

Catch

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Asleep diagonally in his bed: beer-bellied DAVID ALEXANDER (40s), an ex-jock whose glory days are long-gone.

He clutches his sheets and rousts from a dream, muttering sleepy nonsense.

DAVID
Throw me some fastballs, Dad.

David rolls, opens his eyes. Reality sets in. He's not ten years old. He's not playing catch with his father.

Just a dream.

David fumbles around his nightstand and snaps on the light.

DAVID
Dad?

Confusion.

DAVID
That was so...

David studies his hands, searching for the ball and glove from his dream.

DAVID
Real.

Out of bed. To his closet he goes.

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Lots of rummaging through old boxes. Eventually David finds what he's looking for--a battered childhood baseball glove.

Written in magic marker along the side of the mitt: "DAVID"--the block letters faded from age.

David squeezes his hand into the glove and slaps the pocket.

After digging into the box a little more he finds an old baseball.

Time to play some catch.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Dark. The sun hasn't yet broken the horizon.

David flips on an outdoor light.

One corner of the yard isn't illuminated. This area is the darkest, weediest, most overrun section of David's property.

That's where he goes to whisper a question.

DAVID
Are you there, Dad?

A faint night breeze.

DAVID
I got the sense from my dream that
you'd be out here.

David shuffles.

DAVID
Is that crazy?

Something or somebody looms just beyond the shrubs and weeds but remains shrouded in shadow.

DAVID
I dreamed that we were playing
catch, like we used to.

David flips his old baseball into his glove.

DAVID
Do you remember playing catch with
me?

Branches sway.

DAVID
So I'm going to take a leap of
faith here and toss you the ball.
I'm not sure if you can throw it
back, but I think you can.

Gripping the stitches carefully, David lobs the baseball into the dark patch. It gets swallowed in overgrowth.

An agonizing wait. No return throw comes.

David slumps, whispers.

DAVID
What the hell was I thinking?

Time to go back inside.

Not so fast. David's baseball sails through the air, hitting the grass with a thud.

David scoops it up, shock and wonder on his face.

His dead father wants to play catch.

DAVID
I knew it. I was right.

Wasting no time, David throws the ball back to the shadowy corner.

More vague movement in the dark patch...and here comes Dad's throw. It pops into David's mitt with authority.

DAVID
Nice one, Dad. You've still got a great arm. A cannon.

Full magical wonder shines on David's face.

He tosses the ball to Dad in the shadows. Dad tosses it back.

A weird twist on an American tradition.

DAVID
I can't tell you how much I missed this.

A solid fastball sizzles into David's glove. Pop!

David shakes his glove. That stung a little.

He tucks the ball into his mitt.

DAVID
You never got to see me play high school ball. You died before...

He stops and rephrases.

DAVID
What I'm telling you is that I had a couple of good high school seasons. You would've been proud.

David weighs the ball in his hand.

DAVID
I guess there's something else I
should say.

A deep breath.

DAVID
I forgive you for leaving mom and
me. It was tough on us, but I
understand. You had your reasons.

David fiddles with his glove.

DAVID
Mom took it hard. She told me that
you were evil for what you did, but
I don't think that's fair.

He paces.

DAVID
I've never believed the awful
things people said about you. All
those crazy rumors are a load of
crap as far as I'm concerned. I've
always defended you. I've always
had your back. I want you to know
that.

He throws the ball to the dark patch.

DAVID
This can be a fresh start for us.

The wind kicks up. The bushes sway in the dark corner.

DAVID
What do you think? Talk to me. I
know that you love me. I can feel
it, but I need to hear from you.

Zoom. The return throw rockets at David with the speed of a
Major League fastball.

David exclaims after catching it. He pulls his hand out of
the glove and shakes it.

DAVID
Ease up a little, okay. I'm a
little over the hill, if you hadn't
noticed.

His voice stiffens.

DAVID

You don't have to whip it at me
anymore to make me a man. I am a
man.

Zing. Another blistering fastball flies from the dark corner
and smacks David in the shoulder.

He yowls in agony.

Confusion fills David's face. Where did that second ball come
from?

Another speedy pitch whizzes David's way. It strikes David
squarely on the chest, cracking his ribs, driving the wind
from his lungs.

David collapses, gulps for air.

A relentless barrage comes David's way. Baseballs smash one
after another into David's leg, hip, and back.

He tries to stand, but he's shattered. He struggles to catch
his breath.

DAVID

Stop! Fuck!

He coughs.

DAVID

Are you trying to kill me?

Whoosh. A blistering fastball hits David squarely in the
nose, smashing it. Blood gushes.

Fighting through the pain, David pulls a cell phone from his
pocket and dials for help. But a pinpoint throw from Dad
smashes the cell phone out of David's hand.

David rolls and crawls, desperate to get far away from his
murderous, fastball-chucking poltergeist dad.

He spits blood. Realization sets in.

DAVID

Mom was right.
(gasp)
Evil son-of-a-bitch.

A few yards away from David is a rusty lawn chair. It's the
only nearby object that would provide cover from Dad's
throws.

David crawls, inch by agonizing inch. Desperate for a shield.

Just a few feet away from the chair... Slam. A baseball smashes into it, toppling it over and pushing it back six feet.

David is a sitting duck.

He shakes his head and gazes helplessly at the overhead light illuminating the yard. He raises his hand to it and stares.

DAVID

Mom? Mama?

Tears in his eyes as he reaches out. There's something in that light that seems to provide him hope.

Another fastball sizzle's David's way.

Thud! It cracks the side of his head. He drops. A fatal blow.

The yard goes silent. Nothing moves.

David still wears his glove, which is now stained with blood.

A breeze sways the shrubs and weeds in the dark corner. It seems for a moment that good old Dad might step out of the shadows, but it doesn't happen.

Just remorseless shadow.

The light starts to flicker. It goes out--completely dead.

Darkness in the yard. No more fun. Game over.

FADE OUT: