

First, I'll be blunt: Mei Misaki really did fuck *everything* up for *everyone* and made Izumi Akazawa's life *hell* for *no* reason.

But it's honestly a seriously interesting parallel. At least to me...and one that pissed me off as I was watching for the first time. As I re-watched *Another*, that feeling grew stronger.

I'll just explain everything here for anyone who might want to get why. And of course, I literally mean pretty much *everything* concerning these two students, so there's going to be serious spoilers here.

Now, concerning Mei and Izumi's relationship, there's 8 categories of things we need to know up front after having seen the show. Some more important than others:

1. Izumi Akazawa might seem cold, but it's because of a traumatic past much worse than anyone else's in the cast, and she's actually a very compassionate and noble person who cares about others and isn't afraid to say it.

2. Mei Misaki is the exact opposite and doesn't give a fuck about anything.

3. Mei is a bitch.

4. Izumi doesn't give a damn about petty grudges and unlike the Mei x Kouichi shippers, she likes Kouichi but never forgives Mei for her wrongdoings only because Mei started this entire mess no matter how you look at it, and Mei doesn't so much as pretend to care who's dying.

5. If you're the "extra", you were in Yomiyama Middle School's Class 3-3 once, killed by the curse and revived sometime later as a member of Class 3-3 again (there's a Yomiyama North and South Middle, but only the North is relevant). So, you had to have been from Class 3-3's city, Yomiyama, and not, say, *Tokyo*. You looked just like you did in life and don't remember dying, and neither does anyone else because your existence is rewritten within Yomiyama so you didn't die in the memories and records of people and things in the town. Being outside of Yomiyama means you're immune to this memory erasing or will recover your memory concerning the extra in time. But since Yomiyama's a small,

insignificant town, no one outside has really heard of the Yomiyama Middle Curse, and no one but those in Class 3-3 really believe it. At the end of the school year, the following April, you die and history rewrites itself as it was before, with people who remembered your second presence in 3-3 immediately forgetting it and the ones who witnessed your second death gradually forgetting your second presence in 3-3 (unless, like Chibiki with Reiko, they can reason it out).

6. Kouichi's aunt Reiko was in Class 3-3 as a student in 1983. Her being alive or not doesn't change the fact that this can be found out via deduction. She was previously murdered in October 1996, halfway through the 1996 school year, where she, for reasons related to trying to solve her sister Ristuko's Class 3-3 related death in 1983, was serving as Class 3-3's assistant homeroom teacher. She was probably murdered by Izumi's brother before his suicide (this is why Izumi forgot about meeting Kouichi and Reiko despite remembering the suicide). That's an admitted theory and not confirmed, but it makes perfect sense in every way aside from Kouichi not mentioning it at the end of the show. But Kouichi hardly mentioned any of his classmates who died, the ending was drastically rushed regardless, and such memories involving the extra take a while to fully return even once they die the second time. Everything concerning Reiko's murder is erased within Yomiyama and replaced with whatever makes her seem alive after she's revived as the extra.

7. The dead extra, who appears alive, joins 3-3 and takes one of the class seats. Because of their "closeness to death," their presence randomly causes others in 3-3, or related to them to the 2nd degree (grandparents/parents/siblings), to die at least once every month. So long as these deaths occur in the timespan during which the Calamity is active, and to those who can be affected by it, their deaths are marked as due to the Calamity by Yomiyama Middle's librarian, Chibiki Tatsuji, the teacher of Class 3-3 in 1972 who started the phenomenon before leaving his teacher role and fleeing to the library for his safety, along with wanting to record the spiritual phenomenon.

To counterbalance this spiritual phenomenon, as soon as Class 3-3 is decided on the first day, one 3-3 student is chosen by the Head of Countermeasures to be ignored by Class 3-3 and made "nonexistent": The Shunning. Then the number of seats goes down by one, and the extra's spiritual presence has no room in the class. This is regardless of whether the extra is being shunned or not; so long as someone is, the shunning will *usually* work and stop the Calamity. In addition, the lone student must sit at an old desk away from the rest of the class in the back-left corner, a desk that was probably the original Misaki's when he started the Calamity of 1973. This serves as an extra ward. However, once the Calamity has started, the Shunning no longer effective. Only the students and teachers of Class 3-3 must follow the Shunning for it to work, but if it isn't followed to the letter until the school year's end (the following March 31st), the Calamity could strike at any point in time. Acknowledging the Calamity exists doesn't violate the Shunning, and neither does acknowledging the Shunning's existence. But acknowledging that the Shunning is being employed to anyone at all *does* break the seal it maintains on the curse.

8. Mei Misaki's twin-sister Fujioka Misaki is suffering from leukemia when the story begins on April 26th. This is a couple of weeks after Mei has started her nonexistence, and only Mei knows about her condition. That same day, in the same hospital, Izumi, Kazami, and Yukari visit Kouichi. The next day, Fujioka's leukemia flares up and she dies alone in her room, early in the morning. Mei receives a call and heads toward the hospital hours later to give her sister a parting doll. By chance, Kouichi runs into Mei on the elevator as she's going to Fujioka's visitation room in the 2nd basement level, and Mei tells him about her "poor other half".

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Now, with those key briefs out of the way, the timeline goes something like this:

-Reiko was in Yomiyama North Middle School's Class 3-3 as their assistant homeroom teacher ("conveniently," the only one in the school) when she was randomly stabbed and drowned (possibly targeted on purpose) in October 1996, about a year and a half before the current setting, which starts in April. The culprit is Izumi's insane brother, and Reiko's death is a result of the curse. Izumi and Kouichi meet soon after when Izumi stumbles into him while grieving her brother (who wasn't caught in the murder). Kouichi was in the area from Tokyo for Reiko's funeral, and after shaking hands and introducing each other, the conversation between him and Izumi before he returned to Tokyo revolved around these unfortunate happenings. But they both gradually forget even meeting each other when Reiko is revived on the first day of school, April 1st 1998, her spirit likely wishing to return to 3-3 and solve the Calamity as she intended before. Obviously Kouichi doesn't know this. Neither does Izumi or anyone else. As for when they met, it revolved around Reiko who was revived and had now "never died". So Izumi only vaguely believes she knew Kouichi from somewhere before from how his hand felt they shook two years ago. Considering the poignant nature of their meeting and how he how he basically helped her deal with her despair, then how she was able to recall meeting him somewhere before based only on their shaking hands, then falling for him a second time, despite his being a problem student, solely off the impression she felt from him—then later on, remembering exactly where she met him and shaking his hand in her dream, despite memory-loss from the curse, meeting Kouichi was a *very special* moment for her. Kouichi, though, didn't have the same response. He wasn't in the same grief as Izumi, instead being the one to comfort her. So, he doesn't remember that handshake or meeting Izumi at all.

-Izumi volunteers to be the Head of Countermeasures sometime in March 1998, after grieving her brother's death from the Class 3-3 curse in 1996 and after witnessing the Shunning work to protect 1997's class. Concerning personal safety, the Head of Countermeasures is the exact opposite of Chibikisan's librarian position and the most dangerous position in the school: it's the lead position of those who engage the curse directly. Her reasoning for taking this job is that she takes the curse seriously, more seriously than anyone and despises it. Needless to say, she doesn't want it to claim any more lives than the one's she's already had to see it claim. Not only does she want Class 3-3 safe, she wants to end the Calamity forever. If she didn't volunteer to be for Head of Countermeasures, since it's such a risky and accountable position, it is naturally unpopular. Therefore, someone else from her class would've been forcibly chosen.

-[As a brief aside and example of the Head of Countermeasures' dangerous responsibility, Izumi, Kazami, and Yukari go to the hospital as representatives from "Class 3" to greet Kouichi ("Class 3", as in "grade 3, Class 3" specifically and not, for example, "Class 4" as in 3-4, etc—there are 5 in total). They fear whether or not he's the extra because of how suspicious his circumstance seems: a sickly kid who transferred into school from Tokyo, and into *their* class at that? Well, after a shallow yet very cautious and foresighted conversation full of trap-questions and setups, Kazami starts to say something but shies away—then Izumi, as Yukari doesn't seem up to it either—gulps before putting on a straighter face than her peers, welcoming Kouichi personally and getting him to shake her hand with rather sly hospitality. However, Kazami and Yukari, as well as Izumi herself look pretty worried during the handshake: if Kouichi *is* the extra, that means Izumi literally just touched the curse. And even as Izumi's fear turns to surprise at recognizing—not that his hand is warm—but that his hand feels familiar, the other two are still concerned for other reasons. Izumi asks if he's "sure" he wasn't ever in Yomiyama previously...because he says he was always in Tokyo until recently despite her swearing she recognized his hand. But Kazami and Yukari are agape, taking that "are you sure you've never been to Yomiyama before" as a sign that she's suspecting he not only has but that he's the dead *extra*. They're worried out their wits for Izumi's safety.]

-The school year begins with resurrected Reiko as 3-3's assistant homeroom teacher, for obvious reasons, though the curse makes everyone believe she'd always had this role (as in, if she was never murdered) instead of realizing there should no longer have been an assistant homeroom teacher in the school. Also, the actual homeroom teacher Kubodera-sensei *wasn't* involved with Class 3-3 in any way before this school year...unlike the extra, Reiko, who was a student then an assistant teacher before dying from the 3-3 curse.

-On the first day of classes, April 1st, the class is taught the Shunning by Izumi and Kubodera-sensei, which operates under the guise of "the Class Rules" in order to be referenced without acknowledging the act itself. Mei Misaki is chosen as the nonexistent student for the year, likely at Izumi's behest, because Izumi would've decided this immediately on the first day of classes, before any group could vote on it. Non-existing someone with "Misaki" as a last name would possibly be an extra ward because Misaki was the first name of the original extra who caused the Calamity chain. Mei at this point is in Kouichi's later seat but takes the ruined back-left seat/desk (that the original Misaki likely had) as part of the Shunning, to strengthen the ward. But since the shunning deals with a spiritual phenomenon, it still needs to occur even if there's a seat missing. Incidentally, when that vacant seat is filled, it won't affect the status of the shunning as the shunning is a ward against dead individuals. A new student won't change the act of not acknowledging an extra's spirit.

-[Mei says it was on "May 1st" that she was first shunned, but fuck that: she's a liar as usual or screwed up her words like many characters in Another do, because the school year when the shunning starts—and the Japanese New Year—always starts on April 1st. It makes no sense why they would start shunning a month after classes have started. That just breaks the whole story. And if Yukari still died in late May (May 26th), why would everyone be so shocked at Kouichi speaking to Mei and Yukari dying afterwards...when Kouichi and Mei acknowledging each other would've basically been the same thing the class who, by Mei's logic, hadn't used the Shunning from April to May? Why would the Calamity *not* have started? When they already know it happens every month from April 1st to March 31st of next year? Mei is a bitch.]

-So, Mei was made nonexistent on April 1st. The first day of school and the Japanese New Year. Izumi also assigns classmates Junta, Yumi, and Takako as assistant countermeasurers around that time, and they don't complain. The Head Countermeasurer and nonexistent roles are presumed to suck for obvious, stress-related reasons, and no one in class seems to want either of them, but Izumi tolerates her side because she wants to help people as directly as she can in spite of the life-and-death responsibility she knows she took on. Mei knows she can't easily go back on her own decision since other students might not be ready to replace her if she quits. But she doesn't give a damn either way and goes along with whatever. Izumi obviously has respect for her classmate at this point, though Mei honestly doesn't really care about Izumi's life either way, as her actions will show. And besides that, always disappearing ruins any chance for an out-of-school relationship.

-Mei's sister Fujioka dies from the curse right soon after the school year starts. Mei doesn't intend to say a damned thing from the start. But of course, she figures this means the curse's Calamity has begun. Just to humor herself, she writes "Who's dead?" on her desk and looks with her death-seeing right eye to immediately know that it's Reiko.

-Sometime around May 1st, based on Izumi's later remarks, she'd found out about the principal planning to put Kouichi in their class or had found out about Kouichi's imminent arrival in general. She went to confront the new principal and warn him that putting Kouichi in the class would've really been a bad idea, telling the director everything he didn't know about the Calamity. But no teachers backed her, even her own. For some reason, the teachers want the students to sort their own mess out, per Takako's words. Most probably don't believe in the curse themselves; although they're willing to go along with what Izumi does as the Head of Countermeasures, they aren't trying to go out of that realm. Confronting the principle over a curse he doesn't take seriously is a different story. In the end, he didn't take anything she said seriously either, stating to her that it would be more "convenient for the school" to fill in that extra seat in Class 3-3, never minding some "curse".

-After Izumi's attempt, she knows this new transfer, Kouichi, could possibly be the extra and discusses this with class officers Kazami and Yukari. While normally only class officers would act as representatives toward students in Kouichi's condition...this is the curse we're talking about. So, Izumi goes with them to visit Kouichi, and Izumi remembers the feeling of his palm from somewhere as they're trying to check whether he's dead. They're all still ignoring Mei back at 3-3, so it wouldn't matter whether he was dead or not: he wouldn't have been able to cause the Calamity while the Shunning is in effect. This measure, which Izumi admits is rather baseless, is just their trying to possibly identify the extra if they've found him. And if his hands were abnormally cold, she...well, she could've done many things, but the easiest would've been to get Kubodera-sensei to remove him from class roster and welcome Mei back into the class as soon as she returned to Yomiyama Middle. The trap-questions revolved around "how long have you lived in Tokyo" and "have you ever been here in Yomiyama" and the like because of fact #5: the extra was always, to some degree, involved with Yomiyama Middle's Class 3-3. (Prior to the tragedy, Kouichi was living in Tokyo with his father and attending middle school there, going back to his grandparents' in Yomiyama when his father went to India after his mother's death). Besides that vague question, Izumi doesn't antagonize Kouichi about the Class 3-3 issue at all as she presumably wanted to wait until he'd recovered from his pneumonia to burden him. Either that or the handshake took her mind off her objective completely.

-[Concerning this in general, why Izumi didn't immediately tell Kouichi about the situation with Class 3-3...I guess it doesn't really matter why Izumi left Kouichi out of the loop, whether it was for concern for health or shock after shaking his hand, but she did take full blame for not having told him then and blamed herself pretty hard—we can't say that she's "not" being unreasonable with her self-criticalness, so we can't say for sure that she really never did consider the fact that Kouichi was sick either. But in either case, she felt personally responsible for what happened, and there's no point in trying to write her blame off as entirely unnecessary.

One thing we know for sure is that *as of their handshake*, neither her nor Kazami or Yukari's minds were on the rules. Even though something might've happened off-screen, Yukari's and Kazami's unwillingness to tell Kouichi anything follows along with evidently not wanting to tell him anything in the hospital out of fear of accidentally breaking the seal (Yukari, to Kouichi about saying "anything at all": "Izumi would yell at us."). As for Izumi herself, the only thing to possibly say other than forgetting as of the handshake and never intending to say anything at all for reasons concerning his health is that she just forgot to tell in general—but that's an extremely far-fetched assumption to me when they're speaking on the topic the entire time and Izumi immediately tries to seek him out and make sure he understands the rules "clearly" on day 3 (implying she felt he'd known about them before [with her assistants supposedly...assisting her]), and making her anger at Yuuya's and Yukari's contradiction understandable).

So really, the explanation is probably "both". But more so Izumi was concerned for Kouichi's health, as it's custom to avoid revealing breaking news to hospital patients with fragile conditions like Kouichi, along with the fact that Izumi tried to tell him about the rules as soon as she saw him staring at Mei's desk and breaking the seal on the curse.]

-Since Mei continues to say nothing, Class 3-3 and Izumi thinks everything is going well. Yet, it's pure coincidence that no one else has died that April: Fujioka just happened to be that one specific 3-3 related (as Mei's sister) victim for the month. What Mei's doing now is basically what those negligent rich dudes who want to cut profit losses from their mechanical equipment or faulty buildings do with hiding inspection results, letting whoever has to die later, die later. Only she just has nothing to gain from her negligence; she doesn't want to acknowledge anything about Fujioka because it's simply too shocking and sad to her, and she's feeling pessimistic and angry about what she perceives can't be done, even knowing Reiko is the extra. The thing is...she's undermining Izumi by not telling Izumi anything. Izumi volunteered to be the Head of Countermeasures, so it's her responsibility to decide what to do, most likely along with Kubodera-sensei and Chibiki. Though the Calamity can't be stopped with shunning once it's started, something Mei knows as she knows the Calamity continued with Fujioka in April after the shunning started, there are still other methods of stopping the extra aside from killing them: something Mei still hadn't thought of. Basically, from now, she's putting dozens and dozens of potential lives on hold unless she can figure out how to stop the extra herself. But she's not actively trying to figure this out either.

-About a month after Fujioka's death and the hospital visit, Mei still doesn't say a damned thing about her twin sister because it was "so sad" that she "didn't want to believe it" (*even though she mentions not long later that her close "cousin" died to Kouichi in late April before even Yukari's early death, which is **still** admitting someone close to you died from the curse early in spite of the Shunning. Guess clueless*

*Kouichi-kun was the only one worthy of that knowledge.*). But she *does* decide to talk to Kouichi over and over again when she agreed not to as part of the Class Rules, naturally earning everyone's justified distrust/ire. Izumi, unfortunately absent the first day Kouichi decides he can start school, has no chance of stopping Kouichi's actions as she can't inform him of the Class Rules when no one else in 3-3 is even trying to.

-Some days later, Izumi didn't notice and wasn't aware of any wrongdoing from Kouichi. Kouichi literally slammed the door on his classmates Naoya and Yuuya in order to speak to Mei in private, but neither of them mentioned this to Izumi for whatever reason. Actually, no one has mentioned anything regarding Kouichi and Mei to Izumi, though Naoya, Yuuya, and Yukari have each now seen him going to Mei.

-Likely the next day, Izumi is wary of Kouichi and catches him as he's looking over at Mei's desk. When she confronts him outside of class, she then starts to tell him about the Class Rules that he has to follow. Of course, being in 3-3 and thus bound by the Class Rules herself means she can't acknowledge Mei's existence. But there's a loophole that can be taken advantage of, regarding informing others of 3-3's shunning without acknowledging the shunning.

-[In short, this loophole is in that you aren't acknowledging the shunned if you don't "know" or "say" they actually exist. You can even acknowledge they might exist, so long as you aren't acknowledging their presence as someone who's signed up in Class 3-3.

So, if Izumi were to have informed Kouichi of the situation, her immediate wording might've been similar to this:

*"There's a curse in this school that occurs every year. The curse is basically [XXX] every year for Class 3-3 (so he knows the danger is for real and now). So, the solution to that curse is something called "The Shunning." The Shunning is a countermeasure against the curse, basically doing [XXX] to establish a curse sealing that makes it so [XXX] (so he knows what they're doing). Now, let's pretend there exists a student who might look something like...*

*...I don't know...*

*...let's say [XXX]... (not acknowledging they exist; a hypothetical).*

*So say, if there was someone like that, what we'd do in that instance is [XXX], and if something like this were to come up—because, you know, the curse is real: I can show you the records—people would die if*



*you acknowledged the shunned. They would have volunteered to be shunned for their safety and everyone else's. You would have to basically pretend a person like that didn't exist, just as they'd pretend you didn't. And the more you violated this rule, the more likely the curse would take effect and people would start dying."*

With this wording, Izumi isn't acknowledging Mei's existence at all if you look closely. She's only using suppositories. She isn't "admitting" to anything. In fact, if Izumi were to have said this in the hospital, she might've made it even clearer for him, working with the same loophole.

*"So say, **if this person was sitting in the far left for example**, what we'd do in that instance is avoid that desk, and..."*

Though variation #2 wouldn't work by the time Kouichi's looking at the desk and acknowledging it himself, if he doesn't know who Mei exactly is or what she looks like (she could employ any hypothetical that conveys Mei as the shunned, even if it doesn't exactly describe Mei's characteristics), Izumi can still do variation #1 of the loophole and get Class 3-3's situation through to Kouichi.

We know that Izumi knows she's bound by the rules not to acknowledge Mei. But since Izumi was still prepared to try and that confident and good of a speaker in general, we can say for certain that she was prepared to work around acknowledging Mei this way as she informed Kouichi.]

-However, right before she can inform him of the rules, Yuuya and Yukari stop her and bring her aside, telling her that Kouichi's already spoken to Mei. Now Izumi's pissed and snapping at her assistants spoke (this reaction is how we know Yuuya, Naoya, and Yukari didn't tell her this earlier). She realizes she can't talk to Kouichi about the Calamity and what they're doing at all, because even in employing the loophole, she'd be acknowledging Mei as someone Kouichi would now *know* is being shunned as she.

--[More specifically: Because Kouichi knows about Mei, any attempt at discussing the rules with him, no matter how Izumi could try to talk around breaking the seal, would break the seal. Since he knows and has acknowledged Mei, even hypothetically telling him about a shunning that 3-3 might undertake would reveal something. She wouldn't have to acknowledge Mei, or even that a shunning exists, for Kouichi to get what's happening. So, that's not the pitfall. Kouichi would've already acknowledged Mei was being shunned if she told him earlier, so that's not the pitfall, so long as he agreed to do it as well.

The pitfall is that by speaking of this situation, in any terms, Izumi would be acknowledging Mei as someone Kouichi would, again, *now know is being shunned* as she spoke. Had Izumi told him this in, per se, the hospital, Kouichi could've gotten the message without getting the reference. And when he found out later, he would've just shunned Mei.

But in a case like this, Izumi is inadvertently letting Kouichi know at that moment that there is a student to be shunned by him per Class 3-3's rules, and that this student is the one no one is speaking to. Per Class 3-3's rules.]

Accordingly, this means, she was never going to just bust through the seal once in order to inform Kouichi. Though, why would she?

-[Well, the Calamity will always start at an unknown time—if *not* held at bay by an effective countermeasure such as the Shunning. So, even if someone in the class broke the seal and stayed on track with ignoring Mei from then on, the curse shouldn't have logically taken effect unless the seal kept getting broken, which is exactly what Kouichi was allowed to do, thanks to them.

Even if Izumi messed up the loophole in explaining to Kouichi, getting the rules through his head before the curse took effect was in the end a much better alternative than what she was seeing at the time: Kouichi overly curious and overly-obsessed with her nonexistent student.

Despite this, Izumi isn't a gambler when it comes to something like others' lives. She worries that the next time the seal is broken, the Calamity may begin so doesn't want to risk speeding it up herself or triggering it herself. Since lives are on the line and she's in the moment without hindsight, she's not willing to use that "any time before the Calamity begins, you can break the Shunning" rationale, so Izumi's going to tell Kouichi about the Class Rules without acknowledging Mei via loophole until Yuuya and Yukari tell her he knows about Mei. At that point...Izumi doesn't know how *not* to avoid breaking the seal herself because of the above paradox, and she's too concerned for her classmates to even think of doing so."

Of course, in hindsight, it would've been better from 3-3's point of view if she'd just bit the bullet and told Kouichi what she was going to tell him. Though, if she'd known the curse wouldn't have started

until Yukari, she would've tried to stop him then. But as far as the canon, even as she saw Kouichi in full cuck mode, leaving her, Yuuya, and Yukari to follow Mei, she realized she couldn't do anything about it.]

-The next day, and still in May, Kouichi broke the seal again with Yukari as he got ready to walk him home in the rain. She told him not to say the name "Mei" again, without actually saying it herself, which was good...but she didn't have any way to tell him why, for the same reason as Izumi.

-The next-next day (not literally), he broke it once again by going up to look for Mei on the rooftop before Naoya called him, saying something about "Izumi looks pissed" (lately-speaking, from the other day; she wasn't right there) and "not to mess with things that don't exist"...meaning Naoya broke the seal again himself.

-Finally, the next-next-next day (not literally, but the scenes jump like it is), we're near the end of May. In class, Kouichi very likely skipped out on his exam to follow Mei who very likely skipped out on *her* exam. Meanwhile, Izumi was on the far side of the classroom taking hers and either didn't notice him leave or did—and she most likely wouldn't have been able to drag him back without breaking the seal; Kouichi would know why she'd be trying to stop him and would want to see Mei unless she spelled everything out to him. Minutes after he leaves, Yukari dies. Now, everyone thinks Mei and Kouichi are at fault for what happened. Mei for breaking the seal of silence to ward off the curse (so there was one less student) and Kouichi for being the new student and adding back in the missing seat that ignored Mei was supposed to drop, along with talking to Mei over and over. Izumi knows Kouichi's mere addition to 3-3 didn't cause anything since the Shunning doesn't fail when a seat is added. But it's his meddling with Mei that made things go from bad to worse in her mind, something that he couldn't have known due to unfortunate circumstances, but something that Mei could've prevented on her own, either by avoiding Kouichi entirely or reporting him to a non-3-3 authority over "harassment" or the like.

*--At this point, we get two branches of asininity. The "truths" and the "what-ifs". These two clashing perspectives have actually been going since the start, but they become very apparent now and will continue until the story's end. You'll be able to recognize them without having to have them labeled every time.*

1. Truth: The class seats were already full from the start, and Izumi took care of that with Mei's cooperation, reducing the number by one. But it was actually *the faculty seat that was added*. The assistant homeroom-teacher Ms. Mikami's. Aka, Reiko's. A seat for only 3-3 that was apparently removed and never refilled after Reiko's death. So, there was always one extra seat unaccounted for.

Even if Mei hadn't spoken to Kouichi, someone would've died because Mei hadn't warned anyone about the Calamity starting earlier than expected that calendar year (it had from January to begin), in April with Fujioka. So, no one suspected Reiko or anyone outside of class, and no one suspected a faculty or family member at all.

2. The what-if is what everyone thought at this point *but* Mei. Everyone but Mei thought the Calamity hadn't started until Mei broke the seal with Kouichi. This includes Izumi. And this means, they never considered the extra seat, as they never ever knew things were not A-OK. Izumi might have known who the real extra was right before she died, but none of the other students who died in the curse could have known that it was Reiko. Because of this, everyone thinks the Calamity stems from Mei's talking to Kouichi and Kouichi's being the extra student who raised the seat number from -1 to full.

--No one other than Mei, Kouichi, Chibiki, and possibly Izumi just before her death are aware of the "truths", so the students operate under their "what-if" beliefs and blame Kouichi and Mei both indiscriminately. And many think one of them might be the extra. Back on May 1st, Naoya states the fact that the Calamity can begin is strange because 3-3 had, unusual for the time, a perfect number of desks as of the start of classes. As in, a student for every desk and no apparent extra. That was, Izumi replied, until the principal decided to add in Kouichi; spiritually, they now had an extra student and one more seat than the class roster should've naturally had. This is on top of his just being added in a month after classes started, which due to not knowing about Fujioka, led the class to believe the Calamity could start a month late (which isn't wrong if the seal fails a month in). But because of his warm hands, and more importantly because he said he was never from Yomiyama and had no siblings (from Yomiyama; the dead wouldn't be aware that these were trap-questions), she felt he wasn't the extra. She never doubts him (and indeed likes him, considering living on her own to be with him in Tokyo, making Junta angry), but Yukari's death, followed by Ayano's near-death talking to Kouichi and Takeru's sister Sanae Mizuno's death as Kouichi's talking to her—those incidents stir the class. Takako in particular saw Yukari's end entirely while gazing out the classroom window from her rear seat, while Izumi and Naoya heard Kouichi over the phone with Sanae as she died.

People are sure that at this point, merely associating with Kouichi or Mei is contagious and hazardous, which is partly true in that he constantly breaks the shunning seal, but superstition and paranoia plays a large part in these reactions. In the end, to handle both issues at once, Izumi makes them both nonexistent. She doesn't believe either of them are the extra, but it's the best way to hopefully stop them from *really* getting tormented by the class (something that fails later, in Mei's case) and hopefully negate the broken seal with a stronger one as well. Though the Calamity has never stopped once it started, short of killing the two, that's really the best option any of them have at this point since Mei still isn't coming clean. Aside from that, this "double-shunning" has never been attempted before, and the logic behind it is rational (or would be, if Izumi knew the faculty seats were the actual issue). The

measure also reduces the number of seats again to -1, for what it's worth. (Nothing, but Izumi literally cannot know this. Only Mei does.)

-Then Ikuo dies a terrible death. Though, to be fair, he willingly breaks the seal. And he does it at Kouichi's request. At this point, the double-shunning is in full effect, so Ikuo's going rogue against Izumi. Though he speaks to Kouichi outside of class, he states that he doesn't care about Izumi's intentions and that the double-shunning isn't fair to Kouichi because there were many things he "must've wanted to know". His death right after referring to Mei is entirely coincidental...but it's karma anyway, for me. Not only is he endangering everyone's lives from his point of view, he's absurdly blaming Izumi for his own selfish decision and doesn't have any regrets at all. Besides, it wasn't as if she Izumi *liked* what she was doing. It wasn't as if she went home and laughed, "Heh heh...I got Kouichi good..." She could hardly *face* him after shunning him. And she was doing it for the safety of the class, and *everyone* knew they had to cooperate in order for them to *remain* safe. When she apologized to Kouichi in advance on behalf of the class before this, the remorse in her voice was obvious, compared to her usual tone. Most likely because, unlike Mei, Kouichi still doesn't know what's going on and there's no way he could.

-But then after Ikuo's death, Kubodera-sensei kills himself in class as a result of the Calamity (or rather, stress from it) after some incoherent rambling. Most of the class flees or is told to get out by Chibiki. And while Izumi's comforting Aya who's having a breakdown, she glares at Mei for what she perceives Mei caused. At this point, it's clear the double-seal isn't working, though. So Izumi lets Mei and Kouichi back in with everyone, even though she certainly doesn't have to, especially Mei—and no one would really care if she didn't. A while later, she tells them both to be careful of what people will still think of them because they were still responsible for the seal failing to begin with. She's also sure her class will accuse her of incompetence (though that isn't the case; it's mainly the fanbase who does so), yet more self-deprecation from her. And last, she says she can't bring herself to blame "*Kouichi*" because she doesn't consider *him* responsible for what happened. To her, he was just mixed up in things he couldn't have known about.

-Izumi doesn't scold Mei for not going along with everyone right there, but she glares at her again and pretty much has general ill-will towards her every time they speak afterward. She doesn't suspect Mei is the extra either but believes Mei started everything by not keeping quiet as she was supposed to. Or at least coming to her in private after school and saying she couldn't handle it so they could pick someone else. Naturally, Mei's attitude towards the Calamity is that it's, at best, an inconvenience. It's a shame too: the damned thing took her sister. Yet she jokes about it with Naoya, "It could very well be you, you know." smirking the entire time.

-[Even if she didn't think anything could be done about the Calamity, this shows the difference between Mei and Izumi's line of thinking: Mei doesn't want to begin searching for an answer until she meets Kouichi and sees his interest and relatives' connection to the Calamity. Even then, her curiosity is mild at best until Junta's death. Even though she definitely cared for her sister, she didn't care for her other classmates or their families and chose to have fun with her situation and gloss over Fujioka since she couldn't see a way to solve the curse. In short, she's a dangerous pessimist with no personal drive or care for others.

At the same time, Izumi, whose relative died almost two years earlier in 1996 made a commitment back then towards becoming Head of Countermeasures so she could not only save her classmates from the Calamity that year but stop the Calamity for good. Of course, her larger goal is certainly a pipe dream, but it may have been possible to thwart the Calamity to an extent with Mei's help, as preventing deaths from previous Calamities (using her eye) would theoretically stop students from returning as extras in future ones. That aside, her brother died a year and a half ago—Izumi has had this noble, yet very dangerous desire (the same desire that killed Reiko) for most if not all of that year and a half before finally becoming Head of Countermeasures in 1998; and she took her failures much more personally than Mei who didn't feel responsible for anything she knowingly did. As Izumi plummeted, she felt guilty not just towards herself but towards the entire class for letting them down, even though, ironically enough, they were never really against her like they were against Mei. Likely because they saw this clear contrast between the two in intentions, ambitions, and character.]

-Anyhow, after that scene, Izumi visits Chibiki as usual about countermeasures and any headway he's made on figuring out the Calamity. Presumably then, he informs her about an earlier meeting with Reiko/Ms. Mikami who suggested, based on her having mentioned "something saving her Class 3-3 of 1983 during a trip to Yomiyama Shrine in August" with Kouichi earlier that the Class 3-3 of 1998 should do the same thing in August. Though no one after 1983 had been able to replicate the Calamity stopping half a year earlier like back then, and though no one knew exactly what the connection was between the shrine and stopping the Calamity prematurely back then (which was 1983 3-3's Katsumi Matsunaga killing the extra then him and everyone else naturally forgetting about their existence), Reiko figured it was worth a shot and scheduled a visit to Yomiyama Shrine that was essentially mandatory for anyone still in the class—several students had left town after Kubodera-sensei's in-class suicide. Now, Izumi was going to go that shrine no matter what. However, Mei and Kouichi found out moments later when they spoke with Chibiki about 1983's class. Everyone was equally up-to-date, for now, unlike when no one told Izumi before that Kouichi was breaking the seal inhibited. Though, Reiko's visibly disturbed when she announces it as Ms. Mikami, knowing it isn't sure that this trip will do anything to help.

-Before the trip, though, Naoya calls Kouichi and Izumi for a meeting, having been told by Yuuya that his sister Tomoka (who he ratted to, though it didn't matter at that point as the Shunning was known to be

ineffective by then) knew the aforementioned Katsumi Matsunaga as a bar patron where she worked. Tomoka didn't know where Katsumi was, so Izumi suggested Kouichi ask Reiko for him as Reiko and Katsumi were both in Class 3-3. Kouichi is shocked because he realizes this, and he asks Reiko what she knows about what happened on that trip. But on that trip, the extra was killed, so Reiko can't remember much about it at all. She offers to take Kouichi and his friends to Katsumi, though, and either he or she tells the others so they can prepare, though Izumi tells Takako and Junta and takes them over to Kouichi's grandparents' house for when they leave. Here, we see the rather obvious but still lowkey attempts from Izumi to get close to Kouichi, who she's suddenly developed some feelings for—but aside from that, we should note everyone's attitudes here.

-[This day is important for two reasons. One, it's a welcome break from the despair and misery of the Calamity, and its setting at the beach is literally a safe-zone for the group, as they're out of Yomiyama.

But moreover, for Izumi, Junta, and Takako, and to an extent, Yuuya, Naoya, and Kouichi, this day is last bit of mental and emotional peace they'll ever have.

Junta will die before evening. Takako will become emotionally and, in a way, mentally broken from Junta's death. Yuuya will fare better than anyone, even Kouichi who only really suffers at all later on because of his attachment to Mei and his aunt Reiko. But the class trip certainly won't treat him kindly. And Naoya will have lost it with Kazami later on during the trip, admittedly snapping.

Izumi says they need a break from the constant depression, explaining the swimming gear she brought and possibly got Takako and Junta to bring despite the real reason they were going there: that Reiko figured Katsumi was staying nearby. But this is okay. Everyone else feels the same way and would rather not morn inside forever. More importantly, they were all there with Reiko to find Katsumi and learn how he stopped the curse. The beach fun was auxiliary, and for while they waited for him. So neither Izumi, nor Takako or Junta are shirking their responsibilities. It's just a doubly-positive situation at the moment.

However, when Junta dies, any sense of normality and calm that Izumi wanted to feel is essentially gone for good. More than ever, she frets and looks sullen, turns back to strictly doing countermeasures work, doesn't relax at all, and never, ever jokes again. Even when she remembers meeting Kouichi later on in her sleep, she doesn't focus on that with him later on for a second. She took Junta's death personally and realized that Takako took it even worse, becoming more unhinged and generally apathetic and hollow than before. Though Izumi held on emotionally and especially mentally, unlike the others, Junta's death and the past deaths on her watch, caring for Takako, Aya's ensuing death, and the death of Yumi's

brother, both of whom had been trying to escape the Calamity, got to her greatly. All of this happened just before the class trip to Yomiyama Shrine.]

-And last, towards the end, those left in 3-3 visit the shrine to pray off the curse. This includes Reiko who organized the trip in private. Most of Class 3-3 at this point blames Kouichi and Mei for the Calamity, while Izumi has started to recover her memories of Kouichi. She still doesn't remember anything after shaking his hand (namely, that he was in Yomiyama from Reiko's funeral), but she knows she met him in Yomiyama. Of course, he was obviously too young to be in Class 3-3 at the time, but one of his relatives still could've caused his death by falling victim to the Calamity. But for whatever road that'd lead down, his hands were still warm and Reiko wasn't presumed dead. If Mei had told Izumi that the Calamity began before she spoke with Kouichi (let alone that she knew the extra was Reiko), that might've triggered an epiphany in Izumi, especially considering she couldn't remember Kouichi until recently, knowing he was loosely connected to Class 3-3 as Reiko's nephew—but she didn't suspect Kouichi at this point either way. It's worth noting, though that neither Mei nor Izumi were too confident in the class trip—the same as Ms. Mikami. They also both found out around the same time that praying at the shrine really was pointless compared to killing the extra and stopping the curse. Although Izumi wasn't made privy of the tape Katsumi left in the old Class 3-3 before one of the 1980's classes switched to the current 3-3 room as a failed countermeasure, Yuuya showed her the tape soon after he, Mei, Naoya, and Kouichi had heard it at the shrine lodge, her being made privy to their outing by Yumi and then getting Yuuya to show it to her. (During Junta's death, Kouichi was the only one who heard a shell-shocked Katsumi remember and mutter where he'd hid the tape but only told Yuuya and Naoya because he feared for the countermeasurers' safety...so, I suppose the other two friends were expendable.) Before finding out Mei, she's down on herself for failing so badly as a countermeasurer. But she believes it's everyone's best shot at surviving at this point, so she plans to go along with it and hopes it works.

--Mei, I should note *again*, knows she can see whoever the extra is at any point in time with her all-seeing eye, and she still refuses to despite the mortal danger the remaining students are in, simply because she doesn't like how she looks with her eye-patch off (unless of course Kouichi-sama asks her too). Meanwhile, Izumi's stressing out about failing everyone's trust over a *draft* job. Not to say it's not a severely "important" draft job...but it's a draft job. One that no one wanted. Besides the earlier clues that Mei knew who the extra was, in addition to blatantly showing herself to Kouichi, "uncovered", and claiming he's not the extra, her hand twitches as soon as they've watched Katsumi's tape on killing the extra at the shrine lodge and Yuuya wonders whether the extra is there with them.

-During dinner, as soon as Naoya mentions to Yuuya, Mei, and Kouichi that he might know who the extra is, Izumi and Yumi, whose brother has died, look over from their nearby table. But Naoya notices and gives a vague answer when Kouichi asks who, about there "probably being a way to tell who it is". Because of that obvious dead-end and the stress and grief over everyone's deaths and her perceived



failure as Head of Countermeasure, Izumi then formally apologizes to everyone on the trip for being incapable of stopping them. Much to everyone's surprise as she declares herself "inept" and says she's "very sorry" for what's happened so far. By then, Mei's stopped eating: she's probably gathered what's going to happen. Because right after, Izumi also says Mei shares "some degree" of the blame, having started the Calamity when she broke the rules.

What? How dare Mei have to share "some degree of responsibility"! That Izumi, man. What a bitch!

--Now, Izumi still doesn't hate Mei at this point, but she's had it by the time Kouichi calls out Izumi despite the obvious blood on Mei's hands. Izumi bites her lip and looks away, continuing to talk to everyone until Naoya defends Mei. And though he asks Izumi what good blaming Mei will do now anyway, saying he doesn't buy what she's saying, he's quickly forced to stand down since he's just defending her to defend her. It's apparent to him at this point that Mei did cause the Calamity by violating the Shunning, and though that's obviously not the case, no one in the class can know otherwise and Izumi's logic is sound. All he can ask is what she expects Mei to do about it now. Izumi looks back at everyone, knowing she can't ask anything of Mei but to apologize. And so, that's what she asks. But this entire time, that's all she's really wanted: for Mei to accept her share of responsibility for what had happened and apologize. She's not imploring an apology, nor is she outright demanding one: Izumi's face at this point shows she's clearly just trying to reason with Mei. She's not glaring at all, as she ignores Naoya and Kouichi and speaks to Mei—personally.

[<http://i.imgur.com/WoonvSz.png?2>](<http://i.imgur.com/WoonvSz.png?2>) ("We've yet to hear one word of apology from her. Yet Misaki—the moment *you* were allowed to exist again, *you* carried on as if nothing happened....")

-Her tone has also changed. From the moment Izumi replied to Naoya's, "What do you expect her to do now?" with "...apologize." referring to Mei, she went from a general, vexed criticism of Mei towards her class, Kouichi, and Naoya, to an almost pleadingly honest tone as she tried to reason with Mei herself. Nothing Izumi's saying is unfair. But she's genuinely shocked when Mei coldly replies with, "There's no point," not even looking at her. [<http://i.imgur.com/TF8JtAr.png?1>](<http://i.imgur.com/TF8JtAr.png?1>)

--Now, does Izumi "**expect**" Mei to apologize here?

...

Of *course* she does. The look on her face and earnestness of her tone says it all. She isn't flat-out deriding Mei: she's simply telling Mei, again, *personally*, how what she's doing looks. All she truly wants from Mei right now, the *only* thing she's asking for, is a sincere, heartfelt apology to the class for letting them down. She doesn't think it's unreasonable. She doesn't think it's too much to ask of Mei at all, and that's why she feels that if she's straightforward and honest with Mei that Mei would be honest back. Admit her mistake and admit she cares.

-[Consider this: With all Mei did, all the people she let die, hardly showing concern, and all the people she put in danger, including Izumi...Izumi was well within her rights to demand more of Mei. And so was the rest of the class. Naoya, Yuuya, and Kouichi were really pathetic here to stick up for Mei as if Izumi was attacking her, when Izumi said nothing but the truth while Mei, meanwhile, lied to the three of them the entire time up until this point. Mei never intended to tell anyone who the extra was, first for apathetic, pessimistic reasons; later for fear that Kouichi would find out. She didn't even want to tell Izumi about Reiko for Kouichi's sake. And Mei wasn't going to tell Kouichi who the extra was (which is why she *constantly* stalled) until she took care of them, especially after seeing Katsumi's video, at which point she knew that killing Reiko would erase her revival from Kouichi's memory.

Mei threatened the lives of dozens of people, and her actions had already caused several to die. Yet Izumi knew that Mei's actions and the blood on her hands could never be wiped away. The most Mei could give was an honest sorry. So, that was what Izumi asked of her. And Izumi was willing to forgive her as best as she could, if Mei only apologized for the pain she'd caused everyone.

Once again, Izumi was well within her rights to demand whatever she wanted from Mei, and it *still* wouldn't have made up for what Mei did. But she didn't even try to hold Mei to anything harsh, probably because she assumed Mei, like most of the class, didn't take the curse seriously until Yukari's death (though, yes, she still should've asked Mei why she did that). But that didn't matter because Mei violated the seal and, worse, hardly seemed to care while she was doing it and after Izumi, out of her own kindness, allowed Mei back in with everyone. (Because Izumi *didn't* have to unshun her.)

She literally asked for *a word of apology*. For Mei to "apologize". Something she'd just done from deep down mere seconds ago. It was all they both could do, and she knew it. All she wanted was for Mei to do the same.

In other words, Izumi was too kind for her own good. Her trustworthiness led to her being betrayed several times, and her harsh exterior was hardly extensive at all: in reality, she was a very kind, caring, and fair person who wanted the best for every one of her peers. But that shouldn't have extended to Mei. What Izumi *asked* of Mei was the most lenient "consequence" possible for Mei's callous actions. It was so lenient that the only possible argument against it was "what's the point?" and yet, that argument was still played out by Mei and the boys, as if Izumi was putting Mei to the fire.

It wasn't as if she'd told Mei... "become my personal slave" or something. Which, to be perfectly blunt, wouldn't have begun to make up for what Mei did. A lifetime of servitude versus several lives isn't comparable at all, and neither would've been allowing every student in the class to literally beat her down until they *felt* like stopping. I personally would've held Misaki to the fire. At the **very** least, Izumi could've asked her *why* she broke the seal so nonchalantly, hardly seeming to regret her actions at all—and Mei probably would've mentioned Fujioka somewhere along the line the more her and the class pressed. But an **apology**?

Even *Mei* knew what Izumi was asking was downright trivial. Izumi didn't question Mei's intentions; she assumed the best of her peer: simple naiveté, and her response to Naoya showed how even though she viewed Mei as partly responsible, she never viewed Mei's intent as malicious. Yes, Mei should've apologized for not taking her job seriously—but what Izumi just didn't get was why Mei never seemed to care about what she'd done at all even after the Calamity began. And despite Mei's crass reply to this statement, it's evident by her body language that the sincerity in Izumi's trivial request compared to all the awful things she'd done—just got to her. It made her slightly angry, in truth: what Mei felt at that moment is that Izumi shouldn't have been asking for so little. In a way, it was almost insulting to her, and to the others who'd died, just asking for an "apology".

-Well, Mei follows the "There's no point" with "Would apologizing serve any purpose? If it will, I'll do it." (probably the first instance of her actually lashing out) and Izumi can't believe it. Mei says this line in the face of all their classmates' deaths and their relatives' deaths, Kubodera-sensei's suicide, and the terrible end they'd both seen Junta meet only days ago. And Izumi had the nerve to not argue with (or fuck up) Mei right then but just keep calm and wait for Mei to give her honest answer? Even when she'd never gotten smart with Mei like this—*ever*?

Izumi is *such* a basic bitch, I **swear**....

--In all seriousness, let's explain the above in more detail. This scene alone is extremely important in developing both Mei and Izumi. In this regard, it's more or less the most important scene in the story. Specifically there's a couple really major things to note in Mei and Izumi's characters from their exchange here. One is that this points out the source of Izumi's frustration with Mei. Mei is acting as though she's above everything that's happened, and while apologizing is a bit late at this point, it is an act of genuine compassion that her class would want. Had Mei apologized earnestly, earnestly said she was sorry for breaking the seal, this ending might've turned out differently. Even if she never admitted a thing about Fujioka. But Izumi doesn't "hate" Mei here; she just hates this aspect of Mei, which is perfectly fair since it is—to be cliché—"all Mei's fault". Izumi should hardly have to blame herself at all. The class certainly doesn't. But she blames herself *more* than Mei. She can't hate Mei if we see that here in the end, all she wants is for Mei to say sorry.

Secondly, Mei should've apologized and any reasonable person would've in that situation, but Mei has a couple aspects from her headstrong character that explain her reaction. One, she doesn't want to apologize because she feels it's pointless. And from an efficiency standpoint of just "taking care of the extra," something she'd decided she had to do alone at that point, there was no need to apologize. Of course, Mei didn't calculate needing her classmates' trust later on, but apologize was reasonably pointless at the time if seen through the robotic lens that Mei typically saw life through.

However, we saw that even though she still had an uncaring front, Junta's death visibly troubled her. While it isn't 100% assured to have prompted her investigation with the group any more than Fujioka's death (since she just happened to be in the area when Kouichi, Yuuya, and Naoya started to search), we can conclude that she really didn't feel the need to apologize because she thought it wasn't important. As in, apologizing to the class wouldn't bring anyone back. She was more focused on trying to stop the Calamity when she got the chance, away from Kouichi, but she also felt apologies were worthless in the face of what the Calamity had done to her class. She didn't like admitting that belief, but she had to as she was confronted by Izumi, which is why it took her a moment to actually face her peer. Right before her answer, we can see that Izumi's words got to her. They'd cut deep indeed, and Mei knew she was right—which is why she couldn't deny a thing Izumi said—but she'd already made her up mind all the same. She didn't want to face what Izumi was saying, and she likely wouldn't have been able to, no matter how Izumi's tone was...but she didn't have to apologize in her eyes. Not aloud, to her classmates. She could right things, she felt, by actually righting them. That reasoning, though sincere, misses the point of apologies. But she might've had a point with it if the situation wasn't, one way or another, completely her fault in the first place. That the past students and relatives and died, and that the current ones, including Izumi and herself, were still in immediate danger. In all honesty, however, Izumi probably took Mei's "there's no point" colder than Mei intended it. That's understandable in the

moment—regardless, Mei definitely sealed it with, “Would apologizing serve any purpose? If so, I will.” She earned every bit of ire she got later by needlessly throwing out that disingenuous, *sarcastic* rhetorical question. The fact that Izumi didn’t respond to that comment—instead waiting for Mei to cut the childishness and just accept her share—is telling. She should’ve gotten angrier. With this hindsight bias, I would’ve slapped a bitch at that point.

--Briefly stated, as Mei and Izumi are staring each other down, Kouichi tells Mei not to apologize. But Izumi’s had it, though. She’s at this point so jaded from the deaths Mei caused and she failed to stop that she’s too tired to outburst like normal, let alone with Kouichi. Moreover, Izumi really just wants to see what Mei will say. She’s just hoping Mei will come around and express some remorse. She’s blaming Mei for the wrong reason, but her thought process is perfect from what she and the class know. They can’t know any otherwise without Mei’s convenient gifts of luck and fortune, and Mei caused and will continue to cause everyone’s deaths anyway by keeping hidden the knowledge that those gifts gave her.

-But while Izumi waits on her reply, Mei overrides Kouichi and says, very obviously *insincerely*, “I’m sorry. It’s all my fault.” If Mei meant anything she’d said, Izumi would’ve accepted it and probably wouldn’t have attacked her later. But since Mei just wanted Izumi to get off her case, she wasn’t honest at all. She’d wanted Izumi to relent and take back what she said seconds ago, but Izumi was simply waiting. Regardless, Mei wasn’t going to apologize like Izumi hoped she would. In her eyes, she knew what she had to do (to Reiko) was irrelevant to apologizing, and she said whatever she thought would end the conversation.

And it did: Izumi just turned away.

-That was Mei’s clearest chance. After this scene, Izumi pretty much gave up on her. Because for Izumi, was her one attempt at extending the personal “olive branch of forgiveness,” so to speak. Izumi’s comments had nothing to do with the class; they were her own personal feelings. Mei, though, tells Kouichi “thanks for standing up for her,” which sums up rather solidly how shallow, frozen, and selfish she is. Despite this, Izumi still doesn’t actively “hate” her at this point, and she still doesn’t think Mei’s the extra.

-Meanwhile Naoya becomes increasingly irrational about who the extra is and interrogates Kazami who he thinks is the culprit before accidentally pushing him off the balcony when they fight. The fall doesn't kill Kazami but had to have messed him up in other ways because he finds Yuuya when he walks back in and relays the event before Yuuya tells him about Katsumi's tape which he steals and figures from the conclusion that it's worth killing everyone present to find out who the extra is.

-At the same time, Izumi who was thinking on the balcony about those recent events goes inside to discuss Mei with Takako. Her reflecting has brought up a nagging question that she's having trouble sorting out. She mentions to her friend that she'd seen someone who looked just like Mei back in elementary school (Fujioka), though she never got to know her well because they were in different classes. She only knew that they always referred to her as Misaki. For Takako's sake, Izumi's never hearing "Fujioka" is incredibly unlucky, because when Takako asks if "Mei" (Fujioka) wore an eye-patch over her left eye, Izumi replied no...but then realized that Mei lost her eye when she was four....

--Of course, this doesn't directly tie into her being the extra, and Izumi isn't one to go off conjectures. But the now-insane old lady lodge-keeper Keiko starts attacking students around this time, and Izumi runs out, leaving an unstable Takako in her room when she hears Kouichi screaming after he discovers one student who'd been stabbed. At this point, Takako is mulling over Mei possibly being the extra, and when she's attacked by Keiko moments later, barely escaping, she justifies it alone that Mei had to have been the cause, stating Mei had both her eyes and was then killed in elementary school before being reincarnated and not having her left eye reform properly. Something that makes no sense both from a Class 3-3 Calamity standpoint and in the context of Izumi stating right at Takako that Misaki lost her eye when she was four. Unfortunately, if Keiko hadn't attacked when she did, Izumi would've probably figured out about Fujioka, either with Takako or by asking Mei herself. As things stood, there was no time.

-From here, of the main cast, Izumi, Naoya, Mei, and Kouichi realize that random people at the lodge they're residing in are being attacked, a fire has been started, and Izumi hears a scream from Takako (attacked by Keiko), running up with Kouichi and Mei to check in her and telling Naoya to stay behind and call #119 (#911) for one of the stabbing victims. When the three see Takako and Izumi's shared room slashed with blood everywhere, Izumi freaks out for the first time, fearing that Takako's one of the unknown attacker's victims. She's too irrational to do anything but follow Kouichi and Mei, worried out of her mind. Because of this, Kouichi intuitively takes over Izumi's leadership role. Yuuya runs into Kouichi; he has no idea what's going on or where Takako is, but he informs Kouichi of Kazami's actions and behavior. Kouichi is of course shocked to hear the news and says the group should split up after Naoya regroups with them, telling Kouichi that he left the injured student from earlier with another classmate who heard the screams and ran to help. Presumably, Izumi is back in her and Takako's room or nearby, still looking for her with Mei, or with Mei watching. That or Izumi's rather

lackadaisically following Mei as Mei stays a bit behind Kouichi. But likely the former as the two aren't seen for a bit here. Kouichi, in that case, is returning from the room with the stolen tape, warning two students along the way before getting back to Mei and Izumi. Yuuya and Naoya go off together to warn others but run into Keiko who's grabbed a butcher knife and scream.

Mei is now in the figurative backseat, waiting for her chance to kill Reiko—alone. There's no denying her determination, but her stupidity in not telling anyone Reiko is the extra or at the very least not waiting until more and more people start dying to attack Reiko is very, very unfortunate. And now, Izumi's only focused on what could've happened to Takako. Essentially, she's spaced out and not fully with Kouichi here. She still sticks with him and Mei, but only superficially. Obviously, she can't just break away to look for Takako—yet—but her best friend is all she's thinking of. Despite this, though their minds aren't entirely in the moment, both of them noticed Yuuya and Naoya from the lower level, and they start off to find them...

-...until Takako shows up, covered in blood. Izumi probably didn't see her holding her bloody weapon, stolen from Keiko during their scrap (either a steel knife sharpener or, more likely, a steel skewer). She's so overjoyed that Takako's apparently safe, chances were she didn't notice the weapon at all. If she did, which didn't seem likely...she was too happy to care. She doesn't even regard Takako's very...broken "Found you." (And, yes, that was directed towards Izumi.) Although Izumi knows Takako's not entirely...sane now, and indeed she'd been sounding this...out of it since Junta's death ("Our Misaki lost her eye when she was four years old!" ... "...*what...?*"), she never expected that to precursor Takako's next move. She only knew that Takako was bandaged and covered in blood. When Izumi sees Takako, she notably snaps out of her worry (she was never in an actual slump, however), forgets about Naoya and Yuuya for the moment, and runs up to Takako, placing her hands on the girl's shoulders and asking her if she was okay. From just this, it's pretty clear( and only natural) that, as long friends, Izumi has stronger feelings for Takako than Kouichi so far, something that won't change by the end. Feelings that I could certainly go into more, but that would require backtracking, and this Mei/Izumi relationship draws on Takako's final scenes well enough.

-So, Izumi runs up to Takako and asks if she's okay, her hands on Takako's shoulders. But with the self-justifications running through Takako's head, she her friend pushes her aside almost immediately (after saying Izumi can't live without her) and tries to kill her scapegoat Mei, as I would, before she's knocked back by Kouichi who takes her weapon. She retreats to the microphone room to broadcast her kill-Mei message in a few moments, confusing Mei for Fujioka who she saw in Elementary school but never knew about was Mei's twin, and confusing Mei's prosthetic eye as Fujioka's "undead eye". This is despite the fact that Izumi told her earlier, Mei lost her eye when she was 4: Takako is stupid.

-[Though, to be fair, Takako likely took drastic measures after being attacked by Keiko because she didn't want anyone else to die and blamed Mei for breaking the seal, evidenced by her agreeing with Izumi about it at their table. Her "I can't live without you, just like you can't live without me" from her perspective means she wants to kill Mei so she and Izumi can live together in peace.]

-Anyhow, after that incident, Izumi is on the ground and in literal shock. Though, she was dumbfounded from the moment Takako strangely said, "If you had died too, I don't think I could go on." She gathers herself again after a moment when Kouichi asks her how Takako knew about "sending the dead back to dead," what she said before attacking Mei. Izumi then revealed their having looked at the tape after Yuuya showed them, though she didn't reveal Takako's logic for implicating Mei because there's no way she could've known Takako's highly irrational and incoherent reasoning based on their conversation earlier. Instead, she simply said Takako was mentally unstable after Junta's death: that in itself is proof—though it's not really needed—that Izumi wasn't suspecting Mei up until now. But then, Izumi says she has to find Takako and stop her because she's definitely snapped and there's no telling what'll happen to her or what she'll do if she isn't calmed down.

-Izumi runs away despite Kouichi's attempted warning that it's too dangerous, but they both stop when Takako suddenly announces over the lodge's intercom that everyone should kill the "extra", Mei, because of her terrible logic. That's around the time Izumi either jets over to Takako or hears the 3-3 students who now want to kill Mei. If it's the former, she can't hear her peers if she's far away, and she's probably is too adrenalized to hear them if she's taking off after Takako finishes. If it's the latter, she turns around and sees Reiko (as her persona the professor Ms. Mikami) running over to Mei, so she assumes Mei and Kouichi are in good hands. I doubt it's the latter since that's unreasonable to think: really, Izumi was probably running for Takako before Takako finished her message.

-With Izumi gone, there's no one to really stick up for Mei except for Ms. Mikami/Reiko who hears the message and gets knocked out in return for trying to defend Mei from one of the students. The fact that even some of the class believed Takako is pretty pathetic. To start, everything Takako said are things she would've said from the beginning if she really wanted to implicate Mei. But still, only the mentally unstable (Yumi) or just plain stupid (Yukito/Kenzou) believe her *and* try to attack Mei in the first place. Yes, most of the class did believe Mei was the extra after Takako's message, but it didn't take much besides Reiko's "You can't kill your own classmate" and Kouichi running off with Mei to convince most of them to abandon Takako's effort and try to get out of there. Izumi undoubtedly would've done a better job than Reiko at convincing people to calm down, partly because she knew Takako on a closer level, and 3-3 knew this. But without her, Kouichi ran with Mei (leaving Reiko unconscious on the floor) and evaded several murder attempts, first seeing Yumi die in a horrible fashion (thanks to Kouichi pulling Mei away) and then Takako in an even worse fashion, after Takako spared Kouichi's life from an easy kill—having stabbed his arm from behind as he sat—only because Izumi appeared to like him. Takako's



death was incredibly gruesome and Mei was completely frozen as she witnessed it. The curse claimed everyone who came after Mei, and when Izumi discovered Takako who'd run off after the announcement, she saw a bloody hanging corpse with an anguished face, a broken neck, and probably worse. And she sees Mei, who'd stood up, with the bloody skewer in her hand.

-At this point, Izumi has *really* had it. It makes no sense how Mei could've killed Takako with the steel sharpener, and Takako's neck wasn't torn by the ceiling cables she hanged herself from. And so, Izumi goes by what she sees: Takako has been hung and Mei has Takako's weapon. It isn't the fact that Mei has Takako's weapon that's important—it's the fact that Mei *has* Takako's weapon. Takako obviously wouldn't have wanted to kill herself, and Mei obviously couldn't have done *that* to Takako with the weapon she was holding: so it must've been the Calamity that killed Takako. Whether Izumi's found out about Yumi or not, the only thing she can assume is Mei is responsible once again. The point is, Izumi up until this point had been completely rational. But along with the other deaths (from Mei) weighing heavily on her, when she sees her friend dead from the curse (from Mei), and in *that* manner, she mentally melts. And with Mei right in front of her with the knife, covered in Takako's blood, she blames Mei fully for this.

--Izumi doesn't blame herself even partly this time. But she's not as crazed as the other students—she just deeply wants to murder Mei, at this point firmly believing her to be the cause of everyone's misery. Which is true: everyone but Keiko/Kazami's victims and Aya/her family and Yumi's brother died over Mei, and Mei started this chain, so...

-...she mutters that she will kill Mei, but the ceiling collapses from the fire, separating her and Kouichi from Mei right then. Now, we know Izumi picks up Takako's weapon, so what the hell was Kouichi doing? Did they just glare at each other before going separate ways or what? The dumbass could've explained everything to him—but really, that might not've worked. Not from his mouth. Even though Izumi's claiming Mei as the extra now that Takako's died, she'd be trying to avenge Takako anyhow. Mei being the extra is half Izumi's worry and half (mostly) an excuse so she can kill Mei in revenge for her "killing" Takako. Izumi has already heard Kouichi say "it's not what you think," and she didn't give a damn or even try to listen. And while I'd normally call that a serious character flaw, Kouichi has proven himself unwilling to budge on Mei no matter what the situation, and Mei just stared at Izumi before running away (perhaps if she actually spoke the flashback was on her mind about killing the extra, Izumi would've known). No, I'm not "forgiving" Izumi for wanting to kill Mei, but Izumi should've hated Mei like this *long* ago instead of trying to be empathetic.

-While Izumi's looking for Mei again, she comes across poor Kyoko, quite possibly the nicest girl who was stabbed in the back, and Aki who Kyoko was trying to help escape, stabbed in the neck after checking to see if her friend was alive then running off—yep, Tomohiko mentally checked out and killed them both. Seconds later, Izumi finds him about to kill Kouichi but blunts him in the head with the skewer, insulting him quite justly for being hypocritical (essentially, he wanted to avenge Yukari...by killing Kyoko and Aki and Kouichi—and possibly others) before preparing to hit him a second time. She's stopped by their accompanying librarian, Mr. Badass-san (semi-sarcastic) who wants to protect him; but instead of trying to get her weapon back from him after he disarms her and throws her back, she realizes she was wasting time confronting him when she could've been finding another weapon and then finding Mei (not to say she knows Kazami is done for, but she knows he's incapacitated and Kouichi is safe). However, this running from Chibiki was not before beautifully deriding his hypocritical claims of wanting to "save students" when his job was literally him running away from the Calamity he started, only to research it privately from his librarian position while watching people murdered by the curse for decade after decade. If this wasn't Another, Izumi would've likely been well-off for that fantastic criticism. Luckily, Tomohiko bleeds out more slowly and painfully than if Izumi had killed him outright.

-Kouichi, bandaged and rested, has recovered from his injuries fighting Tomohiko and goes after Izumi who he knows is still after Mei (even though Chibiki told his ass to stay outside; maybe he told Chibiki this, but it wasn't shown). He manages to find them right in time to beg Izumi not to attack Mei. Izumi, of course, swings at him. Not with lethal intentions, but he dodges it anyway and tries to tell her she's not the extra.

--The thing is, Izumi doesn't really know for sure. She suspects it *enough* but she can't be convinced for certain at all. So, Mei's being the extra—it's possible, but not a matter of course. After all, Izumi doesn't really know *who* the extra is yet at all, let alone whether or not it's Mei. And Kouichi certainly doesn't know Mei's state from Izumi's point-of-view either. This is why she replies with: "If the Calamity isn't stopped after I kill her, then I'll agree with you!" before slamming him through a railing and knocking him out: she wants to end the Calamity, definitely...but she wants to kill Mei foremost. And if she has to plow through Mei before it's all over, whether Mei's the culprit or *not*, it's whatever. Izumi's viewed Mei as cursed for causing everyone else's deaths including Takako's. It's *strictly* revenge now, and Izumi unfortunately doesn't care whether or not Mei's the extra: to her, the worst case is that she'll kill Mei and then focus on the *real* extra. Because even if she didn't believe Mei was the extra, she'd still be trying to kill her. Is this wrong? Well, morally, yes. Logically, though? I can't blame Izumi there. Mei hasn't mentioned her crazy-eye's ability to see death, and neither has Kouichi, and they've literally told her nothing else. So, to Izumi, killing Mei wouldn't be some "drastic loss" that could affect the entire [5 students'] survival in the future. She has no way of knowing Mei's value at that point.

-Therefore, she nearly kills Mei several times after throwing Kouichi aside (note that she doesn't kill him though she easily could) and only fails due to Mei's consecutive guardian-angel fuel explosions knocking her down when she's about to kill Mei, then knocking her and Mei out for a few seconds (or dazing them; either way, immediately and awkwardly cutting to Mei getting up and trying to leave for Reiko because of trying to match the music's pacing), then an intervention by Kouichi at the end when he wakes up and dives on Izumi after she's recovered and prepared to stab Mei.

-[To be fully serious again, it's almost certain that Izumi's been targeted by the Calamity at this point, as the explosions occur around where she should've been and thwart her from killing Mei from the moment she runs into Takako. Keep this in mind...]

-When Kouichi intervenes a second time, we see more of Izumi's mindset. Though he says, "You're wrong about her," he says nothing else. Neither does Mei, who could've stood up for herself right then.

--Honestly, though, while Izumi wouldn't have unreasonably attacked Mei if she knew who the extra was and reasonably would've attacked Mei if she didn't, regardless of knowing or not (because she's livid at her best friend's death and Mei is responsible for all of this), Izumi's reaction if she actually told her the truth, even in apologizing, would've been much more unsure. It could've either ranged from running straight for Reiko, to not understanding why Mei kept everything to herself and trying to empathize with her, to hating her guts for never saying anything while people were dying around her, to just losing it in anger and outright attacking Mei unrestrained, to a combination of the last two, to not even believing Mei or wanting to believe her. With Izumi's mental state what it was, any of those would've been possible.

But for Mei, she absolutely didn't want to make things *worse*. Her two biggest reasons for not telling anyone anything this late were fear of Kouichi finding out (incredibly petty, and stupid as she told him where she was as she was about to kill Reiko) and not wanting to get on anyone's bad side worse than she already was. Maybe if Mei got on her knees, cried, and begged Izumi to forgive her, Izumi *might* have calmed down. But as Izumi was beyond enraged already, Mei didn't want to say anything even when their lives were in danger (either from Izumi or the explosions occurring around them), not only for fear of Kouichi finding out the truth about his aunt but for fear that that Izumi would mentally snap the instant she hears Mei confess to knowing all along, throw Kouichi aside and start stabbing relentlessly.

--Even still, after that “You’re wrong about her,” Izumi looks away from Kouichi...as if she’s almost swayed by his words alone...right?

Eh, possibly. But for reasons I’ll get into soon, it’s more likely that Izumi just can’t believe what she’s hearing. She’s shocked that Kouichi’s going that far for Mei after all Mei’s put them through (Kouichi as well, emphasis on “*them*”), and for a moment, what seems to be her accepting Kouichi’s words is actually her looking away, trying to come to terms with how Kouichi’s turning out to be.

-But she can’t. Mei to her isn’t someone who can afford to live. Because Mei’s possibly the extra and a threat to everyone regardless. Her and Kouichi as well. All she’s trying to do is protect Kouichi and the rest of her living classmates. So, she can’t help but wonder something like, “*Why can’t Kouichi see that?!*” as she’s grabbing onto her, trying to stop her from getting any closer to Mei. And when he says at last that she’s “wrong” about Mei after all she knows Mei had put her and everyone through, Izumi lets out the frustration with Kouichi that she’s been largely repressing from Kouichi. She lashes out one last time, kneeling him in the stomach before hitting him in the chest again with her skewer and knocking him down next to Mei. And as he’s staring up at her from in front of Mei, she yells, “What’s your problem? I’m—I’m just trying to protect us all, so why?!”

--In other words, why he’s so against her when all she’s been doing in her eyes is working hard to save them now? This entire time? It’s aforementioned that Izumi can either be earnest in this claim...

--...or another, but less likely possibility is that she was starting to realize she might’ve been wrong about the extra—or more plausibly, that, extra or not, what she was doing was doing without proof was mostly for personal revenge and just wasn’t right. She was selfishly trying to murder Mei whether she was the dead student or not. But as she starts to realize that, she represses it and justifies what she’s doing by claiming Mei’s the extra, and that she’s just trying to protect everyone.

--Either way, Izumi’s actually crying, yelling at Kouichi on the ground; and along with viewing Mei as the extra and just plain awful, her tears are clearly a combination of jealousy of Mei and frustration with Kouichi on a more personal level, which is warranted because she really has tried to do much more for Kouichi than Mei has, but Kouichi is obviously siding with Mei anyway for reasons she can’t understand. So, he doesn’t answer Izumi. In her brief silence, *after* he’s briefly seen her calm down, and *after* she wants him to tell her why he’s defending Mei so resolutely, he *doesn’t* try to justify Mei or even explain

what's *really* been going on in general. You can argue that he tried it and failed with Kazami while being attacked by him—but Izumi *wasn't* attacking him. This late in the game, there's really no excuse for the kid. One can only look at this objectively: Kouichi merely glared at Izumi when he had a chance to really reason with her.

-Kouichi's silent glare is the last straw for her. Psychoanalysis notwithstanding, she's frustrated and angry and depressed at herself, Mei, and now everyone. With Kouichi having betrayed her, she doesn't have anyone left to validate what she's doing, so she finally resorts to stiffening up, glaring back, and threatening him by sullenly stating she'll kill them *both* if he keeps defending the cursed girl, in a bid to make him move.

...

-But he doesn't move. And neither does she.

-[So: Would she have actually killed him if she had to?

...

...I doubt it. She didn't decide to threaten even him until at the last moment, but she'd been avoiding his face with her weapon the entire time (compared to bruising Mei's as soon as she got the chance), meaning she was going out of her way to not seriously hurt him before, besides accidentally knocking him out when she threw him off of her earlier.

Aside from that and her liking him, something I'll never fully understand, there's two reasons her threat likely wouldn't have actualized. One is that she didn't actually know for sure that Mei was the extra. She believed it, but she didn't have any proof. And she wasn't going to kill Mei and Kouichi on the off chance that Mei would've been the extra. Just Mei, yes. But not Kouichi unless she knew Mei was the dead one.

Not just because of her liking Kouichi, but because she didn't want anyone else to die. In the end, killing Mei was a personal desire.

The second is in her specifically saying, "If you're so desperate to die [by protecting the "extra"], I'll kill you along with her." This is an extremely important line.

And she sounds serious. But first of all, that line justifies the former reasoning over the second for her being shocked at Kouichi's saying,

"You're wrong about her." Simply put, she can't believe he'd want to risk his life over the source of everyone's misfortune and the cause of their deaths, even if she *isn't* the extra. Mei *has* been responsible for every death here, honestly-speaking, so Izumi's notion isn't wrong. But that aside, Izumi believes Mei is the extra—and Kouichi is safeguarding the already dead curse without even explaining why, all from—what looks to Izumi—pure emotion. And while Izumi herself is largely driven by emotion, she does know for sure that Mei's responsible for all this suffering. The lack of reasonableness (and really, *fairness*) from Kouichi is why Izumi just couldn't understand him mere moments ago. Why she might've even been disillusioned with him...until moments later.

That aside, Izumi doesn't tell Kouichi to get away from her, but the message is clear. It's a good three or so seconds before their glaring is interrupted, and Izumi still hasn't made a move, even to get past Kouichi. This is only the second time he's protected Mei in front of her, though it only really matters after Takako's death, and she saw him with Mei, arguing for Mei, while Takako's dead. To her, it's Kouichi who seems to be biased, unyielding, and unreasonable, risking his life for, at best, a dangerous, likely cursed girl who uncaringly let her peers die. Yet obviously—and it'll be said again—*obviously*, she doesn't want to kill him. But in the pause, she's naturally trying to read him and weigh her options because she still *does* want to kill Mei.

Then, what would Izumi have done? We know Izumi only threatened to kill Kouichi because she *didn't* want to actually fight him. She wanted him to move, intimidated for his life, so she could hopefully avoid fighting him at all. While she could've almost certainly killed him from where she was, his standing in her way, evidently willing to die for Mei definitely wasn't something she wanted to deal with, as it meant she might've seriously had to get violent with him to stop him from stopping her. In any case, it's unlikely that she would've given up completely unless (probably Mei) suddenly dropped everything and completely and utterly *apologized*, sobbing and on her knees. If Kouichi kept where he was, most likely, Izumi would've kicked or hit him out of the way before brutalizing Mei, since she wasn't holding back at all otherwise. If attacking Kouichi that way didn't stop him, then I still don't see her killing him. Just off what her relationship was with him, plus the fact that he's a classmate and someone to protect from the

curse even if he doesn't want Mei to die, and her extreme threat that was stated only to get Kouichi to move so she didn't have to fight him at all.]

-But while the past friends are glaring at each other, Izumi waiting for a final reply as to whether Kouichi wants to die with Mei, a lightning bolt shatters the grand window behind them, and huge shards of glass and a wooden stake impale her against a wall.

-[Yukari has been outdone.

*This* is why the Calamity has targeted Izumi specifically: she's standing two or three steps from Kouichi and Mei, but only she's pinned with any of the debris despite the smashed glass and wooden beams obviously being wider than all three of them. Kouichi literally dived in front of Mei and only got 4-5 blades of glass sticking from his back. Between this case and the explosions, it's highly unlikely that Izumi wouldn't have survived unless she immediately ran *away* from Mei after finding her with Takako. Even then, it's dubious, as the Calamity, needless to say, doesn't curse you proportionately to how much you try to hurt Mei.]

--To briefly describe the situation, I've gotten a similar injury to Izumi in the past, involving falling through glass and blood everywhere. It wasn't to her degree of getting impaled several times, but it was similar enough that I can explain her state.

Izumi likely felt very little but numbness due to the shock of her injury and her rapid blood loss. But because of her rapid blood loss, she was losing consciousness quickly. Her blank, empty expression as she rests on the wall says everything. Soon after passing out, she would be brain dead in a few minutes. Obviously, Kouichi should've tried to stabilize her bleeding if not rush her outside—with her wounds, it'd almost certainly fail, and she'd almost certainly bleed out. But it'd be *something*, showing he really cared for her.

Instead, he assumes she's done for and sets her down on the floor. In all likelihood, he's right...but that's incredibly cold of him, presuming he was thinking at all.

-Sadly, due to the shock of blood loss, she gains back the last of her lost memories right as she's losing consciousness. The fact that Kouichi was temporarily in Yomiyama back in 1996? It was for his aunt Reiko's funeral. She may or may not have remembered the rest of their conversation, but it wouldn't have mattered now: it would've been nearly impossible for Izumi to have not realized then that Reiko was the extra. Unless she forgot Reiko was in 3-3 in 1996 (as an assistant teacher who also did art classes) and in 1983 as a student, but that's too unlikely to be worth expanding on. And in the context of that flashback she has (though we don't see the rest, Izumi does as she's on the wall), Kouichi and Izumi both revealed their lost relatives were in that class.

-Of course, it's unsurprising as well that from the shock of her injuries and her memories having returned, she loses her grudge against Mei and knows what's more important. With her last strength, she tries to tell Kouichi about Reiko, asking if he remembers how they met (with her kicking a coffee can at him; she says "soda," but it's not like she should have remembered or ever known). But unfortunately, Kouichi still doesn't remember a thing about Izumi in the past, stating so rather bluntly as he leans over her.

-And so, Izumi realizes it's pointless after all. In the end, she accepts the way things are, managing a smile at his honesty and knowing she can't tell him anything else even if she wanted to. When she passes out, an explosion that Kouichi narrowly escapes buries her body almost entirely under flaming debris.

-Finally, horrified by Izumi's fate, Mei finds Reiko with her death-seeing eye. And we see, of course, that when she re-gathers her resolve and gets away from the lodge, losing Kouichi on purpose ("for his sake"; aka: leaving him to die in there and killing his aunt without him knowing), she corners an utterly clueless and helpless Reiko crushed under rubble and prepares to kill her without hesitation with a pickaxe, saying she has to die and not even trying to think of an alternative. That evidently, is just her style. This is despite Reiko's saving the girl's life from angry classmates listening to Takako only minutes earlier, getting bludgeoned unconscious and getting a badly bleeding concussion in the process. And Kouichi, equally heartless, kills her himself when he finds them, believing Mei's story against Reiko of seeing her stabbed and killed two years ago, even as Reiko's genuinely insisting she's not the extra and begging him to help her.



Our heroes.

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Though, in all fairness, *Another* is pretty clearly a story that purposefully subverts the viewers' expectations of its main characters. I hate summaries, so I won't give any. Everything above basically sums it up for Mei and Izumi. We see why Mei is garbage. In short, Mei was given all the tools to succeed in beating the curse and Izumi was given nothing. She only had her head. Yet Mei had witnessing Reiko's death, the omega-eye, and her sister's death. Nothing "pleasant" but definitely useful for saving her classmates and future children and adults from terrible deaths.

Here's a listing of what the two know for most of the show, though, just to drive in the point of how unfairly the odds are stacked against an alone Izumi, working with all the knowledge she has, to stop this Calamity.

-Izumi knows this:

1. Izumi knows the dead person is a classmate.
2. She knows the dead person lives in 3-3's hometown.
3. She knows the dead person looks alive and doesn't know they're dead.

4. She knows (in her mind) the Calamity has been averted until Mei started talking to people and getting it started with her friend Yukari. Yet she somehow doesn't break until Mei gets Takako killed, and to me that's pretty fucking lenient. All she reluctantly asked for in exchange for her role in the tragedy was an earnest apology. She blamed herself for the other half of the mess.

5. She knows 3-3's desks are down by 1 once Mei is first ignored, and she knows they're up again when Kouichi joins which shouldn't matter if he doesn't talk to Mei because the dead person can only take up one desk...

6. She knows Reiko is Ms. Mikami and has been in 3-3 in the past.

Of what Izumi knows, numbers 1, 4, and 5 are wrong. But Mei knows this:

1. Mei knows the dead person is a classmate.

2. She knows the dead person lives in 3-3's hometown.

3. She knows the dead person looks alive and doesn't know they're dead.

4. She knows the Calamity had begun before she was ever chosen as the nonexistent student. So the countermeasure was pointless because there was no way to stop the curse once it began (she didn't know about the 'dead back to death' part).

5. She knows 3-3's desks are down by 1 once she's ignored, but she knows they're up again when Kouichi joins which shouldn't matter if he doesn't talk to her. But she knows the latter isn't true because the Calamity started with her sister. So she has to figure it's someone else who's dead in the class and not Kouichi, but she doesn't care to find out.

6. She knows a few weeks after Izumi that Reiko is Ms. Mikami and has been in 3-3 in the past.

Obviously, Mei knows more. She's only wrong about #1. Alright, so now we'll find the solutions.

-Let's assume first that Mei tells Izumi about her eye:

--Izumi gets Mei to find the dead person with it. To keep it uncovered all day if she has to. Hardly anyone gives a damn how it looks, especially if it can save their asses. I mean it. I hate that dumb ass girl. Then unlike the others with that retarded cassette ending, she asks Mei to come back for future reference until something else can be worked out. There's more than one way to stop the Calamity after finding the extra, but we'll get to that in a bit.

-Let's assume Mei only tells Izumi about Fujioka. This would be before the second month's death (Yukari) is over hopefully.

-Izumi is smart. Possibly the smartest person in the show when it comes to the Calamity, along with Chibiki. So when she finds out Fujioka died *after* Mei was made nonexistent, two things happen:

--Izumi immediately apologizes to and welcomes Mei back into the group before she's made nonexistent, or she forgoes the whole process. If Mei already is nonexistent and she comes to Izumi like it's serious, Izumi will pretend to ignore Mei but will still be listening for obvious reasons, and Mei isn't stupid enough to not realize Izumi (who's not briskly walking away) really does want to hear what Mei

has to say. Then when Mei reveals Fujioka, she'll be welcomed back along with an, "I'm sorry about all of that/why the hell didn't you say that sooner? Well, at least you didn't wait until..."

--After Mei's back in, Izumi will now know the Calamity has started in spite of the seating reduction. It started sometime after Mei had become the nonexistent student, with her sister's death a couple weeks later.

--This will be shocking to her. Without Mei's knowledge, she would've thought the class seats went from full to -1 to full with Kouichi. But in this case, she'll realize when they perform the countermeasure on Mei to reduce the student body (seat deaths), the deaths will still happen per month, having already begun. In other words, since reducing the number of 3-3 "student seats" doesn't help, there must be an extra 3-3 "faculty seat".

(And to be perfectly honest because it would look *very* bad otherwise, Izumi already knew Reiko had been in Class 3-3 before BUT never suspected her because she was already in the class for a month without any prior incidents—something Mei could've easily corrected her on. After all, if the class seats were reduced by one and no deaths occurred until Kouichi raised them again and spoke to Mei a month later, then it couldn't have been a faculty seat that caused the Calamity...right?)

--With this knowledge, Izumi will deduce that the extra of course has to be someone else "related" to her year's Class 3-3 (who's *in* the class, as the extra must be revived within the class), but that someone is apparently *not* a member of the "student body".

--Izumi knows Reiko's been in 3-3 in the past. But, just to be sure, she would ask every one of her 3-3 teachers if they've been in Class 3-3 in the past or taught it in the past. And though she wouldn't remember the woman dying...

--...only Reiko would say yes. Right now, there's no denying it: Izumi knows it has to be Reiko. But after that, if Izumi's still feeling unsure, she can ask Kouichi's immediately family about Reiko. Whatever minor hints aside, the game-breaker is Ryouhei, Kouichi's grandfather, who explicitly remembers Reiko's funeral due to emotional instability from losing two daughters and age-related memory loss interfering with the curse's memory loss. ("Poor Ritsuko. My poor Reiko too.")

[Note, this only works if Mei comes to Izumi before Yukari dies. Anytime afterwards, Izumi might be led to believe the dead one is anyone else in the class as before when Kouichi arrived and talked to Mei, the Calamity apparently “starting” right after this (unless she can believe and confirm Mei’s mention of Fujioka afterwards).]

-At this point, what measures can Izumi take to assure everyone’s safety once Reiko is discovered? Remember, part of the reason Mei said nothing at all about Fujioka or her eye or Reiko is because she foolishly believed nothing could be done about the Calamity since it’s started. (Not to excuse her, for sure—losing Fujioka was no less than devastating, but Mei never even warned Fujioka about her leukemia when she saw her sister was sick either, instead trying to ignore what her eye saw “for her sister’s sake”.)

But there were quite a few routes for Izumi at this point even if Mei still doesn’t think anything can be done. With Mei’s information, she will know four things:

1. Reiko is technically dead even though she looks alive. Not only is she dead, she’s “undead”. And she will continue to indirectly kill innocent people so long as she’s left alive.
2. Reiko doesn’t know this and it’d have to be proven to her if Izumi even thinks about a peaceful resolution. On top of that, Reiko would have to come to terms with it. But that’s covered: Izumi’s easily smart enough to use Kouichi as pawn in her persuasion. Whether or not killing Reiko’s legal may or may not matter to Izumi at this point...but if it does and Mei’s in her ear, telling her that she can see the death on Reiko after having explained the seating issue, her relation to 3-3, and possibly the scene of her death itself if Mei waited that late to confess—and if someone else had to die before Izumi did anything, I’d wager she, and perhaps Chibiki; almost certainly Kubodera-sensei, to take the burden off her, would be rather determined in doing whatever they had to do by then.
3. If Izumi wants to be *sure*, she’ll likely show up where Kouichi lives and ask around to find out as much as she can. Reiko’s father (Kouichi’s grandfather Ryouhei) can confirm Reiko’s death if Izumi goes to their house and asks. He’s the only one with this knowledge, but it’ll be hard to dismiss his word, the posthumously-named parrot, “Rei” and all the other evidence she’ll have at this point.
4. Most importantly, the extra is literally linked to the living by Class 3-3. This is why they always appear in Class 3-3, and this is why they were always in Class 3-3 in the past. Accordingly, if they’re taken out of

Class 3-3, they'll lose that connection and the curse will cease to act. And *this* is why those outside of Yomiyami are safe from the curse, even if they're in Class 3-3 or related to those students/teachers.

--Here's the loophole that Izumi has a couple days to dwell hard on if she doesn't want to chance killing Reiko: to achieve the most desirable end, all she has to do is break the spiritual connection which would either mean firing Reiko (or expelling a student for future reference) or, even better, firing her and then making her move from Yomiyama. Secondly, this would obviously be more appealing to Reiko than being killed; and at this point, where Izumi wouldn't have known about the tape, it would've been her easiest option. Most likely, Reiko would've taken her own leave. The Calamity would almost certainly continue, but Mei and Izumi working together this way for a few years would end it for good.

--Now, if Reiko for whatever reason didn't want to leave Yomiyama North, it would've been difficult convincing the principle to fire Reiko from Izumi's relatively lowly position. But with her, Kubodera-sensei who assigned her as Head of Countermeasures, believing in the curse himself, Chibiki with the class records for evidence, *and* Mei with all of the knowledge she has providing extra support, the principle would've faced *much* more pressure, especially knowing that if he didn't fire Reiko and someone died, things would look terrible for him. This isn't even considering the other students who'd appeal with her in Class 3-3, along with the limited students outside of 3-3 who also believe in the curse.

--Izumi never assumed for sure that Mei was the extra, it's important to realize. She might've suspected it towards the end, following...everything...but at that point, she was so furious with Mei that she didn't care either way and just wanted to justify getting revenge on her and ending the misfortune she brought everyone—a combination of believing Mei killed Takako and knowing that everything that was happening then was because of that girl. (“If it turns out she's not the extra, I'll admit I was wrong.”) With that said, though Izumi listened to the tape later on and heard Takako's story, she still didn't suspect Mei, even when Takako did. Instead, she tried to stop Takako. This is while, by now, she's just about fed up with Mei and doesn't really give a damn about reaching out to her or empathizing with her anymore. She still blames Mei for everything that's happened too—so if Izumi was willing to take her time and try to reason out who among the class could be the extra, it's likely she'd try at least a little harder to think of that loophole if she knew who the extra was earlier on. She would definitely know it after hearing Katsumi's tape, as she would've known from Yuuya about Katsumi's sudden recollection *after* he left Yomiyama (as far as the curse extends). But whether Izumi takes the little extra time to give Reiko a chance, or kills her, or one of her countermeasurers or a faculty member does something to Reiko, Reiko would pretty quickly be a non-issue had Mei helped.

-[What Izumi would've known they *couldn't* have done was shun Reiko.

Mei and Takako, as stated, are both idiots for immediately attempting to take matters into their own hands, seeking Katsumi's flawed, and happenstance knowledge from his old tape instead of relying on what they already should've known. Izumi never expected Mei as the extra, at least against Takako's perspective, as she tried to stop Takako and had already stated that Mei lost her eye when she was 4. But if she knew it was Ms. Mikami, she would've known Kouichi's presence and talking to Mei was just a circumstantial distraction to fool her and the others into thinking the shunning at some point had worked, and she would've known it might *have* stopped someone in the student body who was the extra responsible for the curse...if that were ever the case in the first place.

Of course, Izumi would've also known the basic rule, especially after it failed twice in front of her: shunning is useless once the Calamity has begun.]

-Last but not least, pretty soon Yuuya would've mentioned to Izumi his older half-sister, Tomoka. Tomoka could've led Izumi to more solid evidence on how to stop the curse if she was willing to waste a few days of class tracking it down instead of acting directly (provided Kubodera-sensei and/or Chibiki hadn't already acted without her). The only reason Izumi didn't find out about the tape was because she happened to not be next to Katsumi when he said what he did. His memory was coming back slowly as he'd left Yomiyama for the beach with everyone. Very slowly: he suddenly recalled hearing about Reiko recently (her death) but wasn't sure what the subject was. Reiko eventually would've recalled everything as well had she stayed out of Yomiyama some while longer ...but in any case, Izumi could've figured that the curse didn't extend past Yomiyama, as she'd already known the deaths didn't occur past Yomiyama and that the deceased was always based in Yomiyama ("Are you sure you've never been to Yomiyama?"), meaning those outside of Yomiyama or those under serious mental trauma like—Ryouhei or Katsumi again—wouldn't have been affected by the curse's memory-loss.

--And if Izumi didn't realize this is how it worked before she regained her altered memories through her own mental trauma just before dying, it wouldn't have been difficult to figure out that putting the extra outside of Class 3-3 severs the link from which the curse is based on. At any rate, she never said what she was going to do once she found the extra—she was even more concerned with stopping the Calamity itself, for good—but she had those other, more merciful options *in addition* to killing whoever was cursed, provided someone else didn't get to the afflicted first.

The only sad part would be that even if Reiko isn't killed, as the extra, she would die at 12:00 AM, April 1st anyway.

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So, that's simple enough. But just for laughs, Izumi could've reasoned out that it was Reiko even if Fujioka died *before* Mei was chosen as the nonexistent student. As in, for example, if Mei's shunning really *did* start on May 1st.

--In that case, once Mei told her what'd happened as soon as classes officially began, Izumi would've realized the countermeasures wouldn't matter either way. Whether the Calamity happened before the shunning and the desks were full or whether it happened when the desks were empty, it happened prior to start of the term which is when Fujioka died. So it couldn't have been anyone from the class whose desks were affecting things. Meaning it had to be one of the faculty who were ready before the students were.

--Izumi again wouldn't know about Reiko's death, so she'd simply question which one of their teachers taught 3-3 in the past or attended 3-3 as a middle schooler. Luckily for her, the only one of those teachers would've been...

--...Reiko. Who'd been assistant "teaching" since before that year.

So, who's responsible for the Calamity no matter what? It isn't Izumi, that's for sure. I wouldn't blame Reiko either. Reiko caused those deaths by accident, but she had no idea what was going on, had no way of finding out, and even tried to save Mei from being killed—who didn't bother to return the favor. She died still in disbelief that she could be dead.



The real *villain* is an eyepatch loli. The one girl that got a "S" ranking in beauty despite being paler than Casper and having no fanservice shots.

Okay, I'm just hating now; that's not even important.

To be honest, though one might say Mei said nothing about anything from the start and let everyone struggle in fear because she "didn't know what to do if they found the extra," that bitch knew it wasn't her place to make those decisions anyway. *Izumi* took on that responsibility; Mei took on the responsibility of being silenced by the class, and they both took on that pressure willingly.

In short, Mei betrayed everyone...for no good reason.

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And whatever, here's a "short summary" comparing the two, Mei and Izumi. Just for the hell of it.

Mei doesn't care about anyone's lives or helping anyone. Even when she looks visibly sad at hearing people have died, she brushed those deaths off quickly enough. It wasn't until Junta died that her armor visibly cracked and started to feel the Calamity (of whom she knew Reiko was the cause by then) had to be stopped as soon as possible—by herself, after going with Yuuya, Naoya, and Kouichi to find out where Katsumi left his note on how to stop it. However, she had the potential to save everyone by letting them know the Calamity had already started with her sister, but she chose to keep everything she knew to herself because she didn't want to admit her sister died despite admitting to Kouichi her "cousin" died, which still would've helped equally well.

She also knew how to find who'd died with her awesome-eye and was intentionally indirectly causing the deaths of everyone in her class and their relatives, but she didn't care enough to tell anyone because she didn't feel comfortable showing her eye in public...? Yet she'd already used it to find Reiko early on. More on that later.

Above all, Mei stated she "didn't know what could've been done" even after solving the identity of the extra, and she wanted to personally know what to do about the curse after that. She didn't share any of her knowledge because she didn't think *anyone else* would know what to do if they knew who the extra was. And even when Mei waited until she heard Katsumi's tape on killing the extra, wasting even more lives in the meantime, she still kept who the extra was to herself, deciding to wait personally *again* for what she saw was the right time to kill Reiko herself. Primarily so she could do it away from Kouichi. For "his" sake. Okay, despite endangering him several times before with no problem, and joking about it at that. And we all saw how tragic that delaying ended up being. She was a *Me! Me! Me!* arrogant loner, screwing with everyone around her because she simply wanted to do everything all on her own.

Truthfully, Mei is the most selfishly unpunished person I've seen in a *long* time. Despite this, she doesn't have social "issues". She talks to whoever talks to her, actively talks to Kouichi, who she likes, and she tries to find out how to "stop" the Calamity along with Naoya, Yuuya, and Kouichi, despite still having never brought up her eye.

And, probably because she's bitter over Fujioka, she just loves fucking with others in the face of the seriousness of what's going on. Eg, at Naoya: "Maybe you're the extra. Have you considered that?" And at Kouichi: "It's because I *don't* exist." And "Your name is associated with *death*." And "It may have already...begun..."

And "Bye SA-KA-KI-BURA."

...

She's a fucking child.

As far as her closer classmates are concerned specifically, she doesn't show any real concern for Naoya and Yuuya like she does for Kouichi, even when Naoya and Yuuya irrationally stick up for her against Izumi's request for an apology.

Though at the same time, this shipping is funny in the face of her intentionally scaring Kouichi for her amusement and otherwise roleplaying around a problem that could very well harm him; the problem that killed her twin sister and nearly killed her at least twice as well.

Honestly, the "Mei x Kouichi" shipping makes no sense in this regard, since she literally didn't care to save him from the Calamity or even warn him about its true nature, thinking he'd just live or die anyway no matter what she tried. And at the same time, you have Izumi hated by many for shunning Kouichi along with Mei, apologizing to him on behalf of everyone, *twice*, when she only did it to ensure *his* literal safety along with *everyone else's*. That and partly blaming Mei along with herself for starting the Calamity, when she had no way of knowing the truth without Mei (that it was only Mei's fault), asking Mei to apologize with her even though an apology was too light and Mei knew it.

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Izumi herself is the exact opposite of Mei. And she requires much more explanation because her character is much deeper and better-written.

Izumi enters the school year caring for everyone as peers whose safety she feels responsible for. She doesn't have anything against Mei at all before she speaks to Kouichi, over and over again, though she doesn't bond with Mei either because Mei doesn't always come to school and even she's not gone immediately after classes are over, she doesn't try to converse with anyone. She only speaks to Fujioka when she can, before Kouichi arrives. Perhaps Izumi and Mei could've been friends in another setting (they were two of the few students who took the Calamity seriously after all), but not with the Calamity to worry about. She doesn't have anything against Kouichi either. After sincerely apologizing, and too guilty to face him, she only makes him nonexistent because to her there's no other way to keep

everyone, including him and Mei, safe from the curse once Mei spoke to him. She'd wanted to warn him about the curse, but Mei broke the seal and deaths resulted from her apathy--at that point, she can't say anything to him because he's connected to Mei and everyone blames him for talking to her.

More specifically:

--Everyone's blaming him for talking to Mei (who's viewed as cursed: every death so far has involved her after all) and being the next seat; though Izumi knows he himself didn't do anything besides talk to Mei, she shuns him to please everyone so the class wouldn't perchance get out of control. They were starting to ignore him anyway.

--Izumi's trying to reduce the seating number again, which she knows doesn't make a difference in terms of deciding whether or not the spirit will be suppressed to start, but she's hoping it'll re-strengthen the seal that he and Mei broke. This double-shunning she plans is a completely new thing, never attempted before, so only hindsight can make its ineffectiveness apparent.

--Izumi's unable to involve him in anything with 3-3 because he acknowledged Mei who's believed to be cursed by much of the class, leading him to, in their view (before the shunning is shown to be useless), take up that curse. Understandable: After all, Yukari's closeness to Mei and Kouichi before she died and then Aya's closeness to Kouichi before she nearly died justifies this. Of course, Izumi can't be direct with Kouichi either lest she break the seal herself. He has to be quarantined with Mei. Via the double-shunning, he and Mei can talk to each other, but he can't talk to anyone else without Mei's intended nonexistent status being brought up yet again.

In the end, she's making him nonexistent for his safety, giving him someone to talk to while he's ignored. But it wasn't her decision alone despite the fact that she came up with it. She, her assistants, the rest of the class, the teacher, and possibly the librarian Chibiki voted on and agreed on adding him to the quarantine.

So, the meeting of faculty and countermeasurers Izumi conferred with ended up in a decision to have him made nonexistent in a desperate effort to strengthen the broken seal and reduce the number of

seats again. She couldn't tell him why either, as that would be acknowledging *his* existence right there. Though it got to Kouichi at first, he later understood why she and the others were ignoring him, and when the deaths continued, Izumi got everyone to re-acknowledge him and Mei both (despite, at least for Mei, most of them disliking her), apologizing to him but hardly having to justify herself because he knew why she did what she did: to hopefully stop the deaths of anyone else related to Class 3-3.

If only Izumi hadn't been absent the day Kouichi started school, she would've been able to warn him not to speak to Mei pretty easily. Besides not asking Mei, "Why did you do this to us?" that terrible coincidence was her biggest mistake. And it wasn't even a real mistake.

-[As for when Izumi was out, evidently, no one else in 3-3, even the class officers Yukari and Kazami and her fellow countermeasurers had the sense to tell Kouichi what was explicitly going on. Because they feared they'd have to acknowledge the nonexistent Mei in the process, and he and Mei spoke many times publically during their hesitation (to Mei's delight), making them even more reluctant to tell him anything. As such, they all tried to stall and distract Kouichi with "tours around the school" and crowding him with discussion (while Takako and Yumi watch to see if his focus is suitably occupied). In particular, Yukari was closest to being honest, first getting worried that Ikuo was in danger from the curse and the seal had been broken by Mei and Kouichi (until she remembered it was normal for Ikuo to have to head there). Then asking if Kouichi's classmates walked around with him and said "anything...anything at all (about Mei)" before going, "If we're not careful, Akazawa will yell at us."

Then when Mei's name was brought up anyway, she just kind of...froze. I feel sorry for Yukari. Between that and telling him not to say the name "Mei" again later, she honestly kind of tried. Sort of.]

-But Izumi, more competent and duty-bound than her associates, would've told him anyway because her position mandated she do *something*.

That being said, Izumi herself was partly to blame for two reasons: missing Kouichi's first day and not warning him in the hospital. She took this out on herself, noting that if she wasn't absent on Kouichi's first day, she could have warned him there but should've warned him in the hospital to be safe anyway.

Izumi also said after Yukari's death it'd be "dangerous" to warn Kouichi, because by then the Calamity was shown to have begun. Any slip in warning Kouichi that acknowledged the still-shunned Mei would've presumably had dire consequences at this point. When Izumi first heard from Yuuya and Yukari that Kouichi was acknowledging Mei, she knew she wouldn't have been able to confront Kouichi without making it obvious to him who they were shunning and directly acknowledging their existence in his mind. And later, she knew after Yukari's death that without doubt, the curse was now in full effect.

However, we know from the fact that Izumi wanted to tell Kouichi about the Calamity and class rules immediately, and from the fact that she was disgruntled with the principle's placement of Kouichi in their class, that if she had suitable backing when she spoke to the principal, she would've warned him not to allow Kouichi into Class 3-3 a month after the term started, when the class already had Mei perfectly nonexistent and the seats perfectly reduced.

With Izumi's knowledge of the Calamity, countermeasures, and her forcefulness concerning the matter, this warning would not have come across jokingly. After all, his warning would've been from someone who conferred with teachers on equal footing in order to exclude a specific student from any type of class involvement. She took her job *very* seriously.

This was from someone who was forceful enough to get her own assistant homeroom teacher to **completely ignore her own nephew** during school.

Outside of Class 3-3 and curse-related matters, the Head of Countermeasures position was fairly useless, as mentioned before. It wasn't even acknowledged as a real student role outside of 3-3. But in those two realms, Izumi had near total discretion to recruit whoever she wanted to help her, create new countermeasures, shun anyone she wanted, and more. The position is, in a way, extremely powerful in that it gives her essentially total control over the class as long as it deals with dealing with the curse. She couldn't do anything distinctly illegal, of course, or exceedingly unreasonable, but that was about it for restrictions. Even outside teachers were obligated to follow her instructions as best as they could. The position was only unpopular because the leader was expected to protect everyone, a tremendous amount of pressure, and because the leader was more or less inviting the curse closer to them the longer they unsuccessfully operated. The principle would've have known of this position though not likely have taken it seriously compared to that of the class officers—but it's different when Izumi is standing in front of you, with Ms. Mikami and Kubodera-sensei to her left and right, and possibly Chibiki behind her, telling you the curse's history, the role of the Countermeasures, and why it's imperative that Kouichi be put in any class *other* than Class 3-3. At that point, you as the principal would think, "...this just isn't worth the trouble."

But because neither the 3-3 teachers nor the other teachers nor Chibiki helped her out when she went to convince him against adding Kouichi into the perfectly-seated class, the newbie principle did what he wanted without any objections, just because he felt like it, and 3-3 had to deal with an extra student who didn't know what was going on. It would've been much easier to convince the principle, who didn't know about the curse, not to place Kouichi in the loaded Class 3-3 before the fact than to convince the principle to remove him based on something no one outside of 3-3 and their relatives believed in, with no visible evidence that he'd done anything wrong. On top of that, going to the unconvinced principal about removing Kouichi from 3-3 *after* Kouichi had acknowledged Mei would've been impossible to accomplish without breaking the seal. Even if she speaks in completely hypothetical terms, she has to make it known to the principle who the problem student is.

So, Izumi could've certainly warned the principal about the curse *in advance*: though he likely wouldn't have believed it, he equally likely would've heeded her words in case something did happen and the backlash fell on him—if the other faculty had been willing to help Izumi out. In all, it was a lot of bad luck for everyone—from everyone but Mei's point of view.

This all being said, unfortunately, none of this countermeasures stuff would've made a difference anyway because the Calamity started, which Mei never mentioned. Mei let Izumi down and everyone else down, and Kouichi should've hated her too when she revealed after several had died she didn't show *him* her savior-eye because "he never asked" and not to anyone else because "she didn't like how it looked". But he still liked her and defended her. She didn't have a grudge against Izumi; she just didn't care about Izumi's life, or anyone's, until towards the end of the show.

Izumi disliked Mei for breaking the seal, but she still would've appreciated her help like she would've wanted anyone else's. Mei wouldn't have been secluded if she helped her peers out; she would've been a good friend in Izumi's eyes and probably would've become well-liked by the others too. The bitch wasn't "not popular" since the start of class...it was only by her own negligent actions that she ever lost favor.

All Izumi wanted to do was make sure everyone was safe. That's why she took on an unpopular job and subjected herself to severe stress, stress that grew worse as more and more people died despite her best efforts to help. From the meeker girl she was earlier, already without any parents, her insane brother's traumatic death while she was his only caretaker along with knowing she'd have lives on her hands as the Head of Countermeasures and wanting and failing to succeed in her duty there...these three things gradually turned her into the sterner, more serious and severe person that she appeared to

be. From her early junior high days, to the start of her 3rd year, to when she *really* becomes solemn after Junta dies.

People knew she was stern, but people also knew she was just trying to do her best for everyone. Kouichi in particular said this to her in person, and it embarrassed her; she didn't know how to react. But everyone in 3-3 respected her outside of Mei. She got along with everyone *because* she cared for everyone, and she only got angry at people like Naoya or Mei (the latter whom she never stayed upset with) when they endangered her countermeasures, endangering people's lives in the process.

Yes, Izumi liked Kouichi too. But that's not why she forgave him and not Mei after making them nonexistent. She forgave—as in didn't blame—Kouichi for what happened because he couldn't have known Mei was nonexistent via shunning. To him, it looked like she was being bullied, although she volunteered for the position and didn't care about being ignored. She *didn't* apologize to Mei because Mei wasn't forced into being nonexistent unlike Kouichi, so Izumi wasn't responsible for any discomfort she could've felt, but most importantly, because Mei was to blame for talking to Kouichi and violating the class rules they'd all agreed on before Kouichi arrived. Not only did she get herself into trouble with everyone, she got Kouichi into trouble with everyone and led to everyone's safety being jeopardized. Which, if Mei was actually remorseful, Izumi probably would've forgiven her easily. But as Izumi said, from the moment Mei was let back in with her class, she didn't even so much as say "sorry" for what she'd done. Izumi hated the fact that Mei was apathetic about the deaths *she* caused. And so she scorned Mei whenever she saw her, expecting that she'd just once take responsibility. And why not? Izumi already had for herself when what happened wasn't even her fault. Both of them volunteered; both of them knew what they were getting into.

Even still, she only wanted Mei to acknowledge what she did. As we see on their trip to the Yomiyama Shrine. She knew Mei couldn't make up for it, but accepting responsibility and actually caring about what she'd caused was at least humane. That's why Izumi was willing to give her that chance several times. After each new death, specifically. Izumi's demeanor made her seem harsh, but she actually just wanted Mei to accept responsibility and then try to make up for what was happening however she could...at *some* point. Mei's secret mission to kill Reiko obviously wasn't something Izumi could've foreseen.

However, when Mei insulted Izumi's honest request for an apology to the class (after Izumi herself formally apologized for herself *and* Mei), Izumi didn't snap at her. On top of this, Naoya, Yuuya, and Kouichi stick up for Mei all the while, but Izumi lets it go despite it angering her, especially with Kouichi, because she only wants to know how *Mei really feels*. This entire time, though, Izumi has been working



her ass off to try and find new countermeasures/who the extra is/whether anyone new is hurt/etc, and so she chooses to focus on her countermeasures work instead of berating Mei despite the terrible reception her and her friends gave that simple request. That includes dealing with the "how to stop the extra (killing them)" tape left by Katsumi from 1983's 3-3 Class. It also includes discussing who that extra might be and how to single them out, then what to do from there.

Izumi doesn't believe it's Mei, though, even with the "doll-eye" reasoning Takako gives everyone. And so, she tries to stop Takako from killing Mei, having just recovered from the shock of seeing her best friend, presumed dead, lose it.

In the end, Izumi has a meltdown (less impairing than her classmates' mentally snapping) after seeing Takako's corpse, apparently hung from Mei's influence. After this last friend, Izumi can't handle it. Because of everything Mei had caused, essentially ruining Izumi's life and making her hate herself, she wasn't willing to listen to any attempts by Kouichi to explain that Mei wasn't the extra. Izumi believes Mei is the "extra" but would be going after her even if Mei wasn't, unless she knew who the real extra is; she hardly cares about confirming her suspicions reasonably because of her hatred, and not knowing the extra for sure doesn't matter because she knows Mei brought this tragedy on all of them. And tragically, Mei was still unwilling to explain herself or anything else at this point to Izumi, and Kouichi was more concerned about safeguarding Mei than persuading Izumi not to kill her, behavior that certainly didn't help ease his past friend. Izumi was even more broken, this time heartbroken, by Kouichi's willingness to defend Mei with his life after seeing her presumably savagely murder the girl.

All he or Mei had to do was tell the truth as Izumi stood over them. But none of that happens. Izumi, having cornered Kouichi could never hate him, and she had a crush on him as well. But when she sees him protecting Mei without them giving her any context as to what had happened with Takako, or what was happening in general, she can't help but feel betrayed. So, after a bout of sorrow and disbelief, with her asking him why he was siding with Mei against all logic, despite her only trying to look out for him and her class, he doesn't answer and she melts down further, threatening to kill him too if he doesn't stop shielding her.

Izumi and Kouichi just glare at each other, though. And with that aggrieved tone, she doesn't kill him in the few seconds she has the chance.

Well, she definitely didn't want to. It's unknown if she would've calmed down or beat Kouichi aside to get to Mei, but probably the latter seeing that she didn't regain her memories of who had died until just

before she herself died seconds later. It's 99% likely that, when Kouichi first met Izumi, he mentioned his late aunt's name and possibly even her being in Class 3-3, before Izumi did the same regarding her late brother. And even if he didn't, Izumi knows who Reiko really is (e.g., "I guess you can't judge a book by its cover." when Reiko's racing; her seeing Reiko as Ms. Mikami with Chibiki as they all returned from Junta's funeral) and would know she's returned as 3-3's assistant homeroom teacher.

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So then...

...in the end, the problem...every problem...is all Mei.

For more or less 80% of the story, Mei just didn't give a fuck about anything or anyone but Kouichi, whether they died or not. It started from Fujioka's death. When Fujioka died, she kept her hatred bottled up and refused to let her classmates know what'd happened because she was bitter and cynical, not wanting or caring to associate with her class and not thinking there was anything they could do anyway. As a result of her anger and hopelessness, she decided to have fun with it and purposefully broke the shunning the class agreed on just to worry them while she knew it didn't matter. And she never told them it didn't matter because she didn't want to, and she never apologized because she didn't think it mattered. Funny.

Meanwhile, Izumi thinks that even though Mei's not talking to anyone even after class and always leaving early or skipping school altogether, it's alright because Mei's upholding her role as the extra that she volunteered for, keeping the class safe while Izumi figures out how to stop the curse for good so they never have to do this again. She never expected Mei to not give a damn about betraying everyone, and so, she never made sure Kouichi himself (who was in no condition to be told he was transferring into Hell) knew to avoid her: she was just too trusting.

And she got burned. Of course, she later learns Mei just decided to talk to Kouichi like she'd never made a promise to be the nonexistent student. Mei not only talks to Kouichi but, from the moment she figures out his obliviousness to Class 3-3's situation on the rooftop, she purposefully manipulates him into

wanting to talk to her more, hinting at something bad possibly happening if he does (and knowing it already did), not ignoring him or telling him to ignore her/leave her alone—and just generally being cold yet mysteriously inviting to him for no reason other than to make him question her and acknowledge her. Why? Because she's bitter and doesn't care how Izumi feels or what she tries to do for the class; in her eyes, Izumi is powerless, and fighting a pointless battle. And after Mei callously screws everything up with the seal that she should've warned wasn't working from the start, Izumi no longer has the time to focus on the curse in general. She has to focus on stopping the curse from continuing to harm their class, by reluctantly shunning Kouichi who was now enticed by Mei into constantly breaking the seal. Which, even though even Kouichi ("very ignorant") understood Izumi was only doing what she had to do, much of the fanbase apparently can't because she's a "bitch" and hate-likes Kouichi for wanting to protect him. Even though Mei didn't care either way.

Yes, Izumi should've asked Mei she did what she did (and *maybe* Mei would've told her the truth), but Izumi wrongly assumed Mei just didn't take the curse seriously and then didn't want to admit fault and take responsibility for her action's consequences. It shouldn't have gotten to that point, though. All Izumi would've wanted at all from Mei was some valuable help to guarantee everyone's safety. She would've loved it, and loved her for helping, because though she was doing her absolute best but already knew the job wasn't easy to handle. In fact, with Fujioka's death from the start and her ignorance of that, she never had a chance. But Mei was a sociopath who didn't mind who died until seeing the deaths got too much even for her. Yet she then had the nerve to run when Izumi was trying to stab her.

There is no reason a noble-intentioned, yet utterly broken person like Izumi should get any hate at all from anyone who's seen this, *unless they just weren't paying attention at all*. Meanwhile, it's only a minority that dislikes Mei who ruined Izumi's and everyone else's life. She's *everyone's* best girl.

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Now for some slightly random connections. If that makes any sense.

*Why were students even placed in the cursed Class 3-3 this late in the curse's life?*

It depends on the kid. Mei's mother probably didn't believe in the "curse" like most parents, if she even knew of it (unlikely), and shoved her in the city's school. It was only by unfortunate coincidence that Mei ended up in 3-3. By contrast, Izumi wanted to try and stop the curse she believes took her brother from Class 3-3 and will endanger the new Class 3-3. After seeing the Head of Countermeasures for 1997 save their class, she decided to be the Head of Countermeasures for 1998 and signed up with her teacher before classes started that year, putting herself in harm's way when she never had to. As in, possibly opting to be placed in Class 3-3 when she didn't have to be. Surely, knowing about the potential misfortune of 1998's Class 3-3 in advance and believing in the curse from the start unlike most of her classmates, she could've certainly insisted to either not be placed in 3-3 or to not attend Yomiyama North. Could Mei have requested the same? Perhaps, but Izumi's brother having already died while at that school and in 3-3, along with her only guardians being her grandparents who apparently would've been alright even if she left for Tokyo on her own next year (that she'd decided and that she had a chauffeur from the beach scene really makes one think she swam in yen), means Izumi definitely had more rein to "choose her fate" per se.

*And also, at what point did Mei remember Reiko had died?*

Most likely when she, Takako, Izumi, Junta, Kouichi, and Naoya left Yomiyama to go to the beach. The only time she's out of Yomiyama, and she's out before Kouichi, it's the only time this can make sense, although her memory is really good to have not forgotten once she reentered the town (though the trauma of seeing Junta, Yumi, Takako, and Izumi die probably kept that memory burning in her). Kouichi and Izumi didn't realize the truth about Reiko because Mei didn't know Reiko's identity even as she saw her being killed, whereas her two peers did. She remembered by sight only, but she'd already reasoned out the extra faculty seating issue after she confirmed Reiko was dead much earlier on with her heavenly-eye.

Second, from above, Mei also knew Reiko was dead earlier when she removed her eyepatch during class and peeked at Reiko because the "curiosity was getting the best of her". If anything, that meant after someone had died, so any time up until just after their teacher Kubodera committed suicide. Likely around the time she noted while with Chibiki and Kouichi in the library that Reiko was in 1996's Class 3-3. Though she didn't have the "context" of Reiko's death, this meant she knew Reiko was dead for possibly weeks before the trip to Yomiyama Shrine, and she still let everything be because she didn't see the absolutely urgency in confronting Reiko until things were too far out of control, with her classmates dying by the minute.

If Mei's not a bitch, she's undoubtedly a monster.