

## A Dream

The taste of salty sweat drooled over my mouth as I hobbled over the metal tarnished bleachers to grab my towel. It was 4 in the morning and the light of the flickering pole dimly lit the field. I was heavily panting to catch my breath as the flickering light slowed to a stop. I stumble up as a pool of sweat follows my track. Only one thought was in my mind.

“Ben, did you talk to your pops?” A voice from behind called. I Swiftly turned around and was shaken by the sight of Coach Jones after what happened the other night.

“Umm,” I stutter as I recollect my thoughts “No sir I haven't talked to him yet.”

“Son I can't guarantee this scholarship will be here long,” Coach jones says as he concerningly stared down at me.

“I know,” I said as I shook my head in dismay, “I will get it done,” He shook his head concerningly as he disappeared into the crowded school hallways

It has been 8 years since mom passed away and ever since I and pops were the only ones at home. Not a single happy thought crossed my old man's head. He was emotionless after that day. I wish we could go back to the old times when it was me and him just playing catch in the yard not concerned about any of the problems we had in life. We could barely make it to ends meet and still we would have a grin on our faces.

Since pops gave me a football for Christmas in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, I would spend hours just throwing it around and listening to the football radio in the backyard carelessly. Now whenever I bring up football to pops, he breaks out into an angry outburst.

Now this time had to be different. *He had to see that I loved to play football. He had to sign those papers this time*, I thought to myself. But no matter how much I tried convincing myself this time would be different, but a small part of me knew that his decision wouldn't change no matter what.

"Dad," I mumbled as I approached, he was working at "Coach asked me to tell you about this opportunity I have in footba-"

"Ben don't bring that up," he said in a stern voice.

"Dad listen coach said I have a good chance at making it pro," I blabbered before he could interrupt me.

"I don't care what coach says," He says escalating his tone, "I know what is best for you."

"Dad imagine wh-" I said convincingly before pops interrupted me.

"I DONT WANT YOU TO IMAGINE," he screams as face starts reddening.

"YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND POP-." I say trying to top his voice.

"WHAT DO I NOT UNDERSTAND, DID I NOT UNDERSTAND THAT MOM DIED BECAUSE OF ME, DID I NOT UNDERSTAND THAT IF I HAD LISTENED TO HER THAT MAYBE SHE WOULD HAVE LIVED," he scorched as his face was the color of freshly cut tomatoes.

"YES, DAD IT IS YOUR FAULT," I replied out of anger, "IT IS YOUR FAULT THAT MOM IS NOT HERE, IT IS YOUR FAULT THAT WHEN SHE DIED YOU BECAME A DRUNK-"

"DON'T EVEN BRING THAT UP, YOU KNOW HOW I HARD I WORK TO KEEP US OFF THE STREETS EVERY DAY," He yells as he takes a pause to catch his breath before I interrupt him

"OK IF I AM SUCH A BURDEN TO YOU, MAYBE I SHOULD LEAVE," I said before I immediately regretted it.

"GET OUT I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU EVER AGAIN," He screamed as I started to storm inside.

I dashed inside the house and slammed the door shut. I kicked aluminum cans of beer and pop papers out of the way to my room as my eyes started to accumulate tears as they flowed down my tomato-red cheeks. I quickly wiped my eyes in disbelief that I was crying and took a deep breath as I opened the door to my room. I slouched onto my bed and pulled the thrown backpack up onto the bed while tears poured onto my nicely tucked blanket. *Would it be worth it? Would I make a fool out of myself? Will he regret it?* I contemplated while my actions spoke otherwise, I pulled out a clean folder and took out an uncrumpled document which read:

SIGN HERE:

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I pulled out a black ink pen from my backpack and started gliding the pen in neat cursive and spelled out my pop's full name in guilt while tears drew dark circles on the document then aggressively dumped the backpack and started packing everything I could think of from some money, my phone, portable chargers, snacks, clothes, and more materials then swiftly zipped the backpack close.

I closed my eyes and swept the tears off my face and decided that my decision was final and no matter how much I wanted to believe that pops would be ok with me playing football professionally I knew he wouldn't. No matter how much I believed that I would be able to see the old pops I knew he wouldn't come back. No matter what I thought about him I knew it would be impossible to change him.

I jumped off the bed and propped the window open then stepped onto the unknown world. *Everything was going to change*