

## Football 194

### Chapter 194 TOBY

The sun hung low in the sky, casting long shadows across the Jefferson High School courtyard. It was a typical Thursday afternoon, and the end of the school day was approaching. Students bustled through the hallways, chatting and laughing, eager to finish their last classes and head home.

In the library, Emma sat at a wooden table, her textbooks spread out before her. Her long hair fell over her shoulders as she bent over her notes, scribbling intently. Across from her, May flipped through a history book, occasionally glancing up to check on Emma's progress.

"Are you almost done?" May asked, her voice a soft whisper in the quiet library. She only came to the library to keep her friend company as she worked through her assignment. However, if she was being honest she dread going home early not wanting to listen to another lecture by her parents.

Emma looked up, a small smile tugging at her lips. "Almost. Just need to finish this last section on the Civil War." she replied before going back to her work trying her best to ignore her friend. She had been asking her the same question every so often whenever she got too bored.

May nodded, leaning back in her chair. "Take your time, it's not like we could be doing something more fun," she responded with a huff before pulling out her phone and started scrolling on her Instagram. Since she couldn't Emma to hurry up she would entertain herself with her socials.

Meanwhile, in the boys' restroom down the hall, Rakim splashed water on his face, trying to shake off the lingering drowsiness from the day's classes. He had another early morning today heading to the Ace training center at 4:30 to start his morning training. After completing a session he had to focus in class listening to teachers drone on and on about things he didn't care about.

If not for his mother making him keep a B average in school, he would have just slept in class. He glanced at his reflection in the mirror, his green eyes staring back at him, filled with a mix of determination and exhaustion. Junior year at the age of 15 was proving to be more challenging than he had anticipated.

That is especially the case since he had to take more time off to focus on his football commitments. Playing in tournaments across the globe with the main team at Ace Academy and joining training programs have been his main focus. So whenever he got back to the States for school he felt his entire world slow down.

The only reason he still insists on going to school is because of his sister and friends at the school. He just wasn't ready to enter the adult world of football just yet but he knew that he would soon have to make a choice. That's especially the case since his agent Kingsly has been in talks with teams looking to sign him.

At the start of the year, the interest from teams was for him to join their youth teams but things quickly changed in September. At the tender age of 15, he exploded on the scene at the Madrid international. Playing against under 21yr old football hopefully, from teams across Europe he was unstoppable.

Dancing past defenders and linking up with midfielders he played with flair and efficiency beyond his years. However, his team came up short in the semifinals he made the various teams keep an eye on him and take a second look. Their interest continued to heat up after it was announced that the England Under 17 youth team expressed interest in his services for the 2019 Under 17 World Cup.

Now he was having a hard time just enjoying life as a student as the football stage was knocking at his door. Drying his hands on a paper towel he quickly crumpled it up and tossed it into the trash. Adjusting his shoulder-length dreads he was ready to rejoin the world outside.

Shooting a quick text to Emma he quickly found out where she was and decided to head to her. He had no plans on going back to class and instead decided to ditch the last class and hang out with his sister. If he was lucky she might even have snacks which he could relieve her of.

Just as he turned to leave, a loud, sudden noise echoed through the halls. It was a sound Rakim was all too familiar with but hadn't heard in his new life. He could never forget that sound as it was all he heard for years. (Bang Bang Bang,) hearing the piercing sounds snapped him out of his shocked state.

His heart raced, and for a moment, he stood frozen in place, the reality of the situation sinking in. Adrenaline started pumping through his veins as his long-forgotten instincts kicked in. However, he still couldn't bring himself to act as various thoughts started to creep in.

'This can't be happening,' he thought, his mind struggling to console his new life with a familiar dread that he had been trying his best to forget. (bang) Another shot rang out, followed by the sound of more screaming and chaos. Reason would dictate that he should lock himself in the bathroom, but the thought of being trapped and being unlucky enough to be trapped here rang in his mind.

'Hey Eva those were definitely gunshots right?' he inwardly asked her but he didn't really need her to answer as the screams of students were enough. Leaning an ear to the door he slowly pulled it open to see for himself what was going on outside.

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In the library, Emma and May's heads snapped up at the sound. Her heart pounded in her chest, instantly recognising the sound since she had gone hunting on a family trip. Although not having fired a gun herself the fear she felt for them hasn't diminished. A cold wave of fear washed over her not knowing what to do for a second.

"Was that...?" she started, but May was already on her feet, her face pale. "Gunshots," May whispered, her voice trembling. "We need to hide." Emma's mind raced, her thoughts a jumbled mess as she processed May's words. Her instincts screamed at her to move, to find safety, but fear rooted her to the spot for a moment longer.

Finally, she snapped into action when May slapped her across the face. The pain was just what her brain needed to snap into gear forcing her body to action. She frantically scanned the almost empty library looking for a solution for their current situation. The school has never had a school shooting so there isn't a protocol in place.

"Get down, behind the table," she urged, her voice a harsh whisper as she pulled May over to the librarian's desk on the second floor. The Library is quite massive giving them quite a few options to hide and as long as they stay silent they should be fine.

The girls scrambled to hide, crouching low behind the sturdy wooden furniture. Other students headed for various aisles looking for the best spot to hunker down. Some even moved desks to the doors but there were just too few brave enough to do this. In the end, they only managed to cover 2 of the four doors leading to the Library.

Emma's heart pounded in her ears, the sound almost drowning out the chaos erupting in the hallway outside. May's hands shook as she clutched her phone, her fingers fumbling to silence it. She glanced at Emma, eyes wide with fear. "What do we do?" Emma took a deep breath, trying to steady herself. "We stay quiet and wait for it to be over. Hopefully, help is already on the way."

After saying that she sent a text to her mother and father letting them know what was going on. She didn't dare to call them not wanting to attract attention and hoped they would promptly see her texts. May did the same texting her brother who was off campus at a basketball competition.

