

DREAM BOY

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARK-DAY

BEN(10), short and thin, has a much smaller body than kids of similar age. Ben stands beside a basketball court. He brings a basketball and tries to join kids who have already started a game. He walks back and forth with his head down. He sits by the court and waits for people to end the game. He keeps his head down, and keeps whispering nervously. He mutters and practices what he is going to say.

BEN

(light voice)

Hi,...Can I join you? I...I...have
a ball signed by Kobe!

Ben walks back and forth, talk to himself and rehearsing what he would say to those kids.

BEN (CONT'D)

Nonono, that won't work. Hi, I'm
Ben. Would you mind if I joined you
guys?

Ben grasps his head, and he is frustrated that he can't find good words to start the conversation.

The group is finishing their game. Ben talks to himself for a while, and starts to walk toward them. The group is having a rest, they talk and laugh loudly. Ben is afraid to get close to them. He holds the basketball tightly, and walks to them. Some kids notice Ben as he gets closer, but they ignore him. Ben stands beside them for a while, and waits for the group to start the conversation. Some kids in the group are gossiping about him.

GROUP MEMBER A

Anthony, look at that boy. Haha, he
must want to join us.

ANTHONY(11), the leader of the group is tall, strong, and muscular. Anthony glimpses Ben, then continues their chat. Everybody enjoys their talk, so no one wants to talk to Ben. Ben decides to introduce himself.

BEN

(light voice)

Hi...I'm Ben. Would you mind...

Anthony stands up and pushes Ben offensively.

ANTHONY

Who do you think you are? We don't play with kindergarten babies.

The group laughs at Ben out loud. Anthony turns back and packs his stuff.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Let's go. Let's find another place without dwarfs.

The group starts to leave while laughing.

GROUP MEMBER B

Go home and find your mama. Kindergarten babies cannot play basketball.

Ben still stands there, he doesn't give up. He asks again.

BEN

Please, just a few minutes. I really want to find someone to play basketball, even just once.

Anthony stops packing, turns around and looks at Ben. Anthony looks toward Ben for a few seconds.

ANTHONY

Okay, friends. Let's play with him, so that he can give up his basketball dream.

The group listens to Anthony, and starts to separate the team. Ben is excited. He tightens his shoes, and gets ready to play.

The game starts. Everytime someone passes the ball to Ben, he cannot really catch the ball. It seems like Ben's speed is much slower than others, he cannot really catch up the game.

Five minutes later, Anthony stops the game. Everyone is just warmed up except Ben. Ben is breathing heavily and fast, his face looks pale.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

That's why we don't wanna play with you. You can't run at the same speed, you're not as strong as us. Basketball is only for people who can run and have muscles.

The group leaves, laughing at Ben. Ben squats down and tries to catch his breath.

He stares in the direction the group is leaving. Ben looks at the basketball without any focus. Kids around the playground are gossiping about what just happened, but no one comes to Ben.

Ben decides to get home.

EXT. STREET- EVENING

Ben walks alone with one hand holding the basketball. Ben is walking toward the sunset.

INT. BEN'S HOUSE-EVENING

JANE (34), Ben's mother, is preparing dinner for Ben in the kitchen. Jane notices Ben coming back, and she sees Ben is holding the basketball. Jane stops what she is doing.

JANE
Sweetie, come here.

Ben is going upstairs when he hears his mom calling. Ben goes downstairs with the basketball, and goes toward Jane.

As Jane walks toward Ben, the phone rings.

JANE (CONT'D)
Hi, this is Jane.

NURSE (O.S.)
Good evening, Miss. This is from Children Hospital downtown. We just want to track how Ben is doing these days. Any discomfort?

JANE
Oh, hi. No, Ben is pretty good these days.

NURSE (O.S.)
That's nice. But remember don't let him do any strenuous exercises, his heart wouldn't allow him to do that.

JANE
Yes, I will keep reminding him that. Thanks for your call.

NURSE (O.S.)
No problem, that's our job. Call us if anything happens.

Jane hangs up the phone. Ben is standing beside her.

BEN

Mom.

Ben keeps his head down. Jane can feel Ben's sadness, so she hugs Ben.

JANE

It's okay, son. You wanna tell me what happened today?

Jane releases Ben, and looks at him. Ben strokes the basketball, still keeping his head down.

BEN

I was trying to join some people to play basketball today, but I can't catch up with them, I was so slow, and not strong enough

Ben is getting excited as he is talking, Jane strokes Ben's head. Ben raises his head, and looks into Jane's eyes.

BEN (CONT'D)

Mom, I really want to play basketball. Playing basketball is my dream! Everytime I ask others to play with me, nobody accepts me. Do I really look too small, too short to play basketball?

Jane looks at Ben full of motherly love.

JANE

Ben, you know what disease you have right now. Right?

Ben nods his head.

JANE (CONT'D)

And I just got a call from the hospital, they told me you really need to stay away from exercise like playing basketball. You really can't do those things. I'm sorry.

Jane talks softly, patiently. Ben looks grim, and nods his head.

JANE (CONT'D)

Don't do any strenuous sports.
Cardiopathy can take away your life
any time, the only thing we can do
is avoid any thing that would
stimulate your heart. Stay with
mommy as long as you can, okay?

Jane nearly cries.

Ben nods his head, no words.

EXT. BEN'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Ben is lying on the bed, and prepares to sleep. He turns his body, and stares at the poster hanging on the wall. It is a poster of Kobe Bryant.

BEN (V.O.)

Can I play basketball? Even once...
before cardiopathy takes away my
life

Ben continues to whisper, then he falls asleep.

EXT. STREET-DAY

Ben brings the basketball with him. He walks toward the basketball court.

BEN

Ben, this is your last chance.
Today is your last day to stay with
basketball.

EXT. PARK-DAY

Ben sees the same group of people as yesterday, and he is afraid to talk to them. Ben tries to get away from them, but the group notices him.

ANTHONY

Hey! Friend from kindergarten...

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT-DAY

Ben walks away, he tries not to hear those offensive words. Ben walks without any direction. Finally, he gets to an empty basketball court. Ben holds the basketball and looks at the basket. Ben decides to play alone.

Ben starts with copying how basketball players do on the TV. Quickly, Ben feels tired. His breath starts to get quick and heavy.

Ben stops to have a rest. He sees Anthony's team is coming.

ANTHONY
Hey, kindergarten baby!

Anthony starts yelling while he is still far away from Ben.

Ben tries to ignore them. He looks at somewhere else. Soon, Anthony is standing right in front of Ben. Anthony shields the sun completely, we can see Anthony's shadow completely cover Ben. Anthony looks down at Ben.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Why so persistent? You still don't understand you can't play basketball?

Ben doesn't respond to Anthony.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Okay. Today, I'll let you understand, completely.

Ben is shocked. He looks up at Anthony, stares at him for a while. Then he nods, accepting the challenge.

The game starts, Anthony is so fast that Ben cannot reach him. Anthony tries to hit Ben every time he passes him. And the team is cheering for Anthony. Ben falls many times. Each time, he finds it harder to breathe. He gets up slower each time until he finds he's too tired to chase Anthony anymore.

Anthony finishes the game with a clean shot. He looks back to Ben.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Hope you can understand from now on.

Anthony leads the group leaving.

Ben stands on the court without moving, his eyes begin to close.

Ben falls on the floor. His eyes close completely.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT-DAY

A few minutes later, Ben opens his eyes. He feels energetic. Ben stands up and does some stretch preparation. He doesn't feel anything wrong with his body. Ben is happy that he doesn't feel uncomfortable, he decides to play basketball one more time.

Ben dribbles the ball smoothly. The ball is under Ben's control. He doesn't feel shortness of breath or pain, he sweats and enjoy playing basketball.

INT. HOSPITAL- DAY

Ben is lying on a hospital bed without consciousness. Jane and doctor are surrounding him. Doctor and nurse start to check Ben's body status. Jane is trying to wake Ben up.

JANE

Ben! Ben! Wake up! Ben! Ben!

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT-DAY

Ben is playing basketball, he hears his mom calling his name. Ben stops, and looks around, but no people are around the basketball court. So he continues playing. In Ben's imagination, he is playing in a basketball game, he has opponents. Ben cooperates well with his teammates, and the team always runs away with the game. As the game is going on, Ben hears his mom calling his name again. But he ignores it, and concentrates on the game.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL- DAY

DOCTOR and nurse can see Ben is still alive from the EKG machine. Doctor starts to press Ben's chest, trying to wake him up. Jane keeps calling Ben's name.

JANE

Come on, sweetie. You have promised mommy. You still have a long journey waiting for you. Come on.

Ben's eyes remain closed, without any consciousness.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT-DAY

This time Ben plays basketball as a professional basketball player. Everytime he throws the ball, he makes it into the basket. A few minutes later, Ben hears sounds from a doctor, but he can't really hear what the doctor is saying.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL- DAY

The Doctor looks grim. He turns to Jane.

DOCTOR
Jane, you really need to prepare
for this, for the thing that no one
wanted to happen.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT-DAY

Ben shakes his head, and thinks it is an illusion. The other team catches up in points. The two teams have the same points now. Ben looks at the timer, last ten seconds of the game. Ben's team still need one 3-pointer to win the game. Ben jumps and throws out the ball at the 3-point line. As he throws out the ball, he hears the sound of his heart pounding, it is really fast. He hears the "bibibibi" sound from an EKG machine. As Ben's body falls on the floor, he sees the ball go into the basket. They win. A long "bi-----" sound exists. That is the sound from the machine. Ben closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL- DAY

The machine shows a straight horizontal line. No signs of life in Ben.

Jane starts crying.

Doctors start to take the respirator off of Ben.

DOCTOR
We are really sorry, Miss.

FADE OUT.