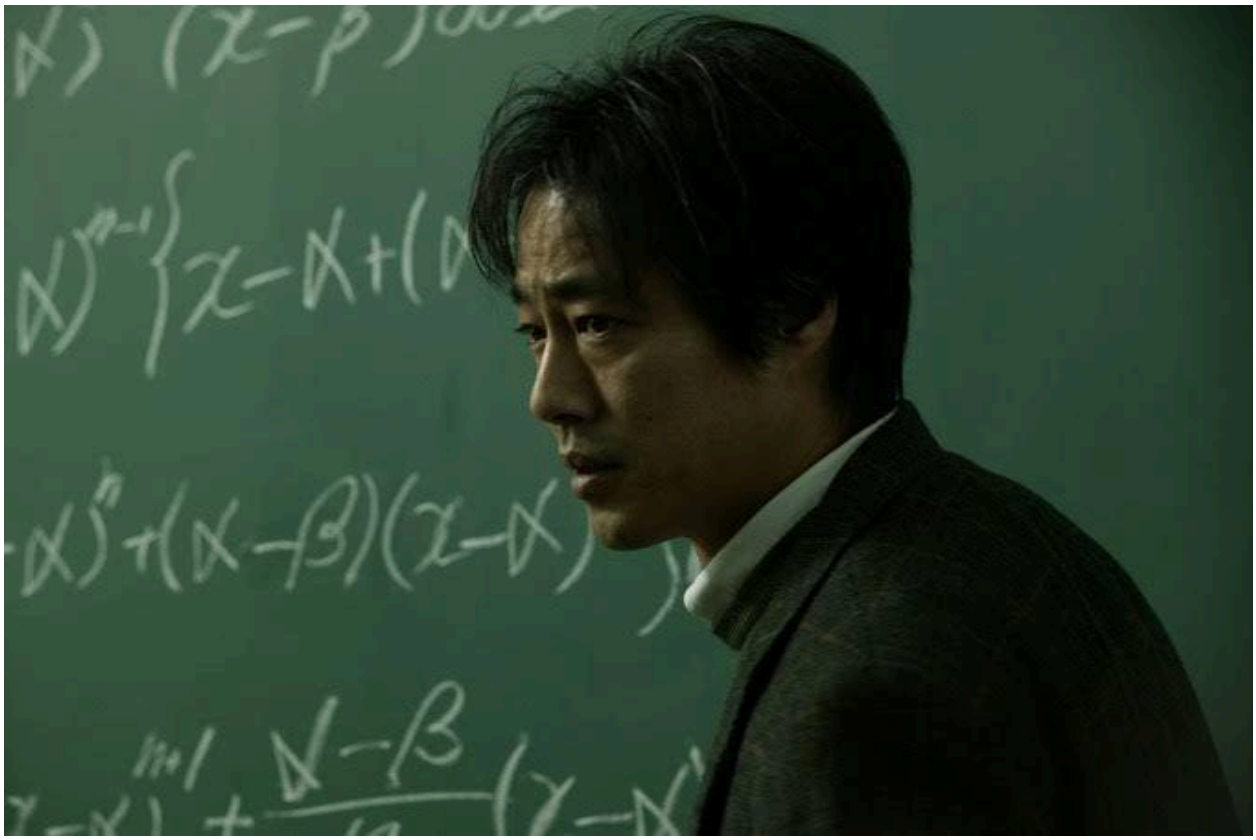
Ishigami Tetsuya



"The Devotion of Suspect-X"

Made by: Osbis

Introduction

The doc will cover up his feats from the novel and some movie scenes to give you guys some visual queues on his feats and yeah it's basically gonna be a 99%% copy paste of the novel cause it already explains everything in detail. So this doc is basically like an organised version of the novel for you to get read of his feats from the jump though I will still recommend you to just read the novel cause it's like a doc in itself and the story being peak. Plus most of the novel is filled with feats so you don't have to worry about reading gajillion words of story just to reach the part where you can read his feats.

Profiling People

Near Kiyosu Bridge, families and couples often strolled along the river, but such people seldom visited the riverbanks this far up. The long row of cardboard shanties covered in

blue vinyl sheets kept them away. This was where the homeless lived, in the shadow of an expressway overpass that ran along the west side of the river. Ishigami figured the looming overpass must have provided some shelter from the wind and rain. The fact that not a single shack stood on the other side of the river gave weight to this hypothesis, though it was possible the first squatters had settled there by accident and the others had simply followed them, preferring the safety of their community, such as it was, to solitude across the water.

A man was leaning up against the railing that ran between the walkway and the water, brushing his teeth. Ishigami had seen him around. He was past sixty, and his grayish white hair was bound in a long ponytail. He had probably given up on work. If it was physical labor he wanted, he wouldn't have been hanging around now. Those jobs were filled in the early morning hours. He wouldn't be going to the unemployment office, either. Even if they did find a job suitable for him, with that long hair of his he'd never make it as far as the interview. The chances of anyone wanting him for a job at his age were close to zero anyway.

Another man stood near his sleeping box, crushing a row of empty cans under his foot. Ishigami had witnessed this scene several times before, and he had secretly named this fellow the Can Man. The Can Man looked to be around fifty. He had good clothes and even a bicycle. Ishigami figured that his cancollecting trips kept him more active and alert than the others. He lived at the edge of the community, deep under the bridge, which must have been a position of privilege. The Can Man was a village elder, then—an old-timer, even in this crowd—or so Ishigami saw him.

A little way on from where the line of cardboard shanties petered out, another man was sitting on a bench. His coat must have once been beige, but now it was scuffed and gray. He was wearing a suit jacket underneath it, though, and beneath that a white work shirt. Ishigami guessed that he had a necktie stashed away in his coat pocket. Ishigami had labeled him the Engineer a few days earlier, after spotting him reading an industrial trade magazine. He kept his hair cropped short, and he shaved. Maybe he hoped he'd be going back to work soon. He would be off to the unemployment office today, but he probably wouldn't find a job. He would have to lose his pride before that happened. Ishigami had first seen the Engineer about ten days ago. He wasn't used to life along the river yet, still drawing an imaginary line between himself and the blue vinyl sheets. Yet here he stayed, not knowing how to live on his own without a home.

Ishigami continued walking along the river. Just before Kiyosu Bridge, he came upon an elderly woman taking three dogs for a walk. The dogs were miniature dachshunds, each with a different colored collar, one red, one blue, and one pink. As he approached, the woman seemed to notice him. She smiled and nodded. He nodded in reply. "Good morning," he offered. "Good morning. Cold, isn't it?" "Quite," he replied, grimacing for effect. The old woman bade him a good day as she passed by, and he gave her a final nod. Some days before, Ishigami had seen the woman carrying a plastic convenience

store bag with something like sandwiches in it—probably her breakfast. He surmised from this that she lived alone. Her home wouldn't be far from here. She was wearing flip-flops, and she wouldn't be able to drive a car in those. She had probably lost her husband years before and now lived in a nearby apartment with her three dogs. A big place, if she was keeping three dogs there. No doubt her pets had kept her from moving to a smaller room somewhere. Maybe she had already paid off the mortgage, but there would still be maintenance fees, so she had to scrimp and save. She hadn't been to the beauty salon once this winter. Her hair showed its natural color, free from dye.

[Observation, Social awareness, Reasoning]

Ishigami backstory

The classroom felt deserted that day, as always. The room was large enough to seat a hundred students, but there were only twenty or so there now. Most of them were in the back row so that they could slip out after attendance had been taken or work on some project of their own during the lecture. Very few undergraduates wanted to be mathematicians. In fact, Ishigami was probably the only one in his entire class. And this course, with its lectures on the historical background of applied physics, was not a popular one. Even Ishigami wasn't all that interested in the lectures, but he sat in the second chair from the left edge in the front row. He always sat there, or in the closest available position, in every room, at every lecture. He avoided sitting in the middle because he thought it would help him maintain objectivity. Even the most brilliant professor could sometimes err and say something inaccurate, after all. It was usually lonely at the front of the classroom, but on this particular day someone was sitting in the seat directly behind him. Ishigami wasn't paying his visitor any attention. He had important things to do before the lecturer arrived. He took out his notebook and began scribbling formulas. "Ah, an adherent of Erdős, I see," said a voice from behind. At first, Ishigami didn't realize the comment was directed at him. But after a moment the words sank in and his attention lifted from his work—not because he wanted to start a conversation, but out of excitement at hearing someone other than himself mention the name "Erdős." He looked around. It was a fellow student, a young man with shoulder-length hair, cheek propped up on one hand, his shirt hanging open at the neck. Ishigami had seen him around. He was a physics major, but beyond that, Ishigami knew nothing about him. Surely he can't be the one who spoke, Ishigami was thinking, when the long-haired student, still propping up one cheek, remarked, "I'm afraid you're going to hit your limits working with just a pencil and paper—of course, you're welcome to try. Might get something out of it." Ishigami was surprised that his voice was the same one he'd heard a moment earlier. "You know what I'm doing?" "Sorry—I just happened to glance over your shoulder. I didn't mean to pry," the other replied, pointing at Ishigami's desk. Ishigami's eyes went back to his notebook. He had written out some formulas, but it was only a part of the whole, the beginnings of a solution. If this guy knew what he was doing just from this, then he must have worked on the problem himself. "You've worked on this, too?" Ishigami asked. The long-haired student let his hand fall down to the

desktop. He grinned and shrugged. “Nah. I try to avoid doing anything unnecessary. I’m in physics, you know. We just use the theorems you mathematicians come up with. I’ll leave working out the proofs to you.” “But you do understand what it—what this—means?” Ishigami asked, gesturing at his notebook page. “Yes, because it’s already been proven. No harm in knowing what has a proof and what doesn’t,” the student explained, steadily meeting Ishigami’s gaze. “The four-color problem? Solved. You can color any map with only four colors.” “Not any map.” “Oh, that’s right. There were conditions. It had to be a map on a plane or a sphere, like a map of the world.” It was one of the most famous problems in mathematics, first put into print in a paper in 1879 by one Arthur Cayley, who had asked the question: are four colors sufficient to color the contiguous countries on any map, such that no two adjacent countries are ever colored the same? All one had to do was prove that four colors were sufficient, or present a map where such separation was impossible—a process which had taken nearly one hundred years. The final proof had come from two mathematicians at the University of Illinois, Kenneth Appel and Wolfgang Haken. They had used a computer to confirm that all maps were only variations on roughly 150 basic maps, all of which could be colored with four colors. That was in 1976. “I don’t consider that a very convincing proof,” Ishigami stated. “Of course you don’t. That’s why you’re trying to solve it there with your paper and pencil.” “The way they proved it would take too long for humans to do with their hands. That’s why they used a computer. But that makes it impossible to determine, beyond a doubt, whether their proof is correct. It’s not real mathematics if you have to use a computer to verify it.” “Like I said, a true adherent of Erdős,” the long-haired student observed with a chuckle. Paul Erdős was a Hungarian-born mathematician famous for traveling the world and engaging in joint research with other mathematicians wherever he went. He believed that the best theorems were those with clear, naturally elegant proofs. Though he’d acknowledged that Appel and Haken’s work on the four-color problem was probably correct, he had disparaged their proof for its lack of beauty. Ishigami felt like this peculiar visitor had somehow peered directly into his soul. “I went to one of my professors the other day about an examination problem concerning numbers analysis,” the other student said, changing the subject. “The issue wasn’t with the problem itself. It was that the answer wasn’t very elegant. As I suspected, he’d made a mistake typing up the problem. What surprised me was that another student had already come to him with the same issue. To tell the truth, I was a little disappointed. I thought I was the only one who had truly solved the problem.” “Oh that? That was nothing—” Ishigami began, then closed his mouth. “—Nothing special?” the other finished for him. “Not for a student like Ishigami—that’s what my professor said. Even when you’re at the top, there’s always something higher, eh? It was about then that I figured I wouldn’t make it as a mathematician.” “You said you’re a physics major, right?” “Yukawa’s the name. Pleased to meet you.” He extended a hand toward Ishigami. Ishigami took his hand, wondering at his peculiar new acquaintance. Then, he began to feel happy. He’d always thought he was the only weird one. * * * He wouldn’t have called Yukawa a “friend,” but from then on, whenever they chanced to meet in the hall, they would always stop and exchange a few words. Yukawa was well read, and he knew a lot about fields outside of mathematics and physics. He could even hold his own in a

conversation about literature or the arts—topics that Ishigami secretly despised. Of course, lacking any basis for comparison, Ishigami didn't know how deep the man's knowledge of such things went. Besides, Yukawa soon noticed Ishigami's lack of interest in anything other than math, and the scope of their conversations rapidly narrowed. Nonetheless, Yukawa was the first person Ishigami had met at university with whom he felt he could talk intelligently and whose ability he respected. Over time, however, their chance encounters became less and less frequent. Their paths took them in different directions, one in the math department, the other in physics. A student who maintained a certain grade point average was allowed to switch departments, but neither of them had any desire for such a switch. This is really the proper choice for both of us, Ishigami thought. Each on the path that suits him best. They shared a common desire to describe the world around them with theorems, but they approached this task from opposite directions. Ishigami built his theorems with the rigid blocks of mathematical formulas while Yukawa began everything by making observations. When he found a mystery, he would go about breaking it down. Ishigami preferred simulations; Yukawa's heart was in actual experimentation. As time went on Ishigami occasionally heard rumors about his acquaintance. He was filled with genuine admiration when he heard, in the autumn of their second year in graduate school, that a certain American industrial client had come to buy the rights to the "magnetized gears" Yukawa had proposed in a thesis. Ishigami didn't know what had become of Yukawa after their master's program was finished; he himself had already left the university by then.

Professors viewed Ishigami as a student that can only be seen once every fifty or a hundred years. Manabu Yukawa called Ishigami a genius even more than himself. Even though they were in separate departments, stories about Ishigami made the rounds. Ishigami didn't care for computers, so he would lock himself in the school lab, working out problems with paper and pencil all night. When they saw him, it was usually from the back while he sat hunched over a desk—that's how he got the nickname 'the Buddha.' A term of respect, of course.

[FSIQ, Adverse capacity, Perception]
[Thinking, Reasoning, Charisma]

The murder Night

Yasuko Hanaoka is a divorced single mother who works at a bento shop. Yasuko's abusive ex-husband, Togashi, shows up one day to extort money from her. He threatens both her and her daughter, Misato. The situation quickly escalates into domestic violence, prompting Yasuko and Misato to kill Togashi in self-defense.

Ishigami knows

Due to the commotion in the room when the murder took place, Ishigami went to check if things were okay. Yosuko made up a story to cover it "It was a bug. A cockroach." "A

cockroach?" "Yes. A cockroach on the wall, and I—my daughter and I were trying to get it. I'm afraid we made quite a ruckus…" so ishigami left. In the guilt of accidental murder she started wondering what she should do.
After some time Ishigami calls her on the phone wondering what she is gonna do, is she gonna call the police if not then he can help her with covering up the murder. Yasuko thinks Ishigami must have heard them, that's how he figured the murder out but the building was near sound proof.

Ishigami pointed to a corner of the room. An empty can lay there on its side. Some ash had spilled from it onto the floor. "When I knocked on your door a few minutes ago, I smelled cigarette smoke. Figuring you had a guest, I looked for shoes by the door, but I couldn't see any. I glanced into the room, and noticed it looked like someone was under your kotatsu, and the cord was pulled. But if someone wanted to hide, they could've just gone into the back room. Which meant that the person under the kotatsu wasn't hiding there, they had been hidden there. When I put that together with the thumping noises I'd heard, and the fact that your hair was unusually disheveled, it wasn't hard to imagine what had happened. Oh, and one more thing: there aren't any cockroaches in this building. I've lived here several years now and never seen one." His voice was calm, never rising, his expression never changing. He's terribly levelheaded, and smart, she thought. How else could he have accurately reconstructed such an elaborate scenario after only a glance through her front door? This was the small opening in the front door and even in that small opening most of his vision was blocked by Yasuko.





[Observation, Reasoning, Emotional management] [VSI, PSI, CPI]

At the time Ishigami didn't know about the daughter being the real killer so the mother tries to twist the narrative and tells him that she killed him to save misato from going to jail but "I know you didn't kill him by yourself. Your daughter must have helped you." Ishigami said, Yasuko shook her head. "No, that's not true. I did do it myself. She only just came home—she came home right after I killed him. She had nothing to do with it." It was clear Ishigami wasn't believing a thing she said. He sighed and looked at Misato. "I think hiding it is only making it harder on your daughter." "I'm not lying. You have to believe me!" Yasuko laid her hand on Ishigami's knee. Ishigami stared at her hand for a moment, then looked back at the corpse. Then he tilted his head. "What matters is how the police see things. I'm afraid they'll not be fooled so easily." "Why not?" Yasuko asked, before realizing that she had as good as admitted her lie. Ishigami pointed to the corpse's right hand. "There's bruising on the wrist and the back of his hand. I think I can even make out finger marks. I'm guessing he was strangled from behind, and naturally tried to protect his throat. These marks came from someone stopping him from doing so. The evidence is plain to see." "It was me," Yasuko insisted. "I did that, too." "Ms. Hanaoka, that's impossible." "Why?" "You strangled him from behind, right? How could you pull his hands forward at the same time? It's impossible. You'd need four arms."

"Is there some way we don't have to turn ourselves in?" Misato asked. Yasuko looked up. Ishigami tilted his head, thinking. His face betrayed no emotion. "It seems to me that you have two options: hide the fact that anything happened, or hide the fact that you had anything to do with it. Either way, you have to get rid of the body." After some thought they decide to hide the body.

[Social awareness, Emotional understanding, Emotional management, Reasoning, Thinking]

Clean crime scene

“Wouldn’t somebody find the body? If we hid it, that is,” Yasuko asked. “We haven’t decided whether we will hide the body yet or not,” Ishigami replied. “Sometimes it’s best not to conceal anything. We’ll decide what to do with the body once we have all the information at hand. The only thing we know now for certain is that we can’t leave him lying here like this.” “Information about this man,” Ishigami explained, looking down at the corpse. “About his life. I need to know his full name, address, age, occupation. The reason he came here. Where he was planning to go afterward. Does he have family? Please tell me all that you know.” but 1st we should clean up this room as quickly as possible. I’m sure there are mountains of evidence here as it is now.” Before he had even finished talking, Ishigami set about lifting the head and torso of the corpse. “Move it? To where?” “To my place,” Ishigami said, with a look that indicated this was the obvious choice.

The daughter is given the work to clean the crime scene as much as possible.

While the mother is questioned for information. Did she plan on meeting him today? The answer was no, which rules out the possibility of any witnesses to track Togashi's last location to her. He put his hand into the corpse’s jacket pocket. A rolled-up ten-thousand-yen bill came out, then another.

“That’s the money I—”

“You gave him this?” She nodded, and Ishigami offered her the money. Yasuko didn’t reach for it. Ishigami went to where his suit hung on the wall nearby and pulled his wallet from the pocket. Removing twenty thousand yen he replaced it with the bills from the dead man’s jacket. “I can appreciate why you wouldn’t want his,” Ishigami said, handing the money he had taken from his own wallet to Yasuko. As obviously he doesn't want any trace fingerprints plus the police might check the cash and some people might recognise the cash to be there that they spend on bento shop yasuko works. Ishigami keeps searching the corpse’s pockets again. He finds Togashi’s wallet. There was a little money inside, a driver’s license, and a few receipts. “Shinji Togashi … West Shinjuku, Shinjuku Ward. Do you think that’s where he was living now?” he asked Yasuko, “I’m not sure, but I don’t think so. I know he lived in Nishi-Shinjuku a while back, but he said something—it sounded like he’d gotten thrown out because he couldn’t pay the rent.” Yasuko answers.

“It looks like the driver’s license was renewed a year ago, which means he must have kept the papers for his old location while finding another place to actually live.” “I’m pretty sure he moved around a lot. He didn’t have a steady job, so he wouldn’t have been able to rent anything long-term.” Ishigami figures. Ishigami remarked, his eyes falling on one of the receipts. It read “Rental Room Ogiya.” The price had been ¥5,880 for two

nights, paid up front, it seemed. Ishigami calculated the tax in his head and came up with a price of ¥2,800 per night.

He showed the receipts to Yasuko. "I think this is where he was staying now. And if he doesn't check out, someone there will empty out his room. If he left anything behind, they might wonder, and call the police. Of course, they might not want the trouble and just do nothing at all. They probably have people skip out on them all the time, which is why they make them pay up front. Still, it's unwise to be too optimistic." Ishigami resumed searching the corpse's pockets. He found the key. There was a round tag on it with the number 305.

"Is there anyone he kept in contact with, anyone close that you know of?" Ishigami resumed his questions. "I don't know. I haven't seen him for years."

"Did you hear what he was planning to do tomorrow? Did he say if he was going to meet anyone?" "No," Yasuko said, her head sagging.

"He didn't tell me anything like that. I'm sorry. I know I'm not much help." "No, I just had to ask. Of course you wouldn't know any of those things. Please don't worry about it." Ishigami reached out with a gloved hand and pushed open the dead man's lips, looking inside his mouth. He could see a gold crown on one of the molars. "He'll have dental records, then." "He went to the dentist regularly when we were married."

"How long ago was that?" "We were divorced five years ago." "Five years?" That was too recent for any reasonable hope that they had thrown out his charts.

"Does he have a criminal record?" "I don't think so. Of course, I don't know what he's been doing since we broke up." "So it's a possibility, then." "I suppose…" Even if the man hadn't committed any major crimes, he could easily have been fingerprinted for some minor traffic violation. Ishigami didn't know whether police forensics bothered comparing fingerprints with traffic records, but it wouldn't hurt to consider the possibility. So, no matter how they disposed of the body, its identity would eventually come to light if it was found. They would have to resign themselves to that. Still, they needed time. Leaving fingerprints or teeth behind could hurt their chances.

The situation wasn't easy, for sure. Once they discovered the identity of the body, the police would almost surely come calling on Yasuko. Ishigami wasn't sure she or her daughter would be able to withstand tough questioning from the city detectives. Preparing a weak cover story wouldn't be enough. As soon as the detectives found an inconsistency, the whole thing would fall apart, and the Hanaokas would likely just blurt out the truth. What they needed was a perfect defense based on perfect logic.

Whatever you do, don't panic, he told himself. Panicking wouldn't help them reach a solution. And he was sure their problem had a solution. Every problem had one. Ishigami

closed his eyes. It was a habit he had developed when confronting particularly ornery mathematical challenges—all he had to do was shut out all information from the outside world, and the formulas would begin to take shape. Except this time, it wasn't formulas that filled his head.

[Info gathering, Thinking, Reasoning, Social awareness, Fabrication, Emotional management, Cognitive discipline]

Crime in different Time

When he saw Togashi's body, Ishigami already had a program in his head ready to load. It would be difficult to completely dispose of the body. No matter how carefully he did so, he could never reduce the chances of discovery to a perfect zero. And even if he got lucky and succeeded in concealing what had happened, it would do nothing to ease the pain in Yasuko's heart. She and her daughter would live in constant fear of discovery. He could not bear to visit such hardship on them. There was only one way to put Yasuko and her daughter truly at peace. He would have to detach them completely from the case. He would make it seem as though they were connected, and yet there could be no doubt that they had nothing to do with the murder.

Create an Alibi as they don't have one. Ishigami created 3 plans, 1 of course to hide the crime so that there is no arrest of Yasuko or Misato, 2 was to get rid of police suspicion of her. 3 was a contingency plan (Trump card) if police kept pressing Yasuko which might lead to Yasuko and Misato cracking under pressure he will frame himself as a murderer of togasi. He was prepared to take her place in a jail cell, should the situation call for that. His entire plan was constructed around that commitment. To put it another way, he knew he could do anything, as long as it didn't interfere with that trump card. Yet what a trump card it is! Who could possibly follow through on such a plan? Ishigami knew it would be near impossible himself. That's why he cut off his own path of retreat—so he would never be able to turn back once things were put into motion.

Creation of Real Alibi

The night of March 9 togashi was killed, they didn't have the alibi of the day. He would kill someone else and then make the corpse look like Shinji Togashi. Then he would slowly reveal to the police when and how the victim had been slain. The more the investigation progressed, the less suspicion would fall on Yasuko Hanaoka. Why should it? She didn't kill that man by the river. That wasn't evidence of the murder of Shinji Togashi. The police would be working on an entirely separate case without them even knowing about it. Ishigami because he often walked along the river here. He'd had plenty of time to consider the homeless who lived there and their lives. Why were they living at all? Were they just killing time, waiting there for the day when they would eventually die? When they died, would anyone notice? Would anyone care? he knew exactly the right person to kill a homeless person who could disappear overnight and no one would bother looking

for them, or worry where they had gone. Not even filed a missing persons report. A person that had no contact with their family anymore, if their family is even alive.

That was when he decided to use the Engineer—the homeless man who had so recently begun living at the camp near ShinOhashi Bridge. Remember Ishigami profiling this guy? Other homeless people had already given up on society as they had been homeless for too long but this guy was fairly new to this lifestyle so he wanted to get out of it hoping to find a job which is exactly what Ishigami offers him.

On the morning of March 10 after Yasuko Hanaoka killed Shinji Togashi, Ishigami approached the Engineer. He had found him sitting apart from the other homeless as usual. "I have a job for you," Ishigami had told the man. He explained that he wanted him to help as an observer on a riverworks project that would last several days. He had noticed that the Engineer had a background in construction. The Engineer had been suspicious at first. "Why me?" he had asked. "Well," Ishigami had explained, "I'm in a bit of a tight situation." And he'd told how the man he had previously asked to observe had been in an accident and was now unable to do the job—and, without an observer there, his firm wouldn't get permission to proceed with the work. He needed someone to stand in for the absent man. He'd offered an advance of fifty thousand yen, and the Engineer had agreed.

Ishigami had then taken the man to the rental room where Togashi had been staying. There he'd given him Togashi's clothes to put on and had told him to sit tight until that evening. When evening came, he'd brought the Engineer out to Mizue Station. Ishigami had stolen a bicycle from Shinozaki Station in advance. He had chosen the newest bicycle he could find, to assure that the owner would promptly report the theft. He had prepared another bicycle as well. This one he had stolen from Ichinoe, the station before Mizue. It was an old bicycle, with a broken lock. He'd given the new bicycle to the Engineer. Ishigami had both tires of the bicycle flat to prevent someone else from riding off with it. The two of them had gone to the river, soon arriving at the spot along the Old Edogawa River. Ishigami couldn't have anyone know about the second murder—especially not the Hanaokas. So he had used the very same murder weapon and had strangled the victim in the very same way. He. Afterwards he smashed his face to hide the fact that he wasn't Shinji Togashi. Technically, he didn't have to burn off the man's fingerprints, because he had already planted them in Togashi's rented room, which would have led the police to believe that it was Togashi's body anyway. Yet if he had crushed the man's face and not removed his fingerprints, leaving the job half done as it were, it would have raised suspicion. His hand was forced by his fear that it might take too long for the police to discover the body's identity. Which is why he left fingerprints on the bicycle. For the same reason he left the man's clothes only half burned. Ishigami made sure that the police correctly ascertained the time of the homeless man's murder. He knew the autopsy would reveal a relatively accurate time of death, but he was afraid the body might not get discovered in time, which would make an accurate time of death much harder to determine. If the span of the possible time of death extended to the

evening of the day before, in other words, the evening of March 9, that would be very bad for his plan because that was the evening when Togashi actually was killed. Neither Yasuko Hanaoka nor her daughter had an alibi for them. To prevent that from happening, he needed proof that the bicycle had been stolen on or after the tenth. So chose a bicycle that most likely had been left there for less than a day, so the owner would be able to determine roughly when it had been stolen.

Now that the police are investigating a completely different murder taken in a completely different time. March 11 the body of the homeless person was found from the police perspective. The crime scene was on the Tokyo side of the Old Edogawa River, not far from a sewage treatment facility. Just across the water, on the river's other bank, was Chiba Prefecture. The body had been left on the side of the sloping embankment, wrapped in a blue plastic tarp of the kind often used in factory yards. An elderly man out for a jog along the river had called it in. He'd seen something that looked like a foot protruding from the tarp and had lifted the plastic for a peek. According to Kishitani's report, the body had been left in a sorry state. It had been stripped of clothes, shoes, even socks. The face had been smashed—like a split melon, The fingers had been burned, too, completely destroying any fingerprints. The corpse was male. Marks around the neck indicated he had been strangled. There were no other wounds apparent on the rest of the body.

There was a bicycle nearby. Some people from the local station in Edogawa already came to pick it up. Probably trash somebody threw out but It was a little new for that. And both of the tires were flat. Someone put a hole in them with a nail or something. Hmph. The victim's, then? Hard to say. It had a registration number on it, so they might be able to find out who owned it.

The face and fingerprints were destroyed, which means that the killer didn't want anyone to know who the victim was. Of course, that also means, if we find out who the victim was, it should be easy to identify the killer.

The bicycle they found near was reported stolen. Asking the owner's not going to do them much good. It's not like she knows who stole her bike. Though they might get a glimpse of the path the killer took that day, which is something.

Following the memo and a map, the two detectives hunt for the address. Finally they found it: a modern-looking place with white walls. A nameplate by the door read "Yamabe." Yoko Yamabe bicycle.

According to her, the bike had been stolen the day before—in other words, on March 10—sometime between eleven A.M. and ten P.M. She had gone out to meet a friend in Ginza, gone shopping and had dinner, and by the time she'd returned to Shinozaki Station, it was already past ten o'clock at night. She had taken the bus home.

The bicycle was chained locked but there was no mention of chain lock in the crime scene.

They observe the location of where the bike originally was, a section of sidewalk about twenty yards from the small supermarket in front of the station. There were a few bicycles lined up there now. There was a bank branch office nearby, and a bookstore. There probably would have been quite a bit of pedestrian traffic during the day and early evening. Someone crafty enough could have cut the chain quickly during that time and taken the bike as though it were their own, but it was far more likely that the deed had been done later, after the streets had cleared somewhat.

The bicycle was newly bought only last month which made Yoko yamabe mad, leading her to report it missing.

The forensics team got several fingerprints off the bicycle's handlebars, frame, and seat. They had found other evidence as well. What they thought to be the victim's clothes had turned up, stuffed into a five-gallon oil can, several hundred yards from the place where the body was found. The clothes were partially burned. There was a jacket, a sweater, pants, socks, and underwear. Forensics guessed that the killer had set fire to the clothes and then left. But the fire had gone out before finishing the job, and they hadn't burned as well as he had hoped. There was nothing special about the style or manufacture of the clothes. All of them were standard designs, common throughout the country. A police artist had used the clothing and the shape of the victim's body to draw an approximation of how he had looked before he was killed. Some policemen had already been to Shinozaki Station, illustration in hand, to ask around. However, without anything distinctive about either the person or the clothes, they had gathered no information of any worth.

A picture of the illustration went up on the nightly news that evening, and a mountain of calls came in, but none of them offered any positive link to the body from beside the Old Edogawa. Meanwhile, the police had compared everything they knew about the victim to the missing persons list, but they were unable to find even the thinnest thread connecting anyone to their John Doe. Only a survey of hotels and hostels in the Edogawa area, checking to see if any single men had abruptly disappeared, turned up something of merit. A customer staying at a place in Kamedo called Rental Room Ogiya had gone missing on March 11, the day the body was found. When he hadn't shown up at the desk at checkout time, one of the staff had gone to check the room and had found it empty, save for a few of the man's personal belongings. The manager hadn't bothered to inform the police because the customer had already paid in advance.

Forensics descended on the place immediately, picking up every fingerprint and loose piece of hair. Finally they struck gold. One of the hairs was a perfect match with those on the body. There were also fingerprints on the walls and belongings that matched those from the stolen bicycle. The missing man had signed his name in the rental room's

guestbook: Shinji Togashi. His address was listed as being in West Shinjuku, Shinjuku Ward. The neighborhood they had entered was mainly residential, though there were a few small shops here and there, all of which felt like they had been around for years—real momand-pop establishments. Most other parts of town had long since been overrun with supermarkets and chain stores, but this area was different. It was a old downtown district, Shitamachi. Maybe that's what makes it feel different. This isn't a terrible place for a single mother to raise her daughter.

They should be arriving at the apartment building soon. The memo gave a name, too: Yasuko Hanaoka. At the time of his death, Shinji Togashi had still been a registered occupant at the address he'd left in the guestbook at the rental room. It just wasn't where he had actually been living. Once they'd identified the body, the police had put out a bulletin on the television and in the newspapers, asking for anyone who knew anything about the dead man to contact their local law enforcement. That had turned up nothing. But the real estate agent who had rented Togashi the old apartment in Shinjuku knew where he used to work: a used-car place. He hadn't been there long, though, quitting before his first year was up. Still, the lead had been enough to give the investigation some legs. It turned out that the victim had once been an import luxury car salesman, and he'd been fired when he was caught skimming from the till. He hadn't been charged, however. The detectives had found out about it when they went to the car dealership to do some questioning. The importer was still doing business, but no one on staff there now knew much about Togashi—or at least, no one who was willing to talk. The investigators did learn that, at the time that he was working there, Togashi had been married. And according to someone who knew him after the divorce, he had made a habit of visiting his ex-wife, and the ex-wife had a child from a former marriage. It wasn't hard for the detectives to trace their movements. Pretty soon, they had an address for Yasuko and Misato Hanaoka: the apartment they were heading for now, here in the Morishita district of Eto Ward.

An alibi for Yasuko and Misato were created on the day of the homeless guy he murdered. When the detectives asked about her alibi, she had told them exactly what she had done. The alibi wasn't solid but it stands up under pressure because Yasuko and misato were answering truthfully to police questioning of march 10 but the murder took place on march 9 which also vastly reduced the pressure from the police questioning as they didn't have to lie. Which is also a trap actually as If he had given Yasuko and Misato an ironclad alibi, the police would have had to point their suspicions elsewhere. They might even suspect a bait and switch. Someone might even get the bright idea that the victim they'd found wasn't really Shinji Togashi. Ishigami was afraid of that, so he made everything point to Yasuko Hanaoka as the killer, and Shinji Togashi as the victim while making sure there isn't proof of the muder being done by Yasuko to not get her arrested. Once police determined that the body was likely Shinji Togashi's, they would start to suspect Yasuko. Because her alibi was flimsy.

Yasuko and Misato didn't know that togashi had been killed. They probably hadn't seen it on the news or read it in the papers. The story hadn't garnered too much attention from the press, after all. Mr. Togashi didn't have any other family, so they thought Yasuko might know something. But after the divorce they barely met. The last time she saw him was over a year ago. No contact, No phone calls, No letters from that moment. Togashi died on March 10, the day Yasuko and misato went to see a movie. At a place called the Rakutenchi in Kinshicho. They left around six thirty She went on to describe the movie they'd seen. It was one Kusanagi had heard of; the third installment in some popular series out of Hollywood. After watching the movie they ate at a ramen shop in the same building, and then we went out to karaoke. They do this once every month or two. They usually only go for about an hour and a half. Any longer and they will get home too late. They returned home around after 11 O' Clock.

He had given her explicit instructions about what she was to do on the night of the tenth. The movie, ramen, karaoke, She had done everything according to his instructions, not knowing why she was doing any of it.

From the police perspective: The karaoke box checked out, The person at the desk there knew her face. And they were in the book, from nine forty for an hour and a half. Considering the time, they probably caught the 7 o'clock show at the theater. It ended at 9-10. If they went to eat ramen after that, their alibi still holds. The place where Ms. Yasuko used to work. Togashi dropped in there on the fifth of March. Five days before he was murdered. Apparently, he was asking about Yasuko. Only karaoke alibi checks out there are still things they have to be checked so make sure to investigate every piece of her alibi.

So they would continue suspecting her, which meant they'd never suspect that the body wasn't that of her ex-husband. About the real dead body of Togashi it is disposed of in a different area so even if the police of that area finds the body it would be outside of our jurisdiction. Avoiding the murder of Shinji Togashi being linked to his own crime of killing the homeless guy. Togashi's body he had cut into six parts in his bathtub, tossing each one separately into the Sumida River in bags weighted down with heavy rocks. He did this all under cover of darkness, in three separate locations on three separate nights. He knew that at least some of them would be found at some point, but he didn't care. The police would never be able to learn to whom the body parts belonged. According to their records, Togashi would have already been dead and his body found—and a man couldn't die twice. [Situational awareness, Thinking, Reasoning, Strategy, Planning, Misdirection, Concealment, Anticipation, Emotional understanding, Emotional management, Trap setting, Deception, Adverse capacity]

Clearance of Suspicion

Now that the police suspect Yasuko it was time to get rid of that suspicion. After the police questioning Yasuko finished and were leaving the apartment Ishigami appeared in their observation, entering his room which is right beside Yasuko room knowing police will question him about Yasuko as he was the neighbour of Yasuko. Police rang the door bell. Ishigami had taken off his coat, revealing a sweater and slacks beneath. His face was blank as he looked at the police. Almost everyone viewed him with suspicion at first, if not alarm, but his face revealed absolutely nothing. They asked him for some cooperation showing the man the police badge. Still, Ishigami's face didn't twitch a muscle.

"What's this about?" Ishigami asked without even glancing at the badge.

It was a picture of Togashi from when he had been a used-car salesman.

"This is a photo from a few years ago, but—have you seen anyone resembling this man around here recently?" Ishigmai stared intently at the photograph for a moment, then looked up at the detective.

"Can't say I know him."

"Right, I'm sure you don't. But, I was wondering if you had seen anyone who looked like him?"

"Where?"

"Well, for example, somewhere in the local area?" The man squinted again at the photograph. This is a dead end, thought Kusanagi.

"Sorry, never seen him," "I don't really remember the faces of people I pass on the street, anyway." Ishigami said.

"Yes, of course," Kusanagi said, already regretting having come back to question the man. But, since he was here, he might as well be thorough about it.
"Might I ask, do you always come home at this time?"

"I suppose it depends on the day. Sometimes I'm late with the team."

"Team?"

"I supervise a judo club. I'm responsible for closing up the dojo at the end of the day."

"Oh, you're a schoolteacher, then?"

“Yes, high school,” Ishigami replied, and he told them the name of the school where he worked.

“I see. Well, then, I’m sorry to have bothered you. You must have had a long day,” Kusanagi apologized, lowering his head. It was then that he noticed the mathematics textbooks piled up in the entranceway. Oh, great, he thought, a lump growing in his stomach, a math teacher. Math had been Kusanagi’s worst subject in school. “Ah, I was wondering—” he said, trying to shake off the feeling. “Your name here on the plate by the door … Do these characters read ‘Ishigami’?” “That’s right, I’m Ishigami.”

“Mr. Ishigami, I was wondering if you remember what time you came home on the tenth of March?”

“The tenth of March? Why, did something happen?”

“No, nothing to do with you, sir. We’re just gathering what information we can about events in the local area that day.”

“I see, well, March 10, huh?” Ishigami stared briefly into the distance before returning his gaze to Kusanagi.

“I’m pretty sure I came home directly that day. I would say around seven o’clock.” “Anything unusual happened next door that evening?”

“Next door?”

“Yes, um, Ms. Hanaoka’s place?” Kusanagi asked, lowering his voice.

“Did something happen to Ms. Hanaoka?” Ishigami replied

“No, nothing. We’re just gathering information.”

“I don’t recall anything unusual, no,” Ishigami replied.

“No loud noises, or talking?”

“Hmm.” Ishigami scratched his neck. “Sorry, nothing comes to mind.”

“I see. Are you friends with Ms. Hanaoka by any chance?”

“Well, she lives next door, so we meet each other now and then and say hello. But that’s about all.”

“I see. Thanks, and we’re sorry to have bothered you.”

“Not at all,” Ishigami said, nodding and reaching for the door. Kusanagi saw that he was lifting his mail from the box that hung on the inside of the door. The detective’s eyes went wide for moment when he saw the words “Imperial University” written on one of the letters.

“Erm,” the detective said hesitantly. “Did you graduate from Imperial University?”

“Huh?” Ishigami started, his eyes opening a little wider. Then he, too, noticed the address on the letter in his hand. “Oh, this? Must be an alumni letter. Does whatever you’re investigating have anything to do with the university?”

“No, I had a friend from there that is all.” “Oh, yes, I see.” “Er, sorry for the trouble.” The detective bowed curtly, turned, and departed.

Putting an act of a guy with confusion, not knowing anything about the case or yusako. Further solidifying the alibi of Yasuko and Misato.

The detectives had no reason to suspect him aside from him being weird which was also part of the act done purposefully that will solidify his trump card plan. They don't see the motive behind his actions as from their perspective he and she barely knows or talks to each other.

[Acting skill, Deception, SQ]

After the detectives are done with his questioning, he goes to the nearest quiet public phone where he had a reasonable chance of not being observed. As he had given the instruction of late-night telephone call along with her alibi. He didn’t own a cell phone, and he couldn’t use the landline in his own apartment. As he walked, he went back over the details of his conversation with the police. He was sure he hadn’t given them a single reason to suspect he was involved in any way. But there was always a chance, however slight. If the police suspected Yasuko, they would have to figure that a man had been involved in disposing of the body. They might start looking for someone connected to the Hanaokas, a man who would be willing to dirty his hands for them. They might even consider investigating the mathematics teacher who lived next door himself.

Ishigami knew he had to avoid going to their apartment, of course. He had been avoiding any direct contact. That was why he didn’t call from his own house. The investigators might see from the phone records that he had made frequent calls to Yasuko Hanaoka and find it suspicious. But what about Benten-tei? He still hadn’t made up his mind about that. All things being equal, he should probably avoid the place for a while. But the police might come around asking questions. The owners might tell them about how the mathematician who lived next to Yasuko came by there every day to buy lunch. Wouldn’t

they find it odd if he stopped coming right after the day of the murder? Shouldn't he keep going there as usual so as not to raise suspicions? Ishigami didn't trust his own capacity to come up with a logical answer to this question, because he knew that, in his heart, he wanted to keep going to Benten-tei. That lunchbox shop was his connection to Yasuko. If he didn't go there, he would never see her at all. He arrived at the public phone and inserted a telephone card. The card had been a gift from another teacher—the front showed a picture of the teacher's newborn baby. The number he dialed was for Yasuko's cell phone. They might have put a tap on her home phone, after all. The police claimed they didn't wiretap citizens, but he didn't trust that one bit.

"Yes?" came Yasuko's voice over the line. She would have already guessed that it was he, because of the public number. He had told her he would contact her this way. Ishigami listened to every word Yasuko said, organized it in his head, analyzed it, and committed it to memory. It seemed that, for the time being, the police didn't directly suspect Yasuko. They had probably just been following procedure when they asked after her whereabouts. They might have someone check out her story, but it probably wouldn't be a high priority. But if they found out that Togashi had visited on the tenth, that he had come to see Yasuko, they wouldn't be so friendly the next time they turned up. And the first thing they were bound to check out would be her statement that she hadn't seen Togashi recently. Luckily, he had already prepared her for that eventuality.

He asks about the daughter if the detectives have questioned her, the answer was no so he tells them to be prepared as the detectives will most likely ask her. "You know what to do if that happens, right?" "Yes, you were very clear. I think she'll be okay." "I don't mean to repeat myself, but remember, there's no need to make an act of it. She just needs to answer the questions they ask as mechanically as possible." "Yes, I told her that." "Did you show the police your ticket stubs?" "No, I didn't. You told me I didn't have to show them unless they asked for them specifically." "Then that's fine. By the way, where did you put the stubs?" "In a kitchen drawer." "Put them inside the theater pamphlet. Nobody goes out of their way to store ticket stubs. They might suspect something if you have them in your drawer."

"The owners at Benten-tei … do they know about me going there to buy my lunch?" "Well, yes, actually. The owners were saying they were happy you were such a reliable regular." "And they know that I'm your neighbor?" "Yes".

Ishigami headed home, elated. But his high didn't last long when he remembered what she had said about Benten-tei. He realized that he had made a mistake when talking to the detectives. When they asked how well he knew Yasuko, he had only told them that they said hello when they chanced to meet. He should also have told them about the lunchbox shop.

[Info gathering, Thinking, Reasoning]
[Prediction, Situational Awareness, WMI]

The desk in front of him was covered with a mountain of paper, each sheet filled with mathematical formulas. It was his custom to do battle with his formulas every evening after his return from school. He'd gotten out early today—no judo practice—but even so, he wasn't making much progress. In fact, he hadn't made much progress for several days now. He just sat in his room, listening for sounds next door, wondering when the detectives would come back.

They had come again the night before—the same two who had visited Ishigami's apartment. Yasuko had told him they'd come to check her alibi at the movie theater, as expected. They'd asked if anything memorable had happened. If she had met anyone she knew on the way in, or way out, or even during the movie. Did she have the ticket stubs, by any chance? Did she buy anything in the theater? Did she have receipts? What had the movie been about, who had been the lead actor—?

As they hadn't asked anything about the karaoke box, he assumed they'd called on that establishment already. Of course that part of the alibi checked out. Ishigami had chosen the place because he knew it would. Yasuko said she had shown the detectives the ticket stubs, the receipt for the program, just as Ishigami had instructed. Other than describing the plot of the movie, she'd told the police nothing. She hadn't seen anyone, and nothing memorable or out of the ordinary had occurred. Ishigami had told her to say all of this, too. The detectives had left, seemingly satisfied, but he didn't think for a moment that they had given up yet. The fact that they had come back to check on the movie theater alibi meant they had enough data to make them suspicious of Yasuko. Ishigami wondered just what those data were. He took Telephone card, wallet, and room key in hand, as he stepped out of his apartment. He was just on the stairs when he heard footsteps coming up from below. He slowed his pace and lowered his eyes. It was Yasuko. She didn't seem to notice who he was right away. Just before they passed, her feet stopped. She had seen him. Even looking down at his feet, Ishigami could tell she wanted to say something. Ishigami spoke first. "Good evening." He tried to say it like he would say it to anyone he happened to meet, his tone relaxed, his voice low. He didn't make eye contact or slow his pace. Passing Yasuko, he continued down the stairs in silence. There was no telling when the police might be watching, so whenever they did meet, they had to act like neighbors and nothing more. Another of Ishigami's own instructions. Yasuko had paused for a moment in her ascent, but then—perhaps remembering what he had told her—replied, "Good evening" in a small voice, then continued up the stairs without another word. Reaching the park, Ishigami quickly strode over to the phone, picked up the receiver, and put in his telephone card. There was a small convenience store about thirty meters away. The owner was closing up shop for the night. Other than that, no one else was around.

"Yes, it's me," Yasuko said, picking up the phone immediately. She sounded like she knew the call was coming from Ishigami. Somehow, that made him happy. "Anything unusual to report?" "Um, yes. That detective came to the store today." "To Benten-tei?"

“Yes.” “What did he ask this time?” “He was asking whether Togashi had come to the shop at all.” “What did you tell him?” “I said no, he hadn’t, of course. The detective said that maybe he had been there when I wasn’t in, and he went back to talk to the owners. The owner told me that the detective showed him a picture of Togashi, and asked about him. You know, I think the detective suspects me.” “That’s nothing we didn’t expect. There’s nothing to be afraid of. Is that the only thing the detective asked?”

“No, he also asked about the club I used to work at—the bar in Kinshicho. He wanted to know if I’d been in contact with the people there. I told him no, just like you said. Then I asked him why he wanted to know where I used to work, and he told me Togashi had been there recently.” “Ah yes. Of course.” Ishigami nodded, the receiver pressed to his ear. “So Togashi was at your old workplace, asking after you.” “It seems so. That must be where he heard about Benten-tei. The detective said that since it sounded like Togashi had been looking for me, it would have made sense for him to drop in at Benten-tei next. And I told him, ‘Well, I suppose that’s true, but he didn’t, so I can’t help you.’ ” Ishigami called to mind the detective named Kusanagi. He seemed like a personable man. Soft-spoken, not too imposing. But if he was a detective in Homicide, that meant he had the requisite information-gathering skills. He wasn’t the kind to scare a witness into revealing something, but the sort who casually drew the truth out of them. He had noticed the letter from Imperial University in Ishigami’s mail, too, which meant he was observant. And all of this made Kusanagi someone who required caution. “Did you ask him about anything else?” “That was the only thing I asked. But Misato…” Ishigami’s grip tightened on the receiver. “They went to her school?” “Yes, I only just heard about it myself. They caught up with her on the way home after classes. I think it was the same two detectives that came here.” “Is Misato there now?” “Yes, hold on.” Misato was on the phone immediately. She must have been standing right next to her mother. “Hello?” “What did the detectives ask you?” “They showed me his picture, asked if he’d been by the apartment…” “Togashi. You told them he hadn’t, right?” “Yeah.” “What else did they want to know?” “They wanted to know about the movie. If I’d really gone on the tenth or not. They thought maybe we’d got the date wrong. I told them I knew it was then, absolutely.” “What did the detectives say then?” “They wanted to know if I’d told any of my friends about the movie, or texted them.” “And?” “I told them I didn’t text anybody, but I did tell a friend. Then they wanted to know who my friends were.” “Did you tell them?” “I only gave them Mika’s name.” “Mika’s the girl you told about the movie on the twelfth, correct?” “Yeah, that’s right.” “Good. You did good. Did the detectives want to know anything else?” “Nothing big. They wanted to know if I was enjoying school, how badminton practice was, that kind of stuff. I wonder how they knew I was on the badminton team? I didn’t have my racquet with me.” Ishigami surmised that Kusanagi had seen her racquet when he visited the Hanaokas’ apartment. This detective was turning out to be formidable.

Yasuko got back on the phone and asked, “Well, what should we do?” Her voice sounded faint on the other end of the line. “Nothing, for now. This isn’t a problem,” Ishigami said with conviction. He wanted to put her at ease. “Everything is going according to my

calculations. I should expect that the detectives will be back again soon. Just follow my instructions and everything will be all right." "Thank you, Mr. Ishigami … you know I don't have anyone to turn to but you." "That's all right. Good luck. This will soon be over. I'll speak with you again tomorrow." Ishigami hung up the phone and took out his phone card. Events were developing according to plan. He had known they would find out eventually that Togashi had been looking for Yasuko—that was why Ishigami had made the effort to establish an alibi. He had also expected the police to question that alibi. And he had expected that the police would try to make contact with Misato. They must have hoped she would be the weak link in the chain, a way to take apart the alibi in the absence of any witnesses. Ishigami had taken several steps to prevent that from happening, but he thought now that it would behoove him to check once more and make sure he hadn't overlooked anything.

Ishigami returned to his apartment only to find a man standing in front of his apartment door. At first, Ishigami thought it was another detective. But then he realized that no, that was wrong. The man's shoes were in perfect condition, as good as brand-new. He approached, warily, and the man spoke. "Ishigami?" Ishigami looked up at the stranger's face. The man was smiling. It was a smile he remembered. Ishigami took a deep breath, and his eyes went wide as the memories came vividly back to him from a twenty-year distance. "Manabu Yukawa."

[Info gathering, Foresight, Thinking, Reasoning, Anticipation, Concealment, Emotional engagement, Emotional understanding-Emotional management, Perseverance, FSIQ, Cognitive discipline, Stress tolerance]

Next time when she meets him. Yasuko breathed a sigh of relief when she saw Ishigami's face. He looked calm, and that made her calm somehow. She had noticed that he had a visitor the night before and that the lights in his apartment were on late into the night. She was afraid that the detective had come back to question him again. "I'll take the special." He placed the order in his usual monotone. As always, he did not so much as glance up at Yasuko. "One special, coming up. Thank you," she said. Then she added in a low voice, "You had a visitor yesterday?" Ishigami stammered, then glanced up at her, blinking. He looked around the room quickly. "We shouldn't speak like this," he whispered. "They might be watching." "I'm sorry," Yasuko said, withdrawing behind the counter. The two said nothing while they waited for the lunch to be ready. They didn't even exchange glances. Yasuko glanced out at the street but couldn't see anyone watching. Of course, if the police really were out there, they wouldn't be so obvious about it. The boxed lunch arrived from the back. She handed it to Ishigami. "He was an old classmate," Ishigami said abruptly as he was paying. "What?" "An old classmate from university came to visit. I'm sorry if it alarmed you." Ishigami talked without moving his lips. "Oh, no … I'm fine," Yasuko said, smiling despite herself. Then she looked down at the floor, so that anyone watching from outside would not see her mouth. "I see. I wondered —you don't seem to have many visitors." "He was my first, actually. It was a surprise to me." "Well, I'm glad for you, then." "Right, thanks," Ishigami said awkwardly

as he took the bag with his lunch in it from her. “Tonight, then.” Which meant he would be calling her again this evening. Yasuko nodded, smiling. She watched the back of his stocky figure as he stepped out onto the street.

The next time she met him she was with another man, Kudo. She turned around to see what it was, and discovered a man standing at the bottom of the stairs, umbrella in hand. It was too dark to see his face, but from the shape of his body she realized it was Ishigami. Ishigami started walking down the street now, moving slowly. From the look on Kudo’s face, Yasuko imagined that Ishigami had been standing there watching the two of them as they got out of the taxi. “I’ll call,” Kudo said through the window before signaling for the driver to leave. Yasuko watched the taillights of the cab as it pulled away. Only then did she realize that her heart was fluttering. How many years had it been since she had spent time with a man who actually made her happy? She watched as the taxi drove past Ishigami on his way down the sidewalk. When she got back to her apartment, Misato was watching television.

Her cell phone rang. The display showed that the call was coming from a public phone. “Yes, it’s me.” “Ishigami here,” came the low, familiar voice. “Anything happen today?” “Nothing in particular. Nothing with Misato, either.” “I see. Please, be careful. The police still suspect you. They’ll be doing the groundwork now, checking into everything and everyone around you.” “I understand.” “Did … anything else happen?” “What?” Yasuko asked, flustered. “No, nothing. I just said nothing happened.” “Right … all right. Sorry. I’ll talk to you again tomorrow.” Ishigami hung up. Yasuko put down her cell phone, wondering what that was all about. She had never heard Ishigami sound so uncertain before. Then it dawned on her that it must have been because he had seen Kudo. He had to have wondered who the man was who was talking to her so familiarly. No doubt that was why he had pressed her at the end—he wanted to know about Kudo. Yasuko knew why Ishigami was going so far out of his way to help her and her daughter. Like Sayoko had said, he had a thing for her. Suddenly she wondered what would happen if she got close to another man. Would Ishigami keep helping her like he had? Would he keep solving all their problems? Yasuko decided that it might be best not to have dinner with Kudo. And if they did meet, not to let Ishigami know about it. But as soon as the thought came, a strange feeling of anxiety seized her. How long would this last? How long would she have to avoid Ishigami’s watchful eyes? Would she be barred from seeing another man until the statute of limitations on Togashi’s death ran out?

Ishigami used the same public phone he always did when he made his third call that evening. The first two times he hadn’t been able to get through to Yasuko’s cell phone. He was worried that something might have happened—he’d always gotten through to her before—but when she answered he realized immediately from her tone that his fears were misplaced. Ishigami had heard the doorbell at the Hanaokas earlier—and as he’d suspected, it had been the police. Yasuko told him that the detective had asked her for the ticket stubs. Ishigami knew what they were after. They would try to match the stubs to their other halves, presumably in storage at the movie theater. If they found stubs that

matched the ones they got from Yasuko, they would check the fingerprints. If Yasuko's fingerprints were on them, that would prove that she and her daughter had at least been at the movie theater that night— whether they had actually seen the movie or not. If there were no fingerprints, the police suspicion of the Hanaokas would go up a notch. And the detective had asked about the kotatsu. This, too, Ishigami had predicted. "I think they've determined the murder weapon," Ishigami said into the receiver. "The murder weapon?" "The kotatsu cord. That's what you used, isn't it?" The phone went silent on the other end. Maybe Yasuko was remembering the moment it had happened, when she had strangled Togashi. "In any strangulation, marks from the murder weapon remain on the skin of the neck," Ishigami explained. It felt harsh to lay it out so plainly, but this was no time for euphemisms. "Forensics is quite advanced these days. They can usually tell the murder weapon used by looking at the marks it leaves." "So that's why the detective asked about the kotatsu?" "I'd assume so. But there's no need to worry. I've already made arrangements." He had expected the police to identify the murder weapon. Which was why he had exchanged the Hanaokas' kotatsu with his own. Their old kotatsu—the real murder weapon—was packed away in his closet. As luck would have it, the cord on his old kotatsu was different from the one on theirs. If the detectives came back and examined that cord, they would immediately realize it was a dead end. "What else did the detective ask you?" "What else…?" Yasuko's voice faded into silence. "Ms. Hanaoka? Hello?" "Y-Yes?" "Is something wrong?" "No, nothing at all. I was just trying to remember what else he said. There wasn't anything, I don't think. He mentioned that if they could prove that I went to the movies then I would no longer be a suspect, or something to that effect." "Yes, the movie theater alibi is very important to them. That was part of my plan, of course. There's really nothing to be worried about." "Thank you. It's a great relief to hear you say that." Yasuko's words lit a fire somewhere deep in Ishigami's chest. For a brief moment, the tension he had been feeling pretty much around the clock eased a little.

You can check out the information about the case from the Yukawa section to understand what went on between Ishigami and Yukawa. Ishigami left the school for the night. He was standing at the crosswalk under the traffic light when a man approached. "On your way home?" the man asked, smiling. "When you weren't at your apartment I thought I might find you here." Ishigami recognized the man's face. It was the homicide detective. "I'm sorry, you are…?" "Ah, you've probably forgotten." The man reached for his coat pocket, but Ishigami held up his hand and nodded. "No, I remember you now. You're Detective Kusanagi." The light turned green and Ishigami began to walk. Kusanagi followed. What's he doing here? Ishigami thought as he crossed the street. Was it about Yukawa's visit two days ago? Yukawa had told him that they wanted him to help with their investigation, but he had refused, hadn't he? "Do you know a Manabu Yukawa?" Kusanagi asked. "I do. He came to see me. He said you'd told him about me." "Actually, that's true. I told him that you'd gone to Imperial University—the same department he was in. I'm sorry if it was an imposition." "Not at all. I was glad to see him again." "What did you two talk about, if you don't mind me asking?" "Old times, mostly. That was about all we talked about the first time he visited." "The first time?" Kusanagi lifted an eyebrow.

“Has he been back?” “He’s come to see me twice. The second time, he told me that you’d sent him.” “I sent him?” Kusanagi blinked. “Um, what exactly did he say I sent him to do?” “He said you wanted me to help with your investigation, and that you thought it might be better if the request came from him.” “Oh, right, help with the investigation.” Kusanagi scratched his head as he walked. Ishigami noticed his uncertainty at once. The detective seemed confused. Perhaps he didn’t ask Yukawa to come talk to me after all? Kusanagi grinned sheepishly. “I talk to him about a lot of things, so I get a little confused about exactly which cases he knows about and which he doesn’t. What kind of help did he mention?” Ishigami considered the detective’s question. He hesitated to say Yasuko’s name, but of course, he couldn’t exactly play dumb. Kusanagi would surely cross-check whatever he said with Yukawa. Ishigami told him about Yukawa’s request that he spy on Yasuko Hanaoka. Kusanagi’s eyes went wide. “He asked you to do that, did he?” he asked, sounding flustered. “Right, right—ah, I guess I did talk to him about that, yes. About whether you might be able to help us. He must have thought he could help out by asking you, since you two have a connection. Right, that makes sense.” To Ishigami, the detective’s explanation sounded like a last-minute improvisation. Which meant that Yukawa had come on his own to prod Ishigami about the case. So what had he been after?

Ishigami stopped and turned to face Kusanagi. “And you came out here today to ask me that? Or was there something else?” “No, sorry, I was just getting to it.” Kusanagi pulled a photograph from his jacket pocket. “Have you seen this man? I’m sorry the picture isn’t very good, I had to take it with a telephoto.” Ishigami looked at the photograph and swallowed. The man in the photograph was the person who had been foremost in his thoughts these past few days. He didn’t know his name. He didn’t know who he was. All he knew was that this man was close to Yasuko. “Mr. Ishigami?” Ishigami wondered how to respond. He could just say he didn’t know him and leave it at that. But then how would he ever find out who the man really was? “You know, he looks somewhat familiar,” Ishigami said slowly. “Who is he?” “Can you think where you might have seen him?” “Well, I’m not sure. I see a lot of people every day. If you told me his name or where he works, I might be able to come up with something.” “His name is Kudo. He runs a printing company.” “Kudo?” “Yes. Like this—” Kusanagi described the Chinese characters used to write Kudo’s name. Kudo … Ishigami stared at the photograph. So why were the police checking him out? He must be involved with Yasuko somehow. In other words, the police suspected a connection—a special, maybe even intimate connection—between this Mr. Kudo and Yasuko Hanaoka. “Well? Do you remember anything?” “Hmm. Not really. He does look familiar though.” Ishigami shook his head. “I’m sorry I don’t remember more than that. Maybe I’m mistaking him for someone else.” “Right, no problem,” Kusanagi said, frowning slightly and putting the photo back into his pocket. He pulled out a business card. “If you think of anything, do you mind dropping me a line?” “Certainly. Um, does he have something to do with the case?” “I really can’t say at this time. We’re still looking into it.” “Is he involved with Ms. Hanaoka somehow?” “They had some contact, yes,” Kusanagi said, being intentionally vague. He didn’t want to divulge any more information than he already had. “By the way, you were at Benten-tei

with Yukawa the other day, yes?" Ishigami looked up at the detective. The question was so unexpected, for a moment he didn't know how to respond. "I happened to see the two of you there," the detective went on. "I was on the job. Sorry I didn't say hello." So they are staking out Benten-tei. "That's right. Yukawa said he wanted to buy a lunch box, so I took him there." "Why go all that way? Don't they sell lunches at the convenience store by the school?" "Well, you'd have to ask Yukawa. Bententei was his idea." "Did you discuss anything about Ms. Hanaoka or the case?" "Well, only what I told you before—that you wanted my help with the investigation." Kusanagi shook his head. "I mean other than that. As he probably told you, I ask Yukawa for advice on cases. Turns out he's more than just a physics genius, he's also a gifted sleuth. I was just hoping he might have said something about his thoughts on the case." Ishigami was confused. If they were meeting as often as it sounded like they were, then Yukawa and the detective should have been exchanging information. Why would the detective have to ask him what Yukawa thought? "No, he didn't say anything in particular," Ishigami said. "I see. Very well. Sorry to bother you on your way home." Kusanagi nodded farewell and headed back along the way that they had come. Ishigami watched him go. A feeling rose inside him, making him queasy, as though an elaborate formula he'd thought was perfect was now giving false results because of an unpredictable variable.

[Info gathering, SQ, Composer, Thinking]
[Reasoning]

The Devotion of X

Things were going as planned, the police were onto Yasuko but didn't have anything to use against her and he was slowly getting rid of police suspicion of Yasuko by instructing her what to say when they questioned her and what kind of action should be taken. But surprise to both Yukawa joins the investigation team and finds out Ishigami was the neighbour of Yasuko the current suspect and Ishigami finds out Yukawa has started working on the case. They both understood each other's capabilities. Yukawa knew if Ishigami had helped Yasuko to cover the murder of togashi the case was way more deeper than the thing they were witnessing, Ishigami knew if Yukawa is working on the case he will eventually uncover the truth by his pure deductive skills rather than traditional methods of police pressuring Yasuko and her daughter until they breaks which had low chance of happening since they can on only take the investigation so far without any proof but with yukawa there there was no other way aside from following the plan fully. Ishigami had been already preparing for the worst outcomes to make sure Yasuko doesn't get arrested. So Ishigami puts his contingency plan into action before Yukawa could understand the case.

There was no turning back now. Nor was there any reason to stop the plan he'd set in motion. No matter how brilliant the deductions of that genius physicist might be, they had no hope of prevailing against an actual criminal's confession in court. He had been planning and setting up the murder in a way that could support his confession. His

original plan for confession was he will go to the police station and confess but he will not reveal the information fully as those random police would not recognise him properly as in like a plausible suspect. So he will set a condition, that he will have to be faced with kusanagi as 1st he is the detective incharge of the togashi case and remember he was there to witness ishigami weird behaviour when they were questioning him about Yasuko. So kusanagi will be called then the conversation/confession would go something like this:

Ishigami, his face expressionless, was staring at Kusanagi. Or maybe his eyes just happen to be pointing in my direction, the detective thought. Maybe he's not seeing me at all. The mathematician's face was entirely devoid of emotion; it was as if his gaze was fixed on some faraway place and Kusanagi just happened to be sitting in that blank trajectory. "The first time I saw him was on the tenth of March," he was saying, his tone perfectly even. "He was loitering near her door when I returned home from school. I caught him putting his hand inside the mail slot in her doorway." "I'm sorry, this man—who was he, exactly?" "Mr. Togashi. Though, of course, I didn't know that at the time," Ishigami answered. Kusanagi and Kishitani were with him in the interrogation room. Kishitani sat off to one side, taking notes. Ishigami had asked that no one else be allowed in the room. He'd said he wouldn't be able to tell them what he needed to say if a bunch of officers were there asking questions. "I wondered what he was up to, so I called out to him. He looked surprised, and told me he had business with Yasuko Hanaoka. Said he was her estranged husband. That's when I realized who he was, and I knew he was lying, but I pretended to go along with his story so as not to alarm him." "Wait a second, how did you know he wasn't telling you the truth?" Kusanagi asked. Ishigami took a short breath. "Because I know everything there is to know about Yasuko Hanaoka. I know she's divorced, and I know she had been moving around, trying to escape her ex-husband." "How could you know all these things? I had heard that you hardly spoke to her, despite the fact that she's your neighbor. That you only saw her because you frequented the lunch shop where she works." "That's what we tell people, yes." "Excuse me?" Ishigami straightened himself in his chair, puffing out his chest ever so slightly. "I am Yasuko Hanaoka's bodyguard. It has been my duty to protect her from men with less than good intentions. And for obvious reasons, neither of us wanted people to know about it. I am a schoolteacher, too, after all." "But you told us you hardly talked to her at all when we first met," Kusanagi pressed. Ishigami sighed quietly. "You came to my apartment to ask questions about Togashi's murder, didn't you? Of course I couldn't tell you the truth. You would have suspected something immediately." "Okay..." Kusanagi hesitated. "So now you're telling me that you know everything about Yasuko Hanaoka ... because you're her bodyguard?" "That's correct." "So you've been close to her for some time. Since before this incident?" "Yes. As I said before, our arrangement was a secret. We were very careful to keep our communication hidden. Not even her daughter knew about it." "How exactly did you do that?" "We employed several means. Would you like me to tell you about

them now?" Ishigami looked questioningly at the detective. None of this was feeling right to Kusanagi. He had been genuinely shocked at the suggestion that the math teacher had anything like a close relationship with his attractive neighbor, and the background the man was now giving them seemed vague at best. Still, if there was any truth to this story at all, he wanted to hear it. "No," Kusanagi said, "I'll ask you about that later. I'd like to hear about your dealings with Mr. Togashi first. You said that you first met him outside Yasuko Hanaoka's apartment, and that you pretended to believe he was still married to her. What happened then?" "He asked me whether I knew where she was. So I told him she wasn't living there anymore—that she'd had to move recently for work. That surprised him, as you might imagine. Then he asked me if I knew where she'd moved to. I told him I did." "Where did you tell him she'd gone?" Ishigami grinned. "Shinozaki. I told him she'd moved to an apartment along the Old Edogawa River." I wondered when Shinozaki would come up, Kusanagi thought to himself. "Is that all?" he prodded. "That wouldn't be enough for him to find her by. That's quite a stretch of river, and there are lots of apartment buildings along there." "Of course, Togashi wanted to know her new address. I told him to wait while I went back into my room, looked at a map, and wrote down an address—the address of a water treatment facility. You should've seen his smile when I handed him the paper. He told me I'd saved him a lot of trouble." "Why did you give him that address?" "To get him to go where there wouldn't be many witnesses. I'm familiar with the lay of the land out there, you see." "Wait a second." Kusanagi stared hard at Ishigami's face. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. "So you're telling me that from the very moment you met Togashi, you planned to kill him?" "Of course," Ishigami replied, his voice matter-of-fact. "Like I just said, it's my job to protect Ms. Hanaoka. If someone showed up who I knew intended her harm, it was my responsibility to eliminate the problem." "And you believe that Mister Togashi intended her harm?" "It's not a question of belief, I know he did. He had given her all kinds of trouble already by that point. She moved next door to me to get away from him, after all." "Ms. Hanaoka told you that herself?" "Through our usual channels of communication, yes." Ishigami spoke smoothly and without hesitation. He certainly had plenty of time to get his story straight before coming in here, Kusanagi reflected. And yet there was a lot about the story that seemed suspicious at best. For one thing, nothing he was saying matched the mental image of the stodgy high school teacher that Kusanagi had of him until now. Still, there was nothing to do about it but hear the rest of what the man had to say, whether it was true or not. "What did he do after you gave him the address?" "He asked if I knew where she was working now. I told him I didn't know where it was, but I'd heard she was working at a restaurant. I also told him I'd heard that she got off at eleven o'clock, and that her daughter would go to the restaurant after school and wait so they could go home together. Of course, I was making all that up." "And why did you fabricate this information?" "To make it easier to predict how he would act. I couldn't have him dropping by my selected location too early. It might be out of the way, but there are still people in the area during daylight hours. I

knew that if he thought Yasuko wouldn't be getting off work until that time, and that her daughter would be with her, he would have no reason to visit her apartment before then—" "Hold on," Kusanagi raised his hand, cutting him off. "Are you telling me you thought of all of that right there on the spot?" "Yes. You don't believe me?" "No ... it's just that I'm impressed you could come up with such a plan so quickly." "It's really not much," Ishigami said, his smile fading. "I knew he wanted desperately to see her. All I had to do was use that desire against him. It wasn't difficult." "Well, maybe not for you." Kusanagi licked his lips. "So, what happened then?" "Before he left, I gave him my cell phone number. I told him to call me if he couldn't find the apartment. Typically, people suspect something when strangers show them that kind of kindness, but he didn't suspect a thing. I don't think he was very smart, to tell the truth." "Very few people would imagine someone they'd only just met was planning to kill them." "If you ask me, he should have suspected something because it was the first time we'd met. In any case, he took the fake address, put it in his pocket, and practically skipped off down the hallway. When I saw that he had left, I went back inside my place and began making preparations." Ishigami paused and slowly reached for the teacup on the table. He took a couple long gulps of the lukewarm tea. "What sort of preparations?" "Nothing too elaborate. I changed into some more comfortable clothes, and waited. I also spent some time thinking about the best way to kill him. After running through several options, I chose strangulation. I reasoned that would be the most reliable method. There's no telling how much blood I might have got on me if I tried to stab or bludgeon him to death. Nor was I sure I could do it with just one blow. Also, strangulation made the choice of a murder weapon much simpler. I knew I needed something strong, so I went with the shielded electrical cord to a kotatsu." "Which you carried to the scene of the crime?" Ishigami nodded. "I left the house around ten o'clock. I had the actual cord with me, as well as a box cutter and a disposable lighter. On my way to the station, I noticed a blue plastic sheet someone had thrown out in the garbage, so I folded that and brought it with me, too. I got off the train at Mizue and took a taxi to the Old Edogawa." "Mizue Station? Not Shinozaki?" "Of course not," Ishigami replied without hesitation. "I didn't want to run into the man by mistake. I got out of the taxi some distance away from the place I'd told him about, too. I knew that, in order to retain the element of surprise, I needed to avoid being seen until the time was right." "So what did you do after you got out of the taxi?" "Taking care not to be seen by anyone, I headed toward our meeting place. Not that I needed to be too careful. There was hardly anyone on the street." Ishigami took a sip of tea. "Right after I arrived at the river bank, my cell phone began to ring. It was him. He told me he'd arrived at the address I'd given him, but couldn't find the apartment building. So I asked him where he was, and he told me in some detail—all the while not realizing that I was approaching his location as we talked. I told him I would check the address again and call him back. By that time I knew exactly where he was. I could see him sitting—sprawled out, really—by a clump of grass on the riverbank. I walked up slowly, so as not to make a sound. He didn't notice me at all

until I was right behind him. But by then, I already had the cord around his neck. He resisted, of course, but I had the advantage, and he went limp quickly. It was a lot easier than I'd expected, to be honest." Ishigami's eyes fell back down to his cup. "Might I have another cup of tea?" Kishitani stood and poured him another cup from the pot. Ishigami nodded in thanks. "The victim was a healthy man in his forties. I wouldn't think he'd be that easy to strangle if he resisted with all his strength," Kusanagi ventured. Ishigami's expression didn't change. Only his eyes narrowed slightly. "I'm the instructor at the judo club at my school. Coming from behind, it's quite easy to overpower a man, even if he's bigger than you." Kusanagi nodded, his eyes going to Ishigami's ears. They were puffy, cauliflower ears—the sure sign of a judo wrestler. There were more than a few men on the police force with ears like his. "What did you do after you killed him?" he asked. "I knew I had to conceal the identity of the body. I thought that if you police knew who he was, you would surely suspect Yasuko Hanaoka. First, I removed his clothing with the box cutter. Then I smashed his face." Ishigami's tone was cold and even. "That is, I laid him on his back, put the plastic sheet over his face, and struck him several times with a large rock. I don't remember how many times I hit him, but I'd say a dozen at least. Then I used the lighter to burn off his fingerprints. After all that, I took his clothes and left the scene. A little way from the bank, I found an oil drum, so I put the clothes in there and burned them. The fire leapt a lot higher than I'd expected, and I started to worry that someone might notice, so I decided to just leave them there. I walked back to the road, caught a cab, and went to Tokyo Station, where I got in another cab for home. It was a little after midnight when I returned to my apartment." He let out a drawn-out sigh. "That's it. That's what I did. You can find the electrical cord, the box cutter, and the disposable lighter in my apartment." Kusanagi glanced at Kishitani out of the corner of his eye; his assistant was writing furiously. The detective set a cigarette to his lips. He lit it, blew out a puff of smoke, and stared at Ishigami. The man's face was expressionless once more, his eyes a total blank. There weren't any gaping holes in the story. Everything he'd said about the body's condition and the scene of the crime matched what the police knew. Since none of the details had been released publicly, it was easier to think that he was telling the truth than to believe the alternative. "Did you tell Yasuko Hanaoka that you killed him?" Kusanagi asked. "Why would I?" Ishigami replied. "I couldn't have her slipping up and telling someone else. Women are terrible at keeping secrets." "So you haven't talked to her at all about what happened?" "Not at all. And once you started sniffing around, I took great pains to make as little contact with her as possible, so as not to attract suspicion." "You said you had a way of communicating secretly with Ms. Hanaoka before. Could you tell me about that now?" "There were several ways we communicated. For one, she would talk to me." "You mean, you would meet somewhere?" "Nothing like that. People might see us. She would talk in her own apartment, and I would use a device to listen to her." "What sort of device?" "By placing a sound amplifier on the wall between our apartments, I could hear her voice." Kishitani's pen stopped in mid-stroke and he looked up. Kusanagi knew what had

stopped him. “You mean, you were eavesdropping on her?” Ishigami’s brow furrowed with surprise and he shook his head. “It wasn’t eavesdropping. She was talking to me.” “So Ms. Hanaoka knew about this listening device?” “She might not have known about the device, but she was facing the wall between our apartments when she spoke.” “So that’s why you say she was talking to you?” “That’s right. With her daughter there, she couldn’t talk to me openly, you see. So she pretended to be talking to her daughter, when she was really sending me messages.” The cigarette in Kusanagi’s hand had burned halfway down to the filter, but he hadn’t flicked it once. He dropped it in the ashtray. His eyes met Kishitani’s. The junior detective was scratching his neck, perplexed. “Did Yasuko Hanaoka tell you this—that she was only pretending to talk to her daughter, when in fact she was talking to you?” “She didn’t have to tell me. I know everything about her,” Ishigami asserted, vigorously nodding his head. “So she didn’t tell you that, then? Maybe this whole arrangement was just in your head?” “Nonsense!” Ishigami’s expressionless face flushed slightly. “You see, I knew about the trouble her ex-husband had been giving her because she told me about it. Why would she bother telling her daughter such things? It doesn’t make sense. She was giving all this information for my benefit. She was asking me to do something about it.” Kusanagi waved one hand to calm him, squashing out the smoldering cigarette with the other. “You were saying you had another means of communication?” “Yes, the phone. I called her every evening.” “You called her house?” “Her cell phone, to be precise. Not that we would talk. I would merely let the phone ring several times. If she had an urgent need, she was to answer. If not, she wouldn’t pick up. I always let it ring five times before hanging up. That was the number we decided upon.” “You decided? Both of you? So she knew about this?” “Of course. We had talked it over previously.” “So we could ask Ms. Hanaoka about this?” “Absolutely. That’s the only way to be sure,” Ishigami said with an air of confidence. Kusanagi shook his head. “I’m afraid we’re going to have to ask you to repeat this story several times. We’ll be writing up a formal statement, you see.” “Not a problem. I understand there’s procedure to be followed.” “Before we get to that, however, there’s one last thing I wanted to ask you.” Kusanagi put his hands together on the table, interlocking his fingers. “Why’d you turn yourself in?” Ishigami took a deep breath before asking, “Should I not have turned myself in?” “That’s not what I asked. I just wanted to know why you decided to do so, and why now.” Ishigami snorted. “What has that got to do with anything? Surely all you need to do your job is a confession. How about, ‘Wracked with guilt over what he had done, the murderer turned himself in’? I should think that would suffice.” “Sorry, but you don’t exactly look wracked with guilt.”

And then the police will arrest him. The case is over but kudo has gotten dragged into the case. He was a good man who could take care of Yusako and Misato from what he had observed. He could tell both liked each other truly. He envied the man but he knew that guy was a better light in yusako life than him. While saving kudo seems a lot trouble but It also gave him an opportunity to solidified both his confession and the relationship

between that man (kudo) and Yasuko, making sure the police is 100% convinced/satisfied with his confession and togashi case with not a single thread of doubt and she would live a happy life with another man who she herself likes. So the stalking of kudo began.

It had been a while since Ishigami last sat behind the wheel of a car, but it only took him about thirty minutes to get used to driving again. Still, it took him a while to find a suitable place to park on the road near his destination. Every spot he checked seemed like it would put him in someone else's way. Finally he found a small truck that had been sloppily parked across two spaces and managed to squeeze in behind it. It was his second time in a rental car. He'd been obliged to pick one up once while he was a university assistant in order to ferry students around on a field trip to a power plant. That time he drove a large van that seated seven, but today he was in a small economy car, which he found much easier to handle. Ishigami's eyes went to a small building ahead of him on the right. The sign on the building read "Hikari Graphics, Ltd." It was Kuniaki Kudo's company. It hadn't been difficult to track the place down. He had the name Kudo from the detective, Kusanagi, and he knew the man ran a printing company. Ishigami had gone online, found a site with links to printing companies, and checked every single one in Tokyo. Hikari Graphics was the only one with a CEO named Kudo. Ishigami had gone to the rental car office directly after finishing up at school and picked up a car he had reserved in advance. There was danger involved in renting a car. The transaction would leave a trail. But he had weighed the risks for a long time before deciding to act. When the digital display on the dashboard read 5:50 P.M., several men and women emerged from the front entrance. Ishigami spotted Kudo amongst them, and his body stiffened. Eyes fixed on the group, he reached for the digital camera in the passenger seat. Flicking it on, he looked through the viewfinder. There. He adjusted the focus and zoomed in as far as the lens allowed. Kudo was dressed impeccably. Ishigami didn't even know where one would go to buy that kind of clothes. Again, it occurred to him that this man was Yasuko's type. Of course, not just Yasuko, but most women, if given a choice between him and Kudo, would have chosen Kudo. Ishigami snapped a picture, feeling a pulse of envy course through him. He had set the camera not to flash, but even so Kudo showed up beautifully on the LCD. The sun was high enough and angled well so as to light his subject clearly. Kudo was going around to the back of the building where Ishigami had already ascertained, the company's private parking lot was located. The mathematician waited, watching. After a few moments a single Mercedes rolled out into the street. It was green. Spotting Kudo in the driver's seat, Ishigami hurriedly started his own engine. He drove, eyes fixed on the Mercedes's brake lights. Driving was difficult enough, but following someone else made it even harder. The worst part was timing the traffic lights. Luckily, Kudo was a conservative driver. He drove at or under the speed limit, and always stopped at yellow lights. Ishigami began to worry that he might be driving too close to his mark and would be noticed. Still, now that he had started, he had to keep following. As he drove, the mathematician occasionally glanced at the car's GPS. The roads were mostly unfamiliar to him, but he could see on the map that Kudo's Mercedes was heading for Shinagawa. The number of cars on the road increased, and it became harder and harder to keep up the chase. Ishigami let himself get too far behind, and a truck got

between him and Kudo. He couldn't see the Mercedes at all, and while he was debating whether or not to switch lanes, the traffic light turned red ahead of him. It looked like the truck was at the front of the line—which meant that the Mercedes had driven on ahead. I lost him already? Ishigami swore under his breath. But when the light turned green and he started up again, he saw a Mercedes waiting up at the next light with its turn signal on. Without a doubt, it was Kudo. He was turning into a hotel. Without hesitating, Ishigami followed. It might look suspicious, but he couldn't turn back after having almost lost him once. When the next light changed, Kudo made his turn with Ishigami right behind him. Passing through the hotel gates, the Mercedes headed down a sloping ramp into an underground parking area. Ishigami followed. When he reached out to take a ticket for the parking lot, Kudo glanced behind him, and Ishigami had to hunch down in his seat. He couldn't tell whether the businessman had seen anything or not. The parking lot was mostly empty. The Mercedes pulled into a spot close to the hotel entrance. Ishigami stopped some distance away. He turned the key and lifted his camera. Kudo got out of the Mercedes. Click. Kudo was looking in his direction. He suspects something! Ishigami shrunk down even farther. But Kudo turned and went into the hotel. Once he was out of sight, Ishigami started up his car again and drove out. I suppose two pictures will have to do for now. He had been in the parking lot for such a short time that he didn't owe anything when he left. He turned the wheel carefully as the car climbed back up the narrow ramp. Ishigami contemplated the note he would include with the two pictures. In his head, it went something like:

As you can tell by the enclosed pictures, I have discovered the identity of a man you see frequently.

I must ask, what is this man to you?

If you are having a relationship, that would be a serious betrayal.

Don't you understand what I've done for you?

I believe I have the right to tell you what to do in this matter. You must stop seeing this man immediately.

If you do not, my anger will be directed at him.

It would be a simple thing for me to lead this man toward the same fate Togashi suffered. I have both the resolve and the means to do this.

Let me repeat, if you are engaged in a relationship with this man, that is a betrayal I cannot forgive, and I will have my revenge.

Ishigami repeated the words of his statement to himself, considering whether it was too threatening, or perhaps not threatening enough. He went back to his apartment.

Ishigami was at his computer when he heard the door of the next apartment open and close. There were three photos up on his screen: two of Kudo, and one of Yasuko as she went into the hotel. He had wanted to get a shot of the two of them together, but he'd been worried that Kudo would spot him; and if Yasuko had happened to see him, too, there would have been a scene. So he had let his better judgment prevail and kept his distance. Ishigami imagined the worst-case scenario. He'd need these photos then, for sure. He just hoped it never came to that.

He glanced at the clock on his desk before standing. It was almost eight o'clock in the evening. Yasuko and Kudo hadn't been together for very long. He couldn't help but make note of how that fact put him at ease. Telephone card in his pocket, the mathematician left his apartment and walked down the street as usual, taking a careful look around to make sure he wasn't being watched. He thought about the detective, Kusanagi. It was strange. Even when Kusanagi had come asking about Yasuko, Ishigami had gotten the feeling that the man was really there because he wanted to know about Manabu Yukawa. What sort of connection did they have? It was hard for Ishigami to plan his next move without knowing whether or not he was a suspect yet. He called Yasuko's cell from the now familiar public phone. She picked up on the third ring. "It's me," Ishigami said. "Is now a good time?" "Yes." "Anything happen today?" He wanted to know what she had talked about with Kudo, but couldn't find a way to ask the question. If he hadn't tailed the man, he never would have known they'd met at all. "Er, actually…" she began. "Actually what? What happened?" He imagined Kudo filling her head with all kinds of crazy ideas. "The detectives, they came back to Benten-tei. And, well, they were asking about you." "About me? How?" Ishigami swallowed. "Well, it's kind of a long story, but some of the people at the shop have been talking about you since before all this began. Sorry, I don't want to say anything to make you angry…" What was making Ishigami angry was the roundabout way she was giving him the information. She would be no good at mathematics, he could tell. "I promise not to get angry. Please just tell me as bluntly as possible. What were they saying about me?" Ishigami waited, ready to hear something unflattering about his looks or demeanor. "Well—I've denied it all along, you understand—but some of the people at the shop think that you come there to buy lunches just so you can see me." "What?" For a moment, Ishigami's mind went blank. "I'm sorry. They thought it was funny, like a joke. That's how they talk about things. They really don't mean any harm by it. I don't even think they seriously believe it themselves," Yasuko said, vainly attempting to do some damage control. But Ishigami barely registered half of what she said. He was wondering how someone else had noticed—someone other than Yasuko. They were right, of course.

He did go to the shop every day just to see her. And he realized that unconsciously he had expected her to notice how he felt. Still, it made his entire body hot with shame to

think that someone else, a third party, had noticed first. How they must have laughed to see an ugly man like him head over heels for a beautiful woman like her. “I’m sorry. You’re angry, aren’t you?” Yasuko asked. Ishigami hurriedly cleared his throat. “No, no … What did the detectives do, exactly?” “Like I said, they heard that rumor, and so they came to the shop asking who this person—you—were, and the person at the shop gave them your name.” “I see,” Ishigami said, still burning. “And where do you think the detectives heard that rumor?” “I … I’m not sure.” “Is that all they wanted to know?” “I think so. That’s all I heard.” Receiver gripped tightly in his hand, Ishigami nodded. This was no time for indecision. He didn’t know how it had happened, but it was clear the police were gradually setting their sights on him. He had to think of an appropriate response. “Is your daughter there?” he asked. “Misato? Yes, why?” “Can I speak with her a moment?” “Sure, of course.” Ishigami closed his eyes. He focused all of his energies on divining what detective Kusanagi was planning, what action he would take, what he would do next. Yet, in the middle of his thoughts, there he found the face of Manabu Yukawa. What was the physicist’s role in all this? “Hello?” came a young girl’s voice over the line. “It’s Ishigami,” he told her. “Misato … you said you talked about the movie with your friend on the twelfth? Mika was her name, right?” “Yes. And I told the detectives that, too.” “Right, so you said. I was wondering about your other friend—Haruka, was it?” “That’s right. Haruka Tamaoka.” “You told her about the movie, too, right? Did you talk about it more than that one time?” “No, just the once. Well, maybe a little.” “You didn’t tell the detectives about her, right?”

“No, only about Mika. You told me I shouldn’t mention Haruka, so I didn’t.” “That’s right. But I think it might be time to talk to them about her now.” Ishigami glanced around the park, making sure no one was nearby, before giving Misato detailed instructions on what she was to do.

Due to yukawa's odd visit to yasuko benten-tei workshop alongside ishigami kasanagi suspected yukawa had figured something out so he confronted him about it leading to an argument where ishigami becomes a suspect.

Back at the teachers’ room, a man—one of the office assistants—was standing just inside the door, waiting for him. “Mr. Ishigami? There’s someone here to see you.” “To see me?” The assistant walked up to him and whispered in his ear. “I think he’s a police detective.” Ishigami sighed. “What are you going to do?” the assistant asked, peering at him intently. “What am I going to do? He’s waiting for me, isn’t he?” “Yes, but I could tell him you’re occupied and send him home.” Ishigami chuckled. “No need for that. Where is he?” “The parent conference room.” “I’ll be right there.” Stashing the test answer sheets in his bag, Ishigami made his way toward the conference room. He would have to grade them at home later. The assistant started to follow him, but Ishigami waved him away, saying, “I’ll be fine on my own.” He knew well enough what the assistant was up to. The man wanted to know why the detective was there and had only suggested that they give the detective the brush-off in hopes that Ishigami would tell him what the visit was all about. The man Ishigami had expected to see was waiting for him in the conference

room: the detective named Kusanagi. “Sorry to bother you here at school like this.” Kusanagi stood and bowed curtly. “I’m not usually here over spring vacation. I’m surprised you found me.” “Actually, I dropped by your apartment first, but it seemed you were out so I called the school. They said something about a make-up test? You have to give make-up tests during spring break?” “It’s worse for the students, I assure you. And today wasn’t a make-up test. It was a remake-up test.” “You don’t say. Let me guess: you like putting pretty tough questions on your tests.” “Why do you say that?” Ishigami asked, looking the detective in the eye. “Just a feeling.” “They’re not tough, though. I merely take advantage of the blind spots created when students assume too much. And they usually assume too much.” “Blind spots?” “For instance, I give them a question that looks like a geometry problem, but is in fact an algebra problem. If all they’ve done is memorize the problem sheets in their books —” Ishigami abruptly stopped talking and sat down across from the detective. “I’m sorry. I’m guessing you didn’t come here to talk about high school mathematics. So, why are you here?” “Nothing much, really,” Kusanagi said, joining him at the table and pulling out his notepad. “I just wanted to ask you about that night again.” “By ‘that night,’ you mean…?” “The tenth of March,” Kusanagi said. “I believe you’re aware that’s when the incident occurred?” “You mean the body they found by the Arakawa River? That one?” “Not the Arakawa, the Old Edogawa,” Kusanagi corrected him without missing a beat. “You may remember me and my partner coming to ask you questions about Ms. Hanaoka? Asking if you’d noticed anything peculiar that night?” “Yes, I remember. And I’m pretty sure I told you I didn’t recall anything out of the ordinary.” “That’s right, you did. I was just hoping you could try to remember that evening in a little more detail for me.” “How do you mean? It’s hard to remember something when nothing happened.” Ishigami let himself smile a bit. “Right, but what I’m looking for—or what I was hoping to find—was something that maybe you didn’t pay particular attention to at the time, but might actually turn out to be a valuable piece of evidence for us. Maybe you can just tell me about that evening in as much detail as possible? Don’t worry if it has nothing to do with any incident.” “All right. I suppose,” Ishigami said, scratching the back of his neck. “I know it was a while ago now, so I brought something I thought might help you remember the day.” Kusanagi handed over a classes he’d taught along with the school events schedule. He must have procured the information from the office. “Does anything here jog your memory?” the detective asked, smiling. The moment he looked at the chart, Ishigami understood what the detective was up to. He wasn’t here about Yasuko Hanaoka, he was here to establish Ishigami’s alibi. Though Ishigami couldn’t say for certain why the police were suddenly turning their eyes in his direction, he suspected it had something to do with Manabu Yukawa’s strange behavior. In any case, if the detective was here for an alibi, he’d better answer him. Ishigami settled himself in his chair and sat up straight. “I went home that night after the judo team finished practice, so it would have been around seven o’clock. I think I told you that before, too.” “Indeed you did, indeed you did. So, you were in your apartment for the whole time after that?” “Well, I think I probably was, yes,” Ishigami said, leaving his words purposely vague. He wanted to see how Kusanagi would respond. “Did no one visit the apartment that night? Or call on the phone?” Ishigami lifted an eyebrow. “Whose apartment do you mean? Ms. Hanaoka’s?” “No, your apartment.” “Mine?” “I know you

must be wondering what this has to do with our investigation. Believe me, we're not investigating you. We're simply trying to establish everything that happened in the general vicinity of Yasuko Hanaoka that night. That's all." A pretty frail excuse, Ishigami thought, though he expected that the detective knew he was being obvious and that the man just didn't care. "I didn't see anyone that night. I'm pretty sure nobody called, either. I rarely have visitors." "I see." "I'm sorry I don't have more to tell you after you came all this way." "No, please, don't worry about me. I'm sorry for taking your time. Oh, incidentally —" Kusanagi picked up Ishigami's work schedule. "According to this, you took the morning of the eleventh off, only coming into work that afternoon. Did something happen?" "You mean the next day? No, nothing happened. I just wasn't feeling well, so I slept in. Third-quarter classes were almost completely over anyway, so I figured I could get away with it." "Did you see a doctor?" "No, it wasn't anything so serious. Which is why I ended up going in that afternoon." "Just now at the office I asked the assistant there, and he said that you rarely take time off, Mr. Ishigami. Just mornings sometimes. About once a month?" "It's how I use my vacation time, yes." "Right. The office told me you are often up late working on mathematics, and you take off the following morning, something like that?" "That sounds like something I would have told the office, yes." "And this happens about once a month or so…" Kusanagi's eyes dropped to the work schedule again. "But you took the morning off on the tenth, too—in other words, the day before. The office said they weren't much surprised the first time, but when you took two mornings off in a row that got them. This was the first time that happened, was it?" "I guess it might have been." Ishigami put a hand to his forehead. He knew he had to answer carefully. "I didn't have any particular reason for doing it that time, though. Like you said, I was up late the night before the tenth, and went to work in the afternoon. That night, I felt like I had a bit of a fever, and that's why I was out the next morning as well." "But you recovered enough to come in after lunch?" "That's right." Ishigami nodded. "Right," Kusanagi echoed, his eyes full of suspicion. "Is something wrong?" "No, I was just thinking, if you managed to go to school for the afternoon, you can't have been too sick that morning. But then again, if they weren't too sick, most people would have gone to work anyway. Especially if they'd missed their morning classes just the day before." Kusanagi was openly doubting Ishigami now. He must've thought whatever information he might get out of the math teacher would be worth annoying him. Ishigami smiled wryly, refusing to rise to the bait. "If you say so. I just remember having trouble getting out of bed that morning. But right before lunch I started feeling a lot better, so I decided to go in. Mostly because, as you pointed out, I had just taken the morning off the day before." All the while Ishigami talked, Kusanagi was staring him straight in the eye. The detective's gaze was piercing and fierce—the gaze of someone who truly believed that when a suspect wasn't telling the truth, it would show in his eyes. "I see. Well, all that judo must keep you in good shape. Probably only takes you half a day to recover from a fever, eh? Wish I had your constitution. The fellow at the office said he'd never even heard of you calling in sick." "That's hardly true. I catch colds, too, you know." "And you just happened to catch one on the night of the tenth." "What do you mean by that? I know that's the night your murder took place, but it wasn't a particularly special night for me." "Of course." Kusanagi closed his notepad and stood.

“Sorry for taking your time.” “Again, I’m sorry I couldn’t be of more assistance.” “Not at all. We’re just covering the bases.” The two of them walked out of the conference room together. Ishigami saw the detective to the main entrance. “Seen much of Yukawa lately?” Kusanagi asked as they walked. “No, not at all,” Ishigami answered. “How about you? You talk to him now and then, right?” “Not recently. I’ve been too busy. You know, the three of us should get together sometime. I hear from Yukawa that you enjoy a drink now and then?” He motioned with his hand as if tilting a glass. “I’d be happy to, but shouldn’t that wait until you’ve solved this case of yours?” “Probably, yes, but a man has to get out sometimes. I’ll give you a ring.” “All right. I’ll be looking forward to it, then.” “You do that,” the detective said, turning to walk out the door. Ishigami returned to the hallway and watched him through a window. Kusanagi was talking on his cell phone as he walked out to the road. His expression hadn’t changed. Ishigami thought about what his visit meant. They must have had a reason to turn their suspicions toward him. What would that be? He hadn’t sensed anything of the sort the last time he’d met Kusanagi. Based on the questions he asked, Kusanagi was a still long way from the truth. He was basically shooting in the dark. Perhaps Ishigami’s lack of an alibi had given him a new direction. But if so, so be it. Ishigami had planned for this, too. The problem was— The image of Manabu Yukawa’s face flitted across his mind. How much of the truth had the physicist been able to sniff out? And how much of that truth did he really want to expose? Ishigami remembered something Yasuko had told him the other day on the phone. Apparently, Yukawa had asked her what she thought of him—of Ishigami. And it sounded like he had known about Ishigami’s fondness for Yasuko. The mathematician recalled his various discussions with Yukawa but couldn’t remember a single careless word or gesture that might have tipped him off. So how had his old friend noticed? Ishigami turned and began to walk toward the teachers’ room. He ran into the office assistant in the hallway on the way there. “The detective leave already?” “Just now, yeah.” “So aren’t you going home, Mr. Ishigami?” “No, I remembered something I have to do first.” Leaving the assistant to wonder what the detective had wanted, Ishigami returned quickly to the teachers’ room. Sitting down at his desk there, he reached into a box he kept beneath it and pulled out several files. These weren’t class files. They were part of the results of his work over the last several years on a particularly difficult mathematics problem. He placed them in his bag with the test sheets and left the room.

[Thinking, Reasoning]

He started staking them both kudo and yasuko and threatening them. It was a perfect act, as yasuko view her relationship with kudo troubling due to him being in her life and she knew he liked her so much so that he was helping her cover a muder so if she falls for with another man (kudo) ishigami would cause her and kudo trouble.

Remember she had already created a narrative of it when Ishigami 1st saw her and kudo but in reality He had gotten the impression that they were old friends—or something more. Who knew it could be her again friend, relatives, or a lover the answer was uncertain. It wasn't until the 2nd time he saw Yasuko and Kudo again in the shop she

worked in. Her eyes opened in surprise. The man merely nodded, smiling, with a look that said, We'll talk after you've dealt with these customers. Who is he? Ishigami wondered. When did he show up, and how did he get so close to Yasuko Hanaoka? Ishigami vividly remembered the look on Yasuko's face when she had stepped out of the taxi the night before. He had never seen her looking so full of life. Her face hadn't been the face of a mother or an employee at a lunch box shop. It had been her true face, he thought. A woman's face. A face she wore for this man, and would never wear for Ishigami—Ishigami's gaze darted between the mystery man and Yasuko. He thought he could feel the atmosphere shift between them. A feeling of anxiety clutched at the math teacher's chest. Like most people he was hurt but instead of giving up those emotions he figures he could use those in his advantage. As she would know he is hurt too at the moment when she was with kudo and ishigami saw them. With this in mind when he plays the role of the stalker she wouldn't her reaction would be real up until his instructions to the situation giving her more validity that she is innocent. This also strengthens/test kudo bond with yusako as now Ishigami is threatening him to hanging out with her. So it's up to him to leave or continue the relationship. In which both case had it's goods. If he ran away then it's good cause after ishigami revealed main plan finishes all suspicion of other would be gone and it will show yasuko that kudo is just not strong enough to protect her both physically and mentally which is what she needs the most considering her situation so she will go along with a guy she thinks is good for her. If continued the relationship even after the threat it's also good as Ishigami plan had been already set to motion so all the suspicion of other suspects would be gone and seeing kudo resilience their bond will grow stronger on adversities they had faced.

Yusako perspective: Misato sat in uncomfortable silence, eating her apricot pudding. Yasuko wondered once again whether it would have been better just to have left her at home. "You get enough to eat, Misato?" Kudo was asking. He had been fretting over her all evening. Misato nodded, mechanically sticking the spoon into her mouth, without even a glance in his direction. You can drag a teenager to a good restaurant, but you can't make her enjoy it. They had come to a Chinese place in Ginza for dinner. Kudo had insisted that Yasuko bring her daughter, and so she had dragged Misato along, despite the girl's protests. In the end, Yasuko had convinced her to come by telling her that it would seem unnatural for them to avoid going out—that it might make the police suspicious. But now that she saw how worried Kudo was, she regretted it. All through dinner, he had tried a variety of approaches to get the girl to talk, but he had failed to get more than a few terse words out of her all night. Misato finished her dessert and turned to her mother. "I'm going to the bathroom." "Oh. Okay." Yasuko waited for Misato to leave, then turned to Kudo, clasping her hands together. "I'm so sorry." "Huh? About what?" He looked genuinely surprised, though Yasuko knew it was an act. "She's really shy, that's all. And I think she has issues with older men." Kudo smiled. "Don't worry. I didn't imagine we'd be great friends by evening's end. I was just like her when I was a teenager. I'm happy just to have gotten to meet her today." "Thanks, you're too kind."

Kudo nodded. He fished in the pocket of his jacket, which hung on the back of his chair, and pulled out a cigarette and lighter. He had refrained from smoking during dinner on account of Misato. “Any developments since we last spoke?” he asked, taking a puff. “Developments? With what?” “That investigation.” “Oh.” Yasuko lowered her eyes for a moment then looked back up at him. “No, nothing. Life’s been pretty normal, actually.” “I’m glad to hear that. The detectives leaving you alone?” “I haven’t seen them in a while. They haven’t been to the shop, either. How about you?” “Nothing to report on my side. I think they’ve given up on me.” Kudo flicked some ashes into an ashtray. “Though there is something bothering me. I think it might be related.” “What’s that?” “Well…” Kudo mused for a moment before opening his mouth again. “It’s just, I’ve been getting these strange calls lately. The phone rings at my house, and I pick it up, but there’s no one on the other side.” “Really? That sounds unpleasant.” Yasuko frowned. “Yeah. And then there’s this—” After a moment’s hesitation, he pulled a piece of paper out of his coat pocket. “I found this in my mail the other day.” Yasuko saw her name written on the paper and froze. The message read: “Keep away from Yasuko Hanaoka. She’ll never be happy with a man like you.” The note had been written on a computer and printed out. There was nothing to indicate from whom it had come. “Someone sent you this in the mail?” “No, I think they put it in my mailbox by hand.” “Do you have any idea who it might be?” “Not a clue. I was hoping you might know.” “I’m sorry. I can’t imagine…” Yasuko reached down to her handbag, taking out a handkerchief. Her palms were beginning to sweat. “That’s all there was? Just this note?” “No. There was a picture, too.” “A photograph?” “From the time I met you in Shinagawa. Whoever it was took a picture of me in the hotel parking lot. I had no idea.” Kudo shook his head. Unconsciously, Yasuko’s eyes swept the room. Certainly no one was watching them here? By then, Misato had returned, so they didn’t discuss the note anymore. A few minutes later they left the restaurant, said goodbye to Kudo, and climbed into a taxi. “I told you the food would be good,” Yasuko ventured, but Misato frowned and said nothing. “I wish you hadn’t made that face the whole time.” “Then you shouldn’t have taken me along. I told you I didn’t want to go.” “But he invited you specifically.” “He would have been happy with just you, Mom. I don’t care if he invites me again. I’m not going.” Yasuko sighed. Kudo seemed to believe that, if he gave it enough time, Misato would warm to him. Yasuko doubted that was true. “Are you going to marry him, Mom?” Misato asked suddenly. Yasuko sat up in her seat. “What are you talking about?” “I’m serious. You want to marry him, right?” “No.” “Really?” “Of course not. We just go to dinner every once in a while.” “Okay. Fine then.” Misato turned and looked out the window. “Why did you ask me that, Misato? Is there … something you want to say?” “Nope.” But Misato slowly turned back toward her mother. “I just thought maybe it’s not a good idea to betray that other guy.” “That guy? Who?” Misato stared Yasuko in the eye and said nothing, though it was clear she meant Mr. Ishigami. She wasn’t saying anything because she didn’t want the taxi driver to hear. “Well, I don’t think that’s anything you need to be worrying about,” Yasuko said, leaning back in her seat. “Hmph,” Misato grunted. She clearly disagreed. Yasuko thought about Ishigami. She was worried about him, even without Misato’s reminder. And the note and the photograph left in Kudo’s mailbox disturbed her deeply. As far as Yasuko knew, there was only one person who

could have sent that message. She remembered the dark look that had appeared on Ishigami's face when he spotted Kudo dropping her off at her apartment. The image was burned vividly in her mind. It was more than possible that Ishigami had discovered her relationship with Kudo and was jealous. She already knew his attraction to her was more serious than a passing fancy—after all, that was the only reasonable explanation for both his willingness to help them cover up Togashi's murder and his continued protection of them from the police. It was probably Ishigami who had left the note and the photograph in Kudo's mailbox. If that was true, then what were his plans for her? Would he use what he knew as leverage to try and control her life? Would he never let her see—let alone marry—another man? Thanks to Ishigami, Yasuko had, so far, avoided arrest in the hunt for Togashi's murderer. She was grateful for that. Yet what was the point if she could never live a free life? It was no better than when Togashi was alive. She was just dealing with a different man now, and this time, there truly was no escape. The taxi arrived at their apartment. They got out and walked up the stairs. The lights were on in Ishigami's room. Yasuko went into her apartment and began to change. Moments later, she heard the door to the next apartment open and close. "See?" Misato said. "He was waiting for us to get back." "I know that," Yasuko shot back, her testiness showing in her voice. A few minutes later, her cell phone rang. "Yes?" "It's me," came the familiar voice. "Can you talk?" "Yes." "Anything to report today?" "No, nothing." "I see. Good." She could hear Ishigami slowly breathe out on the other side of the line. "Actually, there are some things I need to talk to you about. The first is, I have placed three envelopes containing letters in the mail slot on your front door. Please go get them after I hang up." "Letters?" Yasuko glanced toward the door. "Please keep them safe. You'll need them shortly. All right?" "Okay." "I included a memo with the letters explaining how you are to use them. I hardly need tell you to destroy the memo when you're done reading it. Understood?" "I understand. Should I get them now?" "No, afterward is fine. Also, there is thing else I need to say. It's very important." Ishigami paused. Yasuko sensed reluctance in his voice. "Yes?" "This is…" he began, "this is the last time I will call you like this. I won't be contacting you any further. Nor should you try to contact me. No matter what happens, you and your daughter are to remain bystanders. Don't get involved. That's the only way you'll be safe." Yasuko's heart began to race as she listened to him talk. "What are you saying, Mr. Ishigami? What is this all about?" "You'll see soon enough. I think it's better not to tell you right now. Just, don't forget what I said. All right?" "No, it's not all right. I need you to explain." Misato came over, noticing her mother's consternation. "There is no need to explain. Good-bye." "Wait—" she said, but he had already hung up.

After the call Ishigami confesses to the police that he killed togashi just like his original plan but this time there was more to the story. Continuation of his confession:

How about, 'Wracked with guilt over what he had done, the murderer turned himself in'? I should think that would suffice." "Sorry, but you don't exactly look wracked with guilt." "If you're wondering whether I feel I did wrong, then I'd have to say I don't—well, not exactly. I do have regrets. I wish I hadn't done what I did. And if I had known how I would be betrayed, I

never would've killed that man." "Sorry? You were betrayed?" "Yasuko, she..." Ishigami dropped his eyes for a moment before continuing. "She's seeing another man. Even though I was the one who dealt with her ex-husband. And if she hadn't told me all those things, I never would've done it. She said it, plain and clear: 'I want to kill him.' So I killed him for her. You might say she was my accomplice. She made me do it, after all. In fact, I don't know why you police aren't over there arresting her this minute."

Police perspective: In order to corroborate Ishigami's story, the police had to search his apartment. While that was going on, Kusanagi and Kishitani went to talk to Yasuko Hanaoka. It was evening, and she and Misato were at home. The two detectives had a fellow officer take the girl outside—not to protect her from hearing anything alarming, but because they wanted to question her separately. When she heard that Ishigami had turned himself in, Yasuko's eyes went wide; for a moment she seemed to have stopped breathing. She opened her mouth but no words came out. "I take it this comes as a surprise?" Kusanagi asked, paying close attention to her expression. Yasuko shook her head slowly, and finally spoke. "I had no idea. I mean, why would he kill Togashi?" "You can't think of any possible motive?" Yasuko hesitated at Kusanagi's question, a look of bewilderment coming across her face. She looked as though she had something to say but was unwilling to say it. "Ishigami says he did it for you. He says he killed your ex-husband on your behalf." Yasuko looked pained and let out a long sigh. "So you can think of a reason." She nodded slightly. "I knew he had feelings for me. I just never imagined he would go so far—" "He told us that the two of you have been in constant contact for some time now." "Contact?" Yasuko frowned. "We've barely ever spoken." "But there were phone calls from him? Every evening?" Kusanagi told the woman what Ishigami had said about their arrangement. Yasuko frowned again. "So that was him calling." "You didn't know?" "I thought it might be him, maybe, but I wasn't sure. He never gave his name." "I see. Can you tell us a little more about these calls?" Yasuko explained that someone unknown started phoning her in the evening about three months ago. Without giving his name, "I see. Can you tell us a little more about these calls?" Yasuko explained that someone unknown started phoning her in the evening about three months ago. Without giving his name, the caller had suddenly started saying things about her personal life—things no one could possibly have known unless they had been spying on her. She was frightened, afraid that she had a stalker; but she'd been baffled by the question of who it might be. After that, the phone had rung every night at the same time, but she had never answered—except for once, when she'd picked up the receiver without thinking. Then the man on the other end said: "I understand you've been too busy to answer your phone. So I have a suggestion. I will call every evening, and you only need to answer if you need me for something. I will let the phone ring five times, you just need to pick up before the fifth ring." Yasuko had reluctantly agreed, and since that time, the phone rang every night. Apparently, the stranger was calling her from a public phone. She never answered. "You couldn't tell it was Ishigami from his voice?" "Not really. We'd spoken so little. And I never picked up except for those two times, so I can't even really remember what the voice sounded like now. In any case, I can hardly imagine

someone like him doing such a thing. I mean, he's a high school teacher!" "That's no guarantee of character these days, I'm afraid," Kishitani offered. Then, as if embarrassed by his own interruption, he quickly lowered his head. Kusanagi reflected on how the junior detective had taken the Hanaokas' side since the very beginning. Ishigami's turning himself in must have come as a great relief to Kishitani. "Was there ever anything else, besides the calls?" Kusanagi asked. "Well…" Yasuko rose and retrieved three envelopes from a nearby drawer. There was no sender or return address marked on any of them; on the front of each was only the name "Yasuko Hanaoka." "And these are?" "Letters I found in the mailbox on my door. There were some others, but I threw them out. I just thought I should keep these as evidence in case there was ever a more serious problem—people are always doing that on television, you know. I didn't much like having them, but I kept these three, just in case." Kusanagi opened the envelopes.

Each contained a single sheet of paper with words that had clearly been typed on a computer. None of the letters was particularly long:

I notice you've been putting on more makeup recently. And wearing fancier clothes. That's not like you. Plainer attire suits you better. It also bothers me that you've been coming home late. You should come home right after work is finished.

Is something bothering you? If it is, please don't hesitate to tell me about it. That's why I call you every night, you know. There are many matters on which I could advise you. You can't trust anyone else. You shouldn't trust anyone else. Just me.

I have a feeling something terrible has happened. I fear you've betrayed me. Now, I know with all my heart that you would never do such a thing, but if you ever did, I'm not sure I would ever be able to forgive you. I am the only man for you. I am the only one who can protect you.

"Do you mind if I take these with me?" "They're all yours." "Anything else like this happen recently?" "To me? No, nothing really…" Yasuko's voice trailed off. "To your daughter then?" "Well, no. But … there was something with Mr. Kudo." "Mr. Kuniaki Kudo? What happened to him?" "When I met him for dinner the other day, he said he'd received an odd letter. There was no signature or return address, but the letter told him to stay away from me. There were some photographs in the envelope, too, photos of him, taken without his knowledge." "So your stalker was stalking him, too?" The detectives exchanged looks. Given all they had seen thus far, the writer of the letters would have to have been Ishigami. Kusanagi thought about Manabu Yukawa. The physicist had respected Ishigami as a fellow scientist. Kusanagi wondered if his friend would be shocked to hear that the mathematician was moonlighting as a stalker. There was a knock at the door. Yasuko answered it, and a young detective leaned into the room. He was a member of the team that had been searching Ishigami's apartment.

“Can I have a moment with you, Detective Kusanagi?” “Sure.” Kusanagi nodded and headed for the door. In the next apartment, Mamiya was sitting in the chair by the desk. The PC monitor on the table next to him was glowing. Elsewhere in the room, young detectives were packing things in cardboard boxes to take back to the station as evidence. Mamiya pointed at the wall next to the bookshelf. “Take a look.” Kusanagi gasped despite himself. The wallpaper had been removed from a corner of the wall, and a square had been cut out of the drywall behind it. A thin cord dangled from the hole; on the end of the cord was a small earphone. “Have a listen.” Kusanagi placed the earphone into his ear and immediately could hear voices. “If we can confirm what Ishigami is telling us, things should proceed pretty quickly. I don’t think we’ll be bothering you too much more after that, Ms. Hanaoka.” It was Kishitani. The sound was a little fuzzy, but perfectly audible. Kusanagi glanced back at Mamiya. He wouldn’t have believed the people he was listening to were on the other side of the wall if he hadn’t seen it himself. He listened again for a moment. “… will Ishigami be charged with?” “That will have to be determined by the court. But it’s a pretty clear case of murder, so I should think he’ll be put away for quite some time—that is, assuming he doesn’t get the death sentence. In any case, he won’t be bothering you anymore, Ms. Hanaoka.” For a detective, he talks way too much, Kusanagi thought, removing the earphone. “We should show this to Ms. Hanaoka afterward. Ishigami says she knew about it, but I have my doubts about that,” Mamiya said. “You mean Yasuko Hanaoka had no idea what Ishigami was up to?” “I heard you talking to her over that earphone,” Mamiya said with a grin. “It’s pretty cut and dried.

“The kotatsu cord, for one. It was in a box along with his kotatsu in the closet. An insulated cord, too—the same kind as the one used to strangle the man. If we can find a trace of the victim’s skin on it, we’re golden.” “Anything else?” “Take a look.” Mamiya pushed the computer mouse back and forth on the desk. His motions were jerky; he was clearly unfamiliar with using a mouse. Kusanagi guessed that someone had just taught him. “Here.” He had opened a wordprocessing program. A page full of writing showed on the screen. Kusanagi peered at the words.

As you can tell by the enclosed pictures, I have discovered the identity of the man you see frequently.

I must ask, what is this man to you? If you’re having a relationship, that would be a serious betrayal.

Don’t you understand what I’ve done for you?

I believe I have the right to tell you what to do in this matter. You must stop seeing this man immediately.

If you do not, my anger will be directed at him.

It would be a simple thing for me to lead this man to the same fate Togashi suffered. I have both the resolve and the means to do this.

Let me repeat, if you're engaged in a relationship with this man, that is a betrayal I cannot forgive, and I will have my revenge.

Ishigami was a classic stalker. Delusions of sharing some kind of bond with his target, trying to get rid of every other man who gets close to her.

Ishigami had put the envelope in her apartment mailbox before making his final call on that last evening. In it she had found the note it still held, as well as three letters—all of them supposed proof of how he had been a stalker. She had surrendered the three letters to the police as evidence. The note told her how to use the letters, and what she should tell the detectives when they came to talk to her, all in Ishigami's customary detail. There were instructions not only for Yasuko, but for Misato as well. It covered everything, every situation they might find themselves in, ensuring that no matter what befell the Hanaokas, they would know what to do. It was because of his instructions that Yasuko and Misato had been able to handle the police. Yasuko knew that if she made a misstep and the detectives saw through the deception, all of Ishigami's hard work would go up in smoke. Misato must have known that, too. At the very end of his instructions he had added a final message:

"I believe Kuniaki Kudo to be a loyal and trustworthy man. Marrying him will certainly increase the probability that you and Misato will be happy. Please forget about me. Feel no guilt. If you are not happy, all I have done will be for nothing."

Yukawa would go on to figure out Ishigami's plan but it was too late. He talked to Kusanagi. Kusanagi would then inform his superior. But the police wouldn't act. At that point, there would be no way to prove they had misidentified the body. Meanwhile, Ishigami would be charged with Togashi's murder. [Foresight, Deception, Planning, Strategy, Prediction, Acting skills, Composer, FSIQ, kinesthetic intelligence, Cognitive discipline, Emotional management, Emotional facilitation, Situational awareness]

A Visit from an old friend

This event takes place when Ishigami and Yukawa meet each other in the middle of the case for the 1st time since their child hood. "I have to say it's quite a surprise you showing up, Yukawa," he said, taking his seat. "Out of the blue I heard your name from a friend the other day, and thought I'd like to see you again." "A friend? Who could that have been?" "Er, well, it's a bit of a strange story, actually." Yukawa scratched his nose.

“A detective from the police department came by your apartment, right? Guy named Kusanagi?” “A detective?” Ishigami felt a jolt run through him, but he took care not to let his surprise show on his face. He peered at his old classmate. What does he know? “Right, well, that detective was a classmate of mine.” Ishigami blinked. “A classmate?” “We were in the badminton club together. I know, he doesn’t seem the Imperial University type, does he? I think he was over in the sociology department.” “Ah … no kidding.” The cloud of unease that had been spreading in Ishigami’s chest vanished in a moment.

“Now that you mention it, I remember him looking at a letter that came to me from the university. That must’ve been why he asked about it. Wonder why he didn’t tell me he was a fellow alum?” “Well, honestly, he doesn’t consider graduates from Imperial University sciences to be his classmates. Sometimes, I don’t even think he thinks of us as the same species.” Ishigami nodded. He felt the same way about those in the humanities. It was strange to think of the detective as someone who had been at the same university at the same time. “So Kusanagi tells me you’re teaching math at a high school?” Yukawa asked, staring directly at Ishigami’s face. “The high school near here, yes. You’re at the university, Yukawa?” “Yeah. Lab 13,” he replied simply. Yukawa wasn’t trying to ring his own bell, Ishigami realized; he didn’t seem to have any desire to boast. “Are you a professor?” “No. I’m just futzing around as an assistant professor. It’s pretty crowded at the top, you know,” Yukawa said, without any discernible ire. “Really? I figured you would be a full professor for sure by now, after all that hype about those magnetic gears of yours.” Yukawa smiled and rubbed his face. “I think you’re the only one who remembers all that. They never did make a working prototype. The whole thing ended as an empty theory.” Yukawa picked up the sake bottle and began to open it. Ishigami stood and brought two cups from the cupboard. “But you,” Yukawa said, “I had you pegged as a university professor, holed up in your office, taking on the Riemann hypothesis or some such. So what happened to Ishigami the Buddha? Or are you truly following in the footsteps of Erdős, playing the itinerant mathematician? “Nothing like that, I’m afraid,” Ishigami said with a light sigh. “Well, let’s drink,” Yukawa offered, ending his questions and pouring Ishigami a glass. The fact of it was, Ishigami had planned on devoting his life to mathematics. After he got his master’s, he had planned to stay at the university, just like Yukawa, earning his doctorate. Making his mark on the world.

That hadn’t happened, because he had to look after his parents. Both were getting on in years and were in ill health. There was no way he could have made ends meet for all of them with the kind of part-time job he could have held while attending classes. Instead, he had looked around for steadier employment. Just after his graduation, one of his professors had told him that a newly established university was looking for a teaching assistant. It was within commuting distance of his home, and it would allow him to continue his research, so he’d decided to check it out. It was a decision that quickly turned his life upside down. He found it impossible to carry on with his own work at the new school. Most of the professors there were consumed with vying for power and protecting their positions, and not one cared the least bit about nurturing young scholars

or doing groundbreaking research. The research reports Ishigami slaved over ended up permanently lodged in a professor's untended in-box. Worse still, the academic level of the students at the school was shockingly low. The time he spent teaching kids who couldn't even grasp high school level mathematics had detracted enormously from his own research. On top of all this, the pay was depressingly low. He had tried finding a job at another university, but it wasn't easy. Universities that even had a mathematics department were few and far between. When they did have one, their budgets were meager, and they lacked the resources to hire assistants. Math research, unlike engineering, didn't have major corporations waiting in line to sponsor it. Ishigami had soon realized he had to make a change, and fast. He had decided to take his teaching credentials and make those his means of support. This had meant giving up on being a career mathematician. He didn't see any point in telling Yukawa all this, though. Most people who had been forced out of research had similar stories. Ishigami knew his was nothing special. The sushi and sashimi arrived, so they ate, and drank a little more.

[Emotional management, Social awareness]
[Adverse capacity, Self awareness]

"That's right, I almost forgot the most important thing I wanted to show you," Yukawa said suddenly, pulling a large brown envelope from his paper bag and placing it in front of Ishigami. "What's this?" "Open it and find out," Yukawa said with a grin.

The envelope held a sheet of paper covered with mathematical formulas. Ishigami glanced over it, recognizing it almost instantly. "You're trying a counterexample to the Riemann hypothesis?" "That was quick." The Riemann hypothesis was widely considered to be one of the most important unresolved problems confronting modern mathematics. The challenge was to prove a hypothesis proposed by the German mathematician Bernhard Riemann; no one had been able to do it so far. The report Yukawa brought was an attempt to show that the hypothesis was false. Ishigami knew there were powerhouse scholars elsewhere in the world trying to do this very thing. Of course, none had succeeded yet. "One of the professors in our math department let me copy this. It hasn't been published anywhere yet. It's not a complete counterexample, but I think it's heading in the right direction," Yukawa explained. "So you think that the Riemann hypothesis is wrong?" "I said it was heading in the right direction. If the hypothesis is right, then of course it means there's a mistake in this paper." Yukawa's eyes glittered like those of a young miscreant watching a particularly elaborate practical joke unfold. Ishigami realized what he was doing. This was a challenge. He wanted to see just how soft Ishigami the Buddha had grown. "Mind if I take a look?" "That's why I brought it." Ishigami pored over the paper intently. After a short while he went to his desk and got out a fresh piece of paper. Laying it down before him, he picked up a ballpoint pen. "You're familiar with the P = NP problem, right?" Yukawa asked from behind him. Ishigami looked around. "You're referring to the question of whether or not it is as easy to determine the accuracy of another person's results as it is to solve the problem yourself—or, failing that, how the difference in difficulty compares. It's one of the

questions the Clay Mathematics Institute has offered a prize to solve." "I figured you might be." Yukawa smiled and tipped back his glass. Ishigami turned back to the desk. He had always thought of mathematics as a treasure hunt. First, one had to decide where to dig; then one had to determine the proper excavation route that led to the answer. Once you had a plan, you could make formulas to fit it, and they would give you clues. If you wound up empty-handed, you had to go back to the beginning and choose another route. Only by doing this over and over, patiently, yet boldly, could you hope to find the treasure—a solution no one else had ever found. Therefore, it would seem that analyzing the validity of someone else's solution was simply a matter of following the routes they had taken. In fact, however, it was never that simple. Sometimes, you could follow a mistaken route to a false treasure, and proving that it was false could be even harder than finding the real answer. Which was why someone had proposed the exasperating P = NP problem. Ishigami immersed himself in the problem and soon lost track of time. He was an explorer heading out on safari, a soldier diving headlong into battle, an engine fueled by excitement and pride. His eyes never left the formulas for a moment, his every brain cell devoted to their manipulation. "Ah!" Ishigami stood suddenly. Report paper in hand, he whirled around. Yukawa had put on his coat and was curled up in a ball on the floor, sleeping. Ishigami walked over, stopped, and shook his shoulder. "I figured it out." Yukawa sat up, eyes bleary with sleep. He rubbed his face and looked up at Ishigami. "What's that?" "I figured it out. I'm sorry to report that this counterexample is wrong. It was an interesting approach, but there was a fundamental flaw in the distribution of prime numbers—" "Hold on a second. Hold on." Yukawa held up his hands. "My brain is nowhere near awake enough to understand whatever you just said. I'm not sure I would understand even after a few cups of coffee, for that matter. To be honest, I don't know the Riemann hypothesis from a hole in the ground. I just brought that because I thought you'd be interested." "But you said you thought it was heading in the right direction?" "I was just repeating what the professor over in the mathematics department said. Actually, he knew about the flaw in his counterproof. That's why he didn't publish it." "Oh. No wonder I found it," Ishigami said, crestfallen. "No, it is a wonder. I'm impressed. The professor told me that even a top-flight mathematician would never find that error in one sitting." Yukawa looked at his watch. "And you did it in only … six hours. Impressive!" "Six hours?" Ishigami looked out the window. The sky was already whitening. He glanced at the alarm clock to see that it was almost five A.M. "Ishigami the Buddha lives on!" Yukawa cheered.

[FSIQ, Cognitive discipline, Preserverance]

"Some things never change. Which is kind of a relief." "Sorry, Yukawa. I totally forgot you were still here." "Oh, I don't mind. Still, you should probably get some sleep. You've got school, don't you?" "That I do. But now I'm too excited to sleep. I haven't concentrated on something like this for a long time. Thank you." Ishigami extended a hand. "I'm glad I came," Yukawa said, giving him a firm shake. "Me, too." Ishigami nodded. "There's not much to do here, but feel free to make yourself at home until the trains start running again." * * * Ishigami slept until seven o'clock. He slept deeply, either because his brain

was tired or from a deep psychological satisfaction, and when he woke his mind was unusually clear. He was bustling about, getting ready for work, when Yukawa commented, “Your neighbor was up early.” “My neighbor?” “I just heard them leaving. A little after six thirty, I guess.” So Yukawa had been awake. Ishigami was wondering if he should say something when Yukawa continued, “That Detective Kusanagi I was telling you about says that she’s a suspect. That’s why he dropped in on you, isn’t it?” Ishigami assumed an air of calm and put on his suit jacket. “He tells you about his cases, does he?” “Now and then. It’s more like him dropping by to shoot the breeze, then complaining to me about work before I can get rid of him.” “I still don’t know what the whole thing is about. Detective … Kusanagi, was it? He didn’t give me any details.” “Well, apparently, a man was murdered. Your neighbor’s ex-husband.” “Huh. Never would have guessed it,” Ishigami said, his face expressionless. “You talk to your neighbor much?” Yukawa asked. Ishigami’s brain went into overdrive. Judging from the tone of his voice, Yukawa didn’t suspect anything. That wasn’t why he was asking questions. Simply brushing him off was an option here. But Yukawa knew the detective—he had to consider that. Yukawa might mention his visit here. Ishigami had to answer. “I wouldn’t say ‘much,’ but I do frequent the lunch box shop where Ms. Hanaoka— that’s her name—works. Forgot to mention that to Detective Kusanagi, now that I think about it.” “So, she’s a seller of lunch boxes,” Yukawa mused. “I don’t go there because my neighbor works there—she just happens to work at the store where I buy my lunch, if you follow. It’s near the school.” “I hear you. Still, I can’t imagine it’s all that pleasant having a murder suspect in the neighborhood.” “It wasn’t me she murdered, so I don’t see how it’s any of my business.” “How very true,” Yukawa said, without a shred of suspicion. They left the apartment at seven thirty. Yukawa decided not to head for the nearest station, instead saying he’d walk with Ishigami to his school and take the train from there, a route that would save him from having to make a transfer. Yukawa didn’t speak of the case or Yasuko Hanaoka again. At first Ishigami had wondered if Kusanagi had sent him to get information, but now he decided he’d probably been overthinking the situation. Kusanagi would have no reason to go to such lengths to get information from him anyway. “Interesting commute you have here,” Yukawa commented. They crossed under the Shin-Ohashi Bridge and began to walk along the slow-flowing Sumida River, past the ramshackle village set up by the homeless. The gray-haired man with the ponytail was hanging up his laundry. Beyond him, the Can Man was well into his daily routine. “It’s the same thing every day,” Ishigami said. “This entire past month, nothing’s changed a bit. You could set your watch by these people.” “That’s what happens when you free people from the restraints of time. They make their own rigid schedule.” “I couldn’t agree more.” They went up the stairs just before Kiyosu Bridge, in the shadow of a nearby office building. Seeing their reflection in a glass door on the first floor, Ishigami shook his head. “How have you managed to stay so young, Yukawa? You still have a full head of hair. How different we two are!” “Not as full as it used to be. And what’s underneath it is slowing down, too.” “Good thing it was going too fast to begin with.” While they chatted, Ishigami felt himself growing tense. If they kept on like this, Yukawa would come with him all the way to Benten-tei. He started to worry that this genius observer of the natural world might notice something between him and Yasuko Hanaoka if he happened to see

the two of them together. And he didn't want to fluster Yasuko by suddenly arriving with a stranger. When he saw the sign he pointed it out. "There is the lunch box place I was telling you about." "Benten-tei, huh? Interesting name. The owners must have hoped that Benten, the goddess of wealth, would smile down on them." "Well, they have my business. I'll be buying one there again today." "Right. Well, I suppose I'd best be off, then." Yukawa stopped. This was unexpected—and welcome, Ishigami thought. "I'm sorry I wasn't the best host." "Not at all. You sell yourself short." Yukawa narrowed his eyes. "You ever think about going back to the university to continue your research?" Ishigami shook his head. "Anything I can do at a university I can do on my own. And I doubt any place would be willing to take me at my age." "You might be surprised, but I won't twist your arm. Good luck, Ishigami." "You, too, Yukawa." "It was good seeing you again." The two shook hands, and Ishigami stood on the sidewalk to see his friend off. He wasn't being sentimental. He just didn't want Yukawa to see him go into Benten-tei. When Yukawa had disappeared into the distance, Ishigami turned and walked swiftly toward the shop.

[SQ, Thinking, Reasoning, Social awareness, VCI]

"I'll take the special." He placed the order in his usual monotone. As always, he did not so much as glance up at Yasuko. "One special, coming up. Thank you," she said. Then she added in a low voice, "You had a visitor yesterday?" Ishigami stammered, then glanced up at her, blinking. He looked around the room quickly. "We shouldn't speak like this," he whispered. "They might be watching." "I'm sorry," Yasuko said, withdrawing behind the counter. The two said nothing while they waited for the lunch to be ready. They didn't even exchange glances. Yasuko glanced out at the street but couldn't see anyone watching. Of course, if the police really were out there, they wouldn't be so obvious about it. The boxed lunch arrived from the back. She handed it to Ishigami. "He was an old classmate," Ishigami said abruptly as he was paying. "What?" "An old classmate from university came to visit. I'm sorry if it alarmed you." Ishigami talked without moving his lips. "Oh, no … I'm fine," Yasuko said, smiling despite herself. Then she looked down at the floor, so that anyone watching from outside would not see her mouth. "I see. I wondered —you don't seem to have many visitors." "He was my first, actually. It was a surprise to me." "Well, I'm glad for you, then." "Right, thanks," Ishigami said awkwardly as he took the bag with his lunch in it from her. "Tonight, then." Which meant he would be calling her again this evening. Yasuko nodded, smiling.

[Situational awarenesses, VCI, Composer]

Lesson for a Student

This event takes place after the call where he wanted to ask her about the man (kudo). But remember ishigami wanted her to ask about kudo in 2 calls but this is the 1st one before he figured about their affection. The performance of the junior-year group 2 math class on the year-end exams was appalling. And group 2 wasn't the only sad story; the

entire junior class had done poorly. To Ishigami it seemed like the students were getting dumber by the year. After he'd passed out the answers, the math teacher put up a schedule for make-up exams. The school had set a lowest acceptable score for each subject, and those students who didn't reach it wouldn't go on to the next grade. Of course, they prevented all but the most hopeless cases from failing and being held back a year by making them take as many make-up exams as they needed to pass. Shouts of protest rose from the class when they saw the grades he'd given them. Ishigami ignored the outcry as usual, but one comment rose above the noise and reached his ears. "Hey, Teach, aren't there universities that don't require a math test to get in?" one of the students was saying. "Why should us guys who are going to those schools have to pass math?" Ishigami looked in the direction of the student, a boy named Morioka. He was leaning back in his chair, scratching his head and looking around at the other students for support. He was a short kid, but he filled the role of class crime boss—even Ishigami, who didn't have this bunch for homeroom, knew his reputation. The boy already had a long history of warnings for riding to school on a motorbike, which was strictly forbidden. "Are you going to art school, Morioka?" Ishigami asked. "Well, I mean … if I do go to university, it'll be one without a math exam for sure. Not that I plan on going. Besides, I'm not taking the optional math class next year, so what's my grade this year matter? Hey, don't get me wrong, I'm thinking about you, too, Teach. Can't be much fun teaching with idiots like me in the class. So, I was thinking, maybe we could kind of come to an understanding about this. An agreement between adults, like." That last line got a laugh from the class. Ishigami chuckled wryly. "If you're so worried on my account, then pass your make-up exam. It's only differential and integral calculus. That can't be too hard." Morioka scoffed loudly. He crossed his legs off to the side of his chair. "What good's differential and integral calculus gonna do me? It's a waste of time." Ishigami had turned to the blackboard to begin an explanation of some of the trickier problems on the year-end exam, but Morioka's comment made him stop and turn around. This wasn't the kind of thing he could let slide. "I hear you like motorbikes, Morioka. Ever watched a race?" Morioka nodded, clearly taken aback by the sudden question. "Well, do racers drive their bikes at a set speed? No, they're constantly adjusting their speed based on the terrain, the way the wind's blowing, their race strategy, and so on. They need to know in an instant where to hold back and where to accelerate in order to win. Do you follow?" "Yeah, sure, I follow. But what's that got to do with math?" "Well, exactly how much they accelerate at a given time is the derivative of their speed at that exact moment. Furthermore, the distance they travel is the integral of their changing speed. In a race, the bikes all have to run roughly the same distance, so in determining who wins and who loses, the speed differential becomes very important. So you see, differential and integral calculus is very important." "Yeah," Morioka said after a confused pause, "but a racer doesn't have to think about all that. What do they care about differentials and integrals? They win by experience and instinct." "I'm sure they do. But that isn't true for the support team for those racers. They run detailed simulations over and over to find the best places to accelerate—that's how they work out a strategy. And in order to do that, they use differential and integral calculus. Even if they don't know it, the computer software they're using does." "So why not leave the mathematics to whoever's making the

software?" "We could do that, but what if it was you who had to make the software, Morioka?" Morioka leaned further back in his chair. "Me? Write software? I don't think so." "Even if you don't become a software engineer, someone else in this class might. That's why we study mathematics. That's why we have this class. You should know that what I'm teaching here is only the tip of the iceberg—a doorway into the world of mathematics. If you don't even know where the door is, how can you ever expect to be able to walk through it? Of course, you don't have to walk through it unless you want to. All I'm testing here is whether or not you know where the doorway is. I'm giving you choices." As he talked, Ishigami scanned the room. Every year there was someone who asked why they had to study math. Every year, he gave the same explanation. This time, since it was a student who liked motorbikes, he'd used the example of motorbike racing. Last year, it was an aspiring musician, so he talked about the math used in designing musical technology. But no matter the specifics of the discussion, which changed from year to year, it was all old hat for Ishigami.

[SQ, Thinking, Reasoning]

Info on the case Yukawa

This event takes place after the lesson of the student section. This was also when Ishigami figures out about the relationship between Yasuko and kudo. When he returned to the teachers' room after class, Ishigami found a note stuck to his desk. It was hastily scrawled, and it read, "Call Yukawa." With a cell number written below, he recognized the handwriting as belonging to another one of the school's math teachers. What does Yukawa want? he wondered, swallowing to clear the sudden catch in his throat. Cell phone in hand, he went out into the hallway. He dialed the number on the memo. Yukawa picked up after the first ring. "Sorry to bother you during school hours." "Is it something urgent?" "I guess you could call it urgent, yeah. Do you think we could meet today?" "Today? Well, I have a few more things to take care of here. I suppose if it was after five o'clock…" He had just finished his sixth-period class, and all the students were in the homeroom. Ishigami didn't have a homeroom class of his own, so he could leave the keys to the judo dojo with another teacher and get out early if he had to. "Great. I'll meet you at the front gate at five, then. Sound good?" "That's fine—where are you now?" "In the neighborhood. See you soon!" "Right, see you." After Yukawa hung up, Ishigami clutched his cell phone with tense fingers, staring down at it. What could possibly be so urgent that it would drive the physicist to come see him here at school? Ishigami puzzled over it as he walked back to his desk. By the time he had finished grading his few remaining exams and had gotten ready to leave it was already five. Ishigami walked out of the teachers' room and cut across the schoolyard toward the front gate. Yukawa was standing near the gate next to the crosswalk. His black coat fluttered in the wind. When he saw Ishigami, he waved and smiled. "Sorry to drag you out like this," he called out cheerfully. "I was just wondering what was so urgent that you came all the way out here to see me about it," Ishigami said, his expression softening. "Let's talk while we walk." Yukawa set off down Kiyosubashi Road. "No, this way is faster," Ishigami said, indicating

a side road. “If we go straight through here it will get us right to my apartment building.” “Yeah, but I want to go to that lunch box shop,” Yukawa explained. “The lunch box shop? Why go there?” Ishigami asked, feeling the muscles in his face tighten. “Why? To get a lunch box. Why else? I don’t think I’ll have time to get a proper dinner anywhere tonight, so I thought I might get something easy ahead of time. The lunches are good there, aren’t they? I’d hope so, seeing as how you buy them every day.” “Oh … right. Off we go, then.” Ishigami turned toward Benten-tei. They headed off in the direction of Kiyosu Bridge. As the walked along, a large truck rattled past them on the road. “So,” Yukawa was saying, “I met with Kusanagi the other day—you remember, the detective that dropped in on you?” Ishigami tensed, his premonition growing steadily worse. “What’d he have to say?” “Nothing big. Whenever he runs into a dead end, you see, he always comes whining to me. And never with the easy problems, either. Once he even wanted me to solve a poltergeist haunting. See what I mean?” Yukawa began to tell him the story of the poltergeist haunting. It sounded interesting enough to Ishigami. But he knew that Yukawa hadn’t come all the way here to relate a would-be ghost story. The math teacher was on the verge of asking his old friend what he had really come for when the sign for Benten-tei came into view. Another wave of unease washed over him. How would Yasuko react when she saw them? It was unusual under any circumstances for Ishigami to show up at this time of day, and if he came with a friend, she would be sure to suspect the worst. He just hoped she had the sense to act naturally. Yukawa stepped up to the sliding glass door to Benten-tei, opened it, and went inside. Ishigami followed, somewhat hesitantly. He saw Yasuko behind the counter, in the middle of helping another customer. “Welcome!” she said brightly to Yukawa. Then she turned to look at Ishigami. A look of bewilderment came into her eyes, and her smile froze on her face. “Did my friend do something?” Yukawa asked. “No—nothing,” Yasuko shook her head, still smiling uncomfortably. “He’s my neighbor. He always buys his lunch here…” “So I’m told. I’m here on his recommendation.” “Thank you, then,” Yasuko said, nodding politely. “We were classmates back in university,” Yukawa went on, turning to Ishigami. “I was just over at his place the other day.” “Oh, right.” Yasuko smiled and nodded again. “Oh, he told you?” “Yes, in passing.” Yukawa nodded, smiling. “So, what do you recommend? No, what does he usually buy?” “Mr. Ishigami almost always gets the special, but I’m afraid we’re sold out…” “That’s too bad. Let’s see, then. They all look so good…” While Yukawa selected a boxed lunch, Ishigami stood looking out through the sliding glass door. He wondered if the detectives were watching from somewhere nearby. If possible, he didn’t want them to see him being friendly with Yasuko. Then another thought occurred to him, and he gave Yukawa a sidelong glance. Could Yukawa be trusted? Did he need to be on his guard around this old friend? If he’s friends with Kusanagi, anything he sees here might eventually wind up back with the police. Yukawa had finally decided on a lunch box. Yasuko had just gone back with his order when the glass door slid open again and a man in a dark brown jacket stepped into the shop. Ishigami glanced behind him as casually as he could. He felt his jaw clench involuntarily. It was the man he had seen dropping Yasuko off the other day in front of their apartment building. From beneath his umbrella, Ishigami had watched them talking together. He had gotten the impression that they were old friends—or something more. The man didn’t seem to

notice Ishigami. He was waiting for Yasuko to reappear. When she came back to the front and saw him, her eyes opened in surprise. The man merely nodded, smiling, with a look that said, We'll talk after you've dealt with these customers. Who is he? Ishigami wondered. When did he show up, and how did he get so close to Yasuko Hanaoka? Ishigami vividly remembered the look on Yasuko's face when she had stepped out of the taxi the night before. He had never seen her looking so full of life. Her face hadn't been the face of a mother or an employee at a lunch box shop. It had been her true face, he thought. A woman's face. A face she wore for this man, and would never wear for Ishigami— Ishigami's gaze darted between the mystery man and Yasuko. He thought he could feel the atmosphere shift between them. A feeling of anxiety clutched at the math teacher's chest. Yukawa's lunch box was ready. He paid, took the bag, and turned to Ishigami. "Thanks for waiting." They left Benten-tei and went down to the Sumida River at the stairs by Kiyosu Bridge. They began to walk along the river. "So who was that guy?" Yukawa asked. "Huh?" "The guy that came into the shop. It looked like you recognized him." Internally, Ishigami cursed his old friend's powers of observation. "Really? Can't say that I did," he replied, striving to maintain his composure. "Oh, well, never mind then." Yukawa said. "So what is the urgent business all about, anyway? Don't tell me you came all this way just to buy a lunch box?" "Oh, right. I hadn't gotten to why I came, had I?" Yukawa frowned. "Like I said before, that Detective Kusanagi has a habit of bringing me all of his annoying loose ends. Anyway, this time he came because he found out I knew you, and you're her neighbor. It turns out he has a … well, a rather unpleasant request." "What's that?" "To put it bluntly, the police are still investigating the murder of your neighbor's exhusband, and they have suspicions about your neighbor. Unfortunately, they haven't got a shred of evidence linking her to the crime. So, they'd like to keep tabs on her, watch what she does—you know, observe. But there are limits to how far they can take that. Which is where we come to you." "Wait, they don't want me to watch her for them, do they?" Yukawa scratched the back of his head sheepishly. "Er, well, yes, actually they do. It's not like they want you to observe her all the time, twenty-four seven. They just want you to keep an eye on the place next door, and let them know if you notice anything. I know, it's a serious imposition, but that's how they are." "So that's why you came out here to talk to me?" "Well, I expect the police will make a more formal request soon enough. They just wanted me to feel you out about it first. Personally, I wouldn't care if you said no—in fact, I almost think you should, but I thought I owed my detective friend at least a preliminary chat with you." Yukawa looked sincerely put upon. Secretly, though, Ishigami wondered if the story was really true. Would the police really go to a civilian with a request like that? "Is that why you wanted to go to Bententei, too?" "Honestly, yes. I wanted to see this suspect for myself. And I gotta say, now that I have, I don't think she's capable of killing someone." Ishigami was about to tell him that he agreed, but he held back. Instead, he said, "Well, they say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover." "True enough. So, what do you say? How would you answer if the police asked you to spy for them?" Ishigami shook his head. "Honestly, I'd rather not get involved. I'm not in the habit of prying into other people's lives, and besides, I barely have the time. It might not look it, but I'm rather a busy man." "So I thought. Look, I'll just tell Kusanagi what you said. That should put an end to the whole

idea. Sorry if I made you uncomfortable at all." "No, not a bit." They were approaching Shin-Ohashi Bridge. They could already see the homeless people's shanties along the riverside. "So the murder happened on March tenth, I think he said," Yukawa said. "Kusanagi mentioned you came home kind of early that day?" "Yeah. I didn't have anything scheduled that night. I think I got back around seven— I believe that's what I told him." "After which you holed up in your room, doing battle with those mathematical problems of yours?" "Something like that." As he talked, Ishigami wondered if Yukawa was actually trying to see if he had an alibi. If that was the case, then he already suspected Ishigami of being involved. "Which reminds me, I have no idea if you have any other hobbies. I mean something other than math." Ishigami snorted. "Hobbies? Not really. Math is about all I do." "What you do to blow off steam, then? Do you like going for drives?" Yukawa pantomimed gripping a steering wheel. "No, no. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't. I don't own a car." "But you have a driver's license?" "Is that a surprise?" "Not particularly. You're not so busy that you couldn't find the time to go to driving school, are you?" "I got it right after I found out I wasn't getting a university job. I figured it might be of help in finding work. Of course, it ended up not helping at all," Ishigami said with a sidelong glance at Yukawa. "What, are you trying to figure out whether I could drive a car?" Yukawa blinked. "No. Why would I?" "Given your questions, I just thought you might be." "Well I didn't mean anything by it. I was just wondering if you like to go for drives. Or, more to the point, if you had anything you like to discuss other than mathematics once in a while." "Other than mathematics and murder mysteries, you mean." Yukawa laughed. "Well said." "Well, I'd better be getting back home. Sorry for troubling you with the whole investigation thing." "Just apologize to Detective Kusanagi for me. I'm sorry I couldn't help him." "I don't think there's any need to apologize. And, I hope you don't mind if I drop in again?" "No, I don't mind." "Great. We can drink sake and talk math." "You mean talk math and murder." Yukawa shrugged and wrinkled his brow. "Maybe so. Though I did come up with a new problem for you. Maybe something you can think about in your spare time?" "That being?" "Which is harder: devising an unsolvable problem, or solving that problem? And it's not an empty question. Unlike the Clay Mathematics Institute prize people, I guarantee this puzzle has an answer. Interesting, no?" "Very interesting," Ishigami said, trying to read Yukawa's expression. "I'll think about it." Yukawa nodded, then turned and walked back toward the main road.

[Situational awareness, Thinking, Observations]

Hangout with Yukawa

This was after yukawa had an argument with kusanagi which led to Ishigami being the suspect and kasanagi trying to figure out Ishigami alibi. The clock showed the time as 7:30 A.M. Ishigami left his apartment, clutching his tote bag. The bag contained the thing he valued most in the world: a set of files pertaining to the mathematics problem he was currently researching. "Currently"—or, more accurately, "eternally." He had written his senior thesis on it back in college, but even now his work was far from complete. He had calculated that it would take him roughly another twenty years to complete his work on

this particular theory. Possibly even longer. It was the kind of insurmountable problem worthy of an entire lifetime's devotion. And of all the mathematicians in the world, he was in the best position to crack it. How wonderful it would be to forget everything else, all other considerations, all the time sinks of daily life, and just work on that problem! Ishigami daydreamed, as he had so often before. Whenever he considered the dreary truth that he might die before finishing, it chafed at him to do anything but work on it. No matter where he went, he took his files with him. There could be no rest, no vacation while there was still progress to be made. And all he needed to work on it was paper and pencils. If only he could have been left alone to do his research, he would have required nothing else from life. Mechanically, he walked his usual morning route past the Shin-Ohashi Bridge and down along the Sumida River, past the shacks with roofs made from blue vinyl tarps. The man with the long white hair pulled back into a long braid was once again holding a pot over a burner. Ishigami couldn't see what he was cooking. A mutt with light brown fur was tied up beside him. The dog sat, exhausted, leaning its flank toward its master. The Can Man was crushing cans and muttering to himself as usual. He already had two plastic bags filled with flattened aluminum balanced next to him. A little farther along there was a bench. This morning it was empty. Ishigami glanced at it for moment, then dropped his gaze to the ground before his feet, maintaining his steady pace. He sensed someone walking toward him along the riverbank. Right about now was when he usually met the elderly woman taking her three dogs for a walk, but he could tell from the sound of the approaching footsteps that this wasn't she. Ishigami glanced up. A surprised "Oh" slipped from his mouth, and he stopped. The other person kept on coming. Then with a smile he paused in front of Ishigami. "Morning," said Manabu Yukawa. Ishigami hesitated for a moment, unsure of how to reply. He wet his lips and opened his mouth. "You were waiting for me." "Of course I was," Yukawa replied, still smiling. "Well, maybe not 'waiting,' exactly. I've just walked here from Kiyosu Bridge. Figured I'd run into you along the way." "What ever it is, it must be urgent." "Urgent? Maybe. It could be." "You want to talk about it now?" Ishigami glanced at his watch. "I haven't much time." "I only need ten or fifteen minutes." "Can we talk while we walk?" "Suits me." Yukawa glanced around him. "But let's talk here a moment first. Just two or three minutes will do. How about that bench over there?" He immediately headed toward the bench without waiting for Ishigami's reply. Ishigami sighed and followed his friend. "We walked here once before together, didn't we?" Yukawa recalled. "That we did." "I remember you saying that the homeless people here had developed routines like clockwork. You remember that?" "I do. That's what happens when you take clocks out of people's lives—I believe that's what you said." Yukawa nodded, satisfied. "Too bad it's impossible for you and me ever to be off the clock. Like it or not, we're stuck in the cogs of society. Take them away, and our clocks spin out of control. Or rather, we are the cogs in the clockworks. No matter how much we might think we are off standing on our own, we're not. It gives us a certain measure of security, to be sure, but it also means we're not entirely free. I've heard that lots of the homeless don't want to go back to living regular lives." "Keep chatting like this and you'll use up your two or three minutes in no time," Ishigami said, looking at his watch. "You're at one minute already." "Okay—the world needs its cogs, all of them; and even a cog may say how it gets used. In fact, only a

cog may determine its eventual meaning in the system. That's what I wanted to tell you," Yukawa said, staring Ishigami in the face. "Are you going to quit your teaching job?" Ishigami's eyes opened wide with surprise. "Why do you ask that?" "I just thought you might be moving in that direction. You're not planning on being the cog labeled 'math teacher' all your life, are you?" Yukawa stood. "Shall we?" The two stood up and began walking along the Sumida. Ishigami didn't speak, waiting for his old friend to say something. "I heard Kusanagi paid you another visit. Checking on your alibi?" "Yeah. Last week." "He suspects you." "Seems like it. Though I haven't the foggiest clue why." Yukawa suddenly smiled. "To tell you the truth, he's a little foggy on that as well. He's only interested in you because he saw me taking an interest in you, that's all. I'm sure it's not my place to tell you this, but the police don't have a bit of evidence to point them in your direction." Ishigami stopped. "So why are you telling me this?" Yukawa stopped as well and turned toward him. "Because I'm your friend. No other reason but that." "Because you're my friend you thought you needed to tell me about some murder investigation? Why? I have nothing to do with the crime. Why should I care if the police suspect me of anything?" He heard Yukawa sigh—a long, slow sound. Then his friend shook his head. Something about the sadness in his expression made Ishigami feel nervous. "The alibi's immaterial," Yukawa said quietly. "Huh?" "Kusanagi and company are obsessed with picking apart their suspect's alibi. They think that if they keep prodding at the holes in Yasuko Hanaoka's story, they'll eventually find the truth, provided she really did kill her ex-husband. And they think that if you were her conspirator, then all they need to do is check out your alibi, too, and the fortress you've built will come crumbling down." "Sorry, but I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about." Ishigami frowned. "Besides, what's wrong with detectives looking for holes in alibis? Isn't that what they do? Assuming there really are holes to be found, that is." Yukawa's mouth softened. "Kusanagi said something interesting the other day. He was talking about the way you designed the tests you give to your students, taking advantage of the blind spots created by the students' own assumptions. Like making an algebra problem look like a geometry problem, for instance. It made sense. It's very effective for tripping up the ones who don't understand the underlying principles and just try to solve everything by the book. The student sees what they think is a geometry problem, so they attack it from that angle. But they can't solve it. They get nowhere, and end up just wasting time. Some people might call it unfair, but it's a very effective way of measuring someone's true ability." "What are you getting at?" "Kusanagi and company," Yukawa said, his face growing serious, "think that this is a question of breaking down alibis. And why not, since their primary suspect has an alibi. Even better, her alibi feels weak. It feels like you could just keep hitting it and eventually it might break. The same thing happens all the time in our research, really. And, time and time again, we find that while we were happily swinging away at a problem, all the while we were completely off the mark. The police have fallen into that very trap. The bait was there and they took it, hook, line, and sinker." "If you have concerns about the direction their investigation is taking, shouldn't you be talking to Detective Kusanagi, not me?" "Yes, eventually, I'll have to. But I wanted to talk to you first, for reasons I've just stated." "Because you're my friend." "Yes. I might also say because I don't want to lose your genius. I want to clear

away all of this distraction and get you back to doing what you do best. You've got a precious brain and I don't want it being wasted like this." "I don't need you to tell me that. I already abhor wasted time," Ishigami said. He turned away and began to walk again—not because he was worried about being late to his class, but because it had suddenly become too uncomfortable for him to continue standing in that spot. Yukawa followed. "In order to solve this case, we mustn't think that the suspect's alibi is the problem. The problem lies elsewhere. A difference greater than that between geometry and algebra." "So, out of curiosity, what is the problem?" Ishigami asked without looking back. "It's not a simple thing, so it's hard to give you a simple answer; but if I had to sum it up in one word, I'd say it's a matter of camouflage. Subterfuge, even. The investigators have been fooled by the criminals' camouflage. Everything they think is a clue isn't. Every hint they uncover is merely a breadcrumb set in their path to lure them astray." "That sounds complicated." "Oh, it is. But if you simply change your way of looking at it, it becomes surprisingly simple. When an amateur attempts to conceal something, the more complex he makes his camouflage, the deeper the grave he digs for himself. But not so a genius. The genius does something far simpler, yet something no normal person would even dream of, the last thing a normal person would think of doing. And from this simplicity, immense complexity is created." "I thought you physicist types didn't like talking in the abstract." "I can be more concrete, if you like. How are we doing on time?" "I'm still good." "Still have time to drop by the lunch shop?" Ishigami glanced at his friend before returning his gaze to the path ahead. "I don't buy lunch there every day, you know." "Really? I heard you did. Well, almost every day." "Is that your smoking gun that links me to this case?" "Yes and no. If you were simply buying your lunch at the same shop every day, that wouldn't mean anything, but if you were going to meet a particular woman every day, that's something no interested observer could overlook." Ishigami stopped and glared at Yukawa. "Do you think because we are old friends, you can just say whatever you like?" Yukawa met his gaze. Facing him straight on like this, Ishigami could sense the strength behind the physicist's eyes. "Wait, are you really angry? I've upset you." "This is ridiculous," Ishigami muttered, setting off again. He began climbing the stairs that led up toward Kiyosu Bridge. "Clothes they think belonged to the victim were found a short distance away from the body," Yukawa said, following a pace behind. "They were half-burned, in an oil can. They think the murderer did it. When I heard that, I wondered why the murderer didn't do a better job and burn the clothes completely. The police seem to think it was because he wanted to leave the scene as quickly as possible, but that leads one to wonder why he wouldn't have just taken the clothes with him to burn someplace else when he had more time. Or maybe he thought they would burn more quickly than they did? Once I started thinking about it, it bothered me. So I tried burning some clothes myself." Ishigami stopped again. "You burned your clothes?" "In an oil can, yes. A jacket, a sweater, some pants, shoes … oh, and underwear. Bought them at a used-clothes shop. I was surprised how much it cost! See, unlike mathematicians, we physicists aren't satisfied with something until we've performed the experiment ourselves." "And your results?" "They burned pretty well, actually, and put off a lot of toxic fumes," Yukawa told him. "There was nothing left. It didn't take long at all. Maybe five minutes, tops." "And so?" "So why didn't the murderer wait those five

minutes?" Ishigami shrugged. He climbed the stairs leading back to the street and, at the top of the stairs, he turned left on Kiyosubashi Road—the opposite direction from the way to Benten-tei. "Not buying lunch today?" Yukawa asked, as he'd expected. "I told you I don't go there every day," Ishigami retorted, frowning. "I was just worried about your lunch, that's all," Yukawa said, quickening his pace to walk beside him. "They also found a bicycle near the body, you know. Turns out it had been stolen from Shinozaki Station. The suspected victim's fingerprints were on it." "What of it?" "Kind of surprising to have a criminal who goes so far as to crush the victim's face, yet forgets to wipe his bicycle for fingerprints. Pretty stupid, really, unless he left his fingerprints on the bicycle on purpose. But why would he do that?" "I'm sure you're about to tell me." "Maybe in order to link the bicycle to the victim. Clearly, it was better for the criminal for the police to draw that conclusion." "Why's that?" "Because the criminal wanted the police to assume that the victim had ridden that bicycle from Shinozaki Station himself. And for that, he couldn't use just any old bicycle." "So there was something special about the bicycle they found?" "I wouldn't say 'special.' It was your typical morning commuter bike. With one exception: it was brand-new." Ishigami felt every pore on his body open. It was getting more difficult for him to breathe steadily. Someone called out, "Good morning!" and he started at the sound. A female student was passing them on her bicycle. She nodded toward Ishigami. "Oh, hey, morning," he hurriedly called back. "That's impressive. I didn't think students said hello to their teachers anymore," Yukawa commented."Hardly any do. So why did this bicycle have to be brand-new?" "If you're going to steal a bicycle, why not steal a new one—that's what the police seem to think. But our thief didn't care about that. He cared about when the bicycle had been left at the station." "Because…?" "The thief had no use for a bicycle that might have been left by the station for days. And he wanted the owner to report the theft. That's why the bicycle had to be new. Owners of brand-new bicycles don't usually leave them out on the street for very long and are more likely to go to the police when their bicycle goes missing. Neither of these things was absolutely necessary for the thief to create his camouflage, but either would help, so he chose the course of action most likely to yield positive results." "Hmph." Ishigami refrained from commenting on Yukawa's conjecture. He walked on, looking only at the street in front of them. They were nearing the school. The sidewalk was filling up with students. "Well, this is certainly an interesting story, and I'd like to hear more," he said, stopping and turning to face Yukawa. "But maybe you'll let me be for now? I don't want the students prying." "Absolutely. I think I've said pretty much what I had to say, in any case." "It was interesting," Ishigami said. "I recall you posing a question to me before. You asked which was more difficult, formulating an unsolvable problem, or solving that problem. Remember?" "I do. And I have an answer for you. It's more difficult to create the problem than to solve it. All the person trying to solve the problem has to do is always respect the problem's creator." "I see. What about the P = NP problem, then? The question of whether or not it's as easy to determine the accuracy of another person's results as it is to solve the problem yourself." Yukawa favored him with a suspicious look, unsure of where Ishigami was leading. "You've given me your answer," Ishigami went on, pointing a finger at Yukawa's chest. "Now it's time for you to hear someone else's solution." "Ishigami…" "Good day." The mathematician

turned his back on Yukawa and strode into the school, tote bag clutched tightly in his arms. It's over, he thought. The physicist had seen through everything.

[Thinking, Reasoning, Trap invasion]

Passing The Students

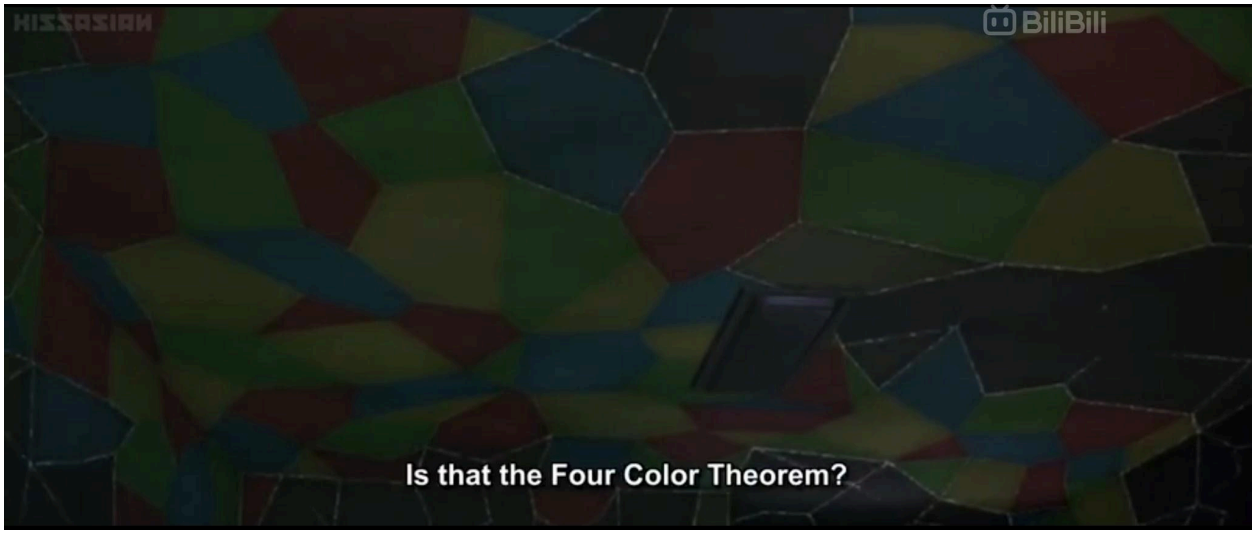
Ishigami sat staring at a line of unhappy faces. Some of them were beyond unhappy—they wore looks of outright pain. A few had gone even further, and drooped in despondent resignation. One member of the dismal class—Morioka—hadn't even glanced at the test sheet after Ishigami gave the go-ahead to start. He was staring vacantly out the window, head propped up on one hand. It was a nice day outside, with an endless expanse of blue sky stretched high over the school complex. Morioka was probably thinking about how he could be riding his motorcycle if he didn't have to be in here, wasting time. The school and most of the students were already out on spring break. There was just this one group of students, with one final, depressing hurdle to jump. Too many kids hadn't passed even the make-up tests after finals and had been required to do remedial class work. Thirty of Ishigami's students were in these special classes—a far larger number than for any other subject. And after they were done with the extra coursework, another test awaited them: the re-make-up test. The head teacher had stopped by while Ishigami was writing up questions for the test, to make sure he didn't make them too difficult. "I don't like saying this, but really at this point the tests are just a formality. We can't let the students go on to the next grade with failing marks. And I know you don't like doing all these extra tests, either, do you? Besides, we've had complaints that your tests were too difficult from the beginning. Just—make sure everyone passes, okay?" Ishigami didn't think his typical test questions were difficult. They were simple, in fact. There were no departures from the material he had covered in class. Anyone with half a brain, and a rudimentary understanding of mathematical principles, should have been able to solve them. Usually, all he did was change how the problems looked. Surely it would be too easy to use problems straight from the textbooks and practice sheets! Still, the students who simply tried to memorize answers and the ones who hadn't paid any attention at all were at a loss when faced with basic challenges. So this time Ishigami had done as the head teacher instructed. He had used representative questions straight from the students' practice sheets. Anyone who had studied even a little should have had no problem. Morioka gave a big yawn and looked at his watch. Then his eyes met Ishigami's. Ishigami expected him to look away, but instead Morioka grimaced and held his hands up over his head in the shape of an X, as if to predict the mark that would be on this paper. Ishigami tried grinning at him. Morioka looked surprised, then grinned back, and resumed looking out the window. Ishigami remembered when Morioka had asked him what good differential and integral calculus was. Ishigami had used motorbike racing as an example, but he wasn't sure if that got through to the boy. Morioka's attitude didn't annoy Ishigami. It was only natural to wonder why one had to study something. Once such questions were answered—well, then there was an objective, something to learn toward. And that could lead down the

path toward an understanding of the true nature of mathematics. Yet too many teachers refused to answer simple questions of relevance from their students. No, Ishigami thought, they probably aren't able to answer them. They taught without really understanding their subjects, simply following a set curriculum, thinking only of coaxing a passing grade from the students so they could send them on their way to make room for next year's flock. Questions like Morioka's would have been nothing but an irritation to them. What am I doing here? Ishigami wondered, not for the first time. Giving students tests just so they could earn points had nothing to do with the true meaning of mathematics. It didn't mean anything. It wasn't math, and it wasn't even education. Ishigami stood and took a deep breath. "Wherever you are on your test sheets, you can stop." He looked over the classroom. "I want you to turn your papers over and write down what you're thinking right now on the backs." Confusion washed across the faces of the students in the room. A mutter spread through the class. "What we're thinking? What does that mean?" "Specifically, I want you to write down what you think about math. No," he amended, "just write anything about math at all. You'll be graded on what you write." Every face in the room brightened. "What grade are you going to give us?" a male student asked. "Depends on what you write. If you can't handle actual math, I hope you can at least say something about it," Ishigami said, sitting back down in his chair. Every student turned over his or her paper. Some, including Morioka, began to write immediately. I'll be able to pass them all now, thought Ishigami with some relief. There was no way to mark a blank answer sheet, but as long as they had each written something, he could assign grades as he saw fit. The head teacher might wonder a bit, but surely he couldn't complain about Ishigami delivering the passing grades he'd specifically asked for. The bell rang, indicating the end of the test period. A few of the students asked for a little more time, so Ishigami gave them an extra five minutes. When it was done he collected the answer sheets and walked out of the classroom. The moment the door shut, he heard the room erupt into conversation. There were audible cries of relief.

[FRI, Thinking, Reasoning]

Ishigami in Jail

This event takes place after the confession of Ishigami where he gets arrested. A countless number of stains, scratches, and other small marks covered the wall in front of Ishigami. He chose several at random, and in his mind connected them all with straight lines. The resulting matrix was made up of triangles, squares, and hexagons. He began painting the shapes with four separate colors, not allowing any two adjacent shapes to share the same color. All of this he did in his head.



Ishigami finished the problem in less than a minute. Wiping the image, he chose different spots and repeated the process. It was the essence of simplicity, yet he could do it over and over without losing interest. If he grew weary of the four-color problem, he decided he would just use the spots on the wall to define an analytical geometry problem.

Calculating the coordinates of every spot on the wall would take a considerable amount of time. And that was just using the spots on the wall. Who cared if he wasn't allowed to leave his room? As long as he had paper and something to write with, he could work on his math problems. Even if the authorities were to bind his hands and feet, he could explore new proofs in his head. They could take away his sight, or his hearing, but they could not touch his brain. Confinement was like a limitless garden of paradise for him. How short is a lifetime, he thought, compared to the time it will take humankind to find all the rich veins of mathematical ore where they lie sleeping and tease them forth into the world. Nor, he reflected, did he need anyone to acknowledge his work. Certainly he would have liked to publish his theories, to be recognized and reviewed; but that was not the true essence of mathematics. In academia it was always a race to see who would reach the summit of which particular mountain first, but as long as he knew which peaks he had discovered, that would be enough.

[Observation, FSIQ, Thinking, Cognitive discipline]