

Krishang Rai



THE UNDERDOGS OF  
SOGGY WAFFLE  
ACADEMY

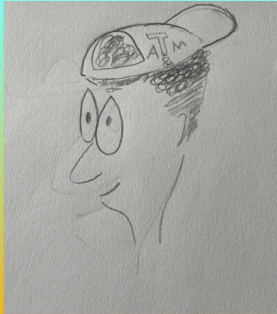
# PROLOGUE

Before the trophies, before the headlines, before anyone dared to say "champions" and "Soggy Waffle Academy" in the same sentence without bursting into laughter, there was just a school with the most unfortunate name in the county. Legend has it that five years ago, on the grand opening day of what was supposed to be called "Westbrook Preparatory Academy," disaster struck. The school board chairman, Mr. Finley, had arranged for a celebratory breakfast before the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The catering included a magnificent tower of Belgian waffles—the chairman's personal favorite.

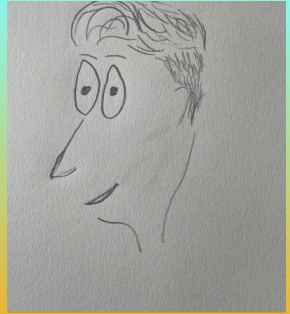
As Mr. Finley stood to make his speech, balancing his plate of syrup-drenched waffles, the brand-new sprinkler system malfunctioned. Water rained down upon the dignitaries, the local news crew, and most tragically, upon Mr. Finley's waffles. As he stared forlornly at his soggy breakfast, a news reporter shoved a microphone in his face and asked, "Sir, what do you call this disaster?". "Soggy... waffle... academy," he mumbled miserably, not realizing he was creating an instant viral moment. The name stuck like maple syrup to a sleeve.



Jake



Tyler



Ethan

# 1

In the unremarkable town of Westbrook, there stood a remarkably unremarkable school called Soggy Waffle Academy. The name originated from an unfortunate incident involving the cafeteria's ceiling, a rainstorm, and the principal's breakfast, but that's a story for another day.

Soggy Waffle Academy held a special distinction in the county: it had never won a single sporting event in its twenty-seven-year history. The trophy case in the main hallway contained only a dusty participation ribbon from 2017 and a fake gold medal that the janitor, Mr. Peterson, had found in a cereal box.

Enter Jake, Tyler, and Ethan – three eighth-graders who had been inseparable since kindergarten. They were as different as pizza toppings but stuck together like glue on a science project.

"Did you see Coach Wilson's face when you made that three-pointer?" Tyler asked Jake during lunch, nearly choking on his chocolate milk.

Jake grinned. "He looked like someone had just told him the cafeteria was serving real food today."

"Impossible," Ethan quipped, carefully inspecting his mystery meat sandwich. "Pretty sure this used to be one of those erasers from the dollar store."

What made these boys special wasn't just their friendship, but their uncanny athletic abilities that seemed wasted at a school where "sports" was synonymous with "organized disappointment."

Jake could sink baskets from half-court with the precision of a surgeon. Tyler could throw a football through a cheerio from forty yards away. And Ethan? He could manipulate a soccer ball like it was attached to his feet by invisible string.

"You know what would be hilarious?" Ethan said one day as they walked home. "If we actually won something. Like, anything."

"Principal Dobkins might have a heart attack," Tyler replied.

"Worth it," Jake nodded.

And so began the season that would change Soggy Waffle Academy forever.

The basketball team, previously known as the "Dribbling Disasters," transformed under Jake's leadership. At the championship game, with three seconds left on the clock and down by two points, Jake launched a desperate three-pointer that seemed to hang in the air for an eternity before swishing through the net.

"We won? WE WON!" Coach Wilson screamed, accidentally throwing his clipboard into the crowd. "SOMEBODY PINCH ME!"

A random parent obliged, leading to an awkward moment that was quickly forgotten in the celebration.

Two weeks later, Tyler led the football team—formerly called the "Fumbling Flapjacks"—to their first championship. His game-winning throw sailed through the air in perfect spiral formation, landing in the receiver's hands as time expired.

"I think I'm hallucinating," Principal Dobkins muttered, removing his glasses and wiping them for the fifth time.

The following weekend, Ethan and the soccer team—once dubbed the "Stumbling Socks"—completed the trifecta. With a dazzling display of footwork, Ethan scored the winning goal in overtime.

The town newspaper ran the headline: "SOGGY NO MORE: WAFFLE ACADEMY RISES TO GREATNESS."

At school on Monday, the three friends sat at their usual lunch table, now surrounded by admiring classmates.

"Fame hasn't changed you guys, has it?" Tyler asked with mock seriousness.

"Please," Jake scoffed. "I still can't get my locker to open without kicking it first."

"And I still have the same crusty peanut butter sandwich," Ethan added, holding up his lunch.

They laughed, these three ordinary extraordinary friends who had done the impossible: they'd made Soggy Waffle Academy proud.

Principal Dobkins had the school's sign changed the following week. It now read: "Soggy Waffle Academy: Home of Champions (Yes, Really)."