

Hikawa Infographic #5: Birthday Card Arts Series 2

[>Imgur link to the infographic<](#)

Intro

Hello, everyone, and welcome to another infographic and analysis for the Hikawa Twins. This will be the 5th infographic in the main 'series' so to speak, and this time I want to really take a good look at the new Birthday cards they have received this year. Some of you may remember or have even read the previous infographic I did last year (my first one) for the original Birthday cards, and so I wanted to try and replicate that general success this time as well. As we'll see, this year's Birthday cards do connect to their old ones, so I'm including a link to the original infographic post in case you'd like to have a look over it as well.

[Hikawa Birthday Infographic 2021](#)

As always, I'm including the usual reminder with regards to the interpretation of this infographic and analysis. You do not need to agree with everything I say here, nor am I going to state that what I discuss is the objective truth regarding the meaning behind the symbolism and imagery I highlight. First and foremost, I want to bring this imagery and symbolism to your attention, and then I'd like to offer some story and lore context to explain why I think certain details are interesting, or why I can appreciate certain design choices more. At the end of the day, you are more than welcome to offer your own interpretations and explanations for the things we're going to talk about in a moment. I just want to let you know that there are a lot of nice details that do exist and deserve recognition. And with that out of the way, let's begin.

New Year, New Flowers (and fruit)

I'm going to work my way down the infographic in case people want to go through the text and pictures together. And to that end, let's start things off by looking at the primary theme of the new Birthday arts. We were told that the theme this year is going to be sweets, and immediately you can see that they weren't lying, with both Sayo and Hina having prominent cakes on display. But the detail that really catches the eye is the inclusion of very obvious fruits, one for each twin. Hina has very noticeable strawberries in the top right and bottom left corners of her art, as part of the border and frame, while Sayo instead has blueberries in the top left and bottom right corners. We can also see imagery of these fruits scattered in other places. Decorations on their outfits, for example, or as part of their cake design.

Immediately this already looks to tickle a bit of the old complementary nature of visuals we tend to see between the twins. Red and blue is a very standard and stereotypical pairing of colours, often considered a colour-blind friendly alternative to the usual red-green dichotomy, and even the position of the berries in their arts is notably mirrored, while the twins are looking opposite ways. It comes across quite clearly that these were designed as a pair with the arts being designed almost like reflections of each other. But just like last year, I want to take a bit of a deeper look into some of the symbolism behind these fruits and flowers. What kinds of emotions or feelings they are associated with, and how they might, in turn, associate with the same kinds of feelings from the Hikawa twins and their story.

To do this, we'll first talk about Hina and her strawberries. Although the strawberry is Hina's primary fruit here, we can also see that Sayo's cake features strawberries in the cream layer. And while this is probably quite a normal detail,

as strawberries aren't uncommon in cakes, we're going to see that this is still quite a sweet detail because of the symbolism behind the strawberry, and the deliberate linking of this fruit to Hina.

In Hanakotoba, the Japanese language of flowers, the strawberry flower has quite an interesting set of meanings associated with it. It typically connotes the ideas of "respect and affection", "happy family", "foresight", and "you please me". Anyone at all familiar with Hina as a character (particularly with regards to Sayo) might already be able to see why this is such a good fit for Hina. When it comes to Sayo, Hina displays extremely powerful emotions. Sayo is the person that Hina respects the most, and whom she holds and outright displays the most affection for. I'm sure we've all come across various scenes of Hina glomping onto Sayo, we've all heard Hina tell Sayo she loves her, and so on. What I find very interesting though, is the "happy family" and "foresight" part. As the story moves on and the troubles of their past are slowly left behind, both Sayo and Hina have been looking toward the future, how they can approach it together and what it holds for them. Hina has longed to be a happy family once more with Sayo, to be close to her once again, and Sayo has slowly managed to reciprocate those feelings increasingly openly with Hina over the last couple of years. And in that respect, I like to think of these cards as being a little more forward-thinking in terms of their meanings. Last year very much addressed the past and present, yet these are looking to the future and all its promise.

On the Western side of things, we have some even more powerful emotions. While the flower tends to focus on the topics of esteem and love, the berry itself is considered extremely romantic overall. In medieval times, it was often seen as the fruit of the devil, and a symbol of temptation. Its striking red colour and heart shape has made it a powerful symbol of love, feminine sexuality, and sensuality even in the modern day. It's also sometimes regarded as the symbol of Venus, who is in turn the Goddess of Love. Earlier I mentioned that Hina tends to display very powerful emotions when it comes to Sayo, and in the case of love it is no different. I would be confident in saying that Hina displays the strongest

canonical love for something out of the entire cast, and the subject of those feelings is Sayo. Much of Hina's entire life revolves around Sayo. She is very frequently thinking of Sayo, talking about Sayo with others, or trying to get other people to talk about Sayo. We know she tries to get people to take pictures of Sayo for her, so that she has a bigger collection of photos to use on her phone, and she even waits for hours in the CiRACLE lounge for Sayo to finish practicing, just so that they can walk home together. She is so deeply invested in Sayo, and there is really no denying the depth of love that she feels for Sayo, regardless of how you choose to interpret that love.

A passionate fruit that focusses strongly on love is the perfect way of symbolising her feelings towards Sayo, and it is no coincidence that it was chosen for an artwork that is visually paired with one for Sayo as well. Heck, we've even seen Hina try to tease Sayo into saying "I love you too" on their birthday, and she often teases Sayo about her feelings when Sayo tries to play down helping Hina, because she knows that Sayo feels the same way deep down. So, in that respect, Hina even manages to live up to the 'temptation' side of this fruit as well. And remember how I mentioned that Sayo's cake has strawberries in it too? At first glance, it seems like there is no real reason for the artists to include that detail. Sayo's cake would have been perfectly normal without them, yet they chose to include it anyway, knowing that those strawberries were being linked to Hina in her own art. They did it deliberately to link Hina to Sayo through that detail, knowing that Hina's powerful love of Sayo would be symbolised in that way.

As a result, I'm really impressed with Hina's birthday card overall. This single meaning alone is so powerful, and really helps to capture the kind of person she is throughout her story because of how it encompasses a key aspect of her personality. She is overflowing with love and affection for Sayo, unconditionally. Nothing that Sayo has ever done has managed to break those feelings Hina has for her. Not during the depths of her inferiority complex, nor even in the Umbrella event where Sayo seemed to be breaking her promise (though Hina did become very upset). Her feelings of love have weathered so many trials to reach the point

they are at now. Last year we were given orange/yellow tulips to signify Hina's unrequited love, a very melancholic message of how much of their life had been until quite recently. This year, that past is left behind her, and her feelings of love are placed front and centre. In a way, I'm excited to see what this means for the twins and their relationship going forward. We already saw in the 5th Anniversary Special Animation that Sayo and Hina are *very* close now. It's possibly some of the most intimate scenes we have seen between them so far. Being able to openly acknowledge Hina's powerful love is a big change of pace and I'm looking forward to them working that idea even harder.

Now let's move on to Sayo's side of things. The blueberries, much like Sayo herself, are a little bit more subtle. A bit more... gentle, in their message. In Hanakotoba, they typically connote the meanings of intelligence and having a fruitful life. Of course, we all know Sayo is a very intelligent person, both in a logical sense but also emotionally as well. She's very introspective and able to work through her thoughts and feelings, and is academically very strong as well. But the fruitful life also jumps out as being quite relevant in terms of her story, particularly in a future-thinking perspective. Up until this point, Sayo has been working very hard to be a better person and catch up with Hina. It's been tough on her, but she pulled through because of Hina's support and her own desire to reconcile. With how sad and unfulfilling her past has been because of her complex, I like to think of the blueberries here as signifying her recognition of what is to come in the future. Having rebuilt her relationship and found her sound once more, Sayo is ready to take on the future and have a life not dictated by her insecurities or perceived failings, but one that is instead hers to direct. One that she can spend side by side with Hina, having worked so hard to get there.

From the Western side of things, they have a blunter meaning of 'I only love you'. This is something you'd probably expect to see more on Hina's side than Sayo's, given that Sayo is normally very strict on how much of her feelings she displays to others, and especially with Hina. That said, much like Sayo is the inarguable

primary object of Hina's affection, so is the reverse also true. Of all the characters in the story, of all the stories we have seen, it is clear that Hina is the one that Sayo holds the most love for, even if she can be a bit shy in showing it. Sayo forced her way through agonising pain, fighting against the trauma of her inferiority complex, just to try and reconcile with Hina. Something that she received very little observable emotional support in doing so. This kind of detail is unsurprisingly glossed over by the game, as it would take a lot of time to engage with, but we rarely see Sayo being given the opportunity to open up emotionally to anyone with regards to the trauma she has felt due to her complex. She rarely discusses the fear and the pain that it caused her, save for a brief discussion with the player character in one of her card stories and tentatively opening up a little to Roselia on the topic, but never going into too much detail. From what we can see, she has been very isolated in dealing with this issue despite its complexity and severity. And yet despite those struggles, she still pushes forward with the difficult decision of facing that inferiority complex and overcoming it. For her own sake and especially for Hina's, because at the end of the day Sayo knows how much she means to Hina, even if she doesn't understand exactly why.

Another great example of Sayo's love can also be seen more recently in Prismatic Duo. After all that effort to rebuild her relationship, she finally gets an opportunity to spend time with Hina for Christmas. It's a special occasion that they've both been waiting for, and yet suddenly the agency comes and asks Hina to help them. Hina unsurprisingly declines and wants to be with Sayo, because their time together is special, and yet it is Sayo that tells Hina she should go. Not because she doesn't want to be with Hina, but because she loves Hina enough to prioritise her well being over her own. She knows that Hina's career with Pastel Palettes is so important, and she doesn't want Hina to lose out on, or jeopardise that opportunity. Even though it hurts her to do so, even though she's visibly not happy about it after Hina walks off with the agent, she still makes that decision, sacrificing her own happiness, because she loves Hina and wants what's best for her. It's an incredibly selfless act that really shows Sayo's love in a more indirect way. As an aside, Sayo's heart-to-heart with Hina in that chapter is just beautiful. You can really feel the emotion between them.

The berries themselves also contribute to the general idea of a fruitful life, being associated with meanings such as optimism and confidence in the future, as well as inner peace and satisfaction in life. And that just goes to highlight some of the previously discussed topics. Now that Sayo has progressed forward beyond the chaos and uncertainty of her complex, she's managed to build up that relationship with Hina and she's finding that stability in her personal and professional life. Her relationship with Hina is good, she's found her sound and developed that confidence as a musician. She's moving forward from a great point and the future holds a lot of promise for her. It's something she can be confident about.

So to finish off I want to give a bit of praise for the overall designs and the main themes here. I think the berries work very well for Sayo and Hina individually, but I also love the fact that they can hold deeper meanings that relate the twins to each other as well. The choice of having strawberries in Sayo's art makes that subtle tie to Hina more noticeable and having a strawberry and blueberry on both of their badges is again a nice subtle detail that emphasises their connection. These outfits aren't designed as individuals, they are specifically made to be a pair. And CraftEgg drive that further by including crossover details and symbolism that incorporates both twins one way or another.

Cameo Flowers

As expected, the first chapter was relatively chunky, covering the main theme of the cards in a more general sense. Now I want to look at some of the more specific details, starting with what I call the cameo flowers. To put it plainly, CraftEgg have included the old flowers from Sayo and Hina's previous birthday cards as a little background detail in their new ones. If we look at the vases on the tables in each of the arts, you can see this. Orange/yellow tulips with

cantoniensis for Hina, while Sayo has pink and purple tulips with blue roses. These all have very pertinent meanings and symbolisms that relate beautifully to the Hikawa storyline. If you're interested in more about that then you're welcome to have a look at the first infographic I made, which covered these arts and flowers more specifically.

For the purpose of trying to keep this written section not as long, I don't want to go over the same things I've already talked about with these flowers in too much detail, so I'm going to leave it as the quick summaries in the infographic itself. What I do want to highlight though, is that this kind of detail is excellent at highlighting the future and how the twins' situation has changed going forward, and this is especially noticeable for Hina. These flowers are included as a side detail, just some vases on a table, almost like a memorial or detail of remembrance for something of the past. Because in essence, that's exactly what it is. Take Hina's vase, the yellow tulips. A symbol of unrequited love, something is universally recognised as being such a powerful and fitting remark on Hina's story with Sayo. Hina pined after Sayo for so long, wanting even just the smallest bit of contact she could get with her. Yet for so many years, those feelings were ignored by Sayo, who was afraid and in pain. But nowadays, that line of thinking is no longer true. Hina is no longer being left alone waiting for Sayo, because Sayo is doing her utmost to stand by Hina's side and answer those feelings with her own. As a result, these birthday arts almost have a chronology of their own. The first birthday arts recognised much of their past and present, Hina longing for Sayo for so long, and Sayo finally catching up with Hina and having her own feelings truly bloom anew. These new arts instead acknowledge that past and look towards the future. They remember the troubles and the uncertainty of those earlier times, but also symbolise the potential and promise in Sayo and Hina's relationship that is yet to come. All the while, they reinforce those strong feelings they share for each other, something that will likely never fade again.

It's one of those details that you see in passing and think "oh yea, that's kind of cool", but to me it holds so much power by really linking the fantastic rollercoaster

of past emotions to the powerful messages of the future. It's great to see those kinds of details recognised continually by the artists, because they clearly know the significance behind them.

Table Details

Moving swiftly on, we turn our attention to another set of details on the same tables as the vases. The first of these is the teapot and teacups, along with the pearl strings. I don't have too much to say about the pearls now, other than they very clearly match across artworks, which is cute. But as you can see, each twin has a cup of tea on their table, while Hina also has a teapot as well. And straight away I want to highlight that detail to you. Remember how I said these arts were specifically made to be a pair? This is one of those delectable details that emphasises the shared nature of their arts. Both girls have teacups, therefore they both need a teapot to pour tea, right? But if the teapot is only in Hina's art, then that suggests that they're sharing that teapot one way or another. You can even notice that the teapot seems to share a strong similarity in colour scheme to Sayo's dress, with the two shades of blue combined with a yellow trim. What's more, both of their teacups are obviously from the same set since they have the same colour and shape, the same saucer, and they both have roses on them as well. The teapot also has roses on it. So, all signs are again pointing towards the twins sharing this tea set between them, which is a wholesome thing to imagine.

I also want to briefly touch on these roses in a bit more detail as well (you can also see them on the tablecloth, too). If we look again at the teapot, you'll notice that the roses on them are coloured in pink and red. Now, when thinking of a teapot, it's typically the main part of a tea set that is shared between people. Everyone pours their tea from the same teapot. It's a connecting point. And on this connecting point, we just so happen to have some of the most iconic

romantic and love-related symbols from throughout history in the red and pink roses, right? Coincidence? Or perhaps a more subtle reminder of the love they share for each other? Some of you may be rolling your eyes and believe that such a detail is merely coincidental, and I don't necessarily blame you. But hopefully as we go through the rest of the analysis, you'll find that the overwhelming abundance of similar imagery makes it difficult to imagine it as purely coincidental.

On that note, we'll also move our attention to the twins' teacups, which appear to have what I think are matching orange roses (the steam and resolution limitations do make it not so clear). These typically do not have a direct Hanakotoba meaning in Japan, but in the West, they are considered a cross between the red romantic rose, and the yellow friendship rose, being associated with enthusiasm, intensity, and passion. It goes without saying that such emotions are key aspects of the Hikawa storyline. Hina's enthusiasm for Sayo, Sayo's intensity in her pursuit of music, their shared passion for each other and rebuilding that relationship they lost. A fitting motif for them to share across their arts. I also want to point out that all these roses seem to occur in pairs. It might seem like a minor detail, but when you're dealing specifically with a pair of twins and going out of your way to emphasise imagery and symbolism that displays their love and affection for each other, it's quite cheeky to go and make the roses come in pairs as well.

The other detail I want to mention is located on Sayo's table, where you can see she has some sheet music as well as a pen. And in any other setting this detail would probably be quite average. Sayo does write music occasionally and she is a musician who is dedicated to her craft, so it wouldn't be too unusual to see her with sheet music every now and then. But the thing is, this isn't a normal setting, and this isn't a normal detail. This is an artwork that is specifically paired with Hina, and so I think we all know what this inclusion of the sheet music is a reference to. It can only be Prismatic Duo, the event where Sayo gifts Hina sheet music for them to play together. The event that really helped to show us the

depth of their love and feelings for each other, and how far their relationship had come. And the thing I like most about this detail is that it connects the twins on two levels. Not only does it reference an event that they both starred in as the main focus, but the sheet music also reminds us of the fact that Soyo made it for them to play together. It's a double detail that specifically acts to tie the twins to each other and drive home the point that they are connected. And just reminding us of Prismatic Duo in general is a big boon, because that event is incredible.

Sweets-themed dresses

Now it's time to discuss something that is arguably one of the main details and themes of these arts – sweets! Now, we were told originally that the theme of these new cards would be sweets, and CraftEgg certainly lived up to that promise. Not only do Soyo and Hina both have their own prominent fruits (as discussed earlier) serving as a form of sweet, but they also have their own birthday cakes as well, with the cakes even using the fruits as part of their design. It's all interconnected. Something that I find especially cool, however, is that if we look closely, we find that the Hikawa twins are wearing dresses that are designed to match the theme of their birthday cakes. So, when CraftEgg said sweets-themed, they really did mean it.

Let's start off by looking at Hina – her cake is arranged as a yellow sponge with pale blue icing on the top and sides, but interestingly this icing is not done in a uniform way, it's quite irregular. The cake itself isn't completely iced and it appears as though it was left to run down the sides, resulting in an unequal 'drooping' pattern. It is decorated with strawberries on top along with 'ropes' of icing, and there are also strawberry flowers present on the sides as well. There

are also a pair of hearts on top as well, one with her name and the other containing a little bowtie.

If we turn our attention to Hina's dress, we can see her cake design reflected there. Her dress has a large visible portion of yellow skirts, matching the visible sponge of her cake on the outside. The icing can be seen in the pale blue sections about halfway between her waist and the hem of her skirt, even matching the irregular drooping pattern as well. The more delicate decorations can also be noted across her outfit. The strawberries on icing can be seen in multiple locations around her dress, and a mini strawberry cake features in her hat as well. You'll also notice that her hair tie is pinned using a strawberry flower. Finally, the heart shaped décor is very nicely captured in her earrings, where they even feature a little bowtie on the outside. All in all, Hina's dress very nicely captures the overall theme and design of her cake, and it suits her perfectly.

Moving swiftly onward we now have Sayo. Her cake is similar to Hina's but different (like much of their shared imagery, to be honest). Unlike Hina's more irregular cake, Sayo's cake is very precise and balanced in terms of design, it almost feels clinical. The cake is completely iced in an even manner, with two layers of blue icing, one darker and one lighter. Notably, this icing also follows a strict and consistent undulating pattern around the whole cake, unlike Hina's inconsistent drooping. It is also lined with a row of pearls. The top of the cake, much like Hina's, is decorated with more rope icing dotted with blueberries, and the centre contains the love heart decorations along with a yellow ribbon pinned with a blue rose. And this overall design is reflected exquisitely in the design of her outfit. Looking at her skirts, we can straight away notice the dark/light blue split that was present in the cake icing, with the uniform undulating pattern lined with pearls. There is even a rope-like lining near the hem dotted with blueberry decorations as well.

What I find really pleasing though, is that if we look more closely at Sayo's skirts we can see that they're triple-layered. A blue layer on top, followed by a yellow, then a white underneath. And what you'll notice is that this is a direct mimic of the layers of her cake. The blue icing on the outside, followed by the yellow sponge, followed by the white cream. It's a lovely detail that really helps to emphasise the connection between her cake and her outfit. She's basically wearing her cake, so to speak. The other decorations on the cake can also be seen around Sayo's head, again just like Hina. We immediately notice her hair clip that is themed after the icing and blueberries, and her ponytail is tied up using a yellow ribbon with a blue rose in the centre, much like the top of her cake as well. Finally, we also have the same heart-shaped earrings that match those hearts above her cake.

So overall, we can quite clearly see that CraftEgg did not fail to deliver in their promise of creating sweets-themed outfits for the twins this year, and they've done a fantastic job of incorporating that theme across the entire card art. I especially love how they went out of their way to design the outfits with the other sweets designs in mind. It feels so much more impactful than if they had just given them some cute outfit that was otherwise unrelated to the overall design.

Love-heart imagery

So now we've looked at most of the main imagery and symbolism in these arts, the primary themes. The flowers and fruit, much like last year, are some of the main objects of interest, and the dresses this year are also a bit more front and centre because their design is explicitly linked to the theme of the art in a more tangible way. But now I want to turn our attention to some of the details that are a bit less front-and-centre. And to start that off I'm going to talk a bit about the general love-heart imagery that Sayo and Hina share here.

Now, as we've already seen a bit throughout the analysis so far, Sayo and Hina share quite a few motifs between them containing hearts. And we've previously discussed this idea of the powerful love they share as well. Something I found quite interesting is that this connection isn't the first, for Sayo and Hina. Going back through the first series of birthday cards, you can see that Sayo and Hina also shared a heart motif through their tiaras at the time, which I loved as a symbol of their love for each other. As time went on, this became more notable because no other girl seemed to have any heart motif at all that I could find. This year, the heart motif isn't exclusive to the twins, as we've seen from Rimi's art, but instead what CraftEgg have done is they've just dialled up the inclusion of the motif to 11. But what's still noticeable, and it's something I keep emphasising by design, is that Sayo and Hina again share the motifs in a deliberately paired fashion.

For example, the chairs they both sit on. Different colours, perhaps, to match the overall tonal colours and theme of their arts (red for strawberries, lavender for blueberries) and yet the design is the same – a giant love heart. You can't help but think of the implications and meanings when they're both sitting back against a giant heart that matches the other. Similarly, as we just discussed, they have matching hearts on their cakes and as their earrings as well. Ordinarily it might just be a cute detail, but the designs are identical, and they even include that little bowtie – this motif is typically associated with Hina because she uses them to tie her little tails. And this goes one layer deeper as well, because a very similar setup was used in the first series of birthday cards as well, where Sayo and Hina's earrings also had little bow ties on them. Heck, you can see this in Sayo's relatively recent card from the Hina/Hagumi teaching event. She has a bowtie motif in her trained art, because Hina is around. What's more, even if their birthday badges are heart shaped, and as I pointed out before these are the same badges that also deliberately have that strawberry and blueberry pairing on them. Their badges acknowledge that connection between them while also symbolising love through their shape. If you want to be a little nerdy, they're even placed over the left breast, which is where the heart is usually located.

This imagery is something I find to be really powerful, despite it not being the main focus necessarily. As I said before, I've gone on at length about the level of emotion being conveyed by the details in these arts so far, particularly love and affection. And what's hopefully becoming clear, calling back to the roses from earlier, is that these details and motifs aren't just a happy coincidence. We're beginning to see that the imagery is chosen quite deliberately here, to highlight aspects of the twins and their feelings for each other. The shared heart motifs might be a bit less subtle than some of the more hidden meanings and symbolism, but they do not lack for power. And ultimately, it's a really sweet way of acknowledging their feelings for each other in a slightly more concrete way. Remember, they didn't have to be designed as a pair. Sayo and Hina may share a birthday, but they are still their own individuals, and very different people. But the arts were deliberately designed to not only be similar in terms of theme and design, but to actively incorporate identical motifs of love between them. Considering how terrified Sayo used to be when it came to being like Hina, it's a really nice way to celebrate the total reversal of those feelings. Fear and pain have turned into love and affection.

Additional Background Details

But if you thought the references and symbolism couldn't get any sweeter, you'll have to think again. Because despite this supposedly being a sweets-themed birthday art, CraftEgg didn't neglect to include a few more details to really appeal to the Hikawa fans and their love of event stories up to this point. For example, Hina's art contains a couple of astronomy related items. You'll notice a globe of the world off to the left side, while behind her she also has an orrery, a device for predicting the relative positions of the planets and their moons. These details are nice because they relate to her on a personal level (through her love of astronomy and stargazing) but also because they serve to remind us of one

moment in particular that epitomises the connection of the Hikawa Twins to astronomy. I am, of course, talking about the Twin Star Ensemble event, where Sayo and Hina stood and gazed at the stars together, lost in their own little world for a brief moment in time. It's a very powerful event that really served to deepen the relationship between Sayo and Hina, showing us that although they are different, they can still shine independently while loving each other. That such differences don't need to be a barrier that comes between them but can instead be cherished and appreciated.

This reference to TSE is made even more substantial by a detail in Sayo's art. If we look to the left of her art, we can see in the background a kind of silver chain. You'll also notice that it's dotted with pale crescent moons and blue four-pointed stars. Sayo has long had a kind of 'connection' to the concept of Night, with Hina being tied to Day, because of the kanji in their names. So, in that respect, this detail is quite lovely in how it reminds us of that symbolism in a personal way for Sayo. But much like Hina's detail, this again also serves to really drive home that TSE reminder as well. Because remember, Sayo otherwise has no connection to astronomy at all. Her main relationship to the subject comes entirely from her link to Hina. Hina is what compelled Sayo to take an interest in astronomy, to do the background reading that allowed her to help Hina. It's what the entire TSE event revolves around. It is an inescapable fact that choosing to place these kinds of motifs in Sayo's art is intended to remind us of TSE, because that is the main area where such a motif would be relevant. And again, this kind of detail is something I really love, despite it being not especially related to the original theme. TSE is arguably the first major point at which we see Sayo and Hina really deepening their relationship and showing their close feelings for each other. I've previously done an infographic looking at the symbolism in their card arts, but even the stories themselves from the event are very powerful in showing us just how much Sayo does care about Hina, and how much that love and affection means to Hina as well. They share a very powerful bond which isn't really explored much up until that point, but that event basically blows the whole thing open for us to see. As a result, referencing that event means so much because of how important it is and what it symbolises in terms of their relationship and development.

A final background detail I wanted to look at were the white and lavender roses in Sayo's background. It's quite a... conflicting detail, in a way. It doesn't seem to fit in in some especially meaningful way, though as a standalone it's quite beautiful. And roses are the primary symbol of Roselia so you kind of come to expect them all around the place when their members are present. Something I find quite cool, though, is that even these flowers have relevant meanings for the Hikawa relationship. White roses typically connote the ideas of deep respect and 'I deserve you' – these two meanings alone are something that I think any Hikawa fan can recognise. Sayo and Hina both have a deep respect for each other. Hina naturally loves Sayo more than anything and always trusts her to be correct on things. She's somebody that Hina will always rely on unconditionally when she needs help or support. Sayo similarly has bottomless respect for Hina's natural abilities, but also her general personality in how her constant love and optimism has helped to support Sayo through her troubled times. I always like to recommend Roselia's final Noble Rose event when talking about this topic, because during one of the chapters you really get to see into Sayo's thoughts about Hina, and just how much Hina means to her.

Related to that, the idea of 'I deserve you' is also quite pertinent in their story. Both twins have been working so hard for so long to reconcile and rebuild their relationship. Hina spent many years alone, and without the person whom she so longed to be with. Despite trying again and again to open up to Sayo, she was rebuffed. Sayo in turn also had to go through emotional agony and turmoil, facing the pain of her insecurities and being torn knowing that she desperately wanted to reconnect with Hina but also fearing that it would hurt too much and that she would also hurt Hina in the process. Fighting against her own self-loathing, she finally managed to break free with Hina's support and now they are moving forward together. If any two characters deserve a 'happily ever after' moment, it's Sayo and Hina. To say that they deserve each other is almost an understatement.

In a related vein to that idea, white roses also tend to be a textbook wedding flower among Western cultures, as they are typically a symbol of purity and perfect for recognising a romantic or marital bond. When you think of the new bond that Sayo and Hina have made and have been strengthening together, this is quite beautiful imagery. They really do deserve to be happy together. The lavender roses also relate to this. They don't have a specific Hanakotoba meaning, but among the West they are apparently associated with enchantment and mystical love, usually love at first sight. It's something you might tend to associate with Hina's feelings for Sayo instead of the other way around, though their relationship in general could be summarised in such a way. Their accomplishment of reconnecting and rebuilding that relationship so deeply is quite enchanting, in a way.

Last Miscellaneous Details

As we wind our way towards the end of the analysis, I just wanted to briefly highlight a couple of final details which I thought were quite sweet. I've gone on at length about how the design for Sayo and Hina's arts are deliberately paired, and we can see this still in some of their jewellery designs that I haven't already mentioned.

Similarly to last year, there's quite a heavy usage of pearls throughout the twins' arts. You'll notice that their necklaces and bracelets are designed in the same way, albeit with different colour schemes. Pearls tend to be quite a universal decoration and are quite versatile in how they can be used, so in a way this isn't immediately a stand-out detail. Though I will note that pearls are often associated with wisdom gained through experience, and that's one meaning that can almost summarise Sayo and Hina's entire story.

The final detail I want to mention is specifically about their necklaces, because the design is actually quite similar to their earrings from last year. You'll notice that both the 2021 earrings and the 2022 necklaces seem to be designed as a blue gemstone surrounded by an orange border. This could just be a coincidence, or them using a detail that worked well in the past, but it's notable that Sayo and Hina do share a link to something blue and orange... that being Castor and Pollux, as we were shown in the TSE event. Sayo is the blue/white Castor, while Hina is the orange Pollux. So, it's quite nice seeing the repeated use of imagery that incorporates that idea.

Conclusion and Closing Remarks

I mention it in the infographic, but if you've read your way through all of this then thank you, and I hope it was enjoyable for you. I know that these can be very long and probably rambling in a lot of places, and I understand that not everyone wants to read through thousands of words about a very specific topic. So, I do appreciate it when people take the time to do so. The infographics as a format help to summarise the main points, but I enjoy being able to discuss some of the imagery and meanings in a lot more detail too.

I want to reiterate that these cards really impressed me. The overall quality is a step up from last year and we still get a nice chunk of beautiful symbolism and hidden depths to the arts as well. In particular they've really upped the little details that link the twins together, and you can tell that these arts are a deliberate pair, as if they were from the same event or something. I was also pleasantly surprised by how strong the hinted emotions were in these arts. Last year we had quite a surprising focus on their past and present relationship through the flower meanings, but this year they've really gone the extra mile in emphasising that love between Sayo and Hina. Hina's art in particular is

incredibly unapologetic in the level of romantic subtext it fields. But as I note, this is something I think is quite fitting for her as a character when we think about how much she loves Sayo, and how that is demonstrated to us in the visible canon.

Anyway, to avoid continuing on in some vague ramble I'll end this here. Thank you again for reading and I hope it was an enjoyable experience. Remember, you don't have to agree with everything here and I am well aware that there will be people that are not fond of the more romantic or 'love' side of things discussed here. That's fine, you're more than welcome to view such things in a more platonic or familial context as required. Take care, and I'll see you hopefully in the next infographic/analysis combo!

Thank you!