony, Monokuma File 4, Snow and fog, Tenko and Gonta’s location**

Angie [fingers in hair]: Honestly, I believe Kaede. It’s Rantaro that’s fishy.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: What are you suggesting, that *I found Korekiyo and killed him while I was behind Kaede?*

Kiibo [determined expression]: So you admit being behind her!

Rantaro [rolls eyes]: Yes. **That still doesn’t leave me time to murder someone.**

Himiko [looks at bug net]: Maybe we just got it wrong… and we have to talk about something else.

Gonta [confused expression]: But this is what Kaede said. We shouldn’t believe Kaede?

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: There could be a way to solve this situation. Maybe the time of death is not right.
Angie [surprised expression]: No way! That doesn’t make sense after Kaede’s deduction!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Korekiyo wasn’t heard since yesterday according to you. This means he must have died early in the morning.

Rantaro [moves to the side]: What are you saying? He could have died later than what Kaede’s assuming… rigor mortis times are different for everyone.

Angie [tilts head to the left]: You can’t keep changing your version! You said he died early!

Kaede [gesturing]: There’s always another possibility.

Himiko [neutral expression]: That he wasn’t covered by snow from the start…

I know that Rantaro didn’t kill anyone… but can I really prove it with real evidence?

ANSWER: Tenko’s testimony --> “Korekiyo wasn’t heard since yesterday”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: I have to say… Tenko told me that she and Gonta heard Korekiyo. In his research room, today.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Well, how am I supposed to know that?! Nobody told me!

Tenko [hands on podium]: Actually, you were in the Shrine while we exchanged information. If you decided not to pay attention, it’s your fault.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Fine, but stop looking at me like I’m dumb.

Gonta [puzzled look]: Gonta sure we told you this morning in AV Room. I wanted to talk about it but wasn’t sure when.

Tenko [determined expression]: I wanted to bring it up too. When we heard Korekiyo it was definitely past 8 a.m. and that means he was still alive!

Kaede [gesturing]: But you didn’t come to us right away, am I right?

Tenko [scratched ear]: No… we wanted, but we didn’t know where you could be. We kept around to see if there was something we could do.

Gonta [smiling]: After that, Monophanie called and went to the AV Room.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Are you sure it was him? Anyone could enter at any time.

Kaede [gesturing]: I doubt that’s possible.

We all know that, because there’s a requirement to enter Korekiyo’s lab…
FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

ONPOMAD

ANSWER: Monopad

Kaede: I’ve got it!

BREAK!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Let’s remember that you need Korekiyo’s Monopad to access his lab, let alone the fact that-

Tenko [determined expression]: I heard him, guys! It was him!

Kiiibo [pensive look]: So what should we do…? I guess Kaede’s wrong.

I wanted to bring up another point, but I suppose it will be talked about later.

The point is, I know what I saw. It’s Tenko and Gonta that are wrong. I’ll show the others what I mean first.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Korekiyo’s mask, Cassette tapes, Casino prizes, Tenko and Gonta’s location

Angie [flailing arms]: Let’s recap what we know then, because I’m getting confused!

Tenko [pensive look]: I thought we said Korekiyo was killed early, but that doesn’t make sense…

Gonta [smiling]: Yes! Because me and Tenko heard him in research lab!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Are you sure of it? Maybe it was the wind.

Kirumi [left hand on hat, right hand on hip]: Kiyo could not be confused with that.

Kiiibo [looks around]: If he was there, it means he was alive… you passed there late in the morning.

Gonta [shocked expression]: Look, I know what I heard!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Maybe his ear got damaged too after the attack. That’s why he hears things that don’t exist.

Tenko [hands on podium]: No, because I heard him too! He was definitely there, that was his voice!

I understand why Tenko is convinced, but, according to the evidence, she can’t be right. It’s easy to see… or rather, hear why.
ANSWER: Cassette tapes --> “He was definitely there”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: With all due respect, the body inspection has priority over everything else, so I’ll consider it first.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Senses can be deceiving, just like what happened to you.

Tenko [confused look]: What do you mean?

Kaede [gesturing]: Rantaro found multiple recordings in Korekiyo’s room. The only explanation is that you heard one of them.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Some of them were louder than others… that’s how you heard it.

Gonta [confused expression]: But… the cassette can’t play itself.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: No, it apparently can. That’s how me and Kirumi found out about it.

Kirumi [moves to the side]: Without the sound, we could not have located the compartment where it was hidden.

Angie [surprised expression]: It’s amazing that you found it in the first place! Not even Kaede could!

An hidden compartment behind the fridge…

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Aren’t you the Ultimate Detective? That’s weird…

Kaede [thoughtful expression]: Yes, I have to admit. That is because why I do not believe it was there while I explored the place yesterday.

Himiko [looks up]: Maybe you were tired. It happens.

No, I wasn’t. I searched everywhere… but there was no sign of that stereo.

PSYCHE TAXI START!

Where did Kirumi find the hidden compartment?

[[The skylight set/The forest set/The kitchen set]]

ANSWER: C
She managed to do that thanks to an object, which I used too in my exploration.

[[A lever/A key/Korekiyo’s Monopad]]

ANSWER: A

I knew about the lever because...

[[I have a map of all Research Labs/I explored the lab with Korekiyo/Kirumi told me beforehand/The Monokubs talked about it]]

ANSWER: B

However, while I was searching, there wasn’t any sound. There’s someone who can confirm this...

[[Rantaro/Angie/Kirumi/Kaito]]

ANSWER: A

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: I did search the place, but I didn’t hear anything. I knew about the lever, since I explored the lab when it first opened.

Kiibo [looks around]: Yeah, I remember. You were there with Maki.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: I even found the hidden compartment, but there was nothing in it.

Gonta [confused expression]: So it was put there later...

Kaede [gesturing]: Not to mention the fact that nothing was played at the time, and Rantaro can confirm.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: The lab was completely silent once I entered. If the stereo was playing something, I’d have heard it.

Kirumi [tilts head]: So it was placed there between yesterday and today.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Yes, though I’m sure most of the cassettes were recorded in the lab.

Rantaro [looking in front of self]: Since he mentioned being there multiple times.
Kaede [arms crossed]: You said there’s no way to determine when those tapes were recorded, right?

**Rantaro nodded. Well, it could’ve been useful.**

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: In addition to that, I don’t think he recorded any during those last two days. There were no mentions of yesterday’s attack.

Tenko [pensive look]: Maybe you didn’t pick the right cassette.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: It’s possible, surely… but I tried most of them, and the most recent event mentioned was Himiko’s…

Himiko [looks down]: Don’t worry. You can talk about it.

Angie [fingers in hair]: I think it’s useless! Do these cassettes have something to help us uncover the culprit’s identity?

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Not really. He mostly talked about his talent and… a certain Aishi...

Kirumi [holds hand over chest]: I will admit I know who this Aishi his. Though I will not disclose more, as it is not relevant to his murder.

Kiibo [puzzled expression]: What? You should help us… Korekiyo was your friend.

Kirumi. [moves to the side]: This is exactly why I will keep this to myself. For now, at least.

**Kirumi withholding important clues… it is definitely suspicious. There is no one named Aishi here… as far as we know.**

She insists on her not being related to the murder in any way, yet…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Mentions of Aishi were numerous, but only three times Korekiyo named Kirumi alongside her.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Please, the most I can tell you is that she was a person he deeply cared about… before she passed.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: His sister, right?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: …yes.

Gonta [shocked expression]: What if one of the the girls here is Korekiyo’s sister?

Himiko [scratching cheek]: None of us looks like him… and Kirumi told us that she died.

Gonta [sad expression]: Gonta said another stupid thing! Sorry, sorry everyone!

Angie [fingers in hair]: I just want to know if we can know anything from those tapes…

Kaede [gesturing]: Monophanie, can we play those here? That’d help us.

Monophanie [thinking]: Hmm… no-no! It would be against the rules, bastards! And I’d be the one breaking them, you’re stuck with what you know!

Kaito [irritated expression]: The rules never mention it’s prohibited to bring anything to the trial
That’s true. However, they are clear about something else… if Monophanie can’t bring the cassettes here, it means they’re subject to another rule.

[[You can’t bring objects found in your room outside/You can’t bring objects in a lab outside/You can’t bring objects of a dead person outside of their lab/Monophanie’s just stressed]]

ANSWER: You can’t bring objects in a lab outside

Kaede [gesturing]: Right, but we can’t take anything found in the research labs outside of those.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Which means that the stereo and the cassettes were always in Korekiyo’s lab.

Himiko [tired expression]: I thought we were sure that Kaede searched the kitchen.

Kaede [gesturing]: And I did.

Himiko [tired expression]: …But Korekiyo couldn’t have brought the stereo and cassette anywhere else!

Unless he lied to me...

Kaede [gesturing]: There’s only one possibility. Those were still in his lab, but hidden somewhere else.

Tenko [scratches ear]: I guess we can’t hope to understand where…

But I have a very plausible idea. There were some places in Korekiyo’s lab I couldn’t check… he told me he couldn’t either, but that’s impossible. They were locked, and he must have been the one to do so…

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. L P
2. E O
3. V C
4. K E
5. E R
6. R S

ANSWER: Locker
Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: After the attack in front of Korekiyo’s lab, I inspected it. There were some lockers that couldn’t be opened.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Yes, I also remember what he said when confronted.

Kaede [gesturing]: He told us he never opened those lockers… but, actually, that’s where the stereo and cassettes where the whole time.

Tenko [determined expression]: Right! And you didn’t hear anything because there was no cassette in the stereo!

Kiibo [looking around]: Korekiyo must have put the one Tenko and Gonta heard later.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Maybe after he ran from Kirumi!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I did not hear it, though.

For now, I don’t think it’s important to focus on when the cassettes were put inside the stereo.

Still, we know that they did, so Korekiyo must have returned to his lab.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: I was thinking, maybe it would be a good opportunity to figure out who yesterday’s attacker was.

Gonta [sad expression]: The bad person who attacked me and Kirumi?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Bingo. The attack happened right in front of Korekiyo’s lab, so it’s reasonable to assume he could be the intended target.

Tenko [pensive expression]: So, maybe… they are the same person who ended up murdering Korekiyo.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I cannot understand why someone would target him.

Himiko [looks at bug net]: Maybe the killer didn’t like him… maybe Korekiyo did something terrible without noticing.

Maybe… someone could’ve learned a secret of his… and wanted to kill him for that reason, like Miu with Tsumugi.

Angie [cheerful expression]: So you’re saying that Kaito’s Korekiyo’s killer!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: What the fuck did you say about me?!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: We’ve pretty much established you were the one who attacked Gonta and Kirumi…

Kaito [angry expression]: Even if you’re right, explain how the hell would I be able to kill Korekiyo if I was locked?!
Angie [pouting]: You’re an inventor! Maybe you found a way! Kaede, please, explain to us how he did it.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Wait, Angie. First, I want to be sure he’s the one to blame for yesterday.

Angie [surprised expression]: I thought you were sure!

Kaede [arms crossed]: I thought. Maybe it would help to hear everyone another time.

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Casino prizes, Kiibo’s alibi, Purple fiber, Stuck dorm door**

Angie [cheerful expression]: What else is there to discuss? **Kaito’s the attacker!**

Gonta [sad expression]: Really…?

Kiibo [shrugs, looks to the side]: Yes, Gonta. I’m sorry, but someone has to be.

Gonta [sad expression]: I not believe that… even if true, not fine to lock him!

Angie [clasps hands]: It still proved useless… he escaped thanks to **one of his inventions**…

Kaito [angry expression]: It’s a fucking bathroom! How would I be able to create anything?!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I know Kaito looks suspicious… but is there anything that could actually implicate him?

Kirumi [moves to the side]: He does not have an alibi…

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: **Apart from that, nothing.**

Kiibo [determined expression]: It’s definitely enough!

I don’t know if it’s enough… if he was near the lab, he’d have left evidence behind. If there’s any, we should take that into account.

**ANSWER: Purple fiber --> “Apart from that, nothing.”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: You and Kirumi found purple fibers near the lab. That implicates Kaito.

Kaito [irritated expression]: What?! How so?!

They’re purple… just like Kaito’s…
Answer: HAIR

Kaede: I’ve cracked this case!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re the only one here with purple hair. That means they can only come from you.

Kaito [irritated expression]: I never went near that cursed lab!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Evidence says otherwise~!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Sorry for doubting you, Kaede… but I believe that the fiber we found is actually a red herring.

Gonta [happy expression]: Yes! Maybe Korekiyo’s killer placed it there, like my racket when Tsumugi died!

Kaede [gesturing]: That can’t be true. There were some yesterday too… after the attack.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Someone could’ve still planted it there to accuse me!

Tenko [hands on podium]: So you’re saying that someone plucked out your hair. That’s the only way to get them.

Kaito [looks to the side]: Well… not that I can remember, but-

Kiibo [determined expression]: That’s something you’d notice!

Rantaro [moves to the side]: All of this discussing about Kaito’s hair when that fiber is not that at all.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Huh?

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Here, I’ll pass you the one I found.

**Rantaro handed me one of the fibers. At first look, I noticed it appeared a bit longer than Kaito’s hair.**
That could’ve been a coincidence, but then it became pretty clear that I wasn’t looking at a hair, but something else entirely.

Kaede [gesturing]: This is not hair, it’s silk fiber.

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Exactly what I imagined as well. The color is different, not to mention the texture.

Angie [curious expression]: Then what is a silk fiber doing there?

Kaede [gesturing]: It’s from one of my clothes… Korekiyo brought them there.

I already know this. Korekiyo was trying to cosplay me. I told the others too. They can refuse to believe me, but surely they’ll have to believe the cosplayer.

--SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

ANSWER: Cassette tapes

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Korekiyo brought some clothes of mine to his lab to recreate them later… it was said in the cassettes as well.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Correct. Some fibers must have come off.

The clothes’ quality in this academy was never that stellar. I’m sure Korekiyo would’ve done a better job.

Maybe that’s why he refused to wear the clothes that I gave him.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Thank you, Rantaro. If it wasn’t for you, I guess we’d be all dead.

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Wait a minute, Kaito’s the only one that doesn’t have an alibi for the time of the attack.

Kiibo [determined expression]: So that means he’s the attacker!

Is he really, though? Everyone was with someone else, but if Kiibo’s and Himiko’s testimonies are correct… there are others that should be suspected as well.

Gonta [index finger near chin]: Kirumi was with Korekiyo… then with me. She’s innocent.

Well, she was the one who was attacked…

Angie [cheerful expression]: I was with Kiibo near the dormitories! We’re both innocent!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Tsk, you could cover for each other.
Kirumi [tilts head]: They could, but I heard them before meeting Gonta.

Kaede [gesturing]: Just to be sure… Angie, what were you talking about? This way, Kirumi can confirm having heard you.

Angie [smiling]: Coats. You know, how important it was to give them to people in need…

**I won’t take Angie’s bait. We already had this discussion, and I stand by what I’ve done.**

Kirumi [tilts head]: That is correct. I heard them mentioning them.

Kiibo [determined expression]: Just as I said then, Kaito, the only one without an alibi, did it!

Yet, there are two people that were not with someone else the entire time. Could they have done it? Unlikely, but it would be foolish to ignore them…

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

\[I I O B K A N D \text{ MIOIH K}\]

**Answer: Kiibo and Himiko**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: Kaito’s not the only one without an alibi. You and Himiko were alone too.

Himiko [sweating]: W-what… you’re suspecting m-me?

Angie [shade coming down on face]: Hey, better watch what you’re saying, Kaede…

Tenko [hands on podium]: Himiko was definitely in no shape to commit a murder!

**She was just recovering from a suicide attempt. But I wouldn’t discard any possibility.**

Kiibo [determined expression]: I was locked inside the bathroom, I couldn’t get away.

Himiko [sweating]: Y-yeah… we were both in the school…

Kaede [arms crossed]: I have to be objective. There’s a slim possibility that either of you were quick enough to reach the lab and then return to the school.

Kiibo [determined expression]: If that were true, who locked me inside the bathroom?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Yourself.

Kiibo [confused expression]: W-what…? I’d never do that! What if nobody came to help me?

Kaito [irritated expression]: Please, you could exit any time you wanted, you just had to turn the
key.

Kaito’s right. If Kiibo did do that, he could head out the bathroom at any time. He could’ve waited for Himiko to have a shaky alibi and a way to accuse Kaito.

Kiibo [hides in hood]: I assure… I assure you that’s not the truth! I’d never do anything like that!

Tenko [hands on podium]: Look, Kaito’s still suspicious.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Yes, because even if Kiibo did all that, he still couldn’t have killed Korekiyo!

Angie [pouting]: It takes too much time to go to the courtyard and then return back, without being heard or seen by anyone on the way there!

Himiko [looking down]: If Kaito’s really innocent… we should have something to prove it.

Kaito [irritated expression]: What happened to innocent until proven otherwise!?

Kaito seems to be the most suspicious, but I wouldn’t rule out anything. I know I locked him up because I believed he attacked Kirumi and Gonta, but now I’m starting to have some doubts…

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Playing records, Casino prizes, Kiibo’s alibi

Angie [tilts head to the right]: Himiko’s innocent…

Angie [tilts head to the left]: And Kiibo’s innocent too! That means Kaito’s the bad guy!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Wait a second before saying that with certainty. We have more information now.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Yeah, but that doesn’t make him any less guilty!

Gonta [confused expression]: Maybe he attacked me and Kirumi but not Korekiyo.

Himiko [neutral expression]: Maybe… he was locked inside the bathroom.

Kaito [angry expression]: I went to the casino! That’s where you found me, remember?!

Kiibo [index finger pointing upwards]: But there was no one there that confirms this story.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Yes, Monokid! But he keeps his mouth shut! I was playing to get Monocoins!

Who’s to blame for the attack that took place yesterday? I don’t think I can accuse someone now…

ANSWER: Playing records --> “I was playing to get some Monocoins”
Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Monokid provided us some playing records. He refused to disclose any names, but it’s safe to assume that Kaito’s the one he’s referring to.

Kiibo [confused look]: We know that Kaito went there, but nobody can say he played there!

Kaito [angry expression]: Haven’t you listened to Kaede!? I was fucking playing to get you out!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: …You could’ve done that after the attack…

Kaede [arms crossed]: No, it’s impossible. The records specify that the plays happened between twelve and twelve thirty…

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: Which is when we were attacked…

Kaede [gesturing]: No matter how you look at it, Kaito was inside the casino. He never moved from there.

And that means… I was wrong as well. Maybe I should’ve taken more time to think about it…

No, I couldn’t have risked anyone else dying.

However, no matter how hard I try, it’s always, always… useless. Our numbers continue to dwindle.

Angie [shocked expression]: Are you saying you decided to lock Kaito for no reason?!

Kaede [arms crossed, irritated expression]: I decided? I thought you were part of it too.

Angie [fingers in hair]: I suppose so, but it all started from you! Maybe you owe some excuses to Kaito.

Can she be more irritating?

Kaito [irritated expression]: I hope you don’t think I’ll forgive you if you put all the blame on Kaede. You’re the most awful living being I’ve ever met.

Tenko [hands on podium]: I won’t tolerate this language!

Kaito [irritated expression]: I have the right to hold an opinion. And I won’t use cute words to hide it.

Kaito [angry expression]: You locked me in a fucking bathroom for no reason!

We had our reasons, but… Angie’s right; I owe an apology to Kaito. Even so, it’s obvious that now is not the time. The inventor won’t forgive me so easily.

Himiko [looking up]: But… if Kaito is innocent… who else could the attacker be?
Rantaro [arms crossed]: You or Kiibo. It’s obvious.

Himiko [sweating]: Eeek!

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: No, I fear it’s neither of them.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: But they don’t have any alibi.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Yet… there is a third option… sadly, we have to consider that as well.

**A third option… she’s referring to that person…**

-SELECT SOMEONE!

[[KOREKIYO SHINGUJI SELECTED]]

Kaede: It has to be you!

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re talking about… Korekiyo.

Kirumi [eyes closed]: Yes. I suspect he might be the attacker.

Tenko [shocked expression]: What!? But you were friends, right?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I still believe that… maybe… it could have been an accident…

Gonta [confused look]: But Korekiyo arrived immediately to help us, right?

Tenko [hands on podium]: I remember that too!

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: The attack took place in front of his lab not because he was the target, but because he was the attacker.

It sounds much more logical this way, but… we’d have to clear up some things.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Have you reached this conclusion by a process of elimination… or because you have evidence?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: The latter…

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Sigh… so it is exactly how I imagined… it is what you saw in Korekiyo’s lab.

**Something that Kirumi saw… I explored his lab as well, but I couldn’t have noticed what she’s talking about with my experience as a detective… on the other hand, she’s an adventurer and knows about it.**

Kaede [gesturing]: Oh, right, you’re talking about the-
Gonta: Gonta will make everyone understand!

[[split screen separating Gonta and Kaede]]

Kaede [gesturing]: Gonta, if you'd let me finish-

Gonta [sad expression]: I won’t believe Korekiyo attacked us! Because he helped us!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Culprits will always try to find ways to prove their innocence.

REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!

Truth blades: Korekiyo's mask, Cassette tapes, Bark and wood

Gonta [confused expression]: When we were attacked, Korekiyo…

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: …he was shouting stop and something like that…

Gonta [index finger near chin]: And after that he went to us and shouted.

Gonta [smiling]: So it can’t be him!

ADVANCE!

Kaede [gesturing]: I disagree… this could’ve been a way to make himself look less suspicious.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: And he did never help you directly. He only asked for help.

Gonta [sad expression]: We were the only ones there, and he could kill us immediately! So he’s innocent!

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Not… not mentioning that you searched his lab and found nothing to use as weapon!

Gonta [index finger near chin]: It can’t be inside the lockers, since there were cassettes there.

Gonta [smiling]: Maybe the attacker was this Aishi, yeah?

I knew what to say before Gonta spoke, so it can’t be too hard to refute him.

ANSWER: Bark and wood --> “Nothing to use as weapon”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Kirumi saw many pieces of wood and bark near the jungle set in Korekiyo’s lab. Apparently, this could be used to make a weapon.
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: That weapon wasn’t made by anyone, I think. It was a prop of the set, right?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Yes, Rantaro. That weapon... it is not common in the civilized world, but... numerous indigenous forest populations used it.

Kirumi [moves to the side]: It is called blowgun. And it is used to shoot darts.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: So that’s what was used in the attack. Then it was broken in lots of different pieces to hide it.

Gonta [sad expression]: But it could be used by anyone! Even if found in Kiyo’s lab...

Kaede [gesturing]: No. Since it was part of the set, it could not have been brought outside of the lab.

Kirumi. [holds hat over chest]: Korekiyo was the only one to have access to the lab... and the only one who could use... the blowgun.

Kiibo [looking around]: Are you sure that there were no blowguns anywhere else?

Kaede [gesturing]: Monophanie, can you tell us if there wer-

As I turned to face the throne, I noticed she wasn’t there anymore. Her two brothers didn’t go away.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Where did she go?

Monotaro [sad]: Who knows... I think she doesn’t want to give up her position of power, she has to sort something out...

Monokid [playing with guitar]: I personally don’t care at all! I just want to bully people!

Monotaro [sad]: ...

Kaede [arms crossed]: Just... can you answer my question. Excluding the labs, were there any blowgun or materials to build one?

Monotaro [sad]: I don’t know if I can answer...

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: Maybe something... will convince you. If I were to reveal something I saw, then-

Tenko winked at the bear. What?

Monotaro [worried]: Alright! Well... I can say that the answer to Kaede’s question is no!

Kaede [arms crossed]: What about the darts? I know there weren’t any in the warehouse, but about the materials...

Monotaro [worried]: If someone’s skilled enough, I believe they could! But I’m not an expert!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Tenko... I'm curious, but I'll focus on the case for now.

Kiibo [puzzled look]: Tenko, what...
Tenko [slightly smug expression]: I’ll tell you later.

Kaede [gesturing]: I think it’s obvious now. Korekiyo is the one that attacked Kirumi and Gonta.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: Yes… that is what happened.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: You suspected him from the moment you saw those pieces of wood, right?

Kirumi [eyes closed]: No, before that. From the moment I spoke with him yesterday.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I just refused to believe it. But you cannot escape from the truth… only hide from it.

Angie [fingers in hair]: But… why would Korekiyo try to kill you? Aren’t you friends?

Himiko [looking down]: What if he only wanted to kill Gonta? Kirumi wasn’t supposed to be there, you know?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: I… doubt it. But I will explain my opinion… after this trial ends.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: After all that happened, you still refuse to talk?

Kirumi [eyes closed]: Korekiyo was… a troubled individual. I am sure terrible things happened to him.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: That is why… he tried to murder me. And why he tried to save me and Gonta after he realized what he had done.

Kaito [irritated expression]: So you’re saying he was crazy. Got it.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Have some respect for the dead!

Kiibo [uncertain look]: If Kirumi’s saying that he felt guilty… maybe it was a suicide?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: It could be a reasonable explanation, if Kirumi told us more.

Kirumi [tilts head, eyes closed]: As far as I know… he never mentioned anything that could make me think that.

**Every time we have the trial, we wonder if it the victim killed themselves.**

**Maybe we want to believe none of us could be capable of killing a friend… and that’s why we continue asking this question.**

**But we're always wrong.**

Chapter End Notes

So, by the end of the week you'll have the second part of the chapter. And by next Thursday the third part.
Chapter Summary

After having found clues about the attacker, the discussion continues...

...Even though it'd be easier to believe that Korekiyo killed himself... We have to accept that it can't be true.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Body conditions, Monokuma File 4, Missing Monopad, Death in the Death Road, Himiko’s testimony

Angie [fingers in hair]: Korekiyo wasn’t feeling great, so it could’ve happened!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: Understatement of the century.

Tenko [pensive look]: A suicide would explain why he went missing.

Himiko [looks down]: But a murder would too…

Tenko [pensive look]: Maybe he died in the Death Road To Despair.

Gonta [shocked expression]: Do you really think he went there?

Kaito [rubbing head]: It’s the perfect place to kill yourself.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Didn’t Kaede say he was attacked?

Angie [clasps hands]: I got it, maybe the wounds were caused by the traps in the Death Road!

Could Korekiyo have killed himself? Maybe, but something doesn’t feel right…

ANSWER: Death in the Death Road --> “he died in the Death Road To Despair”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: According to Kirumi’s notes, whoever dies in the Death Road remains there for the next 48 hours.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: If that was where Korekiyo died, he’d still be there now.
Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: How do you know about this?

Kirumi [tilts head]: I know how to find information.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Yes, but where did you find it?

Kirumi [moves to the side]: …

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: There is a notice at the entrance of the Death Road. It must have been added in the last days.

As Kirumi was talking, I couldn’t help but see that she was eyeing Monotaro. Again, just like Tenko before… what did those two do?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Is it true, Monokid and Monotaro?

The red bear just nodded, remaining silent.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Maybe he killed himself somewhere else!

Kaede [arms crossed]: This isn’t a suicide. Because of two reasons.

Angie [clasps hand]: Oh, alright. Tell us, please.

Kaede [gesturing]: First of all, something that we know thanks to the Monokuma File…

FLASHING ANAGRAM START!

$U A S C E F O D A E H T$

ANSWER: Cause of death

CLEAR!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Kiyo died because his vertebrae were crushed. Unless he hung himself, there’s no possible way he sustained those injuries.

Gonta [confused look]: Sure about no hanging?

Kaede [gesturing]: There’s no place near where he was found where he could’ve hung himself. And he was hidden under a pile of snow.

Kiibo [determined expression]: Well… you can’t discard that option so easily!

Kaede [arms crossed]: I don’t see how he could’ve suspended himself. There’s no object that suggests that either.

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: Maybe the Monokubs removed it!

I think that’s impossible too, but if Kiibo wants evidence, I’ll gladly provide it. I know that
Korekiyo must have been killed by someone else.

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**ANSWER: Body conditions**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: We discussed about the various bruises before. These were caused by a scuffle that Korekiyo had shortly before death.

Rantaro [index finger near lip]: And it had to be a fight because the rigor came sooner than usual, accelerating the process.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Okay… I suppose you’re right…

Kaede [gesturing]: Now that we have this sorted out, we should try figuring out the identity of Korekiyo’s killer.

Himiko [tired expression]: I forgot… who were the suspicious people?

**Me and Rantaro, but we’re innocent… so who else could the killer be?**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

Truth bullets: Casino prizes, Missing Monopad, Stuck dorm door, Himiko’s testimony

Angie [fingers in hair]: Kaito hasn’t been cleared of suspicion, though.

Kaito [irritated expression]: What?

Angie [tilts head to the right]: You’re innocent for the attack…

Angie [tilts head to the left]: But not the murder!

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: I was fucking locked inside the bathroom!

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Ironic, right? Just like me…

Tenko [pensive look]: Maybe he could’ve took something in the casino…

Kaito [angry expression]: The only things that are inside that place are a toilet and a sink!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Not to mention he’d have to bring the body back to the cafeteria…
Kirumi [tilts head]: It is plausible Kiyo was killed where it was found; that would not imply any dragging.

Gonta [confused look]: If Korekiyo was dragged, **there should be some tracks**?

**If I remember well… there’s something I can remind to the others.**

**ANSWER: Casino prizes --> “he could’ve took something in the casino…”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re right, Tenko. That could’ve happened.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Make up your mind! Defend me or don’t!

Kaede [arms crossed]: This is a trial. I didn’t come here to take anyone’s side. I just want to know the truth, because-

Rantaro [smirking]: Yeah, you’re on the side of the truth. What an inspirational quote.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Are you going to irritate me as well?

Rantaro [apprehensive look, arms in front of self]: I was only making a joke, jeez…

**As I just said, this is a trial. This is not the time to make jokes. We could die here if we don’t make the right choice.**

Kaede [arms crossed]: By the way, I follow the evidence. And the evidence’s here. Someone did claim one of those objects; it must have been you….

Kaede [gesturing]: There’s one in particular that could help you immensely.

Kaito [irritated expression]: I don’t know about any of these objects!

Angie [tilts to the right]: But they were on the prize catalog!

Angie [tilts to the left]: They were there! You had to have seen them!

Kaito [irritated expression]: That thing is twenty pages long! I just paid attention to what I needed for the Electrohammers!

**He might say that, but of the various things that caught my eye, there’s definitely one that could help Kaito escape.**

[[Key/Secret agent pen/Secret pass/Mono-fix]]

**ANSWER: Key**
Kaede [gesturing]: Monokid sold a universal key that allowed access to any door in the casino and hotel area.

Angie [flailing arms]: That’s true! I was there too!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Why would I buy something like that before being imprisoned?!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: He’s got a point.

Gonta [sad expression]: Yes… Kaito not got away! I… I think!

Kaito [rubbing head]: Right, guys. I’m going to be honest...

Kaito. [fists bumping into each other]: I found the door open after waking up!

Tenko [hands on podium]: You expect us to believe that? What a terrible lie!

Kaede [arms crossed]: If you were honest, you’d have told us much sooner.

Kaito [irritated expression]: And you’d have had the same reaction! Maybe worse!

Kiibo [looking away]: We should trust you after all you’ve done? Wow.

Himiko [looking up]: But you were telling the truth, would it be useful?

Kaito [irritated expression]: What do you mean?

Himiko [neutral expression]: Someone opened the door… at the end you could’ve killed Korekiyo no matter what.

Kaito [irritated expression, fists bumping into each other]: No, they did it to frame me!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: It’s certainly possible… considering you’d be the biggest suspect.

Angie [fingers in hair]: What if Kaito predicted all of this and escaped knowing we wouldn’t suspect him?

Tenko [pensive expression]: But is Kaito so intelligent?

Kaito [angry expression]: I’m the Ultimate Inventor! I’m more intelligent than all of you combined!

Gonta [sad expression]: Maybe we shouldn’t talk about this.

Angie [flailing arms]: I understand, you’re that sure that Kaito’s the culprit!

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Monokuma File 4, Korekiyo’s mask, Snow and fog, Himiko’s testimony**

Angie [clasps hands]: Oh, Atua, please welcome Kaito despite his actions…
Kaito [angry expression]: Hey! Why are you praying for me?! We haven’t voted yet!

Kiibo [determined expression]: Is there anything more to say?

Kiibo [looks to the side]: You could have headed out of the casino.

Kaito [irritated expression, fists bumping into each other]: What are you talking about?!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: After all, the time frame would fit.

Kaito [angry expression]: You haven’t answered me!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I’m still doubtful. No one saw him? Impossible.

Tenko [pensive look]: There was a lot of fog… that’s why.

Kaito… could he have killed Korekiyo? It all seems to point to an affirmative answer, yet it looks too simple… But for now, I have to follow the evidence I found.

ANSWER: Himiko’s testimony --> “You could have headed out of the casino”

Kaede: I agree with that!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Himiko… you told me that after going inside the boiler room, you heard something.

Kirumi [tilts head]: You have not talked to me about this.

Himiko [looking down]: I thought… I was seeing things… listen, it’s not the time to discuss about that, alright?

Tenko [stressed]: Okay, but why did Kaede bring this up? How does it relate to Kaito?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: If this morning everyone was with everyone else, the footsteps could either be Kaito’s or Korekiyo’s.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: But it can’t be Korekiyo.

Gonta [worried expression]: W-why?

It’s easy. Himiko told me that she and Kirumi went to the boiler room after ten. And we determined before that Korekiyo…

[[Died around 7 A.M./Died around 8 A.M./Didn’t go to the boiler room/Was inside his lab]]

ANSWER: Died around 8 A.M.
Kaede [gesturing]: Korekiyo died before that, and we know it because of the rigor mortis.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Even if we suppose it appeared extremely early, that couldn’t happen in less than an hour.

Angie [surprised expression]: Wow! So Kaito really escaped!

Kaito [looking away, sighing]: I admit it, it was me.

Tenko [slightly smug expression]: So… is this a confession? You killed Korekiyo?

Kaito [irritated expression]: What? Of course not!

Kiibo [pointing]: Then what were you doing outside of the casino?

Kaito [looking away, sighing]: I was having a walk… it was freezing, but it was better than being stuck in a closed space.

Rantaro [reassuring expression]: I can relate. I was having enough trouble being locked in my room.

Kaito [looking away]: I didn’t want to be heard by anyone, because if you did… I know you’d be furious with me.

Kaito [neutral expression]: So when I heard a sound, I went immediately back inside the casino… I didn’t have a key, so I asked Monokid to lock me again.

So that’s why the door was locked when me and Angie arrived…

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: Honestly, I am surprised he agreed to this.

I’m not. He loves violence; that apparently includes jailing people.

Kaito [determined expression, fists bumping into each other]: I got him pretty angry.

Monokid [angry]: It doesn’t matter how many times you say it, hotdogs ARE NOT sandwiches!

Kaito [neutral expression]: The dictionary is clear.

Monokid [angry, smashes guitar]: The dictionary won’t stop me, because I can’t read!

Himiko [scratching temple]: Hmmm, Kaede… didn’t I told you that it was before entering the boiler room too? I think that someone was running…

Kaede [arms crossed]: No… you said only later.

Himiko [looking up]: Well… I also did before…

What? This is… weird.

Kaede [reassuring expression]: Himiko, don’t tell me you didn’t correct yourself before because you thought I’d get angry at you.

Himiko [neutral expression]: …Yes. Sorry…
Kaede [arms crossed]: Well, I wouldn’t. So you should have.

Himiko [looks down]: Now you sound a bit angry…

**I suppose it’s better that she told me…**

*Updated truth bullet: Himiko’s testimony*

Kaito [rubbing head]: Well, that wasn’t me. I only heard them once, and it must be after they went inside!

**And that means someone else must’ve been in the area… but who could that be, if everyone was with a second person?**

**Maybe it’s Kaito and he just doesn’t remember…**

Angie [praying]: Atua is still telling me that Kaito’s the culprit, so don’t think you can convince us not to vote for you!

Kiibo [pensive look]: What you said doesn’t make you any less suspicious. It could all be fake.

Gonta [confused expression]: But if Kaito was culprit, then he’d have the key… so it would be unnecessary to do Monokid angry…

Tenko [scratches ear]: Make, not do.

Gonta [panicked expression]: Sorry!

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: But if he don’t have the key… maybe he’s telling truth.

Angie [surprised expression]: So you believe him… but Atua says the opposite!

Gonta [sad expression]: M-maybe… Atua’s wrong…

Angie [smiling, shade over eyes]: Oh, Atua is *never* wrong…

**So, Gonta believes Kaito. I do too, because I’ve seen something strange in that casino. If Kaito got out, he’d have to use the key in bathroom. But… that’s impossible.**

**-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!**

**ANSWER: Casino bathroom door lock**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: I’m almost sure that Kaito is telling the truth. I have evidence to back up my
Kaito [wipes off sweat]: Thank God.

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: When I inspected the bathroom door lock in the casino, I could clearly see that there was dust only on the side opposite to the bathroom.

Kaede [gesturing]: That means that the rest of the dust was removed, surely by someone using a key.

Kirumi [tilts head]: So you are suggesting that a key was only used to open the door from outside.

Kaede [right hand extended to the side]: If Kaito opened it from inside the bathroom, the dust wouldn’t be resting there.

Kiibo [looking away]: So… he’s telling the truth…

Kaito [irritated expression]: Of course I am!

Kiibo [confused look]: But… but… this… this doesn’t mean Kaito’s innocent!

Kaito [irritated expression]: You’re so stubborn!

Kiibo [determined expression]: You’re the only one that could’ve done this! Everyone else was with a second person!

Kaito [irritated expression]: Quite clearly you’re wrong, since Korekiyo was buried under a pile of snow.

Kiibo [pointing]: Because you put him there!

Even though I think Kiibo’s not taking the right approach, what he’s saying is true. Everyone else has an alibi. So… how do we deal with this?

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: This looks like a dead end. I propose to identify the person who freed Kaito.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: If we understand who did that, we can ask them why they did it. Maybe they know something more.

It shouldn’t be hard to understand who could’ve done that. There’s only one person that could’ve done this.

-SELECT SOMEONE!

[[GONTA GOKUHARA SELECTED]]

Kaede: It has to be you!

Kaede [gesturing]: Gonta, it was you, right?
Gonta [worried look]: N-no! Why you accusing me?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Because you’re the only one that could’ve freed Kaito.

Angie [pouting]: Don’t be silly, Kaede! As a member of the ABCs, he’d have to talk to me first!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: So now he has to obey to you. Why am I not surprised.

I don’t understand why Gonta won’t admit it. If he refuses to talk, I’ll just have to bring up what was told to me.

Gonta could free Kaito, because he was with him this morning.

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**ANSWER: Tenko and Gonta’s location**

Kaede: I got it!

Kaede [gesturing]: According to Tenko’s testimony, you split up during the search for Korekiyo.

Tenko [pensive look]: Yes, he went to…

Tenko [shocked expression]: The casino!

Kirumi [moves to the side]: But is the key rather expensive? How would he get that much money?

Kaede [gesturing]: Angie previously took all the Monocoins from the members of the ABC, putting them back in a safe place.

The safe place she mentioned was…

[[Her lab/Her room/Gonta’s lab/Gonta’s room]]

**ANSWER: Gonta’s room**

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: She told me she hid them in Gonta’s room, since he would never play.

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: Together, those and a bit of luck could be enough to buy the key.

Gonta [sad expression]: …Okay, I did it.

Tenko [confused expression]: But you said you talked with Kaito… and he’s saying he found the
door open!

Kiibo [pointing]: Kaito must be lying!

Kaito [irritated expression]: I’m not!

Gonta [looking at racket]: He’s not… I am the liar. He was sleeping when I opened the door.

Kiibo [confused look]: W-why did you do it?

Himiko [looking up]: We all thought Kaito attacked you… and you were the one who actually freed him..?

Angie [neutral expression]: …

Gonta [holds hat over chest]: Gonta… Gonta thought it was not fair to trap Kaito..! Even if he attacked me… I thought… maybe he was confused and didn’t mean it…

Angie [neutral expression]: …

Rantaro [moves to the side]: You’re too good, Gonta.

Gonta [sad expression]: Maybe yes… because all of this only made the trial more confusing…

Angie [neutral expression]: …

Kaito [rubbing head]: Why didn’t you said it earlier? We know you’re innocent, you had nothing to lose out of it!

Gonta [sad expression]: Because… well, two reasons… first, I… I not knew if you really Korekiyo's killer…

Tenko [pensive expression]: But the first thing we said was that Korekiyo died very early! Kaito couldn’t have killed him…

Gonta [sad expression]: But you weren’t sure, Gonta was confused and didn’t know what to say!

Kirumi [tilts head]: And the second reason?

Gonta [sad expression]: Because… I didn’t know what would Angie say…

Angie [neutral expression]: …

Angie [flailing arms]: Okay, it doesn’t matter!

Gonta [confused expression]: Really?

Angie [flailing arms]: Sure! I’m certain that another thing like this will never happen!

Angie [smiling, shade on front]: Because it won’t.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Next time, try to be honest.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Not the next. Now. If any of you knows something, spit it out.

Tenko [scratches ear]: Hey, don’t be so rude…
Kaede [arms crossed]: I don’t like it, but I have to. We have wasted so much time because Kaito and Gonta refused to say anything.

Kaede [determined expression, arms crossed]: Every small detail is important. Start talking now or we might all die because Monophanie gets bored.

Angie [fingers in hair]: You also have a lot of secrets, I think it’s not fair for you to be angry at us for staying silent.

Kaede [irritated expression]: What do you mean now?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Nothing important that you don’t know, Kaede. But I’m not a spy, so your secret is safe.

My secret… is she referring to the coat I hid or something else?

I’d want to ask her, but she’ll never tell me. Also, we’re in the middle of a trial. It’s best for me to remain focused.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Considering the circumstances, I doubt we will receive an answer, but… Gonta, do you know anything that could help us?

Gonta [thoughtful expression, index finger near mouth]: If you are talking about Korekiyo’s killer, no… I only helped Kaito escape, nothing else.

Maybe we have to look at this case from another perspective. Instead of focusing on who’s the killer, maybe we need to find new information first.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Tenko’s testimony, Korekiyo’s mask, Cafeteria door, Clean floor

Kirumi [tilts head]: I see. We should talk about something else then.

Kiibo [looks around]: Are you sure? *Maybe we missed something.*

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Definitely. But I believe it’s best to look forward.

Himiko [tired expression]: I know there’s a lot we haven’t talked about…

Tenko [pensive look]: Like the fact that Korekiyo used lipstick behind his mask…

Angie [fingers in hair]: That’s strange, *but it isn’t relevant.*

Kaito [rubbing head]: I don’t understand why the culprit would remove the mask and *place it near the body*…

Himiko [neutral expression]: Maybe *Korekiyo did that instead of the culprit.*

I know what to talk about, but is it really something worth discussing?
ANSWER: Korekiyo’s mask --> “place it near the body”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: The mask was found under the boiler room, not near the body.

Kaito [sweating]: Y-yeah, I know. I was saying that Korekiyo was killed there!

Kiibo [looks to the side]: The Death Road? We said it was impossible.

Kaito [proud expression]: Outside of it, under the boiler room, so that the rule doesn’t apply!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: If that was true, someone would have to bring him up and then place him outside the cafeteria.

Kaito [looking to the side]: You’re saying it isn’t possible?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Yeah, it’s nearly impossible. There’s a ladder...

Kaede [gesturing]: I don’t think that even Gonta could be able to carry a dead body with one hand while he climbs the ladder with the other.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Then how did Korekiyo’s mask end up in that place?

I am wondering the same thing since this trial started… how did it actually get there?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: I don’t have any idea… considering we closed up that place a long time ago.

Gonta [confused look]: That’s… not true.

Kaede [arms crossed]: No? You covered it with the manhole.

It was Gonta, because…

[[The manhole was too heavy/Nobody else was there at the time/We chose at random]]

ANSWER: The manhole was too heavy

Kaede [gesturing]: Since you were the only one strong enough to lift it.

Gonta [happy expression]: I lifted it again yesterday! Because if nobody was killed… a blizzard would come.

Ah, right… I’m dumb. I thought he would move it this evening, not before.

Kaede [arms crossed]: I didn’t know you lifted it again.
Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Me and Himiko did not know either.

Himiko [looking up]: No, I knew it… I was wondering why you were so surprised after seeing it…

Angie [praying]: We had a AAA between the ABCs yesterday morning and we all agreed to open the passage sooner than later to liven up the place!

Himiko [looking down]: Sadly, because of the attack and Korekiyo’s disappearance we couldn’t decorate it…

**So only Angie, Kiibo, Tenko, Himiko and Gonta knew. Allegedly, at least.**

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: If Kiyo did not know, I do not see why he would go there.

Angie [clasping hands]: But maybe he heard us!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: When?

Angie [fingers in hair]: Well, while Kaede and Rantaro were investigating his lab. He was outside.

**That’s true…**

Himiko [neutral expression]: Maybe we talked about the decoration, but I can’t remember…

Tenko [pensive look]: We could’ve mentioned something about the boiler room, that’s how he knew about it.

Kaede [gesturing]: It doesn’t matter if he did go there or not, we have enough evidence to say the murder didn’t happen under the boiler room or inside the Death Road.

Angie [fingers in hair]: But… why would the mask be there?

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Obviously, someone brought it there. To make us believe Korekiyo died in the Death Road.

Himiko [tired expression]: The rule that Monotaro revealed us wasn’t ever disclosed before today… maybe that’s why the killer put it there.

Himiko [looking up]: The blackened had no way to know that we’d be able to understand what happens if you die inside the Death Road.

Kaede [gesturing]: Mh… it can’t be it. It wouldn’t make any sense to kill him far away from the boiler room and then pretend he died there…

Tenko [scratches ear]: Maybe the killer panicked and didn’t know what to do!

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: Maybe their intention was to make us believe that Korekiyo escaped.

Kaede [right hand extended to the side]: That doesn’t make any sense either… if they want to get out, we have to have this trial, and before that discover the body…

Angie [flailing arms]: I’ve got an idea! Maybe Korekiyo removed the mask in the boiler room… and was killed there!
Tenko [pensive look]: You mean under?

Angie [fingers in hair]: No, I mean in.

Kiibo [confused look]: Why… would he do something like that?

Angie [fingers in hair]: I don’t know, but I think it makes a lot more sense than the killer bringing the mask to that place.

Kirumi gave me an important detail about the mask, and so I know why Angie thinks that. It could’ve been removed in the boiler room. The mask was…

HIDDEN PASSWORD START!

1. H B
2. U R A
3. O M
4. K I
5. D E P

ANSWER: Humid

Kaede: I’ve got it!

CLEAR!

Kaede [gesturing]: Kirumi told me that the mask was humid… just like the boiler room.

Angie [clasping hands]: Right!

Kaede [gesturing]: But the place under the boiler room isn’t. Actually, it’s pretty cold there.

Angie [fingers in hair]: But if the mask was humid… it must mean it absorbed humidity there!

Angie [cheerful expression]: And the culprit wouldn’t have any problem with moving the body, there are no ladders to climb!

Mine is just a hunch… but what Angie’s theorizing is in direct contrast with what we’ve just said.

If the culprit killed Korekiyo in the boiler room and moved the mask under it to make us believe he got injured exploring the death road, why would they make an effort to move the body somewhere else, so close to the school entrance?

There has to be another way to look at this.

What else could’ve made Korekiyo’s mask humid?
ANSWER: The snow

Kaede [gesturing]: Instead of the heat of the boiler room, what if the mask was removed after Korekiyo was buried under the snow?

Kirumi [tilts head]: It is plausible that Korekiyo was buried with the mask at first, but it was removed later. The mask was could have been humid because of the snow…

Kirumi [thoughtful expression]: After all, I saw it under the boiler room, not inside it.

Angie [fingers in hair]: But that’s as likely as my hypothesis!

Rantaro [moves to the side]: You’re saying that the culprit dragged Korekiyo from the boiler room to the cafeteria, basically… that’s not easy.

Kiibo [looks away]: I know but… maybe they used something to help them… a sleigh or… I don’t know…

I suppose sleighs could be stored in the warehouse, but… aren’t we going too far now?

Tenko [hands on podium]: I don’t think there’s any way to know for sure the reason why the mask is wet.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Gonta thinks it’s more important to understand where Korekiyo was killed… we don’t know that.

This is an important part of the case. If we’re wrong, we could end up getting everything wrong.

Kaede [gesturing]: Most likely, Korekiyo was killed in the cafeteria. His body was found right outside.

Kiibo [looking around]: You’re saying he didn’t die outside?

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: It’s possible, but I think it’s more likely he died inside the school.

Kiibo: It’s my time to shine!

[split screen separating Kiibo and Kaede]

Kiibo [hiding under hood]: Did you like my line, Angie?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Definitely! It suits your talent, it’s perfect for those kind of situations!

Kaede [irritated expression]: What are you talking about?
Kiibo [pensive look]: Well… I just can’t see why the killer would do this inside…

**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth blades:** Missing Monopad, Cafeteria door, Clean floor

Kiibo [determined expression]: Korekiyo’s body was buried under a pile of snow outside…

Kiibo [thoughtful expression]: For the killer, it’d be easier to do that if the murder happened outside.

Kiibo [looks to the side]: If the blackened acted inside…

Kiibo [index finger on chin]: They would have to drag him outside or something like that, right?

**ADVANCE!**

Kaede [gesturing]: Of course they’d have to. It would be harder, but that doesn’t mean they could have done it!

Kiibo [determined expression]: But why go through so much effort if they **could leave the body inside the cafeteria?**

Kiibo [uncertain look]: If, for some reason, they wanted to hid him, just **use the door to the hallways**! It’d be harder to find the body!

Kiibo [determined expression]: Going outside would be riskier, even though **the fog obscured everyone’s view**. What if someone was right there and saw the dead body?

Kiibo’s not remembering what he told me… or maybe he just doesn’t want to.

**ANSWER:** Cafeteria door --> **“use the door to the hallways”**

Kaede: I’ll cut down your words!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: If they wanted to hide the body, they had only the option of going outside. The door you’re talking about was locked.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Yeah, you said it unlocked just after we found the body.

Kaede [gesturing]: That way was basically blocked off. The culprit would only have one place to escape.

Kiibo [uncertain look]: But… that would make the cafeteria an even worse place to commit a murder…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Worse than right outside of it?
Kiibo [looking around]: You’d have more places to flee after killing someone if you did it outside…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Kiibo is right. I don’t understand why you’re fixated on the murder happening inside.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I don’t see any evidence that could bring you to believe that.

**Maybe he doesn’t. But I have it.**

**NONSTOP DEBATE START!**

**Truth bullets: Body conditions, Monokuma File 4, Missing Monopad, Cafeteria door, Clean floor**

Kirumi [tilts head]: Even if the murder was carried out inside the cafeteria, would it matter?

Himiko [tired expression]: We have a general area, I think it’s enough.

Tenko [pensive look]: Hey, let’s try to figure out how he died, then.

Kaito [irritated expression]: Kaede already said it! **Spinal cord compression!**

Tenko [hands on podium]: Yeah, I meant **how** did that happen to him, not what. Ugh...

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: **He was choked,** clearly.

Rantaro [hands in front of self]: Hey, wait before dismissing this completely. I’m sure Kaede has something to say.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: We said Korekiyo had fought with someone…

Himiko [looking up]: Kaede said that his clothes are proof of that.

Gonta [thoughtful expression]: Maybe… he got hurt and bled.

Angie [fingers in hair]: But Kaede said there was no blood, right?

Gonta [index finger near chin]: **The culprit got rid of it!**

**Exactly, Rantaro doesn’t see evidence to think the murder happened there… that’s the point.**

**ANSWER: Clean floor --> “The culprit got rid of it!”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: That’s exactly what happened, Gonta. The culprit got rid of the blood inside the cafeteria.
Gonta [surprised expression]: Really!? I was just making theories!

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Inspecting the cafeteria, I noticed some clean patches of floor, all one near the other.

Kaede [gesturing]: Someone put a lot of effort in making sure they were clean… without any trace of blood.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Your theory is that the culprit and Korekiyo had a fight inside the cafeteria… and somehow he got hurt.

Well… he’s dead, so…

Rantaro [moves to the side]: He bled, but not enough to dirty his clothes or to cause any serious damage…

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: He must have sustained some very minor injuries… but the culprit thought that any sign of blood could implicate them.

It seems like they wanted us to believe Korekiyo died somewhere else, so I see why they would avoid leaving any clue in the cafeteria.

Kaito [rubbing head]: Great, the murder happened there. But how?

Tenko [scratching ear]: Somehow, Korekiyo’s neck was broken…

Angie [fingers in hair]: Besides Gonta, I don’t think anyone would be strong enough to overpower Korekiyo…

Gonta [worried expression]: Gonta not culprit!

Himiko [reassuring expression]: We know that, Gonta… Angie was just saying.

Kaede [gesturing]: Let’s think about this. There has to be a way to break his neck… without getting too close.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: The culprit and Korekiyo fought. That means they did get close to each other.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Definitely…

Tenko [pensive look]: So why is it impossible for the culprit to have twisted his neck in a moment of weakness?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Because that’s almost impossible. It’s not like they show in movies.

Kaede [gesturing]: The neck is too strong to be twisted like that in a couple of seconds.

Kaito [rubbing head]: So how do you break someone’s neck?

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: Impact. The force would snap the victim’s neck.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Yet that requires an amount of strength I doubt anyone in this room possesses.

Of course I don’t think Korekiyo was killed because he was thrown on the floor or to the
walls... he’d need to hit something sharp. There’s one such thing in the cafeteria.

[[A knife/The cafeteria table/The door handle/A bat]]

**ANSWER: The cafeteria table**

Kaede [gesturing]: I’m fairly certain that the injury that Korekiyo sustained occurred because he hit one of the edges of the cafeteria table.

Himiko [tired expression]: Now that I think about it… they could cause damage…

Kaede [gesturing]: While he was fighting with the culprit, they must have pushed him in that direction, leading to his death.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: We don’t know how strong the push was, but the impact was powerful enough to snap Korekiyo’s neck.

The culprit was either very skilled at this or extremely lucky… considering they managed to pull this off in such a short timeframe. Something is definitely amiss here, but I can’t put my finger on it…

I’m so close.

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Tenko, remind myself of something… you and Kaede found the body, right?

Tenko [confused look]: Yes… well, not really…

Kaede [gesturing]: What do you mean?

Tenko [pensive look]: You were the first one to see it… then the announcement sounded, and I came there with you.

Wait! I thought Tenko saw the body when I brushed away the snow… this means…

[[Monophanie changed the rules/Korekiyo killed himself/Korekiyo wasn’t dead/Another person saw the body/The culprit is Tenko]]

**ANSWER: Another person saw the body**

Kaede [gesturing]: The rules are clear. Two people besides the blackened have to see the body before the announcement is played.

Gonta [index finger on chin]: So one of us saw Korekiyo dead and said nothing!

Angie [pouting]: I can’t believe someone would be so inattentive!
Kaede [gesturing]: I don’t think this is has anything to do with that…

Himiko [looking up]: It could be that the witness passed near Korekiyo and didn’t see him… so it was like having discovered the body, but not really…

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: That’s impossible. Tenko and Kaede were near the body, but there was no announcement until Kaede saw the body.

**Whoever did this… it was deliberate, it seems. Maybe out of fear, they kept silent.**

Kaito [rubbing head]: All this talk about place of death, reasons and witnesses is fine, but guys… can’t we talk about alibis? Someone had to kill Korekiyo!

Himiko [tired expression]: Exactly, if we find the killer… we’re done… no hypothesis, just the truth.

Kaede [gesturing]: I know what the quickest road is, but that doesn’t mean it’s the easiest.

Kaito [rubbing head]: You can say what you want, but someone has to have a shaky alibi…

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: And that probably means they’re the culprit!

**Everyone says they were with someone else during the morning. Maybe the culprit had just enough time to slip away and kill Korekiyo? No, that would be too convenient…**

Tenko [pensive look]: Hey, I don’t want to accuse anyone, but… Kaede, have you said that everyone told you they were together the entire time?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Yes. Well, you told me that you and Gonta split up, but…

Kaito [gives a thumbs up]: Gonta was with me!

Rantaro [smirking]: Oh, you just reminded us you could be the culprit.

Tenko [shocked expression]: No! I didn’t mean that! I was thinking about someone else who lied!

**To be fair, Tenko didn’t lie. She told us right away she was alone for a while. On the other hand, another person’s account doesn’t match with her testimony… they have to explain themselves.**

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

**ANSWER: Kiibo’s alibi**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kiibo… you told me that you and Angie stayed together the entire morning.

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Y-yes…
Kiibo [hides under hood] Well, actually…

Kaito [irritated expression]: “Well, actually?” Are you fucking changing your testimony?

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I can… explain…

Kaito [angry expression]: If you lied about this, it must mean you lied about me locking you in the bathroom!

Kiibo [shocked expression]: W-wha..!?

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Once a liar, always a liar!

He’s not wrong, but he can’t seem to focus… like always.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kaito, this is not the time to talk about that.

Kaito [angry expression]: What?! Of course it is!

Kaede [irritated expression]: No. We have to talk about today, not yesterday. After the trial, we’ll be sure to discuss about what you want.

Kaito [looking to the side]: If Kiibo doesn’t get executed by then, you mean…

Kaede [irritated expression]: We’ll see. Still, I agree with you. Not only you’re a liar, Kiibo, but also a filthy coward.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: A… coward?

Angie [surprised expression]: Hey! Apologize now, Kaede!

Kaede [irritated expression]: No. I stand by my opinion.

Tenko [worried expression]: I think that calling him filthy is a bit much… maybe he’s innocent.

If it is, it would be worse. So much worse.

Kaede [irritated expression, arms crossed]: If he is, he had to speak when I asked to be honest with me, a few minutes ago. Yet he remained silent.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Only now he decides to speak up. Talk about good examples.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: …

Angie [clasping hands]: Don’t be intimidated, Kiibo! Kaede’s angry because she hasn’t found the culprit yet, maybe you should help her!

I’m angry because what?!

Kaede [irritated expression]: You shut up too, Angie. You’re not Kiibo’s personal guard.

Gonta [sad expression]: Sorry, can you explain Gonta?

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: You saw Kiibo heading for the Shrine this morning, but he told Kaede he never left Angie’s side.

Rantaro [arms crossed]: Angie, tell us. When did Kiibo leave?
Kiibo [looks to the side]: I can answer for myself. I left at around fifteen past nine, but…

I know why. He told Tenko and Gonta.

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!

ANSWER: Stuck dorm door

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [irritated expression]: You had to fix the stuck dorms door. Apparently.
Kiibo [looks to the side]: Why, apparently? You don’t believe me?
Kaede [arms crossed]: I really hope you’re the killer. Then your silence would have meaning.
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Stop with the passive-aggressiveness, Kaede. You’re not going anywhere with that.

Look who’s talking. At least he’s reasonable, unlike Angie’s brainwashed sheeple.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Rigor mortis, Cassette tapes, Casino prizes, Tenko and Gonta’s location

Angie [clasps hands]: I can vouch for Kiibo, the door really got stuck!
Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I think that is really convenient timing on his part.
Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: I bet he stuck it himself, like he did with the bathroom door!
Kiibo [clutches at chest]: Why d-do you think I’d be able to do something like that!?
Himiko [looks at bug net]: Kiibo was seen going to the Shrine, exactly opposite to the cafeteria… I think he’s innocent.
Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: He had enough time to kill Korekiyo and then return to the Shrine.
Angie [praying]: He was going there as instructed by Monotaro… to find a miraculous object that fixes everything…
Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: That’s a bit hard to believe. An object like that doesn’t exist.
Kiibo [determined expression]: It does! And thanks to it Angie managed to get out of the dorms!
Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Maybe Angie’s the killer and Kiibo’s covering for her!

I can’t believe Kiibo has lied until now. And for what? I can’t believe this…

**ANSWER: Casino prizes --> “An object like that doesn’t exist”**

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

**BREAK!**

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Kaede [gesturing]: They’re telling the truth. One of the casino prizes was the Mono-fix. And it fixes everything, apparently…

Himiko [surprised expression]: Kiibo went to the casino? I can’t believe he did something that Angie advised not to do…

Angie [praying]: From now on, Atua banned the casino once and for all…

Angie [cheerful expression]: But he didn’t go to the casino! Monotaro told him he took the Mono-fix for something… but he could give it for free.

**That lines up with Monokid’s story. He told me and Angie that Monotaro stole it a while before.**

Monotaro [shuriken in paw]: Yes, but… I’m pretty sure I left it near the school entrance… that’s where I told you to search for it.

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh, really? I remember that you said Shrine, not school…

Monotaro [confused]: Really? Is my memory that bad?

Monokid [smashes guitar]: Maybe a beating will make you remember!

Monotaro [scared]: Please, no! I’m sure I said school!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Everyone, I’m going to be honest now.

Angie [clasping hands]: Okay, go Kiibo! We believe in you!

Kiibo [looks to the side]: I did go towards the Shrine, but I went to the school first… that’s where Monotaro told me to go.

Kiibo [looks around]: There, I found the Mono-fix… but it’s not the only thing I saw.

Kaede [irritated expression]: You saw Korekiyo’s body.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Right… his… one of his fingers was sticking out of the snow pile, and I… I saw his face…

Kirumi [tilts head]: I must admit, it is hard to believe you now.

Kiibo [confused expression]: Why? I didn’t lie… I just kept silent…
Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Yes. I cannot understand why you would do that. You have always been reasonable, yet now you withheld a crucial detail to the case.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I was hoping… if you did not see the body… there wouldn’t be a trial…

Kiibo [looks away]: And that is why… the first thing I thought… is to make you believe he escaped.

Angie [fingers in hair]: What do you mean?

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I was the one… who took the mask and put in the boiler room… just before Kirumi and Himiko got there.

Kiibo [looks away]: I heard them talking… and quickly sprinted away…

Yes. That must be it. Because…

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET

ANSWER: Himiko’s testimony

Kaede: I’ve got it!

Kaede [arms crossed]: He must be telling the truth. That matches with Himiko’s updated testimony.

Kaede [gesturing]: Before she and Kirumi arrived to the boiler room, she heard someone running.

Tenko [scratching ear]: Kiibo… I see what you were trying to do, but… the moment the body was found… you had nothing to lose in telling us what happened.

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: That is why I think you did not reveal the truth. Because you are Korekiyo’s true killer.

As much as I’d like Kiibo to be the blackened now, I’m here to save everyone. That’s why I have to be objective.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Tenko’s testimony, Rigor mortis, Cassette tapes, Snow and fog

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Please, tell me why you did it.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I… I didn’t..!

Kirumi [tilts head]: You are the only person that was alone in the courtyard this morning
Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: He left Angie inside too late in the morning. *Rigor mortis would have set in later if Korekiyo was killed around nine.*

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Yeah… and as I was saying… I went to the lower courtyard…

Gonta [smiling, hand on chest]: It didn’t look like he had a fight with someone!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Why would you go there?

Kiibo [uncertain look]: After having seen Korekiyo’s body… *I went to his lab.* To… search for clues.

**If only Kiibo told us sooner…**

**ANSWER: Tenko’s testimony --> “I went to his lab”**

Kaede: I agree with that!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: He did go to Korekiyo’s lab. Along with the recording, Tenko specified that she and Gonta heard footsteps.

Kiibo [looks to the side]: Yes… the person they were talking about wasn’t Korekiyo… it was me.

Rantaro [smirking]: Oh, so it was you who started the recordings. The box under the fridge was broken… it was your doing.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: Yes… I started hearing the recordings when I went there… and I stopped them when Tenko and Gonta arrived to the lab.

Kiibo [looks around]: I finished listening to the one I put inside the stereo, and then ran away to the dorms to help Angie…

Kiibo [looking to the side]: I didn’t know they would rewind by themselves, so I… I didn’t remove the cassette I was listening to.

**And that’s how Kirumi and Rantaro were able to listen to the stereo hidden under the fridge. It makes sense.**

Kirumi: I’ll unheart your lies!

[[split screen separating Kirumi and Kaede]]

Kaede [gesturing]: Why are you not convinced, Kirumi?

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I cannot be the only one who thinks this is far too suspicious...
REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!

Truth blades: Body conditions, Missing Monopad, Bark and wood

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I cannot believe one would hide so many information if he were not the killer.

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: As you should remember, no one besides him is unaccounted for at the time of murder.

Kirumi [moves to the side]: Angie was stuck inside, confirming her innocence.

ADVANCE!

Kaede [right hand extended to the side]: First of all, your comment on the time of murder doesn’t make sense… Kiibo surely didn’t go to the school before 9 a.m.

Kaede [gesturing]: It’s too late.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: The rigor could have been caused by something else.

Kirumi [moves to the side]: Not to mention, nobody could enter Korekiyo’s lab without his Monopad... it was inaccessible to everyone but him.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: I am convinced he did not go to the lab either!

Kirumi’s wrong. She didn’t inspect Korekiyo’s body, right? So... she might not know something.

ANSWER: Missing Monopad --> “it was inaccessible to everyone but him”

Kaede: I’ll cut down your words!

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: But that isn’t true… you see, nobody could find Korekiyo’s Monopad, but…

Kaede [arms crossed]: .I’m sure that Kiibo’s the one who took it from him.

Gonta [shocked expression]: Taking things from dead people? That illegal!

I don’t think that’s true. Maybe Gonta chose the wrong word.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: You… are right. I took Korekiyo’s pad to go inside his lab… otherwise I couldn’t have entered…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kiibo going inside also explains another detail of the case. We already went over it, but now it finally makes sense.

Gonta [confused expression]: What detail?

-SELECT A TRUTH BULLET!
**ANSWER: Cassette tapes**

Kaede [gesturing]: You and Tenko heard the cassettes from outside… as we know, that wasn’t Korekiyo inside, but Kiibo who played them.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: We know that the stereo rewinds by itself, but it’s obvious that it can’t attract the cassettes and play them by itself.

Tenko [scratches ear]: I don’t understand what you’re saying.

Kaede [gesturing]: One of us had to put the cassettes inside the stereo for the first time for them to play… that person is Kiibo, as he explained.

Kiibo [looking away]: Exactly, that’s me…

Tenko [pensive look]: That doesn’t mean he couldn’t have killed him…

Kaede [arms crossed]: The announcement itself is proof of it. If he was the killer, it would’ve sounded when Tenko witnessed the body.

**Instead, the two people needed to kick it off were Kiibo and me.**

Kirumi [neutral expression]: …

Kirumi [looks down, shade on front]: Then… why did you do this?

Kiibo [worried expression]: Do… what?

Kirumi [angry expression, pointing]: Not tell us he was dead! It doesn’t matter that we discovered his body a couple hours later, you gave us false hope!

Kirumi [angry expression, tearing up]: When I… when I found that mask… deep inside me, I hoped… I hoped he escaped… and I told you!

Kirumi [looks down, shade on front]: Yet you didn’t say anything about finding his body! You pretended nothing happened, silent!

Kirumi [angry expression, crying]: When Tenko and Gonta said they heard Korekiyo you said nothing! Nothing! You stood there in silence!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: …

Kirumi [angry expression, crying]: Just like you’re doing right now, always silent. Why? For what twisted reason would you do this?! To make me think Kiyo was safe…

Kiibo [looking away]: Because… it was better like that…

Angie [tilts head]: Huh?

Kiibo [looking away]: If no one saw him… we wouldn’t be here, right now… we’d be down in the boiler room, facing a blizzard, yeah…
Kiibo [looking to the side]: But at least we’d be together… believing one of us made it out… without doubts and stares… we’d have survived.

Kaito [irritated expression]: What the fuck are you saying? I’d be stuck in a bathroom, to hell with your non-existant doubts!

Kiibo [hides under hood]: I… I meant-

Kaito [rubbing head]: Doubts will always exist, especially in the conditions we’re right now.

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Fighting over coats, force who’s not your friend to be perpetually monitored, locking who isn’t on your side?

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: But above that, do you really believe that tricking someone into believing what they want is the best option?

Kiibo [hides under hood]: …

Kaito [angry expression]: No! As much as you want to you can’t change the truth. It might destroy them, but it’s a price to pay.

Angie [pouting]: Sometimes you have to sweeten the pill.

Kaito [moves to the side]: This isn’t sweeting the pill, is refusing to swallow it!

Himiko [neutral expression]: You should all stop talking about this.

Kiibo [looking away]: …

Himiko [looking up]: I don’t think we can decide which approach is the best… and arguing over it here is not what we should do.

_Hiding the truth to protect the others… I…. I know what Kiibo’s thinking… and I’d agree… in different circumstances._

Kaede [arms crossed]: You still haven’t told us why you waited for us to call you out to tell the truth.

Kiibo [hides under hood]: …

Kirumi [moves to the side]: So, you are still refusing to speak.

_I can understand why Kiibo would hide the presence of a body, but there is no reason not to reveal it once the announcement sounds._

_Unless…_

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kiibo, are you afraid of dying?

Kiibo [worried expression]: Why… why do you ask me this question?

Kaede [irritated expression]: Just answer.

Gonta [confused look]: I think the answer is easy!
Kiibo [looking to the side]: …

Kiibo [uncertain look]: Somewhat… but I guess… I’ve come to terms with it, with corpse after corpse…

That’s it. If he isn’t scared of death, then…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kiibo’s covering for someone.

Kiibo [looking away]: …

He isn’t an accomplice. He would’ve made himself look suspicious, like Himiko.

He solved the case before us, since he had more information at his disposal. He knows who the blackened is.

And he isn’t convinced of what he’s doing. He doesn’t really want to sacrifice his life for the blackened, even though they’re his friend. But because they’re a friend, he refuses to believe it.

Now... I understand. Other than this, I have no real proof... but there's time for that. For now, I'll just reveal who the blackened must be. Because there's only one person Kiibo would cover for.

-SELECT SOMEONE!
Warm embraces heat up a cold world: Class Trial (Part 3)

Chapter Summary

Kaede accuses one person of murder despite not having concrete proof, but is she right?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

-SELECT SOMEONE!

[[ ANGIE YONAGA SELECTED]]

Kaede [arms crossed]: If there’s someone who Kiibo would give his life for, that’s Angie.

Gonta [shocked expression]: Angie? Maybe you’re confused!

Angie [surprised expression]: Oh? Are you accusing me of murder? But I’m innocent, remember?

Stuck in the dorms…

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: You were… Monotaro gave us confirmation…

Angie [cheerful expression]: See? I’m innocent!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: I made a chart to track everyone’s positions during the morning, and… she couldn’t have done it…

Tenko [scratches ear]: Great, so I can understand better what happened…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>circa 8</td>
<td>Kae&amp;Ran Angie, Kaito, Gon&amp;Ten, Him&amp;Kir, Kiibo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL, SHRINE, CASINO</td>
<td>SHRINE, SHRINE, SHRINE</td>
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<tr>
<td>circa 9</td>
<td>SCHOOL, DORMS, CASINO, CASINO AND LOVE HOTEL, COURTYARD (upper), DORMS, SCHOOL, BOILER ROOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>circa 9.30</td>
<td>SCHOOL, DORMS, CASINO, COURTYARD (lower), BOILER ROOM, COURTYARD (lower)</td>
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</table>
You were all at the Shrine while me and Kaede were searching for secrets in school for the rest of the morning.

Then, you started your search for Korekiyo. Angie and Kiibo were in the dorms at first, but he headed out to help with the door going to the school entrance. There, he found Korekiyo’s body. Meanwhile, Himiko and Kirumi were heading to the school themselves. Gonta was helping Kaito escape and then joined Tenko in the love hotel shortly after.

Himiko and Kirumi arrived in the boiler room, as Tenko and Gonta met Kiibo on the lower courtyard. He went inside Korekiyo’s room while they searched around the place. After some time, they heard him inside the room, thinking it was Korekiyo. They continued their search in the courtyard allowing Kiibo to get out of Kiyo’s lab and go back to Angie to the dorms, shortly before me and Kaede’s arrival there.

Gonta [happy expression]: Gonta thinks he understand now!

Angie seems innocent. That’s the point. But someone killed Korekiyo.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Monokuma File 4, Clean floor, Kiibo’s alibi, Stuck dorm door

Tenko [hands on podium]: How can Angie be the culprit while being in the dorms?

Kirumi [thoughtful expression, index finger on lip]: There might have been a secret passage somewhere in the dorms.

Angie [fingers in hair]: And I just happened to stumble on it in time to kill Korekiyo?

Himiko [looking down]: It sounds impossible.

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Oh, I see. You think she killed Korekiyo when she wasn’t in the dorms.

Angie [tilts to the right]: What? He must’ve died today, around eight!

Gonta [confused expression]: Maybe you suggesting she was bringing Mono-fix to dorms, not Kiibo.
Tenko [pensive look]: But we saw Kiibo, so that’s not what happened.

Angie [pouting]: There’s no way around it! I was stuck in the dorms! I only got out a few minutes before Kaede and Rantaro!

I knew something wasn’t right from the start... The circumstances surrounding Korekiyo’s death were strange, but now... I can cast away my doubts!

ANSWER: Monokuma File 4 --> “He must’ve died today, around eight!”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!

Kaede [gesturing]: Korekiyo didn’t die today. It’s as easy as that.

Himiko [neutral expression]: I know you don’t read the Monokuma File, but this information is the exact reason why you should...

Kaede [irritated expression]: First of all, I always read the File when the investigation comes to a close.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Second, I don’t read it because it gives confusing information. Just like today.

Angie [pouting]: Between eight in the morning and eight in the evening! It’s vague, but it says Korekiyo died today!

Kaede [arms crossed]: No. The File doesn’t specify the day. Only the time. He died yesterday... between his disappearance and 8 p.m.

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Now that you mention it... that is right.

Gonta [index finger on chin]: But the Monokuma File never says the day of death...

Kaede [index finger pointing upwards]: And that’s why it messed up with our perception, while giving the killer the possibility of creating an alibi.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: Interesting hypothesis.

Kaede [gesturing]: It isn’t just a hypothesis. There’s substance to it.

Tenko [confused expression]: You’re smart, Kaede... but maybe you’re reaching here.

Kirumi [right hand on hip, left hand on hat]: I am convinced that the murder occurred yesterday, as Kaede says.

Monophanie [giggling]: Oh oh oh, what do I see here? Conflicting opinions?

Monokid [excited]: Conflicted opinions! Does it mean it’s time for that thing with the floating stands?
Monophanie [false excitement]: That’s right! It’s finally time for the best trial section by far!

Monotaro [confused]: I thought you hated that part…

Monophanie [false excitement]: Boring brothers aside, it’s time for yet another scrum debate!

Monophanie materialized a key in front of her, inserting in the contraption we had grown accustomed by then. We were brought up, four on one side, four on the other.

Kiibo remained at the center. Apparently Monophanie couldn’t understand which side he was on. A few seconds passed, then he was placed on the side opposite to mine.

On one side Angie, Kiibo, Tenko, Himiko, Gonta: Korekiyo was killed today!

On the other Kaede, Rantaro, Kirumi, Kaito: Korekiyo was killed yesterday!

Kaede- Rigor
||
Kaede- Disappeared

|Rantaro- Searching
Kaito- Frozen
Kaito- Yesterday
Kirumi- Body

SCRUM DEBATE START!

Tenko: If Korekiyo was killed yesterday, wouldn’t we have been notified?

Kaito: The body discovery announcement plays when two people other than the culprit discover a body! Before then, we wouldn’t have known!

Gonta: Korekiyo was still in good condition… the body would be decayed!

Kirumi: As a matter of fact, decomposition takes more than one day to have an effect.

Angie: If he was killed yesterday, we’d have noticed! We were searching for him!

Rantaro: By your logic, if he was killed today, we’d have noticed too. Instead, the body was found after the search.

Himiko: You said it yourself Kaede, he was killed at eight as proven by the rigor mortis…

Kaede: Him dying yesterday actually reinforces my idea, as the rigor had more time to set in if he died yesterday!

Gonta: The body would be frozen under the snow!

Kaito: No, he didn’t stay enough time under the snow for his body to be frozen.

Angie: We saw Korekiyo yesterday, then he disappeared himself!

Kaede: That’s the point! He disappeared because he was killed!

This is our answer!!

- 

BREAK!
Kaede [gesturing]: Are you willingly forgetting that it’s impossible for any of us to have killed Korekiyo this morning?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Exactly. There’s no denying the rigor mortis. Even if he was murdered today, it couldn’t have been after nine, to be generous.

Kaede [arms crossed]: We all know that Kiibo has to be protecting Angie. We only need his word.

Kiibo [looks away]: …

**Great. He doesn’t want to talk. Such a coward.**

**If he admitted it… it would be so much easier.**

Kaede [irritated expression]: It doesn’t matter. I have enough evidence to prove she’s the murderer.

Angie [smiling, shade on head]: You do? Curious! But I also think you have to explain something yourself!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Gladly.

Angie [fingers in hair]: This morning, you and Rantaro were in and out of the school… discovering something just near the entrance, a secret passage.

**What is she trying to do?**

Angie [flailing arms]: Yet! At the same time, Kiibo was feet to your right, discovering Korekiyo’s body!

Angie [surprised expression]: Despite this, you never heard or saw him?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Kiibo himself admitted he saw the body.

Angie [flailing arms]: Oh, I’m sure of that! What I’m doubting is your testimony!

Angie [smiling, shade on head]: You never were at the school, am I right?

**Her logic is sound, and if I don’t come clean nobody will believe me.**

**I could lie, I could say that Kiibo was outside and we were inside… that we moved to other floors… but…**

**I glanced at Rantaro. He nodded.**

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, you’re right. Rantaro and me were near the cage.

Tenko [pensive look]: Then… why did you lie about it for all this time?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Clearly because one of them is the real culprit!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: We were together. Already talked about this.

Angie [fingers in hair]: If you lied about the school, you could’ve lied about you being together
Angie [smiling, shade on head]: Quite hypocritical for someone who just said that everyone should be honest!

Gonta [sad expression]: Gonta not want any more lies, please!

**I hate Angie. I hate her with every fiber of my being.**

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: We have an alibi, Angie. You do not. Stop trying to accuse others when you’re the one under accusation.

Angie [fingers in hair]: I do have an alibi, for today and yesterday! Are you conveniently forgetting?

Kirumi [right hand on hat, left hand on hip]: Before pointing fingers, we should ask Kaede and Rantaro why they lied.

Angie [pouting]: Really? They could be lying again.

Kaede [irritated expression]: We could, yes. But we won’t. I lied to protect all of you.

Tenko [hands on podium]: Just like Shuichi? And Oums?

Kaede [reassuring expression]: Please… I ask you to believe me. When this trial is over, I will tell you what I discovered.

Himiko [neutral expression]: Why then? Do it now!

**I could, but… it would distract everyone else… and it’s not like I could prove what I saw…**

Angie [cheerful expression]: I’m sure that she’s covering for Rantaro!

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Bullshit! Kaede would never be an accomplice!

Tenko [scratching ear]: But… it’s hard to believe her when we know she lied…

Kaito [giving a thumbs up]: What we also know is that she’s an amazing detective, who has always saved us during those trials…

Kaito [looking to the side]: And… despite her being wrong sometimes…

Kaito [giving a thumbs up]: At the end, she’s always been on point!

Himiko [tired expression]: Okay, maybe… maybe we should hear her out…

Angie: Time for divine intervention!

[[split screen separating Angie and Kaede]]

Angie [pouting]: You can’t accuse someone while your story is not confirmed!

Kaede [irritated expression]: Not confirmed?! How many times does Rantaro have to repeat he was with me?
**REBUTTAL SHOWDOWN START!**

**Truth blades: Snow and fog, Kiibo’s alibi, Clean floor**

Angie [pouting]: All talk! You lied, and that’s the truth!

Angie [fingers in hair]: Sometimes it’s okay to be wrong, to make mistakes, just like you’re doing right now!

Angie [tilts head to the left]: Because I’ve also have! Everyone does, I’ll just have to explain why!

Angie [tilts head to the right]: But I think you know the truth, and you just want to hide it!

**ADVANCE!**

Kaede [arms crossed]: You may try to discredit me, but I know you’re the culprit.

Angie [pouting]: No, how so? Korekiyo was killed today!

Angie [fingers in hair]: **Yesterday it still snowed…**

Angie [cheerful expression]: And **as long as the snow falls, we all are alive!**

Angie [clasps hands]: And **you have no way to prove I sneaked out of the dorms…** as if I had a way to!

Angie [prays]: Please, Atua! Show the ABCs the route of truth, and save them from a terrible life of misery!

**Does Angie not know what we were told? No… she was there when we discussed the evidence… so she has to be aware of it.**

**ANSWER: Snow and fog --> “as long as the snow falls, we all are alive”**

Kaede: I’ll cut your words!

**BREAK!**

Kaede [gesturing]: You’re wrong. Monophanie explained to us how the motive works.

“As you should remember, the motive expires right after someone dies! That explains the absence of snow! To be clear, a cycle of snow would continue regardless! If somebody dies while it’s snowing, it would continue like normal, until it went away. What’s different is that the next time snow was forecasted, snow wouldn’t be there anymore! The motive would expire, as I said.”

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: This means that Korekiyo could have been killed
yesterday…

Kaede [arms crossed]: Since the last snow cycle started at around twelve yesterday.

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: So Korekiyo was murdered after twelve!

**Well, we already knew that because he disappeared later during the day… that’s not what I intended to say, but I’ll… avoid arguing, for now.**

Kaede [gesturing]: Yes, but mainly… it proves that it’s possible, since it didn’t snow after twelve today… when snow was supposed to fall.

Tenko [pensive look]: But still, that doesn’t make “yesterday Angie” the culprit… because this hypothesis doesn’t exclude the possibility Korekiyo died today.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Exactly! All that we know is that he died between yesterday afternoon and today’s morning… not necessarily yesterday!

Angie [tilts to the left]: Up until now I’ve only heard circumstantial evidence!

Kaede [irritated expression]: What do you mean?

Angie [fingers in hair]: Kiibo protecting me? Possible, but I’m sure he’s just scared! Especially after you calling him coward, I doubt he’d even glance at you!

Angie [cheerful expression]: Korekiyo dying yesterday? Likely, but there isn’t any actual proof he died before eight this morning!

Angie [flailing arms]: And lastly, there are many people that could’ve killed him yesterday! Not just me!

**She is right. If I don’t show actual evidence, it’s impossible for me to accuse her seriously.**

Kaito [rubbing head]: Please, it’s so obvious! Let’s just vote for Angie and be done with it.

Kaede [gesturing]: No. We can solve this case without voting early.

Angie [pouting]: Why would I even kill Korekiyo? I hate death, I wanted to make this a paradise for everyone!

If I want to convince everyone that Angie’s the culprit, I’d need a motive… but does she even have one?

Tenko [scratching ear]: Kiibo, please… tell us, do you really believe Angie did this?

Kiibo [hides under hood]: …

Kiibo [looking away]: Yes…

Kiibo [determined expression]: But that doesn’t mean I won’t defend her!

**What?**

Kiibo [determined expression]: I chose to believe her! If she says she didn’t do it, I trust her!

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: After trying all you can to avoid exposing her, you
decided to defend her...

Kiibo [determined expression]: I don’t know what happened. I’m sure Angie would’ve confessed by now… to save all of us.

Himiko [looking up]: Right… she wouldn’t let us die. If she was the culprit and escaped, she’d have basically killed all of us.

Gonta [holds hand over chest]: Angie would never sacrifice us!

Tenko [determined expression]: Right! There has to be another answer!

No, there’s one answer. That Angie’s the killer. Inspired by Kiibo’s words, the others can’t see the truth.

NONSTOP DEBATE START!

Truth bullets: Korekiyo’s mask, Cafeteria door, Clean floor, Kiibo’s alibi

Angie [clasps hands]: Thank you, my Children! I know you’ll always believe me!

Angie [tilts to the left]: Just remember, Kaede lied about where she was this morning!

Kaito [angry expression]: Bullshit! You killed Korekiyo, it’s evident!

Angie [smiling, shade on head]: It is? How?

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: After he ran from the Shrine, you kidnapped him…

Angie [fingers in hair]: Impossible! I was with Kiibo shoveling snow!

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: You killed him last night, before going to bed.

Kaito [angry expression, fists bumping into each other]: Or maybe during night-time! That way nobody would see you!

Angie [pouting]: I will ignore your last hypothesis, it’s ridiculous.

Kiibo [determined expression]: Angie’s innocent! We stayed together the entire time yesterday!

Either I agree with one of my classmates, or I turn Kiibo’s words against himself. To my knowledge, there’s only one time that Angie could have committed this murder…

ANSWER: Kiibo’s alibi --> “We stayed together the entire time yesterday!”

Kaede: No, that’s wrong!

BREAK!
Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: You don’t know if you stayed together the entire time. And you said it yourself.

“After that, I was with Angie the entire time… both yesterday and today. After you and Rantaro met with me and her near the boiler room, we went back to the dorms and had a nap. She told me she’d bring me something to eat, but ended up sleeping too.”

Kaede [gesturing]: You were sleeping yesterday. How could you know where Angie was?

Kiibo [determined expression]: Besides me, in the bed!

Kaede [irritated expression]: I repeat my question. How could you know?

Kiibo [determined expression]: She was sleeping when I woke up!..!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Sure. But you don’t know what she was doing while you were sleeping. Don’t try to pretend.

Angie [flailing arms]: You’ve started quite the crusade against me, Kaede! You can’t claim I killed someone because I don’t have an alibi!

Kaede [pointing]: This isn’t just the alibi! It’s everything!

Angie [pouting]: I stayed in that room!

**Kiibo figured this out already. That’s why he’s so scared of Angie being the culprit. He knows she did exit his room… he decided to believe otherwise.**

He knew where she went, and refused to accept it. Angie told him she was going to…

**HIDDEN PASSWORD START!**

A F R E T C A I E

**ANSWER: Cafeteria**

Kaede: I’ve got it!

**CLEAR!**

Kaede [gesturing]: No, you went to the cafeteria to bring Kiibo something to eat. But there… the murder happened.

Kiibo [determined expression]: No! That’s not it! It’s just a coincidence! A way to frame Angie!

Rantaro [moves to the side]: Framing? How could they know she was going there? It was a conversation between her and you.
Angie [prays]: Framing or not, it still doesn’t mean anything. Atua will prove me innocent.

Angie [clasps hands]: You see, I couldn’t have known Korekiyo was in the cafeteria. Atua would never tell me such things… he respects everyone’s privacy.

**Angie wouldn’t know… of course, how could she?**

Kaede [arms crossed]: That’s the crux of the case. Angie had no way of knowing where Korekiyo was. This was all coincidental.

Kaede [gesturing]: Kiibo’s right. Angie wouldn’t kill anyone… intentionally.

Kirumi [covers mouth]: An… accidental murder?

Rantaro [thoughtful expression]: Angie must’ve met Korekiyo when she went to the cafeteria…

Rantaro [moves to the side]: And somehow, she and him started a fight.

Kiibo [determined expression]: Angie would never start a fight!

Kaito [looks to the side]: Who says that she did? It must’ve been Korekiyo.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: And she murdered him by kicking him towards the table…

Kirumi [moves to the side]: …breaking his neck in the process…

**It’s so awful to think that Kirumi is thinking about how Korekiyo died…**

Kiibo [determined expression]: What? Everyone could’ve done that! Anyone could’ve entered the cafeteria, anyone could’ve pushed him!

Angie [fingers in hair]: Yes! Kirumi was alone for a while!

Kirumi [glaring]: Are you accusing me of murdering my friend!?

Angie [prays]: I’m consulting Atua for guidance. If I remember well, Kaede and Korekiyo were together.

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: We were. And we have an alibi for each other.

Angie [pouting]: I don’t know if I can believe you.

Rantaro [smirking]: Tenko was with us. Not for the entire time, but enough.

Tenko [scratches ear]: Definitely… for most of the afternoon.

**I see why Rantaro would point to that, but we I’m sure the murder occurred later. If Angie’s the killer, she acted later.**

Kaede [gesturing]: After me and Korekiyo met you and Kiibo. We started shoveling, you went back to the dorms.

Kaede [right arm extended to the side]: Everyone, where were you when we changed places yesterday?

Tenko [pensive look]: I was alone… then met Korekiyo… yes… a while before Kirumi returned.
Tenko [scratches ear]: Then, after Kirumi ran after Korekiyo… I stood there, then we formed a research party for him, around the courtyard... first lower, then upper.

Kaede [gesturing]: Composed by?

Tenko [pensive look]: Me, Kirumi and Himiko. I immediately went to the love hotel to pick her up.

Kaito [surprised expression]: Love hotel!?

Himiko [tired expression]: The beds there are so much comfier than the ones in the dorms… they are so fluffy…

Tenko [determined expression]: I’ve tested them myself and Himiko is telling the truth!

Himiko [tired expression]: Tenko is too. They came to me. I… didn’t like that, but… I thought I had to help.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: It did last for thirty minutes, or maybe a bit less… we did not explore the area around the school before we met with you.

Exactly as I remembered.

Angie must have met Korekiyo after he escaped, crossing paths with him in the cafeteria.

At that time, we were too far to hear or see him enter the door, because we were near the boiler room.

Himiko, Tenko and Kirumi were around the casino area, the fog was obscuring their view.

Yet Angie had all the time to hide Korekiyo’s body and return to the dorms with Kiibo.

Kaede [arms crossed]: Angie, you’re the only one who could have killed Korekiyo. Admit it.

Angie [pouting]: Umph, Kaede! I repeat you, that’s not true!

She still thinks we’ll believe her…

PANIC TALK ACTION START!

Angie: I’ll show you the truth!

Angie: Atua, enlighten those who do not know!

Angie: Everyone on my island will stand by my side!

Angie: I’m the leader here!

Angie: Atua’s voice is telling me you’re wrong!

Angie: If I had a fight with Korekiyo and bled on the floor, wouldn’t I have some wounds on my body?

FAKE—HAND—CUT—SACRIFICE—ON
ANSWER: Fake sacrifice cut on hand

Kaede: This is over!

Angie [pouting]: ...!

BREAK!

Kaede [arms crossed]: Right after we found the body, you mentioned having already sacrificed some blood to Atua.

Angie [pouting]: …

Kaede [pointing]: The truth is that you never did that; your hand was aching because Korekiyo cut you there!

Angie [prays]: You have no way of proving that.

Kaede [arms crossed, irritated expression]: Then tell me, why would you prepare a sacrifice without the others?

Kaede [arms crossed]: Quite unusual, considering your record.

Tenko [worried look]: Yeah… you never kept us out of the rituals…

Angie [clasps hands]: It was a private meeting between me and Atua.

Kaede [arms crossed]: And when was it supposed to happen? Today? In your room?

Angie [prays]: Yes. Before morning, I prayed for Gonta to be safe… that’s why I offered my blood to Atua!

Himiko [looking down]: But… you asked us to do the sacrifice… after Gonta was found. Not before.

Himiko [looking down, sad expression]: Just after the body was found…

I see what Himiko’s getting at. If all the Blessed Children had a cut, she could have pretended to have done the sacrifice with them… and nobody could’ve denied it.

Angie [cheerful expression]: Oh, but that was for Korekiyo’s safety in Atua’s realm!

Rantaro [raises eyebrow]: If you truly believe that a God will be appeased with useless sacrifices you’re too far gone.

Kirumi [glaring]: We should vote.

Kiibo [pointing]: But we have no definitive evidence!

Kaito [fists bumping into each other]: Are you dumb? There’s so much pointing to her! You believed her to be the culprit until ten minutes ago!
Kiibo [hands on temples, shaking head]: No, no, no! I refuse it! Angie would never kill someone!

Kaede [irritated expression]: Stop.

As Kiibo continued to be in denial, the other ABCs were all looking at Angie. They weren’t saying a word. Did they also believed her lies?

No, it can’t be. They have understood.

Kaede [pointing]: We have definitive evidence. Now, I’ll recap the case to show it to you.

**CLIMAX INTERFERENCE START!**

Kaede: Before we talk about Korekiyo’s death, it’s important to remember what happened in front of his lab.

Kaede: Yesterday Gonta was escorting Kirumi to the Ultimate Cosplayer’s lab, while their view was obscured by the fog, one of the motives for murder.

Kaede: In front of the lab, they were both shot with poisonous darts. Gonta to the eye, Kirumi to the leg and abdomen. At the time, I thought that the attacker was Kaito, but in reality was Korekiyo.

Kaede: Korekiyo later waited for Kirumi at the Shrine, where she was left earlier. After a short conversation, he ran away in the fog knocking Tenko to the ground.

Kaede: Kirumi ran to the lab to search for him, but didn’t found him. She then enlisted Tenko and Himiko’s help, heading to the Love Hotel.

Kaede: We’ll never know what Korekiyo was doing before he was killed, but he eventually arrived in the cafeteria without being seen by anyone, as the search party was around the Love Hotel and then the lower courtyard, while me and Rantaro were shoveling snow near the boiler room.

Kaede: While this was happening, the culprit and Kiibo were resting in the former’s room. Kiibo fell asleep, and the culprit decided to go to the cafeteria to bring him something to eat.

Kaede: There, they had an unfortunate encounter with Korekiyo. As far as we know, Korekiyo attacked them and they were forced to defend themselves.

Kaede: Not much is known about what happened, but Korekiyo at least managed to wound the culprit’s hand. However, they retaliated and pushed or kicked him towards the cafeteria table.

Kaede: Tragically, Korekiyo hit the table and broke his neck. The culprit realized this, and quickly tried to hid the murder.

Kaede: Using water, easily accessible in the kitchen, they cleaned the spots where they bled, then covered Kiyo’s body in snow outside the cafeteria.

Kaede: They didn’t have any other hiding spots, since the other door was locked and dragging the body around would risk being seen. After doing this, they returned to their dorm room.

Kaede: They didn’t try to frame anyone, I believe because of time. Maybe they’d have done that later, but the many events that happened today made that impossible.
Kaede: In fact, Kiibo was the one that helped the culprit, even though the culprit did not know it.

Kaede: Today, after having met Gonta, the group split again. Kiibo and the blackened went back to the dorms, but after the latter was stuck inside, Kiibo was tasked to help them by searching for the Mono-fix.

Kaede: As instructed by Monotaro, Kiibo went to the school to retrieve the object. Instead, he found Korekiyo’s body. Horrified, he must’ve realized that Angie was the only one who could’ve committed the murder, and decided to deceive us all.

Kaede: Because the BDA didn’t play, he wanted us to believe that he escaped. To make sure of this, he took his mask and dropped it in the area under the boiler room, where it would be found minutes later by Himiko and Kirumi, who were passing near.

Kaede: Then, he took Korekiyo’s Monopad to investigate his lab, maybe hoping to find clues that could help him strengthen or weaken his hypothesis.

Kaede: While he was there, Tenko and Gonta heard him playing cassette tapes recorded by Korekiyo, making them think he was alive, hiding in his lab. Only after they went away he returned to the culprit, freeing them. Shortly after, Kiibo and the culprit met with me and Rantaro.

Kaede: Then, after reuniting in the AV Room, we gathered in the cafeteria. Only thanks to Tenko, I was able to see where Korekiyo was hidden… otherwise, who knows if we would’ve ever found his body.

Kaede: This is not circumstantial evidence, every piece fits. There’s only one of us Kiibo would protect no matter what…

[split screen separating Angie and Kaede, Angie is looking up with her eyes closed while praying]

Kaede: Angie Yonaga, you’re the murderer of Korekiyo Shinguji!

BREAK!

Angie [praying]: …

Kiibo [worried expression]: Angie… aren’t you going to say anything?

Angie [clasps hands]: Okay. At this point, there’s no reason to lie.

Angie [neutral expression]: It was me.

Gonta [shocked expression]: What? Angie? But… how can this be real?

Angie [praying]: Kaede’s right. Korekiyo was the one who attacked me. All of this happened by chance.

Kiibo [pointing]: I knew you would never kill anyone!

Kaito [angry expression]: But she did! That’s what matters now!

Angie [sighing, looking down]: That’s true… that’s what mattered. Intentionally or not, I murdered
Korekiyo.

Kirumi [holds hat over chest]: …

**She seems to have accepted her death… weird, for Angie… to back down. But I suppose she doesn’t have a way out.**

Kiiibo [crying]: But this isn’t right! You didn’t want him to die! You don’t need to be executed!

Angie [clasps hands, looking down]: I thought the same. That’s why I hid the body.

Kaede [arms crossed]: If no one found Korekiyo, you wouldn’t have to attend the trial.

Angie [sighing, looking down]: The same idea Kiibo had.

**She must have influenced him. That’s how he thought about it.**

Rantaro [moves to the side]: We’ll have time to talk after we vote. You can say your goodbyes to Angie.

Angie [clasps hands]: Not necessarily.

Kaede [arms crossed]: You’re the blackened. There’s no way to escape the execution.

Angie [praying]: Yes… I’ll be dead either way. I’ll finally meet Atua.

Kaede [arms crossed, irritated expression]: Then what are you blabbing about?

Angie [cheerful expression]: After killing Korekiyo, I made a deal with Monophanie!

Angie [fingers in hair]: I wouldn’t have confessed right away if she promised me that the group execution would involve no pain at all!

**I don’t like what I’m hearing. Why is she telling us we’re the ones who will die?**

Angie [tilts to the left]: If you don’t vote for me, you’ll all die instead of living here with motive after motive!

Angie [tilts to the right]: Doesn’t that sound fantastic?

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking in front of self]: Dying for you and let you live? Are you crazy?

Angie [praying]: I’ll die too. That was in the deal. My execution will be painful, but it will be worth it to save you all!

Kaito [bumps fists into each other]: Save? You’ll kill us!

Angie [praying]: You will not suffer anymore, for you’ll be welcomed in Atua’s Realm. A world without any pain.

Rantaro [arms crossed, looking to the side]: I would’ve never thought I’d hear this again…

Kaito [angry expression, places fists on the podium]: Let me understand, you want us all to die because you **feel**a God is waiting for us?

Angie [fingers in hair]: I hear him right now. And he’s telling me he’ll forget your mistakes if you
follow me.

Angie [flailing arms]: I’m sure he accepted Korekiyo as well!

Kirumi [adjusts hat]: Even though he believed in an afterlife, I do not. And I will not relinquish my life for something I refuse to believe.

Kiibo [looking away]: You don’t have to believe in Atua, or whoever it is.

Kiibo [looks around]: Do you know what will end up happening here? We’ll continue killing each other, until two of us are left.

Gonta [sad expression]: Yes… we always say no more killings, but the killings are always more…

Kiibo [looking away]: Exactly. I… I don’t want to suffer through cruel motives just to die… either by my friends or a gruesome execution.

Kaede [arms crossed]: So you’d rather give up everything!?

Kiibo [determined expression]: Yes! After death there’s either nothing or some kind of power… either way, I’m sure I’ll be better there than here.

Rantaro [furrowed brows, glaring]: No. You need to accept life… no matter how hard it is. You can’t give up.

Kiibo [crying]: Who are you to tell me what I’m supposed to do!? I can decide for myself!

Rantaro [glaring, hands on hip]: This isn’t about yourself, it’s condemning everyone in this room to death!

Kiibo [crying]: It’s for your own sake!

Rantaro [smirking]: Now who’s the one telling the other what to do.

Angie [fingers in hair]: I think Kiibo’s right though! Even if I didn’t believe in Atua, I’d say the better choice is to drift to an endless, peaceful sleep!

Gonta [thoughtful expression, finger on cheek]: But if Atua exist, will he let me play tennis?

Angie [cheerful expression]: Of course! He’ll let you do anything!

Kirumi [moves to the side]: Please, tell me you are not considering following Angie to certain death.

Angie [fingers in hair]: Ah, look at that. If the ABCs all vote for Kaede, we’ll have the majority vote!

**Obviously she chose me. How petty…**

Tenko [worried look]: I… I… don’t know…

Kiibo [determined expression]: Please, Tenko… don’t you want to be done with this place? It only brought death and distrust…

Tenko [worried expression]: But… but…
Kaito [rubbing head]: Tsk, you’ll never convince her. She’s reasonable, even though she has her flaws.

Tenko [pensive look]: I’ll do it if Himiko does too.

**…no. This isn’t possible.**

**We can’t… how… how are people deciding to kill themselves when the killer is right in front of them?!**

Himiko [looking down]: …

Kaede [arms crossed]: Tenko, don’t you realize what you’re saying? You really want to die?

Tenko [worried expression]: No, but… Kiibo’s right… there’s no way we’ll escape from here.

Kaede [pointing]: You can’t say that!

Tenko [worried expression]: We might snap in a moment or the other… and… and I believe in Atua… I’m willing to take a risk.

Kirumi [left hand on hip, right hand on hat]: The risk is deciding to live despite all the hardships that life throws at you… to stay strong…

**Kirumi… she’s speaking from a personal experience… I know that.**

Tenko [worried expression]: I… I…

Himiko [neutral expression]: I won’t vote for Kaede.

Angie [tilts head, confused]: Huh?

Himiko [uncertain expression]: I… I want to believe in Atua… I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that…

Himiko [uncertain expression, clenches hands]: But I refuse to believe he’d want us to die!

Angie [fingers in hair]: No, I’m listening to him right now. He’s clearly saying he wants everyone to be with him!

Himiko [bites lip, looking down]: Then I’m sorry for him, but I have to disagree! If I decide I want to live, that’s not his business!

Himiko [determined expression]: And I’m not the only one! Kaede, Kirumi, Kaito, Rantaro… they want to make this a better place… why not give them the chance?

Kiibo [pointing]: We’ve done so, and they’ve either lied or were unsuccessful!

Himiko [determined expression]: And is it that enough to kill them? No, no… of course!

Angie [prays]: We’re not killing them, they will awake by Atua’s side.

Himiko [determined expression, clenches hands]: They’ll do when they’re ready. If they’re willing to help us survive, I bet Atua will be happy too!

Angie [clasps hands]: Well, surely, but the earlier you met Him, the-
Himiko [determined expression, pointing]: You should be rooting for them, didn’t you want this place to become our new home?

Angie [neutral expression]: I fear that without me, everything will-

Himiko [determined expression, pointing]: It doesn’t matter if you’re here or not, I swear you I’ll do everything to save what’s left!

Angie [sighing, looking down]: But Atua-

Himiko [determined expression, pointing]: No more Atua. He’ll have the chance to meet us when we die. But we have the power to do more in this life.

Angie [looking down]: …

Kaede [smiling]: Thanks, Himiko. I… I’m glad you’ve understood.

Kiibo [hands on temples, shaking head]: I… I… is this really happening?

Kaede [arms crossed]: It’s six to three. The verdict is final… it’s time to vote.

I looked at the throne were Monophanie was supposed to be. Apparently she had left, but Monokid spouted some nonsense and decided to start the voting process regardless.

The sixty seconds counted down, the results were displayed immediately after. Eight votes for Angie, one for me. I guess she was too proud to vote for herself.

Monokid replayed his father and his sister’s action, bringing down another screen to announce us whether or not we were right, but we all knew it wasn’t necessary.

Angie’s the blackened. We were right… for the fourth time.

CLASS TRIAL END.

“Yeah, you bastards!” Monokid exclaimed. “The last part of the trial dragged a bit too long, but you were super-duper right! Angie’s the blackened!”

“She said as much herself.” Kaito commented.

In fact, that was not the hard part of this case. Convincing everyone not to throw away their life was.

As we stepped away from our stands, Kiibo stood still and cried. His sighs and weeps were louder than I imagined.

“Someone has to console him…” Tenko said, moved by her caretaker instinct.

I kept myself from speaking. It was too clear what my opinion was on the matter. I might understand why he’s so broken now, but is all because of his actions.

“Do you have anything else to say?” Rantaro asked Angie. He never enjoyed talking to her, but now it looked like he was forcing himself to even look at the leader.
It was the first time I saw Angie not forcing herself to smile.

“I’ve said all. I confessed and tried to do the best for you. But you refused.”

“Okay, stop.” He said, then turned away. “I’ll wait by the elevator. Don’t bother me about the execution. I hate watching them, it’s gratuitous violence no matter who’s subjected to it.”

“I can’t believe you still voted for me.” I said.

“I… I didn’t.”

It must have been Kiibo then. Denial brings you far, I see.

“Gonta’s sorry I voted for you, but… Himiko’s speech made sense!”

“I guess it did, then.” She muttered.

“I don’t want you to die…” The entomologist said. “But I don’t want anyone to die. I’ve been there, and I… I don’t want to fall down again. There’s something in this life… we have a purpose.”

“Just…” Angie sighed. “Remember that I wasn’t the one who attacked Korekiyo… he charged at me with a knife. What was I supposed to do?”

Kaito immediately lashed out at her. “We’re not angry with you for that, but everything else that happened later. Covering up the body, lying about your alibi, going through with this trial at all!”

“We have different beliefs, and I’m so sorry you don’t agree with me. You’ll be too when the moment comes.”

Kiibo continued to cry on the other side of the room. Tenko was doing her best to make him feel better, but he kept distance from her.

“What about Korekiyo, Kirumi? You said… you may know why he attacked Angie.” I asked her.

“It is just a theory. But for the short time I knew him… I think I have understood how much he was troubled. And how much secrets and regrets he was hiding. As you proved… he attacked me as well…” She sighed. “To be honest, though… I suppose it was not him, really.”

“Do you mean the man was dissociating or something?”

“I promised Kiyo I would not reveal his secret before. Despite this, I believe it is better if I do. He thought his life would continue after death… somehow… and that is why I refused to tell you. However, seeing what happened… I am sure that if he is somewhere, he would prefer to be understood, rather than demonized.”

I can see what Kirumi’s going for, but can I forgive someone who attempted murder not once, but twice? For as much as I don’t like Angie I must be objective. If he didn’t attack her, we wouldn’t be here.

“I am certain Korekiyo had dissociative identity disorder. He was not born with it, of course. The event that sparked the onset was the death of his sister, Aishi… Kiyo never fully accepted her passing, and as a way to cope with it, he fabricated a second personality, resembling her.”

“That… explains the lipstick.” Himiko said. I guess it does.

“I met this personality. Despite being friendly at first, Aishi grew worried of my presence. I
noticed she did not like me… or any of the other girls, for that matter.”

“Gonta not sure about topic… we still talking about Korekiyo… why are you referring to this Aishi like it was a real person?”

“Because, to Kiyo, she was. When she surfaced, Kiyo would completely dissociate and create another self. He was not pretending; he fully believed to be Aishi. His sister… apparently was completely obsessed with Korekiyo when she was alive… and wanted him to be far from other people… but I noticed, girls, especially…”

She paused for some seconds, looking at Angie. She was not smiling, but didn’t seem sad either. Maybe she was confused about how to feel.

“Kiyo must have remembered this behavior and replicated it in Aishi. When she noticed I was spending too much time with her brother, she lost control and decided to attack me. The darts were not meant for Gonta, but for me.”

“So… Korekiyo did want you dead.” I said.

“No. It was Aishi. Kiyo would have never done so. That explains why he ran after us after he shot the darts, and why he waited for me at the Shrine. He wanted to find the strength to overcome his sister, yet he never did.”

Kirumi stared into the distance.

“After our encounter, he ran away to avoid hurting me more… only to try to kill you, Angie… I… I am… sorry.”

“Sorry?” The leader asked. “To be fair… why should you be?”

“If I stopped Korekiyo… this would not have happened.”

Angie smiled weakly. “No, it’s not you who should be blamed. You tried your best and also got punished for it. I… I know how it feels like.”

“Are we really going to be sad for Angie and not Korekiyo?” Kaito protested.

I know I should be furious at her, but after discovering what happened… Angie was forced to defend herself. She didn’t have any ill intentions… she didn’t want to kill Korekiyo.

I hate her manipulation, her constant brainwashing and even her last attempt to kill every one of us, but does she deserve to die? Maybe some other punishment, but this…

“I’m not sad.” Angie said, smiling like she used to. “I’m a bit disappointed I’m already leaving this place, but I’ll finally get to see Atua! I wonder his house is like I’ve always imagined it!”

“Aren’t you afraid to die?” Gonta asked.

“I’m more afraid of the suffering I’ll have to bear in a while. Dying isn’t bad if you have something to look forward to, or if you feel you’ve done something good before!”

“Oh… maybe I understand now.”

“I only wanted all of you to be with me, with Atua, without pain! What makes me happy is that we’ll meet each other again either way… because I’ll put in a word for all of you!”
“A what?” Kaito rolled his eyes.

“A word! As Atua’s vessel, I’ll personally tell him you’ve all been good people! Kaede, Kaito and Rantaro as well!”

“Tsk. Even if Atua was waiting for you, I bet you won’t.”

She winked at him. “Nyahahah! We’ll see! I’ve done some bad things at your expense, so it’s only fair to pay you back, somehow.”

“Explain.” He said.

“You see… I was the one to tell Kiibo to set you up.”

“What the fuck… I knew it!”

“You could’ve told us sooner.” I intervened.

“Sooner?! She’s the reason I was stuck in a stinking bathroom for almost a day!”

“I know. I sincerely thought you were dangerous. And I told Kiibo how to make you look suspicious… but I had no idea that Korekiyo’s attack would happen at the same time.” She explained. “When I discovered what happened, I knew you were free, thought you were the attacker… and I felt guilty. Because I thought that just to prove a point I put someone else life’s in danger.”

I… I’ll have to think about this. It was pretty obvious that Kiibo was lying about what he saw, but Angie has… a point. She couldn’t know who attacked Gonta and Kirumi.

Or maybe she’s just using her words to make me feel sorrier for her.

“And now I… I think it’s time to say goodbye… I don’t want to make this longer than I should.”

“So… is this… goodbye?” Himiko cried.

“Yes! A bye, not a farewell!”

Gonta echoed the entomologist’s word. “Then… goodbye, Angie!”

He hugged her, which then led to Himiko joining in as well.

“Don’t they realize she’s been playing them for fools this entire time?” Kaito whispered to me.

“We’re still talking about someone’s life… but maybe we can bring them back.”

Angie waved at Gonta and Himiko for the last time, then at us. She even tried to approach Rantaro, still waiting near the elevator, but he shook his head.

“Leave him be.” I said. “He has made his choice.”

Shrugging, Angie then left and went towards Kiibo and Tenko. He hugged them both as well, Kiibo’s sobbing still echoing through the trial grounds.

“Are you done?” Monokid exclaimed. “I’m getting boooored!”

“Almost.”
Angie then leaned towards Kiibo and whispered something in his ear. If she lowered her voice enough, us on the other side couldn’t hear it anyway.

So, she must have done this because she doesn’t want Tenko to know either.

“Now I’m done.”

“Well then, we’re ready for-

“No! It’s my job to do this!” Monophanie exclaimed, falling off from the sky and landing without any damage whatsoever.

“You’re back!” Monotaro said. “Where did you go?”

“This is not your business!”

“What? Why?”

“We need to be quick otherwise we’ll never gain our independence!”

“Independence? What’s the meaning of this?”

Without any consideration for her brother, Monophanie took a new, pink mallet and used it to hit a matching glittery button that replaced the usual one.

On the screen a sprite of Angie showed up, being dragged by the same half-assed sprite of Monophanie that we saw last time. She didn’t have the time to upgrade that, it seems.

Two or three seconds passed in silence, before a herd of Monokumas invaded the trial grounds. My classmates were worried at first, but their expression turned into surprise once we realized that none of those was aiming for us. Rather, they were all targeting Angie. The crowd lifted Angie up and disappeared into the dark that surrounded the trial grounds.

As the herd was passing, one of the Monokumas climbed the throne and took Monophanie by surprise, dragging her with him. Alerted, Monotaro and Monokid came running after the Monokuma.

Then, the screen came down in front of our eyes.

**Sacrificial lamb**

The Monokumas have now organized into three rows, marching on a beach. In the middle row there’s Angie, her hands tied with a rope as to mimic her praying. As they’re walking, the Monokuma directly behind the leader takes out a whip and starts hitting Angie’s back with it. Despite her pained expression, she continues on, turning her gaze towards the sky.
In front of the procession that’s now reaching a jungle, Monophanie is tied on a pole carried by the Monokuma that previously ambushed her. The pink bear tries to talk, but she’s not able to because her mouth is blocked with scotch tape.

Her two brothers watch the scene unfold behind trees, but are too scared to do anything and remain hidden.

The Monokumas then reach an ancient, mossy stone temple. The left and right columns remain outside, while the central one steps inside. Monophanie is untied from the pole, but she remains unable to move since the rope still traps her.

The Monokuma in front takes some steps forwards while dragging Monophanie and reaches an altar. He lifts the bear in the air and slams her onto it, then takes an axe. Monophanie shakes in fear realizing she’s about to be sacrificed. She struggles, but the Monokuma strikes her in the chest, killing her and then tossing her body away as the crowd cheers.

He then signals to the Monokuma behind Angie to bring her to him. The bear stops using his whip and pushes Angie to the altar. The leader reluctantly does so and she is forced to lie down. She smiles weakly and closes her eyes. The Monokuma lifts his weapon and digs the axe into Angie’s chest, ending her life while all the other bears applaud and rejoice. Not satisfied with the murder, he opens the wound and searches for something, not perturbed by the disgusting sounds and the copious amount of blood flowing down the altar.

He then smiles, having found what he was looking for. The Monokuma takes Angie’s heart, slams onto the ground and steps on it. Soon, all the other bears inside join, stomping onto the leader’s heart and turning it to pulp.

That was horrible.

“Wha…. Why…” Kiibo sobbed.

“ Angie… I’m sorry…” Gonta joined him.

A familiar voice echoed in my ears. “Upupupupupupupu…!”

Wait…

“Monokuma back again in business!” The black and white bear exclaimed, standing on the throne. “Finally I’m done with my luxurious holiday and I can get back my daily dose of despair!”

“D-dad!!” Monotaro exclaimed. He didn’t look happy.

“The one and only!... Well, I suppose there’s thousands of spares around here, but I’m the original! Took me long enough, but this fur doesn’t take care of itself, you know?”

“W-where’s Monophanie?”

Monokid intervened. “She’s dead! Haven’t you seen her body being thrown at sea?”

“Yup! I’m deeply sorry, but she had to go!” Monokuma said. He didn’t care at all about the death of yet-another supposed child. “In fact, I took care of her myself! That Monokuma that took her
“Away and axed her, that’s me!”

Monokid stood in awe. “Wow, dad! You’re such a role model for me!”

“At least one of my children acts like I’ve told him to! Respectful but cruel, friendly but hungry for blood!”

“What do you mean one?” Monotaro trembled.

“I’ve looked at what you’ve done while I wasn’t here, Monotaro, and I’m afraid to say… you’ve really messed up.”

“Me?! Monophanie organized all of this! I tried to dissuade her!”

“I’m not talking about that! Today, you were seen in a place you weren’t supposed to be seen!”

“The… the Undead Round?”

The… what? What was that?

“Shut up!” Monokuma boomed. “You’re going to fuck up this even more if you continue saying things you aren’t supposed to! They’re able to learn!”

Their speech… there’s something wrong with it.

“It just happened! Can’t you erase their memory again?”

“No! Somehow, I can’t anymore!”

“S-sorry! I didn’t know! Please, be kind with me!”

“We won’t take any risks. This game needs to end. And the team doesn’t want to have any problem in the way!” Monokuma said. “Goodbye, my dear son! I’ll always cherish you in my memories!”

“Your memories? What do you mean…”

Monokuma took a remote, then clicked a button.

Monotaro exploded.

In a second, there was nothing left of him.

“One less. One more grave to dig.”

Monokid laughed. “Hah! I won’t help you!”

“Who am I kidding, I will definitely not waste my time with graves for useless characters! You, bastards, have you enjoyed the execution?”

“And you’re a sick bastard.” Kiibo said.

“Oh! Slow down with those words! I didn’t know you had it in you! Then again, you basically were an accomplice in a murder! Upupupupupu…”

“Shut up!”

“I’m sure you’ll have plenty of chances to be a real killer in the future!”
“Just ignore him.” Himiko said. “He wants you to be angry.”

“But what should I do!?” Kiibo cried. “It’s his fault we’re stuck here continuing to murder and murder! I’m sick of people dying in terrible ways! I WANT TO GET OUT!”

“Don’t you remember what Angie wished? She wanted us to live here.”

“But… without her… can we?”

“Of course!” Kaito encouraged the astronaut. “Do you want to live depending on someone else?!”

Kiibo glared in response. “I want to help others… look at you, how many friends do you have here?”

Kaito didn’t respond. Hard to tell why… maybe he had no answer, maybe he refused to continue the discussion.

“We have no business here… we should leave.” Kirumi said.

“Definitely.” Tenko agreed.

“I don’t want to go there with Kaede or Rantaro.” Kiibo spat.

I rolled my eyes. Is he pinning the blame on this whole ordeal on me? “You can very well ignore me. And if you can’t stand my mere presence pretend I’m the one who’s dead, maybe.”

“Don’t try to go around acting like you’re a saint!” He shouted. “You say you want to protect us, but you never prevented a murder!”

“Angie didn’t either.” I corrected him.

“We’re talking about you! You’re the one that acts like she’s always right!”

“I don’t.”

“Really?! Nobody in this room could believe you!”

“You lied to us by not revealing your suspicions of Angie!”

Tenko tried to intervene. “Calm down guys, we’ll gain nothing by yelling at ea-

“And you lied about this morning! You lied about the coat you hid in Rantaro’s room! You lied about the Kubs Pads!”

The… Kubs Pads? How…

“Kaede…” Kirumi turned to me. “You seem preoccupied.”

“Of course she is! All of the Kubs Pads were in her room!”

They not only entered Rantaro’s room… but mine as well… when… when did they get my key?

“Hidden in her wardrobe, since God knows when!”

Kiibo’s shouts alerted Rantaro as well, who came closer after waiting by the elevator.

“Is that true, Kaede?” He asked.
He... he is right.

I never destroyed those Pads, except mine and Korekiyo’s…

And I kept that to me.

But I never watched them, except…

“She doesn’t need to answer. Just ask her the key, you’ll see with your eyes.”

“Before blaming anything on her, wait her response.” Rantaro sided with me.

“Why does she have right to it?! She must have watched every one of them! And now she knows our weaknesses! Who knows why she had access to them!”

“I only watched one more than the one who was originally given to me. And I haven’t even checked my weakness.”

Gonta, confused, scratched his head. “But you could… since you know.”

“One? Whose?” Kaito asked.

“That’s not even the point! She lied by not telling us she had them and then complained about us lying? Isn’t that the most hypocritical thing ever?!”

“It sounds like it.” Tenko said.

“Do you think I’d kill you? Have you forgotten what happened in the last seventeen days?”

“We may talk about Kaede’s actions after leaving this trial grounds.” Kirumi said.

“And blowing off some steam.” Kaito added.

“Why are you forgiving her?!!” Kiibo continued. “This isn’t right!”

“We are not forgiving her.” Kirumi explained. “It is simply useless to discuss about this now that we are all exhausted.”

Kiibo stood in silence, refusing to respond. He stormed off towards the elevator and he left, alone.

“We should go to your room regardless.” Tenko said. “Those Pads need to be destroyed.”

“I... agree. I should’ve done that a long time ago.” I nodded.

“Don’t think we’ll pretend this didn’t happen.” The caregiver continued. “Kiibo might have had an exaggerated reaction, but he was right.”

Himiko feebly intervened. “Wait... maybe we should hold before doing that. Remember... there’s also one person who Kaede knows the weakness of.”

“Who is it?”

“Kirumi.”

The adventurer stared at me, then spoke again. “As said before, all discussions about Kaede’s action will be postponed to this evening.”
“I need to lie on my bed for a bit.” Himiko said. “Please, let’s just go…”

We rode the elevator and got back to the Shrine. We all headed for my room, though I quickly explained that nobody could see the Pads. Kiibo protested, but I told them I’d explain later. The astronaut decided to storm off and told me to go the cafeteria as soon as possible.

We split up after heading out of the dorms. After Angie’s execution and Kiibo’s words, everyone needed some time to think. I walked to the cage, where I showed Rantaro what I found during the morning.

“I suppose you’ll have a real trial soon. We’ll be judging your actions.”

Rantaro, once again, sneaked up on me.

“If you wanted to come with me you could’ve just told me. I wouldn’t have chased you off.”

“Can’t ever be sure. Especially with someone like you…” He sighed.

“What do you mean?”

“Not destroying the Kub Pads after gathering them all in one place. Seriously?”

“I had my reasons.”

“You keep your reasons to yourself too much.”

“I messed up. I realize it. But… I didn’t know what to do in my position. I had the opportunity to see everyone’s weaknesses… I thought that by knowing them, I could protect everyone… but I never swiped on those Pads. I was torn between doing so and not knowing.”

“Do you think you did the right thing then?”

“No.” I sighed. “No, at all. Maybe Korekiyo’s secret had something to do with his sister… maybe I could’ve saved him… and Angie as well.”

Rantaro didn’t say anything, looking at the fake horizon in front of us.

“How do you feel about Angie… dying?” I asked.

“I can’t say I’m happy. I wished there was another way to solve this.”

“She had no choice… everything happened by chance… is it right to consider her the blackened?”

The artist shook his head. “But those are the rules. She ended a life… Monokuma doesn’t care about your intentions, only the act.”

“I suppose so.”

“Now that Angie’s gone, we have a chance to bring everyone together again. Not with false promises, but actions.”

“Good luck. I’ve lost any hope.”

“Why watch only Kirumi’s video?”
“It’s hard to explain. But… I’m relieved I watched it.”

“Do you remember who was the original owner?”

“Himiko.” I said. I remember it from the second trial.

“I wonder if she knows. On an unrelated note, will you explain them how the true cage is the sky and not the metal bars later?”

“Sure. Maybe I should stop lying… maybe being honest is actually how we’ll survive…”

***

A few days later…

Himiko looked down from the windows of the helicopter. When she got out of the Killing Game, she discovered to have some kind of fear of heights.

“Is it okay?” A male voice said. He was the pilot.

“Yes.” She nodded. “I’m over it now. I’ve seen so much shit I can’t bring myself to be afraid of looking down…”

“You’ve not wrong…” Another voice said. “It’s so weird to believe we were so weak before… before the days in the Academy.”

“From what we discovered, you weren’t that bad, Shuichi.” Himiko said.

“Please.” Shuichi sighed. “It’s better… if we didn’t talk about it.”

“You always go on about your past.” The other boy said. “It’s like you wanted to forget it, but keep coming to it anyways…”

“Koji.” Himiko glared at him. “Just stick to flying the freaking helicopter.”

“Alright…”

“Have you heard from the others?” Shuichi asked.

“No. They still don’t know I’m with you.”

“I’ve talked with Nariko a few days ago. She was worried for you.”

“I can defend myself. And she shouldn’t pretend to care for me.” Himiko rolled her eyes.

“She does. We’re in this together.”

“Alright… if you say so…”

Shuichi didn’t look satisfied with the answer. Himiko didn’t care about that either way.
“Are we catching up with the feed?” She asked.

“More or less, three days later.”

“So we don’t know what happened in the last 72 hours.”

“The last information we have is… right after Korekiyo’s trial.”

“I hope everything’s going alright.”

“I don’t like where Kiibo’s headed.” Koji said from the front. “We don’t know what the hell he could do now that Angie’s gone.”

“Great!” Himiko said ironically. “Can you get to Towa quicker then?”

“No. This is the best I can do. And remember that if we go too fast, we might be tracked.”

“Let’s hope Nariko was right and they’re all focusing on keeping the game running.”

“Well, surely I’m not dying with you here! I’d hate to after all this effort.”

“And you’d love to prove your sister wrong.” Shuichi snickered.

“That too.”

“We’ll be here in five or six hours. If Maki’s plan fails, we have to be ready and rescue all of the survivors.”

“She really had to risk everything…” Himiko sighed.

“That’s why we went against her. Ours is a backup plan. But one that’s needed if she’s wrong.”

“She is.” Himiko said. “I’ve seen the participants. They’ll not give up. They won’t die… and that’s why we’re needed.”

“Be ready to fight back, guys.” Koji said. “Nariko was sure they aren’t tracking us, but Towa City is enemy territory. Time to prove what you’ve learned.”

NEXT: Chapter 5- Death wishes shall save the living

Chapter End Notes

Chapter 4 is finished! Took long enough.

Only 5 and 6 left, almost done with this story... finally some new stuff regarding the outside world will be revealed, maybe even how the last scene of this chapter can happen... unless you've already figured it out.

So... probably coming back between the start of January and February. Chapter 5 will have an interesting "prize" as well as a new motive, and the survivors will stumble upon various secrets of the academy. Also, it will have the last trial. I'd
have really loved a trial for Ch.6, but considering what is going to happen and how it is structured... there would be no way to collect truth bullets for the end. But no worries, twists will come regardless.
Sorry for the long long wait! I hope you haven't forgotten about this story! >.< I'm not finished with this chapter but I'm writing the investigation right now. For the moment I'll start posting the daily life and see how it goes from there.

Refresher:
The group realizes that Angie killed Korekiyo and told Kiibo to frame Kaito, essentially leading to him being wrongfully accused of Kirumi and Gonta's attack. Kiibo tried to cover for the Supreme Leader and sacrifice everyone to save her, but he was discovered.
After she's executed, Kiibo reveals that Kaede hid all of the Kubs Pads with their weaknesses and secrets distributed days before inside her room. Kaede, in fact, was supposed to destroy them, but she kept them intact, except hers and Korekiyo's, which was destroyed by himself when he discovered the detective's plan. The group decides to hold a "trial" for Kaede to decide what should be her punishment.

A few days later, Shuichi, Himiko and Koji are on an elicopter trying to reach Towa City.

And that's where we left off.
(I had to make a correction after posting. In the latest chapter, I wrote that Gonta took the Pads. I changed it back to Kaede keeping them to herself because of a very important reason. You'll see why in this chapter.)

“So, Kaede… let’s start the trial.” Tenko said.

“Can you not call it that?” Kaito asked. “It’s different…”

“It does not matter how we name it. What is important are Kaede’s motivations behind her hiding the secret videos.”

Less than one hour after the trial, the eight of us met in the cafeteria. The snow had completely melted outside and only puddles remained. Like previous times, the body disappeared. I still shiver knowing it was kept hidden for almost a day.

“How did you come into possession of the Pads?” Kirumi asked.

Tenko nodded. “The Monokubs took them during the investigation!”

“First of all, I must tell you that I didn’t take those Pads because I wanted to see them.”

Kiibo glared at me. It’s easy to see why he wouldn’t trust my words.

“Monokuma threatened me. He sent me a letter… he wrote that the secrets would be revealed if
too many people other than me discovered he gave them out again. Soon, I found out that Maki and Korekiyo found them.”

“What?” Gonta exclaimed. “So he gave them back? I didn’t see them!”

“He hid them under the bed. Without much choice, I decided to take them and store inside my room.”

“I can confirm.” Rantaro said.

I was wondering why Monokuma didn’t reveal the secrets. After all, Kiibo and Angie found those Pads, and that means five people saw the Pads again. He was clear: four people know about the Pads, the videos are not secret anymore. Did he forget about the letter? I surely didn’t want him to remember.

“I knew it! You were plotting with her!”

I raised my voice. “No, Kiibo. It’s my time to talk.”

“I wanted to interrupt you…”

“Then you’re rude. Let me finish before refuting.”

He crossed his arms and refused to say anything else. Better.

“I collected the Pads the day before we went inside the Virtual World… with Maki and 0U-M5’s help.”

“And none of us can see them now because that would allow Monokuma to leak our secrets…” Kaito said.

“Rantaro only discovered about the Pads later, but never saw it in his room. So I guess he’s excluded. He found a loophole. But he thought I destroyed the Pads. So you can’t place the blame on him.”

“Nyeh… he still didn’t tell us.”

“Why would that be useful? You’d be happier not knowing about their reappearance… since I believed Kaede destroyed them.”

“I think… we should’ve been informed.” Tenko commented. Kaito, however, agreed with Rantaro. “I can’t speak for me since my secret was already revealed… but how can you know? Maybe you’d have freaked out!”

“If he told us, we could’ve checked if they were destroyed!” Kiibo protested. “Then, when Kaede wouldn’t let us in her room because they were still there, she would be forced to destroy them to avoid them being revealed!”

“Gonta can’t say that was a stupid idea…”

“You cannot talk with hypotheticals. Even if we discovered about them, there is no guarantee Kaede would have destroyed them. Not to mention that only her and an handful of other people could do that without triggering the reveal.”

“Do you think she’d refuse?”
“Maybe. We were in no position to force her. Korekiyo and Maki were the only other people able to check if the Pads were destroyed, and, were they to agree with us, still may not be able to sway Kaede.

"Let’s just ask her then!”

I sighed. “What good will this answer be? I don’t even know what I’d have done! And I didn’t see those secrets, so your accuses have no meaning.”

“Allegedly.” He glared at me.

Seemingly, Tenko was against me as well. “I think that Kaede’s intentions were noble… but keeping those Pads around doesn’t have any advantage. And she told us she destroyed the Pad with her secret…”

“Obviously…” Kiibo butted in again. “So that no one could see her weak point!”

Damn… now that he points that out, it looks like my decision was made to protect myself in case I was discovered, but…

“It wasn’t because of that. I didn’t check my secret either. I didn’t want it to consume me, to make me paranoid…”

Or maybe I didn’t want to face the truth… hard to say, when I smashed it.

“But, about not destroying them… it’s because I wanted to watch them, sooner or later.”

“What do you mean?” Kirumi asked.

“Our weaknesses… if I knew about them, maybe I could protect all of you… if anything dangerous showed up… maybe I could’ve done something…”

“It seems like she did it with kindness in mind…” Himiko said.

“But then I remembered what I told myself… that I wouldn’t try to protect everyone again… after being betrayed twice… that’s why I didn’t watch those secrets. I could never use them to take advantage of someone, but if I discovered about your weaknesses… I couldn’t help but try to help you… and feel more discouraged when I’d fail.”

“Nyeh… you’re telling us you didn’t see those videos because you didn’t want to protect us?”

“…Yes. Make that what you want.”

“That’s so backwards!” Kiibo protested. He wasn’t completely wrong, but… “It doesn’t make any sense!”

“Haven’t you ever been conflicted?” Himiko asked, aiming at the astronaut.

“What does this have to do with being conflicted?”

“It’s sad, but when you don’t know what choice to make… you might not make a choice at all. That’s what Kaede did… paralyzed by indecision… she didn’t do anything.”

“I felt like those secrets were safe in my room. If anything happened, I could resort to those.”

“…And you continue to tell us we should be honest…”
“No need for being antagonistic.” Kirumi said. “What matters now is that we know about Kaede’s intentions.”

Tenko was pacing around the room, seemingly unable to stay still. “But can you say they were good? I don’t know…”

“They did not hurt us in any way. I believe she did nothing wrong, but… this does not mean she should be held accountable.”

“So… you want to give her a punishment?”

“Man, first trial, then punishment… don’t use these words…”

“We shall continue this discussion and decide accordingly.”

Gonta raised his hand to speak. The adventurer allowed him, to which he thanked her. “Just one question… how many people had to see the Pads to allow the secrets to be revealed?”

“Four, but… nothing happened.”

“Monokuma bluffed?” Rantaro suggested.

“Wouldn’t put it past him…”

“So this was all for nothing?” Kiibo said, bitter.

“Уриририририририририри…”

Monokuma entered the door. He had a sweatshirt and short, alongside a bandana. He looked exhausted.

“Hello, bastards… pant…”

Nobody answered.

“Can you at least say hi?! Can’t believe your manners are worse than my childrens’…”

“Nobody wants to speak to you.” Rantaro explained.

“There’s no cure for stupidity, I guess. I’ve just returned from my evening run and I expected a bit of food to cheer me up!”

Kaito sighed. “What are you going on about…”

“The food I ate on vacation was the worst I’ve ever seen!”

“You don’t eat food, you’re a robot!”

“Wrong! I eat the same food as you do! You’re just too dumb to understand that! How rude!”

Rantaro shook his head and addressed the bear. “Enough with your nonsense. Why are you here now?”

“I came just in time to overhear your discussion about the Pads! I haven’t kept up with that Pad mess and I had to check what happened between my vacation and now!”

Himiko puffed her cheeks. “So… you confirm that what Kaede’s saying is true. You did threaten
“Yup, but it wasn’t a threat. It’s a way to spice up things… isn’t it a pity that motives go to waste after a chapter? That’s why I came up with that great game!”

“Why me?” I asked Monokuma.

“You’re the most interesting one. At least that’s what I think.”

That’s not something I ever thought I’d hear from Monokuma, but I’d never consider it a compliment… since it’s coming from a sadistic bear.

“The point is, I’ve reviewed what happened during those last days, and coupled with a bit of info from Monokid… you sure had fun with those Pads! I honestly expected them to be found much much earlier!”

“What do you mean?”

“Poor, sweet children! You really thought that Monokuma would tell a lie? No, no… I always tell the truth! If I wrote four people… it means that four people was the maximum number I could tolerate!”

“Then, it means…”

Kaito was interrupted by the bear. “Exactly! I must be able to read your mind, because it means that those secrets will all be revealed!”

“No, this shouldn’t be allowed!” I protested.

“I wrote in the letter that those Pads would haunt you until the end of the game… and would you look at it… it looks like they finally caught up to you!”

While everyone else was far from relaxed, Gonta didn’t flinch. Maybe he didn’t realize what just happened.

“At least Kaede won’t have her secret revealed.”

“At least?” Kiibo repeated, although in an harsher tone.

“Nah, she isn’t safe either. Her Pad might be destroyed, but that doesn’t mean I can’t put it on the announcers! In fact, I’m just going to!”

The bear snapped his fingers and the room went dark. The only source of light was the announcer screen, where the clock displaying the time was substituted with the introduction of my secret video.

«Kaede’s the Ultimate Detective! Why would I accept a detective as a participant of a killing game, where you have to solve murder mysteries?! Maybe I want that thrill, right? Half truth, because Kaede has got a terrible secret-

“We can get out of here and not listen.” Rantaro suggested.

“Yes, let’s… let’s just go outside.” I blurted out.

“No way!” Monokuma sneered. “I made sure to block all exits to the cafeteria! A promise is a promise, Kaede!”
My heart was racing. If they knew about my secret…

«Kaede has killed two people before this killing game! Wow! Are you surprised?»

I gritted my teeth. As soon as he revealed it, everyone turned towards me.

«Just to be as clear as possible, they weren’t suspects, completely unrelated to her profession as a detective and she didn’t do it by accident!»

Yes, but… how am I going to explain everyone why I did it? Will they even believe me? That’s what I wanted to avoid in the first place…

«I won’t tell you the reason why she did it, since you can ask her yourself! But I suggest not to, because she might get angry and assault you too! So be quick, and murder her before it’s too late!»

The video stopped and the lights turned back on. For a couple of seconds, no one spoke.

“Before you chain Kaede, I’ll remind you that a new secret video will be uploaded to your Monopads at 8 a.m., 4 p.m and 8 p.m. each day!”

“W-what?” Tenko stuttered.

“Mmh, maybe you need some time to adjust. I think we can arrange a plan…” He scratched his head. “For tomorrow, you’ll just have two secrets revealed. But starting from the day after tomorrow, you’ll have three!”

I don’t see how that could help us…

“I’ll broadcast them on the announcer screens… if you avoid them, they’ll be uploaded on your Monopad. You need to watch them in one hour if you don’t want to get punished! But I’ll give you an advantage… you can decide the order!”

“How… would we do that?” Himiko asked.

“I set up a postbox just right to the entrance of the school. Be sure to put inside it a letter containing the name of the person’s secret you want to learn!”

“Or?”

“Mmh… I guess I’ll kill you all.” He waved at us. “Bye!”

I looked at the others. There was no escape from this.

***

Kiibo

First she lies, then she complains about lies, then she lies again… and now we discover she’s a murderer? How fake can she be? And how is it possible that no one realizes it?!

“It looks like you have something else to address.” Kirumi said.
“Something else?!” I exclaimed. How can it be just something else? I can’t put up with this bias towards Kaede. What has she done for us? Why is she here with us? “We know she has killed two people!” Two people, and that’s all that she can say.

“I’m… sure there has to be a reason.” Tenko stuttered. She might be surprised, but I’m not. Kaede’s a manipulator, and she has just admitted she doesn’t care about us.

“First, I must tell you I already knew about her secret.” The adventurer continued. “As I was the original owner of her Pad. I already discussed with her about its content.”

“Did… she threaten you?” Himiko asked. “Is this why you haven’t told us about it?”

“Please, do you think she’d be able to do that?” Kaito asked rhetorically.

Despite all that she did to him, he still defends her. How… I can’t understand it…

“No. I have kept silent because this information would have worsened our relationships. And look, it is exactly what is happening now.”

Like they weren’t damaged enough. I can’t believe she’s trying to justify a murderer… “So… you were fine with a killer in our midst?”

“Everyone here allegedly was and still is a potential killer.” The worst she could come up with.

“If someone has killed before, they’re more likely to do it again.”

Rantaro ran to Kaede’s defense. “Yet she never harmed anyone.”

“I observed her, and I concluded she is not one to end a life if there is not a purpose behind it.”

Like escaping this place? Is she blind?

“Since I spoke with her, I know what brought her to that act. And it was an hard, but reasonable choice.”

“There’s only one way to prove Kirumi right.” Rantaro said to a still silent Kaede. “You need to tell what happened.”

“Isn’t… it personal? Gonta thinks it is hard to speak about…”

“Yes.” Kaede nodded. “But… I have to explain myself. Otherwise I’ll never be understood.”

Empty words…

“I grew up in what I believed to be a healthy family…” She began. She went on to recount how her twin brother was murdered and how she discovered her parents were behind it. Apparently, that’s how she got her talent and why she was so attached to Shuichi… he reminded her of her brother.

“I’m… sorry for what happened.” Himiko said when Kaede finished.

“It happened a long time ago. I… I’m fine now, but thank you.”

I’m sad for her too, but that doesn’t change the fact that she could’ve done so much other than killing her parents. There had to be another way, but she chose the most violent.

“I hated myself for a long time for what I did… but never as much as I hated my parents for killing
my brother. I don’t want to lie… I don’t regret what I did, but that’s the only time I ever thought about harming another person.” She said. “No matter how much I disliked someone, I never despised anyone to the point of inflicting them such pain… because all my hate was directed to my parents.”

Does she want us to pity her? I hope not… her teenage years were definitely worse than mine… but it’s from those experiences that bad people are born. She tried to escape from her parents, yet I feel she might become just like them… am I wrong to believe that? All that she did until now is trying to convince us to follow her instead of Angie, who wanted us to live in peace here…

“Hey, maybe we should go to bed.” Tenko suggested. “After what just happened… I don’t want to see anything worse than this.”

“We can destroy the Pads, now.” Kaede said.

“Keeping them won’t change anything.” Himiko sighed. “In a matter of days every secret will be revealed, so…”

Rantaro intervened. “Then, we have to decide which secret to reveal first.”

“Does mine count?” Kaito asked. “We all saw it when Ouma displayed it in the AV Room… but, technically, it wasn’t revealed.”

“Monokuma didn’t specify anything about it, so I believe it could be a good first choice.”

That doesn’t do anything, though… those secrets are all as good as public knowledge now…

“I suggest to write Kaito Momota. If not applicable, Rantaro Amami.” The artist said.

“Are you okay with your secret being shown?”

“Yeah. Maki had mine, and it’s nothing important. It won’t expose me or anything.”

“Fine. I’ll take a paper and do like you proposed.”

“About Kaede’s punishment?” I asked.

“I believe her secret being revealed is enough.” Kirumi said.

I… suppose it’s right. A fitting, ironic end for her useless quest. Maybe this will help her change…

As we left the cafeteria, I want to talk to anyone. I was still thinking about Angie and her cruel execution… she must’ve suffered… more than anyone else. Korekiyo might have tried to kill her, but at least… at least he died immediately. She was tortured, and her heart was ripped out of her, and then the Monokumas stomped on it, while she bled, and I saw her eyes, she was scared, maybe she thought that nothing came after death, that Atua wouldn’t welcome her, that all of her efforts were useless, that-

“Nyeh.”

“H-himiko…” She surprised me. I didn’t saw her.

“When… when did you came here?”
“I was in front of you. You stopped and worried me…”

I didn’t even notice…

“Because… I am worried…” I sighed. “This is not… what I thought. Those two last days were awful. I wish they never happened…”

“And I wish I told everyone about 0U-M5 killing Maki… the difference is that that’s on me. What happened yesterday and today is not your fault.”

“I don’t care if it is or not. I hate that it happened. Everything from Kaito’s casino adventure to Angie’s execution. If only something went different…”

“If only… maybe… sadly, we’re stuck with the past… for as much as you’d like to go back… you can’t. It sucks.”

I’d do anything to bring Angie back. Just to talk to her for a while, or to play some board games…

“I already miss her. It really sucks. It’s been a couple of hours, but I feel so empty and so angry…”

She didn’t say anything. Do I want her to? If she said something like it’ll get better or that she understands me I’ll only be angrier. Maybe she’s better than me in handling all those emotions…

“She was a good person, right? Angie, I mean…”

“Yes. She wanted our best. Maybe some didn’t agree with her methods, but… it’s hard to keep everyone happy. She did what she could.”

“Maybe she deserved to stay here, talking with you.”

“Why do you think this?”

“She killed Korekiyo by accident and hid his corpse to avoid the trial… while I covered everything up. I’m more to blame than her.”

I say this, but I stand behind what I’ve done. She didn’t deserve to die… if everyone from the ABC agreed, and we would’ve all voted for someone else… she would’ve escaped, and returned to her island…

Maybe I would’ve stopped existing, maybe I’d have met Atua or something else, but… I know she’d remembered me… and she’d have talked about me to whoever knew her, as the one who helped her survive. I would be someone.

Now, I’m just a guy that tried to get everyone killed.

“Maybe you need to sleep. We all do.”

“…How can you not be angry at Kaito and Kaede?”

“…I’m not in the mood of being angry. That’s too taxing.”

“I am. They destroyed everything Angie tried to create, lashed out at you and now they’ll start silencing everyone who supported Angie…”

“You can’t be sure…”
“But I’m scared!”
“What happened isn’t their fault… you should know that.”
“D-don’t tell me what to do!”

Since when is Himiko so keen on giving advice? I talked with her because I wanted someone to speak to, not a person that tried to change my opinion. Now she’s against me as well… how long will it be before I’ll be left alone again?

“You’re right.” I said. “It’s time to go to bed.”

The entomologist looked at me with an expression that almost resembled pity, then I entered the dorms.

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**Kirumi Tojo**

I had already woken up before the morning announcement. I cannot say that I was satisfied after what happened the day before, yet I felt relieved that the situation did not escalate.

Then Monokuma arrived with his news. In days, all of our secrets will be revealed. Truth be told, I am not as worried as it may seem… however, I cannot say this was the best result.

I will tell the others to reveal my secret next. It is only fair… They will understand sooner or later. It is hard to imagine they would see me in a different light, but…

I have always known that my life would be shorter than others… so, the idea of dying here… while not being the most exciting, is and always was a possibility. About the secrets of my classmates… I hope they are not as damaging as mine and Kaede’s. I want to believe I will not be pushed to murder, but… who knows what the others did.

I watched the video exposing Kaito’s secret. Of course, I already knew what it was. He’s colorblind. Maybe it can be used to kill him, but it is extremely unlikely. I wonder why Monokuma would choose that.

Kaede, meanwhile, has not yet revealed why she watched my video. When I talked to her, she did not mention it. I do not believe she was lying, so I am sure she watched it later.

As everyone was gathering in the cafeteria, I remembered Monokid’s words about my video.

“Everyone knows about it. And even two of your classmates. Three, if you consider me too.”

It would fit… if Himiko had watched the video. Had she, though? I pulled her to the side to ask her.

“I… don’t really remember…”

“How can you not?” I asked, slightly irritated.
“I don’t remember having watched it…”

I do not see why she would lie at a time like this, and if she doesn’t remember anything about it, I think she did not watch it after all… then… who could the second person be? Are they alive? Monokid used the present tense…

“Good morning.” Kaito yawned. As soon as he entered, he went to the coffee machine to prepare some.

“Kaito’s secret was revealed. Mine is the next one.” Rantaro said.

“Can you tell us? I think it better than to wait.”

“I suppose…” The artist shrugged. “Monokuma revealed I’m kinda addicted to chocolate and that there was poison in the warehouse… so he suggested to poison it or some shit like that, but Maki already got all the bottles and hid them in her room, which is locked now…”

“So, are you safe?” Kaito asked.

“As long as any of you doesn’t meddle with my drinks, I am.” He said, sipping his hot chocolate.


“Gonta feels like we are becoming friends again… right?”

The tennis player was not exactly right; Rantaro still did not say a word to the ABCs, Kaito barely acknowledged their presence, while Tenko’s eyes were oddly fixated on Kaede… worse of all, though, Kiibo refused to sit at the table and remained alone in the kitchen, looking inside the cupboards.

“Maybe we can cook together today!”

Tenko wasn’t convinced. “I… don’t know.”

“But there is nothing we have to do… and Gonta wants to prepare Angie’s favorite dish!”

“We don’t have the ingredients. We’ll have to search in the warehouse.” Kiibo said from the kitchen. “I agree, but remember about the AAA reunion we have to attend.”

The mention of the word reunion was enough to raise some eyebrows.

“Reunion?” Kaito echoed, but Kiibo ignored him. “Hey!” He stood up. “What do you mean with reunion!”

“Kaito, calm down now!” Tenko exclaimed.

The inventor shook his head in surprise and apologized. “Yes, yes… I need… to be more level-headed…”

“We still doing reunions even without Angie?”

Kiibo, this time, answered. “I will. You are free to join me, or not. Since her lab is closed, I decided we will go to the gym. It will be like it has always been… everyone’s invited, as long as they’re friendly. You can bring anything, the point of this reunion is becoming closer to each other, by telling stories or having fun.”
“I… I’m not sure.” Himiko said. “Maybe we should pause them in honor of Angie-"
“No, I know she would’ve wanted them to continue. Again, you’re free to come if you want.”
“I will!” Gonta announced happily. “I think everyone should to celebrate Angie!”

Kiibo finally headed out of the kitchen.

“I appreciate your enthusiasm, Gonta, but not everyone feels the same as me and you. As you know, some of us didn’t like Angie very much. If they still believe that, they shouldn’t come.”

“A-alright…”

Quite clearly, Kiibo tried to anger Kaede, Rantaro and Kaito. I am unsure if his snide comment was directed to me as well, as I never publicly expressed any feeling towards Angie’s attitude.

“Kiibo, we don’t want to argue here.” Kaede said soothingly.

“Fine.” He responded, but bitter. “If you don’t want to do so at the AAA, you’re welcome.”

Kiibo is worrying me. I have always seen him as meek and silent, but just hours after Angie’s death… he has changed his character completely.

I wonder if he had always been like this, but never confident enough to show himself.

“Kaede, yesterday we didn’t ask you about the cage.” I said. “I have not forgotten.”

“Of course… I can come clean now. But… you all have to listen to me.”

“We’re here.” Tenko said. “I don’t see how we can’t.”

“The point is… it’s a bit hard to believe… maybe you should test it by yourselves.”

“Fine. Let’s all go to the cage, then.”

"Are you going on a school trip without a teacher?!""

Monokuma slammed the door open, wearing an oversized teacher outfit. Monokid was behind him. I tried to cross his gaze, but he did not pay attention to me.

Rantaro sighed. “It’s true that you can’t see the value in something until you lose it.”

“Aw, are you referring about me? Are you happy I’m back?”

“The opposite. I was referring to how peaceful this place was before you came back.”

Monokuma changed attitude. “What a rude student! I can put you in detention, you know! And not send you to the school trip!”

“Hyahahah! And what are you talking about? Peaceful?! Monophanie and Monotaro were two incompetents!”

“Well said, Monokid. Thankfully, I can count on you. If only there were five of you, instead of five different children…”

“Can you clone me? I’d love some more Monokid to bully those bastards!” He paused. “On second thought, it’s much more fun to dunk on my brothers! They’re the true losers!”
“Oh, do you want them back? You know, bringing them back to life?”

“I hate them so much I prefer them alive to bully them all the time!”

“Too bad…” Monokuma said. “Even though they’re robots, they’re too damaged to come back.”

“Damn!” Monokid swore, then threw his guitar to the ground.

“But the other bastards… they’re definitely not!”

“Not robots?” Kaito asked.

“Tsk, that doesn’t matter! Tell me, Rantaro, have you ever heard of trompe-l'œil?”

Gonta looked confused. “What is this? A test?”

“It’s an art technique used to portray the illusion that two-dimensional objects are actually three-dimensional… it was first-

“Well well, stop flexing your art knowledge on us, it was just a question!”

“Why did you ask me in the first place then?”

“The point is, is an illusion! You’ve been subjected to four illusions while you were here! And it’s time to reveal them!”

“How exciting!” Monokid said.

“Shuichi, Miu, Oums, Angie… they’re all dead, right?”

Some seconds of pause followed.

“No! They’re actually, all alive and well!... Well, not well well... but not in a well!”

“How funny, dad!” Monokid echoed.

Nobody laughed.

“Do you want us to believe they are alive? We have seen them die… in the executions,” I said.

“And as I said, those were illusions! Those four people are still alive! Do you think I wouldn’t give them a second chance? Everyone deserves one!”

“Nobody will believe you.” Rantaro said.

“I know. That’s why I have hidden four DeadPads around the school! Find them, and you’ll have a surprise… the proof they’re alive!”

Kiibo immediately asked. “How do we find them?” He seemingly believed the bear… at least, he wanted to.

“In the new areas that you can explore! Monokid, the items!”

“Ta-daa!”

Monokid brought a tray with three items. A key, an ocarina and an oversized drill.
“Time to explore!” He exclaimed.

***

Kaede Akamatsu

A… possibility that Shuichi’s alive?

No… no, it has to be one of Monokuma’s tricks…

“I’m not lying… find those DeadPads and you’ll see!” He laughed, then disappeared along Monokid.

“He is lying. We know what we saw.” Tenko said.

“No. We saw a projection.” Kiibo rebuffed. “We have no way of knowing if what we saw actually happened… what if it was a movie? A realistic one, but… they exist!”

“Gonta… I want to believe they are safe!”

“Even if they are, we don’t know where they could be.” I said.

“That’s why we need to explore!” The astronaut exclaimed.

He always said that discovering new places in the school would be dangerous, but now… with the possibility of bringing Angie’s back, he’s willing to let that pass…

“We have nothing to lose.” Kaito said. “We have to explore. We don’t know in what conditions they are! The sooner we move, the better it is!”

I… I want Shuichi to be alive… but… can he really be? It… it sounds so fake… We saw him die… I saw him with my own eyes… his head, falling down….

“We split in groups, then.” Kaito announced. “Each of us will be tasked with one of those objects.”

“And what about the cage?” Tenko asked.

He rolled his eyes. “We’ll come across it.”

“I might know where the drill is used. Right at entrance.” Rantaro explained. “I think there’s something under it.”

“I’ll go with Kiibo… and Gonta.” Himiko said.

“I’ll try with the ocarina.” The artist proposed instead

“Right!” The tennis player exclaimed. “And we’ll take the key!”

“I’m going with Kaede. Is it okay?”

I nodded. He’s the best choice for now.

“The two of you again…” Kiibo protested.
“Do you want to come with me?”

He shook his head. Probably thinks I’m a serial killer.

Tenko nodded. “Fine. That means that me, Kaito and Kirumi will use the drill to explore whatever’s under the school.”

“Great! I’ve been meaning to ask you a couple of things…”

“We’ll meet at the Shrine, ok?” Rantaro said. “We’ll be near the cage and Kaede will show you all what she saw.”

Some were reluctant, but everyone agreed. After taking a bite, I headed out of the cafeteria with Rantaro. I had an idea about that ocarina.

“Do you know where we should use it?” He asked.

“Since you were so eager to pick it I thought you knew what to do with it.”

“Don’t tease me, I can see through you. It’s already clear to you, right?”

I shrugged. I hope it wasn’t that obvious… maybe he just tried to guess and got it.

We headed for the pool, and I tried my best to perform a coherent melody, despite having no idea on how an ocarina should be played.

“Well, maybe it isn’t here.” I said.

“Maybe Monokuma wants to hear something decent… not that I can do better than you, though!”

I know he’s trying to lighten up the situation, but I’m not in the mood for jokes right now…

“Please… try to be serious.”

His expression changed. “Alright. I thought you wanted something to laugh about.”

“No, thanks. After what happened, I prefer to focus on what’s important. Trying to understand. What’s the deal with those DeadPads and show the secret about the cage. Then, I’ll have to live with glares from the others.”

“If it interests you, nothing will change from me. I’ll look at you like I’ve always done. After all, you already told me what happened.”

“I left out crucial details, though.” I sighed.

“I witnessed a murder.” I said. “That’s when it really started. I made sure to bring the criminals to justice. And… that’s it. I doubt you want to know the details.”

“Ah. Alright… I…”

“Don’t worry. It happened a long time ago. You don’t have to be awkward about it.”

“Even if I had known about the truth, I wouldn’t have forced you to say it. What happened to you is horrible. I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy.”
“It’s… weird. I always told myself I deserved better parents… but maybe… that’s what I needed to succeed in life, to become an Ultimate…”

It’s not like I ever wanted it… I’d bring my brother and a pair of better parents back… even if it meant ditching my talent.

“And… I don’t know… honestly, this is terrible… but… when I think about what I did, despite thinking I’m a monster… I don’t… I can’t feel sad. I don’t feel anything.”

“When we last spoke, I told you we shouldn’t tell each other about our past unless we were comfortable enough…” He looked away for a second. “I… I don’t think I’m as ready as I believed to be, but… I think I have to tell you what happened to me too.”

“I… look, if you don’t want too, that’s okay-

“No. You got your past revealed. I have to do the same. Because… it’s not as different as your situation… I also… despised my parents.”

I didn’t say anything. If Rantaro wanted to speak to me, I couldn’t stop him.

“I always lived far from big cities and something like that, you see… my parents owned a farm in the middle of nowhere… there were some families around us, but we all knew each other. We did normal things… played together, ate together, prayed together. Since I was young, I noticed everyone was always fluctuating around my parents. They always came to visit them, brought friends, and eventually those would come to live in houses near us… at the time, I was too young to understand what was going on, but some of my sisters were old enough to feel… off.”

“Off?”

“I never went to school. I was self-taught. Luckily for my parents, I had a talent in art, and they noticed it quickly. They never reported me as an Ultimate, though… they kept me to themselves, and used me to bring people from areas far from our farm… when I was ten, I was brought by car to the nearest city to sell my paintings by two of my older sisters, Kanna and Emika…”

So, he was used because of his talent? I’ve heard of parents like that, who want their child not to be recognized by the government…

“I remember, they were talking about an escape. I asked them, escape from what, and they told me… from dad and mom. I was scared, and didn’t understand. I thought they were abandoning the farm where I had so much fun. So I cried, but they told me to be quiet… and that’s when I saw mom… she had followed us. One of my sister screamed, the other started crying, saying something about being taped and recorded… I ran towards mom, and hugged her… I felt her hugging me back, then a sharp pain… when I opened my eyes, I was in my bed. Mom was besides me… I asked her what happened, and she lied to me. I found out much later, of course, but she lied to me. She said Emika and Kanna disappeared, that they searched for them, but didn’t find them… so they concluded they were kidnapped.” He continued. “Kanna showed up weeks later, completely changed. She said she had seen the error of her ways… and that Emika was dead. She told everyone not to escape from the farm, because everyone outside could be a dangerous person.”

“Did… she tell you what happened to her and Emika?”

“Yeah, she did tell us a story. But I was smart enough to realize she was lying. One of my other older sisters, Rin, told me what she thought… how everything was wrong in our little community. I was young, so I couldn’t fully grasp how bad the situation was, but… she helped me realize what
was happening. Keeping us isolated, making demands, everyone treating my parents like gods…”

“Were you… in a cult?”

“Exactly.” He said. “I had never heard that word. And I thought everything we did was normal. Not that I had ever known anything different. My sister told me that I shouldn’t have trusted Emika, that she had been brainwashed into believing she would be condemned to eternal suffering if she didn’t pay respect to our parents. Then, Rin disappeared soon after. I saw her escape one night… and then, I saw a note on my desk. She told me how I could escape, when, but I had to convince everyone that I was playing by their rules. So I blended in… in retrospect, I saw how my parents administered the farm, how blind I had been… and that the population was rising… parents and their children joined, and I wished I could help them. But I couldn’t… I knew I couldn’t bring everyone out of that hell.”

“But… eventually, you got out.”

“Yes. Alone, of course. Just like Rin, I told my younger sister how to escape when she would be old enough… but I think I didn’t convince her… my parents tightened their grip around the community. My words were useless…” He sighed. “I tried contacting the police to tell them what happened, but they wouldn’t listen to me. They refused to close the farm, since nothing that I reported was illegal. And so the farm still stood… until one day, everyone left. To this day… I don’t know where they went.”

“What… about your older sisters?”

“Never found them. I spent some time searching for them, but… nothing. I had hoped they would leave something to be found for anyone who escaped, but… nothing. I haven’t heard from Kanna and Rin since they got out of the farm. The thing is… I can believe they’re fine. They might be alive and well, maybe they have a family right now… but my other sisters, older and younger, who were never freed… who knows. They might have become like my parents… they were obsessed with having children. Never understood why. Something about keeping making sure there was a successor and other cult-like stuff you only hear in movies. Chilling. Escaping from there was the best thing I ever did.”

“I-

“There’s no need to say anything.”

“It’s just… that’s terrible. No one should go through that.”

“No one should’ve gone through what happened to you as well. But… it happened. I learned to live with it, just like you.”

I don’t want to play the pity game, but… he didn’t kill anyone. He has no fault. Me, however… I ended someone’s life. It isn’t that difficult to empathize with him.

“I’m… honored… you told me this.” I said. He smiled, but it didn’t feel honest.

As on cue, the vines around the pool disappeared. Immediately after that, the ocarina I held in my hand became too hot for me to bear, and I dropped it on instinct.

It smashed on the ground and broke.

“At least it did its job.” I said. “Let’s go in.”
As we entered, we didn’t notice anything strange. The place looked like a normal swimming pool. There was a glass ceiling and beach chairs to sunbathe, showers and changing rooms.

“This pool’s very deep, though.” Rantaro commented.

I came closer to him and saw that he was right. It had to be at least five meters deep.

“Can you swim?” He asked.

“Yes. But that doesn’t mean you can throw me inside.”

“I’d never have thought of that!” He looked genuinely offended.

Well, it’s not my fault for believing he could do something like it.

“Maybe under different circumstances we could organize a party here.” I pondered. That’s definitely not something Rantaro expected me to say, as he opened his eyes wide. “I think we should… try to talk with the ABCs. Now that Angie’s not here, they’re free to do what they want.”

“You want Kiibo to come as well?”

“He’s not going to. But maybe I should make an effort and try…”

He rolled his eyes. “Good luck with that.”
Death wishes shall save the living: Daily Life (Part 2)

Chapter Summary

Three DeadPads are found, two labs are explored and a secret room is discovered.

Kiibo

The key was used to open a door on the first floor that had always been locked. It was different from the others, so I always suspected it to be a research lab. However, I was surprised when I realized it belonged to me.

It had to happen sooner or later, I guess.

“I hope those stairs were worth it.” Himiko huffed.

Gonta tried to console her. “If you were exhausted, you should have told me! I would’ve given you a piggyback ride!”

I was a bit tired as well. The stairs were a lot more than I had expected. I believe we climbed four floors… we might be on an hypothetical fifth floor.

“It makes sense for an astronaut.”

Gonta said what I was thinking while Himiko slumped over the floor. I put my hand on the doorknob.

“Don’t you want to turn it?” She asked.

“I…” I flinched. Why? I can’t be scared. I need to find those DeadPads… Monokuma wanted us to go here because he must’ve placed one of those in my lab.

I scanned my Monopad and turned the knob.

The room inside was divided in three sections. First, the one that was directly in front of the door, resembled a space shuttle. In front of me there was a control panel, with dozens of screens flashing images of the various planets of the solar systems.

The sections on the sides, however, were meant to represent the outside of the shuttle. The floor was of a greyish color, and there were two rovers moving across the room, pretending to be scanning something. A planetarium projected stars on the ceiling, and one window was shaped like a porthole.

“Are we on the Moon?” Gonta, asked, excited.

“I’m… afraid we aren’t…” Himiko answered. She seemed a bit disappointed herself.

I moved towards the screens. As I thought, there was a Pad on the chair right in front of them. The back cover was engraved with the word DeadPad. Himiko came closer to me to see it with her eyes.
“I suppose this is it, right?”

I swiped on the Pad, expecting Monokuma to welcome us with his useless introductions. However, something more haunting appeared.

In a dark room, under a spotlight, we saw Angie, blindfolded, with her legs and arms tied to a chair.

“Angie!” I instinctively cried out.

“K-kiibo?”

I gasped. I didn’t expect her to respond. Can she hear me? How? But… but… if she can… who cares how she can… if she does, it means she is alive!

“ Angie, can you hear me?” I repeated.

“Y-yes…” She nodded. She was moving her head around, trying to find me. “Where are you?”

“It doesn’t matter now. Do you know where you are?”

“I… I don’t know… everything’s dark.”

“She’s really there…” Himiko said. “She… is she really alive?”

Of course she is! She’s talking with us right now! I knew her execution was fake!

“Don’t worry… we’ll come to save you! Monokuma told us you’ll have a second chance!”

«Upupupupu… it’s me, Monokuma! The video feed will stop in 30 seconds. Make the most of it!»

Sixty seconds? As I was trying to think about what just happened, a counter appeared on the top of the screen.

“Angie! What happened after you were dragged out of the trial grounds?”

“I… I don’t remember…”

“You don’t remember? Really?” Gonta asked.

“I… remember having woken up here… I don’t know how much time has passed… are you okay?”

Maybe she was drugged and put to sleep… there’s no way the Monokumas dragged her to a jungle! Where would that place even be?!

“Angie, listen to me! We’re all safe, but I’m scared without you!”

“D-don’t… I’m not coming to you, so you… you need to shake off that feeling.”

“No, I’m sure we’ll bring you back!”

“Hey, Kiibo, I believe you.”

«End of transmission. You can talk more with Angie this evening. Thanks for your collaboration.»

I… I wanted to talk more to her, but… what matters is that Monokuma didn’t lie. He told us the truth… Angie is alive. She’s not dead… she didn’t suffer… I’m sure we can find her! Monokuma
had to bring her somewhere, right? Maybe she’s in one of the locked research rooms! We have to break in!

“If Angie’s alive… then the other killers must be too!” Gonta exclaimed. “Gonta so happy… maybe they can come back and redeem themselves!”

“That means… Oums is alive as well…” Himiko said.

“It doesn’t matter. What is important is that Angie is still here… we can bring the ABCs together… we have to talk to Tenko about this as well.”

“Now?” Gonta asked.

“At lunch.” I said. I’d like to keep it a secret, because I know it would anger everyone else… but maybe they already know.

“I’m… I’m happy about Angie…” Himiko said. “And I’m happy about you being happy again…”

“But?”

“Huh?”

“There’s a but. I know. Your tone tells enough.”

Himiko looked away, then at me with the same expression of pity. “You… you can be happy without her too, you know.”

“Don’t you want her to come back?”

“Yeah, definitely… if we have the possibility, I’d be happy to see her again…”

“Then why are you saying those things?”

“It’s dangerous to get your hopes up like this. Remember… you don’t need one other person to live. You can’t do everything on your own, but there are many people to help you, not just one.”

“Are you angry with her? Is that why you’re saying those things?”

She was the one who convinced everyone to vote for her after all…

“I… I think Monokuma isn’t completely honest, and-

“What if he isn’t?! Is it dangerous to have hope?! Yesterday you said I should’ve move past her death and now that I have a chance to do so you don’t like it?!”

“You are not moving past it. If she comes back, it’s like she never died. And if she doesn’t, you’ll feel worse.”

“I thought the ABC was united. You’ve betrayed us.” I said.

“Woah!” Gonta exclaimed. “Himiko believes in Atua just like Angie! She not betrayal!”

“That isn’t enough. You should believe in Angie too. And you didn’t.”

“I’m… I’m too tired to argue now, Kiibo…”

She starts the fight and then backs away from it.
“I’m not here to listen to your advice, okay? I… I’m doing what I think it’s best for the group, not just me.”

“We can talk about this later… or maybe never, if you don’t want me to mention it again.”

“I didn’t say that…”

“Nyeh… Then I’ll bring it up with everyone else…”

“You're still welcome to the Assembly today in the gym!” Gonta said, and I agreed. I wouldn’t want to distance myself from Himiko, despite what she did yesterday… In fact, I hoped to restore her trust in me and Angie.

If she comes back, she’ll surely bring the group together. I may try as much as I want, but I’m not like her.

Nobody listens to me… except her. Angie has been the only one who accepted me.

Before she died, she covered for me. She told everyone that the plan to accuse Kaito of escaping his lab was her idea… but it wasn’t.

It was mine…

I did everything alone. I only told her after we discovered he was innocent… now, everyone believes I was just her pawn…

Because she thought she would die, she didn’t have to face the consequences. So, she protected me… she knew the others wouldn’t understand why I did it, to avoid worse from happening…

Between all the people I have known, she has been the second person I really trusted… all she needed to do was trust me back. But I still don’t understand why… why has she been so kind with me… that’s what I want to ask her when she comes back.

***

Kirumi Tojo

“Rantaro said right in front of the entrance, right?” Kaito asked.

Tenko answered “Yeah. Why didn’t he come here? He could’ve helped us. Typical.”

“Typical what? Male?”

“Please.” I intervened. “Do not tease each other.”

“Sorry. It was my fault. I shouldn’t have said that.” Tenko apologized.

Kaito smiled and gave her a thumbs up. Sometimes he is reasonable as well. She smiled back.

“Any idea on how to use that drill?”

“Maybe it’s like the other objects, guys. Just put it in some kind of hole…”
“No holes on the ground.” I noted. “Though a drill is supposed to create those. Maybe you should use it.”

“Anywhere? Isn’t Monokuma going to attack us if we damage the Academy?”

“Rules never mention that. I suppose you could drill the entire school and Monokuma could not punish you according to the rules.”

Yet… if this place started to look like swiss cheese, I am sure Monokuma would add a rule to avoid too many holes.

“Let’s start drilling, then.”

Fortunately, we did not have to drill a single hole. Less fortunately, as soon as the drill came in contact with the floor, a 3x3 meters area directly under Kaito fell down.

“Kaito!” Tenko shouted.

However, the inventor fell down by just half a meter. In front of him there was a corridor, yet not a usual one: aside from it being rather narrow, its walls were made of rocks. We did not have to drop down to reach him; there were some stairs.

“Ouch, this was unexpected…” Kaito said, massaging his back.

“Can you stand?”

“Yes! This is nothing but a minor hurdle in Kaito Momota’s life!”

Tenko did not appear to like what Kaito just said and turned towards me. “This place is pretty different from the rest… it looks… untouched.”

“Are those real rocks?”

“Yes.” I nodded. We were underground, of course. Though those rocks were a bit different from the ones I used to see in my usual explorations.

We continued walking through the tunnel. At some point, it was almost impossible to see.

“There are no lights here.” Kaito lamented.

“Wait. Look.” I pointed to our right, though I do not know if my classmates could notice what I saw. After their confusion, I explained. “There is a lever.”

“Great! Maybe it will give us some light!”

“Wait, Kaito! It could be a trap…”

“Really? I’m sure Monokuma wouldn’t kill us at random, like that. He likes conflict, not boring deaths.”

Agreed. Without much hesitation, I pulled down the lever. A robotic voice echoed in the tunnel.

[School entrances locked; Opening Research Lab…]
In front of us, a new passage opened. It was quite clearly my research lab, as it was themed around archeology, exploration and had exotic souvenirs displayed around some shelves. I pulled my hand away from the lever to enter, but it went up again, and the wall of rocks in front of me closed back.

[Research Lab locked; Opening school entrances…]

“Just as my eyes saw light again…” Kaito protested.

“What did just happen?”

“It seems that the only way to access this research lab is by holding the lever down. This means that it cannot be accessed by a single person.”

“Someone has to stay outside to keep the lever down.” Tenko repeated. “Oh, that’s dangerous!”

“Right… Someone who comes with you could trap you inside!”

“Not just me.” I noted. “This lab does not require my Monopad, like the others. Anyone can gain access to it, provided they have someone that can hold down the lever.”


“I can guard, if you want.” Kaito said.

“I don’t have anything against you, but better safe than sorry. I’ll be the one holding down the lever.”

Kaito let out a deep breath, maybe to avoid saying something that could offend Tenko. “Maybe we should let Kirumi decide. It’s her lab after all.”

“You can both remain outside.” I said. I am shocked none of the two could come up with that answer.

“Fine.” Kaito sighed. Tenko agreed as well, though she seemed less perturbed than the inventor.

My lab was a circular space with an archeological motif. The walls were made by rocks, adorned with sparkling metals, some of which I never saw before, and torches lit the room. Some parts of the rock wall were carved, forming natural-looking shelves where numerous artefacts and souvenirs were shown. I recognized some of them and I immediately billed them as false; it was impossible for Monokuma to have them all.

The lab was beautiful, even though I was not a cave dweller and focused more on outdoor explorations. My only problem was how damp it was inside; this area was closed off for a long time, even before we woke up in this academy.

While admiring the various objects on the shelves, I noticed a familiar shape.

“I found a DeadPad.” I said, inspecting the back.

“What do you see?” Kaito asked from outside.
I swiped on the Pad and a familiar face appeared in front of me. Oums was blindfolded and tied to a chair, under a spotlight.

In one piece.

“Oums.” I said.

“What?” He exclaimed.

“Don’t think you can enter!” Tenko reprimanded him. “I might be a teacher, but I can hit you on the head good!”

“Is… someone there?” Oums asked.

“Yes, it’s me, Kaito!” The inventor exclaimed.

“Is someone there? I can barely hear you…”

My mind was already constructing hypotheses. Of all the people who died, Oums could the only one that could be alive… only because he had never been alive. Kaito told us he could have rebuilt Oums if he had a chip… maybe one of the Kubs put him back together.

“Did Monokuma do something to you?” Kaito asked.

“I… I have no idea… I just woke up… who… who is Monokuma?”

“What? You do not remember this name?”

“I… I can’t remember anything…”

«Upupupupu… it’s me, Monokuma! The video feed will stop in 30 seconds. Make the most of it!»

“Thirty seconds? What are we supposed to do?”

“Wait, you should keep your composure.” I advised.

“Is it… he okay?” Kaito asked. “Any damages?”

I appreciate him not rushing inside. Maybe Tenko is holding him hostage, but he is showing restrain for the first time inside this place.

“I… It is hard to see… but he seems safe. He is blindfolded and tied, but he is just like we saw him last time.”

“What… what are you talking about? Do you know me?”

“You are Oums, the Ultimate Robot.”

“A… robot?! What… I’m a robot?!”

He… does not seem to realize that.

“Yes. The best, that’s why you’re an Ultimate!” Kaito shouted.

“No, I’m… a real person! I can talk, I can hear you, I can-

«End of transmission. You can talk more with 0U-M5 this evening. Thanks for your collaboration.»
This evening… why then? Monokuma has to have a plan in mind, I thought, as I headed out of my lab.

“He didn’t know he was a robot? How is that possible?” Tenko asked, confused.

“Someone must have erased his memory… like Monokuma, and Kaito later.”

“I didn’t do anything now!” The inventor defended himself. “Plus, when I did that, he remembered being a robot! I can’t see how he could forget that!”

“You could not do that even if you wanted, then?”

“No. I think that goes against the fundamental laws of robotics… a robot needs to know they are one.”

“So… how could he have said those things? You think he was lying?”

I intervened. “No. He sounded serious. I could not look into his eyes, but he seemed shocked.”

“How can you tell?” Kaito asked.

“Imagine someone telling you your life is a lie, and you are in reality a machine. Your entire body will give clues, not just your eyes.”

“But…. what would Monokuma gain by convincing Oums it’s not a robot?”

“It is hard to say now… we must talk about this with the others in the cafeteria.”

“Fine.” Tenko said. “We can debate about this outside of this tunnel. This place is not my favorite... too cold... and dark.”

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Kaede Akamatsu

“DeadPad.” I said. “I knew Monokuma would place one here.”

“It was our reward for exploring, after all. Not putting it here would’ve been the ultimate dickbag move.” He shrugged. “Are we sure we should watch it?”

“We came here for this. To potentially save our classmates.”

“Potentially.” He repeated.

I ignored him, and swiped my finger on the pad. Immediately, I saw Shuichi.

His head was on his shoulders.

But he was hung upside down, a rope tying his feet and dozen of scars on his face.

“Shuichi!” I shouted.

I didn’t think. I didn’t know if he could hear me. Just seeing him… he is alive…
“Kaede?” He looked around, but was confused. He didn’t see me. But I saw him.

“It’s me, yes.”

There was just a light above him, the rest of the room was dark.

“Please, tell me where you are! I can’t stand being here anymore!”

“I… where? Where are you?!”

“I don’t know!” He shouted.

How was this real? This couldn’t be real… I saw him die… everyone saw him die.

“Let me take it from here.” Rantaro said. “What’s the last thing you remember?”

“Rantaro? Are you with Kaede? Did you do this to me?”

“What?!” I exclaimed. “Of course not! This was Monokuma, after dragging you outside of the trial grounds and faking your execution!”

“No, he left me somewhere around the school grounds… and then, I think... someone captured me.”

Shuichi was right in front of me, speaking with me… was it just a ruse?

“Who?”

“I think… I’m sorry… I can’t remember… it must have been one of the Monokubs... or one of us...”

“One… of us?!”

“A traitor?” Rantaro asked.

“I won’t speak with you… until you can confirm it wasn’t you who did all of this!”

I intervened. “Shuichi! You believe me? Then talk with me!”

He nodded. “Why can’t you come to me? Why are you hiding?”

“We’re not where you are. That’s why I asked you. But we want to find you, and save you. That’s why we need to know what else you remember.”

“What I said. I woke up here… I don’t even know when… it feels like an eternity!”

“So you were sleeping? And woke up like that?”

“Yes…” He sobbed. “I… can’t stand this position anymore… my head hurts… I want to pass out, but I never can…”

“Upupupupu… it’s me, Monokuma! The video feed will stop in 30 seconds. Make the most of it!”

“What…” I said. I should’ve known he would give us a limit. “Shuichi, we have half a minute before we are cut off.”

“Cut off?”
“I know this won’t be the last time we talk, but please… tell us what you can!”

“I… I don’t know where to start…”

“Anything is okay!” I exclaimed.

“Well… I’m sorry.”

“What?”

“About what I did. I shouldn’t have. What I did was stupid.”

“You already said sorry! It doesn’t matter now!”

“Please, I want you to…. to forgive me…”

“Of course I do!”

“Do you really think I should be saved?”

“Yes! We all did terrible things here, and your intentions were good… that’s what matters.”

Shuichi smiled. Then Monokuma’s sadistic smile appeared instead.

«End of transmission. You can talk more with Shuichi this evening. Thanks for your collaboration.«

“Fuck!” I exclaimed.

“Swearing is serious business.” Rantaro sighed. I was ready to snap at him, but he spoke before I could say anything. “And with that I… meant you have every right to say what you want.”

“Work on your communication skills!” I exclaimed.

“I know they’re terrible. That’s why I don’t speak much.”

I glared at him.

“Bad words aside, do you really believe that’s Shuichi?”

“Yes! I can recognize him, and so do you!”

“But we saw him die. We all did… I’m sure you remember how horrific it was.”

“I… I do. I know…”

I know that could be another illusion.

Nobody can tell for sure if what we saw was real.

But I want it to be real. I’ve suffered too much, and this time, I want to hold on onto hope.

He looked at me in the eyes.

“I can see you’re conflicted, even though you didn’t say any word.”

“You’re worried for me. But I can handle it. If Monokuma’s messing with us, somehow… I’ve lost
my brother and him already. I decided to lose my parents. Here, I’ve lost someone I considered a friend, and someone who I was becoming friends with. I know what losing is. For once, I want to regain something.”

He smiled weakly. “You’re right. You can handle it. But if you can’t… I’m here. And other people are too. You know you’re not alone, right?”

“Yeah.” I said, not wanting to argue. The truth is that with my secret revealed… I don't know.

“So we found everyone’s DeadPad, right?” Kaito asked once we all gathered in the cafeteria.

“Except Miu’s.” Kiibo pointed out.

“Nobody cares about her. She killed someone without a valid reason!”

“She… thought she had one.” I said. “If the others deserve a second chance, she does too.”

Tenko glared at me. “You were the one who was harsher towards her. Have you changed your mind?”

“Yes. I mean…” I still don’t like her for what she did… but I can’t be mad at someone for my entire life. And surely, if she’s alive, she deserves to be punished justly, not with a gruesome death. “I killed my parents in revenge. She did the same. I’d be an hypocrite if I ignored her completely.”

With the corner of my eye, I could see Kiibo nodding. I’m sure he was of the same opinion. “We can’t stay here doing nothing!” He exclaimed. “We have to search the school and find Angie before anything bad happens to her!”

“Shuichi, Miu and Oums as well.” Himiko corrected him. He didn’t respond.

“Even if we were to find them, I am sure Monokuma would not let us free them.” Kirumi spoke out.

“Yeah, he’s… he’s using a carrot on the stick!” Gonta said. “Is that the expression, Tenko?”

“I suppose it works, yeah.”

“Are we supposed to stay here and do nothing?!”

“Gonta thinks that the first thing to do is eat. Meals are on the table and nobody took a bite…”

It’s hard to focus on food when the lives of our friends are at stake…

Instead of eating, Kirumi posed a question I wondered about too. “Do you believe those videos depict our classmates?”

Kiibo was quick to answer. “Of course!”

“Think about it. As a matter of fact, they are not harder to fake than the executions we saw.”

She’s right. And I know it. It is far more logical than Monokuma’s tricking us… but the truth is… that I want to see Shuichi again…

“The executions were not interactive, though.” Tenko intervened. “We all talked with them
today… which means they heard us.”

Rantaro sided with the adventurer. “That doesn’t prove anything, I fear… What if we saw actors?”

“Actors?! I know what Angie looks like, and nobody else could look like her!”

“It’s not hard to alter our perception… we already know that the people who organized this game erased parts of our memory, maybe they did something more.”

“You can't prove that!”

“What if… Monokuma has voiced those videos by himself, using some kind of robot lookalikes?” Himiko proposed.

“Robot… lookalikes?”

“I…. well… it’s just a thought…”

“I would not be surprised.” Kirumi said. “Oums did not remember his nature as a robot.”

“Huh?” I raised my eyebrow. “How did Kaito explain that?”

“No idea.” He sighed.

So Kirumi is suggesting that his memory loss might mean that the Shuichi and Angie that we saw were robots as well?

“It seems farfetched… how do the two things relate?”

“I do not know… however, it has to have meaning, I feel… you may call it sixth sense, yet I cannot believe what we saw is real. Would Monokuma give killers the opportunity to redeem themselves?”

That does go against the rules of the game, but… Monokuma is the one who made them. He can change them as he pleases, so that shouldn’t matter.

“I’ve seen Angie for more than two weeks every day! I know what she looks like! A robot or an actor can’t substitute her!”

“I… I also can say that the Shuichi I saw looks exactly like I remembered him. He had scars on his face, but except that…”

“It is comfortable to think they are alive, I know.” Kirumi said. “However… Monokuma is cruel and at the same time honorable. He has always kept his word. I refuse to believe he would go against what he has always said.”

“We can talk all you want, we won’t understand if what we saw was real without more information, guys!” Kaito exclaimed. “I want Oums to be with us too, so I can say… well… uhm… He’ll see for himself!”

*He?* Didn’t Kaito always refer to Oums with an it?

“…Despite my wishes… we can’t be sure. So before doing anything, maybe… we should wait. I know I did bad things by rushing into them. Let’s wait.”

“They might be in danger!” Kiibo protested.
“Monokuma put them there for a reason. He won’t kill us before we have the time to speak with them again… he said it himself.”

Kiibo decided not to respond. He must know Kaito’s right, but he still wants to act now.

“The cage!” Gonta exclaimed. “We should all go there and see what Kaede should have let us see!”

“Right. We almost forgot it amidst all of this chaos, Gonta.” Tenko congratulated him.

“Sure. I… I have nothing to hide… you can follow me now, if you want.”

“You should’ve told us immediately. We’re not your enemy!” The tennis player said.

“I’ll pass. You can tell me later. I’m going to my lab to work on the Electrohammers.” Kaito said.

“Aren’t you curious?” Himiko asked.

“I… trust Kaede. I should’ve before. So I know whatever she did, she did it for a reason.”

“You can go without me as well.” Kirumi said. “I will guard Kaito.”

He pouted. “I thought you trusted me too.”

“I am only making sure you do what you are supposed to.” She explained.

Tenko waved at them. “Okay… we’ll fill you in on what happened at the cage later then.”

***

Kiibo

Kaede was stopped by Monokuma at the cage. She told us she could let us see what she meant instead of telling, but the bear was threatening her.

“You cannot throw anything outside of the school grounds!” He exclaimed.

“Why is this suddenly a problem?” She asked. “I did it before!”

“No, I have not seen it. And I see everything happening inside this academy!”

“E-everything?” Tenko stuttered.

“Yes, I’m the headmaster after all… upupupupu…” He snickered.

“It happened while you were in vacation, or what you call it, right?” Gonta hypothesized. “That’s why you don’t remember seeing it… because you didn’t…”

“Mmmh… it could be. Then, it means I’m a very kind headmaster! What you did, Kaede, goes against the rules!”

“What rules? The Monopad doesn’t specify them, so you are wrong. Can’t punish me for that.”
“Fine!” He exclaimed.

My Monopad vibrated.

“Now there’s a new rule, it is prohibited to interact with the cage surrounding the Academy and with everything else outside of the above-mentioned cage, including air, even indirectly. That includes throwing objects or stretching your arm outside of it.”

Kaede was furious. If looks could kill, Monokuma would be dead on the ground.

Not that murdering would be a problem for Kaede…

“Now that that’s done, you guys, it is almost time for an update on your classmates’ conditions! At 4 p.m. right after the reveal of the secret, you’ll have more info on how to bring back your dear, blackened friends! Buh-bye!” He said, running away.

“Why is he… so hellbent on this cage?” Tenko asked.

“Easy. He doesn’t want you to believe me.” Kaede rolled her eyes.

Rantaro shrugged. “Monokuma might come up with new rules, but he can’t prohibit you from talking.”

“Him doing that shows that Kaede’s honest.” Gonta exclaimed. “Monokuma is bad, and that’s why he wants to hide the truth!”

“Just be done with this already. Tell us what you found and we can be done with it.” I sighed.

She didn’t respond and let four seconds of silence pass.

Just to irritate me. Ugh!

“If I threw that rock, you’d have seen it bouncing back.”

“Bouncing back?” Himiko replied, confused.

“Yep. The cage isn’t the true wall. You might think we’re surrounded by a ruined city and we’re under the sun, but in truth… those are just depictions on screens.”

“That’s absurd.” I said. How could our surroundings be fake? What for? There’s no reason to put the cage if there’s another barrier.

“Monokuma wants us to believe we’re outside. I don’t know why, but it’s true.” She said.

“But… why?” Himiko asked. Kaede couldn’t find an answer.

“You can decide not to believe me… the point is, I told you what I was hiding. I wish I could’ve shown you, but Monokuma won’t let me. Because he wants you to doubt me.”

“Why pit us against you?” Tenko intervened.

Yeah, she brings up a good point. Not everything rotates around you, Kaede.

“I’m a detective. I discovered a secret and I could discover more… and let you escape. He knows that, and that’s why he wants you to kill me.”
Kaede has helped us in the trials, but she hasn’t done anything real to get us out of here.

“We’re destined to stay here, so this is all useless.” I said. “Even if you were telling the truth, the situation doesn’t change. We’re still trapped.”

Gonta agreed with me. “Kiibo is right… screens or cage… it’s still a big barrier.”

“It’s important. We know there might be more lies, and ways to escape. We must find them!”

“That’s just… your idea.” I said. No concrete evidence, the one that Kaede should search for.

“Fine. Think what you want of this. I held my promise; show what I was hiding.” She spat, unsatisfied with our reaction.

“Nyeh… you did the right thing, Kaede… now we can trust you a little more.”

I disagree.

I need… I want to get out of here… the more time the others spend with Kaede, the more they are drawn to her… yeah, if I don’t do anything I mind end up alone again… and then, maybe they’ll team up and mock me…

“We should go to the gym for the Assembly!” I said. “Whoever wants to come, follow… follow me, alright?”

I looked everyone in the eyes, hoping for some reaction. I know I should’ve been the first to move away, but the fear that nobody would come with me made me freeze.

“Yes, should we go?” Gonta said after seconds of horrific silence.

“O-okay, Gonta… anyone else?”

“I guess I will.” Himiko shrugged. Tenko joined her.

“I’d say those are the people who want to pray with you.” Rantaro said. Of course I wouldn’t expect him or Kaede to do so, and wouldn’t want them either. In fact, I hoped they would turn down the offer.

“Can we try to meet at 4 pm in the cafeteria, at least?” The detective asked.

“We will do our best.” I said, leaving with the other members.

“Are you okay?” Gonta asked me on the way to the gym.

I sighed. “Yes… you don’t have to ask me that every time.”

“Sorry! Gonta thought he didn’t ask you before…”

“No, it wasn’t you, it was Himiko… I can survive without Angie. Even if she didn’t come back, I’d be able to continue living here. It’s okay, I’d just act like I did before coming here.”

“If she didn’t come back?”

“Yes. Because she will. You will all help me with that, I’m certain.”
“But… she didn’t come back yet…”

“It doesn’t matter now. We know she’s alive. Whatever Monokuma asks, we have to do… if it makes her come back.” I said resolutely. “Because, if we don’t… we might have to see her die… a second time…”

But this time, it’d be real.

“I’m not good with words, but I think it’s not correct to have this… uhm… mentality. Because if Angie doesn’t come back… you will be even sadder.”

“That’s something I’m not even considering. Act like… like… Angie is in her room, right? And she’s having a shower…”

“But it would be a long shower…”

“Then she’s sleeping, because she didn’t last night. She’ll wake up in some time… maybe days, but she will meet us eventually.”

“Gonta is not so sure about it…”

I know.

Neither am I.

But… If I show weakness, everyone will cast me aside. And listen to Kaede, even though she’s a liar.

I need to act like Angie did, holding the group together. When she returns, I can rest. And if she doesn’t return…

No, I don’t have to think about that.

If I don’t believe it myself, the others won’t either. Angie is safe and Monokuma will free her soon. Angie is safe. Monokuma will free her. Yes.

There’s no way that the executions were real. Where would that jungle even be? Nowhere, it must have been rendered on a computer, or maybe it was a set… it wasn’t real, for sure!

“We’ll pray for Angie’s return in the gym.”

“I thought you didn’t believe in Atua.”

“Yes, you’re right, I’m… conflicted. However, if there’s a chance that this will help bring Angie back, I’ll take it. There’s nothing to lose.”

“Maybe… confidence?”

“Huh?”

“Confidence in yourself. If Monokuma lied, or, and I hope it doesn’t happen, decides to hurt Angie despite our prayers-

“No. That won’t happen. I will do everything to save Angie, understood? That’s… the least I can do. Save her without harming anyone else.”
What I couldn’t have done yesterday. Now that I can… nothing will stop me.

Gonta didn’t seem too convinced.

“My mom always told my dad you shouldn’t force opinions on anyone, but… I can just tell you mine. And mine is that you should be prepared for the worst, but still be positive!”

“Then just tell me. You don’t believe I can do this?”

“Do… what? But, but I believe you, of course!”

“You think I’m not capable, that I’m just some guy-

“The gym’s closed.” Tenko interrupted us, having tried to push the doors open.

“W-what? Why…?”

“Because the great architect Monokid is renovating!”

The blue bear startled us.

“No access to the gym. I’m changing some things inside to make it awesome!”

Tenko raised an eyebrow. “Nobody asked for it, you know?”

“I know! I wanted more gym machines so that you can all be fit like Gonta!”

“With all respect… I don’t need it.” Himiko sighed.

“Strenght is important to overcome the difficulties of life! Hyahahaah! That’s why I’m here and all my brothers are being recycled!”

So… he wants us to become stronger? Or is he just trying to stop me from honoring Angie?

“How much time is it before we can enter?” Tenko asked.

“Don’t know! I’ll let you know as soon as it’s ready! I’ll throw a big party, you can bet! Post scriptum, bet at the casino so I can get rich!”

And after promoting his business he vanished.

“We… we’ll go somewhere else…” I said.

“Gonta agree! Those bears can’t stop us from praying…”

“Maybe we could go to my research lab.”

“And do all of those stairs again? Please, I’m tired!” Himiko complained.

Tenko raised her voice. “This shouldn’t be a chore! We could go outside. It’s the perfect time of the day to spend some time under the trees… just like a picnic… but without food.”

“Nyeh… I’m fine with that.”

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“Do you want to see how the Electrohammers are made?” Kaito asked.

“You know that is not the case.”

“So it’s true that you don’t believe me.”

“You did, how can I say it…”

“Fuck up too many times?”

“I would have used different words, but yes, that was what I meant.”

“That’s why I’m working on the hammers. To redeem myself.”

“How are they supposed to work?” I asked.

“If everything goes to plan, they’ll disarm every electronic mechanism in a five-feet area. I’ve seen something like it when I was in training, and I want to replicate it.” He explained. “You see, if I can finish the project… we’ll be able to traverse the Death Road to Despair!”

“Really?”

“Every trap there is triggered because of some kind of mechanism, right? We’ll breeze through it like it’s nothing!... But there’s a lot that could go wrong. That’s why I have to work hard on the Electrohammers and do one good thing, once and for all!”

It definitely is a noble action from him. I truly believe he wants to redeem himself, the problem is whether or not he will succeed.

“Tell me about you. Everything okay?” He asked.

“What… do you mean?”

“I don’t want to pry or anything… but you always seem so… distant. I’ve never seen... emotion, coming from you, except yesterday…”

“I am not suppressing my feelings, if you are wondering.”

“I… well, I didn’t mean that… Is… look, I can’t say I was a friend of Korekiyo’s… but you were. And I… I saw you keeping the same expression, through the entire trial… but after a while… you got everything out… after discovering Kiibo covered for Angie… you were a completely different person.” He said.

“I do not see your point.”

He sighed. “I don’t know what I wanted to say. I’m sorry… It’s just… forget it.”

“Do not worry. If you have something to say, tell me.”

“Fine… How can you keep your calm like that? You know that Kiibo and Angie are the reason Korekiyo’s dead, yet… you don’t even glare at him! It’s like you hold no grudge!”
“Glares and anger will not bring Korekiyo back. Resentment towards anyone will only poison me if I think about it. So I… forget and move on. It might be hard, it might take a lot… however, in the end… it helped me as a person.”

“Is it really okay to be… and I don’t… I don’t want to be disrespectful… so forgiving? People might take advantage of you, and that will make your situation worse.”

“I am not forgiving. If I survive this, I will not consider myself Kiibo’s friend, or even Kaede’s, to be honest. Their actions were harmful to the group. Yet I will not scream at them when I have the chance… because we are not alive to harm others, and most importantly not ourselves.”

“I… I can’t live like you…”

“You do not have to. Everyone is different… and we can learn by them. That is what I believe.”

He looked at me, silent.

It was not a good moment to tell him why I had really followed him, however, I had to reveal my intentions.

“I need to go back to the tunnel under the school.” I explained.

“You want to look around your lab again?”

“No. There is something wrong with it. I am sure it leads somewhere.”

“We reached the end of it.”

“I am an adventurer. I know when something is hidden.” I explained.

“Why not tell the others?”

“It may sound eerily similar to Kaede, but… I cannot say it. But… I feel there is something under this school, hidden to our view. A… network.”

When Monotaro emerged from that corridor in the boiler room… that place had to lead somewhere. I would not be surprised if the rock tunnel connects to it.

“And you can’t tell me because…?”

I let out a deep breath. I just told him that I cannot explain my reasons…

“The most I can say is that I have to follow my instinct. However, I have to follow it alone… I cannot attract too much attention.”

“If that place exists, you might get trapped inside!”

“That is why I am telling you.”

“Ah!” He smirked. “So you do trust me! Despite my constant fuck-ups!”

Not really, but…

“I believe you mean no harm… in theory. In reality… well, I think you could have done better.”

“Fine. I can accept that.”
Under normal circumstances, I would not put my life in Kaito’s hands, yet this was my best option. I could not have sneaked in the tunnel without everyone noticing and I need at least one person to save me in case I am too careless.

And among everyone, considering their intelligence, strength and trust… Kaito is the one that scored higher.

That says a lot about my classmates.

I used the light of my Monopad to guide me through the tunnel, touching the wall.

I knew something was hidden, and when a rock moved to the side I was not surprised. In front of me there was a tight and small passage, which I could only enter crawling.

After a few steps, the scenery changed completely. I stood up once more to find myself surrounded not by rocks, but by metal.

I was in the corridor I saw yesterday while I was investigating, I was sure. It would make sense… though I could not understand why the passage that connected the tunnel and this place would even exist.

Because of its tightness, I assumed the passage was meant to exist for the Monokubs and Monokuma… maybe there are countless more of those around the school… to allow them to move everywhere and surprise us. Even the one connecting the ground floor to Kaede’s lab could have been designed for that purpose.

But that would not explain why they appear so suddenly without anyone noticing… they may be quicker, but they are definitely not invisible…

I tried to piece together the reason why they could be so quick as I moved along the corridor, wondering why no one else ever thought of that, not even me. Until now, we all accepted it… yet it is not normal. It does not matter how advanced Monokuma or the Kubs are, they cannot materialize or disappear in an instant… why am I only asking myself this question now?

My head hurt. It felt like a warning, as if it was telling me I should not try to find a reason. However, I could not accept it without understanding how it could be done.

Could our eyes be deceiving us? It could be a lie, an illusion… I thought of that and other possibilities, but there was no answer. Those robots seemed to defy logic.

The corridor went on. The more I walked, the more I was convinced Monokuma would appear in front of me and force me to stop… but he did not come for two, three minutes. I realized that I had to have moved past the cage that surrounded us above the ground. Despite that, I knew this path would not lead outside… Monokuma would not let me access this place if put the game at risk.

Then, at the end of the tunnel… nothing. Expecting another passage, I tried everything, but I had no results whatsoever. It seemed I hit a dead end.

I sighed. Maybe there was something else on the other end, so I turned.

I looked back at the wall before going the other way to discover... that there actually was a door, perfectly centered.
That was not there before, I was sure…

I touched the handle to be sure I was sane… it had consistency. Before entering I tried once again to make sense of what I experienced.

It could not be because of my condition… it did not affect the nervous system and were it to do so, I doubt it would have made a door disappear from view.

Maybe there was some substance in this corridor, that made me hallucinate… however… I cannot understand how it could convince me there was not a door.

…Whatever happened, I could not stood still. I felt I did not have much time here. Again, I could not explain why.

I went inside the room.

It was a small room full of screens, all depicting white noise. On the ground there were hundreds of USBs and flashlights. I picked one of them up to inspect it. I tried to turn it on, but it was seemingly broken.

Turning my attention on the USBs, though, revealed they were named since each a tag attached to it. They were no different from the ones Monokuma had stored in the AV room.

“The death of the Remnants of Despair”, “The Final Killing Game in the Future Foundation Headquarters”, “The No-Pher Projects”… where they all fragments of our memories? They could not be… there were too many. Glancing at other titles, I realized two appeared to contradict each other…

“Japan suffers thousands of deaths after hundreds of meteorites fall” and “Meteorites predicted to hit Japan do not collide with Earth”.

They could be two different events… but the probability that such an event happens twice is almost zero, even if in a thousand years timeframe.

However, two other USBs left no doubt. “Junko Enoshima survives the first ever Killing Game” and “Junko Enoshima is killed in the first Killing Game” could not happen both.

Even then… wasn’t Junko Enoshima the one who caused the Tragedy…? Did she participate in a Killing Game?

I came closer to the screens. Under them there was a console. On it, dozens of various buttons. I wonder if they were functional… or if it was worth pushing one.

No, it was not. I am not risking everyone else’s life…

As I was trying to understand the meaning of this room, I heard something behind me.

Then, unconsciousness.
I woke up in my room. At first, I thought it was morning. It took me less than a second to remember what happened… it was not morning, as I already woke up today.

Someone attacked me.

Or… did they? I did not feel any pain. Inspecting my body, I did not find any wounds.

However, I definitely lost consciousness because of someone else. I remember hearing steps, behind me. Though, not soon enough to turn.

I stood up. My room was tidy, everything in order. If someone brought me here, they would need to pass unnoticed by all the others…

Worried, I left my room and headed outside of the dormitories. I did not know how much time had passed and neither what happened… maybe a murder, I feared.

To my relief, I saw the members of the ABCs in the courtyard. They were not making any noise, but were alive.

So I returned to my room… I washed my face and… saw an envelope with a letter inside, right besides the cabinet. On the back, written with black ink, was:

"Don’t see the contents of this letter, if you want to keep this a secret from your kidnappers. Read with your hands and you won’t be watched. Despite this, you might increase your risk of being kicked out of the Killing Game. And by that, I mean killed.

Your choice. Signed, the hero you need.”

An hero? Was this person… one of us? Are they the one who was following me in the tunnel? I knew I could answer those questions if I opened that letter. I did not care about increasing my chances of dying, as I was already fighting a battle with my illness.

Paying attention to what was written, I avoided any eye contact with the letter, and followed
instructions. As I expected, the contents were in braille... reading with hands. Whoever put this here knew I recognized that language, so... can it really be one of my classmates? I never mentioned it to anyone.

“Do not mention the existence of this letter to anyone. By doing this, you have exposed yourself. The organizers of the Killing Game cannot see what is written here, but they will know something is wrong. Right now, they are analyzing data from your brain and they will realize what is happening in less than 24 hours. But I am trying to beat them at their own game.”

Who... is this anonymous hero? How could the people behind this killing game read my mind...?

“I am sorry for knocking you out. It was necessary for them not to realize you explored the room in the tunnel. That wasn’t meant for you to see, yet I created the passage between your lab and the tunnel itself. What is done is done, however, and that’s why I’m writing you this letter. This game is not made for you to win, it never was. That is why I can’t allow it to continue. I’d like to tell you more, but you wouldn’t understand. As you already know, your mind is full of locks and forbidden words. Still, I thank you for what you have done. You do not know it yet, but you did what you should have. Never fear the unknown, I agree. Sometimes, only by exploring it you can survive. Soon, this torture will end and you will hopefully be truly alive, not suffering countless deaths one after another, played with as if you were a toy.”

The message ended there.

I took the letter and flushed it down the toilet. Its contents were already imprinted in my mind. Forbidden words, the same thing Monokid said to me after I woke besides him two days ago after being attacked by Kiyo... This is definitely not one of my classmates...

It has to be someone who has worked to create this Killing Game, a traitor of sorts. They opened the passage that led to the tunnel, but not for me... it had to have a reason...

I considered returning there to see why that room was so important. All it seemed to have was useless cassettes and broken flashlights, yet it was never meant to be found. This time, I would be prepared for an attack, and I would uncover this mysterious hero.

However... they wrote we were watched. If I went there... the organizers of the Killing Game may realize the identity of this traitor. I cannot do that...

Watched... yes, but... when I read with my hands... I am not?

Why...

How is this possible? There are not any cameras around the academy... never seen one, but the bears always knew where to find us...

Unless... they can see us by...!

...By?
Wait… what is happening?

I knew it.

I knew what I was thinking.

I forgot?

It is almost as if…

As if there was… a mind lock… exactly what the letter said.

So it is not just words we cannot use or understand, but entire concepts?! Who would be even capable of doing this… and why…

But maybe… there is a key to this lock. The question would be how to find it…

Ding dong bing bong!

<<It is now almost 4 pm! I invite you all in the cafeteria for new information on those videos depicting your still-alive classmates! Don’t you wanna bring them back? Of course, you were great friends! See you there!>>

Sighing, I stopped thinking about our minds. If I could find a way to uncover that mystery, it would not be standing in this room alone. Still, to avoid repercussion, I could not talk about the letter to anyone… whatever it was, I would need to find the truth by myself.

I walked with the ABC members to the cafeteria, exchanging some words with Himiko. She told me about what happened at the cage.

“Weren’t you supposed to be with Kaito?” She asked.

“I returned to my room to wash myself. He was working on the Electrohammers before I left him.”

“Do you… know that for sure?”

No, and I doubt I would recognize those even if I stood besides him the entire time.

“Yes. They looked like hammers…”

“Um… I believe you, Kirumi! I don’t think you’d lie!” She smiled.

“You didn’t see me coming back? It was just a while ago…” I lied.

She shook her head and told me the others probably did not as well. That surely must mean I was brought to my room before they started their praying session…

Kaito, Rantaro and Kaede were already in the cafeteria when we arrived. The latter was holding two pads.

“I have Miu’s video too.” He said, pointing at it. “I know we didn’t like her, but… as I said, she deserves a chance to come back too.”
“Good thing to say!” The inventor agreed. “She killed someone… but the other three did too!”

They all had their reasons, more or less valid…

Shuichi thought sacrificing himself was the only way to avoid a massacre.

Miu wanted vengeance for her sisters’ murder.

Oums followed his directives. As a robot, he could not do otherwise.

And Angie… she defended herself, never intending to kill.

Were I in their situation… I might have done the same.

“Finally, you are all here!” Monokuma exclaimed. For once, he entered from the front door.

“Finally, some manners!” Tenko echoed him.

Monokuma seemed quite displeased with the girl. “Shut your mouth, or the next time I’ll be the one showing you manners!”

She fell silent.

“Good. It’s now time to tell you how you can bring back your friends!”

“So… it’s really… is it true?” Himiko asked.

“Of course! Monokuma doesn’t lie… first of all, I’ll let you talk with them another time!”

The DeadPad Kiibo had vibrated. After that, the announcer monitor lit up to display Angie under a spotlight. She was tied to a chair and could not move.

“Angie!” Kiibo exclaimed. “I’m back!”

“I… I can’t see you… I can’t see anything…”

“Don’t worry… we’re here to help you!”

“Are we sure it’s really her?” Kaito asked, scratching his head.

The astronaut lashed out at him. “Definitely! I know what she looks like, you should too!”

It did look like her…

Another DeadPad vibrated; this time Miu appeared in the same position as Angie. She and her shared the screen, however they were in different rooms.

“Miu…!” Gonta called out for her.

“Hey! You’re still here too? Somebody help me get outta here!”

Next was Oums. Kaito shouted his name as well, though the robot did not recognize him.

Lastly, Shuichi. Kaede refrained from doing anything, as she probably knew her efforts were useless.

With the four of them positioned in each corner, Monokuma spoke.
“Four killers, four people who claimed a life are all displayed here! They are real, as you can see! You spoke with them, you can see them with your very eyes! Wouldn’t it be beautiful to have them back?”

“Cut to the chase.” Rantaro said.

“Fine.” He pouted. “The thing is, we can’t bring them all back.”

“What? Why? What does this mean?” Tenko asked various questions, though Monokuma interrupted her before she could finish.

“I think it would lessen their punishment, you know? They still killed someone… what do you think the victims would say? They would be pretty disappointed with you!”

“Hey! Talk, guys! Are you gone?” Miu protested. It seemed like they could not hear us.

“Only one of them can return. Let’s call them… the Resurrected. But you shouldn’t worry! You don’t have to decide now. In fact, you have all the time in the world!”

“S-still! You can’t make Gonta and the others choose! It’s not fair!”

“Life isn’t fair! …Oh, by the way… I didn’t finish my sentence. You can choose now or later, but… the longer you wait, the longer they’ll suffer!”

As if on cue, the four screens flashed. The four screamed as they shook violently.

“Angie!” Kiibo cried out.

“That was an electric shock.” Monokuma smirked. “Not painful… I mean, not much. I’ll increase the voltage bit by bit… but I’ll never overdo it. They’ll suffer more and more… until I change my torture! Upupupupu That… until someone is brought back!”

“What is going to happen to the three we don’t choose?” Tenko asked.

“Death. For real, this time.” He shrugged. “But I’m sure it’s better than suffering years and years subjected to torture, don’t you agree?”

“You… you are…”


That bear… he instilled hope in us, only to take it away… we should have known…

“Because, you see… this was the real punishment all along! Being tortured until death is worse than death itself!”

“We have to choose now.” Gonta said. “I… I don’t want anyone to suffer more than they should! It’s… nobody should live this, no matter what they did!”

“Choosing the resurrected should be something we all agree on.” Rantaro said. “We can’t choose them now. We’re too shocked.”

“But… but!”

“It doesn’t matter. We want Angie!” Kiibo exclaimed.
“Are you sure?”

“No!” Kaede exclaimed. “We have to think about this first!”

“Can we do a vote?” Kaito asked.

“Nah. It’s first come first served… starting from 8 p.m. today! Call me and I’ll be right at your side. Choose two names and I’ll be sure to carry out the deed!”

“Two names…?” I muttered. Monokuma told us only one could be saved.

“Oh, did I forget? Silly me! You must first choose who to resuscitate from the, let’s say, dead… then… you have to make another name, picking it from the people who are alive! That person is the Sacrifice!”

“Then, you mean…”

“Yup! A life for a life! In exchange for one of your classmates, you’ll have to sacrifice someone!”

***

My hopes…

To be with Shuichi again…

My hopes… are shattered.

No… this can’t be real… this can’t be real…

“The balance between life and death is a fragile one, you see… for a person can’t be brought back if someone else doesn’t take their place!”

“What are you spouting?!” Kaito protested. “Those four ain’t dead! You’re just killing someone!”

“It won’t be me, directly, but… well, who cares. The death will be instant, so the chosen victim won’t feel anything. That’s the point, you guys. One of those four will come back if one of you dies. Easy.”

“Why do you do this?” I asked, bitter.

“Bored. I want some action! And I’ll make it clear! No self-sacrificing! When you call me, you have to make another name! Otherwise no resurrection. That’d be too selfless. We don’t tolerate act like those at this Academy!”

After that, another shock was administered to the four blackeneds. I refuse to believe it will continue at this rate. If it does, they’ll be dead by tomorrow…!

“This is a prize! And as such, you can only claim it before the next murder occurs. If you want to bring back your favorite friend, do it without worries! You won’t be counted as a blackened, since you won’t be killing anyone! The Sacrifice will be killed in, uh, ten minutes at maximum… for the Resurrected to join you… you’ll have to wait a little more. Twelve hours, I’d say. Happy afternoon, we’ll see each other tomorrow for a new motive!”
The screen went back to displaying the hour, then Monokuma headed out. After that, Rantaro’s secret video played out, as 4 p.m. had passed.

Nobody spoke. Someone had to break the silence.

“We… we can’t sacrifice anyone here.” I laid out.

Not everyone seemed convinced, but some of my classmates immediately agreed with me.

“I’d want Oums back… but not if that means killing one of you…” Kaito said.

“The same is true for Angie.” Tenko sighed.

“B-but…” Kiibo stuttered.

Rantaro looked at him. “Don’t tell me you’d accept this prize.”

“I don’t want it, but… if we don’t do anything… they’ll be tortured endlessly!”

Kiibo’s… right.

Until someone dies, by our hand or Monokuma’s… Shuichi, Miu, Oums and Angie… will be in pain.

“Holy shit. This is just like a motive.” Kaito said. “A motive mixed in with a prize!”

“It’s either their continued suffering or a quick death for one of us.”

“I don’t think any of us wants to die!” Gonta exclaimed.

“But is it fair for them to be subjected to torture?” Kiibo protested.

“No… but-

“What?! Didn’t you say they deserved a second chance?!”

“They do! But you know what? We do too! We’re here! We survived until now!” I screamed. “I’d love to have Shuichi back! Were it for me, I’d bring every one here in this room! But if that involves taking another life, I won’t do it.”

No… not another time.

“So… you’d rather let four people suffer. Got it.”

“Gonta doesn’t like this. You’re arguing like you weren’t friends!”

Kiibo didn’t speak. He wanted to disagree, but couldn’t find the strength to speak.

“If you say bad words to each other you will only make this situation worse! We won’t speak anymore, and we’ll start killing… until no one is left!”

“Gonta…” Kiibo sighed.

“I want Angie to be back too, but… not if…”

“You are not a true friend.”
"What?"

"You are fake. An hypocrite."

"Kiibo!" Tenko exclaimed. "What are you saying!?"

"As a follower of Atua, you should always put others’ needs before yours. If you really cared about Angie, you’d gladly sacrifice your life."

"But… Gonta… doesn’t want to die! Am I… evil for wanting to survive?"

Tenko came to his defense. "You aren’t wrong! It’s Kiibo who’s confused right now!"

"Yes… think that I’m the bad one here. Exclude me. Don’t talk to me anymore. You never wanted me… the only reason you were with me is because Angie was with me, right?"

Himiko was the only one who tried to speak. "We are friends, Kiibo… you know-

"Friends! Like it was possible to make friends in this place! We’re enemies! It’s just that we don’t know that yet."

Having said that, Kiibo ran away, slamming the door behind him.

"I… I… don’t know what I said wrong…" Gonta said, crying.

"Hey! It isn’t your fault! How many times do I have to repeat that!?"

Kiibo… finally broke.

"Should we… go after him?" Himiko asked.

"It will not resolve anything. In fact, I believe it will have the opposite effect."

Kaito was worried. "But if we leave him alone he might call Monokuma to murder one of us! Just because he wants Angie back!"

"He won’t be able to do that before eight pm." I said. "That’s four hours. We’ll surely find him before then."

"Yeah, but…"

But… I don’t want anyone to suffer either. Maybe letting people be tortured is worse than death, like Monokuma said…

"I wouldn’t want to interrupt this discussion…" Rantaro spoke up. "But we have another problem to solve. Tomorrow, another secret video will be revealed. We have the chance to choose which one."

Himiko looked defeated. "They all will be played eventually… does it even matter?"

"We don’t know what might happen… maybe Monokuma will stop. Who wants to be the one?"

"None of us knows their secret… how can we predict how dangerous it is?"

"Think about the worst thing you did. Or your biggest weakness. Even if none of those is the secret, that should be your scale.”
“Kaede should be able to evaluate how dangerous my secret is.” Kirumi said. “She watched my video.”

“I also watched Kiibo’s…”

“Does anyone else know any secret regarding one of the people that are in this room?” Rantaro asked, but there were no answers.

“I think it’s up to you to choose, Kaede.”

Kiibo… or Kirumi… they both have secrets… that could lead to their death…

Kirumi placed a hand on my shoulder.

“Your reaction is enough to tell me that my secret is what I always feared it was. You should write my name.”

“But, Kirumi…”

“I know. It is a dangerous secret. However, you know that it being revealed will not make me more likely to die.”

“At this point, we should all have learned not to kill…” Gonta said, cleaning his face.

“Yes. That is why I think it should be revealed.”

“You… should tell us now.” I said.

I… couldn’t tell them that Kirumi had a terminal illness. I don’t know how did she find the strength to continue this killing game… knowing she might die after it ends…

“If you do… you won’t have to explain later…”

“No… I… I do not want you to look at me differently. I will always be the same Kirumi Tojo… the one you know.”

“Sure?” I asked.

“Yes…” She paused. “Now, if you excuse me… I have to go to the bathroom. I… I have a running nose.”

Kirumi turned and wiped her nose with her hand. Pink stains covered her skin. She was bleeding, but she hid it while leaving the room.

“I need to check on her. You can write her name and put it in the postbox, ok?”

The others nodded.

“You don’t want any help?” Kaito asked.

“It’s between Kirumi and me, sorry.”

In her hurry, Kirumi didn’t even close the bathroom door. She was near one of the sinks, wiping off the blood from her face.

It was clear that it wasn’t only the nose. From the short walk to the bathroom, she must have
coughed up blood.

I knocked on the door. I know it was useless, but I had to do it regardless.

“Who… is it?”

“It’s Kaede… I couldn’t let you go here alone.”

She sighed. “This… is exactly what I feared would happen.”

The adventurer didn’t give me the okay to enter, yet I did. It might have been rude on my part…. But I couldn’t stand there as she was suffering. I already looked at her from a distance since I watched her video. Now it was time to do something.

“You hid it well,” I said, leaning on one of the stall doors.

“I was lucky. I remember symptoms being worse…” She coughed. “Why… why are you here?”

“Maybe you won’t believe me, but… I want to help.”

“Is this the reason why you watched my video? Did you suspect something was wrong?”

“I vowed to be honest last night, so I will… I saw it because I had to have a way to hit back at you if you talked about my secret.”

“Huh.”

“I… I don’t know why. It happened. I picked it up, and it started. Once I thought about my actions, it was already too late. Plus… after discovering about your illness… I couldn’t pretend I didn’t see.”

She sighed. Then coughed. “It is useless to be angry now. I do not approve of what you did, however, I suppose it does not matter anymore.”

“I’m sorry,” I said. I was honest. “I made a lot of mistakes at the Academy. I… I want to stop them.”

“Everyone does, sadly.” She wiped off her face and turned. “So… it is fine. We should not talk about this now. It is clear that you regret your actions.”

I wished to know more about Kirumi. She appeared calm, but I could sense worry in her eyes. Was she approaching death? You can be great at hiding your emotions, but death is inescapable. Everyone fears it, more or less.

“I am done here. We should go back to the cafeteria… as we have to decide the name for tomorrow.”

I won’t insist. I already harmed her enough.

She doesn’t want to be helped, and I think I understand where she’s coming from. Even if she told us sooner we couldn’t have done anything to improve her condition.

We ended up splitting up; I didn’t follow Kirumi despite I wanted to. If she ever needed something she’d tell us, I repeated to myself.
“Is her secret that bad?” Kaito asked. He was accompanying me and Rantaro to his lab.

“You’ll discover it tonight. I already messed up by watching it.”

Rantaro supported me. “Good call. We can wait for a little longer.”

Kaito shrugged. Maybe he didn’t care as much as he pretended to. “My focus is only on the Electrohammers for now. They’ll be finished before I expected!”

“Which is?”

“If everything goes according to plan, I’ll have two test versions ready by tomorrow morning!”

“Does that mean we can escape by tomorrow?” I asked, skeptic.

“Not really…” He smiled awkwardly. “I don’t know how functional those things will be. That’s why I called them test versions. I’ll go down the Despair Road and check them out.”

“Alone?!” I exclaimed.

“Sure. I can’t put someone else in danger. This time, everything will fall on me, the genius inventor Kaito Mom-

Rantaro interrupted him. “I think crazy sounds better in this circumstance. Going there alone is a death sentence.”

The inventor tried to speak again, but this time I stopped him. “Even if your Electrohammers worked, it’d still be too dangerous…”

Not to mention, would Monokuma allow us to escape? He said that there was an escape… what we’re going to do doesn’t seem to be against the rules… until he changes them.

“Yes. It is. But I’m the one who created the Electrohammers, and that means I should be held responsible for whatever happens. To me! Not to others.”

And, if we escape… what is going to happen to the four blackeneds? Will they be killed by Monokuma?

If they are even real… question after question, problem after problem, I almost forgot that Monokuma might be playing another one of his twisted mindgames…

If we escape, we can find help. After all, they have to be trapped somewhere inside this academy! Maybe… maybe Monokuma will kill them. I know. It’s a possibility… but we don’t have better options.

The only way out for them is… that we find a way out first.

“You are free to go, but I’ll come with you.” I said to Kaito.

“No, no more. The last time I got us both trapped inside the Program.”

“What can I say? I hope you’ve learned your lesson.”

Rantaro wasn’t on board with my decision too. “Sure about this, Kaede?”

“Yes. There needs to be at least two people. If someone gets hurt, the other can call for help.”
“And what if they both get hurt?” Kaito rebutted. “It means that two people are weak, not just one.”

“Then you need a third. Here I am.” Rantaro raised his hand.

“You too?”

“I have nothing better to do.” He shrugged.

“Thanks, guys, I really mean it, but… I have to do this alone. I already explained why. I won’t listen to you. Sorry.”

That word… reminded me that there was still something I had to do.

“No. I have to say sorry to you.”

“Don’t tell me-

“I have to tell you. It’s not… right to avoid this. I was wrong… about locking you inside that bathroom. I shouldn’t have done that.”

Kaito didn’t say a word. Maybe he figured out I wasn’t finished.

“I listened to Angie and believed her… because I held resentment against you. I let emotions cloud my judgment. Because of what happened with Maki and Oums… I felt you were responsible… that you had to pay… somehow, you had to be punished.”

He looked away. “Maybe I should’ve.”

“Maybe.” I responded. Now, it doesn’t matter. And even then, it wasn’t my call to make. “But trapping you because of some vague evidence… that isn’t me… I’m the Ultimate Detective, for crying out loud! In spite of this, I got it wrong. And that only allowed for another murder to happen.”

“The two aren’t related.” Rantaro chimed in. “You can’t beat yourself up for what happened yesterday.”

“Y-yes, I know… you don’t… don’t have to tell me that. It’s that… sometimes you wonder, you know? What could’ve been different if you did the right thing… maybe nothing, maybe everything. Who knows? I just can’t help it.” I let out a deep breath. I should stop. No more looking to the past. It’s written. “You know? I shouldn’t brood about the last days. I just wanted to tell you I was mistaken and that I’m very sorry.”

I held out my hand. We shook hands.

“Don’t mention it. Is all in the past. We both recognized our faults.” He nodded. “That said, I’ll still go alone.”

I furrowed my eyebrows. “Really!?”

“What you said only convinced me more. It’s my way to atone for my mistakes.”

“Then me coming with you is a way to atone for mine!”

Rantaro was once again the one to broke our argument. “You both want to be the protagonist in this story, huh?”
“It’s not that!” We both shouted at the same time.

He shook his head. “Whatever you say. Nothing against you, Kaito, but Kaede is right this time. Going alone is as good as shooting yourself. At least find a friend who helps you.”

“What?”

“Uh… Crap, I think I’ve got my saying mixed. But you got my point. We should all go if we want to have a chance to come back here and get the others.”

***

Kiiibo

“You’re not a true friend…”

Yes, that’s what I said to Gonta…

“You’re a fake. An hypocrite.”

And I said it again, with different words.

I know what I said… that’s… that should be the only way to make Angie come back, right?

Nobody is going to choose one of us for her. That’s just how it is.

The truth is…

Maybe it would be better if those videos were a lie. To think about her being tortured… Her death must have been painful, but it would’ve still been less terrifying than being surrounded by the dark, tortured by shock after shock…

I couldn’t bring myself to make a name either. I know it’s wrong. I can’t trade someone else’s life. Not my friends, not Kirumi, Kaito, Rantaro or Kaede. I won’t be the one who lands the killing blow, but… it will still be my fault. Even if I found the strength to do such a terrible, terrible thing… what would the others say?

They’d hate me.

Everyone already does. Yes, some less than others. Some don’t care at all. It’s as if I was never a participant in this killing game, like I was already dead.

Would they care if I were in Angie’s place? Maybe, just because she’d say they should.

So, they don’t care at best. They didn’t care.

After what I said to Gonta, they should. They have to, they need to! Maybe I should’ve said more. I should’ve found something about Tenko or Himiko… too late now, I guess.

That isn’t the point.

If they hate me, it means they’ll call Monokuma and say my name.

That’s why I said those terrible things to Gonta. He’s too good to be affected by them, but the
others… they will see me as a hypocrite. Yes…

They’ll make my name… and I’ll exchange places with Angie. Everyone will be happier with her around. Why keep me around when I’m such a nasty person? No one would spend time with me in elementary and middle school either…

And imagine, not dying at the hands of one of your classmate… killing you so they can escape… it would be different. They would choose my name to help someone else. That’s an act of courage, not cowardice.

I’m sure that even Kaede and Rantaro will be willing to help Angie when she’ll come back. She’ll be the only one sad about my death… it will hurt her, but it will pass. Time heals all wounds, right? If just one person remembers me fondly, that’s… that’s perfect for me.

Knock knock!

Someone… knocked at the door.

“Kiibo. I know you’re inside.” Himiko said.

I didn’t want to answer.

“Yes. You… found me.”

But I still did. Maybe I’m too weak. Maybe my body is telling me it doesn’t want to give up yet… but… but I’ve made up my mind. Have… have I?

“Nyeh… I came around before. It’s almost 8 p.m. and Gonta is preparing dinner.”

“I’m not hungry. I’ve already stolen ice cream from the warehouse, so… if I ever need food, I can find it here.”

For a while, silence. She didn’t know what to say. Why was she even trying…

“I know you didn’t mean it… what you told Gonta.”

“Yes, I do,” I said without thinking. “He only pretends to be gentle… the same is for you and Tenko. You can go away, I don’t want you around!”

“Instead, I think you want us around.” This wasn’t Himiko. It was Tenko.

She came too?

“No.” I said, burying my head in the pillow.

“I know we haven’t known each other for a long time… but in less than three weeks, I’ve gotten to know you better than many of my friends back at home.” The caregiver said. “Because we spent every hour of those days together. We enjoyed the good parts and pulled through the bad ones… like this one.”

“If I said that I hate you, it is true! You-
I stuttered. No, I can’t. They have to believe me!

“You took advantage of Angie! You never wanted to be her or my friend, because—because... just look at what happened! She’s dead and you’ve done nothing for her! Just some prayers! Who knows if they’re even useful!”

“Nyeh... I’m your friend, Kiibo. You are mine too. It doesn’t matter how many times you say you hate me, I know it’s a lie. What’s true is that you never talked much... but you smiled, you laughed when we were together... it can’t be because there was Angie. You liked us too.”

“Those moments were real.” Tenko added. “Something friends share. All four of us know that you didn’t change your opinion of us. You’re scared that we changed our opinion of you.”

She seems to have understood me... but how do I know what she’s saying is true? I don’t see why they would think I’m a good friend. I never did anything special, I couldn’t even show them something about my talent...

Maybe they do care about me... but... if that’s true, they should still call Monokuma and tell him to kill me. It would make everyone happy.

I stood up and cleaned my face. Then I opened the door.

“Why should you keep me around instead of Angie?” I asked them. They both didn’t expect it.

“What... kind of question is that?”

“Answer me.”

“You survived until now. Angie didn’t.” Himiko said. “It’s sad, but—

“What happened to her could’ve happened to me too.”

“Right. It could have. But you are here now.”

“Yes, even if Angie’s alive... it’s not right for any of us to take her place. I wish there was an easier way to solve this problem, but there isn’t.”

“She... she’s suffering! Right now! The solution is that one of us trades places with her.”

“You know that what happened isn’t your fault?” Tenko asked. “You can’t blame yourself for what Monokuma’s doing.”

No, I can’t. But... should I be fine with what’s happening to her? Why do the others want this? Until a murder happens, she’s bound to that chair...

“It isn’t fair.” She continued. “But if any of us dies, it might be for nothing—

“Then choose me.”

There, I said it.

I tried to close the door, but Tenko stopped me.

“Don’t try to say something like that and then flee!”

I resigned.
“K-kiibo… what do you mean?” Himiko said.

“You should hate me! Tenko, you’re annoying… and Himiko, you’re just a weight for everyone else…!”

“Nyeh? How could we hate you? We’re in this together. We spent days with each other!”

“Because… of what I just said…”

“Let’s forget for a moment about this.” Tenko said. “You want to die?”

“If that means bringing Angie back, yes. I’m useless here anyway.”

“You aren’t. You are as useful as everyone else here.”

“Maybe more!” Himiko exclaimed. “I can understand why you’re feeling that…”

Right. Himiko tried to kill herself. She had the strength to try it herself… I can’t even do that.

“We’re here, remember that. If you have anything to say… we can listen to it. You can’t keep everything bottled up… right?”

I didn’t say anything. I felt conflicted.

She continued. “…Gonta wanted to organize some kind of party. He said you should come too.”

“We’ll tell everyone. It’s not exactly an AAA, but… we can do what we did during those.”

“Yes, Gonta said… that he doesn’t want to fight with anyone. Even if Kaede and Rantaro were mean to Angie, we should still accept them. Maybe they’ll change their opinion on her.”

All of this is useless… if Angie doesn’t come back, it’s as if she was dead.

“The party will start before lunch tomorrow. It doesn’t have an end. You can come whenever you want.”

“Okay. I get it. But I’m free to do what I want.”

“Of course.” Tenko nodded, then smiled. “Just know that we’d like you to come.”

I smiled absent-mindedly and closed the door. Alone, again…

I looked at the clock. 8 p.m.

From now, if someone wants… they can make a name.

After what happened, I don’t think the victim will be me… but the worst is, if I am be the sacrifice… it is not Angie who will come back. If that’s what will happen… I don’t want to die.

Chapter End Notes

Will someone make a name? Discover it next time!
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