

Glitter on our eyes

Education



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

It was almost ten o'clock by the time the final buzzer sounded. Max was only half paying attention as she joined her fellow cheerleaders in a final cheer, waving her green and blue pom-poms in the air. She couldn't help glancing over her shoulder at the away team's stands on the other side of the football field. Silly, maybe, to try look for Eleanor from this far away, but it didn't really stop her.

Finally the crowd began to disperse, and Max let out a sigh of relief. Her pom-poms fell to the ground without a second thought. In a single movement she reached down and picked her water bottle, twisting off the cap. Tilting her head back, Max drank so fast she was probably in danger of choking. Whatever.

When she glanced back over to the other side of the field, Central High's cheerleaders were nowhere to be seen. Her shoulders slumped; even a quick scan around revealed nothing. Maybe Eleanor was waiting for her outside the gate-

" Hey," said Allison, grabbing Max by her uniform's collar before she could run off, " slow down, tiger. I'm sure she'll come looking for you soon."

" Hey, yourself—you don't get to call me that!" But Allison only swatted at Max's long blonde ponytail.

Out of the corner of her eye she could see a familiar figure, dressed in purple and gold, coming down the forty-yard line, and she had to pry Allison's fingers off before—

A shout of "Maxine!" was all she heard, and then a small dark figure landed in her arms. Max laughed and held on tight as she spun her girlfriend around several times. Their foreheads pressed against one another's as Max brought them to a halt.

"Eleanor, you know-"

"Yes, yes, call you 'Max'," Eleanor said, tucking a strand of her dark hair behind her ear. "But I like Maxine better." With the same hand she reached up and straightened the sparkly scrunchie in Max's hair, then smiled when Max rolled her eyes. They both knew that Max didn't mind when Eleanor called her by her full name, but damned if Max was going to admit it.

One of Max's teammates, Kenisha, called out, "Geez, Max, couldn't you have found a girlfriend who wasn't cheering for our rivals?" She gave Max a playful punch on the arm as she passed.

Max set Eleanor back down on the ground. "But she's just so cute!" Eleanor, though a head shorter than Max, had much fuller hips, which she used to hip check Max and send her stumbling several steps to the side.

"Watch it!"

"You deserved it."

The squad's bags were stashed in the locker rooms behind the bleachers; Eleanor and Max walked down the small slope of grass, hand in hand, so Max could grab it along with her backpack. It didn't take long for them to head out while Max said goodbye to her squad mates on the way.

" We're still going to grab some food first, right?" Eleanor asked as they left the stadium (" stadium" in the loosest sense of the word, Max had always thought). " Mom and Dad said I should be back by midnight, but since it's Friday night..."

Max couldn't help but laugh and put an arm around Eleanor's waist. " If you want to stay the night, you know that I'm not gonna object."