

PLAY ME FOR YOUR HEART

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - SOCCER FIELD - DAY

The general feel is of Small Town Nowhere- faded playground equipment, water fountains that haven't worked in years, a pavilion that could use some love. The soccer field is similarly decrepit- patchy grass, nets held together by duct tape and hope, layers of faded line paint- and, unlike the rest of the park, not entirely deserted.

JULIA PANETTA-WU (18-ish, dressed like a college athlete, definitely should have brought a real coat) sits in the center circle. She picks absently at the grass, her attention elsewhere, her soccer ball forgotten off to the side.

A CAR (generic family car, a little worn down) pulls into the lot. Julia tracks it as it parks, watches the figure that climbs out and zips up their puffy coat.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

RORY WINSHIP (18-19, wearing her dad's coat and a ratty pair of hiking boots with her Lulu Lemon leggings; she has a poorly done, dorm-bathroom dye job) takes a moment before she slams her car door and treks out to the soccer field.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK - SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Julia watches Rory approach. Rory stops a few feet away, shuffling awkwardly. She doesn't make eye contact.

RORY

Hey.

Julia can't look away.

RORY (CONT'D)

My, uh- my dad said you were back.  
He saw your mom at Food Lion.

JULIA

Okay.

Rory kicks at the ground a few times like she is trying to decide whether she needs an invitation to sit down. She sits down anyway.

Still watching Rory, Julia shifts a little like she's trying to put space between them without Rory noticing.

RORY  
Um, how was your semester?

Julia shrugs.

JULIA  
Fine, I guess.  
(pause)  
Yours?

RORY  
It was okay. Nothing too exciting.

Rory pulls her coat tighter around her.

RORY (CONT'D)  
I, uh- I watched some of your  
games.  
(She watched every game.)  
Your goal against Clemson was  
really nice.

JULIA  
(surprised)  
Oh. Um, thanks.

Silence falls between them. Julia looks at Rory and Rory looks anywhere else- the ground, the distant baseball fields, the sky.

Rory frowns, takes a deep breath.

RORY  
Can you just say it?

JULIA  
Say what?

RORY  
I don't know, whatever it is you  
want to say. Why did you call me in  
October and hang up when I  
answered?

Julia isn't taking the bait.

JULIA  
(attempting nonchalance)  
Why did you drive by my house five  
times over Thanksgiving?

Rory snaps to attention, embarrassed- she didn't realize Julia had noticed that. Julia smiles slightly, quickly, and Rory looks away.

Silence falls again. Rory fidgets, and Julia stays as still as possible.

Rory nods to herself and stands up.

RORY  
Right- I'll play you for it.

Julia frowns at her.

JULIA  
(confused)  
What?

Rory collects the soccer ball, knocking it a few times between her feet. Her confidence in this plan grows. She looks down at Julia.

RORY  
One on one. First to three. If I win, you tell me why you called. If you win, I'll tell you why I stalked your house.

Julia rolls her eyes.

JULIA  
(amused, but trying not to show it)  
I'm not doing that.

RORY  
Why? Afraid you'll lose, Miss D-1 College Athlete?

Rory slowly starts moving towards the goal, taking her time to show off a little- she hasn't played in while, so it's clumsy. She does a move before lining up her shot. She throws her arms up to celebrate before running to collect the ball, bringing it back to midfield.

Julia hasn't moved an inch. She falls back into a poker face as Rory returns.

RORY (CONT'D)  
That's one-nil. You're never gonna win sitting on your ass, you know.

Rory starts towards the goal again. Julia watches- she can't help her growing smile. Julia waits a moment before clambering to her feet and taking off after Rory.

Julia catches her, stealing the ball. She maradonnas around Rory, slamming the ball into the upper 90.

Julia collects the ball and jogs back to the circle. Julia sheds her sweatshirt. Rory follows her, dropping into a defensive stance.

RORY (CONT'D)

Fine- one-one.

The girls battle it out. It's messy- shirt tugs, shoves to the back, heel clips. Rory hip checks Julia off the ball but loses it again when Rory trips over her awkward boots.

As they play, the awkward tension disappears. They are up in each others faces, casually teasing, and it feels natural. It almost seems like they've forgotten why they are playing in the first place and have moved on to just having fun.

They are tied 2-2. Julia has the ball, moving towards goal. She megs Rory, lines up her shot. Rory slams into Julia from behind- the shot goes wide and the girls go tumbling to the ground in a heap.

They are both laughing as they roll to a stop.

JULIA

(laughing)

You're such a cheater.

Julia disentangles herself and sits up, throwing her hand up dramatically.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(mock outrage)

Ref! Ref, that's a card!

RORY

(rolling over to look at  
Julia)

Shut up, that was totally clean.

Rory shoves at Julia's shoulder. Julia allows herself to be tipped over, playing it up.

JULIA

A deliberate shove outside the run  
of play! Another card!

RORY

(rolling her eyes fondly)

Is this what they teach you college  
athletes? How to be drama queens?

JULIA

Among other things. I'm also very good at faking injuries and bullying nerds to do my homework.

RORY

Of course you are.

The girls are both still laughing as they settle facing each other. Their laughter dies off, but silence this time isn't tense or awkward. It's almost comfortable, the girls looking at each other, both flushed and almost smiling.

Julia reaches out to brush some grass off of Rory's face. Julia's brow furrows. She twists a few strands of Rory's hair between her fingers.

JULIA

(whispering)

Can I ask you something?

Rory just nods, suddenly nervous.

JULIA (CONT'D)

What the FUCK did you do to your hair?

Rory giggles, scrunching up her face in mock disgust.

RORY

My roommate thought it would look good.

JULIA

I mean, it doesn't not-

RORY

I hate it.

JULIA

(laughing, relieved)

Oh good. It's really terrible.

RORY

(flicking Julia's cheek)

Hey!

They fall silent again, Julia still twirling Rory's hair between her fingers. Rory's eyes search Julia's face. Julia avoids making eye contact, staring at her fingers in Rory's hair instead, so she misses when Rory's gaze drops to her lips.

Rory surges forward, pressing her lips against Julia's. Julia freezes for a moment before she kisses Rory back. Julia's hand tangles in Rory's hair. Rory's fingers trace the edge of Julia's jaw.

It's over as soon as it's begun- Julia pulls back suddenly, roughly pushing Rory away. Rory freezes, eyes closed.

JULIA  
No. You don't-

Julia scrambles to her feet. She's shaking her head, wringing her fingers together.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
(hurt)  
You don't get to do that.

Julia stomps towards midfield. Rory sits up, watching for a moment before she gets to her feet and chases Julia down.

RORY  
Jules- Julia, wait!

Julia is clumsily pulling her sweatshirt back on as Rory catches her.

RORY (CONT'D)  
(upset)  
Can we- please, just talk to me-

JULIA  
(angrily, to herself)  
I can't believe you right now.  
After June, after- you *know* how I-  
and I've been doing *so good*-

Rory grabs at Julia's arm, trying to stop her. Julia shakes her off, starts walking away. Rory tries again, this time getting her hand around Julia's wrist.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
(through gritted teeth)  
Let go of me.

RORY  
Jules- please.

Julia tries to yank her arm out of Rory's grip. Rory holds her ground.

RORY (CONT'D)  
 (trying not to cry)  
 I miss you *so much*, all the time,  
 and I thought- I've been thinking  
 maybe I do feel- maybe we could-

JULIA  
 (with angry tears, almost  
 spitting)  
 You don't get to kiss me just  
 because you're *sad*, Rory!

RORY  
 - and you left! You left and you  
 didn't say goodbye-

JULIA  
 You found out how I felt and you  
 laughed. You *laughed*! What was I  
 supposed to do with that?

Rory keeps stumbling along like she didn't hear Julia,  
 getting more worked up.

RORY  
 I'm just so *confused* and I want to  
 talk to you about it but I can't  
 because it's *about you* and I- I  
 need-

Rory is crying too hard to talk now. After a moment, Julia's  
 rigid posture softens. She slides her arm out of Rory's grip  
 just to thread their fingers together. She doesn't turn  
 around, closing her eyes and looking up.

Rory wipes at her face, tears calming.

JULIA  
 Did you mean it?

Rory looks up, staring at the back of Julia's head.

RORY  
 (sniffling)  
 I don't know.

JULIA  
 Right. Okay.

Julia nods. She squeezes Rory's hand in hers before dropping  
 it.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
 Maybe I'll see you this summer.

Julia takes a deep breath. She tucks her hands into her hoodie pocket and walks as calmly as she can towards the parking lot, leaving Rory in the middle of the soccer field.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END.**