

Football 236

Chapter 236 Valencia

Rakim was rudely awoken by the skidding of the plane's treads on the tarmac and the feeling of inertia as the iron bucket he was in tried to decrease its speed. He didn't hate flying and rather enjoyed the effect that height had on his Eagle King's View. Although not able to see people on the ground he had a wider range of vision.

However, he hated that natural feeling he got whenever the plane took off or landed. The sudden shifts in speed and altitude always made his eardrums feel blocked, a discomfort he couldn't seem to get used to no matter how many flights he took.

As the plane taxied to a stop, Rakim stretched and glanced around at his teammates. Some were still groggy from sleep, while others were already chatting excitedly about the upcoming match. The excitement the club felt for international matches was infectious, and despite his initial discomfort, Rakim felt a surge of adrenaline.

He gathered his belongings consisting of a small bag containing his essentials. Which consisted of his second phone just in case his main one breaks, a charger, wallet, sunglasses, Cologne, Durag, Face & Body Cream, Shower Gel and a toothbrush. Rakim never travelled anywhere without having this bag making sure it was within reach.

Making sure he didn't leave anything behind and followed the others out of the plane. The warm Spanish air hit him as soon as he stepped out, a stark contrast to the cool Scottish climate they had left behind. The team was quickly herded into a bus that would take them to their hotel. By the time they got to the hotel, the sun was in the process of setting as it was 6 pm in Valencia.

The players made their way inside the hotel and to their rooms which had all been booked in advance. Rakim shared a room with Karamoko since they were around the same age. Whether that was a good thing to room two 15-year-olds in a hotel room is yet to be seen.

The room had two beds next to each other separated by two cabinets and a mini fridge. The room had a neat interior design unique to Spain showcasing a local style. Stashing their bags next to their beds Rakim started doing some stretches trying to get his muscles going after 5 hours of sitting.

"Hey want to go check out the city?" He asked after turning his gaze to the sprawled-out Dembele on the bed. He had only gotten 2 hours of sleep as he got tricked into playing a game of poker by the older guys.

Lucky for him they didn't play for money as he got hustled real quick losing all his snacks. He learned the hard way not to play a game you don't know with people who do. Since we were on a strict diet going into the match our protein snacks were the only thing we could munch on the plane.

"It's already 18:20 it's not worth it with dinner at 8 pm," he replied in a lazy tone not willing to get up from his bed.

Ignoring him I quickly changed out of my suit into something more comfortable. We only had to wear it for official team appearances like disembarking the plane and bus to the stadium. Changing into a pair of black Amiri sweatpants and hoodie, I laced up my grey pair Yeezy 700.

"Aight see you later bruv," I told him before immediately heading for the door and strapping a man bag over my shoulder. Making my way to the elevators I met one of the coaches on the way but he simply reminded me to be back before dinner.

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The hotel's entrance was grand, with high ceilings and intricate tilework that captured the essence of Spanish architecture. Tourists and locals alike moved through the space, some checking in, and others heading out to explore the evening. Rakim took a deep breath, relishing the warm air and the scent of the sea that wafted in from the nearby coast.

As he stepped outside, the city of Valencia greeted him with a vibrant energy. The streets were alive with the sounds of people, music, and the occasional honking of cars. The sun was low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the city. Rakim decided to take a walk to get a feel for the place. He kept his pace leisurely, soaking in the sights and sounds around him.

He wandered through narrow streets lined with colourful buildings, their balconies adorned with hanging plants and laundry fluttering in the breeze. Small cafes and shops were dotted along the way, with patrons enjoying their evening coffee or browsing for souvenirs. The atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming, as the locals would greet him whenever he passed by.

After walking around the beautiful city for around 40 minutes Rakim settled at an ice bar. With the setting sun acting as ambience he settled on one of the tables outside. Having learned Spanish in school he had no trouble placing his order with the bubbly waitress.

'Feels like I'm on one of our family holidays,' He mused to himself as he casually took in the atmosphere around him. Street performers were displaying their skills to the delight of the onlookers, especially the tourists.

{Are you that nervous, you don't know if you made the team yet,} Eva commented snapping me out of my musing forcing me to notice the guy performing fire tricks. He held a burning stick and was doing all types of risky tricks to the amazement of the onlookers.

'how do you figure that I'm nervous?' I asked her after watching the guy swallow fire before spitting it out in the air. Honestly, this guy was giving me all kinds paranoia, as it looked like something could go wrong at any moment.

{You only go on walks when you are nervous, if you're excited you train and when you are sad you phone Emma,} she replied in a matter-of-fact tone sounding as if she was stating the obvious. I wanted to argue with her but the more I thought about it I couldn't argue with her.

'Sigh sometimes I forget how well you know me,' I lamented knowing that she is probably the closest being to me in this life. Well, I guess it's a side effect of having someone live within your head or wherever she existed.

{Just play like you always do, when you are having fun you play some of your best football,} She told me in a sincere tone causing my mood to calm down realising she was right.

'Thanks, I needed to hear that, I'm glad I have you,' I told her being one hundred per cent genuine and grateful for her. Not just her, but also my family and friends I created connections with mean a lot to me. With their support and comfort, most of my psychological shackles from my past life have healed.

"Hey you're Rakim right, can I get a photo," Looking up at who it was his eyes met Two stylishly dressed girls, a blond and brunnet. Both girls had a tan going on making me think they were tourists, and the I Heart Spain bag the blonde girl carried was a fact of that.

"Sure," I responded getting up from my chair and taking a picture with them. The girls are tall around 5'10 and I guess you could call them attractive but what came to mind when looking at them was talkative, like they didn't stop asking questions.

"you are the last person I expected to meet here," The blonde girl called Tamara said with excitement as she sat at my table after we took the picture. Stupified at the girl's action I could only silently sit on my chair and sip my iced coffee.

Just as I was about to respond her friend Jess chimed in "Told you it was a good idea to come here for vacation," her voice morphed into a shrill scream towards the end of her sentence. Not even allowing me to get a word in the two continued asking me questions and answering for me.

For a whole 20 minutes, the two held this Q&A with themselves as I happily enjoyed my iced coffee. When I was done I excused myself saying I was going to the toilet before hitting a dash the moment I turned a corner.