At 4:15 on July 3rd there were only two types of people in Wrigleyville, Chicago. The ravenous screaming fans, and those so wrapped in the tension and anxiety that they couldn’t watch the moment unfold before them.

It was the bottom of the tenth and the bases were loaded. Brewers had dodged so many bullets earlier in the game, two-double plays to end innings and cease the Cub’s threat, strikeout to send the last batter of the inning back into the field, and a stabbing catch by shortstop to prevent a run. It had all come down to the last at bat. Would the Brewers be able to pull off one last magical play or would the Cubs fans be rewarded with a win in this stadium of crushed dreams. I could barely watch.

The count was 3-2 and I was powerless as I watched the pitcher dig his spikes firmly into the dirt. I wondered what he was thinking as he worked the ball over, warming it in his hands. He seemed to be taking extra time thinking that those moments might lead him to a more confident and decisive throw. His head was down as if to hide his face from the 90,000 eyes that bore into him, urging him to throw. There was no doubt what pitch he had to throw. He knew it, the batter knew it, and the crowd knew it. The only question left was could he deliver.

I was torn between watching the next pitch or waiting for the crowd’s reaction to tell me what happened. I took both my hands like two black pirate patches and covered my eyes so nothing could get through. I could feel the tension of the fans around me. It smothered me like a heavy blanket, taking away my breath, adding to my discomfort. I didn’t see the pitcher as he brought the ball into his glove. I didn’t see his leg go up to signal the start of the pitch. I didn’t see the bodies of the 45,000 fans leaning over as if to get a closer look. I didn’t see the ball fly towards the plate at 90+ miles per hour…but I heard it. WHAP! The ball hit the leather of the catcher’s open mitt. It was then that I dared to open my eyes.

All eyes focused on the man in black. I waited. I knew if his right hand moved it meant the Brewers would live to see another inning. I also knew that if his hands stayed at his side and he turned away, the Cubs would walk home with a win.

He turned away.

Recognition swept through Wrigley Field as fans and players realized the game was over. Everyone froze. Heads turned towards third base and the runner who occupied it. He didn’t sprint, he didn’t tag up, and he didn’t look to the third base coach for hand signals or the waving of his arms telling him to run home. Instead, he slowly, but eagerly jogged home capturing the victorious moment.

At 4:16 on July 3rd the Brewer fan in me felt let-down. The baseball fan in me was disappointed that my afternoon with good friends, baseball fans, and overpriced nachos that only a baseball fan would buy, was over. I could already feel the tension of the last minute escaping fans as quickly as it had come. Bellowing fans yelling “Cubs Win” with beer tainted breath, playful ribbing among friends over the final call, little kids with sticky fingers and tired eyes, all were being taken away from a world that holds magic and wonder within the confines of Wrigley’s historic walls.