

Cambridge English Readers

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Level 1

Series editor: Philip Prowse

The Big Picture

Sue Leather



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People in the story

Ken Harada: a photographer

Sachiko: Ken's wife

Tetsuro: Ken's son

Kenzaburo Yoshimoto: the boss of Tokai Photo Agency

Takahanada: a famous sumo star

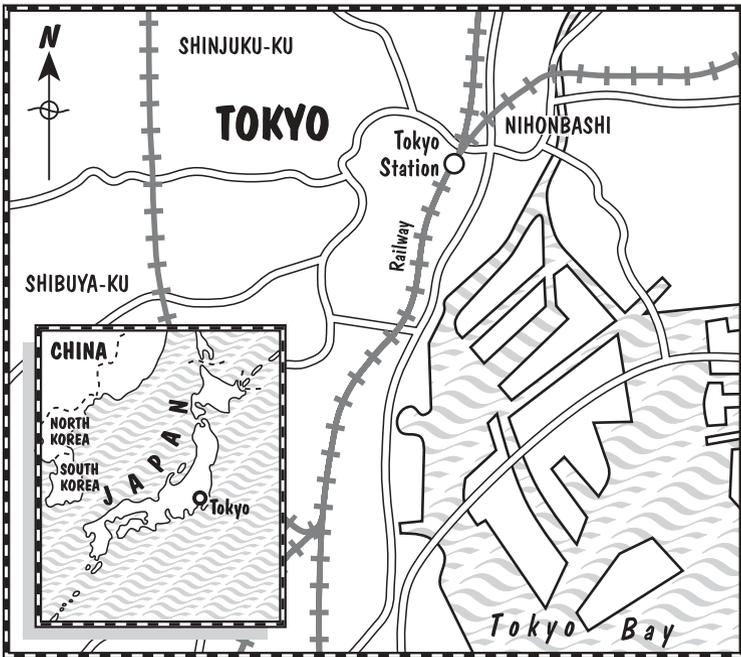
Kumiko Okada: Takahanada's girlfriend

Hiromitsu Shioiri: a Yakuza gunman

Fat man: works for Hiromitsu Shioiri

Chief Inspector Uchikawa of the Tokyo Police

Places in the story



Chapter 1 *A photo*

It started with a telephone call. Just like any other day.

I'm Kenji, Kenji Harada. Everyone calls me Ken. I take photos. It's my job. I take photos for newspapers, for anybody who wants to buy them. I take photos of famous people. I have a Nikon camera and a darkroom in my flat. Sometimes work is good, sometimes it's bad.

Like I said, every day starts with a telephone call from Tokai Photo Agency. They buy my photos and sell them around the world. Sometimes they give me a lot of money for my photos, but sometimes they give me very little.

It was Thursday, 8.30 in the morning. Work was bad. It was often bad in January, February and March. It was April now, but it was also bad. My wife wasn't happy. She wanted money. She always wanted money.

I answered the telephone. It was the boss of Tokai Photo Agency. His name's Kenzaburo Yoshimoto. It's a big name for a small man. A very small man.

'Go to the Tokyo Garden Hotel at 10.30,' Yoshimoto said. He never said 'good morning' and he never said 'please'.

'Takahana is going to the Tokyo Garden Hotel with his new girlfriend,' Yoshimoto said.

Takahanada! He was a famous sumo star in Japan.

'And be quick,' Yoshimoto said. 'Every photographer in Tokyo is going to be there.'

Takahanada was very good-looking and very rich, and

his new girlfriend, Kumiko Okada, was a beautiful actress. People said Takahanada wanted her to be his wife. Wow! I could sell a good photo of them for millions of yen. I dressed quickly, putting on my new black suit. I took my camera. I didn't have time for breakfast. I thought about the money.

Twenty minutes later I was on the streets of Tokyo. There was a lot of noise and there were a lot of people. I love Tokyo. It's a very beautiful city and it's mine!

I took a taxi. I didn't have much money, but I didn't want to be late. At 9.45 I was at the Tokyo Garden Hotel in Shinjuku. Shinjuku has a lot of expensive hotels and restaurants. There were about twenty-five photographers near the hotel.

'Hey, move!' said one photographer to another photographer, and then pushed him. Everyone wanted to get the photograph. Everyone wanted to be near Takahanada and the beautiful Kumiko Okada. Every photographer had an expensive camera and a very big lens. I saw my friend, Jun. He was a photographer too.

'Hey, Jun!' I called. 'They're coming in this door, right?'

'Sure,' called Jun, smiling.

I looked around. Where could I wait? I didn't know. There were a lot of photographers by the door of the hotel. It wasn't easy to take a good photograph from there. I walked down the street and looked around.

Next to the hotel was a coffee shop. I looked in the window. It looked nice, with white tables and flowers, and I was hungry and thirsty – I wanted a coffee and some breakfast.

A taxi stopped at the coffee shop. It was just a Tokyo



taxi, but then I saw them. Takahanada and Kumiko Okada! They got out of the taxi and went to the door of the coffee shop. From the coffee shop, you could get into the hotel.

I quickly took my camera and my big lens, and looked at them. I moved the lens so that I could see their faces. I could only see their faces.

Takahanada smiled at Kumiko and I took the photo. It was a very, very good photo. And it was mine, just mine.

Takahanada and Kumiko went into the hotel. I looked around. There were no photographers, just me. I walked quickly away from the hotel and called a taxi. I smiled. I had the only photo of Takahanada and Kumiko Okada. I was rich.

I was very happy. But I almost died because of that photo.

