







INFO

What if I told you Ayanokoji Kiyotaka's best feats aren't his manipulation or his reasoning during the Zodiac Exam, but his **SQ, backed up by the baseline he establishes throughout the volume**?

It's been three days since the island exam. Ayanokoji is seemingly faking contemplation while gazing at the sea through his window when Hirata, one of his cabinmates, approaches him and suggests that he should spend more time with others. Kiyo simply replies that he has no one to spend time with. Hirata then points out that he has Sudou and Horikita. Internally, Kiyo remarks that he might be friends with them, but he's more like a low-level friend to both.Hirata follows up by saying that it's a good opportunity to make friends and apologizes, adding that it might not be his place to say such things to him.Hirata invites Ayanokoji to meet up with Karuizawa-san and the others at 12:30 for lunch, to which Ayanokoji questions who the others are and declines the offer.Hirata assures Ayanokoji that he can trust him. Ayanokoji shakes his head and replies that he can spare ten minutes for lunch. Although he suggests that it would be better for Hirata to leave him alone, Hirata insists that he wants to have lunch with Ayanokoji, enjoys his company, and considers it a rare opportunity.

> Normally, a guy would do anything to get the chance to eat a meal with a girl.
> Typical male thinking. However, Hirata seemed able to prioritize eating with another guy without hesitation. It was enough to give me doubts. Perhaps he swung “that way.” Hirata was an effortless multitasker, but he never did anything without reason.
> “I’d feel bad if Karuizawa blamed you later, though.”

Hirata avoids the question by saying that Karuizawa isn't that kind of girl. However, Ayanokoji knows that she can be straightforward with others, hold grudges, and act nice in front of Hirata.

What Ayanokoji already knows about Hirata

- Hirata and Kei's relationship is weird, considering that they don't address each other by their first names in Volume 1 or afterward.
- During the island exam, Ayanokoji profiled Hirata and inferred that something in his past had made him a staunch pacifist.
- Despite Hirata's claims, Ayanokoji has reason to believe that Hirata doesn't trust him 100%.
- Hirata would do anything to prevent conflict. He prioritizes peace at any cost, even if it means hiding things and taking the stress upon himself.

That's why Ayanokoji notes that Hirata likely has an ulterior motive.

> Hirata opened the door, as if to guide me, while I relaxed in bed. Hirata was being his usual concerned self, but taking me out when I wasn't really that enthusiastic was odd. It seemed kind of forceful for Hirata, especially since he could normally read any situation well. He likely had some kind of ulterior motive.

Ayanokoji also asks Hirata about the island drama involving Class D, particularly the Karuizawa case, after Hirata thanks him for helping during the island exam. This further raises questions about Hirata and Kei's relationship from Ayanokoji's perspective.Hirata takes Ayanokoji out for lunch and explains that he wants to become friends with Horikita for the sake of Class D's unity. Since Ayanokoji is supposedly friends with Horikita, Hirata thinks it would be nice if he could help them become friends before they establish a working relationship for the class.Ayanokoji replies that he and Horikita aren't that close and that, even with his help, it ultimately depends on Horikita herself, as she isn't the type to make friends easily.After hearing this, Hirata politely apologizes for making the lunch about himself. They begin eating, but Kei and a group of girls surround Hirata and pull him away. Ayanokoji escapes the gathering while Hirata is occupied with the girls.also there katsruragi profiling and ryueen profiling from previous exam which connects to this exam .

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1P2DxE1GzNdcV9qjkHzcMdMLpn1n99FrPzfXJ_LVwFt0/edit?usp=sharing

A map of the ship was on a nearby signboard, and it was pretty easy to understand. The fact that the map had been placed in a gilded frame might've been overkill, but it also made it seem like something you'd find on a luxury liner. I drew a route that'd let me kill a bunch of free time and immediately hopped onto the elevator. I got off on the second deck.The ship had nine decks in total, plus a roof. The fifth deck was above ground, while the fourth was below. The first deck housed both the lounge and banquet area, while the rooftop had the pool, café, and other facilities. The third and fourth decks were for guest rooms. The guys were on the third deck; the girls were on the fourth.The ship also had various kinds of entertainment options, such as movies and a live theater venue. These were everywhere, from the first underground level up to the third underground level. On the fourth underground level—the lowest level at the bottom of the ship—was some kind of switchboard breaker room. That particular level was irrelevant to the students.The lounge was open twenty-four hours a day. We were free to go there no matter how late it was, but a notice from the school urged us to refrain from going there as much as possible. As I walked through the second-level area, I noticed that the atmosphere felt quite different. The rooms were vacant, and I couldn't tell what they were used for. So few students were in the hallways that it appeared deserted.During his walk, Ayanokoji meets Sakura, and Kushida later joins them because she's in the same area. Sakura tells Kushida that it's her first time properly meeting her, despite having seen her interacting with some girls earlier. Kushida replies that they were girls from Class C.Ayanokoji already knows from Volumes 1 and 2 that Kushida makes an effort to befriend everyone, including students from other classes.During their conversation, a message arrives on their phones, instructing them to meet in their individually assigned rooms at a designated time for the next special exam.

> This probably wasn't going to be a paper test or physical fitness examination, or something you'd see at a regular school—much like the survival test on the island. However, nothing in the message implied what awaited us. Were we supposed to be able to read into something, or should we just be prepared for anything? I didn't know.
> More than anything else, certain points in the message weighed on me. They wanted us to gather in the room at 18:00, but we only had about twenty minutes to get ready and head over, which was an extremely short amount of time. Plus, it seemed like it had been decided rather quickly. Also, why was the designated meeting spot one of the ship's private rooms? That couldn't make a good exam room by any standard.

Ayanokoji messages Horikita to ask whether she received the same message. She confirms that she did, and they briefly discuss the strange circumstances surrounding the exam before ending their conversation.

RULES:

Kiyotaka arrives at the designated location, where he finds his classmates Karuizawa, Yukimura, and Sotomura, along with Class A teacher Mashima. Once everyone has settled down, Mashima explains the rules.

> In this special test, all the first-year students will be divided into twelve groups based on the signs of the Zodiac. Everyone will participate within their respective group. The purpose of this examination is to test your thinking.

Mashima further explains that the exam focuses on thinking, decision-making, and teamwork. Unlike the previous exam, this one will test the following abilities:

- The ability to thoroughly process information, which is an essential component of the test.
- The ability to analyze the current situation and clarify the task at hand.
- The ability to solve the problem after clarifying the process and identifying the task.
- The ability to utilize imagination and create new values.

Mashima informs them that they belong to the **Rabbit Group** and provides a list of its members.

CLASS A: Takemoto Shigeru, Machida Kouji, Morishige Takurou CLASS B: Ichinose Honami, Hamaguchi Tetsuya, Beppu Ryouta CLASS C: Ibuki Mio, Manabe Shiho, Yabu Nanami, Yamashita Saki CLASS D: Ayanokouji Kiyotaka, Karuizawa Kei, Sotomura Hideo, Yukimura Teruhiko

and explains the rules

The VIP Exam Rules

A **VIP** will be assigned to each group. By submitting answers to the school through a designated method, students can trigger one of four possible outcomes.

- At 8:00 a.m. on the first day of the test, every student will simultaneously receive a message identifying the person selected as the VIP in their group.
- The test begins tomorrow and ends at 9:00 p.m. on the fourth day. Students are completely free to do as they wish on the first day.
- The group must gather twice at predetermined times.
- The school will accept answers only between 9:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. on the final night. During that period, each group must submit an answer identifying who they believe the VIP is.
- Each individual may submit an answer only once, but the first answer received from any member of the group will determine the group's result.
- Answers must be sent to the email address provided to each group, using mobile devices.
- The twelve VIPs cannot submit answers.
- Students may submit answers only for the groups to which they are assigned.
- Test results will be sent to all students by email at 11:00 p.m. on the final day.

The Four Possible Outcomes

Outcome #1: Everyone identifies the VIP correctly. Everyone in the group receives 1 million private points.

Outcome #2: The group fails to submit the correct answer, or another group's VIP submits an incorrect answer.

The VIP receives 500,000 private points.

These are the so-called *traitor rules*, as Ayanokōji refers to them. However, we won't focus on the reasoning behind these outcomes here.

Outcome #3: Someone other than the VIP submits the correct answer before 9:30 p.m. on the final day.

That student's class gains 50 class points, and the student who submitted the correct answer receives 500,000 private points. Meanwhile, the VIP's class loses 50 class points as a penalty.

The group's testing period ends immediately. However, if the person submitting the correct answer belongs to the VIP's class, the answer is not counted, and the test continues.

Outcome #4: Someone other than the VIP submits an incorrect answer before 9:30 p.m. on the final day.

That student's class loses 50 class points. The VIP receives 500,000 private points, and the VIP's class gains 50 class points.The group's testing period ends immediately. However, if the person submitting the incorrect answer belongs to the VIP's class, the answer is not counted, and the test continues.

The possible scenarios can be summarized as follows:

- The VIP reveals their identity to the entire group, and everyone clears the exam.
- Someone else submits an answer at the end but incorrectly identifies the VIP. The group wins.
- A traitor successfully identifies the VIP.
- A traitor is misled about the VIP's identity.

Mashima remarks that the exam resembles a game of ***Werewolf***.

Anonymity and Punishments

The school will take anonymity into account during the test. At the end, only the outcomes for each group and the increase or decrease in class points will be announced. In other words, the school will not reveal the identities of the VIPs or the students who submitted answers.Students may also have temporary IDs assigned to them, allowing them to transfer their points to those IDs. They can even divide the points among multiple recipients. If a student keeps quiet, there should be no fear of their identity being discovered after the test. Of course, those who have no reason to hide their identities may receive their points openly.Mashima also explains that certain actions are prohibited, including stealing another student's cellphone, using threats to obtain information about the VIP, and using someone else's cellphone without permission to submit answers.The maximum punishment for such violations is expulsion. Furthermore, if any suspicious activity is discovered, the school will conduct a thorough investigation to determine whether anyone has broken the rules.

Now his SQ showcasing

1.

After the rules are explained, Ayanokoji meets up with Hirata, and the two search for Horikita.They find her with Katsuragi, the leader of Class A, Ryuen, the leader of Class C, and Kushida. Hirata becomes concerned about the situation, but Ayanokoji leaves him to handle Class D's coordination while arranging a meeting with Horikita somewhere they can talk without

attracting suspicion.During their meeting, Horikita and Ayanokoji exchange information about their respective groups.

CLASS A: Katsuragi Kouhei, Nishikawa Ryouko, Matoba Shinji, Yano Koharu

CLASS B: Andou Saya, Kanzaki Ryuuji, Tsube Hitomi

CLASS C: Oda Takumi, Suzuki Hidetoshi, Sonoda Masashi, Ryuuen Kakeru

CLASS D: Kushida Kikyou, Hirata Yousuke, Horikita Suzune

Ayanokoji mentally comments that the other classes' representatives seem relatively strong in terms of ability. He also notes that, based on ability, Ichinose should have been in Class B's group rather than Kanzaki.

> "I see. This really seems like an inevitable grouping," I muttered.
> "But something feels **unnatural**," I added. I didn't really know many students, but it was somewhat unnatural for Ichinose to be in Rabbit and not Dragon.

He further observes that Horikita's group contains several capable individuals and that Ryuen and Horikita are incompatible personalities who are bound to clash.

Ayanokoji informs Horikita that he hasn't been selected as the VIP and points out that the VIPs in the different groups have probably already begun devising strategies. He also suggests that Ryuen might be a threat during this exam.

2.

During their conversation, Ryuen approaches them and questions Horikita about several things, including the VIP system and the previous special exam—specifically, how Class D managed to pull off its result and whether the rumors were true.Ryuen also pays attention to Ayanokoji, remarking that he is considerably smart despite not having accomplished anything particularly noteworthy so far.Ayanokoji suspects that Ryuen has gathered information about him through his grades.

> Maybe he'd spent time measuring my academic abilities, physical abilities, and even communication skills. Grades were objective and reliable. You couldn't deceive others with that information.

Ayanokoji also recognizes that Ryuen is the type of person who listens primarily to himself.

> He refused to accept even the slightest hint of advice from others. He didn't appear to want to confirm anything during this encounter, only to chat with Horikita and pass the time amusing himself.

Considering how suspicious it is for Ryuen to show up in that particular area at that particular time, Ayanokoji concludes that someone in Class D must have leaked information about the class's abilities.

> "I think we were being spied on. Him suddenly meeting up with us is too convenient," I said.

He rules out Ibuki as the spy and realizes that Ryuen has already begun implementing a strategy. He also recognizes that Ryuen's encounter with Horikita may have been a deliberate attempt to provoke a reaction.

> "A mistake," I muttered.
> He'd seemingly meant to say that there was someone smart here, someone just like him, but that was a little easy. Our encounter may have given Ryuen an even bigger hint than I'd imagined. Was I just being overly concerned about the test?

Horikita reassures Ryuen that Ayanokoji is merely an unremarkable student and that there is nothing worth worrying about.(this is also a throwback)However, Ayanokoji notes that Ibuki belongs to his group, meaning that Ryuen has a potential source of information about their group through her.

3.

During the first meeting of the Rabbit Group, Ayanokoji integrates socially without much difficulty while observing the dynamics within his group and the interactions between its members. The most noteworthy detail is the interaction between Karuizawa and Ibuki, as Karuizawa doesn't seem to have any problem with Ibuki being there despite Ibuki having stolen from them during the island exam.Ichinose naturally takes the lead when everyone is hesitant to speak. She encourages everyone to communicate and aims for Outcome #1, in which the entire group correctly identifies the VIP and everyone receives 1 million private points. However, some members oppose this idea. Ayanokoji joins the conversation and encourages Sotomura to support the goal of achieving Outcome #1.A Class A student proposes a strategy of remaining silent and avoiding conversations with the other members. Machida takes the lead in presenting Class A's position within the Rabbit Group. Hamaguchi, a Class B student, opposes this idea but eventually backs down from his position.Ichinose then speaks against Machida's proposal. Ayanokoji observes Class A's strategy and how Ichinose begins dismantling its defensive wall.

> Apparently, Class A's policy had already been decided. But I didn't think that Machida himself held the power. I sensed someone else behind Machida, pulling the strings.

Ayanokoji already suspects that Katsuragi is the one directing the strategy from behind the scenes.

> Machida's fake altruism didn't fool anyone. He was talking about a Class A strategy. Something extremely simple.

What's noteworthy here is that Ayanokoji immediately recognizes the simplicity of Class A's strategy despite never having participated in this kind of social game before.Machida opposes Ichinose's proposal, explaining that it is Katsuragi's strategy. He also challenges Hamaguchi's arguments concerning the distribution of points.Ayanokoji notices a problem with Hamaguchi's argument against Machida.

> However, his argument wasn't really going to work for Class A. After all, we were dealing with Katsuragi, who must have realized the test's "trick." Otherwise, he wouldn't have suggested this strategy.

The trick lies in the potential outcomes of the VIP exam, particularly Outcomes #2 and #4, which can allow a VIP to benefit while affecting the points of other classes.

> Katsuragi proposed that the VIPs had been distributed fairly amongst the groups. His plan was to let the test pass calmly so that all classes would receive the same number of points. However, Hamaguchi wasn't done.
> Ichinose seemed receptive to Katsuragi's strategy. Machida looked as if he'd expected her agreement, but Ichinose wasn't done.
> Katsuragi's plan was to play defensively, almost like he was putting up barriers. In order to pull off his strategy, he'd need the cooperation of everyone in the group, a difficult proposition. However, it really was a simple plan that anyone could pull off. All it required us to do was not talk. You could say that this strategy was a way to break the test.

Ayanokoji recognizes that Class A is essentially building a defensive wall around itself. By refusing to communicate, its students can make it significantly more difficult for others to identify their VIPs.After a prolonged back-and-forth discussion, most members of the Rabbit Group begin to agree with Class A's proposal to stop discussing the exam and go their separate ways.

> It seemed like the trust Ichinose's class had in her was unshakeable. The other two students from Class B nodded in agreement.
> "Thank you. Lastly, we have one more person to ask." Ichinose turned to me. "What do you think, Ayanokouji-kun?"
> "I mean, the strategy's fine. Besides, I think most people here agree, and I've never been good at talking," I answered.
> I **promoted** accepting the strategy. However, I doubted that Ichinose would just accept Katsuragi's plan so easily. No, if she just gave up and went with the flow, Class B would be headed toward a dark end. Katsuragi's strategy was hiding something.

Ichinose then opposes Class A's strategy, pointing out that they have no idea whether another special exam will follow this one. Any difference in class points resulting from this exam could have long-term consequences, making it dangerous to surrender potential opportunities to earn points.

Machida, representing Class A, maintains that his class will follow its strategy and isolate itself from the rest of the group.

Ayanokoji's Thoughts After the debate

> Katsuragi's proposal had surprised me, but Ichinose and Hamaguchi's arguments made it seem like nothing more than a flustered attempt at a bluff—something they'd come up with on the spur of the moment. Ichinose's understanding of Class A allowed her to turn things around with just a few words. The students who had once agreed with Class A's plan were now mostly either neutral or aligned with Ichinose. Classes C and D were now more likely to follow her. It was like a duel between Class B, led by Ichinose, and Class A, led by Machida. Right now, the tide was turning in favor of Class B.
> As a demonstration of their separation, the three Class A students stood and went to the corner of the room. It looked like they planned to spend the rest of the time doing what they wanted. I was betting that the other Class A students in other groups were probably doing the same thing. Katsuragi's strategy was the ultimate defensive move: something that would keep all of Class A behind a gate. If a VIP happened to be in Class A, it would be exceptionally difficult to find him or her.

4.

After the debate between Class A and Class B ends, Manabe, a Class C student, asks Karuizawa whether she bumped into Rika, one of Manabe's friends, while waiting in line. Manabe demands that Karuizawa apologize if the incident is true, but Karuizawa refuses. Manabe then attempts to take a picture of her, prompting Karuizawa to grab the phone and throw it away.

The phone remains undamaged, and Manabe tries to photograph Karuizawa again. However, Machida intervenes and stops her.

Ayanokoji notices that Karuizawa is beginning to lose confidence and becoming emotionally vulnerable. He also observes how she asks Machida for help. From that point onward, tension develops between Manabe's group and Karuizawa.

> I thought that Karuizawa would've answered Manabe more forcefully, but her words were surprisingly weak. Or rather, there was some fear mixed in with her "tough girl" act. It might've been my imagination, though.
> Judging this situation fairly, Machida was correct. I certainly understood Manabe's feelings in wanting to take the picture to ascertain the truth, but if the person tells you no, taking a picture without permission is rude. Confronted with that argument, Manabe and the other girls had no choice but to back down, though Manabe didn't seem wholly convinced.

Karuizawa expresses her gratitude to Machida for intervening.

> "Come on, lay off me. Thank you, Machida-kun," said Karuizawa.
> Karuizawa looked up at him, her eyes full of gratitude. Even though the Class A students had distanced themselves from the rest of the group, they weren't bad guys at all. Takemoto and the others didn't appear to be too interested, though.
> "All I did was the right thing." Machida blushed slightly.

Ayanokoji wonders whether this might be the beginning of a new romance, although Karuizawa already has Hirata. Regardless, he gets the feeling that the friction between Karuizawa and the Class C girls will cause serious problems down the road.

5.

After the meeting ends, Ichinose suggests that everyone is free to do as they please.Ayanokoji continues observing Karuizawa's behavior, particularly how she accidentally steps on Manabe and acts apologetic afterward, despite this behavior not matching Karuizawa's usual personality. This further raises his suspicions about her unusual behavior.Ayanokoji then goes to meet Hirata. Along the way, he encounters Sakura, who shares information about her group, the Cow Group. He also meets Yamauchi and subtly baits him during their interaction.

6.

The second meeting begins, and Ichinose once again tries to get Class A to participate in the discussion. However, Class A refuses to budge and continues following its strategy of isolating itself from the other students.During the meeting, Ayanokoji continues observing Karuizawa's unusual behavior. The way she confronts Manabe, avoids Ibuki, and becomes attached to Machida doesn't seem consistent with her usual personality. Ayanokoji begins to establish a social hierarchy within the group and realizes that Karuizawa would be at the bottom of it.

> If I were to create a hierarchy for the group, she'd be below Manabe and the other Class C girls. Maybe that's why she was acting strangely. My doubts and suspicions slowly grew.

The second meeting ends without any meaningful discussion. Ichinose then turns to Ayanokoji, asking for his opinion on the situation.

> "Hmm. I suppose this is going to be tough. What do you think, Ayanokouji-kun?"
> Ichinose turned to me. She was even calmer, wittier, and clear-headed than I had previously thought. She noticed that I kept quiet during these discussions, but didn't put me on the spot. If I had been her classmate, I would have had a crush on her. She was just that charming. The Class B guys probably weren't alone in falling for her; she had to have admirers from other classes, too. She probably rivaled Kushida in terms of popularity.
> "To be perfectly honest, I'm the type to just sit things out. I'm just a bystander," I said.

Ichinose, however, encourages Ayanokoji to work together with her. This is an important detail, as it connects to a hidden plot point later on.After the meeting ends, everyone begins to leave. Ayanokoji approaches Manabe and brings up the incident involving Karuizawa allegedly pushing her friend.

> "Hey. Do you have a minute?"
> Manabe looked slightly on her guard, probably because she hadn't expected me to come after her.
> "I heard about your problem with Karuizawa. Something about her pushing someone at the cafe, right?"
> "Yeah. Why do you ask?" snapped Manabe.
> These girls wouldn't normally want to chat with me, but that topic seemed to interest them. All three focused on me, like they were checking me out.
> "I'm not 100% sure, but I think I saw Karuizawa fight with a girl from another class," I said.
> "That's… Are you sure?" asked Manabe. Her voice was stiff, and she drew nearer. I shrunk slightly and nodded.
> "I think so. Well, I just kind of got this bad vibe, you know? I felt like she was acting like a jerk, so I thought I'd go ahead and tell you."

Ayanokoji deliberately keeps his statement vague to set things in motion without exposing himself. In reality, he hasn't seen Karuizawa fighting with anyone. He is simply planting a suggestion in Manabe's mind and allowing her group to draw its own conclusions.

> I kept it vague to set things in motion, and then turned and went back the way I came. Honestly, I hadn't actually seen anything. If I'd kept talking, I would have probably been exposed as a liar. Now that the fuse was lit, Manabe and the others would react. How would the newly docile Karuizawa respond? I wanted to find out.

7.

After the second meeting, at the end of Day 1, Ayanokoji returns to his cabin, where he meets up with Hirata. Hirata shares information about two Class D students who have been selected as VIPs: Kushida-san in the Dragon Group and Minami-kun in the Horse Group. He informs his cabinmates through a message on their phones.

“Hey, Hirata. Wouldn’t it be better to give us that information by phone? We don’t know who’s listening in on our conversations,” I said.

Yukimura questions Koenji about his behavior during the island exam, but Koenji ignores Yukimura’s appeal and does something unexpected.

Hirata and I read over the email we’d just received from the school.

“The test has now ended for the Monkey group. Those in the Monkey group are no longer required to participate any further. Please do not disturb the other students.”

The Monkey Group is Koenji's group.

Ayanokoji's thoughts reveal that he may already understand something about the pattern and nature of this exam.

"Well, Kouenji didn't take the test seriously at all. That was true. However, he was remarkably perceptive and observant. He had boldly stated that the test was nothing more than a '**simple quiz**' to find the liar. If that were true, he'd probably hit the mark."

(" here might look just saying with emphasei, but we know exam is about thinking, action and cooperation. so it's suspicous if ayanokoji know if exam was only simple quiz koenji is right.)

Ayanokoji decides to get some fresh air, as his cabinmate, Yukimura, is heavily irritated by Koenji's usual behavior.

Ayanokoji goes out onto the deck to look at the stars. Nearby, he spots someone standing in the shadows. It turns out to be none other than Kushida, who is there for some reason. After a brief conversation, Ayanokoji decides to head back. However, before he can turn around, Kushida hugs him for a while.

Ayanokoji mentions that he is feeling restless, so he decides to visit the lounge, which he notes is off-limits to students. We later learn that this is because it is an adults-only bar equipped with vending machines that sell beer.

He finds the teachers relaxing on the sofas and decides to spy on their conversation.

The conversation between the teachers reveals that Mashima, Chabashira, and Hoshinomiya are friends. chae-sensei accuses Chabashira-sensei of deliberately placing Ichinose in the Rabbit Group at the last moment when she should have been assigned to the Dragon Group. Chabashira brushes off the accusation as a coincidence, while also revealing that she finds Ayanokoji from Class D interesting.

Mashima-sensei intervenes and urges Hoshinomiya to stop spying on other classes and her colleagues, even though there is no explicit rule prohibiting such behavior.

chae-sensei:

"I genuinely thought that Ichinose needed to learn a lesson, so I removed her from the Dragon group. You know? By the way, Sae-chan, I couldn't help but notice you've been focusing on Ayanokouji-kun. Anyway, it's just a coincidence. Coincidence, coincidence. When the island test ended and Ayanokouji-kun became a kind of leader, you weren't surprised at all, were you?"

Mashima-sensei:

“I see.” Mashima-sensei nodded as though convinced of something. However, he then strictly addressed Hoshinomiya-sensei. “There’s no rule against this, but I want to be clear. Stop spying on other colleagues’ classes.”

Both:

“Agh, it’s like you don’t trust me at all. Well, I’m not the only one to blame. Sakagami-sensei is part of the problem, too. If we evaluated the Class C students properly, another student should’ve been placed into Dragon. But they threw Ryuuen in there.”

“That’s certainly true. This isn’t your average year. The students seem rather special.”

However, there is one detail that stands out as particularly suspicious. Ayanokoji claims that he went to the lounge for a change of scenery.

“I’d taken this route just for a change of scene, but had stumbled onto an opportunity. I hid myself and drew nearer.”

Yet, he never mentions taking a drink. Instead, we get this:

> “With this newfound information, it was about time for me to head back. If I stayed any longer, I might be seen. Just knowing that Ichinose had been sent to spy on me was enough for this little **reconnaissance**. Apparently I was under heavy scrutiny.”

Ichinose had apparently been sent to spy on Ayanokoji.

Could Ayanokoji be lying in his own narration?

8.

The next day, Ayanokoji meets up with Horikita. They discuss Kouenji and Ayanokoji’s desire to learn more about Karuizawa from Horikita. However, when Horikita questions him about his intentions, Ayanokoji deflects by claiming that it’s nothing important and is merely related to the exam. They continue discussing Karuizawa’s personality.

During their conversation, Ryuuen approaches them again. He taunts them and claims that he has already figured out a way to identify the VIPs from other classes.

> “I’ve already started to discover the VIP’s identity. Would you believe me if I told you that?”
> “Unfortunately for you, I’ve already gotten a handle on the fundamentals of this test. Depending on how things go, Class C will win by an overwhelming majority.”

Ryuuen explains his progress. First, he identifies the VIPs in his own class and then uses that information to determine which groups contain the VIPs from other classes. By identifying three VIPs from his own class and uncovering a pattern, he can begin narrowing down the identities of the remaining VIPs.

Ayanokoji recognizes that Ryuuen's strategy relies on brute force. (If Ayanokoji already understands the strategy, why is he hiding it from the narration? Hmm.)

> "Ryuuen's calm proved that what he said was true—that he was operating within the rules. His strategy was to forcibly lay bare all of Class C's secrets. At any rate, if what he was saying was true, Ryuuen had identified three of the VIPs. That was a huge step toward completing this test."
> "It was comparable to a quiz where you could turn the page over and find the answer written on the back. If you didn't flip the page, no one would know the answer, but if you flipped it just a little, you could spy the answer. In other words, Ryuuen probably knew the identities of every class's VIP."

Ryuuen then takes his leave, but Ayanokoji and Horikita notice that he has left his phone on the seat.

> "While we kept silent, we peeked underneath the chair that Ryuuen had been sitting in. Under the chair was a single cell phone set to record audio. A single chat message had been sent to that phone. There was no sound because the phone had been set to silent. I couldn't see everything on the screen because of the angle, but I instantly made out the words 'Sorry for yesterday!'"
> "Perhaps there was some kind of drama in their class? I didn't want to court disaster by continuing to look, so I sat back up. Horikita quickly understood, took out her own phone, and sent me a short message:"
> *"If that phone is his, we probably shouldn't say anything careless."*
> "Well, she wasn't wrong, but who knew what the correct answer was? This was difficult, but it would also be suspicious for us to just go silent."

Horikita and Ayanokoji continue their conversation carefully, using their phones to communicate without revealing anything important to the phone recording their conversation. However, one detail in their exchange suggests something else.

> "Sounds like things are rough for you, too," I said.
> "I've got a lot of work for you to do. I need you to find the group's VIP as soon as possible," said Horikita.
> "Easy for you to say. It's not like *I* can find them."

Notice the emphasis on *"I."* Ayanokoji's response sounds deliberately casual, as though he's trying to reinforce the impression that he is incapable of identifying the VIP. but we know he knows secret behind this exam.

His subsequent thoughts suggest that he is intentionally concealing his abilities:

> "Our conversation only highlighted Horikita's capability and my incompetence. That way, suspicion would probably be directed away from me. At any rate, Ryuuen was using his own phone to try and find out more. He was looking for anything he could get."

“Is Ayanokoji’s persona really that unusual that he feels the need to hide things even from his own narration?” 🤔

9.

Ayanokoji’s meeting with Horikita comes to an end, and he returns to his cabin to meet up with his cabinmates. Yukimura expresses his frustration over being placed in the Rabbit Group. After hearing rumors that the Zodiac groups were organized according to the students’ abilities, with the Dragon Group representing the highest level and the Rabbit Group somewhere in the middle, he begins questioning the school’s selection criteria. Ayanokoji mentally connects these rumors to the conversation he overheard between the teachers, which seems to confirm that the groups were arranged according to ability.

Yukimura then informs Ayanokoji that neither he nor Sotomura is the VIP. Ayanokoji confirms that he isn’t the VIP either, and Karuizawa is also ruled out.

During the third meeting, Ayanokoji arrives early and finds Karuizawa already there. She asks whether he is the VIP, and he answers that he isn’t. She then follows up by asking whether he thinks she is the VIP, to which Ayanokoji also answers no.

Ichinose and the other students from Classes A and B eventually arrive. Since they cannot discuss the exam freely, Ichinose suggests playing a card game to pass the time.

> “Five people, then. Well, I thought we could play Daifugō, but does anyone here not know the rules?” asked Ichinose.

Ayanokoji realizes that Ichinose is using the card game to observe the other students’ personalities and behavioral patterns. By learning about the unique characteristics of each person, she can better understand how to approach them. He also recognizes that, from an outside perspective, his own behavior appears dull and passive, especially when a situation begins to deteriorate. This is another example of Ayanokoji deliberately maintaining his unremarkable persona to mislead those around him.

> “This was probably what Ichinose wanted to see. By learning the unique characteristics of our group, she would know how to talk to them. It wasn’t much, but considering that talking was useless at present, it was effective. It also meant that Ichinose was observing my behavior, just as I’d observed the Professor.”

The meeting ends without any meaningful discussion about the exam. Ichinose then announces that she is leaving, prompting Machida from Class A to ask where she is going. Ichinose boldly replies that she cannot allow Class A to win, implying that she intends to confront Katsuragi about his strategy.

Ayanokoji takes this opportunity to follow her, claiming that he wants to accompany her because Horikita belongs to the same group. However, his actual motive is more calculated: he wants to avoid attracting suspicion. Given that Ichinose has been sent by chae -sensei to observe him,

Ayanokoji needs to maintain the appearance of an ordinary, relatively passive student rather than someone deliberately investigating the other classes.

Ichinose confronts Katsuragi about his defensive strategy. Ayanokoji observes their exchange and mentally analyzes the reasoning behind Katsuragi's decisions, recognizing that Ichinose understands why Class A has adopted this approach.

Ryuuen eventually joins the discussion and remarks that the groups were divided for a reason, suggesting that Ichinose's placement in the Rabbit Group is unfortunate. This further supports the suspicion that chae-sensei deliberately moved Ichinose out of the Dragon Group, potentially to place her in a position where she could observe Ayanokoji.

> "In any case, what Ichinose did or didn't know about the school's plans wasn't really important. What was important was that she was *staying quiet about it.* Ichinose and Ryuuen were trying to get a read on each other."

Notice the emphasis on *"staying quiet about it."* Ayanokoji appears less concerned with what Ichinose knows than with what she chooses to conceal, suggesting that he is carefully monitoring her behavior and intentions.

Ryuuen then explains his plan to crush Class A, although Horikita does not agree with his proposal.

> "There it was. Just as Katsuragi had his own strategy, Ryuuen had come up with a very Ryuuen-like plan. And it seemed like things were evolving beyond where they'd been this morning."
> "Three classes will share information about all the VIPs. That way, we'll bypass the school's rules," said Ryuuen.

So, Ryuuen wants the three classes to join forces and share information about the VIPs.

This exchange further confirms that Ayanokoji understands how Ryuuen intends to win the exam. He realizes that Ryuuen wants Class B to join his side because he has already made significant progress identifying VIPs using information from two classes. However, Ayanokoji intervenes by suggesting that if Class C and Class D form an alliance, Class A and Class D could potentially do the same. Ryuuen responds mockingly, pointing out that no such alliance has actually been established.

This is also a signal for Horikita to step in and persuade Ichinose away from Ryuuen's proposal. Ichinose is eventually persuaded, fracturing Ryuuen's attempt to establish an alliance for the exam. Kushida, however, announces that she is going to meet her friends.

This exchange also hints at cooperation between Classes B and C. Ichinose later gives Ayanokoji a cue about an upcoming development and shares that she is not the VIP and that none of the Class B students in the Rabbit Group are the VIP either.

10.

Ayanokoji proceeds with his manipulation of Kei Karuizawa, further demonstrating his social intelligence. His approach resembles a Milgram-style experiment, although the comparison is not entirely accurate. Rather than simply testing obedience to authority, he examines how social pressure, fear, and emotional vulnerability can influence a person's behavior.

The fourth meeting ends without any meaningful discussion, with the students once again playing cards.

TL;DR

Using a fake email account and posing as a Class D student, Ayanokoji anonymously contacts Manabe. He begins manipulating her by claiming that they share a mutual dislike of Karuizawa. He explains that contacting her anonymously is safer because it leaves no evidence of any alliance or communication between them.

Manabe remains suspicious, repeatedly claiming that she has no idea what he is talking about and threatening to stop reading his messages.

(Information Gathering, Preparation Process, Strategy, Influence, Persuasion — First Stage)

Ayanokoji exploits Rika's fear of Karuizawa to create a sense of urgency in Manabe, encouraging her to protect her friend. He tells her that Karuizawa has consistently stayed close to Machida throughout the exam and, outside of that, to Hirata. Consequently, she will likely remain on her guard for quite some time.

(Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Information Control, Persuasion — Layer 1)

Manabe responds that she does not need his help because she can simply use Rika to approach Karuizawa and force her to reveal the truth.

Ayanokoji counters that it will not be so simple because Karuizawa will never admit her mistake. Instead, given Rika's sensitivity, Karuizawa might emotionally hurt her.

(Persuasion — Layer 2)

Ayanokoji assures Manabe that there is a reliable way to make Karuizawa pay. He even tells her that, if she does not trust him, she is free to show their email conversation to the school in an attempt to discover his identity.

(Persuasion — Layer 3)

Once Manabe becomes more willing to listen, Ayanokoji tells her that he can lure Karuizawa to a remote location where she will be alone and unable to contact anyone because there is no phone signal. Manabe agrees to cooperate and follow his instructions precisely.

Ayanokoji also reveals details about Karuizawa's traumatic past, making Manabe feel that this is an opportunity she cannot afford to miss.

(Preparation Process, Strategy, Information Control, Direct Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Persuasion — Layer 4)

11.

That night, Ayanokoji contacts Chabashira-sensei to arrange the phone-swap tactic and continue his plan involving Karuizawa. Meanwhile, chae -sensei follows Chabashira, further reinforcing the possibility that the teachers are monitoring one another's activities and that Ayanokoji is attracting more attention than he lets on.

12.

The next day, Ayanokoji meets up with Hirata and attempts to extract information about Karuizawa under the pretense that Horikita has asked him to investigate her. This approach takes advantage of Ayanokoji's existing profile of Hirata, particularly his desire to gain Horikita's cooperation and his tendency to prioritize peace and avoid conflict.

To accomplish this, Ayanokoji reminds Hirata that he had previously asked him to act as an intermediary between himself and Horikita. He then falsely claims that Horikita wants to know everything about Karuizawa because she expects Ayanokoji to report on the situation within the Rabbit Group.

(This is a lie—Horikita never made any such request. Ayanokoji invents this story to persuade Hirata to reveal everything he knows about Karuizawa.)

By exploiting Hirata's desire to cooperate with Horikita, Ayanokoji successfully obtains his cooperation. He also secures Hirata's assistance with a plan involving a piece of paper, further demonstrating his ability to manipulate people by appealing to their motivations rather than relying on direct pressure.

At the same time, Ayanokoji continues profiling Hirata, recognizing that despite his willingness to cooperate, Hirata still conceals information and does not fully trust him.

> "Hirata had pledged not to involve himself in the Karuizawa issue. From this point onward, Hirata would probably come to me for help whenever he was in trouble. I had successfully gained Hirata's cooperation, a power I'd always wanted. I'm sure he felt he'd gained something as well."
> "Hirata. Since you have a large social network, I have a favor to ask." I handed Hirata a piece of paper. He read it and accepted my request without so much as a displeased look.

13.

On the final day of the exam, during the fifth meeting, the students are playing Old Maid to pass the time. Ayanokoji knows that the sixth and final meeting is approaching.

When he arrives early, he finds Ichinose asleep. After she wakes up, the two engage in a conversation that reveals more about Ichinose's personality, values, and way of thinking. Throughout their interaction, Ayanokoji maintains his ordinary, unremarkable persona, ensuring that Ichinose continues to perceive him as a relatively normal student rather than someone manipulating the events surrounding the exam.

This interaction is particularly important because Ichinose is observant enough to notice unusual behavior. Ayanokoji must therefore maintain his persona while simultaneously gathering information about her.

14.

During the sixth and final meeting, Ayanokoji executes his previously prepared plan, using the phone-swapping tactic alongside the information he has gathered about Karuizawa. Hirata's contribution, involving the piece of paper Ayanokoji gave him, also plays a role in the plan by providing an incorrect answer. Both elements demonstrate Ayanokoji's use of social engineering to manipulate the exam's outcome without directly exposing his involvement.

However, the most important development occurs after the meeting: Ichinose figures out the phone-swapping tactic.

Ayanokoji himself acknowledges the significance of her deduction:

> "A simple person would have never noticed that Yukimura and I switched phones. A clever person would have noticed the swap and accused me of being the VIP. But they never would have come to the conclusion that Karuizawa was the real VIP."

This observation highlights Ichinose's exceptional perceptiveness. She not only recognizes the phone swap but also sees through the implications of the deception, connecting the apparent manipulation to Karuizawa's actual role.

Ichinose then informs Ayanokoji that she initially suspected the VIP was in Class A's group because one of its members belonged to Sakayanagi's faction. Despite figuring out Ayanokoji's tactic, however, she does not betray him.

Ayanokoji avoids attracting suspicion by claiming that the plan was Horikita's idea and that he was simply following her instructions. Once again, he redirects attention away from himself and preserves his carefully constructed persona. However after meeting ended everyone phone buzzes with continous stream message showing multiple vips were identified

15. The Final Discussion and Ryuuen's Deduction

Ayanokoji arranges a meeting with Hirata, Karuizawa, and Horikita. Sudou also joins them, and they discuss the exam and its results.

Ryuuen approaches the group once again and explains how he identified the VIP in the Dragon Group. Horikita challenges him to name the VIP if he is genuinely confident, particularly since the Dragon Group has already achieved Outcome #1.

Ryuuen correctly identifies Kushida as the VIP.

This encounter serves another purpose beyond discussing the exam: it helps divert Ryuuen's attention away from the true mastermind behind Class D's actions. By allowing Ryuuen to focus on the visible participants and their apparent roles, Ayanokoji can continue operating from the background without exposing the full extent of his involvement.

Rat: Outcome #3. The traitor answered correctly.

Cow: Outcome #4. The traitor answered incorrectly.

Tiger: Outcome #2. The VIP's identity was not discovered.

Rabbit: Outcome #4. The traitor answered incorrectly.

Dragon: Outcome #1. The entire group answered correctly at the end of the test.

Snake: Outcome #2. The VIP's identity was not discovered.

Horse: Outcome #3. The traitor answered correctly.

Sheep: Outcome #2. The VIP's identity was not discovered.

Monkey: Outcome #3. The traitor answered correctly.

Rooster: Outcome #3. The traitor answered correctly.

Dog: Outcome #2. The VIP's identity was not discovered.

Pig: Outcome 3. #The traitor answered correctly.

After Ryuuen leaves, the group is left wondering how he managed to identify so many VIPs. Ayanokoji explains that the process was relatively simple, outlining how Ryuuen could have secured Outcome #1 for the Dragon Group by revealing Kushida's identity as the VIP.

> "Putting aside how Ryuuen found out the VIPs' identities, all he had to do was tell everyone 'Kushida is the VIP' before the end of the test, right? Of course, no one would believe what someone like Ryuuen says. Especially a group of such intelligent, gifted people. However, the final half hour was different. Even if you answered incorrectly, there wasn't any risk to class points. As such, even someone

> who’d been playing defensively like Katsuragi could vote, right? If there was even a 1% chance that Kushida was really the VIP, then they would’ve gotten Outcome #1, which was the most convenient for everyone involved.”

This demonstrates Ayanokoji’s social intelligence once again

 # here's what happen properly most likely

On that day, the Cow Group ended its exam prematurely. By analyzing the exam’s scoring pattern, Ayanokoji deduced that the Cow Group’s VIP belonged to Class B but had not been correctly identified. As a result, Class B regained 50 class points. Therefore, Class B’s total returned to 0 points: −50 from Koenji correctly identifying one of its VIPs and +50 from the incorrect betrayal in the Cow Group. This explains how they recovered their points, but not why.

At the end of the exam, Ryuen’s class finished with 150 class points. However, he had correctly identified four VIPs, meaning he should have earned 200 points, not 150.

From this, Ayanokoji concluded that the student who submitted the incorrect answer in the Cow Group belonged to Class C, causing Ryuen’s class to lose 50 points.

This is suspicious because Ryuen exercises complete control over Class C and had effectively taken control of the entire exam. It is therefore difficult to believe that someone from his class would make such a careless mistake. Ayanokoji realizes this and concludes that if Ryuen made a mistake, it must have been intentional, meaning he had something to gain from it.

Ayanokoji deduces that Ryuen had made an agreement with Class B because that deliberate mistake was exactly what allowed Class B to recover its lost 50 points.

The only remaining question is: What did Ryuen gain in return?

Ayanokoji knows that identifying the exam’s scoring pattern requires knowledge of six VIPs. Ryuen initially knew only three—the VIPs from his own class. As explained earlier, Ayanokoji had also deduced that Kushida had betrayed Class D, giving Ryuen a fourth VIP identity. He was still missing two more.

Those two VIP identities, Ayanokoji concludes, came from Class B.

He reconstructs the agreement as follows: Ryuen intentionally submitted an incorrect answer in the Cow Group so that Class B could recover its lost 50 class points. In exchange, Class B gave Ryuen the identities of two VIPs—the VIP from Koenji’s group and the VIP from the Cow Group. Since both groups had already finished the exam, revealing those identities carried no risk. Ayanokoji understood this as well.

Now that Ryuen possessed six VIP identities, he had enough information to recognize the scoring pattern and could win the exam with ease.

However, he made some unusual choices.

From Ryuen's perspective, the scores were:

Rat Group → VIP = Class A → Ryuen betrays correctly and gains +50 points

Rooster Group → VIP = Class A → Ryuen betrays correctly and gains +50 points

Pig Group → VIP = Class A → Ryuen betrays correctly and gains +50 points

Cow Group → VIP = Class B → Ryuen intentionally betrays incorrectly and loses −50 points

Monkey Group → VIP = Class B → Ryuen does not betray

Dog Group → VIP = Class B → Ryuen does not betray

Snake Group → VIP = Class C → Ryuen cannot act → 0 class points (+500,000 private points)

Sheep Group → VIP = Class C → Ryuen cannot act → 0 class points (+500,000 private points)

Tiger Group → VIP = Class C → Ryuen cannot act → 0 class points (+500,000 private points)

Rabbit Group → VIP = Class D → Ryuen does not betray

Dragon Group → VIP = Class D → Ryuen does not betray

Horse Group → VIP = Class D → Ryuen betrays correctly and gains +50 points

The important point is that Ryuen knew the identities of all the VIPs. In the best-case scenario, he could have correctly identified nine VIPs. Yet he deliberately chose not to do so.

First of all, Ryuen could not betray the three VIPs from Class C because, according to the rules, a class cannot betray its own VIPs.

Next, regarding the Monkey Group (Class B), Ryuen could not betray its VIP because Koenji had already identified that VIP on the first day of the exam. At that point, Ryuen had not yet figured out the exam's scoring pattern.

As for the Cow Group (Class B), Ryuen needed that result to fulfill his agreement with Kanzaki. This allowed them to cooperate and gave Ryuen the two remaining VIP identities he needed.

Regarding the Dog Group (Class B), Ryuen honored his alliance. If he had submitted the final Class B VIP's identity, Kanzaki would have betrayed the Dragon Group before 9:30 p.m. by submitting its VIP's identity.

As for the Dragon Group (Class D), Ryuen was allied with Kushida, who served as his informant. He needed to preserve her trust, so he could not expose her by submitting her name or allow Kanzaki to do so. Otherwise, he would lose her cooperation. As shown later during the

Sports Festival, which Ryuen partially won thanks to her, he needed Kushida to continue acting as his spy.

Regarding the Rabbit Group, Kanzaki did not want Ichinose to become involved because he had acted behind her back. Therefore, one of the conditions of his agreement with Ryuen was that Ryuen would not betray the group Ichinose belonged to. For that reason, Kei was never betrayed.

As a result, Ryuen betrayed the three Class A groups and the remaining Class D group without violating his agreements. The Dragon Group was protected because of Kushida, while the Rabbit Group was protected because Ichinose was present.

Thus, Ryuen correctly identified three Class A VIPs and one Class D VIP, giving him a total of four successful betrayals and earning him 200 class points. After subtracting the 50 points he intentionally sacrificed in the Cow Group to fulfill his deal with Kanzaki, his final total became 150 class points.

Or he could've just asked someone from Class A who belonged to Sakayanagi's faction for the VIP identities instead of making a deal with Kanzaki.

He only tried to betray the other classes at the last moment for aura farming, after which the Rabbit Group achieved Outcome #4.

First things first

> If I could do that, I'd be able to live freely, without having to worry about the small things. I looked out the window and daydreamed about Dragon Ball. Three days had passed since the end of the test. Immediately after our survival test's conclusion, most of the students had been waiting for the other shoe to drop. They'd treaded lightly in case the school was up to something.

This monologue might seem inconsistent with his character at first, but it's actually the opposite. He's spending time with Hirata, Yukimura, and Professor (the weeb), from whom he gains some knowledge. This shows how he's maintaining his persona around other people while behaving like an ordinary student.

There's a weird argument, and I don't know how valid it is. Basically, Light has multiple modalities—being hunted, being the hunter, being more or less powerless, being a leader, etc.—which makes him scale highly in this aspect. However, Ayanokoji is practically the embodiment of modality as a whole.

He takes on multiple roles: being the hare, being spied on by two sides, being a loner, being an organizer, being the brain behind the scenes, appearing socially inept, being an orchestrator, acting as a spy, and allowing himself to appear casual and unremarkable.

Also, Kushida's hidden plot is literally woven between the lines. This is evident when Ayanokoji sees her in the lounge area and she mentions wanting to meet the girls from Class C. It comes up again on the second night, and later, when Kushida mentions wanting to meet up with her other classe s friends.

VERDICT:

This volume shows Ayanokoji's baseline SQ, which is evident from the fact that the only person who figured out Ayanokoji's scheme in the end was Class B's leader, Ichinose, a social leader who leads her class without conflicts. She was sent by chae-sensei to spy on Ayanokoji because of her perceptiveness and awareness of her social surroundings. However, Ayanokoji avoids being exposed and even helps Ichinose, while also maintaining cooperation between Class B and Class D, showing his ability to navigate social dynamics beyond his own class, all while remaining hidden.

This is further evident from how he resolves the Class C vs. Class D conflict in the Rabbit Group (Karuizawa) and the Class A vs. Class D conflict in the Dragon Group (Katsuragi). ("I promoted accepting the strategy. However, I doubted that Ichinose would just accept Katsuragi's plan so easily.")

Meanwhile, he avoids being exposed by Ichinose, Ryuen, and Ibuki, figures out Kushida's betrayal and Katsuragi's strategy, navigates the social game and its power dynamics, helps Hirata and Horikita, cracks the Zodiac pattern, and achieves Outcome #4 (the best option), all while maintaining concealment and not letting anyone know what he is doing.

This also ties into the X strategy, Class D's development, and the development of Horikita and Hirata. If this really was Ayanokoji's first Werewolf-style social deduction game, then he is genuinely impressive at both macro- and micro-level social deduction.

If he knew the code, why didn't he betray every class?

To be honest, Ayanokoji was aware of his own limitations during this test.

> "...No matter how much I schemed, it would be extremely tough to lead the Class D students from all the remaining groups to victory. You could even say it was impossible.
> If the students came together, we could do something. Otherwise, we were beyond help. We had no connection. You couldn't interfere with another group's answers using your own phone. There wasn't enough time to find another method, and the risk was high. If I had some information that could decisively turn everything around, that would be another matter. The ringleaders were Hirata and Kushida. If I could use them…
> 'It's impossible,' I muttered. There were three days left. Even if I did manage to gain their cooperation, I still didn't have enough eyes and ears. I needed to understand

> what was going on in each group’s discussions. Of course, I might still be able to use Horikita and Sakura, but…
> Well. Right now, I needed to get **more eyes and ears** on my side."

Simply put, he had to stay hidden. I mean, he had literally two spies operating in this volume while developing Class D, preventing Ryuen from uncovering the mastermind, and strengthening cooperation between Class B and Class D. He didn't need to prevent Class A from losing points, since it would help him in the long run to have Class A weaken and make Ryuen look worse to the other classes.

Plus, he made a mistake. Due to his small social circle, Kushida was able to counter him, which is one of the reasons Ryuen was able to keep finding them. This shows that, despite Ayanokoji's strong analytical abilities, his limited information network created a weakness that someone like Kushida, who had extensive social connections, could exploit.

> "Interesting thing was that, despite how recently our group had formed, we’d already developed our own unique hierarchy, including power dynamics. The loners were loners, and the popular kids were popular. The organizers were organizers. However, not everything was business as usual. For example, if there were two organizers in the same place, one would take charge, and the other would be dropped. It was like a microcosm of the jungle, survival of the fittest."

Basically, the story establishes the relationships within the class and in the rabbit . in the class D Ayanokoji and Sakura are loners, Hirata and Horikita are organizers, while Kushida and Karuizawa are popular. These represent different positions in the class hierarchy, with each having a different form of influence. Hirata can bring people together, Horikita can organize them, Kushida has extensive social connections but is against class D goals overall however Karuizawa holds influence among the popular girls and can adapt to difficult social situation when needed

Ayanokoji, meanwhile, is a loner in terms of social roles, yet he can influence all three groups through the people who occupy those positions. This is evident when he organizes a meeting with Hirata, Karuizawa, Horikita, and Sudo to discuss the exam results, while Ryuen approaches them again. This contrasts with the beginning of the volume, where Ayanokoji had a smaller social circle and didn't facilitate interactions between others. By the end of the volume, he demonstrates his ability to influence all three groups while maintaining his loner image.

This is further reinforced by this simple dialogue:

> "I had a Joker, a pair of twos, and three other cards. Considering the hand I’d been dealt, I could’ve seemingly overwhelmed the others, but the winner isn’t always the one with the strongest hand. The smallest upset could weaken your hand, and then you’d be defeated."

This takes place during their Daifugo card game, where the Joker acts as a wildcard and has the highest rank in the stated ranking:

3 < 4 < 5 < 6 < 7 < 8 < 9 < 10 < J < Q < K < A < 2 < Joker

The storytelling basically suggests that Ayanokoji has a hand capable of overwhelming his opponents, but he's thinking long-term. Having the strongest cards doesn't automatically guarantee victory, since the smallest mistake can weaken your position and allow your opponent to take advantage.

This parallels Ayanokoji's situation in the exam. He understands the code and possesses a strategic advantage, but using it carelessly could expose his identity or damage the relationships he's building. That's why he focuses on developing Class D and preventing Class C from attacking it in the future instead of simply maximizing his immediate gains.

If we take the symbolism further:

- Joker/wildcard — Ayanokoji
- Pair of twos — Karuizawa and Chabashira
- Three different cards — Hirata, Kushida, and Horikita

This could look like a stretch, but it's not entirely unreasonable. The Joker represents Ayanokoji's versatility, since he can adapt to different situations and operate outside the established social hierarchy. He doesn't need to occupy a conventional role because he can influence the people who do.

The pair of twos could represent Karuizawa and Chabashira as two individuals who serve different purposes in his broader strategy.

The three different cards could represent Hirata, Kushida, and Horikita, who each possess different forms of social influence.

After the card game, Ayanokoji and Ichinose go to the Dragon Group, where this dialogue matches the possible symbolism of the three different cards, IMO:

> "Horikita, Hirata, and Kushida were all star players. Ten minutes passed until, finally, the door opened. The first person to exit the room was Ichinose’s target, Katsuragi. Other Class A students trailed behind him. Katsuragi immediately noticed Ichinose."

The reference to Horikita, Hirata, and Kushida as star players reinforces their importance within the class's social structure.

There was also Old Maid, where players try to form and discard pairs while avoiding being left with the single unmatched card. Judging by the storytelling, Kushida could represent that unmatched card, as she didn't form any pair and was the betrayer in this exam.

Feat list

- Excellent SI display in social deduction, similar to Werewolf, despite supposedly never having played such a game before. This volume showcases his thinking, decision-making, and teamwork at both macro and micro levels.
- Achieving Outcome #4 (the best option for the VIP class and VIP), strengthening Class D's unity, and improving overall cooperation between Class B and Class D.
- Avoiding spy efforts while figuring out the strategies of two opposing teams, including Kushida's betrayal and Katsuragi's strategy.
- Tying into the X strategy, profiling Hirata and Karuizawa, obtaining a card in Class C against Ryuen, and concealing his identity as the mastermind without letting anyone know what he was doing.

TL;DR — Ayanokoji is really good at navigating social settings, and judging by how he performed in this social deduction game(which never played before), he's pretty good at that as well in social deduction games in ability wiseAlright, done with this post, which will be ply called *analysis slop* by many. Now, two scd posts are left, and after that, imma reading *Court of Cont Carlo*.

14. Executing the Plan: Phone Swapping and Social Engineering -
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mW9BtoKIDaAPdD2x0p2fNH1sShrQvhUGJRI05aryNLc/edit?tab=t.0

11. The phone-swap tactic-
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mW9BtoKIDaAPdD2x0p2fNH1sShrQvhUGJRI05aryNLc/edit?tab=t.0

10. Kei Karuizawa's manipulation -

https://www.reddit.com/r/IntelligenceScaling/s/lK2D9wRYWH