BB feat:

I - B’s Main Aim

Beyond Birthday, the man known primarily as ‘B’ and the true successor to L, wants to challenge and surpass his arch-nemesis through a match of wits, proving to himself, by any means necessary including his own life, that the greatest detective in the world is nothing more than a fraudulent character, fueling his hatred, malice and despair into accomplishing this very goal.

“It all boiled down to the entire case being a challenge for L, and he had killed people, and tried to kill himself, for that alone… but while murders could be dismissed as simple madness, committing suicide for such a stupid reason could not. Before he became like that, if only someone had stopped him… but that just shows how intent he was on his purpose. His own life was as meaningless as the lives of his victims, nothing but a tool in Beyond Birthday's quest to surpass L. It mattered more to him than his own life. Perhaps he was less intent than desperate. Nobody could have stopped him. That was his resolve. Which made him… so very strong.”

By asserting his superiority, B, the pale copy, would triumph over the person whom he was groomed to duplicate in vain as a poor facsimile. For several years under the 1st Generation of the Wammy’s house, only insatiable rage and obsession would guide B’s actions. The world’s brightest mind, the greatest sleuth in the world, would grovel at the feets of the greatest criminal master-mind to ever walk the earth. B would hand L a murder case so infuriatingly difficult that he’d have no choice but to submit to B’s reign at the top, completely crushing L’s resolve and his motivation for investigation. Not only would B surpass L, but L would, by extension, see his intellect, pride and ideals destroyed.

(EQE)

B would engineer a complex serial killing linked to a sequence of intricate puzzles specifically tailored for L, which only he could successfully solve, whether directly or indirectly. L would meticulously unravel the riddles of B’s making, carefully taking in the clues which his successor would have left behind to finally catch and stop him in his state of madness. But this would be the very cause of L’s demise. Each puzzle, properly deciphered, would conveniently lead to another crime-scene associated with yet another puzzle. The streak would continue on up until its culminating point, an impossible murder case : B’s mind-breaking suicide.

B would orchestrate the perfect and ultimate crime which even L wouldn’t be able to solve : his very own death. Each sub-case prior to his ultimate crime would act as decoys – a long series of traps disguised as a seemingly coherent enigma. The preceding sub-cases would only serve a singular purpose : camouflage and concealment. L would fall for the illusion that the final crime would undoubtedly have a final puzzle accompanying it, something which he could solve to

eventually retrace B and put him behind bars, having been conditioned with the idea that the puzzles were meant to be connected and coherent with one another. But the conundrum of B's design would have no end, no solution which would allow L to corner and defeat B.

(Planning, Setting Traps, Concealment, Logical Manipulation)

Aware of L's nature, B had inductively anticipated that he'd send proxies, his loyal public faces, to catch him instead of moving by himself – a factor upon which he had based his entire plan. And what better way to irreparably entrap L into losing than by using his own tools, resources and intellect against him. Feeding information about the messages he had dispersed over the crime scenes to the pawns, the latter, and by extension, L, would fall on the contradictory parameters of the final murder which would have conflicted with the very perception B would have keenly manipulated them into adopting.

(Anticipation, Direct/Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Inductive Reasoning)

With no pathway to a solution, L would be condemned into chasing after the mirage of B who would no longer exist. With no other hope, he'd be forced into obsessively reinvestigating the other murder scenes, looking for a hint which had been missed or a warning which would have been cleverly hidden, but in the end, no such element could be found. In fact, B had meant for the difficulty between each puzzle to escalate drastically, making the possibility of a mistake more likely. L's hands would be tied by the contradiction of B's design : a logical puzzle suddenly turned illogical, a mind-mire impossible to solve.

A problem with no missing link would mean an answer without a solution, but this very idea would contradict the 'coherence' displayed in the preceding cases. There would be no killer left to catch, and thus, B would claim his victory over L, as a ghost who, even dead, would haunt L for the rest of his life. B was perceptive enough to understand that, due to the gap in their abilities, he'd never be able to outsmart L by conventional or direct confrontation. So, B chose the most optimal and novel route possible towards victory : pitting L against himself, manipulating him into falling for a trap only possible because of his deductive skills, precautions, and proxies – one which would inexorably lead him towards his demise.

(Creativity, Perception, FRI, Setting Traps, Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Inductive Reasoning)

II - The Wara Ningyo Murders

B had made it so that his crime scenes would leave the LAPD detectives in an intellectual stalemate. Absolutely nothing prominent could be retrieved from what had been laid out by the killer. Or so they thought. What never obviously occurred to the police investigators was that they were purposely kept at a loss. Their only role in B's plan was to collect photographs and evidence of the scenes; things which B could then use to skillfully steer L's pawns into the right directions. He had engineered his murders in a way which required him to juggle between the

perspective of the LAPD detectives, leading them completely astray via the natural difficulty of his cases, whilst making sure that he'd be able to leave hints only L and his proxies would be able to notice and factor in. In a sense, the LAPD only served as a medium between B and L, as additional pawns which he would indirectly use to provide L with the necessary information required to make vital deductions which B would use against him.

(Information Control, Concealment, Indirect Manipulation, Tactics)

III - The 1st Murder Strategy

At the original conception of his plan, B had been able to make two vital predictions which were crucial to a smooth execution of, not only his plan, but also of this strategy :

1-) B concludes that L knows of his 'off-the-grid' disappearance and that, in consequence, L will anticipate that he will offer him a challenge : an uncrackable mystery. Therefore, B expects that L will do anything to hunt him down once he spots a case which seems to fit B's profile and motive.

2-) L will not move alone. He'll send proxies, at most three, to investigate in his place (which is likely a trend which B would have inferred based on L's previous cases). B would brilliantly foresee this and, as previously mentioned, structure his entire plan on that nigh-certain eventuality.

(Anticipation, Inductive/Deductive Reasoning)

The 1st murder strategy relied on two main objectives respective of his aforementioned predictions :

1-) Get L to recognize and pinpoint his murder case.

2-) Get L to engage into the battle by putting his proxies into action so that he can successfully meet them, allowing him to guide them across the murder scenes.

1st Tactic : Media Manipulation

B had created a coherent disposition to his three murder scenes, a connection which allowed for the investigators to link the killings to one another. The 'killer' had purposely left Wara Ningyo behind and created his own atypical locked rooms which, keep in mind, are supposed to make murders look like suicides. But here, the deaths clearly occurred to the LAPD detectives as murders, because of the methods which had been used. The inevitable conclusion to arrive at : the killer is undoubtedly very abnormal. Nothing of the sort had ever been recorded in the police's criminal files, let alone in the public. This 'oddness' combined with the sheer difficulty and nebulous nature of the killings would fuel intrigue and curiosity among the masses, personified by the American public, the media, and the police departments. Naturally, the case would grow quickly in prominence, which it did on August 13th : the time where B's murders were being called the Wara Ningyo murders or the Locked-doors murders. Through perfect affective forecasting and a keen understanding of mass psychology, B is able to amplify the coverage of

his murder cases through the media by making them extremely odd.

(EQU, Mass/Indirect/Logical Manipulation)

B had been calculating this response from the public. He wanted to drastically increase, or even guarantee, the chances of L being able to notice the killings. B had anticipated that L would be looking for a sign of his activity, one which he could then link back to him, not only because of the suitable level of difficulty for an nigh-impossible mystery, but also because of the emotional signals which B had laid out within the crime scenes which he would have expected L to lump into patterns (we'll go over these cues in the 4th Murder Strategy, since they'll be much easier to understand by then).

For now, simply retain that L would be able to link the psychological profile he's made of B to the aspects of the murders. B would foresee L's thinking and give him exactly what he had been looking for tirelessly : an outstanding murder case the police could not even fathom solving which would inevitably attract his attention and, thus, set off the battle between the two of them.

(EQU, Anticipation, Inductive Reasoning, Indirect Manipulation)

2nd Tactic : The Crossword Puzzle

Let us now take a look at the second larger tactic making up the 1st murder strategy : the crossword puzzle. B had designed and made it incredibly difficult, so much so that it was reasonable that several police officers couldn't have worked through the hints successfully.

Naomi Misora confirms this specific quality of the puzzle later on in the novel. She first believes that, when L had first mentioned it to her, he was simply bragging out of ego, exaggerating the difficulty of the puzzle. However, once she is able to get a first-hand perspective of the puzzle, she completely discards this hypothesis and posits that it looked unfathomably complex and frustrating.

(VCI, FRI, Inductive Reasoning)

On July 22nd, B sends the puzzle to the police station via an untraceable forwarding system. If completed correctly, the answer to the puzzle would provide the detectives with the address of the eventual first murder of the LABB murders. In other words, B would provide the officers with the means to prevent his killings, willingly tipping off the location of the first murder as a preemptive warning. But of course, all according to B's design, the police detectives wouldn't be able to solve it, irrespective of how much time they would spend on it. Anticipating this very eventuality, B expected them to throw it out, dismissing it as some sort of pretentious prank out of frustration.

However, this is exactly what B wanted. Once the case would become broadly discussed through the media or the police, L would notice it, just as previously mentioned above. Being aware of L's influence and his attention to detail, B anticipated that L would be looking for any sort of

additional evidence pertaining to the Wara Ningyo murders and that he'd scan the state hoping to find other clues through his extensive information gathering network. L would find the puzzle, solve it, link it to B, and fall for the first little bait of B's immense trap. Without acting directly, B had been able to keep the investigators in his control, forcing them to throw away the puzzle by having made it infuriatingly difficult so that it would eventually find its path to L, which would in-turn allow him to influence L's thinking.

(Tactics, Indirect/Logical Manipulation, EQU, Anticipation, Deductive Reasoning)

But there was more to the crossword puzzle than meets the eye. The fact that B, the killer, had been willing to leave a warning, a notice to the police detectives which would have allowed for the prevention of his murders would show to L that he might be leaving other imperceptible preempts, other messages on the crime scenes. B would anticipate that L would pass down this thought to his pawns at the appropriate moment. Indirectly, they'd have been puppeteered into abiding a general rule of B's design, a preconception which would steer their perception in a direction favorable to his plan.

B's eventual investigation methods when he'd be on the crime scenes alongside the pawns would be thereby justified, since he had also anticipated that L would have asked his delegates to thoroughly reinspect the scenes, looking for hints which the police would have missed, based on the general rule which B had induced into their minds. The starting point of B's final trap would start to slowly close in on L who, naturally, would have expected that finding the killer's hints would allow for his investigation to progress. What he wouldn't perceive however, according to B's vision, was that this would lead to his doom in the future.

(Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Tactics, Anticipation, Deductive/Inductive Reasoning)

Not only that, but B's multi-layered crossword puzzle tactic would also allow B to compel L into putting his pawns on the move. B has made it clear to L that the clues he'd be leaving behind wouldn't be detectable by an amateur. In fact, this, right off the bat, would prevent L from acting through the LAPD, since it was made very clear that they didn't possess the intellectual capacities required for the task at hand. L would need to send a proxy whose intelligence and deductive skills he deemed superior, somebody who'd be able to see things keenly, someone perceptive enough to stop B in his tracks. But yet again, this move would benefit B as well, courtesy of his preparations. He also needed L to send a highly clever person to investigate since, to remain concealed as a random third-party to the pawn, he'd have to limit his obtrusiveness, meaning that B couldn't be seen solving everything by himself otherwise even the proxies would start harmfully suspecting him.

(Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Tactics, Concealment)

From the perspectives of Naomi and L, the puzzle also reflected the killer's pride and his desire

to be superior. Why make a warning, something that would allow the police to counter his plan, whilst actively making sure that they wouldn't be able to access that warning in the first place? The answer : ego and over-confidence. The very essence of this part of the crossword puzzle tactic had been to display the killer as an attention-seeking and boastful maniac who'd do anything to assert his superiority, to mock those who are 'below him'. But this is only the surface of B's ploy, as there were other aspects which pointed at the killer being a condescendent freak. Excluding the crossword puzzle, the dolls, the locked-doors and the fanatical fingerprint wiping all also suited this trait. They showed that the killer was neurotic, obsessive, childish and arrogant. Though, as previously mentioned, this is only the surface of what B's plan entails. The 1st murder strategy did indeed serve as a means for B to engage with L and to calibrate the thinking of his proxies, but more important is the fact that it would also prove to be crucial in the execution of his 4th Murder Strategy which we will cover later on.

(EQU, Psychoanalysis, Tactics)

Through this wide array of methodological preconceptions, B is able to indirectly guide Naomi to the idea that the killer is a prideful maniac with delusions of superiority and that therefore he'll leave other hints behind, proving that the ones attempting to catch him are ridiculously inferior to him despite making the job easier for them. B had anticipated that Naomi would thus be able to figure out the toppling principle of the killer's methods : the detectives should have been looking for things which should be there, but that aren't if they wanted to solve the case. He knew that Naomi would link this modus operandi with the idea that the killer is extremely neurotic and that his actions are, at first glance, apparently meaningless, which suits with the fact that instead of leaving direct clues tied to a missing link, the killer had taken things away from the scene to formulate a message.

(Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Anticipation, Inductive Reasoning)

Naomi does indeed pick up on this after making her psychoanalysis of the killer and, when she heads to the scene of the first murder, she also notices that Believe Bridesmaid, the 1st victim is missing and that therefore, he suits the general disposition of the game the killer seems to be playing at. With this in mind, Naomi heads up to Bridesmaid's bedroom where his dead body was found and then moved away by the police to look for additional evidence. The key is the bedroom, since that's where the body of Believe Bridesmaid should be, but isn't. Naomi then takes out the picture of the corpse and notices the strange cuts covering Bridesmaid's body. She starts surmising about their use, discarding the theory that they were just the object of a grudge held by the killer against the victim, since the former had likely taken off the shirt of the victim to injure the corpse before putting it back on when someone with a true grudge would have simply cut through the fabric.

What occurs to her is that the cuts might be part of the message, which she starts looking for, observing the things left around by Bridesmaid. A thought then suddenly strikes her : beneath the bed was perhaps a certain blind-spot where the police missed something, something that they wouldn't have been able to observe having been left ignorant of the killer's logic (which had been exposed to Naomi through L's deductions instilled by B). What never occurred to Naomi however, was that there'd be someone expecting her at the location. B had been waiting carefully, beneath the victim's bed anticipating that Naomi would indeed find him there. He had guided her to him, visualizing her movements throughout the house and anticipating her exact thoughts, all thanks to the crossword puzzle and the preconceptions which B had managed to indirectly stow in her mind.

It is left unknown in the novel at which point B would have slipped inside the first murder scene to hide himself. The author makes the express point that the only eventuality which had left B guessing, was when L would put his pawns on the move. But obviously, that timing had been covered by B's contingent thinking. The fact that L had unlocked the murder scene could be a possible theory as to how B knew when to lay in the bedroom. It's plausible to assume that B had noticed someone unlocking the house on the 14th and that he had been lurking around the location, expecting something like this to happen, which is feasible considering he knows that L needs to give access to the scenes to his pawn somehow.

(Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Anticipation, Predictions, Deductive/Abductive Reasoning)

3rd Tactic : Meeting Naomi Misora

Before Naomi can finish peeking beneath the bed, B raises his hand out, seemingly reaching out towards Naomi, which fills her to the brim with fear and paranoia. What made this even more effective is the fact that Naomi had been conversing with L prior to scrutinizing the room, a factor which B would take advantage of eventually. If information concerning L would leak because of her, her career and future would be seriously compromised, which induces guilt and vivid panic in her mind. B crawls out and extirpates himself completely from beneath the bed and greets Naomi as Rue Ryuzaki, a private investigator.

(EQU/EQM, Emotional Manipulation)

Once they had moved out of the bedroom and into the living room, Naomi starts questioning B (who we'll now mention as Rue Ryuzaki). She asks him if his name truly is Ryuzaki, which he confirms bluntly and calmly, whilst sitting in an awkward and child-like position which strikes Naomi as strange. When Naomi subsequently asks whether he is a private detective, Ryuzaki answers that he isn't as he feels that the term carries excessive neurotic and egotistical connotation, calling himself an 'un-private detective' (which sounds absurd to Naomi).

Naomi then decides to ask Ryuzaki what exactly he was doing beneath the bed to which he

replies that he was doing some investigative work, in the same unruffled tone and with an unsettling glare. Ryuzaki further adds that he was hired by the parents of Bridesmaid to conduct his own investigation. It's also revealed that the pressure which had been instilled by Ryuzaki lurking beneath the bed had gotten to Naomi, hence why she had asked him if he heard her conversation on the phone. He replies that he couldn't make out what she was saying and that the bed had muffled the sound of her voice, further exacerbating her feeling of paranoia and doubt, since Naomi wouldn't be able to tell if he was lying or not.

(EQU/EQM, Fabrication)

Naomi then tells Ryuzaki that she is also a detective investigating the deaths of Bridesmaid, Queen, and Bottomslash, to which he excitedly replies that they can cooperate if that's the case, breaking away from his silent and unsettling persona. Naomi then proceeds to ask him if he found anything useful to the case, to which Ryuzaki answers that he was merely hiding once he heard someone enter the house, expecting someone like the killer returning to the crime scene having forgotten something.

Naomi instantly perceives this as an improvised lie, but that was also expected by B who would turn that into his advantage. Ryuzaki reiterates his will to cooperate with Naomi into investigating the case together, which she declines out of suspicion and doubt. However, he further persuades her by saying that he'll give her all the information he's gathered without any obligation to disclose her own. Naomi thinks of this as another lie, something that he couldn't genuinely believe or want, further increasing her wariness and doubt regarding Ryuzaki, who had calmly spewed lie after lie.

(EQU/EQM, Fabrication, Emotional Manipulation)

Regardless, Ryuzaki decides to show her a copy of the crossword puzzle which the killer had sent to the police on July 22nd. Misora is instantly surprised at the fact that someone as strange and insignificant as Ryuzaki could have obtained such evidence. Surprised, Naomi starts showing signs of her knowledge of the crossword puzzle, which B instantly picks up on, confirming and deducing that the woman whom he had met is indeed the pawn sent by L to catch him.

What's also important to note is that the copy which B had given Naomi was solved entirely. Keeping the level of difficulty in mind, Naomi is completely stumped as she's only able to notice that the man who she found so suspicious had been able to complete the puzzle alone. Ryuzaki then decides to give Naomi a little 'show' of his deductive reasoning skills, arriving at the exact same conclusions which L had passed on to Naomi, namely that, since the puzzle had served as an unsolvable warning to the police, then it's likely that this attention-seeking killer would have likely left other messages behind.

Of course, B had already anticipated and knew that L would have made such deductions having created the very situation they were in, but the essential is that, naturally, Naomi couldn't possibly dismiss him as a random amateur. The man had been able to stay on the same length as L, the world's greatest sleuth.

(EQP/EQU/EQM, Anticipation, Inductive Reasoning)

Ryuzaki then apologies and heads towards the kitchen, exhibiting strange body language to Naomi. He then returns to the couch with a jar of jam in his hands, which he then opens. Having stuck his arm inside, Ryuzaki then scoops up jam with his hand and licks it off his fingers. After a few handfuls, he then starts slurping out the jam directly from the jar, making obnoxious sounds in the process (

). Naomi is completely and utterly disgusted by this behavior, further pronouncing her disdain towards Ryuzaki and his odd demeanor. He senses this based on her expression, asking her if anything is wrong, obviously aware that his little habits were mentally torturing Naomi. After finishing his jam, Ryuzaki then invites Naomi to go investigate the scene with him. However, he 'abruptly goes down on all fours' and starts crawling all over the scene like a true freak. His posture further appalls Naomi, who, shocked, rejects Ryuzaki's propositions of 'joining him'. Ryuzaki replies that it's such a shame, sadly shaking his head in concern, which further puts emphasis on his childish and prideless behavior in Naomi's eyes.

(EQP/EQU/EQM)

Although he had used very awkward tactics, this was all part of B's strategy. He had acted out a persona so disturbingly sinister, that Naomi couldn't help but feel as if she should stick around the odd character who was Rue Ryuzaki. B uses his amazing skills in affective forecasting to predict Naomi's behavior which would result from his act, namely that she wouldn't be able to set her gaze away from him. After all, who would? Rue Ryuzaki, the 'un-private' detective with a freak-ish, blunt, suspiciously deceptive, and appalling character who had been able to arrive at the same conclusions as L. Naomi couldn't possibly fathom letting someone like that investigate the crime scenes alone.

But now, B had carefully engineered a situation where Naomi, L's proxy, would follow him at all times. The trap had been activated. He had lured Naomi into focusing on him, which, in-turn, would allow him to lead her directly to the clues left behind on the scenes. A brilliantly cunning setup from B, one which was absolutely vital for the proper unfolding of his bigger plan since, without the pawns being as efficient as B required them to be, he could never achieve his goal. Now, he could regulate the soundness and effectiveness of Naomi's deduction to his will, masterfully leading her in his accord, having indirectly influenced her into following him.

(Acting Skills, Tactics, Indirect/Emotional Manipulation, EQU/EQM, Setting Traps)

IV - Rue Ryuzaki

Let us take some time to describe the fake identity which B had adopted. As Ryuzaki, B would approach the families of the victims which he himself had murdered. With extensive persuasion, he'd be able to convince relatives of all three victims to hire him as a private investigator to solve the tragedy which had been inflicted upon them, bringing them truth and justice regarding their losses. We remain unaware as to how B would have exactly done so, but, whether it was through guilt-tripping, mere persuasion, or whatever form of smooth-talking, the novel points out that his manipulation on Naomi, in comparison to his manipulation on the families, was a simple walk in the park, meaning that his exploitation was extremely potent and difficult to pull off.

(EQU/EQM, Direct Manipulation, Charisma, Social Skills)

Regardless of the means, B had now been able to obtain a certified mandate from the actual relatives of the victims. Also, it's important to note that the initials of the name which B had purposely picked out (R.R.) are synonymous with the code of L (R's become L's in Japanese). This was not by chance : it was a cue given by B to L – a signal that he had come into contact with Naomi. Obviously, when Naomi would have been exposed to Ryuzaki's behavior, she'd contact L, telling him that a mysterious and seriously disturbing investigator called Rue Ryuzaki had shown up on the scene. L would immediately deduce that it was B, the man he was searching for. But B would expect that L would instruct Naomi to let him do as he wishes, especially since he'd later confirm that a certain Rue Ryuzaki had indeed been hired by the families.

In essence, B anticipated that L knew what he was planning to do, and that, for him to win, he needed B to be at liberty to do what he wanted, otherwise both of their plans would fall apart. Naomi would have no choice but to let Ryuzaki do as he wants albeit without ceasing to suspect him, allowing him to execute his plan without any problems. Even if L was aware of B's manipulation, he'd be forced into letting him do as he pleased since he ultimately needed more proof to close out the case and defeat B, hence why in either scenarios, it was highly beneficial for B that Naomi stayed in his grasp without suspecting the true nature of Ryuzaki.

(Tactics, Anticipation, Indirect Manipulation, Deductive Reasoning)

Let's look a bit more at Rue Ryuzaki's appearance and his habits, since that aspect is also quite interesting. The novel describes him as a young man with natural black hair, a plain white shirt with faded jeans, severely-pronounced eyebags and a curved or slouched position. Ryuzaki also displays a certain love for sweets. This sounds very familiar to another character doesn't it? B had been able to pose as L, adopt the same exact appearance as him, without ever even meeting him in the first place. Not only somehow aware of his appearance, B was also able to replicate L's habits and his thinking to virtual perfection. The novel makes it very clear that B, at

his natural form, and L are actually radically different in looks. But with multiple layers of makeup, B is able to act exactly like L.

What's also quite impressive about this disguise is that, despite incarnating the man whom he hates the most in the world, B funnels that vivid hatred into performing the act, swallowing his sense of superiority and his pride into incarnating the very essence of L. Quite ironic. B wanted to escape his destiny at Wammy's, straying as far from the idea of becoming like L. He wanted to be different and above him in his own way, and despite that, he's still ready to pass as and copy L, whom he despises to his very core if it means he can succeed. Now, what's also important to note is to point out a misconception which some people seem to have. B specifically posing as L has virtually no relevance to the development of his plan. His ego and anger is what pushed him to do it, nothing more since all B needed was to be disguised and covered by several layers of makeup in front of Naomi (we'll discuss that reason later on).

(EQU/EQM/EQE, Acting Skills)

V - Believe Bridesmaid

After putting on his act, Ryuzaki starts looking around the room, hoping to find additional clues, truly putting on the persona of a detective. Naomi tells him that it's unreasonable to do so since the police had likely already thoroughly inspected it, however, he replies that since the police had missed the importance of the crossword puzzle, then it's almost guaranteed that they could have missed other messages, other things which the killer could have left behind. Naomi then agrees and expresses her desperate will to have some sort of clue, a basis to make progress in the investigation.

Ryuzaki exploits this and asks her if there is anything which had struck her when she first entered the room. Obviously, having been anticipating her exact thought process in advance, Ryuzaki is aware that Naomi has inspected the photograph of Bridesmaid's body which contains the first part of his riddle as, otherwise, she wouldn't have been able to find him without having been exposed to the mental suggestion of the killer's modus operandi. B is already starting his work and setting up Naomi to decipher the roman numeral sequence which he had carved in the victim's corpse.

(Deductive Reasoning, Direct/Logical Manipulation)

All according to plan, Naomi thinks about the cuts on Bridesmaid's body. But she starts wondering if she should really show them to Ryuzaki, since his act had already fortified a pejorative portrayal of him in her mind. Nonetheless, she decides to lay a trap for Ryuzaki by showing him the photograph of the victim, hoping to read his reaction at the sight of the cuts as he had done to her with the crossword puzzle. But this was also part of B's expectations, who knew that Naomi would end up showing him the photograph with a certain degree of skepticism.

When Naomi mentions the photograph to him, he, again, intentionally displays strange behavior and then picks the photograph straight from her fingers, intensely staring at it and nodding, thus preventing her from reading any of B's intentions covered up by his unconventional acting. He congratulates Naomi on her work and asks her why exactly is the photograph of importance. She tells him that the killer likes abiding by the rule that the missing link on the crime scene is an object that should have been there at the time, but that had been taken away subsequently. Ryuzaki tells her that this is quite clever and proceeds to inspect the cuts on the body portrayed by the photograph, positing them as a carefully cut-out sequence of roman numerals which he proceeds to quickly decipher.

Pretending to unravel the letters, Ryuzaki shocks Naomi with the sheer speed of his work and how keenly he had been able to detect some form of message far before she could even begin to understand what the cuts were supposed to mean. Naomi takes a step back, obviously stunned by Ryuzaki's efficiency which is reflected in her tone of voice and body language. She then tells him to excuse her for a moment since she wants to go fix her makeup. B sees right through her and obviously knows that this was her pretext to go contact L, a factor which he had also anticipated. B knew that the proxies would be continuously calling L, reporting their progress about the case but also about his presence. So, B slowly follows Naomi up to the bathroom where he posts himself right across the door. After finishing her conversation with L, Naomi opens the door and finds Ryuzaki standing right beside her, which further renews her anxiety concerning the possibility that he could have been intentionally eavesdropping. Like the psychopath he was, B took dear pleasure in seeing Naomi struggle and becoming paranoid about his unsettling actions.

(Anticipation, EQP/EQM, Direct/Indirect/Logical/Emotional Manipulation, Acting Skills)

Regardless, Ryuzaki tells Naomi, after some mockery and inappropriate remarks about her hygiene, that he has discovered another important clue which could constitute the killer's message. He directs her towards the victim's bookshelf where he points out that two volumes (4 & 9) of a manga are missing which, again, fits the general rule the killer abides by. Naomi is skeptical about this conclusion, arguing that it's equally possible that the victim simply had lent the books to someone or that they were missing in the first place for some reason. To steer Naomi back on the right path, Ryuzaki had been acting like an overly-passionate fan of the manga in question, overtly exhibiting unusually obsessive behavior about the quality of the work. So, when Naomi tells Ryuzaki that his conclusion is far-fetched, he starts adamantly defending the manga, telling her that it would be sacrilegious for someone to willingly dispose of the volumes, even betting his jam on the fact that the killer had taken them away. Such a forceful and immature expression makes Naomi concede and finally consider Ryuzaki's theory, not wanting to

deal with his childish obsessions any longer. Of course, Naomi could have never realized that this was a deliberate tactic designed by B to make her accept the hypothesis required for him to carry on his plan.

(EQU/EQM, Direct/Logical Manipulation, Acting Skills, Tactics)

This leads Naomi directly to inspecting the bookshelf itself to look for the missing link, just like B had manipulated her into doing. Observant, Naomi notices that, since the shelves were so tightly packed, if the killer had taken the two volumes away, then there should be some sort of gap suiting that possibility. However, there was no such gap, since the shelves were crammed up with compactly arranged books. But B had also made that observation much before, back when he had been setting up the puzzle. Combined with his subtle persuasion, he'd turn this particular habit of Bridesmaid into an advantage. If the killer had taken volumes away but there was no noticeable gap resulting from the absence of these volumes (which would have been easily observable since the shelves were absolutely jammed), then the inevitable conclusion to arrive at is that the killer had replaced the volumes with another book of similar size. Whether the bookshelf had been rearranged by B intentionally or if it really was a product of Bridesmaid's habits is left unknown to the reader.

(Deductive Reasoning, Direct/Logical Manipulation)

All according to B's expectations, Naomi makes the observation that the killer might have planted a book of the same length as the two other missing volumes combined. Ryuzaki commends her thinking, claiming that her idea is actually a very good one. Before that, Naomi had asked if Ryuzaki knew how many pages the missing volumes (4 & 9) were made up of to which he instantly replied 192 and 184 respectively. This wouldn't trouble Naomi at all since he had made it very clear that he was an obsessive fan of the manga. It would be quite reasonable to assume that he'd know the contents by heart right? But this was, again, part of B's calculations. His act had allowed him not only to convince Naomi of the missing link theory, but also to steer her in the right direction. Having completely fallen for B's trick, Naomi starts looking for a book amounting to 376 pages (the sum of the size of both missing volumes) which she finds : Insufficient Relaxation.

(Tactics, Direct/Logical Manipulation, Anticipation)

Ryuzaki then plucks the book right out of Naomi's hands and starts 'speed-reading' to look for clues. He then tells Naomi that there is quite literally nothing outstanding in the book. No metaphors, hints, scribbled notes in the margins, or anything which could lead them to a message. Naomi then thinks about what he had said about the margins to which he adds that there was nothing but page numbers written in them. She makes the link between the page

numbers which he had mentioned and the sequence of roman numerals carved into the victim. Again, B had engineered this very thought, purposely highlighting the verbal alikeness of the ‘numbers’ and the ‘numerals’, driving Naomi to the appropriate conclusion : the roman numerals and the page numbers were linked as part of the same riddle.

(Tactics, VCI, Direct/Logical Manipulation)
Naomi asks Ryuzaki about the contents of the roman numeral sequence which he recites without hesitation (having memorized it in advance).

“16, 59, 1423, 159, 13, 7, 582, 724, 1001, 40, 51, 31”

She then surmises about the roman numerals actually being linked to the page numbers, with each numeral corresponding to a specific page, but is stopped in her tracks when she realizes that 4 of the numerals in the sequence are superior to the total number of pages (376). Ryuzaki gives her another little hint, saying that perhaps some of the numerals wrap around the total number of pages (e.g. - 476 is 376 + 100 which would indicate page 100). Ryuzaki, having memorized the contents of the book, then begins unraveling the anagram of his design and tells Naomi to open up Insufficient relaxation at the following page numbers, asking her to note the first word on each designated page :

16 - Quadratic

59 - Ukulele

295 - Tenacious (1423 —> Wraps around the number 376 three times, hitting 295 on the fourth lap which indicates page 295)

159 - Rabble

13 - Table

7 - Egg

206 - Arbiter (582 —> Wraps around the number 376 one time, hitting 206 on the second lap which indicates page 206)

348 - Equable (724 —> Wraps around the number 376 one time, hitting 348 on the second lap which indicates page 348)

249 - Thud (1001 —> Wraps around the number 376 two times, hitting 249 on the third lap which indicates page 249)

40 - Effect

51 - Elsewhere

31 - Name

Ryuzaki then tells Naomi to take the first letter of each word and to align them :

“Q-U-T-R-T-E-A-E-T-E-E-N”

A similar, yet erratic appellation of the second victim’s name would be obtained. However,

disappointed and dubious, Ryuzaki tells Naomi that a third of the letters don't match and that, therefore, it might just be a mere coincidence. Naomi doesn't buy it however and makes the remark that the 4 letters misplaced are linked to the four numerals higher than 376, allowing her to infer that they probably made a mistake in their decoding procedure, which is exactly what B was trying to get her to think. She then proceeds to check the four problematic words again. Tenacious, Arbiter, Equable and Thud.

Naomi then thinks that the 'wrapping method' might also apply to jumps in the letters of each word for each lap made.

295 - Tenacious (376 fits 3 times in 1423 —> hitting 295 on the 4th lap —> 4th letter —> 4th letter in Tenacious = A)

206 - Arbiter (376 fits 1 time in 582 —> hitting 206 on the 2nd lap —> 2nd letter —> 2nd letter in Arbiter = R)

348 - Equable (376 fits one time in 724 —> hitting 348 on the 2nd lap —> 2nd letter —> 2nd letter in Equable = Q)

249 - Thud (376 fits two times in 1001 —> hitting 249 on the 3rd lap —> 3rd letter —> 3rd letter in Thud = U)

Q-U-T-R-T-E-A-E-T-E-E-N —> Q-U-A-R-T-E-R-Q-U-E-E-N

(VCI, FRI, Inductive Reasoning, Logical/Direct Manipulation, Creativity)

B had been able to anticipate Naomi's entire thought process and her reasoning every time he had unobtrusively introduced the various clues required to solve the anagram, just like he had prepared for. Ryuzaki then commends Naomi for her work, asserting that he would have never thought of it when, in fact, she had been his puppet, conveniently highlighting the hints under his skillful lead. In truth, that reality couldn't escape Naomi's mind. What if she had just been a tool for the man called Ryuzaki to use? After all, it was he who had pointed out all of the important aspects vital to solve the puzzle. But again B had encompassed this very thought in his tactics. He had been carefully observing Naomi and he knew that she was smart enough to suspect him for something beyond what he had allowed her to pick up. But at two distinct occurrences, B had induced troubling levels of anxiety and paranoia into Naomi's mind which stemmed from the idea that he could have been listening to her conversations with L. If Ryuzaki was to spread some information regarding L which would compromise his anonymity and security, Naomi would be in extreme danger. B knew how she'd feel about this eventuality, namely that she'd bring herself to believe that she wasn't thinking clearly and that the possibility that Ryuzaki had been manipulating her was just a fantasy resulting from her paranoia, fear, and psychosis.

(Psychoanalysis, EQU/EQM, Concealment, Emotional Manipulation, Tactics, Anticipation)

VI - Quarter Queen

On August 16th, Naomi was in downtown L.A., on her way to visit the second crime scene on Third Avenue where the second victim, Quarter Queen, had been brutally murdered. On her way there, she'd be eventually assaulted by B, who was wearing a mask, armed with a blackjack and a hefty club as his weapons. But he had no intention of harming Misora, since he only wanted to test her, to see if she was worthy of being L's public face. B would quickly realize that she had both the brain and the brawn, since she had managed to solve his riddle without too much assistance and that she was able to keep up with his strikes, dodging all of them masterfully. L had indeed chosen carefully and ingeniously. But as previously said, B never wanted to harm or kill Naomi and therefore, after a short duel, he runs away to a stolen car he had parked in the vicinity. With a few kicks, B had been able to infer the martial arts which Naomi practiced. He had managed to link her moves to Capoeira without any difficulty, purely based on his observational ability.

(Inductive Reasoning, Observation)

Before Naomi can arrive at the second crime scene, B disposes of all the evidence of his attack on Naomi and then stays ahead of her by reaching the second crime scene before her. When she arrives moments later, B had set himself up in a way which would instantly provoke her. He was going through the underwear of the victim (

💀

), because he knew that Naomi would try to

funnel the frustration and adrenaline she felt following the assault into adopting a more aggressive approach to deal with him. But the absurdity of him going through the drawers of the victim had managed to suspend that feeling.

(EQU/EQM, Anticipation)

When Naomi looked around the room, she noticed the three nail marks left on the walls of the location, indicating that the three Wara Ningyo had been nailed precisely on each mark. Ryuzaki notices Misora checking the walls and asks her if anything is bothering her. Naomi replies that the locked-doors and the sequence of the dolls remained a mystery, even though they had managed to solve the first puzzle left by the killer. Ryuzaki distracts Naomi telling her that it's futile to spend too much time thinking about the rooms since, ultimately, the killer could have had a key which he would have duplicated.

Naomi ponders about this, wondering if perhaps the rooms were the objects of another meaningless enigma the killer was playing at. She, however, still insists on finding out about the method used to lock the doors, in the case where the killer didn't have a key. When Naomi asks Ryuzaki about his thoughts, he simply replies that the killer most likely did, in fact, have a spare key. Naomi then proceeds to assess the general disposition of the rooms, acknowledging that string could have been passed under the spacing of the doors to flip the latches.

However, Ryuzaki refutes this, telling her that with this method, the force at play would have

been killed by the doorframe. Naomi is unable to create a working theory for how exactly the killer might have locked the rooms, with the hypothesis that he didn't have a key which, even to her, seemed like the less likely probability. This is an excellent misdirection by B, who was aware that the locked-door technique was the most sensitive aspect of his plan. Naomi's deductions had been starting to get quite risky, hence why he had bothered to argue against her claims. Nonetheless, all according to what B had planned, Naomi wouldn't think that much of it for the time being since the reason for the locked-rooms' presence across the crime scene was most likely motivated by the killer's knack for games.

(Misdirection, Concealment, Direct/Logical Manipulation)

Misora then takes out the pictures of the second victim, noting the atrocious conditions of her death. Her eyes had been poked out and crushed. Truly a horrific and cold-blooded act which disturbed Naomi. She then proclaims that it's horrible to kill a child in such a way, to which Ryuzaki replies that murder, whether inflicted on adults or children, is equally horrible. Ryuzaki then proceeds to tell Naomi that he hadn't been able to find anything important on the scene, highlighting the possibility that the killer might have been looking for money when comparing the socio-economic statuses of each victim. Ryuzaki expressively mentions that his theory had led nowhere, implying that their investigation had reached a halt. B would purposely slow down the pace at which his investigation with Naomi had been going, using it as a pretext to take a break, allowing him to serve her some coffee – an instrumental tactic for the second murder.

(Logical/Direct Manipulation, Tactics)

Ryuzaki had made the coffee excessively sugary, something which was bound to disgust Naomi. As he served her, he sat in the same childish and awkward position he had been adopting around Naomi, distracting her as she took a sip. As expected, Naomi is appalled by the amount of sugar in the coffee and starts coughing. Ryuzaki innocently asks Naomi if something is wrong, just as if he had done nothing and that this manner of drinking coffee was just another one of his strange habits. Before Naomi can go to the bathroom to wash the sugar out, Ryuzaki exposes his 'theory' about the overarching missing link connecting each murder together : the alliterative initials of the victims.

B.B. - Q.Q. - B.B.

When Ryzuaki proudly shows her this observation, Naomi is instantly disappointed since she had already obviously noted this particularity. In fact, most people would have been able to observe that pattern. When Naomi expresses her disappointment, Ryuzaki starts acting seemingly dejected or ashamed of his stupidity and the 'pointlessness' of his deductions. What would have not occurred to Naomi is that this was deliberate. B needed Naomi to have the sequence of initials freshly in mind in order to set up his tactic (which we'll cover below).

Before that, Ryuzaki offers Naomi to hypothesize about any good approaches to solving this murder, since his deductions have been deliberately unsuccessful. He makes her guess that the message-to-be-found on this scene will have similar contents to what had been deciphered on the first, namely that it would point directly towards the next victim in the sequence. Ryuzaki suggests that if they know that the second message will merely point towards the third victim, then, technically, it would be more effective to skip ahead to the third crime scene, hoping to prevent the fourth murder which was bound to happen based on the metaphors of the Wara Ningyo.

However, B had anticipated Naomi's response to that situation, namely because each prior clue contained a crucial message with relative importance to the series of murders itself which pointed at the fact that this scene might have another hint which could prove useful. He knew that she'd refuse and that she'd prefer scrutinizing the present scene (2nd) to try and find the missing link just as L had instructed her to do. He based the present part of his plan predominantly on that factor since, when Naomi rejects his proposition, he asks if he can take a look at the evidence file which she carried with her, since he had already taken a look around the scene. It wouldn't be very cordial to hold Ryuzaki 'hostage' since he had already looked around. There was no point in making him wait for no reason and, additionally, at the same time, he could help work different angles.

Under the previously enumerated reasons, Naomi accepts and passes it on to him, from which he takes out the picture of the third murder and shows it to Naomi. Backyard Bottomslash had been badly mutilated and laid on her back, with one of her arms and one of her legs having been chopped off. Perhaps they were the object of the killer's missing link game again? For now, that had little importance. Ryuzaki also mentions to Naomi that, on the scene, there was a cabinet which withheld an album with pictures of the victim. He recommends that she looks through it to see if she could find anything important about the victim's personality or her friends.

(Tactics, Direct/Logical Manipulation, Anticipation, Acting Skills)

Naomi would then head to the bathroom, unable to bear the feeling the sugar had left inside her mouth with these things in mind :

1-) B.B. - Q.Q. - B.B.

2-) Backyard Bottomslash, the third victim, had been found lying on her back.

In the bathroom, Naomi starts staring at herself in the mirror above the sink where she experiences some form of existential crisis. However, she'd instantly notice that the mirror, obviously, reflected her perception. The truth had just struck her instantly : a mirror naturally inverts images. With this in mind, Naomi comes running out of the bathroom blabbering about the photograph of the third murder which Ryuzaki had previously shown her. Naomi then starts

placing down the photographs of all three murder scenes, displaying the positions in which the victims were left.

Bridesmaid - Queen - Bottomslash

Back - Front - Back

Naomi provides this observation to Ryuzaki, who looks at her with an air of incomprehension. She was talking very quickly and excitedly after figuring out such an important aspect of the murders. Ryzuaki suggests she take an instant to reorganize her thoughts since she looked pretty crazy exposing her hypothesis. Naomi then says that her induction was the extension of what Ryuzaki had said about the initials originally (which at the time seemed like an obvious pattern recognition). The letters B and Q, in their lower-cased form, look the same if inverted.

b & q

That was the missing link which connected all victims together. Quarter Queen had been laid with her face down in contrast with Bridesmaid and Bottomslash to make that pattern noticeable. The killer had chosen Quarter Queen partly for this specific reason, to make the missing link an incredibly far-fetched pattern which only a worthy opponent could decipher.

(Inductive Reasoning, Indirect/Logical Manipulation)

However, Ryuzaki refutes Naomi's theory since there's one big thing which contradicts her line of thought. Initials are not supposed to be in lower-case. Naomi is left excruciatingly disappointed since that theory looked extremely possible. Ryuzaki then makes the remark that he was glad that her theory was wrong since killing a child for the sake of making a puzzle was a horrible motive. But Naomi remembered what Ryuzaki had said before, namely that killing adults and children is equally horrible. Naomi then realizes that the lower-case form of the initials is actually a perfectly presented hypothesis since the victim had been a little child.

(VCI, Direct/Logical Manipulation)

The larger missing link had been discovered, thanks to Naomi's thinking. Or so she thought. This was all part of B's strategy to make Naomi progress through the case. It was he who pointed out the sequence of alliterative initials, who showed her the photograph of the third murder mentioning the victim's position, who pointed out that Queen was a young small child, who gave her excessively sugary coffee to send her to the bathroom where he had known that the mirror would provide Naomi with the necessary inspiration, all according to his expectations. B had anticipated Naomi's conclusions down to the last minute detail and indirectly manipulated her into developing her 'inversion' theory.

(FRI, Creativity, Tactics, Anticipation, Direct/Indirect/Logical Manipulation)

Furthermore, B also needed to make Naomi connect the second murder scene to the third by exposing the smaller missing link. He had pointed out to Naomi that, inside the cabinet on the

scene, there was a photo album of the victim which he had suggested Naomi should look at. But first, Naomi needed to notice that some eyeglasses had been planted on the victim's body. Not only that, but her eyes had been completely crushed by the killer, which also seemed to fit the rule of the message being something that should be there but remained absent. Ryuzaki had driven her to that exact conclusion. When Naomi would look through the album, B knew that she'd notice the fact that Queen had never worn eyeglasses in the past. She was even able to confirm that fact when she contacted the victim's mother, but again, this was considered in B's preparations.

Her eyes and contact lenses had been 'disposed of' by the killer, leaving only the glasses on her dead body. A literal 'blind spot' which the police had missed. This was the message which the killer had left behind as the missing link, as it would point directly to the neighborhood of the third murder : Glass Station. It was Ryuzaki, B, who had noticed and pointed out the crushed eyes and the photo album to Naomi, knowing that she'd make this exact deduction.

The very moment he had committed the second murder, he had managed to anticipate that the eventual third murder, once executed, would have played directly into underpinning the second. Again, the author points out that B could only guess when L's proxy would enter the scene but, despite that, he had been able to figure out the exact conclusions and thinking of the pawns weeks in advance. He had also anticipated that the glasses would be removed from the body in the morgue, which was vital, since, for the glasses to fit the message, they'd have to be removed from the corpse once moved by the police. They could only remain in the photograph, where L's proxy would be forced into noticing them.

(Anticipation, Tactics, Direct/Logical Manipulation, Deductive Reasoning)

VII - Backyard Bottomslash

On August 19th, Naomi would head to West L.A. in the Glass Station neighborhood, inside the house where Backyard Bottomslash had been murdered. She'd notice two things when she entered :

1-) The two nail marks left by the two Wara Ningyo

2-) The stacks of animals left resting on the walls (2, 5, 9, 12)

It's also important to note that Naomi had been wearing a silver watch around Ryuzaki. Ryuzaki soon joins her and starts investigating the scene with her. He instantly steers her towards inspecting the photograph of the body, since the missing limbs were obviously the outstanding particularity of the third murder. The killer had chopped off one of the victim's arms and one of her legs at the root. The arm had never been found but the leg had been put in the bathtub. Ryuzaki tells Naomi that there has to be a reason as to why the killer would have taken the arm with him and not the leg, since clearly both could fit the killer's missing link habit.

Why had the killer taken the time to completely sever off two libs? They were much more difficult to dispose of than random objects across the crime scenes. Those were the questions Ryuzaki was asking Naomi, already feeding her information about the solution to the puzzle. B had set up the riddle specifically in this manner : the arm had been completely taken away and the leg had just been disposed of in a different room than the one in which the corpse had been found. That's because the arm was the missing link whilst severing off the leg had been just an essential part of the method to create said puzzle, without being a vital clue. This is what B would eventually lead Naomi to believe, keenly understanding which deductions she'd need to make to solve the puzzle.

(Deductive Reasoning, Direct/Logical Manipulation)

Naomi then wanders off to make coffee, thinking about what Ryuzaki had said about the photograph of the victim and the missing limbs. When she comes back, she finds Ryuzaki laying on the floor, foolishly posing as a dead body. But before noticing him, Naomi would, again, notice the holes left by the Wara Ningyo on the walls. The killer had deliberately made it so that the first thing which would attract the attention of the detectives investigating the scenes would be the dolls which would be noticed a split-second before noticing the actual corpse. Naomi exposes this thought to Ryzuaki who agrees, but isn't necessarily convinced as to why this is relevant to the current crime. Naomi responds that it might have something to do with the locked rooms. She theorizes that the distraction provided by the dolls would allow for the killer to quietly slip out of the rooms once someone arrived. Ryuzaki refutes this saying that, even if the killer had done that, then the doll wouldn't have been necessary since the corpse alone would have served that purpose successfully as well, just like how Naomi had noticed him laying on the floor of the room when she entered it.

He then tells her that there is no point in developing futile theories about the locked rooms since they could be, in fact, another one of the killer's trivial games and that it would be a more effective approach to inspect the actual corpse instead. This had been an entirely intentional tactic from B. He wanted her to notice the spots of the two dolls on the specific walls of the rooms. Him acting as a dead body was intentionally done to give contrast to her thoughts. It was to show her that she had noticed the dolls before the body and that, therefore, she'd have them vividly in mind when inspecting the rest of the crime scene. He had anticipated her precise thoughts again, which was vital if they wanted to go through the third puzzle accordingly.

(Anticipation, Direct/Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Tactics)

Naomi then notices that the killer had taken the time to put clothes back on the corpse, which sounded needlessly difficult. Following up on this observation, Ryuzaki points out that the leg

which had been left in the tub was wearing a sock and shoe, which perhaps means that the killer's message has nothing to do with the actual clothes but purely with the missing limbs. That would explain why the killer had bothered to put everything back on, to make that observation more likely.

After that, Ryuzaki invents a case-solving story where a victim had been killed and their ring finger had been taken away by the killer who had been looking for money. He had cut off the finger to take the victim's valuable ring which they had worn. This little story provides Naomi with the necessary inspiration to extrapolate a detail about the scene : perhaps the arm had been taken away because the victim had been wearing something, similarly to what Ryuzaki had recited. She then notices her own silver watch which she had been wearing on her arm. B had noticed this and anticipated that Naomi would reason that the killer might have cut off Bottomslash's arm to take away her watch which she had been wearing on her left arm. This is reasonable to assume since the killer had left the sock and the shoe on the severed-off leg. Naomi exposes this theory to Ryuzaki who approves of her thinking. Naomi then starts pondering about why the killer would have taken the entire arm just to remove the watch, which would be the missing link message in this case. Having been exposed to B's manipulation, she starts thinking about the general disposition of the body. Seeing that Naomi is stuck, Ryuzaki drops another hint : the head, arm and leg are all of different lengths.

Naomi connects the dots and comes up with the following conclusion : the watch had been stolen because the victim had been turned into the hands of a clock (seconds, minutes, hours). The killer needed to get rid of the arm completely to lead them to conclude that the watch was important, whilst only disposing of the leg since it wasn't a direct prop needed to arrive at the deduction regarding the watch. But still, both had to be cut off to transform the victim into a clock. Again, Naomi had been tricked by B who had led her through visual cues, shaping her conclusions and mode of thinking.

(Fabrication, Logical/Direct Manipulation, VCI, VSI, Deductive/Inductive Reasoning, Anticipation)

Naomi starts arranging the directions in which the limbs are pointing to obtain a specific time : 12h45. But Ryuzaki refutes her theory, saying that there's a major problem with it : depending on how you look at the photograph, the time pattern changes, since the limbs don't point in the same directions. There was no clue as to how Naomi and Ryuzaki should place the numbers correctly, assuming that the walls of the rooms represented the frame of a clock. But Ryzuaki would soon enlighten her. He mentions that it feels like there is a wall blocking them from arriving at the proper conclusion, one a little too high to surmount. Under the influence of Ryuzaki's analogies, Naomi connects the 'wall' which Ryuzaki was talking about to the actual walls of the rooms, upon which were stacked 4 piles of stuffed animals.

2 - 5 - 9 - 12

9 and 12 obviously correspond to the times on the left and top of a clock. But 5 and 2 don't fit, which is something Ryuzaki points out. However, Naomi subsequently points out that they obviously do, if you add the two Wara Ningyo which had been taken away by the police.

2 & 5 become 3 & 6

The frame and the numbers of the clock are complete. The room had indeed been turned into a visual clock puzzle by the killer who had integrated the Wara Ningyo into the time indicators. Now, the limbs pointed at a specific time : 6h15 and 50 seconds. Ryuzaki had masterfully guided Naomi through everything : the dolls being present on the walls, the missing arm and the watch, the leg having been disposed of by the killer, the walls representing the clock, and so on. The time would then be translated by Ryuzaki into a certain number : 061550, the construction approval register for a condominium in L.A. Once more, B had been able to perfectly read out Naomi's decisions in advance, pointing out bits and pieces of deduction required to solve the puzzle which he had anticipated she would connect.
(Direct/Logical Manipulation, VCI, FRI, VSI, Inductive Reasoning, Creativity, Anticipation)

VIII - The 4th Murder Strategy

1st Tactic : The Condo Trick

One of the first things which struck Naomi and L was the very rigid pattern of dates which the killer abided when committing his murders :

July 22nd —> July 31st —> August 4th —> August 13th —> X (the 4th murder)

9 - 4 - 9 - X

Logically-speaking, the most probable time for the fourth murder to happen was 4 days after the third which had happened on August 13th.

9 - 4 - 9 - 4 (the killer likes the numbers 4 & 9)

July 22nd —> July 31st —> August 4th —> August 13th —> August 17th

This is what Naomi believed until :

1-) Nothing happened on August 17th

2-) L expressively told her that the 4th murder would happen on August 22nd.

What never occurred to both L and Naomi is that they were being completely fooled by B, who had set up a multi-layered trap for them to trigger, allowing him to successfully pull off his suicide. Let us retrace his line of thought. Rewinding back to the very beginning of his plan, B had been able to find the convenient location, fitting the exact criteria he was seeking for to commit his perfect suicide. B stumbled on a condominium in West L.A. matriculated with the construction approval register 061550, which he had 'scanned' looking for 'B.B.' residents.

Keep in mind that B had planned all along to use victims whose initials had some form of link to

the letter ‘B’. This little pattern would evidently occur to any sufficiently-intelligent investigator and it would undoubtedly lead to the conclusion that the killer had been obsessed with the letter B, especially considering that he would have been leading whoever was inspecting the crime scenes with him into noting the alliterative initials pattern. Using his Shinigami eyes, he had been able to find two : Blackberry Brown (occupying room 1313) and Blues-harp Babysplit (occupying room 404). Curiously, when lining up the numbers 1 and 3 together, one obtains a shape resembling the letter ‘B’. This is something which B had noticed about the number ‘13’ and an idea which he’ll use prominently for this tactic.

Room 1313 —> 1 + 3 = 13 = B —> 1313 = BB

Room 404 —> 404 - 0 = 44 —> 1 + 3 & 1 + 3 = 1313 = BB

However, once this deciphering method would have been discovered by L and his pawns, B knew that they’d obviously notice that the inductive process behind room 404 is much too ambiguous to be seriously considered as the prime target for the killer. Again, keep in mind that B had killed one victim each time, meaning that, in the mind of L and his pawn(s), only one of either Blackberry Brown or Blues-harp Babysplit would end up dying. Approaching this problem rationally, the person living in room 1313 would simply seem like the likelier prey. This is exactly Naomi’s thought process in the novel when she and B arrive at the condominium according to B’s plan.

But, B had known the fact that the ambiguity behind the room numbers would certainly come to be a sensitive aspect of his plan and that it would trouble L’s pawn(s). In anticipation, B would formulate an insanely strong long-term tactic which would allow him to give room 404 the necessary backing to be feasibly factored in by L and his pawn(s). For this decorated misdirection to occur, B had been mapping out his murders on a specific timeline. He needed 5 dates to encompass within his plan, with each one indicating an important milestone which L and his pawn(s) would not be able to disregard.

July 22nd : The Beginning of the LABB Murders (Crossword Puzzle)

2 + 2 = 4 = 1 + 3 = 13 = B

OR

Japanese Kanji of 22 (二十二) = 2 + 2 = 4 = 1 + 3 = 13 = B

July 31st : The First Murder

3 + 1 = 4 = 1 + 3 = 13 = B

OR

Invert the digits = 31 = 13 = B

August 4th : The Second Murder

4 = 1 + 3 = 13 = B

August 13th : The Third Murder

1 + 3 = 13 = B

August 22nd : The Fourth Murder (B's Suicide) and the end of the LABB murders.

2 + 2 = 4 = 1 + 3 = 13 = B

OR

Japanese Kanji of 22 (
二十二
) = 2 + 2 = 4 = 1 + 3 = 13 = B

When all of these dates are attached to make up one sequence (22 - 31 - 4 - 13 - 22) with precise intervals between each one of them (9 - 4 - 9 - 9). But why conceptualize a completely inconsistent pattern of intervals when, quite frankly, it shouldn't change much?
The answer is : Room 404 (4 - 0 - 4)

Add up the composing digits of Room 404 (4 - 0 - 4) with the set of intervals (9 - 4 - 9 - 9) and you obtain (4 - 4 - 4 - 0 - 9 - 9 - 9). The sequence now becomes balanced, balanced with the room number of Blues-harp Babysplit. Both rooms now have the relevance and credence required for the pawn(s) to fall for B's trap.

(Inductive Reasoning, Anticipation)

Essentially, B had known completely in advance what L would end up thinking, having dropped neat little hints in the timeline which would influence him into asserting the final date, playing right into B's hands. The killer had shown that he likes playing games and laying patterns in his murder cases. Having expected that B would soon engineer a murder case for him after he vanished from Wammy's, L was already fairly certain that B was behind the Wara Ningyo murders when they had been reported on August 13th, which is why he would inevitably look for clues which could confirm B's involvement. The crossword puzzle was one such clue and it was extremely important to the development of B's plan in general all the way up to this condo tactic, since it would manipulate L into thinking that B will have left more of such preempts and hints all across his plan. Naturally, it would be clear that other messages, cleverly concealed, could be found if L decided to carefully analyze the killings and their aspects – B had influenced L into thinking this way. One of the most evident patterns which B had anticipated L would notice was the intervals between the dates.

9 - 4 - 9 - X

B would have indeed left another message for L – the killer likes the numbers 4 & 9, which is further supported by the evidence taken on the first murder. Not only that, but B had also anticipated that L would look at the dates and notice that they all had a connection to the letter 'B' by means of the number '13' (as presented above). But remember, in the original timeline sequence there was one date and, by extension, one interval missing. It is absolutely crucial for L

to figure out this last date to prevent B's fourth murder, forcing him into deducing it out. While trying to answer that question, L would have been tricked into keeping this premise in mind because of B's preparations : B has chosen the dates on which he's committed his murders based on the number '13'.

Here, B would have anticipated L's entire reasoning : Assuming that the pattern is continuous, then the fourth murder should happen on August 17th, 4 days after the third murder (9 - 4 - 9 - 4), which also fits with the tendency that the killer likes 4 & 9. However, abiding by the 13 Rule, there are only four dates in a month which can be deciphered properly : the 4th, 13th, 22nd and 31st. The 17th is not included in that selection of dates, meaning that it's not a valid possibility since it doesn't have any links with the number '13'. B had been able to predict that he'd have already killed by the 4th and 13th of August once L would have fallen on the case, meaning that there were only two other possibilities which would fit the qualities of the final murder adequately : August 22nd and August 31st. However, B had known all along that L, once having discovered the '13' rule, would also be able to solve the entire room trick in advance, linking the variations of the timeline with room 404. B would have needed one 4 and three 9's, meaning that the last date had to be 9 days apart from the third murder which happened on August 13th – this is what L would automatically infer, all according to B's expectations.

But it doesn't end here. As we mentioned multiple times in the list, B had also foreseen that L wouldn't move alone and that his proxies would solve the case 'for him' meaning that they'd also imperatively need to be on the final scene. However, B had additionally anticipated that the pawns would keep frequent contact with L, whether that was to report their progress or for L to give them instructions. B knew that L couldn't possibly move forward with his investigation if he didn't transmit the final date (August 22nd) to his pawns. So, he also expected Naomi to obtain that piece of information eventually through L who would have given her the answer to the riddle about the timeline's ending. But by giving her the date, he would have pieced up the riddle together for her, meaning that Naomi would be able to reconstruct the entire sequence.

22 - 31 - 4 - 13 - 22

By having the sequence in mind, inherently, Naomi would also have the intervals in mind.

9 - 4 - 9 - 9

(Anticipation, Deductive/Inductive Reasoning)

All according to plan, B would be able to use Naomi's knowledge of the intervals which had been passed on by L, allowing him to manipulate her at the condo. B would be able to isolate and misdirect Naomi away from him in the last 'act' using the variations in his schedule by linking them to room 404 as shown above. B would successfully use L's own intellect and foresight, anticipating his thought process to the last minute detail, to indirectly manipulate him into

disclosing the date (and by extension, the logic behind the intervals) to his pawn, allowing him to skillfully corner the pawn into leaving him unchecked when the time would come, with the use of mere numbers.

(Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Setting Traps, Tactics, Misdirection, FRI)

Now surely you realize that something is off about this part of B's ploy : this would only work if there was only one pawn at the scene, not multiple. Considering that B couldn't have known how many pawns would show up, he'd have to expect a way to cover the arrival of additional pawns (at most 3, as mentioned in the novel). So, how did he proceed? Although this is completely excluded and left unexplained in the novel, the author states that B had prepared a contingency, a back-up plan in this event. However, we are left ignorant as to what that contingency might have been and how B would have encompassed it in his tactic. By being pessimistic, let's just say that B had been lucky that only one of them (being Naomi) would show up in the end.

(Contingency)

B is also able to confirm that this part of his plan had been successfully executed when he tricks Naomi into admitting why she had given more weight to the 'B' Theory than the 'Q' Theory when either of the two could be possible at the time of the third murder, since the initials pattern was not yet complete (BB - QQ - BB – X). At this point, he has built a thoroughly-accurate emotional profile of Naomi and knows that she takes pride in being confident about her hypotheses. He uses this by labeling her conclusions about the '13' Theory as purely arbitrary and unsupported to induce a reaction out of her. He succeeds, and gets Misora to blurt out that "B is the killer", thus providing him with the first premise of his reasoning. B knows that only L could have provided Misora with this sort of information (as nobody else could have conceivable access or knowledge of such a fact). It thus confirms to B that L had indeed seemingly falled straight into the trap, having passed on the details regarding the date of the final murder to Naomi just as he calculated.

(Deductive Reasoning, Setting Traps, EQU)

2nd Tactic : Gun Manipulation

B would have gone to his hideout and conducted research on Naomi Misora as his Shinigami Eyes would instantly tell him the name of L's pawn. Naomi would be an FBI agent on leave, on leave because she was suspended. As for the reason behind her suspension indicated in her FBI file, it would be logical to assume that the information was not in-depth but sufficient. The data should at least go along like :

1-) The team she worked with had spent months secretly investigating and infiltrating a drug cartel.

2-) She had completely blown the operation as she was unable to take the necessary means to

have stopped the killer.

3-) The dangerous criminal in question responsible for the drug-related and murderous crimes was a child, 13 years of age.

4-) They had arrested no one, and while no one had died, there had been some agents injured so severely they might never be able to return to active duty—horrific results, considering the efforts squandered.

5-) Despite her own weak position within the organization, the fact that she had only been forced to take a leave of absence was rather lenient.

Based on these premises, B could infer Naomi's current feelings and emotional state along the following lines :

Naomi had completely blown over the operation, this must've been because she was unable to pull the trigger on the criminal, the criminal who was profiled to be 13. So she felt extremely hesitant and got emotional over the idea of having to end the life of a child prematurely displaying her sensitive and sympathetic nature. She would understand that, if she wouldn't gather the will to take down the criminal, then all the efforts that her team had put into the operation for months upon months would go down the drain.

But then again, her emotions got the best of her as she could not find the courage to kill a child and consider herself a moral person for the rest of her life, it would scar her for the remaining of her days leaving her traumatized. Thus she had let the child live, not just purely out of hesitation and the moral dilemma she was faced with whilst having to pick between letting her team down or serving justice to a criminal… but also out of her own free will, it was a multi-faceted sense of emotion that she was struck with when she had the opportunity to shoot him, which is why she had been unable to understand exactly why she had could not pull the trigger.

It's impressive to note that B understood Naomi better than she did herself. As she blew the operation there was no doubt that she was going to be looked down on by all her colleagues and higher ups, which was a source of stress and frustration for her in the first place. But she'd also have to consider the lengths the members of the operation had gone for this mission. Whilst no casualties occurred the injuries were so severe that many of them might not be able to ever return to the frontlines of duty.

So the fact that she had to carry the guilt of letting her emotions get the best of her and throw all the blood and sweat that her team had put into the operation was extremely burdening to her as she lost sleep over it. It is also to consider the fact that she was on temporary suspension. Just temporary. Which is extremely lenient considering the circumstance of her failure. It made her feel even worse as she felt pitied upon and undignified. Worsening her mood even more from the trauma of the previously established moral dilemma as well as carrying the guilt of throwing down

the drain all the months worth of efforts of the operation team which they will never get back (remember, some have basically lost their duties because of it as well).

General conclusion :

Naomi is a sympathetic person, especially for her job as an FBI agent working under such operations. She is guilt ridden by the severity of her mistake and also somewhat traumatized by the idea of using the gun against the 13 year old child in the operation.

(Inductive Reasoning, EQU, Psychoanalysis)

After solving the 3rd murder, whilst B and Naomi were making the necessary preparations to prevent the 4th murder, he brings up the fact that it is necessary for Naomi to be able to protect herself and thus, hands her over a gun.

A gun.

Naomi takes the gun hesitantly and lays down in bed in one of the 2 condominium rooms, as she goes into a completely diffused emotional state due to B's profile and his handing over of the gun had made her go through the trauma she experienced from her operation. The novel does an excellent job at explaining the effects that B's Manipulation had on Naomi.

"But Naomi Misora remembered.

The moment she'd pointed the gun at him...

The eyes that the child had turned towards her.

Like he was staring at something he couldn't believe, like the grim reaper had just appeared before him. Like it was absurd. He could kill other people, but he had never imagined that he might be killed himself. But he should have known, he should have been ready to die the first moment he took a life. As any criminal would. As any FBI agent would. That threat hung over them all. She was part of the system. That child was part of the system too. Perhaps that had weakened their resolve. Perhaps that had numbed them to the threat. Perhaps their fears had rusted over. But so what?

Given that child's upbringing, he not only had no chance to reform, he never had a prayer of living right to begin with. What had Misora expected from someone like that? How cruel was it of her to have expected anything? She knew as well as anyone that that child was living the only way he could. He had always been doomed. But did that mean he had to accept his fate? Was there only one way to live, one way to die?

Was human life... was human death all controlled by some unseen hand? Obviously, she harbored some resentment toward those who had used this failure as an excuse to expel her, but when she thought about the difference between the thirteen−year−old she had failed to shoot and the second victim in the Los Angeles BB murders, Quarter Queen, she began to feel like the whole affair was ridiculous. Misora did not have a strong sense of justice.

She did not believe herself to be ethically or morally superior. She did not approach work with any kind of philosophy. She was where she was because her entire life had been like walking through a town she didn't know—if she lived her life over again, she was sure she'd end up somewhere completely different. If someone asked her why she was working for the FBI, she would not have been able to answer."

What makes this manipulation even more effective, is the main pattern that the LABB serial killings abide by. As previously discussed, B had anticipated that L would share his knowledge behind the identity of the killer with Naomi. He had also anticipated that L would intervene with Naomi's progress to inform her that the 4th murder takes place on the 22nd and not on the usual 9-4-9-4 day pattern. Using this B was able to force Naomi to make the connection between the numerical values of the dates and B as shown in the first tactic of this strategy. Out of the 5 dates composing the string of dates (22 - 31 - 4 - 13 - 22), 13 is the most straight forward and relevant number of the general pattern (13 = B)

And the killer is B.

B… 13…

The killer is B so… is the killer 13…?

What if the killer is 13…?

The thought of the killer being 13 terrified Naomi, and revived her trauma of the night of her failure, of the look of terror in the eyes of the child. B shows a perfect psychoanalysis of Naomi and uses great affective forecasting to predict how she would react to the circumstances he would engineer and provoke. Having put Naomi into this distressed state, B would have been able to buy himself enough time to commit suicide. Had L not comforted or inspired Naomi, and B never mentioned Capoeira, then she would have never been able to figure out the locked-room trick, considering her rational judgment had been clouded by this outburst of emotion which B had caused in her mind

(EQU/EQM, Psychoanalysis, Tactics, Emotional/Indirect Manipulation)

3rd Tactic : Self-Immolation

Having now been able to skillfully lead Naomi into another room on another floor, B is able to put the final steps of his plan into practice. Ultimately, he chooses to burn himself to death. He breaks the room's sprinkler, disables the alarm, and pours gasoline on himself, lighting it up afterwards. B had been preparing for this very moment since the beginning, knowing that self-immolation would mesh extremely well with the other murders he had perpetrated. B would be able to achieve several things via this quite straight-forward tactic :

1-) He would have been able to remove all of his fingerprints and traces around the room, maintaining the habit he had implemented for the other crime scenes, by having the flames burn

up any evidence of his true identity.

2-) He also manages to keep his sequence of murder varied. The different causes of death regarding the past killings had been specifically kept diverse and random in anticipation for this moment. Strangulation, blunt-force, stabbing, and arson. No one could possibly discern a pattern since B's methods had been purposely randomized.

3-) Since B had destroyed any photograph of his and that he had been purposely walking around Naomi with his makeup-heavy disguise of L, no one would be able to link him back to Wammy's. His carbonized corpse would be inspected and identified as Beyond Birthday, Rue Ryuzaki's real name. After all, it was obvious that R.R. was an alias, even to Naomi. The killer had targeted him because of his initials – this is what the police detectives would unequivocally believe, or rather, what B would have led them to believe based on the previous people he had carefully selected. Nobody would suspect that Ryuzaki (Beyond Birthday), the private investigator, and B, the killer, had been one and the same person all along even if someone who would be able to recognize B was looking at his corpse (i.e. - A Wammy's member), all thanks to the fire. Prosaically, the conception of B the serial killer would live on, having murdered the conception of Ryuzaki the investigator, despite both being dead.

4-) The severe burns inflicted by the flames on his torn-up body would prevent anyone from suspecting the killer's suicide.

B had been purposely leaving messages around, which, most of the time, would be found on the victims' corpses. Assuming that B had chosen another method, the police would be able to inspect his body, find that no damage had been done unlike all previous scenes and that, therefore, it might be possible that the killer had committed suicide, which would explain the discrepancy between the fourth and other three murders. However, the fire would have completely destroyed B's body, meaning that no one would be able to scrutinize his corpse looking for such slight alterations or injuries which could have led to a message. Ultimately, the evidence would lead L to conclude that B was still out there somewhere and that he'd need to be hunted down. But, the self-immolation tactic would trap L into relentlessly going after his dead successor–he'd quite literally be forced into looking for the ghost of B, who would no longer be alive.

(Anticipation, Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Concealment, Tactics)

4th Tactic : The Wara Ningyo

B had nailed 'straw dolls' to the walls of the crime scenes for which he had imagined and entrenched different meanings within, in the aim of achieving his goal. He had dispersed them following a certain pattern :

4 - 3 - 2 - 1
What would B accomplish in the end by doing this?

1-) Knowing that L, his pawn and the investigators will have noticed the pattern, B would be able to create the illusion that the killer had simply stopped murdering people and that his work had been completed. Moments before B would kill himself, he'd nail one Wara Ningyo to the wall (very important detail for the next point). When his body would be found, inspected and identified as Beyond Birthday (not as B from Wammy's house and thus, not the person that L and his pawn would suspect had been behind the entire murders), the investigators would be forced into noticing the singular doll remaining on the scene. Also do note that B had been pinning the dolls in predetermined spots on the walls at each crime scene in a way that they would be noticed for a split-second before the corpses of his victims, which ensured that the investigators would notice the one doll remaining an instant before they'd see Beyond Birthday's body.

So, going back to the main point, the investigators would notice the one doll, the sole visual indicator left on the scene. The metaphor of the victims count slowly dwindling down carried by the dolls would force them to assume that this was merely the final victim of the killer, not that the killer had made himself the final victim. The very thought of a doll being found on scene would supersede the far-fetched theory that the killer had chosen himself as the final victim, since B had conditioned the investigators into associating the Wara Ningyo with something only the killer would have left on the scene following a murder done by his own hands.

The killer's suicide would have never been even taken into consideration, or at the very least not after a seriously long and extenuating period of thinking, all because B had nailed the final Wara Ningyo to the wall, solidifying the false assumption that the killer simply had been acting as he'd always has been : leaving dolls around. It's also important to note that, when B would die, he wouldn't be able to keep on orchestrating and committing murders obviously. However, due to the Wara Ningyo metaphor, the lack of subsequent killings wouldn't trouble anybody, since the pattern had reached its end. The Wara Ningyo murderer had finished his work and killed his fourth and final victim represented by the final straw doll nailed to the wall. A very keen misdirection designed by B using the thoughts and logic of the investigators.

2-) It would allow B to create the locked-rooms effectively (see next point).

3-) The Wara Ningyo themselves would have acted as misdirective instruments. After seeing them, anybody would concentrate on the dolls themselves and not on their nails which, in fact, had been the key to everything (this detail will have particular importance for the locked rooms). At the original conception of his plan, B knew that the LAPD police detectives would involve themselves in the killings, meaning that they would certainly be extracting evidence from the scenes, including the dolls. Having taken this into account, B knew that he could go forward with

this part of his plan, since all that would be left would be the nail marks on the walls, which alone, wouldn't be enough to suspect their use in the rooms. However, B also took into account the possibility that the dolls might remain on the later crime scenes (most likely the third). He had calculated that the police would be investigating the scenes before L's pawn(s) would have been put on the move, even before he had perpetrated anything.

He was aware that the dolls on the third crime scene might remain, so he decided to include them into the third puzzle, knowing that it would distract the pawn(s) from their actual use, compensating for their potentially unfortunate presence. He would have artificially concealed the true nature of the dolls by, again, warping the perception of his opponents
(Tactics, Misdirection, Logical/Indirect Manipulation, Anticipation, Predictions)

5th Tactic : The Locked Rooms

B had been creating locked rooms for each of his murders which he had designed by scheming out a very complex tri-vectorial and multi thread-based system to lock the door latches of each room using the Wara Ningyo's nailheads at pulleys to direct and control the force administered by the threads. Since this is quite a hard trick to explain and to visualize, we recommend reading the final parts of the LABB novel, which will undoubtedly offer a more comprehensive and detailed account of the physics principles involved.

(VSI, Knowledge)

Using this technique, B would be able to completely conceal his death and, therefore, the fact that Beyond Birthday had, in truth, committed suicide. Locked-room tricks are traditionally present in your average Mystery Novels. The detective finds them, understands that the murder was done to be made look like a suicide and, from there, figures out the trick behind them. Simple, isn't it? However, B would have abused this popular form of thinking – that locked rooms put in place by criminals are only ever used to make murders look like suicides.

However, he had been using this fact in an unorthodox manner by inverting the logic behind the common thought process. Although this is quite strange to say, B had planned to make his murders look like… murders. Yes, very odd. He'd make the investigators notice that the deaths of his victims had clearly been caused by murder, despite them having been made in locked rooms. Why is that?

Because when B would kill himself, the investigators would systematically assume that it had been murder, since Beyond Birthday's body would be found in a locked room. Nobody would guess that, for once, instead of following his usual pattern of making murders look like murders, the killer had actually made his own suicide look like a murder. Anyone would remove the possibility of suicide, because B had conditioned the investigators into developing a fabricated preconception that the killer would always be murdering people and putting their bodies inside

locked rooms, not that he would end up making himself his own victim. This is another fantastic misdirection (and a great concealment feat) which B orchestrated by controlling the reasoning of the people investigating his death.

(Creativity, Misdirection, Concealment, Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Tactics)

This is an extremely complex idea that B is putting forward, but it definitely has its risks. Having devised his plan, B knew that the locked rooms would undoubtedly be the most sensitive part of his plan. In fact, he was wary that the trick to create them would be uncovered by L and his pawn(s) at the time of the third murder. The weakness in the technique emerged from the idea that the rooms could only be created using two dolls. Thus, the trick would work on three of the scenes: the first, the second, and the third. But what about the fourth?

It should have only one doll, right? If they had been left on the scene, the pawn(s) would spot the Wara Ningyo's nails and could eventually, after some thinking, discover the trick B had used. If you have been attentively reading, you'll notice that this would be why B had thought about camouflaging the dolls within the puzzle of the third murder. Having discovered B's methods, the final murder, his death, would have no credence. The room was locked with only one doll which would be truly impossible. The only possible explanation was that the person who would be found dead had locked the room by hand and nailed the doll to the wall themselves, clearly revealing their identity as the killer who had tried to kill himself. L would have been able to solve everything from there.

B's plan relied on the fact that the pawn(s) would never be able to discover his methods, which was truly a reasonable assumption to make. After all, they would have so little at their availability to understand such a complex ploy and method. The author of the LABB novel himself reveals that Naomi had only been able to reveal the trick because of a good luck stroke, apparently. Abiding by the most reasonable conclusion to make, B reasons that, as long as the pawns would never figure it out, then the weakness in his plan would simply evaporate. Beyond Birthday would have died in a locked room, despite only one doll being found at the scene. All B would have to do is lock the door by hand and nail the one final Wara Ningyo to the wall. If someone would attempt to uncover B's triangulation method, their hypotheses would be completely crushed by the fact that only one doll had been found in the locked room.

(Deductive/Inductive Reasoning, Tactics, Concealment, Misdirection)

In fact, when he and Naomi were solving the murders, B was getting concerned about Naomi's curiosity. She wouldn't let the locked rooms out of her mind. She wouldn't be dismissing them as an aspect of lesser importance. She was suspecting that they had some use, some other form of purpose. Even if she had been persuaded of their triviality by Ryuzaki, she'd still try to figure out the technique used by the killer, assuming he didn't have a key. But B was far sharper. He was

able to constantly convince her otherwise and divert her attention away, right until the end.

How?

As previously mentioned, B knew that the locked-rooms were the most sensitive aspect of his entire plan and of his 4th murder strategy. He had been apprehending Naomi's concerns before she even suspected their use and had therefore structured another top-tier deceptive tactic to account for the pawn(s)' curiosity. The psychology underpinning the general composition of his plan would come to be the object of this fruitful tactic which B had prepared, entrenched at the very heart of the 4th murder strategy.

B had anticipated, from the very beginning, that L was lying in wait for a challenge of his conception. So, when Wammy's house would learn of his sudden disappearance, B would have expected that L would predict his eventual involvement – a sign of his activity : the perfect crime. And B gave him exactly that when the American media was giving important coverage of the Wara Ningyo murders in L.A. — a case so difficult and strange that L was bound to notice it and link it to B.

He would have perfectly understood that L would be basing his response to the LABB murder based on the psychological profile he had designed of him. Through very high levels of internal understanding, B would be able to nail and pinpoint L's impressions about him to perfection :

L knows of the arduous reality which B had to endure among the first batch of children which had been picked to create his perfect facsimile. The first generation at Wammy's was said to be a psychologically-infernal environment for all who were selected. A true living hell within which children were stripped of their identities which were, in-turn, substituted by a sole code : pretenders to the name of "L".

Bound by a single meaningless and impossible purpose, these childrens had witnessed their freedom and individuality crushed for the unique objective of succeeding to the world's greatest detective. Also do note that, although this is unknown to L, B had also been cursed with Shinigami eyes, constantly reminding him of death and despair throughout the course of his life which undoubtedly affected his psychology. But L was able to understand that B thought that he was meant for more, more than just being a pale copy of the one he was groomed to become.

He therefore profiles B as an individual with relentless streaks of hate against him and an unwavering desire to surpass him. L was able to perceive B's ego and pride which were reflected namely in his sudden departure. From there, L is able to conclude that B is plotting his grand revenge to defeat him. L is fully aware that B will not attempt to defeat him through direct confrontation and that he'd rather adopt an approach coherent to his emotions.

As such, L immediately understands that B will try to tackle him by creating a murder case impossible to solve, one which would definitely put L's legacy and skills in the dirt for good. He is

able to perceive that B thinks of him as a pretentious being and that, therefore, B will try to destroy all in which he believes, which would be his drive or quench for diligently-carried out investigation. L is able to associate this with B's ego and his burning drive and therefore decides to wait and see if B challenges him just as he had preemptively predicted. But that's not all. Not only would B prepare based on this entire thought process, but he'd also anticipate how L would link his emotions to the crime scenes. There are four major components of B's plan which had been carefully engineered to condition L into adopting a specific perspective :

1-) The obsessive print-wiping on all murder scenes

2-) The dolls

3-) The locked-doors

4-) The crossword puzzle

Upon observing and factoring in these various elements which all had an inherent connection to the murders, B would have anticipated that L would be able to highlight the emotional cues embedded within the different patterns which had been laid out by B in a similar manner to what is described below :

The killer had sent the crossword puzzle to the LAPD on July 22nd, one which was impossible to solve for the detectives working in the LAPD. The answer to the crossword puzzle was the address of the 1st victim, Believe Bridesmaid :

'Two-Twenty-One Insist. St. Hollywood'

If the crossword puzzle had been solved it could've possibly prevented the 1st murder but it could not serve that purpose due to its sheer difficulty. But why would the killer send the crossword puzzle to the LAPD, knowing that it would have absolutely no chance to serve the purpose of preventing the 1st murder that he had hinted at, due to its sheer difficulty as well as how vague its implications were… hmm… this is ego. The killer is egotistical as he's giving them hints and chances to prevent his schemes but knows that he is far more competent than the LAPD. This is not in an attempt to outwit them, but rather the emotion that he feels from the idea of outwitting them… he is taunting and mocking them. This is a form of subversive behavior. To go out of your way to commit such horrible crimes for the sake of mockery and pride? He's trying to prove his superiority, not to the world or on a large scale, but to a personal level. Fueled by inferiority and a need for approval… to fulfill a sense of emotional depravity.

The unnecessary levels of fingerprint wiping play a significant role too. While it is true that fingerprint removal was a common form of trail erasure by criminals, the extent to which the perpetrator had committed them in his murders were beyond absurd, and were needlessly extensive. He could have escaped undetected without having to wipe every page of every book or unscrew the light bulbs to wipe them. But he still did it, which displays a sense of neuroticism,

and obsessive behavior. As he is again, going to unnecessary lengths to prove his superiority, as if he is playing just a game… a game. This also links back to the fact that for all 3 scenes of the murders the doors were locked. In Mystery Novels, locked doors are used to make murders look like suicides, but in this case it was quite clear that these deaths were really just murders. So this was another example of the killer displaying neurotic behavior by going to unnecessary extents…Not to mention the Wara Ningyo symbolizing the number of victims, another taunt.

"I'm not done yet… come and catch me if you can! If you have the intellect to challenge me that is… You are all far inferior to me!"

He would anticipate that L would link this obsessive and prideful behavior with his understanding of the man he knew as 'B' who would have laid out the entire crime scene in this absurd, yet extremely telling manner. L would be able to discern the emotion behind the killer's methodology and link it to B, cementing the Wara Ningyo Killings as B's doing. Everything would seem to fit with L's conception of B's prideful and condescending nature and, as such, B would lure L into investigating the case.

(EQU, Anticipation, Psychoanalysis, Inductive Reasoning)

So, this is all well and beautiful, but what exactly is the purpose of letting L pick up on his own ego and prideful traits? Before going over that, we need to cover the actual meaning behind the crossword puzzle. As it is known, L would have been able to retrieve a copy of the puzzle itself through his extensive state-wide information gathering network and then successfully solve it, providing him with a warning of the 1st murder : the address of the first victim. B had deduced and prepared for that eventuality, it was an imperceptible trap for L for the following reason : B knew that L would be passing on this information to his pawn (who's involvement had been anticipated preemptively).

He'd use L's thinking and reasoning skills to calibrate the perception of the pawn into adopting the exact same psychoanalysis that L had portrayed of B. Therefore, when Naomi ends up being briefed and put up to speed on the case's details by L, she instantly notices the neurotic behavior of the killer which B had fabricated, prominently through the crossword puzzle, which served as an unsolvable preempt, but also through the print-wiping, the dolls, and the rooms. This was all according to B's design. B knew that, not only L, but also his proxy would end up profiling him as a boastful and childish murderer with cravings for superiority. Not only that, but B would also be able to indirectly manipulate Naomi into meeting him by using the crossword puzzle as a tool to induce the killer's methodological preconceptions into her mind. The crossword puzzle was, on the surface, primarily a means for the killer to send a warning to the police. But to Naomi and L, the puzzle would also strike as a direct message, a deliberate hint left by the killer that he'd be leaving other such messages on the crime scenes, other clues that would have led to the

prevention of the subsequent murders.

Ultimately, Naomi falls for the trick and starts to think that the killer would have taken objects away from the crime scene to conceptualize ‘missing links’, preempts which would have connected the victims together. Abiding this notion, she goes up to Bridesmaid’s room (who is missing) and meets B, all according to his thoughts. B introduces himself as Rue Ryuzaki, an ‘unprivate detective’, someone free of excessive ego and neuroticism. Sounds very familiar right? B dissociates himself from the preconception of the killer he had carefully entrenched in Naomi’s psyche. This is further emphasized when B adopts the personality of a freak-ish and appalling creepy detective who seems to have a complete lack of manners. Naomi is very confused at the sight of B’s unconventional acting and, despite finding him quite suspicious, can’t possibly fathom that he is the killer, since this prideless and blunt persona which B puts up completely contradicts the preconception that she has of the killer.

Furthermore, the hints of doubt induced by B into Naomi’s mind because of his act and demeanor would come to serve him directly. This is another very neat trap designed by B, who wanted to lure Naomi into keeping her watch over him so that he can then successfully and unobtrusively guide her through each crime scene of his making. Through this specific tactic, B is able to set himself up in the perfect position to execute his plan and, in this particular case, his 4th murder strategy. So far, this is exactly the same as the aim of his 1st murder strategy, but bear with us and keep reading since this is where it will begin to get interesting and transcend into the 4th murder.

Essentially, B is able to abstractly create two preconceptions of the killer. On one hand, Beyond Birthday, B, the true killer, an egotistical and condescendent maniac, fueled by an innate sense of superiority. On the other hand, Rue Ryuzaki, the shameless ‘unprivate detective’, characterized by his uncivilized, prideless, and strange behavior. Concerning the 5th tactic of the 4th murder strategy, the locked-rooms, we’ll mostly be looking at the first preconception of the killer. This is the key to everything : the ego, pride, condescendence, the drive to assert a sense of superiority, all of which are reflected in the components of the murders exposed to Naomi, the pawn.

Everything that the killer did was overwhelmingly connotated with these traits, whether that was the crossword puzzle, the doll sequence, the print-wiping, and so on. It would only seem fitting to Naomi that the locked-rooms, another random element of the murders, were just another trivial game the killer was playing at, since they suited the general disposition of the crimes : excessively conceited and neurotic. Even though Naomi had a hunch that the rooms might have another purpose, she’s easily swayed and seduced by the idea that the rooms are just the product of the killer’s arrogance and mockery, like everything else had been laid out. What better

way to conceal the very core mechanism of his plan than through such an intricate tactic? B would have prepared carefully for this very lengthy and comprehensive misdirection to occur, something so unpredictable that his trap would slowly but surely close in on Naomi and, by extension on L.

(EQU, Anticipation, Concealment, Misdirection, Fabrication, Indirect/Logical Manipulation, Tactics)

IX - The Anti-Feat

We believe it is important to unravel and cover the process behind B's ultimate loss and to chase away the misconception that his plan was mediocre because he ultimately failed at its apogee.

As we are aware, B had engineered his plan in a way which would deliver him victory if it abides by his preconceived notion of what it means for L to win. L's idea of victory and dismissing a case as being solved is to find the perpetrator, nail down concrete evidence against their guilt, and sentence them to prison. How B had originally intended the 4th murder to go was for Naomi Misora to run down to B's apartment (404) when he fails to answer his phone as scheduled, only to find him to have been burned to death with the doors locked and one Wara Ningyo pinned to the wall, concluding the Los Angeles BB Murder Case.

But of course this did not happen as Naomi managed to solve the locked door trick before Beyond Birthday successfully managed to commit suicide. But B had used layers of deception and psychological manipulation to cover and misdirect those working on the case from discovering the true nature of the locked doors, so what went wrong?

The little detail and slip up that turned the tables against Beyond Birthday was Capoeira. When B and Naomi were making the necessary preparations to head towards their respective apartments to catch the killer, B had "accidentally" slipped up to Naomi about knowing of her mastery of Capoeira, which only 2 people could've known : L or her assailant in the valley. Naomi soon manages to connect B to the assailant, deduces that he is the killer and then manages to arrest him just on time after extinguishing the flames he set on himself.

Now there are many problems with B's loss which we think are illogical such as, for example, how completely out of character it was for B to slip up about Capoeira, how he managed to survive the burns, how he managed to not die of smoke inhalation, how he managed to survive a trip to the hospital based off how the aftermath of his suicide attempt was described, and so on. Not to mention, had Naomi been a couple seconds late, B would've died and for L, if he does not manage to catch the perpetrator and sentence him, then it would be a loss. In the end, we believe that there are just too many simultaneous elements which would cause B’s demise magically aligning at the climax. The author of the novel himself cloaks up this fallacious narrative by saying that Naomi had only been able to discover the locked room trick with a streak

of good luck and inspiration.

Note : All aforementioned feats also fall under planning for obvious reasons. Also, although not explicitly mentioned, most of B's feats also fall under abstract reasoning and general thinking skills.

X - Analysis (WIP)

XI - Conclusion & Acknowledgements

If you have gotten to this point, we wish to extend our gratitude to you for going through our thoughts despite the length of the list. Beyond Birthday is, without a doubt, still an extremely underrated character, which can be due to the lack of people who've gotten a clear read of the LABB novel or because his accomplishments are quite difficult to understand. Either way seems plausible.

The sheer difficulty of his circumstances, with him having to face the man whose intellect he had learned to fear, and his great disadvantage in resources makes him, without a doubt, an insane contender in outsmarting debates. Not to mention the absolutely mind-boggling complexity, creativity, and contextual adversity upon which his plan is predicated. With only some 100 pages of feats and a bit of re-tracing 'off-screen', B has shown extraordinary accomplishments i. We hope that this list, in its most developed and reviewed form, sheds additional light on the character. Following the earlier releases of our previous B list versions, the importance of the character has been steadily picking up momentum, which we are looking forward to continuing with the significant upgrades which have been added.