

## The Team

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**The Team**  
*May 16, 2018*  
By Jeffrey Lo

**Written as Part of THE 2018 PROJECT**

*To read the 365 plays in THE 2018 PROJECT, visit:*  
<http://www.jeffreywritesaplay.com/the-2018-project-365-plays>

**CHARACTERS:**

Romar, 15 years old, a bit squeamish

Coach Taylor, 40 years old, a tough coach with heart

**If you are interested in sharing or performing this play or any of the plays in THE 2018 Project individually or in a collection, please contact the playwright at:**  
<http://www.jeffreywritesaplay.com>

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*The sound of sports talk radio.*

*It's a bit loud.*

*A bit obnoxious.*

*Definitely more serious than it needs to be.*

*Lights up on the office of Coach TAYLOR, a basketball coach and PE teacher.*

*He is looking over past box scores for last year's team.*

*As the radio hosts get louder, TAYLOR looks up from his box scores and turns the radio down.*

*TAYLOR goes back to the box scores.*

*The office door opens.*

*TAYLOR looks up and sees ROMAR, a squeamish 15 year old.*

*ROMAR seems scared to be here.*

ROMAR: Coach.

TAYLOR: Yeah.

ROMAR: Can I... ?

TAYLOR: Yeah, of course. Um. Romar, right?

ROMAR: Yeah.

TAYLOR: Romar, good. Have a seat.

*ROMAR takes a seat.*

*TAYLOR, without being too obvious, switches to his notes on ROMAR.*

*The sports talk radio hosts get even rowdier than they already were.*

*TAYLOR looks at the radio and turns it off.*

TAYLOR: Sorry about that.

ROMAR: You listen to them a lot?

TAYLOR: The radio?

ROMAR: KNBR.

TAYLOR: Oh, KNBR? Yeah. Yeah, I do. Best way to hear about our local teams.

ROMAR: Yeah... totally...

TAYLOR: You listen?

ROMAR: No.

TAYLOR: Alright.

ROMAR: They always seem kinda... They're too rowdy for me. They get loud.

TAYLOR: Oh well...

*TAYLOR thinks about it.*

TAYLOR: You're probably right about that.

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*Beat.*

TAYLOR: So what can I do for you, son?

*Pause.*

ROMAR: Umm...

*Pause.*

*Pause.*

TAYLOR: You can say what you need to, Romar. No need to be afraid.

ROMAR: Ok.

TAYLOR: What can I do for you?

ROMAR: Well... I wanted to...

*ROMAR freezes again.*

TAYLOR: Is it about the team list?

*ROMAR nods his head.*

ROMAR: Yeah.

TAYLOR: Right... I kind of figured.

ROMAR: You knew?

TAYLOR: Sure.

ROMAR: How did you know? Did someone –

TAYLOR: You're the third guy to come through here today.

ROMAR: Oh.

TAYLOR: It's only natural.

ROMAR: Right.

TAYLOR: Not everyone can make the team.

ROMAR: Uh huh.

TAYLOR: But everyone worked hard.

ROMAR: I did!

TAYLOR: I know, son.

*Pause.*

*Beat.*

*TAYLOR glances at his papers for a quick moment.*

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TAYLOR: So what can I do for you?

ROMAR: Well –

TAYLOR: Did you want some feedback? A reason why?

ROMAN: Um –

TAYLOR: What you can do better next year?

ROMAN: No.

TAYLOR: No?

ROMAN: Well. I mean. I want to know how I can do better. Yes. But I'm not asking you how I can do better for next year.

*Pause.*

TAYLOR: What are you getting at, Romar?

ROMAR: I want you to reconsider.

TAYLOR: Reconsider?

ROMAR: I want you to reconsider putting me on the team.

TAYLOR: I'm not sure that I can do that –

ROMAR: But you have to –

TAYLOR: I'm sorry but –

ROMAR: I NEED YOU TO!

*Pause.*

*Silence.*

*TAYLOR notices ROMAR's breaths growing heavy.*

TAYLOR: You need me to?

ROMAR: Yes.

TAYLOR: What do you mean, you need me to?

ROMAR: I mean... I really need to be on the team. I really, really need to be on the team. Please.

*TAYLOR looks at his papers more.*

TAYLOR: Why?

ROMAR: What?

TAYLOR: Why? Tell me why you need to be on the team? I don't think you're lying or anything but I think I need to know more than you're giving me to actually consider this –

ROMAR: Because...

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*Pause.*

ROMAR: Because... I'm good.

TAYLOR: Because you're good?

ROMAR: Because I'm REALLY good.

TAYLOR: Is that so?

ROMAR: I am GREAT!

*TAYLOR looks at ROMAR.*

*ROMAR is working so hard to keep it together.*

*TAYLOR looks at his papers one last time to remind him of ROMAR's tryout performance.*

*TAYLOR puts the paper down.*

TAYLOR: Romar...

ROMAR: Yes?

TAYLOR: You're not great.

ROMAR: What?

TAYLOR: At basketball. You might be great at something else – hell, you probably are great at something else but – I'm looking at my notes here from your tryout and there is no mistaking it – you are not great at basketball. Do you think you're great at basketball?

*Pause.*

ROMAR: No.

TAYLOR: You're not even good at basketball.

*ROMAR looks up at TAYLOR to feign surprise.*

*Beat.*

*ROMAR's head drops back down.*

ROMAR: I know...

*Pause.*

TAYLOR: Romar, tell me something.

ROMAR: Yeah?

TAYLOR: Do you love basketball?

ROMAR: Huh?

TAYLOR: Let me re-phrase that. Do you like basketball?

ROMAR: Why?

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TAYLOR: Just answer the question.

ROMAR: ... no.

TAYLOR: I didn't think so.

ROMAR: What does that matter?

TAYLOR: You're asking me to give you someone else's spot on a basketball team and you're asking me why it's important that you like basketball?

*Beat.*

TAYLOR: Romar.

ROMAR: Yeah?

TAYLOR: You said you need to be on the basketball team.

ROMAR: Yeah...

TAYLOR: When you said that, I believed you.

ROMAR: So?

TAYLOR: So tell me. Why do you need to be on the basketball team.

*Pause.*

ROMAR (*Mumbling*): Because I don't want to disappoint my mom.

TAYLOR: What was that?

ROMAR: Because I don't want to disappoint my mom.

TAYLOR: Because you don't want to disappoint your mom...

ROMAR: Because my mom played basketball when she was in college and she loves it. It was so important to her to teach me how to play basketball. It made her so happy... And she isn't happy that often. So if I'm on the basketball team... and basketball is a regular thing that I do... maybe her being happy will be regular too.

*TAYLOR lets this all sink in.*

TAYLOR: I see.

ROMAR: Look, I know I'm bad at basketball. And I don't really like doing things I know I'm bad at. But I like her being happy so... Here I am.

*Beat.*

*Silence.*

TAYLOR: Alright. I'll tell you what, Romar. I'll put you on the team.

ROMAR: What?

TAYLOR: I'll put you on the team.

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ROMAR: Really?

TAYLOR: On the condition that you know I'm probably never going to play you unless you get better.

ROMAR: Got it.

TAYLOR: Even if we're winning by 40 points, you're not going in.

ROMAR: Fine.

TAYLOR: Maybe 50. But not 40.

*ROMAR laughs.*

TAYLOR: But you'll get a jersey with a number and everything to show your mom.

ROMAR: Ok.

TAYLOR: Good. Now get out of here.

*ROMAR picks up his bag and starts to leave.*

TAYLOR: Practice a free throw or something.

*ROMAR stops.*

ROMAR: Hey coach.

TAYLOR: Yeah?

ROMAR: What about the other kid whose spot I'm taking?

*Pause.*

TAYLOR: You're not taking a spot. I keep one open... In case of special circumstances.

*TAYLOR nods at ROMAR.*

*ROMAR exits.*

*The door closes behind him.*

*TAYLOR looks around at his office.*

*TAYLOR looks at his radio and turns it back on.*

*TAYLOR picks up his box scores and gets back to work.*

*Lights fade.*

**END OF PLAY.**