

From I Heard You Were Dead by Don Zolidis

TRENT, 40s, a father

Trent is in the hospital visiting his teenage son, who has recovered from leukemia.

TRENT

If I had gotten leukemia in middle school, kids would've thrown a party. I mean it. They would have made flyers. Now everybody cares and is nice to you. Let me put it this way: I got cut from stuff. I got cut from the junior varsity soccer team in 9th grade. They cut me. They said there wasn't enough room on the bus for me. I weighed like 80 pounds and I was the shape of a Twizzler, I did not take up a lot of space! I could've fit underneath the seats in the bus, but no, they did not have enough space for me. Basically they said, 'your services will not be needed on this B team freshman soccer squad.'

When I was in T-ball as a kid, I struck out. Think about that. They called you out and sent you back to the bench in tears. That's what life was like. I mean all these people who are telling you these are the best years of your life are *liars*. These are the worst years of your life. It definitely gets better after this.

Growing up sucks.

CONSTANTINE

The alternative is worse.

TRENT

...aw jeez bud I wanted things to be easier for you. I had a hard time of it growing up – I really did, and I thought – you know... if there's one thing I can do, I can make it better for my kid. I promised it would be easier. And then...

He gestures around

Then it wasn't so easy, was it?

You know, that first house we had – on Clover, you probably don't remember it. I think we moved when you were three. Neither me or your Mom was making much money, but we were able to get this little dinky house... You know sometimes those cheap places are cheap for a reason. And I knew that there was... I knew it was too close to an old industrial area... I have spent so much time looking to see if there was a cancer cluster in that area, cause I think, what if we hadn't moved there? What if I hadn't chosen to live in that house? They tell you in therapy that you can't think that way, because there's no way to know, you know? But I tried to make things easier and maybe I made them so much harder.

He takes a moment.

Sometimes – people will make you promises they can't keep.