

## **That's MY Dad!**

By Matt Buchanan

I guess I must have been about eight. I couldn't have been much younger. It was the first time my Dad took me to a real Major League ballgame. I guess I must have eaten one too many hot dog or too many nachos, because I suddenly really had to go to the bathroom. I wasn't sure my Dad would let me go by myself, but we were within one run of tying the game and he didn't want to miss anything. I was thrilled. When you're eight finding the men's room by yourself is a real grown-up adventure. Even the word "MEN'S room" was exciting. But I think deep down I was a little hurt that he wasn't more worried about me. I mean who knows what kind of weirdos might have been in that men's room?

Anyway, there weren't any weirdos. But when I got back to my seat, this GUY was in it. This total stranger was in my seat, and he was talking to my Dad. And my Dad had his arm around the guy's shoulder--not in a weird way, but you know, like guys bonding. And they were laughing. My dad used to put his arm around my shoulders like that! The men's room was up a level from our seats, so I saw them before they saw me. And all I could think was, why is he talking to that guy? That's my seat! That's MY Dad!

I couldn't move. I just stood there in the middle of the stadium frozen. I thought I'd been replaced. I wanted to scream, "No, Dad! I'll be a better son! Whatever it takes, I'll do it! Dad!" But I couldn't. I just stood there. I guess I was crying.

This guy in a blue shirt came up and tried to find out what was wrong, but I couldn't tell him. How could I tell him I was dumped by my DAD? So he kind of pried open my fingers, where I was holding my ticket, and saw where my seat was. He sort of pushed me along and we got down to my seat.

When we got there the guy stood up to let me sit down, and I saw who it was. "Hey, look who's here," my Dad said. "It's Mr. Allen! What do you know--he's a huge baseball fan just like you!"

Mr. Allen was my gym teacher. I've hated gym class ever since.