

Chapter 28 – A Friendly Between Brothers

Before the official game against Arthur Winslow’s team next week, our team had a friendly game against each other. Liam was going to be the captain of half the team while Noah was going to captain the other half. Even though it was basically a practice game, the stands were packed.

Monica and I had come early which is why we were even able to find seats. It felt like out entire school had turned out. But it wasn’t only just people from school. People from town were here, familiar faces that I had seen like at the grocery store, or the bus stop and gas station.

I turned to Monica sitting next to me. The excitement on her face was wild, “I can’t believe how many people are here!” I said.

Monica nodded, “Oh, I can. These friendlies between the teammates are always huge.”

I looked into the stands and could feel the already bustling energy. People came with face paint. Some wore blue, others wore yellow. There were girls in in the stand that had shirts that said “Noah’s Baby” and then on the other side of the stand, I saw she-wolves with shirts that read, “Liam’s Baby.”

I pointed at a girl next to us wearing short shorts and a “Liam’s Baby” t-shirt, “Is she serious?” I said. I don’t know why but anger flared up inside me.

Monica clocked my annoyance and began to laugh, “Oh, you’re a little jealous, aren’t you.”

“I’m not jealous, trust me,” I said, rolling my eyes.

The girl wearing the “Liam’s Baby” shirt cut her eyes at me, “Did you just point at me?” she said, a low grow escaping her lips.

I took a step back, “I was just trying to—”

“Just because he’s with you now doesn’t mean a damn thing, bitch. You’re just a temporary phase, human,” she said. Her she-wolf friends laughed at her words. I started to get hot at the attack, at the attention that her words were pulling my way.

“Alright, simmer down, skank,” Monica said, “Trust me, the only way you’ll be anywhere near Liam Gravens, is in your dreams.”

Ooohs rang out in the section near us at Monica’s totally shutting down this she-wolf. The girl looked like she wanted to attack Monica, but she saw Monica’s size and knew better.

I slipped my arm around Monica, “Thank you.” I don’t know how I would have made it at school without her.

“Don’t mention it,” Monica said.

On the other side of me, I overheard two guys talking about who they thought would win.

“Oh, I know for a fact Noah’s team is about to beat Liam’s team,” a guy with a blue baseball cap said.

The guy next to him, wearing a red sweatshirt turned to him, an incredulous look on his face, “Are you crazy. Since when has Noah ever beat Liam at anything?”

“You never know, stranger things have happened,” the baseball cap guy said.

“Shit, that’s Winslow walking in,” the fan pointed towards the entrance. Walking in was a huge guy with broad shoulders and thick dark hair. He had on jeans and a varsity jacket coat.

“Oh, my God, that’s him, that’s Arthur Winslow,” Monica said, pointing.

There was something...familiar about him. It was almost like I had seen him before. But I couldn’t place where. Maybe I’d run into him at a restaurant or somewhere else?

“Why is everyone so excited to see him,” I said. I didn’t know why but the palpable rise in excitement in the stands only made me feel more nerves, to be honest.

“They know Liam and Arthur can’t stand each other, last time they almost got into a fight and the referee had to break it up,” Monica said.

My heart ached at the thought of this. And this surprised me. I realized then that I really didn’t like the idea of Liam being hurt, or being attacked by anybody. And definitely not by whoever this Arthur Winslow was.

I frowned, “Why is he even here?” He wasn’t playing. This wasn’t even an official game.

“Well, the game is open to anyone. But sometimes guys from other teams come to check out the competition at these games. Or to try to intimidate each other.”

I kept looking at Arthur, I just couldn’t get over how familiar he looked to me. I turned to Monica, “Is it me or does he look sort of like Liam?” I said.

Monica cocked her head and took a closer look, “Huh, now that you mention it, I guess I sort of see it,” I said.

It was in the way Arthur walked and even in how his face was put together. His eyes were so similar to Liam’s. I couldn’t stop staring.

Arthur shook hands with some guy next to him and took a seat. Even though I had never met him, I already didn’t like him. He reeked of arrogance. I couldn’t stand guys that were stuck up.

Intro music started to play throughout the stadium and the crowd went wild. Our team, both sides, were getting ready to come onto the court.

“Oh my God, I’m so nervous,” Grace said, grabbing hold of my hand. She laughed.

“I know, me too. I don’t even know why,” I said.

The music swelled as Noah and his half of the team skated out from the tunnel. They were all wearing blue practice jerseys. They pumped their hands into the air and the crowd started to cheer.

Then a different song started to play. It was low at first, but the song started to get louder. Liam and his side of the team jogged out of the other tunnel side. And the entire crowd went totally ballistic.

“That’s my baby,” Monica said jumping up and down. Skating onto the field right next to Liam was Monica’s boyfriend, Peter.

The announcer’s voice echoed loudly throughout the rink, “Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the most awaited intrateam friendly match of the season! Who’s going to win this game and show that they’re the best player on our team? Well, only time will tell.”

My heart pounded as the players lined up on the ice against each other, “Just look at them, they look like giants out there,” I said.

Just then, Liam turned and looked my way. He smiled and gave me a reassuring nod, almost like he could feel the nervousness inside me. I smiled back and waved. This act, his turning to reassure me, made me forget for a second, the worries I felt inside me.

“He’s looking right at you,” Monica said.

I smiled, still looking at Liam, “I know. I think he can feel how nervous I am all the way up here, which is kind of crazy.” I said.

Monica shook her head, “I’m not talking about Liam. I’m talking about Arthur Winslow.”

I turned to Monica, confused, “What are you talking about?”

But Monica wasn’t looking at me. She was pointing down at the field. I followed Monica’s gaze and my eyes came face to face with Arthur Winslow. He was just staring at me, an intense look on his face.

And for some reason that was beyond me, my heart skipped a beat.