

Summer Break

I could feel the blazing sun beating down on my back. Sweat was dripping down my forehead. It was the bottom of the sixth inning, runner on third base, two outs. My team had a slim one point lead. My heart was pounding faster than the speed of light, ready to jump out of my chest.

"You can do this. Just get this last out!" my voice echoed in my head, over and over.

I felt as if time was moving in slow motion. Today wasn't my best day. I didn't seem to be getting outs in the earlier innings, and the unbearable heat had really taken its toll. Then, just when I wasn't expecting it, the bright, neon yellow softball hurtled towards me at top speed, so fast that I couldn't even see the cherry red seams along its side. I could hear my teammates and coaches shouting faintly in the background, but I tried to tune them out in order to focus. All I needed to do was cleanly field the ball, then make a decent throw to first base. Everything depended on this moment. If I couldn't get this runner out, I would let down my team. The pressure felt like a giant boulder was resting on my shoulders, and I now knew what it felt like to be the Roman god Atlantis who was doomed to carry the Earth on his shoulders for all of eternity. All eyes were on me. I felt a thump as the ball bounced right into my glove. I threw the ball towards first base with all my strength and hoped for the best. The crowd erupted into cheers as the umpire called the runner out. All that practice really had paid off. The throw flew right into the first baseman's glove, and the weight of the boulder on my shoulders suddenly disappeared and was overcome by an overwhelming feeling of joy and happiness.

"Ballgame!" yelled the umpire. And just like that, we won the game. The crowd cheered for our team as my teammates and I all high-fived each other, unable to control the smiles on our faces. I was so exhausted after standing under the scorching sun, and especially after the seemingly endless drive. After that moment, I realized that all those hours and hours of practicing, running, and being exposed to the blistering heat really were worth it, even if it didn't seem like it at the moment.

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