

**REDEMPTION**

**By**

**James Park**

**Fairfax High School**

INT. STAPLES CENTER - EVENING

National Basketball Association Lakers player, JAMES ANDRE MICHAELS, tall and robust, is dribbling down the court with thousands of FANS echoing in the arena. The game is tied 92 - 92 with 3 seconds left and counting. The ANNOUNCER make the call.

ANNOUNCER #1

Now everyone is on there feet!

FANS

LETS GO MICHAELS! LETS GO MICHAELS!

ANNOUNCER #1

As you can hear, everyone is hoping their star is going to end the game. Get ready folks, this is going to be a wild ride.

JAMES MICHAELS gets near the hoop, at least 10 feet away. He fakes to the right. The defender bites. He shoots as the time winds down.

ANNOUNCER #1

Michaels shoots...AND SCORES!!!HE SCORES!!LAKERS WIN!!! LAKERS WIN!!!

FANS

WHOOOO!!!! YAHH!!! WHOOOO!!!!

ANNOUNCER #1

WOW!!! These fans just got their money's worth. One of the best games this season. Once again the final score Celtics 92 & Lakers 94. Goodnight folks!!!

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

JAMES sits in front of his locker, sweating and smiling. it is dark and he is alone.

JAMES (V.O.)

It is strange how life works. You can be down in the gutters with no hope yet it seems life always finds a way to give you light and salvation.

He opens the locker. Inside, he pulls out a basketball, flatten and ripped due to its age. JAMES stares at it and a grin stretches across his face. At the same time, tears drench

his face.

JAMES (V.O.)

For me, life gave me hope in the form of my grandma, a strong beautiful woman. I grew up through her; she was there when I was down, there when I was in need. My name is James Andre Michaels and this is my story...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. GRANDMA QUEEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JAMES (8), a young, skinny, maturing boy, is sitting in a chair with a birthday cap. There is cake with 8 lit candles and rainbow-colored ballons that fill the room. GRANDMA QUEEN (59), a fierce-looking respectable woman, with a Blow Tube in her mouth approaches JAMES with a mysterious gift behind her back.

GRANDMA QUEEN

Happy Birthday!!! My little angel is all grown up.

JAMES

What's that behind your back?

GRANDMA QUEEN

Haha. Here James...happy birthday sweetheart.

GRANDMA QUEEN hands her gift to JAMES. Filled with excitement, he savagely rips the wrapping.

JAMES

WOW... it's a basketball!!! Thanks Grandma.

GRANDMA QUEEN

Alright boy. Now you go along and try out that new ball of yours.

He hugs her and heads toward the park.

EXT. THE LOCAL PARK - AFTERNOON

JAMES enters the basketball court of the park. No one is there but him. He tries to dribble, but the ball is kicked away. He retrieves the ball and attempts to shoot. The ball is erratic; it seems that it just doesn't favor the hoop. Finally, with one last look of hope, JAMES gathers himself,

focuses and shoots the ball. As the ball leaves his hands, it spins slowly and heads towards the hoop...

CUT TO:

INT. THE GYM OF FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

SWISH! The ball slices the net cleanly. The crowd cheers. JAMES, now 18, raises his hand in victory. He has now grown into a strong matured man with muscles pumping out of his skin. COACH JAY, a short stocky man, hugs James as they share the victory.

COACH JAY

Good game, kid! I guess it's just another day at the office.

JAMES

Thanks Coach! This game was for you. Like you said it's just another day at the office.

Togther with arms on each other's shoulder, they head toward Coach Jay's office.

COACH JAY

Well kid, I got some good news and some bad news. You know I have been trying to get colleges to recruit you. I'm sorry, but so far no responses.

James sits there with his head down filled with disappointment. He grabs his basketball shoes and throws it in frustration.

COACH JAY

I'm really sorry kid, but I think your gonna need those.

JAMES (CLOSE TO TEARS)

Why do you say that?

COACH JAY

'Cause you're gonna be scouted by the...THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS OF THE NBA! You've done it kid. You got your chance, now take it and fulfill your dream.

JAMES (IN AWE)

Th..the...the Los Angeles LAKers?! I

don't know what to say. Thanks Coach,  
I appreciate it.

COACH JAY

No problem, you deserve it kid. Now I  
want to make me and your grandma  
*You* proud. By the way, how she doing?

When Coach Jay mentions his grandma, James is filled with  
grief and tries to fight back tears.

JAMES

She's good... could be better. Day by  
day, it seems the cancer is slowly  
killing a part of her. But don't  
worry, I know she will make it.

Overcome by emotion, James bursts into tears and shares a hug  
with Coach Jay.

INT. GRANDMA QUEEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

GRANDMA QUEEN, frail and weak, is laying down in her bed.  
JAMES enters the room and sits by her, holding her cold hand.

JAMES (WHISPERING)

Hey Grandma. How you holding up?

GRANDMA QUEEN

My little Angel, all grown up. Don't  
worry about me. How are you doing,  
sweetheart?

JAMES

Well...I got some good news. I gonna  
be scouted by the Los Angeles Lakers  
from the NBA.

GRANDMA QUEEN

The NBA?! MY BABY!!! Oh I'm so proud  
of you (cough).

JAMES

That's right grandma. I did it thanks  
to you. Imma be a star and become  
rich. Then Imma treat you out, and  
give that car you've always wanted -

GRANDMA QUEEN

Calm down boy. You're gonna give me a  
heart attack. Look you're getting a  
head of yourself. Listen, always

remember to not get full of yourself.  
Live for the good of others, and not  
yourself. Look I may not be around  
for long -

JAMES

Grandma don't say that -

GRANDMA QUEEN

No, listen James. No matter what  
happens, I want you to know that I  
will always be in your heart and  
remember that Grandma is proud of  
you.

James clenches his grandma's hands tighter. Together they cry;  
tears filled with both joy and sorrow.

INT. COACH JAY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

School has just ended, COACH JAY and JAMES are in COACH JAY's  
office, discussing the previous game.

COACH JAY

Are you ready for your big game? You  
better be on your "A" game; I heard  
the scouts are really maticulous.

JAMES

Yea....yea...Coach...I guess.

COACH JAY

What's wrong champ?

JAMES

Nothing Coach just tryin to get  
through with tape. I need to get  
home to grandma.

COACH JAY

Kid, why didn't you tell me? Get  
along and send my regards to your  
grandma.

JAMES

No, not yet Coach. Before I go I need  
you to open the locker room.

Coach Jay agrees and leads James to the locker room. James  
opens his locker and takes out a basketball, flattened.

COACH JAY

What is that?

JAMES

It's my basketball. Grandma gave it to me on my 8th birthday. I found it last night. It's special; I thought I'd leave it in here to... you know remind me of her.

He puts the basketball in his locker and heads home.

INT. GRANDMA QUEEN'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

JAMES bursts through the door. He throws down his backpack and goes searching for GRANDMA QUEEN. He enters her room...

JAMES

Grandma? Grandma? Grandma, where you at?

As he enters the room, he notices her on the bed. He approaches and assumes she is sound asleep. James sits beside her.

JAMES

Hey Grandma. The day is coming up; soon imma be a Laker. Grandma? Grandma?

James nudges her body with his hand. She doesn't move. He takes off the blanket and looks at her. Her face is pale and she is motionless. He grabs her hand and it is cold. Grandma Queen is dead and James sheds tears.

JAMES (SOBBING)

GRANDMA! GRANDMA! NOOO! Don't go Grandma, not yet. I need you. I need you. Don't you remember. I was going to make it big and give the car you always wanted. GRANDMA!!! DON'T GO!  
(SOBS) PLEASE, I NEED YOU!

James throws himself on top of Grandma Queen's lifeless body. He sobs in agony and pain. Tears of sorrow flood the floor.

INT. THE GYM OF FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

It is the day of the big game and it has been a week since the tragic death of GRANDMA QUEEN. The game is about to begin and JAMES enters the arena. He is still emotionally broken about his grandma's death. The ANNOUNCER (#2) makes the call.

## ANNOUNCER #2

Good morning students and staff and of course the fans. Welcome to the final game of this young high school season. Today's game features Franklin High's superstar James Andre Michaels.

The game begins. James gets the ball he struggles. He misses every shot and begins to turn the ball over. The first half ends and the team enters halftime.

## ANNOUNCER #2

This is a terrible game for Michaels. I guess it is just not his day. So far he is 1-19 with 10 turnovers. Hopefully he can change it up in the 2nd half.

INT. LOCKER ROOM OF FRANKLIN HIGH- DAY

The players all sit in a circle around COACH JAY. He is furious; red with rage for he beleives his boys can play harder. JAMES sits in the corner, emotionless (it is obvious he is overcome by his grandma's death).

## COACH JAY

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT!! YOU CALL THAT BASKETBALL! I CAN FIND 6 YEAR OLDS THAT CAN PLAY HARDER THAN YOU! I WANT YOU ALL TO GO OUT THERE AND GIMME ALL YOU GOT! DON'T WORRY ABOUT TODAY, DON'T WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW, JUST PLAY AND GIVE IT ALL YOU GOT!!!

The players leave, but Coach Jay and a sorrowful James are left in the room.

## COACH JAY

What do you think you're doing?! The scouts are watching you and you know that. You're terrible. I know it hurts that your grandma is gone. But you shouldn't let that destroy your life!!! Look I know your grandma, and I know she wouldn't want to see you like this. She would want to go out there and play your best. That would make her proud. Think about that?

James doesn't respond and Coach Jay leaves the room. He is left alone. He opens the locker; something catches his eye. It

is the basketball. He grabs it and tears come out as he is reminded of his grandma. Suddenly he hears a voice...

JAMES (HOLDING THE BASKETBALL)

Why'd you go grandma? I miss you.

GRANDMA QUEEN (V.O.)

Boy, what do you think you're doing. Get out there and play. Don't worry about me. Remember I will always be with you in your heart. Make me proud.

James seems to get a bolt of energy. He rises up and seems to gather his strength. He kisses the ball and heads for the game. Grandma Queen's saying of "I'll always be in your heart" echoes in his ears.

INT. THE GYM OF FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The 2nd half of the game begins. James receives the ball and he is a new player. He makes every shot and makes amazing plays.

ANNOUNCER #2

Wow! Look at Michaels. He spins and shoots... and scores. This kid is talented. The game ends folks. See you next season.

The game ends. James cries filled with thoughts of his grandma. He is proud and hugs his coach.

COACH JAY

You did it kid. You finally did it. You made me and your grandma proud.

JAMES

I did it for her Coach. I love her Coach. I LOVE YOU GRANDMA!

As Coach Jay and James share an emotional moment, the NBA scout approaches them.

SCOUT

Great game Michaels! You are probably the best talent in this country. You should be proud. Umm...well I am not guaranteeing a spot in the NBA, but Michaels I am sure you will soon be a Laker. CONGRADULATIONS!!!

FLASHBACK BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

JAMES is back in the locker room in the Staples Center. He wipes his tears and a grin filled with pride stretches across his face. He kisses the basketball and returns it to his locker, like he had since his grandma's death.

JAMES (WHISPERING)

I made it grandma. I love you and I always will. You will always live in my heart.

JAMES leaves the locker room and the story ends.

JAMES (V.O.)

Life may be hard and difficult to understand. But if you always live it with a purpose and a sense of hope you will be happy. As my grandma says, "Live not for yourself but for the good of others". My name is James Andre Michaels and I am happy.