Ichinose Honami

(canon approved nicknames fr fr)

The Queen of Diamonds
Homewrecking lil' Shit

A showcase of her characterization and feats

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Special Thanks to: Ens_realissimum (Scans, C-D Alliance Strategy and misc interpretations), Hughmann2015 (some Y2V12.5 interpretations), Ranma (Researches)

A list to delineate Honami's characterization, feats and abilities.



Source X/Twitter for illustration: nikuman___7

Doc Keys:
White - General Explanation
Underline - URL Link
Lime - FSIQ, Intelligence, Insight
Red - Strategy, Planning, Tactics, Counteraction
Yellow - Deception, Unpredictability
Cyan - Manipulation, Social Engineering, Psychological Warfare
Green - Reasoning, Thinking, Psychology, Social Intelligence
Pink - Emotional Intelligence, Adversity
Blue - Foresight
Magenta - Field Skills, Adaptability
Grey - Clarifications and Caveats

- FSIQ: FRI, PSI, VCI, VSI, WMI. PSI and WMI can be grouped as CPI depending on the case
- Intelligence: Crystallized, Fluid
- Planning: Acclimation, Accuracy, Applicability, Contingency, Coverage, Intricacies, Invincibility, Preparation Process, Versatility
- Strategy: Building, Complexity, Flexibility (aka Adaptability), Forecast (aka Foresight), Logistics
- Tactics: Management, Potency, Synergy
- Deception: Acting Skills, Concealment, Fabrication, Information Control, Misdirection, Sophistry (aka Verbal Deception + Bluffing)
- Unpredictability: Behavioral Volatility, Cognitive Volatility, Creativity, Risk Competence, Unconventionality
- Manipulation: Direct, Indirect, Emotional, Logical, Mass, Coercion
- Social Engineering: Aura, Charisma, Communication, Influence Building, Leadership, Resource Allocation
- Psychological Warfare: Abusing Insecurities, Demoralization, Emotional Inducement, Mind Control, Reinforcements, Scapegoating
- Psychology: Analysis, Application, Insight, Profiling, Warfare
- Reasoning: Deductive, Inductive, Abductive
- Insight: Analysis, Cold Reading, Intuition, Memory, Sensory (Observation + Perception)
    - Analysis: Deconstruction, Mapping, Classification, Tracing, Probing, Abstraction, Assessment
- Social Intelligence: Awareness, Cognition, Intuition
- Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation, Perception, Understanding, Engagement, Management, Realization
- Thinking: Abstract, Application, Associative, Convergent, Critical, Divergent, Holistic, Metacognition
- Adversity: Cognitive Discipline, Impulse Management, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance, Stress Tolerance
- Foresight: Anticipation, Preclusion, Prediction
- Field Skills: Information Gathering, Formulation Speed, Social Integration, Risk Assessment, Safeguarding, Setting Trap, Multitasking

Definitions for most of these categories.

Subjects of the Document

1) *Characterization (Backstory + Y1 + Y2)*
2) *Compendium of Honami's 2nd Year Plan to Capture Kiyotaka*
3) *Handful of Year 1 Feats*
4) *Special Exams*
    a) *Y2V1*
    b) *Y2V10*
    c) *Y3V3*
5) *(Y2V9) Honami's Mind Games on Kakeru*
6) *(Y3V1) Scene with Ichika*
7) *Variegated FSIQ, Reasoning, Thinking & Insight feats*
8) *Miscellaneous (Leadership, Resistance, EM)*
9) *Rankings*

Status

➔ Overall: In the majority stage of completion.
➔ Scans: 97%
➔ WIP: Y1 feats, UIE Plan, Y3V1 Special Exam, Hokkaido Groups Abductive Reasoning, Y3V2 Feats, Rework Y1 Review Reasoning, Narrative & Statements.

Extras

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Contentions

<Rework Needed; that thing barely changed since Y2V11 😭> ~~Too much stuff, it warranted a separate file.~~

Rankings

🌟 Deception 🌟

Concealment >= Fabrication > Misdirection >= Sophistry > Acting Skills

Throughout the second half of the series, information control and concealment can be found in the majority of Honami's purposeful actions, to the point where everyone has a different idea of not only Hona's strengths (with Kakeru, Kiyotaka and Arisu/Miyabi all having vastly different positions due to operating on widely different sets of information), but anything going on around Honami, while being perfect at concealing her footprints. Amplified tenfold the grave communication issues and misunderstandings between Kiyotaka & Kei and Kiyotaka & Miyabi.

Honami's concealment is also her greatest weapon in strategy-orientated special exams; SG and S&D to a lesser extent serve as showcases of this.

This, combined with her lies capable of deceiving the most perceptive characters in the series and her misdirections, Hona's fabricated narratives are strong. Not only do you need abductive reasoning, the information gathering required is the real challenge, as she can take advantage of other people's distrust and conflicts.

Hona can perform good bluffs and believable lies, best shown in Y2V9 and Y3V1.

Finally, Honami has good acting performances, such as Y2V8, Y2V9 (phone call) and Y2V12.5. Beside mannerism and other physical expressions, Honami can also use objects, devices, technology and the surrounding environment to transmit false emotional information to her audience.

⭐ Planning ⭐

Intricacies > Applicability > Coverage > Invincibility > Preparations Process > Accuracy > Acclimation > Contingency > Versatility

By the start of the second year's second half, Hona grew into quite a formidable planner. To bind Kiyo to herself, she constructed a seven-layered plan, overcame severe informational + resource limitations + setbacks, accounted a minimum of ten greater-scope complications, eight more within the Y2V10 Meeting and eight more within one of the contingencies she had to draw up well ahead of time for the promised day (Y2V9.5 tactics also showed an attention to details & variables, albeit they were opportunistic rather than planned long beforehand). Hona's trap on the promise day was for all intent and purpose a contingency. Factoring this with the other contingency she set up in case she had won the EoY exam as well as precautions for and made by her moves around the time of the second year's winter break, she excelled at this aspect of planning.

Hona's preventative measures blinded Arisu (and other risky third parties such as Ichika) from seeing what Honami was up to and thus, Arisu's attempt at ruining Kiyo's neutralization plan was "countered" and nobody else with a connection to his mysterious past could've interfered intentionally. In addition to this, Honami demoralized Miyabi completely, killing his fighting spirit without him realizing, and stopped him from truly messing with her or Kiyotaka. The Nori misdirection from the Y2V10 Meeting was a blinder that concealed her intent to coerce Kiyo.

Accuracy is #5 because of her bullseyes on her plan's abstraction; Ryuji reaching out to Kiyo in the cultural festival, her disappearance at the end of Hokkaido Trip causing a panic and Kiyo finding out about it and looking for her, all the domino effects from her student council resignation (as in, her classmates reaching out to Kiyotaka to make him gather intel on her state, the resulting KiyoKei fracture, Miyabi's rumor spreading along with Kei receiving a photo from one of the gym trip with Kiyotaka, etc) down to all of their EXACT timing. Then there's the Nori plan in Y2V10 and its required preparation/foresight with Norihito between the Hokkaido trip & the following events prior to the winter break.

Honami's plan was also practical - in Y2V9 she moved the needles on numerous programs and completed several tasks simultaneously; Rumor Mills 1.0, breaking the ice with Kiyotaka and fracturing his relationship with Kei, the neutralization of Miyabi, engineering his friend nest within her class, setting up the Nori plan's misdirection through her manipulations of Norihito for the coercion long-term contingencies to ensure that the promised meeting went as planned and gather info on Kiyo throughout his actions and her time with him; Honami managed to do all of this without risking the invincibility of her plan.

Despite being ranked last, her Planning Versatility was strong. The way she used Mako, Ryuji and especially Norihito were multifaceted & laced with details. Hona also made the plan in a manner in which she could use any opportunity with the special exams and gaps in time to strengthen its success rate. So while her plan had an exact structure, Honami also used new developments to fortify it further.

⭐ Manipulation ⭐

Emotional > Direct > Mass > Coercion > Indirect > Individual > Logical

Hona makes people do stuff. They do stuff. Y2V8-Y2V10 Norihito for Emotional, Miyabi & his year & KiyoKei & her classmates & school throughout Y2V8-Y2V9.5 for Indirect + Mass. Y2V9 Kei, Y3V1 Kei and Y3V1 Ichika for Direct. Y3V3 Kakeru for Logical. Blackmail contingencies for Coercion.

✨ Emotional Intelligence ✨

EF > EE >= EU > ER > EP > EM

EF is top because Miyabi, Ichika, Kiyotaka, Kei and Norihito ahhh shit.

She can override her moral values she had been hiding behind for years to make schemes out of pure EE and utilize her feelings to enact deceptive tactics, which also has some implications for ER.

Speaking of which, Hona has way too much emotional self-recognition for a side character, having moments in Y1V10, Y1V11.5, Y2V4. Y2V7-8, Y2V9, Y2V10, Y2V12.5 and Y3V1. Honami can use her self awareness & feelings to foresee the strategies and tactics of other people they use against her or to use her (Y2V9, Y2V10).

A big caveat for ER is Y2V9, specifically its two short stories; while “Jealousy” was if anything a feat given the situation (seeing Kiyotaka and Mako chat amicably) is novel and she seemingly saw through it quickly, Honami was clearly in some sort of denial (regardless of the contradiction regarding her reason to meet with Kiyo as described in the characterization section.

For EU, Hona’s main feats are 12.5 Kiyotaka analysis and Y3V1 Ichika profiling; has other feats like seeing Arisu’s love for Kiyotaka, Kakeru’s fear of Kiyo and so on. Between her feats on Ryuji in Y2V12 and Y3V3 as well as her feats on Ichika, Kiyo and Miyabi, we can determine that she can comprehend anyone else’s emotional states in the present with near perfect accuracy as long as she possesses enough auxiliary information to assess their current situations or current knowledge of what those people know, even if she’s nowhere near them at the time.

What may be enough will vary; for most characters it isn't too much, as shown in the Y2V12 exam, but the deceptive people with fully concealed and extraordinary backgrounds like Kiyo obviously required more time and information gathering.

Honami is strong in EP too. During the battle against Suzune of the second year's end-of-year exam, she discerned faint emotional cues of five people over twenty students (most of whom Honami hardly ever interacted with) in a single round of discussion. Honami can also spot other people having eye conversations.

She can see emotions in eyes and sense intent in microexpressions, as shown in the Y3V1 scenes with Kei and Ichika respectively. She also has instant mind reads based on general demeanors like Y3V2 on Kiyotaka.

See EM section for EM feats. TL;DR: the (increasingly lesser) composure hiccups are offset by Honami's impulse control (Y2V9, Y2V10 & Y3V1), ability to somehow hide the emotions in her eyes (Y2V9) and promise scene (Y2V12.5).

✨ Foresight ✨

Prediction > Preclusion > Anticipation

It's a near certainty Honami predicted the Y2V1 exam strategies besides the ones unrelated to the White Room (i.e. the bounty, Ichika's knife and Takuya), Miyabi's election, all the stuff that Kiyotaka was going to tell her along with his emotional reactions to her choices during their promised meeting in Y2V12.5.

Honami took the necessary steps to avoid disaster in the partner exam. She saw many steps ahead to control the effects of her manipulations on her classmates, Miyabi & Kei before the Y2 Winter Break to hide from Kiyotaka the rumors about him circulating around ANHS + avoid a *proper* reconciliation between him & Kei.

Anticipation feats: Nailing the timing of the gym photo, Class A traitor during the S&D exam, and social behavior and development across the school with ANHS's schedule (admittedly broadly) months ahead of time - especially the flow of the rumors and Kiyotaka's movement before the winter break.

Others main cats:

#6 Thinking [Convergent > Metacognition > Divergent > Critical > Holistic > Abstract > Application]

#7 Insight [Memory > Cold Reading > Intuition > Analysis > Sensory]

#8 Tactics [Management > Potency > Synergy]

#9 Reasoning [Inductive > Abductive = Deductive]

#10 Strategy [Flexibility > Complexity >= Building > Forecast >= Logistics]

#11 FSIQ [VCI > VSI > FRI > PSI > WMI]

Misc cats of note:

AC [Impulse Management > Perseverance > Mental Fortitude > Cognitive Discipline > Stress Tolerance]
Social [Integration >= Cognition > Engineering]
Unpredictability [Risk Competence > Unconventionality > Creativity > Cognitive Volatility > Behavioral Volatility]
Counteraction [Capitalization > Improvising > Shielding > Trap Evasion > Redirection > Responsiveness]
Field Skills* [Setting Trap > Risk Assessment > Multitasking > Information Gathering > Formulation Speed]
Psychology [Warfare > Insight > Profiling]

*: What's used to encompass Field Skills is relatively variable, but most will distribute these subcats.

Final Words

Huge thanks to everyone who has read this document in its current stage. Leaving aside the matter of scans and presentations for an instant, I hope this is far from the document's final form because I'm so excited to upload more scans and address more misconceptions in the future-- just kidding. What I truly mean by this is it would prove Honami continues to have a presence in COTE and bring something valuable to the table. If this document made y'all want to talk about it with their friends or anyone else, make 'em excited for Honami Ichinose's future, then that alone would make me happy & all of the tedious work worth 160 smiles.

This work is for anyone and is meant to be enjoyed.

If you feel the interpretations can not be true: that's okay, though do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions. If anyone is upset with the document because it contradicts their views on Honami or why they liked her in the first place: that is okay too. If you are a die hard Kei fan and you hate Hona for what she was doing to her in volumes like Y2V10 or Y3V1: that is your responsibility, so umm keep up the good work!

XorPaw

Characterization

Before Y2V9, nobody in or out of universe thought Honami was anything but a girl selfless to a fault with an unchanging generosity. After Y2V9 was released, new information re-contextualized Honami's story and people in real life tend to be split between those who believe she's still a good person and those who think she is not anymore. Y2V9's epilogue is a reveal of her true color (or lack thereof, since she is constantly transforming). At the end of the day, Honami always acts and is driven by her desires. They usually revolve the love Honami has for those she holds dear. Always has been, always will be. While most characters, including the more perspective and distrusting ones such as Suzune (Y1V11.5) and Kiyotaka (Y1V10, maybe a case of misleading narration), thought otherwise, this was never a mystery to her.

"I've never really thought of myself as a good person, never thought of myself as a bad person. I suppose I have managed to become an honest person, just like my mother would have wanted." (Y1V9, Honami's Soliloquy)

Honami always acted on her desires. So she was never particularly good or bad. Being someone they want her to be is a desire. If those she cares for want her to be good, she'll be good. If they want her to be bad, she'll be bad.

Pretty straightforward.

Children raised by single mothers, especially from a low-income household like Hona's, can take on more responsibilities at an earlier age. This means children like Honami can develop desires to help their mothers. She studied really hard for her scholarship and she is often described as a hard worker.

Honami, who acted on her desire to lessen the burden on her mother and on her desire to fulfill her sister's wish, took drastic measures to satisfy this desire. This being the shoplifting incident, when she stole an expansive hairpin.

This backfired. Hona's pillar of support was only her mother, so being scolded as harshly as she was for committing what her mother saw as a moral transgression by her was a massive blow. Because of this deep trauma, Honami, someone who remodels herself to suit those she cherishes the most, reshaped herself to create a facade, where she recognized moral transgressions as something to repel at all cost. Honami entered ANHS with this complete makeover.

One could say Honami's real personality was on display throughout the first six books (Y1V1 to Y1V5), though it's ultimately impossible to know with any level of certainty. Hona's class was neither especially successful nor was it falling apart; they were essentially going through the motions, riding the waves.

Y1 sport festival could be seen as something of a win (Arisu and Honami lost 50 class points whereas Kakeru and Suzune lost 100), but it goes without saying it didn't impress anyone, since it was a product of the bottom two classes tanking each other. Her character was never challenged since nothing special happened to her and those around her, less you count Manabu rejecting her candidacy for the student council as such and Kakeru's wounded gazelle gambit with Satoru.

Or so you'd think, but something special began to happen inside Honami. There was a certain boy she began to notice at first sight when she entered the school (Y1V1 SS). A mysterious oddball who rejected her offer to play pretend boyfriend, her purpose of said being that she would not have to hurt the feelings of Chihiro Shiranami, a girl in her class who intended to confess to her class leader (Y1V2). He advised Hona to be honest towards those who express their honest feelings, those who left themselves vulnerable to a heavy crushing blow.

Not long after, after Ken's trial had been dealt with, Hona witnessed this strange boy running at a blazing speed that she couldn't keep up with (Y1V6 SS) to rescue Airi from the unnamed store clerk stalker. It may have been then Honami would begin to feel certain feelings she had never felt (though as previously mentioned there signals from the first volume, just in Y1V2 it became more obvious).

After confronting Airi's stalker (Y1V2), Hona uses her warning about Kakeru as an excuse to tell him: "So *if anything ever happens, you can come to me for help. Talk to me whenever you need it.*"

Earlier in the conversation, i.e literally one page before, Honami teased the same boy for telling Airi the exact same thing. It is not the most subtle of subtexts. He had shown the kind of behavior and moral standing we, the readers, later learn Hona is/was obsessed with because of her own mother.

The boy is Kiyotaka Ayanokoji, a student from Suzune's class and her series' main character. Most people failed to notice anything special about him at first glance other than good looks due to deliberately keeping a low profile.

Unlike everyone else minus Suzune, Hona had two opportunities to see Kiyotaka might be special before the island exam.

Fast forward to the island exam, Chie, the teacher in Honami's class, interrupted Sae's class while she was explaining the rules of the special exam.

Chie specifically speaks to Kiyotaka and no one else:

"Summer is the season of love. If you want to confess your feelings to a girl you like, perhaps it'd be more effective while standing before the beautiful ocean?" (Y1V3)

As a byproduct of Kiyotaka having only encountered Honami, Chihiro and Ryuji of her class by then on-screen, Chihiro's romantic feelings for Honami and Ryuji not being a girl or LGBT (?)Chie could only have been referring to Honami. Being the homeroom teacher, it's not far-fetched to guess Chie learned of the dramatic events around Airi's stalker and perhaps even as much as Kiyo's involvement with Chihiro's confession. With Chie's interest in people's love affairs, taking notice of Hona's crush and flying the idea out there would be in character. If anything, it'd almost be strange if it were anything else.

As previously mentioned, Kakeru and Satoru pulled a wounded gazelle gambit on Hona's class and correctly identified their leader. Despite this, Honami finished ahead of Kohei's and Kakeru's class in 2nd place. So there was no real pressure on her to change her class and her methods, though she began to be more wary of everyone regardless.

Following the events of the island exam, in the middle of the Zodiac exam (Y1V4), Kiyotaka discovered when spying on the teachers that Chie explicitly made sure Hona would be in the Rabbit group with Kiyotaka. Kiyo jumped to the conclusion Chie sent Honami there to spy on him (Y1V4), but the latter was actually unaware (Y1V4 SS) as to why she was not in the dragon group with the other class leaders. This makes it unlikely Kiyo's guess was on the money. Making it even less likely is that Chie only started to take a genuine interest in Kiyotaka's skills after directly witnessing a glimpse of his potential against Arisu in the Y1 end-of-year exam. Do note neither Kiyo nor Honami were VIPs; Sae and Chie were free to pick their groups and there weren't any sort of mysterious limitations they had to conceal.

Even after the Zodiac exam, there were hints Hona had a crush long before Y1V9 even if she wasn't entirely aware, such as in Y1V4.5, Y1V4.5 SS, Y1V5 SS and Y1V8.

But being a class leader who takes her role seriously, Honami wasn't really worried about love affairs at the time. As previously mentioned, because of the outcome of the island exam, she began to be wary of everyone outside her class. Needless to say, Honami knew Kakeru was untrustworthy with her knowing his involvement in the Ken trial and his usage of Satoru in the previous exam, which in itself meant this distrust had to be extended to everyone else in his class, not just the obvious lackeys like Ishizaki or Albert.

It doesn't stop there; based on the point total of the island exam, another class definitely figured out their leader and wrote their name. The same applied for Kohei's class; two classes correctly identified their leader.

Considering Suzune's class won by a large margin and nobody correctly identified their leader whereas Suzune's and Kakeru's named Kohei's class leader, it was entirely within the realm of possibility they were the second class who wrote down Honami's leader.

This was made worse by Rokusuke, a student in Suzune's class, betraying the VIP in the monkey group who is a student of Honami's class. It goes without saying that Honami remained polite and maintained a diplomatic tone, but she began to act more deceptively afterward. Nevermind the Zodiac exam; from that point now, she never divulges confidential intel about herself or her class to anyone (including Kiyotaka by the way) 'less she's essentially forced to. The only time she spilled the beans about secrets to outsiders is when she lacks any other option.

Shortly after, around the time of the Paper Shuffle exam, *someone* spread rumors about Hona getting a large amount of private points through illegal means. That person being Kiyotaka, who signed those rumors on Kakeru's name. Honami had to explain she's essentially her class' private point bank, her classmates entrusted their private points to her in case of an emergency.

Despite Kakeru not denying any responsibility in the matter, Honami suspected Kiyotaka had something to do with the rumors anyway (Y1V8 SS). This is because Honami remembered he saw her phone's screen for an instant when it showed her number of private points, all the way back when they were dealing with Ken's trial (Y1V2).

After Miyabi succeeded Manabu as the new student council president, Honami tried once more to enter the student council. Despite Honami's attempts to get around having to do this and putting up some resistance, Miyabi eventually got Honami to reveal her secret - the aforementioned shoplifting incident - to accept her candidacy. Unfortunately, this burned her badly when Miyabi sold her secret to Arisu, leading to a chain of events in which Kiyotaka ended up revealing this to the whole school (with a number of lies by Arisu & co) to go along with it, stomping on her biggest weakness.

It's her biggest weakness not necessarily because the crime is a sin or immoral as much as how far her mother, the one she loved most, held it against her. It was a constant reminder of how much she disappointed her mother back then.

Struggling to face her past, she retreated and stayed in her room for nearly a week. She gently pushed away everyone who expressed their concern and tried to assure her she could confide in them.

Everyone included Kiyotaka, but he didn't care.

Despite Honami's attempt to repel him just like everyone else, he ate lunch with her throughout the week and talked about meaningless things. It's less about saving Honami in a normal sense. Honami, much like everyone else, can preserve through difficulties of that nature on her own, as proven later on. But having someone who's actually there to change her mind a little from darker thoughts by talking uselessly, especially if it's someone she already took a liking to, is different. Especially when you tried to push them away to not burden them, yet they persisted in caring.

Kiyotaka eventually told Honami he knew what kind of crime she committed, though he didn't appear to particularly mind. More importantly, instead of trying to lessen the gravity of the act, he told her that anyone could be forgiven, which is something her mother could not bring herself to.

The love that already sprouted within her bloomed.

Both exams following this event were also immensely challenging. Kiyo helped big time in Y1V10, when he helped her reach 20 millions private points in the next special exam to avoid either being stuck in a relationship with Miyabi and taking a ~4M private points debt or expelling a classmate via the lottery.

This was followed by a disastrous Y1 end-of-year exam which had significant implications for class points, in which Honami lost 5-2 against Kakeru.

Then before the second year, Suzune's class ended their alliance with Honami.

On the same day, March 30th, she stood in the rain after she felt lost. Kiyotaka found her and convinced her to come to his room.

It led to an important meeting for the both of them. Throughout the meeting, Kiyo was making suggestive advances on her and essentially took the lead. He suggested they promised one another to meet a year from now, which Honami accepted. Following this, Honami regained her fighting spirit.

This promised meeting will have drastic implications for Honami's character arc. It would take 16 volumes and 1 canonical year for everything to come together, in more ways than one.



Source: feno_edu (X/Twitter)

This scene pushed Honami towards a new direction. Much like everyone else in ANHS, she hadn't seen her family for more than a year by then; Hona's fabricated personality to satisfy her wish to be the type of person her mom wanted Hona to be, surrounded by people who enabled her facade, were now outweighed by her inability to satisfy her other desires that grew stronger: this being the leader her precious classmates need her to be and end the hesitations she felt with having to fight the man she long realized by then she likes.

"*What if, what if he and I were in the same class… Then all my worries would disappear and I could fight without any hesitation.*" (Y1V11.75)

The corruption, so to speak, was already fully in place, transforming her.

She continued to be hunted by internal conflicts for long after and struggled to come to terms with who she is, but that begun to gradually fade and Honami's lack of care for the wellbeing of outsiders, those she didn't have any love for, already existed before the 2nd year had begun at bare minimum.

More importantly, Honami was completely aware of this side of herself, but she had to learn to engage with it instead of suppressing it. This is shown in the aforementioned soliloquy, but it's best demonstrated in the epilogue of Y2V9. Notice the similarities between the quote from Y1V11.75 with this:

Before he knew it, Ryūen's smile was gone and he was thinking about Ichinose's words.

'The woman in front of me is not worth the trouble.' I thought I had been treating her as such.

However, when I looked back on it calmly, I realized that I was being very stubborn.

"I won't hold back against anyone in the future. I won't choose a means to an end."

"That's not like you to be bluffing."

"I just realized I don't have time to worry about it anymore. That's all there is to it."

Ryūen's rash thoughts quietly receded from his mind.

Consider "fight without any hesitation" and "won't choose a means to an end" to be synonymous. This proves then without a shadow of doubt that Honami, while singularly protective of those Hona hold dear, cared not one iota about the well being of those pesky outsiders long before Y2V9, or even Y2V1 and perhaps more importantly, Hona was, without a shadow of doubt, entirely aware of this side of hers. That is, even if no one else did or, with regards to some people like Suzune (Y1V11.5), they stopped believing it could exist.

So what exactly happened? Or to be more accurate, what stopped Honami from removing her chains before Y2V9? Throughout the second year, she had virtually no monologues or screen time before Y2V8, meaning her thoughts were hidden from the readers, but she slowly began to remodel herself as early as the start of the 2nd year, slowly becoming more and more blunt about her willingness to act on her desires. Abandoning her group in the Y2 Island exam to warn Kiyotaka of the danger he was in regarding Tokinari & Shiba was only one of many examples. As a matter of fact, the last time Hona truly acted in a way that was detrimental for altruistic reasons was when she didn't report Kakeru after Y1V11.

So for the 2nd Year, she tried to steal or close the gap between her and Kiyotaka (though at that time, only from his class) through subtle social maneuvering.

Honami's actions in this regard became more bold and courageous over time.

Other than her being a bundle of insecurities, she restrained herself from being too bold because it's very likely Hona had reasoned back then Kiyo had a vested interest in helping anyone in need, even to the detriment of his class and he was a very much of a mystery.

This creates reasons for Honami to do what she did best: doubt herself, lack confidence and lose courage. This suggests Kiyotaka wouldn't necessarily like it if she were to lose certain qualities she gained when remodeling herself, much like her mother. The same goes for her class - perhaps even moreso. They clearly liked her the way she was in the first year even through the ups and downs.

Does Kiyotaka care about Honami? Do her classmates? If so, is it because of the same perception everyone else has of her, as an altruistic goodie two shoes?

If so, she needs to hold back or perhaps more accurately, she has an excuse to back off. At least, Honami needs to use the old facade, the one she created for her mother as a front.

Upon realizing Kiyotaka already had a relationship with Kei, everything turned upside down. Being rejected for your first time is pretty bad as is, but it also means she had to make some difficult decisions. Honami couldn't really be sure what she should do anymore, her love for Kiyotaka and desire to snatch him away didn't conveniently fade even after knowing he had a girlfriend in his class. To Honami, who thought she had to keep her mask to not commit any moral transgression, it was a contradiction.

To steal Kiyo away requires tossing aside the perception of Hona being a good person, but how would Kiyotaka feel about her if he no longer thought she's a good person? This contradiction was difficult to handle.

For months, Honami struggled to even look at Kiyotaka face-to-face (Y2V6), though she might have tried not long after the island exam (Y2V10.25 SS).

Of course, her suffering didn't only revolve around Kiyotaka. Doubling the pain was, as her class' leader, letting down her precious classmates as well.

Honami's class was sinking.

Going from an already fragile Class B position, she slipped to C after Suzune's class stumbled into 150 class points in the unanimous vote special exam and then Class D following the events of the Y2 sports festival. Then in the cultural festival, all the other classes gained 50 class points over hers. Rock bottom.

A common misconception is that Honami actively chose to keep her distance out of kindness for Kei's sake, but Kiyotaka kept approaching her and tempting her.

Kei was never a factor. For one, according to both Honami and Kei, they barely ever interacted (Y1V8 for Kei, Y2V9 for Honami) so it's an established fact that they weren't friends or anything of the sort.

Two, the first time Kiyotaka approached Honami after the rejection on the ship was when she disappeared at the end of the school trip, which is something she did to lure him to her as confirmed in Y2V9's epilogue - Honami expected the ensuing panic from her disappearance and that he would show up. This makes her shooing Kiyotaka away nothing more than an acting performance.

Plus, if the Daichi text were a legitimate mistake (which, if it was not, would absolutely not paint her in a more innocent light), Honami tried to contact Kiyo to meet up with him to try to calm down and be less nervous around him.

This proves Honami avoiding Kiyotaka for some time after the UIE exam never had anything to do with her wanting to protect Kei's happiness, respect their relationship or anything remotely altruistic, *it was solely for herself*.

Unlike Kei, Honami isn't fully a victim in this love triangle.



[Image colored by feno_edu - X/Twitter]

With everything she had to endure, the tear was probably real, regardless of anything else.

This doesn't make Kiyotaka innocent of any wrongdoing in this matter mind you, but it dispel a certain notion often used to absolve Honami of the responsibility for her own actions.

Hona decided to take various measures to get around having to lose her facade. By indirectly moving Kiyotaka towards her and her class, Honami could test him as a person, his preferences, his boundaries and help her class as well, while she moves his sights there. Then, she could continue to push further if he allowed her to, which he did. At the end of the Hokkaido school trip, Kiyotaka affirmed that she was allowed to ask for help and break her limits.

Honami understood she could phase out her facade.

This beginning of this process is shown throughout Y2V9.

The reason Honami joined the student council to begin with was to symbolize the way mother wanted her to be: a responsible, hard working person and moral. Honami leaving the council illustrates that she was beginning to phase out this image to be reborn anew. This led to the Honami we have seen since.

The "I have to move forward" short story of Y2V9 demonstrates her last bouts of inner struggles in regards to not committing moral transgressions. It depicts Honami's thought process at the start of their pseudo "date".

She repeated to herself over and over again that she was Kiyotaka's friend and he already had "someone special". But Honami also tells herself that the reason she decided to meet is she has to move forward. "Moving Forward" in the japanese raw was actually "進まなきゃ" - it can mean to advance, *to deepen*, to proceed (with a plan, course of action, etc), to push through.

This creates an interesting contradiction. During the scene the next week, in which Honami invited herself to Kiyo's room, she told him that she accepted the aforementioned date to end her feelings for him. In his monologue, he describes such an act as "stepping aside". Stepping aside is for all intent and purposes the opposite of moving forward, advancing, continuing with a process, etc.

Honami is rapidly showing more and more the kind of person she is to Kiyotaka specifically, someone who acts on her desires (though not entirely for the aforementioned reasons). The key word is "specifically" - Honami flat out doesn't show those colors when it comes to everyone else due to the strategic benefits of maintaining a good reputation with semi-exceptions like Kakeru proving the rule - its strategic purpose was shown in Y2V10 where being taken seriously by him proved essential for her strategy in the S&D exam. But sooner than later she will no longer be shackled by the need to never commit moral transgressions. Using her emotions as her main source of motivation, Honami's metamorphosis into her true self will be completed, to achieve her potential...

...though, not without some gigantic bumps along the way.



Image colored by *Ayumi* | @__Ayumi__07

During the second year's end-of-year special exam, things were originally going as well as they could be for Honami. While Suzune took down her classmates (in particular sweeping Ryuji 7-0), Honami in turn massacred Suzune 7-0.

The only person left in the way of a triumphant and massive win for her class was Kiyotaka. How did it go?

This above image, unfortunately, was misleading. Not in the context for her battle against Suzune, mind you... but she wasn't all smiles by the end of the day.

It did not go well. Kiyotaka, the person Honami has been madly in love with for two years, told her he was using her the entire time. Confessed that he was the one who snuck the rumor about her being a criminal.

Throughout the later portion of the first year. Kiyotaka took shots at Honami's resistance. Helping her recover in Y1V9 when she tried to push him away, finding enough funds without having to borrow money from Miyabi in Y1V10 and dating him. Then, when Honami was depressed in Y1V11.5, he insisted on helping her that time too, despite her push back.

Kiyotaka just implied all of that was done just to use her. Those revelations shook Honami, it took her out of it. To the extent she couldn't perform against Kiyotaka as well as she did against Suzune, leading to a relatively "easy win" for him. Kiyo also betrayed her with the whole Maezono thing, but considering the fact Honami never mentions Maezono's name afterward or talks about her at all, she didn't care about that. Honami's expressed grievances during the promise scene of Y2V12.5 all had to do with Kiyotaka not caring about **her** specifically - even admitting that she did not mind if he was predominantly selfish.

March 30th, The Day of the Promise

After the exam, Honami's class was practically doomed, being more than 600 class points behind Suzune's - the new class A - with only a year left.

Honami, who as the class leader had to take responsibility for another failure, was betrayed by the person she cared for most in the world, was depressed and locked herself in her room for eleven days (March 20th to March 30th). At first, this seemed normal and was not definitely unprecedented (see: Y1V9).

But the truth was that she recovered entirely by herself and quickly too.

Kiyo intended to meet up with Honami, as they promised they would do exactly one year ago. He did not think for a second she could recover this quickly - a grave mistake. By deceiving Kiyo's perception with her phone (timing when she would set his text to "read" among other things), she manipulated him to meet up with her during the night at her room late (in the girl's dorm). Past curfew.

Kiyotaka also sent Honami some texts right before coming to her room, to tell her he came to the girl's dorm. As a result, Kiyotaka was essentially trapped the moment he stepped into her room, though he still had no clue.

Kiyo gave her hard evidence that he came to the girl's dorm. Again, past curfew - an action unambiguously against the school's rules.

Because Kiyotaka had no idea, he thought he had everything under control. He wasn't even controlling his own feelings - Honami did.

This image, fortunately, was misleading.



When they began their conversation, Kiyotaka told Honami that he was there to serve as her *Kaishuku* - much like he said he would in Y1V11.5 if she were to fall. This term refers to the act of delivering a finishing blow to a suffering person, so as to finish them off quickly without any more pain. It is most often used in relation to when a dishonored Samurai accepts responsibility for their failures by cutting their own belly open - and their Kaishakuin then strikes them down afterwards, to spare them of their pain. It is a form of an execution.

But, the term also has a second meaning, which is to attend to someone. To lend them a hand, and help them out of a sticky situation.

Kiyotaka's expectations were that Honami would be upset at hearing this term, as he assumed that she thought he meant the deadly kind - which he did.

She had failed, and must accept responsibility by "dying" - and he was there to send her off on her way. Honami did not automatically jump to that conclusion, and specifically asked him which of the two meanings he was referring to. Was he here to strike her down, or to support her?

He told her that she will soon find out.

It was the other way around - rather, Kiyotaka was the one who would soon find out. Kiyo believed he was there to "execute" Honami, but she already knows that he'll instead be by her side going forward. Going by Honami's Y2V12.5 short story and Kiyotaka describing her response as "quick", we know she saw through him completely and well ahead of time - she knew everything he was about to say.

Kiyotaka presented Honami with two options moving forward:

- Kiyotaka will join Honami's class, so long as she drops out. Kiyotaka will get some students from other classes to drop out to compensate for the -300 CPT penalty caused by her departure. When Honami pretends to go along with this option (she already knew what she intended to tell him), Kiyo warns her he might expel some of her classmates if that's necessary.
- Honami can use her resentment and hatred of Kiyotaka to motivate her to defeat him.

Kiyotaka is under no delusion that the last choice will be enough and he's hoping by some miracle she can come up with a third solution he doesn't know of.

After Kiyotaka presented Honami with his proposal, he attempted to analyse her experience in a detached form. He observes the experiences that she must have been going through - the ambivalence Honami must feel after being exposed to so many conflicting feelings and experiences. Kiyotaka specifically talked in his head about running a science experiment with Honami as the ideal subject.

Whether this detachment was true or false is ultimately up for debate, but it's very unlikely Honami believed it to be the former.

From that perspective, one could say Kiyotaka was trying to form a detachment from Hona, viewing her not as someone he had known for two years and spent a lot of time with, and who Kiyo has found quite interesting during that time - but as a lab experiment (Y2V10, Y2V10.25 SS).

It is consistent with the fact that Kiyotaka believed he had to be cruel to Honami. In his mind, it was almost a certainty that was the last time they would be able to communicate amicably. It's easier that way.

But this detachment would be contradictory.

After all, Kiyotaka states repeatedly in his monologue that while he doesn't need to know her answer and would have accepted her rejection of their meeting... he wanted to know what state she was in.

When Honami chooses to avoid responding (which most people would accept as a rejection), Kiyotaka had all he needed to accept the "reality" and move on with his plan C - but he still opted to get out of bed and went out into a potentially dangerous situation because he wanted to know that badly.

Honami knew Kiyotaka could not resist that urge. There's no sugarcoating it, his actions were **incredibly** reckless. By his own admission, he was prepared for her to trap him and strongly believed she now hated him. But he let Hona send him extremely damning texts in front of her room's door anyway - this included her saying Kiyotaka was in the girl's dorm past curfew, while implying he was acting somewhat pushy too. Hona also controlled Kiyotaka's actions throughout the day with her texts. If Honami hated him as much as the latter tried to manipulate her to, Kiyo would have been in serious and completely unnecessary trouble. Simply put, this was uncharacteristically irrational behavior from someone like Kiyotaka.

It evinced he's heavily invested in her, one way or another. Since Honami planned everything that happened that day in advance, it would mean she knew all that.

Hona had her third answer prepared in advance. Kiyo only understood Hona was ready for him to visit after he got played and noticed she put her citrus perfume in her hair before he came as well as other oddities like her room being cleaned.

The core reason why Kiyo was wrong about her mental state was his knowledge. In his monologue, Kiyo brings up Honami being in a state of ambivalence. When someone is in that state, the negative emotions tend to overpower the other. This was why Kiyotaka assumed she would hate him. Later, after Honami sat him down on the bed and started talking about how he had been toying with her, he looked into her eyes. Kiyotaka noted that while they were shining and bright, the emotions within them seemed to swirl between dark and light.

Kiyotaka was unable to tell which emotions Honami truly felt. She loves him, but she's angry at him. Instead of her anger taking the fore, both are in play.

Hona called Kiyotaka out, while hammering home how much she loves him. She overcame what could've been considered scientific norms and the White Room's teachings in regards to emotions.

This image, for the better or worse (depends on who you ask), is exactly what it seems.



Source - X/Twitter, Alya | @Alya_l16

And when Honami showed him she already gained the upper hand, she used it to confront Kiyotaka on all his lies and misbehaviors, about how he treated Kei and others, especially how he treated herself, and in general how he treats others.

And he's sitting down like a child getting scolded, without once trying to deny her accusations nor defend his actions or reasons.

Kiyo mentions during their talk regarding having her drop out and him replacing her as class leader that her force of personality is beyond his ability to control. Whether he meant that sincerely or not, it did not take long for her to prove this.

Despite Honami's own sins - being a homewrecker and selfish in general is bad, but she was also willing to engage in psychological warfare against Kei (someone largely innocent of wrongdoings in all of this) throughout Y2V9, Y2V9.5, Y2V10, Y2V12 and Y2V12.5 - Honami was wielding righteous indignity and Kiyotaka could only bow to it. Honami was no saint, but regardless of Kiyotaka's motives, he had done far worse with so many people by that point, including Honami herself.

Righteousness aside, she had complete control of the situation by then. To Kiyo's own admission, if there was a physical altercation between the two and anyone else learned of it, it was an "unthinkable situation" for him, as a guy who snuck into the girl's dormitory past curfew.

And yet - despite having control and the power to destroy him, Honami makes it quite clear that she does not want actual or even abstract power over Kiyotaka. Everything she tells him hints, not at domination, but for reciprocity.

"*Let's become accomplices*"

"*Your attitude towards Kei is too one sided*".

"*Just like you used me, I'll use you, I have that right, don't I?*"

"*Just like you've left a mark on my heart, I'll leave my mark on yours*"

By the time Honami became more intimate, Kiyotaka, in his monologue, seemed to have accepted it.

"*This is the extent of Ichinose's resolve - I must therefore respond to her feelings with equal resolve*".

"*This is an absolute contract for mutual need*"

Hona only wields the power this one time as a necessity, in order to calibrate the balance Kiyo offset by toying with her heart with his despicable behavior during the previous special exam. The power shifted from Kiyotaka, to Honami and then to neither. During their scene together a literal year prior, Kiyo was carrying the initiative, physically and otherwise. This time, Honami snatched control from his grip along with the initiative.

When, during the meeting one year earlier, Kiyotaka insisted on being an enemy over an ally, Honami said he was a “trustworthy” person, denying Kiyo’s framing in the process and choosing to make her own interpretation of his existence in her life. During this meeting, Hona denied the two choices he presented to her, making her own. This shows she’s still the same girl she was back then, but what “she used to be” wasn’t what Kiyotaka or anyone else had in mind.

By choosing her path, instead of retracting or compromising on her no expulsion policy and being more in line with either Kiyotaka's expectations (being fueled by hatred) or the way other class leaders lead, Honami doubled down on leading her own way. In the larger context of the story it is very meaningful. Honami's no-classmate expulsion policy and just who she is as a person, extending to her qualities like great communication and social skills, blatantly contrasts with how the White Room functioned during the 4th gen, where the "weaks", the children who could not keep up, dropped out like flies while social encounters, emotions and especially attachments were effectively nuisances. Honami is the antithesis of everything Kiyotaka had to conceal or discard to survive the 4th generation. Honami staying true to her way of thinking and her attachments despite all her struggles was incredibly important for her character and possibly the story as a whole. This can explain Kiyo’s surge of emotions after he heard her proposition.

Rather than Honami’s character having grown dramatically stronger in Y2V12.5, the promise scene was a testament of her development throughout the second year. The girl who lacked the courage to dirty her hands, plagued by self-doubts and internal conflicts due to traumas, is now quite bold. But what it came down to was, while she *understood* herself just fine, she learned to *accept* who she is & what she *does* instead of trying to run away from herself, even when it conflicts with her desires to be the type of person those she loves wants her to be.

And so, that is the story of Ichinose Honami. Entering the Third Year, she is now the girl who can now stand proud as an equal to Kiyotaka himself, both leading the bottom classes aiming to make up a significant amount of ground as soon as possible. We hope Honami’s story will continue for as long as the story does.

The analysis aims to be in line with the overall narrative and present direction of Honami’s character, explains why the change or character development in Y2V9 may have come across as abrupt or an “awakening” for many fans when in truth it was the culmination of Honami’s adaptations and growing courage throughout the series and finally, it aims to be as consistent with all the information we have on Honami Ichinose as possible.

This document is written with this interpretation of Honami’s character as a base, which should help understand the true meaning of her feats.

TL;DR: Honami when the man's taken.



manCompendium of Honami's 2nd Year Plan to Capture Kiyotaka Ayanokoji

CKA



Source: [Nikuman - X/Twitter]

Probably what you came here for.

Throughout the second year, Honami had been carrying out a plan to bind Kiyo to her, make him support her and her class. She aimed to reconcile her feelings for Kiyotaka with her duty to her classmates as class leader, all the while having to manage with the situation with Ryuji and other discontents in her class. This section of the document will explain everything known of her scheme's layers & how they accentuate the accuracy of the plan.

This analysis was written under the mindset that:

- While COTE has lighthearted, "silly" and comedic moments, Kinugasa does care about the law of conservation of detail to some extent.
- Kinugasa does not always put all his characters' actions in retrospect and the "stuff that amounted to nothing" are usually clues that can be used to find hidden plots.
- The "underwhelming " manner in which Miyabi's story ended was 100% intentional and set to end up that way well ahead of time.
- Honami was clearly planning something throughout at least the second half of the Year 2 even if it's not directly stated. Between her scene with Kei and Maya in Y2V9 ("not yet"), her ominous comments and monologue during the scene with Kakeru in the epilogue of Y2V9, the author vaguely implying she had thought of some kind of method to steal Kiyotaka from Kei (Y2V10) and the evidences of preparations for her promise night ploy (along with the fact that the scheme for the promised meeting is the only thing the aforementioned method could be referring to), all the apparent tropes indicate she was executing a plan of sort - the only thing debatable is the process. In other words, while this analysis can definitely be flawed and questioned, the odds that her actions throughout, bare minimum, the second half of Year 2 were not centered around a plan are slim to none.

❖ **The plan had 51 preorganized components. They produced the following Long-Term Strategies / Layers (Featured related tactics):**

- ➢ Overwriting Kiyotaka's Social Circle (Y2V7-Y2V10)
- ➢ Rumor Mills (Y2V7-Y2V9.5)
- ➢ Handling Discontents (Y2V7-Y2V9, Y2V10, Y2V12.5)
- ➢ Collecting Blackmail Material (Y2V9.5, Y2V10, Y2V12.5)
- ➢ Blinding Third Parties (Entirety of post-UIE?)
  - ■ Arisu / Kouhais distinction
- ➢ Promise Day Scheme ({Before Y2V10} ~ Y2V12.5)
- ➢ Promise Day Aftermath (Y2V7-Y2V9.5, Y2V12.5, Y3V1)
  - ■ Norihito Manipulations (Y2V8, Y2V9, Y2V10)
  - ■ Breaking the Ice (Y2V8-Y2V9)
  - ■ Miyabi Trap (Y2V7-Y2V9)
  - ■ Kei Warfare / Manipulations (Y2V9, Y2V10, Y3V1)
  - ■ Rumor Mills 2.0
  - ■ The Cake Analogy Thingy

(Planning Intricacies)

- **Throughout this section, certain conditions had to be met to accomplish her primary objectives. Below is a list of holistic complications Honami had to analyze and they are the purposes of the intricacies within CKA.**
  - ➢ Stopping Arisu from hindering the plan, by blinding her to it.
  - ➢ Continue to gather information to profile Kiyotaka Ayanokoji, since he is still a bundle of secrets.
  - ➢ Clearing any traces of her proactivity from 1st Years and any new school personnels: the experience with Shiba and Tokinari during the UIE is proof they are dangerous and her desire to learn about the White Room and Kiyotaka must be concealed from them.
  - ➢ Demoralizing Miyabi, so he won't involve Honami in his games anymore and get in her way. This was mainly handled through her rumor strategy, though it was also its own thing beyond that by meddling with Kei.
  - ➢ Kiyotaka's relationships with Honami's classmates, especially with the difficult ones such as Ryuji, but also the more useful ones for manipulative purposes - Norihito mainly, but also Mako.
  - ➢ Most importantly, Kiyotaka's relationship with Honami herself, through some tactics such as the gym fabrication, the selfie, overwriting strategy, simply spending time with her and so on.
  - ➢ Control the public's perception of her relationship with Kiyotaka.
  - ➢ Create sufficient ammos to torpedo any relationship Kiyotaka may have with other people, principally Kei of course, by loading up on coercive, reputation destroying, material.
  - ➢ Centering the final stage to bind Kiyo around the promised day and preparing accordingly, Hona had no chance to accumulate enough private points before the end of the second year, considering Hona and her class had nothing left after they chose to save a classmate in the Class Vote Exam of Year One. But Kiyo and Honami promised that, no matter what occurred between their classes, they would meet on March 30th, after the 2nd year ended. The timing and condition of the promise can be meaningful.
  - ➢ Post KiyoKei break-up, cover up the past mingling with Kiyotaka when he was Kei's boyfriend to protect your reputation.

(Planning Coverage)

Context and Preparations Before the “Elections”

Aftermath of the Second Year’s Island Exam and Sports Festival

A big hidden plot throughout Y2V7-Y2V9.5. The story heavily implies on-screen during her post-exam conversation with Kakeru in Y2V9, that Honami had been cooking *something* by letting you know she was moving “calculatingly” without explaining anything specific, other than, in a monologue, revealing to the readers that Honami lured Kiyotaka in Y2V8 into approaching her during the last night of the Hokkaido trip. So, for some time by this point, long prior to the fake date and even dropping out of the student council. It does not elaborate beyond that. This puts into question most of what she has done since Y2V7 because it was around that time, according to her, that she began to consider leaving the SC, which led to a series of events nearly identical in essence to the one Honami orchestrated one volume prior. The next few divisions aim to offer a logical interpretation on what all that scheming was about based on the information from the volumes.

In Y2V7, Honami’s class had fallen all the way down to Class D; the situation was awfully bleak even if you ignore her personal feelings and any plan Honami might have had regarding those feelings falling apart. Fortunately, it was the usual time Kiyotaka intervened back in the second half of the first year. While by no means guaranteed to happen again, the possibility sparked hope for a breakthrough.

But pursuing that possibility required Honami to acknowledge her shortcomings not just as the leader of her class, but also as the person she had been for years by then - kind of a coward (or at bare minimum, definitely something of a people pleaser). The plan described in this analysis contradicts Honami’s core “values”, the very ideals she had been hiding behind, and still she's able to override that and suppress her urges to run back to her shell (this is best demonstrated in her Y2V9 SS “I have to move forward”) out of her love for the one she truly care for.

(Adaptability, Perseverance, Impulse Management, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Realization)

It’s also around that time Honami began setting up the pieces for her strategies regarding Ryuji & Norihito, the rumors around her and Kiyo and so on & so forth.

For starters, Hona by that point could predict that Miyabi would hold an election by drawing a logical conclusion based on what she was in a position to observe.

To create a convenient time frame for her Y2V9 strategy, Honami had to resign from the student council during the 2nd week of December, late Thursday.

So predicting Miyabi would hold an election was only half the battle. Hona also had to figure out ***when*** he would declare that election... which she also could.

The preceding Hokkaido trip, which had ended in early December, considerably narrowed down the time window in which Miyabi could announce the elections.

Though as long as the election process could last for a number of days OR they accept a request to delay the election to Friday, a ten to one considering it was for the sake of Miyabi's battle against Kiyo that he wanted for a long time and the process of an election usually involve the few candidates running their campaign (though given Miyabi announced the elections on a Thursday after school hours with the next week being a busy one for the 2nd years due to the special exam, chances are that he did not intend to extend this battle beyond a single day, so Honami would have had to request a delay for the elections if Miyabi announced them before late Thursday which he wouldn't have much choice but to accept), this slice of the strategy was, to an extent, malleable; he could've announced the election days earlier and it still would have worked as she intended - albeit with some adjustments. No one involved had the right to force Hona to remain in the student council for an election, something that usually does not even take place. Honami knew it wasn't happening on Friday, let alone during the last week. It is a "tradition" for the school to announce a special exam between A vs B and C vs D after school trips, so Hona could have known about this in advance. That's why it was unlikely the election process would continue into the following week; Miyabi knew both Suzune and Hona could take issue with this (a legitimate predicament given that both had to agree to run for the office for an election to take place) as it would keep them busy while they simultaneously fight to win the special exam against Arisu and Kakeru's class respectively. So the odds that Miyabi announced the election on Friday after school hours were slim to none. It was foreseeable as well that Miyabi didn't want to and couldn't drag his battle against Kiyotaka after the winter break since third years, especially in years with a clear Class A like his, are more focused on preparing for the incoming university entrance exams & job hunting. Additionally, the school expects the third years in the student council to step aside in the second semesters to give their juniors more experience. "Couldn't" is a big word, but there was no benefit in dragging this out any longer either, only hassles, so from Miyabi's point of view... *Why bother*?

Basically, Hona's strategy required Miyabi to call the elections when he was most likely to do so - any day during the second week of December, but before Friday.

(Prediction, Hot Reading, Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Strategy Flexibility, Strategy Logistics)

It's essential to mention that Norihito and Mako being in Kiyo's group during the Hokkaido trip was foreseeable for Hona **specifically**. It's a fact that the groupings for the trip were not random and the pattern could have been solved by students with many connections outside their class, as explained by Kiyotaka. Hona, who's the most popular student in ANHS with an established insight on everybody else, definitely fits the bill and then some. The Chekhov's Gun principle dictates this is proof Hona made use of it, one way or another; that Kinugasa chose to make the predictability of the groupings in a way that worked into Hona's obvious strength over everyone else in the series is evidence in itself that Honami weaponized the pattern, especially when the existence of the pattern is for all intent and purpose an useless detail without any hidden plot and only Hona even has the *potential* of having used it, considering the events with active mind game throughout Y2V8 & the next few volumes revolved around her scheming, with any exceptions having a whooping zero to do with the Hokkaido trip groupings.

This does depend on whether the groups were made in the same way for the trip from the previous years, but there is absolutely nothing suggesting otherwise in the story. Honami predicting Kiyotaka was going to be in the same group as Nori & Mako is important because the connection in the preparation process between the events of Y2V7, Y2V8, Y2V9 and Y2V10 required Hona to foresee relationship development between Kiyo and those specific classmates, especially Norihito.

Considering several other things that will be explained later in the section on top of all this, she had enough data about future events, including the upcoming trip to Hokkaido, to map her strategies around Kiyotaka for the next few months.

But with regards to Y2V7 and Y2V8, it comes down to starting the manipulation process on Ryuji and Norihito towards Kiyotaka for their meetings in both Y2V9 and Y2V10 plus gathering information on Kiyotaka's priorities around that time.

(Prediction, Abductive Reasoning, Social Cognition, Mapping, Memory)

During the cultural festival, *immediately after* Kiyotaka showed up to visit 3-A's exhibition, Honami and Ryuji stumbled on him next in line. Honami immediately left after making a "strange request" (in all likelihood being around Kiyotaka was still an uncomfortable situation for Honami, but that in itself doesn't dismiss the possibility of a deception being in play - it only amplify its believability), leaving the two boys together in an awkward situation; Ryuji held a lot of resentment towards Kiyo from his perception of his influence on Honami, his class' leader and by extension, Kiyotaka's role in his class' depreciation.

This did not stop Ryuji from making a desperate plea to Kiyo to change Honami. Ryuji felt cornered and hopeless, unable to do anything else about the situation.

Her ability to completely see through all of Ryuji's emotional states & intentions was proven thrice afterward; in Y2V10 when Hona not-so-subtly hinted that she knows what he and Kiyotaka were up to (his faction) or Y2V12 when she figured out everything that happened between Ryuji & Suzune (him asking her to forfeit due to his fear of Kiyo's skills) during their battle based on a small slip-up by the latter. In Y3V3, Honami understood how Ryuji would feel about how the situation had changed on the exam's second day even though she was nowhere near Ryuji at the time for a day. Knowing Ryuji was isolated in her class, already distrustful towards Kiyotaka and needed an outlet to vent his frustration towards, if Honami noticed a change in Ryuji's mental state within the next few days (much like with Chihiro in Y2V9.5), it means Kiyo still wanted to help her class for one reason or another. Plus, the Unanimous Vote Exam exposed a drawback of the way Honami led her class - reaching out to those on the outs will be challenging for her. Ryuji or any other discontents having some sort of outlet or not feeling alone is better than them being completely isolated. The evidence for this interpretation is that Hona *never* complained about or signaled disapproval of this faction (while being unto it). Conversely, back in Y2V12.5, she confronted Ryuji for trying to negotiate with Suzune behind her back in the Y2 EoY exam at the first opportunity to do it.

(Acting Skills, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Understanding)

One could presume Honami's actions were not necessary for Kiyotaka and Ryuji to make up. Technically this is true, but in practice it may've been a complicated ordeal without Hona's covert assistance. Kiyo didn't have the kind of relationship with Ryuji in which he would simply call or approach him to have a chat and the same is true the other way around. Especially when considering Ryuji expressed his distrust of Kiyotaka openly & well before the Unanimous Vote Exam, right in front of Honami as well. Ryuji had no reason to think at the time Kiyo would even be concerned about an enemy class, let alone the frustration of just one student Ryuji was not friends with and so even if you were desperate, it would be hard to bring yourself to actually contact him about it. Given Kiyo's lack of connections with Honami's classmates at the time, he also had no way to ascertain what went down in her class during the unanimous vote exam.

Ultimately, Kinugasa chose to construct this scene in this specific manner to get Kiyotaka and Ryuji to bury the hatchet as opposed to having the former contact the latter, implying that the author (and by extension Honami) understood the complications between these two. Her move during the cultural festival created the best circumstances for the two to break the ice.

(Social Awareness, Convergent Thinking, Emotional Understanding)

Another reason to consider Hona's appearance with Ryuji to be a calculated play, other than the timing, the aforementioned convenience and her characterization later on... is that it *was those two being together* visiting the exhibition - Hona and Ryuji openly clashed during the Unanimous Vote Exam, leaving them at odds at the time of the Cultural Festival, hence why he would even approach Kiyo. While it's undeniable Ryuji was a sort of right hand when it came to interclass matters, they were simply visiting Class 3-A's exhibition when they stumbled upon Kiyo. Hona always had other classmates she was closer to than Ryuji such as Mako or Chihiro and her visiting Class 3-A's exhibition did not necessitate Ryuji's support in any capacity.

Honami knowing Kiyotaka would be there at that time is simple to explain; Hona could have used her extremely high information network. After all, Honami is the school's most popular person. This method would not be any different than Kiyo using Miyabi's high information network to find Haruka and Akito later on during the same volume (Y2V7). Considering the aforementioned factors, along with her showing appreciation to Ryuji's and Kiyo's increasing closeness during the Y2V10 meeting, this assist was most likely what she hoped for by leaving them alone.

(Resource Allocation, Indirect **Manipulation**)

There's a more specific benefit to this tactic. The reason why Ryuji reached out to Kiyotaka after the trip, leading to the former asking the latter to meet up with her to investigate why she quit the student council, has its root in this situation. If they hadn't yet made up and Ryuji still didn't trust him, he wouldn't have asked Kiyotaka to meet Honami, leading to their date in Y2V9.

So beyond the concerns with Ryuji and other malcontents and tangling Kiyotaka up with her classmates, this maneuver played into a number of her plan's layers, such as dealing with the matter of Kei + Miyabi in the future. Even if technically, it was possible for Kiyo to contact Honami to meet up before the winter break by himself as a result of her resignation from the council, but having the support of her classmates (and them pushing Kiyo to meet up with Honami) would certainly increase the chances, in any case he wouldn't on his own due to his relationship with Kei or any other reasons. Honami also wanted Mako and Norihito to reach out to Kiyotaka, but they weren't the ones pushing for Kiyotaka to meet up with Honami, it was Yuki and Ryuji. The same applies for the Y2V10 meeting; Honami's excuse that she wanted to run some checks with Kiyo to get Ryuji to participate in the meeting required the latter to have some trust and respect in Kiyotaka.

(Planning Accuracy, Planning Contingency, Planning Preparation Process)

Before Y2V9, Hona performed two tests to gain a better understanding of Kiyo's purpose with her and her class and who he is. They were mandatory. He's dating Kei and Honami is avoiding him, so if he continues helping her class, maybe Kiyo wants to help her class, not necessarily her. Even then, it'd create opportunities.

An outsider like Kiyotaka who did not *seem* particularly opportunistic to prey on her class' shortcomings, unlike the many people within her inner circle, can be a part of the solution if Kiyo can prevent Ryuji, Yuki and the likes from taking more drastic measures. Judging by Honami's comments to them in the Y2V10 meeting and Kiyo's ensuing monologue, she noticed Ryuji's faction from the onset, so she would've known the result of this "test" quickly - before the trip. The matter with Ryuji during the cultural festival was effectively the first "test", test #2 took place during the school trip, during its last day. It appeared that Kiyo will still help her class, even if Hona avoided him; did Kiyo still care about her after all, despite her failures as a class leader & her behavior since she learned of his relationship with Kei? To answer that question, Hona vanished in the blizzard of the trip's last day, shortly before the curfew: Hona's monologue in Y2V9's epilogue is explicit about this being a calculated move. Her intentions were to cause chaos, expecting her friends would involve Kiyo in the search for her. If he comes, then from Honami's point of view back then, it was fair to believe that Kiyotaka cherished her dearly, even if only as a member of her class, but hopefully more. Since Kiyo did come as hoped, erasing the last uncertainty, she could proceed with the plan. As an aside, considering that this entire act was done to gather information, chances are that Hona had already planned to ask Kiyo about the White Room as well and the two being alone like this without surveillance in a remote area was ideal.

(Psychological Profiling, Tactical Management, Emotional Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Information Gathering, Risk Assessment)

While Hona definitely manipulated her classmates into involving Kiyotaka in the search, she somehow expected that Kiyotaka, and no one else, would be the one to find her even though the others had a head start.

It is technically possible she chose the exact location that she thought Kiyotaka would consider and no one else, might have thought he'd be the one to find her because she still had faith in him that he was the closest person she ever met to understanding her or knew his navigation and deduction skills (considering Kiyo narrowed down where she'd be through reasoning, this is not impossible) above anyone else by making observations during the UIE, but there is direct evidence pointing towards a lack of logical thinking.

Mainly, in Hona's monologue (Y2V9) in which it's revealed she lured Kiyotaka, the thinking behind the disappearance is *partly* described as an "instinct that did not consider the possibility".

(Intuition)

When he eventually showed up, she put up an act of not wanting to be with him to make him double down and (from Hona's point of view) be even more worried about her, knowing by then his intent to save her class or her specifically to the point of risking to create misunderstandings if Kei were to see them together. As Hona most likely aimed for, Kiyotaka comforted her. Kiyo reminded Honami that she could ask for his help whenever she needed it.

(Acting Skills, Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation)

After performing both plays, she believed she learned something valuable about Kiyo: He's still invested in helping her class. Kiyo still cares about her well-being. Whether that's due to her being the leader of her class or something deeper was unclear. What's clear is that Kiyotaka's there to help, so Hona can move on to the next step. Furthermore, amongst many other things, Honami wanted to draw his attention in a broad sense & arouse Kiyo's bottomless curiosity. Vanishing in this manner shortly before the curfew for the night of the last day of school trip, was a selfish act. There's no ambiguity about this fact.

It made her friends who deeply cared for her sake panic for no good reason. This was uncharacteristic of the image everyone including Kiyotaka had of Honami.

This, among other actions, would also force Kiyotaka to reevaluate Hona in a big way. It was crucial for Hona to try to continue deceiving Kiyotaka for a long time afterward about her intentions and nature, but not if that amounted to Kiyotaka completely losing all form of interest in her.

(Psychological Analysis, Emotional Inducement, Planning Preparation Process)

With regards to testing him, it also provided Honami with another valuable piece of knowledge; Honami believed with certainty that she had a reliable method to manipulate Kiyotaka. The series of events leading up to Kiyotaka asking to meet up for their date in Y2V9 is extremely similar to when Kiyo found Honami in the blizzard the volume prior: Honami causes chaos by doing something dramatic & not explaining herself -> classmates ask for Kiyo's help -> Kiyo accepts & reaches out to Honami -> Hona acts like she is concerned about Kei and being alone with him -> Kiyotaka doubles down -> she "reluctantly" accepts.

This also reinforces the validity of the aforementioned Y2V7 interpretations.

Considering the facts that:

- Honami claimed, twice in Y2V9, to have begun to consider dropping out of the student council a little bit before the Hokkaido trip.
- Her monologue in Y2V9 revealed she actually orchestrated the sequence of events leading up to Kiyotaka approaching her at the end of said trip.
- The sequence of events leading up to the date in Y2V9 was eerily similar to another we know for a fact she orchestrated not long prior; literally the previous scene she was on-screen in the series.
- The sequence of events leading up to the date in Y2V9 began with Honami dropping out of the student council.

...it's extremely likely her seemingly innocent actions since, bare minimum, Y2V7 were calculated (leaving Ryuji and Kiyotaka alone during the 3-A exhibition, etc).

Dropping out of the student council, a decision made shortly after the Hokkaido trip that she claimed to have begun to consider a little bit *before* the Hokkaido trip (which is basically the entirety of Y2V8, thus a "little bit before" = Y2V7), was suspicious because it set off a chain of events analogous to the one at the end of the Hokkaido trip (meaning, AFTER Hona began to consider leaving the student council yet shortly BEFORE she actually left) that we know Hona masterminded.

In other words, if she quit the student council to trigger the domino effect seen in Y2V9, and she thought about quitting the student council since Y2V7, than it's highly probable she thought about quitting the student council in Y2V7 because she wanted to trigger the domino effect seen in Y2V9, that led to their date.

That the explanation she gave for leaving the student council is dubious at best, as will be detailed in the next division, only adds credence to the interpretation.

One could say Honami lied about thinking of quitting the student council before the trip both during the student council scene AND when asked by Kiyo during the date, but then it raises the question of why Honami would make this lie.

As for why we can believe Honami told the truth about considering quitting the council since before the Hokkaido trip, despite all her lies in-between: no matter how subtle or natural a writer wants to be with certain elements of their stories, they still need to convey the required amount of information, no matter in what form it's presented, so the readers have to discern the elements. For that reason, it is logical to conclude, unless there is evidence suggesting otherwise or a clear incentive in lying to everyone twice - even to her own classmates given Kiyotaka admitted by this point of their date he was asked to ask her by them - the reader can discern, Hona told the truth about thinking of leaving the SC before the trip.

It is possible the similarities between the events leading up to Kiyo finding her in the blizzard were a coincidence, but as far as Honami's appearances in the series are concerned, the scene where she quit the SC that triggered the events leading to their date came *immediately* after the blizzard scene. Even without the "as far as Hona's appearances in the series are concerned" point, the blizzard scene was the last one of Y2V8 and the council scene began at the beginning of Y2V9 (Ch. 1, Pt. 2). It involved the same actors with the same roles, minor contextual changes aside. The only meaningful dissimilarity was that Ryuji intended to meet up with Kiyotaka for another reason (introducing him to the third member of his faction), though the group talked about Hona's resignation regardless and her classmates asking Kiyotaka to meet up with Honami.

In any case, if Kiyo were to be *the one* to find and comfort Hona in the blizzard, it increases the chances her classmates, not just Ryuji but her close friends such as Mako or Chihiro, would rely on Kiyotaka again, in case they were unconvinced if Kiyo was reliable, should something similar were to happen in the future - which did happen right after the trip. She pretended to push him away for much longer during the event of the Hokkaido trip compared to their phone conversation to schedule their date - this could be Hona back in Hokkaido trying to be convinced this method would work again for later usage. Even if there were real downsides to being part of the council in regards to free time and all, the strategy involved guaranteeing Suzune, who's from another class, the student council presidency Hona once seriously vied for, along with two vacant council seats to fill (hers and Takuya's). Ergo, there was a real cost to this, so she had to confirm that the tactic would be a success in advance. Her disappearance, amongst other things served as a "test case" for her future tactics.

(Information Gathering, Risk Assessment, Planning Preparation Process)

Earlier, it was explained why it could be inferred that Hona used pre-established patterns to predict the Y2V8 groupings. Here, we will explain ***how*** she used them to set things up for the future.

Honami made some preparations around Norihito Watanabe, a student from her class, before the school trip to Hokkaido.

This explanation will seem disconnected before reading the Rumor Mills & Norihito sub-plan divisions, but within the context of proving Hona had begun preparing the pieces from her class for her plan before the school trip, it can not be ignored. It will also explain how Norihito's behavior around Kiyo during their scenes of Y2V8, Y2V9 and Y2V10 was the yield of Honami's manipulations.

Throughout both Y2V8 and Y2V9, Norihito had begun to increasingly see Kiyo as a reliable person. He also somehow knew about Honami loving Kiyo even before the school trip despite the fact that the other boys in their class did not, which is unusual. Norihito basically said it was a coincidence.

The way Norihito explained how he knew imply he was thinking of his reason for knowing; the "..." from the previous scan suggest Nori might have lied, though on its own this may sound like a reach and Norihito truly stumbled upon the group of girls talking about Kiyotaka. But it does not end there - Norihito ALSO was not expected to take part in the meeting with Ryuji's "faction" in Y2V9 - second case of him being at the right place at the right time. In that case, Norihito and Mako might have hoped to confirm whether the rumors of Honami dropping out of the student council were true & it was the main reason these two wanted to join the meeting between Kiyotaka and Ryuji's faction as there were rumors of Kiyotaka replacing Hona in the council (which were themselves suspicious as explained in the Rumor Mills division). Kiyo's lack of connections to her other classmates also played a role in making Nori and Mako reach out to Kiyo, a foreseeable outcome. Then later in Y2V10, Nori also was not expected to take part in the meeting Hona organized, according to Ryuji, making that event the 3rd coincidence; this will be described in greater depth in the Y2V10 Meeting division, as Kiyotaka wondered (in his thoughts) whether Nori anticipated Mako would be coming. Basically, one coincidence of Norihito being at the "right place at the right time" in each of the first three volumes Nori appeared in; two of which there is direct evidence they were something else. The benefits for Hona to tell Norihito about her feelings for Kiyo before the school trip would be to make him appear special and maybe even reliable, considering Honami's popularity. This would increase after Kiyo reached out to Honami in Y2V9 to gather information for Nori and her other classmates. All of this would lead to Honami's anticipation in Y2V10, where Nori would come back to seek advice from Kiyotaka. Nori was also a convenient person in Honami's plan given his feelings for Mako (her bestie; this had its share of benefits), Norihito's sociability as well as his controllable and predictable behavior.

At the time of Y2V8-9, this also functioned as a second contingency in the events Ryuji decided to not reach out to Kiyotaka about Honami dropping out of the SC.

Nothing written here is enough to definitively prove she began preparing before Y2V8 on its own, but when combined with what was previously explained about the patterns for the Y2V8's groupings, it's a different kettle of fish.

(Planning Contingency, Planning Preparation Process, Emotional Manipulation, Emotional Facilitation)

The Execution of the Rumor Mills



Hona dropped out of the student council not long after the Hokkaido trip, during the scene where Miyabi revealed the elections. As mentioned many times before, this is a decision she claimed to have made *before* the trip.

Honami's explanation in the moment was that she didn't think she was worthy of such a "title" (being the SCP). Dropping out of the student council obviously had nothing to do with a lack of self-worth. If anything, it was the complete opposite: she had more confidence in herself than before. Leaving aside her strategies and planning, the decision in itself evinced it, especially as Hona didn't consult any of her classmates before making this daring choice even though it was on her mind for some time. It directly concerned her classmates since Honami's presence on the council provided a passive source of class points. It's even more illogical in a narrative sense as it was meant to come across as the 1st noticeable step in the right direction to be more courageous. No one in the room, which included two of the most perceptive students in ANHS, is shown doubting this explanation in the volume; understandable as nobody there could've known in the moment that she kept everything to herself. As it'll be explained throughout this section, this act played a role in nearly every layer of Honami's complete plan. Directly, it was the catalyst for the date and the demoralization/manipulation of Miyabi.

(Verbal Deception, Tactical Potency, Tactical Management)

As Honami didn't (and could not after her resignation as Miyabi asked Honami to stay quiet about her resignation since the procedures being that the SC needs to have the replacement officially introduced beforehand - Takuya's case obviously being an exception to this rule since he was expelled on the spot) explain herself to her classmates at any point before the weekend, it caused confusion, so they asked Kiyo to investigate Hona for them, even though he was in a different class which could go against what would've been their better judgement under normal circumstances, but he has a special position for a multitude of reasons. This led to Kiyotaka asking Hona to meet up, causing some friction between him and Kei; this was essential even if it was only temporary for a plethora of reasons.

To bring context to establish the feasibility of the strategy in regards to getting the timing of the date right: It was a near guarantee that Kiyo would ask Honami to meet up in a public space; the situation between them was still very awkward at that point and when you add Kiyotaka's still-existing-at-the-time relationship with Kei, it was borderline impossible that Kiyo would ask Honami to meet up in either his or her room. Honami was working with a short time frame of four days which was an asset as it increased the predictability of the other relevant actors: the fake date had to happen in three days specifically, as she (or more accurately, rumors which conveniently included Kiyotaka being a new council member; the last part is foreseeable on its own even if Kiyotaka was not in the council room - anyone could notice Suzune relied on Kiyo a lot, though the fact rumors spread of Honami resigning is really suspicious as both the resignation and recruitment happened *after* school hours with the latter, which should have drawn the most attention as it involved more people, taking place **on the last day of the week**; it doesn't make sense unless Hona did some offscreen social engineering because the meeting with Ryuji and the others took place ***the next morning***) was creating confusion when a special exam would take place soon (according to the narrator, "a few days" passed between the date and when Hona stood in front of Kiyotaka's door, which happened the day prior to the special exam), so it was better for her classmates to deal with this before the start of the next week. The rumor of Kiyo being Hona's replacement was crucial since it was the reason Hona's classmates thought Kiyotaka would know whether she did resign and if so, maybe even why.

The first day after resignation, as the last day before the week-end, was for the rumors about Hona's resignation and Kiyotaka being the replacement to spread, the next would be for Kiyo's meeting with her classmates and the Sunday would have to be for the fake date set up Kiyotaka and her classmates the day prior.

(Mass Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Anticipation, Planning Accuracy, Strategy Forecast, Social Cognition, Fabrication)

When Kiyotaka called Honami, she took a bit of time to respond to his call. Then when she did, Kiyotaka asked if they could meet. Honami acts nervously and asks if it is truly okay for the two to meet up alone, which Kiyo affirms to be the case. While Honami doesn't drop her name, she's hinting at how Kei would feel.

By painting this picture the way she did, Hona was pandering to the idea that Kei would be unhappy with him spending time with her.

It is a similar manipulative tactic as the ones she employed during Y2V8/9.5/12.5 - feign hesitations, imply whatever Kiyo is doing is bad for one reason or another (usually Kei) or say something that only resembles a rejection but is not truly one and... Kiyotaka is 100% guaranteed to double down. Which he did.

Honami learned this was effective not long ago; it worked during the school trip, so she knew it would work this time again. This act allowed Hona to conceal her intentions and retain her mask of innocence.

(Acting Skills, Direct Manipulation, Crystallized Methods, Hot Reading)

The fact that Kiyotaka would conceal his intentions with the date from Hona was to be expected for numerous reasons - the atmosphere between these two being tense, her classmates being afraid to approach Hona themselves and not wanting Honami to know their intentions, etc. This was crucial because Honami had to be the one who decides the first location of their fake date.

Honami begins the date by taking Kiyotaka's offer to essentially take the lead on where they'd go and so on; she offers him to go to the gym - a place she began to visit two months ago that he and Kei did not visit.

This was of monumental importance for her strategy as Kiyotaka would frequent the gym more often from that point on: Kiyotaka would later tell Honami that he enjoyed the experience so much that he got himself a gym membership. This led to Honami and Kiyotaka being seen by a random (almost certainly a third year) a few days later who would take a photo of them leaving the gym.

It's highly likely Honami thought this would work on Kiyo because, as previously mentioned, though she'd only confirm Kiyotaka was a fish out of water after the S&E special exam, Honami already thought of Kiyo as someone driven by his love for new experiences and being able to do things by himself. Hona also had to be aware that Kiyotaka doesn't feel comfortable when he's surrounded by unfamiliar faces on his own which would partially explain why he stayed away from the gym until that point, despite his interests and clearly being in ridiculous shape.

(Anticipation, Emotional Manipulation, Emotional Understanding)

In the gym, Honami noticed Mako and Kiyotaka had an “eye conversation”. (Social Intuition, Emotional Perception)

During the next scene at the café, Honami starts the conversation by asking if Kiyotaka asked her to meet up to discuss her resignation from the SC. Kiyotaka admitted to it and asked Honami why she dropped out of the student council. Honami reiterated that she didn’t think she was worthy of the title, but this time she added that she also wanted to focus more on class matters and considered student council duties to be something of a burden.

Again, there’s no direct evidence Kiyo seriously considered the possibility that Honami lied, albeit focusing more on class matters might have been a positive side effect and played a role in her decision, even if it was not the main reason. (Verbal Deception)

To summarize the rumor strategy up to this point, these are the *main* acts Honami had to perform or expect:

- Predicted Miyabi will hold an election between her and Suzune on the second-to-last week before the winter break, due to the upcoming special exam and Hokkaido trip limiting the time window for the election.
- Resigned from the student council the next Thursday after school hours.
- Fabricated off-screen rumors about her resignation and Kiyotaka being her replacement at some point during the week, most likely Friday.
- Expect her classmates to contact Kiyo to ask Honami whether the rumors are true (and if so, then why?)
    - Honami set up several contingencies to ensure this would happen before she dropped out of the student council and there even was a chance Kiyotaka would contact her on his own.
- Put up an act of concern for Kei and surprise that Kiyotaka invited her to meet in public “tomorrow” (that next day being a Sunday) to conceal her intentions.
- During their pseudo-date, Honami suggests to Kiyotaka that they should go to the gym, in hope Kiyotaka would find the experience enjoyable to go there more often from then on.
- Over the next few days, they would go to the gym together, leading to them hopefully being caught by some random third years while most of the second years are busy studying for the upcoming special exam.

In the next several divisions, we'll describe some of Hona's operations, especially the door tactic in Y2V9, as adjustments to progress her plan. This relates to how Ikuta's plan to break the elections played into Honami's. It's possible that Honami didn't expect him to take drastic actions to interfere with the election, especially how he went about it. According to Kiyo, Honami showed some signs of agitation when Fuka threw around the word "shoplifting", which would indicate that Hona was taken aback. However, it is possible that Honami did in fact bank on it or at least expected Ikuta to do something akin to what he did in Y2V9 when he did.

This would've required her to have an accurate read on Ikuta, but this is nothing special for her. Honami has plenty of mind reading related feats on more difficult people to read with significantly less information and time at her disposal to do the reads and foresights, most notably Ichika in Y3V1. Having joined the student council all the way back in the middle of Year 1, Honami worked with Ikuta as SC members for roughly a year. Of course, nearly all of that was fully off-screen, but this is plenty of time together for her to understand how Ikuta felt about Miyabi, how he may react to learning about the former SCP's plan to have an election to decide who will be his successor and his relations with her and Suzune.

If Hona understood that Ikuta wouldn't directly ask her or Suzune to resign from the SC, it wouldn't be too difficult for Honami to develop a rough idea as to how Ikuta would intervene to make either her or Suzune drop out, simply because his options were limited. Obviously, no matter when Miyabi informed him about the elections, any sort of scheming by Ikuta to affect the SCP candidates' judgement would be executed around the time they'd learn about this election, only shortly before at the earliest, so whatever he did can be fresh on Suzune or Hona's mind.

This is important because it narrows down the time frame drastically when Hona had no way to predict with exact precision when Miyabi would tell Ikuta. Honami can guess Miyabi kept Ikuta on a need-to-know basis, but since he thought Ikuta was completely tamed and subdued by then, it's entirely possible he did not care whatsoever to tell Ikuta long ahead of time about the elections.

After the school trip and before the date she foresaw that the elections would be announced, there's at most 3-4 days for Ikuta to take action. During that period of time, it's possible the council didn't have a meeting scheduled and there was no reason for Honami to expect any SC member to call one, outside of possibly something related to Takuya. But since Miyabi didn't do anything about Takuya's departure before the school trip and probably just didn't care at all, he probably intended to leave the task of replacing Takuya to the next SCP.

It is quite fortunate that Takuya didn't matter because... considering Hona began to formulate her plan before he was expelled, which to Honami was obviously an unpredictable event, there is no chance Honami took this into account when she mapped out all the acts and steps.

Regardless, logically, Ikuta would execute his plan at a time when he knew where Honami or Suzune would be present to witness whatever could make them drop out of the elections. The only plausible time given all the aforementioned factors is when Miyabi announced the elections, when Honami & Suzune had to consent to taking part of those.

It's not clear exactly why Honami would think Ikuta would learn about this ahead of time, enough that Ikuta could even prepare his plan, but this can be related to some SC procedures that forced Miyabi to tell Ikuta before the candidates. This is an unknown premise that can't be proven, but since the story doesn't explain why Miyabi even told Ikuta ahead of time in the first place, it's plausible.

So Honami could've expected Ikuta to take some kind of indirect action against her or Suzune, which would lead to the other reasoning (Kiyotaka investigating the case, the timing, etc). But "could've" doesn't necessarily mean Honami did.

There's the matter of Honami reacting to the word shoplifting, but this isn't very strong counter evidence. Rather than proving Honami didn't expect Ikuta to try something ahead of time, it's possible, as Kiyo said in his monologue, shoplifting in general is a trigger for Honami due to her backstory and it was unpleasant for her to listen to Fuka's disgust of being framed as one. Outside of that, she doesn't show any surprise at Fuka bursting into the room or anything else, so if anything, Honami's behavior even after Fuka showed up suggests she expected something similar to this to occur.

That being said, outside of everything in Y2V9 seemingly going as Hona planned and the aforementioned lack of reaction to Fuka's (abrupt) entrance, there isn't a wealth of (or one hard) evidence that she expected Ikuta's actions. It also wasn't necessary for Honami to have this specific foresight. But it's kinda probable.

It is also possible the truth is somewhere in-between: Honami was loosely aware of how Ikuta could impact everyone else's movement if he tried to do something extreme, and she planned with it being a possibility, rather than a certainty.

Whether Honami actually anticipated Ikuta's scheming, adapted to his actions or it's a mix of both, only Kinugasa knows.

(Speculation)

Y2V9 - Kiyotaka's Door / Room Tactics

The day before Y2V9's special exam and a few after their date, Hona anticipated that Kiyotaka would investigate the Fuka case after school and it was going to take a long time. That is because, due to Ikuta's meddling, she had to connect a few dots to understand how his actions would affect both Kiyotaka and Miyabi. Ignoring the last three pages, this was an adjustment: waiting in front of Kiyo's door for so long was only possible because of Fuka's case.

(Anticipation, Abductive Reasoning, Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Holistic Thinking, Abstraction, Assessment, Strategy Flexibility)

Honami waited in front of Kiyotaka's door for one and a half hours. It is heavily implied during her scene with Kakeru in the epilogue, Y2V11 with Masayoshi via parallel that the aim was to spread rumors about her and Kiyotaka. Though she wasn't done with her rumor spreading strategy yet and she had essentially won the moment the fake date was set (as it was then Kiyotaka would begin to visit the gym with her, and the gym photo was taken the day prior to this, according to Nene, when Honami conveniently forgot something there to pick up or so she claimed - true or false it gave Honami a reason to appear in front of Kei). Though there was still a long way to go, the spaghetti of tactics since Y2V7, between the Ryuji - Kiyotaka connection, the disappearance and ensuing panic on the last day of the Hokkaido school trip, quitting the council, her lack of communication with her classmates resulting in the ensuing date with Kiyotaka after, had effectively culminated into this moment.

One purpose of the rumor spreading and the steps leading up to it was to ensure all relevant actors (Arisu, Kiyo, Kei, Miyabi, etc) would operate on different POVs of her and Kiyotaka's actions built on separate set of information, while layers of concealment worsening the tangled webs of misunderstandings when it comes to each others' intents (especially Kiyotaka's) and feelings. This had a handful of benefits, especially when it comes to Miyabi, Arisu and Kei.

Spreading rumors about Kiyotaka's interest in Honami can also help with setting up the post-breakup phase, by intimidating any potential suitors from making a move on him later on; most students would not think they have a chance if they believe Kiyotaka has his sights on the school's most popular girl.

This also played perfectly into Hona's manipulations of her classmates, especially Norihito, for reasons we will delve into in the analysis of the Y2V10 Meeting.

(Fabrication, Multitasking, Strategy Complexity, Planning Applicability)

Honami used Miyabi, whom she made desperate by quitting by student council - his social power and his desperation to fight Kiyotaka makes him the perfect tool to spread harmful rumors about Kiyotaka specifically. Given Miyabi's personality she had the opportunity to observe closely for the past year and his aim, Honami knew Miyabi would gladly take responsibility, leaving all the blood on his hands.

In essence, this means this move was a calculated gambit. Even if Kiyo's instinct sensed something was amiss, Kiyo can't accuse Honami of spreading the rumors; Miyabi did all that by himself and would readily admit to it should he be asked. This hid Hona's responsibility in this, simply because she and Miyabi were clearly not working together. The fact that Honami dropping out of the student council caused Miyabi's need to trouble Kiyotaka in the first place was proof enough.

(Abusing Insecurities, Scapegoating, Emotional Manipulation, Risk Competence, Emotional Understanding, Planning Contingency, Concealment)

Key evidence for everything mentioned above being Fuka's account (Y2V9.5), the timing of Nene's photo and the latter's likely alibi (Y2V9; specifically the fact that Nene is in Kei's social circles, so more likely to have taken part of the same study sessions). Fuka warned Kiyotaka that around the same time all of this took place, she saw Miyabi on the phone tirelessly gathering rumors about the second years.

The gym photo was supposedly taken when Kei and the others were studying for the upcoming exam with Suzune, so the photo couldn't have been taken by Nene herself unless she wasn't studying with everyone else. Kiyotaka was investigating the third year students when the photo was allegedly taken, so Nene might have been wrong about the photo's date. This, and Nene saying the photo was 2 days old yet only sending it to Kei after the exam may lead one to think something is up with Nene, but the odds that she lied or conspired are low for a few reasons.

One is Nene's total lack of characterization despite being one of MC's classmates for Year 1 + 2 and Kei's friend, so we shouldn't assume Nene lied without a direct statement or allegiances to provide a motive for lying. Another being it was a lie easy to see through: If Honami didn't appear the moment Kei saw the gym photo and "cleared up the misunderstandings", Kei would've discussed this matter with Kiyotaka. He would obviously be aware that Nene lied to Kei. He also had Nazuna and many other people to support his alibi that he was investigating when Nene said this gym photo was taken. So by making this lie, Nene would expose herself as a liar to everyone who hurts her friend's feelings and Kiyotaka being especially on guard around her at best from that point on for zero discernible benefits.

Even if you overlook all that, Nene lying for some nebulous goal remains unlikely.

It would suggest that she aimed to reveal herself to Kiyotaka (and everyone else including Kei, apparently) in some capacity and her plot was thwarted by Hona who "clarified" the misunderstandings before Kei confronted Kiyotaka about it.

Nene never did anything that could be interpreted as suspicious before and after Y2V9 and even if revealing herself was at least partly the purpose of this lie, why didn't she reveal herself to Kiyotaka directly without involving Kei and Maya?

Nene being anything other than some harmless NPC in Suzune's class and a plot device in the context of Y2V9's events creates more questions than answers.

But even if Nene was wrong about when the gym photo was taken, it should not have been during the date. Miyabi had reasons to foresee Kiyotaka and Honami spending time together during that day, but not the specific place they'd meet.

There was no reason for Miyabi or anyone else to expect the first gym trip when Kiyotaka never went there, but it would be more plausible if the former SCP had prepared some people to take photos on any day afterward, as the news of Hona and Kiyotaka spending time together might've spread, at least with the third year students, including at the gym which would be unusual since, as previously said, Kiyotaka wasn't known to go there before.

This gym trip would've taken place earlier during the week, on a day before Hona visited Kiyotaka in his room and his investigation into the third year. He would've still been on his free trial and might've applied for his gym membership then.

Regardless, after the events of Y2V11, Miyabi's antagonistic story arc appeared to be over and his year's graduation happened off-screen around the time of Y2V12, so the rumors will never be connected to anything else.

Anyway, back to the Room Scene.

Honami made several moves to obscure her motives for not contacting Kiyotaka ahead of time and waiting. Hona's seductive behavior throughout the scene after Kiyotaka returned was also calculated. Honami's words, declaration of love, and flattery drew Kiyotaka's attention to her feelings rather than considering outside factors (judging by Kiyo's monologues throughout the scene). The corresponding illustration presented below shows Hona's uniform was unbuttoned; this is a first throughout the series; even her sleeping B&W from Y1V4 was buttoned. Kiyotaka remarked that she must've been freezing before he arrived; Honami wore a skirt while waiting for one and half hours in the night of winter. Additionally, Kiyotaka noticed Hona used her citrus perfume much like she used to (Y1V11 and Y1V11.5).



These tactics successfully made Kiyo ignore the possibility Hona was fabricating rumors. Not even intentionally - the fact it would even spark rumors didn't come across his mind. Kiyo's scene with Chihiro in a few days later - more specifically Kiyotaka's reactions to Chihiro's words - proved he had no idea about any of the rumors circulating, he never considered this could happen, although he could've been more so surprised over the *shape* in which they had taken form. Something to consider is whenever someone calls Hona to meet, she always shows up early. That Hona was standing in front of his room for more than an hour duped people into thinking Kiyotaka invited her to his room late, and this was yet another case of Hona "showing up early for a meeting". Arisu, Miyabi, Chihiro and many others fell for Honami's deceit. During the scene on the last day before the winter break after school, it was implied that Arisu mistakenly assumed Kiyotaka had invited her to his room. Chihiro told Kiyotaka that there were various rumors about the two, one being that he invited Honami to his room.

(**Fabrication**, **Misdirection**, Tactical Synergy, Social Awareness)

Something to remember is the feeling she expressed during the declaration was undoubtedly real, as sincere as there can be sincerity in anything. There was no denying the fact that she loves him and wants to become the girl he will look at.

This honest feeling was one condition she had to clear to deceive the perceptive Kiyotaka into thinking there was no deception in play.

Otherwise, it could have turned out like it did for Masayoshi in Y2V11 (who tried to do something extremely similar), where Kiyotaka immediately discerned the agenda of waiting in front of his room without contacting him beforehand.

On this note, throughout the scene, since those feelings were very real, Honami expressed complete self-awareness over her feelings towards Kiyotaka and its depth. She also came to terms with them for the most part, the nature of what she had been scheming for quite some time by that point and her related inner struggles that were still noticeable in her short stories of Y2V9. This is a classic example of resolving emotions through self-reflections and understanding (Emotional Engagement, Emotional Realization, Metacognition)

Another important component she had to manage throughout Y2V9 was Miyabi.

Leaving the student council, getting across she made up her mind ahead of time, then spending a lot of time with Kiyotaka - not only during their date, but by all appearances Kiyotaka inviting her to his room late after school, deceived Miyabi into making several wrong assumptions. A logical conclusion from Miyabi's POV was Kiyo anticipated his proposal to have an election ahead of time, manipulated Honami into dropping out and aimed to have Suzune, his classmate and "pawn", as SCP (Miyabi called him out in Y2V11 for sending Suzune to the council to spy on him, confirming Miyabi saw her that way). This is made worse by the fact that Hona's seat in the student council was given to Kikyo, someone Kiyotaka fooled Miyabi into thinking to be his pawn when she was in fact trying to expel Kiyotaka (Rumor Strike; Y1V9).

This is after Miyabi tried to turn Honami into his plaything again after he made Kiyotaka reject her (Y2V4.5) and her doing nothing afterward to make him think he failed, not fighting his demands to play the role of indentured servant around the time of the second year's sport festival (Y2V6).

As Hona was leaving the student council room following her resignation, she told Kiyo "see you later, Ayanokouji-kun" even though they had no plan to meet up *at the time*. When Honami repeats that sentence later in the book when they again did not plan to meet up, Kiyotaka mentioned in his monologues that it was kinda strange, but not back then. This can be dismissed as, at the time she said it in the SC, Kiyo's mind was more preoccupied with her resignation than her wording.

Or Kinu simply didn't want to draw attention to that until further development.

Given that afterward they ended up going on a date and then post-school hours the day after, she waited in front of Kiyotaka's door until he returned to his dorm without contacting him ahead of time, that little comment might have been said to further misdirect Miyabi toward the conclusion that Kiyo planned everything ahead of time. Hona also claimed that she was feeling "under the weather". This gave Miyabi a plausible reason as to why they actually met two days later instead and a decent excuse to leave quickly before anyone asked her more questions.

Miyabi was confident he would win the bet - he was willing to give Kiyotaka the right to pick his candidate in front of them despite Kiyotaka not asking for it. As such, from Miyabi's point of view, there's ground for Kiyotaka to bail on him and get the most out of doing so.

Miyabi's reasoning can be inferred by his behavior after Honami left the council: he took his anger on Kiyo and forced him to help Suzune with the recruitment to fill the vacant seats and later invited him to the student council to warn him that their battle was not over. It is a small thing, but to persuade Kiyo in Y2V11, Miyabi assured him that their game would not involve the risk of expulsion, even though Kiyotaka offered of his own volition his school life for their election bet.

(Bluffing, Misdirection)

Honami could not allow Kiyo and his circle of friends to know about the rumors during the break, so that he would not address them before it was way too late. This worked out perfectly until he had a lucky / unlucky encounter with Chihiro; Kiyo was blissfully unaware of the rumors before he met her. Kei began to think Kiyotaka has feelings for Honami, which is a misconception he would not be able to adequately address even if he wanted to. Honami approached Kei the *moment* she received the photo. Honami anticipated the timing Kei would learn about the other gym trips, else she wouldn't have been able to show up when Nene texted Kei, as she knew Miyabi was spreading rumors right before the winter break:

The ideal timing if you want to spread rumors to as many people as possible yet also make it harder for the target of said rumors (in this case, Honami and Kiyo) to address them properly. To trouble Kiyotaka, Honami also had to expect Miyabi would target Kei or someone close to her.

The "as if [...]" line directly supports that Hona planned this, as does Hona acting like she had to end her talk with Arisu ASAP because of the class victory party at the cafe... only to take a detour to the gym to pick up stuff which she could have done another day, then start a talk with Kei/Maya before going to the cafe with 0 rush; the convo with Arisu was getting in the way of intercepting Kei on time.

Normally, this could've been dismissed with Honami disliking Arisu and the talk becoming uncomfortable... If it wasn't for Honami going out of her way to talk to ***Kei*** right after, the only person she could dislike even more than Arisu.

The fact that Honami came out of the gym meant she had a good idea Kei would get the gym photo at that specific time and she would be around the mall too.

(Information Control, Anticipation, Logical Manipulation, Convergent Thinking)

Honami had to meet up with Kei ASAP. Then, she "reassured" Kei and Maya (who happened to accompany Kei) and addressed their concerns in a way that made it seem as if Hona's innocent in all of this with Kiyo going out of his way to help her for seemingly nothing in return and it's Kiyotaka that is the one who's into Hona. Though the gym photo was from a trip that happened later, Honami had to make it seem as if she ran into Kei on her way to her class' victory party, in the events that Kiyotaka found out about this - when Hona volunteered to explain the date to Kei, Kiyotaka told Honami not to, claiming that it was his responsibility and he would do it himself. If Honami happened to come across Maya and Kei and it was them who demanded an explanation from her, it couldn't be helped and Honami can not be blamed for any misunderstandings.

(Reinforcements, Misdirection, Verbal Deception, Planning Contingency)

Kei was still worried about Honami in Y2V11. This was partially because the latter twisted what actually went down between them to plant the idea he approached her to lend a hand without a real push. Instead of telling Kei and Maya that Kiyo asked her why she dropped out of the SC on the behalf of her classmates, Hona lied. Honami claimed Kiyotaka gave her some advice on how to lead, concealing his involvement within the inner workings of her class. Hona also dissuaded Kei from confronting the rumors circulating and more importantly, Kiyotaka, about them, increasing the former's stress & isolating the latter socially in the hope he would not intervene to stop their circulation.

(Abusing Insecurities, Scapegoating, Direct Manipulation, Concealment)

Meanwhile, Honami understood Miyabi would have loved nothing more than for the spread of the rumors to be traced back to him to agitate Kiyotaka, especially after Honami made Miyabi think that Kiyotaka manipulated her leading up to her resignation; after all, his actions to spread rumors would have served no purpose otherwise. For all intent and purposes, it is the same as when the former student council president used his people to harass Kiyotaka in the aftermath of the UIE.

The photo could've accomplished that goal better than the other rumors, as Kiyo can swiftly figure out Nene didn't take the gym photo due to the aforementioned reasons. But if Kiyo wasn't aware the photo was in circulation, even if he knew of the other rumors spreading, then he wouldn't trace anything back to Miyabi.

This made his desperate attempt to get to his psyche a dud. Kiyo and Kei had, by all appearances, completely made up and Kiyo couldn't care about something he knew nothing of. That is looking six steps ahead: Miyabi's students spot Kiyo and Hona during one of their gym trips -> Miyabi chooses to spread the rumors and target Kei's friend -> Kiyo learns of rumors from Kei -> he deduce Nene couldn't have taken the picture (even if Nene was wrong about the photo's date, this only lead to Kiyotaka asking her what's up with that and she would spill the beans on who sent it to her) -> he confirm that a third year (one of Miyabi's pawn) was the source -> confront him. Hona snuffed out this possible series of events.

(Emotional Understanding, Social Cognition, Preclusion, Misdirection)

By then, from Miyabi's point of view, Kiyotaka retook his "plaything" even though he still had his nominal "girlfriend" (Kei), anticipated his election plans ahead of time and convinced Honami to drop out to screw up those plans and he got his "pawns" into the council. Then, Kiyo was completely unfazed by Miyabi's last try to get to his head. On top of all that, KiyoKei was superficially back to normal.

For all intent and purpose, Miyabi choosing to spread rumors about Kiyotaka can be seen as a critical mistake; had the former president not fallen into this pitfall, his competitive side could have recovered.

The amplification of Miyabi's preexisting insecurities throughout Y2V9-11; going from still being determined and full of overt confidence during Y2V9 to suddenly believing Kiyotaka anticipates anything he even considers and is beyond his level even before his last meeting with Ichika.

Basically, for all intent and purpose, him giving up on defeating Kiyotaka before the fight truly had begun was the product of many layers of deception, nearly all of which had their roots in Hona's actions.

To summarize all the little things that could have affected Miyabi's judgement:

1. There's virtually zero chance this was intentional from the onset given her mental state at the time, but around the period of the second year's sport festival, Honami was behaving like an "indentured servant", giving Miyabi confidence he had control over her. This could've made Hona's resignation from the student council (right when he needed her the most) hit harder.

    a. Even if Honami did not intend to use Miyabi back in the times of the sports festival, nothing stopped Hona from being opportunistic and using this later on; it's a factor that can affect Miyabi's perception of what is going on. This could be a situation like Y2V12.5, where Hona continued to act as if she was still down & done long after recovery to deceive Kiyo. Regardless, based on Y2V10.25SS, Hona was already trying to reach out to Kiyotaka, so what Miyabi tried to do in Y2V4.5 - using her broken heart to distance her from Kiyotaka and control her - didn't quite work out, not unlike Arisu post-rejection as well.
2. The Hokkaido school trip was a gap in time when Miyabi couldn't monitor Honami or ask to do council work whereas Kiyotaka could make a move to regain "control" of her, even though Honami avoided him up to that point.
3. When she resigned from the SC in the middle of the election talks and was about to leave the council room, which was shortly after the trip, in front of Miyabi, she said "See you later, Ayanokoji-kun" before leaving the room even though she avoided him before the trip and acted nervous whenever she saw him - Honami did not act nervous at all throughout the SC scene.
4. The "See you later, Ayanokoji-kun" comment may have been quite valuable for another reason - the ensuing date three days later.
   Honami created the circumstances leading to Kiyotaka inviting her on said date, though Miyabi wouldn't know. They would be seen by his underlings, further pushing the idea that Kiyotaka prepared everything ahead of time.
5. Kikyo, who Miyabi saw as Kiyotaka's pawn, being her replacement. Honami did not manipulate Suzune into doing this, but it should have been easy to bank on her making that decision if you knew her well and spent any time observing her - Honami has feats (anticipating Suzune's Y2V10 strategy by correctly assessing her mindset and her implied social intuition in Y2V10) and statement (talking about noticing Suzune's change around others over the past two years during their fight in Y2V12) supporting both conditions. ***However***, as a precaution, the aforementioned rumors Honami created of Kiyotaka himself being her replacement might've been an effective way to get Miyabi's gears spinning in that direction from the onset. The "See you later" comment was probably not enough on its own, so it could've been a necessity to get the former SCP to get his people to spy on Honami's and Kiyotaka's date; it happened before Suzune officially declared Kikyo to be the new SC's VP in the first place. This provision eliminated a likely timing inconsistency.

6. Clarifying she didn't make that decision in the heat of the moment, making that fact clear to Miyabi and everyone else in that room.
   Honami did mention that she had been thinking of doing this since before the trip, but that can be dismissed as Kiyotaka having told Honami to say that ahead of time or planting seeds in her head before the school trip.
7. Waiting in front of Kiyo's door for one and half hours, misleading Miyabi & many others into thinking Kiyotaka invited Honami late before the exam.
8. Manipulating Kei into not asking Kiyotaka for an explanation for the gym photo, creating the false impression that KiyoKei was back to normal and so Miyabi's scheme had no impact whatsoever.

The goal of putting Miyabi in this state, besides all the perks tied to making him spread rumors about Honami and Kiyo, would then have been to both eliminate any risk of Kiyotaka being expelled (we can say Honami also saw the bet coming from a mile away, due to the same evidence as the election) and ensure he would not interfere with either one of them anymore in any serious capacity.

This may seem contradictory, since Miyabi wanted to fight a strong opponent to see his limits. But, there's a nuance: a competitive, ambitious person seeking out strong foes would rather fight the champion with the belt than a mountain or a god, so to speak. It ties into his last scene (in ANHS) where he thought he could not reach Kiyotaka's level and fighting him would be a "waste".

(Misdirection, Demoralization, Emotional Facilitation, Tactical Synergy, Strategy Forecast, Strategy Logistics, Planning Contingency, Planning Invincibility, Field Safeguarding, Setting Trap)

One of Honami's key objectives with bumping into Kei was to stop her and Kiyo from having a proper conversation and demoralize Miyabi, but she also took the opportunity to extract as much information as she could out of Kei and Maya. Bowing down and taking an apologetic posture, by acting as if she had personal knowledge of the situation, Honami got Kei to interrogate her. Consequently, Kei dropped Ryuji's and Yuki's names and Honami had to wing it as a result since this obviously wasn't expected, though it validated her pre-existing suspicions while confirming Kiyo left Kei out of the loop. To top it all off, Honami used the excuse of mutual interests to "defend" Kiyo which can be used to continue meeting him regularly and ensure the gym is a Kei-free and Arisu-free zone. It secures a place she can spend time with him - any intrusions from Kei or Arisu's "limbs", none of whom known to visit the gym, can be seen as hostile behavior.

(Information Control, Bluffing, Verbal Deception, Cold Reading, Reinforcements, Direct Manipulation, Information Gathering, Multitasking, Improvising)

Y2V9.5 - Gym

Around the start of winter break, Kei was sick (influenza) and couldn't go out. Hona, thanks to her large information network, learned about this info as quickly as Kiyotaka did. On Christmas' Eve, Honami textedKiyotaka to let him know that she felt terrible for Kei (wink wink) and to offer assistance if he needed help with anything. The texting between the two continued until Honami decided to ask if he had any plan. Kiyotaka did not, but he said he was probably going to the gym since he had nothing to do, due to Kiyotaka's plan with Kei getting voided by her aforementioned illness. This led Hona to ask when, to which Kiyotaka answered around noon. Honami then revealed that she planned on going there at the same time as well. What a coincidence.

The reason why Hona asked for Kiyotaka's plans first before telling him hers isn't particularly complicated: Honami planned on going wherever Kiyotaka would & whenever he intended to. Honami asked Kiyotaka if he wanted her to cancel her plans. Hona explained that if the two of them were to be seen together, it would definitely create misunderstandings among their peers that they were trying to meet up on Christmas Eve. En bref, Honami feigned concern for Kei. As Kiyotaka understood (in his monologues), he can not tell Hona to not go to the gym or to change her own plans to avoid him; it comes across as excessive in itself and for Kiyo to tell her to change her schedule instead of him changing his when he was only pondering on what he'd do would be incredibly self-centered.

Thus, Kiyotaka tells Honami to not worry about it and if they meet at the gym, it won't be the end of the world. Kiyotaka was undecided on what he would do, but after this text exchange, he basically had to go to the gym.

From Kiyotaka's perspective, if he didn't show up around noon when Honami did, she could end up thinking he was trying to avoid her, which could sadden her for no good reason. It's the sort of misunderstanding Hona thought Kiyotaka wanted to avoid; Honami had more than enough information by then to assume Kiyotaka really did not want to damage her mental state, or at least not at that time. A way to put it is that she held her own feelings hostage to have some form of influence over Kiyotaka's actions during that morning.

(Acting Skills, Verbal Deception, Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Reinforcements, Emotional Engagement)

It's important to mention here that the rumors about the gym had to be created at this time and not before, since those were addressed when Honami met with Kei and Maya, so neither of them would talk about it with other people.

No matter how much Honami wanted to spend time with him, the main objective that is relevant in the context of her plans was taking advantage of Kei's illness to amplify the rumor spreading. After arriving at the gym, Honami told him that she planned on coming around the time he did, but got caught up talking with some unknown friend. Hona then lamented that it was such a shame it was Christmas Eve, hinting at a sentiment of compassion for Kei's illness along with their dates being cancelled as a result.

This sequence of events clearly fuels the aforementioned rumors about Honami and Kiyotaka. If the two simply showed up at the gym roughly ~10 minutes apart from one another, it's probable no one would care or notice anything off; it's too large a margin of time to infer either one of them was following the other. Hona had no way to ascertain the exact time Kiyotaka would show up at the gym, thus she tried to control the situation as much as she could, without tipping anything off. Honami did not want Kiyotaka or anyone else to see her waiting as it would provoke the kind of rumors that place her in a bad light instead. Presuming Hona told this unnamed friend of hers at approx. ~X O'Clock she was going to the gym alone or at the minimum without Kiyotaka specifically, and he showed up at ~X O'Clock as well... depending on how the information spreads, people are going to assume Kiyotaka is actively trying to visit the gym at the same time as Honami.

The way she went about it, using her friend to delay the trip to the grip, allowed a large margin of error to time her arrival.

Another point to consider is Kiyo's academic OAA at the time. Kiyo went from A (Y2V2) to B ~ B+ (Y2V9) after doing badly in the 2nd semester's final exam. As a byproduct, the other students out of the loop believed he was skipping studies to meet Honami. The real reason Kiyo's score slipped was his decision to make Ken's improvement stand out more - the gym trips with Hona around that time were a complete coincidence. According to Chihiro, that ended up being one of the rumors spread around.

Honami had to come up with this ploy swiftly, after everyone else including Kiyo learned influenza was spreading, but before 9 AM. Kiyo & one of Kei's (unnamed) friends learned of her illness during the night of the 23rd. It is very unlikely Hona learned about Kei's illness before the next morning as they had never been close.

(Tactical Management, Planning Acclimation, Planning Versatility, Capitalization, Acting Skills, Fabrication, Social Awareness, Social Cognition, Formulation Speed)

The Strength of Honami's Rumors throughout Y2V9-9.5

It's important to establish what makes a deception more, well *deceiving*.

How difficult it is to break the deceit and to ensure people understand that what they were led to believe is wrong. Revealing what *is* the truth. In this case, if one hoped to address the rumors, dispel them and then accuse Honami of being the true culprit, they would have had to go through many barriers: The winter break makes it very difficult to address as many people as possible due to everyone being scattered around. Furthermore Miyabi, the one spreading the rumors, and Kiyotaka, the target of said rumors and the subject of Miyabi's misunderstanding (believing Kiyotaka was manipulating Hona), could not trust each other any less. The odds they would communicate and address those misunderstandings were slim to none. This isn't to mention how Miyabi had no idea she was manipulating him and the fact he wanted to take credits for the rumors - again, if Miyabi didn't want to take the blame for the rumors, the ploy wouldn't make much sense as its only purpose was to provoke Kiyotaka.

While Honami waiting in front of his door and not contacting him ahead of time could be considered suspicious behavior from Kiyotaka's point of view, he had no concrete evidence she wanted to do anything but declare her intentions to win him over and simply didn't want to trouble him by giving him a heads-up.

Another point making her look less suspicious is Honami simply deduced he'd be late with minimal information gathering.

Likewise, Honami anticipated when and to whom Miyabi would get info of their date spread. It's possible Honami noticed somebody taking a picture of her and Kiyotaka when they left the gym in one of their trip following the date: Hona has stated that she is constantly observing her surroundings (Y2V12) and has feats in Y2V9.5 (selfie) and Y2V12 (her performance vs Suzune) backing up this statement.

Essentially the real difficulty in seeing through Honami's fabrications is not really the logical reasoning involved, though Miyabi and Kiyo would have had to resort to abduction rather than deduction. It's the difficulty involved in the information gathering as well as the critical thinking to even consider connecting any dots.

Since Hona was going to ensure Kei wouldn't confront Kiyotaka about the photo (something Hona anticipated she would receive right before the break), that's all there was to it. Through her anticipations and information control, Hona created a set of fabrications that was difficult to break in terms of maintaining the deceit. Even a random encounter between Chihiro and Kiyotaka didn't make much of a dent, all things considered.

Y2V9.5 - Honami's Selfie



Cleaned by Rixi (X/Twitter)

Two days after the Y2V9.5 gym scheme, Honami texted Kiyotaka to ask him if he planned on going to Keyaki Mall at any point during the day, to which Kiyotaka answered yes. After failing to buy a Yogurt machine and his long chat with Fuka, Kiyotaka chose to return to the mall's entrance. There, he came across Honami. Many people from all kinds and all three years were gathered at the Christmas Tree at Keyaki Mall. Before Kiyotaka showed up, she took 43 photos with others, all of whom wanted to as well, usually alongside at least two more people. (Charisma)

Honami asked Kiyotaka if she could take one with him, even though Kiyotaka had a girlfriend and it'd be bad if they were seen given it was around Christmas time. The idea (as Kiyo understood it) of showing up early and taking selfies with other people was, even if they were to take a selfie together, it would blend in with the rest. Thus, if someone saw them, few would think much of it and so, the fact the two had a selfie would not spread around.

Leaving aside the FSIQ / Insight component of this feat, there was also a tactical side to this that plays into one of Honami's larger strategies.

The excuse that ~88+ other people of many kinds also took pictures with Honami doesn't hold up for the one they crossed arms in as it is certainly an intimate act. Every act that suggested Hona was truly trying to prevent misunderstanding and she just wanted to take a selfie was a falsehood, otherwise Honami wouldn't have taken the more questionable photo, regardless of her asking for Kiyo's consent to keep it afterward.

Looking at the events from another perspective, Honami "guilt-tripped" Kiyotaka (or at least attempted to, as much as one realistically can with someone like him) into letting her snap two selfies. One of which Kiyo certainly wouldn't want Hona to show to anyone else by letting him know just how much work she underwent just for one picture with Kiyotaka - telling him she had been there for roughly an hour and a half and then showing him all the pictures she took before he came.

In Kiyotaka's thoughts after he agreed to take a selfie with her, he brought up the fact that Hona had put in a considerable amount of effort to get a selfie with him, which hints if this was her real angle, she succeeded.

Since she's obviously not responsible for Kei's influenza, Hona didn't draw this up ahead of time unlike the next move we'll describe. Regardless, with both the gym fabrication and selfie scheme, she took full advantage of the opportunity created by Kei's influenza to strengthen her larger plan and set up contingencies for the future. By this point in time, chronologically speaking, she developed an effective card to annihilate Kiyo's reputation & destroy his relationship with Kei based on three points. One, the rumors about Kiyo hitting on Honami growing outside his class. Two, Nene's photo and Kiyotaka's obliviousness to its existence. Three, this dangerous selfie, with point #1 + #2 making this look significantly worse than he may think given his aforementioned obliviousness. This gave Hona leverage over him, though she would only threaten him using any of that as a last resort if Kiyo resisted her advances too much, since it could also put Hona's own reputation in question (to a lesser extent, as he was the one believed to be approaching her in all three aforementioned scenarios). The idea that, at bare minimum, she aimed to coerce Kiyotaka in some capacity was proven true in Y2V12.5, and the trap she made to coerce him on the promised meeting had to be drawn up before the EoY exam took place due to all the preparations & the narrator's implications.

(CPI, VSI, Observation, Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Coercion, Divergent Thinking, Social Awareness, Social Cognition, Tactical Management, Planning Contingency, Planning Invincibility, Planning Versatility, Capitalization, Misdirection, Concealment, Setting Trap)

Y2V10 - Honami's Meeting / Norihito Sub-Plan



This division describes the meaning behind Honami's actions during the meeting she set up in Kiyo's room in Y2V10: building on the Y2V8-Y2V9.5 preparations to prepare for her promised meeting with Kiyotaka after the second year. We know that Hona was planning so far ahead due to a statement by the neutral narrator during the S&D special exam, and this meeting happened a day prior to S&D. It is largely why this meeting can be linked with the Y2V12.5 meeting as prep for it.

To accomplish her aims, Honami had to fulfill the following tasks:

1. Use someone on speaking terms with Kiyo to conceal her presence in this meeting from Kei and any other third parties like Arisu, Miyabi, etc.
2. Ensure Mako joins the meeting - do not walk alone to Kiyotaka's room and bait Norihito into coming to the meeting.
3. Position Kiyotaka as someone reliable to Norihito ahead of time.
4. Get Norihito involved in the meeting without making it seem like that was intentional to anyone else.
5. Cook up a speech to justify why you wanted to "run some checks".
6. Give yourself an excuse to return to Kiyo's room after the meeting is over.
7. Act intimate with Kiyotaka in front of his door, inside his room.
8. Do whatever is necessary to make it seem like you never intended to have someone walk in, like pretending you considered locking the door.

(Planning Coverage)

The morning before the S&D special exam, when Kiyotaka and Kei were on their way back to the dorm after spending time at Keyaki Mall, the former received a call from Ryuji. When Kei saw Ryuji's ID, she lowered her guards. Ryuji asked Kiyo to meet up ASAP and that he was waiting in front of his door with Norihito. Kei did not mind cutting off their date, even seemed glad Kiyo made more friends.

A point of interest is that when Kei asked her boyfriend if he was on good terms with them, Kiyotaka only specified that Norihito was his friend. When Kiyotaka met up with Ryuji and Norihito, Ryuji asked him if there was a problem if Honami and Mako would join them as well. Honami asked Ryuji to not tell Kiyotaka about them coming over due to not being sure if she and Mako could come or not... but the reason they came over in the first place is that *she* wanted to meet Kiyotaka.

Norihito being with Ryuji was, according to him, a coincidence; the latter came across the former on his way there. Kiyotaka wondered if Norihito "somehow" anticipated that Mako, his crush, would show up at the meeting. Kiyotaka could not make head or tail of this turn of events. He thought it was an unusual mix of people; Ryuji and Honami were at odds on how their class ought to be run and given the nature of the meeting seemingly being about the class. While he had by then good relations with both by then, it would have been less unexpected if they visited him separately. It's probable Honami not only expected Kiyo and Kei would be together outside on a day off or at least knew the chances of that were very high, but also assessed that he may be observed in such a scenario by those she knows were fixated on him (namely, Arisu's limbs, the third years off the back of Miyabi). So Honami did what she had to do to conceal her presence from Kei's and to trick any onlookers' watchful eyes.

Honami's usage of Ryuji and Nori blinded, at the very least, both Kiyotaka and Kei from knowing she would come as well. Mako was a useful magnet to entice Nori to join the meeting while also serving as a cover to not walk alone on her way to Kiyo's room, which could have been suspicious had anyone stumbled upon them.

(Concealment, Verbal Deception, Planning Invincibility)

After she made a speech about the power of friendship or whatever (which is not shown to the reader, proving it definitely was not the point), it turned into casual chats between the five that Kiyotaka described as akin to a gathering of chums.

Before moving on to the tangible benefits of the meeting, specifically the recipe around the information gathering in addition to setting up the coercion for the promise meeting, it is crucial to highlight that the meeting moved the needle on a few tasks tough to measure as well.

After all, the process around the coercion was a contingency. Ideally speaking, being forceful in making Kiyo hers one way or another shouldn't be a necessity, so for Honami, building the friend nest for Kiyotaka in her class was imperative.

This meeting created an opportunity for her to evaluate how Kiyo's relationship with Ryuji had developed since the cultural festival, when she left them alone to mend the fences. As Honami planned, they had grown closer. Honami remarked that Ryuji felt less on guard around Kiyo and was more willing to express himself than he'd be around most students outside their class, namely Yosuke & Satoru.

This was also a good time to develop Kiyotaka's friendship nest within Honami's class so it can become a more comfortable place for Kiyo to transfer to or work with when the timing is right. It can be said to be a more direct version of Hona's tactics prior to the KiyoKei reveal, much less transparent than what Daichi tried to do during the early goings of Year 2. Despite Honami telling Ryuji she wanted to "run some checks", the meeting ended up being casual. Probably with that in mind, Honami had brought in some snacks. Whenever Ryuji and Kiyo interacted throughout the second year, it was always serious and uptight. Honami could tell from knowing both of their personalities and the circumstances around Ryuji, so she created an opportunity that can help close the gap a little.

Honami knew Ryuji, like her, understood Kiyo's abilities to an extent, so repairing the relationship of her (contrarian) right hand in class matters with Kiyotaka was vital for the sake of making her class a more comfy place for Kiyotaka to transfer to (it is likely she considered this option at the time to bind him) or work with in any way and doing so in the first place would be tough if Ryuji objected for any reasons, such as not handing over his own private points. And even if Hona were to acquire a transfer ticket or enough private points without Ryuji's help and he's open to her offer it's still not ideal to divide the class even if it's little more than a small crack. The rest of her class will follow her every whim without questions; there is no reason to believe that will change, but Hona doesn't want Ryuji, Yuki, etc to turn traitors & it was key that they comply with her wishes.

Furthermore, no matter what else she aimed to accomplish, this was also ample to invigorate one of her initiatives. What at first glance might come across as a maneuver to spend time with Kiyotaka was also a fraction of a larger initiative to "overwrite" Kei's existence from Kiyo's daily life with herself, her own classmates. After the UIE, this began with using the gym right before the 2nd year's winter break which Kei does not visit and afterward, other means to eat as much of his time on his day off as she can that he would spend with Kei.

(Information Gathering, Risk Assessment, Multitasking, Planning Preparation Process, Social Intuition, Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Perception)

Before the group were on their way out, Honami left her phone under the table so she would have an excuse to come back to Kiyotaka's room to retrieve it. This created a situation in which the two were left alone. Honami acted (speaking out loud) as if she considered locking the door, but she stopped herself, making sure Kiyotaka heard all of her thoughts. This in turn led to Kiyotaka asking if Honami intentionally forgot her phone, which she confirmed without resistance. Honami then asks if he was disgusted by her actions - sneaking around to flirt with a guy who's already taken. Kiyotaka essentially said "no", even adding he thought Hona was being considerate by taking some measures to avoid Kei's radar and conflict for the both of them. Then, Honami hugged Kiyo, creating a situation that could not be explained easily if they were caught in the act. The meeting was a golden opportunity for Hona to test to what extent Kiyotaka would let her mess with his relationship with Kei - Hona did steal precious private time the pair intended to spend together. Kiyo giving Honami the green light was the best case scenario.
(Acting Skills, Tactical Management, Information Gathering)

Shortly after, Norihito came back to ask Kiyotaka for advice to help his pursuit of Mako, only to catch him and Honami lacking which stressed him out.
Swiftly, Honami proceeded to make the emotionally unstable Norihito take a seat and guilt-tripped into submission to keep him under control. She took the blame for Kiyotaka, criticized Nori's tone, framed the act of telling everyone about what he saw as an "hurtful act" and he's too much of a nice guy to cause so much pain.
Honami politely blackmailed Nori by telling him she knows how he feels towards Mako and as her best friend, she can "trust" him, indirectly letting Norihito know it is in his best interest to not lose that "trust". Based on his monologue, Kiyotaka figured out this possible angle of her tactics.
(Emotional Facilitation, Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Emotional Inducement, Reinforcements, Coercion, Abusing Insecurities)

Honami's prior manipulations of Nori (Y2V8-9) culminated into this moment. She could have anticipated Norihito returning to Kiyotaka's room for reasons beyond her well established extraordinary understanding of her classmates.
For one, Hona knew how to handle this precarious situation almost instantly and with absolutely perfect precision, something Kiyotaka noticed.
On this note, other than remaining attached to Kiyo long enough for Norihito to see him and though she acted swiftly, Hona didn't show any surprise whatsoever.

Kiyotaka thinking she was taken aback is an assumption; he did not see her face when she first saw Nori.

There's no evidence that he sensed her expression changing like he felt Honami's smile either. It might be worth mentioning that Hona used similar tactics to hide her mental state from Kiyotaka in Y2V8 and Y2V12.5.

Two, Hona made it come across as if she was second guessing herself regarding whether she should lock the door or not, even though literally all of Hona's other actions until that point were calculated beforehand; the purpose of this pretense would then be to mislead Kiyo into thinking that she did not intend to have Nori walk in on them. Honami saying out loud that she didn't lock the door because if she did it'd look worse gives her a justification ahead of time for committing this "mistake" without it coming across as an excuse.

Three, it is unlikely Honami truly planned on staying for a long time. Going back to retrieve her phone is not an action that should've taken long, especially since, according to both Kiyotaka's narration and Honami out loud, the others had just left, and it would have raised many questions if she spent a long time "searching". Reactively, they could call Kiyotaka, forcing them to explain themselves.

Four, the aforementioned complete "coincidence" of Norihito stumbling on Ryuji on the latter's way to Kiyotaka's room and the latter wondering if the former may have "somehow" anticipated Mako coming as well.

It's a common trope in storytelling that when characters think about a possibility and then dismiss it as trivial, they were onto something. Writers write stuff for a reason; some jokes to lighten the mood, foreshadowing, give clues to an ongoing whodunnit mystery, a hidden plot, you name it. Stories throw red herrings at the readers from time to time, but red herrings are by definition meant to stick out and hide a more shocking twist/reveal which does not apply in this case.

Regardless, this alleged anticipation makes no sense by itself since Mako was not a member of Ryuji's faction and there wasn't any reason to think she was joining, but would arrive later regardless. There's nothing in the story indicating Norihito is some kind of intuition god hiding his true skill ala Rokusuke; he's characterized as someone with solid social skills with an otherwise average set of parameters.

So who told him Mako was coming? By process of elimination, the only person in the group of five who absolutely knew Mako was joining the meeting, Norihito's crush on her and could inform him was Hona, the one who organized this event.

Since Norihito had no idea Hona knew of his crush on Mako before he returned to Kiyotaka's room, this is possibly how this went down off-screen:

Hona told Nori that she, Ryuji and Mako would visit Kiyo in his room at one time of the day before the S&D exam and asked if he wanted to come.

She then asked Norihito to not tell anyone else that she revealed the existence of this meeting to him for one reason or another, hence the "coincidence" excuse.

Regardless, there's still the question of why Hona even bothered making him join the meeting in such a roundabout manner - Ryuji was enough to conceal herself from Kei and any potential onlookers, Mako was plenty enough to not walk alone and Hona could've invited Norihito normally if she only wanted him to live up the meeting, nobody would have taken issues with this. Meaning, the very idea it was a coincidence that Nori joined the meeting must have served a purpose divorced from the gathering itself. It had to be a ruse: if Kiyo believed that Norihito joining the meeting was a legitimate "coincidence", then from his point of view, Norihito catching him and Honami being intimate could not have been planned. That Nori would go back to seek advice from Kiyotaka for his relationship with Mako was a product of manipulation, given the meeting gave him an opportunity to have fun with Mako and Kiyo watching from up close, who proved himself to be reliable in this regard. Y2V9 provided an earlier example of Nori seeking Kiyo for help about Mako after a class meeting all three were part of. Reaching out to someone right after a meeting, opening doors without knocking, etc could be some of his habits that Honami knew of and wanted to capitalize on.

It's a conundrum. Kiyotaka had to see through Norihito's claim that his presence in the meeting is due to a coincidence as a lie (without any reasoning because of the lack of any evidence) to suspect Honami's plotting, but the idea that Nori was in cahoots with Hona in this scheme was contradicted by Nori's genuine surprise when he saw Honami hugging Kiyotaka. It's easier to believe from Kiyotaka's POV that Norihito didn't actually lie at all and he was overthinking things.

(Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Planning Accuracy, Acting Skills, Concealment, Misdirection)

As Kiyo mentioned in his monologues, this play also allowed Hona to retake Nori from joining Ryuji's faction, as he appeared to be on the fence. Even though she's for all intent and purpose the reason the Ryuji faction was made (mind you, Hona never had to expect the creation of the faction, most likely Kiyotaka becoming a window for Ryuji to vent all his concerns would repair the two boys' relationship and that it would lead to Norihito getting involved in some capacity, although to be fair it required something similar enough that it would lead to Norihito being on the fence and Kiyotaka had to know this fact), it was patently in Honami's best interest to keep their group in check so it didn't backfire on her face, so one may argue that it was wise to moderate its number.

However, Hona's otherwise never shown to be even remotely worried about this faction, so for Honami to use such a convoluted/exaggerated method is overkill and inconsistent.

Ergo, if it was her only or real goal with Nori catching her and Kiyotaka, Honami definitely could've used simpler methods, thus this could have been yet another layer of deceit. So, what did Hona accomplish that mattered to her?

At the end of the day, Nori's well aware of what Kiyotaka let Hona do. This meant Hona could've, for instance, changed her story later to Norihito and say she lied to save his reputation.

Lied about hugging him on her own without his consent. Honami could even say Kiyo encouraged her, or something else making him look worse.

Considering the selfie from Y2V9.5 too (which admittedly was an opportunistic scheme unlike this plan) she gained a new card to make his school life miserable at any time by destroying whatever reputation Kiyo has, given his (still existing at the time) relationship with Kei; it was a reasonable assumption back then that he didn't want that sort of attention.

This level of coercion would have been required if she won the end-of-year exam and Kiyotaka resisted her offers like him transferring to her class, as under such a scenario, Hona couldn't act depressed and stay locked in her room for obvious reasons. Honami would've needed a different method to coerce Kiyotaka without the ability to weaponize the curfew.

Again, the initiatives in her plan around coercion served as a security in case the "friend nest" & other social engineering didn't have the intended effect on Kiyo's psyche, so the key point to keep in mind is she had at least one contingency set in place whether she won or lost the end-of-year exam.

In every case so far she has tried to coerce others in some way, usually Kiyotaka, Honami went to great lengths to never come across like she's intentionally doing so (until promise night) and avoid being explicit about it. This makes it harder for Norihito or Kiyo to confront Honami or be angry at her for the coercions, which in turn makes said coercion stronger. No one's fond of threats & Honami is good with people, although a more practical reason is it ensures Kiyo is unaware Hona isn't above coercing *him* - an important consideration for her Y2V12.5 trap.

A question one may ask is, why not just record everything instead? Indeed, that would've been a lot simpler and not reliant on making difficult anticipations. The main problem with a recording is that Honami could not give it a spin that paints her in a better light unless she modified it, but if she edited the recording to trim the inconvenient chunks (like her admitting that she intentionally left her phone in Kiyo's room), it would be obvious.

Additionally, secretly recording a seemingly casual meeting would be suspicious in its own right and certainly could be perceived as Honami trying to set Kiyo up.

As for Kiyotaka recording, that was very unlikely unless he recorded all the time; the meeting seemed innocuous at first and even if Kiyotaka suspected something was fishy after Hona returned and asked if she could stay for a little while longer, Kiyotaka would have needed to start recording right under Honami's nose.

It can be said to be quite ingenious in its own right: who would think of coercing someone via getting caught by someone else walking in on you two? So strange, which in turn makes the scheme harder to see through, let alone expect.

(Creativity, Risk Competence, Information Control, Misdirection, VCI, Coercion, Communication, Setting Trap, Planning Contingency, Planning Invincibility)

Y210 Special Exam - Honami's nominations of Kei

By the time Hona deduced a traitor in Arisu's class would feed points to Kakeru, Honami knew Kakeru's class had an extremely high chance of winning the exam and it was just as unlikely that her class would finish last. This meant Honami's strategy could be altered to suit her purposes other than winning or not losing the exam. This is where Kei's ten nominations came into the portrait.

(Deductive Reasoning, Critical Thinking, Psychological Insight, Anticipation, Strategy Flexibility / Planning Versatility, Capitalization)

Throughout the exam's duration, Honami had many reasons to believe Kakeru was instead trying to push Suzune's class to last place instead of Arisu's.

During their negotiation right before the exam, Kakeru warned Honami he had no intention to negotiate any further had she made any agreement with Suzune ahead of time. The traitor in Arisu's class, whoever they were and whatever their agenda may be, could have agreed to feed Kakeru their class' nominations under the condition that he'd push Suzune's class to last place instead of theirs, for the obvious reasons that one wouldn't want to tank their own class, especially when you & your classmates kept the title of Class A ever since you entered ANHS.

Additionally, Kakeru admitted to Honami in Y2V9's epilogue that he saw Suzune's class as a bigger threat than Arisu's. Kakeru also never said to her that he wanted to take down Arisu's class; all Hona could deduce was that he wanted to take her off guard, but this could refer to the existence of a traitor in her class as opposed to pushing Arisu's class to 4th place. But regardless of what he aimed for, she had her reasons to help Suzune.

Both Kakeru and Arisu were aware of Honami's feelings towards Kiyotaka, which is also something Honami knew since they both directly confronted her on them. Kei's nominations might have duped them into thinking she wasn't helping them and was acting purely on her feelings, in case Suzune was in fact Kakeru's actual target. It is impossible to know whether this trick fooled either of 'em, but there's evidence Hona tried to mislead Kakeru in particular. In Honami's texts to Kakeru during the second half, she feigned surprise when his class kept scoring perfect defenses and pretended to be blissfully unaware as to why he would give Honami points... that is, even though the objective narration had already established the reason why she accepted his offer *before* the 1st half is her deducing his aim.

(Acting Skills, Misdirection)

Honami knew Kei worried over Kiyotaka having a crush on her; she deceived her into thinking so and manipulated her into not confronting Kiyotaka over the gym photo. She controlled the flow of the leaks regarding her contacts with Kiyo with such finesse that Kiyo and Kei's classmates remained clueless about this incident - this can be inferred from the fact that nobody other than people like Kei, Kikyo or Maya suspected jealousy to be the reason for the ten nominations of Kei after the exam. Considering her insight in her classmates on top of their conversation during the Y2V8 hot spring scene when Kikyo asked Honami about her love life, it's almost impossible that Hona wasn't aware that Kikyo already knew about her feelings towards Kiyotaka, but Kikyo became an outcast in her class who lost all goodwill, so she never had to concern worry over Kikyo to shield her reputation. That Honami had to take all this into consideration means that Honami was able to notice this change in Kikyo's social life, much like Takuya did around the time of the cultural festival.

Kiyotaka is of course also in the know, but he isn't one to divulge info in the first place and he would be in even more trouble than Honami if the truth came out.

(Information Control, Social Intuition)

Honami's nominations led to Kei freaking out and Suzune contacting her in the middle of the exam to understand what was up.

Honami then began to give Suzune more names she'd attack beside Kei ahead of time which, considering the six points gap between Arisu and Suzune at the end, must've prevented Suzune's class from falling to 4th place. After the exam ended, Honami came to Suzune's class to apologize to Kei. She came up with the excuse that had she contacted Suzune normally it would be suspicious, so Hona needed Suzune to reach out to her instead (this excuse is baffling since Honami could've given Suzune a heads-up regardless and do what she ended up doing).

Suzune, who's uninterested and thus unaware of the other students' love affairs, defended her and dismissed the Kei nominations as strictly strategic.

(Application Thinking, Verbal Deception, Reinforcements, Logical Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Emotional Facilitation)

Honami looked even better than before in Kei's class. This stressful experience isolated Kei even further mentally, who already struggled to adequately express her anxiety to Kiyo about the photo Nene sent her before the last winter break.

Making matters worse for Kei, any anxiety she continued to feel when it comes to Honami will be solely associated with Y2V10's exam as opposed to the other incident: this is exemplified throughout the dialogue between Kiyotaka and Kei during their conversation in Y2V11.

Kei openly expressed her concerns over Kiyotaka and Hona getting along while the former monologues that Kei must be thinking Hona's nominations from the previous exam weren't entirely strategic, which isn't entirely false mind you, but it is not the whole picture.

(Abusing Insecurities, Misdirection)

Even more absurd is that most of Honami's classmates - nearly all the girls and a few guys like Norihito and Ryuji too - are aware that Hona is deeply in love with Kiyotaka, the boyfriend of the girl Honami attacked ten times during the exam in a strategy that involved Kei not knowing the details ahead of time. They all went along with this strategy and there is no evidence they ever suspected a personal agenda in Honami's ten nominations of Kei.

This, along with the earlier meeting in Kiyotaka's room, demonstrates how much Honami has all of her classmates wrapped around her fingers, including Ryuji.

(Mind Control, Mass Manipulation)

Y210 Special Exam - Honami's nominations of Kiyotaka

While Honami's ten nominations of Kei is what drew everyone's attention, both in and out of universe, she also nominated Kiyo in the first two rounds, though she completely stopped doing so afterward. The first question Kiyotaka and his classmates received pertained to baseball rules.

The second concerned news headlines, which was the same category as the one he failed to answer in the first half. The question was about some slang. Like the first time, Kiyotaka failed to answer correctly. Since Honami obviously had zero intention of expelling Kiyotaka and he was one mistake short of dropping out of the exam, it makes sense that she stopped nominating him. Still, not attacking Kiyotaka afterward raises the question of why Honami even bothered to do so in the first place; Kiyotaka having two mistakes was a situation Honami could have avoided by giving him two questions in categories she knew Kiyo would answer correctly, such as arithmetic: everyone including Honami herself knows about his 100% math score in the Y2V1 exam. While Honami was able to make excuses for nominating Kei ten times, those excuses would not have worked if Honami nominated Kiyotaka ten times as well as it would be completely unnecessary - targeting Kei was enough as is to draw Suzune's attention.

Targeting Kiyotaka in the first two rounds was obviously intentional and outside of gaining some insight on him, wouldn't serve any purpose whatsoever. It was never going to help Honami win - Hona knew Kakeru was winning the exam and she never needed to worry about ending as the fourth place either, since Kakeru was about to give her enough points to at least reach 3rd place.

While her reasoning was not stated and this is never brought up again, targeting Kiyotaka with questions about sport rules, memes, or what else helps her learn a little more about him and confirm some of her preexisting thoughts.

What makes Kiyotaka tick? Why did Tokinari and Katsunori try to "eliminate" or kill Kiyotaka? What is this so-called "White Room"? Kiyotaka had no intention of explaining his past or anything else about him, when asked during the trip.

When Hona asked Kiyotaka where he came from (Y1V9 SS#2), he danced around her question until he just said it was a secret. When, at the end of the Hokkaido trip, Honami asked him why Tokinari and Katsunori, adults that were at the time acting director and teacher respectively, tried to take him down, all Kiyotaka said was that the matter was taken care of and that was all he could tell Honami. Strange as it may sound, this was in fact very good for Hona: she was aware Kiyo kept his guards up not only around her, but everyone else too including Kei after their interaction before winter break confirmed she was kept out of the loop too.

She had the chance to observe Kiyo is a guy with top skills in multiple fields, but he is seemingly emotionless and maybe clueless about a few things that could be viewed as common sense - she made note of this in the winter break (the Y2V9.5 gym scene); his wacky blind spots could be the product of a stranger upbringing.

With the data Honami now has about Kiyotaka, it is not a reach to conclude that forcing him to open up to her about his past, much like Kiyo did to Hona nearly a year earlier, is the way to go to learn more about him, since Kiyotaka has made it abundantly clear that he does not want to share anything about himself.

This exam could have been one of many steps in that direction.

(Cold Reading, Probing, Planning Versatility, Capitalization, Divergent Thinking, Psychological Analysis, Information Gathering)

(Y2V12.5) Promise Day

It's impossible to know *with absolute certainty* what Honami wanted to do with Kiyotaka before the Year 2 end-of-year exam beyond having him by her side in some capacity (forcefully or not), though it is likely this translate to wanting Kiyo to transfer to her class and fight the others that way (simply because of how the class system works). She has been preparing for their meeting throughout most of the year to make this a reality by setting up numerous coercive contingencies, preventative measures to neutralize obstacles and through social engineering.

But after the second year's end-of-year, this wasn't going to happen.

At the very least, the two were not going to work together in a normal way. Not only did Honami realize that Kiyotaka wasn't remotely close to viewing her in the same light as she viewed him despite her best efforts, Kiyo's complete disregard for his classmates was incompatible with her philosophy.

Making matters even worse is her class was in a gigantic hole, roughly 600 class points behind the new Class A with only one year left to make up the gap. Even so, despite the harsh reality in front of her - both the state of her class and the person she is madly in love with for two years telling her he was just using her, Honami was unable to give up on both him and Class A (though she said that she tried to hate the former). On top of that, Hona managed to put herself together extremely fast - it took a day, maybe a week *at most*.

Honami knew things couldn't remain the way they were and so, she had to adjust what she wanted to do quickly - the promise and the manipulative method Hona knew was effective against Kiyotaka were still cards in her deck.

Honami had already planned a trap to gain some power over Kiyo before Y2V12.5. Following the events of the Y2 end-of-year exam, it served a likely-to-be slightly different purpose: Temporarily wield power over Kiyotaka - "righteous" indignity that he can only bow to and bring some balance to their relationship.

Honami wants their relationship to be one of ***reciprocity***, not one where the two take turns on who soullessly dominates the other. In its essence, her desires and goals remained the same since the beginning of the second year. Honami wants Kiyotaka to be her partner in crime, accomplice, lover; by her side as an equal.

(Planning Acclimation, Mental Fortitude, Perseverance)

Methodology

Before Kiyotaka walked through Honami's door, the latter already expected what he was about to tell her and so what she would then say in return. This is proven by Honami's quick answer to Kiyotaka's two options with her Y2V12.5 short story backing this up completely. In other words, she not only foresaw the two options Kiyotaka was about to offer her: drop out and Kiyo would replace her as the new class leader or use your resentment of him as fuel to become stronger - but also understood that Kiyotaka was hoping for something else entirely yet wasn't able to come up with that correct solution by himself. This is due to Hona advancing her understanding of Kiyotaka from where it was when the second year began & the progress she had made before Y2V9, said advancements are explained here.

(Prediction, Abstraction, Critical Thinking, Associative Thinking, Hot Reading, Inductive Reasoning, Psychological Analysis)

Even after she recovered from the fallout of the second year's end-of-year exam, Hona remained locked inside her own room. An act to deny him any information about her current mental state. If anyone saw her, he'd probably know how she's doing. By avoiding contact with anyone else, Honami kept her state to herself.

(Concealment)

Kiyotaka sent Honami a message in the morning to set up their meeting. He also tried to call her, only to find her phone was powered off, so he not only gets no response - head no way to ascertain if she'd seen his message in the first place.

Kiyotaka's message was for Honami to come to his room at any time after 15:00 - meaning Honami made him spend half of the day sitting in his room waiting for her. And she kept him waiting, without any response. Kiyotaka still had no idea if she saw his message. After the curfew passed, Honami marked the messages as "read" - it's not a reply, but it's more information than anything Kiyo had prior.

It lets Kiyo know that yes, Hona was awake, and had seen his message. However, even after 20 minutes, Kiyotaka didn't get any more than that. He thought in his monologues that he could take her silence as an answer. However, Kiyotaka got out of bed and went to Honami's room. Kiyotaka could not let go of it, now that he knew she saw his message. She aimed to toy with his impatience to make him move to the girl's dormitory.

(Information Control, Indirect Manipulation, Emotional Facilitation)

When he finally knocked on her door, Hona only responded with text messages, despite Kiyotaka using his own voice. If she responded with her own voice, even on the phone, it would have given Kiyotaka some sense of her state, simply from the sound of her voice and whatnot.

Text messages will only provide the information that you want it to - there is no facial expression, tone or anything else to sense or emotionally perceive.

(Concealment)

Hona first asked him what he's doing there - just to get the conversation started. Hona tells Kiyotaka that the curfew is already past - this is designed to hint that Kiyotaka should leave, without actually telling him to leave. This both tests Kiyo's resolve, as well as ensuring Kiyotaka will insist on staying.

Hona knew this would work: Hona already learned and employed this method on Kiyo twice before (last night of the Hokkaido school trip and phone conversation for the fake date right before the second year's winter break).

(Information Gathering, Direct Manipulation, Crystallized Method)

Honami then followed it up with by sending to him: "I don't have the courage to come to your room right now" - a statement that denotes weakness on her part, even though her Y2V12.5 SS explicitly states that Hona not coming to Kiyotaka's room had nothing to do with courage, making him continue to think she is weak.

When Honami tells him that her door is unlocked, he finds it odd at first, but still goes in. Honami leaves the door unlocked because if she got up and let him in, it would've forced Honami to show her face, giving him more accurate information about her real mental state. When Kiyotaka walked in, the lights were down, and she was sitting against a wall, hugging her knees with her head hidden between them, making her seem small and vulnerable, reinforcing the illusion that he was in control. It denied Kiyotaka the ability to see any facial expressions or read any other form of body language, minus the ones Hona chose to show Kiyotaka such as occasionally raising her head or hugging her knees tighter. These moves were designed to give Kiyo the impression that he has the upper hand in their talk.

(Acting Skills, Concealment, Verbal Deception, Emotional Management)

Kiyotaka, under the impression he was in control of their conversation, believed he could set the terms of what he could offer. Kiyotaka claimed he'd transfer to Honami's class under one condition - Honami had to drop out. Kiyotaka assured Hona that he would make students from other classes drop out to make up the 300 class points lost from her departure and that the class would reach Class A.

Due to said confidence, when Honami asked Kiyotaka what he would gain from transferring after all the work he and his classmates put into becoming Class A, Kiyotaka answered that he was inspired by "a certain graduate's" words from last year to leave an impact on everybody. Revealing that about himself for free was probably the least unguarded action Kiyotaka committed that night.
(Information Gathering)

With Honami's Y2V12.5's short story along with Kiyotaka's narration in mind, it's a certainty that not only did Honami know well ahead of time what Kiyotaka was about to offer, but what her own answer to his proposals would be. Unlike some other occasions where Honami was nervous or shaken while scheming (such as when Kiyo suddenly tried to pull her shirt later during the same scene or during the resignation scene in Y2V9 when Fuka began to complain about "shoplifting"), Honami expressed that her "premonition" had turned into "certainty" before she let him come in her room, ergo Honami had no reason to be shaken by a remark she saw coming from a mile away. According to Kiyotaka's monologue, Honami's shoulders were "jolting" when she heard him hint at stepping down as the leader of the class. In this specific case, this was an act instead of her usual nerves.
Additionally, Hona pretending to go along with his offer, dropping out and letting Kiyotaka lead her class was definitely a lie for the same reasons. Kiyo interrupted Honami to warn her he was going to expel some of her classmates if he judged it was a necessity. But by doing this, Kiyo inadvertently revealed he did not actually want Honami to leave the school.
It confirmed Honami's pre-existing analysis of Kiyotaka, at least in the sense that he's trying to test her and he's resistant to the idea of expelling her, that she has some values he can't simply "replace" even if not in the way she'd like it to be.
Mind you, it is also entirely possible Hona was simply keeping up the act and the potential information gathering was just a by-product of this; the primary reason for her overall "weak" acting will be explained in this document's next page.
(Acting Skills, Bluffing, Direct Manipulation, Probing, Information Gathering (?))

Kiyotaka then offered Honami a second option, to be driven by hatred. Honami decided to reject both options, something Kiyotaka noticed she did very quickly. Honami then immediately tells Kiyo of a third option that left him speechless.
He was overjoyed by this development, Kiyo considered both options he offered to be very lackluster for his goal to have four competitive classes.
Honami being fueled by hatred would not suddenly make her so much stronger than Suzune and Kakeru that she could make up the massive gap in class points.

And similarly, Kiyo transferring to Hona's class would leave what was (formerly) Arisu's class (and Kohei's before she won the power struggle) dead and hopeless.

Whatever Honami offered to Kiyotaka is most likely the alliance between Class C and Class D and we know Hona planned this pick from the start. This means she must have gained, even prior to Kiyo's visit, a grasp of his character deep enough to know not only what Kiyotaka intended to offer, but what he sought in the first place. It could be for many reasons narratively speaking, but she unambiguously found a solution that Kiyo couldn't think of.

The likely cause being that her set of values heavily conflicted with the optimal way to adapt to the White Room during the fourth generation which molded his mindset, making Hona the ideal candidate to think of a solution to his hurdle in this specific situation. She then revealed that she now understands the dynamic between Kiyotaka & Kei and the former's goal of breaking the latter to make her grow, even though there's no evidence Honami listened to them interact directly with one another even once and she had never been close to Kei (Y1V8, Y2V9).

(Emotional Understanding, Unconventionality, Novel Complex Problem-Solving, Psychological Insight, Convergent Thinking)

Kiyotaka suggested they should keep distance to make their plan work and that it was still a good idea for Honami to use her hatred of him to motivate herself.

Honami denied this. Kiyotaka wanted to insist, but then he noticed Honami used some citrus perfume in her hair. Taking note of how Hona's room was cleaned up despite locking herself into her room and letting nobody else in, the door being unlocked along with her perfume, Kiyo realized that Hona anticipated his arrival.

While it was necessary for Hona to leave her door unlocked to conceal her actual emotional state, the perfume and the fact she cleaned her room are both blatant, intentional indicators that she tricked him.

Be that as it may, why would Honami do that in the first place?

For one, the moment Honami sent Kiyo the texts past curfew, he had no way out. Between the damning text messages by Honami & the fact that Kiyo would be in serious trouble if anyone caught him on his way out of her room, Kiyotaka was at her mercy. So whether Kiyo realized or not that he was trapped after reading the texts, it was too late. Hona had other goals beyond having sex with him; the trap forced Kiyo to acknowledge Hona's abilities, someone he previously looked down on. This is not something Kiyotaka minded as he expressed in a monologue back in Y2V9.5 that he welcomed being "unknowingly deceived".

Rather than being upset by all these developments, Kiyotaka was only impressed with Honami throughout this meeting with how she surprised him, both in terms of what her answer was, but also the trap.

Unlike how it was with Kei and everyone else including her as far as Kiyotaka is concerned, Honami wants her relationship with Kiyo to not be one-sided. Two people being partners-in-crime and accomplices is only possible if the partners in crime and accomplices consider each other to be equals.

(Fluid Methods, Anticipation, Coercion, Setting Trap, Emotional Facilitation)

Honami's management of Kiyotaka's emotions was so strong that he admitted he began to act on impulses and acting beyond reason before they had sex. He also remarked that he couldn't help but be attracted to her "mysterious allure".

The fact Kiyotaka would've even come to the female dormitory past curfew and send damning texts (considering the fact Honami sent him texts shortly before he entered the room, past curfew, implying he was breaking the rules, Kiyotaka's previous texts throughout the day would make him look worse as well as the old rumors of him chasing Honami back in the winter break and his behavior during the EoY exam) throughout the day to the person whom Kiyo thought hated him (despite claiming to be prepared for "being trapped with hatred") was a high-risk move, the type of mistake uncharacteristic of him. She made Kiyotaka's curiosity overtake his caution. This opens three options.

Either Hona expected Kiyo to not record the conversation, Honami spoke with a soft and quiet voice throughout the conversation to render any such recording irrelevant or it didn't matter to her. Given how Hona was sitting against the wall in the dark during most of the scene, hugging her knees with her head hidden and her other peculiar behaviors such as talking in his ear, the second possibility is a legitimate possibility. But even if Hona wasn't mumbling, she was well aware Kiyotaka needed her to have four competitive classes. So, even if Kiyotaka could have retaliated against Hona if she reported him, that in itself would've created its own setback. This is not to mention that Kiyo would've still been exposed for breaking the curfew rules and faced whatever consequences in relation to that.

After Honami kissed Kiyotaka the second time, she asked him "are you not going to run away?" By then, since they were a step away from doing the deed, this can be considered a challenge in the same vein as "are you a man?" Kiyotaka stated in his monologue that he felt that he had to answer her "resolve". It's reasonable to view all of her moves leading up to this juncture as a form of deterrence instead of legitimate coercion, so Kiyotaka has an excuse to give in, debatably.

(Emotional Facilitation, Emotional Inducement, Seduction)

General set of boxes Honami had to check for this act of her plan:

1. Gain power over him which can be used to delete KiyoKei if the two hadn't yet broken up and gain leverage in general.
2. Regulate Kiyo's emotional state throughout March 30th. This goes beyond sating his curiosity with the text message, it is also important to give Kiyo the illusion of power over Honami to make him drop his guard.
3. Ensure the event will happen with home field advantage, in Hona's room, to set up the stage and entrap Kiyotaka without limitations, and for said trap to be effective the moment he walks into her room.
4. Create enough obvious clues for Kiyotaka to understand (and be unable to delude himself into thinking otherwise) he was effectively trapped even if he wasn't aware Hona put him in that situation intentionally, all of which must be noticeable only once Kiyotaka is properly trapped, so it has a psychological effect on him if he was hesitant or resisted. This must have been slightly adjusted after the end-of-year exam.
5. Shut down any potential information leakage about her current mental state. This partially means not meeting or being seen by anyone.
6. Control all the information transmitted to Kiyotaka throughout the March 30th from her phone, including shutting said phone down & when his text messages are viewed as "read".
7. Counter Kiyotaka's emotional perception and sensory capacity. Suppress any possible discernment in regards to body languages, etc.
8. Acquire all necessities before the EoY exam, namely enough food to last at least ten days and yet appear to look surprisingly healthy (eliminating the possibility Honami couldn't bring herself to eat all that much due to being depressed) according to Kiyotaka's monologue when he entered her room (considering Honami met him on March 30th and she had not seen anyone else since the end-of-year exam ended, includes missing the year's ending ceremony due to an "alleged illness" and Kiyotaka being informed that she hadn't shown herself outside AT ALL during the break, Hona's three-party meeting was most likely set on the last possible day, ergo April 1st), citrus perfume and the contraceptive (which the readers learned to be a product ANHS sells; Kiyotaka was not carrying that sort of thing on his possession when he visited her room as he was expecting a "trap made with hatred" and Honami obviously was not counting on him to do so).

(Planning Coverage)

The bullet point concerning having food, etc before the exam - evinces that the promise day scheme she executed was a backup plan that was set in place **before** the exam took place (albeit altered afterward due to Kiyotaka's behavior during the exam), but does not prove with certainty that she prepared everything ahead of time. It's entirely possible Kinugasa didn't consider the need for food or Hona always makes sure the fridge is full of healthy food that can last a while. As for contraceptives, well, you know, stuff. The simplest explanation is often the best after all and claiming Honami was preparing everything in advance is clearly an extraordinary claim, so it requires extraordinary evidence.

Nevertheless, those factors increase the odds combined with a passage in Y2V10 that can only be referring to her scheming around the promise meeting - when Honami was thinking of the slight chance she could expel Kei if she tried during the second half of the S&D exam.

Honami quickly decided that it was not even necessary. The reason she thought so, according to the neutral narrator, was that Kiyotaka would not reject her, he would accept her even if he continued his relationship with Kei. They then said Honami thought of a way to overwrite everything by herself. The narrator didn't clarify what this meant, but they do mention right after that Honami thought she was the worst, but she did not mind the type of person she became.

It sounds mysterious, especially the "a way to progress and overwrite everything by yourself" part which is clearly strange.

This matters, because the narrator was talking about what Hona would do in the future (post-S&D exam) and between the Kei nominations during the S&D exam and the promised meeting, Honami never did anything that could relate to this - she was completely absent in Y2V11 and during Y2V12, the reader never see Hona takes any proactive actions in relation to her love for Kiyo (or anything proactive at all, really) . By process of elimination, this leaves only the shenanigans Honami executed **after** the EoY exam as possibilities for what the neutral narrator could have referred to as Honami's way to "overwrite everything by [herself]".

If it did refer to her scheming around the promised meeting, it would play right into the narrator's "[Kiyo] would accept her even if he continued his relationship with Karuizawa" line and Honami knowing she was "the worst".

This proves without a shadow of a doubt Honami did in fact perform long-term planning. At least the Y2V10 meeting and the Y2V12.5 promised meeting are tied together: the former happened one day prior to the S&D exam.

And then you can tie Hona's scheming in Y2V8-Y2V9.5 with the Y2V10 meeting with her manipulation of her classmates throughout those volumes.

This might've been what Kiyotaka meant by a "trap of hatred" (which in his mind involved something that would be a problem if he hadn't yet broken up with Kei) and him realizing it wasn't that type of trap, when he consciously couldn't accept Honami still liked him up to that point.

The fact it was set up **before** Kiyotaka revealed he was using her meant it could not have been a trap made "from hatred", which at that point Kiyotaka could've deduced from Hona looking healthy despite locking herself away for ten days.

This also gives a new perspective to her actions around the times of Y2V8 until Y2V10 where Hona was, for all intent and purpose, testing his borderlines, slowly acting more and more bold until Hona began to outright take private time Kiyo intended to spend with Kei. This explains why it was said in the aforementioned scene from the S&D exam that Honami was confident Kiyotaka would not reject her even if he was in a relationship with Kei.

Yet, we can infer that her scheme in Y2V12.5 was a backup simply because there's no reason to assume Honami wanted to lose the EoY exam.

However, most of Hona's actions to manipulate Kiyotaka into showing up in front of her room past curfew (the promised meeting was supposed to be in Kiyotaka's room instead of Honami's) revolved around her acting like she is depressed & sad and locking herself inside her room - a questionable state of mind had she won.

While there is nothing suggesting Honami foresaw Kiyotaka hurting her the way he did, losing the exam burning any realistic chances to reach Class A with this failure resting on her shoulders as the class leader would've been reason enough for Kiyotaka to not suspect foul play if she locked herself in her room regardless, with or without his betrayal during the end-of-year exam.

Regardless of what Honami would have done had she won the exam or Kiyotaka didn't betray her heart and even if her original plan could not be scaled in most scaling system, it doesn't change the fact that most of what we witnessed during Y2V12.5 was a feat in contingency and its methods were properly demonstrated and understandable.

That being said, it is not too difficult to have a rough idea of what Hona would've done had she won the end-of-year exam without any issues. As explained in the Y2V10 Meeting division, she wouldn't have any justification to lock herself up, so she couldn't have used the curfew to trap Kiyo. But the blackmails she collected ahead of time (both the intimate selfie and Nori catching the two lacking during the meeting the day before the S&D exam) would have come in handy to coerce Kiyo into doing what they did in the canon timeline as well as maybe transferring classes instead of the canon arrangement. Honami would've needed to threaten Kiyo in indirect, subtle manners if he was hesitant as otherwise this could make him resent Honami instead, but we've no way to know the details of the original setup in great depth beyond what the preparations for it showed. Nevertheless, the reason she never used the selfie or Norihito is that they were contingencies to secure Kiyotaka in case she won the exam and he would resist her advances. (Planning Applicability, Planning Contingency)

Promise Day Aftermath

March 30th isn't where the plan was finalized since there were a few things left to do, but much groundwork had already been done for the future. This includes chasing away potential suitors for Kiyo using her popularity and fabricating the narrative that he is interested in her; the rumors circulating around the time of winter break and anything else related afterward and so on. That they began to spend time together post-promise day only poured fuel to that fire. Honami also made some of her classmates more comfortable around Kiyotaka and see him as someone reliable through the rescues she engineered such as when Kiyo found Hona at the end of the Hokkaido trip or their fake date before the second year's winter break, so it'd be a smoother process to have them work with Kiyo when the time came, either as a new classmate or as it actually turned out, an ally.

The cake analogy during Honami's scene with Ichika proved that the promised meeting wasn't the end game as we learned that Honami only gave Kiyotaka the taste of her "cake" once, so Kiyo would seek more "slices" in the future, but Hona wants Kiyotaka to see such occasions as special moments.

An idea often spread around in various circles of discussion and often enabled by many media depictions, that sexual desire downplay love in favor of lust, is not accurate. This suggests that love and sexual desire are distinct, but reducing love to lust is an oversimplification. Mind you, sexual desire can exist without love: It is possible to experience sexual desire without being in love, or for someone to be in love without experiencing strong sexual urges. But sexual desires do foster the emotional bonding between a pair needed to form and maintain a committed relationship. It can contribute to initial attractions, proximity-seeking behaviors even if the two individuals involved have known each other for a long time.

Nobody has to rely on heavy research methods to understand everything written above, but she'd need a reference of sorts. Honami's age, circumstances and her reasoning for asking Kiyotaka to fake date her all the way back in Y1V2 (so there's a precedent) imply this is based on research. Sources for what's explained above:

Journal of Social and Personal Relationships - Fueled by desire: Sexual activation facilitates the enactment of relationship-initiating behaviors

TW - The Connection Between Sexual Intimacy and Emotional Connection

(Emotional Facilitation, Psychological Application, Crystallized Intelligence)

Honami also made a point to not refer to her post-promise day relationship with Kiyotaka as “dating” or say they are “lovers” or other labels of the sort. They did have sex, but only once, so it’s not really a “Friends with Benefits” situation and she definitely wants to be loved by Kiyotaka ("deeply engrave my existence into your heart by my own will", as she told him). We can write off the possibility it is for flexibility, a desire to have an open relationship and what not because there’s a mountain of evidence she hates the idea of him spending time with other girls.

Avoiding labels should be the right decision, if one takes into consideration the way Kiyotaka thinks about relationships, friends or lovers. For example, KiyoKei was built on a one-sided power dynamic, defined by the label itself rather than any meaningful connection. Though there was a chance for Kiyotaka to turn the relationships into the real thing, what existed was not a relationship even if Kei definitely loved him and Kiyo wanted to, since in practice the latter acted as if it was an experience and a process about “love”. Hona's goal is a relationship with Kiyotaka built on a meaningful connection.

Hona prefers these goals over superficial labels. The Ayanokoji group was Kiyo’s designated “group of friends”, Kei was Kiyo’s designated “girlfriend” and Yosuke was his designated “friend”... on an emotional level he had no problem discarding all of them when the time came to do so and to not try to reconnect afterward.

According to Kiyotaka, what Honami offered as a third option didn’t necessitate the two to pretend that they liked each other. In fact, he claimed it’d be better if they kept some distance to make sure it worked. This could have been by design since if they were together by obligation or to fulfill a purpose, the relationship couldn’t be real and so it’d be impossible to ignite a spark in Kiyotaka’s heart.

The alliance between their classes was also not secured by a contract. Rather, it’s built around the concept of trust - Kiyotaka’s inability to let his guard down and trust others has been something he has struggled with his entire time in ANHS.

All of those peculiarities about their current relationship demonstrates Honami’s grasp of Kiyo’s inner difficulties and maybe, *just maybe*, figured out a way to have a romantic relationship with him despite them, even though she has no personal knowledge of the White Room, which led Kiyotaka to become the way he is.

(Adaptability, Emotional Understanding, Abstract Thinking)

(Y2V12.5) Honami's Meeting with her Classmates

Honami arrived late to the meeting, which was scheduled ahead of time.
This is incredibly out of character for her, who prior to this always arrived early to any meeting. If there was any suspicious reason for this lateness, it was not explained/implied.
(?)

Unprovoked, Honami states without a shred of ambiguity that she loves Kiyotaka to everyone present at the scene. Considering most people by then had heard of his breakup with Kei, this is a polite way to verbalize a warning for everyone else that they will have to compete with ANHS' most popular girl for his attention. While Honami didn't need to tell the likes of Yuki and Mako to stay away, people like Shibata who were also present didn't know about her feelings, so this could spread around the school. Combined with the winter break rumors of Kiyotaka having an interest in Honami, knowing the school idol has her sights set on him could trick most people into thinking that there's mutual feelings, which should deter most challengers, especially if they were already insecure.
(Social Cognition, Communication, Direct Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Demoralization, Fabrication)

Honami also claimed that Kiyotaka "saved her", even though she picked herself back up long before he even showed up in front of her room. This creates the perception of a passive role, yet again putting responsibility on Kiyo's shoulder while making herself come across as innocent, much like she did back in Y2V9 and Y2V9.5 with the rumor spreading and her explanations to Kei and Maya.
(Verbal Deception, Scapegoating)

Gracefully, she dominated the entire meeting, despite her horrible failure in the previous exam and the near-doomed state of her class. Other than Ryuji, nobody openly questioned her status as the class leader in spite of that, with most like Shibata, supporting her openly. Despite the fact Ryuji had all three people from his faction to support him and it was only a small fraction of her classmates, she made the group agree to wait until the start of the year for her to come up with a strategy before giving up on reaching Class A completely through class points.
(Charisma, Leadership)

After the meeting was over, Honami approached Ryuji individually, she told him she knew what he did against Suzune during the End-Of-Year exam - appealing to Suzune to forfeit victory and negotiating terms with Suzune behind Honami's back. When Ryuji asked his class' leader from whom did she learn that from, she refused to answer by asking Ryuji why it mattered how she knew. He backed off. She tells Ryuji to make sure to come to her if he encounters any difficulties and that she'll do everything she can to help.

The neutral narrator said that those words sent a chill down Ryuji's spin, as if she warned him to never act like that again.

(Aura)

Scene with Kei (Y3V1)

The morning of the day of the special exam, Honami approached Kei as the latter walked to school and went out of her way to start a conversation with her. That's something Honami usually doesn't do, she's instead inclined to wave at those she does not care all that much for. Kei and Hona rarely interacted with one another during their first two years - they were not close, so it's fair to think they did not have much in common besides their feelings towards Kiyo. In fact, the narration mentioned how the two of them walked very different paths during their time in ANHS. Keeping in mind the rumors circulating around the time of winter break, Honami admitting to her classmates about her love for Kiyotaka which could've easily spread around as rumors then spending more time together starting in the third year sparking more rumors, Kei had no shortage of reasons to suspect Kiyo dumped her to go out with Honami. In other words, Honami must have foreseen Kei would ask her what was up between her and Kiyo when she had the chance. It was painful for Kei, but she desperately needed an explanation or maybe hope. Further evidence of this is that Hona pushed Kei into asking any inquiries if she wished to, unless they were about the special exam later that day, which clearly was not on Kei's mind. Honami denies they are dating. She also put herself down, which seemed like typical Honami behavior - this way Hona seems like the same she used to be. However, the way Honami denied it suggests she thinks highly of Kiyotaka. It's almost as if Honami wanted to go out with Kiyotaka but lacked the confidence to confess. Yet, as the neutral narrator suggested, it was difficult to believe anyone in ANHS could be above Hona's league. Between this and the fact that the way Honami and Kiyotaka interacted in public had changed, it was as if they were one confession away from dating. Kei had to reach the complete truth of it. Kei was scared of the truth, but it was a chance to face those fears. So long as Kei got all the answers from Honami's mouth... she wouldn't need to ask again. Honami could sense Kei's "earnest pleas" by reading her eyes as well as her heart "slightly relaxing" when the latter understood Kiyotaka and her weren't dating.

(Social Cognition, Anticipation, Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Abusing Insecurities, Emotional Perception)

Honami detected a faint "flicker of malice" born within her when she noticed Kei felt better when she understood that her and Kiyo weren't dating. Hona recalled all the times she cried in pain when recalling Kei's "existence" after learning Kiyo was in a relationship with her.

(Emotional Realization)

Honami pretended not to know the official story that Kei dumped was a lie and it was really the other way around, pushing the falsehood that she was oblivious to the situation between Kiyotaka and Kei and didn't understand Kiyotaka's motive with how he planned his relationship with Kei, though Hona admitted she knew he wasn't exactly the average high school boy. So Kei intuitively thought Honami knew something about Kiyotaka's secrets.

After Kei warned her that Kiyotaka would hurt her the same, Honami reassured Kei, admitting she loved him, but saying they were different. Unlike Kei, Honami only wanted to give love. Needless to say, it was a blatant lie. No need to rewind far back in the COTE series for proof - ***the previous page*** described how painful KiyoKei's existence was to her. She always wanted her love to be reciprocated, as would anyone else in the world. However, Honami had built up enough goodwill in the school that Kei believed this lie, despite the fact that Hona nominated her every rounds during the S&D exam without any heads up ahead of time for the sake of her strategy to "help" Suzune's class even though Kei confronted Honami about her mingling with Kiyo a month or so prior to that. For Kei, this exchange was described as "painful" by the narrator. Even though they don't explain why, it is not hard to understand Kei's feelings here - Hona was making her feel inferior and the lies made it hard to blame her directly for the relationship with Kiyotaka going south. Though Honami denied Kei's request to help her go back together with Kiyotaka, she reassured Kei that if a "deep" connection was made between her and him or an "important event" happened between her and Kiyotaka, it all happened after Kei and Kiyotaka broke up while trashing her hopes of getting back together with Kiyo in the process.

There, Honami's agenda with the conversation was elucidated. It's not to stay on amicable terms for its own sake. After all, she admitted to Kei she wasn't among the people she would help. Hona made Kei believe anything saucy that happened between her and Kiyotka only happened after the two broke up. Claiming that all the important events or the deep connection between her & Kiyotaka happened after Kei and Kiyo had already broken up was incredibly dishonest at best, pretty close to being a straight up lie. As previously described, Hona lured Kiyo towards her at the end of the Hokkaido trip and Kiyo hugged Hona for a long time (Y2V8), a few weeks afterward the two had something of a date and Hona invited herself to Kiyotaka's room less than a week after (Y2V9) and even caressed Kiyo's cheeks, they were intimate during the Y2 winter break with the touchy selfie (y2v9.5) and the day prior to the S&D exam in Kiyotaka's room (Y2V10), Honami also began the preparations for the promised meeting (sex included) long before Kiyotaka broke up. Moving further back in time, Kiyotaka and Honami were touchy on numerous occasions before the second year had even begun as well (Y1V4.5, Y1V11.5).

The only way to interpret Honami's reassurance to Kei as remotely truthful (even then only in a technically correct sense) is that the sex did happen after Kiyotaka dumped Kei, but after in this case is the very night of the same day the break up happened. Yet even then, that only happened after Hona began the text message phase of her scheme to coerce Kiyotaka into having sex with her.

Hona wanted to make Kei believe all the saucy stuff happened after the breakup to protect her own reputation and make sure everything she did before Kiyotaka and Kei broke up remained concealed. After all, Honami knew she had to keep an eye on her surroundings when they took the intimate selfie, that she had to keep Norihito's mouth shut when he caught her hugging Kiyo, and so on and so forth. Honami was aware the stuff she was doing with Kiyo throughout the second year would turn into some sort of illicit scandal would it become public knowledge or more accurately, spread in a way she didn't intend to - Honami had proven time and times again (Y2V9, Y2V9.5, Y2V10, Y2V12.5) she has zero quarrel engineering rumors or saying things that made Kiyotaka look worse for her own benefits.

By planting these lies in Kei's head, Honami aimed to ensure that she wouldn't do anything that would hurt her reputation and for her actions towards Kiyotaka to remain covered or misinterpreted in the most convenient way.

(Emotional Facilitation, Direct Manipulation, Influence Building, Demoralization, Abusing Insecurities, Concealment, Verbal Deception)

(Y2V7-Y3V1) Honami's Alignment

This scene with Kei fell in the same pattern as Hona's previously described prior pre-planned actions - the timing. Everything within Hona's plan to take Kiyo that *could've* been planned long ahead of time - her awkward scene with Ryuji during the 2nd year's cultural festival, disappearance in on the last day of the Hokkaido trip, nearly everything Hona did in Y2V9, the meeting in Y2V10, Y2V12.5 promise day and this scene with Kei - happened slightly before upcoming special exams or on set special days with the scheming revolving around those occasions being provoked by those events or using their convenient attributes - for example, the excuse she used for getting people like Ryuji involved in the Y2V10 meeting was to run "some checks" before the upcoming special exam. What this all implies is that Honami could've used foreseeable events as some form of landmarks for her alignment of tactics. It drastically increases the odds that everything besides the events within Y2V9.5 and S&D listed above was planned in a specific order from the start. This would have required her to envision the social landscape of ANHS several months in-universe ahead of time due to all the rumor engineering.

In numerous ways, ANHS is a random environment; special exams and their rules are random and it's impossible to control literally everything. Honami obviously did not cause Kei's illness during winter break and the Kei and Kiyo nominations during S&D weren't strategies she drew up before Kakeru made his counteroffer that confirmed she wasn't winning that special exam. But there's certain patterns that will hold up year after year, including some events (where elements such as waiting in line to see the 3-A exhibitions and the school trip having curfews and the way its groupings would be made can be expected to come into play when you consider ANHS' patterns, how school trips operate & the situation with the third year) and the ensuing A vs B & C vs D special exams right before the winter breaks. Honami also always had great insight on those around her, allowing her to foresee some of their behaviors by the time of the cultural festival, along with their reactions to her actions - for example, leaving the council, Nori catching her hugging Kiyo and so on and so forth well ahead of time.

It brings a greater sense of organization to her planning. Honami's actions had a sensible S→T→U→V→W→X→Y→Z alignment in line with foreseeable events.

As explained in the Y2V9 divisions Honami used the predictable timeline around that period to prepare for the "breaking the ice with Kiyotaka" phase of the plan - this was a necessity for the meeting in Y2V10.

Anyone can assume that special exams will keep on happening afterward, so at least one special exam would take place in the two months between the winter break and the end-of-year special exam. At the very least, Fuka's year DID face a special exam around that time last year (Y1) and someone was expelled, as in the S&D exam. This allows her to plan a meeting on the weekend before that special exam where she'd use the "running checks with Kiyo" excuse to involve Ryuji and the other classmates in her play of the weekend before the special exam to, inter alia, coerce Kiyo as a contingency for the upcoming promised day. It made sense that she wouldn't do much with Kiyo in a way involving using her classmates or influence shortly before the end-of-year exam; the two classes were set to duel ever since UVE.

The promised meeting requires no explanation for its predictability; its date was set literally one year ahead of time. Honami had planned to bind Kiyotaka to her with the meeting, so the damage control with Kei afterward should've also been considered and of course, a special exam at the start of the third year was to be expected so Honami could have used that to prepare basic talking points to start a conversation with Kei on their way to school, someone who wouldn't meet her on private times without attracting suspicions as the two were not close - this is not something that would be expected of the two but at that point Kei wanted to question Honami on her relationship with Kiyo. Even without the reveal of Kiyo's true nature, it is unlikely Honami planned to publicly date Kiyotaka so quickly for PR reasons - in that hypothetical timeline, he would've in all likelihood ended his relationship with Kei shortly prior to the beginning of the third year, minimum a day later than in the canonical one.

(Planning Preparation Process, Social Cognition, Data Analysis, Holistic Thinking, Inductive Reasoning, Anticipation)

This division wasn't made to delve on any specifics of the preparations themselves, it was to describe Honami's schedule of those preparations and thus the meaning of the timing for the vast majority of the schemes within her planning.

(Most of Year 2) Blinding Third Parties

By the time the second year arrived, Honami had enough information to figure out Arisu and Kiyotaka had what can be described as a competitive but friendly relationship, with Arisu's one-sided romantic feelings mixed in. Consequently, it was foreseeable that Arisu would try to halt Hona's process in uniting with Kiyo if she understood it, with Arisu's warning for Hona to distrust Kiyotaka (Y2V4.5) possibly confirming the obvious. For Honami's plan to bear fruits, every strategy and tactic had to be constructed in a way that would neutralize Arisu's potential efforts to hinder it. The latter was dismissive of Honami's skillset throughout the entire time. Arisu's Y1V9 SS and Y2V9.5 make it abundantly clear; calling Honami a "toy" and "trash". It didn't mean she can not change her mind, re-evaluate other people and so on, but while she tried to make Hona distance herself from Kiyo, it was always in a way that aimed to counter *Kiyotaka*'s intentions towards Honami, never taking Honami's own intentions seriously.

This is understandable, since Honami's approach throughout the year ensured it would stay that way:

- While Hona's disappearance (Y2V8) interrupted Arisu's meeting with Kiyo, Arisu was only shown to consider Honami's importance in his plan. There's no evidence Arisu suspected Honami was luring Kiyotaka towards her.
- Kiyotaka invited Honami to their Y2V9 date, this in itself suggesting it was purely his own agenda as the proactive actor, and it is doubtful Arisu knew Hona didn't share any reasoning for quitting the student council with her classmates, so Arisu lacked the clues to put the pieces together. Honami calling Arisu out on her intentions when the latter tried to warn her again doesn't contradict this, since from Arisu's POV this could've been another part of Kiyotaka's plan, especially given the timeline of events: Hona drops out of the student council -> Kiyotaka and Honami date -> Hona won the exam against Kakeru -> suddenly Honami is full of confidence and she can see through Arisu's intentions. Arisu already told Kiyotaka why she warned Honami to distrust him as well, although Honami had no way to know this.
- Waiting in front of Kiyotaka's door for one hour along with Honami's habit of always showing up early for any scheduled meeting tricked Arisu (along with many other students such as Miyabi and Chihiro) into believing Kiyo invited her the night before the Y2V9 special exam took place as opposed to Honami inviting herself.

- Beyond the door play, the rumors circulating during the 2nd year's winter break, product of Honami's scheming, revolved around the belief that Kiyo was the one approaching Hona despite having a girlfriend, so it seemed as if Kiyo was the proactive actor. It was implied that Masayoshi was aware of these rumors (Y2V9.5), so Arisu should as well; he told the latter about the way Kiyotaka looked at Hiyori during their 9.5 meeting (Y2V10).
- Honami's strategies for the special exams, most notably Y2V9 and Y2V10, emphasize elevating her classmates rather than sticking out by herself.
- The Y2V10 Meeting, or more specifically the way Honami used both Ryuji and Nori to conceal her presence from Kei, would trip anyone *potentially* spying on Kiyo at the time as well, such as Miki (Arisu's favorite spy). When Kiyotaka explained the matter to Kei to end the date, he mentioned Ryuji's name and referred to Norihito as a friend, but he did not say anything out loud about her. As a matter of fact, Ryuji's presence, one of the few people in Honami's class willing to oppose her "ways", was a factor pointing in the direction that Honami would not come to this meeting. It is unknown how much Arisu knows about their class' internal "cold wars", but she and Ryuji have some contacts with each other and Ryuji isn't exactly secretive about his disagreements with Honami's methods (he outrights talked about it to Kakeru and Masayoshi in Y1V11.5 and confided to Kiyotaka in Y2V7 without much prompting - three characters outside his class he openly distrusts), so it's not a stretch to believe Arisu would have some ideas about this.

Any traces left by Honami's tactics were completely concealed from Arisu, so it is no surprise she continued to underestimate her threat level until the very end.

Arisu's key to destroying Kiyotaka's neutralization plan reflected this. She agreed to a deal with Kakeru during the UIE exam to fight each other in the end-of-year exam with whoever loses having to drop out, forcing a -300 class points penalty on their class, destroying any realistic chance of reaching Class A.

The logic was as follows; Arisu considered her (or Kakeru's class) to be hopeless going into the third year after she (or Kakeru) dropped out along with the 300 CPT penalty. Additionally, Arisu thought Hona's class was hopeless in its current state. This should have meant, even if Kiyo changed class, one of the four classes would be left in a non-competitive state after the Year 2 ended. This is explained in the Y2V11's epilogue through the neutral narrator. If Arisu's assessment of her class was accurate, she would've successfully crushed Kiyo's plan of a four-way class war into the third year. Kiyotaka was, according to his monologues, unable to come up with any satisfactory solution to reconstruct his plan after Arisu left due to losing the end-of-year exam, as per her aforementioned agreement with Kakeru. So Arisu's initiatives against Kiyo specifically could have been effective.

From this perspective, Arisu's failure to acknowledge and neutralize Honami as a threat was her play's undoing. Honami helped Kiyotaka's plan and ruined Arisu's attempt at destroying it by formulating a third option that Kiyotaka, judging by his monologues, never considered.

In Y3V1, we learned that Honami's concealment went beyond Arisu - Ichika, who keeps a close eye on Kiyo's surroundings, also never suspected her as a schemer, dismissing Honami as nothing more than some "big breasted senpai". This makes sense as Honami knew some associated with the "White Room" tried to end Kiyo and she herself nearly died just for overhearing those words, hence she naturally had to conceal her cards from basically anyone who could be interested in Kiyo, especially those she couldn't profile, even if for nothing else than her own safety.

All of the bullet points above can apply to other third parties as much as Arisu, though one caveat being the winter break rumors didn't circulate with the first years. Katzuomi proves this very well, since his behavior towards Kiyo during the 2nd year winter break versus the start of third year when *everyone* in the school is speculating about Kiyotaka and Hona was unalike, going from his typical sour behavior in Y2V9.5 (in fairness this could've been because he didn't want to show his violent side while Hona was around, but Katsuomi never showed any violent impulses outside of that scene around those time) to trying to pick fights against Kiyotaka. The reason as to why Honami would decide to hide certain things from the kouhais with unknown link to Kiyo's past but not Arisu could be the timing. Considering the personnel that infiltrated the school late in Year 1 (Tokinari) and after the first year (Shiba) to take out Kiyotaka, Honami had to be especially wary of the first years and their teachers (if they were close enough to their students they could share rumors, even be in contact during the winter break), who might have come to ANHS because of Kiyo. On the other hand, Kiyo and Arisu entered ANHS at the same time. This lowered the chances that Arisu was in cahoots with those trying to take him out, even more so when you consider Arisu's feelings for Kiyotaka are affectionate. None of that means she wasn't a threat to Hona's goals, but this is a legitimate case of the devil you know versus the devils you don't. The problem with people that appeared after Kiyotaka's arrival in ANHS went beyond concerns over having a calculating side; after all, Tokinari did threaten Hona that if she were to tell Kiyotaka anything she overheard him discuss with Shiba, they would hurt her classmates. So even when spreading false rumors, it's too risky to feed information to unknown threats: Honami didn't know their motive and even less what they may know... basically nothing. It was impossible for Hona to know if she was "misleading" them at all (how any deception ends up being interpreted is almost entirely a matter of what information the target<s> has and lacks) over inadvertently giving them a reason to assess that it's time to eliminate her.

Naturally, it raises the question of why she did nothing to prevent the rumors at the start of the Year 3 from spreading across the school, unlike those during the winter break of the 2nd year.

The difference is Hona and Kiyo are now openly spending a lot of time together and Kiyo broke up with Kei, so it's much less suspicious. If ***those*** people never did anything to Kei before the break-up, there's no reason for them to make Honami disappear even if she overheard "White Room". The perception can be something along the lines of: she isn't trying to poke her nose somewhere it doesn't belong, so she's still a harmless goody two-shoes of no significance.

(Planning Invincibility, Concealment, Misdirection, Preclusion, Social Awareness, Social Cognition, Abductive Reasoning, Leadership, Risk Assessment)

C-D Alliance Strategy



Preliminaries

This is effectively an extension (+ result) of the CKA plan, but this was separated from the rest for clarity's sake and will be relevant for at least the first half of Y3.

Before reading this section, it's important to mention this description will draw comparison to a variety of game theory terms and models, we believe them to be pertinent in explaining the strategy. Those being the Nash equilibrium (NE), Law of Requisite variety aka Ashby's law, Prisoner Dilemma (PD), the Folk theorem, Tit for Tat (TFT), Iterated Prisoner Dilemma (IPD), evolutionary stable strategy (ESS) and Zero-determinant (ZD). Those are theoretical concepts used to interpret the C & D Alliance Strategy. Meaning, many of the words and abbreviations used will not refer to in-universe characters, environments, devices or concepts.

For the sake of conciseness, explanations for the relevant theoretical concepts used to analyze the C-D alliance strategy were split off from the rest of the doc, though they can be read here.

Using Game theory to interpret this alliance is a form of hermeneutic, or even an explanatory/structural, reading. Such an approach carries the risk of producing interpretations of the text that may not be fully compatible with how the same actions, events, and decisions are perceived in-universe. But those aware of the details, such as Kiyo, regard the alliance highly, though some skepticism remains from people like Ai. Furthermore, even if the author doesn't know those specific terms, it doesn't mean he doesn't get the overall idea the concepts entail, so they can still be relevant.

Another detail is that using Game theory for text interpretation isn't a niche. It might be a stretch to call it mainstream, but it is a recognized approach.

Y2V12.5 preparations

As described in the plan section, Honami, in all likelihood, intended to bring Kiyo to her class before the Y2 EoY exam. Therefore, everything around this strategy was an adjustment and there's no evidence it was considered before Y2V12.5. This interpretation of the alliance only requires Honami to recognize that Kiyo's goal wasn't solely to graduate from class A, so it can survive under unfavorable interpretations for her.

After the Y2V12 exam, Honami's class was 519 Class Points behind Class A. Also, Honami didn't want to abandon her zero-expulsion policy and other idealistic policies in her class. It follows from Kiyotaka's evaluation in the Y2V12.5. In the same scene, Honami confirmed it. Furthermore, Honami herself reaffirmed her commitment to these policies during the meeting with her class in Y2V12.5.

In practice it means the following. Closing the gap (519 points) is already a tough, complex task. Having self-imposed restrictions such as 0 expulsion complicates it even more. In essence, it's about diminishing variety in outcomes.

According to *Ashby's law*, only variety can beat variety. In application to this case, this means that Honami needs to increase the regulator's variety.

In this context, the regulator refers to Hona and her class. If she can't magically increase the strength of her classmates, then she must use something external, i.e., team up with another class or classes or recruit someone.

Arguably, there is no single exam that would allow her to close such a gap. This is even based on the unrealistic assumption that other classes would score zero.

That assumption is unrealistic. The statement implies that a one-time alliance can't solve her problem. It should be something long-lasting. This immediately raises a question regarding the PD and IPD.
Focusing solely on class points implies that "game" is closer to PD. This means that she should propose something other than class points (*in addition to*) to a likely ally that may change the nature of the game, making it more akin to IPD.
Another problem is her damaged reputation in terms of leadership. Setting aside readers' evaluation of her strength/weaknesses, it's likely that, for an increasing amount of peeps in-universe, she appeared to be an incapable or barely capable leader who had ruined her own class and relegated them to class D, even though Honami still had her own class' support. Consequently, Honami needed someone who could serve as a "bridge" between classes, who understood her strong sides, and who could agree to cooperate with her.
However, having someone who could serve as a "bridge" does not solve the main problem. One of the most important concerns is to prevent possible defection as much as possible. One way to do this is to form an alliance with a payoff profile that fits the folk theorem, thus building a credible reward-punishment mechanic alongside a discount factor indicating patient players. In this case, both factors depend on Honami's understanding of Kiyotaka's goals (when looking at it from her POV). That's why for Honami it was critical to confirm her image of him and learn as much as possible about Kiyotaka during the Y2V12.5 promise meeting, as much as possible regardless of external influence in these events.
That's why she tested with some of her behavior, as explained in Y2V12.5's "the method" promise meeting division of the CKA plan section.
Additionally, this understanding serves as a prerequisite for countermeasures against possible *ZD extortions* from Kiyotaka's side.
For Hona, it doesn't matter whether Kiyo expected to use the alliance to achieve another goal or if it serves as a checkpoint. For Honami, it's important that Hona could bring her class back to the class race without losing students (minimizing this risk as much as possible) using the alliance.

There is another interesting detail related to the application of Ashby's law. Actually, convincing other classes for not-trivial long-lasting cooperation is quite difficult, especially for someone with a not-good reputation *as a class leader*. However, instead of convincing the whole class, Hona only had to convince Kiyo, the leader of the previous Class A.

It's about destroying variety; one may argue that this is a byproduct of Kiyotaka being the main character, it still can be counted because Kiyotaka obviously was going to take the leadership role sooner than later. Hona framed it as Kiyotaka's idea, most likely to ensure the other class gets on board; it was explicitly shown to be Hona's idea during the Y2V12.5 scene.

The core idea is that the C-D alliance as a strategy has the properties required for a successful, difficult-to-exploit strategy. This was evaluative and required reviewing the meeting between Honami, Kiyotaka, and his classmates in Y3V1.

Scene with Masayoshi and Ai (Y3V1)

During the meeting between Honami, Kiyotaka, Ai, and Masayoshi in Y3V1, the latter two were quite skeptical about the alliance proposed by Hona and Kiyo. Masayoshi even attempted to take advantage of Honami's class.
Essentially, Ai and Masayoshi's argumentation could be summarized as follows. Let's consider two common situations.
The first scenario involves a special exam in which Hona's class faces Kiyotaka's. In this case, the class with structural/contextual advantages may be incentivized to unilaterally defect to secure victory. Moreover, any class might try to exploit the alliance and turn the situation to its own advantage.
This defection strategy will reduce the gap between the defecting class and the top-ranked classes while also widening the gap with the lower-ranked ones. Therefore, exploiting the alliance looks like the most profitable solution.
The other scenario involves a situation in which both classes need to cooperate to prepare for exams, e.g., by forming joint study groups. In this scenario, one party could exploit the alliance by contributing less while receiving additional support from the other. It makes sense considering that these classes are likely to compete against each other in future exams. Once again, defection appeared to be the most profitable solution. In other words, they argued that the alliance was unlikely to succeed because defection offers a higher payoff.
These scenarios are, basically, the prisoner's dilemma. Therefore, at first glance, the alliance isn't possible or reasonable, because defect is the optimal strategy.

However, the crucial aspect is that it is not a one-time collaboration but rather a recurring process. Thus, it represents an iterated game; the cooperative strategy may provide a more profitable solution. It depends on how it's played.

First of all, the condition for dissolving the alliance.
One condition for a cooperative strategy to be effective is that there should not be a predetermined last round. If the last round is known in advance, defection becomes the optimal strategy for both parties. If both parties choose to defect, cooperating in the round prior to the final round is not a reasonable option, and this reasoning continues for earlier rounds.
The condition "*until the four classes are competing equally*" helps resolve the issue by turning the game's horizon stochastic rather than fixed.
Essentially, it solves the issue with "infinite horizon," which "unlocks" **NE.**
Masayoshi tested the signal for potential deception. He perceived the alliance as a covert collusion when there is a hidden romantic subtext. The alliance *may* just serve that romantic goal; it might not align with the collective goal.
Consequently, Hona's and Kiyotaka's explanation of C-D sought to **prevent** "*false defections*." Their transparent explanation may prevent observers from wrongly inferring a side deal. They aimed at convincing them that the alliance was not an opportunistic romance pivot and expectations of both classes aligned. It mainly fits the Tit for Tat's **"Don't be too clever"** criterion.
It indirectly fits into the **"Nice"** criterion because it highlights the initial choice to cooperate rather than defect. It's about the "Don't be too clever" criterion.

Masayoshi claims that it's a zero-sum game. In this, one party's gain is directly equivalent to another person's loss. The counterargument broadens the context of the alliance. In this extended domain, the "game" becomes non-zero sum. Therefore, cooperation and collaboration lead to better outcomes for both.
It establishes the alliance payoff profile in a way aligning with the folk theorem. The payoff is structured to be feasible for the players and individually rational.
The passage is about TFT's ***Nice*** and ***Don't be too clever*** conditions. "*...we have agreed to concede victory to the class that is even one point behind in Class Points*" shows commitment to cooperate from the beginning & values cooperation more than a single-exam win. The articulated rule is simple and understandable and leaves minimal room for misinterpretation & consequently exploitation ("*more detailed arrangements*").

The rule can be a grim trigger or incite retaliation in tit-for-tat (TFT).
Indirectly it touches on TFT's other two conditions; ***Retaliating*** and ***Forgiving***.
Since the general rule is simple, the class violating it could demonstrate their willingness to cooperate next time. Since the rule is detailed, it clearly codifies who must concede. Any violation is easily verifiable and leads to punishments.

Again, it touches the folk theorem. *"The alliance formed with Ichinose's class is also one of the reasons for my transfer."* Kiyo forced his new classmates to start with cooperation; otherwise, he would retaliate. Here Kiyotaka sounded like a "grim-trigger" (retaliating by defecting in all future rounds).
Honami's public image is an explicit foundation for the alliance (from her side).
Masayoshi and, apparently, Ai are looking for a possible mechanic to retaliate.
Kiyo's hypothetical scenario shows that Honami's actions result in a significant loss of reputation, which serves as a punishment.

At the same time, it deterred defections. The reputational logic allowed earning redemption by returning to cooperation outside her class as a respectable class leader (sort of a "rise and fall" of Honami's reputation). This serves as yet another confirmation that the payoff profile aligns with the folk theorem.
Dissolving alliances in early stages can serve as a retaliation mechanic. This can reinforce the concept of the alliance as a non-zero-sum game.
Honami also explicitly points out (but not in IPD language) the endgame problem with backward induction. Implied "no betrayal first."
Honami's understanding (to some extent) of Kiyotaka's motives, along with his abilities, serves as the foundation of the alliance, just like Honami's credibility.
It's about the C-D alliance being a non-zero-sum game and destroying outcome variety by adding variety (two classes act as one in certain situations).

After a while, Masayoshi tries to get more out of the agreement, wanting Honami to pony up some private points, leading to her making an important statement.

First, Masayoshi's private points demand creates two scenarios.
In the most extreme scenario, his proposal could alter the dynamics of the game by modifying the payoffs for defection and cooperation for both classes.

It's hard to predict, but it's fair to say that the payoff Prisoner's Dilemma “matrix” might become asymmetric in favor of Kiyo's class. In some cases, cooperation for Honami's class might become impossible or even the worst option.

The game might stop being an Iterated Prisoner Dilemma.

In the more skeptical scenario, Masayoshi's proposal complicates the retaliation mechanic for Honami's class. This could lead to situations where retaliation isn't an option at all. For instance, let's consider the equivalence between a low chunk of Class Points and Private Points.

There is an exam in which Honami's class is expected to win based on the rules. However, Kiyotaka's class defects, wins, and earns 20 Class Points.
On the other hand, Hona's class has already spent several million Private Points.
Retaliation might be a flawed option (depending on the current class rankings).
It’s Masayoshi's attempt to force the extortion of the zero-determinant strategy.
For Hona, it’s obviously important to avoid such exploitation.
Therefore, Honami refusing this suggestion and her insistence on equal-footing cooperation are the only ways this cooperation can succeed.
In addition, the whole conversation was public. It was not a private conversation between Honami and Kiyotaka. All their classmates will, likely, learn about the alliance and the rules at one point, which is critical for “coordination equilibria”.

As previously mentioned, one of the main criticisms is that Nash Equilibrium and similar solution concepts are weaker in “noisy” environments. Considering the horizon of the long-term, clear uncertainties like unknown exam content and so on, and unpredictabilities related to social life, it's ideal to mitigate such risk.
The main tool used to increase robustness is to avoid rigid, inflexible rules or an overreliance on far-fetched guesses of what’s to come during the third year.

This is why they chose not to have a formal written agreement and instead relied on trust as the foundation of their C-D alliance. It was explicitly highlighted as a strength in the Y3V1 while pointing out how rigid rules may cause big drawbacks.
That wide range of strategic options allows them to make quick feedback-driven adjustments based on their observation. This process can be done iteratively.
Presumably, monitoring the situations with his class shouldn't be the problem.

In addition, this point allows one to claim in addition to the other points that the alliance as a strategy is somewhat “forgiving”. It provides them options to return to cooperation after defection if they like. In other words, it prevents an endless cycle of retaliation after a defection or even an unwitting/accidental defection. It can be seen as tough to exploit. The expected loss of the strategy's retaliatory phase cancels any extra rewards the exploiter may earn by defecting.

It doesn’t mean that the alliance is invincible. For example, unpredictable events that change what Kiyotaka wants, his goals and objectives, may drastically affect the discount factor and cause defection, as the defection in a single round would outweigh possible future punishments.

But as things stand at the time of this writing (Y3V2), Hona has reasons to think it’s a strategy with a high success rate even with the aforementioned caveats.

Variegated FSIQ, Reasoning, Thinking & Insight feats

Logical Reasoning (all three)

(Y2V9) Fuka Case Related Reasonings.

- Version #2 (broken into multiple separate reasonings)

Deductive Rsn

(~Y2V7) Prediction of Miyabi's competition (that it would take place).

(Y2V10) Class A Traitor Anticipation

(Y2V9) She deduced Norihito asked Kiyotaka to ask her about Mako's type.

Inductive Rsn

[Rework Needed] ~~Y1 ~ Y1V10 Data Analysis & Initial Profile (& Arisu+Kakeru).~~

Year 2 Review ~ Advanced Analysis of Kiyotaka

Honami performed an inductive process to anticipate Kakeru's strategy in Y2V9 and Suzune's strategy in Y2V10, basing her anticipations on their personalities and modus operandi.

Foreseeing the timing of the elections (rather than the elections itself) and the year's schedule after the sport festival.

While the aforementioned review of Kiyotaka is her best reasoning feat, it's also worth mentioning Hona will *generally* resort to inductions over the other forms of logical reasoning to figure things out both by on-screen and off-screen feats.

Abductive Rsn

Primary feats

- Ichika Profiling (+ Kohai & Teachers Rumor Concealment)
- **<WIP>** Predicting Kiyotaka would be in the same group as Norihito and Mako throughout the Hokkaido trip.

Secondary feats

- Foreseeing how Y2V1's partner exam would go down because of the differences in stakes between Year 1 and Year 2 students.
- (Y2V10) The stuff around Kiyotaka's Nominations.
- Honami figured Kakeru would follow through on what he said he'd do in the second half of Y2V10's exam after noticing her text was immediately marked as read. This allowed Hona to deduce what was about to happen (Class A having a traitor) and how she could use that to her advantage.

Perception

See "Scene with Ichika" or Selfie Feat for examples of Sensorial Perception.

If you scale perception by mental impression / interpreting stimulus instead of sensorial awareness, then there's noticing Mako and Kiyotaka were having an eye conversation during the gym scene (Y2V9), seeing through the real meaning of Miyabi's and Arisu's words and actions toward her post-UIE, Fuka case, etc. Hona's reasoning to figure out Kiyo's intent to balance the four classes (Y2V12.5) had to involve a high level of mental impressions as well.

Memory

Y2V12 Exam ~ Honami vs Suzune

Honami's performance against Suzune in the Y2 End-of-Year exam offered many feats and statements elevating her in sensory and emotional perception above the other characters. But in feats and scaling it buffs her memory the most.

Honami can tell when Chiba (some NPC) lies based on "gestures"... even though according to her, they aren't close at all. She also claimed to have spotted several other executives during the 1st round of discussion, which was proven true after the nomination of Minami. According to her, the reason she discerned so much this quickly was that she was "observing people more closely than anyone else" rather than, like Kikyo (another character with high social skills), knowing their secrets and whatnot. In other words, Honami's performance in the end-of-year special exam had little to do with her social qualities but plenty with her senses and interpersonal keenness. Cementing this were her deductions in the next few rounds. After Honami identified Minami as another executive, Hona and Suzune discussed the possibility that the former might have been lucky up to that point because Honami's first two nominations were from her class and it's established by now Honami knows her own classmates "inside and out".
However, this is swiftly proven wrong when it is shown she spotted all the honor students after only two rounds of discussions.
The description given for her decision ("gestures") are vague which makes it kind of difficult to scale in EP/Observation, but the fact Honami can remember which "gestures" to associate with deceits from people she rarely interacts with is very good when it comes to scaling her long-term memory, especially since she could do it with many people she has minimal contact with in one round of discussion. By contrast, Yosuke, someone with social skills on par or slightly below Honami, who saw through Kiyotaka strange behaviour early in the first year, realized Kiyo was lying about his smarts and had the sensorial capacity required to consider that Kiyotaka was putting up an act to blend (ergo, not a complete fodder when it comes to insight, discernment, etc), was soundly defeated by Himaguchi. Then Himaguchi, in turn, was easily defeated by Suzune - someone with improving but still lacking social skills. This series of outcomes proved that, in the Y2V12 exam, the overall sensory/insight and emotional perception had a significantly greater impact on their performance than the characters' social skills.

That Honami was able to clear Suzune (and this exam in general) so easily places her discernment, especially her long-term memory, at a high level relative to the rest of the verse - more so when considering the statements ranking Hona above Kakeru and Arisu in this exam. But even without those statements, the fact these two took several rounds to spot all the honor students put Honami above them.

One could argue it was strictly a demonstration of her interest in socializing, but her academics being among the best in ANHS suggests a long-term memory that is strong regardless of her personal preferences and other fields of expertise.

Other Feats

Honami has more memory feats of note: remembering when most people arrive at school every morning (or at least Kei; Y3V1), noticing the differences in Ryuji's composure when he's around Kiyotaka, Satoru or Yosuke, remembering Kiyotaka caught a glimpse at her private points months later, the prediction for the Y2V8 groupings considering her insight on other students, the drink she had when she came in Kiyotaka's room in Y1V11.5 nearly nine months later (implied in Y2V9).

Even if the recall was of information from only 5 minutes prior, the Y3V3 VSI feat was one of the best long-term memory feats in COTE, since Honami memorized every coordinate of all active players across the year down to the smallest units (roughly 140 students at the time when excluding the commanders).

Pattern Recognition

Honami did not notice the 0-VIP or 3-VIP pattern of the Zodiac exam, otherwise the exam would have ended in her victory. However, for what it's worth, there is some evidence she suspected a pattern was in play.

Before the last day of the exam (Y1V4), Honami assured Kiyotaka neither her nor her two classmates were their group VIP, but she wasn't willing to prove this by showing their phones. This is something Kiyo himself noticed in his monologue. And yet, during the last meeting right before the end of the exam, Honami and the rest of her classmates took the lead in showing their phones with the email to prove they were not the VIPs.

Why did she change her mind? By then, it was way too late to notice a pattern ***or make use of it***. For that reason, before the last meeting, it was best to leave it up in the air whether she or anyone in her class truly was the VIP.

If Hona suspected there was a pattern, why did she not make use of her alliance with Suzune's class to crack the pattern? With 6 VIPs, it would be much easier to win the exam. Even if Honami had to share Kakeru's and Kohei's class points with Suzune's, you can still deal a big blow to the then Class A and the closest class on their tail. Honami had many reasons to distrust Suzune, Kiyotaka and everybody else in their class. Rokusuke, a student of Suzune's class, identified & eliminated the VIP of the Monkey group as soon as the second day began, which was one of her own. Furthermore, it was impossible to tell who truly led Sae's class between Suzune, Yosuke or a mysterious third party. To top it off, two classes wrote down their leader in the island exam (one of which was Kakeru) and two classes wrote the leader of Kohei's class (both of whom had to be Kakeru and Suzune). These factors made cooperation difficult.

Even back then, Hona already heavily suspected Kiyotaka of being this potential third party; Hona thought it was bizarre she was placed in the Rabbit group and should have instead been in the dragon group with the other class leaders. Hona inferred there must have been a special reason for her to be placed in the Rabbit group. Hona analyzed all the people in the Rabbit group and felt she could read everyone minus Kiyotaka. (Y1V4 SS)

CPI

- Uhh...
- Y3V1 Ichika Formulation Speed + EU.
- Selfie Feat

VCI

- Great communication skills, as shown in Y1V4, Y2V5, Y2V9 (SC Scene & Kei + Maya), Y2V10 (post-exam) and Y2V12.5 (the scene with her classmates).
- Capable of extrapolating on slight phrasing inconsistencies and fragments of spoken wording (Y1V8 Kiyotaka, Y2V12 Suzune)
- Her academics OAA are on the upper end at 87. Honami took first place in the entrance exam and #3 (88-90 points) in the Y2V1 math exam.

VSI

- Y3V3 Special Exam GPS Feat
- Selfie Feat

Novel Complex Problem-Solving

- Y2V1 Partner Exam Tactic
- Y2V12.5 - Honami's strategy to balance the four classes.
- In a way, the CKA plan is NCPS.

Learning Ability: Honami is near the top of her grade in ANHS and was also at the top in middle school despite missing half a year and her upbringing not helping matters (low income household and raised by a single parent).

Cognitive Adaptability: Hona has the ability to mold herself in a shape that suits the preferences of the people she values. For Honami to be able to transform her inward self and mindset to suit those she loves, whether it be her mother (Y1V9) or Kiyotaka (Y2V9) - two *very* different people, in the span of few months at most serves as a testament to her fluidity as a person. We lack direct confirmation she did become the type of person her mother really wanted her to be, but Kiyotaka in Y2V9.5 thought in his monologue after his call with Maya that he noticed he is into deceiving others and them trying to deceive him in return; exactly what his relationship with Honami had turned into. After Honami remodeled herself, any problem she had with handling ANHS's cutthroat-ness disappeared (though she was not immune to heartbreaks 💔 and Kiyotaka still isn't in love with her).

~Y2V7 - Honami predicted Miyabi's competition.

Evidences this feat exists

For the strategies she employed in her Y2 plan after the UIE to be coherent, in particular the rumor strategy and everything related to her classmates, Honami had to foresee Miyabi would hold some sort of battle between her and Suzune for his seat after the Hokkaido trip well ahead of time - before the cultural festival when she began her Ryuji-Kiyotaka strategy.

Her plan involved her decision to time her departure from the student council to maximize the impact it would have on Miyabi's mental state and execute her Y2V9 rumor strategy. Worth highlighting (if this inference happened before Y2V6) that this prediction implies she expected Kiyotaka to not compete in the sports festival, but he would be willing to compete later on, though this is very unlikely given her mental state at the time was still in all likelihood at a very low point.

As Miyabi announced the elections to Honami and Suzune after both him and Kiyotaka agreed to the match and Ikuta's scheme was built around trying to make Honami choose to drop out through indirect means, there's no chance she heard about the election ahead of time, especially not prior to the Y2 cultural festival.

Direct evidence Hona was prepared for Miyabi pinning her against Suzune is her calm demeanor throughout the student council scene when Miyabi announced the elections and when she announced her resignation from the student council, only reacting non-verbally to the mention of the alleged shoplifting, a weak spot to Hona for unrelated reasons, which contrasted Suzune's behavior who reacted to everything Miyabi said and kept asking questions during the explanation.

The following analysis serves to explain how she could have predicted this would happen, based on the information we, the readers, know as an absolute certainty *she* is aware of. Given how this is about one conclusion specifically that wouldn't immediately jump to mind without considering multiple factors, it's unlikely that her prediction was either abductive, inductive and especially intuitive.

A bonus that comes from this interpretation is it adds to the Miyabi misdirection from Y2V7 to Y2V11, as it provides a potential explanation as to how Hona would have figured out Miyabi considers Kikyo to be Kiyotaka's pawn.

Summary

Earlier in the 2nd year, around the time of the preparation for the Uninhabited Island Exam, Suzune joined the student council which required Miyabi's thumbs up. Honami would also know Kikyo tried to join the student council, but Miyabi turned her down. If Ichika knew of this, this means this was kept in the records, so Honami would have been privy to this information as a member of the student council. No matter how Hona learned about this, she most likely wasn't told why Kikyo would be refused and Suzune would be accepted.

After all, Kikyo and Miyabi are not known to have an antagonistic relationship; in fact Kikyo is much better known to take a neutral stance in all matters outside of helping her class, as with the vast majority of students. But Suzune, on the other hand, is the little sister of Miyabi's first rival and it is public knowledge she is his second rival's partner in crime. Both Kikyo and Suzune are also in the same class.

Furthermore, Kikyo's academics and social abilities should make her qualified for the position, perhaps even more so than Suzune when you consider their gap in social ability is larger than in grades. Essentially, whatever issue Miyabi had with Kikyo but not Suzune has nothing to do with public allegiances or qualifications.

This means Miyabi's business with Kikyo is tied to some secret agendas. But then why did Kikyo even bother to try to join the student council? Regardless of what is happening behind the scenes between them, Kikyo needed Miyabi's approval to join the student council. It would mean they never had a direct confrontation to ensure both of 'em know of their mutual animosity. More precisely, Kikyo was the one who either wasn't sure or didn't know Miyabi saw her as an enemy. So in turn, when Kikyo approached her to join the student council, Miyabi thought she was trying to trick him so she could spy or some other underhanded business.

But Miyabi accepted Suzune into the council even though she made no attempt to distance herself from her brother or Kiyo (literally, even when asking to join the SC).

This means Miyabi considers Suzune being open about her allegiances as being less harmful to whatever his plans are than Kikyo who may be coy about it. Whatever he's trying to accomplish has Suzune being clearly on Kiyo's side on the SC, while Honami herself is the only other Year 2 student on the council.

On this point, Miyabi clearly tried to turn Hona into his plaything throughout her entire time in the student council such as getting her to spill the beans about her secret and then leaking it to Arisu, coercing her into dating him shortly after or distancing her from Kiyo with the callous way he revealed his relationship on the way back to school after the uninhabited island exam. It means the way he plans to fight Kiyotaka involves the two of them having their own pieces in the SC. Meaning, he views them as proxies for the two of them.

Miyabi's set on having his fight with Kiyo, to the point of starting an harassment campaign against him and telling him in front of Honami it will continue until he accepts to fight him. But Miyabi will leave the student council soon and he'll have to pick between Honami, the one he considered to be his piece, and Suzune, the one he sees as Kiyotaka's pawn. It would be strange if he chose Kiyotaka's "piece" instead of his own, but why did he even bother allowing Suzune to join the SC in the first place and trying so hard to fight Kiyotaka if it were so simple? Whatever the answer is, there is no guarantee Miyabi will choose Honami as the next SCP and by extension, Suzune has a real chance and something Honami has not been personally made aware of will determine Miyabi's decision.

Based on his actions, Miyabi envisions his competition with Kiyotaka to revolve around the only two candidates eligible to become his successor, with each side having their personal piece.

The only possibility worth considering is he plans on having them compete for his throne sooner than later, with him and Kiyo backing their "piece".

Honami's premises

1. Miyabi rejected Kikyo's request to join the student council.
2. Miyabi accepted Suzune's request to join the student council.

Deduction ~ Miyabi is fine with Suzune joining the SC, but isn't with Kikyo.

1. Kikyo isn't any less qualified than Suzune for the position: she is slightly worse in academics, but her social aptitudes are miles ahead of Suzune's.
2. Kikyo and Suzune are from the same class.

Deduction ~ Miyabi has an issue with Kikyo unrelated to qualifications.

1. Suzune is Manabu's sister and also well known to be Kiyotaka's associate.
2. Kikyo isn't known to be particularly close to either of his enemies.
3. Kikyo doesn't have any known personal enemies.

Deduction ~ Miyabi has an issue with Kikyo unrelated to known allegiances.

1. If Miyabi's bone to pick with Kikyo isn't related to qualifications or known allegiances, then it is related to a secret matter.
2. But no matter what that secret is, Kikyo tried to join the student council which required Miyabi's approval.

Deduction ~ Miyabi and Kikyo didn't have a direct confrontation.

1. Without a direct confrontation, there is no guarantee both knew the other considered them an enemy.
2. Kikyo, who tried to join the student council, did not think Miyabi saw her as an enemy as doing so required his approval.
3. Miyabi saw her as a (potential?) enemy, hence why he rejected her candidacy.

Deduction ~ Miyabi thought Kikyo tried to pull a fast one on him or at the very least, had ambiguous allegiances.

1. Even if that was Miyabi's reason for refusing her, it doesn't directly explain why he accepted Suzune into the student council.
2. Suzune is very openly associated with people he considers to be enemies.

Deduction ~ The fact that Suzune is openly an enemy and clearly Kiyotaka's piece works into whatever he's trying to accomplish.

1. Whatever Miyabi's trying to accomplish involves Suzune as Kiyotaka's obvious ally into the SC. Honami is the only other Y2 member in the SC.
2. Miyabi has tried to make Honami his own piece (such as trying to coerce her into dating her or to distance her from Kiyotaka).

Deduction ~ What Miyabi's trying to accomplish involves having his piece in the student council and Kiyotaka having his own piece; both from the same year.

1. If that's how he views Honami and Suzune and he wants to fight Kiyotaka, then he envisions them to be proxies for his fight between him and Kiyotaka.
2. Miyabi is committed to having a confrontation with Kiyotaka, to the point of threatening him with further harassment until he accepts. He said as much to Kiyotaka in front of Honami after he revealed his relationship with Kei.
3. He will have to pick between Suzune and Honami to be his successor. One he sees as Kiyotaka's piece, the other he wants to make his.

Deduction ~ The battle Miyabi envisioned between Kiyotaka and him will revolve around Honami and Suzune fighting to be his successor.

Conclusion ~ The battle Miyabi envisioned between Kiyotaka and him will revolve around Honami and Suzune, whom he considers to be their respective pieces, fighting to be his successor. It should happen not long after the Hokkaido trip, as the seniors will have to vacate their seats by then otherwise the school will most likely use forceful methods to make them do so if they keep delaying the process.

19 deductive premises

Honami's observations

Miyabi perceives Honami to be his piece and Suzune to be Kiyotaka's, and they happen to be the only options Miyabi can choose from as his successor.

Honami's enigma

Legend: A - Miyabi. B - Kikyo. C - Suzune. D - Honami. E - Kiyotaka.

{a} - Miyabi rejecting Kikyo's candidacy

{b} - Miyabi accepting Suzune's candidacy

{c} - Miyabi's efforts to fight Kiyotaka incl. harassment

{d} - Miyabi trying to turn Honami into his piece in various ways

1. A rejected B

2. A accepted C

D#1 ~ A thinks C > B

1. B >= C in individual ability
2. C and B are in the same team.

D#2 ~ D#1 isn't because of ability.

1. C is 100% on E's side.
2. B may not be on E's side.
3. B's public stance is neutral.

D#3 ~ D#1 isn't because of B's public stance.

1. D#1 - D#2 - D#3 = only option for D#1 is secret.
2. Even if [D#1-1], B tried to be accepted by A.

D#4 ~ A and B didn't directly fight.

1. D#4 = A and B may not know that the other sees them as foes.
2. [D#4-2] = B did not expect A to see her as a foe.
3. A saw B as a foe.

D#5 ~ A thought B tried to deceive him.

1. Even if D#5, ? why [D#1-2].
2. C did not try to deceive A.

D#5 ~ C is 100% being a foe on E's side works for A's aim.

1. A's aim += 2 Y2 SC members: 100% E's piece & D.
2. A's aim += making D his piece.

D#6 ~ A's aim = 2 Y2 SC members: 100% E's piece & 100% A's piece.

1. If D#6, then he sees C and D as front of A and E
2. A's aim = fight E.
3. A will have to choose between C and D.

Conclusion ~ A's aim = fight E using his choice between C and D.

Honami had to gauge 5 actors and 4 happenings.

With this prediction in mind, Honami timed her resignation - which evidently was whenever he would start his game with Kiyotaka - to deal the right amount of damage to Miyabi's mental state as she should and reworked her door strategy slightly due to Ikuta's scheme mixing up Kiyotaka's schedule around that time.

Honami's reasonings to assess how the Fuka case was going to affect relevant actors, to adjust her rumor mills strategy.

For starter, Hona could have anticipated Kiyotaka's schedule (more specifically, *when* he would investigate) through an inductive reasoning process:

1. The case, which was assigned to the student council now led by Suzune, was serious enough that it would lead to severe consequences if it was reported to the school.
2. This will be Suzune's first case as SCP.

Induction ~ Suzune wants to make a thorough investigation. It will confirm Ikuta is the one responsible, not Miyabi or Kiyotaka.

1. Kiyotaka is proactive, but always masks this with excuses to come across as indifferent to avoid being pushed off / questioned.
2. He has numerous excuses: he is the SCP's classmate and she relies on him a lot. Ikuta's aim was to sabotage a bet between Kiyotaka and Miyabi. Kiyotaka is Fuka's only friend.
3. He interrogated Honami over her decision to quit the council, proving a certain necessary level of interest in the case to seek/have excuses.

Induction ~ Kiyotaka will most assuredly investigate the matter himself.

1. The second semester will end tomorrow; the case will have to be resolved by then, before the winter break.
2. [*We're assuming Honami did some information gathering off-screen for this one*] Kiyotaka had no plans for this evening, *unlike the previous two days*, but tomorrow is the special exam, then the next is the closing ceremony.
3. He will be on his own after school because his date with Honami created some friction between him and Kei. He could move freely, had no time constraints, etc.

Induction ~ Kiyo will investigate the day before the special exam after school hours.

This anticipation definitely exists because of the circumstances

- We know the “waiting-in-front-of-Kiyotaka-door” tactic was already set in motion by the middle of the day, hence Honami’s "see you later" comment to Kiyotaka after the confrontation with Kakeru.
- The reason it was possible to wait this long in front of his door (or at all) is because of Kiyotaka's investigation. Consequently, Honami knew he would investigate after school that day, even though he told no one he was going to do so. And Fuka has no friend to discuss this with, so she wouldn’t either.
    - In Y2V11, there’s an extremely similar scenario with Masayoshi waiting in front of Kiyotaka’s door for a while as a result of Kiyotaka’s meeting with Sae. Kiyotaka thought this was intentional and that Masayoshi wanted to be seen by Arisu or her limbs; Masayoshi most likely knew Kiyotaka’s meeting was scheduled for on the fifth day (Ai did, so the schedule for each student was public information) and Masayoshi had his contact information. This doesn’t prove Honami knew that Kiyotaka would investigate, but it illustrates that the author could’ve considered these factors, as opposed to being some kind of plot hole.

Kiyotaka investigating was largely a by-product of Ikuta’s unpredictable scheming, so no matter what else she planned to do before she left the council, this tactic was definitely an adjustment she had to make during the execution of her strategy. But in all likelihood, it wasn’t that significant. If, for example, Kiyotaka didn’t investigate the third years and went straight to his dorm, Honami could’ve instead walked with him on his way back or something similar, which would have created a similar effect to waiting in front of his room.

The door tactic in itself wasn’t even the heart of the strategy - the moment Honami and Kiyotaka were spotted by third years during the trips to the gym post-date was the moment the trap for Miyabi was his to fall into. Everything else - waiting in front of the door, the gym and so on - poured fuel to the fire as far as rumors were concerned.

Also, while it is nearly impossible Honami could have predicted how Ikuta would meddle with the election (especially since she had a slight reaction to Fuka being angry over being accused of shoplifting), anticipating that Ikuta would try to meddle with them isn’t that far-fetched.

Honami has spent a fair amount of time working alongside Ikuta as by then they had been fellow council members for roughly a year.

Meaning, Honami had enough time to profile Ikuta, etc. Since the direct evidence Hona foresaw the election also applies to the bet (no reaction when Miyabi blurted it out, unlike Suzune), she at least knew Ikuta had a motive to intervene or at least try to prevent it. Additionally, since Miyabi was obviously not the type of person to care for anyone else's concern and just wanted to do whatever he had to for his battle against Kiyotaka, expecting Ikuta to employ underhanded measures to stop the bet wasn't out of the realm of possibilities, so it's not possible she gave herself some room to maneuver taking him into account.

But all of this (the whole strategy for Miyabi and the anticipation for Kiyo) required Hona knowing Miyabi and Kiyotaka were not the mastermind behind the shoplifting scheme to get Honami to drop out of the SC. Miyabi would've had a lot more issues to deal with than not getting his fight with Kiyotaka if he were busted and had faced some consequences for his actions - even if he is an influential person in the school itself he clearly can't frame other people of actual crimes if he gets caught. Not to mention how her scheming around trying to get Miyabi to spread rumors about her and Kiyo wouldn't make much sense if Hona thought Miyabi actually wanted her to invalidate the bet by dropping out.

Before delving into the "why" neither Miyabi and Kiyotaka were responsible for the matter involving Fuka, it's important to add as an abductive inference that Ikuta was obviously behaving suspiciously throughout the council meeting; for one, he readily admitted he was the one who "screwed up" Fuka's appointment and kept Miyabi in the dark about this. Considering timing is everything in this case, Ikuta is definitely involved even if he's not the only mastermind. Ikuta was also oddly insistent about whether Honami was really okay with running in the elections.

Also, regardless of her shock at seeing Kiyotaka's worst colors in Y2V12, Honami has proven time and time again prior to that to be plenty capable of doubting him when she was justified in doing so based on what she knew and could infer; Hona did not believe his excuses in the Zodiac Exams and she never changed her mind on this afterward (Y1V10 SS), Honami suspected Kiyo was the one behind the rumors of her acquiring private points through illegitimate means (Y1V8 SS) and she doubted his intentions as recently as (at the time) when he invited her on a date the day before Honami executed her door tactic. If he was involved, she had no reason to think he would investigate the case.

The readers could eliminate Kiyo from the suspect list because the story follows his point of view and can see his thoughts when not being misleading or unreliable and his every, actual actions. The characters in the story don't get that luxury.

By making Honami drop out, his classmate becomes the next SCP by default. He is the one doing a bet with Miyabi - Kiyotaka could have accepted Miyabi's challenge to create a scenario in which Suzune takes the presidency over Honami. It doesn't end there; Kiyotaka is Fuka's only friend and so, he could have asked her to make a scene. The whole point was Fuka's outburst and how it'd affect Honami's emotions in the heat of the moment, so anything else afterward does not matter, so whether there is camera footage of Yamanaka planting the item on Fuka or not is irrelevant. Furthermore, even if Ikuta and Suzune were not innocent, it doesn't preclude the possibility Kiyotaka was involved somehow, to any degree.

If Ikuta and Kiyotaka weren't in cahoot, Ikuta had to predict Fuka's reactions to a T, which is much more difficult than for Kiyotaka to simply tell her to act in a certain way. Ikuta also had no stake in the election itself, other than Suzune being Manabu's sister, but there is no evidence Honami knew Ikuta admired the former SCP, let alone that he cared about his little sister. It's also possible Kiyotaka acted without Suzune's approval; Honami knows Kiyotaka does that a lot based on his actions she is aware of throughout the first year. Suzune acting behind Kiyo's back is virtually impossible given the fact Miyabi didn't inform her of the match between him and Kiyotaka nor the election ahead of time.

Honami's deductive premises for Miyabi

1. Miyabi and Kiyotaka decided to bet on the election.
2. If they agreed to bet, then at least one of them truly wanted the bet.
3. If they wanted to bet, they wanted the election.

Deduction ~ Miyabi and/or Kiyotaka did not want to sabotage the election.

1. Just as Kiyotaka was going to choose between Honami and Suzune, Fuka bursted into the student council room and interrupted him.
2. Fuka accused Miyabi of ordering Yamanaka to frame her as a shoplifter after Yamanaka spilled the beans.
3. Ikuta knew the reason for Fuka's visit and the timing of her appointment, but deliberately kept Miyabi in the dark.

Deduction ~ Miyabi could not have planned Fuka's interruption.

1. The class war in Fuka and Miyabi's year is long over.
2. Then the only thing framing Fuka as a shoplifter could accomplish was derail the conversation about the bet and the election.
3. If derailing the conversation was the aim, Fuka's interruption was planned.

Deduction ~ As he couldn't have planned the interruption, Miyabi is not the culprit.

Honami's abductive reasoning for Kiyotaka

Kiyotaka was in the room before Honami and Suzune arrived. That in itself cleared him of being involved with the people who framed Fuka of shoplifting because of a number of circumstances Honami knew about.

The simplest and most logical reason as to why Kiyotaka would be there before Honami and Suzune was to discuss the fundamentals of the bet, the election or both, considering the facts that Kiyotaka was already in the student council room before two council members / election candidates were allowed to come in, the former SCP and Kiyotaka's nonexistent relationship besides the former wanting to compete with the latter, Kiyotaka not being a member of the student council along with said council not having any pending business involving him (Honami would know the latter as she was still a member of the student council at the time) and Miyabi asking Kiyo in front of both Hona and Suzune to pick one of the candidates for their bet; Kiyotaka was also surprised to be allowed to choose.

If Kiyo only knew the fundamentals of the bet and the election by the time Honami and Suzune walked into the room, then their discussion, the reason he was already there, was centered around letting him know of the bet, the election or both. Miyabi had yet to tell Kiyotaka about the election, the bet or both before the meeting, so he isn't in cahoots with Ikuta or whoever is behind the framing; him telling Ikuta or any third party about them, directly or indirectly, was the condition for Kiyotaka to be involved with whatever was going on with Fuka (otherwise why would Ikuta or any other third party go about ending the bet in such a roundabout manner?)

Y2V9.5 - Honami's Selfie Feat

Many people from all kinds and all three years were gathered at the Christmas Tree at Keyall Mall. Before Kiyotaka showed up, she took 43 photos, usually alongside at least two more people.

Following Kiyo's point of view on the situation - all three known pictures included a minimum of three people in them; three unnamed 1-B students, two third years and Kazuomi with Tsubasa from 1-D. So, it can be estimated Honami already took selfies with ~86+ other people by the time Kiyo arrived at the scene.

One can infer there were a lot of people at the scene with that figure alone, but you can add to that count, he also mentioned he spotted Honami in a crowd of people and he saw lots of people passing by, two of which were the teachers of their classes. Regardless, Honami stood out quite a lot since she is, well, herself, but also because she was right in front of the Christmas tree. According to Tsubasa, Kazuomi came to the mall because rumors began to spread of Honami taking pictures with everyone in front of the tree. Honami said she appeared almost one hour and thirty minutes before Kiyo, so we can infer she took picture at a rate of one every two minutes within that span and higher in the last portion of that <=1:30 when we consider the rumors wouldn't instantly spread around the school across all three years.

She stated her main goal was to take a selfie with him. Kiyo inferred Hona's angle was that if Kei & her close friends like Maya or Nene found out about the photo, it may be less of an issue if it was only one of many with a wide variety of people. Kiyotaka thought Honami was constantly observing others, so Hona understood the gravity of the situation and how much caution she had to exercise.

This scene is an exhibit of Honami's visual acuity and spatial intelligence. Despite the aforementioned fast rate of photos taken per minute and the randomness of all the people approaching the two and bystanders passing by, Honami managed to snap two pictures with Kiyotaka at the perfect timing. Kiyotaka's monologue confirmed nobody saw them, meaning the VSI/sensory slice of this feat applies to Kiyo as well. In essence, this means that during their conversation, she never stopped keeping an eye off all of her surroundings; high in the quantity of folks.

The christmas tree may seem helpful to ensure Honami didn't need a full 360 degree awareness, but in truth a tree isn't a wall without gaps, you can walk around it and as far as it did block the other side's vision, it also hindered the ability to see anyone approaching from that other side; do keep in mind the aforementioned factors that made the situation unpredictable for Honami in order to bypass any suspicions.

Y2V10 - Honami's anticipation of the Class A traitor

Evidences this feat exists

After Kakeru sent his counter offer before the first half of the special exam began, the narrator states Honami used her logic and thinking to grasp his aim. Her first text to Kakeru was immediately marked as "read", implying he wanted to contact her as well, but this doesn't explain how she knew Kakeru's aim and he had to cover for himself. She had to deduce how Kakeru would score enough points to secure to win, otherwise she'd assume his offer was a joke and he had no intention to negotiate, as would "any other students", according to the narrator. She executed her Kei strategy when the 2nd half of the exam began, so Honami knew by then Kakeru's win was guaranteed, otherwise she would not aid a competitor fighting for first place. Evincing this foresight further is that her class was actually in the lead after the 14th round whereas Kakeru was in last place.

Summary

Kakeru refused Hona's 25 points in return for not targeting any of her classmates with two mistakes, but Kakeru offered Honami an undisclosed quantity of points while giving her what Honami wanted (not targeting her vulnerable classmates) without asking anything in return. This sounds like a joke, as the narrator said, but it might not have been one, considering he read her first text as soon as she sent it.

Mind you, this doesn't prove anything and it certainly didn't explain what's going on in Kakeru's head. At the very least, he saw her 25 points as a net negative, that much is indisputable. Otherwise, why say they're unnecessary and then offer her points Hona didn't ask for on top of what she actually asked for? But why would he do this? There are circumstances where leaders should sacrifice class points; Honami had to throw Y2V1 to save her class and Kakeru wasted 150+ class points in his search for X. But this is definitely not a special exam propitious for tanking strategies & every point on the board matters; the winning class gets a +150/200 class points increase compared to everyone else - the winning class earns 100 class points, 2nd/3rd will lose 50 class points and last place loses 100 CPT. Worst of all, last place has to expel a classmate.

Kakeru's class obviously didn't want to get rid of a classmate to the extent they're willing to lose 100 class points, as proven by the unanimous special exam when they had an opportunity to expel one of their own for 100 class points, but chose not to. In short, Kakeru must be certain they'll win the exam. This is unnatural as his class has proven time and time again to be inept at academics, including as recently as the last special exam. After all, Honami's 25 points offer was made on this basis.

That means Kakeru had secured a lot of points through external means. Obviously, it's not from Honami because they wouldn't be having this discussion if they already reached an agreement nor is it from Suzune because their classes are parallel in the rotation. Hona's class could've a traitor, but the only candidate, Ryuji & his faction, are closer to Kiyo, a member of Suzune's class, than Kakeru, someone who burned bridges with him. It leaves Arisu's as the only possibility.

However, if Kakeru receives points from Arisu's class, it opens a new question: what did he mean when he said if Honami does anything strange, Arisu will notice? That was the reason he turned down her 25 points offer. Honami is set to attack Kakeru in the first half and Arisu will do so in the second half. If Kakeru doesn't want Arisu to notice anything in the first half, then he plans to surprise her in the second half.

If Kakeru receives points from Arisu's class, it'll be either from Arisu herself, the leader, or someone else, a traitor. Given Kakeru intends on surprising Arisu, that means something she will not expect is bound to happen then. Consequently, he has a deal in place with some traitor from Arisu's class. This traitor will probably set up some way to transmit Arisu's attacks live to Kakeru, who should secure 50 points easily.

Nevertheless, by giving all those points to Honami, Kakeru has a goal in mind. It is impossible he's doing so out of the goodness of his heart. So why? Honami and his class are both in the bottom, hundreds of points behind Suzune's and Arisu classes. Using his traitor, he's in a position to toy with the ranking somewhat and it would make sense if he would rather bring Arisu's or Suzune's classes down to last place over Honami's class which will return to Class D after this exam.

Honami's premises

1. Kakeru rejected Honami's offer to receive 25 points in exchange for not targeting anyone with two or more mistakes.
2. Not long after, he offered to give her what she wanted (not targeting anyone with two or more mistakes) and points she didn't ask for. He claimed her 25 points were "unnecessary".

Deduction ~ Whatever his aim may be, Kakeru saw her points as an active nuisance.

1. 1st place equals a +150/200 CP rise over everyone else.
2. Last place has to expel a classmate and loses 50 CP more than 2nd & 3rd.

Deduction ~ The exam isn't suited for tanking strategy and there is no obvious incentive for a class leader to not score as many points as possible.

1. If Kakeru saw Honami's 25 points as a hindrance and is even willing to give her free points, he must be awfully confident he will win the exam.
2. That confidence couldn't have been from his classmates' abilities, as they struggle academically. Her offer was based on Kakeru's class being weak.

Deduction ~ Kakeru already secured a lot of points from another class.

1. Kakeru's points couldn't have come from Honami herself, otherwise they wouldn't have this discussion.
2. While some people have seemingly begun to rebel against Honami, they are led by Ryuji who had a fallout with Kakeru last year and if anything, is closer nowadays to Kiyotaka who is in Suzune's class. This means Kakeru won't get anything from Honami's class.
3. It's impossible for Suzune and Kakeru's class to give each other points.

Deduction ~ Kakeru will receive points from Arisu's class.

1. One of the two reasons Kakeru gave for turning down Honami's offer is that he thinks Arisu would notice Honami doing so.

2. Honami will attack Kakeru's class in the first half.

Deduction ~ Kakeru wants to catch Arisu off guard in the second half.

1. Arisu will attack Kakeru's class in the second half.
2. If Kakeru thinks he'll get points from Arisu's class, it has to come from either Arisu herself or her class has a traitor.
3. If Kakeru wants to catch Arisu off guard in the second half, then he thinks something unexpected to Arisu will happen then.

Deduction ~ Class A has a traitor.

1. If Kakeru wants to give Honami points for free, he must gain something out of doing that.
2. Honami's class is hundreds of class points below Arisu's and Suzune's.

Deduction ~ Kakeru wants to deal a blow to Arisu or Suzune's class.

Conclusion: Class A has a traitor, they'll give Kakeru 1st place. He'll help Honami because her class is worse than Suzune's and Arisu's and he can afford to do so.

16 deductive premises.

Honami's observations

Kakeru can only get his points from Arisu's class <=> Kakeru doesn't want Arisu to notice anything fishy when Honami attacks him in the first half

Honami's enigma

Legend: A - Honami. B - Kakeru. C - Arisu. D - Suzune. E - The one feeding Kakeru points. Multiple letters like ABC: A, B and/or C.

{a} - Honami's offer to receive 25 points in exchange for not targeting anyone with two or more mistakes

{b} - Kakeru's counter offer.

{c} - Halftime.

{multiple letters} - One of... this and that.

1. B rejected {a} & offered {b} to A when {a} > {b}

D#1 ~ B thinks > is bad.

1. 1st = +150/200 CP diff
2. 4th = -50/200 CP diff + lose ally

D#2 ~ 1st > 4th.

1. If D#1, B thinks he'll be 1st without {b}.
2. B's allies are weak.

D#3 ~ B thinks he'll be 1st w/o his allies' help.

1. B won't be 1st bc of A, A's allies, D or D's allies.

D#4 ~ E is around C.

1. B said {a} is bad bc B wants to blindside C.
2. {a} starts before {c}.

D#5 ~ B wants to blindside C after {c}.

1. C will attack B after {c}.
2. If D#4, E is C or C's allies.
3. E won't be blindsided by D#5.

D#6 ~ E is C's allies.

1. B wants to help A with {b}.
2. A is below C and D.

D#7 ~ B wants to hit CD over A.

Conclusion: B offered {b} to A bc B wants to hit CD over A. B can hit CD using E.

Honami had to gauge 5 actors and 3 happenings. She replied to Kakeru's text in "less than a minute": she made an abduction (Honami's first text marked as read instantly implies he might have considered contacting her first), then deduced his aim and made a decision in less than a minute.

Analysis

<WIP; gotta do the enigma thing + summary + rework some premises?>

(Y2V12.5) Grasping the inner workings of Kiyotaka Ayanokoji

Evidences this feat exists: Between Kiyotaka's monologues throughout the promise scene and Honami's short story that describes her thought process immediately before he walks into her room (she quite literally said that when it comes to what he would say and what she would say in return, she "understood it all now"), there is no question that she predicted with perfect accuracy what Kiyotaka was about to tell her and that she knew exactly what strategy she would offer him to keep the classes competitive... well ahead of time. For good measure, she also accurately described Kiyo's intentions and motives when it came to Kei.

The feat is unambiguously canon; the only thing that can even be up for debate is the process itself, but given that all of these points require Honami to have a deeper understanding of Kiyotaka despite all his lies and deceptions, the feat requires at bare minimum a high number of sub conclusions and thus premises to make any sense, especially when one consider Honami's complete lack of ties to the White Room and any of COTE's politics limiting the amount of information and context Honami has in her disposal to profile Kiyotaka with. To avoid misunderstanding - this isn't saying the reasoning is more "logical" or "better" because it is bigger, just that when more things are induced, it usually warrants more premises.

While the exact premises are debatable, the thought process should probably look like this: Honami understands some of the tactics she used on him, based on what kind of person she thought he was, were effective => he's not the monster he made himself out to be during the Y2 EoY exam and what she knew of him wasn't entirely a lie (many of the methods Honami used on him for her promise day scheme were eerily similar to the ones she used on Kiyo in Y2V8 and Y2V9, evincing she thought like that) => but then, why did he act like that? => review Kiyo's behavior throughout the first two years to discern his goals, intentions and so on => understand what he wants and what he will say during their promised meeting.

(Do note that the "I" won't be used in the analysis below cuz of my weird habits)

Breakdown of Honami's premises

1. Kiyotaka twisted certain events in a way he must have thought she could not have noticed: he referred to when they met on the school trip as an example of using her. In truth, she lured him and she knows that.
    a. Kiyo did not say he saw through her during the Hokkaido trip when he was trying to break Hona's spirit during the exam, even though it would have been the perfect time to do so.
2. While it didn't happen in front of her eyes, Honami is aware Kiyo also lent a hand to Ryuji even though he was openly wary of him, as she expected.
3. Kiyo being a fish out of water can still be true, given his ignorance when it comes to common sense and real world matters. Kiyotaka certainly had an unusual upbringing too - two former school personnels tried to take him down during the UIE.

Induction ~ Though it's difficult to tell to what extent it's true or how telling it is if so, the Kiyotaka that Honami thought she knew was not *entirely* a lie.

4. If Kiyotaka's intentions towards Honami were as selfish as he presented in the end-of-year exams, he had gone about it in an unusual manner:
    a. Right before Miyabi showed up to reveal Kiyotaka was secretly dating Kei, Honami asked him for advice on how to lead her class. Kiyotaka told her she should be less soft and retaliate against the people who hurt her. It is a strange suggestion with hindsight, given he basically advised her to retaliate against himself.
    b. Before the exam, Kiyotaka also never made Honami do anything other than ask her to let him fight Arisu's class in the Y1 end-of-year. Other than that, there's no real evidence he actually "used" her. At least not in a way that can be easily perceived.
    c. Kiyotaka didn't ask for any sort of compensation anytime he offered his assistance to Honami, including the class vote exam.
5. This type of behavior goes beyond Honami: He saved Kakeru during the Class Vote Exam, whom his own class was trying to expel. Part of Kiyo's plan was that Kakeru's friends would spend all of his private points on Honami, so it's unlikely he asked private points or praise votes from them.

Induction ~ Regardless of why, Kiyotaka actively helped other people without expecting anything in return.

6. The people around Kiyotaka, including the likes of Kakeru, Arisu & Honami herself, changed a lot, mostly for the better as human beings or in a way that they and their circle of friends/classmates are better off from it.
    a. Hona told Suzune in Y2V12 that she noticed the latter had changed.
    b. Judging by her comment in Y2V12.5, she saw the change in Kei too.
    c. She's aware that Kiyotaka, at the end of the day, helped her move on from her past. The common denominator between the three is Kiyo himself, who spent a lot of time with them. There's clearly a pattern.
7. On the other hand, Kiyo's clearly not some sort of messianic figure: Beyond what happened with Honami and Maezono in the second year's end-of-year exam, Kiyotaka allowed the former to touch him and went out of his way to approach her when he was dating Kei.

Induction ~ Kiyo gets something out of helping others become stronger versions of themselves, it's just not apparent what it is.

8. If Kiyotaka helped people from every class become their strongest self, then his motivation for helping people was not to reach Class A for himself.
9. He was selective about who he chooses to help, focusing on the student with the highest potential: he didn't care for Maezono, saving Kakeru in the Class Vote Exam meant expelling one of his lesser classmates, etc.

Induction ~ Kiyotaka wants to ensure the people he had taken an interest in duke it out to graduate as Class A until the end, requiring all classes to be evenly matched.

10. Kiyotaka's motivations could have their roots in his unusual background and circumstances - this objective makes zero sense for an ordinary high school student with a normal future to look forward to.
11. Furthermore, considering the massive gaps between Class A and Class C & D after the 2nd year's end-of-year exam, his methods to make the four classes roughly equal might even be failing on a level beyond callousness or malice.
12. If Kiyotaka did everything he could to break Honami's heart even though it would widen the gap between their classes to the point of it being almost unsalvageable and killing his direct connection to her, Kiyotaka must have been dead set on his belief that Honami hating him will make her a more competitive leader than when she loved him.

Induction ~ Whatever was Kiyotaka's past before he came to ANHS twisted his thinking priorities and mindset to a significant extent. Kiyo's childhood could've made his mind too rigid in certain ways for his own good. That being the case, Kiyotaka might genuinely struggle to think of any less painful methods.

Kiyotaka's intelligent and sensible, so he should in theory be self-aware enough to see that there is a shortcoming in his point of view and his methods.

But it doesn't seem like Kiyotaka can communicate it directly given his behavior, implying an inner conflict.

13. If Kiyotaka's actions against Honami during the end-of-year exam proves his inner conflicts, they could easily extend to the way he handles Honami in a general sense moving forward, including during the promised meeting - Kiyotaka invited Hona right before the exam to remind her he was going to tell her something on that fated day, which was unnecessary if he didn't mean it.
14. Kiyotaka shouldn't want Honami to drop out for a plethora of reasons. After all, he considers her to be a vital part of her class. So whatever he will tell her, it's to achieve something else entirely.

Induction ~ Kiyo won't be able to communicate properly he needs someone else's help to correct the flaws within his methods, so it will be presented in a way that seems to aim to make Hona hate him even if he knows it's not the right method.

15. In regards to what he will actually say, Kiyo will avoid making direct attacks at Honami's ability as he doesn't intend to hurt Honami's self-esteem, much like he didn't during the exam. This means Kiyotaka's effort to be detestable will focus on himself.
16. He won't make any last second reveal about his past actions, since he already dumped everything during the exam.

Induction ~ Kiyotaka will talk about what ***he*** will do that concerns the future.

17. Since Kiyo does not know the schedule for Year 3, whatever he'll suggest to Honami can happen or be prepared before the start of the third year.
18. Considering the aforementioned large gaps in points between the classes (with Honami's class being D, and Kiyotaka's class being A) and his goal, Kiyo can be expected to offer something drastic that could help fix that.

Induction ~ Kiyo will in all likelihood offer to transfer to Honami's class. It plays right into the idea of him "discussing the future, but before the third year".

19. If Kiyotaka will offer to transfer to Honami's class to balance the class and intend on being cruel too, he will tell her to do something unpleasant in exchange for him transferring to her class. That "something unpleasant" can only really be Honami and some of her own classmates dropping out - anything else is either too reckless (if it was recorded) to suggest or would not anger her.
20. For a plethora of reasons, Kiyo will want Hona to be repulsed by this offer and turn it down. Honami should, in his mind, truly hate him at that point - but a part of Kiyo does not want that either due to, even if nothing else, his understanding of the limitations of his methods at a deeper level.

Induction ~ Kiyotaka must be hoping for a "miracle" out of their promised meeting: He wants Honami to turn down his offer but somehow finds an answer that isn't being fueled by hatred *and yet* he can't accept that she could possibly not hate him.

Hypothesis: Kiyotaka is obviously not a good person, there's no hiding from that reality. This also applies to his actions with other people, including Kei. However, it was true that Kiyo had a vested interest in helping others, though it's unlikely to be entirely for selfless reasons. But the chances are that his character is more nuanced than how he made himself come across during the 2nd year's EoY exam.

There's a part of Kiyotaka that recognized his methods and his knowledge aren't good enough, but there is a high likelihood that he doesn't know any better, as if it was deeply ingrained in him and he can't fight that part of him on his own. Based on several experiences, Kiyotaka's mysterious childhood is indubitably the cause of this. It can be predicted for various reasons that Kiyotaka will offer her to join her class in exchange for her dropping out. Deep down, Kiyotaka could be hoping Hona is about to do something far beyond his own understanding & find the right solution to balance the four classes that he can't and/or doesn't allow himself to think of, a miracle of sorts. Kiyo knows that solution has nothing to do with her dropping out and him taking her place, even if he can't say it to her.

Miscellaneous

Emotional Management

(In EQ speak, Honami's Intra-EM)

While Honami has some difficulties maintaining her composure throughout the series and her emotional resistance was troubling during the first year, Honami actually has many solid feats in intrapersonal management since Y2V9.

Honami does not like Arisu. She made sure to let her know when, right after the exam right before the Y2 winter break, the latter confronted the former in front of Kiyotaka about her feelings and warned her to stay away from him. She called Arisu out on her intentions to manipulate her and taunted her (while, according to Kiyo, making the kind of smile he never saw on her face before) for no reason (?) other than pure spite.

Another moment reinforcing the idea Hona hates her is when, during the second half of the Survival and Dropout exam, she smiled when she saw that all of Arisu's nominations against Kakeru were successfully defended against. The objective narrator didn't elaborate on Hona's emotional state at the time, but it mentioned Hona covered her smile with her hand from the rest of her classmates, implying that at the very least, she thought the emotions she felt then were inappropriate for her. All of this heavily implies Hona enjoyed knowing that Arisu was suffering - obviously, that's something Honami would not want her classmates to know - even if a win for Kakeru's class meant Hona's class was about to go back to being Class D. This is important, since Arisu has amazing feats in emotional perception. For example, she can hold detailed conversations - a skill that's relevant in terms of emotional perception - with Kiyo without exchanging words, and after they can read into what they want to give to one another via micro facial expressions. However, based on Arisu's reaction to her remarks (admitting she never thought she would have had to reevaluate Honami before this happened), we can say she had no idea Hona felt so much negative energy towards her. Meaning, for a very long time, Arisu had no idea Honami was so completely over her and listening to anything she had to say at best, failed to notice any resentment at worst.

Beyond Arisu, Kiyo mentioned on multiple occasions throughout his date with Honami in Y2V9 and the room scene later in the same volume that he was unable to read her emotional state.

In Y2V12.5, Kiyo monologued that when humans have conflicting feelings of love and hatred (in this case, her feelings towards him), hatred will come out on top.

That's what he aimed for on the surface. Hona, however, was able to control her feelings and his original intentions "failed". That's not to say she wasn't angry at him; Kiyo remarked in his monologue that he saw in Hona's eyes both anger and love - but she never let this anger change her. So, despite feeling a wide range of positive and negative emotions towards him in overpowering intensity, Honami maintained her better judgement, re-assessed her understanding of Kiyotaka & arranged a solution to save her class + her project to bind him to her by helping his own plan at balancing the 4 classes.

During the Y2V9 scene with Kei and Maya, after the latter received a photo from Nene of Hona and Kiyo coming out of the gym a few days prior, Hona maintained her usual gentle attitude and calmly explained the situation, to the extent it had the effect of relaxing Kei & Maya. The illustration for the scene (after the matter was cleared up) presents Hona looking at Kei's back on her way out, letting her true feelings towards Kei show through her eyes for us to see.



Source / Colored By: Andreev (X/Twitter)

“The eyes are the window to the soul” is a metaphor that means a person's eyes reveal a lot about their emotions, thoughts and intentions. Kinu has used eyes as a motif to describe his characters’ emotional states throughout the entire series and Honami is no exception to this.

Honami managed to do (roughly) the exact same thing again after she nominated Kei 10 times during the S&D exam, with an overly dramatic performance there as she was pretending to be apologetic, bursting into her (Suzune’s) classroom and repeatedly apologizing to Kei. It’s more impressive when considering how much animosity Hona holds towards Kei, someone she was so jealous of she thought of sabotaging her whole strategy during the Y2V10 exam for the fringe chance that Kei might be expelled by taking her off the attack selection for a round to ensure Suzune would not defend Kei the next, though Honami managed to keep herself in check and continued with her original strategy.

(Impulse Management, Reinforcements, Acting Skills**)**

Honami's Leadership

From the very first volume, Hona has been the one and only leader of her class. Honami is the only leader of her year who can make this claim; Sae's class never stopped being a carousel, especially early on when people referred to her class as either Suzune's class or Yosuke's class, then there is those in the know such as Kakeru who referred to it as Kiyo's class before his transfer. And students in the class follow one of those three (if not Kei or Kikyo depending on the factions and circumstances) and during the end of the second year there was a debate inside the class as to who should really lead the class, especially since Y2V5. Kohei led the former Class A until Arisu won the power struggle. Kakeru lost control after Kiyo clapped him in Y1V7, until he made his triumphant return in the first year's end-of-year exam.

It was Honami's mentality that caused her whole class to adopt the cooperative mindset they've been known for from the onset. She has displayed outstanding skill at motivating and directing individuals to work together collaboratively and cohesively to accomplish her visions and purposes.

The quest to reach Class A hasn't been smooth sailing: her class' decline in class points began with a significant loss against Kakeru in the first year's end-of-year exam and they fell from Class B to D. Even worse, she does have a real anti-feat in leadership in Y1V9: that being, her hiding herself in her room after the rumors began to spread because she couldn't face her own past, leaving her classmates even more troubled and in the dark is obviously not good leadership.

But the fact that Honami's class remained united under her banner throughout more than half a year of hardships and zero class win since they entered ANHS until Y2V9 (Y1V5 could be seen as one, but she tied with Arisu's class in losing fewer class points; entirely because the other two classes destroyed each others) without any real internal opposition serves as a testament of not only Honami's mental strength and perseverance, but also her abilities in guiding and inspiring her class towards achieving common goals or objectives through times many other would lose the respect of their comrades. Y2V12.5 took it to a whole new level. Even though Honami had just suffered an heartbreaking loss against Kiyo and the new Class A, she managed yet again to recover and rally her class behind her through their sheer belief in her, even pursuing the three people on Ryuji's faction to give her time to think of a strategy for the upcoming year.

There's no evidence she ever used coercive force to make her classmates submit to her decisions. She's the only leader of Kiyo's year with this distinction. Suzune, often considered to be the most democratic class leader, forced the rest of her class to spare Kikyo in the unanimous special exam, leading to Airi's expulsion.

While a fraction of her classmates like Ryuji or Yuki have their own ideas on how the class should be run, Hona's under no obligation to act on any demands they have, change her methods to suit their tastes or follow their advice and the rest of the class is within their right to believe in Honami's vision if they want to.

Honami started at Class B and fell to D. She made her fair share of mistakes that played a part in leading into this (*ahem* Y1V3 and Y1V11), but in no way does it prove she is not the best leader. Her bad luck caused her to take multiple critical hits she didn't deserve. While she should have been more careful regardless, the situation leading to Honami giving her secret (shoplifting past) to Miyabi to join the student council was created by the former president, Manabu, refusing her candidacy with the vague excuse that Honami was vaguely "unfit" despite Hona's outstanding social contributions and academics. From a point of view, one could say, Manabu developed tunnel vision over having Kiyo as the first year's member of the council instead of anyone else despite the latter not concealing his clear disinterest in the job. Had it not been for Manabu and (indirectly) Kiyotaka, Arisu and Miyabi would never have had the opportunity to hit her weakness.
The class poll exam was disastrous for Hona and her class specifically. Whereas the other classes are less unified thus less damaged by losing their own, having to pick a classmate to expel could've damaged her class' best card which is unity. This exam was entirely unprecedented and so, Honami had no way to foresee its announcement without being in the White Room loop. The only reason it even existed was because of the circumstances around Kiyotaka.

Without Masayoshi's personal agenda around Kiyotaka and the rotation working out perfectly, both of which Kakeru was in no way responsible for. If Honami was successful, her strategy would have netted her a big win in Y2V10.
Had Hona defeated Kakeru's class, her class would have gotten a 220 class points lead over his' post-Y2V10 and they would have been neck-and-neck (50-100 less) with Suzune's class entering the 2nd year's final exam. Unlike the other classes, Hona never had a special exam where outside factors worked out in her favor or a case when a stroke of luck went their way. As previously mentioned, Masayoshi fell on Kakeru's laps leading to a massive win in Y2V10.
Kakeru would not have been able to solve the Zodiac exam without Rokusuke's magical intuition and erratic behavior that made Ryuji (?) take drastic measures to recover + Kikyo wanting to betray her class because Suzune studied at the same middle school - a personal reason Kakeru had nothing to do with.

The two exams combined resulted in a jumbo +400 class points differential over Honami's class. Ideally, Honami and Suzune could have joined hands to solve the pattern with their combined 6 VIPs, but there were countless reasons for Hona to be distrustful of Suzune and the rest of her class at the time, due to the class point distribution following Y1V3 along with Rokusuke betraying a VIP.

Arisu's (now Kiyo's) class had a big head start over the other classes by hundreds of class points (though in all fairness Hona's class began at B so she had that over Kakeru). Her class had an advantage during Paper Shuffle with regard to existing overall academic strength and only won by 2 points. She did win the end-of-year exam of Year 1 against Kiyo because Tokinari intervened with the latter's calls. She also had an advantage in the partner exam whereas Hona was at a significant disadvantage forcing her to tank the exam to save her class (see Partner Exam Tactic section for details). Fortunately for Hona it wasn't a significant exam when it came to class points, albeit it allowed Kakeru's class to pass them temporarily. Suzune has Kiyotaka and Rokusuke. Especially Kiyotaka.
Contrary to popular belief, Honami might've handled things adequately without Kiyotaka's existence. For one, Hona's decision to change her approach to fighting the other classes was not something she was convinced into by Kiyotaka even if he had some indirect influence. In fact, most of the problems she faced were at least partly caused by him directly (Y1V6 and Y2V12), indirectly (Y1V10, Y2V1 and Y2V10) or both (Y1V9). Even when Kiyo's help in solving some of these problems is taken into account, it is a fact that Honami still lost ~16M private points and ~360-400 class points from these incidents. Furthermore, the later situations in which Kiyotaka helped her and/or her class (Y2V7, Y2V8, Y2V9 & Y2V12.5) were masterminded by Honami herself (or at the very least, she actively engineered those situations without direct support in terms of someone else giving her the ideas for whatever she was planning). Hell, the last of Kiyotaka's "rescues" Hona did not engineer in any capacity was all the way back in Y1V11.5.

But not all is bad. Thanks to the trust her class has in its leader, entrusting all of their private points to her, they're the only class without a single expulsion. Even if Honami makes or considers making questionable decisions at times, Hona has proven throughout the series she possesses outstanding leadership qualities.

Manipulation Resistance

Hona was often dismissed by people, in and out of universe, as gullible, naive and everyone's victim when it comes to being manipulated/controlled. This used to be a valid criticism in Year 1, Y1V9 and Y1V10 being particularly ugly moments for her, but she had great feats in this category throughout Y2.

The situation with Kiyotaka is actually a very complicated case.
He definitely set the stage to make her fall in love with him. Kiyotaka began in Y1V6 when he fabricated rumors he signed under Kakeru's name about Honami illegally collecting private points to bait others (namely Arisu) into attacking her. Kiyotaka manipulated Arisu even further in Y1V7.5 to push her in that direction. This led to Arisu attacking Hona with Miyabi's assistance and then Kiyo rescuing her. Kiyotaka helped Hona at several other low points, namely Y1V10, Y1V11.5 and Y2V8. Nowadays, Hona is as “yandere” (for lack of better words) as any character can be in COTE's semi-realistic setting.

But even if Honami became more conscious of Kiyotaka after the events of Y1V9, there were indications Hona had a “thing” for Kiyo even before Airi in Y1V2, Y1V3, Y1V4 (see Characterization section), Y1V4.5, Y1V5 SS and Y1V8 (indirectly' Honami freaks out when a NPC girl asked if she liked anyone and later in the story Hona said Kiyo is her first love). Five of the aforementioned volumes happened before Kiyotaka spread the Y1V9 rumors.

Honami already having feelings for Kiyo lessened the seduction as an anti-feat. It’s also worth keeping in mind he is an excellent manipulator.

Something Kiyo also has over Arisu and Miyabi is that, while he's just as capable of amoral behavior as the other two if not more, Kiyo at least has some respect for Hona’s intelligence. Unlike Miyabi, Kiyo made an infinitely more sophisticated attempt at covering his tracks. Kiyo successfully pinned the rumors about Hona's PPTs on Kakeru. Plus, Arisu was manipulated by Kiyotaka into attacking Honami. It's worth pointing out she did suspect Kiyotaka was responsible for the rumors (Y1V8 SS), but compared to Miyabi blatantly leaking her secret and Arisu thinking she could toy with her in Y2 after what she publicly did the year prior, it’s easy to understand why Kiyotaka had more success winning Hona over than these two; not everyone can pull off the white knight manipulation method with finesse. But even if she knew Kiyo was the one responsible for the rumors in Y1V6 (which admittedly is likely), it's nigh-impossible to tie them to the events of Y1V9.

But even then, there's no concrete example of Kiyotaka manipulating Honami into doing one specific thing or another outside of being in love with him in Year One with all the implications this has on her goals, etc. In Year 2, even less. Honami's actions since the UIE veered Kiyo's plans towards more unpredictable directions according to both Arisu (Y2V9.5) and Kiyotaka and he had nothing to do with her in Y2V1; this confirms Hona hasn't been manipulated by Kiyo in the conventional sense of the word throughout the second year (despite Kiyo indicating otherwise in Y2V12). No question that Kiyotaka *deceived* her, but considering the fact Hona has deceived him thrice since Y2V8, it goes both ways. In fact, every outsmarting character has been deceived at least once, with Kiyo being disproportionately on the giving end.

Miyabi and Arisu both tried to make Honami their plaything by using her broken heart after the Y2 Island exam. Hona saw right through Arisu from the start and called her out on it later (Y2V9). As for Miyabi, well, according to Mako (Y2V10.25 SS), Honami tried to contact Kiyotaka in the aftermath of the island exam to get an answer from his mouth instead of Miyabi's, but Honami mistakenly texted the wrong person and her mental state seemingly continued spiraling downward. Honami dropped out of the council just as he was about to launch an election to compete against Kiyo, the worst possible timing for the former student council president. Hona considered leaving before the trip too, so it can't be credited to Kiyotaka's intervention of Y2V8. Miyabi's attempt to manipulate Honami in the aftermath of the uninhabited island exam by using her broken heart amounted to one awkward lunch shortly before the sport festival.

Ikuta tried to use Fuka to guilt-trip Hona into dropping out of the elections, but since she wanted to quit the student council altogether beforehand, we have no way to know if it would have worked out the way Ikuta had intended to under normal circumstances. Judging by how she deduced his agenda very quickly if she didn't foresee it ahead of time, the chances were slim to none. BTW She made more outta both of 'em with her y2v9-v9.5 plotting than either ever did outta her.

Honami also gained an amazing feat in manipulation resistance in Y2V12.5. It was revealed that Kiyo spent the entire year trying to manipulate Honami into hating him to make her more competitive entering the third year. Back in Y2V4.5, when Kiyotaka was supposed to respond to the confession Honami made in the island exam, Hona asked Kiyotaka for his opinions on her class. Kiyotaka advised her to retaliate when others hurt her & don't be soft against them. In the same volume, after the heartbreak, Kiyotaka predicted Honami would eventually snap out of it and then resent him and put everything into destroying him.

Kiyotaka hoped she could reach a third option unknown to him, but at the same time, he felt strong emotions going through his brain after hearing her answer, which implies some level of surprise, as does being lost for words.
Ever since Honami affirmed she was still in love despite Kei's presence, Kiyotaka keep being surprised by Honami's actions – he expresses that in his monologues on multiple occasions: leaving the student council (Y2V9), stating he can't read her emotions during their date (Y2V9), Kiyotaka was definitely shocked when he learnt about rumors in Y2V9.5 from Chihiro, he did not expect Honami to admit she left her phone in her room intentionally in Y2V10...
If Kiyotaka expected Honami to hate him by then, it's logical he'd be surprised by her behavior from that point on as well; she went off script.
After what happened in Y2V12, it's likely he thought she'd resent him so he was unprepared mentally for her trap - he thought she'd try to trap him with hatred.

Kiyotaka failed to make Honami hate him and she ultimately chose her own path instead of the two options he offered her, though in fairness to Kiyotaka he did hope she could find another option and he was happy with the outcome.

Regardless, considering the reality that three power players (Miyabi, Arisu and sorta Kiyotaka) put so much effort into getting Honami to distance herself from Kiyo to make use of her and they all failed, the Honami we have seen throughout the second year is, if anything, proven in terms of manipulation resistance, even if it took some mistakes and character development to reach this level.

(Y2V1) Partner Exam Tactic

One of the potential hidden plots of Y2V1 was Honami envisioning the uniquely stinky situation her class was about to get itself in and escaping this nightmare turn of events before it trapped them.
Right after the exam began, she made an announcement for a meet-and-greet with her juniors. It gave her a head-start to building relations with a large chunk of the new first years, which could have proved to be useful, since Year 2 had a lot of inter-year events (V1-4.5, 6, 7, 11). By thinking outside the box, you can come up with many ideas to involve classes from other years in your businesses; for example, in Y2V2 Sakurako and Riku suggested they could offer to Kiyotaka an unknown amount of private points to expel Kazuomi.
Unfortunately, the juniors that came to her meeting were on the lower end when it came to academics, so they didn't score much. Consequently, Honami and her class finished last with 621 points, 19 below Suzune's class.
However, this was a non-issue when you contextualize the hurdle Honami had to face. This exam came at the absolute worst possible time for Honami and her classmates: her class had next to no private points due to their decision to not expel anyone in the Class Vote Exam at the cost of all their funds. Making this even worse is that everybody in the school knew their coffer was empty, so not only Honami couldn't join in any bidding war, but she also couldn't bluff either. Negotiations would then be off the table as a result, since there's no private point to appeal any first year into negotiating.
Nothing stopped the other classes from letting all of their juniors know of their poverty (in PPT), in hope they would charge obscene interest rates from having all the leverage. Had she taken a different course of action, her class' unfortunate circumstances could've put her not academically gifted classmates in jeopardy. Trying to bluff before the news came out would've backfired horribly - nothing could stop the first years they'd approach from bringing up their offer in their negotiation with Arisu and Kakeru's class to jack up their own prices.
Fortunately, while the timing was horrible for the aforementioned reasons, it's great that the exam came at the beginning of the school year because the juniors were obviously not going to be organized under any sort of leadership by then, Class 1-D being a freaky outlier.

Using her people skills, she took advantage of their disarray to pair up everyone in her class ASAP before anyone could take advantage of her class' weakness to make unreasonable demands.

She was never winning the exam, but considering the measly 50-30-10-0 class points at stakes, it's far from a big deal in the grand scheme of things. If it was not from factors widely outside of her control (Takuya's schemes around Kikyo and Kazuomi chasing the bounty), Honami most likely takes 3rd place, +10 class points. What really matters is the disaster she avoided; i.e., ending any chance she had of reaching Class A: Even if only one unremarkable classmate were to be expelled, there's zero mention anywhere in the Y2V1 that the -300 class points penalty per expulsion and/or drop out was waived: even one expulsion would have destroyed her class.

Looking at things from this perspective, Honami was able to foresee all of this as soon as the exam began. Outside of being a feat of problem-solving, this would also be an exhibit of her decision making, tactical and leadership skills.

(Formulation Speed, Field Safeguarding, Risk Assessment, Abductive Reasoning, Social Cognition, Critical Thinking, Abstract Thinking, Shielding, Fluid Methods, Tactical Management, Leadership, Anticipation, Preclusion)

Sidenote: While partnering up with the weaker juniors was a rather bad thing in the context of scoring points in this exam, they are easier to control or use by outsiders because they're less valued by their classmates, thus having less power and more likely to be on the outs, making them more likely to betray their class or be convinced into taking other desperate measures. Therefore, it is arguably better to build relationships with weaker students outside your class depending on the circumstances and what you're trying to accomplish.

(Y3V3) Survival Game Strategy



Thirty minutes before Kakeru's attack on Kiyotaka, Honami noticed that the GPS signals for Kakeru's class hadn't moved for 5 minutes. Hona immediately realized Kaneda had activated the GPS freeze option and that Kakeru's class was about to ambush Kiyotaka's. Considering the foresight for her first act, Hona must've seen something like this coming sooner than later from the start. The GPS tablets can not take screenshots, so Honami observed the anomaly because she memorized the position of all the students from Kakeru's class 5 minutes prior. According to the neutral narration, Honami memorized the coordinates "down to the smallest unit". The narrator also mentions, as part of Honami's awareness of the situation, that the GPS has functional limits; satellite signal transmissions will always have some deviations, so even if people stayed completely still, there should still be a small drift in the signals' positions. Additionally, Honami had zero reason to only remember the coordinates of Kakeru's classmates on the first scan, meaning that Honami remembered the coordinates of all the students of all classes, proven by the fact that Honami also spotted that the GPS markers from Kiyo's class shifted somewhat, but those were all confined to one area, suggesting they were resting or holding a strategy meeting.

Hona tried to signal Shimazaki with her eyes, but the latter simply exchanged a glance with her, did not get the situation and returned to staring blankly at his screen. No other means of communication - namely languages, hand signals or lip-reading, were allowed between the commanders.

In response to these developments, Hona began her strategy to defend Kiyotaka that will be described below.

(Crystalized Intelligence, VSI, Memory, Tracing, Critical Thinking, Anticipation)

She aimed to join up with the remaining players of Kiyo's class to construct a force of 50 that Kakeru & Suzune would not recklessly attack. After the ambush by Kakeru's class that almost destroyed them, Kiyo's class spent the 2nd and 3rd days on the defensive in the southern area around the headquarters. Then, their attempt to recover even one single additional supply box to regain some ground ended in failure. Looking solely at the results, it was two blunders in a row.
But Honami understood Kiyo's aim, at the very least all the way back to the time she noticed Kaneda turning off the GPS function and responded appropriately.
Both ostensible errors made by Kiyotaka were deliberate to force his classmates to join forces with Honami's class and conceal the alliance from Suzune & Kakeru for the first stretch of the exam, so they wouldn't team up to counter them.
The neutral narrator stated Honami tried more than anyone else to stay "in sync" with his mind, that her awareness was constantly attuned to him, so she counted on Kiyotaka to, soon after "mistake" #2, approach her classmates, so she notified them about this shortly before then. Honami instructed her classmates to follow Kiyotaka's orders on the field. Between the two allied classes, Kiyotaka was by far the most adept student (physically) in the fight and a cut above Himaguchi, Ryuji, Masayoshi or whoever else was out there in decision-making as well.
Fundamentally, since Honami was in the commander role, the best choice was to let Kiyotaka make split second calls over someone less capable. Either way, given the structure of their alliance (Honami being Class D meant that Kiyo would have to concede the win) and Kakeru's attack putting Kiyo's class in a disadvantageous position compared to her class, it's unlikely that Honami didn't expect Kiyotaka's class to concede the victory to her regardless of that, meaning there was not any real loss to letting him make the calls.
(Redirection, Responsiveness, Field Safeguarding, Adaptability, Holistic Thinking, Critical Thinking, Psychological Insight, Anticipation)

There was another potential, albeit speculative, advantage from letting Kiyo take commands. Realistically, the C-D alliance won't last forever and it's not meant to.

Kiyo is now a clear yet new leader. Observing Kiyo from the sideline while having the opportunity to research him through her classmates was logical.

He will undoubtedly be the biggest threat, ultimately, and Honami will eventually have to fight him for Class A. Studying how Kiyo operates from up close through her classmates who'll report to her everything he did around them could serve a purpose beyond this exam. But again, this is very speculative as of Y3V3.

(Information Gathering (?))

Before their merge, Hona launched an operation to ensure that the merge would happen in the second half without alerting Suzune and Kakeru's class while also keeping her own class, as well as Kiyotaka's, safe.

Once the exam started, every class moved to the north region. Unlike the other classes, Hona had her classmates move east and collected all the rewards there.

Honami already expected that Kakeru would be busy staying close to Kiyotaka's class and Suzune's class would move straight north as Class A's starting position gave them a massive advantage to dominate all of the northern areas. It resulted in Honami's class having a small advantage in supply over Suzune's and Kakeru's class (10 boxes over 9).

On the note of her class management, based on how her class moved on the 2nd day and Kiyo's monologue, Honami must've forecasted Rokusuke as a derailment from the onset and managed her classmates' movement to stay far away from his vicinity in case he decided to go rogue. It kinda ended up happening although he attacked Kakeru's class instead of hers.

Additionally, since Honami stayed around the same area with little movement for a full 24 hours, her class could conserve stamina - an *extremely valuable resource* to maintain as constantly reiterated throughout the volume. It's to the point that it isn't worth listing every time Kiyo mentions this factor throughout the volume.

Honami needed her classmates to not tire too much, since she intended to make them move a lot during the middle portion of the special exam.

(Strategy Forecast, Strategy Logistics, Shielding, Prediction)

Another advantage that stemmed from the maneuver was how everyone else was going to be at a long distance from Honami's classmates as a result of traveling in different directions for a while. What this meant is that any class that wished to charge at them had to telegraph their attack; they would have needed to travel a long time to move to their spot, which was suicidal since it would have given her classmates plenty of time to prepare their own defense, even with a GPS freeze.

At first, it appeared as if Honami originally wanted to spend the four days in the eastern side and avoid fighting as much as possible, but this was unfeasible since Day 2 when the groups closed in. Honami ordered her class to circle around the mountain to the south (note: both scans are important to support this claim).

The decreasing space for the 4 classes left any class that attempted to pursue or intercept their navigations wide open to be blown up by another class.

Predictably, Class A still occupied the northwest regions, but they were moving southward and Kakeru's class was closing in on the other side, meaning if either classes tried to strike Hona's class in the middle, the other classes would learn of this quickly through their commander and their active students were not too far away to capitalize on the aggressive opponents.

Additionally, Hona could keep track of everyone's movement on the GPS, so she could have adjusted if the other classes hoped to attack her classmates. As such, like on the first day, hard committing an attack against Honami's was going to be a tall order to both execute on its own and avoid massive retaliations.

Most importantly, it facilitated the merge with Kiyo's class. Honami's "collecting supplies and keeping a safe distance" method was a ploy. It essentially created a massive area where Kakeru could not hit Kiyotaka's class to finish them off even before they merged. This is due to the fact that her classmates could easily show up and ruin his attack in accordance with their movement around them nearby. Kakeru could've ended up in a confrontation with Honami's class as well, putting himself at a big disadvantage even before Rokusuke wiped out nearly a quarter of his force, even more so since Kakeru already suspected a C-D alliance.

Even before Day 2, Hona had her class not too close, yet not too far from where Kiyo and Kakeru's classes were. Kiyo's class was more vulnerable since she would have to make her class travel a longer distance to reach them (Kiyo was at G12 on Day 1, 5 PM). Still, if Kakeru intended to pursue them further, he would've needed to merge his two forces to have any chance of success; one was approaching the B9 area and the other (that Kiyo suspected to have the least but more physically capable combatants) was moving towards H9, the latter of which happened to be a lot closer to Honami's classmates stationed at N12.

Her class being well defended was vital to assert control over the situation. Hona made it so nobody had realistic options to stop the merge even if they suspected an alliance between Class C and D. There were alarming risks to attacking either one of Honami or Kiyotaka's class, they wouldn't interfere with the strategy.

It was too late by then to build a truce with Suzune's class for this exam - Class A had all the leverage over Class B via having more resources and their GPS freeze still being unused, meaning that Class B would've had to forfeit the W or promise to give Class A another sort of significant concession.

Even if Kakeru agreed to or offered anything else, Suzune had reasons to distrust him; they were Class A and Kakeru wasn't the most trustworthy individual.

(Strategy Building, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Flexibility)

When Ryuji stressed out over the spaces shrinking, Hona understood how he felt even though she was miles away. Despite the narrator's earlier confirmation that Hona was already executing her strategy to merge with Kiyotaka's class, Honami told Ryuji that she needed time to think about her next moves, likely to suppress any potential leak or tipping off the other two classes if they crossed paths in the meanwhile if they sensed something was "off" with how her classmates behaved. For what it's worth, it's a fairly standard procedure for most class leaders. Kakeru and Kiyotaka have kept their classmates on a need-to-know basis multiple times (including in this very exam) and according to Tachibana, Manabu was similar as a class leader in this regard. The only difference is that no one in her class seems to have caught on to the fact she does this, not even partially, though this can be written off as her classmates not being observant and characters like Kakeru not not making any effort to deceive his classmates like that, rather than Hona being an exceptional liar compared to them. Regardless, Honami might have kept Ryuji and co. on a need-to-know basis to ensure the strategy went as she intended.

Perhaps in relation to this, Hona could sense her classmate Kobashi "frantically" making hand gestures to Ryuji through the audio, after she gave her command to merge with Kiyotaka's class. Honami's classmates, especially Ryuji himself, were hesitant when it came to working closely with Kiyotaka and his class, something Honami was aware of.

(Emotional Understanding, Verbal Deception, Sensory)

This strategy ensured Hona avoided casualties and any skirmishes for the exam's first half while keeping the veil on the C-D alliance, to conceal her intent to take the veil off to merge her forces with Kiyotaka's in the 2nd half. The narrator said Hona planned to do so since Kiyotaka's class was attacked by Kakeru on the first day. But if one only observed the coordinates, the manner Honami executed her strategy made it come across as if Honami was acting independently of Kiyotaka or anyone else to be nonconfrontational for its own sake.

At first, it was as if Honami intended to park in the east for all four days, but then she was forced to adjust to the shrinking area when it was no longer sustainable. Always in the hope of not fighting at all throughout the SE. But as written earlier, she acted to secure as many supplies as possible at first and to protect Kiyo from Kakeru's intense pressures and ease the merge afterward. Kakeru did not expect Class C and D to ally when it happened whereas his number 2 Kohei thought her classmates were simply going to ignore Kiyotaka's class if they crossed paths.

This is relevant to the arguments regarding a potential temporary trust between the two higher classes. While there might've been a few rumors of secret contact between Kiyotaka & Honami and Kei warned Suzune that Honami and Kiyo could have something going on, the idea that they were really allied and Honami would merge her class with Kiyotaka was still a bit of a stretch. Honami's cover is thus a major reason why Class A and B didn't team up.

When Kakeru attacked Kiyotaka, Honami was patient and did not rashly come to his rescue even if she had lots of reasons to react, believing that Kiyotaka and his surviving classmates could endure at least temporarily. The obvious play to make if they made an alliance would've been to go to his rescue immediately with how dire the situation was and the lack of available communication methods between classes. But Hona kept her classmates at some distance from the actions without showing any suspicious movement, even if her classmates were only barely close enough that Honami could intervene on time if Kakeru tried to do another battle to finish Kiyo off for good. If nothing else, Kakeru was worried that if he defeated his whole class, Suzune or Honami's class may stomp them.

For Honami, this entire operation was a balancing act between staying in control over her strategy while disguising her intentions to shock Class A and B.

(Concealment, Risk Competence, Behavioral Volatility, Logical Manipulation, Impulse Management, Stress Tolerance)

(Y2V10) Description of the Strategy to Win S&D ◈



Colored by: Andreev (Twitter/X)

In Y2V10's special exam, Honami offered 25 points to Kakeru in exchange for not hitting any of her vulnerable classmates (two wrong answers). Honami's deal was based on her expectation of Suzune's attack plan against her: build up a block of five people on the brink. Hona understood everyone knew she wanted to protect everyone and that, unlike Arisu and Kakeru, Suzune did not care about expelling anyone in particular, so she would try to take advantage of Honami's mentality to score points. Honami used this to negotiate with Kakeru.

(Negotiation, Prediction, Psychological Insight, Hot Reading, Metacognition, Inductive Reasoning, Emotional Realization, Emotional Understanding)

The max number of points a class could score in the S&E special exam is 100 points, and 50 in each half. This is because every half consists of ten rounds in which the attacking class nominates five students of the defending class. The class will score a point every time a student answers correctly or be successfully defended. Basically, 1 * 5 * 10 * 2 = 100 possible points.

You can not score points when attacking and class alliances were discouraged by the exam's reward: Only the class that finishes first earns class points, the other three lose points and last place loses 50 more class points and will have to expel one of their own. As such, the class leaders were restrained to a limited number of strategies to win this special exam, increasing its difficulty.

You can try to tank other classes by carefully selecting the subject you're hitting their students with and ensure your attack pattern remains unpredictable thus harder to defend, but the exam's rotation will prevent every class from directly interacting with one other class: Honami & Arisu and Kakeru & Suzune will never attack nor defend against each other. This approach also eliminates any chances of dealing with the other classes. You can make a deal with someone of another class, whether that be their leader or find a way to entice a traitor. As long as the other side holds their end of the bargain (which can be ensured in a number of ways), this is much more reliable than any other approaches since you can secure a fixed ceiling number of points.

The rewards of the exam discouraged this by harshly punishing last place and giving a large boost in point differential to the class in 1st place. The class leader can instead simply rely on and hope their classmates to answer correctly. This is not a terrible idea if the class leader creates an advantageous playing field, but it relies on mixing up a few tactics. She chose this option. She used her protection slots "ineffectively" during the first half when Suzune attacked her.

This completely fooled Arisu and Suzune. During the lunch scene, the two class leaders thought that she was recklessly trying to protect her classmates without thinking things through. However, Honami's goal was to win.

The narrator states that one of the reasons she wasn't going to offer more than 25 points to Kakeru is because any more than that would jeopardize her chances to finish first. Intentionally being inaccurate when defending by wasting defense slots on people unlikely to be attacked appear suboptimal, but the alternative of trying to predict Suzune's attacks normally would not provide a significant boost in accuracy. Without a spy, Honami had no way to know with any certainty who she had to defend and knew Suzune didn't care who would be expelled; as long as she wins, nothing else mattered to her. Meaning, in practice, trying to predict Suzune's targets every round would have been a fool's errand and an exercise of luck. Suzune's strategy may seem like the best way to ensure the defending class scored less points, but it had a big flaw Honami wanted to exploit. If Kakeru and Suzune never attacked anyone with 2 mistakes, they were attacking the students with 0 or 1 mistakes. Logically speaking, these people were more likely to answer correctly. That's common sense; those who already made mistakes were likely to keep answering incorrectly versus those who did not. Then if, during the second half, she didn't have to worry about protecting vulnerable, less capable students, Honami would use her protection slots on the other potential targets, giving her a much higher rate of successful protection.

This arrangement indirectly may have given her class a lot of points.

(Divergent Thinking, Strategy Logistics, **Misdirection)**

Giving 25 free points to Kakeru's class is no big deal - exceptions like Hiyori and Kohei aside, overall they're by far the weakest class academically. Their score of 19 points in the first half reflected this. It's also better for Hona's class if Class D wins or avoids last place than A or B. Arisu and Suzune were clearly not teaming up; had Suzune won, her class would become the new Class A. If Kiyotaka hadn't ensnared Masayoshi in Y2V9.5, he wouldn't have betrayed his class, and it's more likely Kakeru would have taken Hona's deal. If he didn't, chances are Arisu takes the W and that his class would've ended up last - the absolute worst outcome for Kakeru. In Hona's own worst case scenario, she would've lost 100 class points but avoided any expulsion due to Suzune's attack pattern and her deal with Kakeru.

(Anticipation, Prediction, Field Safeguarding, Risk Assessment)

To shade her strategy, Hona forestalled information leakage. Hona sent her text to Kakeru right after the exam began, knowing he would not work with Arisu, to guarantee he and anyone else wouldn't have the time or opportunity to decipher her intentions. For good measure, Honami had her class hide during halftime. While they might have used the time to study, it kept her classmates from saying anything unnecessary.
(Concealment)

Her class never had an opportunity to buy Masayoshi's betrayal - a byproduct of the rotation set up by the school. Those factors were out of Honami's control, so straight-up bad luck. In the alternate universe Honami doesn't get screwed over, Suzune's class might actually have finished last: she threw a lifeline at Suzune in the actual timeline of events because she knew her class would finish 2nd/3rd.

Handful of Year 1 Feats <WIP; Scans + More> ◈

Took the class' leadership role from the onset, without any pushback (Y1V1), partly because she got along with everybody just as quickly.
Honami also convinced her classmates to go along with her private point bank strategy as early as Y1V2 to entrust all their private points to her, to ensure the class can eventually protect everyone should there be a risk of expulsion.
(Leadership, Social Integration, Resource Allocation, Field Safeguarding)

It's heavily implied based on her first SS and later interactions, that she could tell *something* about Kiyotaka was special the moment she met him. (Y1V1 SS)
(Intuition)

Predicted the upcoming special exam during the summer break. (Y1V2) <WIP>
(Inductive Reasoning, Prediction)

Claimed to have come up with the same double phone swap strategy Kiyotaka used during the Zodiac exam, in case one of her classmates were the VIP. (Y1V4)
(Overall Strategy, Social Cognition, Misdirection, Setting Trap)

After the last discussion of the Zodiac exam was completed and Kiyotaka was revealed as the true VIP, Honami predicted that a specific NPC in what used to be Kohei's class would betray the group based on the divide between the Kohei and Arisu factions, with him being a member of the latter group, therefore unwilling to follow Kohei's commands to do nothing. (Y1V4)
(Abductive Reasoning, Social Awareness, Prediction)

Noticed slight changes in Kei's behavior towards Kiyotaka during the course of the Zodiac Exam; she looked at him more often during the last day than before.
(Social Intuition)

Extrapolated Kiyotaka's understanding of the hidden rules behind the expulsions within the MTC exam from fragments in his wordings. (Y1V8)
(VCI)

In the Class Vote Exam, Honami effectively got at least 58/80 praise votes from people outside her class, when you consider Arisu's class being directed to vote for Kiyotaka and her classmates' inability to vote for Honami twice. (Y1V10)
(Charisma)

(Y2V9) Epilogue Scene with Kakeru



Kakeru asked Honami to meet on the first day of the second year's winter break, a rainy grey day. She showed up ahead of time, as she usually does, unlike Kakeru who came 10 minutes late even though he was the one who set up the meeting. Hona is the one who started the conversation, though instead of saying anything about Kakeru's lateness, she commented on the weather.

When Kakeru asked Honami if she was annoyed by his lateness, Honami told him that she was ready to wait for 30 minutes; she was leaving after that. The neutral narrator said her general demeanor came across as if Hona cared less about him than the rain. Kakeru then gets to the point - did something happen?

The narrator explained what was happening behind the scenes between his and Hona's class. Kakeru used a strategy similar to what he used in the past against her such as in Y1V11: harassment, fake bribes and threats; psychological warfare. Rather than telling him she did anything to counter those tactics, Honami acted as if his methods were useless all on their own.

However, the narrator told us Honami anticipated the strategy he would use and countered it by telling her classmates to act as if they were annoyed and to make time for secret study sessions. Because of this, Daichi informed Kakeru that the sabotage was a success. Looking at things from Kakeru's point of view, there was no point in escalating the aggression, so he opted not to.
(Acting Skills, Concealment, Shielding, Anticipation)

Kakeru wasn't satisfied with Honami's answers, so he continued to ask her what happened. Honami wouldn't budge, however, and continued to say he should do things normally. Possibly because he noticed he wasn't getting anything, Kakeru tried a different angle to find an opening, but it also went nowhere.
When Kiyotaka was pounding Kakeru during the rooftop scene (Y1V7), the latter tried to provoke and determine what kind of emotions ran through the former: "***Are you angry, excited, overjoyed, frustrated? Tell me.***"
It was only when Kakeru realized Kiyotaka was unfazed - all of his attempts to mess with him were stonewalled - that he freaked out. Kiyo's utter indifference scared Kakeru more than him getting his face destroyed.
It's similar to what he's doing here with Honami and she figured that out. Later on during that conversation, he brought up Kei and talked on and on about how she was finished after Kiyo's class destroyed her in the end of year exam.
Just as with Kiyotaka in Y1V7, Kakeru thought about how his remarks could affect her emotionally. ***"Impatience, anger, frustration or disgust, whatever feelings you have, show them to me."*** Kakeru got the same response - nothing whatsoever.
(Impulse Management, Stress Tolerance)

This is a bit of a YMMV, but Hona also engaged in Kiyotakaism; "What's the need for you and Sakayanagi-san to be so cautious of me now?", "I'm not someone you should worry about", etc. Curiously, Honami made a speech similar to Atsuomi's "you never know what will happen unless you take action", for what that's worth.
Honami also warned Kakeru that she won't choose a means to an end from then on and she will expel him should he tries to do anything fishy to her classmates without batting an eye. She referred to herself as a "calculating enough person".
Was Honami intentionally trying to imitate Kiyotaka? Maybe.
(Acting Skills)

Regardless, Kakeru was shaken up by their talk. After all, he witnessed the same presence within someone who defeated him with ease a year ago.
In Y2V9.5, Kakeru suggested he believed Honami > Arisu during his conversation with Kohei and Kiyotaka. Later, he expressed similar sentiments (Y2V12), warned Kiyotaka that Honami could cause him trouble and to watch out.
This is a big and quick change of heart. Keep in mind that Kakeru, up until then, didn't care about her in the slightest, thinking she was long finished all the way back in Y2V2, even rating her below Suzune & Kohei in leadership skills (Y1V11)... Kakeru's someone whose character is kinda defined by his fearlessness with Kiyo becoming the one exception. All Hona did was to partially replicate Kiyo's aura.
(Emotional Facilitation, Aura, Behavioral Volatility)

Why would she come out in the open about her change to *Kakeru* of all people? This is where this set of interpretations get at its most speculative as there's not as much direct evidence to support it, but we believe this is a plausible answer.

Kakeru only gives an ear to those he perceives as strong or even stronger than himself. This was discussed back in Y1V11.5 between Hiyori and Kiyo and nothing since has proven this thought to be false. Before this meeting, Kakeru's opinion of Honami was ridiculously low and barely considered her an enemy in the most disrespectful way imaginable. This was a problem for Hona in Y2V9 because her class and Kakeru's were hundreds of class points behind Suzune's and Arisu's. The two had a mutual interest in working together, but she needed to command respect from him to do so. That could be why Hona acted in such a manner and even threatened him with expulsion if he actually went after her classmates even after the narrator confirmed Honami understood what Kakeru aimed for during the meeting - meaning she knew his threats were bluffs. Hona never acted quite like that afterward and is still very different to Kiyotaka, inwardly or outwardly. If anything, the path she chose to follow is in some ways the opposite of Kiyotaka's.

There was no risk of Kakeru spilling the beans - he isn't exactly the most trusted student in ANHS whereas Hona pretty much is; no one will believe him if Kakeru were to say anything about her becoming a shady individual. He knew this; Kiyo used that to his advantage back in Y1V6 with the rumor spread. If Hona intended to command respect from him for any particular goal, it at least bore fruit in the S&D Special Exam; he wouldn't have made an offer nearly anyone else would've misunderstood and treated as a bad joke, according to the neutral narrator, had he not re-evaluated her abilities beforehand. As shown in the CKA plan section, there is evidence Honami had foreseen the schedule for the rest of Year 2.

(Emotional Understanding, Risk Competence, Improvising, Preclusion)

(Y3V1) Scene with Ichika

Honami had noticed from early on during their conversation, even when Ichika was putting up a cute act when asking about going to the gym and being in love with Kiyotaka, that the latter was speaking with "malicious intent". Do note that Ichika is able to fool most with this act, in terms of concealing ill intentions, and it's partly the reason why Miyabi allowed Ichika to be part of his team during the Y2V11 trip albeit reluctantly, amongst other factors.

(Emotional Perception)

Ichika suspected that Honami foresaw her inquiry about getting "carried away" based on her lack of reaction, subtle or otherwise. The narration never gave the readers any reason to doubt Ichika's analysis and if true, could be a by-product of the aforementioned perception.

(Anticipation)

Honami assured Ichika that she would not lie when asked about whether she and Kiyotaka were dating or not, and when answering **another** question, she implied that's why she did not deny her accusations of having slept with Kiyotaka. Ichika thought that securing such a statement would ensure Honami would continue to answer honestly. What Hona implied was a lie, because later in the conversation Honami lied about Kiyotaka revealing the White Room to her when in reality she heard the words "White Room" while overhearing Tokinari and Shiba during UIE and that's basically all she personally knew about it. In essence, she didn't admit to having slept with Kiyotaka out of honesty.

Paradoxically, even if she enjoys some rumors about her and Kiyotaka, Honami admitting to having slept with him is strange as that's not something she'd want to be caught saying for countless reasons; her public image given the situation with Kei, covering other secrets regarding Kiyotaka, the fact that it's against the school rules, etc. Furthermore, Ichika had no evidence (the fact she was probing is proof enough and Honami sensed this beforehand), so Hona was in a position to deny the allegation. In other words, despite her willingness to lie and having very good reasons to do so, Honami chose not to in this instance. Thus, Honami admitted it for a reason. This has a number of implications. For starters, it gave Ichika a reason to believe Honami was sincere when she said she would not lie, making the bluff about the White Room more believable.

(Behavioral Volatility, Misdirection, Verbal Deception, Setting Trap)

Considering how Honami had no reason to suspect Ichika is not a normal kouhai (or accurately, anymore suspicious than the other kouhais) before this scene and she began to lead the conversation to the topic of the White Room after Ichika began to prod, Honami had to formulate her gambit regarding the White Room extremely quickly - roughly when she sensed Ichika's malicious intent early on as she expected Ichika dropping her mask to call her out on getting "carried away".

This includes Honami figuring out Ichika looked down on her and how she could take advantage of her habit to gloat about knowing secrets "outsiders" did not to tease them. Ichika liked her position of power with regards to knowing what the others didn't, so it was improbable she would record the exchange and spread it to everyone else. Honami also figured Ichika did not know about what happened during the UIE with Tokinari as otherwise the bluff would not be effective, hence she must have figured Kiyo kept a lot of things from her as well, further evincing Honami knew Ichika lacked actual evidence of the two sleeping together.

Furthermore, considering these attributes and the fact Honami knows as well as anyone how dangerous knowing about the White Room is, given she almost died for overhearing Shiba and Tokinari talk about it, Honami had to believe whatever relations Ichika has with the White Room... she's not allied with people like *them*.

<Will be Revised> Honami may have used this line of inferences (without the "I"):

- Ichika approached Honami out of the blue, they were barely on speaking terms throughout Ichika's first year in ANHS.
- A malice could be sensed from Ichika's behavior, despite acting all cutesy.
- The kouhais and all the personnels introduced to ANHS after Kiyo joined the school are suspicious because of what happened with Tokinari & Shiba during the Uninhabited Island Exam. Certainly, a few people related to this "White Room" were enrolled or hired because of Kiyo, so they would know things that other people wouldn't about his past. It's very unlikely Kiyotaka would drop his guard around them, however, so they know much less of his circumstances and the relations he built during his time in ANHS.
- Despite the likelihood Ichika is involved with the White Room, there is no evidence she actually wants to expel Kiyotaka. Nothing indicates that she ever tried to at least, one year into her time in ANHS. Meanwhile, Takuya was expelled under mysterious circumstances during the cultural festival. She is a teenager after all and a very intelligent one based on her OAAs, so it's possible that while Tokinari, Shiba and possibly Takuya were dedicated to their mission to eliminate Kiyotaka (the former was not but Honami has no way of knowing this with certainty) Ichika may have her own agendas & dreams - as in, she isn't interested in expelling Kiyotaka like the others.

- On this note, she keeps bringing up romantic topics about Kiyotaka, when there were rumors about Honami and Kiyotaka dating. Ichika brought that up as well, so she seems to be prodding around their circumstances, doing some information gathering. This indicates Ichika does have some insight on Kiyotaka but doesn't actually have the full picture at all.
- Regardless, Hona's concealment throughout the second half of the second year to conceal her change from nearly the entirety of the school must be working on her as well. After all, Ichika thinks her cutesy act is working. It is likely Ichika looks down on Honami and thinks she's superior; the latter is seen as naive, is the leader of a class that fell from B to D, etc. Perhaps more importantly, Honami doesn't know Kiyotaka's past like Ichika might.

This was a supposition of Hona's thought process before Ichika asked her about "getting carried away", from a third person's point of view.

Conclusion: Ichika isn't a concern; the potential links to this "White Room" might even be useful. As she is trying to perturb Honami with the topic of romance to gather information and potentially even mess with her, she's bound to drop the cutesy act at any time since she doesn't think Honami is unto her.

(Adaptability, Formulation Speed, Emotional Understanding, Critical Thinking, Psychological Profiling, Cold Reading, Improvising)

After indirectly admitting to having slept with Kiyo, Honami was asked by Ichika whether she was lying about not dating him. Hona responded by telling her that she and Kiyotaka shared a "strong bond". This response gave Ichika a laugh and she told Honami that she will be discarded like Kei when he's bored of her. It was a good thing Ichika reacted this way since, for one, it was a predictable reaction, allowing Honami to control the flow of the conversation and that in itself further confirms the aforementioned EU feat, since Ichika needed to have a deeper look into what kind of person Kiyotaka was to react this way... even though Ichika was their kouhai who seemingly had no reason to know about this sort of thing.

Honami told Ichika she essentially resists the urge to do *that* more often because it should be treated as something "special", reversed for rare occasions, to drive Kiyotaka into wanting more of her with an analogy about cakes. Ichika replied by telling Honami she's too full of herself if she thinks that'll work on Kiyotaka. Hona then tells Ichika that she seemed to know a lot about Kiyo, which she confirmed, even chipping in that she knew a lot more than Hona does. This strategy is likely to be true, as the neutral narrator said that when she told Ichika about this, the latter sensed that she got a peek of Honami's "true nature".

True or false, for Honami this created a chance to state that there were "no more secrets" between her and Kiyotaka to cause an argument over who knew more of Kiyotaka. Discreetly controlling the flow of the conversation would allow Honami to drop the White Room bluff more naturally.
(Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation)

Finally, Honami tells Ichika that Kiyotaka told her about the White Room. Ichika was shocked; after all, the existence of the White Room is top secret confidential information and in Y2V12.5 it is implied in Kiyotaka's monologue that he and the other White Room students were brainwashed into not revealing anything about it to outsiders and he & Ichika were no exception. So naturally, Ichika had a hard time accepting Honami's claim, but there was no explanation as to how Honami would know about the White Room and Honami admitting that she and Kiyotaka slept together and a part of her strategy to make Kiyotaka fall for her gave a lot of credibility to the earlier claim that she would not lie.

When questioned by Ichika what and how much she knew of the WR, Hona kept her answers vague. Hona made sure, however, to say "I can't tell you that", which suggests Kiyo might have told her to not say too much. Earlier during the scene but not long before dropping the "White Room" bomb, Honami looked around to "scan her surroundings". The narrator stated that it was the first time during the conversation Honami took her eyes off Ichika. This is in spite of the fact Honami admitted earlier to having slept with Kiyo, which is, again, definitely something Honami did not want others to know about. Hona also described to Ichika a part of the strategy to make Kiyotaka fall for her, which is also something she doesn't want the average person to know.

The discussion between Honami and Ichika took place around lunch hours in the Keyaki Mall, meaning it was quite crowded. Meaning, it's highly improbable Hona wasn't already conscious of the surroundings, but Ichika clearly looked down on her so it's doubtful she realized that. In essence, looking around before bringing up the White Room communicates to Ichika, who looked down on Honami, that she understood the seriousness of the White Room as a confidential matter.

Regardless, Hona had to leave as soon as possible before Ichika could figure out she was lying. Conveniently, it was lunch hours so Honami's excuse that she had to meet some friends for lunch was believable: Ichika approached her at around ~12:00(+) and Honami had to meet her friends at 12:30.

(Bluffing, Risk Competence, Communication)

Despite the extremely high likelihood that Honami was already conscious of her surroundings given what was said beforehand and Hona's social awareness being one of her often-highlighted attributes, the narrator stated that Hona broke eye contact with Ichika for the first time right before when she said that there were no more secret between her and Kiyotaka. Basically, Honami's awareness should extend to whatever is behind her and doesn't need to look around to sense gazes or people approaching. This normally would be difficult to believe, but within the verse, it's not unprecedented at all. For instance, there's Kiyo who has unrealistic sensory feats every other chapter. He can detect the shapes and sizes of objects meters behind him without even looking. He can detect if someone is looking at him from 100 meters away, every gaze pointed at him, any kind of smell or sound from far away with nearly zero effort.

Other characters such as Tokinari, Tsubasa and Asuka have similar abilities albeit on a lower scale, so Kiyotaka or White Roomers in general aren't entirely unique in that regard. Considering the narrative around Honami being conscious of her surroundings, the fact that the narration (either neutral or from Kiyotaka's POV) rarely mentions Hona tends to physically look around in any scene she's present (the selfie scene is one of those exceptions although that could also be a case of Hona communicating she understood the gravity of the situation of that scene), along with this being COTE, this is not especially far-fetched. However, one may argue that looking around before answering the "sleeping" question would be a giveaway and that's why she didn't do so earlier. But even so, Honami most likely knew the discussion would move in that direction considering she read Ichika by then and even if she didn't, could've denied the allegations to avoid any risk just as calmly as she admitted it without agitation.

(Perception, Social Awareness)

At the time of this writing (Y3V3), Kinu has yet to reveal what Hona will do with this information she extracted from Ichika; specifically that she's from the White Room like Kiyotaka. But when Honami asked Kiyotaka at the end of the Hokkaido trip what the "White Room" meant, Kiyo acted like she must have misheard what Tokinari or Shiba said. It was entirely possible he was right and she did not have much ground to challenge him, so Hona had to drop the issue. But now, Honami knows Kiyotaka lied and she can throw out Ichika's name to confront him.

(Information Gathering)