Chapter 36 First Game

I got to the rink just after 1 and the only car in the lot was coach Sam’s. I knocked on the locker room entrance and a few minutes later the door opened and Jamie was there. The air exchange when the door opened tickled my olfactory senses. It was the smell of sex. Did one of the players get here early?

“Coach Jamie, sorry I’m early. Just nervous before my first game and wanted to lace up and skate a bit. Are any of the guys here?” I asked. I had pegged Jamie as gay so was a bit surprised by the smell. If coach Sam was here as well then maybe they were having a threesome.

Jamie looked me over, “No, just Sam and I are here. We were watching game video and reminiscing about our time being roommates in college.”

“Can I get into the locker room?” I asked as Jamie was barring the entrance.

“Yeah sure,” she moved aside. I left her and walked to the locker room. Coach Sam came into the corridor and as I passed her I could smell the odor of sex on her. It just confirmed that Sam was bi-sexual. Sam looked about to ask me a question.

I beat her to it, “Hey coach just getting some quick early ice time to work out my jitters.” I didn’t want to get drawn into anything.

Sam looked thoughtful but finally said, “Don’t wear yourself out. Save it for the game. St. Joe’s will be here in two hours and are planning to do a team skate.”

“Sounds good, I will just be doing some light skating and shooting,” I assured Coach Sam as I went into the locker room. In the locker room, I thought about my two coaches. I didn’t feel the drive to harvest essence any longer so I was in control of my faculties. Coach Sam had stopped asking to give me private lessons so maybe I should rekindle that in the future.

I hit the ice in my game uniform and started with a long slow looping skate. The quiet in the rink and the skates cutting the ice were nice and relaxing. I circled a dozen times before getting my stick and dumping a bucket of pucks on center ice. I circled with a single puck and slapped it into the net. I repeated until I finished the bucket. Then I retrieved all the pucks to the bucket and replaced it.

I sipped water and slow skated…waiting and thinking. Sam came and checked on me a few times and I just waved at her. The other team skated arriving and coming out on the ice. St Joes had been the team that eliminated our team from the playoffs last year. The first thing I noticed was their team had three demis on it. I shouldn’t have been surprised. The coach looked upset that I was on the ice and Sam called me over with the opposing coach. She said I needed to stay on just one-half of the ice while St Joe’s skated.

Maybe it was a bit psychological on my part…not giving up the ice. I circled and watched them practice on half of the ice. They brought two goalies and 17 players. The three demis were two foxkin and one wolfkin. Wolfkin were different from werewolves. Werewolves were shapechangers, wolfkin were just wolfmen with no human form. This one was concealed with an illusion I could see through. The two foxkin were the team's stars, identical twins, seniors, and excellent with their stick work and skating agility.

The foxkin had impressive hockey skills but small in stature, maybe 5’6” without skates. The wolfkin was the center of their second line. He was big and strong but not super fast. Their coaches didn’t like me watching their guys by the looks on their faces. I was also a completely unknown quantity to them. I wasn’t on the team last year and was extremely tall. It was kind of a stare-down. They had probably planned to use the whole ice in their pre-skate and I was here fucking with them. It gave me pleasure.

I just stood and watched them, not using my half of the ice until a few of my teammates arrived and then we skated together. I didn’t sow my true skill. The concession crew and Zamboni driver arrived. We were directed off the ice for the Zamboni driver to clean the ice. We would have a short skate before the puck drop. In the locker room, we listened to coach Sam go over the game plan and give her a motivational speech. When we hit the ice the stands were packed.

I circled the rink and didn’t see many empty seats. St Joe’s traveled well…probably due to the holiday. I had many groups on the stands waving at me as I circled our end of the ice. Iris and Abigail were sitting behind one of the goals. My parents and Paige’s friends were behind opposite our bench at ice level.

The national anthem played and my team focused on the flag while St Joes tried to stare us down.  I moved to take the face off against one of the foxkin.  It was quick and I lost.  Surprisingly the first period had no score.  Their goalie was good and stopped two shots from me and six from James that I fed him.  Since we were paired with the other team's top line I was chasing the foxkin most of the period when we turned the puck over.  I was having an effect on them though. I was bigger, stronger, and slightly faster.  My bottomless endurance let me go full speed all the time.  I was also using my body hit the smaller twins whenever I could.

Their frustration was showing as well as ours.  We couldn’t set up our offense and we’re getting terrible shots.  Coming out for the second period and now the stands were now packed with a few people standing.  The rink held 1,280 seats on the opposite side of the player's benches.  So I guessed there were maybe 1,400 fans with as many people who were standing. The cheerleaders were together on the walkway having probably arrived late.  To start the period I got called for a roughing call when I hip-checked one of the twins into the boards.  He went down hard and was slow getting up so the official called a late penalty.  While I was in the box they scored.  So we were down 1-0.

When I came out of the box I said fuck our offense and carried the puck right to the net and forced the puck between the goalie's legs and into the goal, tying the game.  The cheers from the stands were electric as I was congratulated by my teammates.  On our next drive I did the same thing, driving to the net but this time when the goalie went down I slid the puck to James who put it in the back net.  It took us 99 seconds to score two goals and the St Joes players were shaken.

I was soon driving down center ice and one of the twins tripped me with his stick.  I went down hard and slid hard into their goalie.  A penalty was called on me again, this time for goalie interference and a massive rain of boos came down from the stands.  I should have been awarded a penalty shot not assessed a penalty. When coach Sam complained with a tirade of vulgarity we were assessed with an unsportsmanlike penalty.  So our team was skating 5 on 3.  I was fuming as they tied the score.  I returned to the ice with us being down a man.  I gained possession and skated the perimeter in the opposing end to end the 44 seconds left on their power play.  I powered the puck and used my body to block their efforts.  As the time was expiring I drove to the net and took a snapshot.  The puck bounced off the pads and right back to me and I slammed it home, retaking the lead with 2 seconds on their power play.  I had two more scoring chances in the second but didn’t score.  We received an ovation as we left the ice for overcoming the refereeing.

We were up 3-2 entering the 3rd and final period.  The locker room buzzed.  Our team lost to them 5-1 in the playoff game last year.  And they were picked to win our conference this year.  We still had 20 minutes left but everyone felt good.  As the period started the two foxkin were wearing down from the abuse I had given them earlier.  They shied away from me and it let me set up James for an easy goal early in the 3rd.  Their legs were tired and I was on a breakaway a short while later and was dragged down by the wolfkin.  I was awarded a penalty shot.  I skated in and went top shelf right for the goal putting us up 5-2.

I kept skating hard the entire third period and got called for roughing again on one of the foxkin…this time it was probably deserved as I slammed him into the boards in the corner with my full body weight.  He was gimpy coming off the ice. They didn’t score on the power play and his brother gave me a high stick to the face when I returned to the ice.  No penalty was called.  I had a slight cut on my jaw but knew it would heal quickly.  Instead of skating lightly, I pressed with James every time I had the puck.  James and I scored once more each in the period as the St Joes players had thrown in the towel and their effort diminished.  The final score was 7-2 against the best team in our conference.

The other team was so petty they refused to shake hands and left immediately.  I had 4 goals and 3 assists.  An incredible first game.  It felt even better having gone up against demis and still dominated.  The music was blaring in the local room and the coach did her post-game speech.  I was a little drunk on my success and briefly retreated to my mind space to regain myself.

James caught my as the smelly group of guys danced and screamed to hiphop music. He talked close to my ear so I could hear him, “Jade’s mother wants to meet you Sunday night. Dinner is at 8pm.”

I leaned into him to respond in the noise, “I can’t I have a date.” James looked confused then replied.

“You can cancel your date. Jade’s mother isn’t used to being turned down.” He sounded worried. He wasn’t looking forward to returning with the news I wasn’t coming. Andromeda’s advice was that I shouldn’t bow to the lesser demis.

“I might be able to make it Monday night. I will let you know at school,” I said. James's mouth was agape and was fumbling for words. Eventually, he just nodded.

As the celebration toned down I packed up and left. One of the guys had a party planned but I passed. I wanted to get home and see my parents and my sister’s friends. Then I had to sneak out and talk with Abigail’s father. My phone had over 70 messages! I would look at them later.

In the parking lot I found Mary waiting at my car. “Caleb you were amazing!” She yelped seeing me and rushed over to me. “You were easily the best player out there!”

Her excitement made me smile. I hadn’t talked to her much other than through texts. I was surprised she was still interested as I was only responding to one in six texts from her now. I replied, “Hey Mary, I am glad you came to my first game. I didn’t shower so I am still a bit ripe.” Mary just had a bright smile and moved close.

“I like how you smell when you are dirty.” She moved even closer and inhaled to show her commitment. “My parents think I am at Rose’s house. I don’t even have to go home tonight,” she said suggestively. I started weighing my options.

“Is your car here?” I asked looking around. She grinned.

“Nope, I need a ride. That is why I was waiting for you. You wouldn’t leave a girl stranded.” There were still dozens of cars in the parking lot and I was sure she could find a ride if she wanted.

“You are right. Hop in,” I said clicking the doors open with my keys. Where should I bring Mary? It was almost 9pm. I wanted to get clean.

Mary volunteered, “I know the key code to the boathouse if you want to take a shower Caleb.” That sounded good.

“Sure, let's go there. We won't get in trouble will we?” I asked.

“No, we are free to use the ergs at the boathouse any time. It should be empty right now with tomorrow being Thanksgiving,” she said mischievously.

We arrived at the boathouse and Mary keyed us inside and then she swore, “Ah Caleb sorry I forget the corridor to the locker rooms has security cameras. I don’t think I should go into the locker room with you,” she said disappointed. “If the coaches review the footage I might get kicked off the team. I can’t risk it. You can run in and take a shower and then we can go park somewhere.”

This was not going as planned. I took my small backpack with clean clothes and quickly showered and changed into clean clothes. Mary was waiting outside in the rowing machine area. We went to my car. I had half excepted something to go wrong like the entire men’s rowing team showing up but I think I had already scared them away from bothering me. I texted my parents to say I was getting dinner with a friend to explain my absence.

We drove to Highpoint park again, the site of our first encounter. We started talking and I let Mary know my sister was home with her friends and teammates. It was the wrong thing to say. Mary was scheduled to stay with Paige from December 5th to 6th. Now she wanted to get a head start in networking with Paige and her teammates. She basically wanted to hang out at my house. I remained calm. I could have showered at home…and I wasn’t even going to get any life essence tonight!

I sighed and texted Paige asking her if I could bring Mary to the house and if it was ok. It took a few minutes before she texted back.

**Bro we are drinking cape cods. If she is ok with that then sure. We are on the second floor. You were incredible tonight…she may have changed her mind after seeing you play**

I texted, asking what a cape cod was. It was vodka and cranberry juice. I showed Mary the texts.

“I am not a prude Caleb. I have gotten drunk before. Let’s go to your house,” she said excitedly. I was getting cock blocked by my sister. I guess this day of up and downs was going to end on a down. Although I think the later reference in Paige’s first text was to her friend who had been interested in having sex before changing her mind…so maybe not a complete loss.

When we got to my house I introduced Mary to my perplexed parents until I explained she was here to see Paige and her friends. I brought Mary up to my sister’s room and they were all in her room with glasses of red juice. The desk had a bucket of ice, a cutting board with limes, a half-empty bottle of vodka, and three bottles of cranberry juice, two of the latter empty.

“Caleb!” Paige yelled as we entered. She paused and was clearly drunk. “You,” she pointed her finger with difficulty at me, “Are much taller, and bigger!” She walked up to me with a slight stumble and squeezed my arm. “Damn! Girls you got to feel this!” She winked at me as her friends moved in on me like a pack of lions on a lone baby pig.

I was then groped by five attractive drunk women. I recognized Vivian, Paige’s roommate as she stood in front of me while she massaged my biceps. Ashley, the blonde Australian was to my right and she had two hands on my bicep on that side…I flexed for her and made eye contact with her and smiled. I found her the cutest of the bunch and hoped it was her who was interested. One girl I didn’t recognize with dark black hair was alight in abyssal sight. She was either a human mage or had a concealment ability at upper tier 1 or higher. I tried to face her but was boxed in.

Paige had moved to Mary who had been in the doorway and was whispering to her. It was a good four minutes of groping when Paige announced, “Ok Caleb, time for you to go! This is a girl's night and boys are not invited! Go go go!” She pulled me away from her friends. As she pushed me out the door she whispered, “It’s Maya.” The door was shut in my face and I heard the girls laughing and talking on the other side.

***It's Maya***…she must mean the girl interested in me. Who was Maya…was it the young woman with the aetheric halo that hid her true nature? I went to my room curious. I wanted to stay in my room tonight but I had made a promise to Abigail to sort out her dad. I still wasn’t sure what my approach should be…scare him to leave her alone? Charm him to leave her alone? I would figure it out as I went. I changed into some black clothes and left down the fire escape. I could hear the girls still laughing and talking and Mary’s voice was obviously intoxicated. Hopefully, she wasn’t sabotaging my chances with the one named Maya.

I drove to Abigail’s house and walked up to the front door and knocked. It was 11:28pm and took the man a while to answer the door. “Are you Abigail’s father?” I asked a drowsy and confused man.

“What? Yeah. Is something wrong with her?” he was slowly gaining focus.

“We need to talk,” I said and punched him in the face, knocking him out and breaking his nose. Shit maybe I hit him too hard. I stepped into the house and closed the door behind me.