

At Halftime

Art Shulman





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CAST

THE COACH: An authoritarian male, any age.

Team Members

ANNE: A vivacious woman, who likes to party.

GERTRUDE: A sex-obsessed woman.

JANICE: A prissy, fussy woman who constantly primps herself -- filing her nails, touching her hair, and so on.

MARIA: A slightly ditsy woman, often talking to herself.

PENELOPE: A sedate and prudish, but kindly, woman. Smallish.

All team members are over 60 years of age.

Place

The park.

At Rise: *The team members, wearing sweats or a basketball uniform, trudge in.*

JANICE: I think I'm getting heat prostration.

ANNE: Women don't have a prostate, dear.

(The COACH is the last to enter)

COACH: And you call yourselves a basketball team? This may end up being the most humiliating defeat of my whole coaching career. Now get over there and sit down, while we discuss what we're going to do about it!

(The WOMEN sit on the park benches. All of them become silent and serious)

The score--59 to 6! We're losing by 53 points! And it's only halftime! In all my years of coaching in the Over 60 Women's Park Basketball League, I've never been losing at halftime by such a lopsided score! All of you should take a good hard look at yourselves and ask, "Why didn't you play better?"

MARIA: *(Looking at and saying to ANNE)* Why didn't you play better?

ANNE: I think Coach meant that we should each ask that question of ourselves, dear.

MARIA: I talk to myself enough during the day. One of the reasons I play basketball is so I won't talk to myself so much during the day. I don't think we should be asked to talk to ourselves.

COACH: *(The COACH blows his whistle)* No interruptions! You should all be asking yourselves, "Why do you participate in a competitive sport?"

MARIA: *(To herself)* He should make up his mind about what question we should be asking ourselves.

COACH: What's it all about, ladies? Why do you play basketball? Why do you play any sport?

GERTRUDE: To build up our muscles?

COACH: That's a reason, Gertrude, but not the main reason we play basketball!

MARIA: To build up our cardiovascular fitness.

COACH: You obviously don't have much of a heart for basketball, Maria. But that's not the main reason.

MARIA: *(To herself)* I thought it was.

COACH: So what is the main reason?

ANNE: To socialize with the fellow members of your team. I love to party after games. Party at my place after the game's over, ladies.

COACH: How can you even think of partying after losing like this to a team of ancient nuns? Losing to the Little Sisters of Mercy--59 to 6 at halftime! And them playing in long skirts.

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