

A Second Chance

Chapter 1:

End of One Season, The Start of Something New?

I cruised past opposing players as I moved down the ice with speed, carrying the puck into the zone.

“One defender to beat, then I am one one-on-one with the goaltender,” I told myself.

I once saw this YouTube video of Tage Thompson doing this filthy move where he put the puck between the defenseman’s feet and blew right by him. That’s what I wanted to do here. The defenseman was right on me, exactly where I wanted him to be. I moved laterally to the left, crossing over as I skated towards the boards. He mirrored me and was still right in front of me. If only he knew how embarrassing I was going to make him look, that made me smile as I started my move. I took my bottom hand off my stick and let my stick start dragging behind me until the puck was in line with the gap between the defenseman's feet. What happened next was disgusting. I slowly pushed the puck right between his feet. At the same time, I picked up my speed and skated around the opposing player, picking the puck up behind him.

Now I was one-on-one with the goaltender. I did a quick forehand, backhand, between the legs, top shelf, and goal! It was a highlight-reel goal. We had won the game. I couldn’t believe what I just did. I started skating back towards my teammates yelling excitedly as I went, towards the blueline I broke into the ‘heartbreaker’ celebration that my idol, Conner Bedard, did in the World Juniors. My teammates swarmed me at center ice pounding my helmet, congratulating me on my nasty goal.

“Yeah Marcel, way to go, buddy!”

“That was absolutely filthy!”

“That was one for the ages!”

“Someone better have gotten that on camera because that was a highlight reel goal if I’ve ever seen one!”

It probably looked like one giant bear hug, but I didn't care. I was very happy and excited.

After we had broken up out of our bear hug, we all started getting in a single-file line behind our goaltender, ready for handshakes. I don't know about you, but they should probably remove the handshake line from AAA hockey games. I know it is to show good sportsmanship and respect towards the other team, win or lose, but in AAA hockey, everyone just wants the handshakes to be over. When I'm a part of a losing team, I just want to get off the ice as fast as possible to go and sulk after a loss, but if my team wins, then I'm excited and want to get off the ice as soon as possible in order to celebrate with my teammates. Anyway, I'm not the director of Hockey Canada so why am I even thinking about this? I went through the handshake line with as much respect as I could after a win, and I told everyone on the opposing team that they had played a good game. Some of them looked at me with disgust and hatred, probably because of my goal. But I just looked at them and smiled, which does almost made it worse, but I like that sometimes. Aftering going through and shaking every player's hand, I headed to the bench to grab my water bottle and my extra stick that I brought (just in case my other one breaks), then I happily followed my teammates to the locker room.

In the locker room, the atmosphere was ecstatic. Everyone was pumped up for the win as Coach Kieth walked into the locker room.

“That was an amazing game gentleman, hell of a way to end the year! I know that we didn't make the playoffs like we wanted to, but overall, a good season. I know that this is probably some people's last game in squirts, so to those veterans, I wish you the best of luck in Pee wee's. And also, to those you are playing in the Brick Invitational, I want to offer some words of encouragement...

The Brick Invitational! I had heard about the Brick before it is the best and most prestigious hockey tournament for AAA level squirts, but I didn't even realize that Team Brick Alberta was even going to have a team this year. All I could think was why was I not invited? I was the best player on my team, so why didn't I get an email or something about tryouts?

Those were all the thoughts swirling in my head as Coach Kieth continued his postgame speech:

“...While you all might want to win the tournament on our home ice, just remember that you're also there for the

experience. So, remember to have fun and enjoy the sights and sounds of the tournament. Anyway boys I will let you get to your celebration, you deserve it. That was an amazing game you guys played.”

After Coach Kieth had finished, we all yelled thank you coach at the top of our lungs except me, I only did it halfheartedly because I couldn't stop thinking about the Brick. He smiled and left us to celebrate our victory. I didn't really feel as ecstatic as I did when I first walked into the locker room. Now, I was only upset and angry which isn't the best mood to be in after we had just won a game. Our Captain, Rhett, also gives us a postgame speech. He and I are good friends, so despite my mood I listen to his speech: “Good job today boys! Way to crush that team into the ground. Marcel, hell of goal today man, that thing was nasty! I have to see that goal again, but now without further ado ladies and gentlemen give me my theme music!”

And with that he fired up “Higher” by Eminem, and everyone started jumping up and down to the chorus. Despite my bad mood, I even started bobbing my head up and down. I also started smirking at some of the bad dances my teammates were doing. Although I couldn't stop looking at Rhett; he had some incredible dance moves for a ten-year-old, and his singing was surprisingly on point. He was entertaining to watch as the bass continued to hum in the background.

Chapter Two:

The Dilemma

Later that night, even though everyone on my team was in great spirits, I myself, had yet to recover from my mood. Even when I came out of the locker room and saw my dad being mobbed by parents and players alike...

Oh, that's right! I haven't yet told you about my dad. His Name is Richard Chartier. He is a former NHL player and when he was playing in the league. He was incredible. Unfortunately, he suffered a season ending injury, and after that he decided to take some time away from hockey to coach my older brother Christoph. But later, when Christoph entered the league at 18, my dad decided to come out of retirement to go play with him.

One of my goals is to be just like him and make it to the NHL, where hopefully I would even get to play with my older brother Christoph. Now back to my horrible night...

My mood still didn't change. My dad, after slowly crawling out of the crowd, came over to me and congratulated me on my goal: "That was quite the goal today son. Heck, I think that might have been one of your best goals ever, and a game winner too! Incredible!"

Even though I was in a bad mood I had to be nice to my dad, because he rarely gives me compliments like that. And plus, he is a former NHL superstar, so if he thinks it was my best goal ever, then it was my best goal ever.

"Thanks dad, yeah that was a pretty amazing goal. I still kinda can't believe I did that!"

My dad replied kindly, "No kidding, everyone in the stands was saying he better not miss or it would look bad, but you scored! Which was incredible. Hey, do you want to go celebrate? I think that Taco Bell is calling our names, what do you say? Up for a little treat?"

My dad only ever goes to Taco Bell if me or my brothers do well in our hockey games, so this must mean I did well today, besides my goal of course. "Yeah dad, of course I'm in the mood for a little Taco Bell!"

"Great, we can stop on the way to the house," my dad replied. Even though I was still in a little bit of a bad mood I'm sure Taco Bell will give me a chance to cool off and remember how well I did today.

After my dad and I left Taco Bell, we started eating our tacos in the car, trying hard not to spill since my dad was driving his new and very nice Lexus LC 500. On our way back home I asked my dad, "Why didn't I get invited to the Brick Invitational?"

I don't know what I just said! It must have been building up this whole time, and of all people, I had to ask my dad. My dad choked a little on his taco as I asked him, but after chewing a little more he glanced at me in his rearview mirror.

"Son, honest truth?"

I didn't know why he had just said honest, but I replied, "Yes dad, honest."

With that, my dad began a story, “When I was younger and playing hockey in France, I would always get picked on about my height in some way or another. One day, I can’t remember when, I was going to try out for this very prestigious AAA hockey team. Now Marcel you might be wondering why I tried out for this team specifically even though there were other AAA teams. The answer is quite simple, this team would travel all across Europe and North America playing other prestigious AAA teams and playing in the best tournaments. The dream, right?”

I didn’t even know where this story was going but it sounded like one of the best AAA hockey teams I had ever heard of. So I kindly replied, “Yes dad, that sounds like the dream for a kid.”

My dad continued, “I know right? Very prestigious team, anyway, where was I? Oh yes, that’s right. So, when I went to try out for this team my dad and I walked through the front doors to go sign in since my dad had filled out a registration form that came in the mail. You know what the front desk coach said to me, Marcel?”

“What dad?” I replied. I was at the edge of my seat thinking of all the things this coach said to my dad, but nothing would have prepared me for his response.

“He said, ‘You are too small son. You can’t try out for this team. Maybe next year.’ I burst into tears that day, I ran to the car as fast as I could trying to leave that building as quickly as possible. My dad, I guess, stayed and talked to the coach about the real reason I couldn’t try out, but he even walked back to the car, and we drove home in silence that day.”

I couldn’t even believe the words that came out of dad’s mouth. He got turned down, because of his height. It makes no sense. He is now pushing six feet and made it to the NHL. Why was he dismissed because of his height? He must have had some talent to even get an email invite to register to try out.

“Wow dad, I’m so sorry that happened to you. What happened after that?”

Dad, still looking at the road, said, “Well I made a different AAA team, we didn’t travel out of the country as much, but we traveled a lot around France, and I put up an incredible year that season. In fact, the next year that prestigious AAA team wanted me so badly they said I didn’t even have to try out and I would still be on the team.”

“Why didn’t you play for them?” I replied.

“Because Marcel, I was turned down by this team. I should have made the team when I tried out the first year, but they didn’t take me. So I said no to them. Heck, they even lost the majority of their games that year, while my team went to nationals.”

I still couldn’t believe that my dad was dismissed like that, but I was still wondering what this had to do with me and the Brick.

“That was a good story dad, but what does this have to do with me?”

My dad slowly looked at me through his rearview mirror and said softly, “I just didn’t want you to be turned down like I was son. I didn’t want to go through the same experience twice, and I didn’t want to ruin your season. I’m so sorry son.”

I couldn’t believe it! My own father was calling me too short! That is ridiculous! Just because he got dismissed, doesn’t mean I could’ve been. Maybe I would have even been able to try out and make the team!

“Thanks a lot dad! Now I have to see some of my teammates in that tournament while I stay on the couch and play NHL 31!”

My dad, clearly hurt by this whole ordeal, replied quietly, “I’m sorry you can try out next year.”

I didn’t even reply to that; all I could think was how cool it would have been if I had been able to make the team. But, instead just like in dad’s story, we sat in silence all the way home.

Chapter 3:

Hope?

After our fight, my dad and I didn’t speak to each other much for over a week. Every now and then we’d tell each other good morning, or eat meals together, but never really talk. Plus, he was back to coaching my brother in the NHL, so we didn’t really see each other much, which made it easier for me to ignore him. I didn’t really want to, but after the fight, I didn’t really feel like talking to him.

You might be wondering where my mom was in all of this. Well, that's just it: she wasn't. She and my dad broke up when I was little, and I had just started to play hockey. She couldn't handle all of the days me and my five brothers would spend at rinks or team events. Also, I think that they were fighting or at least that is what my older brothers said. Anyway, she left and ended up marrying another man, which was hard on my dad and some of my brothers. It was a little tough for me to some extent, but I think I was too young to notice most of the time. Now, we only saw her on holidays, which was fine with me and my family since we spent so much time playing hockey anyway. I'm not sure why I brought up my mom, but it explained why I was home alone a lot with my brothers after school.

One day after school, I came home and saw my dad sitting at the kitchen table talking with another man. I couldn't tell who it was from afar. Originally, I thought it was one of the NHL players he coached because sometimes he invited players over to our house to watch film in our theater or just to chat about how they were playing. Anyway, as I got closer, I could see that it wasn't an NHL player, but the general manager of Team Brick Alberta! I was speechless. Why he was here? But when I entered the kitchen, my dad called me over.

“Son, I would like to introduce you to Augustus Garcia, the General Manager of Team Brick Alberta.”

“Hello, Marcel, your father has told me so much about you.” Mr. Garcia replied.

My father continued, “Did you know that back in the day, we played in the NHL together? Not on the same team of course, but we were good friends when we met at All-Star Games.”

Mr. Garcia commented, “I remember that he used to play pranks on everyone, which was hysterical!”

My dad chuckled at the memory and replied, “Yes, I do. But my best one was when I put milk into your water bottle, and they caught you spitting it out on live TV! Haha, instant classic!”

“Yeah, you got me there, even the reporter started laughing!” Mr. Garcia replied, chuckling as well.

My dad, about to burst into laughter, decided it was time to get to more important matters and offered me a seat at the table. “Enough formalities, you're nine years old I'm sure you want to know why Mr. Garcia is here don't you?”

I had to reply yes, and with that, Mr. Garcia took the floor: “Well, your dad has actually been trying to get a hold of me these past few weeks to talk about letting you join the team. I saw the tape and you are incredibly talented, but you are a little undersized compared to most kids your age.”

“I know that Mr. Garcia, but I like to think that I play with a big heart and determination out on the ice.” I replied, trying to not have Mr. Garcia talk my dad out of letting me play on the team. I couldn’t believe that this whole time I’d been mad at him, he was actually helping me try to get on the team.

Mr. Garcia continued, “I can see that, that is also part of the reason why I am here today. I wanted to give you a shot at playing on this team.”

I couldn’t believe it! He was actually offering me a spot on this team; I have to remember to make it right with my dad for trying to give me this opportunity. “Really?” I said as if I still couldn’t believe it, which I couldn’t!

“Yes Marcel, really. You’re a great hockey player, I’m sure you get that from your father. I will have to warn you though this is not guaranteed you will have to impress me and the coaching staff.”

“I understand Mr. Garcia, I know that I need to give it my best out there.”

“I’m sure you do, Marcel. I would also like to mention that this opportunity will probably never happen again. One of our players was hurt during the playoffs and so now we need to replace him, and we’re not just thinking of you, there are many other kids we are considering right now,” Mr. Garcia replied.

“I won’t take it for granted, just tell me what I need to do to get a spot on this team.”

Mr. Garcia replied, “I thought you might ask that, so I came prepared. Here’s the thing: we still have a little more than a month until our first tournaments before the Brick. So, what I was thinking, and I have already discussed this with your dad and the coaching staff, was that you should come down to practice this Monday and we evaluate you and then will see from there. But overall, I am excited to see what you display out on that ice.”

“Thank you so much Mr. Garcia for giving me this opportunity I will make sure I won’t let you down!” I replied, unable to contain my excitement.

“I think I will hold you to that Marcel. Richard, always a pleasure, and I will see you both soon.” And with that, Mr. Garcia stood up, shook me and my dad’s hand, and left.

My dad, blankly staring at the door, replied, “How about that Marcel? You might just be able to go to the Brick Tournament after all.”

I didn’t quite understand how or why my dad was able to do this, so calmly I asked, “Why did you do this for me? After our fight?”

Startled a little bit, my father knelt down so he was staring right into my teary eyes, “Marcel, you’re my son. I should have never held you back from trying out for something just because I didn’t want you to get hurt. From now on, let’s be honest with each other, and next year if you want to do this again, we can talk it over. But most likely you can go.”

Partly crying, I replied softly, “Thank you dad.”

And he replied, “Anytime little man. And hey I’m about to play a little bit of NHL31. What do you say? Up for a little rematch?”

Now, to that I had to respond to cockily, “Are you sure about that? Last time I checked I beat your sorry butt in overtime.”

“Maybe, you did but I think I’m feeling lucky today.” My father replied with a smile. And with that me and him went to the game room for our rematch on NHL31.

Chapter 4:

Tryouts?

Monday couldn’t come any slower, it felt like ages before the try-out day finally arrived. Me and my dad woke up early that morning hoping to beat the early morning traffic. He was pouring his coffee into his cup when he asked me, “Are you ready for today? It will be interesting to see how good the kids are this year. Should be fun.”

I replied, “Yeah I’m ready, and even though I’m trying out it should be a little fun to practice with these guys.” “I’m sure it will be. Are you all ready to go?” My dad asked. “Yep. I just need to put my shoes on.” And

with that I put on my shoes, and we were out the door. A few minutes later than I wanted, but my dad didn't seem worried. We got into our car (the Lexus of course) and we were off to the rink.

When we arrived at the rink, we were a bit earlier than I expected. So my dad took his time to park the car, and with that I grabbed my bag, my two sticks, and we headed inside. It was a little warmer inside the rink than outside, but it was still a little cold. But despite the cooler air, my dad and I checked-in at the makeshift desk that was for Team Brick Alberta.

“Hello, my name is Coach Rick. Are you guys checking in?”

My dad replied, “Yes, for my son Marcel Chartier?”

Coach Rick took a look at the laptop in front of him, a few seconds later he replied, “Yes, here he is Marcel Chartier. Are you one of the new kids that are trying out for the open roster spot?”

“Yes, that is correct.” My dad answered politely. “Is it okay if I ask you a couple of questions?” “Yes, that is fine.” my dad replied.

“Alright, preferred jersey number?”

My dad looked at me so I replied, “17 or 71.”

Coach Rick typed it into his laptop and asked, “Preferred jersey size?”

I replied, “Extra small.” Coach Rick typed it in, “Preferred breezer cover size?”

I replied, “Youth large.” Again, Coach Rick typed it in. why were there so many questions?

“Preferred sock size.”

“Youth small.” I replied.

Coach Rick typed it in, not really looking at me as he asked, “Your position?”

I replied, “Center/right wing.”

Coach Rick typed it in, “Your height?”

For some reason this hit me like a brick wall, I didn't realize they wanted to ask what my height was. My dad answered, “He is 4 foot 2.”

Coach Rick chuckled a little bit which I didn't like but he continued, “His weight?”

My dad replied, “65 pounds.”

Coach Rick typed it in and continued his questions, “City of residence?”

My dad answered “Edmonton.”

Coach Rick typed and continued, “Favorite hockey player?”

This was obviously geared towards me, I thought about it for a little bit but I replied, “My dad, Richard Chartier.”

With that response Coach Rick’s head flew up from his laptop, “I’m so sorry Mr. Chartier, I should have known it was you when you arrived.”

My dad replied, “Call me Richard, and no, that's okay. It was actually quite a surprise for me, even, which I really enjoyed.”

Coach Rick now smiling and shaking his head continued, “Favorite NHL team? I’m afraid to assume the Oilers.”

This time I had to chuckle a little bit, “That's okay, my favorite NHL team is in fact the Oilers.”

Coach Rick relieved replied, “Okay good, because I had already typed it in. Ok last question, favorite hockey memory?”

My dad and I both smiled and recalled my goal from my last game of the season. When we were done Coach Rick seemed impressed, “Wow, as a nine-year-old? That seems crazy, but what can I expect from the son of Richard Chartier. Oh, two more things before you head to the locker room, what is your preferred helmet size and glove size?”

I replied, “Youth medium for the helmet and youth small for the gloves.”

Coach Rick replied, “Alrighty, thank you Marcel, the locker room assignments are locker rooms one or three, and here is a bib for you so that the coaches know you're technically trying out.” And with that Coach Rick handed me my bib and I said goodbye to my dad and walked toward the locker room.

My dad called out from behind me, “Good luck son, have fun out there!”

With a smile on my face, I turned around and replied joyfully, “Thanks dad, I will.”

With that I pushed on the double doors that led to the rink. I sniffed the air, and thought to myself, *this is where I'm supposed to be.*

Chapter 5:

The Tryout

After getting dressed I stood with everyone else outside the door that led to the ice. I was a little bit early, so the zamboni was still doing passes up and down the rink. However, with some time before practice, I decided to see how many different clubs were represented on the Brick team. I noticed there were kids from my team, but there were also quite a few kids from some of the other top teams in the league including Leduc, Sherwood Park, Nez, and St. Albert. After the Zamboni was off the ice, everyone jumped onto the ice and started skating around the rink. Immediately, I noticed that these kids were super good, but I thought I could handle them, I told myself. I skated around the rink, stick-handling pucks and shooting whenever there was a good time. Eventually, the Coaches came out onto the ice.

The lead Coach, Coach Ben yelled out, "Alrighty time for warmups."

With that, all the players started to line up in one of the corners. I skated over as well. Once I figured out what we were doing. Coach Ben yelled out instructions, "Alright, overspeeds. Last two do ten pushups." With that, he blew his whistle and the first three guys started skating wicked fast down the ice.

Coach Ben kept blowing his whistle on intervals until eventually it was my turn. I got ready, my hands extended, knees bent, ready to start my stride. Coach Ben blew his whistle, I exploded forward and got into my stride, I was in a pretty good group, so I increased my speed as I rounded the second neutral zone dot then went into my crossovers. When I got to the third neutral zone dot, I straight-lined it down the boards to the fourth neutral zone dot then I went into my final crossovers, before coming up on the final straightaway down to the other end of the ice. There was one kid who was directly on my tail, so I increased my speed for the final stretch. I was able to expand the distance between me and the player behind me so that when I made it to the goal line I was about three or four feet in front of him. Thankfully, I didn't have to do push-ups that rep. I was

definitely a little out of hockey shape, so I was already pretty tired. We continued to overspeeds for a little bit, one more rep skating forwards before two more reps skating backwards. I don't think I did quite as well as my first rep, but I kept trying to show the coaches that even though I was tired, I was still working hard.

Afterwards, the drill switched to a passing and transitioning drill, so everyone got into even lines at the four neutral zone dots. When it was my turn to go, I made sure that the player in the line across from me was going. When I confirmed that I got ready to go. When Coach Ben's whistle blew, I accelerated forward carrying the puck with me, then I passed the puck to the line across from me. I transitioned and opened up for a pass and called out, "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah," and the player passed it to me. Then I passed the puck to the line I was just in, opened up, called for the pass, received the pass, and started skating down towards the goaltender. A lot of times coaches will say to shoot before the hash marks, just to give more of a chance to the goalies. So when I reached the top of the circle I pulled the puck in like Conner Bedard and shot the puck glove side, top shelf. It was a pretty amazing shot, but I just skated back into line like I've done it before. This continued for a few minutes, and eventually Coach Ben blew his whistle and said, "Two hard laps and meet at the board." Even though I was tired, I skated fast trying to keep pace with some of the fastest skaters on the team. When I was done, I took a quick swig of my water before taking a knee at the board.

The next drill that Coach Ben drew up was a passing drill, but we had to weave which basically means that we had to follow a pass, so it looked like we were weaving. We all got into three lines on one side of the rink, while the goalies were at the other end. I was in line three so I would be the second person to get the puck. When the drill started my linemate in the middle passed the puck to the player on his right, then he passed the puck to me. We continued passing the puck through the neutral zone, and finally, we were in the offensive zone. I was the 2nd guy in so I went straight to the net to screen the goalie or get a tip in front. The one problem being small during this drill is if you are in front and in charge of screening the goalie. Because of my height no matter what I did I couldn't screen the goalie, but I had two advantages that the goalie didn't know. Number one, that I was great at tips, and number two, I could bang home rebounds. My linemate with the puck skated down near the boards then passed the puck out in front, I moved with the puck hoping to be right in front of the

shooter when he released the puck. The shooter shot the puck almost at once, so I only had a little time to react. It was a higher shot than I expected so it was close to my chest, what I did next was pretty gross. I moved my stick up towards where the puck was going, then as soon as the puck hit my stick, I turned my stick just a little bit so it would deflect the puck in a different direction. The puck deflected off my stick and went bar down on the goalie, even though he was none inches taller than me. I tried my best not to celebrate too much because coaches hate it when you show off in tryouts. But it was an insane goal, so I celebrated a little bit before returning back to line. The drill continued on, and I felt like that so far, the tryout was going pretty well. I was tired for sure, but I hadn't skated in a little bit and plus overall, I thought I was doing pretty good. Every once in a while, if I was in line for a drill or just completed a drill, I would look up in the stands to see what my dad thought. Almost always he sat there smiling and giving me a thumbs up, which I took as a really good sign.

As I was getting water, Coach Ben came up to me and said, "Marcel, you are doing really well, your shot is amazing, your skating is phenomenal, and your hockey IQ is through the roof."

I was very surprised by Coach Ben's compliments so I replied, "Thank you Coach, that is very nice to hear coming from you."

"Keep up the good work Marcel, and I think that you have a good shot at making this team," Coach Ben replied, slapping me on the back, then he skated off to talk to some of the other players. I looked into the stands, still surprised, then smiled at my dad and gave him a thumbs up, he smiled excitedly and gave a thumbs up in response.

The next drill involved power plays and penalty kills. I didn't know what kind of system they ran, so I asked Coach Ben, "What type of system are you running? For both power play and penalty kill."

He replied, "We are running an overload for the power play, and a diamond for penalty kill."

"Thank you, Coach," I said before returning to my group.

Because I wasn't on the team...yet...I waited for a little bit before replacing someone on the power play unit. The coach had me play the top man on the right side. If you've ever seen the "Great Eight" Alex Ovechkin on a power play, just picture that but on the opposite side of the rink. When the coach dumped the puck in, I

hovered around the top of the circle ready to shoot, pass, or pressure the puck. Thankfully, one of the guys on the power play unit got to the puck first so we could set up. We passed the puck around to move the goalie and kept the puck away from the penalty killers. Eventually, one of my teammates across from me saw an opening and sauced the puck over to me. I only had a little bit of time to react so instead of receiving the puck, I one-timed it on net. The goalie never saw it because of a great screen in front. My shot went all the way to the top shelf on his blocker side. It was such a good shot that even the coach working at my station exclaimed, "Great shot 71!" I smiled as I looked down at my bib, I didn't even realize that the number on the bib was 71. Was that a coincidence or was it a sign of good luck to come? The drill continued and I was even able to stay out with the second powerplay unit for a long time. They must like me on the powerplay I told myself.

After a little while Coach Ben blew his whistle and exclaimed, "Scrimmage time, everyone not on the ice is on the bench." I was really excited for a scrimmage; it would be a great opportunity for me to showcase my skills to the coaches in a game-like situation. When it was my turn to go, I jumped the boards to replace the player coming off the ice. I skated down towards where the play was happening in our defensive zone. From the looks of everyone's position, it appeared that I was the far side wing on the right side of the ice. I skated over to where the opposing defenseman was on that side of the ice so that I could cover him, that way he didn't get an open shot. The scrum continued for a while, then finally the puck was free only the opposing team had position. The opposing defenseman along the boards had the puck and shot it on our net, the goalie was able to kick it out towards the boards on my side of the ice. My teammate who was the defenseman on the same side of the ice picked up the puck along the boards and passed it to me. I quickly banked the puck off the glass so that it passed by the defenseman who was in front of me. I picked up the puck with speed looking for help from my teammates, but no one came.

They all went off for changes, so it was just me, one opposing defenseman, and the goaltender. Just like in the last game of the season, I thought to myself. Although, this time I had a different move up my sleeve. I skated down the ice towards the boards. The opposing defenseman was next to me trying to angle me off the puck. What I did next was amazing, I stopped suddenly and skated around the opposing player, crossed over

towards the goalie as if I was going to go across the entire net. However, I shot the puck sooner than the goalie had anticipated, so he had no chance as the puck sailed bar down on the near post. As soon as I scored, I couldn't help but think that I had just made the team with that shot.

As I skated over to the bench, Coach Ben pulled me over, "That was an amazing play and shot Marcel. Keep up the good work, and I think that you have a very good shot at making this team."

I replied happily, "Thank you, Coach, I will continue working hard."

"I know you will Marcel—I know you will," Coach Ben replied. With that, I smiled, and headed to the bench.

The scrimmage continued for the rest of practice. When practice was over Coach Ben called everyone in, "That was a great practice today boys. I think we are really starting to bond as a team, which is important for this tournament. We are going to have more people trying out this week in order to fill in our one available player spot, so just keep up the good work and we should have a full squad practice starting Monday."

With that Coach Ben and the rest of the Coaching staff started to put up the nets and wait for anyone who wanted to chat after practice. The team did their chant, I didn't join in since I wasn't on the team yet and I didn't want to jinx my chances. Once they were done, we all grabbed our sticks and water bottles and headed to the locker rooms.

Chapter 6:

The Wait and Our First Tournament Games?

After I was done getting undressed, I left the locker room and headed to the main lobby where my dad was probably waiting for me. When I exited the doors to the rink, I saw my dad once again getting mobbed by parents, players, and even some coaches. This time though I could only stand there and smile, I was really proud of myself today so I let my dad have his fun. Eventually, my dad saw me standing there so he carefully navigated over to me. All I could do was smile and chuckle a little bit. Finally, my dad made it over to

me, "Sorry Marcel, I didn't even see you standing there. That was a really good tryout, I think you have a very good shot at making this team."

"You really think so dad?" I replied smiling.

"Yes son, I really do." My dad said as we walked towards the doors that lead to the parking lot. The sun was starting to come out, so a little bit of light illuminated the parking lot. It didn't take long to find our car with extra light. Once I put my bag and sticks into the trunk, me and my dad both got into the car and headed home.

It had been a long morning, so as soon as I got home, I emptied my hockey bag, changed into pajamas, and take a nap. My dad came into my room a little bit later, "Hey Marcel, don't you have school today?"

"Shoot, I forgot dad. I'm sorry the tryout made me think it was the end of the day," I replied, rather startled by dad's comment.

"That's okay Marcel, I understand. Do you maybe want to skip school today so that you can rest?" My dad replied with sympathy in his voice.

"Could I dad? Normally I would go, but that tryout took a lot out of me today," I replied, still a little sleepy.

"That's more than ok Marcel, I know that tryout must have taken a lot out of you. Just promise me you will go to school tomorrow," my dad replied. "Ok dad, I promise that I will go to school tomorrow." I replied, already falling back to sleep. "Alright Marcel, sleep well I will see you when you wake up." With that my dad slowly closed my door behind him, as I silently drifted off to sleep.

News about how I did at the tryout took far too long to arrive, but eventually, Friday came and my dad and I were finally going to learn if I made the team. After my dad got home from coaching, he and I sat in his office by his computer ready for the email to buzz in.

"Dad, this is taking too long, I want to know right now," I exclaimed anxiously.

"I know you do son, but emails don't just pop up on command," my dad replied.

However, to my dad's astonishment the email arrived as soon as he finished his sentence. "That was lucky for you, son," my dad said, shaking his head in astonishment.

“Can we open it dad, can we, can we,” I said practically jumping up and down

“Sure son.” My dad replied by opening up the email. We both read through it and here was a brief summary of what it said:

Dear Marcel, we are excited to offer you a spot on the 2031 Brick Invitational Team Brick Alberta team! We understand if commitments and/or financial issues might prevent you from joining this team, please talk to your parents and/or guardian about this opportunity because we need to have a response before Sunday night. Thanks again for trying out on such short notice, me and the coaching staff greatly appreciated your corporation. I look forward to potentially seeing you on the ice representing the providence of Alberta at the 2031 Brick Invitational. Yours truly, Augustus Garcia, GM of Team Brick Alberta.

I stood there in shock not taking my eyes off of “congratulations.” Dad seemed shocked as well. We both looked at each other and smiled.

“You made it, son,” my dad said proudly.

“I made it,” I replied filled with happiness and confidence.

Chapter 7:

Last Practice

For about a month, I practiced 3 days a week, every week, getting ready for our first Brick Showcase Tournament in Pittsburgh. The practices were hard, but they were not as hard as the tryouts. They were a little bit more fun, since I could really start to gel with the guys. Actually, to my astonishment the guys were really starting to bond with me and were being really nice to me over these past few weeks. I couldn't tell if that was because I was doing well or if it was because I filled in a hole on their team. Either way, I felt especially proud to be on this team and to be playing with these top end players.

But, like always, good things must come to an end and just as soon as I started practicing it was time for the final practice before our showcase in Pittsburgh. On the final practice day Coach Ben kept it simple and we just worked on our systems, making sure we all knew how to play with each other before our first tournament.

Because that was the one problem with tournament teams: we usually don't know how to play with each other very well at least, compared to your actual team that you play for during the season. This was usually because a tournament team was formed with a lot of kids from different teams, which made it harder to have good chemistry right off the bat. This was why most coaches usually focus on team-oriented drills or systems, as I like to call them, that made it a little easier to start to bond with your teammates in order to perform the best we could against high-level teams.

Anyway, at the end of our last practice Coach Ben had a special surprise for us. "All right, as you all are probably aware, this is our last practice before our first Brick Showcase. In honor of that, I wanted a former Team Brick Alberta alum to talk to guys about what to expect and what to focus on in these pre-tournament games."

With that Coach Ben yelled over to someone standing in the tunnel that led to the locker rooms and the ice. From this far away I couldn't tell who the person was, but I assumed that it was probably an NHL player that played for Team Brick Alberta long ago. As the man got closer, I nearly screamed at the top of my lungs, it was my older brother Christoph Chartier!

Coach Ben introduced my brother to the team. "Guys, I would like you to meet Christoph Chartier. He is a former Team Brick alum who now plays with our hometown Edmonton Oilers in the NHL, and I think he's got some words of wisdom to share with our team." With that Coach Ben gave the floor to my older brother. He winked at me before he spoke to the rest of the team.

"Thank you coach for letting me be here today, and before I begin, I would like everyone to just take a moment to reflect on your hockey journey that led you to this moment. Close your eyes and picture all of the goals you scored, all the saves you made, all the wins, heartbreaks, and overtime thrillers. Just picture it in your mind and understand what a great opportunity it is to play on this team." Everyone including myself had their eyes closed picturing all of our hockey journeys that led us to this moment. After a little bit Christoph continued, "I know that a lot of you have probably have been dreaming of playing in this game ever since you were little, I know I was when I was in this exact same moment as you guys are right now. This is a once in a

lifetime opportunity, don't waste it, but make sure to have some fun and play hard because in hockey I believe that the most important thing is to have fun and this journey to the Brick for me was some of my favorite hockey memories that I have. My advice to you here today is don't get discouraged even if games get rough, anything can happen in these tournaments so never quit and never accept defeat as the answer because it is not it never is. Thank you and I wish you all the best on the road to the Brick."

With that my teammates started cheering and my older brother started high fiving, talking to players, and signing autographs. I was a bit surprised by my brother's popularity, but I understood that he was an NHL player and that drew attention from people. After my teammates and I had grabbed our sticks and water bottles we headed to the locker room. One of the kids from Leduc asked me, "Hey Marcel, was that your brother?" And me being an honest kid and all replied, "Yes, that was my older brother."

Everyone in the locker room got kinda excited and started asking me questions about how it felt to be the brother of an NHL player and how many things I got to do that other people couldn't. This was a new experience for me, because before none of my teammates asked me about my family. Only my close friends knew that I had family members in the NHL, and they were always kind enough not to spread the word without my permission. So, I enjoyed the moment and tried my best to answer as many questions as I could with honesty.

After the practice, my older brother Christoph was in the waiting area talking to parents, players, and coaches. When he saw me, he walked over and said, "Hey Marcel, great practice today. Dad isn't here right now, but he put me in charge of getting you home so you can pack for Pittsburgh."

So with that me and Christoph headed out getting jealous looks as we walked by toward the parking lot. Not many people get to have the experience of riding along in the car with an NHL player. Even though he was my older brother, I did feel slightly nervous around him. My brother, though, didn't seem to care.

"So Marcel, are you excited to be going to Pittsburgh?"

I replied, "Yep, I'm super excited. Can't wait!"

My brother replied, “Sounds like it! I’m excited for you. This is a neat opportunity that not many people get.”

As we drove along towards home, I had a question and at that moment I thought that the best person to answer it would be Christoph, “Hey Chris, what was it like having the pressure of being compared to dad? I know I shouldn’t have that feeling but I do. I just want to play as well as I possibly can, and to do that I don’t want to have butterflies in my stomach.”

My brother turned to me sort of surprised but willing to help his younger brother. “It’s okay to have butterflies Marcel, in fact, that is one of the things that I think made me better so no need to worry about that. In terms of me comparing myself to dad, I did do that when I was your age, and you know what happened?”

“What?” I replied, rather shocked.

“I played my worst hockey, that's what. Marcel, you have to learn that even though your dad and I both made it to the show, it doesn't mean you should pressure yourself to be like us. In fact, you should almost forget about us completely when you're out there, because in reality the only person you should compare yourself to is yourself. Okay?”

I was surprised by my brother's knowledge and a little shocked by the revolution, but it made sense so I said, “Yes, I am okay thank you for the motivation.” The only thing that my brother said to that was, “You’re welcome.” And with that we continued our drive back home.

Chapter 8:

Pre-Tournaments and Preparation

My family and I traveled to Pittsburgh that night since we had a game the next day at 3 p.m., and we wanted to get there early enough for me to rest before the first game. When we arrived, we went to the hotel to rest and sleep after a long flight from Edmonton. I was excited to play in my first tournament with Team Brick Alberta, and I was also excited for the fun aspects of the tournament. The tournament wasn’t a standard tournament, instead we would play three showcase games that would help us to prepare for the Brick as well as

showcase our skills to scouts that would be at the game. I was really nervous, but I would always think about what my older brother had said to me the day I left and that would calm down my nerves a bit. The tournament itself was really fun, but we didn't perform as well as the coaches had hoped. In three showcase games we went 1-1-, beating only a team from New Jersey. I had a pretty good tournament scoring three goals and earning four points through three games, but I was also a little disappointed in our performance. Overall though, the coaches said it was a good kind of bad since now this gave us stuff to work on in practice in order to have a better all-around game.

That week, practice was filled with lots of things that we struggled with last weekend in Pittsburgh. Despite that, the coaches seemed excited that we fixed some holes in our overall game. They also thought that we had a really good chance at winning the CCHA Toronto Bulldogs tournament that weekend, which was exciting because it would really boost our spirits for the Brick tournament the following week.

Just like in Pittsburgh, the sights and sounds of the tournament in Toronto were exciting and fun. The team did better in this tournament than in Pittsburgh, however, we lost in the finals of the tournament which was a real letdown for our spirits. I myself had an even better tournament scoring six goals and seven points in four games, I felt like I was doing better every single week as I continued to get used to playing with this team. So much so, that I felt like I was the one carrying the team and no one else was contributing. I didn't say any of that to my teammates, but I definitely felt bitter after the loss in the finals.

After we went back to the hotel to pack up and head home, I told my brother Christoph how I was feeling. "Chris I feel like I am the one carrying this team, and no one else is contributing to help me out on the ice."

Christoph looked down at me surprised and even a little angered at my comment. "No Marcel, you are not carrying this team. Yes, you have been playing very well, and contributing quite a bit to the team, you are definitely not the only one. In fact, by saying that you are the team's weakest link."

I looked surprised by my brother's comment, even a little upset. "How am I the team's weakest link when I lead the team in goals and points?"

Christoph, a little happy to describe my flaw said, “If you care so much about if your teammates are contributing, then how do you think they see you as? A puck hog? A bad teammate? You don’t have sportsmanship? By thinking about yourself as the only one on the team, then you remove yourself from that team. That is why you feel the way you do because you're the only one, if you keep thinking that you are.” \

After that, my older brother started packing, not wanting to talk to me anymore. I felt ashamed that I thought of myself the way I did. I should never think that my teammates weren’t contributing to my team. Because in some ways everyone had a part in a win or loss. That was the brilliant thing about hockey: no one could ever carry a team unless they were Wayne Gretzky. And with my mind cleared I could continue packing, feeling better about our game today, even though it was a loss.

Chapter 9

The Brick Invitational

The week of the Brick Invitational had finally arrived, everyone was pumped for the weekend and couldn’t wait for the tournament to begin. For this week's practice, the coaches ran through drills that would help us in the tournament. After playing in one tournament and one showcase the coaching staff really thought we had a fighting chance at winning the Brick.

At the end of the last practice Coach Ben told us, “The Brick has finally arrived, and I know we are ready to show up on our home ice. We have been preparing for this tournament for months. I know we had some ups and downs, but I think we are truly ready to contend for a championship. I want you guys to ask yourselves, are you ready for this moment?”

We all cried out, “Yeah!”

Coach Ben acted as if he didn’t hear it and asked again, “Are you ready for this moment?!”

And once again we cried out, “Yeah!!”

“Then go out there and take it!” Coach Ben yelled, and we all cheered and did our chant before heading off the ice for the last time as a team, now it was time for the Brick to begin.

I was really nervous for my first game in the Brick, we were playing a very good Toronto Bulldogs team that beat us in the finals in their own tournament. Now I wanted to do that to them, but I was nervous and a little bit afraid. Not because I couldn't compete against them, just because I didn't want to let people down today on the biggest stage in squirt hockey.

My family seemed to notice my concern, my dad was the first to say something: "What's wrong Marcel? Are you feeling okay?"

I replied sickly, "No dad, I don't feel so good, I just don't want to let anyone down today."

My dad looked at my brothers then back to me. "Son you are not going to let anyone down today, just play hockey, have fun out there, and you will see that you will not let anyone down. Okay?"

Feeling a little bit better I replied, "Okay, I am feeling a little bit better."

My older brother chimed in as well. "You will do great today just like how you've been playing all season," my oldest brother Christoph said.

"You got this," my second oldest brother Duke replied.

"No need for butterflies in your stomach," said the twins Buddy and Chase rather cheerfully.

"Just know you will never let us down," my brother Mason replied. N

Now that I heard the encouragement of everyone in my family, I was ready for the biggest tournament of my life.

In the Brick Invitational tournament, there were 14 teams distributed into two conferences. Those seven teams played each team in their conference for a total of six round robin games. Then the top three teams advanced to a single elimination bracket to determine the winner of the tournament. Our team, after the round robin, were 4-2-0. The coaches were super proud and excited to see how far we would go in the championship bracket. We were playing like a team and we were never giving up even when we were down, just like Christoph said, and it worked. We already had two come-from-behind-wins and two close losses that we were in for the majority of the game. I myself was playing some of the best hockey of my life. Through the first six games of the tournament, I had a tournament leading 13 goals and also a tournament leading 15 points. My

family was extremely proud of me, and we were going to the championship bracket which was an amazing feeling of accomplishment.

In the championship bracket we won 6-1 over Toronto in the quarter finals, then in the semi-finals we won against a very good Montreal team in overtime 2-1. While I only had four points through these two games, we were moving on to the championship against Team Minnesota. Team Minnesota was led by Forward Henry Corwin who had 13 points over seven games, including eight goals. However, despite how good Henry was, I was even better. In eight games I had 16 goals and 19 points, these were both tournament leading numbers. I was playing at the top of my game, and now I was excited for the chance at the championship even if it was against a very good Minnesota team.

Chapter 10:

The Championship

On the final day of the tournament, it was just us and the team from Minnesota, everyone else was in the stands watching the outcome of the most prestigious tournaments in squirts. In the locker room I was nervous—not many people have an opportunity to be in this tournament, let alone the finals! Our team got ready in silence, all of us knowing the pressures and expectations that ride upon this game.

Our Captain, a kid from Sherwood Park was the first to break the silence, “Boys we know what's at stake here tonight, a chance of a lifetime to host that trophy into the air. But right now we need to focus period by period, never thinking too far ahead. Because we can't get down on ourselves even if the game gets rough, because you know what we've been in that situation before and we came out of them victorious. Tonight is our night, so let's go out there and take it.”

We all yelled and cheered as we followed our goalie out of the locker room and onto the ice. It was game time.

The first period didn't go the way we wanted it to go, we were down three to nothing at the end of the first. In the locker room coach Ben tried to give us words of encouragement, “I know it looks difficult, but we

know what we need to do and I think we have the heart and the team work to come back into this game. We just can't get down on ourselves early, it is mission difficult, but it isn't mission impossible."

With that we came out determined to score and score we did. To start the second period we scored two quick goals to make the score three to two. However, Minnesota would score again to increase their lead to two. In the locker room tensions were high, we were down two in the final period at the Brick Invitational. Someone came into the locker room, but it wasn't Coach Ben.

"No game is ever easy, that is why we love this game so much. This is the best situation in hockey boys, win the period, win the game. You guys have fought adversity to get to where you are right now, don't sit here and surrender now. This is a winnable game, we just need someone to start off the scoring," GM Augustus Garcia said to the players in the room. "Who will be the first?"

And with that he left with not so much as a glance. Coach Ben was just as surprised as we were but he followed the GM out of the locker room. With the extra motivation, we were ready to win.

The final period was like no other I have ever played, it was almost as if the game had just started. Both teams were evenly matched, the players seemed to get a new spring in their step. Everything seemed going to plan, until Minnesota scored again increasing their lead back to three goals. However, we never gave up and we grabbed two quick goals right back making the score five to four with two minutes left in the game. Coach Ben called a timeout.

"Alright this is what dreams are made of, down one with under two minutes left, let's get the first power play unit out there except substitute Conner for Marcel. Conner you will go out when we pull Branden. The goal is to win the faceoff, carry the puck into the zone with possession and try to draw a penalty or get shots on net. Alright?"

With that we put our hands in and did our chant then went to the ensuing face off. I couldn't believe that I was out on the ice trying to tie this game up at five. I am playing left wing since we will technically be on the man advantage once we pull Branden. The centers glided into position, and our center won it back to one of our D who passed the puck to me. I skate down the ice carrying the puck into the zone. I could hear Coach Ben pull

the goalie. Now, I set up as if we were the power play. We slowed the game down, trying not to force anything that wasn't there. I passed the puck up to a defenseman, then hovered around the top of the circle looking for a one timer opportunity.

Over the loud speakers I heard the announcer say one minute remaining in the period, which meant that there was less than a minute left in the entire game. I thought that the rest of my teammates heard as well as they were moving fast and passing quicker with less time on the clock. One of my teammates saw an opening and passed me the puck. I tee it up and...

...goal! I screamed joyfully and so did my teammates. I celebrated as I tied up the game at five with only 17 seconds remaining. I cruised down the bench, getting fist pumps as I skate past. I was still super full of adrenaline so I continued skating down the glass, tapping my glove against the glass as I skated past. I saw my brothers and my dad in the stands, and I did a humble stick raise. They nodded and smiled at me. I can't stop smiling for the final 17 seconds of the game. The horn sounded and we exited the ice surface, heading back to the locker room tied at the end of regulation time.

In the locker room it was extremely quiet—no one wanted to speak. Even though we tied it up, it didn't mean that the game was over. It just meant that the stakes were even higher now.

August Garcia came back into the locker room. "That was one hell of a period. When they thought you were down you rose up to the occasion and you answered. Now we have the most anticipated period in all of hockey: overtime in the final game. This is what dreams are made of. You are here. No matter what happens out there I want you to know that you put on one of the most amazing runs in a Brick Invitational. This is your moment, this is your chance, we just need one, that is all we need."

With that Augustus Garcia went back to his seat. Coach Ben had one last thing for us: "The starting lineup for overtime: Zach, Conner, and Marcel, good luck boys." And with that Coach Ben left and headed to the bench. I was starstruck. How am I starting in overtime? Tied at five, the first goal wins—this was what my dreams are made out of. We got ready for the face off, Zach taking the face off, me on the right, Conner back at D. The referee dropped the puck and overtime began.

The Minnesota center won the puck back to his defenseman. I chased after the puck trying to force a turnover. The defenseman, seeing me coming right at him with blazing speed, tried to get rid of the puck, but I intercepted it at the blue line. Now I was one-on-one with the goaltender. At that moment all my hockey memories came to mind: my first skate, my first NHL game, my first goal, my first playoff championship, making Team Brick Alberta, The Brick Invitational, my dad, and my brothers all came to mind as I skated down towards the goalie. I wanted to do something to honor all of those moments I had in my deck, which meant I wanted to do something that my dad would notice.

Then I thought of it: when my dad was still playing in the NHL, his shootout move was skating down the middle of the ice stickhandling until he got to the goaltender. Then he would fake right, make the goalie bite, then one hand the puck on the left side. Now of course I would do it the opposite way because I'm a lefty, not a righty, but that was perfect because I knew he will be proud. I skated towards the goalie, stickhandling left and right. Then I faked a move and shot to the left side of the net. The goalie bit. Then I tucked it on the right side with one hand on my stick for the goal!

The arena erupted, Fans were yelling, hugging, and cheering. The coaches were shaking hands, and my teammates jumped the boards throwing their helmets, gloves, and sticks onto the ice. Me? I think you know what I did but I will tell you anyway: I skated around the net yelling. Then at the blue line I broke into the "heartbreaker" celebration for one last time this season. Then I looked into the crowd and saw my dad. He seemed to be crying with joy for me, and then he just smiled and mimicked the "heartbreaker" celebration. That made me smile as I threw my helmet, gloves, stick, and met my teammates at center ice. We were all filled with joy as we embraced for a team hug, some were crying but all were smiling. We had done it; we had won the Brick Invitational.

At the end of our group hug, we lined up for a final handshake line, for this one I went through slowly congratulating every player for more than a second, it was the finals after all. When my teammates and I had gone through the handshake, all of us gathered near our parent section and smiled and waved at our parents and families. But soon it was the trophy celebration, and all of us gathered at our blueline standing side by side

waiting for the announcements. When the red carpet was laid out onto the ice, the commissioner for the tournament set out onto the red carpet holding a microphone.

“Hello and thank you for watching the conclusion of the 2031 Brick Invitational! We are proud to congratulate Team Minnesota on their awesome run in the tournament and their amazing season. But also to our champions, your hometown Team Brick Alberta!”

The crowd roared, not surprisingly as there were a lot more people from all over Alberta, then there were people from Minnesota. The Commissioner continued, “First, before we bring out the runner-up and champion trophies I would like to announce the MVP of the playoffs, with five goals in three playoff games, including the game tying goal and the overtime winner in the championship game, from Team Brick Alberta, Marcel Chartier!”

I was stunned, I couldn't believe I was the MVP of the playoffs. All of my teammates were cheering and trying to get me to skate over to the commissioner. I did skate over to the commissioner, but I was still starstruck about being named the tournament playoff MVP. I shook the commissioner's hand and posed for a picture with him and my trophy. When that was over, I hoisted the trophy over my head in front of my teammates yelling excitedly. My teammates were yelling and screaming as well, then after a lap, I skated the trophy over to our assistant coach to hold onto during the ceremony. They first brought out the runner up trophy for Team Minnesota and that team posed for pictures. As they left the ice, we saw our trophy, and we all started smiling pointing at it. Our Captain stood next to the commissioner for a picture and then hoisted the trophy above his head yelling excitedly as he skated around with it. Then he passed it to me and I got to lift the trophy.

As I was smiling and looking up at my dad I yelled, “I did it!” Then my dad shook his head and smiled uncontrollably. I smiled back and mouthed, “You did it.” It was the greatest moment of my life, that I wanted to cherish forever.

Chapter 11:

The Conclusion from the Author Marcel Chartier

Everyone has a moment that they cherish forever, for me that was the Brick Tournament Championship game. Even though I am older now, I still remember everything about that day. The cheering, the trophy, my goal, but the thing I remember most was my dad. I know that might seem weird, but I remember my dad in that moment: he seemed to be thinking of himself when he saw that goal. Seeing my dad that emotional and happy is the single happiest moment that I have with him, and nothing even comes close. Even though I am in the NHL now and playing with my older brothers, I cherish that moment. It is a moment that I tell my kids and they always shout and jump up and down laughing as I tell it to them, because they are not old enough to understand the emotional part of that story. It wasn't my goal, my celebration, my MVP, the trophy, not even winning the tournament. If you were to ask my brothers, they would tell you it was because of my dad at that moment, so happy and excited as the fans around him were cheering. He was never one for words, but I think that in that moment his expression and his happiness for me was all that he needed to say. Because to me, my dad was not only my dad, but he was the greatest friend that I have ever had in my life.

This story is dedicated to my dad Richard Chartier,

For always believing in me, because hockey has always been a team sport, and I could never have done it without my dad and my teammate being right there beside me.

Thank you.

Richard Chartier

1987-2074