

Scene - Backyard around lunchtime

Charles is seen grilling while other guests are socializing around him. A boom box is sitting to the side of them on a lawn chair. Everyone has big smiles. Tony, Becky, and Lucas all walk up to Charles while he is grilling. Tony leads the conversation.

TONY Great party, man. Thanks for inviting us

CHARLES Oh don't worry about it I know we are all new to the neighborhood so I just wanted to see if we could all meet each other

TONY

Well, you picked the perfect day for a barbecue. The weather today is amazing.

BECKY Oh yeah, I know! The sun is up, and the birds are chirping. It's beautiful

LUCAS Let's all be happy this wasn't last weekend. Remember the rain that came in? Oh, boy, was that a storm.

CHARLES It's funny you say that Lucas because we were planning this for last weekend, but we checked the forecast, and that changed our mind. Moved it to this perfect day. So how is everyone?

TONY Alex and I are great. We are still waiting for the paperwork to get processed to see if we can adopt. We've only heard good things, though. Being this far in the process shows we are getting close.

CHARLES That's amazing. Trust me. Having a kid is great.

BECKY I don't have any of my own, but oh is my niece Amanda the cutest

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CHARLES Becky, you're missing out. It is amazing

LUCAS Being a kid was so fun, the best moments I had were spent with my dad. He made the days go by so fast and made memories that will last a lifetime. I'm sure you will be a great dad, Tony.

TONY I'm actually a little nervous. It would be such an exciting new step in my life, but man are kids a lot of work.

BECKY Oh, are you trying to adopt a baby or one that's older?

CHARLES If I could've skipped the baby step, I would've. Yes, it was worth it because we have Charlie in our lives, but there were a ton of diapers.

BECKY Oh go for older. They never get adopted. Plus, you don't have to think of a name.

CHARLES Oh, the name is the best part!

LUCAS Coming from the guy who just used copy and paste for his youngling

BECKY

Anyways. I'm sure you two will be wonderful parents.

LUCAS Just wait till they're old enough to play sports

TONY We can't wait. Standing on the sideline and cheering our kid on is something to dream about, let alone live

BECKY

The little uniforms. Ooooooh how adorable are the little uniforms

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CHARLES All of them with the same goal. The same pull to win. Play after play. Pass after pass—the adrenaline. Charlie lives for it. It's in his blood

BECKY Don't you just love how they all cheer when the game is over? They're so young that they're just happy to be there

CHARLES Yeah. Charlie loves playing offense. He loves it so much that he pouts when they have to put in the defense. He's done it from when he first started playing all the way until high school. I think he's grown out of it now.

TONY What do you mean to put in defense? They're always at the back of the field.

CHARLES You know what I mean. Once your team scores a touchdown, they kick the ball back to the other team after they try for an extra point, and defense goes on. He loves catching the ball for an extra point.

TONY Extra points? Touchdown? Catching? Kicking the ball TO the other team? You're not saying what I think you're saying, are you?

CHARLES Are you confused by how football works?

TONY Astonished Football?!

LUCAS Oh this is gonna be good

CHARLES I thought everyone here played football

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TONY Oh you were wrong to assume that

CHARLES Why would it be wrong to assume that you play the best sport out there?

BECKY Oh dear

TONY The best sport out there? Have you never heard of the past time that is agreed across the world as the best?

CHARLES I thought football was only played in America-

TONY It's soccer

LUCAS Technically, other countries call it "football."

CHARLES Ha!

LUCAS But you two aren't talking about the same sport

TONY Ha!

LUCAS But he isn't saying soccer is better

BECKY Hey, hey, hey. If you don't play the same sport, that's fine, right? (Beat) Right? (Beat) Right?

TONY No it's not

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CHARLES He finally got one thing right

TONY I don't want your kid anywhere near mine. I don't want him tainting their mind.

BECKY Five minutes ago, we were all having fun and chatting. We can all still be friends. You thought each other were nice.

CHARLES That's before I found out he was one of those... one of those field fairies

TONY Gasps You take that back right now

CHARLES Oh, I'm sorry? Are you whining? Did someone barely tap you, and now you're on the ground crying? Wah wah wah? Oh, are you waiting for a flag?

LUCAS Oh, are you just gonna take that Tony?

TONY Heck no. Unlike him, I can play offense and defense.

CHARLES Then take your best shot, T

TONY T? You can only get through my first letter? You've run your head into a wall so often for "practice" no wonder you guys count by threes twos sixes or ones. Next, you're gonna tell me you need a time out with 15 seconds left in a quarter. A QUARTER. You guys get a break every thirty seconds, and you are trying to tell me you need another water break?

CHARLES Strategy. STRAT-E-GY. You will never get it. And I don't expect you to

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TONY What strategy? Oops, the run forward didn't work. Let's try the throw forward. Oops, that didn't work. Let's try the run forward again.

CHARLES Oh you have crossed the line

TONY Which line? 10? 20? 30? 40? 50? On no! Can't count higher than that! Better start going backward

CHARLES Are we not going to talk about how you have so many people on the field, but only one of them is smart enough to use their hands?

TONY That's the rules!

CHARLES Well, your rules are stupid!

TONY You're stupid!

BECKY Can you two please just stop?

CHARLES AND TONY At Becky and then they turn away No!

LUCAS Oh lord

BECKY There must be some way to make you stop

CHARLES I'm not stopping until that field fairy confesses he is playing the wrong sport

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TONY Wow! Hit your head so many times you can only think of one nickname!

BECKY Oh come on. You guys have to realize there are a lot of other sports in the world.

TONY And they are all horrible

CHARLES Oh look. His second point! One more and you'll have enough to equal one kick from the 30-yard line

LUCAS You guys really think all of the other sports are dumb? Even the one that the other one plays?

CHARLES AND TONY Yeah?

BECKY Guys. You can't be that close-minded. What about baseball?

TONY Baseball? Really? "America's pastime?" More like America's snoozefest

CHARLES It takes forever for anything to happen. The best plays require so much set up that it isn't even worth the time to play.

TONY Softball is the same thing

BECKY How about track? I mean, everyone runs, so what's wrong with track?

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TONY Are you kidding me? Yeah, we all run, but we run for a purpose. Left turn after left turn. Might as well watch NASCAR where everyone stays in first gear, but don't even get me started with NASCAR. People saying that's a sport ridiculous. Keep machines out of play

CHARLES I know, right? Like. Where's the ball?

LUCAS Soccer has a ball...

CHARLES Don't you dare...

BECKY He's making a good point. So you're saying it needs to have a ball. So golf?

TONY Ewwwww. Golf?

CHARLES Yeah, why would you even say that? There's no contact, no team, it's just a waste of energy.

BECKY So contact, team, and a ball. So dodgeball

TONY Nah, dodgeball is just something you learn about in middle school, and you only use it to pass the time until you learn about real sports

BECKY Volleyball?

LUCAS It's only fun on a beach during spring break. Nothing serious

CHARLES

Okay. Gross. Think of all the sand you'll get in... places...

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BECKY Then play it in a gym

CHARLES Inside? You're trying to get me out of my element? The best time to play is in the rain! So how are you going to keep that away from me?

LUCAS Don't some stadiums have a roof?

CHARLES Yeah. And the people who built them probably think flag football is a viable substitute for the real thing.

BECKY You two are impossible

Charlie enters

CHARLIE Hey dad...

CHARLES What is it, best running back in the state?

CHARLIE See I've been meaning to talk to you

CHARLES You finally want to switch to QB like your old man! Ha I knew you'd come around.

CHARLIE No, actually, it's something else. See I'm 16, and I'm growing to be a new person, and I think I've wanted to try new things

CHARLES With care and compassion Son. You don't have to break it to me like I'm going to be disappointed. If you're gay, you're gay. It's fine. I still love you

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CHARLIE No, actually, that's not it. I want to play soccer

CHARLES Complete shift in mood You what

TONY Like a soccer announcer, And it's a gooooooooooooooooooaaal!

CHARLES Tell me you're joking

CHARLIE It just seems so fun. Some other kids at school have been talking about it, and I was hoping that-

CHARLES Hoping that what? I just don't understand. You've been playing football since you were born. I remember tossing the ol pigskin in the front yard back when you had to use both hands to throw it.

CHARLIE I only threw the ball with you because that's what I thought I had to do. You and mom always talked about it. Actually, I think it's the only sport you talked about. If you ever mentioned another sport, it was just as a joke, or it was in bad spirit.

CHARLES Well that's because all of the other ones are a waste of time. You... you have to think about the scholarships that you could get. Those benefits are better than anything you'll get from another sport.

CHARLIE But you never thought about what makes the most sense. Like. Like the thing about soccer. I'll have more playtime and less chance of injury.

CHARLES But what about your knees

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CHARLIE But what about my head? Dad. Brain damage is so common in the NFL that Will Smith was in a movie about how they try to sweep it under the rug.

CHARLES I don't want to talk about this right now

CHARLIE But dad

CHARLES That's enough. Now go talk to your mother.

Charlie leaves in a sad mood.

LUCAS So Charles, do you have anything you want to say to Tony?

BECKY You're not helping

TONY No, no, no. He's helping plenty.

Alex enters

ALEX Honey!

TONY Love!

ALEX While you all were over here, I was checking my phone and guess what

TONY What is it?

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ALEX The adoption company emailed us and guess what

TONY You're not saying what I think you're saying

ALEX Yes, I am... We are going to have a lovely baby boy!

BECKY Oh my goodness, I'm so happy for you two! You'll both make great dads.

CHARLES Quietly as Becky congratulates Yeah. Congrats. Whatever

ALEX Thank you so much! I'm so excited, but you know what I'm most excited about?

CHARLES Let me guess...

ALEX I can't wait to play football with him!

TONY Oh, I love it when you speak French

ALEX French? I'm talking about American football.

BECKY Here we go...

TONY But babe, we have been playing soccer since before we met. You told me how you grew up kicking a ball with the neighbor kids. Setting up goals between two trees, one goal always being bigger than the other, it was such a lovely story.

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ALEX Yeah, but I've been thinking. Yes, soccer is fun and all, but think about the energy at a football game. People just screaming and yelling as they watch grown men slam into each other. It's chaos, yet it is still civilized. When the game is over, it is over. Yes, people talk about it for years about how the season would've been so different if they just put in Jimmy, but it's over when the game is over. Honey, we know of multiple people who were killed over letting one goal go in during a regular-season game. Let alone the ones murdered over a grand final penalty shot. I think there is too much violence backed behind that game.

TONY I can't believe it. We move here, and you just easily convert to one of them?

ALEX It's not what someone told me to do, it's something I wanted to do on my own

TONY I think I need to sit down Moves the boom box out of the chair and put it on the ground

ALEX I'll be back when you want to talk

Alex exits

CHARLES Oh oh oh... I guess Alex is on the right team. Or should I say... right sport

TONY Hey, you keep quiet. Your son knows what game to play. Why don't you?

CHARLES He will realize it's a waste of time, much like how your husband feels

LUCAS Oh snap

TONY I've had it up to here with you

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CHARLES You're sitting in a chair. That's not too high.

TONY Stands to confront him Why I ought to-

BECKY Gets between them You two. Stop it right now.

CHARLES Well, he started it!

TONY No, he started it!

BECKY Well, you're both continuing it, so stop! Lucas, go get Alex and Charlie.

Lucas nods and exits

BECKY And for you two. You need to learn to grow up and accept others for who they are. Even if they don't play the same sport as you

CHARLES But-

BECKY No buts

TONY What about-

BECKY No, what about either. When they get here, you are going to be different people from when you were when they were here.

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Lucas enters with Charlie and Alex.

BECKY Okay, you two. What are you going to say?

CHARLES AND TONY Under their breath

Sorry...

BECKY Not good enough. Charles. You go first

CHARLES

Okay okay

To Charlie

If you want to play soccer, that is fine with me. I know I was harsh on you earlier. Looking back, I should have shown you every sport and let you choose what you wanted to play. We all have different beliefs and wants, so it makes sense if you want to play soccer. I like football, but that doesn't mean you want to play it. I love you for you. And I hope you forgive me.

CHARLIE

Will you drive me to practice?

CHARLES Of course, son. As long as you're happy

BECKY Now you, Tony

TONY Alex. You are the one for me. And to be completely honest, it shocked me that you didn't want to play soccer. This, however, does not change the fact that I want to spend the rest of my life with you. We might play different sports, but we will always come back to the same home—a home full of love for each other, and our boy. My only wish is that we let him choose what he wants to play. Do you agree?

ALEX

I love you so much. Of course, I agree.

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BECKY

Now. Can we all please enjoy this barbecue?

LUCAS

How can we do that? Charles hasn't flipped the burgers since we started talking.

CHARLES Oh dang it!

CHARLIE Oh dad

They all chuckle

CHARLES Well sorry I ruined the barbecue

TONY That's fine. At least we will all see each other at church on Sunday.

CHARLES Oh I'm Jewish

CHARLIE Buddhist

BECKY Islamic (Muslim)

LUCAS Agnostic

TONY Well that's fine. I think we can all still get along.