Rebound

By Ella J.

I looked at the high basket. All I ever wanted was to make a crazy, awesome shot…game changing. Maybe a slam dunk or half court shot. Of course I had made layups and free throws but I wanted something more. I tried and I practiced but my shots never were quite right.

“Hey Tay!”

“Hey Paisley!”

Paisley has been on my basketball team for three years. She is my best friend.

“Guess what! I made the Advanced City team this year!!” Paisley said.

Oh no. This was not good. That means that she is going to be on a separate basketball team than me.

“Oh and another special girl did too…”

I was mad. It had to be Lyla, the complete show off! I did not like her but guess what, Paisley did!

I looked at my poster of Kala A. Jones. People called her the best of basketball. And she did it all in a wheelchair, which I think is awesome.

“Honey, the NFTM magazine is here,” mom yelled. Yay! At least there is one thing good about the afternoon.

“Sorry, I have to go.” I immediately rushed inside. This is my favorite magazine. It shows all the new and awesome things about our town and it is for kids! Great, right? I scammed through the book and then I saw it…Kala! She was coming here to Bryan! In the magazine it says you need to bring your skills to the Everything Basketball Court. And whoever makes a miracle shot gets to meet her. “Yeah, there is no way.” I thought to myself.

After three straight days of shot after shot after shot it came. The day that could change it all. When I stepped on the court the first thing I wondered was, “are you sure this is the JUNIOR tryout?” These girls are amazing and tall. I am only 12 and they look like they are 17!

I watched for 30 minutes. At least 20 people made an awesome shot and then it was my turn. I felt so anxious as I ran up to make my slamdunk. But then something happened. I missed completely and I heard a crack as I hit the ground. I groaned in pain and then everything got dim.

The next time I woke up I was in a white bed. I looked down at my leg. I felt confused and curious. There was blood everywhere, and then I heard a familiar voice. Mom! And a soft voice. “She lost a lot of blood.” Was she talking about me?

“Mom?” I said. She turned around quicker than you would turn if you were hearing growls in the forest.

“Honey! Are you okay?”

“I think,” I replied.

I was not okay. I knew it deep down.

“Wait! How long will I be in this?” I thought, as I looked down at the stiff, gray cast.

“Well Nurse Brown says for a few months.” Now I was quite furious. In my heart, I said goodbye to basketball, to making winning shots, to winning championships, to meeting up with Paisley, to playing a one on one game.

The next day I went home from the hospital and said, “I missed my chance to meet her.” I was going on a walk so I could get the bad thoughts out of my head and learn how to get used to this nonsense wheelchair. But then another wheelchair caught my eye. It couldn’t be. I whispered her name, “Kala?”

“Oh hi,” she said.

“Hello,” I replied. “I am Tanya, and you are…” I was basically speechless.

“The *best of basketball*. Oh I am sorry about yesterday,” Kala said.

“You saw that?” I said.

“Yes but it looks like you do not need to make a shot to meet me.”

“Yeah,” I replied . “How did you get your wheelchair?”

“I was born with it.”

“Hey how ‘bout this. You can give me your phone number and we can practice sometime.” Is this real? She is asking me! “Sure! I would like that. Here it is 555-692-0024. Bye see you then!” I felt good and free and like I could do anything.

This was the day I was finally getting my cast off. I loved that I could walk again but I was kind of sad. I thought of all the things that happened in the endless period of time from meeting Kala, playing in a disability only basketball league, and learning that I was that someone who made the team with Paisley. Remembering all of that made it almost impossible to want to take my cast off.

“Tanya Willams! In here” Here we go…”Hi, Tanya, you have met me before, Nurse Brown.”

“I did not forget!” I replied.

“So are you ready to take your cast off?”

For a minute, I did not know. Was I ready? I heard a knock on the door.

“Who is it?” Nurse Brown said pleasantly (like always.)

“A friend of Tanya’s.” In a moment, I recognized the voice , Kala! “Hey there my Caitlin Clark. I wanted to see you get your cast off!”

“Okay then, let’s do it,” Nurse Brown said eagerly.

This was the championship basketball game. The clock was out, we were tied 52-52. They fouled at the last second, so this free throw was up to me. The week that I could barely walk feels like forever ago and I have been on the Advanced City team for over a month. I glance at the crowd and Kala is silent. You could know that she is a professional player. An expert perhaps. I dribbled the ball twice, looked at the goal, and shot. I closed my eyes and I heard a familiar voice whispering “ She made it, she made it, she…MADE IT!” Kala yelled from the stands. This was amazing. A life changing experience, and I thought to myself, “What can I not do?”

Thank you for reading, Rebound by Ella J