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### The Not So Big Game

I have never liked football. To be honest, I've just never liked sports in general.

Basketball, baseball, tennis, badminton, soccer, or anything involving physical activity and a ball of some kind; none of them really have any kind of appeal to me. I've never really been able to take sports seriously at any point in my life. I could never understand why there's so much hype behind big games like the Super Bowl, or how people could get so worked up whenever their favorite team lost. Conversely, I've never cared even remotely for high school football games. I don't *care* if they are supposed to represent our school, all they do is butt heads and throw around an inflated patch of plastic and rubber. I've always had more interest in stories and movies than physical activities. Just entertainment in general, stuff like video games and music, or plays and books; I was always more invested in that than any sport.

This did not exactly change when I got into Student Council in my senior year of high school. Sure, I was representing senior class and by proxy the school by being elected to that position, but I still didn't care at all about the sporting events. There wasn't any point to it. I had joined to actually voice the unpopular opinions of other people like me, who despised the fact that sports got every single bit of attention, yet the arts hardly had anything to them. The language classes were always skimped at every event. There were hardly any art galleries or shows where you couldn't catch someone trying to physically touch a gorgeous clay pot that

someone had slaved over a hot kiln to make. I wanted to show the Student Council that there were other voices that weren't the all-powerful, high and mighty, clean-cut, holier-than-thou popular students. Someone had to speak up for some of the little guys, and I wanted to bring that to their attention.

Yet whenever I tried to tell that to my fellow council members, they would always laugh it off and say I had to go to all the home games anyways. It was my "obligation" as a member of student council. Of course, being the cheeky little bugger that I am, I put it off until the very last home game, where our precious Snow Canyon Warriors would square off against Dixie High School's team.

It must have been easy to tell just how excited about this I was, because the rest of the council actually called in one of the faculty advisors to tell me that I *had* to go.

"It's required to show your school spirit, and as a member of student council, it's your responsibility," he'd told me. "You need to show up."

Needless to say, I wasn't very ecstatic about the whole ordeal. Unfortunately, it was technically what I had signed up for. So when Friday night came around, I had to throw on semi-presentable attire and walk straight to the high school's football field. There was a line in front of me the size of a line for the bumper cars at a carnival, and the air already reeked of sweat and stale sports drinks. Summer was still very much present, making itself known with every passing minute. By the time I had reached the front of the line, I was already exhausted and irritated with everything about the idea of high school football.

As per my usual luck, by the time I had paid for my ticket and stumbled over to the bleachers, the Senior Class President had finally spotted me, and wandered over to give me a

**Comment [1]:** Fantastic description here! It captures your perspective and the atmosphere perfectly.

rather cheerful greeting, the same kind that a kindergarten teacher gives their students before they make them read a scientific textbook. That look was given to me right before she started pestering me about how I hadn't worn my Student Council jacket, and that I was a few minutes late compared to everyone else. I told her about the ungodly long amount of time I spent waiting in that splendidly odorous line, and she responded with what I still consider to be the most irritating response I have ever gotten in my high school student government career:

“You had to pay? Didn't you know that student council gets in free to our home games?”

I didn't talk to her for the rest of the event. Instead, I trudged my way to a free corner in the bleachers, and grumped about as I waited for the football game to begin. All I can say is that it was unnecessarily boring. None of my friends had decided to go to the game that night, and everyone else I saw there I either didn't care for, or simply didn't recognize. I wasn't smart enough to bring a book, and my iPod had long since drained its battery on the walk over. It was thanks to that unlikely set of circumstances that I had to actually pay attention to either the game, or what was going on around me.

It was the single most boring experience of my life.

I wish that were an exaggeration! I could not find even an ounce of excitement in me as I watched the two teams charge recklessly into each other with clumsy tackles, then throw a ball, then run around like headless chickens, then kick the ball, then line themselves up, and repeat the process over and over again. There was nothing stimulating to it. Even the audience's cheering and groans did nothing to urge me into feeling anything for the sport. I'll admit, I smiled maybe once or twice when I saw one of the players whom I held a grudge

toward get sacked, but otherwise I may as well have been being lectured on the semantics of watching paint dry.

That really took me by surprise. I'm usually someone who can keep themselves entertained pretty well. I mean, I study theater, I can always think up a good story to expand on, or I can just daydream the day away. But right there at that game? I felt absolutely nothing. So I latched onto that thought process and tried to work out why that was. Obviously, there was something to the game that everyone liked in some way. Why couldn't I find any entertainment in this? It wasn't exactly rocket science, or Grade-A entertainment, but even then I should have been able to keep myself from being this bored.

I tried listening and watching the people around me. I wanted to know just what they were seeing that I wasn't.

"Excuse me," I asked a guy sitting in front of me, "do you know if this game is entertaining or not?"

"What are you talking about?" he replied, giving me a look that clearly stated he thought I was a moron and should shut up and let him enjoy his game.

I waved it off, and went back to puzzling over the entire ordeal. The football field was nothing special in itself. Indeed, it was the stereotypical metal bleachers, tall lights, and fake plastic grass that made up every other high school's field. The refreshments were more expensive than what you could pick up in a convenience store, and the players were anything but skilled.

So what was it? Why didn't I feel any satisfaction watching this?

Around that time, I started to think about how much I would've rather been watching a

movie at home. There was supposed to be a premier of *Shawshank Redemption* on one of the channels, and I wondered why I enjoyed watching that more than sports, or even participating in them. I mean, I was actually right there, seeing the action firsthand, rather than sitting on a couch somewhere with a bowl of popcorn and staring at a small screen.

Then it really just smacked me in the face right there: I wasn't being challenged. Well, not in the way I felt was worth being challenged over. To me, this was all just a game. There wasn't any deeper meaning to it than that. There were no scenarios that made me wonder about anything other than my own boredom, no characters or story to the situation that I was attached to. The act of watching something as repetitive as football, and at a place as bland as the football field was just that: *repetitive*. There was really no variety to it other than the teams, the coaches, and the plays. With a book, you can get so much more variety. Characters, time periods, lessons that are taught, villains, word choice. There's just so much variety to it that even if you read it once, if it's good enough and captivating enough, you'll read it again.

Sports are a strictly one time only event, and even then, the important parts can be predicted. You know one team is going to lose, and the other is going to win. There are going to be injuries of some sort, someone is going to need the referee to come in, etc. With stories, though, it can go anywhere. It doesn't have to be just one or the other, it can be both, or ambiguous, or even none at all. I realized that while at the game.

So why didn't anyone else at the game think like that? Well, the more I thought about it, the more I began to think about the fact that I didn't care. Sports would never be my thing. I could respect the people who did like it, sure, but it was never meant for me.

This also gave me a good peace of mind. Because right after I had that realization, I got

up from my seat, and walked out just as nonchalantly as possible. The Senior Class President saw this, and tried to convince me to stay, bringing up the same speech the faculty advisor had given me before.

I still remember my exact words to her. I ended up quoting *South Park*, a TV show that I knew she didn't watch, but hated anyways. Looking back on it now, I guess it was my own poetic way of telling her that even if I hated something, I could at least give it a try. If I didn't like it, I could just get up and walk away. Much like the character of Cartman from the aforementioned TV show.

"Screw you guys, I'm going home."