



RED CASE FILES: HOMRA IN LAS VEGAS

CHAPTER 11: CLASH II

TRANSLATION: NARU-KUN / K-PROJECT WORLD

Kusanagi took out his zippo and lit a cigarette.

The purple smoke that he exhaled slipped into the darkness of the night. Kusanagi was in an alley where the bright lights of the hotel did not reach. Speaking of the light in that place, the flickering emergency light, the light leaking from the main street outside, the cigarette Kusanagi held in his mouth...

Sparks scattered from the bare base, and the embers of superpower that still burned.

Kusanagi killed 5 "ostriches" and 12 "discs". From the moment he parted ways with Suoh, countless supernatural weapons attacked Kusanagi. Kusanagi continued to fight, turning the guns towards the less popular side so that the common people would not come to harm; and that was the result.

"Well, I think that's alright."

Kusanagi muttered to himself as he operated his PDA. He exchanged minimal contact with the other members with the PDA provided by "Tokijikuin", but he hadn't received a reply in the last ten minutes. They were probably under attack, just like him.

Arriving at the Pyramid Hotel, Kusanagi discovered that his guess was correct.

Near the top floor, where the VIP room was supposed to be, it exploded and black smoke billowed up. The hotel entrance was so packed with evacuees that it was hard to even get close. Kusanagi went to "back" and destroyed several supernatural weapons there...

Once again, Kusanagi inhaled the purple smoke.

So, he looked beyond the night sky.

The sword was still floating there. A bright red "Sword of Damocles". Even Kusanagi had only seen her a few times.

It meant that there was an opponent worthy of Suoh's seriousness.

Kusanagi suppressed his urge to go there immediately. His role was to control "Homura". Get them together and create a system where they can protect each other. Suoh was fine alone, no, it was better for him to be alone. That way, he could sweep through without hesitation.

Kusanagi, who was saying that to himself, he suddenly noticed that a vehicle was approaching.

He reflexively took a fighting stance. However, that did not seem to be an enemy. The minivan was slowly approaching and he could clearly see the driver. A beautiful woman in a suit with short blonde hair.

Finally, the minivan stopped in front of Kusanagi. A beautiful woman came down and gave Kusanagi a sharp look. Her face was stained with exhaustion and anguish.

"Izumo Kusanagi. Do you speak English?"

Kusanagi shrugged and answered.

"I studied overnight. If I didn't, I couldn't persuade a good woman like you."

The beautiful woman's expression did not move or twitch. When he regretted making a mistake, she jerked her chin toward the minivan.

"Follow me. I am protecting your comrades."

Kusanagi inhaled the smoke, exhaled it, and then said:

"I haven't heard your name yet?"

After some hesitation, the beautiful woman took out her identification card from her pocket. White lettering encircled the blue-tinged eagle crest: Central Intelligence Agency.

"Erin O'Connell. I'm a CIA agent. Back in the day, but..."

"....."

Kusanagi slowly took a cigarette and put it in the portable ashtray. Seeing the cold hostility in his eyes behind the sunglasses, Erin raised her arms.

"I know how you feel, but I'm on your side now. I've decided to resign from the CIA for personal reasons."

"What happened?"

Erin bit her lower lip and looked down at the ground.

"I can't keep up. To that madman, and to the top management who let it go unchecked...! I dedicated myself to protecting this country. No matter what the motives are above us, we can't follow a strategy that sacrifices people."

He found no lie in her anguished expression or in her spat words.

Of course, the other party was an intelligence agent. There should be many ways to trick Kusanagi's eyes. Still, if his comrades were with her, there was no reason not to follow her.

"Well, I'm asking for guidance."

Erin nodded and got into the driver's seat. Going to the passenger seat, Kusanagi barked.

"Don't try to imitate weird things. Sorry about the burns."

"Don't worry, I'm unarmed. If you can't trust me, I don't mind if you check my body."

Kusanagi smiled softly.

"Those kinds of things, I'll ask when it's private."

Seeing Erin's mouth relax a bit, Kusanagi was satisfied.

The minivan started slowly. Kusanagi once again looked up at the top floor of the burning hotel.

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"Ah, Kusanagi-san said that he will be able to join us."

When Totsuka, who was checking the PDA, said that, an air of relief filled the room.

Totsuka and the other "Homura" members were in a garage near the Pyramid Hotel. After slipping down from the "Pyramid", the robots' attacks visibly stopped and they took refuge there.

However, they did not find that place on their own. They had a guide.

Dewa muttered as he carefully watched the entrance.

"Is it okay to trust that woman?"

"Hmm. What do you think?"

Totsuka bowed his head and said that.

It seems that the former CIA agent who calls herself Erin came to "protect" Totsuka and the others. Erin said that with a serious expression, perhaps sensing the atmosphere from Totsuka and the others.

"I want this operation to end. For that reason, I want you to cooperate."

If they asked him if he could trust her, he wasn't sure. There was also a good chance that it was a trap. Since he had Fujishima and Akagi on guard, he should have been able to spot the "ostrich", which couldn't act stealthily, as soon as that will get close.

"But Tanaka-san said that it's fine, right?"

Saying so, Totsuka looked around the corner of the room.

An old couch was brought in and turned into a simple bed, where Tanaka lay.

The experience of sneaking out of the hotel seems to have done him a lot of damage. If you are afraid of heights, you can't help it. The reason why Totsuka and the others wanted a safe place was so that Tanaka could rest, since he had become groggy.

According to Tanaka, Erin could be trusted. When they escaped from the hotel, someone supported them. Judging from the circumstances, he couldn't think of anyone other than Erin who took down the "disc" with a long-range sniper.

Why did the CIA agent decide to betray her own organization? Totsuka and the others had not heard the details. It was going to be a big thing...

"Totsuka-san. Here we go."

Dewa, who was sitting by the garage window, suddenly uttered that voice.

The same minivan that left was approaching with a roaring engine. Totsuka took up a position on the opposite side of Dewa and held his breath. The soldiers could run out of that minivan and start shooting all at once; that kind of scene came to mind.

However, the two that came down were Kusanagi and Erin.

Dewa breathed a sigh of relief. He was also nervous. Totsuka opened the door and smiled at Kusanagi.

"Yes, Kusanagi-san. It's been a while."

"We were together until a few hours ago. Well, I know what you mean by that."

Kusanagi also had a wry smile on his lips. The other side may have been thinking the same thing. Being ambushed by a soldier after being threatened with the identities of his comrades. In that situation, it is natural to be vigilant.

Kusanagi turned to look at Erin. He spoke in fluent English.

"Thank you, Miss Erin. First of all, let me thank you."

Erin looked back at Kusanagi, then at Totsuka and the others.

"It is not worthy of respect. I helped you because it served my purpose. I want you to explain to me now."

The reason for switching to Japanese was probably to make it easier for members who didn't understand English to understand.

They still didn't know what her "purpose" was. What exactly was the "purpose" of a CIA agent who broke away from the organization itself? Erin was about to open her mouth when Kusanagi stopped her.

"Wait a minute. Looks like we're in a good place on time."

Saying that, he looked towards the alley next to the garage.

Several figures emerged from the darkness. A girl in a red dress, a giant in sunglasses, and a young man in a sweaty wool cap. Totsuka rolled his eyes.

"Anna! Why are you here?"

"I received a call from Izumo."

Anna walked over and looked at Totsuka. A relieved smile appeared on her lips.

"Tatara. Are you hurt?"

Totsuka patted his chest as he smiled.

"No. Thanks to Tanaka-san and the others, there's not a single scratch."

"Good. Tatara, I was worried because you're the weakest."

"Oh, is that so..."

With a wry smile, Totsuka looked at Yata and the others. At first glance, Kamamoto, Bando, Chitose, and Eric seemed to be safe. Only Yata was in tatters, with bruises and cuts all over his body. Kusanagi frowned and muttered.

"I didn't expect Yata-chan to go this far. Did the robots come to your house too?"

Yata awkwardly averted his gaze. Kamamoto answered instead.

"No, a gang we didn't know about appeared. They used that strange bullet, but it wasn't a big deal. What Yata-san did was..."

"Don't worry! They didn't hit me!"

"Yata-chan, it's time to stop talking. So?"

"Yes, yes. There was a guy named Ed. He looked like a Strain, but according to him, he was a survivor of the "former" red clan."

"Purgatory."

It was Erin who muttered under her breath. All of their eyes focused on her.

"Edward The Red is a survivor of the red clan of his predecessor, "Purgatory". After Genji Kagutsu passed away, he moved to the United States and settled in Las Vegas. That's what Mizuchi hired for this operation."

Kusanagi looked at Anna.

Anna nodded, pulled out a red marble, and looked at Erin. It was then that Totsuka finally understood Kusanagi's motives. He was using Anna's responsiveness to confirm the truth of Erin's words.

Knowing it or not, Erin continued to speak.

"Edward is a dangerous man. He has a strong obsession with being in the red clan. It seems that he can't even tolerate the existence of the current "Homura" and the "Red King" Suoh Mikoto."

Kusanagi narrowed his eyes and asked.

"His purpose is to kill Mikoto. Why is he so obsessed with him? We won't do anything to him."

"The purpose of the upper echelons is not to kill Suoh himself, but to kill the "King". The "King" is a powerful weapon in itself. If, by chance, an emergency occurs between Japan and the United States, the "King" and his clan could pose a great threat. It was Mizuchi who offered to develop a countermeasure to counter that."

"Those robots and those strange bullets, right?"

"Yes. It was good until "supernatural weapons" and AW bullets were developed. It makes sense to prepare countermeasures against other countries' military might. But gradually, Mizuchi began to strongly advocate "killing kings"."

Anguish appeared in Erin's expression.

"I don't know how much personal grudge against Suoh was included in that. But the higher-ups accepted it. And, of course, they tried to do it within their own country. Lure the "Red King" to Las Vegas and confirm the practicality of the numerous "special weapons" developed by Mizuchi. Even if we were defeated, the data we obtained would give us a great advantage in future operations against the royal authorities, that's what I thought earlier."

Kusanagi responded with a sigh.

"Impossible. Is that why you caused such a big problem?"

Erin also shook her head wearily.

"Based on past cases, the above seems to have a strong sense of caution against the "King". However, for that reason, a strategy like forcing the people to sacrifice is putting the cart before the horse. I can't accept! such thing!"

When Erin said that, Anna put the marble down and muttered.

"This person is telling the truth."

Erin looked back at Anna.

"This girl is the Strain you are protecting? Certainly, she has a strong sense of sensitivity."

"Oh. Sorry, but I had to confirm. You're not lying when you say you'll be on our side."

"I understand, thank you."

Erin said that taking a breath and then her expression turned grim.

"And about Mizuchi. I have one thing to say about him."

Anna's eyebrows twitched. He was certain that she would never want to see the man who killed her parents and changed Anna's life forever. However, as he appeared in front of them, she couldn't ignore it.

Erin then began to speak softly about Mizuchi.

"That man is not the Mizuchi he used to be. He is..."

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Fists collided and repelled each other.

A fist was made of steel. It was an anti-royal fist, with a diameter of 1 meter and a combination of ultra-hard tungsten and different carbon disulfide steels.

The other fist was made of blood, flesh, and bone. Compared to a fist of steel, it was small, but the aura surrounding it was incomparable to anything else, the fist of a "King".

The impact created in the gap caused the "Piercer Mark II" and Suoh Mikoto to fly at the same time and land at the same time.

"Fu, fu, fufufufufufufu...!"

Inside the cramped cabin, Mizuchi let out an excruciating laugh. The eye camera, which was directly connected to the "Punching Machine Mark II", moved erratically and confirmed the damage from it. Right fist damage rate 74%, left fist damage rate 81%. On the other hand, the enemy...

Suoh Mikoto jumped up, clenched his fists, and raised them up.

In that form, Mizuchi saw a giant hammer.

Before he could think, his limbs were moving. He activated a burst of nitro and super-accelerate backwards. The seat belt dug into Mizuchi's slender body, and flesh and bone let out a scream. The explosion that happened right after that, yes it was a literal explosion, it was captured by the eye camera of the "Punching Machine Mark II". The ground rolled up, and the dirt and sand that were flying in the air rained down like rain.

"Nooo!"

If Mizuchi's eyes were naked, they would have been bloodshot. He licked all the sensors and tried to find out Suoh's whereabouts.

It was not necessary. Suoh broke through the dirt and sand and rushed forward.

"Ohhhhhh!"

Raising a roar, Mizuchi in the "Piercer Mark II" pushed his fists at him. A small hammering sound echoed through the cabin, and a bunker pile was shot at Suoh's face. If that hit him directly, even the "King" would disappear from the top of the neck.

Just before that, Suoh jumped up again.

Kicking the protruding iron stake, he sped up even more. The eye camera caught the image of Suoh swinging his fist at him.

A smile like that of a carnivore showing his fangs floated on his lips.

Mizuchi also laughed at that.

But he couldn't speak. The face of the "Piercer Mark II" was hit and fell. A traffic accident level impact struck the cab and blood oozed from the forehead which smashed into the instrument. With his consciousness reeling, Mizuchi barely managed to carry on with the operation.

As he rolled on the ground, several flash bullets fell from the waist of the "Piercer Mark II" and exploded one after another.

Attacks on sensory organs were effective even for the "King". That was shown by the battle data until a while ago. It probably wouldn't hurt his eyesight or hearing, but it was enough to temporarily paralyze him.

In fact, Suoh's movements had temporarily stopped. That was his chance. No more flash bullets. From now on, Suoh couldn't stop him.

Mizuchi activated the "back hand".

"Ah... "Grasshopper II", "Fireworks Master II"! Do it!"

As if in response to that cry, extraordinary weapons all sprang out at once from the darkness of the night.

"Fireworks Master II" fired machine guns in quick succession as if to surround Suoh from all directions, while "Grasshopper II" tried to crush Suoh with the mass of it. Like a swarm of bees attacking a natural enemy, a steel leg trampled on Suoh and then bent over him.

Gathering all the "Grasshopper II" and "Fireworks Master II" that had been used to attack "Homura" and attack Suoh, that was the final stage of the operation.

Seeing that spectacle as the dawn of humanity, Mizuchi waved as he shed tears.

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"In other words, it's all an illusion of Mizuchi's, right?"

Erin in the passenger seat nodded solemnly at Kusanagi, who asked as he turned the wheel.

"Yes. That's why he's crazy. He believes his delusions are real, and he's striving for it. And even though upper management knows it, they ignore it. It's too bad. I can only say it's unbearable."

As Erin let out a deep breath, an indescribable air entered the car.

Inside the minivan, the core members of "Homura" were huddled together. Yata, Kamamoto, Totsuka, Anna, Akagi, and Tanaka, who was still dazed. Since they couldn't take more people, the other members had to go to the site by other means.

So, Yata questioned.

"But how can someone like that build a robot like that?"

"There is a fine line between madness and genius, but for Mizuchi, it seems to be the same. The deeper his madness, the brighter his talent. By mixing multiple metals, he created an alloy with the property of "retention of supernatural powers", creating bullets that could be used even by supernatural beings. You could call it the greatest invention of the century."

"Even if..."

A police car and a fire truck appeared in the oncoming lane and went by with their sirens blaring. Kusanagi grumbled at that.

"Whatever happens, don't take it too seriously. What's all the fuss about?"

"Since it's a domestic operation, the cover is already made. It's going to be a conflict with the Mexican mafia."

"Ah. It's well prepared."

Kusanagi turned the wheel while he was amazed. The "Sword of Damocles" floating in the sky was closer than before.

Kusanagi confirmed the members through the rearview mirror. They all had the same nervous look on their faces. They didn't think Suoh would lose, but madness is madness because it's unpredictable.

At this time, Tanaka, who was looking down in the back seat, suddenly raised his head.

"Miss Erin. I have a question for you."

"What?"

"Those extraordinary weapons are the product of Mizuchi's talent. In other words, once we catch Mizuchi, no one can produce it anymore. Is that correct?"

Tanaka's face was deeply fatigued. His three-parted hair was also frayed and disheveled, and his glasses had blown off somewhere. Totsuka had told him how much hardship he had endured. Even so, the reason why he still wanted to go was probably because of his sense of responsibility for having to stop Mizuchi, which was the main cause of everything.

After a brief silence, Erin responded.

"That's right. Only Mizuchi can understand the knowledge of supernatural weapons. If he disappears, our country will once again lose its countermeasures against the supernatural."

"I understand."

The brief exchange contained multiple meanings.

However, Kusanagi pointedly ignored him. They would simply remove any falling sparks. There was no change in that perception, and it didn't matter what happened to Mizuchi.

"Hurry up."

Declaring that, Kusanagi stepped on the accelerator.

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It was about 10 seconds after the explosion that Mizuchi felt something strange.

The AWC Hellfire was supposed to be equipped with normal explosive rounds, not incendiary rounds. Even if the flames from the explosion went up first, it wouldn't last forever. After burning Suoh Mikoto, they would eventually calm down. It should be that kind of fire.

But that didn't stop.

No, on the contrary, it was burning more and more violently.

The flames swirled as they lit the night sky in red. A tornado of flames appeared in front of Mizuchi, burning the grass and trees. Mizuchi's allies, a group of extraordinary weapons, were engulfed in a vortex of flame, burned and melted.

At the center of it all, was the "Red King", Suoh Mikoto.

In a fire that would instantly turn a human to coal, Suoh looked as cool as ever. He took out a cigarette and even showed that he could afford to take a drag.

"Idiot."

The voice that he muttered was trembling unintentionally.

Suoh took a step forward. Then the tornado of fire also advanced with him. There, Mizuchi finally realized that the explosion he saw was not caused by a missile, but by Suoh himself.

Just before the missile exploded, Suoh created flames to vaporize the missile.

The hand that held the control stick was drenched in sweat.

(Is this the "King"?)

The threat that they should have known was in front of them as if it were a completely unknown threat.

(This is the "King".)

Mizuchi's clear and crazy mind understood that instantly.

The "King", a new human form. An ancient human threat. They must be killed. Otherwise, their "swords" will kill the old humans. To avoid that, he had the "golden" talent of his.

"Short."

For some reason, he could clearly hear Suoh's mutterings amidst the roaring flames.

Mizuchi widened his lost eyes.

"What?"

"You can't hurt me with such a small fire."

Muttering bored, Suoh tossed the cigarette away from him. Before that fell to the ground, that was engulfed in flames and extinguished without leaving a speck of dust.

Suoh's eyes were filled with obvious disappointment. The group of extraordinary weapons. "Grasshopper II", "Fireworks Master II", and "Piercer Mark II". None of it came close to killing him. No, maybe they couldn't even be enemies.

That fact reawakened a deep part of Mizuchi's heart, a longing he once had.

In other words, the jealousy of the "King" and the fear of seeing the limits of one's talent.

"Suoh Mikoto!"

Gripping the control stick until his bones cracked, Mizuchi in the "Piercer Mark II" began to run forward. With a height of 4 meters and a total weight of more than 30 tons, the

nitro booster accelerated and closed the distance to the enemy in an instant. At the same time as the collision, the prepared stack bunkers in both fists activated.

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And then the "Gorilla" stopped moving.

A large body of steel lay face up in the bunker. The cut surface was still red hot, and the moisture in the air continued to evaporate white.

With a sigh, Suoh turned his feet towards the "Gorilla".

The "Sword of Damocles" was no longer in the sky. Looking back, he must have been overreacting. The "Gorilla", "Ostrich" and "Disc" were not worthy of Suoh's seriousness.

Feeling somewhat uncomfortable about that, Suoh looked inside the gorilla's face shield.

He wasn't damaged there, maybe it was because of that discomfort that he dared to remove it.

Suoh didn't think of that. He reached into the gaps in the face shield and squeezed.

The face shield was forced open with a scream that sounded like steel.

"Ha..."

Mizuchi was alive.

He crouched down as if crushed by the half-destroyed cabin. In that part it will be necessary to machine not only the eyes but also one of the arms.

But he was still alive.

The eye camera moved and captured Suoh.

"Will you kill me? Suoh Mikoto."

After a while, Suoh responded.

"Come on."

Fight. Defeat the enemy. He never questioned that. The fight that was sold is until it's over, and it doesn't matter what happens to the other party at the end of the fight.

But after the battle is over, did Suoh really have the will to kill the immobilized enemy?

Even Suoh himself did not understand.

"Eh."

Mizuchi laughed. He moved his blood-soaked lips and turned his words around.

"If you let me... live... I'll target you again. This time, a more powerful weapon. An even more brutal weapon...! For the honor of my scattered comrades... next time, I won't fail...!"

Suoh looked at Mizuchi and answered.

"Really..."

So, the battle would still continue.

It was Suoh's own decision to seal the deal, and according to Mizuchi's understanding, he was still "in the middle of a battle". Mizuchi intended to commit suicide. In that case, there was only one thing Suoh could do.

Suoh clenched his fists. A red aura resided there. Powerful enough to destroy a person's body. Mizuchi's mechanical eyes stared at him. Like a convict looking at the executioner's axe.

Suoh picked it up.

So, he stopped.

Suoh slowly lowered his fist with an aura still inside, then turned his gaze.

From afar, someone was approaching.

He was a tall man with royal arms and arms of fire. Looking at that and laughing. A smile with nothing but hostility and malice. It was a smile he had seen somewhere before.

"I found you, Suoh Mikoto."

Suoh turned around to look at the new enemy who muttered that with a plaintive voice and jumped onto the "Gorilla".