Gambling Apocalypse Kaiji: Espoir arc

By Coolguy on Discord

FSIQ-Blue
EQ, SQ-Red
Manipulation, Deception-Green
Insight, Observation-Purple
Foresight-Pink
Strategy, Planning-Brown
Reasoning-Orange
Adaptability, Intuition, Knowledge-Magenta
Stats used-Cyan
Context/Story-Black

Note: I split this into parts to make it more easily digestible to the reader, these "parts" are not in the manga itself.

Prologue/Background

(Chapter 1-8)

Kaiji Itou was a young man in his early 20s, who moved to Tokyo 3 years earlier. He lived a slothful and lazy life. He had not even been working since New Year and only had been drinking, gambling and vandalizing Mercedes-Benz cars by breaking off and taking their ornaments for his collection.

One day, in February of 1996, he went to vandalize a car once again, but upon not seeing one, he vandalized a random car he saw. Unbeknownst to him that it was the car of a person he would run into later that day. In his house a man called **Endou** came knocking saying Kaiji owes him a debt, which was due to him signing a loan contract for his friend Furuhata. It seems Furuhata vanished and being a co-signer, all debts went to Kaiji.

As they talk, Kaiji's crimes of vandalism come out, as well as the fact that the car he vandalized earlier was Endou's. Endou ignores this however for the most part and takes Kaiji to his office where he explains the details of the debt, such as how what Furuhata did was a ploy all along to send Kaiji into debt and how much money he has to pay back which came out to be 3,850,000 Yen.

Kaiji expresses disbelief at these facts, but Endou tells him a solution, which, unbeknownst to Kaiji, is another lie. He tells him of a ship called Espoir leaving the Dockyards that night, in which debtors can repay the debts they accumulated by gambling. Kaiji is skeptical, but due to some convincing lies by Endou on how it's beneficial and good it would be he eventually caves in and decides to go.

Later that night he shows up and eventually finds the ship where the game is held. Upon entering he saw the other debtors who came here and eventually the people who would be running the game. An administrator type person came into the waiting room with some black suits and explained to the contestants that they will be using money that they will give out to gamble in tonight's games. They have to take out a minimum of 1 million yen and if they want they can take out money up to 10 million. He further explains that the interest of the money will be set at 1.5% every 10 minutes, coming out to 40% by the end of the game. This astonishes and outrages most participants, but they give in. Kaiji, seeing the situation and upon hearing the words of a guy called **Funai**, decides to take out the maximum money of 10 million.

Upon taking the money, a piece of Velcro was affixed to their chest and 2 envelopes labeled A and B were given to them. In the playhall where they were led to, a man called **Tonegawa** was tasked with explaining the game they were going to play today. They opened the envelopes, one which contained rock, paper, scissors cards, specifically 12 of them, 4 per hand and in the other were 3 stars. The stars were affixed on the Velcro and it represented their lives, which they gambled with while the cards were the tools they were supposed to use.

RULES: *Tonegawa explains that this game is called Limited Janken. In it you and another contestant go to a specific box-table supervised by a black suit and play a match of rock, paper, scissors against each other using the cards, with the winner gaining a star from the loser. Upon finishing the game, the used up cards*

are put into the slot on the box-table and can't be used anymore. This change in the amount of total cards is shown on a scoreboard above the stage, which also shows the remaining time the contestants have. To clear the game you need to survive with a total of 3 stars, however you need to use up all the cards you have on you, forcing you to play the game. You can lose in 3 ways. By having cards left by the end of the game, by having less than 3 stars by the end of the game or by losing all 3 of your stars mid-game. The last thing to note is that the game lasts for 4 hours.

Upon finishing explaining the rules, the contestants grow weary and agitated as they were not expecting any of this. Due to the agitation, Tonegawa says an aggressive yet passionate speech which makes some cry, and some get worried, however Kaiji remains steadfast, wanting to win the game. He runs into Funai once again, who explains to him the situation and tries to scare him about the possibilities of what happens in case of a loss. He also explains the endgame part of the game where selling and buying stars would be possible. Funai then gives a solution which he claims he knows of due to playing this game once in the past. He says that if they tie 12 times in a row, then it's possible to use up all the cards and thereby survive the game by using all cards and still having 3 stars. Kaiji agrees to this proposal and it starts out fine, but in the 10th round Funai "messes up" and wins. He says he will fix it in the next round, however he doesn't, he tricks Kaiji and takes 2 of his stars as a result, then leaves him there stranded with only 1 card and 1 star.

Part 1

(Chapter 9-16)

Upon his devastating loss, Kaiji lashed out against Funai, however a black suit stopped him and straight up told him that such trickery and ambushes are part of this game and he should just accept it. Kaiji 20 minutes later was sitting on a sofa, and was crying previously due to his predicaments. He saw other people playing and such and even saw an old man getting swindled by someone. That old man later would meet Kaiji face-to-face, but that's for later. However he saw someone he didn't expect, the man who caused all his troubles with this debt, **Takeshi Furuhata**.

Kaiji followed him and was eventually led to the bathroom area which was used by people, who either lacked the cards or stars, to cry, wallow and vent their emotions. He found Furuhata among these people, and dragged him out of the bathroom. Instead of wallowing like the other people in the bathroom who share his same exact situation or getting angry at Furuhata, he instead proposed an alliance between himself and Furuhata as with his cards and their combined money they could gain stars. After he agreed, Kaiji started thinking and realized a solution to their problems, that being finding a person with no cards and 2 stars. This was necessary as with this combo, they could compensate for each other's weaknesses.

-Emotional Management, Self Regulation, Reasoning, Adaptability, Strategy

After that thought, they eventually found a person who matches that description by the name of **Ando**. He agreed to join and Kaiji with his leadership skills explained the situation to them as well how together they can work better than alone. Following that, he promptly left to take a piss, however Furuhata followed him, leaving 2 cards with Andou. Considering Ando had no cards, Kaiji immediately realized that he would use the cards to play a game so he could gain a star and following that, leave the alliance. After he returns to the playing area, it's exactly as he predicted and he sees Ando playing a game. Kaiji even notices the small detail that Ando didn't check after he saw them, but later still checked even after he noticed them, proving he would go away in the case of his victory(Checking is the thing you have to do to start the Rock Paper Scissor game at the box-table). After the game, he lost, leaving him with 1 star and the entire group with only 3 scissor cards. Despite his anger, Kaiji controls himself and mends the rift between Furuhata and Ando, preventing the break-up of the team.

-Emotional Management, Emotional Understanding, Self Regulation, Leadership, Social Awareness, Reasoning, Psychology, Observation, Foresight

Star Gaining Strategy

After this tremendous loss suffered by Ando, Kaiji still didn't give up and eventually came up with a way to gain stars. He told Furuhata and Ando to look for a person who has 9 cards and plays a rock and a scissor in his 2 following matches. He didn't tell them then why he wanted that, but the reason was simple. Most people here naturally want to commit to a balanced build of having an equal amount of each type of cards as it is harder to read them in case the cards they have are revealed, as well as allowing for more flexibility in playing. Kaiji realized that if such a person would play a rock and a scissor in the previous rounds, it would mean he has an extra paper, and would most likely play that during a match to balance out his cards.

While they were away searching for that person, Kaiji went from person to person to buy some stars with his money, but due to it being very early-game, it was quite impossible to do so. On his way he even heard a scream come from another room next to the hall they were at, which made him think about what horrible acts the Black suits were doing to people who lost. Eventually however Ando and Furuhata came back and they found a person who fit the criteria. Kaiji had a moment of doubt, knowing this was their last chance to win, but despite that he didn't give up.

Upon noticing the supposed person, Kaiji realized it was a person he saw earlier play a match. Based on the fact that the match was against a 1 star person, he concluded that he cherishes taking away the last lives of people, which was a lucky break for him, since he himself only had 1 star. Based on his overall satisfied looks as he was looking over his cards confirmed to Kaiji that he indeed was a balanced player. All in all, this was the perfect opportunity for Kaiji.

Kaiji left and sat down, knowing that this guy will eventually come to him due to his lack of stars. During this time, Furuhata and Ando soon figured out what his plan was supposed to be. Eventually the guy came and challenged Kaiji to a game, which Kaiji won, as his opponent put down a paper, just as he expected. However it didn't end there. After his victory, Kaiji challenged the guy to a second game, which he promptly lost, but unbeknownst to the guy and Kaiji's allies, this was all part of his plan and he was merely acting.

After his loss, he started to leave, but the guy noticed something peculiar, just as Kaiji expected. He noticed the 2 cards that Kaiji played were both scissors. Since

he himself plays in a balanced way, he couldn't imagine anyone else playing in a different way. Because of this, he thought that Kaiji himself played in a balanced way and he only had a paper and a rock card remaining, which is why he attempted to challenge him again as he was walking away. Kaiji planned all of this out, knowing that with his loss, this guy will come to the desired conclusion, challenge him two times in a row and play the cards that are suitable for his victory.

-Emotional Management, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Perception, Cold Reading, Planning, Strategy, Reasoning, Indirect Manipulation, Setting Traps, Acting Skills, Misdirection

Part 2

(Chapter 17-31)

Upon his victory, Kaiji decided to give the 2 stars he won to Furuhata and Ando. The reason was simple. He realized that to ensure morale amongst his team, he would have to make sacrifices. He realized that Ando and Furuhata would be mad and disappointed if they were left without stars, so even though Kaiji could have taken the 2 stars for himself and left the game, he decided to stay and give it to his allies, even if the fact he doesn't gain any stars annoys him.

-Emotional Management, Emotional Understanding, Leadership, Social Awareness, Psychology

After giving out the stars, he began to wonder how to get more stars. Furuhata suggested using money to buy stars, but Kaiji rebuked him as he himself tried that earlier with little success, moreover using the money would be unwise as they have to pay back the money they took out which has a compound interest of 1.5% every 10 minutes. Kaiji was already thinking of gaining at least 2 or 3 stars, however Furuhata was skeptical as they didn't have any cards, to which Kaiji simply said that they could just get more.

At the same moment, a person with 3 stars was taken away by the black suits for trying to flush his cards down the toilet to get rid of them.(This is important so remember it) This agitated Furuhata, as what they planned to do was similar and might lead to them getting taken away. Kaiji convinced him that this is not the case as they have been exchanging cards amongst themselves earlier and no one batted an eye. He concludes by saying that Limited Janken is more complex than it looks, with Tonegawa only saying limited information and the task of figuring out the hidden rules of the game rests on the players' shoulders, with this transferral rule being one of these hidden rules that they are supposed to figure out.

-Social Skills, Reasoning

Some time later, Furuhata and Ando returned with news that due to a large influx of people being taken away, there is a large amount of extra stars left which could be bought really cheaply. Kaiji debates this in his head, but then notices people going upstairs to the black suits. Furuhata explains that they are paying off their debts and leaving the game as they have enough stars, but upon seeing more and more people go there, Kaiji realized that the black suits were in fact, buying up the extra stars. Kaiji told the 2 to look for extra stars, but it was too late, as it was worth much more to the players to sell them to the black suits than to any other players, thereby no one batted an eye to their requests to buy.

-Reasoning

Rock Cards Strategy

Some time after the unsuccessful attempt to gain stars, the team was sitting and thinking about their situation, when Kaiji came up with an idea while looking at the scoreboard. Based on the time shown on the scoreboard between panels, we can conclude he came up with this plan in less than a minute. It goes as follows:

1) Based on the current number of rock, paper and scissor cards, it's clear to see that scissors are currently in the lead (meaning there are more scissors than rocks and papers).

2) From this Kaiji concludes that if they started amassing cards, particularly rock cards, let's say around 30, then in the last 20 minutes, where there will only be a dozen or so cards of each type, they would have a huge lead if we assume that all the cards will go down in a consistent and equal manner.

3) For example, if they go down by 100 cards in the 1 and a half hours remaining until the last 20 minutes, then there would 32 rock cards (30 of which Kaiji's team has) 52 scissor cards (that Kaiji could beat with his rock cards) and 2 paper cards (which would be nigh-impossible to run into at that point)

4) Thereby having a monopoly on rock cards could assume him victory in the endgame if all goes well.

Although he does realize that this might not go exactly as the example, he knows that the theory should mostly hold up to reality.

After he explained it to them, Furuhata and Ando attempted to get those cards, but Kaiji stopped them, because he knows this would seem extremely suspicious to the other players, and no one would play against them if they knew they had most of the rock cards, so he instead thinks of a different way to gain the cards. He noticed that the people with 3 and 4 stars, who have cards left, have trouble giving away cards to others, as if the other players accept the cards, then they will go upstairs to the black suits and ensure there are even less stars. Kaiji sought to exploit this fact with his strategy. He told Furuhata and Ando to go only to the people with 3 stars, not wanting the people with 4 stars to go upstairs since they had an extra star, and ask them to collect the rock cards for Kaiji's group. In exchange for collecting the rock cards, Kaiji's group takes away all the cards the 3 star players have in their possession, thereby allowing them to go upstairs and leave the game. To sweeten the deal, Kaiji even offered them 2 million yen so they could pay off their debts.

35 minutes after the plan, Kaiji and his team are sitting in the bathroom stalls, counting the cards they have gotten. In total they got 30 rocks, 4 papers and 2 scissors. Kaiji says he feels anxious, with his heart shaking, but despite that he remains calm and explains his plan in more detail to Furuhata and Ando. He

compares his plan to stock market rigging and a practice where stocks are bought to cause a price spike. What Kaiji is talking about is a real practice called “Pump and Dump”. Following this he explains how the timing aspect is the most crucial. Going out in the last 20 minutes as said in the example is actually a dumb idea as after a few wins the players would realize the trick and stop playing against them, so he decides to make some calculations.

He calculates that with the current statistics and rocks they hold onto, they have a 57% chance of victory. Although to him these are not good chances, so he makes an assumption that the ratio of these 3 cards in the game will solidify and their drop will remain consistent, meaning they will drop at the same rate as now. From that axiom he continues his calculations, where he even takes into consideration his own cards as they are not “in circulation”, and comes to an estimate of 64% chance of victory if they wait. After that he calculates some more and comes to the conclusion that if they continue to wait even more, they will eventually have a 71% chance of winning, however just like Kaiji said earlier, at that moment the jig would most likely be up and the people would realize they have a large number of rock cards. He concludes that they should act at an opportunity where they both have high chances of winning and also low chances of being found out, which he says is somewhere between the 64% and 71% opportunity.

Finally he also realizes that all 3 of them going around winning would cause severe suspicion as well, so he devises that all of them should go separately to win stars, return to the bathroom and then allow someone else to go out. On top of surviving the game they could also win more stars than they need to, allowing them to sell it and thereby ensure they can pay back their debt and even leave with extra money. To end his explanation, Kaiji states how they will need to find meaning in their lives once they leave the ship and leave behind the shameful existence that they had, which makes both Furuhata and Ando tear up as well as feel motivated.

Later while waiting for the moment to play, Kaiji tells his teammates that they should go out separately to monitor the scoreboard and change positions every 5 minutes so as to not arouse suspicion. Furuhata brought up the idea of buying up cards, upon which a small squeaking noise could be heard, which Kaiji heard despite Furuhata’s ramblings. He realized somebody entered the bathroom and

promptly told Furuhata to shut it. Once the guy left he told Furuhata that buying cards would seem suspicious and so he rejected the idea. Ando was the 1st person to be sent out and Kaiji already felt nervous at the back of his mind which was telling him something bad was going to happen. After Ando returned it was Furuhata's turn, however he returned much earlier, around 2 or 3 minutes after he left.

Upon Furuhata's request, Kaiji went to the scoreboard with him and saw what happened. Apparently, the number of scissors cards has dropped by a shocking 18 amounts in these 2 or 3 minutes. Kaiji immediately realizes this could ruin his plan since he based his entire plan on the fact that the most amount of cards in circulation are scissors. His team was losing hope, however he reassured them by stating that psychologically speaking, the number of paper cards should drop due to the scissor cards disappearing which would make people start to play the paper cards(as they would have no fear of scissors anymore). Furthermore since they have such a large amount of rock cards, the scissor cards will eventually stop going down and due to the rock cards the players will not dare playing scissors, thereby grinding the drop of scissors to a halt.

However, Ando says something interesting. He says that it was unusual that paper moved so little, but due to Kaiji's logic he finally understands. (even if mistakenly) Upon this statement Kaiji begins to ponder and sees that the scissor cards go down by 2 instead of 1 like the rest, and then he finally realizes what's going on. In truth the scissor cards go down in 2 because all of them are draws. The fact that all of them are draws and that paper barely goes down leads Kaiji to conclude that a large amount of paper cards aren't in circulation, and with this info he realizes that somebody copied his plan, but instead of buying rock they bought paper cards. With a large amount of both paper and rock cards out of circulation, it's no wonder most games end up in ties.

As Kaiji told them this, they all felt fear. In desperation, Furuhata tried to convince them to play now as this might be their last chance to score some victories. Due to the fear and the willingness to hold on to the plan Furuhata could convince Ando, but Kaiji stood his ground. He felt the same panic as them, but still stood in place, realizing the futility and held himself back. And it was the right thing to do, since in the following games both Furuhata and Ando lost their stars, now only remain with 1 each.

-VCI, WMI, PSI, FRI, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Management. Social Awareness, Social Skills, Leadership, Psychology, Observation, Reasoning, Strategy, Planning, Intuition, Adaptability, Knowledge, Concealment, Trap Evasion

Kitami Strategy

Upon their loss, they were sitting once again until a group of 3 headed by a person named **Kitami** turned up in front of them. After further inspection Furuhata and Ando recognized the two by his side as the people they had their matches with previously. From this, Kaiji could conclude that they were the ones buying up paper and they planned to fight Ando and Furuhata as they anticipated that they would panic and rush to play games upon seeing the scissor cards drop in number.

Upon confirming his hypothesis, Kitami explained to them their whole plan and offered to them a final match, since he wanted to go upstairs with a bang(or a match I guess). He also offered a deal to give one star to them for 5 million. Furuhata begrudgingly wanted to agree to the deal, but Kaiji stopped him and explained to him that a situation might arise in the last 20 or 10 minutes of the game, where there is an individual with 5 stars and 6 cards, and needs to get rid of his cards. In that case, he would probably be willing to give away 2 stars in exchange for 6 million yen and also to give away all the cards he has, which would be more beneficial to Kaiji's group overall.

From here on, Kaiji already started planning his counterattack, however he only revealed this later. First of all he thought back on his conversation with Furuhata in the bathroom about buying cards. While there he said he didn't want to buy cards so as to not garner attention, that was merely a lie. In reality he didn't want to buy cards because they exactly had the perfect amount of cards to play draws against each other at the end of the night once they got the stars and needed to get rid of the excess cards. Considering Kitami's gang had the same plan, he applied that thinking to them as well. Moreover considering Kitami said he wanted a final match he concluded that they want to get rid of the extra cards their group might have.

After this, Kaiji tried to ask some questions in an inconspicuous manner so as to figure out info without being noticed. He asked first for a death match (all or nothing, where all stars are on the line), which Kitami promptly rejected. Following this, Kaiji asked for 2 matches, which Kitami also rejected. From this Kaiji could conclude that they only had 1 extra-card since they only wanted to play a singular low stakes match. After his confirmation, Kaiji accepted the 1 final match and headed towards the box-table. Around here Kaiji already had his plan mostly intact, but didn't tell Ando and Furuhata and kept them agitated so Kitami couldn't read them and potentially realize his strategy.

At the box-table, Kaiji noticed the subtle action of Kitami pulling out a particular card from his trousers. Considering they are playing as teams of 3, this would mean that Kitami and his team already had consensus on which cards to use, since this was their "final" match after all. From this card being pulled out and Kitami talking about his final match, Kaiji figured out everything there is to figure out. It goes along the lines of this:

1) Since every person here met for the first time in their lives, it means that all teams are built on shaky foundations and betrayal could be imminent at any moment.

2) Kitami and his team members, just like Kaiji and his team, wanted to get rid of the cards at the end by playing against each other. However the issue is if the cards are different then the winner of the match could possibly just simply walk away and betray the team, leaving the rest with cards and no way to leave the game.

3) To prevent this the cards should all be equal in amount, so all of them turn out to be draws and no one can betray each other. However, considering their plans, one type of card didn't need balancing. Here, this one type should be paper, since they bought paper with the intent to use it on Kaiji's team, meaning they didn't intend to balance it out as they didn't want to use it in the "draw" stage, but only against them.

4) Following this line of reasoning and considering Kitami wanted 1 singular final match means that this extra card, which he intends to play, is a paper card that was left over from the matches against Ando and Furuhata.

Following him figuring all of this out, he wanted to raise the stakes. He took out his money and asked Kitami to make the bet be 3 stars instead of one. He was at first skeptical, since he didn't even know if it was allowed, but Kaiji quickly rebuked him by saying that the black suits would stop them if that was the case. Following that a team member of Kitami stated that the 6 million and one star of Kaiji isn't worth it to which Kaiji replied that he was betting the money, his own star and his teammates' stars as well.

This idea didn't excite Furuhata and Ando and seeing how it is impossible to convince them to agree to Kaiji's offer, Kitami attempted to leave, but Kaiji stopped him by putting up the 6 million, saying he can have it, if he can't convince the two to offer up their stars in 5 minutes. After Kitami accepted, Kaiji used both logical and emotional methods on his teammates. First he appealed to their sense of logic by saying that it would be impossible to gain more stars in one game later on, and then appealed to their emotions by saying that they will win and get off the boat, which was enough to move them to tears and make them accept.

Kitami was dumbfounded at Kaiji's abilities and attempted to leave, only for Kaiji to attack his emotions. He called him a lowlife coward who couldn't accomplish a victory anyway and directly hurt his sense of pride. This seemed to work as it enraged Kitami and made him accept the game. When the game started, black suits appeared behind Furuhata and Ando, followed by fellow players gathering to watch the match, hoping and chanting for Kaiji's loss. This coupled with the potential of his plan failing, put enormous mental and emotional pressure on Kaiji, but he held on and motivated himself to win.

Kitami upon attempting to put down the card had a sense of intuition that something could be wrong, but since he had already put down the card, the referee black suit forced him to play it. Before the cards were revealed, Kaiji promptly explained his entire strategy to Kitami and upon the cards being shown, his reasoning and anticipation of Kitami proved correct, earning him the win.

After that victory, he gained the stars, and explained the process of strategy to Ando and Furuhata in more detail. Only 10 minutes have passed in the story since Kaiji's meeting with Kitami at the leather benches and his victory, but in that 10 minutes he completely turned around his loss, even destroying Kitami's group in the process and leaving their once prideful leader in the dust.

-FRI, Emotional Understanding, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Management, Social Awareness, Social Skills, Logical Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Concealment, Acting Skills, Setting Traps, Observation, Foresight, Reasoning, Adaptability, Strategy

Part 3

(Chapter 32-47)

Paper Cards plan

Following his victory against Kitami's team, Kaiji was aware that this victory alone won't make them win. Seeing the fractured state of Kitami's group, coupled with the remaining time of 37 minutes, he came up with a plan that could guarantee them almost total victory in these last minutes, which he promptly explains to his teammates. It goes like this:

1) Kaiji starts out his idea by expanding on his original plan and includes the information aspect of this game, via the scoreboard which informs players about the amount of cards. He realizes that as the game approaches its end, this aspect will be particularly useful to the players.

2) He plans to use this to his advantage as he knows that even if he buys up or exchanges cards, the amount on the scoreboard will remain the same, leaving the players unaware about the cards in his possession.

3) To use this knowledge he plans to also get a hold of the paper cards because if a large amount of both paper and rock cards are out of the game's circulation, then only Kaiji and his team will be aware of this fact. In other words they will have a monopoly on the "winning" cards without anyone else knowing they even have them.

4) Due to this, the other players will squander the last minutes, unaware of the true amount of cards in the game. While this goes on Kaiji and his team will be aware of the true amount of cards in circulation and once one of the 3 cards completely disappears, they can win 100% of the games. (To give an example, imagine if all the paper cards were out of circulation. Then Kaiji and his team could play rock in every game and either win if the enemy had a scissor or draw if he had a rock. Therefore, suffering a loss would be impossible.)

Furuhata is astonished at how easily Kaiji came up with this, but asks whether it's too late for this plan or not. Kaiji tells him that normally it would be, however due to his earlier destruction of Kitami's team, there still might be a possibility. He gives Furuhata and Ando 1 million each and tells them to buy the paper left over from Kitami's teammates which they gladly accept in exchange for the cash.

Following this, he goes to Kitami, sits down next to him to explain what's going to happen. He says he wants to put his head into his hands due to the stress, but knows he can't do it, showcasing his resilience even knowing failure will result in possible slavery or worse.

Kaiji explains how he bought the paper cards from his teammates and then expounds his surprisingly knowledgeable take on Kitami's team, explaining how the very reason they stuck together was based on self-interest and how merely offering a larger sum of money was enough to get them on board. It shows that he understands humans from a social/psychological perspective and also explains where he got parts of his plan.

Following this Kaiji says that Kitami needs to pay him money and in exchange he will take his paper cards. Kitami is outraged that he not only has to give his cards to Kaiji, but also has to pay him for the privilege. Kaiji simply says that if he refuses, he will reveal that all of Kitami's cards are paper cards to the other

players, which will make sure that no cardless player will take his cards. Kitami is shocked, but says he will do the same to Kaiji.

Kaiji retorts by using basic logic and telling him that he can get rid of the cards easily by playing draws with his teammates and that only the matches with the others is his problem. He also says that he also has other cards, and while he admits Kitami also is in the same position, it won't simply be enough as the games go on. He finishes by saying getting rid of more than 10 paper cards will be impossible for Kitami, eventually leaving him without his 3 stars.

Kitami gets taken over by complete shock, gets on his knees and breaks down in front of Kaiji, utterly defeated by him in every shape and form. The tables have fully turned from the earlier meeting and Kitami agrees, giving away his cards and also paying Kaiji so he can finally leave the game.

The end result leaves Kaiji with 69 cards (30 rock, 34 paper and 5 scissors). Considering at this point in the game there are only about 135 cards left, the 3 of them have more than 50% of all cards still in the game. Furthermore as the clock goes down and the cards still in circulation (in other words the ones not in Kaiji's possession) would diminish, the difference would only become greater, leaving them on the path to victory.

-Strategy, Planning, Emotional Management, Emotional Understanding, Reasoning, Insight

After his plan to victory was set up, Kaiji took a moment to sit down, reflect and wait for the right time to strike. During this time he saw a man start to shout and panic, calling another man he just played with a cheater, who got help from someone who was sent to the "Other Room" (the place the blacksuits take you if you lose all your stars). His claim was not entirely unfounded as Kaiji saw the cheating man speak with an old guy earlier, who was eventually sent to the other room. Kaiji visualizes and imagines how this type of cheating could be accomplished. It could be explained by thinking of the wall as a one way window where the people in the Other Room could see the game, but the participants still playing couldn't see them. As we will later see, Kaiji was completely right here.

-Reasoning, VSI

The aforementioned scene makes Kaiji really think about just what danger he and his team really are in, as their fates are uncertain in the Other Room. He gives an impassioned monologue about how much they must win here or otherwise they will just end up as fertilizer for someone else. This helps motivate both him and his teammates.

-Emotional Engagement

As the minutes roll by Kaiji realizes that them waiting together could lead to certain suspicions, making the other players presume they have a sure fire plan to win the game. To ensure their plan remains airtight, Kaiji entrusts Ando and Furuhata with the task of splitting up and blending in, only reuniting when less than 10 minutes remain in the game.

-Reasoning, Strategy, Concealment

After the others leave Kaiji however, a huge problem occurs. He can feel it in his bones and his leg even starts shaking when he feels his original enemy and main rival for this arc, Endou, returning. He sits down beside him and explains what's happening currently in the overall game. In short a lot of 1 or 2 stars having participants who have no cards gathered in the corner of the floor, waiting for the game's end. The reason is quite simple. The black suits told the participants that at the end of the game there would be an auction where they could procure stars potentially. Furthermore as the game went on, and card selling became more common, the participants feared of other people gaining knowledge of what cards they bought, as with that, their entire deck could potentially be known. So realizing how dangerous could getting cards be, these less than 3 star having and no card having players just decide to wait until the auction.

What they didn't realize however was that this was actually what the organizers wanted. If there are 8 of them then about 3 or 4 will be able to buy stars during the auction, however statistically if those 8 all had duels with each other then 5 of them could get 3 stars. Funai explains all this with some level of contempt as he

thinks they are just fools. After which he comments on Kaiji's intelligence in all this.

Kaiji obviously believes something is up to which Funai reveals his knowledge of Kaiji's card buying scheme. He came here to get some cards from Kaiji as he has information on some players' decks which would allow him some easy victories. Kaiji obviously is unconvinced since this guy was the one who betrayed him at the start. To sweeten the deal Funai promises a star to Kaiji which he can hide in his pocket to ensure his salvation without Ando and Furuhata knowing. After Kaiji has doubts about this Funai states that Kaiji still has about 5-6 million yen left with him which he could use to buy a star later on for himself, meaning he looked out for himself from the start. Kaiji obviously still rejects his offer and pushes him, making his stars fall to the ground. Funai vows to come back and have revenge on him.

Later in the bathroom Kaiji has a meeting with his teammates. He gives each 2 million, making sure none of them can buy a star to survive and thereby betray the others. This way he creates a failsafe and also makes them even more loyal than they already were.

-Social Awareness, Social Skills, Leadership

Out of the 103 players, 62 have already left the game, 22 were waiting for the auction and Kaiji and his team was made up of 3 people. This only left 16 players for them to play against. As time went on the paper suddenly started dropping at an unbalanced rate which was the perfect time to strike. Kaiji realized that a 100% victory rate was most likely impossible because if all the paper vanished then the small amount of scissor cards left would probably vanish too fast. This made Kaiji's team act when there were around 3 paper cards in circulation granting them a victory rate of around 70-80% .

-Reasoning, Strategy

However, an astonishing thing happened. They were unable to find people to play games with. Kaiji was confused for a second, but he realized and figured out the psychology behind this action. You see, no one wanted to play with each other because they had only a small amount of cards, one or two instead of the usual 3 or more. Let's assume these players bought cards from someone else, then that info could potentially be leaked and someone else would know what their only card is. If someone had knowledge of that, it would lead to instant defeat. However the players who didn't buy were also very nervous, because if someone watched their last 3 games, they could figure out what their remaining card was. This comes back to the earlier mentioned balanced build which Kaiji figured out pretty early on. If someone was to play 2 rocks and a scissor in his last 3 games, then he most likely has a paper card, as most people follow this build.

Kaiji came to the conclusion that they simply needed to wait, as the people will be forced to play their cards at the end one way or the other. This was perfectly reasonable, even if it agitated Ando and Furuhata a bit. Everything would have gone as Kaiji said. However…

Funai's Counterattack

Funai speaks up at the end of Chapter 36, and this is where he becomes a real problem for Kaiji. He also realized the same thing as Kaiji did earlier and found a "solution" to the problem. He proposes that all players get together, shuffle all the cards they have and then re-deal them. This way the information advantage of the game would be destroyed, leaving everyone back on square one and allowing them to play.

Kaiji obviously rejects this idea as his entire plan is built on the others not knowing the true amount of cards he has and in circulation. His teammates obviously get agitated, but he foresees that someone would call Funai out on this, possibly ending his plans, which is exactly what happens.

-Foresight, Psychology, Reasoning

A man called Takada called out to Funai that he shouldn't involve himself with others' cards. Funai however was not dumb. He said Takada's name and that he had been buying cards so far. Not only that, but he also revealed Takada's plan to gain wins by knowing what others have. Naturally Takada crashed out at him, but he ignored it. He continued by saying that no matter how many stars you have, if you still have cards by the time the game ends, you will be taken to the Other Room, while if you have 1 or 2 stars, but no cards then you would be able to buy stars at the auction. The goal of this was to convince everyone that holding onto cards was a dumb idea. Continuing this he told what cards three randoms have to which they were surprised. He explained how he got the info and then offered to mix up his cards with one of the guy's, thereby making it so that none of them know what cards the guy has now.

This was what started the snowball. A lot of guys joined in with Funai, even Takada and they started to count and shuffle their cards. They counted 16 cards between the 8 of them, which was weird because the scoreboard showed 90 cards. Funai obviously knew what happened, but he pretended to be clueless and then loudly stated that no one else can join the card shuffling group. This social pressure made the remaining players join his circle. Eventually Kaiji has to throw in the towel and join the group because the other players would distrust him too much if he and his group remained outside the card shuffling circle. However Kaiji had a certain plan and he knew that even in this situation he could potentially win, showing his underrated adaptability.

After Kaiji gave his cards to Funai for counting, he counted all the cards and something was amiss. They had 3 fewer scissor cards than what was displayed on the scoreboard. Since the whole point of the group was to shuffle and then play against each other, hiding cards would be dumb (since you'd want to get rid of them) This makes Funai conclude the existence of a **Mr. X** figure in the auction waiters, who is hiding 3 scissors. Funai however ignored him, because they could just simply play with the cards that are here in the circle and ignore Mr. X without any consequences.

Funai shuffled them then gave Takada and a guy with sunglasses some cards to shuffle. Once that was done Funai took back the cards and spread them around. While this was going on Kaiji created a way his plan could still work. After everyone gets their card, they will all believe their deck is a secret one and would be willing to play. However Kaiji and his group could just check how many cards they have of each type from the reshuffled 69 cards they would get back and thereby recalculate the chances of winning from that.

-Strategy, Adaptability

However Funai foresaw this. He shuffled the cards once again and gave each player the amount that they originally had. However with Kaiji, he threw the cards at them thereby making sure they had to collect them too along with recalculating their new odds. This brought enough time for Funai to play with others. Ando suggested playing against Mr. X, but Kaiji reminded him that he wouldn't want to play with anyone, because everyone knows what cards he has.

Players rose and fell as the game went on, eventually leaving 7 players with cards. Eventually Kaiji recounted his cards, 32 rocks, 34 paper and 3 scissors. He looked at the scoreboard and saw that it said 34 papers, meaning Kaiji's group had all the paper cards, meaning that the earlier plan came back. If they played rock they would either win or tie. They could potentially even get 4 wins if they beat two scissors with rock and beat 2 rocks with paper.

Kaiji went to play against some guy, however Funai quickly stopped him, explaining that they could most likely figure out what card he has and destroy him. This "revelation" makes the other contestants not want to play with Kaiji. Safe to say that after this Kaiji kind of crashes out, breaks down and attempts to beat Funai up, however the black suits hold him back.

Destruction of Funai's plan

The entire destruction of Funai's plan was predicated upon his slip of tongue. Funai was actually wanting to play with the guy Kaiji attempted to play with. After

the black suits made him leave Funai alone, Funai stated “and tried to steal someone else’s **mar…** opponent.”

I would say this is Kaiji’s best reasoning feat in the arc, due to him realizing Funai’s plan from just a slight slip of tongue.

Kaiji immediately understood that he meant to say “mark” for a second. From this he concludes that Funai was 100% sure to win against the guy with glasses (the guy Kaiji wanted to play against). Since Kaiji’s team has all the paper cards, it means that the glasses guy has a scissor which Funai could only beat with a rock. He then asks Funai’s previous opponent what he used against Funai and he says he used scissors. This already proves that Funai somehow knows what cards each guy has. They all leave Funai and a guy even notices some marks on his card.

Funai obviously denies everything said by Kaiji and says he is just making stuff up. Funai tries to prove he is innocent by making them remember that he split the cards and made others shuffle them. Kaiji however reminds everyone that Funai already played this game before and that he most likely practiced card tricks to mark them inconspicuously.

Due to Funai’s constant denial Kaiji decides to give 3 reasons why Funai cheated. The explanation process in the manga is needlessly long in my opinion, so I will shorten it:

1) Funai decided to count how many cards there were in total which was needless and unnecessary to do. This would allow him to mark the cards while counting them, scratching the scissor cards and bending the rock cards. Then at the end he could just give himself the rock cards and give his opponents the scissor cards. Kaiji even says that him giving up the cards for others to shuffle was just a misdirection, as in the end it was him who gave everyone their cards anyway.

2) After the shuffling, Funai scattered the cards on the floor before shuffling them again. This was completely unnecessary and meaningless as that's not even how you properly shuffle. Kaiji says that this allowed him to find and sort all the cards he marked.

3) Finally, Funai dealt the cards in a way that was extremely weird. Instead of going from left to right in the circle, he started with himself and then gave everyone their cards randomly. The reason according to Kaiji was that he gave himself the winning cards and his “prey” the losing ones.

And with this, everyone left Funai alone and his plan was completely in ruins, all because he accidentally misspoke.

-Reasoning, Insight, Observation, VCI/Verbal Reasoning

Mr. X Strategy

Kaiji sits down as he can't play against anyone due to Funai’s earlier involvement. He sees the others not playing and realizes why that is. While destroying Funai’s plan he revealed he had all the paper cards, meaning the scissor players wouldn’t risk playing due to them losing instantly.

Kaiji realizes he could either play against the others for 9 stars or play one game against Funai for 3 stars. Both seem impossible, Furuhata even says so, however Kaiji realizes later on a strategy to completely save them.

Kaiji realizes that if he offers a favourable deal to the other contestants in playing against him, then they would be willing to play. He would put down 3 cards, each a different type, whether it be rock, paper or scissors and then he shuffles them. Once done the opponent can pick which card Kaiji will use against him. To sweeten the deal he even makes sure that after the opponent picks the card Kaiji has to play, he can also check the other 2 cards to prove he isn’t lining up the same 3 cards.

The end result of these games would be meaningless as their goal is to make sure Funai can’t play with anyone. After 3 games the others left are Kaiji’s group

(Kaiji, Ando and Furuhata) and Funai. Meaning he has to play against Kaiji to get rid of the cards.

To couple with this Kaiji also deduces the nonexistence of Mr. X, who Funai believes exists. If you remember earlier, a guy was taken away for flushing down cards in the toilet. Kaiji realized that those 3 extra scissor cards must be from him. However he plans to make sure that Funai believes in Mr. X as long as possible so as to waste his time, making sure he can't think long enough and therefore be forced to play against Kaiji, betting 5 stars.

Kaiji however also realized the same way, before he even started his plan, that they possess 69 cards and playing 3 games plus against Funai will leave them with 65 cards, an odd number. This means that if they play draws against each other then one card will remain. For the group to survive, one of them would have to be taken away and sent to the other room. Despite the dangers, Kaiji decides to go himself, giving the soon to be taken stars to Ando and Furuhata along with the money. He does this because he believes the auction also applies to the Other Room occupants as well. There is a window to the other room where they watch the contestants who are still playing. He believes this window system was created specifically because it will be illuminated in the auction. In short, he entrusts his teammates with saving him from the Other Room during the auction.

Kaiji then executed his strategy and it was practically flawless. At the end he even made Funai scared by being extremely willing to go to the Other Room. He also won the game against him, because he deduced earlier that he had a rock card which he was planning to use against the glasses guy.

-FRI, Observation, Strategy, Planning, Emotional Management, Logical manipulation, Misdirection, Leadership, Reasoning

Part 4

(Chapter 48-53)

After Kaiji completed his strategy he was taken away by the black suits. On the way however he heard the cries and promises of Ando and Furuhata that they will save him, but it seemed distant to Kaiji and he felt something really wrong will happen. He subconsciously knew he would be betrayed.

-Intuition

After being taken, Kaiji was stripped of his clothes, got his passport shredded and was branded with fire a number. He then was thrown into the other room along with the others who lost and were naked and marked the same way. Here Kaiji met the old man, Ishida, who apparently helped that one guy earlier who was accused of cheating. Both he and Kaiji relied on people outside to save them in the auction. However a man with a patch on his back called Okabayashi was also there and he said they were fools to trust in other people for their salvation, which is why he brought money with him to the Other Room which he would give to the guys saving him. He specified by saying that either money in your current possession or knowledge of money's location outside of the ship can both help you, as the temptation of money would make them rescue him.

Okabayashi's theory proved to be right as the man Ishida helped was currently drinking with the other winners. Kaiji's case was more tragic. Furuhata tried to save him, but he was harassed by 2 star havers, wanting him to sell him a star. Since they had enough stars, he sold one for 5 million yen. This money was the corrupting factor which made Ando reconsider his stance on Kaiji.

When Furuhata tried to save Kaiji, Ando stopped him and explained that after the game they would need to pay back the debt they owed to the game creators and with them selling stars instead of saving Kaiji, that could be possible. Eventually Furuhata gave in too and left Kaiji there to rot. (I'll be real, this betrayal is only due to plot)

Kaiji was originally heartbroken by this betrayal, and Okabayashi just snickered that he was right all along. He was chosen by the guys outside and was ready to leave the Other Room when Kaiji had a revelation.

Plan to escape the Other Room

Kaiji suddenly attacked Okabayashi and started beating him up. He even attacked a nearby black suit. After the scuffle, Okabayashi wished a painful death upon him (as usual) and promptly left the Other Room. Ishida asked Kaiji what reason he had to do that other than maybe getting angry at Okabayashi. Kaiji eventually revealed his plan to escape.

His main idea was based on 2 important things, what Okabayashi said and the current price of stars. It went along something like this:

1) The current amount of stars are sold for 4-5 million yen in the auction, meaning for him to be saved, he has to have at least 15 million yen in his possession (worth of 3 stars)

2) Kaiji could see from the amount he had in his hands that he had about 7-8 million with himself, meaning he had to have knowledge of outside assets with him.

3) There was a huge issue however. The knowledge of outside assets was a risky move, since his helpers could easily betray him once the location would be leaked or if the hiding place was unsafe.

4) Not willing to take the risk, he would bring the outside assets into the game, most likely turning it into jewels or precious metals, since they are easily portable and are easy to hide.

5) Since Okabayashi was naked along with everyone in the Other Room, hiding these jewels would be difficult, however Kaiji deduced that the patch on his back was the thing that contained and hid the jewels.

From this, the reason Kaiji attacked him was to:

A. Get close enough to him that he could gain access to the patch.

and

B. To distract both Okabayashi and the black suits from his true plan. The fact that he lost all his hope and also that Okabayashi annoyed him the entire time also gave him a motive to attack, making no one question his assault on him.

After his assault, Kaiji hid the jewels in his mouth, managing to not swallow them or spit them out despite getting beaten and then revealed them to Okabayashi's helpers who saved him instead of Okabayashi, due to him possessing the valuables now.

-Strategy, Planning, Reasoning, Emotional Management, Misdirection, Concealment, Adaptibility, Observation

Epilogue

(Chapter 53-54)

Following his escape from the Other Room, he gave the men the jewels and went to Furuhata and Ando. He beat them up and took the money and stars that were rightfully his. Using the money he bought some more stars which Ando and Furuhata mistakenly thought to be parts of a plan. However Kaiji just wanted to save Ishida, because he actually cared about him in the Other Room, and for this, he bought his freedom.

Following the auction, while Kaiji became free he became disillusioned with money and human greed in general. Worst of all, he still had to pay back the debt he owed to the game creators. He will eventually get back at these people, but that's a story for another day.

Notes

Furuhata and Ando

I'd like to mention that I truly believe that the betrayal of Furuhata and Ando was due to plot reasons rather than anything else, as it could be considered as an anti-feat for Kaiji's ability with people. However it's important to note that during the story Kaiji saved these 2 multiple times, gave them money and stars to earn their loyalty, moved them with his words to the point that they started crying and even sacrificed himself so they could avoid the Other Room. In any other scenario, these 2 would be fanatically loyal to Kaiji, so I don't think it's fair to think of this betrayal as an anti-feat.

Kaiji's adaptability

I'd also like to put Kaiji's adaptive capabilities into showcase just to show how insanely fast he conquered his enemies. Unlike other smart characters, Kaiji was narratively shown to be some random loser, barely making ends meet. He wasn't some government facility trained human, like Ayanokoiji, the best student in the country like Light or secretly a genius manipulator like Yuuichi. He was some random guy, and at the start he naively lost like one against Funai. However by the end he literally forced Funai, who was someone who played this game multiple times, into effectively giving him his stars.

Not only that, but whenever his plans didn't work, he could come up with a way out of the situation insanely fast, to the point that it greatly shocked other side

characters and even antagonists like Kitami and Funai. Both his actions, feats and the narrative too supports his insane capability to somehow pull back from any odds, and to top it off, this is just the 1st arc of the series, so you have to wonder what this guy can do.



“An inhabited being, possessed by God itself!”

-Hyodo Kazuya about Kaiji

Thank you for reading!