



RED CASE FILES: HOMRA IN LAS VEGAS

CHAPTER 7: RED ENCOUNTER

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

Fushimi Saruhiko threw himself on the couch by the window.

The night view of Las Vegas extends outside the window. The myriad of flickering neon lights of the casinos, the night shows of the luxurious first class hotels and the bright twinkling stars woven by them were truly a sight worth a million dollars.

However, the beautiful scenery did not heal Fushimi's stagnant eyes.

"Thank you for your hard work, Fushimi-san."

As he rubbed his eyes, Tanaka brought him a cup of coffee. Did he want him to work more? Looking at Tanaka's masked smile, Fushimi took the coffee and started to sip it.

"What is your progress?"

"Thanks to Fushimi-san, things are going well. We have completed the installation of W Vessensors at 17 emergency entrances and exits of the hotel. With this, if a person with supernatural powers or a supernatural weapon breaks into the hotel, we will be able to catch it quickly."

Fushimi snorted. Extraordinary weapon. It sounded ridiculous, but as someone who was actually attacked, he could never make a fool of himself. Considering that those ostrich-shaped robotic weapons could attack en masse, it couldn't be helped to make some preparations.

Fushimi looked around the room over his shoulder.

The interior of the room had been remodeled over the last few days, and it was finished in such a way that the briefing room of "Scepter 4" looked like this. More than 10 monitors are installed on the wall of the room, showing (illegally, of course) images from surveillance cameras located throughout the hotel. While stepping over wires that are so thick that there is no room to step on, the "Tokijikuin" agents wearing the same suits as

Tanaka are busy going back and forth, contacting here and there, like a command room in the field of battle.

After taking a sip of coffee, Fushimi asked Tanaka next to him.

"Do you think they found us?"

"It's best to think so. It's been a while since then. Since they're based in Las Vegas, they know what we're doing."

Fushimi narrowed his eyes and began to analyze the force.

The enemy is the US Intelligence Department, the CIA, or the NSA's 100-person non-regular force, plus ridiculous robots. On the other hand, there are more than a dozen supernatural beings centered around the "Red King". Their personal impressions aside, Kusanagi and Yata have top-notch psychic abilities. Even against a fully armed soldier, it would do nothing.

"The problem is the amount of extraordinary weapons."

Tanaka immediately nodded at Fushimi's murmur.

"[Ostrich]: It's troublesome that we don't know the total number of those bipedal walking weapons. It would be safer to assume there are 10 of them, even if it's a low estimate."

"....."

Fushimi frowned.

At that moment, when the "Ostrich" attacked, almost everyone inside the van was deploying their supernatural fields.

Conventional weapons are ineffective against fields deployed by supernatural beings. The so-called probabilistic deflection field, a force acting on the probabilities of phenomena, deflects bullets from conventional weapons. No matter how much you fire, those bullets just fly in another direction and never hit the psyker's body.

However, the bullets from the "Ostrich" did hit them.

The one who bore witness to that was none other than Tanaka.

"What I was implementing at that time wasn't the probability deviation field. It was my unique ability, the "Coordinate Fixing Zero Point". Fixing the coordinates of a specific object and moving it freely. If I hadn't used that ability, the bullet would have hit me."

That testimony had great meaning.

In other words, the "enemy" possesses weapons that can be used by psychics. He is equipped with a "probability correction bullet" that penetrates the probability deviation field.

"In that case, the logic of the numbers speaks for itself. If all "enemies" were equipped with "probability-modifying bullets" and fired them, even a psyker would quickly turn into a corpse."

"....."

Fushimi's eyebrows deepened at a dangerous angle.

If a single member of "Homura" dies, everything will be over. Suoh Mikoto will never allow it. Even if Las Vegas burns to the ground, even if all US forces turn against him, he will hunt down those who killed his comrades and take revenge.

At that point, Fushimi's mission to "protect world peace" will fail.

"In the end, I guess I have to protect everyone."

When Fushimi said that, Tanaka smiled and nodded.

"It's hard, but that's the way it is. I owe you, Fushimi-san."

Fushimi wanted to throw the coffee at Tanaka. It was originally this guy who brought him to this place. When he opened his mouth trying to say a sarcasm, an alert echoed in the room.

".....!!"

Everyone in the room focused their eyes on the wall monitor.

Sensor W, a device that measures the Weissmann deviation value, reacted to the device that notified when someone passed by. The location is the seventh exit, the northeast exit on the first floor of the casino. Fushimi stared at the monitor, wondering if the enemy had invaded from there, and inadvertently let out a roar of anger.

"What are you doing, Misaki?!"

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Anna's energy was fading with each passing day.

It is possible that the Las Vegas tour that she had done was a trap to attract "Homura". The unanimous opinion was that "that sort of thing has nothing to do with us", and Anna probably understood that too. But often understanding and feeling are different creatures.

Another reason for her lack of energy could be that she was physically isolated from Suoh. Currently, the enemy's target is presumed to be "Suoh Mikoto's assassination", and the area around him is said to be the most dangerous place in Las Vegas. Clansmen with combat power aside, Anna and Totsuka were forbidden to get close to Suoh and had to sleep on another floor with an escort.

It seemed that Anna could take it. She was allowed to move freely within the hotel, but she rarely left her room, and she continued to stare dejectedly out the window.

Yata, of course, was the one who displayed his chivalrous spirit.

"Hi, Anna! Since you're here, why don't you take a walk?"

Anna looked at Yata, who said that with wide eyes. Looking out the window, then looking at Yata again, she murmured.

"But that's it."

"Okay! We're here for sightseeing, right? I don't know if it's Mizuchi or Kizuchi, but it's ridiculous to be worried about someone like that!"

Saying that he would blow him up, Yata lifted the book in his hand. It was an information magazine about Las Vegas that she brought from Japan, and there were sticky notes here and there. Anna's face turned bright red.

"That's mine."

"Anna, you wanted to see a lot of different places, didn't you? You put sticky notes on it and wrote various things. So why don't you go where you want to go?"

Anna frowned with concern. She blinked and looked at the information magazine. "I want to go" and "Is it okay to go?" they floated alternately in her mind.

Yata looked around the room and beckoned to everyone who met his eyes. Kamamoto, Bando, Chitose, and Eric, oddly enough, these are the members who traveled to Las Vegas together with Yata.

Yata rested the handle of the mop that he stole the other day on his shoulder and grinned.

"If you're worried, we'll be your escorts! No matter how many hundreds of robots like that come, we'll turn them all to scrap!"

A faint smile finally appeared on Anna's lips when she saw Yata, who reassured her by patting his chest.

Anna reached out and took Yata's information magazine. She must have memorized it by heart, and when she flip through the pages to show it to everyone, there was an article about a gorgeous hotel and fountain show.

"Every day from 18:00 there is a fountain show at Hotel Varangia. I've always wanted to see that."

Yata looked at his watch. 4:47 p.m. The Varangia Hotel was not far away. If they left now, they would be in time for the show.

Yata smiled sheepishly and gave Anna a thumbs up.

"Alright! Then let's go right now!"

Anna held the information magazine close to her chest and nodded slightly but clearly.

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Las Vegas and Mikoto Suoh are a very incompatible combination.

Suoh had no interest in money or in casinos. It seemed that he had missed most of the meaning of being in Las Vegas, but on top of that, he paid no attention to the attractions and shows. After visiting Las Vegas, it was just to accompany Anna that he looked around him, not of his own volition.

Therefore, although paradoxical, staying at the "Pyramid" hotel was strangely suitable for Suoh. If he asked for alcohol or cigarettes, they would bring them to him. He would take as many naps as he wanted. Suoh probably didn't pay attention to Tanaka's request not to go out, and Kusanagi and Totsuka painfully realized that he was just staying there because he didn't have to.

If Suoh wanted, he would quickly leave the hotel and spend his time however he wanted.

And if an enemy attacked him, he would easily retaliate.

That was becoming the common opinion of everyone, probably including Tanaka and Fushimi. No one can stop the action of the "Red King". When the time comes, he will go quickly.

And that moment came without warning.

The room where Suoh and the others sleep is a VIP room rented by "Tokijikuin". Luxurious furniture forms a line and of course there is also a bar counter with equipment in the room.

Suoh drank at the rooftop bar only on the first day, other than that, he mainly drank at the bar in his room. Suoh, who was enjoying sake and cigarettes with Kusanagi as the bartender, suddenly looked away from the window, maybe because he was familiar with the taste of HOMRA, or maybe because he got tired of going all the way to the top floor.

"Do you want to hang out?"

He said it in a low voice.

Before Kusanagi could say anything, Suoh grabbed a box of cigarettes and a lighter and stood up. He quickly emptied half of the whiskey that was left in his glass and walked out of the room. Kusanagi panicked and called out to him.

"Wait, Mikoto! Where are you going?"

"A walk."

Suoh's words were short and to the point. Kusanagi exhaled silently, at which point his thoughts had already formed. He shrugged lightly and followed Suoh.

When he came out into the hotel corridor, Fushimi was about to come running.

As soon as he saw Suoh, he flinched and stopped walking. Kusanagi suppressed his laughter at the danger. Did he feel a bit sorry for the change from "Homura" to "Scepter 4"? Suoh didn't mind at all, but his gaze seemed to linger on Fushimi.

Kusanagi gently called out to the tense Fushimi.

"What's wrong, Fushimi? Did something happen?"

"That guy... Yata came out by himself. I'm going to stop him."

"Ah, I don't know what to say, but let's go for a walk too. It's okay."

"Huh?! What are you talking about, Kusanagi-san?"

He ignored Suoh and walk towards the elevator hall. Kusanagi waved his hand lightly on his back and followed him. It wasn't that he didn't feel sorry for Fushimi, but it wasn't something Kusanagi should care about.

After going down to the first floor, the two crossed the lobby with the casino floor on their sides and walked out. The indigo color was beginning to blend into the twilight sky and it would be completely dark in another hour. Suoh and Kusanagi walked through the crowd of tourists with different skin tones.

Suoh's footsteps were in no hurry, and the expression that he was just strolling was perfect. He entered the park and walk while stepping on the shade of the green trees. He stopped at a hot dog cart on the way and bought one with sauce. Kusanagi also bought one.

Before long, Suoh sat down on a bench in the shade of a tree and started eating his hot dog.

Kusanagi did not ask where he was going. He just kept pace with Suoh. If it was just a ride, it was fine. If he had another purpose, he would stick with it. That was it.

As the two of them ate their hot dogs, the darkness of night began to fall.

Suoh, who was licking the sauce off his fingers, suddenly looked up.

At that moment, Kusanagi finally realized it.

There was something there.

After dark, the park was sparsely populated. A jogger passing while listening to music, a family walking home from a casino, a street performer running downtown, but they

weren't. There was no one in sight to pay attention to two Asian men lounging on a park bench.

That's what it looked like.

Suoh stood up as people stopped coming and going.

He took a few steps forward with one hand in his pocket. He put his other hand on his neck and punched.

An explosive aura was emitted from Suoh's body.

A storm-like aura that appeared locally blew around Suoh in a radius of about 5 meters. Leaves flew from the trees, trash cans tipped over, and some crashed to the ground with a shorting sound.

Due to the aura that had been displayed in advance, Kusanagi passed through Suoh's "bullying" and left the bench to approach the fallen object.

"What is this?"

He raised his eyebrows and crouched down beside it.

It looked like a disk. It was a shiny silver machine, about 50 cm wide, top mounted.

Judging by the attached propeller, it was probably something like a drone, but...

The strange thing was that the "disk" sometimes became transparent.

Repeatedly turning transparent and non-transparent like a flickering light bulb. Because it broke down due to "Intimidation", it was probably originally floating around them while it was transparent.

Kusanagi stood up and looked at Suoh.

"Is this the guy you were wondering about?"

"Yes. I've been looking at it since yesterday. It's just an eyesore."

Kusanagi was amazed, but at the same time convinced. Even before becoming "King", Suoh possessed the feeling of a wild beast. It would not be strange if he was sensitive to the gaze of an invisible "something".

But other than that,

"You know. Say that beforehand and then move on."

"Even if you say so, it can't be helped. The quickest way is to destroy it."

"Are you a barbarian?"

When he picked up the broken "disc", it was much lighter than it appeared. It was probably a companion to the "supernatural weapon" that Totsuka and others were talking about. They said they were attacked by an ostrich-like bipedal robot, but because this "disc" has a camera in its eye, it could be a reconnaissance weapon equipped with stealth capabilities.

When...

The "disk" stopped becoming transparent.

At the same time, the eye chamber lit up red. Chi-chi-chi-chi--, while blinking at short intervals, it gradually became faster, like when a creature's heartbeat speeds up when it dies.

A bad feeling ran down his spine.

At this time, Suoh's toes were already lifting the "disc".

The "disc" jumped almost at a right angle to the ground, spinning in the air, it spread flashy flames and exploded grandly.

"Uh...!"

Kusanagi quickly covered his face with his arms to block the blast. Burnt electronics and screws rained down over their heads, falling into the fountains and creating small columns of water.

After letting it go, Kusanagi cursed.

"It even has a self-destruct function! What a dangerous thing...!"

"You are too careless."

He glared at Suoh who said that rudely, but there was no room for objection. The enemy was trying to kill them. Even if it was a reconnaissance weapon, it should have been expected to be loaded with weapons.

That said, Kusanagi also had something to say.

"No way, I thought of giving it to the "Tokijikuin" people. I thought if those people could analyze it, it would be a bit more advantageous."

Since it self-destructed, there was nothing that could be done to give it to them. Kusanagi sighed, Suoh smiled only at the corner of his mouth.

"Then don't be busy from now on."

"What?"

Right after Kusanagi asked again...

Three pieces of iron fell from the sky.

With an earth-shattering roar, the hunk of iron landed and aimed its red-eyed camera at Suoh and Kusanagi. It was a special weapon with the same shape as the one that chased Totsuka and the others, with bipods and a machine gun: "Ostrich".

They formed a triangle centered on Suoh and Kusanagi, stepping at exactly the same time with their feet of steel.

The machine gun began to rotate slowly. While all three guns were pointed at him, Suoh muttered in his usual tone.

"There's no shortage of things to do with analysis, right?"

Suoh's smile turned into a fierce one, like a lion facing prey from him.

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The restaurant "Fontaine" was full of people.

The Varangia Hotel's fountain show has become one of the specialties of Las Vegas for its magnificent and beautiful performance. The show itself is free, but if you want to take your time and enjoy the food, you'll have to go to a restaurant affiliated with the hotel, like Fontaine, and order incredibly expensive dishes.

Right now, Yata and the others are in danger. Even if you ignore the fact that it's tourist area pricing, the amount of money Yata can live on for three days is tiered on the menu. Kamamoto, Chitose, Bando, and Eric craned their necks and looked at the menu, frowning.

Anna, who was sitting in front of them, said anxiously.

"Misaki? I'm not hungry..."

At the same time, Yata and the others turned their faces away from the menu and smiled widely.

"No, what are you talking about Anna? Order whatever you want, I'm sure everything is delicious!"

"No..."

Receiving the menu in confusion, Anna began to read it. Meanwhile, Yata and the others put their foreheads together.

"Hey. How much do you have now?"

"About \$50. I didn't expect it to be this expensive..."

"Ok. Let's go ask Anna what she likes and we'll stick with the cheapest soup."

"Hey! Does the ribeye here look that good?!"

"Kamamoto, you are noisy. There is no money to buy something like that. Drink water from the fountain and bear it."

Fortunately, Anna did not find out about the unfortunate conversation they exchanged in secret. She lowered the menu and pointed to a large photo with glowing eyes.

"Can I order this Las Vegas Raspberry Night Parfait?"

The majestic parfait, like an imposing tower, has an incredible price of \$45.

If this was a tourist spot in Japan, and if Anna wasn't in front of them, he would have called the store clerk, he would have grabbed him by the lapels, cursed at him, and left the store. Yata desperately resisted the urge and smiled.

"Oh! Is that enough? Don't stop!"

Anna gently shook her head.

"Maybe I can't eat it alone. Shall we eat together?"

"Anna..."

Kamamoto was the only one who was touched by her kindness, and Yata and the others looked down embarrassed that the girl had seen through their financial situation, well apart from that the fountain show started as soon as they brought all dishes.

"Wow...!"

Even Yata, who had been complaining in his heart about it, couldn't help but look at it with wide eyes.

Water and light emerged from the center of a large fountain that looked like a small baseball field. The start was smooth, and with the magnificent classical music, the thread-thin water began to spin in a spiral.

Under the indigo sky, the lights buried under the surface of the water gracefully illuminated the splendidly dancing column of water. White, blue, and red, the lights that shone in various colors were like water fairies dancing in lustrous dresses.

Anna, who was watching the show, muttered.

"Beautiful red."

Yata looked at Anna for a moment, then smiled and nodded. Anna wasn't looking at him, but seeing her reassuring profile made him very happy to be there.

Classical music gradually rose. At the same time, the water column was thick and large, changing the atmosphere from elegant to majestic. A mist of water rose up for a moment,

and as if blowing on it, a gigantic column of water came out of the water. A water fairy that danced gracefully and sweetly suddenly turned into a majestic and spectacular water giant, that was the impression he got.

The surrounding tourists also let out sighs and cheers as they admired the magnificent view.

Among them, Yata noticed a man approaching.

Dark skin and deeply chiseled features. A black biker jacket worn directly on bare skin and black gloves. Seeing that cheerful smile on his lips, Yata involuntarily raised his voice.

"You are Ed! What a coincidence, to find yourself in a place like this!"

"Oh, Misaki! Long time no see! Looks like you've been doing well!"

Anna, Kamamoto and the others seemed to have noticed Ed's presence, smiling and opening their arms. Seeing the tall Latin American man, Kamamoto and the others bowed their heads, and Anna's face suddenly stiffened.

Yata did not notice that. Laughing, he introduced Ed.

"This boy is Ed! He picked me up in the desert. He saved my life!"

"Hahahaha! Misaki, you're exaggerating! When you're in trouble, you can ask for help even in Japan, right? I just did the obvious!"

"Well, I don't really know, but... well, sit down."

"Oh, thank you! Then don't hesitate!"

Ed sat down in a chair and crossed his legs. Yata noticed that Anna had subtly distanced herself from him.

"By the way, what's up, Ed? Are you a tourist too?"

"Hmm, no, you're wrong. I'm not saying it's a job, but, I'm looking for someone. I thought Misaki would know."

"Huh? Why me?"

Ed said with a smile on his face.

"Mikoto Suoh. Where is he?"

Everyone was speechless as they looked at Ed.

Ed put his arms on the table and poked his face out. With an innocent tone like a child begging for something.

"The same hotel as Misaki and the others? So can you tell me where you're staying? In exchange, I'll let Misaki and the others go."

"You..."

The show reached its climax. The column of water erupted with even greater magnificence, and the light shone in various ways to color it. Catching the kaleidoscope of water and light out of the corner of his eye, however, what came out of Yata's mouth was a dry voice.

"A servant of Mizuchi?"

He could feel Kamamoto, Bando, Chitose and Eric getting nervous. Ed made a rather surprised face and waved his hands exaggeratedly.

"No, no! I don't care about that guy! The only person I want to see is Mikoto Suoh!"

"What are you going to do when you meet Mikoto-san?"

Ed gave a short answer with a fierce smile that was probably his true nature.

"I will kill him."

Anna's body trembled. As he looked at her with rather affectionate eyes, Ed said:

"There is only one "Red King". I can't do anything more than that. So I will kill him. Get rid of this world. If I don't do that, I won't be able to fight everyone either."

They had no idea what he was talking about.

But there was no need to understand. There was only one thing to understand.

In other words, this guy is an enemy.

"I have nothing to teach you."

Ed showed no disappointment at his hostile words. "Hmm," he murmured, leaning his long back against the seatback and looking up at the ceiling.

"So if I kill them, will Mikoto Suoh show up too?"

(Try it!)

Just as he was about to say that, an angry voice resounded.

"Misaki! What are you doing?!"

Confused, he inadvertently looked away from Ed.

Fushimi was standing at the entrance of the store. With an angry expression on his face, he approached them with long strides while several "Tokijikuin" agents followed him. Ed looked at that too.

His blue eyes widened.

Fushimi didn't care about that, he walked over to the table and slapped him. He muttered under his breath while throwing an angry look at Yata.

"Don't leave the hotel, I've told you over and over again...! Has your brain degenerated to the point where you can't protect yourself? When idiots get along with each other, isn't it just that idiots move and become more and more idiotic?"

"...Saru. Now..."

"Hurry up and get out. Let's go back to the hotel. Even if it's Miko-..., Suoh Mikoto went and ruined it. I don't have time to take care of you."

Yata started and looked back at Fushimi. Just as he was about to ask him what it was that had messed up...

"Puff."

Suddenly, such a voice resounded.

"Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

It was Ed.

Leaning down, holding his stomach, he laughed as if he couldn't stand it. He slammed the table with his black-gloved right hand, and the parfait fell on impact and spilled onto the floor.

The surrounding tourists shifted their gaze from the show to Ed, wondering what was going on. But he didn't care about those things, and he was spreading laughter.

"Hahahahahahahahahahaha! What is this? Why do the blue and red clans get along so well? Huh?! What kind of joke is this?!"

Yata did not understand the cries in English. But there was something he could understand.

This man was not laughing, only his unbearable hatred and anger burst into laughter.

Dazzling eyes with murderous intent pierced Yata head-on.

"How stupid! These bastards are from the Red Clan?! What else? Taking a girl and eating a parfait, there's no way I can accept the bastards who are good friends with the blue clothes!"

Flames erupted from Ed's right hand.

An oddly long arm-shaped flame that rose high enough to lick the ceiling shattered the table with its force, scattering shards and sparks throughout the restaurant.