



RED CASE FILES: HOMRA IN LAS VEGAS

CHAPTER 3: SNAKE HUNTER

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

He woke up to a regular screeching sound.

The man lifted his sweat-soaked upper body. He felt that he had a terrible nightmare, but he did not remember it well. He was thirsty. While trying to find the water, he noticed something unusual.

The room was completely dark. He couldn't even see a bit ahead. He thought about the light and soon realized that it was a misunderstanding.

The room was not dark, but his eyes did not see.

"What is this?"

The sweat that broke out was mixed with cold things. It was astonishing. The sound of metal screeching echoed and his body trembled.

"Where I am?"

The man put his hand on his head and tried to remember why he was there.

At that moment, he heard the sound of the door opening from somewhere, and then, someone spoke.

"Hello, Mr. Mizuchi. Are you awake?"

She was a woman and she spoke English. As he made some guesses, Mizuchi asked in a firm voice.

"Who are you?"

"Me? Yes, call me Jane."

Mizuchi laughed with his nose.

"Anonymous woman, Jane? Do you mean you are not going to reveal your identity?"

"I don't care what the name is. The question is what the contents are."

So it was. Mizuchi fell silent and waited for the next action from the woman, Jane.

In the dark, there was the sound of a chair being dragged. He believed that she sat down. The sound of screeching metal echoed again, and his body trembled. Jane began to speak.

"Koushi Mizuchi. Former "Seven Kamado Chemotherapy Research Center Director" and Former "Gold Clan Member, Tokijikuin". I read your dissertation on the study of different abilities. It is a very original point of view. However, there is one slight lack of ethics."

Mizuchi remained silent and listened to the words.

"Your defeat was, after all, due to that lack of ethics. An incompetent person who doesn't belong to the clan who collects Strains and repeats human experimentation, creating things that were close to human weapons. It was not good that you were caught by the "Golden King". That adult is the type to swallow everything along with the voice, but he is angry enough not to forgive such outrages."

"It is scandalous?"

Mizuchi bit down hard on his back teeth and scratched his temple. The memory evoked by the words turned into a stabbing pain that grated at the back of his brain.

"My experiment was to artificially create a "King". If that happened, humanity would have made great strides! Before that innovation, is it scandalous and inhumane? The history of human beings has shown that there is no progress without sacrifice."

As if to beat the pain, Mizuchi slammed his fist into the sleeper. Over and over, as the sleeper shrieked and thrashed, Mizuchi's eyes began to heat up and water.

"That! That man! Mikoto Suoh! The violent "King" who can only rampage! Why did the 'Slate' empower such a primitive man?! Is that also the power of the "King"?" There's a lot of stupidity!"

If he could see, he should have known that they were not tears, but blood vomited from emotion. However, Mizuchi didn't realize that. He continued to spew anger and curses, hitting the sleeper.

Jane, who was watching him, leaked out a voice saying "Hmm."

"As reported. There seems to be a slight change in personality."

"What?!"

"Mr. Mizuchi. Do you remember why you are here?"

Saying that, Mizuchi tried to trace his memory.

After being arrested as a criminal involved in a different skill, Mizuchi was imprisoned in a detention center owned by "Tokijikuin". After being deprived of the investigation site and spending days in disappointment, he was finally sent to the trial site. He was pushed into the transfer vehicle while immobilized, and the engine started.

He did not remember from that moment.

"We were the ones who rescued you from "Tokijikuin". However, the security there was considerable and we had to use some violent means. There were no deaths, but there were some injuries. One of them is you."

"....."

"The doctor told me that the shock of the "rescue" caused a slight damage to your brain. It was said that it was that effect that made you blind, and that it might have affected your personality as well. What do you think of yourself?"

It was a messy story. He didn't know who they were, but he understood that they were causing him a terrible experience.

Still, for some reason it was crazy.

"Fufufufufufufu... Yes. Did you help me? I have to thank you. Thank you very much, Anonymous."

It was difficult to control the emotions that suddenly arose. Mizuchi calmly analyzed his state. Was it the effect of the "brain damage" that Jane said? Either one was fine. The situation was more important than the condition.

At that time, Mizuchi analyzed that situation as follows.

"So? Is it because of the idea of retiring to the United States that you helped me?"

Jane seemed a bit shocked, and Mizuchi laughed again.

"What surprises you? It is a well-known fact that each country targets different talented technologies. If you assure me even using hard means, it is overwhelming to think that it is the work of intelligence agencies in other countries."

"Why is United States?"

"Your English, it's a beautiful English accent. If you're a first class intelligence agent, you probably have both. There are many intelligence agencies in the world, but the number is limited when it comes to "first class". Among them, The United States is particularly excited about research on different skills."

Mizuchi smiled and leaned forward.

"In the last World War, the United States led the war against Germany and won a spectacular victory. However, the miraculous relic that was supposed to be obtained there,

the "Dresden Slate", was kidnapped by Kokujoji Daikaku at the tip of our noses. If the research on the different abilities obtained from the "Slate" brought unprecedented prosperity to Japan, which should have been a defeated country, it would be a disappointment for the United States not to have that."

"....."

"Of course, the United States also started to research different abilities in a hurry, but unfortunately, both "King" and Strain basically occur only around the "Slate". Research cannot proceed in such an environment. All they can do is to kidnap a talented investigator and give them a small Slate."

Mizuchi lowered his unseen eyes. Metal screeched and his body trembled. He was slowly beginning to understand where he was.

"For now, is this place on a ship you own? Is it still in Japan's territorial waters or has it already gone out to sea? In any case, you are in control of my death. If I don't accept your "suggestion", will I be a food for fish?"

Mizuchi doesn't know what Jane is like. However, there was a small laugh.

"We don't do such savagery to our precious investigators. Fortunately, we are long-suffering. Let's have a good discussion."

Mizuchi laughed.

"In short, I'm not letting go until you nod."

"It costs a fair amount of money too. First, you probably didn't want it. What if you could go back to Japan? You'd be connected to the detention center again, and that's it."

That fact could not be denied by Mizuchi.

Mizuchi was an unmistakable criminal. A villain who had abused the power of "Tokijikuin" and repeated human experimentation. "Tokijikuin" will be following his whereabouts. That is, the very nation of Japan was persecuting him.

Japan was definitely Mizuchi's homeland. There was a certain amount of attachment. But if he didn't have a place to study, it was just a barren desert for Mizuchi.

Jane said, as if she had seen through the idea.

"Let's stop the confusing negotiations. We will provide you with a new place for investigation, and you will provide us with the results of your investigation. Is that enough?"

That was exactly correct. This was Mizuchi's "second life" that was about to end. His knowledge, technique and "talent" were once again in the open, which was more important than anything else.

The joy that welled up could not be suppressed. Mizuchi shook his shoulders and started laughing. He could continue with his investigation. He could look beyond other possibilities. It was the best gospel for Mizuchi. If that were the case, it wouldn't be a problem if the brain was slightly damaged, the personality was transformed, or the sight was lost.

And, in fact, they were not lost.

Mizuchi spread her arms in the direction Jane would be facing and yelled.

"Okay. I accept your transaction. First of all, let's give him a lecture on what the different skills are! Fufufufufufufufu!"

Of course, he didn't realize that Jane looked creepy to Mizuchi's uncontrollable laughter.

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"Something like that happened half a year ago."

Fushimi gave a stagnant look to the man who said it with a smile.

Hairstyle parted seventy-three, silver-rimmed glasses, masked smile, and navy blue three-piece suit. He was a man who looked like an elite office worker or a bank clerk somewhere, and of course he wasn't the kind of person who would come to the "Scepter 4" camp.

The only one apart from the golden seal of "Tokijikuin".

This man who showed up without an appointment arrived at Munakata's office without any hindrance because he was wearing the seal. There is no doubt that the "Tokijikuin" Golden Clan is the most influential organization in Japan today. Even in front of Reisi Munakata, the "Blue King", the man did not try to break the attitude worthy of him, albeit in a humorous manner.

"It was our fault that Mizuchi was kidnapped. There are various kinds of interference from other countries, but I didn't expect to take such direct action. There is a "Usagi" in the escort. Not having it was one of the reasons for the failure."

"That's it."

Munakata looked at the business card placed on the office desk and read the characters written on it.

"Tanaka Hitoshi, a special diplomat from the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs"...?"

"Of course, it's a pseudonym."

With a smile, Tanaka simply said that.

"We have no name. We are "Usagis", just terminals to become your limbs and fulfill your wishes. But when it comes to working abroad, that look is too flashy. I decided to dress up a bit."

Munakata heard him and laughed.

"As expected, "Tokijikuin", do you mean that you can create or delete humans who don't care? It's a word that we who belong to the family registry section can't easily ignore."

"Covert operations are common sense in this world. We recognize that the people of the Blue clan may understand that they contribute to the national interest just as we do."

The roundabout interchange seemed to let the tongue slip. Barely holding himself back, Fushimi urged the story first.

"So? What is the Golden clan to us?"

Tanaka looked at Fushimi. A smile like a mask gave off a strange feeling that he would never know what he was thinking.

"That's right, let's explain step by step."

As Tanaka operated the PDA, a window emerged into thin air. A map of Tokyo and a close-up photo of part of it. A convoy and a suspected car overturned and debris was scattered.

"The means by which the thief secured Mizuchi was nonviolent. He pushed a large truck from the side into a convoy car that was stopped at a traffic light, and when it overturned, it burned out the rear seat lock and packed Mizuchi's body in the truck. Well, it was smart to take such a step."

"It's bold, but it's effective."

Tanaka nodded at Munakata's impression.

"In fact, although it was violent, their performance was perfect. The personnel in charge of the escort could not do anything and shot them down, and no one noticed the thief. Further investigation found traces of someone's work in the surrounding surveillance cameras and traffic lights that stopped the convoy. It is definitely a professional job. "

"How about tracking down the truck that secured Mizuchi?"

Tanaka operated his PDA. The red dotted line, which appeared to have moved the truck, extended from the point of the accident to the western part of Tokyo.

"Since the truck itself wasn't visible, it took a while to narrow it down, but we managed to figure out the route of travel. However, where they headed was..."

Munakata narrowed his eyes at the place where the dotted line stopped.

"Is it Zoshuku Kurayado Station? I see."

"The number of daily users at Zoshuku station is 3.5 million. It is the largest number of people in the world, which is also listed in the Guinness Book of Records. They got lost there and disappeared. The truck was found in the parking lot on the sixth floor of the basement connected to this station, but of course it was a hollow shell."

"What is the identity of the truck?"

"A shipping company in Tokyo was robbed the day before the incident. The driver was also found in the toilet at Zoshuku station. He was blindfolded and had earplugs and testified that he did not remember anything."

Fushimi sighed and summarized the story.

"In short, you have been frank. That is not the answer to this question at all. What does that have to do with us?"

"It is from here that we can have a relationship."

Tanaka smiled and operated his PDA. The map of Tokyo immediately disappeared and became a world map. Among them, Japan was marked with a large red cross.

"An organization that is so audacious and capable of committing such detailed crimes cannot be considered a national one. Public institutions are under our control, and private organizations are unlikely to make an enemy of "Tokijikuin". If so, they are organizations abroad."

A number of red circles appeared on the world map in the window. United States, United Kingdom, China, Russia. Munakata muttered as looked it.

"Koushi Mizuchi was indeed a talented investigator."

"That's right. Until now, Japan, which has the "Slate", is at the forefront of research on different skills. Excellent researchers are what every country wants more than anything else."

"A foreign intelligence agency stole Mizuchi?"

Tanaka nodded and said the names one by one.

"Central Intelligence Agency CIA, Confidential Information Department SIS, Federal Security Service FSB, Ministry of State Security, after investigating various foreign intelligence departments, we finally got a "hit". That's it..."

One of the dots on the world map was highlighted. A huge entertainment city that shines like a resplendent jewel while surrounded by deserts in the navel of the North American continent.

"Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. Mizuchi's appearance was confirmed here."

More photos appeared on the Las Vegas map. The man was holding a cup and laughing in front of a table with red carpets, gold chandeliers, luxurious dishes and numerous sakes.

Although his eyes were covered with something like goggles, Fushimi was still familiar with that man's face. Sledding and mumbling.

"Mizuchi."

"This is a photo taken three days ago. Koushi Mizuchi is in Las Vegas. Perhaps he is backed by a powerful intelligence agency. And even more troublesome: now the "Red King" is also heading to Las Vegas."

Munakata's eyebrows twitched.

"His departure was recently confirmed. It is true that the "King" is not prohibited from going abroad, but fate is a problem. The "Red King" is also heading to Las Vegas. In Las Vegas, where Koushi Mizuchi is waiting for them, who has many ties to them."

The flow of history came into view. Munakata's words made that clear.

"It can't be a coincidence."

"Yes. We believe that Mikoto Suoh's trip to Las Vegas was due to Mizuchi's work. The purpose is unknown, but I don't think I invited him to warm up the old relationship."

Munakata leaned back in the chair and put his finger to his lips.

"Revenge or experiment? Either way, Mizuchi will interfere with Mikoto Suoh. What will happen then? I wish we could have a skirmish."

"Assuming the worst case scenario, there is a possibility of a royal blowup happening in Las Vegas. If that happens, it's not a diplomatic issue. It will look like the start of a war between Japan and the United States."

"Would it be World War III? It's definitely a world crisis."

As he smiled coldly, Munakata looked at Fushimi.

"Fushimi-kun. When you were in the Red Clan, did you ever interact with Mizuchi's camp? I remember seeing a race like that."

Tanaka nodded with a smile like a mask.

"Yes. I came here because there are qualified personnel. A person who knows Mizuchi, has a connection to the Red Clan, and belongs to "Scepter 4". We, before going to Las Vegas, definitely want to borrow Saruhiko Fushimi."

Fushimi didn't answer and just stared at his toes. It was as if he could make his existence transparent.

Of course, that didn't happen. Once manifested, Fushimi's body was tightly entwined and he was about to be dragged to Las Vegas, far beyond the sea.

"Then Fushimi-kun, it's a business order. Go save the world."

Munakata said that lightly, Fushimi clicked his tongue at least in resistance.

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"I see. You are too harsh, there are several things."

Shaking the cocktail glass, Kusanagi laughed. Fushimi didn't try to hide his grumpy expression, instead he stood up with his hand in his pocket.

Maroon Hotel, 1st Floor, Casino Floor. This place, which is directly connected to the reception hall, was packed with many tourists. Most hotels in Las Vegas have a casino, which is open to non-guests. The minimum bet was also a welcome casino floor for the light class, starting at \$1.

In such a place, the appearance of Fushimi standing instead of sitting on his seat was unpleasantly noticeable. The poker dealer where Kusanagi sat also looked suspicious. Kusanagi pointed to the seat next to him with his chin and said.

"Well, sit down."

Fushimi thought for a bit and then sat down on the stool. Kusanagi stops the bunny-shaped waitress and picks up the gimlet from the tray. The drink they serve is a service drink, but as a courtesy, the waitress smiled dazzlingly as he put the dollar bills on the tray.

"Thank you, Mister."

"My Pleasure, Lady."

With a giggle, the waitress pats Kusanagi's chest, a card with contact information in his pocket. Kusanagi lowered his gaze and then looked at the back of the departing waitress.

Fushimi called out in a sulky tone.

"Have you heard of those people?"

"Hmm? Well..."

Kusanagi put the gimlet in front of Fushimi as if to blur.

"It's Mizuchi. It's a name I haven't heard. Sake tastes bad."

"....."

Fushimi pursed his lips awkwardly. When Kusanagi visually showed him the gimlet, he reluctantly picked it up. Kusanagi met him there with his cocktail glass.

"Cheers."

Fushimi apologized for wetting his lips with alcohol and then complained.

"I mean, please tell the answering machine the name of the hotel you're staying at."

"Haha, sorry. Sorry... No, did you bring them? I will, travel expenses weren't cheap either."

"The cost is financed by "Tokijikuin". It seems that there is a crisis in the world, so it is better to have more manpower."

"Suddenly it became important."

Kusanagi laughed, there was a call from the vendor as if he couldn't cash it.

"Mister?"

"Oh, sorry."

After apologizing lightly, Kusanagi paid a tip for the entry fee and the first round began. He tipped Fushimi in the same way, and he looked at Kusanagi annoyed. However, Kusanagi calmly dismissed his gaze and confirmed the cards dealt.

"Well? Won't you tell me?"

"Mikoto-san... Talk to Mikoto Suoh, please return to Japan immediately. Now I have a backup of "Tokijikuin"."

Kusanagi laughed with his nose. Of the three participants, one got off and two stayed. He looks at Fushimi and ask.

"Why don't you go? Leave or retire?"

"Kusanagi-san..."

"Tell me about the betting player at the table."

Fushimi clicked his tongue at him and spoke.

The dealer collected all the chips in play in front of him and the second round began. Of the five community cards lined up in the center, three had been revealed. 4 of spades, 7 of clubs, 9 of diamonds. Kusanagi gasped as he looked at the cards laid out.

"You can tell from the fact that you were in "Homura". It's dangerous, so pack your bags and run away. Is that so? Do you think we'll obey?"

"I do not believe that."

Fushimi bet \$5 of his chips. One of the participants withdrew and the other called. Kusanagi laughed and proceeded in the same way.

"Well, that's the correct answer for me. If it's about Mikoto, please ask me. I wonder if she remembers Mizuchi?"

"....."

"But, Fushimi. I also belong to "Homura"."

Third round. The fourth community card was revealed. Three of Diamond. Fushimi looked at him and said a bit.

"That's fine with you, but what about Anna?"

Kusanagi turned his gaze from the card to Fushimi.

"Mizuchi targets "Homura". It should include Anna. What if he tries to use Anna again as experimental material? There is also a backup of the intelligence agencies there. Can you protect her in a foreign country where you don't understand the language and culture?"

Another customer wagered a \$5 chip. Kusanagi glared at him and raised a \$10 chip.

"Don't get me wrong. Fushimi."

Silent anger was hidden in the murmuring voice. Fushimi was impressed at that voice.

"Did you forget what Mizuchi did? He killed Anna's parents. Thanks to him, Anna couldn't live a normal life."

"....."

Fushimi called without saying anything. The other guest withdrew, leaving only two people, Kusanagi and Fushimi, on the field.

The final round. The last card revealed: The King of Diamonds.

"Why should we run away from Mizuchi? Is the one who ran away from us out there? When Mizuchi ran away for a bit, I only regretted that he was locked in a cage from the bottom of my heart."

Kusanagi took a sip of the cocktail and laid out all the cards he had.

Fushimi sighed deeply. It was a reaction that said a job that was known to fail from the start had failed.

"Well then, at least..."

While meeting Kusanagi's eyes, Fushimi also slid all the tiles on the table forward.

"If I win this, promise me you won't stand out. I won't tell you to run away. Listen seriously to me and the "Tokijikuin" council."

Huh, Kusanagi laughed. He expected Fushimi to go down there, but why was he so tenacious? As a former senior, he couldn't run away.

"Yes. I'll take it."

Confrontation.

Fushimi revealed his hand. 5 of spades and 6 of hearts. 34567 straight.

And Kusanagi also turned his hand to the front.

"I'm sorry, Fushimi."

Ace of Diamonds and Q of Diamonds. It is a role higher than a ladder.

"The "Red King" is like my ally."

Saying that, Kusanagi hit Fushimi's gimlet with his cocktail glass.