

# 13 - Back in the Majors

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Translator:

Editor:

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**SIGN** Back in the Majors

**[01:59] bon**

*September.*

**[02:00] bon**

*After four months away,  
I'm finally back in the majors.*

**[02:06] ann**

*Slipped through! The Spiders  
have the winning run on base!*

**[02:10] ann**

*The cool winds of May have given way  
to the unforgiving heat of summer.*

**[02:15] ann**

*And all this time, for four  
long, long, long months,*

**[02:18] ann**

*I've been out of action!*

**[02:21] ann**

*Including today, we have  
twenty-three games left in our season.*

**[02:25] ann**

*Three Central League teams are  
in a dead heat for the pennant.*

**[02:29] ann**

*In first place, the Osaka Tempters.*

**[02:31] ann**

*In second, the Bunkyo Mops.*

**[02:33] ann**

*And us, the Jingu Spiders,  
are one game out, in third.*

**SIGN** Central League Standings

**[02:37] ann**

*And I probably should have said this earlier,*

**[02:38] bon**

*but my name is Bonda Natsunosuke!*

**SIGN** Bonda Natsunosuke

**[02:41] bon**

*Recruited out of high school, I've spent  
eight years as a middle relief pitcher.*

**SIGN** In his eighth year as a middle relief pitcher

**SIGN** Contract: 18 million

**[02:44] bon**

*I make 18 million yen a year!*

**[02:46] bon**

*What? Why was I out of the  
action for four months, you ask?*

**[02:49] bon**

*I didn't hit a slump and drop to minors,  
if that's what you're thinking!*

**[02:54] bon**

*As a matter of fact, I'd been having  
an amazing season since game one!*

**[02:58] bon**

*I had twenty appearances through late May!*

**[03:02] bon**

*For a middle reliever, your  
appearance stat is everything.*

**[03:05] bon**

*I started thinking I'd get sixty  
appearances this season,*

**[03:08] bon**

*with a corresponding massive pay increase!*

**[03:11] bon**

*But right at the end of May...*

**[03:19] (Flashback) ino**

*I think we'll play today, but the  
weather report's not promising.*

**[03:22] (Flashback) mae**

*It'll be a struggle to get to the 5th and  
make this count as an official game, huh?*

**[03:30] (Flashback) hako**

*Manager. Call from Nagoya.*

**[03:33] (Flashback) tan**

*Yes? Tanabe here.*

**[03:35] de**

*Manager, bad news!*

**[03:37] de**

*Akiba has a fever!*

**[03:39] (Flashback) tan**

*What?!*

**[03:40] (Flashback) de**

*I have him resting right now,*

**[03:42] (Flashback) de**

but I don't think he'll be able to start tomorrow.

**[03:48] (Flashback) ko**

Akiba, who we sent to Nagoya  
a day in advance?

**[03:51] (Flashback) ko**

He needs to take better care of his health!

**[03:54] (Flashback) tan**

This is trouble...

**[03:55] (Flashback) ko**

What will you do?

**[03:59] (Flashback) tan**

Given the weather, we'll be  
lucky to make it to the 5th...

**[04:02] (Flashback) tan**

So we can probably get by  
with just a reliever or two.

**[04:06] (Flashback) tan**

Hey, Sakota, phone the clubhouse.

**[04:08] (Flashback) tan**

Tell Natsunosuke: "Get changed  
and go jump on a shinkansen."

**[04:14] (Flashback) tan**

"Tomorrow, you're starting!"

**[04:15] (Flashback) sako**

M-Manager...

**[04:17] (Flashback) tan**

It'll shock the hell out of  
the Nagoya Wild Ones.

**[04:21] (Flashback) tan**

They'll be expecting Akiba,  
the right-hander, to start.

**[04:25] (Flashback) sako**

And then we send out the lefty, Natsunosuke?

**[04:28] (Flashback) tan**

They'll be scrambling to cope  
just before the game starts.

**[04:30] (Flashback) tan**

And Akiba has a fever,  
so they can't really blame us!

**[04:33] (Flashback) tan**

Sakota, do it!

**[04:34] (Flashback) sko**

B-But...

**[04:36] (Flashback) tan**

What is it?

**[04:37] (Flashback) sako**

I'm not on board with this.

**[04:40] (Flashback) tan**

What?

**[04:41] (Flashback) sako**

It's not fair to Natsunosuke  
to use him this way.

**[04:45] (Flashback) sako**

He's a valuable left-handed relief pitcher.

**[04:49] (Flashback) sako**

We should use him the way  
he's meant to be used.

**[04:52] (Flashback) ko**

Sakota...

**[04:53] (Flashback) tan**

Look, I see what you're getting at,

**[04:56] (Flashback) tan**

but part of this is about wanting  
to give Natsunosuke a chance.

**[05:02] (Flashback) sako**

A chance?

**[05:03] (Flashback) tan**

This season, he's gotten his usual one-man outs,

**[05:06] (Flashback) tan**

but he's also done some long relieving.

**[05:08] (Flashback) tan**

He even played a game as a spot starter!

**[05:10] (Flashback) tan**

We've been using him as a handyman,

**[05:14] (Flashback) tan**

but your run-of-the-mill  
pitcher can't do all that.

**[05:18] (Flashback) tan**

The fact that he can fill all those  
roles is a sign of his skill.

**[05:22] (Flashback) ko**

It's true that he's been  
pretty versatile this season!

**[05:26] (Flashback) ko**

He's been in the zone, I guess.

**[05:28] (Flashback) tan**

Natsunosuke is twenty-six years old this year.

**[05:31] (Flashback) tan**

I doubt he's abandoned the dream of  
being in the pitching rotation, right?

**[05:35] (Flashback) sako**

I-In the pitching rotation?

**[05:37] (Flashback) sako**

Natsunosuke?

**[05:39] (Flashback) tan**

I've been thinking that if someone  
in the rotation lost steam,

**[05:42] (Flashback) tan**

I'd put Natsunosuke in there instead.

**[05:49] sako**

*Natsunosuke!*

**[05:51] sako**

*Get going to Nagoya!*

**[05:56] bon**

*I'm starting tomorrow?!*

**[05:58] bon**

*Don't blame me if it's a disaster!*

**[06:05] (Flashback) shi**

Hey, Natsunosuke! You made it!

**[06:07] (Flashback) bon**

Shiina-san!

**[06:09] (Flashback) shi**

Akiba's in the room next door.

Support Staff Manager Degawa's with him.

**[06:12] (Flashback) shi**

Oh, but don't go visiting Akiba's room.

We can't have him getting you sick.

**[06:16] (Flashback) bon**

Right!

**[06:17] (Flashback) shi**

Well, come on in!

**[06:21] (Flashback) shi**

I can't believe our manager sent you  
all the way out here with no notice.

**[06:25] (Flashback) shi**

I'm pitching in the second game,  
but that's a six-day break.

**[06:28] (Flashback) shi**

He could've just moved me up a day.

**[06:31] (Flashback) shi**

Seems to me he's giving you  
a starter test, Natsunosuke.

**[06:38] (Flashback) shi**

Well, you've been pitching great all season.

**[06:42] (Flashback) shi**

It might be about time for you to join us!

**[06:45] bon**

*"Join us..."*

**[06:46] bon**

*The starters, he means?*

**[06:49] (Flashback) shi**

This might come off as rude to say,

**[06:52] (Flashback) shi**

but you're seriously underpaid right now.

**[06:55] (Flashback) shi**

I think you deserve to make more.

**[06:57] (Flashback) shi**

Which means you need to be a starter.

**[07:00] (Flashback) shi**

If you manage to fill in  
like this and get results,

**[07:03] (Flashback) shi**

you'll earn the management's  
trust in a major way!

**[07:08] (Flashback) shi**

So a little advice on your start tomorrow...

**[07:11] (Flashback) shi**

When playing the Wild Ones, you must keep  
their first and second hitters off base.

**[07:15] (Flashback) bon**

Their lead-off is Fuyuki-san,  
twenty-nine years old.

**[07:18] (Flashback) bon**

He's thought to be the best  
outfielder playing right now.

**[07:22] (Flashback) Salary**

Contract: 110 million.

**[07:24] (Flashback) Salary**

Batting second is Demura-san,  
twenty-eight years old.

**[07:27] (Flashback) Salary**

Similarly, he's said to be the best  
second baseman in the league,

**[07:30] (Flashback) Salary**

and he makes 98 million a year.

**[07:32] (Flashback) Salary**

And waiting in the wings after them

**[07:34] (Flashback) Salary**

is the man who makes  
exactly ten times what I do,

**[07:36] (Flashback) Salary**

the left-handed slugger making  
180 million a year, Sekiya-san!

**SIGN** Sekiya

**SIGN** Contract: 180 million

**[07:41] (Flashback) shi**

Fuyuki and Demura are right-handers,

**[07:44] (Flashback) shi**

so I bet you haven't faced them much.

**[07:46] (Flashback) bon**

That's true...

**[07:48] (Flashback) bon**

I think maybe once this season?

**[07:51] (Flashback) bon**

They're tricky players with major legs.

**[07:54] (Flashback) bon**

We call them the do-anything pair.

**[07:56] (Flashback) bon**

Whether or not they get on base will vastly affect your chance of giving up runs.

**[08:02] bon**

*Every middle relief pitcher wants to reach the starting rotation someday.*

**[08:07] bon**

*So after what Shiina-san said,*

**[08:09] bon**

*I can't deny that I felt even more pressure to make the most of this chance.*

**[08:16] bon**

*Then, the next day...*

**[08:19] (Flashback) ann**

This is Bonda's second start this season.

**[08:22] (Flashback) ka**

I know Akiba has a cold,

**[08:24] (Flashback) ka**

but this is less like a substitute and more like an ambush.

**[08:27] (Flashback) de**

Hey, it's no big deal.

**[08:29] (Flashback) fuyu**

There's nothing we'd like better than a sidearm southpaw.

**[08:34] seki**

*You're here, Bonda.*

**[08:36] seki**

*I always knew the day would come*

**[08:38] seki**

*when I would face you as a starter.*

**[08:43] ann**

*Batting first: right fielder, Fuyuki.*

**[08:51] (Flashback) ump**

Play ball!

**[08:55] bon**

*Will I go from handyman*

*to starting rotation pitcher?*

**[08:58] bon**

*It's the do-or-die moment!*

**[09:09] (Flashback) ann**

Fuyuki starts off with a bunt for a hit!

**[09:13] fuyu**

*Yes!*

**[09:28] (Flashback) ump**

Safe! Safe!

**[09:30] (Flashback) ump**

He really set the tone with that first hit, eh,  
Color Commentator Yamamoto Masa-san?

**[09:34] (Flashback) ump**

He's probably really shaken them.

**[09:36] (Flashback) ump**

That's how Fuyuki rolls.

**[09:38] (Flashback) ann**

Batting second is the second baseman, Demura.

**[09:42] (Flashback) col**

How's he going to approach this?

**[09:44] (Flashback) col**

Demura won't settle for a sac bunt.

**[09:48] col**

*Fuyuki and Demura getting on base will  
increase your chance of giving up runs.*

**[09:52] (Flashback) ko**

That's Fuyuki for you.

**[09:54] (Flashback) ko**

Up against an unfamiliar starter,  
but he went right for the kill.

**[09:57] (Flashback) tan**

Fuyuki probably looks down on Natsunosuke.

**[10:02] (Flashback) tan**

With the Demura-Fuyuki lead-off pair,  
you can really expect anything.

**[10:06] (Flashback) tan**

A stolen base, a hit and run,  
or a sacrifice bunt, of course.

**[10:09] (Flashback) tan**

The sacrifice bunt is  
the least likely scenario.

**[10:13] (Flashback) tan**

Because they look down on him.

**[10:14] (Flashback) tan**

The most likely is a steal.

**[10:16] (Flashback) tan**

He'll probably just go for it,

despite Natsunosuke being a southpaw!

**[10:22] (Flashback) tan**

Natsunosuke, I think this  
might be a starter test for you.

**[10:26] (Flashback) tan**

Ace it and come join us, okay?

**[10:32] fuyu**

*Demura.*

**[10:33] fuyu**

*He must be expecting a steal.*

**[10:36] fuyu**

*We'll use that and...*

**[10:39] dem**

*A bunt hit-and-run?*

**[10:41] fuyu**

*You'll make it to first, too.*

**[10:43] fuyu**

*We'll have runners on the corners.*

**[10:46] kase**

*When Fuyuki gets on base in early innings,  
I let those two decide the gameplan.*

**[11:08] (Flashback) ump**

Out! Out!

**[11:14] (Flashback) ann**

He totally had him, but the first  
baseman dropped the ball!

**[11:16] (Flashback) ump**

Safe! Safe!

**[11:19] (Flashback) ann**

Fuyuki got a major break there.

**[11:21] (Flashback) cc**

It was a great pick-off, yeah.

**[11:24] (Flashback) kas**

He's not half-bad...

**[11:25] (Flashback) tan**

Come on, first baseman!

**[11:28] (Flashback) kos**

So close!

**[11:37] (Flashback) ann**

Looks like Demura's bunting for a hit, too!

**[11:40] (Flashback) dem**

The pitcher again?

**[11:42] (Flashback) dem**

It's turning out exactly like Fuyuki-san's bunt!

**[11:48] (Flashback) ump**

Safe! Safe!

**[11:51] fuyu**

*Okay, he avoided the tag!*

**[11:53] fuyu**

*He's safe on first, but...*

**[11:58] fuyu**

*Oh no!*

**[12:01] fuyu**

*Wait, that was a feint?!*

**[12:04] (Flashback) ann**

Bonda's got him cornered  
with the ball in hand!

**[12:07] (Flashback) cc**

He should probably just throw it  
instead of chasing him down.

**[12:11] (Flashback) saka**

Natsunosuke, don't hold the ball any longer!

**[12:13] (Flashback) saka**

Throw it here!

**[12:14] bon**

*Demura-san is heading for second!*

**[12:17] bon**

*If Fuyuki and Demura don't get on base,*

**[12:19] bon**

*you can keep down your  
chances of giving up runs.*

**[12:25] (Flashback) kat**

Natsunosuke, you don't have  
to go for the tag out!

**[12:33] bon**

*He's out!*

**[12:34] (Flashback) ump**

Out! Out!

**[12:36] (Flashback) kat**

Natsunosuke!

**[12:38] bon**

*I'm going for the tag out!*

**[12:41] (Flashback) shi**

I-Idiot!

**[12:43] (Flashback) shi**

Don't do it, Natsunosuke!

**[12:44] (Flashback) shi**

That isn't the starting pitcher's job!

**[12:51] (Flashback) tan**

Natsunosuke...

**[12:52] (Flashback) kos**

You don't have to do everything yourself!

**[12:55] (Flashback) seki**

Chill out, man...

**[12:57] (Flashback) ump**

Out!

**[13:00] (Flashback) shi**

N-Natsunosuke!

**[13:03] (Flashback) ki**

Is Bonda okay?

**[13:05] (Flashback) ki**

He's on the ground and not getting up.

**[13:07] (Flashback) cc**

You think he's okay?

**[13:09] bon**

*I had broken my right wrist.*

**[13:11] bon**

*That was just before the  
start of interleague play.*

**[13:27] bon**

*It took two months to heal.*

**[13:33] bon**

*They said I wouldn't get back in  
the game for three to four months.*

**[13:37] bon**

*I'd been going full blast with  
my pitches this season,*

**[13:40] bon**

*as if to say, "I'm your  
ace middle reliever, right?"*

**[13:45] (Flashback) bon**

It might be about time for you to join us!

**[13:48] bon**

*For a pitcher, joining the starter  
rotation is a serious promotion.*

**[13:53] bon**

*It would increase my contract, too.*

**[13:54] bon**

*I guess I was desperate  
to make that chance count,*

**[13:59] bon**

*but I screwed up.*

**[14:00] bon**

*There should've been a way to  
do that without getting injured!*

**[14:03] bon**

*I was a loser who got a big opportunity  
and failed to see it through.*

**[14:08] bon**

*After the rains came and went, as summer  
hit its peak, I was finally discharged.*

**[14:12] bon**

*I did my rehabilitation exercises  
in the clubhouse training room.*

**[14:21] (Flashback) toku**

Hey, Natsunosuke.

**[14:23] (Flashback) bon**

Toku-san!

**[14:24] (Flashback) toku**

You sure you should be running?

**[14:26] (Flashback) bon**

Doing color commentary today?

**[14:28] (Flashback) toku**

No, actually.

**[14:30] (Flashback) toku**

Looks like the thing I was most  
worried about happened.

**[14:34] (Flashback) bon**

Y-Yeah... I messed up.

**[14:37] (Flashback) bon**

I guess great heights come with great falls.

**[14:39] (Flashback) toku**

No, Natsunosuke. That's not quite right.

**[14:42] (Flashback) toku**

Whether you're in the heights or the depths,

**[14:44] (Flashback) toku**

being a baseball player means  
you get out there and play.

**[14:48] (Flashback) toku**

I'm saying that when  
you're in an intense sport,

**[14:50] (Flashback) toku**

playing hard goes without saying.

**[14:52] (Flashback) toku**

But this is the first real injury you've had  
in your entire pro career, right?

**[14:58] (Flashback) bon**

That's true. I've never been injured before.

**[15:00] (Flashback) toku**

I actually only realized once it happened.

**[15:05] (Flashback) toku**

Seven years as a pro,  
and you'd never been injured.

**[15:09] (Flashback) toku**

As a rule, throwing a ball is  
an activity that invites injury.

**[15:13] (Flashback) toku**

That's a natural part of being a pitcher.

**[15:16] (Flashback) toku**

This is a sign that you were  
gifted with a hardy constitution.

**[15:21] (Flashback) toku**

"The best ability is availability."

**[15:23] (Flashback) toku**

You may have your own  
amazing talent, in a way.

**[15:26] (Flashback) toku**

Be grateful to your parents.

**[15:28] (Flashback) bon**

But I got injured this time!

**[15:31] (Flashback) toku**

That happens with fifty-fifty plays.

**[15:33] (Flashback) toku**

But outside of unforeseen  
disasters like that,

**[15:36] (Flashback) toku**

you might have a physique that resists injury.

**[15:40] bon**

*Did Toku-san come here to cheer me up?*

**[15:43] (Flashback) toku**

Anyway, about that running...

**[15:46] (Flashback) toku**

It's not irritating the break, is it?

**[15:49] (Flashback) bon**

It might be a little...

**[15:51] (Flashback) bon**

But I think it should be okay.

**[15:54] (Flashback) toku**

Look, don't be in such a rush right now.

**[15:57] (Flashback) toku**

You've gotta rest the break, okay?

**[16:00] (Flashback) bon**

Yes, I will!

**[16:02] bon**

*Toku-san was right to warn me.*

**[16:05] bon**

*The swinging upset the bone setting.*

**[16:08] (Flashback) doc**

You should avoid running  
for a little while longer.

**[16:13] bon**

*I'd set my major league  
comeback back by ten days.*

**[16:16] bon**

*I finally lost the cast at the end of July.*

**[16:20] bon**

*In August, I visited the minor  
league Toda Stadium in Saitama*

**[16:24] bon**

*for a little practice in real games.*

**[16:28] (Flashback) sako**

Our team's managed to hang on  
at the top of the pack,

**[16:31] (Flashback) sako**

but our pitching staff's in a bad way.

**[16:33] (Flashback) sako**

Come back to us soon, okay, Natsunosuke?

**[16:37] (Flashback) bon**

Right! I'll do my best!

**[16:40] bon**

*Sakota-san was right.*

**SIGN** Osaka-Bunkyo-Jingu

**SIGN** Central League Dead Heat

**[16:42] sign**

*Even by August, the Central  
League's top three teams*

**SIGN** Spiders Hanging in There!

**[16:45] sign**

*were in a dead heat for the pennant,  
and we were hanging in at third!*

**SIGN** Holding on to Third!

**[16:48] (Flashback) soki**

But when you return,  
you're back on middle relief.

**[16:55] (Flashback) bon**

I'm back to being a handyman?

**[17:00] (Flashback) bon**

It makes sense, I guess.

**[17:02] (Flashback) bon**

I messed up my chance to be a starter.

**[17:06] (Flashback) sako**

Well, don't feel too bad.

**[17:08] (Flashback) sako**

First things first:  
get yourself back in the game.

**[17:11] (Flashback) sako**

Train yourself for both  
one-man-outs and long relieving.

**[17:16] (Flashback) sako**

The top three teams still  
have thirty games left,

**[17:21] (Flashback) sako**

but the manager expects things  
to stay deadlocked for a while.

**[17:25] (Flashback) sako**

So in the late season when  
the pennant's at stake,

**[17:29] (Flashback) sako**

that's when we'll really need you.

**[17:31] sako**

*The pennant...*

**[17:33] (Flashback) sako**

The manager is counting on you  
as his ace middle reliever.

**[17:38] (Flashback) sako**

That full-blast effort you put in  
before you got injured.

**[17:41] (Flashback) bon**

Y-Yes, sir!

**[17:47] (Flashback) bon**

My first beer in two and a half  
months... It tastes so good!

**[17:51] (Flashback) ono**

Three more from the tap!

**[17:53] (Flashback) ono**

Just help yourself, okay, Senpai?

**[17:56] (Flashback) ono**

Shibuya-senpai and I will pick up the tab!

**[17:59] (Flashback) bon**

Yes, yes, yes!

**[18:00] (Flashback) bon**

Don't mind if I do!

**[18:05] (Flashback) shi**

You were so depressed when  
they first sent you to the hospital.

**[18:08] (Flashback) shi**

It's a relief to see you back in good form.

**[18:10] (Flashback) shi**

Right, Yukio?

**[18:12] (Flashback) ono**

Yes. You were totally inconsolable back then.

**[18:16] (Flashback) bon**

You bet I was!

**[18:18] (Flashback) bon**

I'd made twenty appearances  
from the season opener to May!

**[18:21] (Flashback) bon**

I thought I was gonna get to sixty this year!

**[18:24] (Flashback) bon**

Then all of a sudden, I'm out of the game!

**[18:26] (Flashback) bon**

It was like dropping from heaven to hell!

**[18:28] (Flashback) shibu**

But now you're back to playing real games.

**[18:31] (Flashback) shibu**

It's a great thing!

**[18:34] (Flashback) bon**

It is!

**[18:35] (Flashback) bon**

Anyway, Akira...

**[18:37] (Flashback) bon**

They keep skipping over you in the rotation.

**[18:39] (Flashback) bon**

You're not getting rusty, are you?

**[18:41] (Flashback) shi**

Like hell! I'm not rusty!

**[18:43] (Flashback) shi**

Are you drunk already?

Don't start picking fights!

**[18:47] (Flashback) bon**

Just get yourself back in the rotation and win a game or three!

**[18:51] (Flashback) shi**

Butt out! I'm doing my best, okay?

**[18:54] (Flashback) bon**

You too, Yukio! Get that batting average up by .020!

**[18:57] (Flashback) bon**

That'll get you to .300!

**[18:59] (Flashback) ono**

Yeah, yeah. I'm doing my best!

**[19:01] (Flashback) ono**

I just need to do my best, right?

**[19:03] (Flashback) ono**

Though .020 might be out of reach...

**[19:07] (Flashback) ono**

You know, we did this to encourage you, but you're trying to fire us up instead.

**[19:10] (Flashback) bon**

Anyway, do your best, both of you! For the sake of the team!

**[19:14] (Flashback) bon**

And for me!

**[19:17] (Flashback) bon**

I mean, if we keep this up, we've got a real shot!

**[19:24] (Flashback) bon**

At the pennant!

**[19:26] (Flashback) shi**

That's right!

**[19:27] (Flashback) shi**

We've come this far!

We've gotta get that pennant!

**[19:30] (Flashback) ono**

Yes! This is our big chance!

**[19:33] (Flashback) ono**

Let's do it! Let's grab that pennant!

**[19:35] (Flashback) bon**

Yeah, that's the way!

**[19:37] (Flashback) bon**

Can't get that pay increase

unless we get the pennant!

**[19:40] (Flashback) bon**

C'mon, eat up, you guys! Don't hold back!

**[19:43] (Flashback) shi**

Yeah, eat up!

**[19:45] (Flashback) bon**

Right!

**[19:46] (Flashback) bon**

Bring more, more!

**[19:47] (Flashback) ono**

Yes!

**[19:48] (Flashback) ono**

Excuse me! Repeat for three!

**[19:52] bon**

*I pitched a few games in the farm.*

**[19:58] (Flashback) sako**

Manager, we have word from Toda.

**[20:00] (Flashback) tan**

How did things go?

**[20:02] (Flashback) sako**

He pitched three innings,  
three up and three down.

**[20:05] (Flashback) ko**

Oh, wow!

**[20:07] (Flashback) ko**

That's eight straight perfect  
innings in four games!

**[20:10] (Flashback) tan**

Okay, looks like he made it in time.

**[20:13] (Flashback) tan**

He's been out of the action for four months.

**[20:16] (Flashback) tan**

He needs to make up for lost time.

**[20:18] (Flashback) tan**

Starting tomorrow, bring  
Natsunosuke back to the majors!

**[20:21] (Flashback) sako**

Right!

**[20:23] bon**

*In the unforgiving heat of September,*

**[20:25] bon**

*I'm back in the majors  
after four months away.*

**[20:29] bon**

*I got lucky.*

**[20:30] bon**

*Akira and Yukio didn't especially  
distinguish themselves,*

**[20:33] bon**

*but the team worked hard and  
are still in the race for the pennant.*

**[20:37] bon**

*I said it before, but for a middle reliever,  
your appearance stat is everything.*

**[20:41] bon**

*At best, I'll get to play ten games in  
the twenty-two we have remaining.*

**[20:46] bon**

*I got twenty appearances  
before I broke my wrist,*

**[20:48] bon**

*which will give me a season total of thirty.*

**[20:51] bon**

*That won't get me much of a raise.*

**[20:54] bon**

*But...*

**[20:55] sako**

Hey, Natsunosuke.

**[20:57] sako**

I might need to send you  
out in an inning or two!

**[21:00] sako**

Warm up that shoulder!

**[21:01] bon**

Yes, sir!

**[21:02] bon**

*I'm finally back!*

**[21:05] bon**

*We're a mere one game out of first place.*

**[21:08] bon**

*Any of the top three could  
still snag the pennant.*

**[21:12] bon**

*If I can contribute to the win  
in this deadlock situation,*

**[21:15] bon**

*I might win brownie points  
with the management.*

**[21:17] bon**

*Now, the real test is coming!*

**[21:20] bon**

*That's right, there's money  
buried under the pitch!*

**[21:27] bon**

*Money pitch!*

**[23:01] bon**

Natsunosuke here!

**[23:03] bon**

There's another player who  
came up to the majors with me.

**[23:06] bon**

Itsuki Roppa.

**[23:07] bon**

He's my age, an outfielder recruited out  
of college, in his fourth year as a pro.

**[23:10] bon**

His contract: 6.5 million.

**[23:12] bon**

But he's got that archetypal  
grass-lot baseball attitude.

**[23:15] bon**

He's married, and his wife is  
five months pregnant.

**[23:18] bon**

He's a great guy who's a blast to have around,

**[23:21] bon**

but he's lacking a lot of that pro fire!

**[23:24] bon**

Next time: "The Softy"

**[23:25] bon**

Seize tomorrow's success and today's money!

**SIGN** The Softy

**[23:28] bon**

Money Pitch!

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