

Greatest 30

Chapter 30 - Life At The Academy IV

Grant's smile widened as he walked closer towards them. "I said you're cowards, charity cases who are just being fed by Rosenborg here in Trondheim. One of you played a single game and thought he was the star of the generation. But, he is just a loser like the rest of his band." He grinned viciously at Zachary, who was already atop the stairs.

Zachary sighed audibly. He could not believe that a professional athlete with such an idiotic mindset existed in one of the top international academies of a developed nation.

Although Grant had already graduated from the NF Academy and joined the Rosenborg under-19s, he still behaved like a child. He had started taking verbal jabs at Zachary when he noticed him talking to Kristin before the match with Viking the previous year.

"Let's go," Zachary said, turning away from Grant and his cronies. "We need to get to class." Zachary felt angry, but he knew he had to ignore the fool. He had no intention of jeopardizing his sports scholarship.

"Why do you put up with his insults?" Kasongo asked once he fell into step by his side.

Zachary glanced at Kasongo and shook his head. The short boy was yet to be exposed to the ways of the world. "Let me ask you this," he said. "What would I gain from fighting or bickering with him?"

"You can defend your dignity and honor," Paul answered as they moved away from the stairs, through the hallway, and towards their classroom on the second floor.

Zachary smiled. "I can't live on either of those." He spread out his arms to emphasize his point. The others stopped pestering him once he gave them the reply. They remained quiet, seemingly in contemplation—until they entered their small but cozy classroom.

Reading tables with well-padded chairs were placed around a podium with a large blackboard that ran from corner to corner of one of the walls—painted light-green.

The rest of Zachary's classmates had already arrived. They stood in groups of twos and threes scattered all around the classroom.

"You guys are finally here," murmured a female voice, lisping slightly, drawling out consonants and vowels into an exotic Italian accent.

Zachary turned around only to lock eyes with a stunning young woman with dark hair worn in long braids that plunged over her slim shoulders. Her brown eyes smoldered with a sensuality that could easily capture the hearts of the stoniest of men. Her dark-green ruffled silk blouse could not conceal the lush curves of her cleavage while her denim jeans clung to her hips, accentuating the outlines of her thighs.

Paul, who thought himself a Casanova, nudged himself in-between Zachary and the girl and gave her a gallant little bow. "Good morning, Marta." His mannerisms mirrored the chivalry of knights in old medieval movies.

Marta Romano gave Paul an arch look and said: "Your bows are not the least bit amusing. You're turning into an old man."

"But a lovely old man," said a second voice—and a second beauty, indistinguishable from Marta except that she wore her hair in a ponytail. She looked like a supermodel in her fitting Rosenborg jersey. She hooked an arm over Paul's shoulder and added: "My sister is just cranky from yesterday's long piano practice."

"Good morning, Melissa," Paul murmured. "You look lovely as always."

Melissa's mouth curved up into a soft smile. "Thank you," she said. "But you two are late today."

"We had a meeting with our head coach after our morning practice," Paul answered, sounding cheesy. The beauty of the two Romano twins had long spellbound him.

"Zach! How was practice?" Marta said. She had moved around Paul and her sister to stand beside Zachary once again.

"Just the usual," Zachary replied, smiling. "How was your piano practice?"

The two girls were among Zachary's few classmates. They were both students at one of the music institutes in Trondheim. They also partook in classes with special programs for part-time students at TIS.

TIS was an international school that accommodated the needs of international students undertaking their education in Trondheim. Talented students from all fields could join the school for their secondary education.

"Same as usual," Marta replied, once again locking eyes with Zachary. "You are yet to fulfill your promise," she stated.

"Sorry about that." Zachary grinned sheepishly. He motioned for the girl to follow him away from the others. "Training has been taking up most of my time. I couldn't clear up time to do anything else." He added.

"When you come to me for discussions, I'll also claim to be busy with practice," Marta mumbled.

"Why don't we adjust our plans to the autumn break," Zachary said. "We'll have a lot of free time by then."

"Is that a promise?" Marta questioned, her tone solemn.

"Yes, it is." Zachary nodded emphatically.

"What are the two of you whispering about?" Melissa interrupted their conversation as she positioned herself beside her sister. "Are you two...?" However, before she could complete her question, the lecturer stepped through the door into the classroom.

"Settle down people—and let's learn some German," said the male lecturer, sounding dramatic.

Zachary spent the next three hours cramming German words and sentences he could not understand. At 1 PM, he ate a light lunch with his friends before sitting back in the classroom for algebra. Most of the students lost their vibrancy as the minutes passed. It was as if they were partaking in an intense 90-minute soccer game rather than a lecture.

Zachary was always bored by the equations and calculations during the math lessons. He would have preferred to spend all his time on the pitch rather than in a classroom. But, he persevered to maintain his scholarship.

Fortunately, the class only lasted an hour. At three, Zachary headed to the NF training grounds, where he started his long week prematch training with his teammates and coaches. He spent the whole evening there and only returned to Moholt at 8:30 PM after a sumptuous dinner at the soccer academy.

After freshening up, he returned to his room and opened the system interface. He was planning on making his first purchases from the system shop after saving up a considerable sum of Juju-points over the past year.