

THE COACH'S SON

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. COLLEGE - GYMNASIUM - DAY

Energy. VOLLEYBALL SPECTATORS cheer as we see both teams prepare for the whistle. Shoulders tense, hands quivering. The Monarchs brace for the serve. This is for all the marbles. A shrill blow of the whistle, and it's time. Firehound captain, PETE (23) serves the ball, spinning in the air with such speed, it almost looks like its floating.

SMACK!

Monarch captain, LIAM HAYES (22) hits straight up. Set up perfectly for TOMMY MILLS (21) who lunges at the incoming ball. He stumbles forward, just barely hitting the ball with his hand. Star player OWEN KING (22) races to the ball, stalled in the air, and spikes the ball with precision and power.

A silence hushes over the court and crowd as they anticipate the REFEREE's call...

REFEREE

Point Monarchs. That's game.

The Monarchs cheer and shout over each other in glee as both teams line up at the net to congratulate each other. Owen stands in place. He glances at COACH KING (54), who's watching the team celebrate. Owen pants as he lowers his head.

INT. COLLEGE - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The Monarchs shout and cheer as they burst through the door. Owen is the last one to enter. He carefully scans the room and notices Tommy, changing his clothes at his locker: ready to hunt. He marches toward Tommy, and shoves Tommy into his locker.

OWEN

You choked. You fucking choked.

Owen strikes Tommy across the face. Liam jumps in and peels away Owen.

LIAM

Whoa, Owen. What's going on?

OWEN

He fucking choked! He can't stop.
Dude can't set for shit.

LIAM

No. No, get off him, God dammit.
How's this helping?

Owen releases Tommy's jersey from his grasp.

OWEN

Who said I trying to help?

A beat.

OWEN (CONT'D)

He can't do shit. He's making the
team look bad.

LIAM

Or is he making you look bad?

OWEN

Look at me. How the fuck can I look
bad? I'm the one who keeps saving
his ass.

TOMMY

You don't save me. You just protect
yourself.

OWEN

How is that any different than what
I just said?

Coach King bursts into the locker room.

COACH KING

Men, sit down, now.

The team sits down at their lockers in a panic. Coach paces
back and forth.

COACH KING (CONT'D)

What the hell was that? Y'all
weren't no team out there. Just a
bunch of boys jumping around in
shorts. You gents can't win on your
own. When I was a Monarch, let me
tell you, we didn't even have to
look at each other, it was all
instinct. If you wanna win, you
gotta work as one. That's all it is
men. The Demons have never lost to
us before. We cannot give them that
chance now.

OWEN

Yeah that's great Coach, but what if we aren't the problem?

Tommy shoots up from his seat.

TOMMY

That's bullshit, King. You're part of the problem too. Never mind "part of", you are the problem.

OWEN

Oh, shut up, Mills. You can't play a single game without that shitty sweatband. It's not your lucky charm.

ISAAC (21) snickers as he applies his deodorant.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Don't you start with me Isaac, "Mr. Can't-seem-to-get-to-practice-on-time."

ISAAC

I wasn't laughing at you, bro. What's your problem? The spotlight off you for a sec, eh?

OWEN

Maybe if this team wasn't complete shit, I wouldn't need to be noticed as much, it's a lot carrying you deadbeats.

COACH KING

(shouts)

King. Hall. Right now. Move it.

OWEN

I'm coming Coach, just hope the team can manage tying their shoes.

The team throws their socks, knee pads, shoes at Owen as he leaves the locker room.

INT. COLLEGE - HALLWAY - DAY

Owen and Coach walk down the hall, turning out of sight or earshot of anyone nearby. Coach trips Owen and pins him to the wall.

COACH KING

What the fuck is wrong with you?
 What good are you if you can't make
 your team look better? God fucking
 damn it, Owen. I got \$12,000 riding
 on you winning this championship.
 Don't you fucking go soft on me
 now.

OWEN

Coach? Dad?

Owen stares into his father's eyes, covered by his
 sunglasses.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I'll try.

Coach scoffs.

COACH KING

"Try". You'll "try". Just get it
 done.

OWEN

Yes, Coach.

COACH KING

Funny thing, isn't it? You wouldn't
 think I'd be into team sports. But
 I am cuz it's just so remarkable
 when you see one person carry a
 whole team. That's what I did. And
 that's what I need you to do.
 Because that's what Kings do. You
 don't wanna be a team player, Owen.
 You wanna be a star.

Owen's eyes are wide and his jaw is dropped on the floor.
 Coach King walks away.

COACH KING (CONT'D)

A king.

INT. COLLEGE- LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Liam hands Tommy an ice pack for his bruised eye and sits
 next to him.

LIAM

How's the eye, man?

TOMMY

Cold.

LIAM

Tommy, Owen doesn't just pick on anyone. He picks on you.

TOMMY

Great observation. What about it?

LIAM

I just don't understand why.

TOMMY

What's not to get? I crumble. I'm terrible. I care too much. I'm a disaster. That's that.

LIAM

No, you're not. You're really not. I think he picks on you cuz he's the one that's crumbling.

TOMMY

Listen, I appreciate what you're trying to do. I got a very bruised eye and frankly it hurts to roll it.

LIAM

Hear me out. Obviously, his dad is the Coach. That's gotta be a lot of pressure. He needs to perform, or God knows what's gonna happen. He's alone, and he's scared.

TOMMY

Yeah, and he's a bad person who loves humiliating me. Like why does he always have to wait 'til he has an audience to hit me? Who the hell is that for?

LIAM

It's for his dad. I know it doesn't make it right, but if he didn't walk in and see his son beating up the weakest link, he'll do it himself. It's how they were raised.

TOMMY

So much for family traditions.

LIAM

Listen. Two years ago, before you joined this team, guess who the captain was.

Tommy points his thumb at Liam.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Nope. Not me.

Tommy drops the ice pack from his eye.

TOMMY

Don't tell me. Not Owen?

LIAM

Yup. And he was a terrible one. The only thing he's do was spike the ball. He'd do it well. But he'd always find a way to blame me if he somehow didn't score. Like I was the one holding him back. One game near the end of the season Owen charged me for looking at him while we was serving, middle of the game. I said to him "we're The Monarchs, not a Monarchy." Team called me captain by the end of the game. You just have to fight it a little.

TOMMY

I will.

Owen walks into the locker room with a bruised eye. He grabs an ice pack from the cooler and throws his jersey in his locker before sitting down.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

What happened to you?

OWEN

Don't worry about it.

LIAM

King...

Owen turns his back to face the room. He hides his face in his knees. Liam leans over Owen's back.

LIAM (CONT'D)

If you wanna talk, I'm always here.

Liam turns to face the team.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Alright, gents. This is it. This is our championship. The Demons want to take it. They want to take what's ours. They can't have it. We cannot give it to them. We need to rely on each other. We call our ball, we give each other space...

Liam looks at Owen.

LIAM (CONT'D)

We support one another. Let's go Monarchs!

The team jumps around and chants as they leave the locker room. Owen stays behind. He still sits with his face buried in his knees.

INT. COLLEGE - LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

There's a heavy pounding at the door. Owen turns to look. He opens the door to see four huge men. Each man is wrapped in chains and expensive looking casual wear. They reek of Dior Sauvage, as they stare down into Owen's soul.

GABRIEL

You eight?

OWEN

I'm Owen.

GABRIEL

Yeah, I don't give a fuck what your name is. Are you number eight?

OWEN

I am.

Gabriel motions to the other men, they enter the dressing room and lock the door. The men shove Owen into his locker, and beat him to a pulp. They don't stop until each one of them has both fists covered in red.

GABRIEL

Good luck today.

The men leave the dressing room, leaving Owen laying on the ground. He snuffles and weeps as he lays down curled in a ball.

INT. COLLEGE - GYMNASIUM - DAY

The Monarchs and Demons are warming upon their sides of the net. The crowd cheers so loud, they practically drown out the music from the intercom. As Liam runs by the bench Coach pulls him aside.

COACH KING

Where's King?

LIAM

I think he's still in the locker room.

COACH KING

He better show up. Game's gonna start any minute. Can't lose this game, you know.

Owen steps onto the court. He carries his jersey, shoes, and other equipment in his arms. He limps toward the Monarch's bench. The gym goes silent.

COACH KING (CONT'D)

What the hell. Who to fuck did this to you?

Owen throws all his things at Coach.

OWEN

You did.

Owen limps from the court, and out of the gym, leaving footprints of blood. Liam and Tommy look into the crowd to see the four men that beat up Owen. They look back at Coach, who takes off his sunglasses revealing his red face and wide eyes. Liam and Tommy follow Owen out of the gym. The rest of the team follows.

FADE TO BLACK.