Chapter 219: Going to Pick Up a Few Old Classmates

After stepping through the stylish doors of Gray Cottage, Makoto and Kitasan Black looked around curiously, as if it were their first time there.

The warm yellow lighting complemented the wooden décor, and the interior style faintly resembled the cafeteria at Tracen Academy.

It was already noon. Quite a few customers were inside, yet the overall atmosphere remained quiet, the entire place filled with a cozy warmth.

Before they could take a closer look, however, their attention was quickly drawn to two figures off to the side.

One of them was Oguri Cap.

Completely different from how she looked when delivering takeout before, today she wore a light brown mid-length knit cardigan over a white printed shirt.

On the bottom, she had slim light-blue cropped jeans and a pair of low-heeled women’s shoes.

The outfit was gentle and modest, simple and elegant. At first glance, it was hard to associate her with the legendary racer who once dominated the track.

Oguri Cap wasn’t alone. Walking beside her and chatting cheerfully was another Umamusume with shoulder-length silver-gray hair.

Judging from her hair color, she was likely of the same gray lineage. Her facial features somewhat resembled Oguri Cap's as well.

Combined with a mature and capable-looking business suit and skirt, this Umamusume looked like Oguri Cap's older sister.

Seeing this, Kitasan Black quickly leaned toward Makoto and spoke in a respectful whisper:

"Trainer, that's Oguri Cap-senpai's younger sister. She's also a really strong runner… Oh right, you already knew, didn't you?"

Makoto smiled without speaking and nodded.

Strictly speaking, Oguri Roman was Oguri Cap's cousin.

She also came from Kasamatsu. Because of her sister's great fame on the track, Roman had been burdened with high expectations since childhood.

Her early performances after debut were quite impressive as well.

Although she finished second in her debut race, she went on to win four consecutive races, earning her transfer to Tracen Academy and the chance to compete on a higher stage.

Perhaps her adaptability wasn't quite on par with her sister's. After entering the central circuit, Roman only managed ninth place at first.

Fortunately, she soon placed second in the G3 Tulip Sho.

Then, in the first leg of the Fillies' Triple Crown—the G1 Oka Sho—she even claimed victory in one go.

At the time, it seemed as though a new “Gray Monster” was about to rise on the track and continue Oguri Cap’s legend.

However, life is unpredictable. After the Oka Sho, Oguri Roman’s results dropped like a kite with a snapped string, plummeting rapidly, and she never again delivered any standout performances.

While this made people sigh with regret, it also forced them to admit that a miraculous career like Oguri Cap’s was truly something that happened only once in a lifetime.

In Makoto’s view, Roman’s career was indeed regrettable, but it was also the norm in the world of runners.

Constant victory might be a wonderful wish.

But whether it was the “Monster” Oguri Cap, the earlier “Emperor” Symboli Rudolf, or the later “Overlord” T.M. Opera O, none of them could carry victory through their entire careers.

Or rather, cruel defeat was the true normality of this world.

However, judging by the two sisters now walking toward them, chatting and laughing, the hardships of their past racing days didn’t seem to have left much of a shadow.

Just like this warm restaurant, perhaps this gentle atmosphere was what their lives looked like now.

At that moment, Oguri Cap happened to lift her gaze and meet the eyes of Makoto and Kitasan Black.

She froze slightly for a moment, then smiled.

“Kita-chan? And… Pasui-san?”

Hearing this, Kitasan Black, who had just been about to step forward to greet her, instantly froze. Her expression stiffened, and embarrassment flashed in her eyes.

Makoto also stood there blankly, somewhat confused.

Seeing this, Oguri Roman gave an amused smile, as if she were already used to it. Tilting her head slightly with a hint of reproach, she softly corrected her sister:

“Onee-chan, this is Yasui-san, not Pasui-san.”

Then, with a gentle and serene smile on her face, she took a few steps toward Makoto and Kitasan Black, bowed politely and gracefully, and said softly,

“Back to learn cooking again, Kita-chan? Welcome, welcome.”

She then deliberately turned to Makoto, bowed more formally, and spoke sincerely:

“Yasui-san, hello. I’ve long heard of your name. This is our first time meeting, please take care of me from now on.”

Oguri Cap quickly followed over as well, a trace of apology on her face. She gave a slight bow and said,

“I’m really sorry. I’ve never been very good at remembering names… My apologies, Yasui-san.”

“It’s alright, Oguri Cap… I’m used to calling you that. That’s okay, right?” Makoto quickly returned the bow.

“That’s perfectly fine.”

The corners of Oguri Cap’s lips curved up into a nostalgic smile.

“It reminds me of the days when we were still in school, racing. Oh, right…”

She changed the subject and looked toward Kitasan Black.

“I’m actually going to pick up a few old classmates, the ones I mentioned to you in the text earlier.”

“If you’re here to learn cooking, Kita-chan, you might have to wait for me a bit.”

“That’s okay. I actually brought my trainer to look around, and also to ask you for some advice, senpai,” Kitasan Black said, hurriedly shaking her head while sneaking a glance at Makoto beside her.

“But… Oguri Cap-senpai, those old classmates you mentioned…”

“They wouldn’t happen to be Tamamo Cross-senpai and the others, would they?”

A flicker of surprise crossed Oguri Cap’s face, but she quickly nodded.

“Mm, that’s right. Tama, Creek, and Inari.”

“I also invited Yaeno, but she said she’s been busy with dojo matters lately and will come a bit later.”

“Anyway, I promised Crown I’d help her prepare for the Autumn Tenno Sho.”

“But after running it three times without winning, I figured it’d be better to ask Tama and the others for help.”

“And it’s been quite a while since I’ve seen them, so I thought I’d invite them to Tokyo for a little get-together.”

Kitasan Black instantly grew excited. She glanced at her Trainer again, her eyes filled with admiration.

Back at the apartment, she had only received a message saying, “Going to pick up a few friends later,” without knowing who Oguri Cap was referring to.

She had casually mentioned it to her Trainer at the time, yet her trainer had immediately formed a guess.

And the facts proved his guess completely correct.

Makoto, too, felt secretly thrilled.

Not only because his earlier speculation had been confirmed, but also because of the three runners Oguri Cap was going to pick up.

After all, when judging how strong someone is, you don’t just look at their own ability, you also look at the caliber of their opponents.

For runners, strength isn’t measured only by how many races they’ve won, but by what kind of rivals they faced.

The first to achieve back-to-back victories in the Tenno Sho (Spring & Autumn), the first to complete the reverse Autumn–Spring double, record-breaking consecutive wins in the Takarazuka Kinen and the Arima Kinen, along with numerous spectacular victories…

In any generation, achieving even one of these accomplishments would be enough to leave a bold mark in racing history.

Yet in Oguri Cap’s generation alone, many such outstanding runners had emerged.

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Oguri Roman



