

Afterword

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I remember playing baseball against David in the senior league. I recall pitching a no-hitter at the start of the last inning when he came to the plate. He was always an easy out, and I was clinging to a one-run lead. I remember my first pitch hitting him in the ribs and the roar of laughter that erupted from their bench as it happened. I think his teammates enjoyed seeing him doubled over in pain as much as they enjoyed getting a free baserunner in a close game. I remember being furious at myself for letting the team's worst player reach base, and then for letting that mistake rattle me into an eventual 2–1 loss.

And I remember two players one day getting into a fistfight at third base, and Dale, their coach, grabbing them by their shirts to pull them apart. I remember the mother of one of the boys charging across the field at full speed to dive into the fracas, not to chastise her own son for being a shit, but to pound on Dale. Like the rest of us, she knew all the horror stories, and in her

mind, Dale was the chief perpetrator. Having him place his abusive hands upon her son for any reason was simply too much to bear.

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