

# "ONE MAGIC SEASON"

a family sports dramedy by

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**EXT. THE BASKETBALL CENTER - NIGHT**

A bustling state-of-the-art basketball arena.

**INT. THE BASKETBALL CENTER - CONTINUOUS**

A televised College Basketball game is being played. EARL THE REF whistles a foul on the HOME TEAM.

Their Coach steps onto the floor. YOUNG JIMMY O'GRADY, late 20s, tall, athletic, and unkempt. He wears a rumpled coat and tie. An immediate technical foul follows.

YOUNG JIMMY

You're teeing me up? Is that what's happening, Earl? You stink!

EARL THE REF

I stink? You smell like a distillery, Jimmy. Sit down, before I toss you.

Young Jimmy turns green, and starts to wretch.

YOUNG JIMMY

Toss me? No... I'm going to... toss...

The HOME CROWD reacts as Young Jimmy hurls on Earl.

**EXT. ANY TOWN USA - EVENING**

Sun sets over a blue-collar neighborhood of well-kept homes.

**EXT. O'GRADY HOME - CONTINUOUS**

A BOUNCING BALL is heard. Two girls play basketball in front of a garage with a backboard and hoop.

The smaller of the two scores. MACKENZIE "MAC" O'GRADY, a freckled-faced, 12 year-old, Irish American tomboy.

The taller girl catches the ball as it drops through the net. BRAHNA PAPADOPOULOS, a pretty, 12 year-old of Greek descent.

BRAHNA

Mac? Is this a good idea?

MAC

Well, Brahna. I have my doubts, but if you don't take the shot, you can't win the game. My dad taught me that.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Yes, I did.

JIMMY O'GRADY, late 30s, steps into view.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Come on ladies, let's go.

Mac shrugs in reaction to Brahma's worried stare.

**EXT. MAIN BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER**

A pickup truck with truck bed tool box cruises the boulevard. Lettering on its side reads: O'GRADY'S MOBILE AUTO REPAIR.

**INT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Mac and Brahma sit beside Jimmy on the bench seat.

MAC  
Dad, about this plan of yours?

JIMMY  
What's your concern, Mac?

MAC  
That boys would rather play four on five, then pass the ball to a girl.

JIMMY  
They'll pass it to you. It's why I'm coaching with Teddy.

BRAHNA  
And, that's my concern. My dad? Coaching basketball? I love him, but he's not a coach.

JIMMY  
What your dad brings is enthusiasm.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER - CONTINUOUS**

The truck turns into a parking lot. A sign next to the entrance reads: MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER.

BRAHNA (O.S.)  
With my dad, that's not always a good thing.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Brahma's father waits by his EV. TEDDY PAPADOPOULOS, 40s and childlike. He waves as Jimmy pulls to a stop.

**INT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy and the girls watch as Teddy does a happy dance.

JIMMY

Well, you two will just have to trust me. Mac? Have I ever let you down?

MAC

I'm a twelve year-old girl, dad. I have a list.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Brahna climbs out of the truck to be greeted by her father.

TEDDY

Hi, tall stuff!

BRAHNA

Dad, don't call me that. I'm just me. Brahna. Understand?

TEDDY

Sorry, Brahna. I'm just excited.

BRAHNA

Okay, but stop, please.

Jimmy and Mac, basketball in hand, swing around the truck.

JIMMY

Come on, Teddy. We're late.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy and Teddy hurry through the open doors. The sign hanging above reads: YOUTH LEAGUE BASKETBALL DRAFT TONIGHT.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

The space is intimate. Stands hugging the court. Championship banners in the rafters. Fourteen COACHES sit, looking at DAN JOHNSON, 50s, wearing a Parks Department staff shirt.

Jimmy and Teddy enter to take a seat at the lone open table.

DAN

Good, now that we're all here, let's get started.

The coach next to them stands. LLOYD SKOLNICKI, 40s, tall and narcissistic. He puts his hands on Jimmy's shoulders.

LLOYD

Before we do, you have to hand it to this guy. Takes guts to coach a couple of girls in this league.

ANOTHER COACH raises his hand.

ANOTHER COACH  
Exactly how many girls are playing?  
And, do we have to pick them?

DAN  
Five. And no, you don't have to pick  
them, but I suggest you give these  
gals a fair shake.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS**

Dan's VOICE OVER continues as the girls run the give and go.

DAN (V.O.)  
They're pretty good.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

Dan shakes an old top hat full of numbered chips.

DAN  
So, if there aren't any other  
questions, we need to get to it.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - MOMENTS LATER**

Mac toes the free-throw line. A frown overtakes her face.  
Brahna turns to see THREE BOYS approaching in the distance.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Dan holds the top hat out. Lloyd signals his deferral.

LLOYD  
Wouldn't want it said that I took  
advantage of the new guy.

JIMMY  
Overconfident, aren't we, Skolnicki?

LLOYD  
Doesn't matter when I pick, O'Grady.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS**

Lloyd's VOICE OVER finishes as the boys arrive. The tallest  
smiles with mean intent. HOWIE SKOLNICKI, 12 years old.

LLOYD (V.O.)  
My son is the league's best player.

Howie strides onto the court.

HOWIE

Hey Mac, why are you two losers here?

MAC

You know full well why we're here, Howie Skolnicki. Brahma and me are going to be on the same team. And, that's MacKenzie to you. Only my friends can call me Mac.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy pulls a chip to hold up the NUMBER ONE.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS**

Howie wrests the ball from Mac, and tosses it to FENTON RATLEY, a tall and beefy 12 year-old. He smirks as Brahma steps up.

FENTON

Well, looky here, it's a Brahnasaurus.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

Dan looks to Jimmy.

DAN

What's the team name going to be?

TEDDY

Can I pick the name, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Sure, Teddy, have at it.

Lloyd's assistant lights up. WADE RATLEY, 40s and burley.

WADE

I know, I know... the Sparks.

Laughter breaks out among the coaches.

LLOYD

That's why I keep you around, Wade Ratley. You're a funny man.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: COURTS - CONTINUOUS**

Fenton waves the ball in Brahma's face.

BRAHNA

You're not funny, Fenton Ratley.

Brahma punches the ball free, and it bounds to COOPER LANG, an 11 year-old mix of African American and Caucasian.

COOPER

Come on, guys. Let's get a soda. I'm buying.

He bounces the ball back to Mac, and leads Howie and Fenton away. Mac calling out turns him.

MAC

Hey! I'm Mac.

COOPER

Hi, Mac. I'm Cooper Lang. See you around sometime.

Mac smiles as he catches up to the other boys. Cooper gives Howie a playful shove as they continue to walk away.

COOPER (CONT'D)

For real, Howie? Why pick on them?

HOWIE

They're the enemy, aren't they?

COOPER

Jeez, it's basketball. Not war.

FENTON

Have you met his father?

COOPER

He is hard to please.

HOWIE

Imagine being his son.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

Dan finishes filling the team names on the draft board, spelling MAGIC above the first column.

DAN

Okay then, who's the first pick?

All eyes swing to Jimmy.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - LATER**

The girls wait by the truck as their fathers join them.

MAC

How did that plan of yours work out?

JIMMY

Perfectly, starting with the name that Teddy picked for us.

BRAHNA  
What's that, dad?

TEDDY  
The Magic.

MAC/BRAHNA  
Cool.

TEDDY  
Not as cool as Jimmy picking first.

MAC  
Please, dad. Tell me you didn't.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MORNING**

Mac's VOICE OVER finishes as dozens of YOUTH PLAYERS shoot around. A boy with a perfect stroke sinks his jumper. ZAK CARSON, a 12 year-old Caucasian athlete.

MAC (V.O.)  
He's a ball hog.

He is displeased to see the ball fall to Mac. She steps over, and presses it into his chest.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Nice shot, Zak Carson. But, have you learned to pass yet?

ZAK  
You weren't open, Mac.

MAC  
I so was.

Jimmy steps in.

JIMMY  
Let it go, Mac. You're teammates.

ZAK  
Yeah, about that, Mister O'Grady. I don't know if I want to play with a girl again.

He smiles as Teddy and Brahma enter.

JIMMY  
Not just a girl, buddy. And, it's not Mister... it's Coach.

Jimmy blows his whistle, and the gym goes silent.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I'm practicing now. If you're not on my team, please take it outside.

The gym empties around him as FOUR BOYS gather behind Zak.

ZAK

No way! Playing with one girl is hard enough.

His stare reveals Brahma and THREE OTHER GIRLS standing next to Mac. Teddy hovers behind.

ZAK (CONT'D)

But, all of them? Can't be done.

The heftiest boy looks the girls over with a skeptical eye. DARIUS WILLIAMS, JR., a tall 11 year-old African American.

DARIUS

Yeah. My cousin might be a baller, but the rest of you girls? I'm just not feeling it.

Darius' cousin waves a hand in his face. MO'NIQUE ADDAMS, a very tall, athletic, and fierce 12 year-old African American.

MO'NIQUE

So ignorant, Junior. Us girls are better than you boys.

The shortest boy shrugs his shoulders. BENNY HART, a bright eyed 12 year-old of East European descent.

BENNY

Who cares. I just wanna play the game. Maybe even win a few.

The tallest boy, JOSHUA ABRAMS, a gangly, long armed 12 year-old Jewish American wearing glasses, shakes his head.

JOSHUA

We're not going to win a game.

TEDDY

Gee whiz, guys. You're wrong. We're a good team.

BRAHNA

We really are.

MAC

That's right. My dad has a plan.

Jimmy meets their collective gaze.

JIMMY

And, it's a good one, if I can get you past seeing he and she.

ZAK

Huh? What else is there?

JIMMY

I'm glad you asked, buddy.

He bounces the ball to his daughter.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Shall we show him?

MAC

Oh, I'd love to.

Mac displays her ball handling before draining her shot. Triumphantly clutching the ball, she turns to her team.

MAC (CONT'D)

I'm MacKenzie O'Grady, but you can call me Mac, cuz we're teammates.

JIMMY

And, what do you see when you look at your teammates, Mac?

MAC

I see basketball players.

JIMMY

My daughter is an excellent basketball player, and the reason we are here. Who else has game?

Mo'Nique claps for the ball, and Mac snaps it to her. Working the post, she scores with a few dominate inside moves. She grabs the ball as it falls, and thumps on her chest.

MO'NIQUE

The name is Mo'Nique Addams. And, I most definitely have game!

She looks to ANANYA GUPTA, a tall and rail thin 11 year-old of Indian descent.

MO'NIQUE (CONT'D)

Okay, girl. Show them who you are.

Ananya takes Mo'Nique's pass, and buries a three. She takes another pass, and pulls up. Her jumper rattles home.

ANANYA

I am Ananya Gupta, and I can play.

Brahna steps up, and motions for the ball. She takes Mo'Nique's pass in the post to hit a quick turnaround. She scoops up the ball, and waves shyly to the team.

BRAHNA

Hi, I'm Brahna Papadopoulos, and I'm a pretty good basketball player too.

The smallest girl, STARLA MOON, an 11 year-old mix of Asian and Caucasian with pink ribbons in her hair playfully steals the ball away, and starts dribbling.

STARLA

You are so good. Now, I don't like to shoot much, but I still totally have a talent.

She puts on a quick show of ball handling mastery. Framing her face with jazz hands to end the performance.

STARLA (CONT'D)

Starla Moon. And, we are all so totally basketball players.

The girls gather behind as she offers the ball to the boys.

STARLA (CONT'D)

Are any of you?

Darius smiles brightly as he takes the ball from her.

DARIUS

Stand back, girls. I'm about to flex my game.

He digs in low before pivoting to miss. Unfazed, he throws up another shot, flexing as it rings the rim and falls.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

I'm Darius Williams, Junior. The basketball player of your dreams.

ROBBIE CÁRDENES, a tall and wiry, happy-go-lucky 11 year-old Mexican American steps up to imitate Starla.

ROBBIE

Totally.

They fist bump as the ball exchanges hands. Robbie drives the lane to chuck up a prayer that miraculously falls.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Hola chicas, Robbie Cárdenes has mad skills.

Joshua posts up to take the pass. He stumbles in the paint to miss a hook. He rebounds to put in the miss. The ball plunking him on the head to find his hands.

He pushes his glasses back in place.

JOSHUA

My name is Joshua, Joshua Abrams.  
And, I'm a basketball player.

Benny pulls the ball from Joshua's hands.

BENNY

Just gimme the ball, Big Bird.

He grumbles on his way to the wing.

BENNY (CONT'D)

A guy grows six inches over the summer, and suddenly, he's a basketball player?

Benny gives Joshua a last indignant stare as he sets his feet.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I'd kill for that kinda luck!

He shoots, crashing after the in-and-out heartbreaker to dive on the loose ball as it rolls past.

BENNY (CONT'D)

I'm Benny Hart. And, I'ma good player, cuz I love the game.

Zak steps forward.

ZAK

Ball.

He takes the pass, sticks a trey and eyeballs Jimmy.

ZAK (CONT'D)

I'm real good, but you seriously can't expect me to carry this team.

JIMMY

I don't expect you to carry us. I expect you to stir things up.

ZAK

I don't know what that means.

JIMMY  
It'll come to you, buddy.

Jimmy nods to Teddy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Now, Coach.

Teddy pulls a whistle from his pocket to eye Jimmy.

TEDDY  
I didn't want to lose it.

JIMMY  
No. Wouldn't want that.

He blows his whistle.

TEDDY  
Okay Team Magic, two lines.

The kids form two lines, pointedly separated by gender.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
This isn't going to be easy, Jimmy.

JIMMY  
Nothing worthwhile ever is, my friend.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

The kids are extremely sweaty, and near exhaustion as Jimmy has them running end of practice wind sprints.

JIMMY  
This ends only when one of you quits.

He gets in the ear of each kid as they sprint past.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Benny, are you the quitter?

BENNY  
Nadda chance, Coach.

JIMMY  
Then, it's you, Joshua?

JOSHUA  
No sir, not me.

JIMMY  
Darius, Robbie, one of you?

DARIUS  
I'll never.

ROBBIE  
Me neither.

The girls preempt his query en masse.

STARLA  
So not quitting.

ANANYA  
Nor I.

MO'NIQUE  
No way.

BRAHNA  
No how.

MAC  
Not ever.

Jimmy sights Zak taking up the rear.

JIMMY  
Zak! We lead from the front!

Teddy greets Lloyd and his team, the THUNDER, as they enter.

TEDDY  
Hi guys, we'll just be a minute.

LLOYD  
Take your time. We're early.

FENTON  
Hey dad, which ones are the girls?

WADE  
Look for the sports bra, son.

Fenton scans the court to sight Zak.

FENTON  
Hey, Carson! Is that a sports bra I see, or are you just wearing your jockstrap wrong again?

The bully, and his teammates break into laughter.

TEDDY  
Hey now!

LLOYD

Loosen up, Papadopoulos. Just some lighthearted ribbing among men.

Zak shrinks, the LAUGHTER echoing in his mind as his parents enter the gym. BRUCE and BARBARA CARSON, 40s, good looking and fashionably preppy. He beelines their way.

The kids react to the sound of the WHISTLE with relief. Jimmy waves them over, and they drag themselves to the huddle.

STARLA

I totally don't do sweat.

JIMMY

We're playing basketball, Starla.

STARLA

But, we didn't do any passing.

ANANYA

Nor any shooting.

MO'NIQUE

Yeah, Coach. Your practice wasn't any fun. All we did was run.

Zak leads his parents over.

JIMMY

Nice of you to join us, buddy.

BRUCE

My son isn't joining this team, just to be ridiculed all season again. So, you'll have to trade him.

JIMMY

Yeah... that's not going to happen.

BRUCE

Then, Zak won't be playing at all. Come family, we're leaving.

BARBARA

No, I'll have a word with Jimmy first.

ZAK

But, mom.

BARBARA

I'll have none of your butts, mister. Take your father to the car... now!

Zak and Bruce retreat, and Barbara steps over to Mac.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Hi, sweetheart. I see you're not alone this year.

Mac finds Brahma's hand, and in quick succession each girl reaches for the other until all five are linked together.

MAC

No, ma'am. I'm not.

Barbara eyes Jimmy.

BARBARA

All the girls?

Jimmy nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Good for you, Jimmy. Good for you. When's next practice?

JIMMY

Tuesday.

BARBARA

Zak will be there.

Barbara walks away to turn back after a few steps.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You know, I think this is going to be good... for both my boys.

She exits, and Jimmy eyes his team.

JIMMY

And, as for you, people. If you want to get past all the running, then the battle of the sexes ends today. It's the only way this works. Now, go home... and show up next practice with your minds right.

The kids disperse in all directions.

TEDDY

Boy, Jimmy, there's a lot to teach.

JIMMY

What's youth sports without things to teach?

The girls walk toward the exit as the Thunder takes the court. Lloyd steps over to Jimmy as he scoops up the ball.

LLOYD

That's rough, guy. Your best player wants to quit. You still can't really believe that you'll be competitive?

JIMMY

We'll be plenty competitive.

LLOYD

Look, I don't mean any offense. It's just that I've been coaching basketball for a long time now.

He points to the championship banners in the rafters.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

And, a couple of those banners are mine. So, I know what it takes to win in this league.

JIMMY

Then, I'll have to watch how you do it.

LLOYD

I'm afraid you bit off more than you can chew, but I'll help if I can.

Lloyd offers his hand, and the two men share a hardy handshake.

JIMMY

I appreciate that, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Thanks, Jimmy. I'll see you out there.

They watch as Lloyd BOISTEROUSLY rejoins his team.

TEDDY

What a horse's patoot. Jimmy? Promise me one of those things to teach, goes to him.

JIMMY

Oh, that's a promise.

Cooper bursts inside to put frantic eyes on Mac.

COOPER

Hi, Mac. I'm late for practice.

MAC

You're playing for Lloyd Skolnicki?

COOPER  
Yeah, he's my mom's boyfriend.

He runs up to Lloyd.

LLOYD  
Cooper, you're late!

COOPER  
But, mom is having car trouble, and she was hoping you'd have a look.

LLOYD  
What do I know of cars, kid? Now, take a lap!

The guys join their daughters as Cooper starts his lap.

BRAHNA  
Too bad, he seems like a nice boy.

MAC  
Yeah, I'd rather have him on our team, then Zak Carson.

JIMMY  
Zak will come around, Mac.

He pushes the door open.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Just wait and see.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy, ball in hand, steps out with Teddy, and the girls. Teddy immediately points to a nearby ice cream truck.

TEDDY  
Look, girls. You want anything, Jimmy?

He shakes his head; something has caught his eye.

JIMMY  
No, but thanks, big guy. I'll meet you in the parking lot.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

A woman surveys her car with animated disgust. PENNY LANG, late 30s and pretty. She pops the trunk to reach in, coming up with a pair of pliers.

She puts up a hand as Jimmy approaches.

PENNY  
Stop! Please.

JIMMY  
Looks like you could use a hand.

PENNY  
You needn't concern yourself. My car  
is just making a noise.

JIMMY  
What kind of noise?

PENNY  
A loud thumping noise, if you must  
know. And, I have already determined  
the cause, all by myself.

JIMMY  
Please share.

Penny points to a metal shard protruding from a tire.

PENNY  
There is a rather large piece of  
metal stuck in my tire. A problem I  
am about to solve.

JIMMY  
With pliers?

PENNY  
Oh, what would you know?

She yanks the shard free to fall flat on her rump. A HISSING  
follows as the tire deflates before her eyes. Penny looks up  
at Jimmy, the opposite of his obvious amusement.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
You knew that was going to happen.

He nods.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
Yet you stood by, and watched?

JIMMY  
You made it clear that you didn't  
want my help.

PENNY  
I guess, I was a little standoffish.

Jimmy offers his hand.

JIMMY  
 Maybe you'll let me help now?

He pulls her up, still holding hands as they lock eyes.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 Hi, my name is Jimmy O'Grady.

PENNY  
 Hi, Jimmy O'Grady. I'm Penny Lang.

MAC (O.S.)  
 Cooper's mom.

The girls and Teddy step into view. Snacks in hand.

PENNY  
 Why yes, I am. And, to whom do I  
 have the pleasure?

MAC  
 I'm MacKenzie O'Grady, and this is  
 my best friend Brahna Papadopoulos  
 and her father, Teddy.

BRAHNA  
 Your son is nice.

MAC  
 Yeah, wish he was playing with us.

PENNY  
 Are you girls basketball players?

The pair nod proudly, and Penny looks to Jimmy again.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
 And, you are their coach. The father  
 that picked all the girls.

JIMMY  
 Not to change the subject, but do  
 you have a spare tire?

She shakes her head, and Jimmy bounces the ball to Mac.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
 Mac, would you?

MAC  
 I'm on it, dad.

BRAHNA  
 Coming with you.

TEDDY

Me too.

Penny watches as Brahma and Teddy follow after Mac.

PENNY

She's a precocious little thing,  
isn't she, Jimmy?

JIMMY

You don't know the half of it.

**EXT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER**

Mac tosses the ball into the truck as they arrive.

TEDDY

Mac? I think your dad was making goo-  
goo eyes at her.

MAC

Nah.

BRAHNA

I don't know, Mac. Sorta looked like  
it to me.

MAC

You think?

They nod, and she looks to her father talking with Penny.

MAC (CONT'D)

Then, here's how we'll play it.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy and Penny continue their conversation.

PENNY

So, I must ask. What was the thought  
process in picking your team?

JIMMY

Heart. All my kids have it, and ten  
hearts beating as one, cannot be  
defeated. That's the idea anyway.  
Now, I have to sell it to them.

PENNY

I don't doubt that you will, Jimmy  
O'Grady, because you just sold me.

The trio returns. Mac hands a can of tire sealant to Penny.

MAC  
Here you go, Penny.

PENNY  
Wow, MacKenzie. You saved my day.

MAC  
I think we are going to be friends,  
so you can call me Mac.

PENNY  
Okay, Mac it is.

BRAHNA  
Jimmy? Can Mac spend the night?

TEDDY  
Yeah, Jimmy? What do you say?

MAC  
Please, dad?

JIMMY  
Sure, Mac. If you're ready in the  
morning, then fine by me.

Mac gives her father a hug.

MAC  
Thanks, dad. You're the best.

She smiles at Penny.

MAC (CONT'D)  
See you around, Penny.

PENNY  
See you around, Mac.

Brahna and Teddy wave goodbye as Mac leads them away.

MAC  
Okay, this is good.

Jimmy kneels next to the flat tire.

JIMMY  
Alright, Ms. Penny Lang. Let's say  
we get you back on the road.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - LATER**

The re-inflated tire rolls to a stop next to Jimmy, and his truck. Penny exits her car.

PENNY

I cannot thank you enough, Jimmy.

JIMMY

It was my pleasure.

PENNY

Well, Cooper must be worried sick by now, but I would love to keep tabs on this social experiment of yours.

JIMMY

I'd like that, but it's less a social experiment. More a winning hand.

PENNY

Either way, I'll be rooting for you.

She walks away, his calling out turns her at the gym doors.

JIMMY

You know, Penny. That makes you...  
the team's first fan.

Penny beams at him before slipping inside.

**EXT. PAPADOPOULOS HOME - MORNING**

Mac waits out front of the ultramodern hillside home. Jimmy pulls up in his truck, and she climbs in. He pulls away.

**INT. JIMMY'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy hands Mac a dress. She slips it on as they speak.

MAC

Why do we go to church every Sunday?

JIMMY

It was important to your mother.

MAC

I don't really remember her. Does that make me a horrible person?

JIMMY

No, sweetheart. You were just short of three when she left us.

MAC

Do you miss her?

JIMMY

Every day.

MAC

Do you think you'll ever be in love again? Cuz Penny seemed nice.

JIMMY

She did say that she wanted to watch us play.

Mac is all smiles as she finishes changing.

MAC

Do you think she actually will?

JIMMY

Yeah, Mac. I think so.

MAC

Wow, dad. Maybe this season won't be a total disaster after all.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING**

Mac bursts inside to join the team in a shoot around.

Jimmy follows to be intercepted by two African American women. SHANIQWA ADDAMS, late 30s, tall and striking, and her sister, TAMIKA WILLIAMS, mid-30s, buxom and compact.

SHANIQWA

You must be Coach Jimmy.

TAMIKA

The man with a plan. Question is, can you pull it off?

JIMMY

I know my way around a basketball court, ladies.

SHANIQWA

That we know, but straight up, you feeling better now?

JIMMY

Haven't touched a drop in nine years, if that's what you're asking.

SHANIQWA

That's good to hear. Do you have a team mom?

Jimmy pointedly considers Teddy.

JIMMY

No, just the one hairy Godmother.

Shaniqwa shakes his hand.

SHANIQWA

Shaniqwa Addams. Your new team mom.  
And, this is my sister, Tamika.  
Mo'Nique and Junior are our children.

JIMMY

And, I'm looking forward to talking  
with you further, but right now I  
need to start practice.

TAMIKA

Hold on there, too tall. You haven't  
asked me what I bring to the party.

JIMMY

Forgive me. Consider yourself asked.

TAMIKA

You see, I'm a Celebrity Blogger,  
and you, and this team are a fabulous  
story. I must be allowed to share it  
with my many followers.

JIMMY

Sure. Can I start practice now?

TAMIKA

That would be fabulous!

Tamika steps past him with her smart phone.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Let's get started, children. Auntie  
Tamika needs some pictures.

Shaniqwa nods in response to Jimmy's imploring stare.

SHANIQWA

I feel you.

She calls out to her sister.

SHANIQWA (CONT'D)

Girl? Best jump back here.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Shaniqwa's VOICE OVER continues as the team runs a layup drill.

SHANIQWA (V.O.)

And, let the man have his practice.

Practice continues as Jimmy puts the team through a variety of shooting, passing, defensive, and transition drills. Zak pulls up to take a last lazy shot.

The ball clanks off the rim, and a WHISTLE blows. The sisters join the kids as they gather around Jimmy.

JIMMY

We have all the ingredients needed for success. Next practice... we put them all together.

Tamika holds out her phone.

TAMIKA

Oh, that's good. Once more. This time for the camera.

Jimmy shoots a wide-eyed stare Shaniqwa's way. She nods.

SHANIQWA

Tamika girl!

**EXT. ADDAMS HOME - NIGHT**

An SUV sits in the drive of an upscale hillside home.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tamika sits at her computer. Shaniqwa enters.

TAMIKA

What about this for my blog's title?

Shaniqwa reads the computer screen. She eyes her sister.

SHANIQWA

Girl, that is genius.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING**

The team is split into mixed gender squads. Teddy gives the thumbs up as Zak pulls a last pinnie over his head.

TEDDY

All yours, Jimmy.

Jimmy bounces the ball to Zak.

JIMMY

Alright, let's run it.

Zak passes inside, and slices toward the hoop to collide with Benny. Joshua loses the ball as he trips over them.

Jimmy blows his whistle, and stares at the heap of boys.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Yeah... let's run it again. Maybe  
iron out some of those wrinkles.

The boys struggle to grasp the movements required, making the installation of the offense a series of miscues, collisions, and errant passes. The practice ends as the WHISTLE sounds.

Jimmy waves the kids over, and Teddy leans in.

TEDDY  
Was that as bad as it looked?

JIMMY  
Let's just call it a work in progress.

Shaniqwa and Tamika step in with two boxes as the team gathers.

SHANIQWA  
We have our uniforms, children.

MAC  
Shaniqwa, ma'am? If it's in there,  
can I please have the number four?

SHANIQWA  
Why four, child?

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MORNING**

Mac's VOICE OVER answers the question as she banks in a layup wearing her new uniform. The number FOUR on her back.

MAC (V.O.)  
It was my dad's.

The team runs pregame drills. Mac studies the 76ERS warming up at the other end. Shaniqwa steps in.

SHANIQWA  
Where's your father?

Mac's eyes swing toward the main entrance.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: FOYER - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy wearing a sports coat, looks into the trophy case glass, and fusses with his tie as Shaniqwa pops her head in.

SHANIQWA  
You okay, Coach?

JIMMY  
Yeah, just need a minute.

SHANIQWA  
You got it.

Shaniqwa pops out, and a couple of beats later Penny enters.

PENNY  
Well, I made it.

He opens the door for her.

JIMMY  
Mac will be thrilled.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy escorts Penny inside as the REFEREES hit the BUZZER.

PENNY  
That's your cue.

JIMMY  
Yeah.

She straightens his tie.

PENNY  
Knock 'em dead, Coach.

They trade a last smile before he joins his team. Penny scans the stands flush with SPECTATORS. A stunning woman waves her up. HELEN PAPADOPOULOS, 40's, tall and leggy.

Penny climbs the stands to sit with Helen. They shake hands.

HELEN  
Helen.

PENNY  
Penny.

HELEN  
I see you came with Jimmy. You are with him, yes?

PENNY  
With him? No.

Penny looks to Jimmy. The team huddles around him.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
But, I am a fan.

Tamika videos as Jimmy takes a final measure of his team.

JIMMY  
Keep the ball moving. We're working  
for layups, and open looks.

He puts his hand in, and the kids follow suit.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
On three. One, two, three.

The team chants MAGIC, and the starters take the floor.

Joshua is beaten on the jump, and the 76ers score on the break. Zak takes the inbound to drive into the teeth of the defense. He loses the ball, and the 76ers quickly score again.

Jimmy signals timeout, and the Referee blows his whistle. The kids huddle around him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Come on, people... play our game.

Zak scoffs audibly, and Jimmy locks eyes with him.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Starla, you're in for Zak.

STARLA  
No problemo.

In the stands, his parents see Zak sink into the bench.

BRUCE  
I need to handle this.

BARBARA  
No. I've made myself clear. Zak will  
handle this. All by himself.

The BUZZER sounds. Jimmy has nine hands on top of his. They chant TEAM, and take the floor.

Starla takes the inbound to drive up the court. She passes to Mac. Mac to Brahma. Brahma back to Mac for the score. The bench celebrates as the team goes on defense.

JIMMY  
Alright, now find your man.

A 76er loses Benny for another easy score. Jimmy looks to the scoreboard. It reads: 76ERS 6 - MAGIC 2.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

The scoreboard reads: 76ERS 61 - MAGIC 32. The teams exchange fives to have Jimmy lead his to a side room. The kids file inside as Jimmy watches Zak pass his parents to exit the gym.

Bruce follows his son as Barbara walks over to Jimmy.

BARBARA

He's going to fight you, Jimmy.

JIMMY

We'll get it worked out. I promise.

She flashes a tense smile and walks away. He turns to find Tamika's phone in his face. His annoyance, plain to see.

TAMIKA

Coach Jimmy? You were just soundly defeated in your return to coaching. How does that make you feel?

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The team sits as Jimmy enters. Robbie breaks the silence.

ROBBIE

Is embarrassment an excuse to miss school? Because, I feel sick.

BENNY

Oh, quit your bellyaching. We just ain't playing like a team yet.

JIMMY

Yeah... I'm hoping you people still want to work on that.

BENNY

Nobody here is giving up on ya, Coach. All we need to know is... when's next practice?

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Teddy and the girls step out. Jimmy follows. Penny and Helen wait nearby, and the girls rush to them as Shaniqwa approaches.

SHANIQWA

You still good with this blog? After tonight, there's no turning back.

TEDDY

Be sure, Jimmy. These things can take on a life of their own.

JIMMY

I'm sure.

SHANIQWA

See you in the funny papers then.

Shaniqwa leaves, and the guys walk toward their girls.

TEDDY

So, Penny? You like her.

JIMMY

She's Mac's friend.

TEDDY

Mac's friend, my Aunt Fanny.

JIMMY

Don't make me take your whistle.

TEDDY

You wouldn't?

JIMMY

Oh, you better believe.

They arrive.

MAC

Look who's here, dad.

PENNY

Hi again, Coach. Rough game?

JIMMY

You could say that.

BRAHNA

Mom is taking us girls to brunch.

TEDDY

That's great!

Mac looks to her father for permission.

JIMMY

Do I have a choice?

HELEN

Oh, I love a man who knows his place.  
Penny, you will join us, yes?

PENNY

I would, but my son has a game today.

MAC  
Are you coming to our next game?  
We'll play better. I promise.

PENNY  
I have no doubt.

MAC  
So, next game?

PENNY  
See you there.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT**

Tamika smiles. Her computer screen reads: BLOG PUBLISHED.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING**

Barbara marches Zak up to Jimmy as the team shoots around.

BARBARA  
Go ahead, young man. Apologize.

ZAK  
Fat chance. I'm sick of being bullied.

Zak pointedly takes a seat on the bench's end.

BARBARA  
I don't know what else to do, Jimmy.  
Except wait him out.

JIMMY  
Then, that's what we'll do.

Barbara looks at her son.

BARBARA  
Okay Buster Brown, have it your way.

She exits, and Jimmy is confronted by the sisters.

SHANIQWA  
Easy to see that the boys are lost.  
You have a plan for that?

JIMMY  
Thought I'd explain things better.

SHANIQWA  
You've explained things beautifully.  
It's just at this age, girls can  
hear, what boys must see.

Jimmy's wheels turn. Tamika reacts as it comes to him.

TAMIKA  
Oh... oh... here it comes... bingo!

JIMMY  
Really?

The sisters nod, and Jimmy blows his whistle.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Alright, ladies. Setup on offense.

JOSHUA  
What do you want us guys to do, Coach?

JIMMY  
I want you guys to watch. Ladies, if you please. Run our play.

The girls run through the play several times with precision. Jimmy blows his whistle to survey the boys.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Can you guys do that?

The boys nod in agreement.

DARIUS  
Yeah, now that we've seen it.

JIMMY  
Alright then, gentlemen. Spot up. Starla's running point for you.

They take their spots, and Jimmy nods.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Show me.

While not completely fluid, the boys and Starla cycle through the play without mishap. Jimmy blows his whistle.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Do you know what this means, people?

BENNY  
Yeah, Coach. Means we're a team.

Starla throws her arm over Benny's shoulders.

STARLA  
Totally.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING**

Penny and Helen cheer as Ananya takes Starla's pass to score on the CELTICS. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 51 - CELTICS 49.

The CELTICS COACH calls timeout, and the REFEREE blows his whistle. The Magic players bound off the court to leave the Celtics behind. Their Coach angrily rounds them up.

CELTICS COACH

Get over here, guys. You just gave up the lead to a bunch of girls!

The Magic bench heard every word.

MO'NIQUE

He's disrespecting us, Coach.

JIMMY

Yeah. What should we do about that?

MO'NIQUE

Adjust his attitude.

JIMMY

Good idea. Take us home, Mo'Nique.

Mo'Nique nods, and puts her hand in. Her teammates pile on.

MO'NIQUE

Respect on three. One, two, three.

The team chants RESPECT, and takes the floor. Jimmy scans the bench to catch Zak's eye. The youngster looks away, and Jimmy returns to the task at hand.

JIMMY

Alright, people. Let's earn it.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

Mo'Nique scores as the BUZZER sounds. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 63 - CELTICS 57. The kids celebrate.

Jimmy eyes Zak, still glued to the bench. He turns away to find Tamika's phone in his face.

TAMIKA

Coach Jimmy? You have that first big win. How does it feel?

He looks past her. Penny smiles at him from the stands.

JIMMY

Pretty special.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Jimmy walks Penny to her car. Mac follows behind.

PENNY

Thank you for escorting me, Jimmy.

JIMMY

It's the least I can do for our number one fan.

Mac pretends to gag.

MAC

Hey dad, you said we were going to Cooper's next game, didn't you?

PENNY

He would love that.

She boxes Jimmy out to open the car door.

MAC

Then, it's a date?

Penny climbs inside.

PENNY

It's a date.

Mac closes the door, and Penny drives off.

JIMMY

What just happened here?

Jimmy follows Mac as she leads him away.

MAC

For our number one fan? Really? If that's flirting, then we need to work on your game. Until then, you'll just have to follow my lead.

**EXT. ESPN STUDIOS - MORNING**

A sports car pulls into a parking spot. A woman in a power suit gets out. DUSTY CRUZ, 30s, Asian American and pretty.

**INT. ESPN STUDIOS: LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

Dusty enters. A SPORTS WITH DUSTY logo dominates the wall behind the RECEPTIONIST. The woman holds up several message slips. Dusty walks past without a backwards glance.

She steps into the elevator as the doors slide closed.

**INT. ESPN STUDIOS: PRODUCTION OFFICES - CONTINUOUS**

EUGENE, a nerdy twenty-something holding a laptop, waits. The elevator doors open, and Dusty steps out.

EUGENE

Ms. Cruz, you're ignoring my messages again.

DUSTY

Face facts, Eugene. Until you find something a girl can run with, she's going to ignore your messages.

EUGENE

Then, lace up your Nikes, Ms. Cruz.

He holds up his laptop for her to see.

DUSTY

A kids basketball team?

EUGENE

Look closer.

Dusty smiles.

DUSTY

Come, Eugene. We have work to do.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING**

Jimmy and Mac climb the crowded stands to join Penny.

MAC

Hi ya, Penny.

PENNY

Hi, Mac.

Penny turns to Jimmy.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Hi, Coach. I'm glad you made it.

JIMMY

Should be fun.

The Thunder warms up for their game versus the WARRIORS. Cooper sets his feet and buries a shot from mid-range.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Mac says Cooper's pretty good.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

A REPETITIVE THUMP sounds, and Lloyd's last nerve frays.

LLOYD

Cut that out!

Howie stops banging his ball off the wall, and Lloyd switches gears as Penny, Cooper, Mac, and Jimmy step from the gym.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

There you are, babe. The boy was worried about you.

PENNY

Really, Howie?

HOWIE

Can we go now?

LLOYD

Where are your manners, boy? We have guests.

Lloyd looks to Mac.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

So, sweetie? Do you really think that you can matchup against my boys?

MAC

That's dumb, Lloyd Skolnicki. I can hold my own against anyone in this league. Including your boys.

LLOYD

Wow, O'Grady. Your kid has some mouth on her.

JIMMY

Yeah, she got that from her mother. Isn't it awesome?

PENNY

Well, yes. Cooper? Thank our friends for coming please.

COOPER

Thanks, Mister O'Grady.

JIMMY

You were great, young man.

MAC

You really were.

COOPER

Thanks, Mac. I may have to go to your next game. See what all the fuss is about for myself.

MAC

That would be cool.

JIMMY

Say goodbye, Mac.

MAC

Bye, everyone.

Lloyd stares daggers as Jimmy leads Mac away.

LLOYD

That guy doesn't know the first thing about coaching basketball.

**INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - NIGHT**

A clip of Young Jimmy and his infamous, career-ending confrontation with Earl The Ref plays behind Dusty.

DUSTY

Coach Jimmy O'Grady. His fall from grace will be forever etched in the annals of sport. Is he making a comeback? I'm Dusty Cruz. Jimmy O'Grady's next chapter when we return.

**INT. O'GRADY HOME: LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy stares at his television. In the background a phone RINGS a few times. Mac enters, phone in hand.

MAC

It's Tamika.

He takes the phone, and puts it to his ear.

JIMMY

Tamika? I'm on TV.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The sisters and their children sit in front of the big screen television. Tamika on her cellphone.

TAMIKA

I know. Isn't it fabulous?

She covers the phone to look at her family and whisper.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)  
He's a little fussy.

The commercial ends, and her attention turns.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)  
Ooh, Coach Jimmy. Just remember who  
made you famous again.

She disconnects from the call.

**INT. O'GRADY HOME: LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy looks at his disconnected phone.

JIMMY  
But, I don't want to be famous again.

On the television Dusty returns from the commercial break.

DUSTY  
Welcome back. I'm Dusty Cruz.

**INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - CONTINUOUS**

A retrospective of Young Jimmy's early college days as a shoot first, last, and always player, starts to run behind her.

DUSTY  
If you're a fan of college hoops,  
then you have heard of Jimmy O'Grady.  
His exploits as a player were  
legendary. He led his team in scoring,  
shots taken, and shots missed. He  
would not however, have a single  
assist, nor win a game. Going oh,  
and fifty in two years as a starter.

Images of a protest. COLLEEN MURPHY blocks him from entering  
the gym. He is captivated as the POLICE lead her away.

DUSTY (CONT'D)  
But, a chance meeting at a protest  
over Title Nine would change his  
fortunes forever. Her name was Coleen  
Murphy, and O'Grady was smitten.

Tape plays of Young Jimmy as a pass first, shoot when it  
counts, player that leads his team to the big dance.

DUSTY (CONT'D)  
Then, came the change in O'Grady's  
game.

(MORE)

DUSTY (CONT'D)

As a senior he would lead the nation  
in assists, and his team to twenty  
and five. Securing a first ever  
seeding in the big tournament.

Images of Young Jimmy landing awkwardly during a drill. He  
crumbles to the hardwood, clutching his knee in pain.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

A tournament he would never play in,  
when an injury suffered during  
practice would end his playing days.

Tape of Young Jimmy's early coaching days sitting at the knee  
of Coach ARBUCKLE MCGINTY during a home game.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

His coaching career started the next  
season, when Coach Arbuckle McGinty  
brought him on as an assistant.

Images of the marriage ceremony, followed by the happy couple  
holding a NEWBORN MAC.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

With his future assured, O'Grady and  
Coleen tied the knot. The following  
March the couple welcomed a new  
addition. They named her MacKenzie.

Tape of Young Jimmy as a head coach rolls.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Two years later, O'Grady became the  
youngest Head Coach in college  
basketball history.

The video freezes on Young Jimmy, and slowly fades to black.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Then, tragedy struck. Coleen's life  
cut short by sudden illness. After a  
brief leave of absence, O'Grady  
returned to coaching, but rumors of  
heavy drinking grew persistent.  
Culminating in one of sport's epic  
meltdowns, when O'Grady infamously  
threw up on a referee during a  
nationally televised game. He was  
relieved of his duties the following  
day to withdraw from public view.

The black lifts to reveal video of Jimmy toasting the camera with a bottled water, followed by him coaching the Magic featuring Mac, and her four female teammates.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

That is until now. After nearly a decade, Jimmy O'Grady is reportedly sober, and coaching again. MacKenzie, now twelve years old is one of the stars of the team. And, she's not alone. In what is otherwise, an all boys league, four other intrepid young ladies play prominent roles for O'Grady's squad.

A superimposed American flag flutters behind the team.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

America loves a good redemption story. And, I for one am rooting for Jimmy O'Grady, and his young team.

The retrospective ends.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The end of the broadcast plays out on the big screen.

DUSTY

You can root for them too at one magic season dot com. I'm Dusty Cruz. Goodnight.

Tamika, and her family, gather in front of the computer.

SHANIQWA

Go on now, girl. Have a look.

Tamika moves the mouse, and the computer "wakes" to reveal the ONE MAGIC SEASON website, and its 11 FOLLOWERS.

TAMIKA

Same as last night.

DARIUS

Momma? Refresh the page.

He places his hand over hers, and with a click of the mouse the page reloads to reveal the website has 211K FOLLOWERS.

The family erupts in celebration.

**INT. O'GRADY HOME: LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy sits and stares blankly at the television. Mac turns it off, and sits next to him.

JIMMY  
Did I do the right thing, Mac?  
Coaching this team?

MAC  
Dad? Remember my list?

JIMMY  
Of fatherly disappointments?

She snuggles up to him.

MAC  
It's really a very short list, dad.  
The other list I keep is way longer.  
And, you coaching this team, for me,  
is at the very tippy top.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - DAY**

Jimmy and Mac climb from the truck. He is pulling on his sports coat when the News Vans parked nearby catch his eye.

JIMMY  
God grant me the serenity.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Tamika runs up to Jimmy and Mac as they walk to the building.

TAMIKA  
Now, don't be fussy, Coach Jimmy.

JIMMY  
I'm not going to be. Know why?

TAMIKA  
Because, my eyes are lying to me?

JIMMY  
No, because you're handling this.

TAMIKA  
About that. I've been faking it,  
'til I make it.

JIMMY  
Best get past that quick, Madam...  
because you have arrived.

The REPORTERS start SHOUTING questions. Tamika nods, a new determination on her face as she turns to the gathering.

TAMIKA

All right, all right, quiet down! I  
can only make the Coach available  
for a minute, or two. So, who's first?

The RUDE REPORTER steps forward.

RUDE REPORTER

Who are you?

TAMIKA

Tamika Williams, the team's Press  
Secretary.

RUDE REPORTER

You're the mother writing the blog.

TAMIKA

Among my many responsibilities. And,  
at the moment, I'm the woman asking...  
who's next?

She points to the SKEPTICAL REPORTER.

SKEPTICAL REPORTER

Picking the girls smells like a stunt.  
What's the angle, Jimmy?

JIMMY

I'm just a guy coaching his daughter.

Tamika nods to the PEPPY REPORTER.

PEPPY REPORTER

The nation's eyes are on you again.  
Feeling any pressure?

JIMMY

Just hoping I don't throw up.

Laughter sounds. Jimmy waves goodbye, and opens the door for Mac. The LOUD REPORTER calls out to turn her in the doorway.

LOUD REPORTER

MacKenzie! What do you think about  
your team's chances?

MAC

Stick around. We'll show the world.

The Reporters shout as Mac, Tamika, and Jimmy duck inside.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

The last SHOUTS of the Reporters filter through the door as Jimmy pulls it closed to calmly turn to Tamika.

JIMMY

Tamika? Just how many people are reading that blog of yours?

TAMIKA

About a million, last I looked.

MAC

Get out!

TAMIKA

I know. Pretty soon this team is going to have its own shoe.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

The Thunder and the LAKERS play the final minutes of their game as Mac, Tamika, and Jimmy enter. Penny and Helen sit in a section of the crowded stands that is thick with TOWNIES.

A group of TEEN GIRLS swoon as Jimmy passes. One stands.

TEEN GIRL

WE LOVE YOU, JIMMY O'GRADY!

Helen playfully nudges Penny.

HELEN

You have competition, no?

Penny is a beat behind.

PENNY

What? No. It's not that way.

HELEN

Darling? Does not your heart beat faster when he is near?

PENNY

He's not without his charms.

HELEN

And, this is not love?

PENNY

It's confusing, is what it is.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy looks perplexed as he surveys the kids.

JIMMY

I threw up on a Referee... on national television! Don't you people have questions?

DARIUS

It's not like it was a secret, Coach.

ROBBIE

Yeah, your YouTube video is epic.

JOSHUA

So, the Coach used to like his Manischewitz. He's over it now.

He looks to Jimmy.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

You are, aren't you?

JIMMY

I don't drink anymore. But, when I did, it wasn't Manischewitz.

JOSHUA

Mogen David?

JIMMY

Whiskey. Way too much.

MO'NIQUE

But, you drank too much because your heart was broken?

JIMMY

True, but that doesn't excuse it.

BRAHNA

Well, I think that's kinda romantic.

ANANYA

Yes, Coach. You are a smoldering hunk of love.

STARLA

And, the best coach ever.

BENNY

Yeah, I could almost kiss ya myself.

(MORE)

BENNY (CONT'D)

My last coach treated me like a hemorrhoid. Something ya gotta deal with, but would rather ignore. But, not you, Coach. You treat me like; I was just one of the boys.

He looks to Mac, and the girls.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Well, ya know what I mean.

MAC

Yeah. We're all basketball players here, and a really good team.

TEDDY

And, we're not even at full strength.

Everyone turns to Zak.

ROBBIE

What about it, All-Star?

ANANYA

Yes, Zak. Isn't it time you joined us?

ZAK

You're doing just fine without me.

JIMMY

Alright, people. Let it alone.

The BUZZER sounds from behind the door.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Benny, take us out.

BENNY

You heard the Coach. Let's go!

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

The crowd cheers as the team bursts through the door. Tamika videos as they take the end opposite the KNICKS.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Teddy reacts to the CHEERING coming from the gym.

TEDDY

Will you listen to that.

JIMMY  
We'll be a minute.

Teddy nods, and exits. Shaniqwa steps over.

SHANIQWA  
I'll go see to Teddy.

JIMMY  
Appreciate that.

Shaniqwa exits, and Zak confronts Jimmy.

ZAK  
What do you want from me?

JIMMY  
You heard your teammates. They're waiting on you.

ZAK  
My teammates hate me.

JIMMY  
They don't hate you. They just want to be made better. Great players make everyone better, and you have the goods to be a great player, Zak.

ZAK  
They tease me you know.

JIMMY  
Who? Those dimwits on the Thunder?

Zak nods.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
The best answer to that would be to beat them on the court. This team would be unstoppable if you would lead it.

ZAK  
I don't think I can.

JIMMY  
I refuse to believe that. You just have to find the courage to try.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - CONTINUOUS**

Cooper and Lloyd climb the crowded stands to squeeze in next to Penny and Helen. Cooper hugs his mom.

PENNY  
Great game, love bug.

LLOYD  
The kid took too many shots.

HELEN  
He is a good player, no?

LLOYD  
Who is this?

PENNY  
This is my new friend Helen.

Lloyd takes Helen by the hand.

LLOYD  
I see. Tell me, Helen. You were a  
swimsuit cover model, weren't you?

HELEN  
When I was a teenager. How do you  
remember this?

He leers at her.

LLOYD  
You have some very memorable  
attributes.

Jimmy and Zak enter to CHEERS. The KNICKS COACHES eye Jimmy.

KNICKS HEAD COACH  
That's him all right. We've been  
snuck up on.

The team rallies around Jimmy as the BUZZER sounds.

JIMMY  
Secret's out. We're good. Believe in  
that, people. It makes all we hope  
for possible.

He puts his hand in. Everyone piles theirs on top. The team  
chants MAGIC, and the starters take the floor.

Barbara and Bruce watch from the stands as Zak takes a seat.

BRUCE  
Still think he'll give in?

BARBARA  
He'll find a reason.

The Magic wins the tipoff. Three passes later Benny scores.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

The crowd COUNTS OFF the seconds as the ball finds Ananya behind the arc. She buries a three as the halftime BUZZER sounds. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 35 - KNICKS 20.

Jimmy leads them to the side room.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The room fills with self-impressed CHATTER as the team streams inside. Tamika, a step behind, phone in hand. Shaniqwa follows to start handing out drinks.

Jimmy enters, and the room goes silent.

JIMMY

We're better than these guys. It's not really a big deal to be up fifteen on them. But, it is an opportunity.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Howie waves his father down from the stands. Lloyd eyes Penny.

LLOYD

Come on, babe. Let's go.

The crowd cheers as the Magic emerge from the side room.

PENNY

You go on ahead, Lloyd. Cooper, and I are going to watch the game.

HELEN

Yes, then we all go out to big lunch at Vincenzo's.

Helen takes Lloyd by the hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I am so happy you leave now.

LLOYD

I think you mean, happy to meet you.

HELEN

No. I say it right.

He pulls his hand away to get a kiss on the cheek from Penny.

PENNY

Call you later.

LLOYD  
Sure, babe. Okay.

Lloyd climbs down to be met by his son. He looks past the boy to sadly stare at Penny in the stands.

LLOYD (CONT'D)  
What's going on here?

HOWIE  
I don't know, dad. But, there are Reporters. Lots of them. And, all they want to do is talk about the Magic, and Jimmy O'Grady.

He glares at Jimmy.

LLOYD  
Show me where, boy.

The BUZZER sounds, and the kids rally around their coach.

JIMMY  
Alright, you know what to do.

DARIUS  
I'm bringing the thunder, Coach.

JIMMY  
Lightning brings the thunder, Darius.  
Just be decisive with the ball.

Darius nods, and Jimmy eyes the other boys.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Use these extra minutes wisely,  
gentlemen.

Jimmy puts his hand in. Everyone piles theirs on top. They chant MAGIC. Brahma steps up as the boys take the floor.

BRAHNA  
You sure, Coach?

JIMMY  
I believe in you.

BRAHNA  
Yeah?

He nods, and Brahma smiles.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Lloyd finds the waiting Reporters.

LLOYD

Who wants the scoop on Jimmy O'Grady?

The air is filled with SHOUTED QUESTIONS.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy watches as Brahma runs the play. Darius flashes to the hoop, and she hits him with a perfect pass for the score. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 37 - KNICKS 20.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 64 - KNICKS 48. The crowd COUNTS DOWN as Mac dribbles up the court. She tosses the ball into the air as the final BUZZER sounds.

The team rushes onto the floor in spontaneous celebration.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: FOYER - MOMENTS LATER**

Mac, Brahma, Helen, Penny, Cooper and Teddy stream past Jimmy as he holds the door open. Dan flags him down.

DAN

Jimmy? A minute please.

There is a COLLECTIVE MOAN from the group.

HELEN

It is lunch now, yes?

MAC

Yeah, dad. It's lunch now.

JIMMY

Can it wait, Dan?

Dan shakes his head.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy and Dan watch as Lloyd engages with the Reporters.

DAN

The man's jealous.

JIMMY

He has no reason to be.

DAN

Then, that's not his gal you're with?

Dan waves Jimmy off before he can respond.

DAN (CONT'D)

That aside. This media blitz of yours is costing the city some real money. What's the end game, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Believe me, I'm as surprised by all this as you are.

DAN

Then, you didn't pick all the girls to create some kind of stir?

JIMMY

No. I picked all the girls, because every guy involved discounted them. Including you.

Jimmy waves Dan off before he can respond.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

We had similar draft grades for the boys, but for the girls? Took me a second, but it was obvious that you used a different scale for them.

DAN

Of course, I did. They're gir...

Dan catches himself, and lowers his head in shame.

DAN (CONT'D)

I was just trying to help.

JIMMY

I don't doubt that, but these girls don't want help. They want respect. Fairness. Equality. Mac's mother wanted these things for her. I want these things for her.

DAN

You really think you can win it all?

JIMMY

That's been my plan all along.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy steps outside. The Reporters on him. Mac, Brahma, Helen, Penny, Cooper and Teddy follow as he answers.

LOUD REPORTER

Is it true you benched your best player, because he doesn't want to play with girls?

JIMMY

Who told you that?

Lloyd watches nearby, and Penny peels off to confront him.

PENNY

What are you doing?

LLOYD

It feels like I'm losing you.

PENNY

Go home, Lloyd. You're being creepy.

She walks away, and Lloyd's eye starts to twitch.

**INT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

The group sits at a table cluttered by the remnants of their lunch. Their WAITER leaves the check with Teddy. Mac stands.

MAC

Can we go make a wish?

PENNY

I can help with that.

Penny roots around in her purse to hand a coin to each child.

MAC/BRAHNA

Thanks, Penny.

The girls lock eyes, and giggle.

MAC/BRAHNA (CONT'D)

Jinx.

They run off laughing. Cooper and his mother trade smiles.

PENNY

Go ahead, Cooper. Wish big.

COOPER

Thanks, mom.

Cooper runs after the girls. Helen pulls Teddy to a stand.

HELEN

Teddybear? Walk with me please.

He grabs the bill, and pulls Helen in tight.

TEDDY

We're just going to pay for the lunch.  
Be right back.

**EXT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: PATIO - MOMENTS LATER**

Cooper finds the girls waiting by the wishing well.

MAC

Do you like Lloyd Skolnicki, Cooper?

COOPER

Not particularly, Mac. Why?

**INT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Penny places a hand on Jimmy's arm.

PENNY

Cooper really likes you.

JIMMY

I like him too. You've done a great  
job with him, Penny.

PENNY

And, you're a wonderful father, Jimmy.  
Mac is amazing.

JIMMY

Mac's amazing in spite of me. If it  
wasn't for my priest, Father Frank,  
I certainly would've failed her. The  
man helped me see, not what I had  
lost, but what I hadn't. And, I'm  
committed to never coming close to  
failing my daughter again.

She unconsciously takes his hand.

PENNY

Isn't that the definition of a  
wonderful father?

Jimmy and Penny are lost in each other's eyes as Teddy and  
Helen make their way back to the table.

HELEN

See, I tell you, Teddybear. Their  
love is inevitable.

Their arrival does nothing to break the spell between Jimmy  
and Penny. Teddy clears his throat to snap them out of it.

TEDDY

You two ready to go, or do you need  
another couple of minutes?

**EXT. VINCENZO'S RESTAURANT: PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

The lunch group exits the restaurant.

COOPER

Thanks for lunch, Helen.

HELEN

We'll do it again, yes?

Cooper nods, and Helen kisses Penny on the cheek.

HELEN (CONT'D)

And, you my lovely. I see you soon.  
The children play next, yes?

PENNY

Sadly, yes. It's too bad both teams  
cannot win.

JIMMY

It doesn't work that way, Penny.

Penny coyly fiddles with Jimmy's tie.

PENNY

Well, that's very troubling, Coach.

Mac and Brahma's stare spurs Cooper into action.

COOPER

Jimmy? Mac says you can help me with  
my shot. Will you?

JIMMY

Sure, Cooper.

He eyes his daughter.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

When were you thinking?

MAC

Tomorrow, after church.

**INT. ST. MARY'S CHURCH - MORNING**

Mac exits the confessional. A mischievous grin on her face.  
Her father eyes her with mild disapproval.

JIMMY  
You know, he knows, that you're  
messing with him, right?

MAC  
Yeah, but it's fun.

**INT. CONFSSIONAL - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy enters, and kneels down.

JIMMY  
Bless me Father, for I have sinned.  
It has been one week since my last  
confession.

Hidden by a latticed opening, FATHER FRANK speaks.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)  
I'm listening, my son.

JIMMY  
I covet another man's girlfriend.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)  
Girlfriend? Then, there's no marriage?

JIMMY  
No. They're not married.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)  
The man must be Irish then?

JIMMY  
Not even on his mother's side.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)  
Then, I can see no sin in it.

JIMMY  
Are you sure, Father Frank? I don't  
like the man much.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)  
But, you're fond of the woman.

JIMMY  
Very much so.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)  
You needn't ask forgiveness for  
finding love again. You just have to  
thank your lucky stars.

JIMMY

Thanks, I needed to hear that.

FATHER FRANK (O.S.)

Warms the heart to be the bearer of such glad tidings, but I remind you, this is confession, not a therapy session. So, I say to you, Jimmy O'Grady. Go with God, and take your best shot with this woman.

**EXT. O'GRADY HOME - DAY**

A ball swooshes through the net of the hoop on the garage. Penny and Mac watch as Jimmy coaches Cooper up.

JIMMY

Yes! Do that a hundred more times, and we'll call it a day.

MAC

You know, he's serious about the hundred more times.

PENNY

Oh my, I must go save my son.

Penny bursts onto the driveway to steal the ball from the guys. She waves Mac over.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I think we can take them.

A lighthearted game of two on two, boys verses the girls starts. Jimmy holds the ball out of Penny's reach.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Boy, just once I'd like to know what it's like to be so tall.

JIMMY

Alright, get up on my shoulders.

MAC

Go ahead, Penny!

COOPER

Yeah, mom! Go for it!

Jimmy drops to a knee.

PENNY

Promise you won't drop me.

JIMMY

I promise.

Penny climbs onto his shoulders, and Jimmy stands.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

So, how does it feel?

PENNY

Like I climbed a beanstalk.

He chuckles, and hands her the ball.

JIMMY

Go on, knock it home.

Penny drops it through, squealing as Jimmy playfully collapses to catch her in his arms. The grownups lay in a heap, laughing, and the children exchange a duplicitous smile.

**EXT. O'GRADY HOME - LATER**

Cooper and Mac shoot around. Penny takes Jimmy's arm as they slowly walk toward their children.

PENNY

You just spent more time with my son, then any man has in a long time.

JIMMY

Your son is worth it.

PENNY

Goodness, I want to kiss you.

JIMMY

But, you shouldn't?

Penny shakes her head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Then, it can wait, until you should.

Cooper buries a twelve-footer as they arrive.

PENNY

Time to go, Cooper.

COOPER

Aw, mom! Can't we stay longer?

MAC

Yeah, Penny. It's spaghetti night.

PENNY

Another time, sweetheart. I have to work some things out first.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: PARKING LOT - EVENING**

Jimmy pulls on his coat to see that the team waits. Mac runs to join them as Tamika steps up, rocking a new business suit.

TAMIKA

Thought we'd arrive as a team.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

The team pushes past a crowd of NOISY REPORTERS.

JIMMY

You look...

Jimmy considers his next word, and Tamika interjects.

TAMIKA

Fabulous?

JIMMY

Took the word right out of my mouth.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

The CROWD roars as the Magic takes the floor. Teddy organizes a layup drill as Jimmy makes way to the Thunder's shoot around. Lloyd steps over to meet him.

They shake hands.

JIMMY

Good luck tonight, Lloyd.

Lloyd is controlled, politeness masking menace.

LLOYD

You too, Jimmy. However, the game plays out tonight, I'd just like to say upfront.

He leans in closer.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

No hard feelings.

JIMMY

Of course not.

LLOYD

See you out there then.

Jimmy studies Lloyd for a beat before walking away. Wade steps in to eye Lloyd with concern.

WADE

You sure about this, Lloyd?

LLOYD

Oh, yeah. Tonight, his girls get their official welcome to boys basketball.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 52 - MAGIC 40. Fenton bodies Brahma, knocking her to the floor as she shoots. The Thunder's NUMBER TWENTY rebounds her missed shot.

Jimmy is on the BAD REFEREE as the Thunder works up the floor.

JIMMY

Come on now! That's a foul!

The ball finds Howie inside. Joshua blocks his shot. Mac scoops up the loose ball to glide toward the easy bucket.

In the stands, Penny and Helen react as Howie takes out Mac from behind. The Bad Referee blows his whistle.

HELEN

The boys play too hard tonight. This is not right I think.

PENNY

No, it's not.

Cooper helps Mac up as Jimmy arrives.

COOPER

You okay, Mac?

MAC

I'll live.

JIMMY

Yeah?

MAC

Yeah, dad. I'm good.

Jimmy turns on the Bad Referee.

JIMMY

That never happens if you don't allow them to be thugs from the word jump.

BAD REFEREE  
Just letting the boys play, Coach.

JIMMY  
Oh, I understand now.

He squares off with Lloyd, and the benches clear.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
You're with this coward.

In the stands, his parents watch as Zak walks onto the court.

BARBARA  
Looks like our son has finally found  
a reason to swallow his pride.

BRUCE  
Yeah? What's that?

BARBARA  
Chivalry.

Lloyd and Jimmy continue to argue. Each team at their back.

JIMMY  
You heard me. You're a coward!

LLOYD  
Oh, put a sock in it, O'Grady!

Zak steps between them.

ZAK  
I'd like to play now.

LLOYD  
Why would you want to do that, kid?

ZAK  
Because, I'm sick of bullies.

Howie gets a hard stare before Zak turns to Jimmy.

ZAK (CONT'D)  
The best answer is to beat them on  
the court, right?

JIMMY  
That's right, buddy.

Zak looks to his teammates.

ZAK

I'm sorry, you guys. I've been a big jerk, but I'm hoping you'll give me a chance to turn that around.

BRAHNA

Everyone deserves a second chance.

STARLA

I totally agree.

JIMMY

Anyone disagree?

All eyes swing to Mac. She sighs.

MAC

Promise I won't regret this.

ZAK

I promise.

MAC

Okay then, Zak Carson.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Mac's VOICE OVER is heard as she takes a pass from Zak to score. The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 52 - MAGIC 42.

MAC (V.O.)

Let's play some basketball.

They retreat on defense.

MAC (CONT'D)

How did that feel?

ZAK

How'd what feel?

MAC

Your first pass. Did it feel weird?

ZAK

Just be ready. I'm stirring things up.

The Thunder brings the ball down, and works it inside to Fenton. Zak's well-timed double team causes the turnover.

Mac scoops up the ball, and passes ahead to Zak. He hits a racing Brahna with a perfect pass. She lays it up, and in.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 52 - MAGIC 44 as the Thunder works the ball up the floor to miss a three-pointer.

Jimmy and the Magic cheer as Zak pulls down the rebound. He drives up the floor to be stymied along the baseline.

Zak splits the double team to hit Mo'Nique. She pulls up, and shoots. The ball kisses the glass, and falls.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 52 - MAGIC 46. Lloyd signals for time, and the Bad Referee blows his whistle.

Lloyd regards his players as they gather around him.

LLOYD

Men? You're making me nervous.

Jimmy looks to his kids.

JIMMY

Look at their coach, people. You've got him scared.

TEDDY

This is a good thing, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Yes it is, my friend.

Lloyd holds a hand in. His players follow suit. None touch.

LLOYD

Remember, this game only honors winners. Figure out what you're doing, and don't let me down.

Jimmy puts his hand in, and the kids pile theirs on top.

JIMMY

Everyone knows what they're doing. Now... let's see if we can take this game from them.

Both teams CHANT loudly to break their huddles.

The crowd is electric around Penny and Helen as Howie inbound to Number Twenty. Mac's immediate foul has Jimmy clapping.

HELEN

Mac has fouled. Why does Jimmy clap?

PENNY

He does seem oddly happy about it.

Above them, Barbara leans in.

BARBARA

He's out of timeouts, and fouling stops the clock.

PENNY

Does this work?

BARBARA

With under two minutes to go, it's their best chance.

Number Twenty hits the first free throw, and then misses the second. Brahma rebounds to hit Zak with an outlet pass. Three quick passes, and Mo'Nique spins past Howie to score.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 53 - MAGIC 48. Howie inbound the ball to Fenton. Brahma fouls him to stop the clock.

Fenton bricks his first free throw, then his second. Brahma rebounds, and fires a pass to Mac. She leads the fast break to take Zak's return pass in for the score.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 53 - MAGIC 50. Lloyd calls out as Howie readies to inbound the ball.

LLOYD

Howie! Get the ball to Cooper!

Howie nods affirmatively. Cooper breaks open to receive the inbound. Zak commits the quick foul. Wade is impressed.

WADE

That's smart coaching, Lloyd.

LLOYD

I have my moments.

Back in the stands, Penny looks up at Barbara.

PENNY

Which one is yours?

BARBARA

The one who just fouled. Yours?

PENNY

The foulee. Sort of makes me the enemy, huh?

BARBARA

I think we girls can rise above.

Helen offers her hand. Barbara takes it.

HELEN

I am Helen.

BARBARA

Easy to see that you're Brahma's mother. You're both so pretty.

HELEN

Oh, I love her.

Penny takes Barbara's other hand.

PENNY

Penny.

BARBARA

Barbara.

Cooper buries his first free throw, and Lloyd calls timeout. The Bad Referee blows his whistle.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 54 - MAGIC 50. Lloyd looks at his team as they gather around him.

LLOYD

Congratulations, men. You're going to win, but I'm embarrassed for you that they came so close.

COOPER

They're pretty good, Lloyd.

LLOYD

They're losers, kid.

The kids huddle around Jimmy.

MO'NIQUE

We're not going to win, Coach.

JIMMY

No, Mo'Nique, we aren't. But, there are still victories to be taken from this game. We grew as a team tonight.

Jimmy puts his hand in. The kids pile theirs on top.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

And, I promise. We'll see them again.

Both teams CHANT loudly to take the floor. Jimmy has cleared his bench. He locks eyes with Zak to trade nods of approval.

Cooper makes the second free throw. Joshua grabs the ball, and inbounds to Starla.

She drives the floor to find Ananya behind the arc. Her trey beats the BUZZER.

The scoreboard reads: THUNDER 55 - MAGIC 53. The Thunder watch numbly as the Magic gather in celebration.

WADE

He has them believing, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Let them have their belief, Wade.  
I'll take the win.

**INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - NIGHT**

A clip of a highly festooned headstone plays behind Dusty.

DUSTY

Who knew that the death of a coach could bring such joy to an entire community? Who indeed!

Video of the Magic celebrating after the loss starts to play.

DUSTY (CONT'D)

And, speaking of inspiring. Jimmy O'Grady's team lost last night. So, why are they celebrating? I'm Dusty Cruz. The answer when we return.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A commercial plays on the big screen. Tamika's phone VIBRATES audibly as she watches with her family. She answers.

TAMIKA

Hi, Coach Teddy. We're on TV again.  
Isn't that fabulous?

**INT. PAPADOPOULOS HOME: PLAY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

In a room filled with computer systems; Teddy speaks into a headset as he studies the team's website on a large monitor.

TEDDY

Can we talk about how fabulous?

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tamika continues the conversation.

TAMIKA

We can. Call me back after the show.

She disconnects from the call.

**INT. PAPADOPOULOS HOME: PLAY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Teddy yanks his headset off, and hurries from the room.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tamika and her family watch their big screen as Dusty returns.

**INT. ESPN STUDIOS: SET - CONTINUOUS**

Clips of the Magic verses the Thunder run behind.

DUSTY

Welcome back. I'm Dusty Cruz. Most teams don't celebrate after a loss. Then, there's Jimmy O'Grady's Magic.

Post game video of the team talking to Reporters plays.

LOUD REPORTER

Mac? You lost. Why all the smiles?

MAC

The loss is a bummer, but we feel good about where we're headed.

RUDE REPORTER

Is that because Zak Carson finally decided to play?

ZAK

More like I finally came to my senses.

PEPPY REPORTER

Are you this team's best player?

ZAK

I play on the best team.

SKEPTICAL REPORTER

Five girls and five boys? The best?

BENNY

Ya gotta look past the parts, pal.

He pointedly addresses his teammates.

BENNY (CONT'D)

What should they see when they look at us, people?

ALL THE KIDS

BASKETBALL PLAYERS!

MAC

That's what makes us the best.

The video ends, and Dusty steps in.

DUSTY

If you're not following this special team, then you're missing out. I'm Dusty Cruz. Goodnight.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tamika's phone VIBRATES. She answers.

TAMIKA

You must really need to talk...  
Okay... When can we expect you?

The front door BELL rings. She looks at her family.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Guess who's coming to dinner.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A disheveled Teddy sits at the computer surrounded by Tamika and her family. Mo'Nique plucks a leaf from his hair.

MO'NIQUE

You have leaves in your hair, Coach.

TEDDY

I ran here. Took a few shortcuts.

SHANIQWA

In the dark? Boi?

TAMIKA

Boi? Is you crazy?

TEDDY

I may be, but here's what I know. I know computer coding, and commerce. The team's fifteen minutes of fame is ticking away. You can do some real business if you act now. I can help you with that.

TAMIKA

You'll have to run some bona fides by me, before I'll consider it.

TEDDY

I wrote a software that runs in every computer in the free world. Then, I sold it for an ungodly sum of money.

TAMIKA  
Just how ungodly?

TEDDY  
Third circle.

TAMIKA  
I'm listening.

**INT. ADDAMS HOME: FAMILY ROOM - LATER**

A last keystroke, and Teddy leans back in the chair. Tamika and her family study the slick NEW WEBSITE.

TEDDY  
These improvements will set you up to have some real influence. And, that's some big-time currency in today's world. Now, all you need is one more thing.

DARIUS  
What's that, Coach?

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - DAY**

Teddy's VOICE OVER answers as Darius takes Mo'Nique's pass.

TEDDY (V.O.)  
A winning streak.

**MONTAGE**

-Darius powers past two Warriors to sink the highly contested two-footer. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website. The headline reads: MAGIC WINS! The number of FOLLOWERS starts to climb.

-Starla weaves up the floor against the ROCKETS. She passes to Robbie. He lays the ball up, and in. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website with the headline: TWO IN A ROW! The number of FOLLOWERS climbs some more.

-The Lakers are a step behind as Benny swings the ball to Ananya. She drains the open three. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website. The headline reads: IT'S THREE! The number of FOLLOWERS climbs more.

-The Knicks work the ball inside. Joshua rejects the shot. Brahma chases down the ball to hit Zak with an outlet pass. He passes ahead to Mac. She hits the jumper. FREEZE FRAME.

-The "photo" appears on the website with the headline: MAKE THAT FOUR! The number of FOLLOWERS climbs more, and more.

**END OF MONTAGE**

A KNICKS PLAYER slices through the defense to score on the 76ers. The scoreboard reads: KNICKS 56 - 76ERS 51.

Jimmy and the team look on from the doorway.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
Are they, running our offense?

JIMMY  
The whole game.

The 76ers miss a last shot, and the Knicks burst into celebration as the final BUZZER sounds.

The Magic surges onto the floor.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Warmup, people.

TEDDY  
You heard Coach. Give me two lines.

Jimmy drifts toward the Knicks Head Coach as his team finishes trading postgame fives with the 76ers.

JIMMY  
A first win. Congratulations, Coach.

KNICKS HEAD COACH  
Being honest, you deserve the credit.

JIMMY  
How do you figure?

KNICKS HEAD COACH  
We ran your offense.

JIMMY  
I hadn't noticed. But, no matter.  
Your team took a leap forward. That's  
not an offense. That's coaching.

KNICKS HEAD COACH  
Thanks, Coach. That means a lot coming  
from you.

They shake hands, and Jimmy walks back to his team.

PENNY (O.S.)  
GO GET 'EM, COACH!

Jimmy's head turns. Penny sits with Helen and Barbara. Bruce a row behind. Jimmy waves, and the CROWD around them reacts. He eyes his team as the BUZZER sounds.

JIMMY  
You heard the lady, people.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

Jimmy's VOICE OVER is heard as Zak takes Joshua's return pass to score. The scoreboard reads: CELTICS 50 - MAGIC 64.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
Let's go get 'em!

Robbie steals the ball. The CROWD COUNTS DOWN as the kids swing it around until the final BUZZER sounds.

The team celebrates. FREEZE FRAME. The "photo" appears on the website. The headline reads: THE STREAK HITS FIVE! The number of FOLLOWERS skyrockets.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - EVENING**

Lloyd appears in the doorway, and beelines toward a stands packed with SPECTATORS. His eyes searching.

Penny sits between Helen and Barbara. Bruce a row behind. They see Lloyd climbing toward them.

HELEN  
You tell him you breakup, yes?

PENNY  
I did.

BARBARA  
Men can be so dense.

BRUCE  
Hey! Right here, Barb.

BARBARA  
Not you, Pooh. You're the exception.

She rolls her eyes, and the women laugh as Lloyd arrives.

LLOYD  
You having fun, babe?

PENNY  
Lloyd? I told you it's over.

LLOYD  
It's over when I say it is.

Bruce stands.

BRUCE  
Okay, bud. Push on.

LLOYD  
Or what?

BRUCE  
Your fall may cause a scene.

Lloyd eyes Penny.

LLOYD  
Now, it's over.

He retreats, and Bruce sits down to get a kiss from Barbara.

BARBARA  
Ooh, Pooh. Come sit next to mommy.

Shaniqwa pulls NICK GRANT, 40s, tall, African American and well-dressed, up the stands. She introduces him to the group.

SHANIQWA  
Hey, everyone. This is my man Nick.

PENNY  
Hi, Nick. I'm Penny, and this is Helen, Barbara, and her husband Bruce.

Bruce stands to shake Nick's hand.

BRUCE  
So, Nick? Where've you been? Could've used the extra testosterone around here, bud.

NICK  
Sorry, work's had me in New York.

BRUCE  
Yeah? What's the job?

NICK  
I work for the NBA.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - LATER**

CHEERS fill the air as Starla brings the ball up the floor. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 54 - 76ERS 54.

She stops atop the key. The 76ers defense sags off of her, closing down all passing lanes, daring her to shoot. Starla's eyes narrow, considering the moment, before she let's it fly.

The ball hits home as the BUZZER sounds. The scoreboard reads:  
MAGIC 56 - 76ERS 54.

Jimmy eyes Starla as the team mobs her in celebration.

JIMMY

Starla? I thought you don't like to  
shoot.

MAC/BRAHNA/MO'NIQUE/ANANYA

Doesn't mean she can't!

STARLA

Totally doesn't.

The team hoists her onto their shoulders. Tamika captures it  
all as Shaniqwa steps over with Nick.

SHANIQWA

Coach, this is my man Nick.

They shake hands.

JIMMY

Nick Grant. You're Nick Grant.

NICK

I am.

JIMMY

Shaniqwa? Your man played power  
forward for Chicago.

SHANIQWA

I'm well aware.

JIMMY

So, Nick? How's retirement?

NICK

Wouldn't know. I'm here on business.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

An EXCITED CROWD celebrates. NEWSPEOPLE and CAMERA CREWS  
abound. The surrounding area thick with Satellite Trucks. A  
CABLE NEWSWOMAN, and her CAMERAMAN work near the door.

CABLE NEWSWOMAN

As you can see, the mood here is  
quite festive as we wait for America's  
newest social media sensations.

There is a CHEER as the team pushes through the doors. Nick  
follows. Tamika holds up a hand, and the crowd quiets.

TAMIKA

It's a school night, so let's get right to it, shall we?

CABLE NEWSWOMAN

Why is Nick Grant here?

TAMIKA

I'll let him tell you.

NICK

I'm Nick Grant, Senior Vice President of Public Relations for the NBA. The Commissioner has invited the Magic to play their championship game at this year's NBA All-Star weekend in Los Angeles.

JIMMY

And, we have accepted.

Penny, Helen, Barbara, and Bruce join in the crowd's applause.

NICK

Now, we need the Thunder to accept to make it official.

LLOYD (O.S.)

You're on!

The crowd parts to reveal Lloyd.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I can think of nothing better than beating this guy again. The bigger the stage, the better.

The Cable Newswoman plays to the camera.

CABLE NEWSWOMAN

There you have it, America. It's the Magic verses the Thunder in a City of Angels grudge match. We now return you to the NBA game of the night.

**INT. AD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

An NBA game plays on a television on a wall thick with sports awards and memorabilia. It goes MUTE. FATHER LUIS REYES, 50s, tall and Puerto Rican, puts the remote aside.

He hits a button on a desktop intercom.

FATHER REYES

Please ring Father O'Toole for me.

**INT. AD'S OFFICE: ANTECHAMBER - CONTINUOUS**

MARY MARGARET speaks into the intercom. Block lettering on the door behind her desk reads: ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.

MARY MARGARET  
Right away, Father.

**INT. AD'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

Mary Margaret's VOICE OVER crackles from the intercom.

MARY MARGARET (V.O.)  
He's holding for you.

FATHER REYES  
Thank you, Mary Margaret.

He swivels to grab the phone.

FATHER REYES (CONT'D)  
Francis... I owe you a steak dinner.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MORNING**

Teddy and the kids shoot around. Jimmy steps in.

JIMMY  
Alright, people. Let's play a game.

MAC  
A game? Who are you, and what have you done with my father?

JIMMY  
We're having fun today, Mac. Any objection?

Mac shakes her head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Good. I have just one rule.

MAC  
I knew there was a catch.

JIMMY  
Anyone can bring the ball up.

JOSHUA  
Can we do that, Coach? Just have anyone bring the ball up?

JIMMY  
You can dribble, can't you?

ZAK  
Coach? Where do I spot up?

JIMMY  
Anywhere you want, buddy. It's time  
for you to --

ZAK  
Stir things up.

JIMMY  
Exactly! I'm turning you loose,  
people. Get to an open spot, and run  
the play.

MAC  
That does sound fun!

JIMMY  
Good. Here's the catch. There will  
be no ticky-tack fouls. Hand checks,  
push offs and holds will go unnoticed.

MO'NIQUE  
What's the point of that, Coach?

JIMMY  
Our opponent plays dirty.

**INT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy's VOICE OVER finishes as Mac spins out of the hold Robbie  
has on her pinnie to take a pass and score.

JIMMY (V.O.)  
Best we remind ourselves now.

There are push offs, hand checks, bumps and holds, as well  
as, crisp ball movement, fast breaks, contested buckets and  
lots of fun in this hard fought scrimmage game.

Hoots and hollers sound as the game ends.

DARIUS  
Yeah! I like bringing the ball up!

MAC  
We sure play faster this way.

ZAK  
Thanks, Coach. For everything.

JIMMY  
You earned this. You all have.

Jimmy holds his hand out. Everyone piles theirs on top, and on a silent three count they chant TEAM.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
I'll see you soon.

Benny gives Jimmy a hug. One by one, the kids follow suit.

BENNY  
Love ya, Coach.

STARLA  
Totally love you, Coach.

ANANYA  
Yes, Coach. Love you.

JOSHUA  
Me too, Coach.

ROBBIE  
Yeah, sounds right.

Jimmy gets double hugged by the cousins.

DARIUS/MO'NIQUE  
Love you, Coach.

Zak offers his hand, and Jimmy pulls him in. The two hug.

**EXT. MEMORIAL RECREATION CENTER: GYM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jimmy, Teddy, and the girls step out. Not a Reporter in sight.

TEDDY  
The circus has left town, Jimmy.

JIMMY  
It's just pulled up stakes. We'll catch up with it again.

Teddy gives Jimmy a hug.

TEDDY  
One more game under the bigtop.

He throws an arm over Brahma's shoulder.

TEDDY (CONT'D)  
Come now, too smart, too pretty, and too tall. Let's do brunch.

Brahma pulls away, and Teddy instantly knows why.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I know, I know. It was a senior moment. I swear.

BRAHNA

A senior moment, dad?

TEDDY

Might even have been a stroke.

BRAHNA

Dad? I don't want a nickname. I'm just me. Not tall stuff, or legs, and especially not Brahnasaurus.

JIMMY

Brahnasaurus? Who calls her that?

MAC

The boys at school.

TEDDY

I had no idea, Brahna. I'm sorry.

BRAHNA

It's not easy being a tall girl.

TEDDY

Your mom is tall.

BRAHNA

Mom is beautiful, dad.

TEDDY

So are you. I'll bet those mean boys just have a secret crush.

BRAHNA

Eewh, dad. I just threw up in my mouth a little.

TEDDY

They're that mean?

BRAHNA

No. That short.

She busts out with a pained grin.

BRAHNA (CONT'D)

Promise me. No more stupid nicknames.

TEDDY

I promise. Brunch now?



MO'NIQUE  
Who came up with these?

SHANIQWA  
That would be Coach Teddy.

JIMMY  
Really?

TEDDY  
Yeah, I bought some stock.

MAC  
Cool. Which one's mine?

SHANIQWA  
Number four; of course. Come now,  
children. Find your number.

Starla tugs her jersey off its hanger.

STARLA  
Found mine! Why's it blue inside?

TEDDY  
It's reversible. Gives us choices.

STARLA  
Totally easy choice for me, because  
like it says on my jersey.

Starla holds her jersey up. The name reads: PRETTY IN PINK.

STARLA (CONT'D)  
I'm pretty in pink.

Benny wears his to reveal the name on back reads: ALL HEART.

BENNY  
I gotta nifty nickname too.

Mo'Nique and Ananya show their jerseys. Mo'nique's name reads:  
DOM'MO'NIQUE. Ananya's reads: NOTHING BUT NET.

MO'NIQUE  
Mine is perfect.

ANANYA  
Yes, quite perfect.

Darius, and then, Joshua show their jerseys. Darius' reads:  
BRINGS THE THUNDER, Joshua's: DOCTOR SWAT.

DARIUS  
Yeah, I'm feeling it.

JOSHUA

Look, ma. I'm a doctor.

Robbie looks his over, perplexed. It reads: VELCRO VATO.

ROBBIE

Velcro Vato?

TEDDY

You stick to your man.

ROBBIE

Epic!

Zak's reads: STIRS THINGS UP.

ZAK

They are sharp.

Hiding hers behind her back, Mac looks beyond Teddy.

MAC

Yeah, but Teddy?

Teddy turns. Brahma stares at him. Her jersey unexamined.

BRAHNA

Dad? You promised. No nicknames.

TEDDY

No. I promised no stupid nicknames.

He holds her jersey up, stopping her mid-sentence.

BRAHNA

I've told you. I'm me. Just --

Brahma giggles happily, and hugs her father tight.

MAC

So? Don't keep us in suspense. What's it say?

She shows off her jersey. It reads: JUST ME.

BRAHNA

My dad is awesome.

TEDDY

You hear that, Jimmy? I'm awesome.

JIMMY

This I know.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: VIP ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER**

Father Reyes enters. Nick steps up to lead him away.

NICK  
Thanks for coming, Father. Let's get  
you to your seat.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COURT-SIDE - MOMENTS LATER**

The arena is filled to capacity. The HOLLYWOOD CROWD buzzing as Nick shows Father Reyes to his seat, and hands him a badge.

NICK  
Here's your floor pass, Father. I'll  
see you after the game.

Nick exits. The Father sits down beside KEVIN BACON.

KEVIN BACON  
A floor pass? Pretty cool. How'd you  
score that, Padre?

FATHER REYES  
Friends in high places, my son.

KEVIN BACON  
Yeah? Me too.

Next to Kevin Bacon sits OPRAH WINFREY.

OPRAH WINFREY  
Hi, Father. What brings you here?

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: MAGIC LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Mac's jersey reads: THE REASON as she ties her shoe, the team dressed, boys in blue, and girls in pink. Tamika pops her head in to catch Mac's eye. She shows off her new shoes.

MAC  
Look, Tamika. The team has its own  
shoe. Teddy bought some stock.

TAMIKA  
I know, and I brought you children a  
little something fabulous myself.

Tamika ushers CAITLIN CLARK and KEVIN DURANT inside.

MAC  
Wow! Caitlin Clark, and Kevin Durant.  
You two are...

Mac looks around the room for a quick consensus.

ALL THE KIDS  
The greatest!

CAITLIN CLARK  
Thanks, kids. We think you are too.

KEVIN DURANT  
And, everyone here is rooting for  
you.

MAC  
Everyone?

Nick enters.

NICK  
It's game time.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER**

The team files through the doorway to discover the way lined with the NBA's RISING STARS. The kids trade five with each as they head toward the basketball court.

The last calls out to turn them short of the entrance.

RISING STAR  
Hey, Magic! Just do it.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - MOMENTS LATER**

There are CHEERS as both teams take the floor to warmup at opposite ends. Jimmy and Lloyd join Nick as Dan is escorted onto the floor by a LAKER GIRL carrying an oversized cheque.

Nick speaks into a mic.

NICK  
On behalf of the NBA I am honored to  
present this check to Youth League  
Director Dan Johnson. We are pleased  
to support his wonderful program.

Dan receives an ovation as the Laker Girl leads him away.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Now, let's play some basketball.

There are CHEERS as the BUZZER sounds. Jimmy offers his hand.

JIMMY  
Have a good game, Coach.

Lloyd brushes him off with the old withdrawn hand taunt.

LLOYD

See you in the winner's circle, loser.

Jimmy eyes Nick as Lloyd walks away.

JIMMY

Bit of an oxymoron, don't you think?

NICK

Most definitely.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - MOMENTS LATER**

Penny watches as Jimmy joins his team. He waves to the crowd, and she unwittingly waves back. Everyone notices.

HELEN

Oh, darling. You are so in love.

BRUCE

Yup, you got it bad, lady.

PENNY

Maybe.

Her friends stare.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Okay, you got me. I love him. I love Jimmy O'Grady.

The HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE behind them scoffs.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE

You, and every woman here, hon.

BARBARA

Yes, but she actually knows him.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE

Yeah?

Penny nods, and the woman eyes her HOOCHIE FRIEND.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE (CONT'D)

Hear that, Muriel? She's with Jimmy O'Grady.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COMMENTARY BOX - CONTINUOUS**

From an elevated platform between the benches, Dusty, and play-by-play announcer, BETH MOWINS, overlook the court.

DUSTY

Hello. I'm Dusty Cruz, and my broadcast partner today is, the one, the only, Beth Mowins.

BETH MOWINS

It's great to be here, Dusty. There are sports stories that will live on in the hearts of Americans forever. Jimmy O'Grady, and his basketball team are one of these stories. They have captured the imagination, and an entire nation is rooting for one more miraculous win.

The crowd behind cheers as the BUZZER sounds.

DUSTY

It's the Magic verses the Thunder for the Championship.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS**

Lloyd puts his hand in. His players follow. Not a one touches. Jimmy holds his hand in. All his kids pile on. The teams CHANT to take the floor.

The first half is physical. The Thunder meeting every challenge with hard fouls. The girls ice-cold shooting has the Magic battling from behind throughout.

Ananya misses a jumper as the BUZZER sounds.

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 22 - THUNDER 31. Beth Mowins' VOICE OVER is heard as the teams head to the locker rooms.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)

Can Jimmy O'Grady's team pull one last rabbit out of the hat? Or, has the magic finally run out on their Cinderella season?

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: MAGIC LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

A dejected Magic team sits. Jimmy looks the girls over.

JIMMY

Ladies, you're tighter than a banjo string out there. What gives?

MAC

You heard, dad. Everyone here is rooting for us.

JIMMY

How's that different than back home?

STARLA

Everyone totally knows us there.

ANANYA

Yes, Coach. They are our friends.

TEDDY

Hey, Jimmy. I have this.

JIMMY

Yeah? Team's all yours, Coach.

TEDDY

Girls? The people out there have followed you online all season.

MO'NIQUE

Facebook friends aren't real friends.

TEDDY

Normally, but we've shared something very special with them. And, because of that, they have come to feel a great affection for this team.

BRAHNA

Are you saying they love us?

TEDDY

Just like back home.

BRAHNA

That's really neat when you look at it that way, dad.

TEDDY

So? We're good then?

Mac looks around. The girls nod in collective agreement.

MAC

Yeah, that helps. Thanks, Teddy.

TEDDY

Great! Now, can all of you do something for me.

BENNY

Sure, Coach. Just name it.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - MOMENTS LATER**

Light fills the corridor's mouth as Teddy's VOICE OVER answers.

TEDDY (V.O.)

Pick a color!

A CHEER erupts as Benny flies from the light clad in a pink-bodied jersey. His teammates follow, each wearing the color.

The second half action is fierce. Each team giving as good as they get. The girls renewed shooting touch, the difference, as the Magic methodically cuts into the Thunder's lead.

Mo'Nique sinks a free throw, and Lloyd signals timeout. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 37 - THUNDER 42. Beth Mowin's VOICE OVER narrates as the crowd stands in ovation.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)

The Magic have caught fire, and everyone here is loving it. That is everyone with the possible exception of Thunder Coach, Lloyd Skolnicki.

In the Thunder's huddle.

LLOYD

They only have one player. And, he's wearing pink!

HOWIE

They're better than you think, dad.

LLOYD

You're an embarrassment, boy.

Lloyd angrily turns on Cooper.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Cooper! You're benched.

COOPER

Me? What for?

LLOYD

Your attitude poisons my team.

Number Twenty mouths HIS TEAM. The Other Players shrug.

WADE

But, Lloyd? Cooper's the only starter that's not in foul trouble. We need him out there while the others sit.

LLOYD

And, play all the scrubs? Not even  
for an ESPY.

He scans his bench. His eyes land on Number Twenty.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Number twenty, you're in.

NUMBER TWENTY

I have a name, Coach.

LLOYD

Just try not to be worthless.

The Thunder chants WIN to take the floor. The Magic still  
huddles as the FEMALE REFEREE steps over.

FEMALE REFEREE

Putting a team on the floor, Coach?

JIMMY

Yes, ma'am. We'll be there.

Jimmy takes a last measure of his team.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Keep pounding the rock inside.

The kids search each other's face in uneasy silence.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What now, people?

MAC

Well, we were hoping that you'd turn  
us loose. Let us have some fun.

BRAHNA

Like you promised.

JIMMY

I did promise, didn't I?

The kids nod.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Alright then, people.

He puts his hand in, and the kids follow.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Let's have some fun.

A silent three, and they chant MAGIC.

Set free, the Magic uses quickness, and guile to run past the Thunder. Number Twenty misses a shot. Fenton is whistled for a foul on Brahma as they fight for the rebound.

Lloyd eyes the scoreboard. It reads: MAGIC 51 - THUNDER 49. He signals for time, and the Female Referee blows her whistle. She escorts Fenton to the Thunder's bench.

FEMALE REFEREE  
That's five on him, Coach.

Fenton wilts under Lloyd's withering stare.

LLOYD  
You disappointment me.

Lloyd turns on Number Twenty.

LLOYD (CONT'D)  
And, you! Don't shoot again!

WADE  
Lloyd? Howie is a whistle away from fouling out too. For goodness sake, put Cooper back in.

Cooper stands.

COOPER  
Please, Lloyd. I think I know how to turn this game around.

LLOYD  
I'm not interested in what you think you know, Cooper. Sit down.

He coldly eyes Wade.

LLOYD (CONT'D)  
And, Wade. I'm the coach. You're just the guy I kept around because he was funny. Hear me?

WADE  
Yeah, loud and clear.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS**

Penny, Helen, Barbara, and Bruce see that Cooper still sits.

HELEN  
Cooper still sits. Something is wrong, yes?

PENNY  
Yes, with his coach.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS**

Lloyd grabs Howie as the BUZZER sounds.

LLOYD  
Show me you're not a loser, boy.

Howie pulls away to take the floor. He bearhugs Brahma as soon as she is handed the ball to be whistled for his fifth.

Lloyd is dumbstruck as Howie takes a seat on the bench next to Fenton and Wade. The Female Referee snaps him out of it.

FEMALE REFEREE  
Coach? Who you putting in?

He scans his players.

LLOYD  
Cooper! I'm giving you another chance.  
Don't let me down.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS**

Beth Mowin's VOICE OVER is heard as Penny, Helen, Barbara, and Bruce react to Cooper sprinting onto the court.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)  
Cooper Lang has reentered the game.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS**

Cooper steps up on Mac. Zak sets a pick on him as Mac takes Brahma's inbound pass to hit the open jumper. The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 53 - THUNDER 49.

Lloyd throws his hands up in disgust.

LLOYD  
Oh, I give up.

Cooper signals timeout, and the WHISTLE sounds. The team gathers around him. Lloyd is stupefied as Howie and Fenton get up to join the huddle. The Other Players follow.

Wade shakes his head as Lloyd sinks into the empty bench.

LLOYD (CONT'D)  
It's mutiny. Mutiny I say.

Lloyd's surrender does not go unnoticed.

TEDDY  
Looks like Lloyd's quit.

JIMMY  
But, his team hasn't. Cooper can  
shoot the lights out.

Jimmy eyes Robbie.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Robbie? Make him work for it.

In the Thunder's huddle.

HOWIE  
We can't beat them playing my dad's  
way.

COOPER  
So, let's play another way.

Jimmy takes a final measure of his team.

JIMMY  
If I haven't told you before, people.  
Thank you. You are a magic bunch.

The BUZZER sounds, and Jimmy puts a hand in. The kids follow  
suit, chanting MAGIC as they break their huddle. They take  
the floor to pass the Thunder Players returning to their bench.

Lloyd glares as they take seats nearest to Wade.

LLOYD  
All of you have ruined this for me.  
Well thanks for that, you bums.

Cooper takes the inbound to be dogged by Robbie as he pushes  
the ball up the floor. He stops and swings it away. Three  
more passes, and the Thunder scores on a give and go.

Teddy turns to Jimmy.

TEDDY  
Jimmy?

JIMMY  
I saw, Teddy.

Beth Mowins' VOICE OVER calls the action.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)  
Oh my! The Thunder just took a page  
out of Jimmy O'Grady's playbook to  
cut the lead to two.

Mac bodies up on Cooper as they set up for the inbound.

MAC  
You guys ran our play.

COOPER  
We're going to try and beat you at  
your own game.

MAC  
Really?

She pushes off to receive Brahma's inbound pass.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Well, good luck with that.

Mac passes to Mo'Nique. She floats a pass to Zak. He runs under it to pass back to Mac. She lays it up, and in.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)  
The pass is to Addams. She lofts the  
ball ahead to Carson. He runs it  
down, and dishes back to MacKenzie  
O'Grady on the fly. She scores!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 55 - THUNDER 51.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
It's a four point Magic lead with  
just over three minutes to go.

Cooper works down the floor, Robbie all over him.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Cooper Lang has the ball. Robbie  
Cárdenes giving him quite a battle.

His team cycles through the play until the ball finds Cooper again. He lets fly to drain the contested three.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The Thunder swings the ball around  
the key. Lang has it at the wing. He  
shoots, and hits the three!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 55 - THUNDER 54.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The Magic's lead is one.

Lloyd sits up, suddenly interested.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The Thunder are a different team  
 with Lang back in the game.

Jimmy works the sideline as Zak walks the ball up the floor.

JIMMY  
 Find the open shot.

The Magic sets up. Mo'Nique breaks open, and Zak fires her  
 the ball. She spins into the paint to score.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)  
 The Magic are on offense. Zak Carson  
 fires a pass to Mo'Nique Addams. She  
 spins into the paint, and scores!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 57 - THUNDER 54.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The Magic are up by three.

Robbie mirrors his every move as Cooper works down the floor  
 to shoot the ball. His trey rattles home, and Lloyd stands.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Lang brings it down. Cárdenes is in  
 his hip pocket. Lang pulls up to  
 launch another three. It's good!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 57 - THUNDER 57.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The game is tied with a minute-twenty  
 to go.

Jimmy signals for calm as Zak walks the ball up again.

JIMMY  
 We're okay. Just run the play.

The kids run their offense until the ball finds Brahma  
 underneath the basket. She banks her shot in for two.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)  
 Carson swings the ball to O'Grady.  
 She passes to Cárdenes. He bounces  
 the ball into Addams. Brahma  
 Papadopoulos is knocking at the  
 backdoor. Addams feeds her for two!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 59 - THUNDER 57.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The Magic retake the lead with twenty-eight seconds on the clock.

Cooper dribbles down the sideline to be trapped by Robbie. He scans the floor. A Magic defender in every passing lane.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Lang drives down the sideline. Stymied by Cárdenes! He picks up his dribble. The Magic doing a great job closing down those passing lanes with fifteen seconds to go.

Number Twenty pops open.

NUMBER TWENTY  
 Here! Here!

He takes Cooper's pass and pivots to face the defense. Both teams grappling as the Thunder run their last play.

Jimmy works the sideline. Everyone on their feet.

JIMMY  
 Stick with your man!

Cooper cuts the lane. Robbie right with him. The crowd starts to COUNT DOWN as Number Twenty makes his pass.

The ball flies toward Cooper as he works out of the paint. Robbie pokes the pass away, and Lloyd slumps into his chair. The ball bounds past the arc to find Number Twenty again.

Cooper points to the basket.

COOPER  
 Shoot it! Shoot it!

Number Twenty closes his eyes to heave the ball at the basket. The shot sailing over Mac's outstretched hand.

Beth Mowins' VOICE OVER makes the final call as the ball banks off the glass, and falls for the miracle three at the BUZZER.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)  
 It's good!

The scoreboard reads: MAGIC 59 - THUNDER 60.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 And, this magic season is over! The Thunder win, sixty to fifty-nine.

Mac falls to her knees as the Thunder celebrates. High tops step into view, and Mac looks up. Howie offers his hand.

HOWIE  
Hey, MacKenzie. Respect.

MAC  
Do me a favor, will you?

Mac takes his hand, and he pulls her up.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Call me Mac.

HOWIE  
I'd like that.

Cooper steps in to hug her.

COOPER  
Mac! You were great.

MAC  
You were pretty amazing yourself,  
Cooper. Congratulations.

COOPER  
Could've gone either way.

MAC  
Glad to hear that, cuz I think we  
should go best of five.

COOPER  
Would you settle for a high five?

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS**

Helen, Barbara, and Bruce eye Penny as the teams trade five on the court below.

HELEN  
But, darling? You must.

BARBARA  
Helen's right, Penny. Go tell Jimmy  
how you feel.

The Hollywood Hoochie leans over again.

HOLLYWOOD HOOCHIE  
If you don't, hon. I will.

BRUCE  
That is not going to happen.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS**

POLITE APPLAUSE sounds as Nick steps into the circle, mic in hand. A Laker Girl carrying a large trophy at his side.

NICK

What a phenomenal game. To the fans in attendance, and across the nation, thank you for being a part of it. Now, the Thunder. To Coach Skolnicki, and his players, congratulations.

The Laker Girl holds the trophy out for Number Twenty.

NICK (CONT'D)

You are League Champions!

There are GASPS as Lloyd boxes the boy out to steal it away.

LLOYD

I knew you'd come up big, kid.

NUMBER TWENTY

Yeah, Coach? What's my name?

LLOYD

Is that really important?

NUMBER TWENTY

No, Coach. You got your trophy.

A deluge of BOOS rain down as Lloyd holds the trophy aloft.

LLOYD

I'm the best!

The crowd cheers as the Laker Girl ushers Lloyd from sight.

NICK

And now, the Magic. You may not have been victorious today, but you have won our hearts all the same.

Lloyd watches from the shadows. He hugs the trophy tight.

LLOYD

Yeah, but I'm holding the trophy.

Nick waves Father Reyes over.

NICK

We may not have a trophy for you, but nonetheless, we do have something special to share with everyone here.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COURT-SIDE - CONTINUOUS**

Father Reyes high fives Oprah Winfrey, and then, Kevin Bacon as Shaniqwa and Tamika step up to invite him onto the floor.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS**

Shaniqwa and Tamika escort Father Reyes to center court.

NICK

Coach, this is Father Luis Reyes.

JIMMY

To what do I owe the honor, Father?

FATHER REYES

A mutual friend of ours, Father Francis O'Toole, sent me your way.

MAC

Father Frank?

FATHER REYES

That's correct, young lady. And, he told me that your father is the man for the job. I've come to agree. You see, I'm with Saint Agnes Prep, and we need a basketball coach.

MAC

The all girls school back home?

FATHER REYES

Do you think he'd be interested?

Mac locks eyes with her father.

MAC

Dad? If you don't take the shot.

Jimmy nods as he weighs her words. A smile growing on his face. His eyes dance as he turns back to Father Reyes.

JIMMY

Are you paying?

FATHER REYES

Handsomely.

JIMMY

So, what's the team's name?

FATHER REYES

The Lady Lambs.

JIMMY

Well. Alright then, slap a skirt on me. I'm a Lady Lamb.

The Crowd goes bananas as they shake hands. The CHEERING rocks the stands above him, and Lloyd's eye begins to twitch.

LLOYD

Ha! Big deal.

Nick puts his arm around Jimmy's shoulder.

NICK

Wow, Coach! That's a big deal. Anything you'd like to say?

The arena goes SILENT as Jimmy takes the mic.

JIMMY

What's youth sports without things to teach? Commitment, self discipline, mental toughness, teamwork, sportsmanship, and resilience. These are the things that sports, done right, teaches our children. The measurement of a winner is not by victory alone, but in the all out effort in pursuit of that goal. That's what makes a winner.

Penny's shouts turns Jimmy's head.

PENNY (O.S.)

JIMMY! JIMMY!

He sees her climbing down the crowded stands.

JIMMY

PENNY!

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS**

Jimmy wades into the stands. Penny beams to see him coming. The crowd parts as they meet.

PENNY

I think we should now.

JIMMY

Why now?

PENNY

Because I love you, Jimmy.

JIMMY

I love you too, Penny.

They kiss, and the crowd cheers loudly.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS**

Mac and Cooper high five as everyone on the floor celebrates. Lloyd groans as his trophy falls apart in his arms. His eye twitching uncontrollably.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: COMMENTARY BOX - CONTINUOUS**

Beth Mowins and Dusty look down on the celebration.

BETH MOWINS

Now, that's a fairytale ending.

DUSTY

Just goes to show you.

**INT. CRYPTO.COM ARENA: STANDS - CONTINUOUS**

The duo's VOICE OVERS wrap it up as the kiss continues.

DUSTY (V.O.)

Sometimes you lose the game, but you still win at life. I'm Dusty Cruz.

BETH MOWINS (V.O.)

And, I'm Beth Mowins.

DUSTY/BETH MOWINS (V.O.)

Goodnight.