“You know, it's very strange. I have been in the revenge business so long, now that it's over, I don't know what to do with the rest of my life.”

Yes, the 2010-2011 Cavaliers have completed their Inigo Montoya story arc this season, having finally slain the evil six-fingered man (or in this case, #6) after months being led around in a drunken haze by the conniving but clueless Vizzini (Dan Gilbert) and oafish but reliable Fezzik (J.J. Hickson). And much like Inigo in his post-vengeance euphoria, the Cavs traveled to Charlotte last night with a 24-hour letdown looking virtually inevitable.

And yes, they did indeed lose, 98-97, to a mediocre Bobcats team (32-42) that’s scrapping for a playoff berth. But I wouldn’t go as far as to call it a letdown. If anything, the Cavs (15-59) look like they’re finally thinking optimistically—weighing their options for the future rather than dwelling on the past with bitterness and desperation. They’re perched by the castle window, preparing to hop down and grab the reins of one of those four white horses Andre the Giant wrangled up. Or maybe they're four white lottery balls. Whatever. Did you even see *The Princess Bride*
? Because I have no intentions of rewrting this entire introduction just because you're pop culturally underdeveloped.

Anyway, let's move on to the game, as presented in my traditional Positives vs. Negatives format. And by "traditional," I mean, "second time I've used it."

POSITIVES

1) Energy Maintained

No one would have blamed the guys for coming out flat on the second game of a back-to-back, straight off a plane, a day after their hardest fought, most emotional win of the year. But give the Cavaliers credit. They were determined to stay aggressive. Trailing 26-16 early, they closed the first quarter on a 10-2 run, capped by a Luke Harangody 3-pointer (his lone bucket of the night). And the tide turned further in their favor in the second quarter, thanks to. . .

2) . . . Ramon Sessions

Baron von Beardhausen took his starting job, but Sessions has not let the reserve role impact his production. And while Davis and Hickson certainly played well, it was Sessions and the bench crew that really kept Cleveland in this one. The Cavs were +8 with Ramon on the floor compared to -8 with Baron running the show, and Sessions' 10 second quarter points gave him 16 in the first half alone—pacing Cleveland to a 50-47 lead at the break. He'd finish with 24 points, 4 assists, and 5 boards in just 29 minutes.

3) Shots are Going In

Much in the way that the purpose of golf is to hit a ball into a cup, and the purpose of soccer is

to kick a ball into a net, the central focus of basketball is putting the ball in a hoop. There are many ways to accomplish this. Tossing the ball from a distance in a high arc directly through the hoop; bouncing the ball off the backboard and through the hoop using complex geometric analyses; or even putting the ball directly into the hoop by jumping above it and roaring like a lion. The Cavs utilized all these methods well for the second straight night, shooting 52% from the field and 86% from the line (Sessions alone was 10 for 10 from the stripe). Anthony Parker has seemingly risen from the dead, swishing two more clutch triples and converting on 6 of 9 shots overall. The guy that needs to lead this team in FG percentage, though, is Hickson, and he did once again, hitting on 10 of 15 for 20 points, including a couple ill-advised but successful 15-foot jumpers in the final three minutes of play.

NEGATIVES

1) Shots are Also Going In for the Other Team

Yeah, it was a road game, fresh off the plane, after a big win… etc etc. But the Bobcats were running without Tyrus Thomas, and the team's most dangerous weapon, Stephen Jackson, quickly joined him on the sideline with a hamstring issue in the second quarter, never to return. The Cats were ripe for the picking, but the Cavs defense wasn't up to the task, yet again. After their fine effort the night before against Chris Bosh and company, the frontcourt of Hickson and Ryan Hollins was helpless to contain the incredibly unintimidating tandem of Kwame Brown (16 points, 8 rebounds) and Boris Diaw (26 points, 7 boards, and 11 golldarn dimes!). Yeah, Boris Diaw nearly dropped the second triple-double on the Cavs in as many nights. And a Whore of Akron he ain't. Combined, Brown and Diaw shot 18 of 25 from the field, and the Bobcats as a team shot it at a 56% clip. This is completely unacceptable.

[redacted]