

Football 208

Chapter 208 Betrayal (2)

"Maybe you shouldn't have cleaned up, Mum ran away as soon as you did, heck she even took the girls with her haha," Rakim's voice drifted in from the side causing his dad's mouth to twitch in annoyance. He didn't mind him though as he continued to laugh in delight at his quip.

"I'll let you know I was the one who suggested they get a bit to eat and let you relax," He retorted trying to regain some of his prestige but it did little to stop his son's laughter.

"Whatever helps you sleep at night, old man," he responded as his laughter slowly stopped, but his smile that had grown stiff over time became more genuine again. His father didn't bother retorting anymore just happy at being able to hear his son's laugh again.

Leaning back in his chair, the laughter of his son still echoing in his ears. For a moment, they sat in companionable silence, the tension of the past days slowly dissipating. They let their thoughts drift in comfortable silence each thinking of different things. The moment was only broken when Rakim spoke up again.

"So," Rakim began, his tone turning serious, "what's been happening while I was out? I know everyone's been avoiding the topic, but I can tell something happened," he said recalling the carefulness at which some of the visitors conversed with him.

Ben sighed, running a hand through his hair. "A lot has happened, son. We've all been dealing with the aftermath in our own ways. But there's something I need to tell you, something important about your agent, Oliver."

Rakim's brow furrowed. "What about him?" he asked not at all expecting him to be involved in this matter. The man was quite attentive always looking for ways to create more visibility for him. His hunger to prove himself and the value he placed on him was the reason his parents signed with him.

Taking a deep breath, Ben started, "While you were unconscious, Oliver used your situation to his advantage. He was closing deals for his other clients, using your shooting as leverage to gain sympathy and better contracts." He explained that his news convinced companies and football teams who were looking to boost their image to close deals with the man.

Rakim's eyes widened in shock after listening to his dad who continued to list off things he found out. It seemed to have been on the news a couple of days ago explaining anyone's reluctance to talk about it. The feeling of being betrayed by someone who is supposed to have his best interest stung deep.

For a while, no one talked as they waited for him to process this information. "So does that mean no team wants my services anymore?" He finally asked choosing to focus on the most important point for his future. His value was somewhere between 5-7 million before being shot and some predicted it rise to 40 million within the next 2 years.

So finding himself in a position where most of the teams that were vying for him have cooled off unsettled him. It wasn't only the Giants who took a wait-and-see approach almost all teams did. Ben had been fielding calls of teams withdrawing their offers after falling out with CAA.

Ben nodded his expression hardening. "CAA has been spreading rumours to most clubs that you are unlikely to recover so most withdrew their offer, Nike also sent a rep and triggered the freeze clause on your Junior ambassador contract," he stated with a calm demeanour knowing it wouldn't do any good to sugar coat things.

With his son's profile and the spotlight on him, he would have to deal with this sooner rather than later. Rakim was more surprised by Nike's actions than that of the other teams. They had done a lot to convince him to join their ambassador's program in hopes of nurturing a long-term connection.

This program is aimed at supporting young athletes with gear and scholarship rewards. They sponsored trips and training camp expenses to young athletes and the only price is using their gear. It was easier to sponsor soccer players than any other sport in America given how strict laws are. Thus when seeing his talent they drooled at the prospect of getting him to join their program.

However, things proved hard when the boy continued to alternate cleats of different brands. Only after Oliver connected them did they manage to reach a multilayered deal with the prospect of a 4-year deal once he turns 16. The deal would have seen him earning \$5,000,000 split into those 4 years accordingly.

However, this freeze meant that they wanted to halt that deal entirely as they evaluated his recovery. This meant they could cancel the contract at their convenience only paying a penalty of \$20,000. "I want to cancel my contract with them?" Rakim finally said after snapping out of his thoughts not knowing what to think about the news.

His father hearing his words was confused taking a second to realise what he meant by his words. "The Nike Contract?" he asked trying to clarify his son's intentions and make sure he wasn't lashing out out of anger. "I don't mind us cancelling the deal but are you sure, you were so excited when you finally signed it," he asked locking eyes with him but what met him was a reassured gaze hiding the hurt he was feeling.

He had a similar gaze when he fell out with his own family and had to find the strength to move on. To his question Rakim nodded firmly, his eyes unwavering. "Yes, I'm sure. If they don't believe in me now, then they aren't the partners I need for the next chapter of my life,"

"very well I'll get the process started," Is all he said no longer asking any questions about the matta. Since Nike had triggered the freeze clause they also had the option to cancel the contract with a much cheaper breakup penalty.

After their talk, Rakim promptly fell asleep after having seemingly over-taxed himself. The nap only lasted a few hours as he awoke around 6 pm hungry to get something to eat. His father was still sitting by his bedside, reading a book having seemingly not moved. When he saw Rakim stirring, he put the book down and smiled. "Feeling better, champ?"

Rakim nodded, "I guess just hungry," he responded as not a moment later his stomach growled in protest. "Let's get you something to eat then buddy," he said as he pulled out a bottle from the small mini fridge in the room. It was still a smoothie but he didn't mind it as it was rather tasty.

While he was devouring his smoothie Ben stepped out to receive a phone call. Rakim took the opportunity to look around the room, which was empty for the first time since his awakening. It was strange how familiar yet foreign everything felt but he didn't linger on that feeling.

Picking up his phone at his side he began scrolling through his phone seeing some of the well wishes of his followers. He was surprised that the majority was genuinely wishing him well waiting for him to recover. Taking a picture for his story he made a quick post to reassure them that he was ok and thanked them.

That proved to be a mistake on his part as his phone blew up with notifications almost instantly. It didn't stop in the slightest for the next 20 minutes causing his phone to heat up as it worked in overdrive. Only when the girls with the rest of his family returned did he realise how popular he had gotten online.