

The bright sun beats down on the field. Incredible heat is matched with incredible tension as Joel breathes out.

Joel

Pass it here!!!

The kid looks over and acknowledges Joel. Time slows but he ignores him, making a bee-line for the goal. Increasing his speed, he kicks the ball forward and just as he's about to strike, he trips and falls down on the field. The opposing team goes in for the steal. And drive the ball towards the goal. Through fast thinking and teamwork, they score and the coach blows his whistle.

Coach

Alright! Good play everyone! Let's pick it up tomorrow.

The players head off the field, but the coach calls for Joel and his teammate.

Coach

Joel! Justin! A minute please...

The two look at each other, Joel with a sense of curiosity and slight stress worried he may have done something wrong. Justin looks a bit annoyed, almost like he knows what this is about. The two approach the coach and he breathes out then speaks.

Coach

Justin, you and I both saw Joel was open. Why didn't you pass?

Justin looked down a moment, thinking of some excuse.

Justin

Uh, I thought I could make it.

Coach

**sigh* I know you're a good enough player than to make sporadic decisions like that. Joel was open, unguarded. You could have scored a point for your team. So why didn't you pass?*

Justin again thought. This time for longer. After what seemed like a few minutes he finally spoke.

Justin

Coach, Joel is-you know; he's not good under pressure. Even if I passed to him you know he wouldn't have-

The coach cut him off

Coach

Justin, this is a team sport. Every single one of you is required to work together and trust each other. Now, whatever your excuse is for not trusting Joel, he's your teammate. And if you care about winning, then you care about your team. Now mistakes do happen, but what you did out there cost your team the game. You guys lost because you made a selfish decision.

Joel just watches and doesn't say anything. He's unsure what to think.

Justin

Coach, he's never even scored! Even during practice!

Coach

What did I just say?!

Justin

ALRIGHT!!! (sigh) alright, fine.

Coach

I don't want to have this discussion again. Both of you, dismissed.

The coach walks in the other direction. Joel and Justin just stand there. Justin finally turns Joel and says:

Justin

I was right. You know that. And deep down, Coach does too!

Justin walks off. Joel puts looks down and the scene fades.

The next scene fades in as Joel gets in his mother's car. Who is picking him up from practice.

Julia

Hey sweetie. How was practice?

Joel

Fine...

Julia

Good. I'm making us a delicious dinner tonight; Italian sausage and pasta. Sound good?

Joel

Ya...thanks.

Julia can tell something is up. She looks in her rear-view mirror back at Joel who's looking outside the car window. His expression is more concerning than his personality.

Joel

Hey Mom?...

Julia

Ya?

Joel

Why do people like football?

Julia

**chuckles* I don't know, you tell me. You're the one who's playing it.*

Joel

I know...

Julia

You don't like it anymore?

Joel

I don't know. My feet always hurt, and I'm not good at it.

Julia

Hey! You are good. I've seen you play.

Joel

No, I'm not.

Julia

You may have your 'off' days but you are good when given the chance.

Joel

Well, I seem to have more 'off' days than 'good' days.

Julia

Well, that's what practice is for isn't it? No one is perfect at what they do. Even professional players make mistakes.

Joel

Not often.

Julia
Then practice...

Silence fills the car. Joel imagines all the times he's screwed up at games and practice.

Julia continues:

Julia
Listen, failure is a given. Everyone you see will fail at some point in their lives. It is the reason for life. Forgiveness is what we get when we learn from our mistakes. If you made a mistake today, no matter how bad, tomorrow you have a chance to redeem yourself. By trying harder to learn, to become better. It is the greatest gift we have. And all of it is designed as a balance. Happiness and sadness. Winning and losing, it's all meant to teach us something, ok? Is that alright?

Joel continues to stare out the window, losing himself in the conversation his mom was telling him.

Julia pressures:

Julia
Joel?

Suddenly Daniel's voice is heard.

Daniel
Joel?

Joel turns abruptly and it's revealed that the entire scene was a flashback. Daniel asks Joel worriedly.

Daniel
You alright?

Joel takes a moment.

Joel
Ya. Ya I'm alright.

Joel reaches over and gives Daniel a smooch. The scene ends.