

# Not Giving Up

By: Asha Zuniga



## Chapter 1

One bright Sunday morning a girl was born. Her name was Ashlyn Moore. She was born on February 13, 1988. Her parents could not take care of her, as well as they wanted to. So they had no other choice but to put her up for adoption. Two kind New Yorkers adopted her. Mary Beth Erin and John Erin. As well as Ashlyn, Mary Beth was adopted. Mary Beth's adopted family was from Florida and Michigan. When Mary Beth and John adopted Ashlyn she was eleven years old. She was an ordinary girl on the outside but on the inside she was extraordinary.

As she grew she was picked on, teased, and laughed at because she was adopted. She had long blonde hair and blue eyes as a twelve-year-old middle school student. She was in the sixth grade at Palms Middle School where there was only one other girl in the entire school that is adopted named Sarah Canson. The other students also picked on her, but they just ignored and sometimes told their teacher. There was one girl in the seventh grade named Alyssa Hope. She was the meanest girl in Ashlyn's school. She was thirteen years old and picked on Ashlyn any chance she got. Ashlyn was getting sick of it and through middle school and high school that's all Alyssa did to her. When she was fifteen years old her Mom (Mary Beth) was diagnosed with Leukemia Cancer, which Ashlyn had very little knowledge about. After talking with her adopted dad John and researching about it she understood that it was very serious. She was going through a very hard time in school and at home. Everyone made fun of her because she would be crying all day in school. Every day when she got off the bus she would run home to see her mother. But one day her mother was not there. She looked everywhere and her mother was nowhere to be found. Her father was lying on the bed.

"Father" Ashlyn cried. "Where is mother?"

Her father replied

"I'm so sorry Ashlyn but your mother passed away." There was a moment of silence for months.

## Chapter 2

One-day Ashlyn's father went out on a date. He started dating Kelly Johnson. She was nice to Ashlyn when they were around her father but otherwise she was just as mean as Alyssa Hope, who still bullied her. Ashlyn's father sat down and had a talk with Ashlyn about remarrying to Kelly. Ashlyn refused and said "Father if you marry her I will run away." Her father said nothing and so he did marry Kelly Johnson, which is now Kelly Erin. Ashlyn graduated a year after they married. But she couldn't decide whether to go to college or travel the world with Sarah. She was always by her side but the only reason they couldn't hang out like they used to, because when Sarah's parents divorced her father remarried Alyssa Hopes mother. So Ashlyn did NOT want to go over there to see her if she had to see Alyssa. Ashlyn did not run away like she said she would instead she applied for California State University to have a reason to go somewhere different. She really had no idea what she was going to be or where she was going to go. In her heart there were two options, college or travel. She was so confused but still applied for college. She was just going to wait until she got the letter back from California State University. Then she thought, well what if I do get in, what will I become? She had too many questions and not enough answers. Her dad didn't even know that she applied for the college and he wouldn't find out unless she got in to the college and had to leave. She was really hoping she got in but if not then she would be fine because she also wanted to travel just as much as going to college.

Two weeks later she received the letter from the college. It read

"Dear Ashlyn Moore,

You have a great personality. You are also very creative but we need more than who you are. We need the grades and even though you were an all A student we still need you to understand the work you are doing. I'm very sorry for this miss fortune. Please remember you are a star and will always be but it's not up to me.

Sincerely, Mrs. Englemyer

Ashlyn was not sad enough to cry but was very unhappy. She knew now that she had to start traveling right away and so she did. She also didn't have to tell her dad about even applying for college because she didn't get in.

## Chapter 3

She called Sarah right away and told her that she is able to come with her if she wants to but if not then they should say goodbye. Sarah didn't answer so in order for her to find out she would have to go over there in person. But she would have to see Alyssa. Ashlyn had to go; she had to talk to Sarah. When she arrived, Alyssa was in the kitchen. Sarah was in her room. Alyssa also picked on Sarah but her parents never seemed to see or care about it. When Ashlyn walked into the kitchen she saw Alyssa there like she was waiting for Ashlyn to come for months. "Sarah's in her room." Alyssa explained. "Thank you" Ashlyn replied. As Ashlyn walked to Sarah's room Alyssa followed her. Ashlyn was feeling very uncomfortable. When Ashlyn entered the room Sarah was lying on her bed. Their eyes met at shock and they ran up to each other and hugged and squeezed as tight as they could. Sarah asked, "What's up?" Ashlyn said "I was wondering if you wanted to travel the world with me?" It was a straight up question and Sarah didn't know what that meant. "What?" she exclaimed. "I applied for a college didn't get in and now I want to explore the world with my best friend. So will you come with me?" she asked "Of course I will!" she replied. "Where will be going?" "I don't know yet but we'll figure it out."

They had to start their adventure someplace, and that someplace was New York. It is originally where her stepparents were born. So they set out there adventure on a Monday morning and would not be coming back until she found what she wanted.

When they arrived it was about twelve o'clock and they were going to call Ashlyn's dad and break the news to him. When they called Kelly answered and Ashlyn did not want to tell her or she would twist the facts. Instead she just quickly hung up the phone and called her dad's cell phone. He didn't answer so she a voicemail saying, "Hi dad I just wanted to say that I'm in New York and am setting out to find who I want to be. By the time I'm back I'm hoping you will forgive me for leaving. I love you, bye."

## Chapter 4

Ashlyn didn't know what to do first and then it hit her; she was going to walk around enjoying where she is. They went shopping, went out to eat and looked at every person that was enjoying their job. She never found anything that stood out to her. So they bought more plane tickets and flew to Brazil for that was Ashlyn's favorite soccer team. They arrived late Friday and went searching. This time Ashlyn felt like she would be there for a while. They were wondering around and just loving the food, the people, and how everything worked there. They stayed there for days doing the same thing over and over again. Ashlyn thought of trying out for the Brazil Woman's Professional Soccer Team. They were not having tryouts but scouting the college games. There was only one problem. She wasn't in college. She wanted to be on the team but she didn't want to live in Brazil the rest of her life. So she decided to just wait until she found a good fit for her. She enjoyed living in Brazil for a while but not for the rest of her life. She knew exactly where she wanted to go next.....Jamaica. Jamaica is in the Caribbean Sea and is south of Cuba and north of South America. It was Tuesday when they arrived and it was almost midnight. Ashlyn was so anxious to find what she thinks she needs. Abu Dhabi is the one place she thought she was going to find it. Yet when she arrived she knew it wasn't there. But why waste a good vacation. While she was going to sleep her father called but she did not answer. He left her a voicemail saying "I am very disappointed in you but if this is what you want then you may have it. This would have been the last of my suggestions but I know you will be fine. See you soon, Love you bye.

The next morning she woke up and checked her phone. She noticed that her dad left her a message. She was very stunned at what he said she thought he would be so upset that he would come and get her himself.

As she was walking on the path of the road she knew she needed to call her dad right away. So she decided to call him.

"Hello"

“Hi dad I wanted to say that I’m very sorry for leaving and will see you soon. Bye”

Her dad didn’t understand what happened and was confused. But he understood that he had to just let her be who she is. Sarah’s dad and step mom didn’t really care about what she was doing or where she was going but she still told them and as usual they ignored her.

Sarah and Ashlyn are best friends but when it comes to their parents they just stayed out of the way.

While they were walking they came along a food stand and saw people dancing, playing music, and some of them were just talking to the people who came along. Ashlyn jumped right in and it was like they were family. Maybe that was her true calling, music. All these ideas were bouncing in her head about what she could do.

When she was little she played the violin and sang in a musical but she never thought about that being her career. She always enjoyed the sound of the guitar. This was one of the instruments a man happened to be playing. She could maybe sing and play the instrument. Her dad played the saxophone when he was little but never went on with it either. The only thing that worried her if she didn’t enjoy it as much as she imagined then it would be a waste and she still wouldn’t know what she wants to do. She kept that in her head the rest of the day. They walked outside and it was really hot so they went down to the sea and she and Sarah took a dip in the ocean. It was so cold they went from as hot as the sun to as cold as an ice cube. As she was swimming she realized exactly what to do. She saw about six girls playing soccer. They walked over and the girls asked if they wanted to play. So they did and Ashlyn loved it. Her final decision was that she was going to find out somehow to play soccer. Ashlyn went back to California and talked to her dad about what happened.

When she got home her dad was sitting in his office waiting to talk to her. Her dad said, “Sweetie I’m so sorry for not being who you want me to be but I hope you found what you were looking for. Did you?”

“No sir but I have a feeling it’s coming.”

“Good so what is it?”

“Soccer!”



Ashlyn's dad gave a nice smirk as Ashlyn walked away.

Ashlyn figured if she was going to play soccer she was going to have to figure out the rules and practice, practice, practice. Her dad played when he was in college and loved it as he still does. She was going to set her mind to playing soccer. So she had to figure out how she would start her career.

As the same as in Brazil where there were scouts going to college games there was in California so she had to get into a college. She applied for the University of Southern California. She had to turn in her college application.

Dear University of Southern California,

My name is Ashlyn Moore and I am nineteen years old and would like to join your college group. I went to Palms middle school and high school and got all A's throughout my school life. I applied for California State University and unfortunately did not get in. This is my second application for a college and I'm hoping to get in to this one.

Sincerely,  
Ashlyn Moore

Ashlyn reviewed her application a bunch of times to make sure that it was just right when they got it. She walked outside and went to the mailbox with her hand shaking and her breath breathing very, very heavy. She put it in just in time because when she pulled her hand down the mail truck came and pulled the mail right out of their mailbox. She knew she was making the right decision because inside her heart she knew soccer is what she wanted to do.

As months went by she waited longer for this letter back from University of Southern California than the letter from California State University. She waited and waited and waited for that letter to come back to her. When it did come back it said.

Dear Ashlyn Moore,

We have seen your application and enjoyed it very much. All we need to know is what college classes you would enjoy taking. After we have this information you will be a student at University of Southern California. We attached the college classes that we have here at University of Southern California for you to decide on what classes you want to be attending. There are many to choose from and make a wise choice for your first year. Thank you very much and just send back what classes you want and we should see you soon.

Sincerely, Mrs. Richardson

From The University of Southern California.

## Chapter 5

Ashlyn was jumping and cheering with happiness. She ran inside screaming and saying "DAD, DAD, DAD I got into University of Southern California College and that means I can tryout for their soccer team!"

"Well sweetie that's just great I'm very proud of you. You need to know that you will need to practice very hard to compete with these girls and to make the team."

"Yes father I know that."

"Well good then it looks like you will be attending the University of Southern California!" Their smiles were big and wide just because of how hard Ashlyn tried for this and then achieved her goal. She was calmer on the outside than on the inside and she was very nervous. They stood there for a moment in silence and then Ashlyn started crying tears of joy. Her dad grabbed her and hugged her so tight that she felt the love travel from him to her. Ashlyn was crying because she realized that she would have to leave Sarah and most importantly her father. Her father understood by the look on her face what was happening. As they stood there Kelly walked in she looked dead in the eye at Ashlyn and rolled her eyes. As John turned around Kelly stopped and said "Oh sweetie what's going on. Are you guys ok?" "Yes though Ashlyn is leaving to go to the University of Southern California and will miss everyone she loves and cares about." Her father looked at Kelly and back at Ashlyn and said "Well Ashlyn when will you be leaving and how are you going to get there?" The reason he asked that is because Ashlyn never got her license or even her permit yet a car. Ashlyn's head was full of thoughts that confused her she could either: have her dad or someone else take her, not go to college, or GET HER LICENSE. The last idea for her was kind of a nightmare because she was terrified of driving. Her dad tried to get her to drive since she turned fifteen and it was legal for her to get her permit. Anytime he said that she would immediately deny it saying "NO!!!!!" Her father tired for years and finally she thinks that he decided to give up. To school she would ride the bus, to the mall she would ride with friends, and pretty much everywhere else she

would ride with her dad. The thing that made her a little mad was that her dad had a reason for trying to get her to drive and it was that Sarah got her permit and later on she got her license. And yes Ashlyn was left out and it did hurt her in some way but just as she learned to live with Kelly she learned to live without driving.

## Chapter 6

The next morning she got up and was determined to get her drivers license. She said to her dad as she walked down the stairs into the kitchen "Dad I am going to get my license today I've waited too long and am finally going to get over my fears as you taught me!" "Well then how about we go fight your fears." Then the worst thought appeared in her mind she has never been in the driver's seat of a car and hasn't pushed the pedal before. All though she had that thought her father did not have nearly the same one. In his mind Ashlyn was guessing that he was thinking of how Ashlyn was leaving for college and going to play soccer and this that and the other. They drove to the driver's office but as they were pulling in to a parking space a learning driver came from the passenger side of the car and hit the side where Ashlyn was sitting. All Ashlyn could remember was the sirens of an ambulance and police car.

## Chapter 7

Ashlyn's dad was in tears and meanwhile Kelly was half smirking half teary. It seemed that Kelly had it out for Ashlyn. Ashlyn had a concussion and her father was just scraped around his neck from the seatbelt. Ashlyn didn't just have a concussion but when the car came in it hit her right leg and she tore her muscle. The doctor gave her a full leg cast and she had to use a wheelchair. She had to stay in the hospital for three days and just sit there eating, sleeping and resting her leg. Meanwhile she was having a writing war with the University of Southern California council president. They were mainly talking about when she will be able to come to college and Ashlyn was getting mad because they didn't understand that she tore a muscle and now she needs to rest for at least a week or even two weeks. Not only was Ashlyn mad but also Ashlyn's dad was mad. He handled it well though he called them and said

"My daughter Ashlyn Moore applied and made your college and three days ago she tore a muscle in her leg. Now you keep writing her letters asking when she will be better. Well the answer is when the doctor says that she can get out of her wheelchair and get her license and drive to your school." After that he did not let them talk nor did he talk back. He simply let them off with that and hung up the phone.

Ashlyn didn't quite know that her father called the university because he said that he was calling Kelly to tell her that they would be coming home as soon as the doctor returned with the pain medicine she had to take. When her dad returned to the room Ashlyn asked, "What did Kelly say?" "Well...." he stuttered, "She said that she can't wait to see how well you're doing." When those words came out her dad's mouth she knew they weren't true. Although she was very suspicious she had no energy left in her body to figure out what was going on. The doctor came back and said "You are allowed to leave but I want you to remember that if you lay one toe on the ground or put any pressure on your right leg you will be in so much pain you could pass out." Ashlyn attempted to get up and actually did, but of course she was in crutches and sat down in a wheelchair but she still did it. As she got up everyone in

the room had a big smile. Even Ashlyn because even though she was on crutches the father that she never really got along with was always there by her side. Now on the other side Kelly was at home probably sleeping all day not even knowing that her stepdaughter was in the hospital. She felt that deep inside her heart she would be ok because somewhere up above her someone was watching her. That someone was her mom. She felt inside her body that she would heal faster than she would usually. As she sat down in her wheelchair she started to cry. Her dad bent down and hugged her as she started to feel better.

## Chapter 8

After three weeks Ashlyn was taking her medicine and was now on crutches instead of a wheel chair. She still had a full leg cast that wrapped around her whole leg three times. It felt tighter than it did before but it was because in order for it to heal it had to be tighter. Ashlyn did indeed wobble and fell flat on her but about two times but luckily didn't fall on her foot. It was hard for her to get through the house with the narrow hallways especially with her wheelchair. She started getting used to using the crutches. The hard part was getting used to the wheelchair. She couldn't even get to her bedroom because it was upstairs and at school she would have to take the elevator for people with injuries. Her dad moved down most of her stuff to the office downstairs and turned it into her bedroom. She couldn't fit through the hallway if she was using her hands so Kelly or her dad had to push her through. After she got crutches it was easier for her to get to her bedroom downstairs but she still couldn't go upstairs. She tried to sneak in one time but just as she was trying to go up her dad was coming down from his bedroom. He saw her and said "Ashlyn what do you think your doing? If you try going upstairs you could possibly fall down or even fall on your foot. I don't want you to get hurt before it is heals." After Ashlyn was done talking with her dad she went back to her room with the clacking sound of her crutches. She was very upset just about what she can and mostly can't do. She wasn't going to let that get in her way though. She figured if she can't go up the stairs then she can't but the one thing that did bother her was that she couldn't fit through a hallway by herself.

It was almost eleven o'clock at night and Ashlyn decided to go to bed. Although Ashlyn went to bed Kelly and her dad didn't. They stayed up talking to each other back and forth. "I'm very worried about Ashlyn and how she going to get better. I know she will but..." There was a moment of silence. John spoke up "She wants to play soccer but I don't want her to if she does indeed hurt her leg again. Soccer is a very dangerous sport because of how rough some people are and how much they get away with it." Kelly just nodded and frowned but from where John was you could probably see her smiling. Sadly John didn't see it. Ashlyn could of



spotted it easily yet they probably wouldn't be talking about Ashlyn when she's there. Kelly didn't say anything at all in that conversation. Ashlyn did hear them but by the time they got to the interesting part Ashlyn was sound asleep.

## Chapter 9

The next morning Ashlyn woke up and it was unusual because no one else was up. Usually when Ashlyn wakes up her dad is getting ready to go feed all her animals. But this morning it wasn't like that. I was calm and quiet and you couldn't hear anything. Everyday Ashlyn would wake up and she would hear the sound of her dad's coffee, the sound of the horses gnawing on their food and most importantly the sound of Kelly sleeping. Kelly was awake and being as rude as can be.

"Where's my dad?" Ashlyn said in a forceful voice.

"Oh he's sleeping. He isn't going to do as much work as he usually does so you're going to have to go feed the animals." Kelly said that like feeding the animals were the worst thing Ashlyn could do.

"But I can't I have to rest my leg. So why don't you go do it."

"Well fine then I will and then your father will be mad at you for not doing it."

Kelly stomped away and Ashlyn went back to her room so quietly no one could hear her. She was eager to go check on her father but as told forcefully by the doctor and her father "NOT TO GO UPSTAIRS!!!!!" So as simple as that she didn't. Although she didn't go upstairs she heard her dad coughing and it didn't sound good. He almost sounded sick. After that tough occurrence her mind she knew her life was just getting worse.

Kelly fed the animals and made breakfast lunch and dinner for Ashlyn. Maybe Ashlyn was wrong maybe Kelly didn't have it out for Ashlyn but she still didn't know that. That Thursday Kelly confronted two things. One was that she didn't want to destroy or hurt Ashlyn so she just didn't seem to like how she acted around Kelly and two was that her father was very sick with the flu and would need to rest and stay in bed and be away from them. Ashlyn actually thanked Kelly for saying that, because she never really enjoyed what Kelly said sometimes. Kelly and Ashlyn both had the same look on their face that they would be getting along more often than they used to.

That Saturday Ashlyn went in for a check up at the doctors. They said

“Your leg has healed almost all the way but we need you to wear that cast until further notice.”

“Yes sir I’m ok with that”

After that they headed home. The next Monday Ashlyn’s dad got out of bed and was feeling just as he did before he got the flu. When Ashlyn got out of bed she heard the usual except now all she heard were the sound of coffee being made and the sound of horses chewing their food. This meant two things. She made up with Kelly and her father was ok. This did put a smile on her face. The only thing that would make her happier was if she could get her cast off and go to college. If she could do this it would mean that she would be able to play soccer. But sadly those were not going to happen quick enough as she planned.

## Chapter 10

Even though she didn't get her cast off that day she did the next week. Her father drove to the doctor's office and signed in. The lady said

"How may I help you?"

"Well my daughter is here to get her cast off."

"Well then ok just come on through here and the doctor will be in in just a second."

Ashlyn and her dad waited in a big x-ray room. Ashlyn was nervous she thought what if I haven't healed then I'll have to keep wearing this cast. Also she would have to stay home and wouldn't be able to go to college. Her dad had thoughts in his head to but his were the words over and over again "Is she going to be ok? Is she going to be ok? Is she going to be ok?" That was the kind of nervous her dad was having and you could see it.

"Yes dad I will." Ashlyn said that in the softest voice she had. The two of them met eye-to-eye and smiled. Just as they were doing that the doctor walked in.

"How are you doing today?"

"Good how are you?"

"I'm doing good thanks. Now how about we get your cast off and see how it's doing."

"Ok."

The doctor told Ashlyn's dad to help her underneath the x-ray and he did. Ashlyn's face was turning as pale as paper and you could tell how nervous she was. The doctor turned the x-ray on and Ashlyn's leg was shown on the screen. The doctor explained to Ashlyn's dad that Ashlyn's leg was indeed ok. Ashlyn did hear this conversation and said

"YES!!!!!" The doctor and her dad heard her and smiled at her. Ashlyn was so happy she wanted to get off the x-ray. The doctor and her dad walked over to her and lifted her off the table and put her on the cushion bed to take the cast completely off. The doctor unwrapped it very slowly and Ashlyn was shaking hoping it wouldn't look bad. He unwrapped the last part and as Ashlyn looked down it looked as good as new. Ashlyn smiled and then the doctor although her dad was almost going to cry.

“What’s wrong dad I’m as good as new? Are you ok?”

“Ya I’m just sad because now you get to go away to college.” Ashlyn never thought of that she was just happy that she was healed.

“Dad I know I’m going to college but that doesn’t mean that I’ll never see you again. I’ll come to visit you and Kelly as much as I can.”

“Sounds like a deal. Now we should get going you need your old room back and you need to practice walking on that foot. You also need to pack for college. They walked out of the doctor’s saying their goodbyes. As Ashlyn was walking she felt funny inside. It was weird for her not to be on her crutches or in a wheelchair in a long time. She walked normal but she was scared of falling or hurting her leg in someway. Her dad was there by her side the whole time. It was like watching a baby giraffe walk for the first time or a baby bird flying for the first time. It was very hard to describe how Ashlyn was feeling inside. It was weird but a nice weird. They reached the car and Ashlyn’s face was just shocked because she didn’t fall. They then went home.

## Chapter 11

When they got home Kelly was waiting for them. Ashlyn's dad walked in first and Kelly asked

"What did the doctor say?"

After she said that Ashlyn walked in with a big smile on her face. Kelly knew what this meant. Kelly went to go hug her carefully because she didn't want to step on her foot. There was happiness filling their home. Everyone was cheering and smiling. They decided that since Ashlyn was ok that they should celebrate. They were going to through a party. They wanted to do it right away so they did it the next day. Ashlyn invited Sarah and some more friends from the neighborhood. Kelly invited her friends that lived nearby and her dad invited anyone he had on his contact list. They had cake, candy, a lot of people, and presents. The party didn't end until at eleven o'clock at night. A week later Ashlyn went to go get her drivers license. She was very nervous but also excited. This license would lead her to college.

She got to the drivers office and told the lady that she had an appointment for Ashlyn Moore. They lady said "Yes." and led Ashlyn to the correct position to take her test. When the man who would instruct Ashlyn got there they introduced each other and were on their way. Ashlyn did almost everything right. They pulled back in the parking space and the man left to go put in his papers. Ashlyn's hands were shaking. When the man came back he smiled and said "Congratulations you past your drivers test and are now an official licensed driver." Ashlyn smiled and said, "Thank you so much." After that he walked away and Ashlyn followed him. She walked into a tiny room and they took her picture. She went back to the front desk where her father was waiting for her to get out. The lady at the desk gave her license to her and they left.

The following week she left for college. Her dad and Kelly said, "Goodbye and I love you" about a hundred times. She said "goodbye" to Sarah and she started crying. Ashlyn left their house and set out for her college journey.

## Chapter 12

When she arrived the principal met up with her to talk about her academics. She asked

“What classes would you like to take?”

“Well I was thinking of doing English, Math, Psychology, and World History.”

“Those are all great choices for your first semester and for what you want to become.”

“Speaking of that when are soccer tryouts?”

“Well I think they are in two weeks so it will give you enough time to get used to the college.”

“Thank you”

After Ashlyn had her conversation she left the office and went to her first class.

After two weeks went by it was time for soccer tryouts. She got her cleats, shin guards, and her ball. She walked out to the soccer fields and there were a lot of girls there. They started off by stretching. This was very good for Ashlyn to stretch out her bad leg. When they finished with that they started passing the ball back and forth. They did this so the coach could tell who was going to be on the team. Just before they were going to take shots on goal the team started coming their way. This made Ashlyn mad because Alyssa Hope was on the team. Tryouts were almost halfway done after they were taking shots on goal. For the last part of practice the coach made all the girls even the ones already on the team run laps around the field. This made all the girls tired except for Ashlyn and Alyssa. The coach finished the practice after that and all the players went to their dorms. Before Ashlyn left she asked “Coach when will we know if we made the team or not?”

“I’ll send you something saying if you did make it or if you didn’t to your dorms”

“Ok. Thanks.”

Ashlyn had a great nights sleep feeling confident about the tryouts. They had a week worth of tryouts doing the same thing over and over again.

The last night of tryouts the coach sent out the letters. Ashlyn got hers and opened it very quickly. It said

Ashlyn you are very creative and coordinate in soccer. Thank you very much for trying out and you did make the team. I'll see you at Tuesday nights practice to start our season off fresh.

Thank you, Coach Johnson

Ashlyn screamed and cheered very loudly. She called her dad and told him all about it. After she got off the phone she went to bed. The next day when she walked in her first class her teacher said that she was doing great in all of her subjects. Ashlyn was very proud of herself. She had accomplished a lot since she got to college. They had practice that night and Ashlyn went in confident. There were five people that made the team that were new like Ashlyn. Ashlyn was one of those five. The practice they had that night was tougher than when they had tryouts. They scrimmaged against each other and Ashlyn scored two goals for her team who won. They had practice every Tuesday and Friday of the week except for the days they had breaks. They did the same things each practice. Ashlyn was getting good practice for the games they were going to play. Their first game was on the fifth Saturday that they had practice. In the whole season they have seven games. They were playing Johnson State University for their very first game. They were playing at their home fields and there were a lot of people. The coach put Ashlyn in center mid for the beginning of the game and put her in forward for the second half of the game. She scored the first goal playing center mid and the second half playing forward. Alyssa played left forward the whole game. She scored one goal playing forward. In the end the score was 3-0. This was Ashlyn's first victory with this team.



## Chapter 13

They had practice three out of four Tuesdays and Fridays. Then they had their game after practice on Friday. They were playing Ray Bryant University at their fields. Ashlyn played center mid again and Alyssa played forward again. Alyssa scored four goals in the first half and Alyssa scored one goal in the first half. In the second half Ashlyn scored two goals and another girl named Lola scored the last goal. In the last two minutes the opponent's scored against them. The game ended at 8-1 and Ashlyn's team won again.

They kept on practicing and had a game two Saturdays after their last game. They were playing against the University Northern Utah. Ashlyn played center mid as usual and Alyssa played forward as usual. Ashlyn scored a goal in the first ten minutes. No one else scored goals the rest of the game including Utah's team. The scored ended at 1-0.

Their next game was a week from the Saturday they played against Utah. This time they played against Florida State College. Ashlyn and Alyssa played in the same positions as they did in the other games. This was their fourth game that the team played. Ashlyn and Alyssa were starting to get along but they weren't fully friends. Ashlyn and Alyssa scored one goal each in the first half and the other team scored two goals in the first half. After the second half started Alyssa scored right away. The other team never scored another goal and the score was 3-2 and Ashlyn's team won.

Their next game was after four weeks because they got two week off of school. They played against one of the hardest teams in the division. They played where they usually do and Ashlyn only scored one goal. Alyssa scored three goals. The other team came really close because in the third quarter they had three goals. This game ended at 4-3 and this was a tuff team to beat, but they did it.

They only had two more games left and needed to get a lot of points to get to first or second place to get into the championship. They were in fourth place in their whole division and really wanted to get to the top of the standings. For the sixth game they played against Fort Myers University. Ashlyn scored

four goals and Alyssa scored three goals. There total was seven and the other teams was three. They were very proud of how far they have gotten.

It was their last game but they weren't nervous at all. They were actually very excited to see where they would end up. They played against Arizona State College the day after their game against Fort Myers University. Ashlyn scored eight goals in that game and Alyssa scored two. The other team didn't score any and the score was 10-0. Ten goals were the most goals they had scored in a game. Everyone was very proud of the season they had.

## Chapter 14

Ashlyn's coach went to the girls college soccer website to check what place they were in and they were in and they were in FIRST PLACE! Everyone was screaming and cheering. Their coach announced that they were in first place all over the school. It even ended up on the news show. They were even doing better than the boys but not much better. The boys ended up in third place in their division and were one position away from being in the championship. Even though the boys team didn't make it to the championship the girls did. The girls coach made them practice every day after school for three weeks until the championship. Then the one most important game in Ashlyn's freshman year in college was here.

## Chapter 15

The championship game was at promptly two o'clock in the afternoon and the girls were practicing a lot. When the referee blew his whistle the girls all ran on to the field. Ashlyn looked out to the audience to find her dad. At first she couldn't see him and then him and Kelly were the only people she saw. They were playing on their home fields against Brookford University. Ashlyn started at center mid and Alyssa started at forward. Ashlyn's heart was pumping when the referee blew his whistle to start the game. Ashlyn ran to the ball and took it away from the other player. She passed it up to Lola and she went on a break away. A break away in soccer is when you run with the ball and there is no one in front of you. Lola crossed it into Ashlyn and she ran up to it and chipped it into the net with her foot. Ashlyn turned back and saw that Alyssa looked mad at her. Maybe she thought that she should of hit that ball and made the goal. The referee wrote down Ashlyn's name and number in his book to make sure he knew who made the goal. Ashlyn's number was 10 and when they got their uniform Ashlyn picked it up really fast because it was her lucky number. The referee blew his whistle and they ran back to the center of the field. The other team started off very strong after Ashlyn scored a goal. Ashlyn's team's defense wasn't that good so if the ball got by the forwards and Ashlyn they would be in deep trouble. In this case that did happen. Ashlyn started running as fast as she could to get back but started running to late to catch up with the other teams player and as she kept running she took a hard shot and missed it. Ashlyn wasn't happy but glad that she missed. You could tell that the girl was mad. Ashlyn ran back to the center to try and get the ball after the goalie punted it. Ashlyn dropped it down from her head to her chest and tried to look for a pass but the other player took the ball from her. She did get it back but it was challenging. She went on a break away herself and outran the other teams defense but as she went to take the shot she hit it with her left foot straight at the goalie and she got it. Ashlyn is a righty and her left foot is very poor in taking shots. They all ran back and someone on the opposite team got it and dribbled around Ashlyn and the defense. As Ashlyn's running back the girl takes a shot and makes

it. This goal tied the game one to one. The referee called the first water break and they ran off the field. He called it again and the girls returned back to the field. They started back in the middle and they separated to try and pass the ball. Ashlyn didn't pass the ball though she just kept running and as she was running slipped on the grass and fell on her right leg. She was in little pain but it still did hurt her. The referee asked if she was "ok" and she said "yes." She said yes because she really was ok. She popped back up and started running backwards. The ball came towards her but bounced over her head. She ran back to get it and did finally receive it. She started running with it until a big defender came in and slide tackled into her right leg. The ball went out and Ashlyn was on the ground. She was hurt so bad she started crying and her coach came on the field to get her. He said

"Ashlyn just relax and take a breath."

As told Ashlyn relaxed and took a breath. She was lying there and waiting for the doctor to come out and get her. The doctor and her coached lifted her up onto a stretcher and pushed her to the sideline. During this time her dad looked very worried. The coach kept asking, "Can you play? Can you play? Can you play?" Ashlyn was saying, "Yes coach I can!" over and over again. He had to make a very tough decision. In college soccer you only have three substitutions, which are when one player comes in for another player. Once one player comes out they can't come back in. The coach could either play with ten players in which they usually play with eleven or wait and see if Ashlyn could come back in later. Ashlyn was one of the best players on the team and it was hard to play with one player down which was the best player. The head coach asked his assistant coach what he should do. The assistant coach immediately said, "You must put in a substitute for her. We can't afford to play with ten players." The head coach thought about it and said to Ashlyn "I'm not putting in a sub so you have to be able to go back in."

Ashlyn nodded and said, "Yes sir I'll be able to go back in just give me a few minutes." So her coach did and sure enough after a few minutes she popped up and got back in the game. She ran onto the field and the game started again. Right as the game started the referee blew his whistle for half time. This was good for Ashlyn because she would get extra rest on her leg. She put her leg up on

the bench and as she was doing that she looked up and saw her dad bent over calling her name. She saw him and he asked her

“Are you ok?”

“Yes, coach is putting me back in when the second half starts.”

“Ok play you’re hardest out there.”

“Yes sir I will.”

He walked away and as he did Ashlyn felt something inside of her that made her feel wonderful. As she was kind of day dreaming the referee blew his whistle and they ran on to the field. It was Ashlyn’s team’s ball and they passed it back to Ashlyn as the forwards ran up for Ashlyn to give it back to them. She made a beautiful pass to Alyssa and after she missed the ball Ashlyn thought that that was a big mistake. Alyssa practically stumbled over the ball and it was just embarrassing for her to have done that. Ashlyn felt bad for Alyssa almost the while crowd and some of the other teams player laughed at her. Even some of her own players laughed at her. Although some of her own teammates laughed at her Ashlyn did not. It was the championship game and in order for them to win they had to play and stay as a team. Even though Ashlyn made a good pass and Alyssa missed it she still had faith in her. Ashlyn was starting to get nervous and shaky. Who knew what was going to happen? Then when those thoughts went through her head she went on a breakaway. This was a hard thing to do in soccer but Ashlyn did it. She heard her name being called from the side and out of the corner of her eye she saw Alyssa. She wanted Ashlyn to cross the ball to her. Ashlyn practiced this at practice and it didn’t work out the way Alyssa planned it to. But while those thoughts were rolling in her head she knew it was the right thing to do. So Ashlyn passed the ball to her and Alyssa went head first flying into the goal. She didn’t quite hit it with her head but she hit it with her chest. This wasn’t on purpose and although it wasn’t she still made a goal. This made Alyssa and Ashlyn’s team up by one point and it was the last quarter. Although Ashlyn’s team was winning the coach wanted to win by more points. In order to do this he had to put Ashlyn and Alyssa at forward because they were the best one’s on the team. Ashlyn went up with Alyssa and all they really had to do was stay further up and outrun the defense. Their goalie punted it all the way out to Ashlyn and Alyssa but it went

straight to Alyssa. Alyssa immediately turned around and just ran as fast as she could. She almost got to the end until Ashlyn yelled out "Alyssa" really loud and Alyssa looked up to kick it to her and booted it across the field. Ashlyn knew it would go too far but it didn't, it landed right in front of Ashlyn. She kicked as hard as she could into the net. SHE SCORED! Everyone started screaming because right then the referee blew his whistle. Almost everyone in the stadium was cheering. The girls ran off the field screaming and yelling. Except for one person and that was Alyssa. She walked off the field moping. Ashlyn guessed it was because she didn't score as many goals as Ashlyn or she didn't score the last goal. Either way everyone was cheering for the whole team not as individuals. Alyssa was mad but Ashlyn didn't think it was at her but she didn't know that for sure. She looked at Alyssa and smiled. Alyssa looked back at Ashlyn and mouthed "Great job!" That showed a sign that she would be ok.

## Chapter 16

Ashlyn's dad snuck up behind her and gave her a giant hug. He yelled, "I am so proud of you. You did great!"

"Thank you!" she replied. Then Kelly walked up to her and said "Ashlyn you did so great. Congratulations on your win."

"Thank you very much Kelly!"

Ashlyn's dad and Kelly walked over to get something to eat for Ashlyn. While they were walking away Ashlyn heard her name being called. It was Sarah. She came to watch Alyssa and Ashlyn play. They gave each other big hugs and were smiling really big.

Ashlyn asked "What are you doing here?"

"Well I came to watch you play and the fact that my step mom wanted to see Alyssa play so we drove from home to here."

They just stood there and looked at each other for a while until Alyssa walked up. She said "Congratulations!" and then walked away. Sarah had no leave so Ashlyn was just sitting down in the bleachers waiting for her parents to come back with the food. While she was waiting Alyssa walked up.

"Thanks for crossing in that ball for me to score a goal. It was really nice for you to do that."

"Well thank you for crossing in the ball to me. That was a beautiful cross."

"Thank you. So I wanted to say that I'm sorry for being so mean to you in elementary, middle and high school. I really had no reason to be that mean to you. Can you forgive me?"

"Of course I can. But Alyssa you were really mean to me and I never did anything to you. That was kind of a waste of your life to be mean to me when in reality I never even knew you. What was it that made you mad?"

"Well I guess I was jealous and didn't really need to be mean to you but chose to be mean to you. Now that I know you I regret every bit of my life that was being wasted on bullying. If you don't want to be friends with me that really is ok because you have every right not to like me."

"I might not have to like you but I choose to. You were so mean yet being mean back is not what I would usually do."

"So is it ok if we do become friends?"



“Ya I think it is.”

This really did warm Alyssa and Ashlyn’s heart because of the care and thought they just said. After Ashlyn and Alyssa’s little talk the coach called everyone in to get their medals and the team’s trophy. They were going to call everyone in alphabetical order. When they got to Ashlyn’s name everyone was cheering and screaming. It felt good to put on that medal and hold that trophy. They took a group photo and it ended up on TV and in the newspaper. Everyone saw it including Ashlyn.

## Chapter 17

The next day was her awards ceremony and she was very excited. As she arrived to her school she walked into the cafeteria and her coach and some of her teammates were there. They all joined her in. She went and sat next to Alyssa then her coach started to talk. He said, "Ok well, I think we should start with the awards. Ok this award goes to a student who has been with our school for two years now and she plays mostly forward. So I would like to call Alyssa Hope to the front please. Alyssa got up and started to walk toward coach Johnson. She received her award and sat back down. Coach continued and said, "This person is very loyal. She played center mid most of the time although she did play forward at some points. She started and ended very well and I am very proud of her. Please applaud for Ashlyn Moore." Ashlyn walked up but before he gave her the award he again said, "Now this award is the MVP award and you deserve it so here you are." He gave out the other awards and said, "Thanks for coming everyone and I'm very proud at what we accomplished. Let's just say it one more time. The whole team came together and said, "One, two, three TEAM!