

Orien sat in the waiting area of his gate in Galeão International Airport, Rio's main international airport. The fourth race was going to be held in London, England, and the flight was set to leave in about an hour and a half, and he sat by himself, keeping a watchful eye over Parker and Grant's stuff, as the two of them went to go get all three some food. Orien simply asked for grilled cheese at an international restaurant if they had it. He wasn't really hungry, so he planned on saving it for a snack.

While Orien was scanning the waiting area, tapping his foot to kill time, he spotted Tetsuko in the row across from him. She was reading a manga about cars racing. Orien couldn't read the kanji on the book cover, but the only thing he could recognize was a giant red D at the end of the title. She was very engrossed in her book, so she didn't notice Orien staring at her. He wanted to get her attention somehow.

The sound Tetsuko heard next was indescribable. She could only try to call it a vomit-choke-cough-wheeze. The sound Tetsuko heard next was indescribable. She could only try to call it a vomit-choke-cough-wheeze. It sounded like a dying cat with a frog stuck in its throat. She looked up from her book, and saw the cause of the horrid sound. It was Orien.

"Do I need to call emergency services?"

"I was just trying to clear my throat. Did I sound that weird?" Orien asked.

"For a second, I thought you were literally dying. If you need to talk to me, a simple 'hello' would do." She complained. She sounded very unhappy to have her reading interrupted.

"Sorry." Orien mumbled, scratching his head. Tetsuko shook her head and closed her manga.

"Well, I can't focus on my reading now, so what do you want?" She asked him in a very curt tone.

“I just wanted to thank you for your advice,” Orien smiled. “I wouldn’t have made tenth place without you and Jabari helping me win.”

“Who said I was helping you *win*?” Tetsuko pressed, looking him in the eye. “You’re still an opponent.”

“Huh? Weren’t you telling me about studying the map so I know how to navigate the track and know what to do? So I could win?”

“I was helping you, but not because I wanted to let you win. I saw you had talent, but hated how you were wasting it by relying on luck. I helped you learn the game and understand it. I don't care about anything else.”

Orien was confused. A rival competitor helped him win Rio because she saw potential in him, not because she wanted him to win.

“I appreciate it, but why?” Orien spoke up.

“I race to improve my skill. I’m not satisfied with any finish. There’s always something I could do better,” Tetsuko explained, looking off into the airport restaurants, away from Orien. “I am satisfied with knowing I competed against an adversary who used every ounce of their skill and knowledge, regardless of whether I win or lose.” Tetsuko explained, her voice staying deadpan throughout. She picked up her manga and began to walk off before Orien called out to her.

“Wait, where are you going?”

“Away from you. I've said all I needed to say." She said, continuing to go.

“You don’t want to just sit and talk some more?” He offered. This made Tetsuko stop in her tracks. She turned her head back toward Orien.

“There are three philosophies I always follow as a racer. I call them Tetsuko Ohama’s Three Rules. One: Use any and every resource you have to their fullest potential. Two: Keep out of the public eye. Three: Don’t be friends with the other racers. If you do, you’ll get attached. Get attached, it’ll only bring conflict and disaster.”

With that, Tetsuko left Orien by himself in the waiting gate, leaving the weight of her words hanging in the air.