

## Football 207

### Chapter 207 Betrayal

[25/09/2018, 10:30 St George's Private ward,]

The next morning couldn't arrive soon enough for Rakim as he spent most of the early morning undergoing tests. The doctors wanted to ensure the comma wouldn't cause lingering neural damage. Plus the fact that his parents were putting pressure on them to make sure their kid would be ok didn't help things.

Only around 9 in the morning was he able to rejoin his family in his hospital ward where more people had joined them. He hadn't seen them when he went for tests so he guessed that they showed up after hearing the news from his family. His grandparents, Uncle Williams, and surprisingly Lexi had trekked down to the hospital as soon as they heard the news.

Thus Rakim spent the morning with them taking in their well wishes as he tried to process what he had missed. No one talked about the shooting choosing to keep the topics light as he regained his Barings. Breakfast for him was a smoothie as the doctors wanted to ease him back to testing solids.

Not having eaten anything substantial for 7 days left him rather hungry and eager for something more filling, but he obediently sipped his smoothie, grateful to be surrounded by loved ones. As the morning wore on, Rakim slowly adjusted to his new circumstances. His body felt different with every movement, every breath reminded him of the bullet wound and the long road to recovery ahead.

Despite having memories of him experiencing worse injuries in his past life now it was different. The simple fact he was an athlete whose future depended on his body made him worry about the future. His plan to play in one of the major leagues at the start of the new season also needs to be reevaluated.

There was a different kind of mental fatigue that went along with the billet that started to weigh on him. Outwardly though he kept his smile on not wanting to worry everyone who loved and cared for him. After breakfast, more and more people showed up sending their well wishes for a speedy recovery.

His Middle school teammates whom he hadn't played with for years as the distance between them grew also showed up. They were still friends in a sense just not as close anymore as everyone went their own paths. He still appreciated their visit Taking some time to reminisce on their past shenanigans.

Max was especially animated as he recalled some of the pranks he managed to rope the team into. His room was a hub of activity, filled with laughter, stories, and a sense of relief that he was finally awake. If not for the residual effects of the vitality Elixir he would have been too tired to keep up.

The walker cousins were the only ones not in attendance however that was due to them not being in the country. They are both now living in London and working their way up the Crystal Palace youth division. Still, they FaceTimed him briefly telling him to get better soon or he will never catch up to them.

He enjoyed the time he spent with all the visitors letting him realise just how much of an impact he had in his new life. This wasn't gained by performing spectacularly on the playing field but by him as a person. Thus he remained patient with everyone answering the same questions hundreds of times and engaging them in conversation.

Sometime around noon, a doctor came n to take him to his first physical therapy class. Mum was the only one who followed along not letting anyone else disturb him. It wasn't a hard session only aimed at light stretches to make sure his shoulder mobility didn't stiffen as it healed.

The doctors had been clear about the physical therapy he would need, and the potential challenges he might face. Yet, he tried to remain optimistic, drawing strength from his family and friends. Still he hadn't managed how difficult it would be to get his shoulder moving through the exercises.

It felt numb like when you sleep on your arm wrong and it behaves like a new limb. Stretches that he could do in his sleep were now taking minutes just to get started. He thought that because he used the A-grade Vitality elixir he would have an easier time with this but he was wrong.

{The elixir made sure to heal most of the nerve damage the bullet did to the right side of your chest. To regain full mobility will require you to work hard during therapy sessions.} Eva said clearing his doubts as he felt more motivated to get better as soon as possible.

Rakim focused on the exercises, listening carefully to the physical therapist's instructions. Each movement, though small and controlled, left him hurting for pain but he gritted his teeth and remained focused. His mother watched closely from the side, her eyes filled with both concern and encouragement.

"You're doing great, Rakim," the therapist said, her voice calm and reassuring. But the longer he struggled with basic movements the more he became irritated. He understood that he wouldn't get better instantly but struggling with the smallest movements annoyed him.

Gritting his teeth through the pain was all he could do as he did his best to push down the building irritation. "Take it slow and steady. Recovery is a marathon, not a sprint." The therapist said but it did little to help him sounding rather sarcastic to Rakim.

Rakim tried to focus on the therapist's words, but each movement, no matter how small, felt like a reminder of how far he still had to go. The pain was intense, and the frustration even more so. He

couldn't help but think about how easily he had performed these stretches just a week ago. But he knew he had to push through this, not just for himself, but for his family and his future in football.

After what felt like an eternity, the session ended. Rakim was exhausted, but his determination remained unwavering. His mother, Lisa, gave him a reassuring smile as she helped him back to his room. "You're doing amazing, Rakim. One step at a time," she said softly.

Back in the room, Rakim found himself surrounded once again by friends and family. The atmosphere was lighter, filled with laughter and stories. It was a welcome distraction from the physical pain he was feeling. However, the session had taken a lot out of him both physically and mentally.

Noticing her son dozing off every few minutes Lisa kindly excused all the guests sending them home. They were understanding of this and didn't complain as they all headed their way. Just as she wanted to rejoin her son and family who remained in the room Ben appeared before her.

He looked much more spirited with a smile constantly plastered on his face. He had gotten cleaned up shaving his developing beard keeping a sharp goatee. His demeanour was much more relaxed as he seemed to regain his vigour. Seeing his wife he pulled her into a deep hug before she could even fully take in his clean-up appearance.

He didn't say anything and simply held her for a few minutes as they both breathed a sigh of relief. Both their kids were fine and they could finally see the light pierced through the dark clouds that had covered them. "Go and take the kids out for lunch with the family I'll sit with Rakim for a while," He calmly said to her after releasing her from his embrace placing a soft kiss on her head.

She wanted to protest but was stopped by his next words, "The girls haven't left the hospital and could use the change of scenery and so could you honey." Not being able to argue with his reasoning she simply nodded understanding that she had to step up.

Throughout the ordeal, she had taken a back seat forcing Ben to take control. Now that her son was better she couldn't slack off anymore and had to take care of both their kids. Thus she wasted no time dragging the girls out of the hospital room upon entering despite their protest.

In a matter of moments, the room was empty leaving only Rakim on his bed and Ben Seated on the chair next to him. Clutching today's paper he gazed at his son for a second before relaxing not seeing the need to start a conversation just for the sake of it.

"Maybe you shouldn't have cleaned up, Mum ran away as soon as you did, heck she even took the girls with her haha,"