

Major League System

Everyone paid attention, they had no choice. Mark's voice was magnetic. Despite being hired during the all-star break and this being his first game as coach, it was already evident how capable he was.

Seeing this brought a smile to Ken's face. Who wouldn't be proud seeing their grandfather command a room full of professional athletes with such ease?

After going through some things, they were led onto the field to warm up. Ken followed and stayed around the dugout area while the players went onto the field.

"Are you nervous?" Mark asked.

"Nervous? For the ceremonial pitch?" Ken asked incredulously. Despite the largely packed stadium, why would he feel nervous for such a thing? It wasn't like he was pitching in his first game.

"Hehe, I'm kidding." He said, nudging Ken with his elbow.

Ken shook his head letting out a dry chuckle. Soon enough it was his time to go up onto the mound. The catcher James Rogers was in position behind the plate, squatting nonchalantly.

Ken who had already warmed up his shoulder smiled at the man. 'I hope he catches it...'

He lifted his left leg before kicking off the pitchers plate and striding forward. His right arm whipped past his face and a killer fastball shot straight towards Jason's open glove.

PAH

A cheer rang out across the stadium and Ken raised his arm, waving at them. The pitch had felt good, part of him was upset that he wouldn't get to start right away.

Jason who was behind the plate was wearing a shocked expression as he looked down at the ball in his glove. He did not have to move at all, yet the impact of the ball had almost caused it to fire back and hit him in his mask.

'This kid... He's the real deal...'

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 843 - 843: SeaWolves (1)

The next morning, Ken was ushered onto a plane and made his way to Erie Pennsylvania. The scenery was breathtaking. He had not known that Lake Erie was so beautiful, especially from above.

A part of him was a little nervous to be moving to a new place by himself, but a larger part was filled with excitement for what was to come. It was always daunting joining a new team, but Ken was far better at socializing than he used to be.

As he went into arrivals, a driver was waiting for him with a sign. He was ushered into the sedan and taken to the team facility. It took around 45 minutes, of which most was spent by Ken looking out the window at his new home.

It suddenly dawned on him why the team would be called the Sea Wolves. The town was essentially a fishing town. Being so close to the water, fishing seemed to be quite popular.

They soon arrived at UPMC park. Ken thanked the driver and got his bags out of the car, taking a moment to take in the sight. From this point forward, he was a professional athlete and this would be his home ground.

"Ah, is that you Ken?" A soft voice with a lisp called out.

Ken turned and saw a large imposing man with a mustache. Ken performed a double take, surely this was not the man who had spoken before.

"Welcome to the Sea Wolves. I'm David Rimmer, the strength and conditioning coach for the team." He said, holding out his hand.

Ken was a little unsure. The man's voice did not match his aesthetic. However, he swallowed his doubts and grabbed the outstretched hand, "Nice to meet you coach."

Instantly, he could feel the firm grip of the man's hand, forcing him to put more strength into his own. Ken's eyes darted to the man, only to see a broad smile on David's face.

"Mmm, you have a good grip. I can't wait to see how strong you are in other areas." David said, sending him a wink.

Ken's hand shot back and he shuddered unconsciously. 'What the f—'

"Anyway, we'll have plenty of time for that later. The Head Coach and the medical team are waiting inside for you. Let me grab your bags." Coach Rimmer said, collecting his bags with ease.

"L—Lead the way..." Ken said, gesturing the man forward. There was no way he would trust the man behind him, not after such an interaction.

After being led into the facilities, he was met with quite a few people, almost too many. The coaching staff, player development staff and team administrators. Thankfully, they were not all as eccentric as Coach Rimmer.

The Head Coach Barry Matthews was an older man with a southern accent. He seemed like the no nonsense type, but he was surprisingly easy to talk to and seemed genuinely excited for Ken's arrival.

Martin, his player development coach was rather young and wore thick glasses. He seemed like one of the nerdy data types, but this did not bother Ken at all.

After a brief introduction and chat, the coach took Ken on a tour to visit the team and the facility. He was briefed about protocols and their training schedule as they walked the halls.

The locker room looked as if a bomb had hit it, but judging by Coach Matthews expression, it was nothing out of the ordinary.

"The players are on the field now, I'll introduce you to them." He said, leading Ken through the tunnel.

It was around 11am in the morning and the sun was nearing its peak. In the cloudless sky, it shone down on the well-maintained field. Like the inside, it looked a little old fashioned, but Ken did not mind. It gave the place character.

On the field, the team were going through their own individual training. The first thing that Ken noticed was that these people were older than him.

The thought made him laugh internally. What did he expect? These players were professionals and they all held the same dream, to be called up to the Majors.

"Right, gather up you lot!" Coach Matthews called out, getting the attention of the players.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and made their way over to the coach. Since Ken was still in his casual gear, he felt a little out of place, not to mention so many sets of eyes were on him at this moment.

"This is Ken Takagi, he was drafted by the Ligers and will be spending time in the team to develop. You know the drill, make him feel welcomed."

As soon as the coach said this, Ken could feel one of the gazes directed at him turn hostile. Ken's eyes darted to the source. The guy looked a little younger than the others. He was probably in his mid twenties.

They locked eyes briefly before the guy in question let out a scoff and walked away, returning to his individual training. Ken's eyes lingered briefly before he was bombarded by his other new teammates.

"Damn rookie, what are they feeding kids these days?" A voice called out. It was a shorter man who had to crane his neck to look up at Ken.

He wasn't sure how to respond to such a thing, so Ken just smiled. "I'm Ken, nice to meet you."

"The names, Rick. We're gonna be good friends in the future." He said with a lopsided grin. "Why? Cos I'm the starting catcher hehe."

"Don't scare off the rookie Rick, the guy looks terrified as it is." Another voice spoke up, nudging the shorter man out of the way.

Without waiting for the shorter man to object, he stepped forward and held out his hand, "I'm Cain, I play in the outfield. Nice to meet you."

"I'm Ken, I'll be in your care." Ken replied, still feeling a little awkward. His eyes moved to the guy who had seemed hostile earlier.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 844 - 844: SeaWolves (2)

Cain followed his gaze and let out a small smile, "That's Rohan, one of our starting pitchers. He takes a little while to warm up to people, don't stress about it."

Ken nodded and threw it to the back of his mind. He wasn't naive enough to think that everybody would like him, nor did they need to. As long as he played well enough, he would quickly move through the ranks up to the Majors.

"Wanna throw me some pitches?" Rick asked, his eyes showing his excitement.

"Ken won't be training today, he's got a medical evaluation and physical testing to do. As long as he passes, you'll be free to test out his arms." Coach Matthews interjected.

"Arms?"

"Oh you didn't know? Ken is a switch pitcher."

"HUH!? No way right..." Rick's jaw dropped as he looked at Ken for confirmation.

To see a grown man look at him this way, Ken felt a little uncomfortable.

"Y—Yes, but my right is faster." He admitted.

"Alright, you can see it tomorrow. Ken, let's go get you tested." Coach Matthews interrupted.

As the two walked away, Rick was still filled with disbelief. "I've only ever heard of a single switch pitcher before... Venditte."

Cain let out a small chuckle, "Have you been living under a rock old man? How have you never heard of Ken?"

Rick shrugged, "My daughter is starting primary school this year, I don't have time to watch college ball."

"Forget college ball, the guy has been all over the media since he became a switch pitcher. He's like a celebrity." Cain replied, shaking his head.

"Well I don't even watch the TV these days apart from baseball." Rick complained.

"Yeah I guess you get all your news from the newspaper." Cain said, letting out a peel of laughter.

"I'm only 34 you bastard!" He huffed.

Back in the facility, Ken was in the midst of his medical exam. He had completed one just a few days ago at the Detroit Ligers facility, but this one was far more expansive. Martin, the player development coach was also in attendance, marking down the information.

Ken passed with flying colors.

Next on the list was a consultation with the nutritionist to go over his diet and exercise routines. He was taken into an office and met with a woman named Brittany. She looked to be in her mid twenties and wore a black dress with a high split in the leg.

The woman was as attractive as she was professional. Thankfully, Ken had long gotten over his awkwardness in front of pretty women thanks to his most recent trait; Insightful.

"So, can you give me a run down of what you eat during the week and what your training regime is like?" Brittany asked, tapping her pen on the clipboard.

"Ah, it would probably be better if I showed you." Ken said, pulling out his phone. "Do you have an email address I can send my plan to?"

Though she was a little taken aback, the woman still nodded and sent through her work email.

A few moments later, Brittany opened up the email and scrolled through.

"10 mile run, calisthenics, yoga..." She nodded, it looked like a solid training plan.

"And you do this 3-4 times a week?"

Ken shook his head, "This is my daily training regime. I try to fit some weight training in at least 3 times per week, but I've been a little slack lately since I've been traveling so much." He admitted, feeling a little guilty.

Brittany's head snapped towards him, her expression filled with disbelief. "Y—You're pulling my leg right? This doesn't even include your baseball training..."

"Oh, right. I forgot to send that through." Ken replied, "I'll send it through now."

"W—Wait! You're being serious?"

...

The next 20 minutes included a stern lecture from the woman as she spoke about rest days and how she was surprised that Ken had yet to be injured from his grueling training regime.

Ken was a little taken aback, but he did not argue. The woman was not aware that between his fatigue management skill and Mika's sleep protocol that would be fully recovered by the next day.

If it were anyone else, their body probably would have broken down by now. Ken nodded along until Brittany was satisfied, though he had no intention of changing his training plan. Mika knew his body's limits, there was no other better trainer than her.

Brittany let out a sigh, "Well, as long as you know now..."

She then proceeded to give out a new training plan which Ken accepted. He took a quick look and almost scoffed. This might be perfect for any professional athlete, but not so for Ken who had the system.

Although, some of the exercises did intrigue him.

"Okay, I've sent through some food suggestions. You'll need to ensure you meet your protein macros every day, or risk capitalizing on your training benefits. Also, without carbohydrates, you'll lack the energy that your body requires."

Ken nodded. He knew about the latter, but was not aware of the term macros. He would need to do his own research in the future. Already, Ken forced himself to eat a lot of food to maintain his energy levels, if he could adjust his diet to achieve better results, why wouldn't he?

After saying his goodbyes, Ken spent the remainder of the day within the facility. By the end, he was mentally exhausted. He went through the teams playbook, the game schedule and training camp details.

While he would report tomorrow for the first training session, he would not debut until getting the green light from the coaching staff. It just meant that Ken needed to prove that he was ready to play.

Ken was filled with confidence. As long as he could play like usual, it wouldn't be long until the coach's would be comfortable putting him in the lineup.

Or at least, that's what he hoped.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 846 - 846: Training (2)

By the time he was almost finished, more players had begun to arrive on the field.

"Looks like you're making friends already." A voice called from outside the bullpen, getting his attention.

Ken turned and saw Rick, the short guy he had met yesterday, standing outside of the bullpen wearing a grin. Ken had a good impression of the guy, but for some reason his smile ticked him off.

"You were watching?"

"I only saw the end." Rick replied with a shrug.

"And you've just been watching me clean up this whole time?" Ken asked incredulously.

"Hehe. Well, usually our ball boys are the one's who clean up before and after practice. I didn't want to interrupt your good deed for the day." Rick snickered.

Ken froze, his mind taking longer than usual to piece together what had happened.

"That bastard..." Ken grit his teeth. The guy had told him to clean up, knowing that it wasn't the players job to do so.

Seeing Ken's angry appearance, Rick couldn't help but laugh even louder. Unfortunately, this just made Ken even more annoyed.

"Don't sweat it man, I can tell, Rohan acknowledges you."

At this, Ken raised his eyebrow, "And why would I need his acknowledgment?"

"W—Well..." Rick looked a little uncomfortable. He waved Ken closer to the cage, as if he didn't want others to hear.

A little intrigued, Ken obliged.

"You see, Rohan was never meant to be here..." He started.

"He was drafted out of junior college and started way down in rookie ball. He climbed all the way up through the leagues until it was finally time for his debut... That's when he got injured." Rick said, wearing a sullen expression.

Ken's eyes widened for a moment. It seemed that every player has their story and Rohan was not the exception. Still, did that warrant his attitude?

"So you're saying I should be thankful that he acknowledged me?" Ken replied indifferently. [search the website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.](#)

"No... I'm just saying, give him a little slack. As Cain said yesterday, he takes a little while to warm up to people." Rick replied, letting out a sigh. "You probably remind him of his younger self."

"He's not even that much older than me." Ken retorted incredulously.

"Sure, age-wise. But I'm talking about attitude, enthusiasm and the like."

Ken shook his head, to him, Rohan sounded like someone that was immature and could not accept his circumstances. Just as he was about to leave, he froze in place as memories started to stream in.

Was he not the exact same? In his previous life when he was injured, he turned sour and pushed people away. If they were comparing maturity, the old Ken would have been far worse than Rohan.

'At least he can chase his dream again...'
Ken thought. When he was given another chance, he had made the most of it. The fact that he was standing here right now was a testament to his hard work and shift in attitude.

"It has nothing to do with me." Ken shrugged eventually. He had his own battles to overcome and goals to achieve, why would he need to be worried about someone like Rohan.

"You're right." Rick said, though his face looked a little disappointed.

"Practice should be starting soon, let's go." Ken said, turning to leave the bullpen.

Rick watched as Ken walked away and couldn't help but let out a sigh. He had hoped that Ken and Rohan would get along, especially since they were both starting pitchers. But it didn't seem like it would happen.

Rick let out a grunt of annoyance, "Damn pitchers... Why are they all so stubborn?"

Coach Matthews walked onto the field and blew his whistle, getting all the team to gather. His face lit up as he saw Ken walking over, wearing the SeaWolves uniform.

When he had found out from his boss that Ken would be joining the team, he had almost jumped for joy. He'd been following the guy ever since learning that he was a switch pitcher, and though Columbia weren't able to make it far into the post season, it was still exciting every time Ken got onto the mound.

'With his help, we might finish the season strong...'
He thought.

Then his eyes fell on Rohan not far away, his expression turning mixed.

"Alright you lot, there's a game tonight so we're only going through some light training and drills today. I want everyone to get some batting practice in by the end of the day as well." He said, gazing over the team.

"Ken, I want to see 100% out of you today. Martin will be shadowing you today to test your game readiness, whatever he reports will dictate when you will debut for us so keep that in mind."

"Yes Coach." Ken said seriously, clearly fired up.

Coach Matthews nodded. "Since you're a two-way player, you might be pretty busy, just don't slack off."

With that, Beau, the captain of the team took them through some group stretches and warm ups. He was a big guy, sporting a short-cropped beard and had wide shoulders. Judging by the streaks of gray in his beard, he was at least 30.

Yet Ken didn't underestimate the man.

Once finished, they broke up into their groups to go through some drills.

Ken found himself alongside Cain, the easy to talk to outfielder he had met yesterday. He was around 6'2 and looked to be in great shape. Cain carried himself with an ease and confidence that was almost enviable.

The guy reminded him a little of Riku, his old teammate in the U18 National Team. Of course he wasn't as eccentric as the guy.

"Do you have a girlfriend?" Cain asked, seemingly out of the blue.

"Ah... Yeah. Well, she's my fiance." Ken replied.

Cain's expression turned sour. "Damn it! Is it just me who will be alone forever?" He cursed.

'Ah... Maybe they're more alike than I thought.' Ken thought, resisting the urge to laugh.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 845 - 845: Training (1)

The next morning, Ken arrived back at UPMC park, the SeaWolves home ground for practice. He had already gone for a morning run in the area. Since his hotel was near the lake, he was able to run nearby, enjoying the scenery.

He walked into the locker room and placed down his bags. Ken had arrived early for practice, but he didn't seem to be the first there.

After getting changed into the uniform he'd received yesterday, Ken laced up his cleats and made his way onto the field. The jersey was red, almost crimson. It stuck out, and Ken didn't really like the color.

Of course he would never say this out loud.

'I wonder who is here.' Ken thought, his eyes scanning the empty field. There was a bag already in the locker room, so it meant that someone had arrived before him.

Yet even as he looked around, he couldn't see anyone.

'Maybe the bullpen?'

Sure enough, as he approached the bullpen he could hear sounds of someone pitching. Instantly, he got curious and made his way over.

"Good morning." Ken called out, heading through the gate.

There, he saw the cold youth from yesterday standing upon the mound with a basket full of balls next to him. He already looked to be sweating, which meant he'd likely been here for a while.

Instead of responding, the guy nodded briefly before returning to his practice. Instead of a catcher, there was pitching net set up, it was already filled with balls in each of the strike zones.

Ken evaluated the youth. He looked to be in his mid to late twenties, perhaps only a few years older than him. He had a square jaw and a small goatee, but what drew Ken's attention the most was his eyes.

They were a deep green and seemed fierce. Even when the guy had nodded to him, Ken could still tell that he held some animosity for some reason.

The problem was, Ken had no idea why.

"Mind if I join you?" Ken asked offhandedly. Half of him expected the guy to either ignore him or just flat out refuse.

Instead, Rohan moved off the mound and grabbed a towel from nearby, wiping his face. "I'm finished now, it's all yours." He said simply.

Ken's eyebrow twitched, 'He definitely hates me...'

However, Ken wasn't about to let such a thing affect him. He wasn't planning on staying in the Double-A for long, so why would he go out of his way to ingratiate himself to another player?

Ken shrugged and began to roll his shoulders, making his way to the mound. He would get a few practice throws in this morning before practice kicked off, at least then he'd be able to calm down some remnant nerves.

Rohan was still nearby, making no move to leave the bullpen. Ken glanced at him briefly before ignoring him. 'If you're finished, then why are you staying?' he thought.

Getting into position, Ken began to throw a few warm up throws with his right arm. Even though he was a switch pitcher, he still preferred throwing with his right.

After 8 throws, he was feeling warm enough to begin.

He got into position and was about to wind up, before he was interrupted.

"Call your pitch." Rohan said. By now the guy had gotten comfortable on one of the benches.

"Sorry?"

"Call where you're going to pitch, otherwise it doesn't count." He said.

'Huh? If you're going to watch then just shut your mouth.' Ken said in his heart, feeling a little annoyed.

However, he decided to humor the guy. Ken was confident in his control, calling out where he was going to pitch wouldn't change anything.

"Top right." He said simply.

In the next moment, Ken performed his wind up and sent the ball rocketing from his arm into the the top right pocket. The net wobbled from the sheer force of the pitch before settling.

SWISH

Without looking at Rohan, he called the next pitch and sure enough, hit it masterfully, with no issue. This continued for 5 pitches until Rohan spoke up again, this time his voice contained some derision.

"Anyone can throw a fastball into the strike zone. Don't you know any breaking balls?"

Ken's eyebrow twitched again. He had half a mind to throw the ball in his hand at the guy, but that wouldn't be good for team morale.

'It would be good for my morale...' Ken thought.

"I know a few." He responded simply, "So I just call the pitch again?"

Rohan nodded and crossed his arms before leaning back against the cage. There was a small but annoying smile painted on his face.

'Calm down Ken... Why are you letting this guy get to you?' He said in his heart. Ken had nothing to prove, at least to this player.

"Slider, bottom left."

SWISH

Ken let out a breath and went into his wind up. He strode forward and ripped a slider. The movement of the ball was sharp and landed exactly where he had called.

"Curveball, middle."

SWISH

"Changeup, middle right."

SWISH

"Forkball, bottom right."

SWISH

Ken went through his pitching arsenal, throwing perfectly placed balls into the net with ease. With his zone mastery skill and his years of practice, such a task was almost too easy for Ken who had placed great importance on his ability to control his pitches.

He glanced at Rohan who was no longer wearing the small smile. A dark satisfaction overcame Ken, but thankfully he had his poker face skill active, so his real thoughts were not showing.

"N—Not bad rookie..." Rohan said, clearing his throat. "Now, clean up the balls. Practice will be starting soon." With that, the guy left the bullpen, leaving Ken by himself.

'What the hell...?'

Suddenly, Ken felt his frustration return. Had he been tricked into cleaning up the guys mess?

Ken grumbled to himself, but still cleaned up afterwards. The task took around 10 minutes and he was just as annoyed as when he started.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 847 - 847: Moving up (1)

The outfield training was more or less what he was used to, though the training was light. Fly balls, grounders and the like before throwing back into the infield.

The first thing Ken noticed was that everyone on the team was good. The atmosphere was different, even though it was only a light training session.

'So this is how professionals train...' Ken thought, his mind adjusting. He had yet to shift his perspective from that of a college player. Everyone here was fighting for a spot to move up to the big leagues, of course they would not slack off.

However, this did not intimidate Ken. If anything, it only fueled the fire within him.

"Let's head over to the batting cages." One of the assistant coaches directed. The outfielders complied, making their way over to the plate. There were 8 players, and each needed to hit around 20 balls.

He turned to the mound and saw one of the pitching coaches standing behind the net. Even with Ken's memory, he couldn't remember the guy's name.

"Have you been practicing with a wooden bat?" Cain asked him casually.

"Hmm? I hit with a wooden bat all through college." Ken replied.

"Eh? You could afford to do that?"

"Well... I technically only broke two bats. My friend broke one as well."

"Sheesh, that's expensive." Cain quipped, shaking his head, "I definitely couldn't afford that when I went to college."

"Which college did you go to? If you don't mind me asking." Ken asked, curious.

Cain sighed, "I went to a Junior College. Unfortunately I was never scouted heavily after High School so I didn't get to choose one of the big schools. In fact, I went undrafted in 2018."

"Ah... Sorry to hear that." Ken didn't really know how to respond. It would probably be a bit inappropriate for him as the #3 pick in the most recent draft to speak on the matter.

This time Cain laughed, "It's no matter. I'm a much better player now that I've been in the minors for a few years. I made it up to the Triple-A but I was sent back here a few months ago." His voice trailed off.

Ken didn't need his insightful trait to know that the guy was disappointed.

"You'll make it back." Ken replied, patting him on the shoulder. It might not mean much coming from him who had only met the guy yesterday, but Ken felt like he should console the guy.

"Yeah... I'll get back there soon." Cain said with determination.

"Rookie, you head up to the batters box first. Show us old folks how it's done." Cain added, nudging Ken.

Ken nodded and headed over to grab a helmet and pick a bat. Thankfully, he found one that was the exact model of the one he'd been using for the past 3 years, though it looked a little older.

"Do you mind if I go first?" He asked a few of the other players. He didn't want to step on any toes after only just joining the team. Plus, they had a game tonight, whereas he would just be a spectator.

"Go for it."

After hearing a few words of encouragement, Ken bowed slightly and made his way up into the batters box.

"I'll just take a few practice swings if you don't mind." He said, raising his hand towards the pitching coach.

With that, he got into position and took a few heavy swings, loosening up. He knew the pitches weren't going to be overly fast, but he still wanted to hit them well, especially since it was his first practice in a new team.

After about a minute, Ken thanked the coach and got into position. He went through his usual ritual and turned to face the man, sending him a nod.

This first pitch came, probably in the 75-80mph range.

WHOOOOSH

THWACK!

Ken followed the ball and watched it fly deep into the outfield. The feedback in his arms told him that it was hit in the center of the bat. The feeling was something that every batter longed to experience with every at-bat.

"Dayuuuum!" Cain exclaimed while others whistled in appreciation at the hit.

"That probably went over 400 feet... Isn't he meant to be a pitcher?" One of the players asked, wearing an incredulous expression.

"Didn't you hear the coach? He's a two-way player..."

"Have you ever seen a two-way player who can pitch 100mph and hit bombs like that?" The other player responded incredulously.

"Yeah... Just then."

"..."

WHOOOOSH

THWACK!

The next pitch was hit into the left outfield this time, once again clearing the back wall with ease. With the slower pitches, it was almost too easy for Ken, but this was the intention of this batting practice, to focus on technique.

Twenty pitches, twenty hits. All but three were hit over the back wall.

"Thank you." Ken said, bowing slightly to the pitching coach and leaving the batters box. He could feel the eyes of the outfielders on him, their looks had changed slightly, as if filled with a little more respect.

Of course this made him feel good, but he didn't want to let it get to his head. He needed to show that he was ready to play in the Double-A, such a small showing would not guarantee such a thing.

"Nice one rookie. Keep hitting like that and you won't be hanging around here for long." Cain said with a wide grin. He pat Ken on the back, a little too hard.

"T—Thanks..."

Ken stayed close by while the rest of the outfielders went through their batting practice. Perhaps it was because he set the precedent, but many were doing their best to send the ball over the back fence.

Cain on the other hand was far more meticulous. He hit 5 to the left, center and right outfield and the remaining 5 were home runs. It seemed that he was purposefully controlling his hits to achieve this.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

- Chapter 848 - 848: Moving up (2)

Chapter 848 - 848: Moving up (2)

While it might not seem that impressive from the outside, Ken could appreciate the feat. Home runs were obviously the best way to get runs, but no one would pitch like the pitching coach in a real game.

Practicing where to hit the pitches had merit as well.

"You're pretty good with the bat." Ken stated sincerely.

"Well, I am a lead-off hitter." Cain replied with a shrug, "I'd be a pretty lousy one if I couldn't hit in batting practice."

Ken chuckled. The guy was rather humble, at least compared to some of the people he'd played with over the years. He found himself beginning to like Cain who seemed easy going yet was determined.

DING

'Hmm? What was that?' Ken thought he heard the system notification bell in his mind.

"Ken, the coach is calling for you." One of the players said, grabbing his attention.

"Ah, right, thanks." Ken replied, finding the coach towards the edge of the field. He jogged over to Coach Matthews and asked him what was up.

"Just got a call from the big brass. They want you to play tonight, are you ready?" The coach asked. From his expression, it seemed like he wasn't too pleased to be overruled.

"I am ready coach. I'll play whatever you need me to." Ken replied.

Coach Matthews nodded. "I'm using you as a designated hitter and closing pitcher." He replied, "Make sure you perform well."

"Yes sir!"

Ken felt his spirits surge. He had not expected to join the line up right away, but it seemed that someone at the Ligers wanted him to play as soon as possible. This suited him just fine.

With a grin, he turned and was about to rejoin the outfielders.

"Where are you going? I want you in the bullpen. Talk to Rick and get to know him, he's our starting catcher." Coach Matthews said, stopping Ken in his tracks.

"Yes sir."

Ken turned and jogged over to the bullpen. He saw Rohan who he briefly locked gazes with before the guy ignored him. However, he was in too good of a mood to be annoyed by such a thing.

"Rick, coach told me to come over and chat to you."

"Hmm? What about?" Rick pulled off his catchers mask and approached him.

"Well, he said to get to know you because you're the starting catcher. But I assume its because he's decided that I'll be playing tonight." Ken explained.

"Eh? You're playing already?" Rick looked absolutely mystified. Ken caught the guy's gaze moved towards the other end of the bullpen. He didn't need to turn to know that Rick was looking towards Rohan.

"He wants me to close out the game tonight." Ken said simply, his eyes locked onto Rick's. "Do you have some time to go over some signs and catch my pitches?" Ken asked.

"Ah sure... Just let me finish up with Rohan first." Rick said.

However, Rohan had already left the bullpen and was walking towards the field.

"A—Alright, I've got time now..." Rick replied, letting out a small sigh.

Ken threw the situation to the back of his mind. He needed to focus on tonight's game. Even though he was only a DH and potential closing pitcher, it was still his debut match in Double-A.

"What pitches do you know?" Rick asked, bringing him to the present.

So the two chatted for a while as Ken went through his pitches and they reiterated the signs.

"And with my left, I can only throw a slider and fastball." Ken finished, "We'll just use the same signs for it."

Rick looked surprised before he remembered that Ken was a switch pitcher. "Okay, show me what you've got."

With that, Ken collected a glove and made his way to the makeshift mound in the bullpen. His arms were already warm from the outfield training earlier, but he still went through a few dynamic stretches.

After getting the sign from Rick, Ken shot straight into his wind up and sent a pitch barreling down the lane.

PAH!

Later that night, Ken placed his bag down in the locker room and felt his nerves begin to eat away at him. It wasn't just the fact he would be making his debut in the minor league, but also the system mission that had suddenly appeared.

At first he had thought the mission would be one of the usual season-long missions, but this was not the case.

#NEW MISSION: Debut

DESCRIPTION: This is a turning point in your baseball career and will shape how those in the industry will perceive you. Should you fail to make an impression, the road ahead will be fraught with difficulty.

*Task: Make an impression.

REWARDS:

>N/A

WARNING: Result of mission will have far reaching consequences to the user.

Ken had never seen another mission like this. Not only were there no rewards, the red text below the mission was something that filled him with anxiety.

He had tried to query Mika about what the quest meant, but she refused to answer for some reason. While this had annoyed him at first, eventually he managed to calm down.

'I was planning on making an impact anyway.' Ken reasoned. As long as he were to perform well in his debut match, he could make a good case for making it as a regular into the team.

With more playing time, he could cement his case to move up to the Triple-A team. Of course Ken didn't want to get his hopes right now, he still had to get through his first game.

"You nervous?" Cain said, nudging him on the way past.

"A little." Ken admitted.

'Only because of this damn mission... ' He said in his heart.

"I remember my first pro game." Cain said with reminiscence.

"How did you do?" Ken asked curiously.

"I got struck out twice and hit into a double play... Oh, I also collided into Neil in the outfield and almost got injured." He said, turning to Ken. "But you'll do great, don't worry about it."

Ken's heart sunk.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 849 - 849: Injustice (1)

As Ken walked onto the field to warm up, he saw their opponents on the field. While there were some people in the stands, it looked like it wouldn't be at full capacity tonight despite it being the first game back since the all-star break.

When Ken had first been given the schedule, he was shocked. Besides the all-star break, there were 6 games every week with Monday being the only off day. Being in the minor leagues was truly like having a full time job.

They would be facing the Hartford Yard Goats for the next 3 nights at home before heading to New York for the next week. In fact, he would be spending a week away every second week.

Suddenly, Ken had a little more respect for these minor league players who were on such a small salary while putting their bodies at risk almost every night. Even he had signed a minor league contract, just barely over \$30,000 a year.

If this was divided against the 142 games in the schedule, it would be just over \$200 per game. Ken had made more in college through his Nikey endorsement deal.

"Ken, stop spacing out or the coach will get pissed." Cain called to him, waving him over.

"Ah, sorry."

After completing the drills Coach Matthews brought them into a team meeting. Since he was new to the team, Ken kept quiet and listened in.

Since they were the home team, they'd be batting second. His position in the batting line up was last, despite being an opening batter for majority of his career. Ken could not complain, nor would he.

"Alright, win on 3."

1

2

3

"WIN!"

Ken took his place on the bench and watched as the players made their way onto the field. The announcer called out the names of each of the players as an introduction, receiving some cheers from the crowd.

Around 3/4 of the 6,000 capacity UPMC park had been filled for the first game back. Many were decked out in the SeaWolves colors and merchandise.

Ken took in the atmosphere, feeling his nerves rise a little. The new mission made it feel as if a mountain was pressing down on his shoulders. What were the far reaching consequences that it spoke of?

Would Ken not make it to the majors if he were to perform poorly in this game? Or would something else happen?

Having possessed the system for 6 years now, Ken knew that it had a tangible effect on the world. If it were to manipulate something if he failed the mission, Ken was powerless to stop it.

"Play ball!"

Ken was awoken from his reverie by the announcer who called a start to the game. His attention instinctively moved to the mound where he saw Rohan getting into position.

Rohan's whole demeanor changed the moment he got into position atop the mound. If before Ken saw him as a slightly gloomy and pessimistic individual, he now looked like a gladiator poised for battle.

The shock was so much that Ken almost forgot that he did not like the guy.

As he began his wind up, Ken felt his body shudder. The guy strode forward and sent his arm whipping past his head.

The ball soared through the air and rushed through the strike zone into Rick's open glove.

PAH

"Strike."

A cheer went up from the crowd but Ken frowned deeply.

'Did I imagine that?' he thought to himself.

Everything about the pitch had seemed perfect, from the technique down to the execution. So why did the ball seem so flat?

He turned his attention to the screen at the back of the field and saw the pitch speed.

"89mph... that's kind of slow, right?" He mumbled to himself.

Of course it was not objectively slow, just that from what Ken could see, the pitch should be far faster than it was, at least that's what he thought.

Curious now, Ken watched the next pitch closely. At first everything looked fine, but he noticed as Rohan's left foot planted, it wavered slightly. The detail was minute, but Ken was able to see it.

Much of the power was lost because the planted foot was not solid. The transfer of weight was sluggish which caused the pitch speed to plummet.

'Is he still injured?' Ken thought, frowning.

Ken suffered a similar situation when he had fractured his foot against UF last year. But surely the medical staff would have noticed something before he did? Or perhaps they knew about it.

Despite the pitches lacking potential speed, Rohan's control and Rick's leading allowed them to strike out the first batter.

Ken decided to use his identify function on Rohan, to see if he could get more information.

NAME: Rohan Hills

AGE: 24

TALENT ASSESSMENT: S+ (EX+)

POTENTIAL: EX+

USER STATS:

>Physical Fitness: S+ (EX)

>Pitching: SS- (EX)

>Fielding: C (A)

>Game Intelligence: SSS

>Mental: SS+

Additional Information: Suffering from injuries.

'What the hell?' Ken's eyes widened in shock. The guy was injured, yet was still playing through it. What kind of person would do such a thing?

[...]

Ken heard a sigh in his mind.

'Right... I guess I can't talk.' Ken thought to himself.

But the problem was, this guy was a professional whereas he was a college student at the time. Professionals should definitely take care of their body more, since it was related to their primary income.

However, Rohan seemed to think that he could get away with hiding his injury. Ken wouldn't let that happen. The guy was still young, he had plenty of time to recover and get back onto the field.

If he continued to play, the injury would only get worse and extend his recovery time.

Ken walked to the coach and was about to rat out the guy for his own good, but he paused. It was better to test the waters first.

"Coach, I was told that Rohan was injured before he made his Major League debut. Can you tell me more about it?" Ken asked.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 850 - 850: Injustice (2)

Coach Matthews was a little taken aback, so he did not respond right away.

"I don't really think it's my place to say..." But after thinking about it for a little while, he nodded. "I guess you can find this stuff online anyway."

He gazed out onto the field silently for a few moments before beginning, "Rohan was on track to debut with the Ligers a couple of years ago. He shot up from Rookie ball into our team seemingly overnight and became our best pitcher."

"He stayed for 6 months before he was called up to the Triple-A Toledo Mud Hens. Even then, he was on track to get the call up to the big leagues. His pitches were fast and dynamic, I had never seen anything like it..."

Ken listened silently.

"The week before he was due to make his debut, he was struck by a drunk driver..."

'What?' Ken's eyes widened in shock. He had originally thought that Rohan might have injured himself while playing baseball, but it seemed that it was not the case.

"What happened?"

The coach let out a sigh, "He was pretty beat up... Many doctors said that he would struggle to walk again, let alone pitch. To see such a young guy face this hardship, it breaks my heart."

'To think that he was able to recover after such a blow and still try to achieve his dream of making the major league...' Ken suddenly felt terrible.

He had pegged the guy as just immature and jealous, but in reality, Ken was the immature one. Would he have been able to do the same? Or would he have given up?

He didn't know, nor did he want to find out.

"He is a warrior, a stubborn one at that." Coach Matthews said, turning to Ken. "Rohan might be a little standoffish at first, but give him a while, he'll warm up to you."

Ken nodded, feeling his heart stir. He turned back to the mound and watched the young man wind up once more, sending out another pitch.

Now that he knew the circumstances, Ken could understand why the man's foundation was unsteady. His injuries were likely located in his hips and legs, sapping his strength.

Even with a solid core, suffering from pain every time one pitched would take a monumental determination to continue.

WHACK

Ken watched as the ball floated in the air towards the outfield for an easy catch.

"3 outs, changeover."

Rohan pumped his fist and let out a genuine smile which lit up his face. For the first time, Ken saw just how youthful the guy was.

As they came back to the dugout, Ken's eyes never left the guy.

"What are you looking at? Did you want my autograph?" Rohan asked, sending him an arrogant grin.

Ken didn't respond to the words, merely holding out his fist, "Nice pitching."

Rohan looked a little taken aback briefly, but he still bumped Ken's fist and mumbled something before walking past. Ken smiled, feeling as if he understood the guy a little more than before.

With the end of the first inning, it was time for the SeaWolves to head up to bat. Cain was first at the plate and he wasted no time scoring a hit for an easy trip to first base.

Unfortunately for him, the second batter sent a grounder towards the pitcher which forced the double play, stopping their momentum before it even started.

"Argh damn it Nigel... How did you fall for that curveball? My grandma throws better than that guy." Cain complained once they got back to the dugout.

"Sorry... I didn't think it would dip that much at the plate." Nigel replied, looking a little downcast.

"Don't stress guys, it's still the first inning." Rick said, trying to ease the tension. "We can still recover."

His words seemed to have an effect. Despite his smaller stature, everyone seemed to listen to him. Ken felt that the guy was dependable and wondered how many years he'd been playing in the minor league for.

Judging by his age, it might have been for quite a while.

The game continued and Ken was able to see how the team operated. As he thought, Rick seemed to be the central figure, able to seamlessly move between all the players and receive positive responses.

It made sense why he was made the captain of the team.

Unfortunately in the 3rd inning, one of Rohan's pitches was picked off and sent into the outfield. The slow reaction to the hit and subsequent throw back to the infield allowed the runner to 3rd base for a triple.

Since there was only one out, it set up a perfect bunt or sacrifice fly situation for the Yard Goats. As Rohan pitched, the batter placed out his bat for a bunt, hitting it flush.

BONK

The ball floated in the air a little bit and Rohan stumbled forward to go get it. Ken saw him wince in pain, but he did not stop.

The runner from third was blitzing his way to home plate and it seemed like there was nothing that could stop him.

Rohan dived forward and scooped the ball up with his off hand, shoveling it forward to Rick at the plate. The impact caused Ken to cringe.

"Safe!"

Unfortunately, the runner managed to slide in and convert the run before Rick could turn his body and tag him, resulting in the first run of the game going to the Yard Goats.

Rohan got to his feet a little shakily before returning to the mound, his face expressionless.

"Damn it, so close..."

"Just a fraction of a second sooner and it would have been out."

The guys in the dugout seemed regrettable, but it didn't change anything. Ken's eyes were still locked onto Rohan atop the mound.

'I have to help him...' he thought inwardly. Ken still had the Recovery Elixir in his inventory, though he only had one. If he used it on Rohan, a stranger then if something happened to a loved one, he would be unable to help.

But Ken felt compelled.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 851 - 851: Debut (1)

'Why am I feeling this way?' Ken's thoughts were in disarray.

Was it perhaps because he saw himself in Rohan? Or maybe he wished that he had been as tenacious and unbreakable as this man. The guy was 24 years old, the same age Ken was before he regressed.

For a while, Ken stewed in his thoughts.

'Is this my insightful trait that is making me so empathetic?'

"You okay Ken? You look pale." Cain's voice awoke him from his train of thought.

Ken shook his head, "I'm alright now, just a few nerves leftover." He said, turning his attention back to the field. The 7th batter was up, which meant he would need to go warm up in a few moments.

WHACK

The ball was struck into right field, shooting between 1st and 2nd base for an easy base hit. As the crowd cheered, Ken centered himself and quickly got ready. He placed his helmet and guards on before walking out of the dugout.

Coach Matthews pat him on the back on the way past, "Loosen up a little, you won't be able to hit if you're too tense."

"Thank you coach." Ken replied, bowing his head slightly.

He walked on deck and took a few practice swings. The coach was right, his body felt tight. 'This isn't like me...' Ken thought.

To others this might just be a regular season game for the SeaWolves, but to him it was his debut in the professional league. Not only this, the ominous system mission was looming over his head.

Ken closed his eyes and took a deep breath, calming himself. He tried to picture something that would ease his nerves.

A woman appeared in his mind wearing a flowing white dress. In her hands was a bouquet of flowers, clutched tightly to her chest as she waited for him to meet her at the alter.

Ken's nerves unraveled and a smile broke out onto his face in the next moment. Ai, the person who had supported him in this life, the one who filled his heart with love and understanding was waiting for him.

His hands gripped tighter on the bat. This woman had sacrificed her own happiness for Ken to chase his dreams. The whole reason he was able to focus purely on baseball was because she was so supportive.

'There's no way I'll let it end here...' He thought.

Ken's eyes snapped open in that moment, as if he had finally awoken from his dream.

WHOOOOOOSH

The swing was loud and filled with power causing many of those in the dugout to move their gazes to Ken instead of the game itself.

"Man, that rookie can swing..." Rick said incredulously.

"Ah, to be young." Cain added.

Rick scowled, "You're only a few years older than him you bastard."

WHACK

Everyone's attention turned back to the field as Tony smacked the ball deep into left field. The ball was hit low and far enough that the outfielder could not get to it in time, allowing the runners to snatch two bases.

Ken nodded in satisfaction, they were in a good scoring position at the bottom of the 3rd. As long as he could hit it deep into the outfield, they would get at least one run.

"Batting 9th, our newest addition to the SeaWolves... From Japan, number 13... KEN TAKAGI!"

The announcers voice echoed over the speakers, but was met with a lukewarm reaction from the crowd. Perhaps if the announcer had mentioned he was the 3rd overall pick of the draft, or that he was from Columbia instead, they might have cheered louder.

However, Ken did not care about the crowds reaction. He approached the batters box and went through his ritual, touching the plate and the end of his cleats with the bat.

He turned to the pitcher for the Yard Goats on the mound and got into position. Ken did not know anything about the guy, so he needed to tread cautiously unless the guy threw a meatball. Either way, he would be ready.

Letting out a controlled breath, Ken waited patiently for the next pitch.

He watched the pitcher look towards 3rd base briefly before raising his leg and striding forward. Ken's eyes locked onto the ball which flew out.

Without a word, Ken stepped backwards, watching as the ball flew into the glove of the catcher.

PAH

"Ball."

'They're trying to rattle me...' Ken thought, however his mind was calm. He wasn't surprised. Since he was a rookie, it wouldn't be uncommon for other teams to try and spook him with an inside ball.

"Petty tricks." Ken muttered, not even glancing at the catcher behind him.

The next pitch arrived, a slider deep outside and low. With his long arms, Ken could have reached it, but it would have likely been a ground ball to first base.

PAH

"Ball."

"Are you afraid to throw me a strike?" Ken asked, finally turning his attention to the catcher. The guy had a full beard beneath his catchers mask and looked to be in his 30's.

The catcher scowled, "This ain't college kid. You should tone down your arrogance."

Ken shrugged, "Throw me a strike and see just how arrogant I can be."

After saying this, Ken completely ignored the catcher. Whatever they threw next, he would dispatch as long as it was in the strike zone. He had supreme confidence in himself.

It was a huge shift from how he was feeling just moments ago warming up. Half the battle of performing under pressure was confidence. Ken had trained for almost 10 years non-stop to be here, if he couldn't trust all of his hard work, then what could he trust?

"100 bucks says he hits a homer." Cain said from the dugout.

"I'll take that bet any day." Rick said, "The guy was shaking like a leaf earlier, he probably won't get a decent hit until his 3rd at-bat."

"Hehe, easy money." Cain let out a laugh, rubbing his hands together.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 852 - 852: Debut (2)

Unaware of the wager in the dugout, Ken's focus was completely on the pitcher. He watched closely as the man performed his wind up and sent the next ball flying from his fingertips.

Ken noticed the spin right away and judged that it was a curveball. There was no way he was going to let such a pitch go. As the ball made its way to the zone, it dipped, but he already expected it.

WHOOOOOOOSH

THWACK!!

Having picked the pitch, Ken had no issues timing his swing. The ball was absolutely thumped, soaring towards the center outfield like a rocket. He watched it for a few moments before gently tossing the bat aside and beginning his jog.

The crowd went absolutely nuts. If they didn't know who Ken was before, they surely did now.

In the dugout, Rick's jaw dropped.

"Haha! Easiest money of my life." Cain exclaimed, patting Rick on the shoulder. "Pay me after the game."

Coach Matthews had his eyes wide open in surprise, but he soon let out a chuckle. "I guess I was worried for nothing." He said, shaking his head.

"Home runnnnnn!" The announcer called out.

Sweet Caroline began to play on the speakers, bringing the crowd alive even more.

"Sweet Carolineeee. DA DA DAAAA."

"Good times never seemed so good!"

Ken who was jogging around the bases felt all the cheers for him and couldn't help but smile. This was his first at-bat in a professional team and he was able to hit a home run, he couldn't have asked for more.

As he rounded 3rd base and headed towards home, he saw his two new teammates Tony and Levi waiting for him with bright expressions. Ken felt a little sad for a moment. For the past few years it had been Ayden or Brian waiting for him.

He quickly threw it to the back of his mind and stepped on home plate. The two men whooped and celebrated with him, patting the top of his helmet and roughing him up a little.

"Nice homer rookie."

Upon returning to the dugout, everyone looked at him with shining eyes, as if they'd just found a lump of gold in the dirt. There were only two that wore other expressions.

Rick looked as if he'd just swallowed a fly and Rohan seemed far more composed than the rest.

"N—Nice hit man." Rick said, patting him on the shoulder.

"Why does it look like you're about to cry?" Ken asked incredulously.

Cain popped up and let out an arrogant laugh, "This guy just lost a bet because he didn't believe in you. Don't give him your pity."

"You bet against me?" Ken asked, acting offended.

Rick didn't know how to respond, so he just grumbled before leaving, moving to the other side of the dugout. Ken found it rather funny, but he didn't continue to rub it in.

"You gonna give me a cut of that money?" Ken asked Cain, sending him a wink.

"Hell no, I saw what bonus you got from the Ligers. You can afford to lose \$100."

Ken shrugged. He was in a good mood.

His gaze moved to Rohan who was looking his way. The two locked eyes briefly before Rohan nodded his head, a silent acknowledgment.

Ken returned the nod and turned his attention back to the field, only to notice that no one from their team was stepping up to the batters box.

"Cain! Hurry up and get out there!" Coach Matthews yelled from atop the stairs.

"Oh crap."

Cain quickly grabbed his helmet and bat before running up the stairs onto the field. Since he had been so late, he wouldn't get a warm up swing.

However, it seemed that he did not need it. He hit an accurate ball towards the right outfield, easily getting onto first base before the ball was thrown back to the infield.

Off the back of Ken's home run, the SeaWolves gained a lot of momentum. By the end of the 3rd innings, the score was 4-1 in their favor.

This set the tone for the game and soon, the SeaWolves seemed unstoppable.

Ken had thrown off his nerves and also hit well in his following at-bats, getting a single and a double. All he needed was a triple and he would have completed the cycle.

At the top of the 8th inning with a score of 6-1, Ken was called up to the pitchers mound, replacing the relief pitcher who had come in at the 5th inning.

While he had played well this game, it was finally time to put a stamp on his debut by closing out the pitching.

As he approached the mound, his name was announced over the speakers. This time, everyone cheered, showing how much of an impression he'd made on the fans.

Of course Ken would never be swayed by the fan's opinion of him, but he had to admit that it was a good feeling having people cheer when he was called up.

He collected the rosin bag on the ground and rolled it around in his hand a few times while waiting for Rick to get into position. Once he was ready, Ken threw his 8 warm up throws.

'My shoulder feels light... good.' He thought.

The first batter stepped up to the plate and got into position. He was 8th in the Yard Goats batting line up and had already gotten a hit this game.

This would be the first time he'd be pitching against a professional player, but Ken felt no nerves. He believed that as long as he pitched as he usually did, there would be no issues.

Rick called for a fastball low and inside, just within the strike zone. It was a difficult course, but for Ken who had the zone mastery skill, such a thing was irrelevant.

He let out a slow and controlled breath before lifting his leg. He pushed off the pitchers plate and took a large stride forward.

WHOOOOOSH

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 853 - 853: Oddity (1)

WHOOOOOSH

PAH

"Strike."

The sound of the ball striking the leather glove was deafening. It sent an echo through UPMC park, causing the crowd to come to a hush. As the speed of the pitch flashed onto the big screen, a collective gasp rang out.

"101mph!? This kid is crazy!"

"What's he doing in the minor league?"

"He won't be here for long if he always pitches like that."

Excitement was evident in the crowd as Ken threw his electrifying pitch. Even his teammates on the field were watching on with awe.

Ken received the ball from Rick and returned to his spot on the mound. The atmosphere had shifted slightly, but he paid it no mind. All he needed to do was focus on closing the game out and not giving up any runs.

'My batting performance has been good, I just need to do well here...' He thought.

He nodded towards the Rick and set up for the next pitch.

WHOOOOSH

CLICK

The ball was struck awkwardly, sending it into the ground and kicking up dirt on its way to the mound. Ken easily scooped it up and sent an accurate throw towards first base, beating the batter by a mile.

"Out."

A subsequent cheer came out from the stands at the play. By now, it seemed that anything Ken did would get approval from the crowd.

"Nice work rookie!"

Ken gave Tony at first base a nod and returned to his position, waiting for the next batter. Once his name was announced, Ken took his glove off and placed it on his right hand.

He was wearing an ambidextrous glove so that he could change pitching arms during the middle of a game. The reason he changed was because the next batter was left handed.

It took some time, but some people in the crowd suddenly realized what was happening.

"Is he pitching left!? Surely not..."

"Have you not heard of Ken before? He's a switch pitcher."

He was not the only one who was surprised. The batter stared blankly at the mound for a few moments, almost not believing his eyes. While he was a professional, not every player had time to watch college baseball.

Granted even if he did, Columbia did not play many nationally televised games.

"You're kidding right?" He muttered.

"Get into position." The umpire reminded the batter.

The batter grumbled a little before doing what he was told. He stepped into the batters box and got ready to face the first pitch.

Ken on the other hand waited for the lead and nodded once he'd received it. He wound up, essentially mirroring his pitching action almost completely.

Over the past year he had been working hard to get his left to the same level as his right, but there was still a gap in power.

WHOOOOSH

CLICK

"Damn it!"

The batter cursed and threw his bat aside, running towards first base with all of his might. Unfortunately for him, the ball went straight to Nigel at short stop who collected the ball and sent a swift throw to Tony on first base.

"Out."

The guy let out a huff and turned his attention to the big screen, only for his eyes to widen. "95mph with his off-hand!?" He turned to Ken, as if he was looking at a freak of nature.

"This guy is crazy!"

"Don't get too excited, he won't be here for long if he's this good." One of the fans said, sounding a little disappointed.

"Yeah, you're right... He'll probably get called up to the Majors soon."

"But at least we get to see him before that happens. I wonder if they're selling his jersey in the store yet?"

"Probably not, the guy just got here right?"

While the crowd were chatting away about their newest member, in one of the suites, a man dressed in a blue suit and striped tie was watching the game intently. His eyes were focused on the mound, tapping his fingers upon the armrest of his chair rhythmically.

He was in his late 50's with a receding hairline and a square jaw. Despite this, he still looked handsome and lacked many of the wrinkles one would expect from a person his age.

"Mr. Ilitch, can I offer you any refreshments?" A man also donning a suit asked. He looked to be considerably older than the man in the blue suit.

Charlie Ilitch did not respond right away, as if he was still deep in thought. "I am fine for now, thanks. And please, call me Charlie. There is no need for such formalities."

The older man let out a small laugh, "Forgive me Charlie, I was rather shocked when you asked to come down and watch the game. If I had have known earlier, I would have made things more pleasant."

Charlie shook his head, "It was a spur of the moment decision. I am happy that you were able to put Ken in the game." He replied. "What do you think of him?"

The older man nodded, "He is young, but he plays with a poise and professionalism that usually comes with many years experience."

"Mmm. I am not surprised, he comes from good stock." Charlie added.

"Sorry?"

At this, Charlie smiled, "Ken's father is the coach for the Texas Shorthorns, and his Grandfather coaches my team. It's obvious that baseball runs in his genetics."

"Huh? His grandfather is Mark Williams?" At this, the old man nearly shouted in shock.

"I was also shocked at first. We drafted him without this knowledge." Charlie said with a laugh. "I am glad I came here today. Seeing the kid on the field has given me some peace of mind."

"R—Right..." the old man responded, his earlier enthusiasm waning.

"You are a smart man, Frank. Try to make the most of his time here, however long that will be." Charlie said, getting to his feet. "I'd imagine your fans will be lining up to get his jersey after this game."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 854 - 854: Oddity (2)

DING

Ken who was sitting in the dugout suddenly heard his system chime, causing him to frown. The game had not ended yet, so he wasn't expecting to receive a notification.

It was the bottom of the 8th inning, which meant he still had another inning to pitch to close out the game.

He looked left and right, ensuring that no one was looking before opening up the system.

#MISSION: Debut [Completed]

DESCRIPTION: This is a turning point in your baseball career and will shape how those in the industry will perceive you. Should you fail to make an impression, the road ahead will be fraught with difficulty.

*Task: Make an impression.

REWARDS:

>N/A

WARNING: Result of mission will have far reaching consequences to the user.

Ken's frown deepened. There were no changes to the mission apart from the fact that it was now completed. There were no rewards to claim, so all he could do was stare at it for a while.

'Mika, what is the meaning of this? The game hasn't finished yet but the mission has been completed. Surely you can give me some additional information now right?'

[...]

The system window in front of him flickered briefly, almost causing Ken to gasp in shock. He had never seen it do this before.

#SYSTEM ALERT

>The user has chosen to upgrade the system.

>1,000,000 Major points will be deducted to upgrade the system.

'What!? Why is the system upgrading?' Ken shot to his feet. He did not initiate the upgrade, nor did he have the 1 million Major Points to upgrade it.

'Mika? What is happening?'

[...]

>Error...

>Upgrade fee has been waived.

>System will shut down for 72 hours in which all functions will be unavailable until the upgrade has been completed.

[Would you like to commence the upgrade now?]

[YES/NO]

'No...!' Ken reached his finger up and pressed no. He did not know what was happening and would rather talk through things with Mika before he went through with it.

#SYSTEM ALERT

>The user has confirmed an immediate upgrade of the system.

>Upgrade fee waived.

SYSTEM UPGRADE INITIALIZING

SHUTTING DOWN TO INSTALL UPGRADE...

"Ken, go on deck, you're up soon." The voice of Coach Matthews reached him from the field, snapping him out of his shock.

"Y—Yes sir." Ken called out.

However, his mind was filled with questions. He was not concerned about playing without the system for 72 hours, he had trained too hard to let it effect him this time around.

His biggest worry was why the system began the upgrade on its own.

'Was it a reward from the mission?' Ken thought, frowning. But if that was the case, it should have been stated in the mission rewards, not just sprung on him randomly.

The worst part was, he couldn't ask Mika what had happened, at least not right now.

'Ignore it... I'll get answers in 3 days.' Ken told himself. He was in the middle of a game right now, so he needed to focus on the present. Although he'd completed the debut mission, he wasn't about to slack off now.

So when he stepped up to the batters box next, he swung for the hills.

WHOOOOSH

WHACK!

As the ball flew out to right field, Ken wasn't sure if it was going to be caught or go over the fence, so he ran with all his might. There was already 2 outs, so the runners on 2nd and 3rd ran as soon as the ball was hit.

The fielder jumped up to catch the ball, but his glove hit the back wall, forcing the ball out of his glove and onto the ground in front of him.

The crowd cheered, their roars entering Ken's ears. He turned to see that the fielder was still collecting the ball, so he decided to round 2nd base and head for 3rd.

With his long legs, Ken was able to slide onto third without much difficulty, beating the ball.

'So close...' Ken thought, dusting the dirt off his pants. He looked up and could see the bright eyes of the 3rd base coach staring at him.

The guy came over and celebrated with him, dishing out high fives and praise.

Ken smiled. Although he missed out on the home run, he had batted two runs in, so it made sense why the guy was happy.

"Ken hits a cycle on debut! Let's go SeaWolves!"

The announcer was hyping up the crowd like crazy after his hit. Only after hearing it himself did Ken realize why everyone was so excited.

'A cycle? I had no idea...' Ken thought. He never really kept track of things like this, he would rather have multiple home runs than a cycle.

Unfortunately, he was not able to make it home since Cain gave up an easy infield catch. But as a result from his earlier hit, the game had already moved to 8-1 in the home teams favor.

All he needed to do now was close out the pitching in this next inning and the game would be over.

Even without the system, the next sequence went by smoothly. He struck out the first batter in 4 pitches and the second had sent a fly ball into the outfield.

The third batter put up a bit of a struggle, but was eventually struck out after falling for a changeup.

"Game set! SeaWolves."

At the umpires announcement, Ken pumped his fist in triumph. It had been a weird night filled with challenges, but he had come out on top in the end.

His new teammates flooded the mound celebrating with him. Search* The * website to access chapters of novels early and in the highest quality.

In the dugout, Rohan watched on silently. A small smile crept onto his face, but it was gone almost as quick as it appeared, replaced by a look of regret.

It was rather odd to see someone at 24 years of age with such an expression.

Without a word, he grabbed his bag and headed back to the locker room silently.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 855 - 855: To the Bar (1)

Back in the locker room, Ken was a little out of sorts after the game. He was happy that they had won, but whatever happened with the system was giving him a bad feeling.

'Maybe it was Mika who initiated the system upgrade on her own?' Ken thought. It was not the first time that she had done something without his consent.

If that were the case, then maybe he had nothing to worry about. The shutdown time for the upgrade was only 72 hours, and even without it, Ken was confident that he could play almost as well.

This was the reason why he had trained so hard to keep up his fitness. Without the buffs, his physical fitness was only slightly worse, but not enough to affect his playing abilities.

"Rookie, we're heading to the bar, your treat." Cain said, flashing him a grin.

"Eh? I don't drink, you guys go." Ken replied off-handedly.

"Rules is rules rookie." Cain shrugged, "Or are you too good to spend some time with your new teammates?"

Ken frowned. He did not like to be peer pressured like this, but the guy was right. He should probably take some time to socialize with his new teammates, otherwise they might think he was arrogant.

"Alright. I don't have a license, so I'll need a lift." Ken replied eventually.

"Wait, you're 21 right?" Rick asked.

"Yeah. I won't be drinking though." In this life, Ken had yet to partake in any alcohol. That part of him had died alongside him before he regressed.

"Suit yourself." Cain quipped, "Rohan can drive you."

Rohan's head snapped up and he glared at Cain, but the guy ignored it, letting out a small laugh as he left the locker room.

Ken's gaze moved to Rohan who was in the middle of a deep sigh. He couldn't help feel a little awkward since the guy clearly didn't want anything to do with him.

"Are you ready?" Rohan asked, his expression returning to normal.

"Mmm." Ken nodded, zipping up his bag.

The two made their way into the car park and arrived at Rohan's car. It was a black silverado, bringing Ken some nostalgia. It made him think of his best friend Steve.

"It's probably a little shoddy compared to what you're used to." Rohan said, opening the driver side door. The sound of metal creaking sounded, driving home his point.

However, Ken laughed, "My best friend has a red silverado like this. But it looks like yours is in way better shape."

Rohan was silent for a while, but a small smile crept onto his face. "It was my dad's old car. Been in the family since I can remember." He pat the roof of the car before stepping in.

Ken went to the passenger side and tried to open the door, but the handle didn't seem to work. It was only when Rohan reached over and yanked the inside handle that it finally opened.

"She's seen better days, but it still gets me to and from work." He added.

"Sounds like its got character." Ken replied, sliding into the seat.

Rohan put the car in neutral and placed the key in before turning it over. The engine made some guttural noises before it managed to fire. The whole car shook as if it was a washing machine on spin cycle.

Only now did Ken feel a little nervous.

However, judging by Rohan's expression, this was a normal occurrence.

"Seatbelt on." He said before placing it in first gear.

Ken did as he was told, silently praying that the truck would not fall apart by the time they arrived at the bar. His knuckles were white as they clutched his bag tightly.

However, after driving for a while, the car seemed to calm down and drive normally, allowing him to relax a little.

Not a word was said for the first 5 minutes of the trip, creating a bit of an awkward atmosphere. Ken wasn't sure what to say, but part of him wanted to get to know Rohan.

Thanks to the coach, he knew a bit of the guy's back story, but he couldn't outright say it. It might have the opposite effect.

"So, why are you hanging onto this car? It seems like she's on her last legs." Ken asked.

"Can't afford another one." Rohan said simply, yet there was no shame in his tone.

"Weren't you drafted? Didn't you get a signing bonus?"

However, as he asked this, he saw Rohan's expression shift slightly. For a moment, Ken thought that he would shut off completely.

But then, he let out a sigh. "I'm sure you heard about my injury from someone in the team." He stated matter-of-factly.

"H—How did you know?" Ken was taken aback.

At this, Rohan laughed with amusement. "I've seen the way you've been looking at me has changed. At first you were annoyed with me, but now your gaze is filled with empathy."

"Ah, right..." Ken didn't know how to respond, so he didn't.

A few moments went by before Rohan spoke again. "I gave most of my signing bonus to my parents to pay off their house and allow them to retire. The way I saw it, I would be on a big contract soon once I debuted for the Ligers."

"But then there was the accident." He said simply. "I was in hospital for a long time and though I had insurance, there were some things that weren't covered. I ended up using the last of my bonus on those bills."

The way he spoke was as if the situation had nothing to do with him, like it had happened to someone else entirely.

Ken did not ask for more details. He already knew that Rohan had been struck by a drunk driver. It was a sad story, but the silver lining was that he was still alive and chasing his dreams.

"Is it hard?" Ken asked, his tone soft, almost inaudible above the old engine.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 856 - 856: To the Bar (2)

At this, Rohan began to laugh. "We're living our dream and playing baseball, Ken." He said with a grin. "There are people out there who break their back and struggle every day just to put food on the table for their family. What right do I have to complain?"

Ken blinked a few times before his face turned solemn. He could tell that Rohan was not telling the complete story. There was no way that he would be content with staying in Double-A, this was not his dream.

Ken could see the pain hidden beneath his smile and it made him feel sick. This was the exact expression he wore in his previous life as he went to work every day, having given up on his dream.

His eyes lingered on the man for a while before turning back towards the road.

"Why were you so cold to me when I arrived?" Ken asked.

Rohan didn't respond right away. The bar was on the right and he pulled into the car park before pulling the hand brake and turning the car off. He sat still with his hands on the wheel, as if deciding whether or not to answer.

"I was jealous." He said simply, turning to Ken. "You reminded me of what I lost, what was taken from me."

At such honesty, Ken didn't know how to react. Before he could respond, Rohan continued, "It is a hard pill to swallow, but I can see how talented you are. If this was

before the accident, I might have even taken you as my rival." He smiled once more, this time it was self deprecating.

"I am sorry if I offended you, Ken. You don't need to hear the bitter ramblings of a washed up pitcher. As long as you look after your body, it won't be long before you're called up to the big league." He said, holding his gaze.

Ken wasn't sure how to respond. Seeing a guy that was not much older than him refer to himself as a washed up pitcher did not sit right with him.

"We should go in, the guys are probably waiting already." Rohan said, "Ah, you need to pull the handle hard otherwise the door won't open."

Ken nodded and indeed had to nearly use all of his strength to open the door. Thankfully he was able to exit the truck after some effort.

'Maybe I'll catch a cab home...' He thought, remembering the sketchy drive.

However, Ken felt a little bad. He had found out a bit more about Rohan and while he reminded him of himself in his past life, there were obvious differences.

Not only had Rohan continued to play baseball, he did not use his injuries as an excuse. He seemed to care about his friends, and was only cold towards Ken initially because of his issues.

Other than yesterday, he had treated Ken with respect.

As they walked into the bar, most of the team had already gathered. Upon seeing Ken they cheered.

"Here comes our tab!"

"Hey, that's rude." Cain chastised, however he was wearing a grin.

Ken shook his head, but he was smiling. He hated spending money, but he was in a good mood after having a good debut, regardless of how the system had acted before.

He walked up to the bar and pulled out his wallet. "I'll put \$1000 down as a tab."

The bartender frowned, "Not without an ID you won't."

So Ken produced his ID. It seemed that even with his height, Ken still looked underage.

"Oh! It's Ken!"

He heard a shout from the other side of the bar causing him to shift his attention towards the sound. There were a few big guys that looked like they'd walked straight off the offensive line on the football team.

Only when they stood up did he see that they were wearing SeaWolves jersey's. He let out a sigh of relief, realizing that they were probably fans.

He raised his hand and waved, sending them a smile.

"You famous or something?" The bartender asked, giving him a weird glance.

"Didn't you hear Seb? He's our new rookie, the switch pitcher." Cain called from the table nearby.

"Ah right, the one that the Ligers drafted." The bartender said, nodding his head.

"Should you really be drinking?" He stated, giving Ken a disapproving look.

Ken felt a little exasperated, "I'll be drinking juice. Orange, if you've got it."

After hearing this, the bartender nodded in satisfaction.

By then, the people across the bar had already arrived and began talking to Ken, speaking about the game earlier. They asked for autographs on their jerseys.

When they turned around, Ken saw that they were all wearing Rohan's number, causing him to pause. However, after seeing all the other signatures on the back, he felt a little better. It seemed that everyone here had signed the jerseys before.

"There you go." Ken said, handing the guy his pen back.

"Thanks man, we can't wait to see you pitch again. It was so cool!"

"Thank you. I'll do my best to not disappoint you." Ken said bowing slightly. He had not interacted with fans much and this was the first time since becoming a pro.

"Alright Andy, we've got some team bonding to do." Cain said, shoos the guys away.

"Ah, sure thing Cain."

The group respectfully returned to their table, leaving Ken be.

Ken found an empty chair and was soon delivered his orange juice and Rohan was given a soda water. Once everyone had their drinks at the ready, Rick stood up and addressed the team.

"I don't often make speeches, so I'll keep it short and sweet. First game back from the all-star break and we got a win, we also got ourselves a flash rookie from the draft. If that ain't a reason to celebrate, I don't know what is."

"To winning!" Rick hoisted his beer into the air.

"To free beer~" Cain added.

The rest of the team raised their glasses and drank deeply after.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 857 - 857: The Call (1)

The next two games were just as impactful for Ken who had officially been moved to the DH position. He had also been moved up to the 3rd spot in the batting order, showing how much the team valued his batting.

For these two games, Ken pitched in only 1 more, closing out the final game with ease again. Even without the system, his pitches were sharp, not even allowing a single hit in the final 2 innings.

And so Monday arrived. The single rest day in an otherwise packed schedule. This was also the day where the system would finish its upgrade, and when he could finally get the answers that he was searching for.

#SYSTEM ALERT

SYSTEM HAS SUCCESSFULLY UPGRADED TO LEVEL 6.

-MISSIONS

-SYSTEM SHOP

-LOTTERY

-IMAGE TRAINING

-IDENTIFY

-TRAINING PLAN

-MENTOR

-???

USER STATS:

>Physical Fitness: EX

>Pitching: SSS+

>Fielding: A+

>Game Intelligence: SSS

>Mental: EX-

>Skills: 25

>Traits: 4

PHYSICAL FITNESS: (Avg. EX)

Balance and Coordination: EX

Agility: EX-

Strength: EX

Stamina: EX+

In his hotel, Ken waited patiently as the system finally completed its upgrade. Upon opening his status window, he carefully scrutinized it, looking for anything that had changed.

His eyes widened as he saw that his potential had now increased to Legendary and his major points were untouched. It was an unexpected boon, so he wasn't complaining.

However, upon seeing the new menu option, Ken frowned.

"What is this?"

He tapped on the question marks and a new window popped up.

#???

Choose 1:

>Requires 1,000,000 Major points to unlock

>Requires 20,000,000 Major points to unlock

'Huh?' Ken was perplexed. Firstly, he was at the systems max level, so why was the menu not revealed? Secondly and most importantly, why were there two options to unlock?

'Mika, what is this?' Ken asked.

[I cannot go into more detail Ken. You will have to decide for yourself which option you unlock.]

Ken froze. The voice that had spoken to him was not monotonous as he had come to expect from Mika. Instead, it sounded like a young woman.

'M—Mika? What happened to your voice?'

[Is it unpleasant? I can return to my previous voice if that makes you feel more comfortable.]

Ken was silent for a while, but he shook his head. 'Sorry, I was just a little surprised. You sound great.'

[Thank you.]

With no answers for the new system function, Ken decided to move on. One of his strengths was not fixating on things that he could not control, something he had had to learn on his own.

20 million Major points was something that he could not even fathom at this point in time. Throughout the whole time he'd had the system, he had only accumulated just over a million.

Judging by this, he might not even get to unlock the 2nd option by the time his baseball career ended. By then, would he even need the new function?

But there were more important things for now to discuss.

'Mika, what happened with the system the other day? Why did the upgrade initialize without my consent?' Ken asked, getting back on track.

[User met the conditions of the mission, so the reward was expedited. Do not worry, Ken. There is nothing wrong with the system, it will still work as intended.]

Ken was silent for a while as he thought about it. The mission stated that the reward was N/A, but it was in fact a system upgrade? Something didn't really add up.

'Can you tell me about the warning at the end of the mission now that I've completed it?' He asked carefully.

[...]

[I cannot speak about it, Ken. All I can say is that its related to the unknown function.]

'Okay, thank you Mika, that helps.' Ken said finally, laying back onto his bed. He did not have the answers that he was hoping to find after the system came back online, in fact, he had even more questions.

His eyes moved to the unknown function and hovered over the two options. If he could unlock both, Ken might have felt different, but the fact that he could only choose one made him feel a sense of foreboding.

If the warning was related to the unknown function, then things were not as simple as they appeared on the surface. This only gave him a sense of foreboding, like something bad might happen if he were to make the wrong decision.

BUZZ BUZZ

Ken stirred, reaching for his phone. He didn't recognize the number.

"Hello? This is Ken speaking."

"Ken, it's Coach Matthews. I'll keep it short and sweet, you've been called up to the Mud Hens. Your flight to Ohio leaves tomorrow morning."

"Eh!? What?" Ken was so surprised that he couldn't even process what was being said to him.

"I'll send through the details over email. And Ken, I don't want to see you back here okay? Best of luck." Coach Matthews said before promptly hanging up.

Ken turned his phone and looked at it in bewilderment. He had only just joined the team for less than a week and he was already being shipped up to Triple-A? Was this even real?

[Congratulations Ken. You are a step closer to achieving your dream.]

'T—Thanks Mika...'

However, Ken didn't know how to feel. He was expecting to play in the Double-A for at least 6 months. Even though he'd only met his teammates a few times, there were a few that already made an impression on him.

Cain reminded him of Riku and Rick was a good guy, albeit quick to anger. Then there was Rohan, the man who he had finally just started to understand.

Thinking of Rohan, Ken sat up. He was leaving tomorrow, there was no time to waste. If he wanted to give the Recovery Elixir to him, it was now or never.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 858 - 858: The Call (2)

Unfortunately, Ken didn't have the guy's number. In fact, he only had Cain's number from the team. After a few minutes of contemplating his life decisions, Ken called the man and was able to secure the number.

The next issue was trying to think of an excuse to meet up with Rohan.

RING RING

"Hello?"

"Hey Rohan, this is Ken... Sorry to call out of the blue, but I wanted to chat in person. Do you have time?" Ken asked, his face heating up.

"Is it not something that can wait until tomorrow?"

"You see... I've been called up to the Mud Hens. My flight leaves tomorrow morning."

"I see..."

The line was silent for a while.

"I'll head over to your hotel in a few minutes."

With that, the guy hung up. Ken could feel his pain on the phone when hearing that he had been called up to the Triple-A league. If Ken was in his shoes, he might not have been so accommodating.

Ken went down the elevator and waited out the front of the hotel. Around 10 minutes later, he heard the familiar choking sounds of the silverado pulling into the driveway.

"Hop in." Rohan called, pulling up.

Ken smiled softly and walked around, getting into the passengers side. Now that he was here, he realized that he did not have a plan on how to give the man the Recovery Elixir.

If it was someone like Steve, he could have just told the guy it was a sports drink and told him to drink it. But Rohan he had only known for a few days, and they were not that close.

"Have you eaten yet?"

Ken shook his head in response.

"There is a BK close by. Are you fine with burgers?" Rohan asked.

"Burgers are fine."

Rohan was right, in not even 2 minutes they arrived at the fast food restaurant and made their way inside. No one had spoken just yet besides the initial conversation.

The place wasn't that packed thankfully and the two lined up.

"What did you want? I'll pay for the meal and you get us a seat." Ken said.

Thankfully, Rohan didn't object. "Bacon deluxe and a regular coke thanks."

Ken nodded and watched the guy walk to one of the booths inside at the very corner. Now he needed to think of a way to get him to ingest the Recovery Elixir. He could pour it into the man's drink, but it might look suspicious.

After being called up, Ken placed the order and paid. He was given two empty cups, to which he raised an eyebrow.

"It's self serve drinks." The young man behind the counter said, pointing to the side.

"Ah! Thank you." Ken bowed profusely, his mind racing.

This was the perfect opportunity to fill up the man's drink with the Elixir. He already knew that even if it was mixed with something else that it would still work.

The only issue was to do it without looking suspicious in front of the other customers, or even Rohan himself. Ken walked over to the drink machine and placed the cups on the tray.

In one fluid movement, he placed the empty cup under the ice dispenser and before pressing the button, he asked Mika to give him the Elixir.

A small clear vial appeared in his hands and he swiftly poured it into the cup before pressing the ice button. Upon emptying, the glass vial disappeared as if it were never there in the first place.

Ken remained focused though, filling up the remaining parts with coke. He then filled his own with ice and water, there was no way he would risk mixing the two up, even if he wanted a coke.

With the two cups now full, Ken turned and headed towards the table. He was feeling a little nervous now.

Upon sitting, Ken handed the man his drink, his eyes lingering on the cup for a little too long. "H—Hey... Sorry for calling you up out of the blue, I know that you barely know me." He said, trying to recover.

Rohan looked at him and smiled softly, "It's fine, I know why you called me."

'Eh? He does?' Ken froze.

Rohan continued, "You're nervous about being called up to the Triple-A. Since I've played there before, it makes sense why you would give me a call."

"Ah, yes of course." Ken nodded like a pecking chicken. Yet inwardly he chastised himself. Why had he not come up with a proper plan beforehand?

Before they could continue chatting, their number was called.

'Damn that was fast...!' Ken got up and collected the food before returning to the table.

The two then ate in silence for the next few minutes. All the while, Rohan did not touch his drink. This only made Ken more nervous and he almost choked on his food.

Only when they had finished eating did Rohan reach for his drink. However, he took 1 sip and frowned. "Did you get diet coke?"

'Ah... No way right?' Ken panicked. He used memory recall to check and almost had a heart attack. Instead of choosing coke, he'd used the diet coke right next to it.

'ARGHHH I'M AN IDIOT!' He screamed internally.

However, Rohan let out a laugh. "It's not a big deal."

But to Ken, it was. At least it would have been, had Rohan not drank the whole cup in the next moment.

"I should probably stop drinking soda altogether, it's not good for you." He replied with a smile, placing the now empty cup aside.

"So, what is it you want to know?" He asked.

After seeing that he had successfully administered the Recovery Elixir, Ken felt his nerves melt away, easing his tension. Now that he was no longer on edge, the conversation went well.

Like a true senior, Rohan told him what to expect, even naming a few of the players that were on the team and the coaching staff.

The two spoke for an hour or so before Rohan was beginning to yawn uncontrollably.

"It seems I'm not as young as I once was." He said with a laugh. "It's only 8pm and I'm this tired."

"Let's go then. Do you live far?" Ken asked. He would hate for the guy to fall asleep at the wheel and put himself and others in danger.

"A mile from your hotel."

Ken nodded and walked to the car with the guy. When he was dropped off, Ken thanked him once more.

"Hopefully I'll see you in the Triple-A soon as well." Ken said, flashing him a grin.

"Haha, sure man." Rohan replied, waving it off. "Best of luck, give em' hell."

With that, Ken watched as Rohan drove off, his heart already feeling lighter.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 859 - 859: Rohan (1)

After dropping Ken off at the hotel, Rohan rubbed at his eyes, stifling a yawn. He felt exhausted, though he wasn't surprised. Ever since the accident, he had lost a lot of stamina.

While he had managed to get back to some level of fitness, it was a far cry from what he used to be. The medical staff had told him it was a miracle he had even gotten this far.

Of course it had not been easy. Rohan had needed to learn to walk again, something that had taken a monumental amount of drive and effort. If it wasn't for his love of baseball, he would have given up long ago.

Even then, the doctors warned him that the more he played, the worse his injuries would become later in life. Arthritis was their biggest concern.

After finally arriving at his apartment, Rohan parked his truck and slowly got out of the drivers side, wincing slightly from the pain. He let out a yawn once more and gingerly walked up the stairs to his place.

"These damned stairs." He complained bitterly.

He fumbled with his keys after ascending and opened the door. Rohan stumbled, letting out a cry of pain as he hit the floor hard. The room was dark and the floor was cold.

In pain, he did his best to get to his feet, gritting his teeth hard. This was not the first time that this had happened, and it wouldn't be the last.

With monumental effort, he got to his feet and closed the door, turning the light on.

"I'm okay..." He said to himself, letting out a deep breath. "I might just need to take it easy for the next couple of days." He muttered.

Rohan yawned once more, exhaustion tugging at his mind and body. Shrugging off his shoes, he carefully walked into his room and sat on the edge of the bed before massaging his legs.

"I wish I could go with him..." Rohan muttered, a sense of yearning in his voice.

He liked Ken. The guy was hard working and competitive. He had seen him play in a few games earlier in the year for Columbia and marveled at his grit both in the batters box and on the mound.

However, there was a part of him that was jealous. He was not proud of it, in fact, he was ashamed. Worried that he might not be able to conceal his jealousy, Rohan had kept his distance initially.

But this didn't last. Rohan could sense the guy's compassion and empathy, which all but destroyed his jealousy. So when Ken called him up tonight after the game, he did not hesitate to meet up.

"It is a pity that we won't see each other again." He said, laying back in bed.

For some reason his whole body was exhausted. He had not felt this week since the accident, it was like he was a newborn baby. It took all of his strength to roll onto his side and place a pillow between his legs.

He slowly drifted into a deep sleep and soft snores filled the room.

Rohan found himself running along the streets. The cool night air entered his lungs, filling him with vitality. His eyes moved to the street orange street lights, casting their light onto the path ahead.

Things felt a little odd, but he couldn't put his finger on it. He looked down at his watch and saw that he still needed to run a few more miles before reaching his target.

With a surge of determination, he increased his pace, reveling in the feeling of freedom. The cool breeze touched his skin, invigorating him. There truly was nothing better than running.

Cars went by, their headlights illuminating the road ahead. One particular set seemed too bright, causing Rohan to shield his eyes from the discomfort.

That's when it happened.

Before he knew it, Rohan's body was launched into the air. The impact had been so quick that his body had not had time to register what had happened. Only when he tumbled along the asphalt and came to a stop did the excruciating pain follow.

Lying on his back, Rohan stared at the yellow streetlights. He knew that it was all over. His dreams of playing in the major league were gone, all because of this one moment.

Pain and anguish merged, producing a guttural scream which left his mouth. He wept, knowing that it was over. Everything he had worked hard for his whole life was now gone.

The sound of the sirens pierced his mind. It slowly got louder, to the point where it rattled his brain, breaking through the haze of pain.

Rohan shot up from the bed, gasping for air. His body was covered in sweat and his mouth was dry. His phone's alarm was going off, which sounded similar to the sirens he had heard earlier.

He shuddered, turning off the alarm and wiping away at the sweat on his face. It was not the first time he had experienced the nightmare, but it had been a long time since it had happened last.

Rohan felt disgusting. The sweat caused his shirt to stick to his skin, making him uncomfortable. With a sigh, he cautiously swung his legs over the edge of the bed and slowly settled his feet down onto the ground.

Ensuring that he was stable, Rohan slowly pushed himself off the bed and onto his feet and made his way to the shower. At first, his muscles protested, but he soon stabilized.

The mornings were usually the worst for pain, but today seemed to be rather tame. Still, Rohan knew that at some point, it would get worse, it always did.

He slowly disrobed and stepped into the shower, ensuring the water was warm enough. Rohan was washing himself with the bar of soap before it dropped onto the ground.

With a groan of annoyance he bent down to pick it up, only to lose his footing.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

Chapter 860 - 860: Rohan (2)

He fell onto the shower floor and panicked. The last time he had fallen in the shower he had needed to crawl out and dry before he could get to his feet. It was humiliating.

Not to mention, the pain.

However, as he hit the ground, the pain he had come to expect did not come.

"Huh?"

He blinked a few times, unsure of what was happening. He moved his legs and felt only a slight discomfort. Usually his bones would ache, but now it was only his muscles that seemed tight.

Still in disbelief, Rohan planted his foot and got up from the ground. There was no pain.

"No way... It can't be."

Instantly, he felt a lump in his throat as his rational thought wrestled with the long forgotten hope which had surged in his heart. He stood stock still, pushing down the tears which threatened to spill from his eyes.

Rohan turned off the shower and stepped out, drying himself carefully. Yet even as he performed this action, he was met with no pain, only the resistance of his stiff muscles.

Without a word, he marched into his room and got dressed in his workout gear. His mind was racing, but he did not dare think that he had recovered.

Placing on his shoes, he exited the apartment and looked at the stairs. Letting out a deep breath he descended. With every step he took down, his spirits were lifted a small piece at a time.

By the time he reached the ground, tears had already started to pool in his eyes.

'It doesn't hurt...'

But that wasn't enough for him. He turned to the street, taking in the sight of the rising sun and felt compelled to run. If he truly had been the recipient of a miracle, there was one way to find out.

Rohan took a deep breath and steadied his emotions. He placed one foot in front of the other, ensuring that he would not trip. Steadily, he increased his pace to a brisk walk and then broke out into a jog.

By now, the tears had already begun to flow down his cheeks, the cool morning air brushing against their wetness. It was both refreshing and invigorating.

For the first time in what felt like a lifetime, there was no pain. Aside from the slight discomfort of his muscles, everything felt like a dream.

His jog turned into a run, and soon a sprint. As his chest heaved, Rohan cried out in joy. His body which had been a prisoner of pain this entire time, was now free to spread its wings, soaring on the clouds.

Soon, he couldn't go any further.

Rohan slowly came to a stop and went down on his hands and knees. He was gasping for air, but the air had never tasted any sweeter than it did now.

"Thank you..." he cried between breaths.

He didn't know who he was thanking, but he felt compelled to say it. It might not even reach the entity that healed him, but that didn't matter.

Rohan stayed like this for a few minutes, breathing in the sweet air. His mind was filled with gratitude, and the hope that he had buried for so long finally reared its head.

He was young and now healed, there was still time for him to fulfill his dream.

Standing to his feet, a brilliant smile crept onto his lips, lighting up his once dull features. It was as if the passion within him had reignited, causing him to shine brightly like the sun.

Not wanting to lose this feeling, he broke into a jog along the street, his smile never fading.

Ken had arrived at the airport early in the morning for his flight to Ohio, yet despite his dislike of flying, he was in a good mood. He could already imagine the look on Rohan's face when he realized that his body was healed.

At first he did not know why he felt compelled to use the Recovery Elixir on Rohan, in fact, he still didn't fully understand it. But after seeing how hard the guy worked despite his injuries, all doubts left his mind.

There were probably thousands of such cases around the world where an accident would destroy someone's life, taking their dreams away. But Ken doubted that there were many as tenacious as Rohan, who still tried to chase his dreams after being injured.

Just the fact he was able to play baseball after such an incident was a miracle in itself.

Ken had researched the incident which occurred in Ohio. It was horrible.

On a routine run, Rohan was cleaned up by a drunk driver and had his lower half shattered from the impact. He was lucky that his spine had not broken, but everything else had in its place.

The man had been placed behind bars, but that did little to change the fact that a promising athlete had their career cut short. Thankfully, the community had put a lot of pressure on the club and Rohan had been given the chance to return to Single-A after almost 18 months of rehab and conditioning.

He had performed well enough to get back onto the SeaWolves team, but he was never able to progress from there.

But now that he was healed, Ken had no doubt that the man would return to form soon and join him in Triple-A.

BUZZ BUZZ

As Ken was in the line to board the plane, he received a message on his phone. Taking it out, he saw that it was from Rohan, causing a smile to bloom on his face.

"I will see you in Ohio within 6 months."

There was nothing else, just that one sentence.

Ken let out a laugh and began to type before hitting send. His response was just as short.

"I'll keep the mound warm for you."

With that, Ken knew he had made the right decision. They were part of the same organization and while they were technically rivals for the starting pitcher position, Ken didn't mind it. In fact, it made him feel fired up.

'Time to kick ass in Ohio then...' he thought, grinning.

DING

'Hmm?'

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.