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NOTHING BUT NET!

Eighth-grader Richie Mallon has always known he was a shooter. He has practiced every day at his driveway hoop, perfecting his technique. Now that he is facing basketball tryouts under a tough new coach, will his amazing shooting talent be enough to keep him on the team?

Also included, "The Real Story," a slice of sports history related to the plot of the book. Basketball teams have always needed "shooters," players who can score accurately and reliably. Find out more about these outstanding shooters, from Kenny Sailors of jump-shot fame to Golden State Warrior star Steph Curry.

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*For Alice Margaret Bowen,
Little Sis*







CHAPTER 1

I'm the shooter.

That's what I do. That's who I am.

When the basketball leaves my hands, it's going in the bucket. I just know it. Not *every* time—not even Stephen Curry is that good—but most of the time.

Don't ask me where I got my ability to shoot hoops. I sure didn't inherit it. My mom and dad are great, but they couldn't care less about sports. Dad's a college English professor. He spends his time reading Shakespeare instead of the sports section. Mom's a pediatrician. She says she has more important stuff to think about than putting a ball in a hoop.





My older sister Jeanie might have been a good player if she'd ever tried, but she's into high school musicals and stuff like that. She doesn't have time for sports. I don't think she could throw a ball into the ocean if she was standing knee-deep in the water.

No, I got to be great at shooting another way. Practice. A whole lot of practice.

When I was eight years old we moved into the house where we live now. There was a regulation ten-foot basketball hoop in the driveway. I was new to the neighborhood and I didn't know anybody. That basketball hoop was my best friend.

Even though I've always been pretty big for my age, I had trouble getting the ball in the basket at first. But I kept at it. I practiced all the time, trying to learn the shots I'd seen on TV. I spent hours and hours shooting hoops. Playing games in my head.

Finally I worked out a shot of my own. I would dribble up the right side of the driveway to get a running start and sling the ball up from my right hip. Man, I never missed that one.





After a few months our next-door neighbor, Mrs. Moore, looked over the fence. “I declare, Richie Mallon,” she called out. “You are getting awfully good at shooting that basketball.”

After that, I practiced even harder.

I kept at it and a couple of years later Bryce Cooper—he’s my best friend now—asked me to sign up with his basketball team at the recreation center. Mr. Petty was our coach and a really nice guy. He was a huge North Carolina Tar Heels fan.

Anyway, at the start of our first game I got the ball and dribbled down the right side just like I was back in my driveway. I pushed the ball up from my right hip and—

Swish!

The next time I got the ball I did the exact same thing. Nothing but net.

As we were running back to play defense, the other team’s coach leaped up, pointed at me, and yelled, “Who’s got the shooter?”

The shooter.

I liked the sound of that.

He was talking about me.

