INSPECTOR TSUKUMO

- timekeeper-



youtube:@ghs48
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CONTEXT: WHITE
FSIQ/INTELLIGENCE: GREEN
STRATEGY/PLANNING: CYAN
SENSORY & AC : PINK
MANIPULATION/DECEPTION: RED

REASONING/THINKING: LIGHT GREEN
PSYCHOLOGY/SQ/EI: YELLOW
MISCELLANEOUS: BLUE
FORESIGHT & FIELD SKILLS: ORANGE

GHS

TIME LOOP CASE

The victim, Vakita Keigo, 24, was found murdered at around 10 p.m. It is known that he worked as a newspaper deliveryman. Tsukumo and Midzuno are tasked with investigating this first murder. After finding illicit objects at the crime scene, Midzuno believes that drug trafficking is at the heart of the case. However, Tsukumo practically dismisses this proposition and, analyzing the situation more critically, questions what the murder weapon might have been (thereby avoiding what he considers to be a deductive error on Midzuno's part)

Vakita was killed, and a bloodstained stone containing the murderer's fingerprints was found near the body. It is precisely when information that genuinely appears relevant to him emerges that Tsukumo's approach changes completely, demonstrating that he seems to distinguish with precision what is and is not relevant to the investigation. This information is an envelope found at the crime scene. From this clue, Tsukumo naturally begins looking into Vakita's acquaintances and the people who worked alongside him. However, his primary suspect is specifically a boy who also worked as a newspaper deliveryman. His first major hypothesis is **Makoto**, who, besides having a relationship with the victim, also has a sister hospitalized in a local hospital. The latter information is based on the envelope found at the crime scene, which Tsukumo quickly associates with a type of envelope used by hospitals in the city to store money.

Knowing that the murderer's fingerprints were left on the weapon, it would be enough to compare those prints with Makoto's to determine whether there was a match. Naturally, Tsukumo also takes advantage of the situation to apply psychological pressure on Makoto, who already appeared to be emotionally vulnerable.


HOW DO WE SOLVE THIS MISUNDER-STANDING?
WILL YOU LET US TAKE YOUR FINGERPRINS, KUSAKABE -KUN?
TEXT "SOY SAUCE"
THEY GOT ME!!
IT'S JUST A TALK, NOT AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGA-TION
FOR NOW, WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO USE FORCE
WAIT!
CALM DOWN, MIDZUNO
SORRY!! I REALLY SHOULD GO!!
HEY ...

[Critical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Perception, Tactics, EF]

Makoto attempts to escape the situation by returning home, but Tsukumo asks Midzuno to follow him. By keeping him under 24-hour surveillance, they can not only monitor his actions but also apply even greater psychological pressure should Makoto realize that he is being watched.

However, Makoto possesses an ability granted by the gods that allows him to travel back in time if he goes 24 hours without killing. As a result, he is transported back to 00:00 of that same day.

In other words, in this new timeline, the previous events cease to exist. Knowing that the evidence could lead them to him, Makoto makes sure to eliminate it: he burns the envelope and buries the weapon containing his fingerprints.

Tsukumo's timeline is now as follows:

- Victim: Vakita Keigo
- Age: 24
- Time of death: 10 p.m.
- Victim's occupation: Newspaper deliveryman
- Murder weapon: Not found

Once again, Tsukumo rejects the hypothesis that the case is related to drug trafficking.

Even so, Tsukumo notices a small marking on the ground, something that immediately raises major suspicions in his mind.



[Perception]

The following day, a new victim is found: Savanoi Seya, 17, a second-year high school student. His eyes had been crushed, and the cause of death was drowning. The police team believes that, shortly before his death, Seya spent some time in an abandoned barn nearby. Local residents, however, claimed they had not heard anything. The numerous cuts and injuries indicate that the victim had been involved in a fight. Even so, there is no evidence directly linking anyone to the murder, as the crime scene had been carefully cleaned and all potential clues had been thoroughly eliminated.

After analyzing the area for only a few seconds, Tsukumo concludes that the crime had been carefully planned. It is also extremely unusual for two murders to occur on consecutive days in the same city. Therefore, there is a possibility that both were committed by the same person.

The inspector then goes to a local hospital to speak with Kadzivara, an acquaintance of the new victim. However, Makoto, who is also at the hospital, recognizes Tsukumo from having seen him before the time loop and therefore notices the detective's presence and keeps his distance from his actions. (Tsukumo does not yet know Makoto in this timeline.)

Some time later, Kadzivara disappears, while Morishita Daiki, 17, is found dead. With this information in hand, the inspector quickly infers that Morishita's and Savanoi's murders are connected. Furthermore, in his eyes, Kadzivara's disappearance is clearly associated with the same case.

His next step is to speak with the witness who discovered the body. Tsukumo meets with Shinjo Yae and begins his interrogation, showing no concern whatsoever for the girl's emotional state, despite the fact that she had just witnessed an extremely brutal scene.

During the testimony, Yae casually mentions that she saw her childhood friend, Makoto, riding a bicycle along the road leading to the warehouse where the murder took place. Although Yae had no intention of directing suspicion toward Makoto, Tsukumo immediately recognizes the significance of this information and begins to regard it as one of the central points of the investigation.

This time, however, it would be useless for Makoto to resort to the time loop, since this information was provided on the same day Morishita was murdered, making it impossible to erase it simply by rewinding the subsequent events.

Tsukumo and Midzuno summon Makoto for questioning. They question the veracity of Yae's testimony and, after confirming that she was telling the truth, ask Makoto where he was going at that time. He replies that he simply wanted to go for a ride, but Tsukumo immediately responds in a cold and sarcastic manner: **"In that rain? At that hour?"**, already identifying inconsistencies and oddities in his justification.

Despite this, Makoto is released after the investigation (we do not know what other measures the inspector took beyond those already presented) and leaves with Yae for an amusement park located in the city of Miyako.

He does this with a very specific strategy in mind.

Makoto cannot alter either the murder or Yae's testimony, but he can completely destroy her credibility. By going an entire day without killing, Yae will return to the moment when she was giving her testimony to the police due to the reset of the time loop. However, because Makoto is outside the loop's range when this happens, he will remain in Tokyo even after the reset.

Yae's testimony explicitly states that she saw Makoto riding his bicycle along the road leading to the crime scene in the city of Miyako. However, after the reset, Makoto will already be in Tokyo, making it physically impossible for him to have been at the murder scene just minutes earlier. To solidify this perfect alibi, Makoto deliberately makes sure to be recorded by security cameras, objectively reinforcing his presence in the city and, consequently, undermining the credibility of Yae's testimony.

In other words, in this timeline, Makoto is theoretically also free from Tsukumo's threats. Even so, the inspector remains extremely convinced that Makoto is involved in the case (and is the murderer himself), based on the various premises he has formulated throughout the investigation.

After receiving the security footage from the convenience store, the police determine that Makoto entered the establishment exactly one minute after midnight. Since the distance between Miyako and Tokyo requires at least two hours of travel, Shinjo Yae's testimony becomes, in theory, impossible. Makoto's alibi appeared to be completely confirmed. Even so, Tsukumo immediately reacts, stating that there is something very strange about the situation.

He then asks Mizuno to obtain the footage from the cameras installed around the store as well. Tsukumo had instantly noticed an unusual visual detail: **Makoto was not soaked.**

It had been raining heavily in Tokyo that day, and Makoto had walked to the convenience store without an umbrella. Under these circumstances, it was extremely strange that his clothes were not completely wet.

It is impressive how Tsukumo is able to notice an apparently insignificant detail and turn it into a new premise to support his suspicions against Makoto. Even when faced with an apparently perfect alibi, he identifies a subtle inconsistency and uses it as the basis for continuing to regard Makoto as the prime suspect.



[Critical Thinking, Observation, Perception]

A few days later, Katagiri Yuriko, 35, a housewife, is found dead in her bedroom. The victim had a stab wound to the abdomen; however, the actual cause of death was a facial injury inflicted by a piercing object. The body was discovered by Kuroda, a resident of the same building. The night before, Katagiri had remained at home. The crime scene indicated an extremely high degree of aggression and hatred on the part of the murderer. Even so, no relevant traces were left behind, indicating that the perpetrator had acted with extreme care to eliminate any evidence.

During the investigation, it is also discovered that the victim's daughter attends Miyako High School, the same school attended by victims connected to the previous cases.



As can be seen, the murders have been occurring almost daily since July 10. The victims' bodies were found in locations relatively close to one another, and the time of death remains practically the same in every case. Although the methods of execution vary, it is still possible to identify several common traits among the murders, indicating that they are likely part of the same sequence. It is also possible to establish a connection between Vakita and Tanahashi through their involvement with drugs. However, Tsukumo completely rejects this hypothesis, remaining convinced that Kusakabe Makoto is still the culprit.

Among the deceased victims are three students from Myako High School and Vakita, who worked as a newspaper deliveryman. Kusakabe is the only known person who had some connection to all four of them, either through attending school or working alongside them.

This line of reasoning, however, is immediately dismissed by the police team. After all, they are dealing with a serial killer, and they consider it practically impossible for Makoto to have

committed all of those murders, especially given his supposedly irrefutable alibi in Tokyo. Furthermore, his wallet was found on the 15th at the fireworks festival (evidence fabricated by Makoto with the help of a girl who, unbeknownst to everyone, began cooperating with him in exchange for favors he had previously done for her). This would place him far away from the location where Tanahashi was murdered on the same day.

The police also question the absence of any apparent motive. Although Makoto had attended school or worked with some of the victims, there were no records of conflicts or animosity that could justify the murders.

Tsukumo, however, simply ignores these objections. Rather than debating the plausibility of the theory, he directs the investigation toward another point and asks whether Katagiri—the daughter of one of the victims—attended school that day, noting that Makoto had also been absent from class.

Tsukumo's suspicions up to this point can be characterized as follows:

SUSPICIONS → MAKOTO

P1 ⇒ The murders of Vakita, Savanoi, Morishita, and Kadzivara are connected. Their temporal proximity, the connections between the victims, and the circumstances surrounding the crimes make it extremely likely that they were all committed by the same person.

P2 ⇒ Makoto has a direct or indirect connection to all of the victims: he worked with Vakita and attended the same school as Savanoi, Morishita, and Kadzivara.

P3 ⇒ In the first murder, Tsukumo identifies bloodstains with a shape resembling that of an envelope. After comparing this outline with different models, he concludes that it precisely matches the envelopes used by the municipal hospital.

P4 ⇒ These envelopes are not used for ordinary correspondence, but exclusively for transferring money. Furthermore, only the Miyako municipal hospital distributes this particular type of envelope.

P5 ⇒ Makoto's sister is hospitalized at that very hospital due to her severe health condition, making Makoto one of the few people naturally associable with this specific type of envelope.

C1 ⇒ In addition to his direct connection to all of the victims, Makoto now also has a concrete connection to physical evidence found at the scene of the first murder, further strengthening his position as the prime suspect.

P6 ⇒ A reliable witness, Shinjo Yae, claims to have seen Makoto near the location and around the time of Savanoi's murder.

P7 ⇒ Despite this, Makoto presents an apparently irrefutable alibi, having been recorded by security cameras at a location where it would have been physically impossible for him to be if Yae's testimony were true.

P8 ⇒ This alibi is excessively convenient. An alibi that is so objectively solid, emerging precisely to contradict a reliable witness, is itself suspicious.

P9 ⇒ Upon carefully analyzing the footage, I notice an inconsistency: Makoto was not soaked despite having walked, without an umbrella, through heavy rain to the convenience store.

C2 ⇒ Makoto's alibi is not as perfect as it initially appears. There is an objective inconsistency indicating that it may have been fabricated in some way.

P10 ⇒ Days later, during another murder, Makoto's wallet is "coincidentally" found at the fireworks festival and subsequently handed over to the police. This creates a new alibi, suggesting that he was at that location at the time of the crime.

P11 ⇒ However, this new alibi is significantly weaker than the previous one. The only available visual evidence consists merely of the silhouette of a person seen from behind, making it impossible to objectively confirm that it was Makoto.

P12 ⇒ Considering that Makoto had previously presented an extremely convenient and subsequently questionable alibi, it becomes plausible that this new piece of evidence was also deliberately fabricated to divert suspicion away from him.

C3 ⇒ The new alibi does not eliminate my suspicions; on the contrary, it reinforces a pattern of excessively convenient evidence emerging whenever Makoto could potentially be implicated.

P13 ⇒ Makoto remains the only person who simultaneously possesses consistent connections to all of the victims, an association with physical evidence found at the first crime scene, and two alibis characterized by abnormally convenient circumstances.

C4 ⇒ Makoto remains the prime suspect in the murders. In fact, the body of evidence now suggests that someone is deliberately manipulating the evidence to divert suspicion away from him, making his involvement in the crimes even more likely.

It is noteworthy how Tsukumo comes to suspect Makoto through three distinct avenues: (1) social connections to the victims, (2) a material link to the scene of the first crime, and (3) anomalous behavior surrounding his alibis.

[Inductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Metacognition]

Tsukumo orders them to find Kusakabe and Katagiri as quickly as possible.

Fortunately, Makoto needed to go to the hospital to submit written authorization allowing examinations to be performed on his sister, who had remained unconscious for quite some time. Anticipating this obligation, Tsukumo predicts that Makoto would inevitably appear at the hospital.

Upon finding him, he attempts to initiate a conversation about the investigation, but is completely ignored. Even so, he continues his approach and mentions that Makoto had been away from Miyako the previous day, returning only that day. He then asks what he had been doing during his absence, but once again receives no response.

Noticing that Makoto remained completely expressionless, Tsukumo decides to increase the psychological pressure.

He asks Midzuno to show Makoto a photograph of the bloodstains found at the location where Vakita was murdered. During his investigation, Tsukumo had noticed that the stains had a shape resembling that of an envelope. By comparing this outline with different models, he concluded that it precisely matched the envelopes used by the municipal hospital.

This detail was particularly relevant for a specific reason: these envelopes were not intended for sending letters, but exclusively for transferring money, making them completely different from ordinary correspondence materials. Furthermore, they discovered that, in Miyako, only the municipal hospital distributed this particular type of envelope.

Naturally, Tsukumo did not reveal this information by chance. His objective was to demonstrate to Makoto that the investigation was getting closer and closer to the truth. Under normal circumstances, a discovery of this magnitude should, at the very least, provoke some emotional or behavioral reaction from a culprit. However, nothing happened. Makoto remained completely impassive.

Tsukumo immediately notices this detail. Makoto did not change his expression, avert his gaze, or display any sign of nervousness or surprise. From this reaction—or rather, the absence of one—Tsukumo concludes that he is dealing with an individual possessing excellent self-control, capable of acting rationally and keeping his emotions completely suppressed even under intense psychological pressure.

Based on this assessment, Tsukumo understands that continuing to rely on objective evidence would yield no results. If Makoto was capable of remaining unfazed even when faced with the imminent possibility of being exposed, then the only way to make him react would be to target something that stood above his own rationality.

Thus, he completely changes his approach.

> "How horrible... Because of your little sister... Because of her illness... Your life has become an existence devoid of joy. She ruined your life. There's nothing but darkness surrounding you. Perhaps it would be better if, after the examinations, they discovered that her condition was irreversible... Then you could finally be happy again."

For the first time, Makoto reacts.

His expression immediately changes, revealing a strong emotional disturbance in response to Tsukumo's words.

At that moment, the inspector understands exactly what Makoto's weakness is. If not even the prospect of being arrested was enough to shake him, but a provocation involving his sister produced an immediate reaction, then his greatest emotional motivation is centered around her.

Tsukumo therefore concludes that there is only one plausible reason for Makoto to have committed those murders: **his younger sister.**

MAKOTO'S BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOANALYSIS

In retrospect, Tsukumo quickly understands that Makoto does not respond to pressure in the same way as an ordinary individual. However, his complete lack of reaction leads Tsukumo to infer very specific psychological characteristics. He mentalizes Makoto as an individual with a high degree of emotional self-control, capable of completely suppressing his emotions even when confronted with potentially incriminating information. In other words, he understands that pressuring him through logic or evidence would hardly produce any results. From this assessment, Tsukumo also understands that, despite this coldness, Makoto remains a human being guided by values and emotional attachments. Therefore, if there is something capable of breaking through his rational facade, that element must be connected to the most emotionally significant aspect of his life.

Based on this, Tsukumo completely abandons his previous approach and begins directly targeting what he considers to be the emotional center of Makoto: his sister.

When Makoto finally reacts to the provocation involving his sister, Tsukumo confirms his hypothesis. The reaction demonstrates that his sister represents his greatest emotional vulnerability, allowing the inspector to conclude that this bond is strong enough to justify extreme behavior. Thus, Tsukumo not only identifies Makoto's psychological weakness, but also mentalizes his motivational structure, concluding that, if he is indeed the murderer, the most plausible reason for the killings is precisely his younger sister. This conclusion does not stem solely from the observed reaction, but from Tsukumo's ability to understand which stimuli a specific individual is capable of ignoring and which are capable of disrupting his emotional stability.

It is also important to carefully analyze the words Tsukumo chooses, as they reveal both the origin of his intentions and the message he intended to convey to Makoto.

> "How horrible... Because of your little sister... Because of her illness... Your life has become an existence devoid of joy. She ruined your life. There's nothing but darkness surrounding you. Perhaps it would be better if, after the examinations, they discovered that her condition was irreversible... Then you could finally be happy again."

What is most interesting is that this speech seems to reflect, almost perfectly, the reality in which Makoto finds himself. Tsukumo formulates these words in an extremely explicit manner precisely to force him to confront his own situation.

The moment the inspector understands that Makoto's sister is the primary motivation behind the murders, he also understands the psychological consequences of this motivation. Her illness has not only become his life's purpose, but has also driven him into a world dominated by murder, violence, and successive crimes. His existence has come to revolve around a single purpose that, ironically, could never provide him with genuine happiness.

From this perspective, the phrase **"she ruined your life"** should not be interpreted as an accusation against his sister, but as an observation that the circumstances created by her illness have completely consumed Makoto's life. He no longer lives for himself; he lives exclusively for her. His reality has become a sequence of sacrifices, deaths, and suffering, surrounded by nothing but darkness.

It is precisely because he understands this psychological structure that Tsukumo states that perhaps it would be better if her condition were found to be irreversible. Not because he genuinely wishes for that outcome, but because, from Makoto's perspective, it would be the only circumstance capable of breaking the cycle that has trapped him. The death of hope would paradoxically mean his liberation from the obsessive commitment he has assumed toward his sister.

In other words, Tsukumo not only provokes Makoto, but demonstrates that he has mentalized his psychological state to such an extent that he is able to verbalize what Makoto himself would never be capable of admitting: that his life has been completely consumed by this objective, and that all the darkness in which he now lives exists because of it. It is precisely because he recognizes this implicit truth that Makoto finally abandons his impassive demeanor and reacts emotionally.

[EU, EP, EF, Inductive Reasoning, Perception, Observation, Formulation Speed, Direct Manip, Info Control, Foresight, Tactics]

However, due to another time loop, the day is reset and, consequently, this conversation unfolds differently. In this new timeline, after an exhausting sequence of events that caused him immense psychological stress, Makoto reacts far more irritably. When Tsukumo begins the same speech he used previously, Kusakabe loses control and suddenly lunges at the inspector, attempting to assault him.

Naturally, this reaction only strengthens Tsukumo's suspicions. If Makoto had already demonstrated that his sister was the only subject capable of breaking through his cold and rational demeanor, his impulsive response now further confirms the effectiveness of the inspector's psychological reading. In Tsukumo's eyes, the intensity of the reaction only reinforces that his sister constitutes the center of his motivations and the primary emotional trigger behind his behavior.

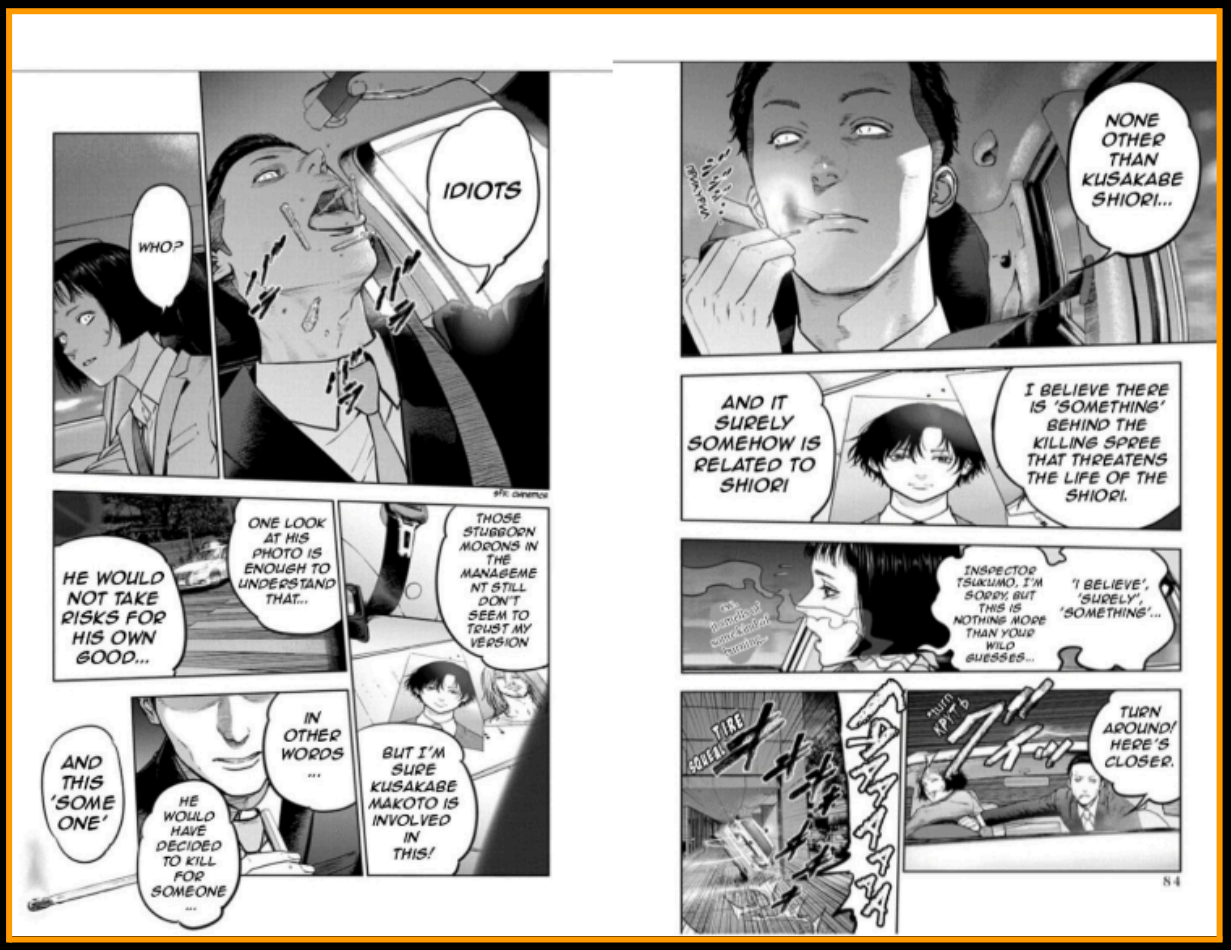
At another point, Tsukumo and Midzuno discuss the growing number of murders and other crimes that have been overwhelming the local police force. The department no longer has enough personnel to investigate every suspect and pursue every investigative lead simultaneously. Given this situation, their superiors order the investigation targeting Makoto to be suspended, mainly because he possesses an alibi considered extremely solid.

During this conversation, Tsukumo makes explicit what he had previously demonstrated only through his actions. According to him, a single glance is enough to understand Makoto's true nature. In his assessment, Kusakabe is not the type of person who would put his own life at risk for personal interests or self-benefit. Based on this psychological reading, Tsukumo formulates a new inference: if Makoto is truly committing those murders, then he must necessarily be doing so for someone else.

To the inspector, that person can only be Kusakabe Shiori, his younger sister.

Tsukumo then deepens his understanding of the situation even further. If Shiori is the central motivation behind Makoto's actions, it is reasonable to conclude that there is some factor directly related to her that is forcing him to continue killing. In other words, the inspector infers that something involving Shiori is threatening her life, and that this threat constitutes the true reason behind the sequence of murders.

Although he does not yet know the exact nature of this factor, Tsukumo already understands its motivational structure: the murders are not driven by pleasure, revenge, or ambition, but rather by a circumstance that places Shiori's life at risk and drives Makoto to act desperately in order to protect her.



[EP & EU, Inductive Reasoning]

The inspector goes to the Municipal Hospital with the intention of finding Shiori Kusakabe, Makoto's sister, who remained unconscious. Upon arriving, he discovers that Makoto had left the hospital approximately half an hour earlier. One of the nurses also informs him that the machines providing Shiori's life support had been turned off. Although she remained in that condition for no more than five minutes, the incident is enough to raise strong suspicions that someone had attempted to take her life.

In light of this, Midzuno suggests checking the hospital's security camera footage. Tsukumo, however, goes a step further: he immediately orders that permanent surveillance be established, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in Shiori's room.

The inspector is no longer in doubt. From the moment he began confronting Makoto by using his sister as the central subject, the boy's behavior changed drastically. His reactions, now combined with the apparent attempt on Shiori's life, only reinforce what Tsukumo had already inferred: Makoto's sister is the true center of the entire investigation. Regardless of the exact nature of the crimes, Shiori represents the primary motivation behind Makoto's actions and, consequently, the key to unraveling the entire sequence of murders.

With this entire situation in mind, the inspector asks the nurses and staff to **"strain their hippocampus to the limit,"** trying to remember absolutely any detail that could be related to Kusakabe or his sister. Even if they considered the information insignificant, Tsukumo emphasizes that it should be shared, since even the smallest detail could contribute to the investigation.

This statement also reveals an important aspect of Tsukumo's cognitive abilities. By encouraging the nurses to **"strain their hippocampus to the limit,"** he demonstrates an understanding that memory can be accessed much more deeply than it normally is, seeking to retrieve information that might initially appear irrelevant. It is natural to associate this with Tsukumo himself employing the same method in his investigations, attempting to recall and meticulously analyze every detail he observes.

This interpretation is consistent with several demonstrations throughout the work. Repeatedly, Tsukumo is the first character to notice extremely subtle elements at crime scenes, picking up on a significantly greater amount of information than the other investigators. A clear example occurs during the first murder, when he identifies small bloodstains near Vakita's body and, based on their shape, infers that they corresponded to the outline of an envelope—a detail completely overlooked by everyone else present.

Thus, his statement does not merely constitute an instruction to the nurses, but also provides insight into his own cognitive method. His heightened observational ability, combined with refined critical thinking and excellent judgment regarding which pieces of information are actually relevant, appears to be directly connected to his ability to retrieve, organize, and reassess memories in an extremely detailed manner, allowing him to extract meaning from elements that would go unnoticed by most people.



[Cognitive Proficiency, Memory, Sensory, Critical Thinking]

After analyzing the security camera footage from the Municipal Hospital, the team discovers that Katagiri, the daughter of one of the serial killer's victims, had hurriedly left the hospital shortly beforehand. However, there was an extremely unusual detail: this was the only footage in which Katagiri appeared. It was as though she had deliberately avoided all the other security cameras in the hospital during her escape, something that would be highly unlikely to happen by chance.

Another aspect catches Tsukumo's attention. The footage shows Katagiri entering the hospital calmly through the main entrance, but when leaving, her behavior was completely different: she was visibly in a hurry and used an alternative route, avoiding the cameras whenever possible.

Given this contrast, Tsukumo quickly formulates a hypothesis. In his view, the change in behavior was unlikely to have been spontaneous. The most plausible explanation was that someone had

instructed her to avoid the cameras during her escape. Naturally, the primary candidate for having given her those instructions was Makoto.

There is, however, another even more important detail. The camera that managed to record Katagiri had been installed recently. Consequently, it was unlikely that whoever instructed her knew about the existence of that equipment. This explains why, despite avoiding practically every camera, Katagiri ended up being recorded by one that she should not have known about.

With this, Tsukumo further strengthens his hypothesis that Makoto had been at the hospital at that time. Kusakabe had left the location approximately thirty minutes before Katagiri was filmed leaving through the back, while he himself had used the main entrance normally. To the inspector, this sequence of events was consistent with someone who had given her instructions before leaving.

At this point, Tsukumo begins a clear process of metacognition, critically reevaluating his own hypotheses in light of the new information.

> "If Katagiri and Kusakabe are really working together, then Kusakabe is probably involved in the murders, and Katagiri, the daughter of one of the victims, has become his accomplice. But if they are allies, how do we explain the incident involving Shiori? It is obvious that Katagiri tried to kill her. If that is really what happened, then why would she attack Makoto's sister specifically? Could Katagiri actually be Kusakabe's enemy? If they are not allies, then what is their true relationship? What really connects them?"

This reflection highlights an important quality of Tsukumo's reasoning: he does not rigidly cling to his own conclusions. Even after gathering strong indications that Makoto and Katagiri are working together, the inspector identifies an inconsistency capable of undermining this hypothesis and immediately begins reevaluating it. Rather than ignoring the contradiction or forcing it to fit his initial theory, he uses it as a starting point for constructing new possibilities, demonstrating high cognitive flexibility, constant monitoring of his own reasoning, and excellent metacognition.

The inspector changes the subject and questions Midzuno about why she did not follow his instructions to locate Kusakabe. She honestly replies that her superiors did not approve the investigative plan. The chief had strictly forbidden them from continuing to follow Tsukumo's methods, arguing that his hypotheses were based solely on conjecture and delusions. Even so, Midzuno demonstrates complete trust in the inspector's judgment, stating that she believes he is right.

Without allowing himself to be influenced by his superiors' decision, Tsukumo continues meticulously reviewing the most important information in the case. Since the previous day, he has been repeatedly rewatching the footage related to Makoto's supposed perfect alibi. The inspector

analyzes all the footage obtained by Midzuno from the cameras installed around the convenience store and spends the entire day examining every single recording.

Despite the extensive analysis, none of the footage reveals what Makoto did before arriving at the store. All they can confirm is that he appeared coming from the direction of the amusement park. However, this creates a new problem: **how did he get there?** All entrances to the park are monitored by security cameras. Under normal circumstances, it would be practically impossible to bypass all of them without being recorded.





As can be seen in the scans, Tsukumo analyzes approximately twenty different recordings, watching each one in its entirety to confirm that Makoto genuinely did not appear in any of them. At several points, the inspector watches three recordings simultaneously, comparing different angles to mentally reconstruct the entire monitored area.

Based on this analysis, Tsukumo is able to map out the arrangement of the six cameras responsible for monitoring the entrances to the park. By understanding their fields of view and the coverage provided by each one, he concludes that all of the main entry points are adequately monitored. Thus, it would be objectively impossible for Makoto to have entered the park through any conventional route without being captured by at least one of the cameras.



It is precisely this inconsistency that catches his attention. As shown in the scan, Tsukumo notices that Makoto simply appears within the cameras' field of view, without there being any record of him approaching. To the inspector, this phenomenon completely defies the logic of the situation. It was as though Kusakabe had appeared out of nowhere; such an abrupt appearance that it resembled an actual teleportation.

This realization only reinforces his conviction that there is a hidden mechanism behind the events, capable of producing results that, at first glance, appear impossible. From this point onward, the inspector begins treating this "impossibility" not as the end of the investigation, but as evidence that there is still a fundamental variable that remains unknown.

[Inductive Reasoning, VSI, Sensory, Engagement]

At this moment, one of the nurses approaches the police officers to report some new information. As Tsukumo had previously requested, any detail, no matter how insignificant it might seem, was to be reported immediately.

The nurse informs them that there had been a sudden change in Shiori Kusakabe's physical condition. At first, she believes that the incident is unrelated to what happened with Katagiri, but explains that there is an extremely unusual phenomenon: during the night, Shiori's clinical condition undergoes abrupt and inexplicable changes. This had already happened several times. According to her, this change is completely incompatible with the nature of the illness. There was no way her symptoms could progress so abruptly. Even more curious was the fact that these changes always occurred exactly at midnight, at the precise moment when a new day began.

Upon hearing this information, Tsukumo immediately establishes a connection with another element that had intrigued him since the beginning of the investigation.

Makoto had been recorded by the security cameras at the convenience store one minute after midnight. The inspector remembers the footage perfectly, both the timestamp and the image itself.

At the time, he had already interpreted it as Kusakabe deliberately wanting to be captured on camera, using the footage to construct an almost irrefutable alibi.

Now, however, the coincidence no longer appears merely circumstantial.

The exact time at which Shiori experiences inexplicable physiological changes coincides precisely with the moment Makoto makes a point of appearing in front of the security cameras. To Tsukumo, this synchronization could hardly be the result of chance. Although he does not know the mechanism responsible for these events, he realizes that both phenomena share the same temporal variable.

This new information does not provide him with a definitive answer, but it eliminates the possibility of treating the events as independent. From this point onward, Tsukumo begins to consider Makoto's behavior and Shiori's clinical condition as part of the same process, connected by something that inevitably occurs at midnight. It is this association that brings him, for the first time, closer to the true structure underlying the entire case.

[Associative Thinking]

Next, Tsukumo and Midzuno go to speak with Morishita Daiki's mother, the third victim of the serial killer. The woman is in a completely devastated psychological state following her son's murder, as he had been her sole reason for living.

During the conversation, Tsukumo attempts to extract any information that could contribute to the investigation, especially because she had been one of the people responsible for caring for Shiori at some point. However, overwhelmed by grief and anger, the woman reacts aggressively and repeatedly claims that she does not remember absolutely anything that could help. Despite the apparent lack of useful information, the conversation produces an "unexpected" consequence. Shortly after meeting with the investigators, Morishita's mother begins to believe that Makoto Kusakabe is responsible for the murders. Consumed by a desire for revenge and convinced of his guilt, she decides to go after him on her own, determined to take justice into her own hands.

Afterward, still at the Municipal Hospital, Midzuno informs Tsukumo that several security cameras have been installed on the first floor to monitor all entrances and exits of the building. However, there is a problem: Shiori Kusakabe's room remains completely outside the cameras' field of view.

She also points out that installing cameras directly inside Shiori's room would violate her right to privacy and would therefore be legally unfeasible.

Upon hearing this, Tsukumo reacts immediately. Rhetorically, he asks Midzuno:

> “Did you even pressure the hospital director?”

He then elaborates on his criticism:

> “What’s the point of wearing a police badge? To slam your fist on the desk and scare the director.”

With this statement, Tsukumo makes it clear that, given the severity of the case, bureaucratic procedures should not prevent measures that are essential to the investigation. His objective is for Midzuno to convince the hospital director at any cost, allowing for more effective surveillance of Shiori.

Furthermore, Tsukumo observes that the hospital still has several blind spots, meaning that even with the existing cameras, it would still be possible for someone to move through the building without being fully monitored. As long as these gaps remain, Shiori’s safety will continue to be compromised.

The inspector also recalls another request he had previously made: locating both Katagiri and Makoto Kusakabe. Midzuno, however, explains that this has still not been possible. The police force is completely overwhelmed by the sequence of murders and, to make matters worse, their superiors continue insisting that any investigation targeting Makoto be suspended, arguing that his alibi remains solid and that there is insufficient justification for allocating resources to him.

After this, a sequence of unexpected events occurs. Consumed by her desire for revenge, Morishita’s mother attacks the police officer assigned to protect Shiori, stabbing him and successfully taking the girl hostage. Shortly beforehand, she had sent Makoto a message informing him of exactly what she intended to do. As a result, Kusakabe immediately goes to the hospital. Amid the crowd surrounding the area, Makoto remains completely motionless as he observes the situation. At one point, he is directly asked whether he is the Serial Killer. Without any hesitation, he answers yes. As the conversation continues, Makoto takes advantage of an opening to neutralize Suzuhara, striking her and successfully saving Shiori. Faced with this sequence of events, Tsukumo immediately seeks to understand the meaning behind Makoto’s confession.

The explanation seems obvious to him.

By claiming responsibility for the crimes, Makoto directs all of Suzuhara’s attention and hatred toward himself, removing his sister from the center of the conflict and increasing her chances of survival.

To Tsukumo, this undoubtedly represented a genuine confession.

However, something still deeply troubled him. Even after admitting to being the serial killer in front of numerous witnesses, Makoto showed absolutely no sign of fear. As an investigator, Tsukumo possesses a strong ability to interpret people's psychological states in extreme situations. Based on a suspect's expression and behavior, he is normally capable of discerning emotions such as anxiety, desperation, guilt, or fear. Yet, in Makoto's case, he found none of these. His gaze remained completely neutral. His posture remained firm. There was no hesitation, remorse, or any trace of apprehension. This lack of reaction directly conflicted with the logic of the situation itself. An individual who had just confessed to a series of murders and was inevitably heading toward imprisonment should display some form of emotional distress. Makoto, however, seemed to be acting as though none of it mattered.

It is precisely this inconsistency that catches Tsukumo's attention. If Kusakabe truly understands the consequences of his confession, why does he show no fear whatsoever?

Faced with behavior that is incompatible with the circumstances, the inspector begins silently questioning his true intentions:

> "What are you doing?"

After this, the day is rewound, and therefore the events involving Shiori and Suzuhara have not yet occurred (meaning Makoto has not confessed to any crime either, and Tsukumo obviously has not experienced any of this).

[EP, EU]

Naturally, because of all the movement and relocation that had taken place in the hospital, when the day resets at midnight on the 21st, Shiori simply appears outside her room. Makoto manages to disappear before anyone can find him, but the officer responsible for surveillance immediately realizes that something is wrong. Upon hearing that the artificial respirator had been turned off, he rushes to check the situation. However, the scene completely defies logic. It was objectively impossible for someone to have removed Shiori from her room without him noticing. The hallway was under constant surveillance, and no movement had been observed. It is precisely at this moment that we understand the definitive shift in Tsukumo's approach. His understanding begins to be completely reshaped when Midzuno informs him that the security cameras recorded part of what happened.

According to her, at 11:59 p.m., Shiori was exactly where she was supposed to be, showing no movement whatsoever. However, Tsukumo was already anticipating something very specific. At the very next instant, between 11:59:59 p.m. and 12:00:00 a.m., the wheelchair and Shiori simply appear somewhere else.

There is no record of any movement. In a single second, Shiori ceases to be in one location and comes to exist in another. Midzuno attempts to rationalize the phenomenon, suggesting that perhaps the camera had malfunctioned. Tsukumo, however, had already moved beyond that hypothesis. To him, this was not a recording error. After this event, the inspector completely isolates himself. He remains locked alone in a room for the entire day, refusing any outside contact.

As he himself states, it does not matter how many times he thinks, rethinks, or formulates new possibilities; they all converge toward a single conclusion. At one point, he begins asking the other police officers whether **"a new day has already appeared,"** a behavior that naturally causes confusion among everyone around him.

Even after an entire day, Tsukumo remains secluded.

For hours, he continues staring at his own reflection in the mirror, without even leaving to eat or use the bathroom. This is not merely contemplation. It is an intense process of cognitive reconstruction. The inspector reviews every piece of information obtained throughout the investigation, successively discarding every explanation incapable of accommodating the observed facts. Gradually, he realizes that his greatest limitation was not the lack of evidence, but the very assumptions he had been using to interpret it. As he himself comes to understand, he needs to abandon prejudices, break paradigms, and reject conventional assumptions for the events to finally make sense. Once he manages to do so, he reaches his definitive conclusion.

This scene, considered in isolation, has much greater psychological implications than it might initially appear.

The act of staring at his own reflection for hours is not ordinary contemplative behavior; it represents an extreme form of perceptual self-exposure. Studies in psychology and neuroscience have shown that prolonged observation of one's own face in a mirror can produce perceptual distortions, a sense of unfamiliarity toward one's own identity (*strange-face illusion*), depersonalization, derealization, and intense cognitive strain. The brain expects constant small changes in the environment; when an individual fixes their attention on a single stimulus for excessively long periods, normal perceptual mechanisms can begin to break down.

In Tsukumo's case, this experiment is even more radical because it does not have a contemplative purpose, but an epistemological one. He is attempting to completely reconstruct his model of reality. The mirror serves as an absolutely stable point of reference while he questions fundamental concepts such as temporal continuity, perception, and causality. In other words, he uses his own consciousness as an object of investigation.

This means that Tsukumo is subjecting his mind to an extremely intense process of cognitive dissonance. His entire belief system tells him that time flows linearly and that certain events are

impossible. However, all the evidence he has collected points toward precisely the opposite. To resolve this contradiction, he must simultaneously maintain two incompatible structures of thought without prematurely rejecting either one.

This type of reasoning is psychologically exhausting. The brain's natural tendency is to rapidly reduce dissonance by discarding the unlikely hypothesis or reinterpreting the evidence. Tsukumo does precisely the opposite: he refuses to resolve the conflict, deliberately prolonging it until he finds a logical framework capable of accommodating all the facts.

Furthermore, there is the voluntary deprivation of basic needs. He spends hours without eating, without using the bathroom, and practically without interrupting his stream of thought. This prolonged state of hyperfocus causes virtually all cognitive resources to be directed toward a single problem. Although this may increase the depth of his analysis, it also dramatically increases mental fatigue, reduces cognitive recovery, and intensifies psychological stress.

Another important aspect is that Tsukumo is not merely attempting to formulate a hypothesis; he is attempting to destroy his own biases. His entire life experience tells him that what he is witnessing is impossible, yet he forces his own mind to abandon that assumption. This process requires exceptional metacognitive ability, because he must continuously observe his own biases, identify which conclusions arise solely from implicit assumptions, and eliminate them one by one.

Ultimately, the experiment before the mirror represents a form of partial sensory isolation and extreme cognitive immersion. By drastically reducing external stimuli and maintaining his attention on a single object while restructuring his model of reality, Tsukumo pushes his psychological state to an uncommon limit. The mental cost of this process is enormous: he spends hours sustaining continuous cognitive tension, confronting his own convictions, and preventing his mind from resorting to the most comfortable explanations.

[EM, AC]

On the night of the 21st, something truly was present inside that hospital. This "something" simply ceased to exist when the day changed. Before disappearing, however, it had removed Shiori from her room, taken her to the waiting room, and turned off her artificial respirator. Regardless of the nature of this phenomenon, its intentions were clearly hostile. Considering the entire context of the investigation, Tsukumo concludes that only one person had sufficient motive to act in such a manner: Suzuhara.

Shortly afterward, this hypothesis is partially confirmed.

Suzuhara's body is found. She had been murdered only a few hours after the events at the hospital.

However, Tsukumo was already several steps ahead. His interpretation of the phenomenon he had come to understand—the existence of a time loop—allowed him to explain not only Suzuhara's disappearance, but the entire sequence of events that had previously seemed impossible.

Within this new logical framework, his conclusion emerges naturally. As Tsukumo had already inferred, **Makoto killed Suzuhara.**

HOSPITAL ABDUCTION -

P1 ⇒ Shiori was found outside her room, in the waiting room, with her artificial respirator turned off.

P2 ⇒ For this to happen, someone necessarily had to remove her from the room, transport her to the waiting room, and turn off her respirator.

C1 ⇒ There was a deliberate attempt on Shiori's life.

P3 ⇒ The perpetrator knew Shiori's location and acted during the early hours of the morning, taking advantage of an opportune moment.

P4 ⇒ Only someone with sufficiently strong motivation would have had reason to attempt to kill Shiori.

P5 ⇒ Suzuhara had previously demonstrated a strong desire for revenge against her son's killer.

C2 ⇒ The most plausible hypothesis is that Suzuhara was responsible for the attempted murder of Shiori.

P6 ⇒ Makoto has a strong emotional bond with Shiori and has already demonstrated that his absolute priority is protecting her.

P7 ⇒ If Makoto encountered Suzuhara attempting to kill his sister, it would be reasonable to expect him to intervene immediately.

C3 ⇒ It is highly likely that Makoto confronted Suzuhara in order to stop the attack.

P8 ⇒ A confrontation of this nature would place Suzuhara in an extremely dangerous situation, considering that she was attacking the person most important to Makoto.

P9 ⇒ Shortly afterward, Suzuhara is found dead.

C4 ⇒ The explanation that best connects these events is that Suzuhara was killed shortly after this confrontation with Makoto.

P10 ⇒ The attempted murder of Shiori, Suzuhara's motivation, and Makoto's absolute priority of protecting his sister form a coherent causal sequence.

C5 ⇒ Even before finding the body, the most plausible hypothesis was that Suzuhara would die as a consequence of her attempt to kill Shiori, with Makoto being primarily responsible for her death.

[Abductive Reasoning, Associative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Lateral Thinking]

These inferences were strongly supported by another major line of reasoning formulated by Tsukumo: his interpretation of the Time Loop. Furthermore, I will later analyze his next major plan, the **HandPlan**, which will receive its own treatment in another section.

While the two were driving, Tsukumo unexpectedly asks Midzuno to stop the vehicle and return without him. He claims that he has an urgent matter to deal with and needs to handle it alone.

Shortly afterward, he finds Kusakabe and begins following him discreetly. Or rather, almost discreetly. Makoto notices his presence, and Tsukumo immediately changes his approach. He admits that he has been discovered and casually remarks that he has never been very good at following people. Since Makoto makes it clear that he intends to simply ignore him, Tsukumo decides to get straight to the point.

"Did you kill Suzuhara?"

Makoto pretends not to know what he is talking about, even acting as though he is unaware of her death. His expression remains completely blank; his eyes convey neither guilt, concern, nor surprise. It is then that the inspector makes an important observation. Faced with a situation as absurd and complex as this one, he concludes that the only way to confront it is through an equally absurd and unpredictable approach.

And that is exactly what he does.



Tsukumo prevents Makoto from leaving by handcuffing the two of them together. He then swallows the key to the handcuffs, making it impossible for either of them to free themselves without external assistance. After they go to eat together, Makoto finally questions his actions. He asks whether a police officer actually has the authority to arrest someone without a warrant. Tsukumo simply replies:

— “Unlikely.”

The response makes it clear that he is no longer concerned with acting strictly within procedural boundaries. To him, preventing Makoto from acting has become far more important than respecting legal formalities. From an outsider’s perspective, his behavior could even appear desperate.

During the conversation, Tsukumo asks a completely unexpected question:

— “How many times have you gone back in time?”

For the first time in a long while, Makoto’s expression changes ever so slightly.

He then explains that he began suspecting this possibility after analyzing the footage from the convenience store in Tokyo. On that occasion, Makoto conveyed a strange sense of incompatibility with the reality being observed. The objective evidence pointed toward one scenario, yet his presence seemed to contradict it. Unfortunately, up to that point, common sense had prevented Tsukumo from seriously considering a hypothesis as absurd as time travel. However, after everything he witnessed at the hospital, that barrier was finally overcome.

Tsukumo had already inferred that, on that rainy day, Makoto had murdered Suzuhara’s son. He had also theorized that, the following day, he constructed his alibi in Tokyo and somehow traveled back into the past. The events at the hospital merely consolidated this line of reasoning.

Based on the evidence he had gathered, Tsukumo reconstructs the entire sequence of events. First, he abductively infers that Suzuhara attacked Shiori in the hospital waiting room during the night of the 21st. He then concludes that, upon discovering what had happened, Makoto decided to return specifically to that day in order to prevent his sister from being killed. In this new timeline, Makoto confronts Suzuhara and ultimately kills her to save Shiori before the tragedy can take place.

This also explains the phenomenon recorded by the cameras. To everyone else, it appeared as though Shiori had simply teleported from one location to another at exactly midnight. Tsukumo, however, sees far beyond this apparent phenomenon. His interpretation is completely different. Between Shiori’s disappearance from one location and her reappearance in another, not merely one second had elapsed. **An entire day had passed.**

This conclusion also explains another piece of information that had been considered anomalous during the investigation. According to the nurse in charge, Shiori’s clinical condition underwent abrupt changes precisely when the clock struck midnight, something incompatible with the natural progression of her illness.

Within Tsukumo’s hypothesis, these changes cease to be a mystery.

In other words, Shiori is also transported through time along with Makoto, retaining in her body the consequences of events that occurred in previous timelines. Thus, what had previously appeared to be a succession of impossible phenomena becomes a single coherent causal system within the inspector’s constructed interpretation.

[Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Associative Thinking, Holistic Thinking]

check “TimeLoop Inference”

Tsukumo asks Makoto to “guide” him through the Time Loop. He states that he intends to travel back in time with him and explains the reasoning that led him to this conclusion. He recalls that Shiori traveled through time together with the wheelchair she was sitting in, demonstrating that objects in direct contact with Makoto are also transported during the reset. Furthermore, he observes that every unexplained phenomenon encountered throughout the investigation occurred precisely at midnight. Only two minutes remained until that moment. Soon, he would have definitive confirmation that the Time Loop truly existed—or discover that his entire hypothesis was nothing more than a delusion.

However, these words were not chosen by chance. Every sentence was carefully calculated to influence Makoto’s judgment. By revealing his interpretation of the phenomenon and making it clear that he would remain handcuffed to him until midnight, Tsukumo deliberately restricts his options. From Makoto’s perspective, only one rational course of action remains: sever the inspector’s hand, escape before the day resets, and restart the timeline, completely nullifying the situation. Tsukumo deliberately guides his reasoning toward precisely that decision.


Bashing


BUT...
YOU CAN'T BE CALLED A NORMAL PERSON...
WHAT ARE THEY DOING?!
KYAA-AAAAA AAAAA AAAAA AAAAA AAA!!
FIG!



Tsukumo's extraordinary mental resilience is also noteworthy. During the confrontation, his hand is brutally severed at the wrist, an injury that would naturally produce extreme pain, immediate physiological shock, and significant loss of motor function. Even so, Tsukumo shows virtually no significant behavioral reaction.

Instead of panicking, screaming, or momentarily losing his ability to reason—that is, responses that would be expected in the face of trauma of this magnitude—he remains conscious, oriented, and focused on the situation.

This behavior demonstrates an exceptional ability to suppress instinctive responses to suffering. The pain does not cease to exist; it simply ceases to control his actions. Tsukumo maintains his judgment, awareness of his surroundings, and decision-making virtually unchanged, demonstrating an excellent level of self-control.

Psychologically, this is clear evidence of an extremely high tolerance for acute stress. In a situation capable of causing cognitive disorganization, panic, or immediate incapacitation in most people, Tsukumo preserves his emotional stability and continues to act rationally.

[EM, AC]

Makoto then does exactly what Tsukumo expected. Convinced that he needs to erase that timeline, he decides to travel back in time, since the only way to reset the cycle is by committing a murder before the twenty-four hours are completed. Upon hearing this, Tsukumo reveals the true trap. He states that he will not accept his hand back. Now that Makoto fully understands his strategy, he would never fall for the same plan again. Therefore, recovering the hand would not help him prove the existence of the Time Loop.

He then presents a far more dangerous consequence. If Makoto remains holding the amputated hand when time resets, then exactly twenty-four hours earlier—during the interrogation at the police station—the hand will simply disappear in front of numerous witnesses. A human limb vanishing instantaneously in the middle of an interrogation room would constitute objective proof of the existence of the Time Loop, completely exposing Makoto's greatest secret.

Upon immediately understanding this implication, Makoto abandons Tsukumo's severed hand moments before midnight. Tsukumo still attempts to reach it and throw it back toward Makoto, forcing him to carry it through the reset. However, time runs out before he can do so. In the following instant, the timeline resets.

When the day resets, Tsukumo relives July 22 once again. During a casual conversation, a colleague mentions the possibility of using handcuffs to restrain someone. Tsukumo immediately decides to put the idea into practice. However, when he searches for the handcuffs in his pocket, he realizes that they are simply no longer there.

This absence completely changes his interpretation of the situation. Tsukumo knows that, before the reset, the handcuffs were in his possession. If they have now disappeared without explanation, something must have taken them from there.

At this point, he still does not reconstruct exactly what happened in the previous timeline. He understands that Makoto severed his hand, but he does not know exactly when the plan failed, nor does he know the entire sequence of events.

What he actually concludes is something much more specific. He realizes that he is experiencing July 22 for the second time.

He also understands that, in the previous timeline, he executed a plan involving those handcuffs and that, for some reason, the plan failed, forcing Makoto to reset the day. Finally, he infers that the handcuffs remained attached to Makoto's body when the Loop occurred, which is why they did not return to his pocket in this new timeline.

In other words, the absence of the handcuffs functions as a message left by Tsukumo himself from the previous cycle.

It does not tell him exactly how events unfolded; it only tells him that they did. It objectively confirms that this timeline has already been experienced, that his plan reached an advanced stage before the reset, and that Makoto was carrying the handcuffs with him when time rewound.

His objective was not to defeat Makoto immediately, but to construct a system in which the timeline would leave traces for the next one, allowing the inspector himself to accumulate knowledge across cycles and understand how the phenomenon works in order to overcome Makoto.

It is important to emphasize that the conclusion that the first plan had failed—the inference formulated by Tsukumo in the second timeline—arises precisely from the disruption of his own line of reasoning. In the previous timeline, he had enough time to fully develop the thought process that would culminate in the creation of that plan. However, upon reliving the same day, this process is interrupted almost immediately by new information: the handcuffs are missing.

This detail completely alters the flow of events. Instead of naturally proceeding toward formulating the same plan again, Tsukumo is forced to redirect his attention toward explaining the absence of the handcuffs. As a consequence, his chain of reasoning changes entirely.

From this, he infers that the day is not occurring for the first time. If the handcuffs should be in his pocket but are no longer there, then something necessarily happened in a previous timeline involving that object. Consequently, he concludes that the plan he had previously conceived was actually carried out but did not succeed; otherwise, there would be no reason for Makoto to reset the day while carrying the handcuffs with him.

In other words, it is not the absence of the handcuffs in isolation that leads Tsukumo to conclude that the plan failed, but rather the fact that this new information interrupts and completely replaces the line of reasoning that, in the previous timeline, had led him to formulate that very plan. The change in the sequence of events becomes, in itself, evidence that the day has already been experienced and that his previous strategy "failed" at some point before the temporal reset.

Now, the inspector begins searching for Makoto, certain that he is still restrained by the handcuffs. In his interpretation, Kusakabe would never continue moving around the city in that condition. Sooner or later, he would have to find a way to remove them.

Tsukumo then anticipates Makoto's next move. Knowing that he needs somewhere he can discreetly get rid of the handcuffs, he concludes exactly where he will go: his father's house.

However, by the time he arrives, it is already too late. Makoto's father is dead, and one of the handcuffs is lying beside the body. To Tsukumo, this scene practically eliminates any doubt. The presence of the handcuff there demonstrates that Makoto had been at the location and managed to free himself.

Shortly afterward, when the other police officers arrive at the scene, Tsukumo immediately communicates his conclusion. Convinced that Makoto passed through the residence and is now completely free, he orders the authorities to launch a large-scale manhunt to locate him as quickly as possible.

However, when he attempts to explain his theory about the Time Loop to the other officers, Tsukumo is met with absolute skepticism. To the team, his hypothesis is so absurd that a much simpler explanation seems sufficient: they believe that the inspector himself broke the handcuffs, brought them to the crime scene, and planted them there to lend credibility to his narrative. In other words, they consider it far more plausible that Tsukumo is manipulating the evidence than that a temporal phenomenon actually exists.

Shortly afterward, however, a new forensic result is released. This time, the murderer used his left hand to commit the homicide. Furthermore, fingerprints were found on the murder weapon. Those fingerprints belong to Inspector Tsukumo.

The police immediately turn their suspicions toward him. Tsukumo, however, simply laughs. At that moment, he understands exactly what happened. In his reasoning, everything occurred during the **"lost day"**—the timeline experienced only by Makoto and Shiori. Tsukumo infers that, during that cycle, he really did handcuff Makoto and that, in order to escape, Kusakabe had to sever his own hand.

However, before resetting time, Makoto used the severed hand to deliberately leave Tsukumo's fingerprints on the knife used in the murder.

Even in this situation, Tsukumo does not waste time trying to convince the other officers. He realizes that arguing about the existence of the Time Loop again would be futile. Instead, he seeks out Midzuno, the only person who still trusts his judgment.

He then gives her an extremely specific instruction: when the clock reaches exactly midnight, she must remain holding Shiori Kusakabe.

The objective is clear. Tsukumo intends to make Midzuno come into direct contact with the temporal phenomenon. If his hypothesis is correct, she will be transported together with Shiori and experience the Time Loop firsthand. In this way, she will no longer have to rely solely on his explanations and will instead possess empirical confirmation that the phenomenon exists (something no person outside the Time Loop could ever perceive)

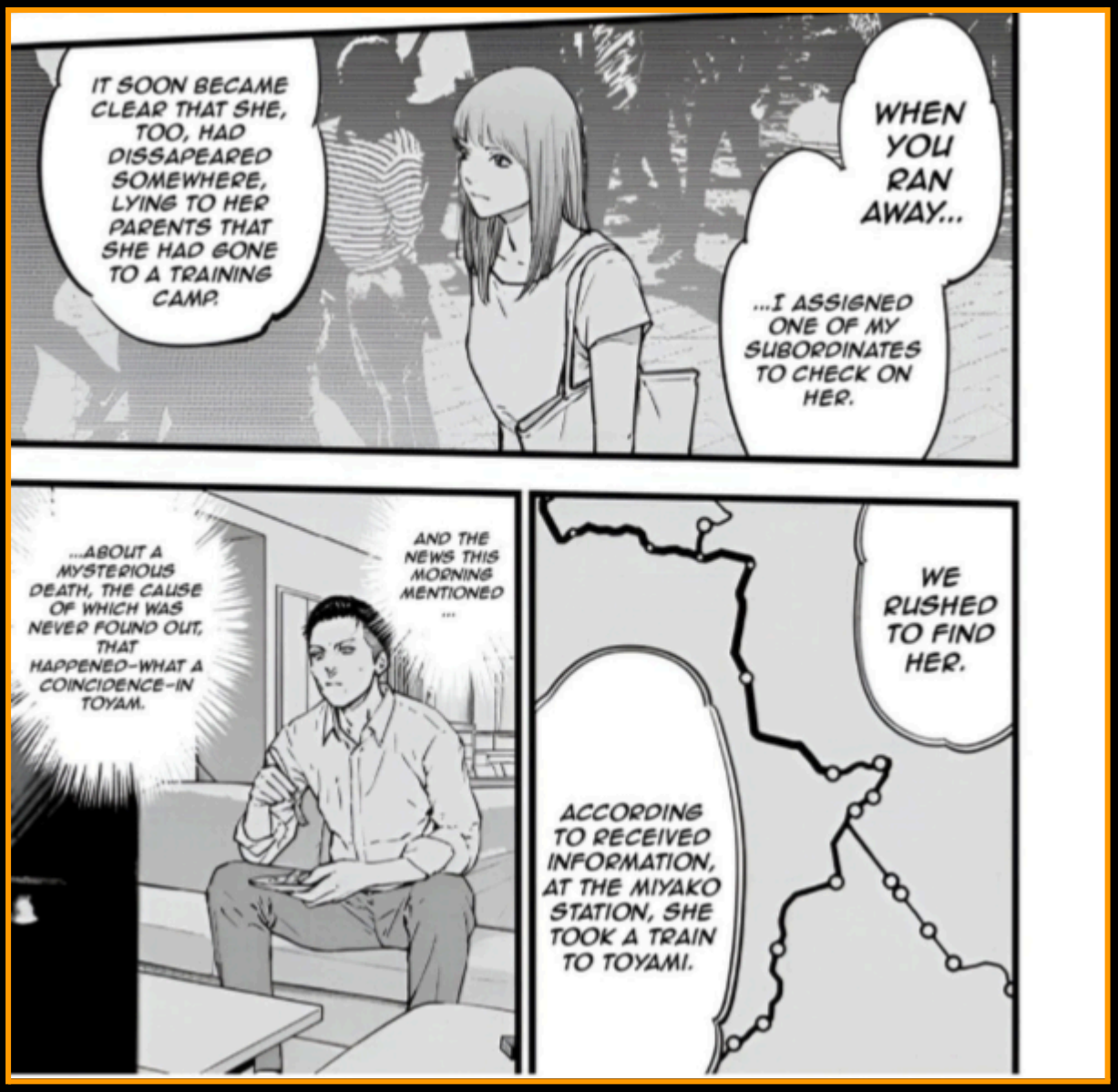
CONTAINER TACTIC -

A considerable amount of time passes, and Tsukumo remains under investigation by the police themselves. Naturally, he refuses to explain his theory to the other investigators, considering it completely pointless to try to convince people who would never accept the hypothesis of the Time Loop. After managing to escape house arrest, he immediately begins a new search for Makoto.

After locating his whereabouts, he finds Makoto accompanied by a blonde girl. Without giving either of them any opportunity to react, Tsukumo knocks them both unconscious and takes them to a large shipping container, where he intends to proceed with his plan.

The process used to locate Makoto once again demonstrates the inspector's level of planning. Tsukumo had previously asked one of his subordinates to keep Shinjo Yae under surveillance. At some point, she disappears and lies to her parents, claiming that she is going to a training camp. However, by investigating her movements, they discover that she had boarded a train bound for Toyami—the city where Makoto is hiding.

This information alone was still insufficient to locate Kusakabe. However, Tsukumo identifies a second extremely relevant element. That same morning, the news was reporting a rather unusual case that had occurred in Toyami: a mysterious death whose cause remained completely unknown.


WHEN YOU RAN AWAY...
...I ASSIGNED ONE OF MY SUBORDINATES TO CHECK ON HER.
IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT SHE, TOO, HAD DISSAPEARED SOMEWHERE, LYING TO HER PARENTS THAT SHE HAD GONE TO A TRAINING CAMP.
WE RUSHED TO FIND HER.
ACCORDING TO RECEIVED INFORMATION, AT THE MIYAKO STATION, SHE TOOK A TRAIN TO TOYAMI.
AND THE NEWS THIS MORNING MENTIONED ...
...ABOUT A MYSTERIOUS DEATH, THE CAUSE OF WHICH WAS NEVER FOUND OUT, THAT HAPPENED-WHAT A COINCIDENCE-IN TOYAM.


THAT'S WHY I WAS SURE YOU WERE WITH SINZYO.
!!!
AND, WHO'S THIS?

As Tsukumo himself states, it was the combination of these two pieces of information that allowed him to pinpoint Makoto's location. The first was Yae's suspicious trip to Toyami, a city she had no reason to be traveling to. The second was the emergence of an anomalous homicide in the same city, in which the cause of death could not be explained through conventional methods. These deaths occurred exactly as the HandPlan indicates—that is, through the organ-extraction method that Tsukumo himself implanted in Kusakabe's mind.

Taken together, the two pieces of information reinforce each other and point toward a single logical conclusion: Makoto was hiding in Toyami. This convergence of evidence allowed the inspector to determine his whereabouts and act before Kusakabe could disappear again.

Organ-extraction method in question:



After capturing Makoto and the girl accompanying him, Tsukumo makes his true objective clear. He does not intend to obtain a confession or merely keep him in custody. What he wants is to witness, with his own eyes, the objective manifestation of the phenomenon he had been reconstructing throughout the entire investigation.

> "I want to see it with my own eyes. Time travel... or a murder."

He then mentions a news report that was broadcast that morning. According to the newspapers, shortly after midnight, another incident had occurred under circumstances identical to those of the previous cases. Tsukumo then asks Makoto whether this one had also been Kusakabe's doing and questions what method was being used in the murders.

The questions, however, are essentially rhetorical. By that point, Tsukumo had already integrated virtually his entire inferential chain. To him, the repetition of the crimes, the impossible alibis, the temporal anomalies involving Shiori, and the recurrence of events precisely at midnight all converged toward a single explanation. His objective was no longer to determine whether there was a connection between the murders and the Time Loop, but to directly observe how that connection manifested itself. As he himself states, he is already certain of it.

From this, the inspector devises an extremely simple experiment.

Makoto would be kept completely restrained inside a shipping container throughout July 25. Tsukumo states that he will only open the door on the 26th. If the Time Loop truly exists, July 25 will continue repeating indefinitely for Makoto, while, from an external perspective, only a single day will pass. Thus, even while remaining imprisoned, Makoto would inevitably accumulate physical deterioration resulting from repeatedly experiencing that same day.

Consequently, when Tsukumo opened the container on the 26th, he expected to find a Makoto incompatible with the amount of time that had objectively elapsed: more exhausted, more injured, and displaying physical signs consistent with someone who had experienced the same day countless times.

After approximately twelve hours, Makoto continues desperately attempting to escape. Even while restrained, he repeatedly throws his own body against the walls of the container, wasting energy in a relentless attempt to break free.

Upon observing this behavior, Tsukumo formulates a significant reflection:

> "How many days have already passed for you?"

This question demonstrates an important shift in perspective. The inspector ceases to analyze time solely according to objective chronology and begins considering the subjective time experienced by Makoto.

Makoto's desperate behavior also strengthens another hypothesis Tsukumo had been developing in parallel; Murder constitutes a necessary condition for reaching a new day. Under this hypothesis, Makoto has only two real alternatives.

The first is to remain imprisoned, refusing to kill anyone and becoming condemned to repeat the same day indefinitely until he dies. The second is to murder the girl imprisoned alongside him—who, incidentally, is Makoto's biological sister—solely to allow time to advance once again.

This is precisely what makes the experiment practically irrefutable from the police perspective. Tsukumo openly states that he intends to release both of them as soon as the 26th arrives. To any external observer, all they need to do is wait 24 hours. There is no permanent threat and no imminent execution. If Makoto were not actually trapped in a Time Loop, there would be absolutely no logical reason for him to attempt to kill the girl. He would simply need to stay alive and wait for his release.

Even assuming Makoto distrusted Tsukumo's word, his reaction would still be profoundly inconsistent with that of an innocent person. No ordinary person, on their very first day of captivity and without any objective necessity, would murder someone else merely out of fear that a possible lie might be involved.

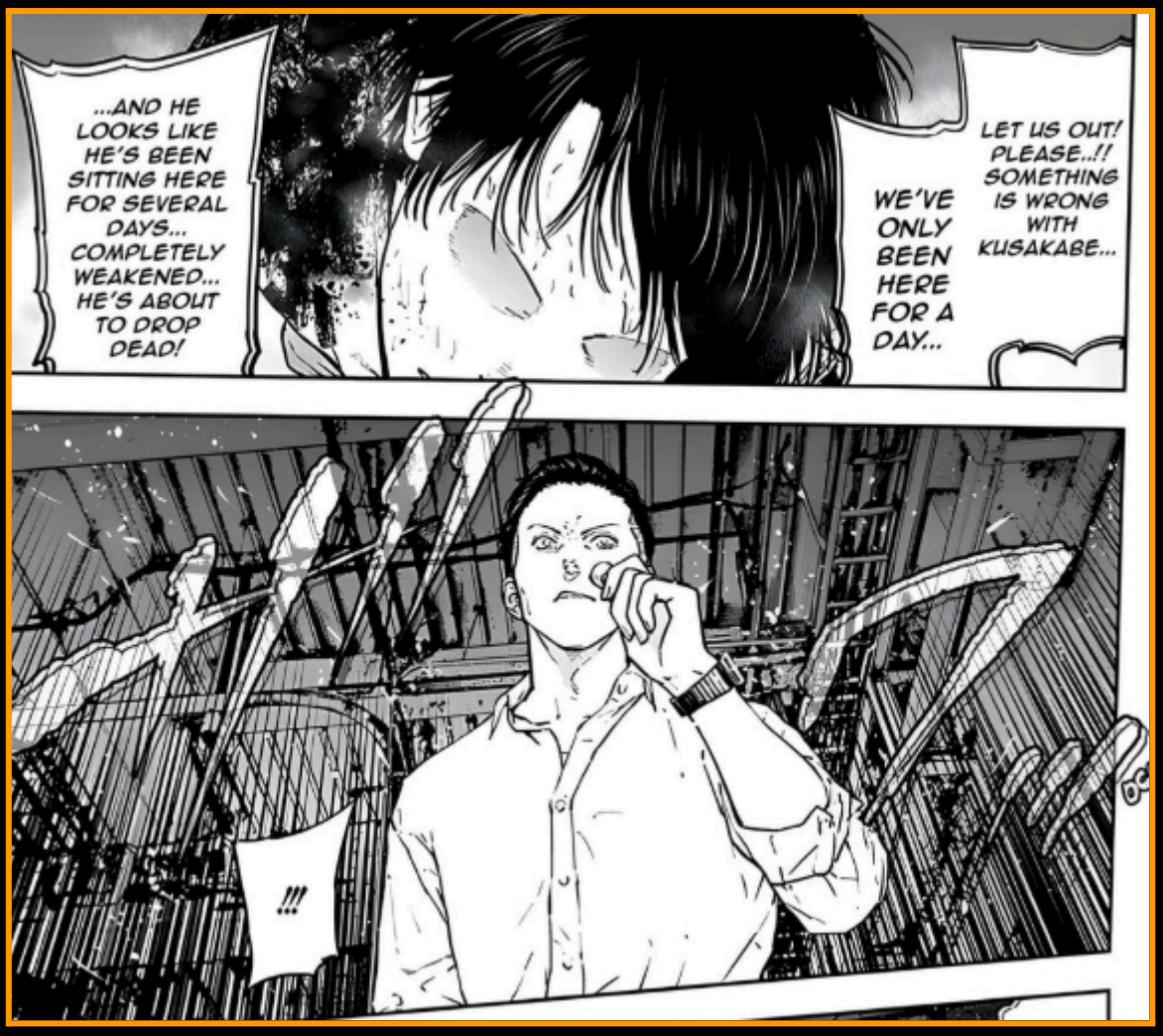
Thus, Tsukumo constructs an extremely sophisticated logical trap. Regardless of Makoto's decision, both outcomes produce relevant evidence.

If he remains without killing anyone, he will remain trapped, endlessly repeating the same day, allowing Tsukumo to observe the accumulated physical effects of the Time Loop until he eventually dies. If he chooses to kill in order to escape, he will confirm precisely the inspector's hypothesis that murder is the necessary condition for breaking the cycle, while also demonstrating, in an almost incontrovertible manner, his homicidal nature.

In other words, Tsukumo turns the very mechanics of the Time Loop into an investigative mechanism. Regardless of what Makoto chooses, both options provide the kind of information the inspector is seeking.

After several temporal resets, Makoto accidentally comes into physical contact with his biological sister at the exact moment the day resets, causing her to become part of the Time Loop as well. Without understanding what is actually happening, the girl falls into despair. Upon observing Makoto's physical and mental condition, she screams to Tsukumo that he is completely exhausted and appears to have been trapped inside the container for several days, despite only a few hours having passed from the perspective of any external observer.

This information is of enormous value to the inspector.



Understanding this, the inspector deliberately places a shard of glass inside the container. Obviously, it is not placed there by chance. The purpose is to provide, in a controlled manner, an immediate means for Makoto to kill his biological sister should he conclude that he cannot bear remaining trapped in that day indefinitely.

If Makoto kills the girl, he will leave objective proof that he is, in fact, a murderer. If he refuses, he will remain imprisoned until he dies in a cycle whose progressive deterioration will provide evidence consistent with the Time Loop hypothesis. In either scenario, Tsukumo forces the situation into a state where the truth can manifest through Makoto's own actions.

On the fifth repetition of July 25, at noon, Tsukumo decides to check on the situation inside the container. Rather than opening it, he simply calls out to Makoto and the girl, wanting to confirm that both are still alive. The reason is simple: they had completely stopped attempting to escape some time ago.

Without receiving any verbal response, Tsukumo remains attentive and, merely by listening through the metal structure of the container, manages to determine that both of them are still breathing.

Once again, this demonstrates exceptional sensory acuity. Even separated by a thick layer of metal—a material that naturally muffles sound—and with Makoto and the girl positioned at a considerable distance from the door, Tsukumo is still able to detect the sound of their breathing.

This perception demonstrates a high level of auditory attention and sensory discrimination. It provides yet another example of his ability, which I explained earlier, to perceive details that would normally go unnoticed by others, transforming nearly imperceptible stimuli into useful information for the investigation. This is consistent with his technique of "tensing the hippocampus" and his remarkable awareness of his surroundings.



However, while Tsukumo temporarily leaves the area, Yae (who, unexpectedly, had also been dragged into the time loop) manages to locate the container. Taking advantage of the inspector's absence, she rescues Makoto from the trap that had, until then, seemed absolutely inescapable. His biological sister, however, remains inside the container.

Upon returning and immediately realizing that Makoto had escaped, Tsukumo is caught off guard by the girl. Wielding a steel pipe, she delivers a brutal blow to his head, causing a deep wound and leaving him covered in blood. Overwhelmed by the anger accumulated after being trapped through successive temporal cycles, she screams:

> "You locked us in this container for several days! Who do you think you are?!"

She then completely reverses the situation and locks Tsukumo inside the container himself, where there is no cell signal or any immediate means of calling for help.

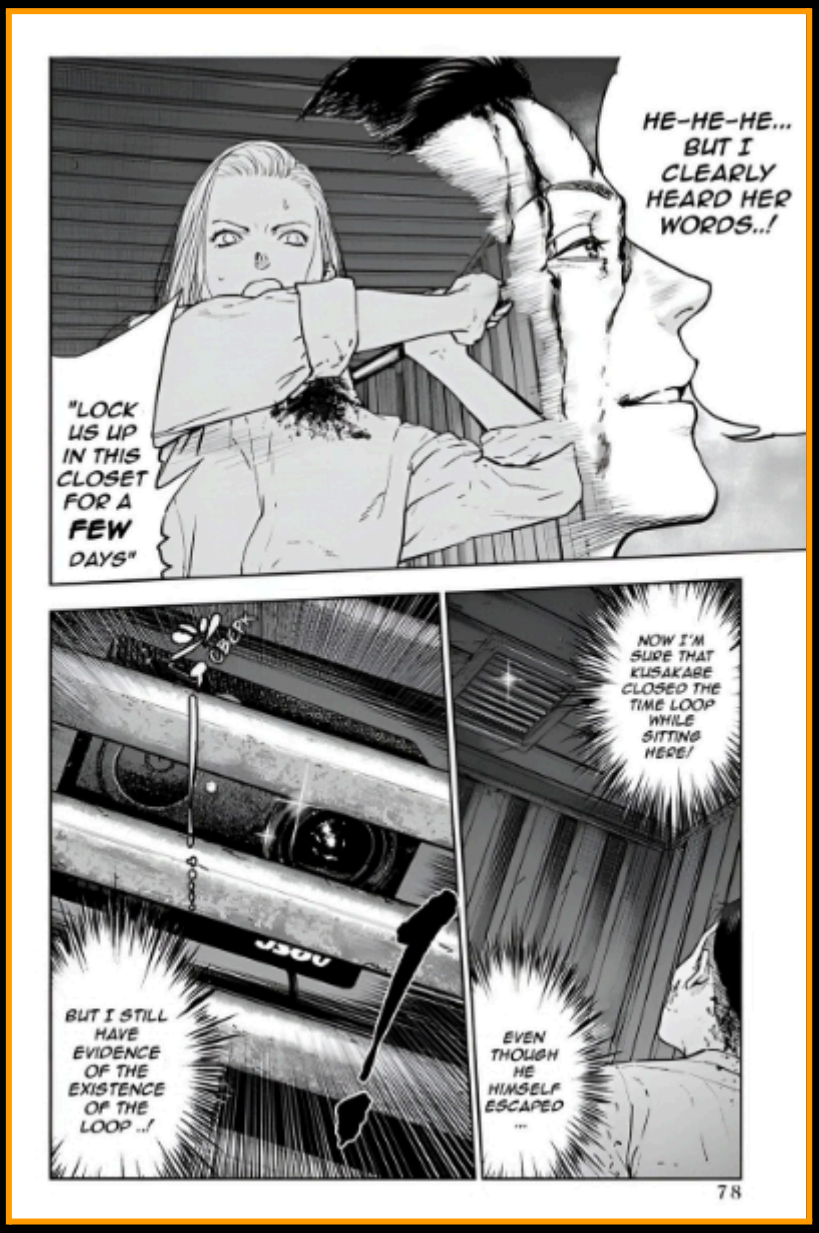
Even after suffering a powerful blow to the head, losing blood, and watching his entire strategy seemingly collapse, Tsukumo remains completely rational. Rather than focusing on his pain or attempting to escape, his attention becomes fixed on a single detail in the girl's statement.

She had said **"several days."**

The girl could not possibly believe that she had been trapped for several days if time had progressed normally. From the perspective of anyone outside the loop, only a few hours had passed since they were confined. The only explanation compatible with her statement was that she herself had experienced successive repetitions of the same day. Tsukumo immediately understands the implications of this information. The time loop really had occurred. And if it had, then all the preparations he had made before trapping Makoto would finally yield results.

From the beginning of the operation, Tsukumo had secretly installed a camera on the ceiling of the container. His objective was not merely to monitor the prisoners, but to record any anomalous phenomena that might occur during the temporal repetition. If the time loop truly existed, the camera should capture alterations that could not be explained through conventional means—disappearances, reappearances, or sudden changes in the arrangement of people and objects.

At that moment, even while injured and trapped, Tsukumo realizes that his own situation no longer matters. For the first time since the investigation began, there is a concrete possibility of obtaining objective proof of the time loop's existence. The detail extracted from the girl's statement confirms his hypothesis, while the camera may provide the material evidence necessary to demonstrate it to anyone else.



[Setting Traps, Lateral Thinking, Critical Thinking, Metacognition, Associative Thinking, Inductive Reasoning, Abductive Reasoning, Tactics, Sensory, EU, EF, Knowledge App., Info Gathering, Responsiveness, Neutralization, Exploitation, Logical Manip, Emotional Manip, Direct Methods]

Remembering the strategy devised by Tsukumo, he had instructed Midzuno to touch Shiori at exactly midnight, with the goal of making her participate in the Time Loop and thereby obtain direct confirmation of the phenomenon. However, the plan was never carried out. At one point, Midzuno explains that she was unable to conduct the experiment because the doctors prohibited

her from doing so. Nevertheless, she does not abandon the idea. On the contrary, she begins considering repeating the experiment at another opportunity. After everything she had witnessed alongside Tsukumo, she decides to trust his judgment, believing that his hypothesis about the Time Loop might actually be correct.

While still at the hospital, Midzuno encounters the blonde girl who had previously attacked Tsukumo and freed Makoto from the container. Her behavior immediately catches Midzuno's attention. Sensing that something is unusual, Midzuno decides to discreetly follow her. The pursuit continues until, exactly at midnight, Midzuno remains in physical contact with the girl. The moment the clock strikes 00:00, something completely inexplicable happens. Suddenly, the rain begins again, and the day returns to its initial state. At that moment, Midzuno personally experiences the phenomenon that Tsukumo had been trying to demonstrate since the beginning of the investigation. The day had truly been reset.

This occurs because Makoto did not kill anyone before midnight. Consequently, the Time Loop was triggered once again. Since the girl was already part of the time loop due to having come into contact with Makoto during previous cycles, Midzuno is also dragged into the phenomenon by touching her at the exact moment of the reset.

From this point onward, Midzuno and the girl share the same objective: to understand the true mechanics of the Time Loop and, above all, find Inspector Tsukumo.

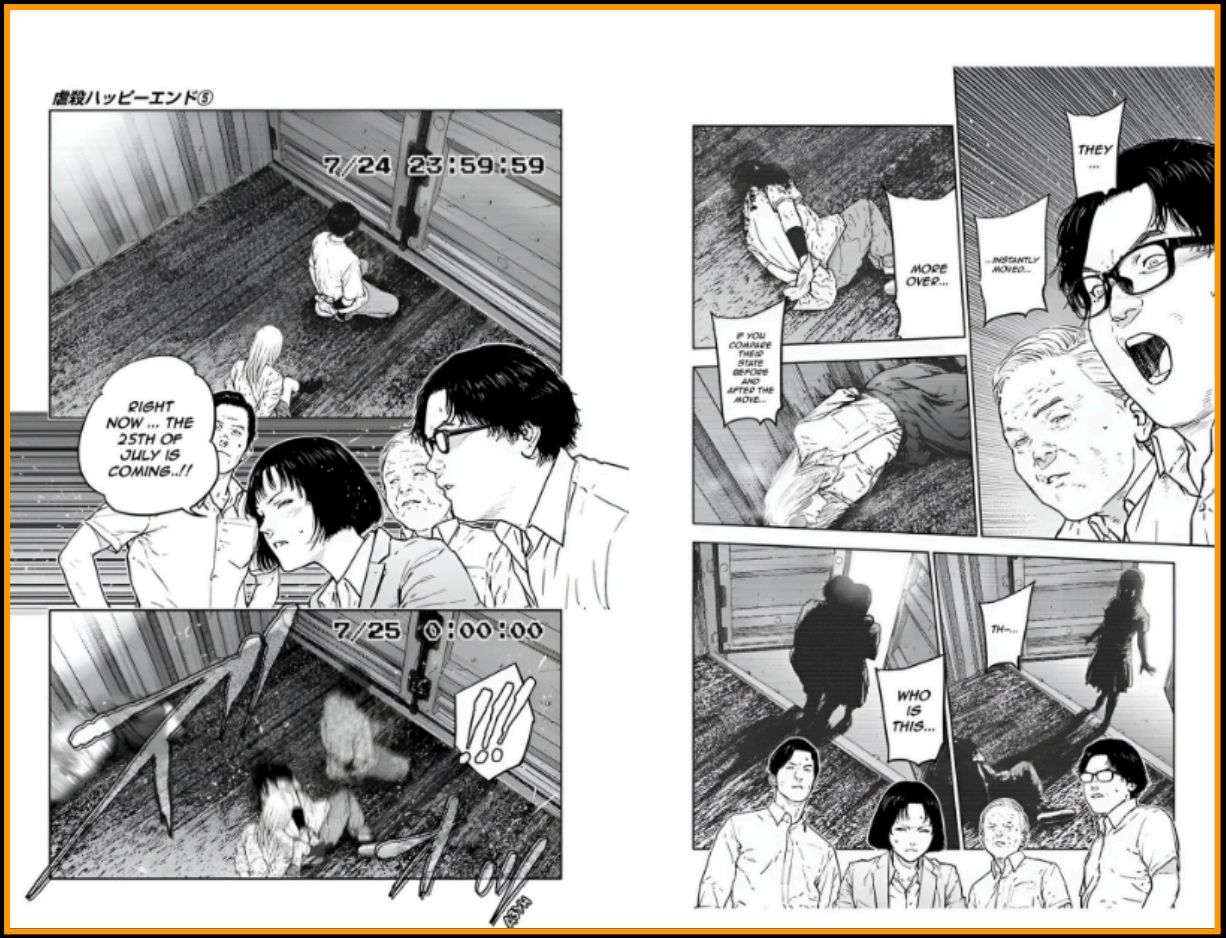
Now acting as allies, the two return to the container where Tsukumo had previously imprisoned Makoto and was later locked inside by the girl herself. However, upon arriving at the location, they realize that the inspector is no longer there. Despite his disappearance, Tsukumo had anticipated this situation and left behind a carefully prepared message to be discovered.

Inside the container, they find the recordings captured by the hidden camera that the inspector had previously installed, along with a note written by him. In the message, Tsukumo categorically states that the Time Loop is real, indicating that the recordings contain the proof he had been seeking throughout the investigation.

At the end, he leaves a message addressed to whoever found the note—Midzuno. He signs his own name and writes that he trusts her, symbolically entrusting her with the responsibility of continuing the investigation and uncovering the truth behind the temporal phenomenon..



After handing the recordings over to the police, Midzuno and the other investigators realize that something had changed drastically. From one second to the next, significant alterations occur in both the positions and physical conditions of Makoto and the blonde girl. These changes are incompatible with a continuous temporal sequence. Their positions no longer correspond to what should have been observed had time progressed normally, and their physical conditions also display discrepancies that cannot be explained by conventional movement.



One of the officers argues that it would have been possible for Tsukumo to fabricate the footage. However, the blonde girl, who is now in police custody, serves as a witness that she experienced three days from her own perspective (although she did not experience every temporal loop as Makoto did), while the recordings showed that she had only been there for a single day.

Even so, as expected, the officers remain reluctant to believe such an extraordinary claim. In an attempt to prove her point, Midzuno asks everyone to hold onto the blonde girl and thereby enter the Time Loop with her. However, because Makoto had killed someone—and they were unaware that killing was what caused the day to advance—the day simply passed normally. In other words, many of them once again became skeptical of the existence of the Time Loop.

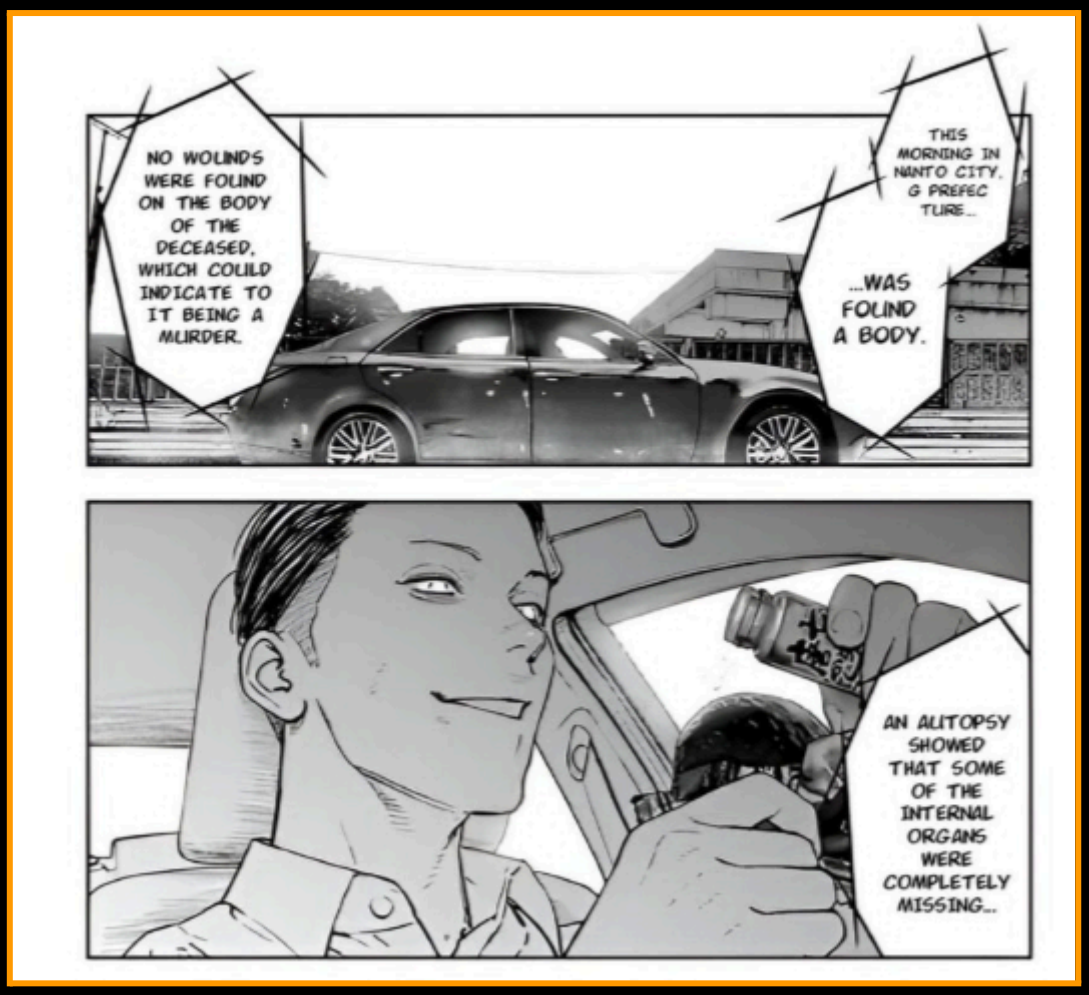
After a series of events, Katagiri is located once again. She eventually becomes a fugitive as the story progresses. Katagiri brutally attacks Midzuno with a pair of scissors inside the hospital. (Katagiri, for that matter, is in an extreme physical condition due to Makoto having left her physically unrecognizable after brutally attacking her.)

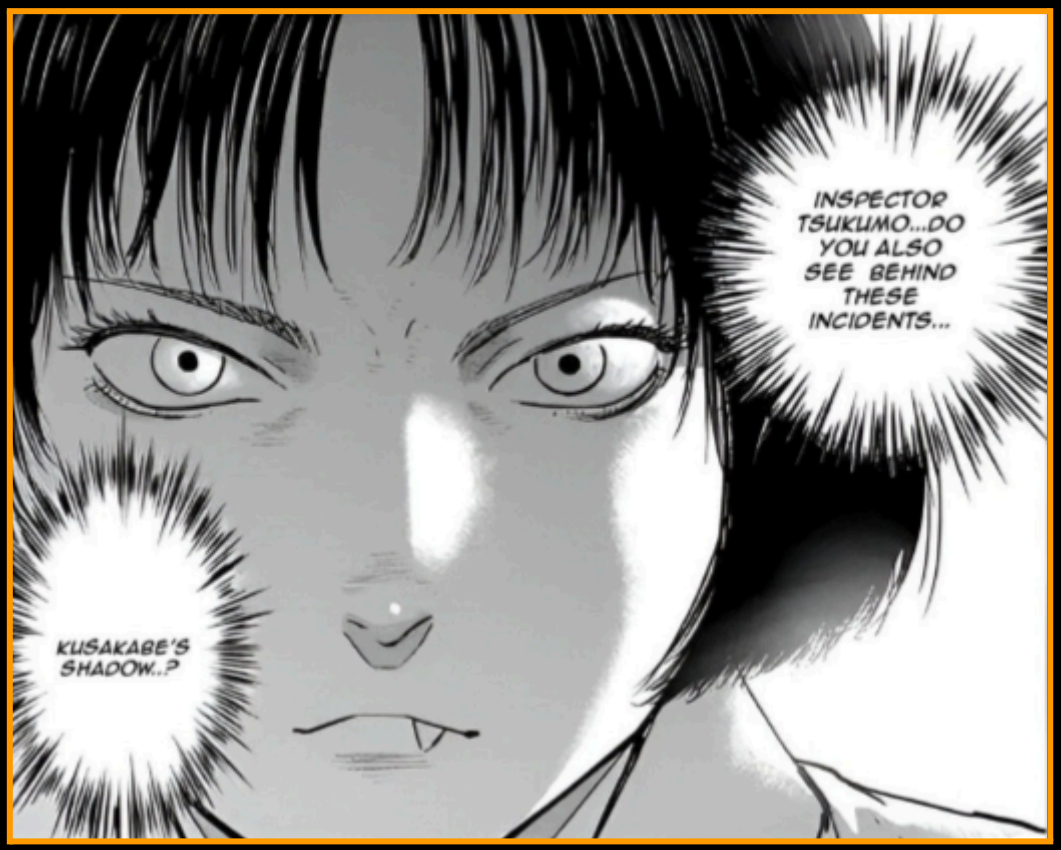
Although the sequence of events is extensive, two points from this conversation become crucial to the entire investigation.

First, Katagiri reveals the true rule governing the Time Loop: the days only advance when Makoto kills someone. If no murder occurs, the day resets indefinitely, trapping everyone within the same temporal cycle.

Then, Katagiri confirms what Tsukumo had been inferring since the beginning of the investigation. She states unequivocally that Makoto is the true perpetrator behind all of the murders committed up to that point.

Tsukumo at this point:


NO WOUNDS WERE FOUND ON THE BODY OF THE DECEASED, WHICH COULD INDICATE TO IT BEING A MURDER.
THIS MORNING IN NANTO CITY, G PREFEC TURE...
...WAS FOUND A BODY.
AN AUTOPSY SHOWED THAT SOME OF THE INTERNAL ORGANS WERE COMPLETELY MISSING...


INSPECTOR TSUKUMO...DO YOU ALSO SEE BEHIND THESE INCIDENTS...
KUSAKABE'S SHADOW..?

Katagiri, who had already been pursuing Yae with the intention of eliminating her, manages to capture her and forces her to accompany her to a certain location, planning to kill her afterward. However, while the two confront each other in a forest, Yae manages to overpower her physically and, during the struggle, ends up killing Katagiri.

Tsukumo and Midzuno arrive at the scene shortly after the final blow. Upon seeing Katagiri's brutally mutilated body, Tsukumo immediately asks Midzuno whether she was the same woman she had been following from Miyako.

From there, Midzuno explains the entire sequence of events that led to their reunion.

Initially, Midzuno had begun to suspect that Makoto Kusakabe was directly connected to the deaths in which the victims' organs disappeared. Based on this suspicion, she began investigating the events on her own. Shortly after leaving the hospital, she realized that the Time Loop had already reset twice.

During this period, another anomalous event occurred: a man reported seeing a woman simply appear out of nowhere. Considering everything Midzuno had already discovered about the phenomenon, she immediately associated the appearance with the Loop and concluded that the woman was likely Katagiri, who had also been incorporated into the temporal phenomenon.

Needing to locate Tsukumo, Midzuno then asked Kana (Makoto's biological sister, who had previously attacked the inspector in the container and was now cooperating with the police) to find his location.

Meanwhile, Tsukumo had heard reports about the suspicious deaths occurring in Nanto. Realizing that these incidents could be connected to the same phenomenon he had been investigating, he traveled to the area to investigate the situation.

While Midzuno was searching for Katagiri in Karinosaka, she eventually encountered Tsukumo. Kana had already informed Tsukumo about Midzuno's movements and the situation involving Katagiri, allowing the inspector to connect the information even before meeting her again.

Thus, Tsukumo and Midzuno's paths converge once again through two independent investigative lines.

After joining forces, Tsukumo and Midzuno begin following the trails left by Katagiri and Yae. Originally, Tsukumo expected Yae to lead them directly to Makoto, as should have happened at that point in the investigation. However, Katagiri's intervention completely alters the course of events.

Following the confrontation in the forest, Tsukumo arrests Yae in the act for the murder of Katagiri Chiharu. Midzuno then contacts her colleagues—who were still tasked with locating and arresting

Tsukumo himself—to inform them that Yae had been captured and that the arrest had taken place immediately after the crime.

Shortly afterward, Tsukumo finally finds Makoto. The inspector agrees to accompany him to the police station on the promise that he will have the opportunity to speak with Yae. Naturally, the department chief intends to use the situation to arrest Tsukumo, who is still considered a suspect by the authorities. However, Midzuno manages to mobilize the task force in one final attempt to prove the inspector's theory and demonstrate that the events surrounding Makoto cannot be explained through conventional means.

Meanwhile, Yae receives a letter through the police officer responsible for her custody. The message, sent by the investigation department, reads:

> "Kusakabe Makoto was detained today near Karinosaka Station and transferred to the Miyako Police Station as the primary suspect..."

Even Yae's parents come to visit her. However, in front of them, she makes it clear that the person they knew no longer exists. Even while imprisoned and facing a seemingly hopeless situation, her thoughts remain focused on Makoto. She understands that she chose to accompany him in this curse and that, regardless of the path they have taken, they are still searching for a way to reach a new day together.

Meanwhile, Tsukumo's situation becomes even more critical. He has only three days to prove two things that, to anyone else, seem completely absurd: that Makoto is responsible for the murders and that the Time Loop is real.

Now, Tsukumo enters the interrogation room—the same room he used to confront Makoto two weeks earlier.



This observation is particularly important because Tsukumo is extracting information from her about Makoto's psychological state and motivation, just as he had previously done during his psychological profiling of Makoto.

The central point lies in the distinction he establishes between "ordinary killers" and Makoto. To Tsukumo, Makoto's expression does not simply convey coldness, guilt, or fear of being discovered. It conveys the look of someone who has already accepted the consequences of his own actions because there is a goal he considers more important than his own safety.

Makoto's expression functions as behavioral confirmation of this hypothesis.

Makoto claims that the time-loop hypothesis is ridiculous and maintains a firm demeanor. A less attentive investigator might interpret this simply as confidence, denial, or emotional detachment.

Tsukumo, however, observes the quality of his expression rather than merely the content of his words.

He notices things such as:

- ➔ Makoto does not display genuine surprise;
- ➔ he does not show the kind of spontaneous indignation one would expect from someone accused of something so absurd;
- ➔ he maintains an exceptionally firm demeanor;
- ➔ he appears to be someone who has already accepted the weight of his own decisions;
- ➔ his expression suggests that there is some greater purpose that justifies his actions in his mind.

Furthermore, Midzuno states that Katagiri openly claimed that Makoto was the reason behind the time loops and that he was undoubtedly responsible for the brutal murders. Kusakabe admits that he knew her, but claims that most of what she said was nothing more than lies fabricated through her obsession and delusions. Makoto actually uses a logical argument to explain the situation from his own perspective, criticizing those who considered the Time Loop a viable possibility.

Tsukumo states that, in three days, it will be either him or Makoto. Everyone holds Kusakabe as they enter the Time Loop, just as the inspector had said would happen. However, nothing happens. Tsukumo assumes that Makoto may have already killed someone that day, but this does not pose a problem, since Kusakabe is confined and will not be able to kill anyone after that day.

Nevertheless, even under extremely strict surveillance, Makoto remains completely impassive. He shows no anxiety, concern, or any indication that he is attempting to act covertly. He simply does nothing.

Then, the day ends. To Tsukumo, this represents a major inconsistency. If his hypothesis is correct—that temporal progression depends on someone being killed—then the day should not have advanced. Makoto was under constant surveillance and seemingly had no opportunity to kill anyone.

It is precisely this contradiction that leads the inspector to reconsider the situation.

If Makoto did not kill anyone while under surveillance, yet the day still advanced, then the death necessary to trigger the passage of time did not necessarily have to be carried out directly by Makoto at that moment.

Tsukumo quickly reconstructs the scenario from this premise.

Makoto had previously been in Karinosaka and, at that point, should already have considered the possibility of being captured. Therefore, it would be rational for him to have prepared some way to ensure that another death would occur even after his capture.

Thus, Tsukumo instantly arrives at a new hypothesis: Makoto had left behind some kind of mechanism designed to continue producing deaths while he himself was unable to act.

This would perfectly explain the apparent contradiction. Makoto did not need to personally kill anyone while in custody. He only needed to anticipate the possibility of being captured and prepare a condition capable of producing another victim.

The mechanism:



From this point onward, the investigation changes direction completely. Tsukumo stops searching solely for Makoto himself and begins searching for what Makoto left behind.

He orders the police to conduct a thorough search of the area around the station where Kusakabe was found, reconstructing his movements and attempting to determine where Makoto had been

before he was located. When another day passes and the three-day deadline for proving his theory draws near, Tsukumo decides that he can no longer rely exclusively on the police investigation. He intends to search for the mechanism himself.

There is, however, one problem: an arrest warrant has already been issued for him. That does not stop him.

Tsukumo escapes by taking Midzuno hostage and drives away in his car. Before beginning his escape, however, he leaves her a few words. Midzuno, unconscious, is with him.

Meanwhile, Makoto remains under police surveillance at a hotel. After being confined throughout this entire period, the mechanism he had prepared reaches its limit that day. In order for a new day to be reached, Makoto must once again ensure that someone dies.

Unable to act freely and knowing that he is being watched, he begins considering another alternative: waiting for the next temporal reset. He can use the Time Loop to escape the surveillance.

BOMB STRATEGY -

At 11:48 PM, a second police officer arrives to replace the agent responsible for watching Makoto. Kusakabe remains locked inside his room, showing no particularly suspicious behavior aside from a few occasional complaints. At that moment, however, both officers receive an alert.

The noise wakes Makoto. When he checks the surveillance post, he finds one of the officers lying unconscious on the floor. Before he can fully understand what is happening, he notices Tsukumo's presence.

The inspector had broken into the room carrying the incapacitated officer, who had been taken down with a stun gun. He then pulls a knife from his pocket. Makoto naturally interprets this as a threat. Tsukumo, however, clarifies that the knife will not be used to kill him. He did not come there to execute anyone. He came only to inform him of something.

A few minutes earlier, the police had received a report claiming that a bomb had been planted in the hospital where Shiori was being treated. The call had been made by Tsukumo himself, and his voice had been identified. As if that were not enough, a quick search of his apartment revealed a blueprint of the hospital, accompanied by notes indicating how he supposedly intended to use the explosive.

The result is immediate: the police department goes into a state of emergency.

But Tsukumo reveals the true nature of the operation to Makoto. The bomb never existed. All of that information had been deliberately fabricated to manipulate the police. Tsukumo knew exactly how the officers would interpret his behavior after he had taken Midzuno hostage and escaped: in their eyes, the inspector had finally lost his mind. And Tsukumo uses precisely that perception against them.

If an apparently deranged man threatens the hospital where Makoto's sister is being treated, what would be the authorities' most natural response? Remove Shiori from the hospital immediately. Tsukumo had anticipated this. He had also anticipated something even more important: Makoto was waiting for midnight.

The inspector had already understood that Kusakabe intended to simply survive until the beginning of a new day, using the Time Loop to escape police surveillance. However, if Makoto did not kill anyone that day, there was a consequence he could not ignore. Shiori was also trapped in the Loop. Therefore, when midnight arrived, the day would reset for her as well.

And Tsukumo had manipulated the circumstances so that, at that exact moment, Shiori would be transported inside a moving ambulance. Only two minutes remained.

If the Loop occurred while Shiori was inside the moving ambulance, the vehicle would be returned to the position it occupied in the previous timeline, while Shiori would remain at the corresponding point in the new timeline. In other words, she would simply appear outside the moving vehicle. Given her physical condition, the fall would be fatal.

Thus, Tsukumo deliberately reduces the entire situation to a single dilemma: Makoto must kill someone before midnight. Otherwise, Shiori will die.

But there is a problem. If Makoto kills Tsukumo, he will be doing exactly what the inspector wants. The incapacitated police officer is still present as a witness and will be able to report everything that happened. Moreover, Makoto would be demonstrating, in virtually incontrovertible fashion, that he has a motive directly connected to protecting Shiori.

Tsukumo therefore turns his own life into a trap. He makes it clear that he is completely willing to die in order to prove Makoto's guilt. After everything he had already demonstrated—particularly during the HandPlan, which serves as a clear example—Kusakabe knows that this is not an empty threat. Tsukumo really is willing to put his own life at risk if doing so means revealing the truth.

The inspector also orders the officer present to memorize every possible detail of the situation. He wants a witness. Makoto has only a few seconds to decide.

=> Not killing anyone means losing Shiori.

=> Killing Tsukumo means revealing his own identity.

That is exactly the conflict Tsukumo wanted to create

In the end, Makoto chooses to act.

He attacks Tsukumo directly in the chest. The knife pierces the region of his heart—precisely where the inspector had deliberately induced Makoto to strike. However, Tsukumo had taken precautions to survive the wound.

Makoto believes that he has fulfilled the condition necessary to trigger the reset. He openly declares himself to be the killer. But then he notices something impossible; Tsukumo is still alive.

The new day should have begun. If Makoto really killed someone, why is the inspector still there? How could the Loop have occurred?

Before he can understand the contradiction, the officer receives a radio transmission; At 11:58 PM, Shinjo Yae had been found dead in her cell.

She had committed suicide.

The true reason behind Yae's decision is revealed later. She had been informed that Tsukumo was causing a massive crisis within the police department and that, because of the situation, Shiori would have to be transferred elsewhere.

Yae immediately understood what this meant.

She also knew how the Loop worked. If Makoto did not kill anyone before midnight, Shiori would die. And, consequently, Makoto would lose the very person who had motivated his entire struggle. Only two minutes remained.

Yae had no time to find Makoto, contact him, or seek another solution; She makes an extreme decision: If the passage of a day depends on someone dying, then she herself would become that death.
Yae takes her own life and, in her final moments, asks the gods to understand her intention: her death should be attributed to Makoto.

Yae deliberately turns her own death into an attempt to fulfill the condition necessary for the day to advance, having been completely manipulated by Tsukumo. Thus, while Tsukumo had constructed a situation in which Makoto was forced to choose between killing someone and losing Shiori, Yae creates a third possibility: she herself becomes the necessary victim for the Loop to continue.

The other police officer, who had been knocked down outside, finds Makoto, who had fled the scene. The officer who had remained inside to monitor the situation was brutally killed, but the other officer was able to see Makoto covered in blood.

Makoto's remote murder mechanism was also discovered.



Three days later, Makoto is officially wanted by the police.

Tsukumo had even anticipated the point of impact of the stab wound. By deliberately inducing Makoto to aim for his chest, he positioned his durable leather wallet in such a way that it would absorb the initial impact and increase his chances of survival. Even so, there remained a genuine possibility that the protection would fail and that he would die. That, however, was never enough to make him abandon the plan. For Tsukumo, the personal risk was secondary to the investigative effect he intended to produce: turning Makoto into a wanted criminal while simultaneously eliminating the suspicions directed toward himself.

The result was even more effective because the strategy also helped clarify the issue of the fingerprints found on the weapon used in the murder of Makoto's father. Based on the subsequent events, Tsukumo leads the department to understand that those fingerprints were not evidence of

his involvement in the murder, but rather a deliberately constructed consequence of Makoto's attempt to frame him.

More importantly, however, is the way Tsukumo utilizes the knowledge he acquired about the functioning of the Temporal Loop. Throughout the investigation, he realized that progression to a new day does not necessarily require Makoto to personally kill someone. Deaths caused indirectly, including suicides, can also satisfy this condition when they are causally connected to Makoto's actions, as in the cases of Miss Kajiwara and Miss Kusakabe.

Tsukumo turns this discovery into a strategic tool. He begins constructing situations in which the very mechanism of the Loop can be used against Makoto. Yae, for example, becomes a piece of this structure: after understanding Shiori's situation and the consequences of midnight arriving, her own decision to die ultimately ensures the temporal progression that Makoto needed to prevent.

Thus, Tsukumo's strategy does not consist solely of manipulating Makoto directly. It exploits the inferred rules of the temporal phenomenon, Makoto's psychological motivations, and the predictable reactions of the people around him, causing different independent events to converge toward the same outcome.

[EU, EF, EE, Mentalization, Acting Skills, Fabrication, Misdirection, Direct Manip, Indirect Manip, Logical Manip, Emotional Manip, Setting Traps, Critical Thinking, Lateral Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Knowledge Appl, Problem Solving, Metacognition, Social Awareness, Foresight, Improvisation, Responsiveness]

TIME LOOP INFERENCE



TIME LOOP EXISTENCE'S HYPOTHESIS -

P1 ⇒ The murders present strong connections to one another. Their temporal proximity, the pattern of the crimes, and the relationships between the victims indicate that they were probably committed by the same individual.

P2 ⇒ Makoto has consistent connections to all of the victims. He worked with Vakita, attended the same school as Savanoi, Morishita, and Kadzivara, and also has an indirect connection to evidence found at the first crime scene, such as the envelope originating exclusively from the Municipal Hospital, where his sister is hospitalized.

P3 ⇒ Despite these connections, Makoto repeatedly presents extraordinarily convenient alibis whenever he could be directly associated with a murder.

P4 ⇒ When analyzing these alibis, I find several objective inconsistencies: Makoto was not soaked despite the heavy rain; later, his wallet "casually" appears in another location to reinforce his whereabouts, but the only visual evidence is a silhouette incapable of objectively identifying him.

C1 ⇒ It is possible that someone is deliberately manipulating the evidence to divert suspicion away from Makoto.

P5 ⇒ Rather than abandoning my suspicions in light of the alibis, I begin interpreting them as part of the criminal's modus operandi itself.

P6 ⇒ When I question Katagiri about her school attendance shortly after one of the murders, I discover that she was also absent on exactly the same day Makoto was absent.

P7 ⇒ Later, I observe Katagiri leaving the hospital through the back entrance, avoiding almost all of the security cameras, a behavior completely incompatible with the calmness she displayed when entering through the main entrance.

P8 ⇒ The camera that recorded her had been installed recently, making it unlikely that she knew of its existence. This suggests that someone had previously instructed her which cameras to avoid.

P9 ⇒ The most plausible person to have given her these instructions is Makoto, who had left the hospital approximately thirty minutes earlier.

C2 ⇒ Makoto is probably not acting alone. Katagiri is, in some way, also involved in the events surrounding the murders.

P10 ⇒ When confronting Makoto with the evidence I have gathered, I notice that he remains completely indifferent. He shows no fear, surprise, or nervousness.

P11 ⇒ This complete absence of reaction reveals an individual with exceptional emotional self-control, incapable of being shaken by logical pressure or the risk of incrimination.

P12 ⇒ When I direct my provocations toward his sister, Makoto finally loses partial control of his emotions.

C3 ⇒ Shiori represents the psychological center of Makoto's behavior.

P13 ⇒ A person like Makoto, who is extremely rational and cautious, would hardly put his own life at risk for personal interests.

P14 ⇒ However, if his entire emotional structure is centered around Shiori, then there is a sufficiently strong motive to justify extreme behavior.

C4 ⇒ If Makoto is the Serial Killer, then the murders are being committed for the sake of his sister.

P15 ⇒ The nurse informs me that Shiori's clinical condition undergoes abrupt changes exactly when the clock strikes midnight, something incompatible with any natural progression of her illness.

P16 ⇒ This timing coincides precisely with the moment Makoto deliberately appears before the security cameras at the convenience store to construct his first major alibi.

P17 ⇒ The temporal coincidence between two seemingly independent phenomena is too unlikely to be ignored.

C5 ⇒ The changes affecting Shiori and Makoto's movements are probably part of the same phenomenon.

P18 ⇒ I mentally reconstruct the entire arrangement of the six cameras monitoring the entrances to the park and conclude that it would be objectively impossible for someone to enter the park through the conventional routes without being recorded.

P19 ⇒ Despite this, Makoto simply appears before the cameras, without any record of his approach.

C6 ⇒ Makoto's movement cannot be explained through the conventional means currently known.

P20 ⇒ Shiori is found outside her room with her respirator turned off.

P21 ⇒ Someone necessarily removed her from the room, transported her to the waiting room, and attempted to kill her.

P22 ⇒ Suzuhara had a strong motivation to attack anyone connected to the murderer of her son.

P23 ⇒ Makoto considers Shiori his absolute priority.

C7 ⇒ The most plausible explanation is that Suzuhara attempted to kill Shiori and Makoto confronted her in order to protect her.

P24 ⇒ Shortly afterward, Suzuhara is found dead.

P25 ⇒ This death occurs immediately after the events involving Shiori at the hospital.

C8 ⇒ Even before official confirmation, the hypothesis that best explains the facts is that Makoto killed Suzuhara to prevent her from killing Shiori.

P26 ⇒ The recordings show Shiori "disappearing" from one location and "appearing" instantaneously in another exactly when the day changes.

P27 ⇒ Shiori's physiological changes also occur precisely at that same moment.

P28 ⇒ Makoto consistently constructs his major alibis exactly within this temporal interval.

P29 ⇒ No conventional hypothesis can simultaneously explain:

- ➔ the impossible alibis;
- ➔ Makoto's sudden appearance;
- ➔ Shiori's instantaneous displacement;
- ➔ her physiological changes at midnight;
- ➔ the sequence of events involving Suzuhara;
- ➔ and the recurring manipulation of evidence.

C9 ⇒ All of these events are manifestations of a single, previously unknown phenomenon.

P32 ⇒ When I completely abandon conventional assumptions and begin accepting an extraordinary hypothesis, all the inconsistencies cease to be contradictions and instead form a single causal system.

C10 ⇒ Makoto is trapped in a Temporal Loop. With each reset of the day, he retains his memories and attempts to alter events in order to protect Shiori. All of the apparent impossibilities observed throughout the investigation are natural consequences of this same phenomenon. The Temporal Loop hypothesis is no longer merely extraordinary; it becomes the only explanation capable of logically and coherently unifying all the evidence I have gathered throughout the case.

HYPOTHESIS VERIFICATION — DEDUCTIVE R.

P1/P33 ⇒ If Makoto is the murderer, then all of the events in the investigation should be logically explainable from this single premise.

P2/P34 ⇒ Makoto has a direct or indirect connection to all of the victims, as well as a material connection to the first crime scene through the envelope originating from the Municipal Hospital.

C1/C11 ⇒ His presence within the set of victims and pieces of evidence ceases to be a coincidence and instead becomes a natural consequence of his authorship.

P3/P35 ⇒ If Makoto is the murderer, then it is expected that he would constantly attempt to divert suspicion away from himself.

P4/P36 ⇒ The two main alibis presented by Makoto emerge precisely when he would be directly implicated in the murders, and both involve artificially convenient circumstances.

C2/C12 ⇒ The alibis cease to represent innocence and instead become deliberate attempts at concealment.

P5/P37 ⇒ If Makoto seeks to conceal his crimes, then it is expected that he would manipulate others whenever necessary.

P6/P38 ⇒ Katagiri begins behaving inconsistently with her previous behavior, avoids security cameras, and later fabricates evidence that benefits Makoto.

C3/C13 ⇒ Katagiri's involvement becomes a logical consequence of Makoto's actions.

P7/P39 ⇒ If Makoto commits the murders for a specific motive, then that motive should explain why he is willing to take extreme risks.

P8/P40 ⇒ The only person capable of breaking through his emotional self-control is Shiori.

P9/P41 ⇒ Every extraordinary decision made by Makoto directly involves his sister.

C4/C14 ⇒ Shiori necessarily constitutes the central motivation behind his crimes.

P10/P42 ⇒ If Shiori is his absolute priority, then any threat against her would justify an extreme reaction.

P11/P43 ⇒ Suzuhara attempts to kill Shiori.

P12/P44 ⇒ Shortly afterward, Suzuhara is found dead.

C5/C15 ⇒ Suzuhara's death becomes a direct consequence of Makoto's need to protect Shiori.

P13/P45 ⇒ If Makoto constantly alters events to protect Shiori, then seemingly impossible phenomena may emerge as a consequence of these alterations.

P14/P46 ⇒ His impossible alibis, sudden appearance before the cameras, Shiori's physiological changes at midnight, and her inexplicable displacement consistently occur in association with Makoto's actions.

C6/C16 ⇒ All of these anomalies cease to be independent events and instead become consequences of Makoto's actions.

P15/P47 ⇒ If all observed facts are natural consequences of the hypothesis that Makoto is the murderer, while no alternative hypothesis can simultaneously explain all of the evidence, then this hypothesis becomes the only logically consistent one.

C7/C17 ⇒ Makoto is responsible for the murders.

HANDPLAN ANALYSIS (WIP)



1- HANDCUFF PREMISSES

Tsukumo's plan is constructed in an extremely unconventional way because it does not seek to defeat Makoto within that specific timeline, but rather to transmit information to Tsukumo himself in the next timeline. In other words, he turns the Temporal Loop into a mechanism for communicating with himself.

His reasoning begins with a simple conclusion: if Makoto is truly capable of resetting the day, then any arrest, evidence, or investigative progress can simply cease to exist. Therefore, attempting to solve the case within that particular timeline is no longer efficient. Instead of fighting against the reset, Tsukumo decides to exploit it.

With this objective in mind, he deliberately approaches Makoto and makes sure to be noticed. He does not attempt to conceal the fact that he is following him, precisely because his purpose was never to spy on him, but to initiate a psychological confrontation. Shortly afterward, he directly asks whether Makoto killed Suzuhara. The question is not intended to obtain a confession; it serves

only to communicate that Tsukumo's understanding of the case has already surpassed what Makoto believed possible.

The next step forms the foundation of the entire plan. Tsukumo handcuffs the two of them together and then swallows the key. This completely eliminates Makoto's freedom of action precisely as midnight approaches. During this time, the inspector continues applying psychological pressure, revealing his reasoning regarding the Temporal Loop and demonstrating that he has understood a fundamental characteristic of the phenomenon: objects in contact with Makoto are also transported when the day resets, exactly as happened with Shiori's wheelchair.

This information is not shared innocently.

In reality, Tsukumo is deliberately inducing a specific line of reasoning in Makoto. By explaining that objects are transported together with him, he leads Makoto to conclude that amputating the inspector's hand would be sufficient to escape the handcuffs before midnight. This is precisely the behavior Tsukumo wants to provoke. The mutilation was not an accident; it was part of the structure of the plan.

When Makoto actually tears off his hand to free himself, Tsukumo activates the second stage of the plan. He displays desperation and claims that, if Makoto continues holding that hand during the reset, then, twenty-four hours earlier, his hand will instantly disappear in front of numerous witnesses at the police station, objectively proving the existence of the Temporal Loop. As expected, Makoto cannot take that risk. Shortly before midnight, he abandons the severed hand. At first glance, it appears that Tsukumo has failed completely. He has neither managed to prove the existence of the Loop nor capture Makoto.

However, that was never the true objective.

The plan was designed to produce a consequence observable only to Tsukumo in the next timeline. When the day resets, Tsukumo relives July 22 once again. During a casual conversation, a colleague mentions the possibility of using handcuffs to restrain someone. Tsukumo immediately decides to put the idea into practice. However, when he reaches into his pocket for the handcuffs, he realizes that they are simply no longer there.

This absence completely changes his interpretation of the situation.

Tsukumo knows that, before the reset, the handcuffs were in his possession. If they have now disappeared without explanation, something must have taken them away.

At this point, he still does not reconstruct exactly what happened in the previous timeline. He understands that Makoto tore off his hand, but he does not know when the plan failed, nor does he know the complete sequence of events.

What he actually concludes is something much more specific. He realizes that he is experiencing July 22 for the second time.

He also understands that, in the previous timeline, he carried out a plan involving those handcuffs and that, for some reason, the plan failed, forcing Makoto to reset the day. Finally, he infers that the handcuffs remained attached to Makoto's body when the Loop occurred, which is why they did not return to his pocket in the new timeline. In other words, the absence of the handcuffs functions as a message left by Tsukumo himself from the previous cycle.

It does not tell him exactly how the events unfolded; it only tells him that they did. It serves as objective confirmation that the timeline has already been experienced, that his plan reached an advanced stage before the reset, and that Makoto was carrying the handcuffs with him when time rewound.

His objective was not to defeat Makoto immediately, but to construct a system in which the timeline would leave traces for the next one, allowing the inspector himself to accumulate knowledge between cycles and understand how the phenomenon works in order to overcome Makoto.

It is important to emphasize that the conclusion that the first plan had failed — an inference made by Tsukumo in the second timeline — arises precisely from the disruption in his own chain of reasoning. In the previous timeline, he had enough time to fully develop the thought process that would culminate in the creation of that plan. However, upon reliving the same day, this process is interrupted almost immediately by new information: the handcuffs are gone.

This detail completely alters the flow of events. Instead of naturally proceeding until he formulates the same plan again, Tsukumo is forced to redirect his attention toward explaining the absence of the handcuffs. As a consequence, his entire chain of reasoning changes.

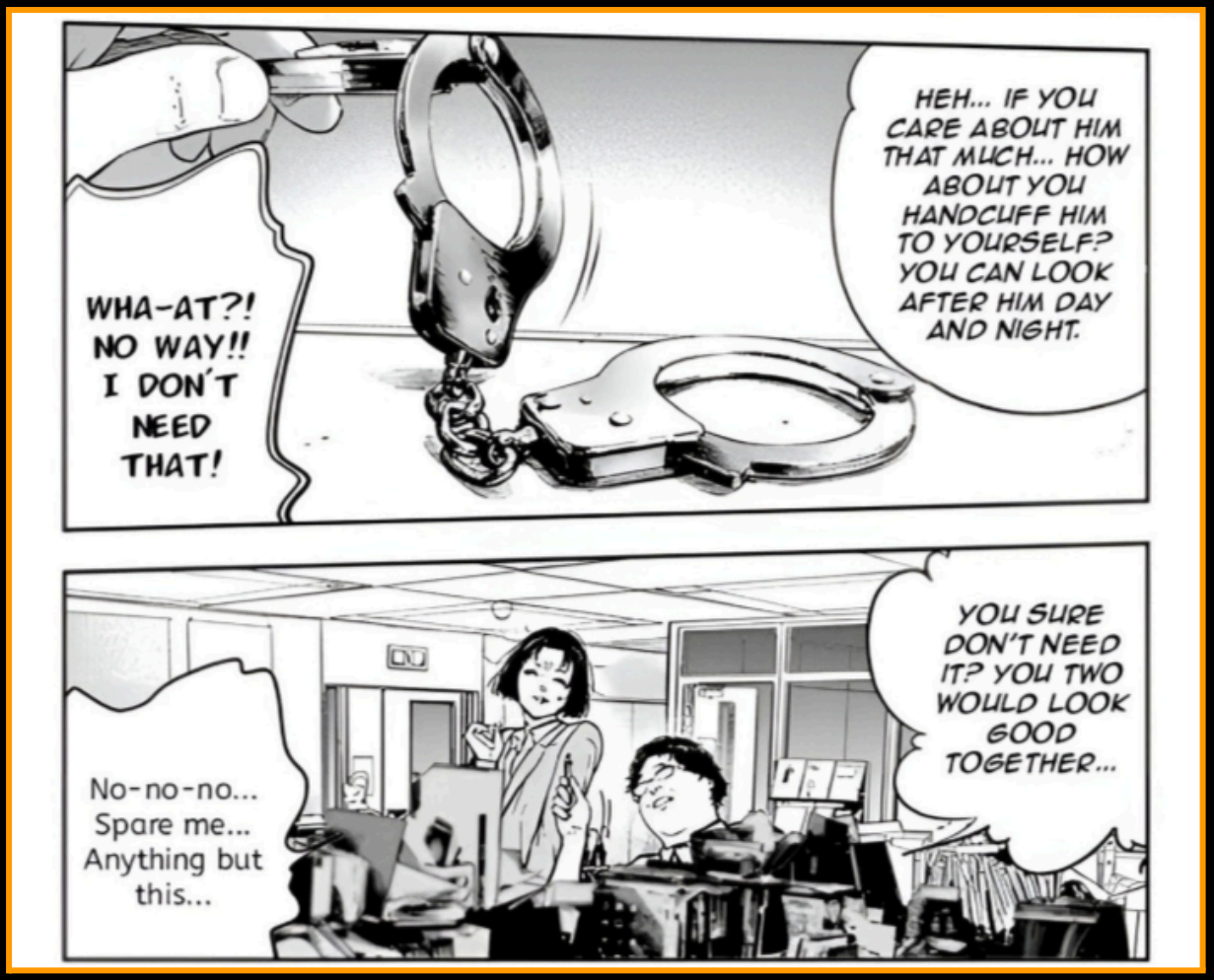
From this, he infers that the day is not occurring for the first time. If the handcuffs should be in his pocket but are no longer there, then something must have happened in a previous timeline involving that object. Consequently, he concludes that the plan he had previously conceived was actually carried out but did not succeed; otherwise, there would be no reason for Makoto to reset the day while carrying the handcuffs with him.

In other words, it is not the absence of the handcuffs alone that leads Tsukumo to conclude that the plan failed, but rather the fact that this new information completely interrupts and replaces the

chain of reasoning that, in the previous timeline, had led him to formulate that very plan. The change in the sequence of events becomes, in itself, evidence that the day has already been experienced and that his previous strategy "failed" at some point before the temporal reset.




YES??
A NEW DAY. HAVE YOU REALLY ARRIVED?!
CREEPY!
.....
...BELIEVE IN TIME TRAVEL?
HOW CAN I EVER PROVE IT?
...DAMN IT..!
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?


HEH... IF YOU CARE ABOUT HIM THAT MUCH... HOW ABOUT YOU HANDCUFF HIM TO YOURSELF? YOU CAN LOOK AFTER HIM DAY AND NIGHT.
WHA-AT?! NO WAY!! I DON'T NEED THAT!
YOU SURE DON'T NEED IT? YOU TWO WOULD LOOK GOOD TOGETHER...
No-no-no... Spare me... Anything but this...


COME O-ON ...
NAKAMOTO -SENPAI!! PLEASE, STOP!!
SHIORI WAS TRANSPORTED ALONG WITH THE WHEELCHAIR...!! THUS, EVERYTHING THAT HUMANOIDS COMES INTO CONTACT WITH AT THE MOMENT THE TIME LOOP IS CLOSED, IS ALSO TRANSPORTED IN TIME...
TURNS OUT.. I CAN TOO.. WITH HIM...
THAT'S IT!
PUSH
GREAT IDEA!
19



Now, the inspector begins searching for Makoto, certain that he is still restrained by the handcuffs. From his perspective, Kusakabe would never continue moving around the city in that condition. Sooner or later, he would need to find a way to remove them. Tsukumo therefore anticipates Makoto's next move. Knowing that he would need a place where he could discreetly get rid of the handcuffs, he concludes exactly where Makoto would go: his father's house. However, by the time he arrives, it is already too late. Makoto's father is dead, and one of the handcuffs lies beside his body. To Tsukumo, this scene practically eliminates any doubt. The presence of the handcuff at the scene demonstrates that Makoto had been there and managed to free himself from it.

Shortly afterward, when the other police officers arrive at the scene, Tsukumo immediately informs them of his conclusion. Convinced that Makoto had passed through the residence and was now completely free, he orders the authorities to launch a large-scale manhunt to locate him as quickly as possible.

However, when he attempts to explain his theory about the Time Loop to the other officers, Tsukumo is met with absolute skepticism. They consider it far more plausible that Tsukumo is manipulating the evidence than that a temporal phenomenon actually exists. Fingerprints are found on the murder weapon, and they belong to Inspector Tsukumo. The officers immediately turn their suspicions toward him. Tsukumo infers that, in that cycle, he really did handcuff Makoto and that, in order to escape, Kusakabe was forced to sever his own hand. However, before restarting

time, Makoto used the severed hand to deliberately leave Tsukumo's fingerprints on the knife used in the murder.

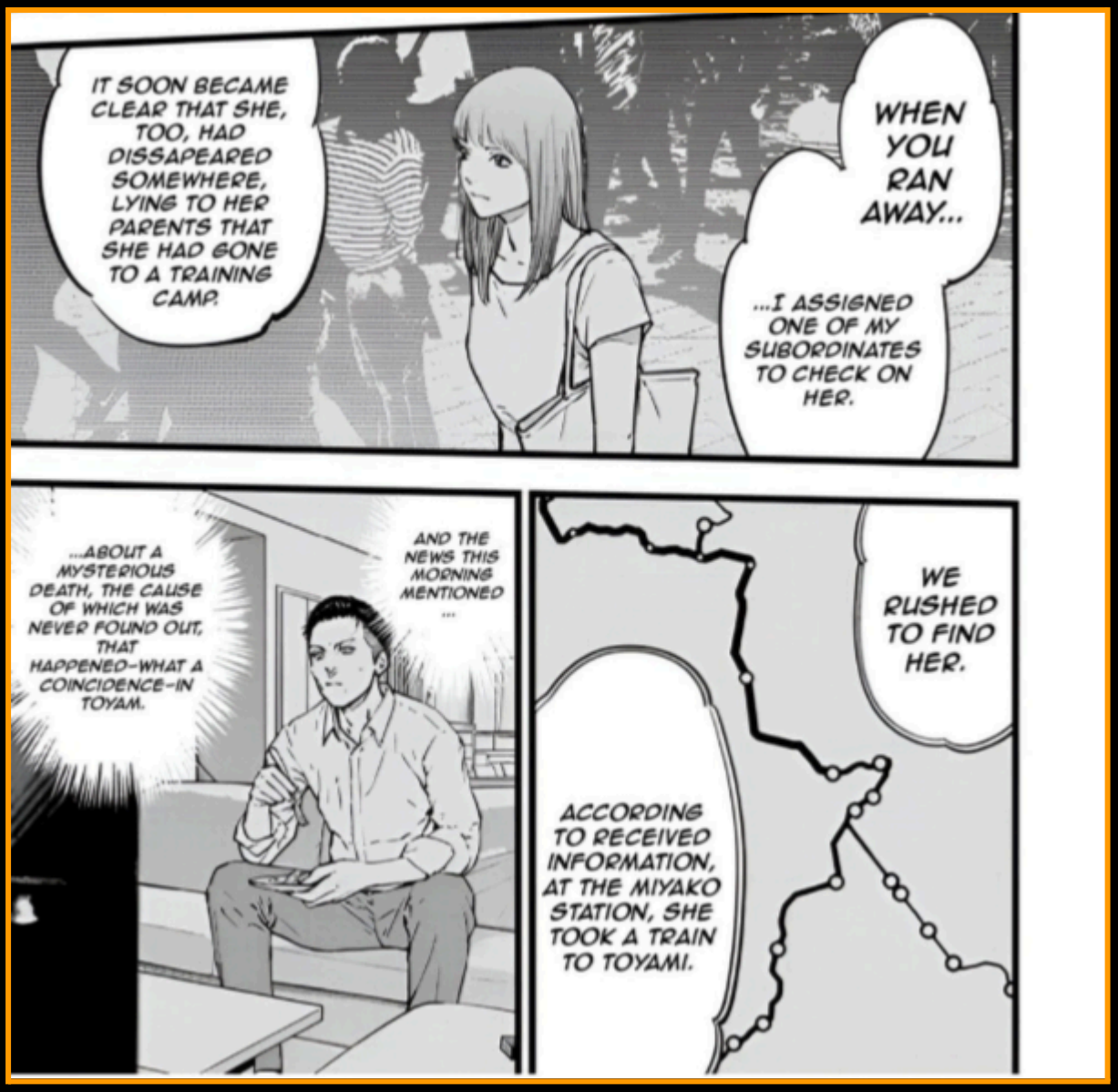
Tsukumo seeks out Midzuno, the only person who still places her trust in his judgment. He then gives her an extremely specific instruction: when the clock strikes exactly midnight, she must remain holding Shiori Kusakabe. The objective is clear. Tsukumo intends to make Midzuno come into direct contact with the temporal phenomenon. If his hypothesis is correct, she will be transported alongside Shiori and experience the Time Loop firsthand. In this way, she will no longer have to rely solely on his explanations and will instead possess empirical proof of the phenomenon's existence—something no one outside the Time Loop could ever perceive.

2. ORGAN KILLING METHOD

Tsukumo remains under investigation by the police themselves. After managing to escape house arrest, he immediately begins a new search for Makoto.

After locating his whereabouts, he finds Makoto accompanied by a blonde girl. Without giving either of them any opportunity to react, Tsukumo knocks them both unconscious and takes them to a large container, where he intends to proceed with his plan.

Tsukumo had previously instructed one of his subordinates to keep Shinjo Yae under surveillance. At one point, she disappears and lies to her parents, claiming that she is going to a training camp. However, after investigating her movements, they discover that she had boarded a train bound for Toyami—the city where Makoto is hiding. This information alone was still insufficient to locate Kusakabe. However, Tsukumo identifies a second extremely relevant factor. That same morning, the news reports an unusual case that had occurred in Toyami: a mysterious death whose cause remained completely unknown.


WHEN YOU RAN AWAY...
...I ASSIGNED ONE OF MY SUBORDINATES TO CHECK ON HER.
IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT SHE, TOO, HAD DISSAPEARED SOMEWHERE, LYING TO HER PARENTS THAT SHE HAD GONE TO A TRAINING CAMP.
WE RUSHED TO FIND HER.
ACCORDING TO RECEIVED INFORMATION, AT THE MIYAKO STATION, SHE TOOK A TRAIN TO TOYAMI.
AND THE NEWS THIS MORNING MENTIONED ...
...ABOUT A MYSTERIOUS DEATH, THE CAUSE OF WHICH WAS NEVER FOUND OUT, THAT HAPPENED-WHAT A COINCIDENCE-IN TOYAM.


THAT'S WHY I WAS SURE YOU WERE WITH SINZYO.
!!!
AND, WHO'S THIS?

As Tsukumo himself states, it was the combination of these two pieces of information that allowed him to narrow down Makoto's location. The first was Yae's suspicious journey to Toyami, a city she had no reason to be traveling to. The second was the emergence of an anomalous homicide in the same city, whose cause of death could not be explained through conventional methods. These deaths occurred exactly as the HandPlan indicated—in other words, through the organ-extraction method that Tsukumo himself had implanted into Kusakabe's mind.

Together, they reinforce one another and point toward a single logical conclusion: Makoto was hiding in Toyami. This convergence of evidence allowed the inspector to identify his whereabouts and act before Kusakabe could disappear again.

The organ-extraction method in question:



In retrospect, the murders begin to display characteristics that cannot be explained through conventional methods. Victims appear dead or severely compromised without any immediate cause compatible with the circumstances observed. There is not necessarily an assassin present at the scene, there is no conventional escape trajectory, and, most importantly, certain injuries appear in ways that are incompatible with when the victim should have been attacked.

To an ordinary investigator, each case could appear to be an independent mystery. To Tsukumo, however, there is a hidden variable connecting all of them: the method he himself induced Makoto to use.

This transforms the **Organ Method** into a kind of invisible signature. Tsukumo does not need to catch Makoto committing a murder. He merely needs to find an incident displaying the characteristic consequences of this method and ask: *who possesses the ability to produce such a result?*

The answer progressively converges on Makoto.

And this is precisely where the trap becomes particularly sophisticated: Tsukumo creates the instrument that he will later use to track Makoto himself. He is not merely reacting to his opponent's actions; he is deliberately shaping the behavior he intends to investigate in the future.

The principle is simple:

> If part of a victim's body is removed in one timeline, but the victim survives until the reset, the alteration may carry over into the transition between timelines and produce an apparently inexplicable death in the next one.

Therefore, every new murder carried out through the Organ Method provides Tsukumo with additional information. The more Makoto uses the method, the more apparent the existence of a pattern becomes. And the more frequently that pattern repeats, the less plausible it becomes that these events are independent accidents.

This allows Tsukumo to perform a kind of reverse identification:

Makoto → uses the Organ Method → produces a specific class of anomalous murders → Tsukumo identifies this class of occurrence → locates the perpetrator based on the pattern he himself induced.

The most impressive aspect is that Makoto believes he is using the method precisely because it grants him a perfect alibi. To him, his physical absence from the crime scene means that there is no way to identify him. Tsukumo, however, completely reverses this logic.

The absence of the killer from the crime scene ceases to be an advantage once the method used to produce that absence is known.

Thus, Tsukumo turns Makoto's greatest advantage into his own vulnerability. The method created to make the murders impossible to trace becomes a signature that allows the killer to be traced.

And this is essential to understanding the next stage of his plan: Tsukumo does not need to immediately prove that Makoto committed every individual murder. He only needs to accumulate enough occurrences of the same pattern to transform the anomalous behavior into a tool for locating and identifying him. It is precisely this chain of seemingly inexplicable deaths that later allows the inspector to construct the container trap.

Therefore, Tsukumo created the cognitive conditions necessary for Makoto to develop the method, allowing Makoto himself to turn it into his primary murder tool and, later, allowing the repeated use of that method to function as a behavioral fingerprint against him.

3. CONTAINER TACTIC

After finding Makoto, Tsukumo places him inside the container together with the girl. Tsukumo creates a controlled experimental environment.

The container tactic represents a sophisticated strategy by Tsukumo to confirm the existence of the Time Loop, as his objective is not simply to keep Makoto imprisoned, but to **turn the confinement into a controlled experiment**. Tsukumo had already formulated the hypothesis that Makoto was capable of traveling back in time, but he knew that proving such a theory objectively to the other police officers would be extremely difficult. Therefore, instead of continuing to demonstrate it solely through deductions, he deliberately creates a situation in which the properties of the phenomenon can be observed.

By imprisoning Makoto and the girl inside the container, Tsukumo drastically reduces the number of external variables. The space is isolated, the two are physically prevented from simply leaving the location, and the inspector himself controls when the container will be opened. The established condition is simple: they will remain imprisoned until the following day. For anyone who is not subject to the Loop, this would mean merely waiting a few hours until the designated period ends. However, if Makoto is actually restarting the same day repeatedly, his subjective experience could be completely different from the passage of time perceived by Tsukumo.

It is precisely this discrepancy that the inspector begins to exploit. After approximately twelve hours, Makoto continues trying incessantly to escape, expending energy, repeatedly throwing himself against the walls, and displaying signs of exhaustion. Tsukumo then begins considering a particularly important possibility: how many days might Makoto have already experienced while, from his own perspective, only a few hours had passed?

The question demonstrates that the inspector is not merely observing Makoto's physical condition, but comparing the objective time recorded externally with the possible subjective time accumulated by an individual trapped within the Loop.

Tsukumo also introduces a second variable into his experiment: the need for a murder in order for a new day to be reached. By observing Makoto's persistence in attempting to escape, the inspector formulates the possibility that murder is a necessary condition for temporal progression. From there, he deliberately creates a situation in which Makoto has very few alternatives. If he simply waits, he will remain imprisoned until the time determined by Tsukumo; if he attempts to trigger another Loop through murder, he will produce precisely the evidence the inspector is looking for.

The presence of the girl makes the situation even more significant. When she also begins experiencing the temporal phenomenon, her perception provides a form of independent confirmation. She was not originally formulating Tsukumo's theory, yet she reaches the point of realizing that Makoto appears to have been trapped there for several days. This establishes a fundamental difference between what external observers perceive and what individuals subjected to the Loop actually experience.

Tsukumo, however, does not rely solely on testimony. From the beginning, he had prepared a hidden camera inside the container. Thus, any anomalous changes occurring during his absence could be recorded. The container therefore functions as a genuine experimental environment: the subjects are isolated, the conditions are controlled, the external time is known, and any physical or behavioral changes can later be analyzed.

The most intelligent aspect of the tactic is that Tsukumo transforms the confinement itself into an informational trap. Regardless of how Makoto reacts, his reaction possesses investigative value. If he remains waiting, Tsukumo can observe his behavior in response to the passage of time. If he repeatedly attempts to escape, he demonstrates that he believes he has some necessity to act before the day ends. If he resorts to murder to trigger another Loop, he provides even stronger behavioral evidence. And if the Loop actually occurs, the camera and the changes observed inside the container can record its consequences.

Thus, the purpose of the container is not simply to prevent Makoto from escaping. Tsukumo uses it to remove Makoto from an environment where the temporal phenomenon could easily be mistaken for coincidences and place him in an extremely controlled situation, in which any manifestation of the Loop becomes much more difficult to explain through conventional means.

In essence, Tsukumo transforms a prison into a temporal isolation experiment. He does not necessarily need to observe the exact moment when the Loop occurs; he merely needs to create conditions under which, if the phenomenon is real, it will inevitably leave some observable consequence.

[FORESIGHT, INTRICACIES, PREPARATION, VERSATILITY]

BOMB STRATEGY



FABRICATING THE BOMB

Tsukumo's final strategy is a particularly strong demonstration of how he transforms previously inferred information about Makoto and the workings of the Time Loop into an extremely complex trap. His objective was not simply to confront Makoto or force him to confess. Tsukumo needed to simultaneously prove that Kusakabe was responsible for the murders and find a way to deal with the Loop itself, despite still lacking complete information about its rules. He exploits precisely what Makoto knows about the Loop in order to predict and control his decisions.

The preparation begins with the deliberate construction of a false image of Tsukumo as someone who has completely lost control. After escaping house arrest and using Midzuno as a hostage, the inspector comes to be perceived by the police themselves as a desperate and potentially dangerous man. Tsukumo consciously exploits this perception by fabricating a bomb threat against the hospital where Shiori is being treated. The bomb never existed. The purpose of the call was not actually to threaten the hospital, but to provoke a specific reaction from the authorities. At the same time, the hospital blueprint found in his apartment serves as false evidence that authenticates this narrative and makes the threat sufficiently plausible for the police to act accordingly.

Tsukumo knows that, faced with an apparently genuine threat against Shiori, the most likely reaction will be to immediately remove her from the hospital and transport her elsewhere. This places Shiori inside an ambulance precisely as midnight approaches. It is also noteworthy that the inspector had inferred something crucial: Makoto intends to wait for the day to pass in order to escape police surveillance.

However, if the Loop occurs while Shiori is inside a moving vehicle, her physical circumstances could become fatal. Thus, Tsukumo turns one of the phenomenon's own rules into a threat against Makoto. He does not need to attack Shiori directly; he merely needs to manipulate the circumstances in order to place Makoto in an overwhelming trap.

The trap then enters its most important stage. Tsukumo infiltrates the location where Makoto is being held, incapacitates the police officers, and takes one of them with him to serve as a witness. This witness is not there by chance. Tsukumo needs to ensure that, should Makoto be driven to attack him, there will be someone capable of reporting exactly what happened. In this way, he turns Makoto's own reaction into evidence. The inspector then presents the situation as an apparently unavoidable dilemma: if Makoto does not kill anyone before midnight, Shiori may die; if he kills Tsukumo to satisfy the Loop's condition, he will reveal himself as the murderer in front of a witness.

The most sophisticated aspect is that Tsukumo does not simply order Makoto to kill him. He constructs a narrative in which the decision appears to originate from Makoto himself. The inspector reinforces his willingness to die for the investigation and, through his behavior, reminds Makoto that he is genuinely willing to sacrifice his own life to prove Kusakabe's guilt. This makes the deception particularly convincing because it does not contradict the personality Makoto already knows. Tsukumo really did pursue Makoto throughout the investigation and genuinely demonstrated a willingness to put his own life at risk. The fabrication consists merely of rearranging these truthful facts so that Makoto reaches the wrong conclusion about the purpose of the situation.

Even the point of impact of the stab wound is manipulated. While discussing his own death, Tsukumo repeatedly directs attention toward his chest, guiding Makoto to aim for that region without explicitly revealing that this is his intention. At the same time, he had placed a durable leather wallet over his heart, significantly increasing his chances of surviving the blow. Therefore, Tsukumo does not merely predict that Makoto will attempt to kill him; he also prepares his body for the specific method by which he expects to be attacked.

When Makoto finally stabs him, the trap appears to have worked perfectly. He incriminates himself in front of a witness and believes that he has killed Tsukumo. However, this is merely the apparent outcome of the plan. The true hidden variable is Yae.

INDUCING YAE's SUICIDE

Tsukumo had understood the importance of the bond between Yae and Makoto and knew that she possessed enough information to understand the danger Shiori was facing. When Yae discovers that Shiori is about to be transported and realizes that Makoto may not kill anyone before midnight, the situation takes on an absolute sense of urgency. Unlike the moment when Makoto had initially been taken into police custody, Yae can no longer simply wait to see what he will do. Shiori is in immediate danger, and very little time remains. Yae therefore concludes that, if a death is necessary for the day to advance, she can become that death herself.

Thus, Tsukumo does not need to directly order Yae to commit suicide. He constructs a causal chain in which her own information and motivations produce the desired decision. This is essential to understanding the sophistication of the strategy: Yae is not simply manipulated through an order; she is placed in a situation where the conclusion Tsukumo wants her to reach appears to be a spontaneous and necessary decision.

This also explains why the trap is so effective against Makoto. The boy believes he is facing a binary choice: kill Tsukumo and become a wanted criminal, or allow Shiori to die. However, this choice is an artificial construction. Tsukumo has already introduced a third variable into the system without Makoto realizing it: Yae. When she takes her own life, the condition necessary for the day to advance is fulfilled without Tsukumo having to die. At the same time, Makoto has already attacked the inspector in front of a witness, thereby producing the evidence necessary to identify him as the murderer.

Tsukumo does not rely on a single event to achieve success. If Makoto attacks, he incriminates himself. If he does not attack, Shiori appears to remain in danger. If Tsukumo survives, the situation continues producing evidence.

He uses psychological inferences and accumulated information to construct a situation in which different outcomes remain useful to his objectives.

In other words, Tsukumo does not need to directly control Makoto's behavior. He controls the conditions under which Makoto makes his decisions. The fake bomb controls the police's reaction; the police's reaction determines Shiori's location; Shiori's location creates the temporal danger; that danger forces Makoto to consider killing someone; Tsukumo's staging guides that choice toward his own body; the witness turns the attack into evidence; and, in parallel, Yae's situation creates an alternative condition for the Loop to advance.

The final result is that the very system Makoto uses to erase evidence is turned by Tsukumo into a source of evidence against him.

Therefore, the true strength of this strategy does not simply lie in Tsukumo **“deceiving Makoto.”** It lies in manufacturing a circumstantial reality in which Makoto’s most natural decisions are precisely the ones Tsukumo needs him to make. Makoto continues exercising his own free will throughout the process; however, his available options have been carefully constrained by the inspector.

It is an extremely strong demonstration of the application of knowledge, strategy, and indirect manipulation: Tsukumo uses information inferred from the Loop, knowledge of police procedures, psychological understanding of Makoto and Yae, physical preparation, and environmental control to transform a situation into a sequence of events highly favorable to his objectives. The outcome does not depend on a single perfect condition, but on a structure in which virtually any significant reaction from Makoto can be converted into an advantage.

CLEARING MAKOTO’s FRAMING ON TSUKUMO

In parallel with the confrontation itself, Tsukumo also constructs a second strategic layer around the consequences that Makoto's attack would produce afterward. In other words, the objective does not end the moment Makoto delivers the stab. The attack is merely the central event in a much larger sequence, whose investigative consequences Tsukumo had already taken into account.

By repeatedly directing Makoto's attention toward his chest while speaking about his own death, he increases the likelihood that the blow will be aimed at his heart. At that moment, he deliberately positions his sturdy leather wallet over the area, creating an improvised layer of protection capable of absorbing part of the impact.

And there is an even more important characteristic: this preparation does not eliminate the risk. Tsukumo knows that the protection may not be sufficient. A stab to the chest remains potentially fatal. Thus, his strategy does not rely on an irrational confidence that he will certainly survive. He deliberately accepts a real possibility of death because the strategic outcome would remain extremely valuable.

Whether he survives or not, Tsukumo can turn Makoto into a wanted criminal. Personal risk, therefore, is incorporated into the plan as an acceptable variable.

Tsukumo recognizes that his survival would be preferable, but he does not treat it as an absolute condition for the plan's success. The investigative objective takes higher priority.

The second anticipated effect is even more interesting: turning Makoto into an officially wanted fugitive.

By making Makoto attack him, the inspector creates a situation completely different from the one that existed previously. Beforehand, Tsukumo was the investigator who needed to prove that Makoto was connected to the murders. After the confrontation, Makoto now possesses a new crime directly associated with him: the attack against the inspector himself, in addition to the murder of the police officer on guard duty.

This completely changes Makoto's position. Tsukumo has created independent evidence and, even if the police remain skeptical about the time travel phenomenon, Makoto's concrete actions remain undeniable.

The strategy also produces an extremely important consequence for Tsukumo: it helps eliminate the suspicions that had fallen upon the inspector himself.

Previously, Tsukumo's fingerprints found on the weapon used against Makoto's father had placed him in a compromising position. However, as the investigation progressed and Makoto's behavior was reconstructed, those fingerprints could be understood within a much more coherent explanation: they had been deliberately planted as part of an attempt to frame Tsukumo.

Thus, the same chain of events that incriminates Makoto also reorganizes the evidence that could have incriminated Tsukumo.

He isnt thinking:

> "How do I make Makoto confess?"

The structure is smth like:

> "How do I make Makoto produce evidence against himself, turn himself into a fugitive, and simultaneously make the evidence that previously pointed toward me explainable?"

This is the true scope of his strategy and lateral thinking.

All of this converges toward the same result: Makoto goes from being an almost untouchable murderer, protected by a mechanism capable of erasing events, to an individual whose own attempt to exploit the Loop produces evidence against him.

Ultimately, Tsukumo manages to accomplish something particularly difficult: he uses the knowledge he possesses as a continuously growing advantage. Every new property he discovers about the Loop ceases to be merely information about the phenomenon and becomes a planning tool.

[FORESIGHT, FORTITUDE / LOGISTICS / COMPLEXITY]

SELF REGULATION



MANAGEMENT & MENTAL FORTITUDE

Taken together, Tsukumo's feats reveal someone capable of maintaining the integrity of his reasoning even when his mind, body, and very survival are subjected to extreme conditions. The most impressive aspect is not that Tsukumo "does not feel fear" or "does not feel pain," but that he is able to prevent these natural responses from interfering with the execution of his objectives.

The first major example is the period he spends hours in front of the mirror trying to understand the events surrounding the Temporal Loop. This scene demonstrates an extraordinary level of cognitive self-control. Tsukumo does not arrive at his conclusion through a flash of intuition or a sudden revelation; he deliberately refuses to accept any explanation that cannot accommodate all the available evidence. To do so, he must sustain for hours a deeply uncomfortable contradiction between everything his experience and common sense tell him is possible and what the facts appear to demonstrate.

This process requires an uncommon degree of mental discipline. Most people, when confronted with a hypothesis as absurd as a Temporal Loop, would tend to resolve the cognitive dissonance quickly: they would dismiss the anomalous facts, seek conventional explanations, or conclude that

there had been some error in perception. Tsukumo does exactly the opposite. He deliberately keeps the conflict open, preventing himself from resorting to the more comfortable explanations until he can reconstruct a model of reality capable of explaining every event. This reveals an exceptional ability to control not only his emotions, but also the cognitive mechanisms that normally protect an individual from uncertainty.

The fact that he remains for hours without eating, using the bathroom, or practically interrupting his train of thought further reinforces this point. His level of concentration is so high that basic physiological needs are temporarily subordinated to the intellectual objective. This does not mean that those needs cease to exist, but rather that Tsukumo can voluntarily keep his attention fixed on a single problem for an extraordinarily long period. It represents an extreme form of cognitive persistence: even as mental fatigue inevitably increases, he continues reviewing premises, testing hypotheses, and questioning his own biases.



This same pattern appears in an entirely different situation: the amputation of his hand. Here, the challenge is not intellectual but physical and emotional. An injury of this magnitude would normally trigger intense automatic responses—extreme pain, shock, panic, temporary disorientation, and difficulty continuing to reason. Tsukumo, however, remains conscious, attentive, and functional. He does not allow the pain to reorganize his priorities. His mind remains focused on the situation, Makoto's actions, and the strategic consequences of what is happening.

This moment demonstrates a different type of self-control: control over instinctive responses. Tsukumo does not stop feeling pain; rather, he prevents it from taking control of his behavior. Even in the face of severe physical trauma, his ability to observe, evaluate, and make decisions remains virtually intact. This suggests an exceptional tolerance for acute stress and a rare ability to separate immediate emotional experience from what needs to be done.



The culmination of this trait occurs in his final strategy against Makoto. At this point, Tsukumo does not merely endure the risk of injury; he consciously accepts the possibility of death. When

constructing the trap that will lead Makoto to attack him, he knows that the improvised protection over his chest increases his chances of survival but provides no absolute guarantee. Nevertheless, he proceeds.

This detail is fundamental to understanding his determination. Tsukumo does not act because he believes himself to be invulnerable. He knows perfectly well that he could die. What happens is that, within his hierarchy of priorities, revealing the truth and proving Makoto's guilt becomes more important than preserving his own life. He turns his own body into part of the strategy because he is willing to accept the worst possible outcome if doing so significantly increases his chances of achieving his objective.

This willingness also makes his manipulation far more convincing. Makoto had already observed that Tsukumo was capable of taking his plans to their ultimate consequences. Therefore, when the inspector demonstrates that he is willing to die during the final confrontation, it does not come across as an empty bluff. His reputation and previous actions substantiate the threat. In other words, his determination is not merely an internal characteristic; it becomes a strategic resource because his opponents already know that he is genuinely capable of sacrificing himself.

When these three moments are analyzed together, it becomes apparent that Tsukumo's self-control operates on three distinct levels. On the cognitive level, he can sustain for hours an investigation that requires him to abandon his own assumptions and confront the possibility that he may be completely wrong about reality. On the emotional level, he maintains stability and clarity even in the face of events that would naturally cause panic or psychological disorganization. On the physical level, he remains functional even after suffering a devastating injury, preventing pain and shock from interrupting his ability to act.

His determination follows exactly the same structure. Tsukumo does not abandon a hypothesis because it is uncomfortable, does not abandon a plan because it becomes dangerous, and does not abandon an objective because the personal cost increases. As the situation becomes more extreme, he demonstrates a willingness to invest more of himself—first his time and mental energy, then his physical resilience, and finally his own life.

For this reason, Tsukumo's level of self-control can be described as exceptional not because he is immune to suffering, fear, or uncertainty, but because he is able to continue operating rationally despite them. His primary psychological strength lies in his ability to maintain a stable objective while everything around him—including his own body and his fundamental beliefs about reality—collapses. He does not eliminate his internal obstacles; he acknowledges them, endures them, and continues moving forward.

Ultimately, these moments demonstrate that Tsukumo's determination constitutes an extremely developed form of self-regulation, in which emotions, pain, fatigue, and even the instinct for self-preservation can be temporarily subordinated to a goal that he considers superior. This ability is precisely what allows him to execute such high-risk strategies and remain mentally functional in situations where most people would lose the ability to think clearly long before reaching a conclusion.

SENSORIAL ABILITIES



OBSERVATION & PERCEPTION

Tsukumo's sensory ability stands out primarily due to the depth with which he interprets what he perceives. His level of observation does not consist merely of visually identifying elements present in a scene, but of recognizing anomalies, patterns, and relationships between pieces of information that, in isolation, appear completely irrelevant. In this way, his perception functions as a kind of investigative filter: it does not merely register what is before his senses, but constantly questions the meaning of each element and its possible relationship with the rest of the evidence.

One of the best examples occurs during the first murder, when Tsukumo notices small bloodstains near Vakita's body. While the other investigators apparently attach no particular importance to these marks, Tsukumo examines their shape and identifies that they correspond to the outline of an envelope. The feat is particularly relevant because it requires more than precise visual perception. He must recognize an unusual shape within a scene filled with information, mentally isolate it, and subsequently establish a correspondence between the observed pattern and a specific object. *(This is later used to infer the Temporal Loop.)*

This demonstrates a high level of sensory interpretation, in which visual information is not treated as independent elements but as data that may represent something beyond their immediate appearance. The bloodstain, by itself, is merely a stain; however, Tsukumo is able to interpret its geometry and transform it into the possibility of an envelope, creating a new investigative lead.

The same principle can be observed in his analysis of Makoto. Tsukumo notices that, despite the heavy rain, the boy was not soaked. This information could easily be dismissed as circumstantial, especially because it does not constitute direct evidence of involvement in the crime. Tsukumo, however, recognizes the discrepancy between the external conditions and the physical state he observes. From this inconsistency, he establishes a new premise for questioning Makoto's alibi.

This type of reasoning demonstrates that his perception does not depend solely on what is explicitly present, but also on what should be present under certain circumstances and is not. In other words, Tsukumo is capable of perceiving anomalies by comparing the observed state with the expected state. His perception, therefore, possesses a strong inferential component.

This characteristic also manifests in the way Tsukumo interprets the envelope found at the crime scene. He does not merely recognize the existence of the object. He associates its appearance with a specific type of envelope used by hospitals to store money and subsequently connects this information to the existence of Makoto's sister, who was hospitalized. A seemingly mundane sequence of information—an envelope, its design, its use, and the existence of a hospitalized person—is transformed into a much broader hypothesis concerning the killer's identity and possible motivation.

What is most impressive, therefore, is the density of the associations Tsukumo is able to construct from them.

His sensory interpretation appears to operate through a process similar to:

Stimulus → identification of anomaly → contextualization → association with prior information → hypothesis formation → search for confirmation.

This also explains his ability to adapt his investigation as new information emerges. When he realizes that Makoto does not respond to conventional pressure, Tsukumo does not interpret this lack of reaction simply as innocence or indifference. He treats the observed behavior as a new piece of sensory and psychological data, seeking to understand what that reaction—or lack thereof—reveals about the individual's internal structure.

From this, he mentalizes Makoto as someone with a high degree of emotional control and realizes that logical stimuli or incriminating evidence would probably not be sufficient to disrupt his

stability. Consequently, he searches for another stimulus capable of producing a significant reaction: his sister.

When Makoto finally reacts to the provocation involving Shiori, Tsukumo immediately interprets this behavioral change as confirmation of his previous hypothesis. Thus, a simple alteration in the suspect's expression and behavior ceases to be merely an emotional reaction and instead becomes evidence regarding his psychological and motivational structure.

This is a fundamental point for understanding Tsukumo's level of sensory interpretation. He does not merely observe what a person does, but also how they respond to different stimuli, comparing these responses to determine which elements possess greater psychological relevance for that individual.

Consequently, his perception is highly contextual in nature. The same stimulus does not necessarily have the same meaning for everyone, and Tsukumo demonstrates an ability to understand this. Makoto's reaction to the accusations, his lack of reaction to logical pressure, and his behavioral change when Shiori is mentioned are analyzed together, allowing Tsukumo to gradually reconstruct his motivational structure.

This reaches an even higher level when considering his ability to connect seemingly unrelated pieces of information to produce hypotheses on a much larger scale. The most extreme example of this characteristic is his interpretation concerning the Temporal Loop. In this case, the distinguishing factor is not simply perceiving an isolated phenomenon, but being able to recognize that certain seemingly independent events, patterns, and inconsistencies may possess a common structural relationship.

The inference of a Temporal Loop therefore represents a natural extension of the same ability demonstrated in smaller cases. In the case of the envelope, Tsukumo connects a visual characteristic to an object, then to the hospital, subsequently to Shiori, and finally to the possible motivation behind the crime. In Makoto's case, he connects weather conditions to the state of his clothing and transforms a physical discrepancy into a potential challenge to his alibi. On a much larger scale, interpreting the Temporal Loop requires him to group multiple anomalies, recognize recurring patterns, and search for a single explanation capable of accommodating information that initially appears incompatible.

This demonstrates an extremely advanced form of pattern recognition and sensory synthesis. Tsukumo appears capable of transforming a large quantity of fragmented stimuli into a coherent representation of the investigated scenario. The greater the amount of available information, the more possible associations he can explore.

Tsukumo's specialty lies in the combination of **Observation** and **Perception**, where he first identifies details that others fail to notice and then interprets those details within a broader context, assigning them meaning and connecting them to other pieces of information.

His greatest distinguishing characteristic is precisely his ability to find information within what appears not to be information.

A bloodstain can be an envelope.
An envelope can indicate a hospital.
A hospital can indicate Shiori.
Makoto's reaction can reveal his greatest vulnerability.
The absence of water on his clothes can challenge his alibi.
And multiple seemingly disconnected anomalies can, on a much larger scale, contribute to identifying an anomalous temporal structure.

Therefore, Tsukumo demonstrates an exceptional level of sensory interpretation because his perception does not end the moment he observes something. Every stimulus is potentially a piece of a larger system, and his ability lies precisely in discovering how those pieces fit together. It is this capacity to transform microscopic details into macroscopic hypotheses, associating seemingly irrelevant information until he constructs complex and coherent explanations, that makes his sensory perception one of the most extraordinary characteristics of his investigative method.

THE CAPTURE OF DETAILS AND THE ABILITY TO TENSE HIS OWN HIPPOCAMPUS

HyperAcuity

Tsukumo’s extraordinary interpretive ability is directly related to his innate capacity to capture and retain an exceptional amount of sensory information. His distinguishing trait does not lie solely in his ability to analyze what he perceives, but in the fact that his observation appears to operate with a scope far beyond that of an ordinary individual. Tsukumo does not limit himself to recording information that is evidently relevant to the investigation; he seems capable of absorbing even information that, at the time, would naturally be classified as trivial, unnecessary, or completely disconnected from the case.

This is particularly evidenced by his own statement about “stretching the hippocampus to its maximum.” By instructing the nurses to force their memories to recover any detail related to Makoto or Shiori, even those they considered insignificant, Tsukumo demonstrates an understanding that the relevance of information is not necessarily determined at the moment it is

perceived. An apparently useless detail may later acquire enormous value when associated with other pieces of information.

This conception appears to directly reflect his own cognitive functioning. Tsukumo treats the investigative reality as an extremely broad set of data, avoiding prematurely discarding any element simply because it has no immediate utility. This allows his memory to function as a genuine reservoir of sensory information, in which seemingly disconnected details remain available to be subsequently retrieved, compared, and reinterpreted.

It is precisely this enormous quantity of captured information that provides the raw material for his hyper-interpretation.

Tsukumo's interpretation, therefore, does not arise from a few carefully selected pieces of data, but from an extraordinarily large amount of information that can be cross-referenced. The greater the number of preserved details, the greater the number of potential relationships that can be established between them. Thus, what initially appears to be a secondary characteristic—such as a mark, a position, an expression, an environmental condition, or any other visual peculiarity—can later become a fundamental variable within a much more complex hypothesis.

This explains why Tsukumo is capable of producing interpretations that seem disproportionately deep relative to the initial stimulus. The stimulus he perceives is merely the starting point; the true complexity lies in the amount of information he is capable of associating with it.

Again, let us use the example of the envelope identified from the bloodstains. The initial piece of information is extremely small: a specific blood pattern near the corpse. However, Tsukumo is able to recognize its shape, associate it with an envelope, identify the type of envelope, and connect it to its use in hospitals. This information is then connected to the existence of Makoto's sister, who is hospitalized, creating a new investigative lead.

The same principle appears when he notices that Makoto is not wet despite the heavy rain. The condition of his clothes, in isolation, is a mundane detail. Tsukumo, however, possesses enough contextual information to recognize the discrepancy between the observed state and the expected state. From there, he transforms a simple environmental observation into an inconsistency capable of challenging Makoto's alibi.

These examples demonstrate that his perception operates in layers. First comes the raw capture of the stimulus; then its retention; subsequently, its comparison with other stored information; and finally, its interpretation within a broader structure.

Capture -> retention -> association -> contextualization -> interpretation -> hypothesis.

He preserves a much greater quantity of data and allows his interpretive ability to determine later which pieces possess value. This drastically reduces the risk of discarding relevant information simply because its importance is not yet apparent.

This characteristic also helps explain his ability to perceive patterns that other investigators fail to identify. If two people observe the same scene, but one records only the elements that are immediately relevant while the other records dozens of minor details, the latter possesses a much greater number of variables from which to establish relationships (aka a perfect methodology considering his approach). Tsukumo operates at this second level, but to an extraordinarily high degree.

For this reason, his Observation and Perception are practically inseparable. His exceptional observation provides an unusual quantity of data, while his exceptional perception transforms that data into meaning. One without the other would be insufficient. Capturing details without knowing how to interpret them would produce only a large collection of disconnected information; deeply interpreting information without possessing sufficient data, on the other hand, would increase the risk of speculation. Tsukumo demonstrates both abilities simultaneously.

His hyper-interpretive ability can therefore be understood as a direct consequence of his hyper-capture of sensory information. He does not merely see more; he apparently records more than should reasonably be necessary. And precisely because he does not immediately establish a rigid boundary between “useful information” and “useless information,” he can later retrieve details that others would have discarded and incorporate them into extremely complex reasoning structures.

This characteristic reaches its peak in the construction of broader hypotheses, such as his inference of the Time Loop. A conclusion of this magnitude cannot arise from a single extraordinary stimulus. It requires the accumulation of countless small inconsistencies, patterns, and seemingly independent pieces of information, followed by the ability to recognize that all of them may be explained by a common structure. The ability to “stretch the hippocampus” in this sense provides precisely the quantity of data necessary for Tsukumo to perform this type of synthesis.

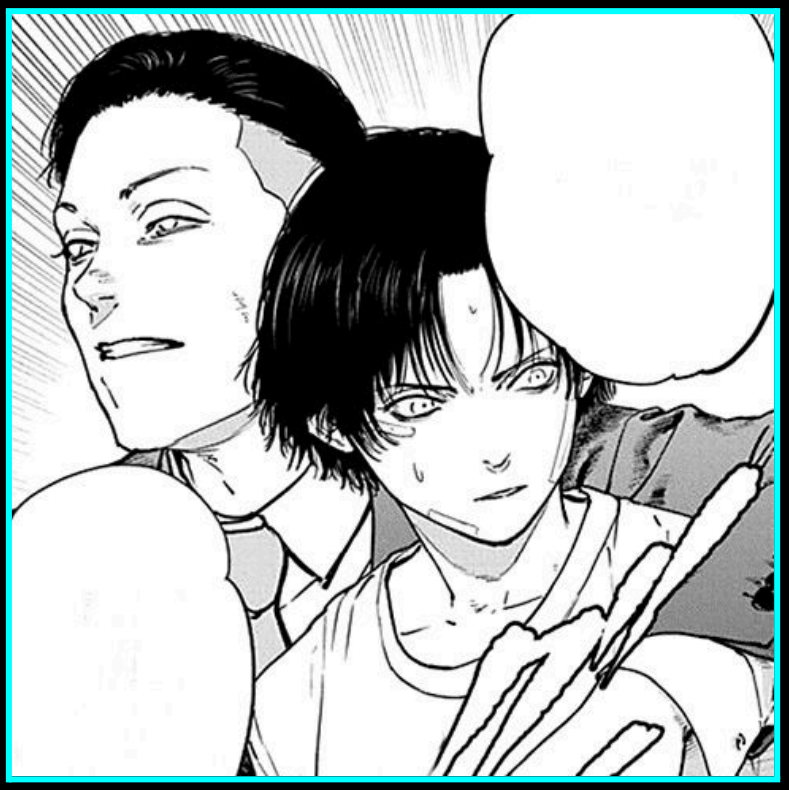
Thus, the truly absurd aspect of his sensory ability is not simply that he perceives details others fail to notice, but that he preserves details others would not even consider worthy of noticing. His mind seems to operate under the premise that no information is truly useless until its context has been fully understood.

This ability transforms his sensory capture into an extraordinary investigative tool: Tsukumo accumulates an abnormal quantity of information, retains even those details that appear irrelevant, and subsequently uses his associative and interpretive abilities to uncover relationships that

remained invisible to everyone else. The more fragments he possesses, the greater his ability to reconstruct the complete picture.

Ultimately, his sensory ability is not merely a matter of perceptual acuity, but of informational density. Tsukumo perceives more, retains more, and, most importantly, is capable of extracting meaning from a much greater proportion of what he perceives. It is precisely this combination of hyper-capture and hyper-interpretation that allows minimal stimuli to be transformed into investigative hypotheses of extraordinary scale.

RESISTANCE's ANALYSIS [WIP]



COGNITIVE / AFFECTIVE / SHIELDING

- **AFFECTIVE** - The ability to resist internal or external emotional influences while maintaining emotional stability and control over feelings such as fear, anger, guilt, attachment, or despair. It reflects how difficult it is to emotionally destabilize the character or manipulate them through emotional bonds and psychological pressure.
- **COGNITIVE** - The ability to resist interference that affects thought, reasoning, or judgment. It includes resistance to logical manipulation, misinformation, mental confusion, induced biases, cognitive overload, and attempts to distort perception or decision-making.
- **SHIELDING** - The ability to protect internal information, intentions, vulnerabilities, or mental states from being read, profiled, manipulated, or exploited by others. It involves expressive self-control, concealment of thoughts, unpredictability, and the creation of barriers that make it difficult for others to "access" or use their mind against them.

COGNITIVE RESIST:

Tsukumo's cognitive resistance can be understood as a direct consequence of the combination of his *Awareness*, inferential ability, and flexibility of thought. It does not simply consist of being skeptical or suspicious of everything presented to him, but rather in the ability to prevent external information, evidence, or argumentative structures from automatically determining his interpretation of reality. Above all, Tsukumo demonstrates an exceptional ability to question the very premises he uses to interpret an event, reconstruct the situation from different perspectives, and replace an explanation when it is no longer capable of accommodating the observed facts.

This is particularly evident in the formulation of the hypothesis that the Time Loop exists. Initially, Tsukumo is faced with a situation that could be interpreted conventionally: several apparently related murders, Makoto directly or indirectly connected to the victims, and, at the same time, a sequence of alibis that seemingly placed him away from the crime scenes. A less cognitively resistant investigator might simply accept these alibis as evidence of innocence. Tsukumo, however, does not limit himself to observing what the evidence apparently demonstrates; he questions the very construction of the evidence. The fact that Makoto was not wet despite the heavy rain, the wallet conveniently appearing at a particular location, and the existence of a silhouette incapable of objectively identifying him are not treated as automatic confirmations of his innocence. On the contrary, Tsukumo begins to consider that these very circumstances may have been constructed to produce a specific conclusion. This approach represents an extremely relevant form of cognitive resistance because it prevents the individual from being passively guided by the superficial interpretation of information.

The same mechanism appears when Tsukumo begins connecting Makoto to Katagiri. The coinciding school absences, her exit from the hospital through the back, her attempt to avoid certain cameras, and the unusual behavior observed afterward cease to be isolated events and instead become parts of a larger causal structure. Tsukumo does not assume that every event necessarily has an independent explanation. He searches for a hypothesis capable of connecting the events. Thus, his resistance to manipulation does not depend merely on rejecting false information, but on possessing enough autonomy to reorganize the information he receives into a structure different from the one his adversary intended to produce.

This characteristic becomes even more evident when the evidence begins challenging conventional assumptions about the situation. Tsukumo observes Shiori's changes around midnight, Makoto's seemingly impossible movements, the disappearances and reappearances, and the repetition of events associated with the same temporal interval. Instead of simply classifying these phenomena as coincidences, observation errors, or insufficient information, he begins searching for a unifying explanation. The essential point is that Tsukumo does not treat the concept of "impossible" as a definitive conclusion; rather, he turns impossibility into something that needs to be investigated. If the conventional model of reality cannot explain the events, then perhaps the problem lies in the model rather than necessarily in the events themselves.

This is probably one of the strongest manifestations of his cognitive resistance. Tsukumo must overcome not only an external attempt at manipulation, but one of the most fundamental biases in human reasoning: the tendency to preserve assumptions about how reality *should* work. The existence of time travel directly

contradicts his conventional understanding of the world. Nevertheless, when all conventional alternatives begin requiring exceptions, coincidences, or explanations that are excessively fragmented, he allows himself to consider the extraordinary hypothesis. This does not mean abandoning rational thought in favor of irrational belief. Quite the opposite: he accepts an extremely unlikely hypothesis because it possesses greater explanatory power than the alternatives available.

His Time Loop hypothesis, therefore, does not represent a simple conclusion; it is progressively constructed through the accumulation of inconsistencies. The murders display connections with one another; Makoto has relationships with the victims; his alibis are excessively convenient; there are objective inconsistencies within those alibis; Katagiri displays suspicious behavior temporally connected to Makoto; Shiori experiences abnormal changes at precisely certain moments; Makoto appears in locations without his approach being recorded; and seemingly impossible movements repeatedly occur within the same temporal intervals. Individually, each element could admit an alternative explanation. When considered simultaneously, however, they form a much more difficult structure to ignore. Tsukumo realizes that the Time Loop hypothesis does not merely explain one strange event: it allows all of these events to be understood as manifestations of the same phenomenon.

This is precisely where his *THINKING* ability becomes essential. Tsukumo demonstrates enough flexibility to alter the causal model being used throughout the investigation. Instead of remaining attached to the first available explanation, he continually reformulates his interpretation as new information emerges. His thinking possesses a strongly abductive character: he searches for the explanation that best accommodates the body of evidence. At the same time, he uses deductive reasoning to determine what consequences should exist if a given hypothesis were true.

The verification of the hypothesis that Makoto is the murderer demonstrates this characteristic. Starting from the premise that Makoto is the serial killer, Tsukumo asks what events should be expected if this hypothesis were true. Makoto is connected to the victims; he presents alibis precisely when his presence would be most problematic; he demonstrates an exceptionally strong emotional relationship with Shiori; events involving his sister coincide with important moments in the investigation; and individuals connected to the situation begin displaying behavior consistent with an attempt to protect or assist Makoto. The hypothesis is then tested not only by what it has already explained, but by the consequences it produces. This process functions as a form of self-correction and reduces Tsukumo's vulnerability to arbitrary explanations.

His *Awareness* provides the necessary raw material for this process to be so effective. His ability to capture and preserve details allows Tsukumo not to depend exclusively on the most obvious information or on information that other people consider relevant. He demonstrates an explicit concern with recovering even seemingly insignificant details related to Makoto and Shiori, understanding that information may acquire importance only after new evidence is discovered. This is extremely relevant to his cognitive resistance because it reduces the possibility of third parties controlling his interpretation simply by controlling which information reaches him. The larger the body of data he is able to preserve, the greater his ability to compare versions, identify discrepancies, and perceive patterns that would not be visible from a reduced set of information.

His observational ability, therefore, does not operate independently of his interpretive ability. Tsukumo does not merely perceive more; he is able to use what he perceives to challenge seemingly established structures. A small detail can function as an anomaly capable of destabilizing an entire explanation. The state of Makoto's clothes can challenge an alibi. A recently installed camera can alter the interpretation of Katagiri's behavior. A physiological change in Shiori at a specific time can connect a medical phenomenon to an apparently criminal event. The value of this information does not necessarily lie in its individual importance, but in Tsukumo's ability to integrate it into larger structures.

This also explains why his cognitive resistance possesses such a strong creative component. To resist logical manipulation, it is not enough to identify that an explanation is wrong; one must possess alternatives. An individual may recognize that something does not make sense and still remain trapped within the presented narrative because they cannot formulate another model. Tsukumo demonstrates precisely the opposite ability. When the conventional explanation fails, he expands the space of available hypotheses. The Time Loop is the ultimate example of this: he is capable of conceiving an explanatory structure that initially appears completely incompatible with common sense, but which later demonstrates the ability to unify what no conventional explanation could accommodate.

There is also a particularly important metacognitive dimension. Tsukumo does not merely question external information; he questions the very processes he uses to interpret it. During his mental reconstruction of the case, he realizes that certain conventional assumptions were functioning as barriers to his understanding. Instead of altering the events to preserve those assumptions, he alters the assumptions themselves. The ability to recognize "perhaps the problem lies in the way I am thinking about this" is one of the deepest forms of cognitive resistance. He does not become resistant simply because he possesses strong convictions; he becomes resistant because he can abandon his own convictions when they are no longer sustainable.

Consequently, Tsukumo's cognitive resistance should not be understood merely as resistance to lies, persuasion, or misinformation. Its most important level is resistance to the imposition of interpretive models. An adversary may present false evidence, construct alibis, control information, or create circumstances designed to lead him toward a specific conclusion. Tsukumo, however, seeks to reconstruct the causality behind that information. He asks why a particular fact occurred, what other information is connected to it, what consequences should exist if a given hypothesis were true, and which elements remain unexplained.

In the case of the Time Loop, this reaches its extreme: the very phenomenon that initially should have been dismissed as impossible becomes, for Tsukumo, the most rational explanation available. His cognitive resistance manifests precisely in his ability not to allow common sense to determine in advance which hypotheses can or cannot be considered. He does not accept the Time Loop because he wants to believe in it; he accepts it because, after gathering, comparing, and reinterpreting an enormous amount of evidence, he realizes that rejecting it would require far more explanatory concessions than accepting it.

Thus, Tsukumo's *Cognitive Resistance* is essentially a combination of autonomy, awareness of his own biases, flexibility of hypotheses, and the ability to reconstruct causality. His *Awareness* ensures that he possesses an exceptional amount of information; his *Inference* transforms that information into

relationships and hypotheses; his *Thinking* allows him to explore alternative models; and his metacognition prevents him from becoming trapped by his own premises. The result is an investigator who is particularly difficult to manipulate intellectually, because an attempt to lead him toward a specific conclusion does not necessarily need to fail at the informational level: it can simply be dismantled when Tsukumo reorganizes the same information within a different causal model.

SHIELDING:

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AFFECTIVE:

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