

PLAYING THE FIELD

WRITTEN BY

VICKY L. NEAL

3024 Apple Knoll Lane
Middletown, Ohio 45044
(513) 539-0258
vickyneal5@yahoo.com
www.vickylneal.com

FADE IN:

INT. CINCINNATI, OHIO - RAMEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The mantle is a shrine to Sam Ramey, head coach for the University of Cincinnati football team.

ROLL CREDITS OVER:

Numerous plaques showcasing his exceptional achievements, including a Heisman Trophy and other awards for college running back, and "College Football Coach of the Year" two out of the past five years.

Family pictures holding prized positions in front of the tribute:

- Sam and his wife Helen with their newborn daughter.
- A picture of baby Jenna barely sitting up on her own.
- A shot of Sam holding his precious infant.
- A picture of baby Jenna in a football sleeper.
- Helen planting a kiss on baby Jenna's head.

HELEN RAMEY (mid 20s), the epitome of motherhood, exits the kitchen. A man's gentle voice carries from the porch...

SAM (O.S.)

I knew there was a reason why I
need a play designer.

A smile finds Helen's face. She heads to the screened door and looks out to the:

EXT. RAMEY HOUSE - PORCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

SAM RAMEY (late 20s), coach's efficient persona, is seated on a porch swing with 7-MONTH-OLD JENNA, brown hair and doe eyes, in his lap. He holds a notepad and pen, trying to design a football running play but struggling.

SAM

That'll never work.

Sam rips off the top page and wads it. Tosses it to the swing, where several other crumpled papers form an unkempt pile. He starts to design a new play, pausing often to think.

Jenna is intent on his actions. She grabs the pen and guides Sam's hand, making a wild scribble on the paper.

SAM

Nice. Maybe you can design plays
for Daddy when you're bigger.

7-month-old Jenna gazes at her dad with unbridled affection.
Sam's heart melts. He kisses Jenna's head.

At the screen door, Helen watches her beloved little family.

EXT. RAMEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - 5 MONTHS LATER

A playpen stands next to an end table. 12-MONTH-OLD JENNA is
inside, obsessed with a small football. A doll lies abandoned
outside the pen, on the floor.

A college football game plays on TV. Sam slumbers on the
couch.

Helen walks into the room from the kitchen. She sees Sam
sleeping and grins. Grabs the remote and turns on cartoons.

Jenna looks at the TV and cries. Sam wakes.

SAM

Where's the game?

HELEN

I thought she'd like to watch
cartoons for a change.

Sam takes the remote from Helen and turns on the game. Jenna
instantly stops crying. She stands up with the football and
bounces excitedly, eyes on the field action.

SAM

You know she doesn't like cartoons.

Sam becomes entranced on the game like a true football coach.

Helen spots Jenna playing with the football, and the doll
lying on the floor. She marches over to the playpen and
gently takes the ball from Jenna.

HELEN

Sam, what did I ask you about the
football?

Helen lays the football on the end table and slips the doll
into Jenna's arms.

SAM

She likes the ball more.

Helen confronts Sam, her back to Jenna.

HELEN

I want my daughter to be like other
little girls.

Jenna glares at the doll and pouts. She pitches it over the side of the playpen. Her eyes shift to the football on the end table, barely within her short reach.

SAM

She's a coach's daughter so she's
not gonna be like other girls.

The small football smacks Helen in the back. She whirls to look behind her.

Jenna clings to the playpen's rail, bouncing with excitement.

12-MONTH-OLD JENNA

Ball!

Helen looks back to Sam. He fights to hide his amusement, but can't quite manage.

INT. RAMEY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1 YEAR LATER

2-YEAR-OLD JENNA sets up several Barbies and their accessories on the coffee table with special, loving care.

Helen wipes her hands on a dish towel as she walks in from the kitchen. She sees what Jenna does and loses her breath.

HELEN

Sam, grab the camera.

Sam comes to her side, holding a video camera. He starts filming Jenna playing with her dolls. Helen gloats while Sam doesn't even try to conceal his disenchantment.

HELEN

See? I told you she'd come around.

Jenna stands back to make sure the dolls are positioned perfectly. Then she grabs her toy football and hurls it.

Dolls and their accessories explode in a symmetrical radius surrounding the coffee table.

2-YEAR-OLD JENNA

Dolls go bye-bye.

Sam teeters on the brink of laughter.

SAM

Got it on film, too.

Helen laments over her embarrassing defeat.

INT. RAMEY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - 2 YEARS LATER

4-YEAR-OLD JENNA sets up a larger toy football on a stand in the floor. She moves back and carefully plans her trajectory.

Helen walks into the room, just in time to watch...

Jenna boot the football. It sails through the small window above the sink. Glass explodes in a beautiful but dangerous display.

Helen places her hands on her hips.

HELEN

Jenna Marie Ramey.

Jenna meets her mom's forbidding gaze and swallows hard.

EXT. RAMEY HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY - LATER

Sam leads 4-year-old Jenna outside. He totes a small football and the video camera. Helen trails behind them.

SAM

(to Jenna)

It's time you start practicing outside.

They stop short of a tire swing hanging from a tree.

SAM

All you have to do is throw the football through the hole, like this.

Sam lobbs the football through the tire's opening with expertise. Retrieves the ball and returns to Jenna.

4-YEAR-OLD JENNA

But I don't like throwing, Daddy. I like kicking.

SAM

Sweetheart, you have an arm that boys would kill for... well, not literally...

Sam places the football into Jenna's hands. Positions her so she's square with the target. Then he starts filming.

SAM

Now, throw as hard as you can.

Jenna strives to hold the ball in her little hand properly, but it's difficult. Sam assists with his free hand.

SAM

Like that. Across the laces.

Jenna throws. The ball drops way short of the hole. Jenna sticks out her lower lip and crosses her arms.

SAM

That was a good try.

Sam retrieves the ball and hands it to Jenna.

SAM

Keep at it. It'll come.

Jenna launches. The pigskin nicks the tire's lowest edge and caroms off.

SAM

Better.

Sam chucks the ball back to Jenna. She produces a few more throws. They travel over, under, or ricochet off the tire.

Jenna stomps her foot.

4-YEAR-OLD JENNA

I hate football!

Jenna scurries past Helen into the house. Helen faces the camera, translucent amusement on her face.

HELEN

She's got your temperament, Sam.

SAM

And that's a bad thing?

They laugh.

EXT. PARK - DAY - 2 YEARS LATER

Sam passes a football back and forth with 6-YEAR-OLD JENNA. She has good range and excellent accuracy.

Nearby, a pee wee football team of BOYS practices.

SAM

Let's take a break.

They go to a table, where a water jug stands with a couple of cups and a picnic basket.