

The Pitch (V9)

By

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EXT - LEFT FIELD FOUL LINE - DAY

Mysterious Man BURL walks a Great Dane HOBBS near left field line. Only their legs and shoes are visible.

MADISON V.O.

My name is Madison. I've grown up in my Mom's arms, holding my Dad's hands, and never did I imagine life without them. But one fine day, from out of left field came the Comets, and I saw things that scared me, and I need to take you there. I want you to come with me. I want to tell you a story about my father, and one of the greatest games there's ever been.

INT. BABY'S ROOM - NIGHT

MOM attempts to soothe crying baby. Car arrives. Footsteps race upstairs. COACH enters room wearing slow pitch uniform.

COACH

Sorry! It was four extra innings before we could pull the win.

MOM

Madison's been crying for thirty minutes.

COACH

Is she burped?

MOM

I've tried everything. I don't know what's wrong with her.

MADISON has a teddy bear under arm. Red Bop. COACH places softball underneath baby's arm. Baby burps and stops crying.

COACH

She's gonna be a ball player.

MOM

You just got lucky.

EXT. PITCHING CIRCLE - DAY

COACH is within the pitching circle huddled with his team.

COACH

I'm proud of everyone of you.  
You've never given up, not once,  
all year. That's why we're in this  
championship. This team has heart  
like I've never seen it.

JOLIE

Can we have a party?

VIVIAN

No! Lets just kick their butts and  
go home.

COACH:

We need another out, then we'll  
worry about a party, or going home.

COACH

Leora how many runs are we up?

LEORA

Three coach.

COACH

Sophia how many outs for the win?

SOPHIA

Just one coach.

COACH

OK put your hands in here. DESTINY!  
Defense on Three!

YANELI

Destiny doesn't coach, remember?

VIVIAN

Coach we told you. She hasn't  
talked since kindergarten.

DESTINY's fearful eyes confirm truth.

COACH

I know, Focus! I'm sorry DESTINY.  
BRIANNA, defense on three!

(CONTINUED)

BRIANNA  
Defense on three! 1,2,3, Defense!

The players disperse. COACH'S holding ball.

COACH  
MADISON, all the work we've ever done brings us to this game at this moment. One more out kid. Make it happen.

MADISON  
Dad. I've got it. Relax.

ANNOUNCER  
With one out for the win Madison Halley stands to complete a season undefeated. That's unheard of folks.

COACH (DUGOUT)  
Come on Madison, come on!

EXT - BATTER'S BOX - DAY

Mariah enters the batter's box.

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE - DAY

MADISON takes position on the rubber, completes routine and pitches.

MADISON'S first pitch is fouled to the left field line and stops at HOBBS and BURL'S feet.

MADISON smiles to Dad with the first strike.

EXT - LEFT FIELD FOUL LINE - DAY

BURL takes ball and camera rises until face is revealed.  
BURL rubs ball on shirt and throws back to MADISON

UMPIRE  
Time!

COACH  
Foul Ball! Way to be! Two more strikes Madison, two more! Let's do it!

(CONTINUED)

MADISON (V.O.)

I've thrown a million softball with my father. So what's two more strikes?

MADISON CATCHES THROW. SHOWS CURIOSITY FOR BURL. TAKES POSITION ON RUBBER, READINESS STANCE. HAND ROTATES BALL, LOGO **HOBBS PASTBALLS - SINCE 1949.**

I'm good when the heat's on. But this was no ordinary softball. He came to see me. He came to tell me something

EXT - BATTER'S BOX - DAY

CRYSTAL at bat. MADISON throws pitch. The ball approaches...

EXT - HOUSE FAMILY ROOM - DAY

A newer pair of cleats and socks lie on floor at door entry.

MADISON, five years old, cries in over sized clothes.

COACH

Does she have a fever?

MOTHER does not answer. COACH feels MADISON's forehead.

COACH

No fever. Get your cleats on sweets.

MADISON

I don't want to go to practice!

COACH

Get your cleats on.

MADISON won't move.

MOTHER

She doesn't feel well for God's sake!

New cleats are revealed on floor.

COACH

OK I'll get her cleats. This kid's not quitting things she starts!

Dad's puts on MADISON's cleats.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COACH (cont'd)  
Come on let's go pal.

MADISON's reflection appears on the china cabinet glass as mother puts dishes away. COACH picks up MADISON, carries her out front door.

MADISON  
I hate softball.

TRANSITION TO PLAYING CATCH WITH DAD AT TEN YEARS OLD.

EXT. - HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

MADISON 10 plays catch with COACH on the front yard back and forth in a nostalgic activity of playing baseball with Dad.

MADISON (V.O.)  
My grandfather died when my Dad was just a boy. Dad said that after it always felt like he was playing baseball in bare feet. My great grandfather played pro ball with Ted Williams and Joe Dimaggio. Nobody really know him though because something happened to his family. My Dad says that success in softball is the same road to success in life. I can't say I really get it, but I followed his advice as best I could.

COACH calls MADISON to his side.

COACH  
Madison you're twenty pounds lighter than most kids in your division. So that means you're going to have to put twenty pounds more effort into everything you do out there on the field.

MADISON  
What's 20 pounds?

COACH places two ten lb. free weights into MADISON's hand.

MADISON  
Oh My gosh!

(CONTINUED)

COACH  
Hold on sweets.

MADISON drops the weights.

TRANSITION BACK TO THE CHINA CABINET REFLECTION OF MADISON.

EXT - BATTER'S BOX - DAY

The pitch passes the catcher's glove.

UMPIRE  
Ball four!

MARIAH walks to first.

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE - DAY

COACH  
Come on Madison. Shake it off! Come  
on! Hang in there.

MADISON shakes her arm and head. CATCHER throws MADISON the  
ball.

ANNOUNCER  
That puts Mariah on first base.  
There's still two outs. Madison  
Halley needing one more out to get  
the win and an undefeated season.  
Up next for the Bat Attitudes one  
of the best hitters in the league,  
batting .430, its Crystal.

KAYLEY - CATCHER  
Come on MADISON. Throw it to me.

COACH  
Come on Madison, come on.  
Concentrate.

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE

MADISON takes stance on the rubber. She pitches..

EXT - IN CAR OUTSIDE OF HOUSE - DAY

MOM and COACH pull SUV along side of their home.

MOM

What's MADISON's schedule next week?

COACH

Monday, Wednesday practice for Walnut. Tuesday and Thursday Chino Hills, and Two Games on Saturday.

MOM

And a pitching lesson on Friday night?

COACH

Yea. And a pitching lesson on Friday night.

MOM

You're a jerk.

COACH

What! You want her to be good don't you?

MOM

You signed her up for two leagues?

COACH

I can drop a league. Please.

COACH gets out of the SUV and walks to back. The pair of distressed cleats are at his feet. Coach lifts back door.

COACH

We just had a nice weekend together on our anniversary for crying out loud!

MOM

I don't even come a close second to your damn pitching net and your bucket of balls!

COACH

You can't leave it alone can you. You have to attack something I love to do with our daughter? And do you realize that she is very very good at what she does out there? It's something you should be proud of!

(CONTINUED)



MOM

Hey Coach! Its me or your bucket of balls!

COACH

Five years of Madison is in that bucket of balls, so careful what you ask for!

The truck speeds off and softball equipment falls out. MADISON, bare foot and in uniform, is revealed on opposite side of the SUV. She stands near COACH and strewn equipment.

COACH watches MOM drive away.

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE - DAY

Pitched ball flies over the catcher's head into the backstop.

UMPIRE

Ball four! Take your base young lady.

ANNOUNCER

Well that eight straight balls for Madison folks. I've been watching her all year, I've never seen her quite this rattled. Hey, but its a lot of pressure...

COACH walks over to Madison.

COACH

Breath MADISON. Just relax. Slow it down.

MADISON

Are you and Mom in a fight?

COACH

What does that have to do with your pitching?

MADISON

Dad I'm scared.

DAD

Just throw your fastball.

Madison back steps and turns to circle.

(CONTINUED)

ANNOUNCER

That will send Crystal to first,  
Mariah to second. The tying run  
coming up to the plate now. Its  
going to be Amber one of the most  
feared hitters in the league.

COACH

Madison! Come on Focus! Lets go  
Madison. Come on!

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE

Amber readies in the batter's box.

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE

MADISON pitches...

INT - DOUGHNUT SHOP - DAY

MADISON leaning on the glass cases of a donut shop. A man  
and his daughter enter the front of the store and approach  
donuts.

Madsion is revealed sitting on the floor in bare feet next  
to theman and his dughter ordering donuts.

LAWYER

You should do it this weekend,  
after MADISON's games. Get with  
your wife alone and hand her the  
paperwork. Stop talking yourself  
out of this.

LAWYER and COACH sit at table in donut shop. LAWYER handles  
prepared divorce papers.

MADISON watches COACH proceed signing the divorce paperwork.

LAWYER slides the divorce papers to COACH in a large  
envelope.

Cleats are revealed.

EXT - BATTER'S BOX - DAY

Madison's pitches ball four.

UMPIRE  
Ball Four!

EXT - PITCHING CIRCLE - DAY

ANNOUNCER  
That's twelve straight balls, and understandably the Comet coach is going to head to the mound, as the team rallies around Madison right there at the hill.

COACH  
Time Blue!

COACH strides to the pitching circle, frustrated.

COACH  
MADISON that's twelve straight balls in a row. Come back to me now.

The infielders come to the pitching circle and huddle.

MADISON  
You're leaving me.

The huddled players become quiet.

COACH  
What?

MADISON  
I saw you with your lawyer friend.

MADISON is fighting emotion.

COACH  
Hey kid. I'm always your father, no matter what happens between your MOM and I. But I'm also your COACH, and I'm their COACH, and we are a team of thirteen. Neither you, nor I, shall cost this team a championship to talk about business between your mother and I. I'll tell you everything after the game.

COACH shifts the attention to the game.

(CONTINUED)

COACH

Alright bring it in. We're undefeated. You're undefeated kids. And you're undefeated cause you never quit! And that's not going to change now. Give MADISON some encouragement out there, because we know she can do it. Alright Brianna Defense on three

COACH AND TEAM

Defense on three. 1,2,3- defense!

The team encourages MADISON and disperses. DESTINY is last to leave and touches her glove to MADISON's shoulder.

COACH walks back to the dugout.

MADISON

Hey COACH! You're a Quitter!

MADISON turns away from COACH. A tear is on her face.

MADISON wipes tear.

THE COMETS yell encouragements. The COACH squats with his hand over his forehead.

AMAYA puts helmet on.

MADISON and COACH look back at one another.

ANNOUNCER

Bases loaded, 7-4 Comets. We are at the bottom of the last inning here. Madison twelve straight balls. There just seems something wrong with the young lady.

BRIANNA, JOLIE AND DESTINY CHEER ON MADISON FROM FIELD.

ANNOUNCER

So bases loaded. We have Crystal, Mariah and Amber all around the bases. Amaya looking for that one pitch trying to win this game here today.

EXT - BATTER'S BOX - DAY

AMAYA stands in the batter's box.

EXT- PITCHING CIRCLE - DAY

MADISON set-up on rubber. Inserts of cleats, eyes, hand, ball. MADISON throws THE PITCH.

EXT- BATTER'S BOX - DAY

AMAYA hits a grand slam.

EXT - THE FIELD - DAY

The grand slam ball flies magically through the air. MADISON'S teammates watch in awe. The ball flies to deep center field and over a high embankment.

ANNOUNCER

This ball is crushed. I can't believe it. Folks there's a tree up there on top of the hill the ball has just gone past.

VIVIAN throws her glove the ground.

MADISON runs after the ball in the outfield.

DESTINY watches runners step on second base. She sees one runner miss second base. She is the only player who knows this has occurred.

UMPIRE saw the runner miss second base.

ANNOUNCER

Would you believe it! Bottom of the inning. Bat Attitudes come back from trailing 7-4 and they win the championship. I've never ever seen a ball hit so far.

THE BAT ATTITUDE runners celebrate around the bases. THE COMETS walk in with defeat.

MADISON runs through outfield and up the embankment. BURL in uniform is walking toward her with the game ball in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

BURL

Hey kid. I think this is your ball.

BURL hold out ball. MADISON reach out to take it. BURL holds on the ball to speak.

BURL

Twenty pounds.

MADISON takes ball and runs down hill back into the playing field repeating her words.

MADISON

Twenty pounds! Twenty pounds!

The UMPIRE is engaged with MADISON's return.

THE COMETS watch and follow MADISON with confusion.

COACH

Bring it in Madison!

MADISON runs within the THE BAT ATTITUDES celebration and begins to tag all the players with the ball. SPECTATORS enter field.

DESTINY stands on second base and tries unsuccessfully to communicate to MADISON.

COACH

MADISON. That's game! Stop. It's over. It's over for God's sake!

COACH places his hands over his eyes.

Suddenly DESTINY's voice rings out.

DESTINY

MADISON! Throw it to me!

THE COMETS, SPECTATORS and BAT ATTITUDES turn their attention to DESTINY. MADISON throws the ball to DESTINY.

The UMPIRE does a dramatic "out" routine.

UMPIRE

You're out! Ball game!

The COMETS rush to DESTINY to celebrate on second base.

The BAT ATTITUDES MANAGER rushes to the UMPIRE in protest. The UMPIRE explains a runner missed second base.

MADISON runs to her team at second base.

(CONTINUED)

COACH shows a look of disbelief and epiphany in the power of his daughter not quitting, even when game was clearly over.

The COMETS and the BAT ATTITUDES do a cheer together at second base. COMETS runs to dugout to celebrate.

EXT - OUTFIELD - DAY

MADISON and COACH walk together on infield away from softball field.

COACH  
MADISON, that was the most  
inspirational play I have ever  
scene in my life. Ever.

MADISON  
Dad.

COACH  
What?

MADISON  
I don't even really like  
softball.(pause) I only play to be  
with you.

COACH and MADISON walk silently.

MADISON  
Why do you do what you do Dad?

The COACH lifts back of shirt, slides envelop from pants without his daughter's knowledge.

COACH  
To be with you too kid.

COACH gently places the paperwork into a trash can.

HOBBS barks. MADISON and COACH turn around.

MADISON  
Hey mister. I think this is your  
ball.

MADISON tosses the ball back to BURL.

MASTER  
Good game kid. One of the best  
there's ever been.

HOBBS barks twice.

MADISON

Thank you sir.

COACH

Are you..

MASTER

I'm a pitching coach. I travel the ball fields and help kids like your daughter. In fact, little Billy Lancaster's on the mound tonight, right HOBBS? He's scheduled to *Bear Some Bad News* next week and could use a little help staying in the strike zone.

MADISON

Say Hi to Billy for me.

COACH

Who's Billy?

MADISON

He's a pitcher, like me.

BURL

Hey coach..

MOM approaches from right field.

MADISON

Mom!

COACH tucks in his shirt. He begins to walk to his wife and he accidentally knocks over the buck of balls. MOM and MADISON laugh at COACH. Both come to help COACH pick up the buck of balls.

MADISON (V.O.)

I believe in Destiny.  
I believe that life is like a bucket of balls. Sometimes they get away from you, but if the whole family does not let them get too far away, they can be put back to where they belong.

Madison and her mother and father walk together off the softball field and into the sunset, as a family.