



The Forgotten Pebble

by xiaoxiao Y



The sun dipped low, casting long shadows across the baseball field. Leo swung his bat, connecting with a small pebble instead of the ball. The pebble shot off, a tiny projectile heading straight for his friend, Ben, who stood nearby.



Ben clutched his forehead, a small red mark blooming where the pebble had struck. Leo and his friend, also named Leo, rushed over, their faces etched with worry. The coach examined the injury, and everything seemed fine, but the guilt gnawed at Leo.



Years passed, filled with school, adventures, and the growing distance of teenage life. The memory of the pebble remained a secret between Leo and his guilt. Every time he saw Ben, the incident resurfaced in his mind.



Twenty-five years later, at a casual dinner, the friends, now grown men, were catching up. The conversation flowed easily, filled with laughter and shared memories. Then, Ben casually mentioned a childhood incident where he'd gotten a forehead injury.



Leo's heart skipped a beat. He braced himself, ready to confess, but Ben continued, oblivious, saying he couldn't remember what had caused it. It was just a small bump, long forgotten. Leo felt a wave of relief mixed with disbelief.



Finally, Leo and Leo shared the truth. They offered a belated apology, and Ben, genuinely surprised, simply laughed. He had no memory of the pebble. They all embraced, finally releasing the weight of the past, their friendship stronger than ever.