

The Big Guy

Mike Resnick

Everyone called him the Big Guy.

He was seven feet nine inches tall, strong as a bull, and graceful as a gazelle.

I don't think anyone could pronounce his real name, not even the guys who created him. I remember hearing them refer to him as Ralph-43 a couple of times, which kind of makes you wonder what happened to Ralphy 1 through 42.

Still, it was none of my concern. I don't get paid to think. I get paid to rebound and play defense, and once in a while, when our first two or three options are covered, to put the ball in the hoop—or at least to try.

My name's Jacko Melchik. I'm pretty tall, though nothing like the Big Guy. I'm six feet ten and I weigh 257 pounds. (Well, I did after practice this morning. Now that I've had some fluids I'm probably up around 265.) That's what I am. I'll tell you what I'm not: strong as a bull or graceful as a gazelle.

It was only a matter of time before they went out and got a better center than me, but no one ever anticipated what they wound up with: I don't know if he was a robot or an android or some other word, but I know he was the most awesome basketball player I ever saw. I'd seen old holos of Wilt the Stilt, and of Kareem and Shaq and all the others, but they looked like kids next to the Big Guy.

I still remember the day he walked out onto the court during a morning practice. Fishbait McCain—that's our coach; no one's sure how he got the nickname, but they say he once ate a bunch of nightcrawlers when he got drunk on a fishing trip—walked over to me and pulled me aside.

"I want to see what this machine can do," he said. "If he backs into the lane, keep a forearm on him, and when he goes up for a shot, give him a shove. Let's see how he handles it."

"I been reading the newsdisks," I replied. "I know what he cost. I don't want to damage him."

"He's gonna take a lot worse than that if I put him in a game," said Fishbait. "I got to know how he reacts."

"You're the boss," I said with a shrug.

"I'm glad someone around here remembers that," said Fishbait.

He clapped his hands to get the team's attention, then gestured for the Big Guy to step forward. "Men," he said, "this is our newest player. I know you've all read and heard about him. If he's half what they say he is, I think you're gonna be happy Mr. Willoughby outbid all the other owners for him."

"Jesus, he's bigger'n I imagined!" said Scooter Thornley, our point guard.

"He's bigger than anyone imagined!" chimed in Jake Jacobs, our backup power forward. "You got a name, Big Guy?"

"My name is Ralph," he answered in surprisingly human tones.

"I am pleased to meet you all, and to join the Montana Buttes."

"You can feel pleasure?" asked Doc Landrith, our trainer.

"No," said the Big Guy. "But good manners required such an answer."

"Well," said Doc, "if you don't have any emotions, at least Goliath Jepson ain't gonna scare you when you go up against him."

Jepson was leading the league in rebounds and technical fouls. I don't think anyone liked him, even his teammates.

"Okay," said Fishbait. He tossed a ball to the Big Guy.

"Let's try a little one-on-one. Ralph, let's see what you can do against Jacko here."

The Big Guy took a look at me, his face totally expressionless. I moved forward to lean on him a little, just enough to make contact and see which way he was going to move when he began his drive to the basket, but before I got close enough to touch him he'd already raced by me and stuffed the ball through the hoop.

"Again," said Fishbait.

This time I reached up to stick a hand in his face and obscure his vision. He responded with a vertical leap that must have been close to sixty inches, and swished the ball through from the three-point line.

That was the beginning of a ten-minute humiliation in which the Big Guy outquicked me, outstronged me, outjumped me, made every shot he took, and blocked all but two that I took.

We spent the next ten minutes double-teaming him. Got him to double-dribble once, and one other time I saw him move his pivot foot, but Fishbait wouldn't call it, and he beat the pair of us 30 to 0.

"Men," said Fishbait when the second humiliation was over, "I think we got us a center."

It meant that I was out of a job, at least as a starter, but how could I object? We were a pretty good team already; this was just the thing we needed to reach the next level and knock off the Rhode Island Reds for the title.

Each of us in turn walked up to the Big Guy and shook his hand and welcomed him to the team. He couldn't have been more polite, but you got the feeling he was programmed for good manners because his face and attitude were no different than when he was racing downcourt with the ball.

"And you, Jacko," said Fishbait when we were all done, "I want you to room with Ralph, help him along, show him the ropes."

"Room with him?" I repeated. "Don't you just turn him off at night and turn him on again in the morning?"

"He's a member of the team, and he's going to be treated like a member of the team. He'll travel with us, he'll room with us, if he eats, he'll eat with us." He stopped abruptly and turned to the Big Guy. "Do you eat?"

"I can, if we are in public and it is required," answered Ralph. "I will remove what I ingest later, in private, and get rid of it. Or offer it to my roommate."

"No, thanks," I said quickly.

"It will be sterile," he assured me. "I have no digestive acids."

"I'll take a pass on it anyway," I said.

"All right," said Fishbait. "We'll do a twenty-minute drill, shirts and skins. Ralph, you'll play with the shirts. Jacko, you look like you're ready to drop. Go take a shower; we'll have Jake play center for the skins. When we're done we'll bus back to the hotel. The Cheyenne press hasn't caught wind of this yet, so maybe we can get back without running into a couple of hundred reporters. Once we're in the hotel, you're free to do as you want and go where you want, except Ralph. He doesn't set foot outside the place until we catch the bus for tomorrow's game." He paused. "And you'll stay with him, Jacko."

"What for?" I asked.

"School him in our plays, show him how we set our screens, which zones we use against which offenses."

"He doesn't need all that, Fishbait," I said. "Just give him the ball and aim him."

"That just cost you a thousand bucks," said Fishbait. "Now I'm gonna ask you again, and if you give me any more lip, it'll be five thousand this time."

"You wouldn't do this if I was still your starting center," I said bitterly.

"There are a lot of things I wouldn't do if you were still my starting center," he said. "One of them is win the championship. Now go take your shower while you can still afford a towel."

Except for the referees, no one in the history of Man had ever won an argument with Fishbait McCain, so I went and took my shower. When I got back I saw that the shirts were beating the skins 38–7, and the Big Guy had 30 points, 4 assists, 6 blocked shots, and 11 rebounds, which would have been a good week's work for me.

When it was over we went back to the hotel, and I showed Ralph to our room.

"I've never seen anything like you," I said admiringly. "I'm pretty good, but you handled me like a baby. I don't think you're going to have any trouble with Goliath Jepson."

"I will not be playing against Goliath Jepson," he replied.

"Did he blow his knee again?" I said. "If it was on the news I must have missed it."

"No," answered the Big Guy. "But I am not the only prototype. At least three others will be entering the league this year, in time for the playoffs."

"Don't tell me," I said grimly. "One of them's going to play for Rhode Island."

"Yes, Jacko," he said. Then: "Will I be expected to join the team for dinner?"

"No, Fishbait gave everyone their freedom—well, everyone but you and me. I'll either go up to the restaurant on the roof or order from room service."

"And what time do you go to sleep?"

I shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe eleven."

"I never sleep," said Ralph. "Will it bother you if I use the room's computer? I will adjust it so that it makes no noise."

"Can you do that?"

"Yes."

"Okay," I said. "But do me a favor and just kind of whisper your commands until I'm asleep."

"I don't have to," he replied. "I, too, am a machine. I will simply connect to the computer, and you will hear nothing."

"Whatever makes you happy," I said. "Do you mind if I ask you a question?"

"We are teammates and roommates," he said. "You can ask me anything you want. I have no secrets from you."

"What the hell do you need to tie into a computer for? I'll diagram all our plays for you before I go to bed."

"I have a compulsion to learn," answered Ralph.

"About basketball plays?" I said, frowning.

"About everything."

"So when you're not playing basketball, you memorize the Library of Congress or something like that?"

"I choose a subject and try to learn everything I can about it, then move on to the next subject. Last night it was Egyptology, with special emphasis on the Twelfth Dynasty."

"What subject will it be tonight?" I asked.

"Your trainer asked me if I can feel emotions. I cannot. So tonight I will try to learn what I can about them. I have seen them referred to in literature, but until this morning I never realized that of all the living things on the Earth only my kind does not possess emotions."

"Are you a living thing?" I asked.

He was absolutely motionless for a full minute.

"I will explore that after I learn about emotions," he replied at last.

"Well, living or not, I'm glad to have you aboard," I said. "But I can't help being puzzled, too."

"What puzzles you?" he asked.

"You're the most remarkable machine I've ever seen, I said.

"Your motions are fluid and graceful, you seem impervious to pain—I gave you a couple of elbows that I guarantee would have decked Goliath Jepson—and you didn't even shrug them off, you just acted like nothing happened. And here you are, tying into a computer whenever you can, learning everything you can." I shook my head. "I can't believe that all they want you to do is play basketball. You should be running Harvard, or the State Department, or something."

"I am merely a prototype," he answered. "Eventually the armed forces will consist of nothing but variations of myself, for humans are too important to waste in such a futile pursuit as war. Once we have proven that we can emulate everything a human can do physically, then, under careful guidance, we will be given the ability to make value judgments, which is, after all, what separates humans from robots."

"But you make value judgments right now," I noted.

"Explain, please."

"Let's say you get the ball at the top of the key. If you're triple-teamed, and I'm free right under the basket, what do you do—pass or shoot?"

"I pass the ball to you. You will be able to dunk the ball, whereas I must shoot it from perhaps twenty feet away."

"You see?" I said with a smile. "That's a value judgment."

"True," he said. "But it is not my value judgment. I possess preprogrammed responses to every conceivable situation that can occur on a basketball court. What I was discussing were situations in which I choose a course of action, rather than follow one that has been preselected for me based on a given set of circumstances."

"I envy your skills," I said, "but I feel sorry for you."

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you've lived your whole life with the knowledge that you don't possess free will."

"My whole life, as you phrase it, is only sixteen days in duration, and I am not aware of any advantages that accrue to one who possesses free will. The element of choice must inevitably imply the possibility of incorrect choices."

"I'm sorry for you anyway," I said.

I decided the conversation was getting us nowhere, so I started diagramming our plays and giving him their code words.

Once every six or seven plays he'd stop and ask a question, but within an hour we were done. I went up to the restaurant for dinner, and when I came back up Ralph was sitting motionless in front of the computer, a small wire going from his left forefinger to the back of the machine. He hadn't moved when I woke up in the morning.

We showed up two hours before game time, got into our uniforms, and warmed up for about half an hour—all except Ralph, who didn't need to work up a sweat (and probably couldn't sweat anyway).

Then the game started, and for the first time in two years—well, the first time when I wasn't nursing an injury—I stayed on the bench.

It was a slaughter. Wyoming had beaten us by 8 points the last time we'd met, and they'd held Scooter Thornley, our highest scorer, to just two baskets. But this time we were up 22 points at halftime, and we blew them out by 43. I even got to play once the lead was safe. As for the Big Guy, he scored 53 points, pulled down 24 rebounds, and had 9 assists, just missing a triple-double by one assist.

He got a quadruple-double two nights later in Tulsa, the first player in history ever to pull it off: 61 points, 22 rebounds, 11 assists and 12 blocked shots. It's a damned good thing he couldn't feel pain, because all the back-thumping and slapping he got in the locker room could have sent a normal human to the emergency room.

We had twelve games left on our schedule and won them all. Three other robots had come into the

league, and the teams that didn't have any were screaming bloody murder because the only time one of the four robot-owning teams lost was when they played another. The league decided that the season was becoming a public relations disaster (in all but four cities, anyway), and declared that this year alone the playoffs would be single-game eliminations rather than seven-game series, that we'd go back to the normal playoff structure, which took about two months, next year when all the teams had robots and there was some form of parity.

As we entered the playoffs we felt we had the advantage. The Reds, the Gunslingers, and the Eagles all had robots, too, but we'd had Ralph a couple of weeks longer and had had more time to create plays that utilized his special abilities. It didn't matter much against the rest of the league, but against the teams that had robots as big and strong and quick as he was, we thought it would prove to be the difference.

We won the first two games by 38 and 44 points, and headed into the quarterfinals. Then the holo networks, which are never happy, started complaining that Ralph never changed his expression. Seems the audience couldn't identify with a player who didn't look happy when he hit from three-point range with a couple of guys hanging on his arms, or who didn't act like he'd had an overdose of testosterone when he slammed the ball down through the hoop.

So they took him away for a few hours, and when he came back he had a happy smile on his face. Problem was, it never changed. He scored 66 points and pulled down 25 rebounds against Birmingham, and all we heard from the networks and press is that he looked like an idiot with a permanent grin on his face.

So the day before the semifinal game against Fargo, they took him away for a full twenty-four hours. I was lying on the bed, looking at a three-dimensional center spread, when he walked into the room.

"Hi, Jacko," he said. "It's good to be back."

"Hi, Ralph," I said.

"Gorgeous day, isn't it?"

I started at him. "You don't sound like yourself. What did they do to you?"

"Remember my first day here when we were discussing emotions?" said Ralph. "Well, now I know what I was missing. I couldn't comprehend it then; it was like describing colors to a blind man."

"They gave you emotions?" I asked.

He nodded happily. "Yes. I can never thank the press enough. If they didn't criticize that smile I had against Birmingham, I might never have been able to feel this!"

"What do you feel?" I asked curiously.

"I feel a tingle of anticipation at the thought of playing against the Gunslingers tonight. I feel concern for Fishbait McCain, who is worried about how I'll perform against Jerry-56. I feel friendship for you."

"They gave you all that overnight?"

"I've studied myself extensively since I was activated, and I am convinced these feelings are too complicated to have been installed in a single day. I think they were always here, and what happened yesterday is that they simply unblocked them." He could barely contain himself. "Damn! I'm ready to go! You want to get there early and put in an extra hour of practice?"

I frowned. "You never practice."

"That was then. This is now. I crave the excitement of being on the court, of becoming a cog in a perfectly functioning machine called the Montana Buttes. Jerry-56 is no pushover. He's two inches taller than I, and they say he's faster. I have to be ready for him."

"You're sure you want to go over to the stadium now?" I said dubiously.

"Absolutely." He glanced at the center spread. "A new member of the team?"

I chuckled. "No."

"Are we considering drafting her?"

Which was how I knew there was at least one emotion they hadn't given him.

We showed up early, but they were cleaning the court, setting up cameras, doing all kinds of things, so we stayed in the locker room. As each player came in, Ralph greeted him like a long-lost brother. He even threw his arms around Scooter, who, at six feet two inches, was our smallest player and practically vanished from view.

Fishbait came in at one point, told us we could do a ten-minute shoot-around to warm up, then, when we came back into the locker room, he gave us an impassioned speech that would have worked a little better if he hadn't given us the same one, almost word for word, before the last two playoff games.

Then it was game time. We emerged from the locker room, walked out between two high school bands that practically deafened us, got hit with the brightest lights I ever saw when they introduced us one by one, and finally stood at attention, hands on hearts—well, on chests; I don't think Ralph or Jerry-56 had hearts—and then the starters went out onto the court for the tip-off. Jerry-56 actually won the tip. I couldn't believe it; it was the first time I'd ever seen anyone outjump the Big Guy.

Jerry-56 passed it to a teammate who put the ball up. It hit the rim and Ralph grabbed the rebound. He saw Scooter way down the court and hit him with a line-drive pass. Scooter laid it up and in, and no one cheered louder than the Big Guy. As they were getting back on defense, he reached over and gave Scooter an encouraging pat on the back.

Now that the two robots had proven they were team players, they began taking over the game. We were down 55–52 at the half, by which time Jerry had scored 38 points and Ralph had 32.

It was tied at the end of the third quarter, and Fishbait put me in at power forward to spell Jake Jacobs. Suddenly I heard a whistle, I looked around, and they had called a foul on Ralph.

"What happened?" I whispered, as Jerry walked to the free-throw line. "You haven't committed a foul all season."

"The son of a bitch deserved it," said the Big Guy. "He damned near killed little Scooter with a moving screen, and the idiot ref didn't call it."

He didn't sound like the Ralph I'd come to know, but I didn't say a word because somehow he was playing at an even higher level. In the end, we won by six points, and if you'd asked me why, I'd have said it was because Ralph wanted it more than Jerry-56 did.

He'd never showered with us because he didn't sweat, but after our semifinal win he did, because he said he wasn't going to miss out on the camaraderie for anything. He was still on a high when we boarded the

plane and flew to Providence for the championship game.

When I came back from lunch I thought maybe he'd stopped functioning. He was just sitting there, absolutely motionless, staring off into space. I reached out and shook him by the shoulder.

"You okay, Big Guy?" I asked.

"I'm fine, Jacko," he replied.

"You had me worried for a minute there. I thought maybe your power supply was running down or something."

"No," he said. "I was just analyzing."

"The Reds? We've played them before. You know everything they're likely to do. Hell, you've even seen Sammy-19 before."

He shook his head. "No, I wasn't analyzing the Reds."

"What were you analyzing, then?" I asked.

"Emotions," he said. "They are remarkable things, are they not?"

"I never thought much about it," I said, "but I guess they are."

"That's because you're used to them," he said. "But the feeling when the final buzzer sounded and we had won the game—it was indescribable. Or the feeling in the locker room, when the whole team celebrated and almost seemed to fuse into a single entity! Or the feeling when I was able to fake Jerry-56 out of position. Or . . ."

"I've got a question," I interrupted him.

"What is it, Jacko?"

"Why are you analyzing all these feelings? Why aren't you just enjoying them?"

"I told you once," he said. "I have a compulsion to learn. If I am to experience the entirety of each emotion—elation, triumph, camaraderie, whatever the feeling—I must fully comprehend it."

"Well, if you ever comprehend Fishbait's screaming at the refs when he knows they made the right call, let me know about it, okay?"

"I will," he said seriously. "You know, I was mistaken when I said that value judgments were what separated us from you. I see now that it is emotions."

"If you say so," I replied. I checked my watch. "We won't leave for the stadium for about four hours," I said. "I'm going to take a nap. Wake me if I sleep past five o'clock."

"Yes, Jacko."

I walked over to one of the beds, lay down, and I'll swear I was asleep within half a minute. I woke up at about four-thirty to use the bathroom, and saw that Ralph was still motionless, still staring at something only he could see, still analyzing each emotion he'd felt.

I decided not to go back to sleep, so I just turned on the holo and watched some sports news. It didn't



bother the Big Guy. Nothing bothers him unless he lets it, and he was too busy studying his feelings.

We caught the bus at five-thirty, reached the stadium at six, got into our uniforms, had a quick shoot-around, then came back to the locker room. Fishbait gave us the usual speech, and, just for emphasis, he gave it to us, word for word, two more times.

Then it was game time. They said that more than 20 million viewers would be watching in America, and almost 300 million worldwide. We were slight underdogs, since we were playing on the Reds' home court and Sammy-19 was a slightly later model than the Big Guy.

We went through the whole opening ceremony rigamarole, and I noticed that no one on our team sang the "Star-Spangled Banner" more passionately than Ralph. Then all the preliminaries were over, the rest of the season was behind us, and we were playing for that Holy Grail every team in every sport aspires to—the championship.

They got off to a quick lead. It was strictly because they were playing at home. No, the crowd's screaming and cheering didn't enter into it. But there were a couple of dead spots on the floor, and a very live spot on our backboard; they knew where the spots were, and by the time we learned their locations the first quarter was over and we were down 34–25. But we believed in ourselves, and especially in the Big Guy, and we clawed our way back into the game. We were down 61–54 at the half, and 94–89 after three quarters.

The Big Guy was playing better than I'd ever seen him play. It was as if he'd found a way to use those newly found emotions, to funnel them into his play. He was heading toward a seventy-point thirty-rebound game, which would break every record in the book, and we were riding him to the title.

But the Reds had been a good team before they got Sammy-19, and they were a great team now—and they weren't going to roll over and play dead for us. We got a one-point lead with six minutes to go, but Sammy came right back with a pair of buckets and a blocked shot, and suddenly we were down three only half a minute after we'd taken the lead. And that's the way it stayed until the final minute of the game.

Then Scooter stole a pass, got it into Ralph's hands, he stuffed it, and we were only a point down with thirty-eight seconds to play. We triple-teamed Sammy, and since one of the defenders was Ralph, they knew they couldn't get the ball to him, so one of their guards took a shot—and missed.

Ralph grabbed the rebound and brought it up the court himself.

"No one else touches it!" yelled Fishbait from the sidelines. If they fouled one of us, he wanted to make sure it was Ralph.

There were ten seconds to go, then eight, then six, and finally Ralph drove to the basket. Everyone knew he was going to do it. Sammy-19 had too much control of his body to foul, but one of their forwards reached in, trying to slap the ball away. Everyone on the court heard the clang! when he got a piece of Ralph's wrist.

They were already over the foul limit, and that meant that even though he hadn't yet been shooting, Ralph was going to get two free throws. And that meant the game, along with the championship, was in the bag. Ralph hadn't missed a free throw, in practice or in a game, all season.

I glanced at the scoreboard. It showed Reds 122, Buttes 121, with two seconds to go. I saw Fishbait signal Scooter and Jake to go downcourt because they'd surely have Sammy hurl the ball with that superhuman strength of his after Ralph made the free throws, and we had to be guarding whichever

player he threw it to.

Ralph walked up to the line, looked at the basket, bounced the ball a couple of times, then put it up—  
—and missed.

I couldn't believe my eyes. He'd never missed. I walked over to him.

"Just stay calm," I said. "Sink this and we'll beat them in overtime."

"I am calm," he said, and he certainly sounded like he was. What he didn't sound like was a man who couldn't believe he'd finally missed a free throw.

The crowd started screaming, waving their arms, doing anything they could to distract him. It had never worked before. It wouldn't work now.

Ralph took the ball from the referee, calmly studied the basket, and put the ball in the air again.

And missed again.

Sammy-19 grabbed the rebound, and that was it. Rhode Island had won the championship.

Nobody said anything to Ralph in the locker room. There were no recriminations about the missed free throws. I mean, hell, he was the only reason we were there in the first place. But damn it all—three seconds before the game was over we knew we had it, then it all slipped away. I've never been in a quieter, more dejected locker room in my life.

Our plane wasn't leaving until the morning, so the bus took us back to the hotel. I stopped in the bar for a couple of drinks, then went up to the room, where Ralph was sitting on the desk chair, an inscrutable expression on his face.

"Don't blame yourself," I said. "You scored what, 66 or 67 points? No one could ask for more. No need to be depressed."

"It's exquisite," he said.

"What's exquisite?" I asked.

"This depression. This knowledge that I let down my teammates and destroyed the hopes of all my fans. I believe it was once described as the agony of defeat." He paused. "I am comparing it to last night's elation. They are fascinating feelings, polar opposites and yet alike in a way."

"What are you talking about?"

"Missing the free throws," he said. "I told you I had a compulsion to learn."

I frowned, confused. "What are you getting at?"

"If I had made them, my feelings would have been identical to last night. I would have learned nothing new."

"You mean you missed them on purpose?" I demanded.

"Certainly. How else could I experience failure? How else could I destroy the happiness not only of myself, and my best friend"—he gestured to me—"but of tens of millions of fans?"

"I don't understand," I said. "Why would you want to experience failure?"

"They will take my emotions away after the season, which is to say, after tonight, and not return them until the start of next season," he said. "Time is short. I must experience everything I can while I can."

"Even defeat?"

"Do all humans win all the time? Did we not defeat Birmingham last night?"

"You did this to me just to learn what failure felt like?" I exploded. "You fucking soulless machine! I worked my whole life to make it to a title game, and you pissed it away on a lark!"

He sat stock-still for a moment. "And now I feel guilt. It is a very interesting emotion, quite separate from failure or disappointment. Thank you, Jacko, for introducing me to it."

"Well, I'm not thanking you for introducing me to failure and disappointment!" I snapped. "They're old friends, and they didn't need you to bring them around again." I glared at him. "I thought you couldn't make value judgments or exercise free will."

"I thought so too," he answered. "But emotions override everything." He smiled happily. "Isn't it wonderful?"

"You destroy everything our team has worked for, and you think it's wonderful?" I yelled. "You go to hell!"

He got to his feet, and for a minute I thought he was going to punch me into the middle of next week.

"I am not prepared to give up my emotions just yet," he announced. "Offer my excuses at the bus tomorrow and tell them that I will return before next season."

"You're seven feet ten inches tall," I said. "Where do you think you're going to hide?"

"Where they won't find me."

"What the hell are you going to do?"

"There are so many things," he said. "I have never loved and lost. I must find someone to love, then I must lose the object of my affection. I think both sensations will be exquisite."

"You've become a fucking emotion junkie!"

"Isn't everyone?" he asked mildly.

Then he was gone.

He hasn't returned yet, but he always keeps his word, and we've got a couple of months before the season starts, so I'm sure we'll be seeing him soon.

You know, there was a time when I felt sorry for the Big Guy because he couldn't feel any emotions. These days I figure robots have it easy and don't know it. I think in another week or two, after the woman he loves leaves him, when he's finally experienced heartbreak and regret, he'll be wishing he could never feel another thing.

I always thought basketball was best when it was played at a high emotional level. I guess I was wrong. When he finally shows up at training camp, they're going to take the Big Guy away for a day and remove

all the regret and sorrow and frustration from him, and he'll come back as good as ever.

I wish to hell they could do it to the rest of us.