

Football 98

Chapter 98

"We're here," Mom said as she parked the car at the side of the road. We are currently outside the magic mall in downtown Orlando, which is quite busy with it being a Saturday and all.

Everywhere you looked groups of people could be seen entering and exiting the mall. I spotted groups of teenagers engaging in lively conversations with their friends. Some were even dancing to a song that was playing from a boom box moving their bodies rhythmically.

"Let's go I think the store is on the second floor," Mom commented from my side after seeing I was mesmerised by the scenery in front of me. Although I've lived here for a few months now I barely leave upwards was quite weird at first as I almost lost my balance. It felt like I was riding a wave, well at least that's what I imagine what it my bubble. That is not to say that I'm lazy, but my world is big enough for me at least for now.

Nodding at her words we quickly exited the car and made our way towards the mall entrance. Looking at the rows of shops on both sides of the mall I couldn't help but be lost in the marvel of it all. I instinctively started walking closer to Mom after noticing the hustle and bustle of the crowd.

She didn't seem bothered by the crowds and just grabbed my hand leading me to a flight of escalators to the second floor. Riding it upwards was quite weird at first as I almost lost my balance. It felt like I was riding a wave, well at least that's what I imagine what it would feel like to surf a wave.

It took us a while to find where the shop was located, Mom even had to look through the mall map to ensure she didn't get us lost. Arriving in front of a Jamaican hair saloon we didn't hesitate to enter. However, upon entering the shop, we were meant with silence as everyone's gaze gathered on the both of us.

The shop was quite big which I wasn't expecting from how it looked from the outside. There are a total of four styling chairs all placed in front of their respective mirrors. Right at this moment three of them are occupied with women who are currently getting their hair done.

The odd thing though was that right now everyone in the shop seemed to have hit the pause button as they stared at us. Usually, I wouldn't get nervous due to social situation situations but right now I was. The group of black women who were looking at us seemed to all be wordlessly asking why we were there.

"Hi, does Brianna work here?" Mom took the lead in speaking up ending the awkward atmosphere that was beginning to build.

"Yes, that's me, are you Lias?" A woman who looks to be in her late forties spoke up in a Jamaican accent as she came forward to greet us. She is wearing a white traditional Dashiki dress with various patterns on it.

The other people in the shop returned to their tasks after seeing that Brianna had been expecting us. Appreciating the fact that I wasn't being stared at like an exotic animal at the zoo I took the chance to compose myself.

Looking around the shop some more I spotted a lot of pictures of people whom I assume are famous. I couldn't recognise most of the people on the wall but one of them was Bob Marley who had a guitar strung around his neck.

"Yeah, this is my son, Rakim," Mom answered her with a smile proceeding to run a hand through my hair as if wanting to highlight why we are here.

"Hi Miss Brianna," I said to her whilst going forward to greet her with a handshake to which she just smiled and pulled me into a hug. Confused as to what was happening, I just froze and let her hug me hoping it would end quickly.

"So, you want dreadlocks, yes?" She asked me as she led me to the free chair prompting me to sit down. Mom followed suit taking a seat on the sofa behind me that was meant for customers waiting their turn.

I felt a little nervous now that I'm actually getting my hair done. In my past life, I always had short hair since it was more convenient to keep up. Since now I'm able to live life the way I want, I choose to have dreadlocks. Somewhere in a book, I read that they stand as a symbol of superhuman strength so I might fit the mould to tea in the future.

~~~

Four whole hours later my hair was finally taking shape. Miss Brianna and one of the other hairdressers were just finishing off the last strands of my hair. Sitting here for hours has been a different type of torture. Although we did take a few breaks so Miss Brianna could rest her hands and for me to stretch my legs, but it was still hard.

Throughout my torture, Mom seemed to just be making friends with the other women in the shop. What Dad said about women being able to become best friends in a matter of moments turned out to be true.

She went from discussing what type of cream is best used to upkeep my hair to complaining about me and Emma with the rest of the Moms in the shop. The thing that stupefied me was when the women started planning a night out together after only having met today.

Back to the point, my dreads are quite thin trickling down my head and reaching to my ears. It was going to be a different kind of trouble taking care of my hair now, but I didn't mind it since I feel like my level of charm went up a level. Looking at my hair I felt as if I was growing a lion's mane.

"Finally done, take good care of your hair nephew, it's some of my best work Y'know," Miss Brianna told me as she finished running some Olive oil cream through my locks. Smiling in response I just admired my new look ignoring the fact that I somehow gained four new aunties in this shop.

"Thanks, I'll make sure to take care of it," I told her getting up from the chair that was slowly getting an imprint of my body. Mom also seemed interested in my new look as she also came forward to get a closer look.

"It suits you," she told me with a smile as she used her hand to check out one of my locks. Although she looked mesmerised by my new hair, I could tell that she was slightly disappointed that it wasn't as soft as before.

Not minding her conflicted emotional state though I used the mirror to take some pictures of my new hairstyle. With the fade that I already had my whole look had a sense of completeness to it. Quickly Sending a few pictures to Emma and the group chat of Liam and Lexi I came back to the present.

At this point, Mom was done examining my hair and was settling the bill with Miss Brianna. The total came to \$120 which blew my mind for a second but upon seeing the price listings I noticed that she gave us a discount. Guess her calling me her nephew wasn't just for fun. We did however have to spend another \$50 for the care cream that made sure the dreads stayed in shape and healthy.

It turns out that it's just the initial cost of getting my hair done that's high but after that, it's pretty cheap to just keep it up. Now that my hair is finally done, I'm looking forward to getting out of here. Plus, I'm hungry too since I only had a light breakfast in the morning.

Saying our goodbyes to the women in the shop we made our way to the food court downstairs. Just like me, Mom was also hungry, so we went to one of the Deli and ordered a sandwich each. According to her, this was one of the healthiest options here. I don't know where she gets this need to always look for the healthiest food option, but I can't complain as it helps me on my journey as an athlete.

"So, are you happy with your hair?" She asked me as we sat down at one of the free tables with our food. Not wasting any more time, I dug into my BMT relishing in the taste of the sandwich.

"Yeah, thank you for taking me and spending so much money," I told her with a gratitude-filled smile which seemingly caught her off guard. It seems like she wasn't expecting me to say all that.

"You don't have to thank me, you are my son after all," she told me as she reached over the table to flick my forehead, after realising that she couldn't ruffle my hair at the moment. A warm sensation welled up within me upon hearing her words knowing that she meant every word.

If it was anyone else saying this, I wouldn't believe them that easily, but Mom is different, she is incapable of lying. It's not that she can't but her straightforward personality makes it so that she doesn't see the point. That's not to say that her EQ is lacking just that she doesn't have a lot of patients for things that annoy her.

"Thanks, Mom," I said to her again as I focused on devouring my sandwich which was feeling neglected with all my emotions acting up.