

The Winning Shot

Genre: Fiction **Reading Level:** 490L

Carlos dribbled the basketball down the court, his sneakers squeaking against the polished gym floor. The scoreboard showed only fifteen seconds left in the championship game, and his team was losing by two points.

“Pass it here!” his teammate Josh shouted from the corner. Carlos glanced at Josh, who was wide open, but he also saw an opening near the basket. For a split second, Carlos thought about taking the shot himself.

Then he remembered what Coach Martinez always said: “Basketball is a team sport. Trust your teammates.” Carlos made his decision. He threw a perfect bounce pass to Josh.

Josh caught the ball, aimed carefully, and released it toward the hoop. The entire gym fell silent as the ball soared through the air. It hit the backboard, bounced on the rim once, twice, and then dropped through the net just as the buzzer sounded.

The crowd erupted in cheers. Carlos’s teammates rushed onto the court, jumping and celebrating. Josh ran over and hugged Carlos. “That was an amazing pass! We couldn’t have won without you,” he said, grinning from ear to ear. Carlos smiled back, feeling proud that he had made the right choice.