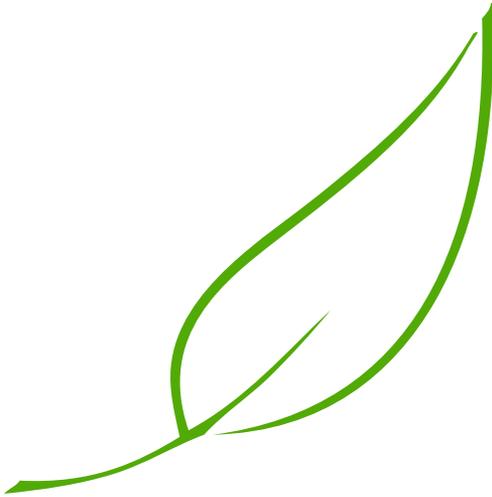


A MUDDLE IN THE HUDDLE

by Ken Bradbury



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*The scene: A Middle School locker room. Characters: (5m)
Tim, Phillip, John, Billie, Wes*

TIM: *(entering quickly with the others)* You did it!

PHILLIP: Did not!

TIM: I saw you do it!

PHILLIP: I tell ya, I didn't do it!

WES: We saw you do it!

PHILLIP: Look, the coach was just standin' there bendin' over to get a drink. I didn't even see him!

JOHN: You crashed right into him, Phil.

BILLIE: You creamed him with the equipment box.

TIM: *(looking down at the floor)* And now look at him. Out cold. Great. Half-time, score's tied and you just killed the coach.

PHILLIP: I didn't kill the coach! He's breathing!

WES: Sometimes they keep breathing after they're dead.

PHILLIP: They do not!

JOHN: Like ghosts ... that's the soul of the coach tryin' to get you ... so he can come after *you*, Phillip!

PHILLIP: *(bending down over the prostrate coach)* Oh, get real. He's just a little bit ... you know ...

BILLIE: Dead. He's a little bit dead.

PHILLIP: Stop sayin' that! He's just knocked out! He'll wake up in a minute and I'll tell him I'm sorry and everything will be okay and we can go back to playin' basketball.

JOHN: *(hand over his chest, fake tear in his eye)* We, the players of Hoopster Middle School dedicate the second half of our game to our dearly departed dead coach.

ALL BUT PHILLIP: Amen!

PHILLIP: Would you guys get serious?

BILLIE: Us get serious? You're the one who tried to kill our basketball coach! You can't get any more serious than that, Phil.

PHILLIP: The coach is not dead!

WES: Sure, tell his family that when they come to pick up his body and his sweat socks.

PHILLIP: Would you guys stop it?

TIM: Hey guys, I hate to interrupt the funeral, but in five minutes we've got to go back out and play the second half with a dead coach.

PHILLIP: The coach is not dead!

TIM: Okay, so he's knocked out. You expect him to coach like that? You know, even if he wakes up you're not going to get much playing time in the second half, Phil.

PHILLIP: Come on, let's splash water on his face.

BILLIE: I think that only works in the movies, Phil.

WES: Yeah. You do that in real life and they drown.

PHILLIP: Well, what are we gonna do?

JOHN: We? *We* didn't do anything. *You* did it!

WES: You'll probably go to jail.

PHILLIP: What?!!

WES: (*as John takes his place as the judge and the others form an impromptu jury*) Gentlemen of the jury! This boy standing before you in his basketball uniform is ... guilty!

JOHN: I agree!

WES: You can't do that. You're the judge.

JOHN: Oh. Sorry.

WES: He ran into the locker room at half time, out of his mind happy because his team was tied for the first time all season, swung the athletic equipment case around and viciously murdered ...

PHILLIP: No way!

WES: ... viciously tried to murder the poor, helpless coach.

JOHN: Guilty!

WES: John, the judge can't say that.

JOHN: Hurry up. Let's hang him.

PHILLIP: John!

JOHN: Sorry.

WES: So, gentlemen of the jury ... how do you find the defendant?

BILLIE & TIM: Skinny and weird!

WES: I mean as to the charges.

JOHN: Guilty!

WES: John!

JOHN: Oops.

BILLIE & TIM: Guilty!

JOHN: Finally! My turn? (*Wes nods*) I hereby sentence him to two years scrubbing the shower stalls!

PHILLIP: What?!

BILLIE & TIM: Guilty!

JOHN: Three years washing all the dirty towels!

BILLIE & TIM: Guilty!

JOHN: And four years trying to get the smell out of this locker room!

BILLIE & TIM: Guilty! Guilty! Guilty!

PHILLIP: I protest!

WES: You can't. You're guilty.

PHILLIP: (*to his knees again, shaking the imaginary coach*)
Come on, coach. Wake up! Wake up!

BILLIE: (*to an offstage character*) What? Oh ... uh ... okay.

TIM: Who was that?

BILLIE: The referee. He said we have three minutes to get onto the floor.

TIM: The coach is already there.

BILLIE: The basketball floor, you numbskull. What're we gonna do?

PHILLIP: I know!

TIM: What?

PHILLIP: We'll prop him up!

BILLIE: Do what?

PHILLIP: We'll carry him out there and prop him up on the bench so it'll look like he's coaching. Anybody got any sunglasses?

JOHN: Are you crazy! We'll never get by with that!

PHILLIP: You got any other ideas?

JOHN: (*they look at each other a moment, then all dive for the body of the coach in an effort to get him to sit up*) Come on, coach. Sit up.

WES: That's a good boy. Sit.



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