



Read-Aloud Winners

2



Elise loves playing soccer. She is even on her school's soccer team.

Elise likes it when her little sister Sara comes to her games.

But today, Elise isn't playing as well as she'd like. Her dribbles are clumsy, and she trips on her feet.

When Elise tries to kick, she misses the ball, and it gets stolen by the other team.

3



Elise is thinking about giving up soccer. But then she sees Sara in the bleachers, holding a homemade sign and waving.

Ask: "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"

4



Seeing Sara reminds Elise of how much her little sister looks up to her. She wouldn't want Sara to give up when things get rough.

So after the game, Elise makes a plan—she'll practice soccer every day.

The next day, Elise gets to work. She knows she needs to practice dribbling so she can work better with her team.

In the backyard, Elise lines up 12 cones. Back and forth she dribbles, zig-zagging between the cones.

Now and then she trips and falls, but she still keeps going.

Ask: "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"

5



Then she tries kicking, tapping, and passing against a wall—first with her right foot, then with her left.

Sometimes she misses and the ball rolls away from her! But she keeps at it.

6



Working on her passing will help her move the ball down the field—but what about when she gets to the goal and it's time to score?

Elise makes goal posts with two chairs.

She sets her feet and takes aim. Then she runs up to the ball and shoots.

Some of her shots miss wide. Some hit the edge of the chairs. But some find their way in.

7



The big game is today. The other team's players are warming up across the field. All 14 players look fast and strong.

They must practice a lot, too, Elise thinks.

8



Elise spots Sara and her friends. They are waving flags for Sara's team and cheering. Elise waves back. Seeing all of them, Elise really wants to do her best.

With a blow of the whistle, the game begins. It's a tight one—the other team gets the first goal, but Elise and her team catch up and even the score. *We're working so well together!* Elise thinks. She dribbles and passes to her teammates, never tripping once.

9



Before she knows it, the game is almost over. The score is 18–19. Elise's team is behind by just one point!

Elise's teammate passes her the ball. With all her might, Elise kicks the ball toward the goal.

The whole field watches as the ball sails toward the net!

I did it! Elise thinks.

But wait. The goalie jumps up and smacks the ball away from the goal! The game is over. Elise's team has lost.

Ask: "What do you notice? What do you wonder?"

10



After the game, the players line up to give their high-fives. "Good game! Good game!" everyone says.

Elise drags her feet as she looks for her family. Then, suddenly, Sara appears and gives Elise a big hug.

"That last kick was amazing!" Sara exclaims. "I've never seen you kick the ball so far."

Elise cracks a small smile. Sara is right. Elise has improved, hasn't she?

"Can you teach *me* to do that?" Sara asks.

Elise puts her arm around her little sister. "Of course," she says. "We'll practice together."