

歌にまつわる物語



"ANGELA X GORA"

CHAPTER 2: DIFFERENT COLORS (TAKAHASHI YASHICHIROU)

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

A "CLOSED" sign hangs on the door of the HOMRA Bar.

The once mighty headquarters of the Red Clan now seems to have lost its presence in the dim light of dusk, almost merging with the cityscape.

"Phew!"

Someone who had seen the scene so many times it could be said to be the same sighed in boredom. It was Mishakuji Yukari, a member of the green "Jungle" Clan, sitting on a nearby rooftop.

The early winter wind was neither cold nor warm, nor strong enough.

His breath felt half-hearted, neither burning nor icy, and it was uninteresting.

"The boredom that reigns here is a shame for those who aspire to greatness."

He whispered to himself.

Although he felt dissatisfied because it wasn't enough, because it wasn't interesting, he liked knowing that it was imbued with a firm sense of aesthetics.

A voice completely opposite his own, but one that still sounds calm even after being digitally processed, rises from the ground.

"You've chosen this place as a meeting point again. I want you to heed my warning."

It was Hirasaka Douhan, also from the Green Clan, dressed as a ninja.

Her voice was calm, but it was filled with blatant accusation. In fact, what she was saying was reasonable, and meeting so close to the enemy clan's headquarters was extremely dangerous.

Even though that red clan, "Homura", is practically on the verge of collapse.

Mishakuji ignores these circumstances.

"You're being overly cautious. What can they do now?"

He has complete confidence that he can emerge unscathed from any dangerous situation.

The reason such an attitude doesn't seem "arrogant" is his dignity, which makes others feel that his confidence is genuine... but Mishakuji forces himself to ignore it.

"When a powerful and self-confident person drags them down, ordinary people get nowhere."

He said as if trying to push her away.

"That's not what I meant. In any case, showing no signs of activity should have been the top priority for everyone in "Jungle". From now on, I want you to deliver information to the place I specify."

"There's no other option."

To begin with, it wasn't a significant action; she simply called him directly to the monitoring station because it was too complicated to find a place to meet. Mishakuji immediately agreed. They moved on to the main topic.

"So, what are the results of this investigation?"

"First of all, regarding the Red Clan, "Homura", there have been no significant changes in the whereabouts of the core members. Including the fact that there is one person missing."

"Ah, I see."

Mishakuji snorted at the results of the investigation, which were as warm and dull as ever.

Last winter, Suoh Mikoto, the "Red King", who controlled the area with his overwhelming power, died.

Since then, the members of the Red Clan, now servants without a king, have become extremely sluggish in their activities. In particular, the disappearance of the number two, who was the de facto leader of both Bar HOMRA and the clan, led most people to abandon the group. Bar HOMRA, the source of violence and fear that protected Shizume, is now nothing more than a closed shop that blends into the cityscape.

"About that missing person...", Mishakuji said nonchalantly to surprise his interlocutor.

"I found him at Nagare-chan's house."

"Where is he?"

Douhan asked reflexively, and then understood what the other person meant, but it was too much work to point it out, so he let the conversation flow.

Mishakuji took this attitude as a reward for playing a little game and answered with satisfaction.

"He's investigating in Dresden, far, far away, across the sea. It seems it took us so long to find him because the Blue Clan hid his travels."

"What are you going to do?"

"Nothing for now. It would be bad if it caused a big stir and attracted the attention of the international community, so let's leave it alone as long as it doesn't get in our way."

"In other words, there's no need to consider the intervention of the number two in the execution of the next plan."

Douhan calmly commented on the increased success rate.

"That's right. The Blue Clan will be able to judge the "King's Killing Charge" to a certain extent by their reaction to the execution... The situation is finally reaching a critical point."

The entire Mishakuji corps is eagerly awaiting the battle.

But...

(Even if that's the case...)

Douhan was puzzled. She asked while gathering information.

"You said you decided to ask me to investigate on your own. Why do you still distrust the Red Clan, that you don't believe they can act correctly in the face of the dramatic changes we've caused?"

"That's true. But..."

After Mishakuji's quick reply, she began to gather her thoughts, trying to translate her intuition into dramatic words.

For Mishakuji, this was surprising. It was impossible for that man to miscalculate the magnitude of the battle. Was there still anything left in that crumbling clan to give him pause?

After a few seconds, Mishakuji began to speak in a tone as if reciting a poem.

"It's true that right now there's only one girl left in the tent who can't let go of the days of fun. The girl with the strongest power has no fighting power. The other clan members are scattered, and number two is far away at sea. There's no dangerous "King" drawn to ruin, nor any beast tamer to act as a mediator in this world."

After carefully listing the miserable scenes, he suddenly laughed.

"But they're a fire, as they call themselves. It only seems quiet now because there's no firewood. When they run into something "burning", the buried fire can turn back into a raging blaze. That's probably why I'm on my guard."

That smile that spread across his face wasn't a relaxed expression of nonchalance.

It was the greed of a strong man, yearning for those who would stand up to him.

(I can't keep up.)

Hiding her fear and astonishment behind her mask, Douhan began finishing the remaining work.

"It's another investigation request, but it seems that people trying to deliberately stir up trouble have appeared again. This time, not only are they armed, but they've even hired a Class B agent."

"Ah, I see."

Mishakuji replied with a murderous smile.

Douhan told him the details, determined not to get involved in anything further.

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The few streetlights cast the silhouettes of desolate buildings into the night.

The side streets near Shizume are deserted, and due to their narrowness, no cars can be seen.

A sudden, loud roar breaks the gloomy silence.

It wasn't the entrance. A ten-story gate with one or two lights burning in the windows slammed open.

It wasn't the entrance.

It was a door leading down from the roof.

The sturdy iron plate rolled down the stairs, almost in a U-shape. The noise was too loud to be considered afterglow, waking everyone in the building.

The person who kicked it down slowly lost his graceful figure with his legs raised and entered.

"You're in the way."

Saying that, he smoothly drew his beloved sword, "Ayamachi", from behind his back.

The commotion downstairs intensified, and the stairwell lights, which had been off, instantly came on.

"What? Where's it from?"

"Upstairs!"

"Wake up, a murderer!"

"Gun, quick!"

Only hoarse voices could be heard from downstairs, anxious and panicked.

"That doesn't sound very appealing, but..."

Finally, he encountered the first person on the stair landing.

"Eh?"

The tough-looking man, who looked like a real thief, stepped back in shock, but then remembered what he was holding and pointed it at him. It was a new pistol; he didn't know where he'd gotten it.

"Oh? So things like this keep coming to the Shizume area."

"Who the hell do you think you are?!"

Ignoring the roaring man, Mishakuji muttered something to his absent master.

"I can't believe we can't catch these rebels without Douhan-chan's on-site investigation, not through our distribution routes... I suppose you're still not clear on that, Nagare-chan."

"What are you muttering?"

Mishakuji casually approached him and struck him down.

Before he went downstairs, four or five people crowded the stairs. Seeing their companions lying on the floor like pieces of meat, they all became enraged, or rather, mad.

"You bastard!"

"How dare you do that!"

The guns in their hands spewed flames, gunshots, and bullets.

Mishakuji gracefully dodged the storm of murderous intent and descended the stairs with minimal movement.

With a graceful dance, his steps were light, and he approached like a henchman of death.

Everyone was bound by fear, and it was too late to escape the fatal distance.

The knight passed through the middle of the group.

By the time he realized it, they had all been destroyed.

"Your level of training is declining. I'd say you're like a local gangster who was hunted by the Red Clan, heard rumors of their downfall, and returned for revenge."

Mishakuji gave him a strict assessment.

"You are a supernatural being after all!"

"You're from 'Homura', right?"

From the end of the corridor, a bullet whizzed by, along with a comment that seemed belated and a mistaken assumption.

Of course, Mishakuji didn't respond.

He carefully dodged it and said only what he wanted to say.

"Before I kill them all, hurry up and send the Strain you hired."

As he said that, he noticed a change in the expressions of the yakuza watching closely.

The hidden joy that is characteristic of those who deceive.

The carelessness that arises when they are certain of victory.

(Where is it coming from?)

The mortar floor bulged and exploded beneath Mishakuji's feet, and he immediately searched for any sign. Flames burst from the cracks, instantly reducing the surrounding combustibles to ash, including those who had been slashed.

"Hehehehe...!"

A burly figure crawled toward the center of the raging flames.

"Everything's pulverized. That's all this "Bomber" can do, hehe."

The self-proclaimed "Bomber" observed his achievements with satisfaction.

Half the stairs had collapsed, and embers projected flickers of light in the darkness here and there.

"You're going too far, Bomber!"

The Yakuza shouted from a distance, avoiding the flames.

"If we hesitate, reinforcements from "Homura" might come, so let's quickly switch to Yasa!"

The "Bomber" laughed again to dispel that fear.

"Ha, if reinforcements come, then annihilate them too. If Yatagarasu and the guy with glasses are among them, even better. I'll pay off a long-standing debt..."

"That information is quite old. I wonder if they were driven out of Shizume a long time ago."

"Eh?!"

The "Bomber" turned around and stared wide-eyed at the initiator of the conversation, as if it were a matter of course.

At the bottom of the collapsed stairs, in a corner unnaturally spared from the collapse, Mishakuji stood calmly.

"That's impossible! How the hell did you escape my bomb?!"

"How?"

A casual word answered a serious question.

"I cut it."

"Don't mess with me!"

The "Bomber" screamed and exerted his supernatural power.

A mass of flames erupted from his outstretched palm.

The flames, unstable in both color and shape, were approaching Mishakuji.

(I see. It's a force field that seals thermal energy... so the unstable control has the side effect of increasing its power.)

After seeing the moment it activated, Mishakuji immediately perceived all its characteristics. He also sneered, in a frank assessment.

(What a neglected hidden talent!)

He smirked and swung "Ayamachi" upward, slashing straight ahead to make it look as conspicuous as possible.

The unstable mass of energy split in two with a single, decisive slash.

Flames split left and right, veering to either side of Mishakuji and exploding behind him.

The handsome swordsman, with a flame on his back, said,

"These fireworks that only look like this won't reach a true clan member."

The proper advice didn't reach the "bomber, who trembled in fear.

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"You're diligent too."

That was the comment of the "Gray King", Iwafune Tenkei, after hearing the whole story.

The report from the Green Clan base, commonly known as the "Secret Base", has provoked three distinct reactions. Adding the bird makes four.

Iwafune, upon opening the can, takes the report as a heroic tale. His lightheartedness toward Mishakuji, whom he simply offers more snacks and a drink, is actually a sign of trust in Mishakuji, who believes he "won't make a mistake".

"How many times have you secretly taken care of the bad guys who were going to attack the weakened Red Clan? You're such a loyal member of the Clan that you could even get a dozen bottles of good sake at that store."

As he said this, he took a few gulps of the cheap sake on sale.

In contrast, Gojo Sukuna was very angry.

"More importantly, even though Nagare has given you permission, you're acting too independently! You're using Hirasaka, and you're the only one being unfair!"

His hand remains hidden until he begins to act seriously, and he's treated like a secret weapon, so to speak, and although powerful, he's still not allowed to move freely. They're both top Jungle players, but the current situation, where only Mishakuji can run around freely, isn't funny.

"I'm trying to stem the suffocation."

He probably didn't know it, but he complained like a child, pouting.

Without trying to appease him, the "Green King", Hisui Nagare, thought calmly.

"So this is the fifth case. I agree with the idea of eliminating uncertainties before executing the plan, but this is a frequency that could lead "Scepter 4" to suspect your true intentions."

Sitting in a wheelchair, he operates the device while still strapped in, and several panels float in the air. A list of the people Mishakuji has secretly eliminated so far scrolls across the map surrounding HOMRA Bar. It's too extensive to be called a "decent" list.

"A separate mission is being prepared to test the strength of the "Blue King". Let's not provoke him unnecessarily for now. Until the plan is put into action, military intervention is prohibited except in emergencies. Is that okay with you, Yukari?"

"As you wish."

If it was an order from his master, Mishakuji had no objection. He bowed exaggeratedly and sat down on his usual bench.

Kotosaka, the parrot, flew above him, yelling.

"Yukari Abarerno, Kinshi Kinshi."

"Hehe, they're scolding you."

Sukuna joined in and provoked him.

Iwafune, swallowing it, asked the question he'd been pondering.

"Anyway, why do you have to go to such lengths? I mean, the "Red Lady" is part of the plan and she needs to be protected, but it's just for fun."

"There's no way Yukari has any other reason than wanting to cause a rude stir."

Sukuna joined in the trend and added a word.

It may have seemed like a rude comment, but it actually hit the nail on the head.

"That's the most important thing."

Mishakuji nodded unabashedly. Then he added,

"But there's an equally important reason."

"Really? What's that about?"

Iwafune was curious about Mishakuji's will to fight and the "reason that's as big as his".

Both Sukuna and Nagare were intrigued and awaited an answer.

Mishakuji's gaze shifted to "Ayamachi" who was leaning next to him.

"If it's a fight where your life is at stake, I want it to be more beautiful."

He replied with words that described it.

After waiting a while for him to continue, Sukuna was displeased to realize that was all he had to say. The boy valued practicality and efficiency, and disliked abstract expressions like that.

"What? You're just making things up to cover it up again!"

Mishakuji couldn't help but chuckle at his comment.

"Actually, it's the other way around... I guess it's still too difficult for Sukuna-chan."

"Do you think Iwa-san and Nagare would understand?"

Sukuna, annoyed, looked at the other two as if demanding a standard answer.

Iwafune, whose motto is secrecy, easily avoided a frank discussion.

"This is a request from the young people, so I ask that you answer it together."

"You asked me, but I can't answer so easily. It's a difficult question."

When Nagare was asked to answer, he thought it over diligently.

Kotosaka perched on his shoulder and leaned toward his thoughtful master.

After a few minutes, Sukuna began to feel he had gotten Nagare into trouble and wondered if he should say, "Enough, you don't have to take it so seriously."

"I guess,"

The "Green King" finally spoke.

"The people Yukari got rid of are standing in the way of our plan."

"That's all? It's obvious..."

Iwafune stopped the impatient Sukuna.

"Well, wait a moment, Sukuna. Let's hear it out first."

Mishakuji silently waited for his "King" to respond.

"....."

"In other words, we, the King and his entourage, should approach the future with greater purity. To do so, we need to eliminate the impurities that hinder us beforehand. When that happens, Yukari describes the overall picture as "beautiful", right?"

Mishakuji smiled deeply at his lord's perfect response and the joy of gaining his understanding. Sitting on the couch, Mishakuji answered truthfully, without unnecessary gestures.

"...Your insight, my lord."

Envious of the two, Sukuna pouted again.

"It's just the way you put it, but it's the same thing you said before. I don't understand."

Iwafune summed it up roughly and comforted the boy.

"It's just a matter of humor, but that's the important thing."

Kotosaka expressed the atmosphere of the place with all his vocabulary.

"Funwari Imai! Sensation!"

Amidst all the commotion, Mishakuji leaned back comfortably on the couch.

Beside him, he explained his intentions in his own way.

"From now on, we will clash and devour each other, each with a different color. If each of our colors isn't clear, the mixture will become murky like mud."

Everyone looked at each other with different expressions, as if they understood or not, and he added with slight amusement.

"The greatest poet in history also wrote it like this."

This time, everyone was on guard.

(Ah, here it comes.)

And he prepared himself.

"All kinds of colors, dancing and vibrant."

It was much better than usual.

Satisfied with what he had said, Mishakuji stretched his long legs and relaxed his body and mind.

"I'm going to sleep. Whether it's blood or fire... I hope it's a red dream..."

The beast, a star actor, fell into a deep sleep, preparing for his next turn.