Going for the Record



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Leah Weiczynkowski lives for soccer. She has just been invited to try out for the US under-18 national team, and she is ecstatic, high as a kite. This is a huge milestone, attained through fierce dedication and relentless sweat, one she's held keenly in her sights since she was a child. Leah's seventeen now, about to begin her senior year of high school in Traverse City, Michigan, and she is on the brink of realizing her dream. Nothing matters as much as this; this is her gateway into the World Cup, the Olympics. Everything she's done in her life up to this point was about this moment. She can't wait to tell her dad -- her biggest fan, her chauffeur to games, practices, and club teams downstate. Thing is, Pete Weiczynkowski has some news of his own, and it's neither exciting nor joyful. Pete has cancer. Pancreatic cancer, a vicious form that knows no cure. When he lays this news on Leah, it knocks the wind out of her from the inside out, and a coldness seeps through her body, as if something at her very core has burst. Not her Pops. Disbelief leads to sadness and sadness morphs into anger -- not just about the unfairness of losing her dad; it's also an anger that asks, Why does this have to happen "now?" Just when she's hit a sweet spot in her quest to become the foremost women's soccer player in the world. Realistically, she has a shot. She's good, and she's determined. And now her dad is dying -- he's dying, and the doctors have allotted him three months, tops, to live. What should she do? Should she go to the tryout camp

even though it's a month before he's supposed to die? Or does she give it all up soccer, the dream, her future to be at home for the last weeks of herfather's life? This is Leah Weiczynkowski's dilemma \vee at least it is in the beginning.
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