The Baseball Plays: 7th Inning Stretch (1st ed. - 02.02.10) - baseballplays9jp
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Introduction

I'm thrilled that Playscripts, Inc. has stepped up to the plate and compiled this anthology of plays from *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball*. I'll do my best to avoid any more cheap baseball metaphors. The idea for a festival of baseball plays came about in 2003 when I was coming up with an event to kick off the founding of Mile Square Theatre in Hoboken, New Jersey. We didn't have the funds to mount our first production, so like many foundling theater companies, we decided to hold a fundraiser. I knew a lot of playwrights and I was confident a few could be convinced to write 10-minute plays on a specific theme, in some way related to Hoboken.

Someone suggested Hoboken's favorite son Frank Sinatra as a theme, but the thought of seeing an endless parade of Ol' Blue Eyes impersonators sent that idea to the reject pile. A festival of plays about Jersey's time-honored tradition of political corruption seemed intriguing, but one that could get us into trouble at a time we were trying to make friends.

And then it came to me, as clear as the commemorative plague on the corner of 10th and Washington Streets here in the Mile Square City. Baseball. Now there's a rich subject. Baseball, America's national pastime, officially born on June 19, 1846, when the New York Baseball Club defeated the Knickerbockers 23-1 at the Elysian Fields in Hoboken. The first playwright I asked to write, Lee Blessing, happily agreed. A passionate fan of the game, Lee gave the event instant cache and others quickly jumped onboard.

A majority of the playwrights we approached had something unique to say about the game and were eager to write about it for the *Stretch*. 100 playwrights have 100 different things to say about baseball, and it was immediately clear that the *Stretch* could sustain itself as an annual event for years to come. Since our first *Stretch* in 2003, Mile Square Theatre has given birth to 48 10-minute baseball plays.

We continue to hold the event every year, attracting some of America's best playwrights, and playing to a growing audience. There is a giddy excitement about celebrating baseball and playwriting in one evening and I urge readers who are directors and producers to stage their own *7th Inning Stretch*. There certainly are plenty of plays to choose from, and this anthology represents a partial sampling.

OK, now the cheap baseball metaphors: I'd like to thank my co-founders Rachel Fowler and David Miller for loading the bases, Lee Blessing for starting the rally, Annie McAdams for keeping the home team together, and all the playwrights and theater artists for knocking it out of the park.

Now let's play ball!

—Chris O'Connor
Artistic Director,
Mile Square Theatre
Hoboken, New Jersey
2009

ASPHALT GREEN
by Rogelio Martinez

Cast of Characters

FATHER JOSEPH

DENNIS

JERRY

Acknowledgments

Asphalt Green was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 18, 2005 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their third annual *7th Inning Stretch*. It was directed by Liesl Tommy and featured the following cast:

FATHER JOSEPH . . . . . Brian Wallace
DENNIS . . . . . Freedome Bradley
JERRY . . . . . Dominic Tancredi

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> *Asphalt Green* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the third annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball*. It was originally performed on June 18, 2005 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

ASPHALT GREEN
by Rogelio Martinez

(Early morning. An abandoned parking lot. DENNIS *is on stage. He wears a bright orange vest and is holding a hardhat in his hand. He's drinking a cup of coffee.)*

(After a moment, FATHER JOSEPH *enters.)*

FATHER JOSEPH. Hello. Excuse me.

DENNIS. Is something wrong?

FATHER JOSEPH. Are you working the site today?

DENNIS. Hoping to. Got a whole bunch of people ahead of me. Seniority thing.

FATHER JOSEPH. Are they tearing it up?

DENNIS. Ain't it too early for you to be out here?

FATHER JOSEPH. I'm usually up at this time.

DENNIS. You union?

FATHER JOSEPH. What do you mean?

DENNIS. You guys got some kind of union? The Vatican? No one should make you be out here this early in the day.

FATHER JOSEPH. We have friends with benefits, if that's what you mean.

DENNIS. You're a funny little guy. Interesting racket the priesthood. Thought of going into it myself. I chose construction instead.

FATHER JOSEPH. We lost a good soldier of God. When are the others coming?

DENNIS. Half hour maybe.

FATHER JOSEPH. I need something from you.

DENNIS. Sure.

FATHER JOSEPH. I don't want them tearing up this parking lot.

DENNIS. They're going to build here.

FATHER JOSEPH. Development.

DENNIS. That's it. That's the word.

FATHER JOSEPH. Not always good.

DENNIS. Always good for us. You tear something down, you got to

build something in its place.

FATHER JOSEPH. Apartments.

DENNIS. Look, I'm just here early because I really, really need a job, which is to say, whatever influence you have with the guy upstairs, if you can use some of that influence that will be great. However it works out, I still got my union card and I still got to get in line.

FATHER JOSEPH. Twelve Hail Marys. Five Our Fathers.

DENNIS. That will do the trick?

FATHER JOSEPH. That will keep you busy for a while. It may or may not do the trick. Now go home.

DENNIS. You don't get it. This here is a job. I don't do it, someone else will.

FATHER JOSEPH. Okay.

DENNIS. Where are you going?

FATHER JOSEPH. I'm going to get a baseball bat.

DENNIS. Hey!

FATHER JOSEPH. I'll be right back.

*(*DENNIS *starts to get nervous. He starts to psych himself up for a fight but then realizes the ridiculousness of it.)*

*(*FATHER JOSEPH *enters with an aluminum bat.)*

DENNIS. Hey, man, you're taking this a little too seriously. It's just a fucking—sorry—just a parking lot. That's all it is. Not like this is holy land or something.

*(*FATHER JOSEPH *gives* DENNIS *the bat.)*

DENNIS. You want me to swing that at you?

FATHER JOSEPH. How does it feel?

DENNIS. Like it could crack someone's head open.

FATHER JOSEPH. How do you feel?

DENNIS. Like I could crack someone's head open with it. Let me just have my cup of coffee here. Wait for the foreman to come. This here is personal time. I have a lot of respect for what you—

FATHER JOSEPH. Remember the last time you held one?

DENNIS. Going on six or seven months. We used a couple of these on some non-union guys. I'm not going to go to hell for that. As far as I'm concerned, God is pro union.

FATHER JOSEPH. God is pro baseball.

DENNIS. God is pro Yankees—them bastards—sorry—end up winning it almost every year. Lord's got something to do with that.

FATHER JOSEPH. Money's got something to do with that. God is a Cubs fan.

DENNIS. You're kidding me.

FATHER JOSEPH. The Lord is attracted to losers.

DENNIS. He never done much for me.

FATHER JOSEPH. This is your opportunity.

DENNIS. What do you mean?

FATHER JOSEPH. He's calling on you. See where those cones are?

DENNIS. Sure.

FATHER JOSEPH. That's third. And over there is first.

DENNIS. What are you talking about?

FATHER JOSEPH. This here is home plate. Over there is the outfield. Get it beyond the parking lot and into the street and you have yourself a home run.

DENNIS. You trying to tell me this is a baseball field?

FATHER JOSEPH. People quit parking their cars here years ago. Too many stolen cars. Kids now use it as their field. I'm the umpire.

DENNIS. You?

FATHER JOSEPH. No arguing with the white collar.

DENNIS. How about that idea of playing baseball on grass.

FATHER JOSEPH. Asphalt is grass for the kids around here.

DENNIS. Look, this is a nice story, but in less than an hour we're going to start jack hammering this asphalt.

FATHER JOSEPH. No.

DENNIS. I'm not going to argue with you. Let my boss do it.

FATHER JOSEPH. You take baseball away from them, they're going to be swinging those bats at different things.

DENNIS. At me?

FATHER JOSEPH. You don't remember when you were a kid?

DENNIS. I'm not much for remembering something I can't have again.

FATHER JOSEPH. You get a bat in your hand you start to remember.

DENNIS. It don't work for me. I had some scrap metal fall on my head. Knocked half my memories out of me.

FATHER JOSEPH. You don't remember playing baseball. A time you hit one out?

DENNIS. Sure.

FATHER JOSEPH. How did you feel?

DENNIS. Like a total asshole. Lost the ball. We were done for the day.

FATHER JOSEPH. No extra balls.

DENNIS. Couldn't afford any. I remember that day because I spent the rest of the afternoon working with my uncle. He was the one that first got me into this business. Thought I would be something else, you know. That day taught me not to swing too hard in life. So you want to try to get me to remember what baseball means to me. It means getting up early in the morning so that I might—if I'm lucky—get some work. Shit.

FATHER JOSEPH. What?

DENNIS. Sorry. Left my cigarettes at home. I'm about to have a really crappy day.

*(*FATHER JOSEPH *takes out a cigarette.)*

DENNIS. This ain't no sin?

FATHER JOSEPH. Only in New York. Smoke away.

(He starts to light the cigarette but stops himself.)

DENNIS. Let me get this straight. You plan to talk fifty, sixty people from tearing this place up just because some kids play baseball here. Okay. I'll tell you what I can do. I can stay here with you and stop you from getting your ass kicked. That's about it. But this place is going to be rubble at the end of the day.

*(*JERRY, *a teenager, enters. He's holding a bat too.)*

DENNIS. What now.

FATHER JOSEPH. We're settling it.

JERRY. I'm just here to make sure it happens.

FATHER JOSEPH. Go home.

JERRY. Alex and his brother are coming. So is Tom.

DENNIS. I have people coming too.

JERRY. We'll just have to see.

DENNIS. Hey, kid, you're in way over your head.

JERRY. You got a cigarette?

DENNIS. Got mine off him.

*(*FATHER JOSEPH *gives* JERRY *a cigarette.)*

JERRY. Thanks. *(To* DENNIS*:)* What are you staring at?

*(*JERRY *and* DENNIS *light up at the same time. They look at each other; each of them is holding a bat.)*

(Lights shift. Green light.)

(The sounds of a baseball game—the announcer, the music, the hitter making contact, etc.)

(A light comes up on a back scrim. Nine players stand in various positions. All we see is the outline of their bodies. [If we don't have the bodies, we can use bats with baseball hats on them].)

*(*JERRY *and* DENNIS *stand in a classic showdown. As* JERRY *approaches the plate, he puts out his cigarette. As* DENNIS *approaches the mound, he does the same.)*

FATHER JOSEPH. Play ball!

(As if by magic, a baseball appears in DENNIS' *hand.)*

(He pitches. He hits JERRY*.)*

(Lights snap back to normal. Lights off on the scrim.)

JERRY. What the fuck did you just throw a ball at me for?

*(*DENNIS *turns to* FATHER JOSEPH*.)*

DENNIS. Shit. Sorry. I don't know what got into me.

JERRY. You hit me with a baseball.

DENNIS. I said I'm sorry.

JERRY. I'm going to have a giant bruise.

DENNIS. Hey, enough!

*(*JERRY *is walking up to* DENNIS*.)*

JERRY. You think you got something with that fastball there.

DENNIS. What did you put in that cigarette?

FATHER JOSEPH. Nothing.

DENNIS. You're lying.

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A Boy A Ball A Bat
by Melanie Marnich

Cast of Characters

GRANDPA, mid-70s.

DAD, early 40s.

SON, 9-ish. Should be played by an adult actor, maybe early 20s. A five o'clock shadow is just fine for our purposes.

ANNOUNCER, any age in announcer years is okay. Present in voice only. Needs to be virtuosic.

Acknowledgments

A Boy A Ball A Bat was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 18, 2005 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their third annual 7th *Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Lenard Petit and featured the following cast:

SON . . . . . Raymond McAnnally
DAD. . . . . Christopher Petit
GRANDPA . . . . . Stanley Harrison
ANNOUNCER. . . . . Bryant Mason

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"The strongest thing baseball has going for it today are its yesterdays."

—Lawrence Ritter

"Baseball was made for kids, and grown-ups only screw it up."

—Bob Lemon

A BOY A BALL A BAT
by Melanie Marnich

(Lights up.)

*(*GRANDPA, DAD, *and* SON *are standing as the end of the National Anthem rings out: "…the la-and of the free-eeeeeeee and the hooooome of the braaaaaaaaaave.")*

(The stadium erupts in applause then quiets to the din of a ballpark.)

(The guys sit.)

*(*GRANDPA *and* DAD *have hotdogs and beer.)*

*(*SON *has cotton candy and a huge supersized-oversized soda.)*

SON. Hey, Gramps, get this.

(He chugs some soda and burps the alphabet—or as much of it as possible.)

BbbrruuABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZeeeeurp.

DAD. *(To* GRANDPA*:)* In case you were wondering what twenty thousand bucks a year and a fancy Catholic school will get you these days.

SON. I can fart Ave Maria.

GRANDPA. That I'd like to hear.

*(*SON *puffs up to toot the song.)*

DAD. Don't even—

*(*SON *waits, fully puffed.)*

DAD. —think about it.

*(*SON *deflates and focuses on his cotton candy and soda.)*

GRANDPA. Wow, it's been years since I been to a game. *Years.*

DAD. Yeah, when you mentioned that I thought to myself "Hey, maybe I oughta take dad to a game…" We used to go, you and me, back in the day. Kind of a tradition.

GRANDPA. It's a beautiful thing, tradition.

DAD. Exactly. And it's perfect for some father-son… Some father-son… Some…thing. Some togetherness. Or something. Right?

GRANDPA. Tradition and nostalgia. Get to be my age, and you love 'em both. Look at it. The diamond, the dugouts, the crowd. It takes a man back, you know? What a great game.

What a…

(As he puts on his glasses:)

What the hell's all that?

DAD. All what?

GRANDPA. All that crap. Back there. Past center field. And right field. And left field.

DAD. That? Back there?

GRANDPA. Yeah. It looks like a…mall. A mall in the outfield.

DAD. Oh, no no no, pops. That's not a mall. Just signage and endorsements made to *look* like a mall.

GRANDPA. In the park?

DAD. Yeah. Subtlety is a thing of the past, pops. They tried it, and it didn't work. Now it's just balls-to-the-walls merchandising and marketing. Makes you wonder what we looked at before all this became available, doesn't it?

GRANDPA. We looked at the *game.*

DAD. Yeah, well, welcome to the game in the 21st Century.

GRANDPA. Where have I been? Dead? I don't remember any of this.

DAD. I'll tell ya, the world of sports can change while you're having a Senior Moment. It's moving that fast.

GRANDPA. But this feels sort of…

DAD. Extreme?

GRANDPA. Well, yeah. I mean, I've watched baseball on TV sort of recently and I don't remember any of *this.*

DAD. This park is one-of-a-kind. See, the city passed a bill. We voted to become a test market for this sort of thing. It's about competition. About letting corporations be as aggressive as they want to be as a way of leveling the playing field. The biggest, the strongest, the most powerful wins. It's how the game is played. It's a beautiful thing.

GRANDPA. It's excessive and tasteless.

DAD. But, man, does it work. Chuck out all regulation and see how far, how fast a business can grow. It applies to the players, too.

GRANDPA. Like, with endorsements?

DAD. No. Like with "roids." And I don't mean hemorrhoids.

GRANDPA. *(With growing incredulity and confusion:)* But that's illegal. Last time I checked, completely illegal.

DAD. Not in this town, pops. See, part of the bill we passed allows the players to operate like those companies. Let these guys steroid themselves to the gills and see how good they get. See them reach their full human potential with no one telling them "no." It's the all new All-American way.

GRANDPA. That's *insane.*

DAD. That's progress, pops.

ANNOUNCER. It's a beautiful day for a ballgame here at Wal-Mart-Home-Depot-Miller-Light-Levitra-Viagra-Prozac-Maybeline Park, everyone. A beautiful day for a game…

*(*GRANDPA *blinks in confusion…)*

(Lights shift. Quickly. Time passes. Quickly.)

ANNOUNCER. …And now, at the bottom of the 9h, that makes the score a competitive 37 to 38. A real white-knuckle ride here at Wal-Mart-Home-Depot-Miller-Light-Levitra-Viagra-Prozac-Maybeline Park, folks.

GRANDPA. *(Still confused, but attempting normalcy:)* So. Hey. Stevie. What grade are you in now? Eleventh? Twelfth?

SON. Third.

GRANDPA. *(Shocked, of course:)* What?!

SON. Turned nine three weeks ago. You forgot.

GRANDPA. But you're so…*mature* for your age.

DAD. It's the vitamins. Great vitamins. He plays little league, and they want him to be in tip top shape. In case he wants to play in middle-school. Kids have to be competitive, you know.

SON. Randy Stein's dad says they're not vitamins they're bovine growth hormones in chewable form.

DAD. *(As an insult:)* Randy Stein's dad listens to public radio.

GRANDPA. I haven't been nine for a long time, but as far as I can remember, we didn't have to *shave.*

DAD. *(As an explanation:)* Kids today.

GRANDPA. Honestly, have I been in a coma?

DAD. No. In a retirement community in Florida. Same thing if you don't watch it, pops. And while you were pruning your orchids

or learning tai chi or whatever it is you do down there, the world changed big time.

ANNOUNCER. And the bases are loaded, folks. You can cut the tension with a spork here at Wal-Mart-Home-Depot-et-cetera-et-cetera-et-cetera Park.

SON. Hey dad hey dad hey hey. The other guy's up the other guy's up the other guy's up. He's up he's up.

ANNOUNCER. Orlando's at the plate. Here comes the pitch aaaannnnddddd—

(The crack of the bat.)

(As the ANNOUNCER *describes the action below,* GRANDPA, DAD, *and* SON *follow the ball in play. Synchronized, choreographed heads and eyeballs.)*

ANNOUNCER. A line drive! Larson grabs it on one hop and rifles it down the line to Jacobs at first! Tag!, Orlando is out! Jacobs fires it to Magill at third, Duke is OUT!, Magill powers it to Kennedy at second who is…now…blasting it home to Tellerico who catches it in midair! It's a quadruple play fans! Yes, four-count-em-four outs and they only needed ONE! Why did they do it? Because they could! And that, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, is the beauty and the purpose and God-given power of performance-enhancing drugs! Wait—What—What's this? Tellerico just pelted the ball out to the audience… looks like a fan is going to catch it…he does…and the ball… TAKES HIS ARM OFF!!! Can you believe it! Amazing! The power behind that ball. Tellerico is a champ! Whatta day, whatta play! Four outs and an involuntary amputation. Beats the hell outta bobblehead day, folks!

GRANDPA. The most beautiful sport in the world has officially become science fiction.

(And he takes a supersized drink from his supersized beer.)

DAD. You shoulda seen the sextuple they pulled last week against Baltimore. Seems like the sky's the limit and you gotta love it. I mean, the crack of the bat is the new sound of the future. Amazing, isn't it? Pops? Isn't it?

SON. Grandpa? You okay?

GRANDPA. No. I'm not okay. I'm not even close to okay.

DAD. Heart attack? Heat stroke? These things tend to happen here.

GRANDPA. No. I've completely overdosed on this bullshit and I've had it up to here. And No the crack of the bat is *not* the sound of the future.

DAD. It's not?

SON. It's not?

> *(The world sort of changes as* GRANDPA *takes control of it, casting a bit of a spell, rousing and inspiring.)*

GRANDPA. No, it's not, men. Get a grip on yourselves. It's the sound of a collective memory. Of our true anthem. Of kids in the sun. Of kids in the lot, in the street, in the grass, in the park. Of the game. Like it should be played. Like we three played it.

> *(*DAD *takes the beer out of* GRANDPA's *hands like "ooooh, guess who drank too much." But* GRANDPA *is utterly sober.)*

GRANDPA. Can you hear it?

> *(The crack of a bat.)*

DAD. Like when I played?

> *(The crack of a bat.)*

SON. Like when I played?

> *(The crack of a bat.)*

GRANDPA. Yes.

SON. *(The spell coming over him:)* Like the other day I was running for the ball across the grass across the outfield and there was like a movie in my mind of players from a way long time ago cool like that.

DAD. *(The spell coming over him:)* Like when I played ball across from the school with boys before they became men who forgot that they were ever boys.

GRANDPA. Like when it was me and my friends and we'd play in the rain. We'd play in the snow. We'd play and play and play.

DAD. And I smell the fear of the catcher.

SON. The fear of the dirt around the plate.

GRANDPA. But I'm not afraid.

DAD. I'm not afraid.

SON. I'm not afraid.

GRANDPA. I have the bat.

DAD. The pitcher has the ball.

SON. And it's just me and the bat and the ball and my day forgotten and my future not yet born—

GRANDPA. —my best friend about to pitch me his best curveball and me praying to send it into orbit because that's how you play the game even in a parking lot in 1947 even when you're a hungry kid and the bat's a hand-me-down from the other neighborhood's clubhouse—

SON. —and me and the pitcher face each other like two bad guys at high noon and in slow motion not created by any technology other than my own God-given eyesight I see his arm wind up and snap the ball clean to me—

DAD. —and I see it spin on its axis and the smile across my friend's face when he knows there's no way no how I'm gonna hit it because it's a spit-slick untouchable pitch but I see it coming toward me and all thoughts scatter like a handful of jacks—

GRANDPA. —and I am the thing in which the angels assemble power and awe and somewhere the round vowels of the church bells somewhere my heart sweats but it's just me and the ball and me and the ball and me closer closer closer till the instant when the muscles known as my arms and the muscles known as my eyes join forces and say Yes—

SON. —and I swing I hit that ball up up and away and we all stop for a moment in time—

DAD. —freeze frame before such a thing as freeze frame and even the ball obliges even the ball knows it is the subject and object of grace and hope—

GRANDPA. —and a perfect example of what a boy can do on any given day when his best friend stands before him and throws the ball and for a minute—

SON. —for a second—

DAD. —the ball stops in its arc and we watch.

GRANDPA. We wait.

SON. And for a while this perfect white ball in this perfect game…

DAD. Hangs in the sky held by the hands of clouds.

GRANDPA. It's clean

and bright

and pure.

SON. And to us

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CHIN MUSIC
by Richard Dresser

Cast of Characters

CAROL

LEFTY

LEFTY #2

Acknowledgments

Chin Music was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 18, 2005 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their third annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Laramie Dennis and featured the following cast:

LEFTY . . . . . Louis Cancelmi
CAROL . . . . . Kelly Mares
LEFTY . . . . . .Scott Gilmore

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *Chin Music* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the third annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed on June 18, 2005 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

CHIN MUSIC
by Richard Dresser

(A picnic table outside a roadhouse in a small town. CAROL, *a waitress, is cleaning off the table.)*

*(*LEFTY *enters, all fired up.)*

LEFTY. Ask me how I did tonight, Carol.

CAROL. How'd you do, Lefty?

*(*LEFTY *is too overwhelmed to talk. He walks around, punches the air, smashes the picnic table.)*

LEFTY. Goddammit! I can't talk about it.

CAROL. Okay.

LEFTY. I was awesome. It was just beautiful, baby, like squashing bugs. They didn't have a chance. I felt sorry for'em and then I squashed some more. You know what it's like when you're in the zone and you can't do anything wrong?

CAROL. Jesus Christ, Lefty, look at me. Cleaning up slop from the pigs who eat here. You think I've ever been in the zone? There isn't any "zone" around here.

LEFTY. Sorry, baby, I thought you liked it here. Buddy's like a daddy to you girls.

CAROL. That's right, a daddy who hits on his daughters and steals their tips. Jeannie started here right after high school, he's been grabbing her butt for 23 years, longer than all three of her husbands combined. I can't take it anymore.

LEFTY. Hey. When you get off tonight, let's you and me go out to the quarry. Go skinny-dipping.

CAROL. I'd like that, Lefty. You're the best thing that's happened in this town for ages.

LEFTY. I know that. I respect my place in the community. Kids look up to me and I can get away with anything.

CAROL. And you can get any girl you want.

LEFTY. True. But other girls are like dirt to me.

CAROL. Let's go out to the quarry right now. Make Buddy get off his ass for a change.

LEFTY. We can't. I'm meeting Lefty. You know him?

CAROL. Lefty? He comes in sometimes, always alone. People don't know how to act around him.

LEFTY. Well hell, the man's an honest to god major leaguer.

CAROL. Was.

LEFTY. And will be again. He was just down here working on his mechanics. Skip called him in, he's headed for Baltimore. How 'bout some beer? I want to sit here and think about all I've achieved.

*(*CAROL *goes inside.* LEFTY #2 *shows up. He's older, in a sport coat.)*

LEFTY. Lefty! I was afraid you wouldn't show, since you got the good word and all.

LEFTY #2. Hey, I never let down a friend. And I wouldn't let you down, either.

LEFTY. Thank you for that.

*(*CAROL *enters with a pitcher of beer and two glasses.)*

CAROL. Here you go, Lefty.

LEFTY / LEFTY #2. Thanks.

CAROL. See, we're going to have a problem with two Lefty's. I can just feel it.

LEFTY. No problem. Lefty here is going back to the bigs.

CAROL. Nice going, Lefty.

LEFTY #2. Thanks. Baltimore needs a lefty after what happened to Billy Rosetti the other night.

CAROL. What happened?

LEFTY #2. Rosetti's a kid that has it all, killer fastball—

LEFTY. Not better'n mine!

LEFTY #2. Curve ball that drops off the table—

LEFTY. Sounds like my curve ball.

LEFTY #2. *(Pointedly:)* Never interrupts.

(Beat, staring down LEFTY.*)*

Anyway, he's out there, 9th inning, runner on third, he leans in for the sign, everybody waits, batter steps out, kicks dirt off his spikes, spits, adjusts his crotch, blows his nose on his sleeve, gets back in, everybody waits, suddenly the runner on third steals home. Billy never moves the whole time. So the catcher goes out and damned

if Billy Rosetti isn't sound asleep. Turns out he really is the kid who has everything. Including narcolepsy.

LEFTY. He likes to have sex with dead people?

LEFTY #2. That's right, Lefty. You're not half as dumb as people say.

LEFTY. Yeah? Who says I'm dumb?

LEFTY #2. How many people do you know?

LEFTY. I'll kick their asses!

*(*CAROL *goes inside.)*

LEFTY. So how do you think I did tonight, Lefty?

LEFTY #2. How do you think you did?

LEFTY. Honestly? I get chills thinking about myself out there.

LEFTY #2. Then there's nothing I can tell you.

LEFTY. You can tell me straight. Do I have what it takes?

LEFTY #2. Frankly, you got to let'em know you're there. You have to own'em.

LEFTY. A 3 hit shut out! I owned'em like I own my shoes!

LEFTY #2. They're not afraid of you. Give'em some chin music, high and tight, make'em dance. You act like you're playing a game.

LEFTY. It is a game, and I love to play. That's why I'm so damn good.

LEFTY #2. You want to play a game, go bowling.

*(*CAROL *comes out.)*

CAROL. Skip called with a message for Lefty. Didn't I tell you this would be a problem? *(Hands it to* LEFTY #2.*)* Travel arrangements to Baltimore. See, when you guys came in separately it wasn't a problem. But now that you're here together, well, someone's gotta drop the "Lefty" thing.

LEFTY. I've been "Lefty" to my fans all season. I don't want to confuse them.

LEFTY #2. Makes sense, I bet your fans are easily confused. But see, big league fans know me as Lefty. I can't give up my moniker for a bush leaguer.

CAROL. How about you use first names? *(To* LEFTY:*)* I don't even know your first name.

LEFTY. And you won't.

CAROL. That's too bad. I can't go skinny-dipping with a guy whose name I don't know.

LEFTY. You won't go skinny-dipping with me? Damn!

CAROL. How can I go skinny-dipping with you if I don't know your name? What kind of girl do you think I am?

LEFTY. Carroll.

CAROL. Yes, honey?

LEFTY. No, that's my name. Carroll. Two "R's."

CAROL. You're "Carroll?"

LEFTY #2. That's the sweetest thing I ever heard. Carol and Carroll are going on a date. People will think you're lesbians.

LEFTY. I'm not a lesbian.

LEFTY #2. You sure? 'Cause we all have our little secrets. Things we're afraid to admit even to ourselves.

LEFTY. Oh, I'm damn sure.

LEFTY #2. Well lesbians like girls. Are you saying you don't like girls?

LEFTY. I love girls!

LEFTY #2. You're sounding a whole lot like a lesbian. I think you have some issues, Carroll.

LEFTY. Don't call me Carroll.

LEFTY #2. You're right. I don't want to say, "How about a kiss, Carol?" and have a big lesbian like you come galloping over and pucker up.

CAROL. *(To* LEFTY #2*:)* Maybe we should call you by your first name, Lefty.

LEFTY #2. You already are. My folks named me Lefty. I've been a pitcher since before I was born.

LEFTY. You're lying. I had your baseball card when I was a kid.

LEFTY #2. That's a touching story. You curled up with my baseball card and dreamed about me?

LEFTY. No, I put it in the spokes of my bike so it would make a clickety-clack sound. I kept the good cards in a shoebox.

CAROL. So what's his name?

LEFTY #2. You shut up about my name!

LEFTY. It's nothing to be ashamed of, Tillie.

CAROL. He's Tillie?

LEFTY #2. Tillman. Mother's maiden name.

CAROL. Carol and Tillie and Carroll. You know, we could start a Girl Scout troop.

LEFTY. We better start it fast before Tillie goes to Baltimore.

CAROL. So what are you going to miss around here, Tillie? *(Off his pout:)* Okay, Lefty.

LEFTY #2. I won't miss the endless bus rides. Carrying my own luggage. Cramped locker rooms. Bumpy fields. You really want to know what I'll miss? I'll miss you, Carol.

CAROL. Come on, Lefty, we don't really know each other…

LEFTY #2. You got a thing about you. I always feel good talking to you.

CAROL. Thanks, Lefty. I'll miss you too.

LEFTY #2. I look at you and I think, there's a major league woman living a minor league life.

CAROL. Is that what you think?

LEFTY #2. You're something special, Carol.

LEFTY. Hey, me and Carol have plans.

LEFTY #2. Skinny-dipping's not that future-oriented.

LEFTY. No, I mean when I get to the big leagues. I'm going to bring Carol with me.

CAROL. You never said that before, Lefty.

LEFTY #2. So her whole plan to get out depends on your pitching?

LEFTY. I'm flat-out awesome. I'm betting on my pitching, why shouldn't she?

LEFTY #2. You know how many "flat out awesome" pitchers are kicking around in every backwater across this great nation? Huh? You know how many spots are open in the bigs? Not everybody makes it. 'Specially if they don't knock down a few batters along the way.

LEFTY. I got what it takes.

LEFTY #2. No, you hope you got what it takes. Well I'm not hoping. I got what it takes. Once you walk out on the field in the big leagues, they can't ever take it away from you.

LEFTY. I know in my heart I'm going to get there. If there's a god—

LEFTY #2. See, that's where you might run into some problems. *(To* CAROL*:)* If you want out of here you don't have to wait and hope.

CAROL. What do you mean?

LEFTY #2. See my cherry red convertible parked over there? You're 20 yards from freedom.

CAROL. It's not that easy. I've been trying for years.

LEFTY #2. And every year it gets harder, more reasons to stay. And then one day you wake up and realize you lost the urge to go. Then it's too late. You finish life right where you started.

CAROL. I know I'll leave someday.

LEFTY #2. Take off your apron. Walk to my car. We'll take a drive to the big leagues.

CAROL. I don't know, Lefty. My whole life is here…

LEFTY #2. Know what I think? I think you waited too long. I think it's already too late for you, Carol.

CAROL. Are you honest to god serious, Lefty?

LEFTY #2. I have to be in Baltimore tomorrow. Then New York.

LEFTY. I thought we were going to the quarry, Carol.

CAROL. The thing about the quarry is we have to come back.

LEFTY. So it wasn't me you liked. It was any guy who could take you away.

CAROL. No, baby, it was you. I just can't bear this life anymore.

*(*CAROL *goes inside.)*

LEFTY #2. Nothing personal, kid. You understand.

LEFTY. Hey. How come you're telling me to brush'em back?

LEFTY #2. That's the game. They gotta be afraid of you.

LEFTY. They sure are afraid of you, Lefty.

LEFTY #2. That's right, I earned that.

LEFTY. But it isn't just the batters that are scared. That beer vendor you hit in the stands, the high school drum majorette, broke her nose while you're warming up, the crippled guy gearing up to sing the National Anthem, you knocked the microphone right out of his hand. They're all scared of you. Cause nobody knows where the hell the ball is going. Including you.

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FANTASY LEAGUE
by Lee Blessing

Cast of Characters

HUSBAND

WIFE

Acknowledgments

Fantasy League was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on August 23, 2003 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their first annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Will Pomerantz and featured the following cast:

WIFE . . . . . Annie McAdams
HUSBAND . . . . . Greg Stuhr

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *Fantasy League* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the first annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed on August 23, 2003 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

FANTASY LEAGUE
by Lee Blessing

*(*HUSBAND *is laid up in bed. He sits up slightly, but looks quite helpless.* WIFE *enters, carrying a newspaper, notepad full of notes and a plate of cookies. She sits next to the bed.)*

WIFE. How are you feeling?

HUSBAND. Like God sat on me. How'm I supposed to feel?

WIFE. You took a bad fall—you're lucky to be alive. How's the headache?

HUSBAND. Lousy. Constant. Pounding.

WIFE. Your next pill's in an hour. Try to hold on. How's your back?

HUSBAND. Numb. As long as I'm just like this, it's numb.

WIFE. At least you have one good position.

HUSBAND. Did you bring the Lorna Doones?

WIFE. *(Holding up the box:)* Right here. Also have the paper, if you're up to reading.

HUSBAND. With this headache?

WIFE. I took the liberty of looking through it already.

HUSBAND. Checked out my players?

WIFE. Mm-hm. Think I got 'em all. Looked on the Internet, too. Made lots and lots of notes over the last few days. I think I'm really starting to understand this.

HUSBAND. This had to happen this year. The best fantasy draft I ever made, and can't even follow 'em. It's getting to be crunch time.

WIFE. I'll tell you what crunch time was. Crunch time was when you reached for that heavy Bill James Abstract of Baseball up on the top shelf.

HUSBAND. Yeah, yeah…

WIFE. It's fine to build a shrine to baseball, but—

HUSBAND. It's not a shrine, it's a den. A very well-stocked den. Following baseball's not a crime, for God's sake. I have a right to enjoy the one thing that gives me pleasure.

(After a beat.)

I won't keep it up there anymore. Give me a break. Read me the news.

WIFE. It may not all be good news.

HUSBAND. When is it ever? Hit me with it. Kevin Brown pitched last night. That guy's money. Let's start with him.

WIFE. *(Consulting her notes first.)* As you know, he's been doing very well this year. Very well.

HUSBAND. Yeah, microscopic ERA. So'd he win? How many innings did he go? How many runs did he give up? Should be less than two.

WIFE. It's probably best to remember that averages are just a numerical abstract drawn from a series of extremes. It can be ninety degrees one day and ten the next. The average is forty-five, but—

HUSBAND. The average is fifty. I know how averages work. Just give me the results. What was his pitch count?

WIFE. Pitch count? Um…none.

HUSBAND. What are you talking about? His pitch count. You saying he didn't throw a pitch?

WIFE. Actually, he didn't.

HUSBAND. What?

WIFE. It's right here in the paper. "While warming up before the game, Brown developed a small blister on the index finger of his pitching hand—"

HUSBAND. Oh no! Oh, my God—!

WIFE. It's not the end of the world, dear.

HUSBAND. Of course it is! He could be out for two starts! Maybe more! He's my rock! He's my stopper! My ace-in-the-hole!

(She reads again from the paper.)

WIFE. "Instead, the start was given to Ortiz—"

HUSBAND. Not Ortiz!!? He's Harry's guy!

WIFE. "…who proceeded to pitch a twelve-inning, fifteen strikeout no-hitter—"

HUSBAND. No—!!

WIFE. I'm sorry, is this hurting? Maybe I should stop.

HUSBAND. I don't believe this.

WIFE. *(Swiftly flashing the sports section at him:)* It's here in black-and-white.

HUSBAND. Give me a Lorna Doone.

WIFE. Let's save those for a minute.

HUSBAND. What, you got more bad news? What about Juan Gonzales? How'd he do?

WIFE. Let's see… Solid single in the first!

HUSBAND. Great!

WIFE. "In the fourth, Gonzales threw his back out bending down to pick up his batting gloves." He's been put on something called the D.L. Is that the disabled list?

HUSBAND. You're kidding, right?

WIFE. I wish I was. If this is too painful for you—

HUSBAND. Painful?! What do you think?! Juan's my right-side power! How long's he out?

WIFE. He'll be out, um…six to eight weeks.

HUSBAND. No—!!

WIFE. Should I stop this?

HUSBAND. No! Gimme a Lorna Doone.

WIFE. *(Without doing so:)* Just a few more to go here. Who do you want next?

HUSBAND. Nomar.

WIFE. Mr. Garsyparsy?

HUSBAND. Garciaparra.

WIFE. Garsiparry?

HUSBAND. Parra! Garciaparra!!

WIFE. That's right, sorry. Um…let's see: last night he got a… *(Looking in the paper:)* Broken leg.

HUSBAND. What—?!!

WIFE. Second inning. 0-for-one before that. Who else?

HUSBAND. What do you mean, "Who else?!" What happened!?

WIFE. Apparently a fan came out of the stands and smashed his patella with one of those telescoping steel rod thingies. They say it was like that skater episode.

HUSBAND. That's impossible!

WIFE. "Anything's possible in Fenway Park." Says so right here.

HUSBAND. You're making this up.

WIFE. What reason on earth would I have to sit here and make up things to torment you? Haven't I always supported you in your hobby? Wasn't it me who said, "Go ahead darling—transform the sweetest downstairs room we have, the one with all the light, into a cramped library of baseball trivia? Stack books and papers to the ceiling, until it's a cavern filled with votive arcana. Spend one-hundred percent of your spare time closeted in that room, peering into a computer, emailing your fellow hobbyists, betting on the outcome of fantasized teams—"

HUSBAND. Fantasy! Fantasy teams. Not fantasized. You make us sound like a bunch of nuts. Lorna Doone.

WIFE. Not yet. Didn't I let you spend your last three vacations with your buddies, driving around to major league ballparks—?

HUSBAND. I have to see the players. I can't make an intelligent draft if I don't see 'em in the flesh. You know that.

WIFE. I certainly do. After all, it is the one thing that gives you pleasure. So—why would I make things up, just because you're lying here totally helpless right now?

(After an uneasy pause:)

Garsyparsy's out for the year. Who's next?

HUSBAND. Out for the—?! I don't know… What about Bonds?

WIFE. Barry Bonds? Ok. Hmph!—some days it really doesn't pay to open the paper.

HUSBAND. What—? What?!

WIFE. Retired.

HUSBAND. Retired!? It's the middle of the season!

WIFE. Apparently, he just got bored with it all.

HUSBAND. He wouldn't retire. He's going for seven hundred homers!

WIFE. His exact quote is… "Seen one homer, seen 'em all." Sorry.

HUSBAND. Doone!

WIFE. You really think you should—?

HUSBAND. I want a cookie! NOW!!

WIFE. Can't. Too close to your medication.

HUSBAND. Then why'd you—?!! I always knew you resented this. The whole Fantasy Baseball thing.

WIFE. Then why do you do it? Why have you done it for all these years?

(He hasn't got an answer.)

HUSBAND. Torii Hunter!!

WIFE. Are you sure you want to ask about him?

HUSBAND. I'm sure! I'm sure! Finest center fielder in the game. The man's an Adonis. Best-looking player I've seen in years.

WIFE. "Did not play." Says here, personal reasons.

HUSBAND. Like what?

WIFE. Apparently, it was an affair of the heart.

(Reading aloud:)

"Mr. Hunter today revealed where he's been for the last seventy-two hours. 'I've found a woman' he said, 'A woman like no other I've ever met. The sort of woman a man finds only once in life—'"

HUSBAND. Very funny.

WIFE. "A woman whose soul slides effortlessly into mine, embraces it, enrobes it in a dignity and splendor it had never before conceived."

HUSBAND. Great—now read me the real one.

WIFE. Believe me dear, this is the real one. "There's nothing else to live for," Mr. Hunter said. "I have given baseball up forever, without the least regret. Now it's as though I never played the game. I feel reborn. My life is suddenly a bright horizon of possibilities, and the woman I love is the sun that rises and sets before me, like an endless pattern of waves. I sail towards her forever, having her always, yet reaching for her eternally. Is she the water? Is she the sky? How can I have her, yet not have her at the same moment? How can I solve the mystery of this love? A lifetime would never be long enough. A century, a millennium."

(A silence.)

HUSBAND. Give me a fuckin' cookie.

WIFE. I'm sorry, honey. You don't get a fuckin' cookie. And you don't get any real news of your Fantasy Baseball League. In fact, it doesn't exist anymore. I've replaced it with a Fantasy League of my own. I've called up some of the wives—you know, of your buddies on the Internet? We're going to the ballpark tonight, and you know what we're going to do? We're going to fantasize. We're going to fantasize real, real hard. And if we fantasize hard enough we may

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A Little Chatter
by Ellen Margolis

Cast of Characters

RUSTY, late 30s, Irish or Scottish American. A big guy. Local (Jersey) accent.

ALIYAH, late 30s, Jordanian. She is western-educated but wears the clothing and head-covering traditional to her background. She has a subtle accent or formality to her speech.

Time and Place

Hoboken, New Jersey. Spring 2007. The sidelines of a Little League game at a park or school field.

Acknowledgements

A Little Chatter was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) in June 2007 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their fifth annual *7th Inning Stretch*. It was directed by Annie McAdams with the following cast:

RUSTY . . . . . Charlie Kevin
ALIYAH . . . . . Patricia Buckley

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For Uncle Dave

A LITTLE CHATTER
by Ellen Margolis

(In the dark we hear RUSTY.*)*

RUSTY. Danny, Dan! Coupla steps left, buddy. One more big step, that's it. Where's the play, guys? That's right!

(The sound of an aluminum bat hitting a ball, pretty hard.)

Holy…*Good, Frankie—get it to the cut-off man!*

(Lights up. We see RUSTY *standing, clipboard in hand. Several feet away,* ALIYAH *sits in a fancy lawn chair, with a brief case at her feet and papers in her lap. Maybe there is a volume of tax code nearby; maybe she's drinking coffee.)*

Nice back-up, guys! Hustle in, now.

(He glances over at ALIYAH, *then refers to the clipboard.)*

Charlie, you're up. Jason on deck. Then Malik! Thomas! Danny! Drew!

(To ALIYAH:*)* Getting a lot of work done?

ALIYAH. Not so much. It's a bit noisy.

RUSTY. Oh, well then, we'll try to be more quiet. Since we're playing in your office and everything. *Charlie, no, don't go chasing that. That was way over your head. (Under his breath:)* Are you trying to catch butterflies? *Wait for your pitch. (Beat, quietly:) That* was your pitch. *OK, buddy, now you know what it looks like. (Pause.) BOOM! NICE! Go go go. (To* ALIYAH, *who doesn't look up:)* How about that?

*(*RUSTY *stares at her for a moment, then dials his cell phone while continuing to talk to the boys.)*

Jason. Big J. Quick bat, Jason, huh? (Into the phone:) Tina, hey. He's up. *Jason—your mom says keep that back elbow high. (Into phone:)* Oh, did you just get a *look. Good eye, Jason. (Into phone:)* Yup, in the dirt. Mm-hm, mm-hm. No, I agree with you. *Get that elbow up, Jason, wait wait, and—good cut, pal. Dja feel that? (Nods, then listens to the phone:) Your mom says watch the ball hit the bat, Jason.* Oops. *(Phone:)* Little dribble down the third base line—*Go go go.* No, he did it, he's safe! *Great hustle! (Into phone:)* I will. *(Hangs up.)*

All right, Malik.

(He glances at ALIYAH, *who looks up and watches as her son comes to the plate.)*

Give it a smack, Malik. You know what to do. (Beat. Under his breath:) And I'm sure your mother wishes you well, too.

ALIYAH. Excuse me?

RUSTY. Nothing. *(Sound: big hit.) Go go! Aw, Malik. You gotta run till it's called, buddy. They would have thrown you out on that for sure!*

ALIYAH. *(Calling out, pleasantly:)* OK, honey. Never mind.

RUSTY. Do you even know what he did?

ALIYAH. He hit the ball, but it went over there instead of straight ahead. It happens sometimes. Not the end of the world.

RUSTY. *1-1 count, Malik. Wait for your pitch.* It's called a foul. Of course, he wouldn't have made it in time anyway.

ALIYAH. How do you know this?

RUSTY. 1 and 2, buddy. You're in charge.

ALIYAH. Now you will say he's too fat.

RUSTY. No, no. He's a big kid, but he's got good speed. No, thing that slows him down is—he always looks at the ball.

ALIYAH. You tell them to watch the ball!

RUSTY. Not after they hit it. *Easy does it, Malik. That's the one. Go go go. No, don't look at the ball!*

ALIYAH. *(Overlapping from "go go go," surprisingly loud:)* LOOK AT THE BASE, MALIK! LOOK WHERE YOU ARE GOING!

RUSTY. See that? He beat it out. *Good hustle, Malik.* See that?

ALIYAH. Yes. Fantastic. An 8-year-old boy makes it to first base. Now we have world peace. *(She enters some numbers in her calculator.)*

RUSTY. That's it? You're not going to watch anymore?

ALIYAH. Did someone tell you I am the head cheerleader?

RUSTY. No, I don't think anyone would make that mistake.

ALIYAH. I am here. I got my son here. On time, too.

RUSTY. Fine. *Remember to choke up, Thomas. (Dials the phone.)* Chris, hey. He's up. Yeah, wait a second, I got another… Tina—he did good. Nope, he scored. That kid Malik batted him in—one I told you about, swings like Stan Musial? I got Thomas's dad on the other line—you bet. *That's OK, Thomas, good cut.* Chris—oh. Pop-up, pitcher got it. Sorry. I'll tell him. *Your dad says good try, Thomas! (Into phone:)* Big grin. *(Hangs up.)*

ALIYAH. Listen. You have no business. I get my son here, and I am here.

RUSTY. Yeah, well, there's "here" and there's "here." Dja see how he sped up when he heard your voice?

ALIYAH. Yes, well, maybe you learned something too?

RUSTY. *Danny, Dan! Where's your helmet? Coach? Time out! Danny, get your helmet on.* OK, I'll bite. What did I learn?

ALIYAH. You say, "Don't look at the ball." I say, "Look at the base." If you tell a boy something good to do instead of "don't do this," he will do it.

RUSTY. *(Smiling:)* And then we have world peace.

ALIYAH. Exactly.

RUSTY. Yeah, well, in this particular case, you may have a point.

ALIYAH. Yes. *(Back to work.)*

RUSTY. *All right, Danny, little hit. Just connect.* Your kid's on base. You have no interest?

ALIYAH. I am here. I cheered for him when it was his turn to bat. Now I'm going to get some work done. Which is also taking care of my son.

RUSTY. Sure. *(Beat.)* Last game, Malik got left on base in the fifth inning. How was your walk home?

(Their eyes meet. A turning point.)

ALIYAH. *Just a little hit, Danny. You can do it. (They respond to Danny's second strike.) Watch the ball, Danny. (Tense pause, then sound of a hit.) Good*! MALIK, I SWEAR TO GOODNESS, GO GO GO! Yes! Excellent.

RUSTY. See.

ALIYAH. Yes, that was all because of me. What's the score, anyway? Who is winning?

RUSTY. We're down by two. *Danny, that's OK—RBI, right, buddy?* Uh, that means they're ahead by…

ALIYAH. Yes, I get it. And who is this Samuel Zhal?

RUSTY. Hang on: *Drew, then it's Stevie, then top of the order!* What did you ask me?

ALIYAH. You said Malik is like someone?

RUSTY. Ah! Musial. Stan Musial. *(*RUSTY *imitates Musial's wiggle, then tips his [imaginary] bat up.)* And he'd drop this shoulder and look at the mound like…

ALIYAH. *(Delighted:)* Yes, that's it! Was he a professional player?

RUSTY. Stan the Man? One of the best. And known for being a real gentleman.

ALIYAH. *(Back to the game:)* And is this next boy a good hitter?

RUSTY. Not so good. He's got the busy feet.

ALIYAH. What is his name?

RUSTY. That's Andrew. Drew. *No shuffling around, Drew. Right, buddy?*

ALIYAH. Plant your feet, Drew! Like a tree! *(Beat.)* He has a nice smile…

RUSTY. Yeah.

ALIYAH. *(Studying* RUSTY's *face.)* He is your son?

RUSTY. No, he's my brother's boy. Lost his dad.

ALIYAH. I'm sorry.

RUSTY. Fireman.

ALIYAH. I'm sorry.

RUSTY. That's the thing—lot of these kids—their moms or their dads are gone. Or both. So I kind of try to keep the chatter going. And some of the parents like me to call, you know, if they're at work or they've got to be home with other kids—

ALIYAH. Malik's father…went to work that day as well.

RUSTY. I'm sorry.

ALIYAH. I would have been downtown myself, but we had just finished an audit, a big job. I took the morning off to stay home with the baby.

RUSTY. *That's my guy! Take your base, buddy.*

ALIYAH. *Good eye, Drew. (To* RUSTY*:)* Right—good eye?

RUSTY. Yep.

ALIYAH. Because he didn't swing at the bad pitches.

RUSTY. That's it. Listen, we really need a third base coach.

ALIYAH. *(Laughing:)* I'm guessing that is third base over there, but I don't think I'm ready to coach.

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OFF BASE
by Theresa Rebeck

Cast of Characters

JIMMY

AMANDA

Acknowledgments

Off Base was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 18, 2005 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their third annual *7th Inning Stretch*. It was directed by Marc Weisz and featured the following cast:

JIMMY . . . . . Paul Haber
AMANDA . . . . . Rachel Fowler

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *Off Base* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the third annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball*. It was originally performed on June 18, 2005 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

OFF BASE
by Theresa Rebeck

*(*AMANDA *and* JIMMY *in the stands, watching a ball game. She is eating popcorn, and drinking a soda. He is much more engaged than she is. Someone hits a long drive to left field. He leaps to his feet.)*

JIMMY. Yes! Yes! Go go—all right. Yes!

(He sits. She has watched his activity, and the activity on the field, with a large degree of skepticism.)

*(*JIMMY *sits, still pumped.)*

AMANDA. You know, I was at my sister's last week, for dinner? And I was watching my niece, Florence, she's three, and you know how they have those little bottles of like bubble juice and the kids blow bubbles? And it's kind of hard for them, they can't blow too hard, or the bubbles pop right away but if they blow too soft that doesn't work either. So Florence has to really concentrate, you know, and she can do it for hours, concentrating like a motherfucker on that little bubble wand, most the time not getting a single bubble, but every now and then, you know, she would get off a huge beautiful burst of the most spectacular little bubbles. And she would smile. And you know, it was a big deal, it meant something, because she did it all by herself.

JIMMY. That's great.

AMANDA. Yeah.

(Beat.)

That's a big deal to a kid, you know. You try to help them and they go no no no, I want to do it by myself. I did, I tried to help her, and she said—

JIMMY. Yeah, okay, Amanda.

AMANDA. What.

JIMMY. Just okay, okay?

AMANDA. Okay.

JIMMY. *(Calling:)* Come on Jose. Come on baby, bring it home. Come on.

AMANDA. It was so cute. "I want to do it all by myself."

JIMMY. All RIGHT.

AMANDA. What?

JIMMY. You don't want to be here, I said you don't have to come.

AMANDA. I'm not saying anything.

JIMMY. You're not saying anything.

AMANDA. I'm just telling a story about the innate moral consciousness of a three year old.

JIMMY. Yeah, see—

AMANDA. That's all I'm—

JIMMY. They don't all do it.

AMANDA. No, I wasn't—

JIMMY. Oh please—

AMANDA. I wasn't!

JIMMY. Sure you weren't. *(Calling:)* Inside, that was inside, come on, what is this? You suck! Get a job! Christ, did you see that?

AMANDA. No, I wasn't looking.

JIMMY. Ridiculous. *(Clapping:)* Okay, let's go, let's see some action! Let's get some runs here!

AMANDA. Let's "get some runs"?

JIMMY. What am I supposed to say, "let's get some outs"?

AMANDA. No, I just never heard that one. "Let's get some runs." I like it. *(Yelling:)* Let's get some runs!

JIMMY. Okay.

AMANDA. What? I'm being enthusiastic. *(Yelling:)* Let's get some runs! Let's get some runs!

JIMMY. Okay. Okay.

AMANDA. You asked me to—

JIMMY. Yes, I did, and now I'm asking you to stop.

AMANDA. Fine.

(Beat. They watch the game.)

JIMMY. Okay, okay, here we go. Let's go, fire up, over the fence, man! Over the fence!

AMANDA. That would be cool. If he hit it over the fence. I bet he can do it too. Look at the muscles on that guy. Wowwee zowee. He

looks fantastic. You don't see that every day. I mean, even football players—

JIMMY. OKAY.

AMANDA. He must work out really hard to get muscles like that.

JIMMY. What is your problem?

AMANDA. My problem, I don't have a problem. I'm just enjoying the game, I'm enjoying watching this really buff guy try to beat the shit out of a teeny weeny ball, without any help at all, because that's of course the moral thing to do, and baseball as we know is a completely moral game all about American values and why would you need help beating the shit out of a teeny weeny—

JIMMY. Not all of them took steroids. Very few of them, in fact, took steroids.

AMANDA. Because that would be cheating and of course in baseball nobody cheats.

JIMMY. I never said nobody. Obviously for a few players—

AMANDA. A few!

JIMMY. A very few there was a problem, a temptation, but to act like the game itself is tainted, is just exaggerating—

AMANDA. "I'm not here to talk about the past."

JIMMY. Why should he talk about the past! It's the future of baseball that is at stake, that is—

AMANDA. You know who you remind me of? My father, after they caught Nixon. No shit, he still thinks Nixon got screwed. They had him red-handed, he betrayed not me because I was six years old, but my father, who believed in him and still believes in him and refuses to admit that he was fucking betrayed—

JIMMY. I am not anything like your father.

AMANDA. You are exactly like my father. "I wasn't betrayed. Baseball is still the holy American pastime, let's all bow down to baseball baseball baseball—

JIMMY. Why are you so mad? What do you care?

AMANDA. Why do I care?

JIMMY. Yes, why do you—

AMANDA. Because you do this! This, this—

JIMMY. This what—

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SANDLOT BALL
by Michael John Garcés

Cast of Characters

ERIC, 17

RYAN, 17

JOSH, 14

Acknowledgments

Sandlot Ball was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 19, 2004 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as a part of their second annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Mary Kate Burke and featured the following cast:

JOSH . . . . . Jamie Smithson
ERIC. . . . . Andres Munar
RYAN . . . . . Roderick Hill

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *Sandlot Ball* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the second annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed on June 19, 2004 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

SANDLOT BALL
by Michael John Garcés

(Eric's room.)

JOSH. What'd you get? Eric, which one did you get?

ERIC. Wanna see?

RYAN. No.

JOSH. What'd you get?

ERIC. You know you do.

RYAN. I don't care, Eric.

JOSH. I do.

RYAN. Let's go to my house.

ERIC. No, we can't play it at your house.

RYAN. So what?

JOSH. So our house sucks.

ERIC. So no game, man, no game.

RYAN. So? Who cares?

JOSH. Me.

ERIC. Come on, Ryan.

RYAN. Eric—

ERIC. Come on, check it out.

RYAN. Ok, ok. What?

JOSH. What is it? What game?

ERIC. Guess.

RYAN. No.

JOSH. Ultra Blood Feud? Accelerated overdrive? No, no—Dragonlord?

ERIC. Dragonlord's for girls.

RYAN. What is it?

JOSH. Is not.

ERIC. What do you think?

RYAN. I don't—give it—just—give it to me.

ERIC. No, stop—guess.

JOSH. Urban Shooting Spree? Japanitron Yakuza Hit?

RYAN. Gimme it.

ERIC. Don't have to grab, man.

JOSH. What, let me—

ERIC. Be careful.

RYAN. Sit down Josh.

JOSH. Let me see.

ERIC. Let him—

RYAN. Josh, sit down and shut up.

JOSH. What?

ERIC. Let him see.

JOSH. Yeah, let me—

RYAN. Sit down.

JOSH. Ow. Cut it— Ow.

ERIC. Careful, man.

JOSH. Ryan, mom said you're not allowed to hit—

ERIC. You'll break it man, be—

RYAN. Mom's not here.

ERIC. Be careful.

JOSH. I'll tell.

RYAN. Better not.

ERIC. Gonna break it.

JOSH. Just let me see.

RYAN. Eric, man.

JOSH. Come on.

RYAN. Josh…

ERIC. …so?

RYAN. So what?

ERIC. So what do you think?

RYAN. I think I don't care.

ERIC. Come on, this is the—this isn't even out yet. Not even out. You have no idea.

JOSH. What? What?

RYAN. So?

JOSH. Is it Power Play Seven?

ERIC. Not yet released. To the general public.

RYAN. So?

JOSH. Not released?

ERIC. So everybody wants this. This is it. This is the shit.

JOSH. Oh. Wait. Wait. Wait. You got Megaball?

ERIC. Black-market pirate copy.

JOSH. Really?

ERIC. First on the block. First in the world. First in the galaxy.

JOSH. Megaball?

ERIC. Highest rating in V R magazine, man. Five bullet holes.

JOSH. Bang bang bang bang bang.

RYAN. Great.

JOSH. Oh man. Megaball. Oh man.

RYAN. V R?

ERIC. Virtual reality, man, you are so—

RYAN. You're a virtual retard, man.

ERIC. So, so fucking—

JOSH. Such a cool game. Such a cool game.

ERIC. I know.

RYAN. You never even played.

JOSH. You are so lucky.

ERIC. I know.

RYAN. It's just a stupid game.

JOSH. Maximum Megaball Three Thousand.

RYAN. Let's do something.

JOSH. So cool.

ERIC. Oh yeah.

RYAN. Come on, let's—let's watch TV…

ERIC. No way.

JOSH. Let's play.

RYAN. No.

JOSH. Come on. You'll like it.

RYAN. No I won't. I'm not a little lame loser like you.

ERIC. Maybe you should try before you—

RYAN. Maybe you should try not being a dick.

ERIC. Maybe you should try having a dick.

RYAN. Maybe you should try getting laid sometime.

ERIC. Maybe you should try someone who doesn't bark.

JOSH. Ryan you got laid?

ERIC. Never.

RYAN. Shut up Eric.

JOSH. Did you?

ERIC. No.

RYAN. I said shut up.

ERIC. But he made out with Lisa Dilley.

RYAN. I did not.

JOSH. Ew, you did?

ERIC. Yes.

RYAN. No.

JOSH. Ew.

ERIC. Yes.

JOSH. She looks like a man.

RYAN. You look like a girl.

ERIC. Yes he did.

JOSH. I do not.

RYAN. You are a girl.

ERIC. Ryan and Lisa.

JOSH. I am not a girl.

ERIC. Making out on Saturday night in your mother's car in the parking lot.

JOSH. Ew. Does mom know?

ERIC. All the way to third base with Lisa.

JOSH. To third? Really?

RYAN. You better not tell her.

ERIC. But couldn't make it safe to home plate.

JOSH. Last Saturday?

ERIC. Dilley dog.

RYAN. None of your business.

ERIC. Yeah, last Saturday.

RYAN. Yeah, while you were jerking off to the video games at Zappland.

JOSH. Better than Lisa Dilley.

ERIC. Much better than Lisa Dilley.

JOSH. Jerking off on the virtual video.

ERIC. On Megaball.

JOSH. Megaball Three Thousand.

ERIC. Maximum Megaball—

RYAN. You guys are so—

JOSH. Every detail, every moment, live it live.

RYAN. Josh, shut up.

JOSH. You just get it?

ERIC. Yesterday.

JOSH. They just bought it for you?

RYAN. I wanna do something, go somewhere, or, or—

JOSH. Bigger than big. Better than the best.

ERIC. So go. Go somewhere.

JOSH. He can't, he has to stay here. Grounded. If anyone sees him, mom finds out, he's so dead. Had to sneak here. I was the lookout. Advance patrol. Alpha seal special ops.

RYAN. Josh.

ERIC. You can't go anywhere?

JOSH. No, he can't. Grounded.

ERIC. You get grounded still?

RYAN. I don't know, I guess.

ERIC. Why, Lisa?

RYAN. No, man.

JOSH. Mom knows about you and—

RYAN. No and she better not—

ERIC. So what'd you do?

RYAN. Nothing, man.

JOSH. He failed.

RYAN. I did not fail. D is not fail.

ERIC. D in what?

JOSH. D minus.

RYAN. Josh.

JOSH. Art.

RYAN. Shut up.

JOSH. Mom said D was fail.

ERIC. Art?

RYAN. Well it's not.

ERIC. Wow.

JOSH. Eric they just like bought it for you?

ERIC. My dad knows this guy.

RYAN. That teacher's a bitch.

JOSH. Your dad is so cool.

ERIC. No he's not.

JOSH. Yes, he is.

ERIC. They had a fight. So he buys me shit.

RYAN. His girlfriend is hot.

ERIC. No she's not.

JOSH. So lucky, man.

RYAN. She's hot.

ERIC. She's a bitch.

JOSH. My mom sucks.

RYAN. She's a hot bitch.

JOSH. She never buys me anything.

ERIC. You got Xbox.

JOSH. Xbox sucks.

ERIC. True, true.

RYAN. You guys are both—

JOSH. We gonna play or what.

RYAN. No.

ERIC. You don't wanna play?

JOSH. Yeah, play, play. Play ball. Batter up. Yeah.

RYAN. No.

JOSH. I wanna play.

ERIC. Come on, man.

JOSH. Can I play?

RYAN. I said no.

JOSH. Can I, huh, can I?

ERIC. I'm playing.

RYAN. Play with yourself.

ERIC. I'll play with Josh.

JOSH. Cool. Oh yeah. So cool.

ERIC. Fine with me.

JOSH. Can I bat first? I want to bat.

ERIC. We gotta pick teams.

JOSH. Ok. Can I pick first?

ERIC. No.

JOSH. Ok.

ERIC. I'm New York.

JOSH. I wanted New York.

ERIC. I'm New York. You be Boston.

JOSH. Boston sucks.

RYAN. You be Boston.

JOSH. I don't want to be Boston. I'll be Texas.

RYAN. Texas sucks.

JOSH. No it doesn't.

ERIC. Be Texas.

JOSH. I'll be Chicago.

ERIC. You already picked Texas.

JOSH. Can I change?

RYAN. No.

JOSH. Why not?

ERIC. Because we're starting.

RYAN. Because I changed my mind.

JOSH. What?

RYAN. Move over.

JOSH. Ryan, I'm playing.

RYAN. Not anymore.

JOSH. You don't even like—

ERIC. Ryan, let him—

RYAN. I'm playing I said.

JOSH. That's not—

RYAN. Go home.

JOSH. Ok. What should I tell mom?

RYAN. That you're sorry you got blood everywhere.

JOSH. What blood?

RYAN. From where your face used to be.

ERIC. Come on, play ball.

JOSH. Yeah. Let the games begin.

RYAN. I want to be Chicago.

ERIC. You're Texas.

RYAN. Texas sucks.

JOSH. I play winner.

ERIC. You play me.

RYAN. Yeah, right.

JOSH. I'll be Chicago.

RYAN. You'll be Detroit.

JOSH. Detroit sucks.

RYAN. That's why.

ERIC. Come on, start.

JOSH. You don't even know how to use the control.

RYAN. Yes I do.

JOSH. Don't.

RYAN. Yeah you just—

ERIC. Oh yes. Oooohhhhh yes.

JOSH. Ah, hah ha.

RYAN. Man…this is…

JOSH. A fat eighty two mile per hour fastball right down the middle.

RYAN. Let's start again.

ERIC. No way.

JOSH. Absolutely no movement on the ball at all.

RYAN. Enough Josh.

JOSH. Hung it right over the plate.

ERIC. Top ten all sports all the time highlight play into the upper deck.

JOSH. Ryan the Megaball king.

RYAN. Josh, I'm serious.

ERIC. Home run New York, first batter up, first pitch. Lead off.

RYAN. Just play the game Eric.

JOSH. Megaball master Ryan.

ERIC. I am playing. Are you?

JOSH. Megamaster.

ERIC. Waiting for you to pitch. You scared?

RYAN. Josh go home.

JOSH. I don't have to. But you do.

ERIC. Scared to pitch me the ball?

RYAN. No man I'm not scared.

JOSH. Ryan's scared.

ERIC. So pitch.

JOSH. Pitch.

ERIC. Pitch the ball.

RYAN. Aw man…

ERIC. Ball one in the dirt.

JOSH. Ugly.

ERIC. Very ugly.

JOSH. Go to the bullpen. Your starter sucks.

RYAN. Go play Dragonlord.

ERIC. You failed art?

JOSH. It's not for girls.

RYAN. I didn't fail.

JOSH. Ball two. Hah.

ERIC. How do you fail art?

JOSH. By sucking.

RYAN. Teacher hates me.

JOSH. For sucking.

ERIC. She must hate you a lot.

JOSH. She does.

RYAN. What's wrong with this—

JOSH. Hit batter take the base.

RYAN. This sucks.

JOSH. Man on first.

ERIC. Why'd you hit my batter?

JOSH. You want me to teach you how—

RYAN. No, I know how to—

ERIC. I should rush the mound, kick your ass, man, beat your head in with the bat.

JOSH. Do it, do it.

ERIC. No, man, I got discipline. All about the game. Take one for the team.

JOSH. Right, right. Smart, very smart.

ERIC. Gotta stay cool. Like ice.

JOSH. Yeah, ice.

RYAN. You two are so…

JOSH. Ball one.

RYAN. What's wrong with this stupid?

ERIC. Here let me show you, let me—you control the pitch by—

RYAN. I got it I got it.

ERIC. Let me show you.

RYAN. I got it.

JOSH. Ball two. Tension in the air.

ERIC. You got it alright.

RYAN. Is this the…man…

JOSH. Ball three. The pressure rises.

RYAN. Will you stop?

JOSH. What?

RYAN. This thing doesn't work right, it—

ERIC. Like this, man, gimme, like this.

JOSH. Strike down the middle.

ERIC. I just threw myself a strike. You happy now? You get it?

RYAN. I get it.

ERIC. If you win the game, I helped you.

RYAN. Whatever, man.

ERIC. Just remember.

JOSH. Three and one count, the pitcher looks out at—

RYAN. Will you shut up?

ERIC. Play the game.

JOSH. The pitch…and the hit and run is on.

RYAN. Wait—what—can you do that?

ERIC. I can and I did.

JOSH. Nice.

ERIC. Thank you.

JOSH. Very nice.

RYAN. You can do that?

ERIC. Course.

JOSH. You should have gotten the runner at first.

RYAN. Right.

ERIC. You should have.

RYAN. You should shut up.

ERIC. Who?

RYAN. Both of you.

JOSH. …Lisa Dilley?

RYAN. I said shut up.

ERIC. Yup yup.

RYAN. What—what happened? What just—what happened?

ERIC. You balked.

RYAN. I what?

ERIC. Balked, man.

JOSH. Ryan balked. Ryan balked.

RYAN. Balked?

ERIC. Yeah man. You advanced my runners.

RYAN. I balked?

JOSH. Ryan's a balker.

RYAN. That's bullshit.

JOSH. He balked the ball.

ERIC. The umpire doesn't lie.

RYAN. Wait—what? What does that—balk?

ERIC. You interrupted the flow of your pitching motion.

RYAN. No I—what? I did not. That's—

ERIC. You interrupted the flow of your pitching motion.

RYAN. Did not. Did…not.

JOSH. You ball balking balker.

ERIC. You interrupted the flow of your pitching motion.

RYAN. Josh shut up. I didn't interrupt anything.

ERIC. Yeah, you did.

JOSH. I don't have to shut up unless I want to.

ERIC. Mid motion. You stopped.

RYAN. When?

JOSH. You balked you shut up.

ERIC. Mid motion.

RYAN. Balk is the lamest rule in baseball this game sucks.

JOSH. Then can I play?

RYAN. No.

ERIC. You playing?

RYAN. This game sucks.

JOSH. Then how come I can't play?

RYAN. Because you suck.

ERIC. You playing?

JOSH. If you don't want to play—

RYAN. I'm playing.

ERIC. Then play.

JOSH. Balker.

RYAN. Josh.

ERIC. Delay of game.

RYAN. What?

JOSH. Delay of game. Delay of game.

ERIC. Pitcher must pitch in a timely manner.

JOSH. The balker balks and then he delays.

RYAN. Delay of game?

JOSH. Yes.

ERIC. You should have paused it.

RYAN. Why didn't you pause it?

ERIC. Because you're the one who stopped playing.

RYAN. I did not.

JOSH. Did too.

ERIC. Pitch, man.

JOSH. Pitch, pitch.

RYAN. This is boring.

ERIC. Come on.

JOSH. If you're bored then—

RYAN. Josh just—

ERIC. Yes.

RYAN. Wait, what?

ERIC. Balk, you balked again.

RYAN. What?

ERIC. Advanced the runners, a runner scores.

JOSH. Oh man, you so suck.

RYAN. What? I didn't even—there's no runner on first. What?

JOSH. The little whiny balker boy.

ERIC. There doesn't have to be a runner on first.

RYAN. I just pressed—

ERIC. You stopped.

RYAN. Did not.

ERIC. You interrupted the flow of your pitching motion.

RYAN. Will you stop.

ERIC. You did.

RYAN. You say that again I'm gonna interrupt the flow of your mouth.

ERIC. I'm gonna interrupt the flow of blood to your brain.

RYAN. I'm gonna interrupt the flow of—

ERIC. Delay of game.

RYAN. What?

JOSH. Interrupting the flow of the game.

ERIC. Just pitch, man.

JOSH. Maybe Ryan's scared to pitch.

RYAN. Maybe you should shut up you abortion.

ERIC. Abortion?

RYAN. Yeah, he was. Doctor blew it.

JOSH. I am not an abortion.

RYAN. Yeah, you are. I was there. Strike one. Yes.

JOSH. You're the abortion.

RYAN. No, they wanted me. Not you.

JOSH. Yeah right you wish.

RYAN. Strike two.

JOSH. They'd been married three months when you were—

RYAN. What?

JOSH. Do the math?

RYAN. What?

JOSH. Three months. Granpy told me.

RYAN. That's not—that's not

ERIC. Home run. Yes. Four-zip.

JOSH. Home run. You suck.

ERIC. Two run clean up home run.

JOSH. The balking abortion gives up another homer because he sucks.

ERIC. Deep into the right field stands. Five hundred fifty feet.

JOSH. Because he sucks. Can't hit and he can't pitch but can suck.

RYAN. Can't hit? You think I can't hit?

JOSH. Ow. Ow.

RYAN. Wanna bet?

JOSH. Ow.

ERIC. And he can't pitch.

JOSH. Because he sucks.

RYAN. What do you mean Granpy told you.

JOSH. He talks about everything man. He's old.

ERIC. Your Granpy's old, man.

JOSH. Old people talk.

ERIC. What else are they gonna do?

JOSH. Burp.

ERIC. True.

RYAN. He does not.

JOSH. You don't know. He doesn't sleep in your room.

ERIC. Loud?

JOSH. All night. Farts. Burps. Talks. Farts.

RYAN. He can't help it.

JOSH. You sleep with him.

RYAN. So he said, he told you—he said—

JOSH. He told mom it was a sin, but she—

RYAN. What was?

ERIC. Batter up.

JOSH. You were, man.

RYAN. When did he tell you that?

JOSH. I don't know. You never talk to him.

RYAN. What am I gonna say to him? I talk to him. Got nothing to say.

ERIC. Yeah, he's old.

RYAN. Eric, shut fucking up.

ERIC. I was agreeing.

RYAN. Well, don't.

JOSH. Well he sleeps in my room so he talks to me.

ERIC. Fine.

RYAN. Well it's bullshit. Mom didn't…she didn't

JOSH. Yeah, she did.

ERIC. Single down the left field line.

JOSH. You should focus on the game, man.

RYAN. You should focus on not getting your butt busted.

JOSH. You should focus on not playing like a girl.

RYAN. You should focus on not being a girl.

JOSH. I'm not a girl.

ERIC. Base hit.

RYAN. Oh, man, that's—that's just—that—

ERIC. That's two on. No outs. Oh yeah. Smell the rout.

JOSH. You're the girl.

RYAN. Man, no matter what I do, this is such—

ERIC. Should focus on the game, man.

RYAN. Such, such—like you're cheating man, or something, like you're—

JOSH. Should focus on not sucking.

ERIC. Cheating?

RYAN. I'm gonna focus my fist into your fat flaccid face.

ERIC. I'm not a cheater.

JOSH. Try it. I'm not scared of—

RYAN. Oh yeah? You're not? Yeah?

JOSH. Cut it out Ryan come on—

ERIC. Just call me a cheater?

RYAN. No, no.

ERIC. Yeah you did.

JOSH. Eric's cheating? Cool.

RYAN. No, he's not.

ERIC. You said I was.

JOSH. How do you cheat?

RYAN. I said it was like you were cheating.

ERIC. Yeah, that's what you—

JOSH. Can you teach me how?

RYAN. That's all I said.

ERIC. I know what you said. What do you mean?

RYAN. I don't mean anything.

JOSH. How do you cheat?

ERIC. I'm not cheating.

JOSH. Oh.

RYAN. I never said you were.

ERIC. Ryan just sucks.

JOSH. True.

RYAN. Come on. Play.

JOSH. Texas sucks.

RYAN. Play.

ERIC. You play.

JOSH. Hurry up. I wanna play.

RYAN. Pop fly pop fly…and…you're…out. You're out. Because you… are a bitch. A bitchy little bitch. Oh, yeah.

JOSH. Ryan…

RYAN. What a catch. You see that?

JOSH. Ryan.

RYAN. That was a catch. That was a major league catch. Over the shoulder center on the fly.

JOSH. Ryan, man.

RYAN. What? What Josh? What?

ERIC. Six-zero.

RYAN. What?

JOSH. Ryan…

RYAN. What?

JOSH. There were two men on.

RYAN. Oh…man…that's…what?

ERIC. It was a good catch, though.

RYAN. …man…

JOSH. Pretty good.

RYAN. …I don't…

ERIC. You got one out.

JOSH. That's good.

ERIC. It's a start.

JOSH. Yeah.

RYAN. I fucking hate this game.

JOSH. Can I play?

RYAN. No. No Josh you can't play.

ERIC. Let him play.

RYAN. You can't play either.

ERIC. What?

RYAN. You can't play.

ERIC. Be careful—you can't take it out like that.

RYAN. Let go of—

ERIC. You're gonna break it—

JOSH. Ryan, stop.

RYAN. Ow.

JOSH. Penis breath.

ERIC. Come on.

JOSH. Ow.

RYAN. My wrist, you—

JOSH. Dicklick.

ERIC. Ow.

RYAN. Fuck you.

ERIC. Let go come on.

JOSH. Ryan you butt fungus.

ERIC. Don't fucking—

RYAN. There. No one plays. There. Ok? Ok? Fuck both of you. Ok?

ERIC. …why did you do that?

JOSH. Ryan, man.

ERIC. Why?

RYAN. What? I just took it out.

JOSH. Oh man.

ERIC. You fucking broke it you fuck brain. You shit stain. You… you…dumb jerk.

RYAN. I did not I just—

JOSH. Oh man.

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THE SAVE
by Dano Madden

Cast of Characters

JULIE, 29, a Little League mom, streetwise

COURTNEY, 28, a Little League mom, learning the ropes

ZENDER, 30, a stranger with candy

Acknowledgments

The Save was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 18, 2005 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as part of the thrid annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It featured the following cast and crew:

JULIE . . . . . .Michelle Beck
COURTNEY . . . . . Dana Jacks
ZENDER . . . . . .Christopher Halladay

Director . . . . . Will Pellegrini
Set Designer . . . . . Matthew J. Fick
Lighting Designer . . . . . Jerome Hoppe
Stage Manager . . . . . Jenny Lazar

The Save was produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on March 15, 2008 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as part of the *7th Inning Stretch: All-Star Edition.* It featured the following cast and crew:

JULIE . . . . . Blaire Brooks
COURTNEY . . . . . Dana Jacks
ZENDER . . . . . .Christopher Halladay

Director . . . . . Gaye Taylor Upchurch
Lighting Designer . . . . . Jerome Hoppe
Stage Manager . . . . . .Becky Lynn Dawson

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *The Save* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the thrid annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed on June 18, 2005 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

Special thanks

Lee Blessing, Eric Brooks, Nick Garcia, Alice Madden, Jerry Madden, John Madden, Joe Novak, Chris O'Connor, Isaac Perelson, Jason Pietrzak, Katie Pietrzak, Nicholas Pietrzak, Allie Pietrzak, Lane Smith, Lauren Singerman, Addie Walsh and Bryan Willis.

A Note About the Text

The monologues and longer lines in the play are often laid out on the page in a way that is contrary to the traditional "block" format. This is in an attempt to indicate changes in idea, rhythm or to emphasize a specific word or phrase. The space in between lines is not specifically there to indicate a beat or a pause.

THE SAVE
by Dano Madden

(The lights rise on the bleachers at an idyllic Little League field somewhere in the Northwest. JULIE *and* COURTNEY *sit next to one another watching the game.* JULIE *holds a clipboard.)*

JULIE. Rally time! Okay! Rally! Rally!

COURTNEY. Is Connor up this inning?

JULIE. Third. He's batting third.

COURTNEY. Is Duncan up this inning?

JULIE. You don't know?

COURTNEY. I do know. Sort of. I think he's up…

JULIE. He's your son.

COURTNEY. I've almost got it figured out—

JULIE. Duncan will be up fifth, if we make it that far.

COURTNEY. Oh. That's right. Okay.

JULIE. What's happening? Oh no! They're bringing in that big kid to pitch.

COURTNEY. Where?

*(*JULIE *points.)*

Oh my God! I thought he was the coach.

JULIE. He's their closer.

COURTNEY. He's a gorilla.

JULIE. He's probably one of the ones with a fake birth certificate. Says he's seven and he's actually seventeen.

COURTNEY. I hope Duncan isn't scared to bat against him.

JULIE. Duncan needs to face his fear. You're supposed to teach them to face fear at an early age. No later than five.

COURTNEY. Oh?

JULIE. Have you taught Duncan about fear?

COURTNEY. I… I…suppose.

JULIE. Connor won't be scared.

COURTNEY. That's impressive.

(Beat.)

JULIE. So…let's see. I have you down for next Tuesday.

COURTNEY. Tuesday?

JULIE. Postgame treats.

COURTNEY. Oh. Yes. I have it written down at home.

JULIE. What're you bringing?

COURTNEY. Oh, I don't know. Cupcakes maybe.

JULIE. You know, as head of the snack committee I am really trying to encourage healthy postgame treats.

COURTNEY. Okay… I guess—

JULIE. What about fruit salad? I'll put you down for a nice fruit salad. Oh! There's Mary Louise! I need to put her on the schedule for Gatorade next Thursday. Right back!

*(*JULIE *exits.* COURTNEY *sits alone for a moment, watching the game.)*

*(*ZENDER *enters. He is a thirty-year-old man and he seems a bit lost. He is in a daze. He wears a trench coat and he is unshaven. He is an outsider—probably not a person you would approach on the street for directions. He stands staring at the game for a minute before sitting on the bottom row of bleachers. Pause. Sounds of the game.* ZENDER *watches the game.* COURTNEY *observes* ZENDER *for a moment and then she too watches the game.* JULIE *re-enters with her clipboard.)*

JULIE. Oh my God! Mary Louise is always so passive-aggressive about her Gatorade days, she— *(*JULIE *sees* ZENDER.*)* Who's that?

COURTNEY. I don't know. A parent maybe.

JULIE. Whose parent? I know all of the parents. This guy is el creepo if you ask me.

COURTNEY. He doesn't seem to be bothering anyone—

ZENDER. Yeah! Nice pitch!

(Beat.)

JULIE. He's cheering for them.

COURTNEY. How do you know?

ZENDER. Strike out!! Nice fastball!! Burned it right past him!!

COURTNEY. Oh. Right.

JULIE. He should, obviously he should be in the other bleachers, the other team's, if he wants to cheer for them.

COURTNEY. Yes, I mean, you're probably right. If he's going to cheer for the other team.

JULIE. He needs to move if he wants to cheer for their gorilla pitcher.

COURTNEY. He should move.

JULIE. Oh! There's Chuck! He's down for treats in two weeks. Right back!

Oh, tell that guy to move.

COURTNEY. Tell him to—

*(*JULIE *is gone.)*

Ummmm…

ZENDER. Yes! Nice hit! Yes yes yes! The big man is hittable!! He's hittable! Way to get on base!

*(*COURTNEY *stares at* ZENDER. JULIE *re-enters.)*

JULIE. I swear that man is avoiding me—

Did you?

*(*JULIE *points at* ZENDER.*)*

COURTNEY. Actually, he's uh, he just started to—

ZENDER. Yeah! Nice cut little man! Way to put some bat on the ball!!

JULIE. Oh my God! He's cheering for Connor!

COURTNEY. But that's good. Right? He's cheering for us.

JULIE. I'm calling the police.

ZENDER. Yes! Nice hit little man!

JULIE. Nice hit Connor! Nice hit son! My son!! *(*JULIE *searches for her cell phone.)*

COURTNEY. The police?

JULIE. This guy has kidnapper written all over him.

ZENDER. Just get on base. Get on base buddy.

COURTNEY. Kidnapper?

JULIE. Yes. He's…he's trying to choose a victim.

ZENDER. Wow! Nice fastball!

COURTNEY. Julie, I understand being, you know, protective, but…

JULIE. Signs, Courtney, signs. Kidnappers are, studies have shown, quite demonstrative in their behavior. Clues—

COURTNEY. What did he do?

JULIE. He's cheering for both teams.

COURTNEY. Julie, calm down. Everything is, we can see our kids on the field. They're safe.

*(*ZENDER *pulls a large bag of candy out of his coat pocket.***)**

JULIE. *(Gasps.)* You see that?

COURTNEY. What?

JULIE. Kidnapper candy!

ZENDER. He walked him! Bases loaded! Nice work! Tying run comes to the plate!

JULIE. And look! Over there! Whose van is that?

COURTNEY. I don't know—

JULIE. Ask him!

ZENDER. Come on. Don't be scared. You can hit this guy.

JULIE. He's cheering for Duncan! He wants to kidnap Duncan!

COURTNEY. Umm…excuse me, sir…sir?

ZENDER. Oooo! Nice pitch! Wow. Nice pitch.

JULIE. Courtney!

COURTNEY. Sir!

*(*ZENDER *turns.)*

ZENDER. Yeah?

COURTNEY. Is…umm…is that your van?

ZENDER. Why do you wanna know?

COURTNEY. Umm…we're just wondering, what…what you're…what…what…are—

ZENDER. What I'm doing here?

JULIE. Yes!

ZENDER. Well, after the game, I was planning to look for any stragglers. And I was going to lure them into my van with this candy. *(*ZENDER *offers them candy before returning his focus to the game.)* Oh. Meeting on the mound.

JULIE. I think I left my cell phone in the car. Right back! Keep your eye on— *(*JULIE *gestures to* ZENDER.*)*

COURTNEY. Ummm…excuse me…

Excuse me—

*(*ZENDER *turns to look at* COURTNEY.*)*

My friend, she…

(Beat.)

ZENDER. She what?

COURTNEY. She umm, I think she's calling the police.

ZENDER. Fine.

COURTNEY. I just, I just thought you should know that she's calling the police.

*(*ZENDER *returns his focus to the game.)*

COURTNEY. You don't care?

ZENDER. I'm not doing anything wrong. I can be here if I want to.

COURTNEY. Not if, the kind of things you were saying—

ZENDER. I was joking.

COURTNEY. Oh. I. Of course—

*(*JULIE *enters in a frenzy.)*

JULIE. I left my cell phone at home. Do you have yours?

COURTNEY. No, I… I think—

JULIE. Frank! That's it!

ZENDER. Oh hoho! They're leaving the big guy on the mound! It's his game to save!

COURTNEY. Who?

JULIE. Marcus' father.

COURTNEY. Marcus?

JULIE. The second baseman! His father is a detective. There he is! Right back! *(*JULIE *begins to exit. She stops and stares at* ZENDER.*)* We are protective parents. *(*JULIE *exits.)*

ZENDER. Oh! Another strikeout! The kid's got his stuff back!

(Pause. COURTNEY *stares at* ZENDER.**)**

COURTNEY. It might be best if you leave.

ZENDER. This is a public park.

COURTNEY. I know. I know. I don't mind, it's just that Julie will… she's very aggressive. If she wants you gone—

ZENDER. The game's almost over.

COURTNEY. It's not me. I don't care so much. I just…why are you here?

*(*ZENDER *shakes his head and turns back to the game.)*

ZENDER. Come on! Let's get some runs and tie this one up!

COURTNEY. Only parents come to the games. Usually.

ZENDER. I need this game.

COURTNEY. You—

ZENDER. Did that occur to you? Or is everyone either a kidnapper or a parent?

COURTNEY. I never said that.

ZENDER. Have you ever found yourself on a really high ledge looking down?

COURTNEY. I… do you mean metaphorically?

*(*ZENDER *laughs.)*

ZENDER. Yeah. Worst problem you got is getting your flowerbed planted on time. Make sure to bake those cookies before the kids get home.

COURTNEY. No. I just…you were on a ledge? An actual ledge? *(Beat.)* I just want to know.

ZENDER. The top of my apartment building.

COURTNEY. You were standing—

ZENDER. On the roof. Twenty stories up.

(Pause.)

COURTNEY. Why?

ZENDER. I didn't know what else to do.

COURTNEY. Oh?

ZENDER. I just got back from overseas.

COURTNEY. Oh. Military?

ZENDER. Yeah.

(Beat.)

COURTNEY. I'm sorry. You must have seen—

ZENDER. Everything. All the cliché, war movie bullshit. I was one of the ones lucky enough to see it all.

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SEPTEMBER CALL-UP
by Steven Dietz

Cast of Characters

MIKE

LARRY

Acknowledgments

September Call-Up was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) on June 18, 2005 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as part of the third annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Mary Kate Burke and featured the following cast:

MIKE . . . . . Sam Guncler
LARRY . . . . . Brian Slaten

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *September Call-Up* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the third annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed on June 18, 2005 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

SEPTEMBER CALL-UP
by Steven Dietz

(Two seats at a ballpark.)

*(*MIKE *enters—followed by his son,* LARRY.*)*

MIKE. You just don't know, you know? You buy the seats in March, thinkin' that come September, this'll be a big game—a *deciding game*—somethin' *crucial down the stretch* against the divisional rival—thinkin' that while the whole city's bustin' their nuts this week, tryin' to score a couple seats—I'm gonna be sittin' pretty with two tickets in a prime location that I got *half a year ago.*

*(*MIKE *is now seated.* LARRY *is looking at the tickets.)*

LARRY. I think we're in the wrong section. I think we're supposed to be over there.

MIKE. It don't matter. Nobody's here.

LARRY. *(Looks around.)* Not a soul.

*(*LARRY *sits next to his Dad.)*

MIKE. *Forty-one games out.* Do you know the *mathematical odds* of losing that many baseball games? Do you know what an *accomplishment* that is?

LARRY. Where are the ushers?

MIKE. Huh?

LARRY. Aren't there usually some ushers?

MIKE. Playin' cards somewhere. Watchin' some *real* baseball on TV.

*(*MIKE *takes out his binoculars.)*

Want a beer?

LARRY. No.

MIKE. *(Scanning the park:)* Look at that: *two Beer Men* workin' the whole ballpark! I could try to flag that one down. He looks younger than that geezer in right field—might have good eyes—might be able to see me from way over there. Whaddya want to bet he could get a beer over here by maybe the fifth or sixth inning?

LARRY. Dad—

MIKE. *(Stands, yells:)* HEY, BEER MAN! OVER HERE!

LARRY. Dad, I'm good—

MIKE. Huh?

LARRY. I don't need a beer.

MIKE. You sure?

LARRY. Uh-huh.

MIKE. *(Sits.)* He didn't hear me, anyhow.

LARRY. He's talking on the phone.

MIKE. He's what?

LARRY. He's talkin' on his cell phone.

*(*LARRY *points.* MIKE *peers through his binoculars once again.)*

MIKE. Unbelievable. What has the world come to when the Beer Man is talkin' on his cell phone?

LARRY. It's September, Dad.

MIKE. So?

LARRY. *(Re: the team:)* They're just playin' out the string.

MIKE. And why do they have to do that? Tell me that.

(Off LARRY's *look:)*

No—really—they shut down plays that stink, movies that suck, corporations that screwed up—all THOSE things they *put a stop to.* But a shitty baseball team—*oh, no*—they make 'em PLAY OUT THE STRING—make 'em PROLONG OUR PAIN AND AGONY TILL THERE'S ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO NAILS IN THE COFFIN. Oughtta be a law.

(Pause.)

You look funny.

LARRY. Thanks a lot.

MIKE. No, you do.

LARRY. Well, I don't feel funny.

MIKE. Okay—

LARRY. Nothin' funny about sittin' here with a ghost.

MIKE. What the hell's—

LARRY. You're a ghost, Dad. You're not even here. God knows *where you are.* You should be at home, haunting Mom, skulking around the kitchen, leaving the lid off the mayonnaise—

MIKE. You're callin' me a *ghost?*

LARRY. —whatever you are: you're not the man I remember. You are not the man you were.

(Pause.)

How many nights in a row is this?

(Off MIKE's *look:)*

You heard me.

MIKE. I've had some free time.

LARRY. A ten game home-stand to close out the year and you've been to *every single game.* Why is that?

MIKE. Hey—you've been right here beside me!—

LARRY. Answer my question.

MIKE. *(Overlapping:)* —so, what's *that,* huh?—if I'm a ghost, what does that make *you?*

LARRY. You know exactly what that makes me.

MIKE. I'm an OLD MAN, Larry—

LARRY. You're not an old man—you're not even—

MIKE. *(Overlapping, fierce:)* —and sitting here under the lights and watching a team full of young guys get their hopes dashed and their brains beat out night after night is about the only thing that makes *any damn sense to me. (Suddenly, to the field:)* HEY, MALONE—THAT GUY WAVIN' FOR THE BALL IS THE *CUTOFF MAN!*—BELIEVE IT OR NOT: HE'S ACTUALLY *ON YOUR TEAM*—YOU MIGHT WANNA THROW HIM THE BALL!

LARRY. Who's the new kid?

MIKE. Pete Malone. September call-up. Hittin' three-sixty down on the farm. Five-tool player—smart and fit—all of twenty years old—his whole life ahead of him—and he cannot for the love of god *hit the cut-off man! (Pause.)* You were that way. Wanted no part of a relay—always thought you could throw the ball all the way home, no matter where you were. And you know what that made you?—you know what people called you?

LARRY. A cocky little shit?

MIKE. *Confident.* That's what you were. You always had that confidence. Made you a leader. And I *encouraged it*—that's the damn truth of it, Larry—I always liked that about you—and I'm sorry—I mean it—I really am—I want to apologize to you for that.

LARRY. Dad, there's nothing to—

MIKE. *(Sharp:)* I should *not have encouraged you.* I should have made you a *follower*—like all the rest of those dimwits you played ball with—WHERE ARE THEY NOW?—the whole lot of 'em: they're all Sales Reps with big trucks and stupid little wives and houses in the suburbs—and they are still followers and they are still around—and WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?

(They are eye to eye.)

LARRY. I'm right here.

MIKE. Lotta good that does me now.

(Pause. They turn and watch.)

LARRY. I like this Pete Malone. Doesn't bail on the curve ball. Plants his front foot. Hangs in there, no matter what.

MIKE. Cocky little shit.

*(*LARRY *smiles. They watch.)*

You ever go see Mom?

(Off LARRY's *look:)*

You remember—your *mother?*—'bout yay-tall?—cheekbones like you?—*ever go say "Hi"?*

LARRY. No.

MIKE. But you're right *here*—you're *in the neighborhood*—

LARRY. Dad, it's not—

MIKE. *(Overlapping:)* —how hard could it be to show up and make the woman's day?!

LARRY. She's got *you,* Dad—

MIKE. But I'm a GHOST, remember?

LARRY. —she's got *you* to deal with—

MIKE. I mean, *Jesus,* Larry—

LARRY. *(Overlapping:)* —she doesn't need ME walkin' through the door.

MIKE. *(Hot:) —just how long were you gonna wait before you told us?*

(Before LARRY *can respond:)*

Did you really want us to find out on CNN?!—find out from some pearly-toothed air-head that they were extending your tour?!—that your unit *wasn't coming home?!--*

LARRY. Dad, look—

MIKE. —cause that's exactly how we found out! From some television mannequin—some haircut in a suit that couldn't spell Iraq if you spotted him the "I" and the "Rack."

LARRY. That report was wrong.

MIKE. *What?*

LARRY. They're home.

MIKE. They're *WHAT?*

LARRY. My unit got home last week.

MIKE. *(Angry, confused:)* Then—*Jesus—then what the hell, Larry?*—why the hell are you—

LARRY. I got transferred out. Deployed with another unit.

MIKE. They didn't let you come home!

LARRY. No—

MIKE. Those fuckers—those gutless charlatans—

LARRY. —I requested it. I asked for a transfer.

(Pause. MIKE *stares at him, hard.)*

MIKE. *(Livid, quiet:)* So you could *stay over there?*

LARRY. *(Firm:)* Dad, you have no idea—

MIKE. Oh, is that right?

LARRY. —no idea how bad they're hurtin' for soldiers over there.

(A tense silence.)

MIKE. Oh, I bet they are. I bet they are really *hurting.* We wouldn't know anything about that. Your Mom—sittin' at home in front of the TV she broke with my one good hammer—sittin' there starin' at what's left of the screen—sittin' that way for a week now…

(More silence.)

Who was that kid you played ball with?—the one with the big ears and the nerdy little parents?—couldn't hit a ball to save his life?

LARRY. You mean Terry?

MIKE. That's it—Terry Williams. "Terry the Fairy," you all called him. I always felt bad for that kid—always followed you around, playin' second fiddle—never had the knack for it—not an ounce of talent in his bones—he'd just ride the bench and chew his gum, the poor worthless little dreamer.

LARRY. So, what about him?

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SOME KIND OF CATCH
by Karen Hartman

Cast of Characters

ETHEREAL LOUDSPEAKER

NATHAN LEVINE, 98

SAMANTHA POWER, 33

Acknowledgments

Some Kind of Catch was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) in June 2006 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as part of the fourth annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Mary Kate Burke with the following cast and crew:

NATHAN . . . . . Louis Zorich
SAMANTHA . . . . . Jennifer Gibbs

Production Stage Manager . . . . . Jenny Lazar

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *Some Kind of Catch* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the fourth annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed in June 2006 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

SOME KIND OF CATCH
by Karen Hartman

(Yankee Stadium, just after the Red Sox victory in October, 2004. The stadium is abandoned, except for NATHAN LEVINE, *98, who sits in a wheelchair wearing old Red Sox paraphernalia, and* SAMANTHA POWER, *33, a gorgeous Pulitzer Prize-winning genocide expert.* SAM *slowly makes her stunned way out of the stadium, passing* NATHAN.*)*

ETHEREAL LOUDSPEAKER. Attention Red Sox fans:

The curse is lifted.

Seize life.

NATHAN. What?

SAM. I believe he said, seize life.

NATHAN. My wife is dead.

SAM. *Life.* Seize *life.*

NATHAN. Exactly. When I was sixteen years old, Babe Ruth himself snuck me into Fenway Park. Eighty-six more years I have hung on to see my team win again. Now, I can cease life.

SAM. *Seize.* Grip, grab, clutch life. Not cease.

NATHAN. I have four grandsons, four. I put them in red socks before they could roll over. Now: an overworked doctor, a Mets fan, an electronic instrumentalist, and a homosexual. I was brought to New York City tonight by paid help. Like the voice said, cease.

SAM. SEIZE LIFE!

NATHAN. You're a kind young lady.

SAM. How will you leave this field?

NATHAN. My home health employee might return.

SAM. Do you need aid? Do you need a push?

NATHAN. I don't need another thing.

SAM. Sir. My work is observational. Analytical. It requires an accurate understanding of that which I cannot control, that which the entire twentieth century was unable to control, and yet I am an activist. May I move you up the ramp? Could you call a car?

NATHAN. Plenty of batteries left in my portable telephone. The other Sox fans called home to share the reversal of the curse, but everyone I know is dead or disinterested.

SAM. Me, too.

NATHAN. Where is your husband—a beautiful woman, a baseball fan, a catch? Where are the people you know?

SAM. Dead, or disinterested.

NATHAN. What do you do for a living?

SAM. I cover genocide, and I teach.

NATHAN. Ah. Genocide. We were the Levines of Vilna.

SAM. I'm sorry.

NATHAN. What's your name?

SAM. Power. Samantha Power.

NATHAN. Ahh. Like, Power Above. Like World Power—

SAM. Not like that.

NATHAN. Genocide. Terrible. Gimme a kiss.

SAM. Are we winners now? And will that make us less empathetic? Less humble? Yankee fans can't feel for what we've gone through. Are we going to become like them?

NATHAN. I'm cold. I've lost my reason to live. I have to pee.

SAM. Suddenly all things seem possible. Ordinary people who sort of thought, "Maybe I'll never get that promotion," maybe they think now, anything can happen. But for other people, who maybe were looking at the Sox to understand failure, in a really symbolic, primal, representative way, perhaps people who might have you know won a pretty major prize at a relatively young age for observing violent, unimaginably grim, nightmarish situations, analyzing and comparing and getting inside other people's problems from hell—I traveled to Sudan to cover the killing in Darfur, maybe you read my piece in the New Yorker—

NATHAN. Sorry, I live in Florida.

SAM. I stopped in Paris on my way back, game four, and normally I have a problem with Paris—

NATHAN. Too romantic?

SAM. Something like that.

NATHAN. Every pot has a lid.

SAM. When you've seen what I have seen, it is hard to believe in providence of any sort.

NATHAN. I am a Jew from Vilna.

SAM. *(Newly alert and engaged:)* Tell me what happened. Tell me what happened to you.

NATHAN. We went to Paris.

SAM. Now Paris *then* is a city I could understand. Pivotal, falling, devoured by world disaster. *There* is a Western Europe where I could have spent some time.

NATHAN. This was 1912, not 1940. Don't you listen? I was in Fenway Park when the curse began. The Babe snuck me in. Your thinking is too general. This will hold back your work.

SAM. My work is um, going pretty well.

NATHAN. So, Paris.

SAM. Normally I view Paris as a place to catch up on sleep.

NATHAN. You're breaking my heart.

SAM. But I rushed to an internet café to hear the eighth inning against the Yankees. And I was out in the night, in the Parisian night, and of course they hate America and our fat pastimes but I had this trivial personal happiness near my ribs and I was *out*. You know, out at night. And my French still hovers at this level where I resemble a motivated but not entirely competent foreign exchange student, who must be more charming than I am, in English, which generally depresses me, but it was a good night. Would I leave my hotel next year at 4am to hear the Red Sox? I don't think so. The stakes seemed higher because of the underdog role. It felt enormous.

NATHAN. Did you sleep with him?

SAM. I did.

NATHAN. That's wonderful.

SAM. What happened to your paid attendant?

NATHAN. Caught up in revelry, I presume.

SAM. He'll come back.

NATHAN. She.

SAM. Oh.

NATHAN. *(To God:)* Get me out of here. At this moment. Victory. A gorgeous blonde above me. Take me now.

SAM. I don't want you to die.

NATHAN. Now.

SAM. Help?

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STRIKING OUT THE BABE
by Charlie Peters

Cast of Characters

CHARLIE

MOTHER

ANNOUNCER

GRANDMOTHER, voice over

CHARLIE'S MOTHER

Acknowledgments

Striking Out the Babe was first produced by Mile Square Theatre (Chris O'Connor, Artistic Director) in August 2003 at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey as part of the first annual *7th Inning Stretch.* It was directed by Chris O'Connor and featured the following cast:

MOTHER . . . . . Audrey Kelley
CHARLIE . . . . . .Charlie Kevin

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

> *Striking Out the Babe* was originally commissioned by Mile Square Theatre for the first annual *7th Inning Stretch: 7 10-minute plays about baseball.* It was originally performed in August 2003 by Mile Square Theatre at the DeBaun Auditorium in Hoboken, New Jersey.

STRIKING OUT THE BABE
by Charlie Peters

Scene One

(Lights come up on CHARLIE.*)*

CHARLIE. I used to go to my grandparents house every Sunday for chicken supper. After supper, my mother would tell me to tell my grandparents what my plans were, my dreams. I'd tell them my plan was to become a big league baseball player, a pitcher for the Cubs, and I wanted throw the fastest fastball, the meanest curve, and a change up that would stop half way to the plate before starting up and going again. I told them I'd win more games and strike out more batters than Cy Young and I would be loved by the fans. Not just admired, I'd be loved. I would be adored. Every Sunday, as soon as I finished outlining my dreams, my mother would say "Isn't it wonderful that Charlie has a dream?" And my grandfather would smile and agree, and my grandmother would say the same thing.

GRANDMOTHER. *(Off-Stage:)* Every dream has an asshole. Don't you end up being the asshole in no other man's dream.

CHARLIE. *(After a pause.)* It was not the support a young boy yearns to hear. But she loved me and it was her way of looking out for me.

(Blackout.)

Scene Two

*(*CHARLIE *wears a baseball glove and mimes pitching a ball.)*

CHARLIE. I got my dream. Eleven years later I was pitching for the Chicago Cubs, and we were having a great year. The fans loved us as only Chicago fans can. New York fans, they think they love their teams, but they win all the time, so how hard is that? That's like loving a beautiful woman. But in my second year up with the Cubs we made it to the World Series. We were playing against the Yankees, the greatest team ever to play the game of baseball. It was like a dream inside of my dream. *(Stops pitching.)* One afternoon, my manager told me to go to the hospital to see a sick kid.

Scene Three

(A hospital room. A MOTHER *stands next to a table on which lies her son. The son is represented by a doll, lifeless of course. If it borders on the ridiculous, so what?)*

CHARLIE. *Mrs. Sullivan?*

MOTHER. Are you the pitcher?

CHARLIE. *That's me.*

MOTHER. I thought you'd be bigger.

CHARLIE. *(Point to doll:)* Is this your boy?

MOTHER. That's my boy.

CHARLIE. *What's his name?*

MOTHER. Taylor.

CHARLIE. *Nice looking kid. (Beat.)* Quiet.

MOTHER. He's dying.

CHARLIE. Yes, ma'am.

MOTHER. Doctor says he's not gonna make it.

CHARLIE. I'm sorry to hear that, ma'am.

MOTHER. I think he's wrong.

CHARLIE. He could be.

MOTHER. Last thing my boy asked me was to ask you to come here.

CHARLIE. Is that right?

MOTHER. You was one of his favorite ball players.

CHARLIE. I'm happy to hear that.

MOTHER. It don't mean nothing to me.

CHARLIE. What can I do for you?

MOTHER. Other than give my boy a new heart?

CHARLIE. Other than that.

MOTHER. He wants something from you.

CHARLIE. A picture?

MOTHER. No.

CHARLIE. A ball?

MOTHER. No.

CHARLIE. A glove?

MOTHER. No.

CHARLIE. A bat?

MOTHER. No.

CHARLIE. What does he want?

MOTHER. He wants you to strike out Babe Ruth.

CHARLIE. Are you joking with me, ma'am?

MOTHER. Why would I be joking?

CHARLIE. Babe Ruth is the greatest hitter in the history of the game, ma'am.

MOTHER. I know that, everybody knows that, what do you think I am? That's why Taylor wants you to strike him out. It wouldn't do no good if you were to strike out some nobody, would it?

CHARLIE. It might.

MOTHER. It wouldn't.

CHARLIE. You can't be sure.

MOTHER. That's not how these things work. You strike out Babe Ruth and you'll save my boy's life. That's how it works.

CHARLIE. Did the doctor tell you that?

MOTHER. Of course not. I just know it. I'm a mother. It came to me. Will you do it?

CHARLIE. I can't promise you that, ma'am.

MOTHER. Why not?

CHARLIE. Cause I can't.

MOTHER. I'll ask the manager to send me another pitcher.

CHARLIE. No one'll promise you that, ma'am.

MOTHER. I bet they would.

CHARLIE. They'd be lying to you.

MOTHER. You can't do it is what you're saying.

CHARLIE. I can do it, sure, but—

MOTHER. It's a matter of life and death.

CHARLIE. You're not hearing what I'm telling you.

MOTHER. You don't do it, my son is gonna die, mister, that's all I'm hearing. You do this and you're gonna be a hero. A legend. Babe Ruth, my ass. You strike out Babe Ruth and save my boy's life doing it, I'll go to the papers and tell em the whole story. People will know you, they'll love you, they'll name a street after you.

CHARLIE. I can do it. I can strike out Babe Ruth.

(Blackout.)

Scene Four

*(*CHARLIE *is on the pitcher's rubber in the middle of the game. We hear crowd sounds when necessary.)*

ANNOUNCER. Top of the fourth inning, ladies and gentlemen, on a beautiful October day at Wrigley Field. So far, the Cubbies are holding off the mighty Yankees, but the meat of the New York order is due up this inning.

CHARLIE. Game three. A beautiful day, the home crowd was feeling good. I was doing okay, too. I gave up a couple of runs early, but I settled down. I had Taylor's name written on the inside of my glove. I couldn't see her, but his mother was sitting in stands behind third base. Then Babe Ruth came up to the plate.

ANNOUNCER. Just listen to this crowd giving it to the Babe. Oh my, oh my, this is something else.

CHARLIE. Here was my chance to do something great, something memorable. I took the sign from the catcher, threw a fastball over the inside corner, and he took it.

ANNOUNCER. Strike one. And, folks, for some reason it looked like the Babe wasn't even ready for that pitch.

CHARLIE. One strike down, two to go, a little boy would live another day, and I would be immortal.

*(*CHARLIE *shakes off several pitches. He readies to throw.)*

ANNOUNCER. Hold on, folks, we just got a message up here in the press box.

CHARLIE. What?

ANNOUNCER. I don't believe this.

CHARLIE. What? WHAT?

ANNOUNCER. It says right here that Babe Ruth has promised to save the life of a little boy in the hospital by hitting a home run for him this afternoon.

CHARLIE. What?!?

ANNOUNCER. A little boy who's mortally ill.

CHARLIE. What little boy? What's his name?

ANNOUNCER. That's right, folks, little Tommy Jones is laying in his hospital bed right now listening to what could be his last baseball game of his life.

CHARLIE. Who the hell is Tommy Jones? How many dying kids are there out there for Chrissake?

ANNOUNCER. It says here that the Babe was at Tommy's bedside this morning before the game and promised to hit a home run for the little boy.

CHARLIE. What is this? A joke? Is it? He can't do that. I promised to save the life of a kid by striking him out.

ANNOUNCER. This is the stuff of legends, folks.

CHARLIE. The hell with this, you fat bellied, stick-legged a-hole. I got a kid, too. Let's see whose kid lives.

*(*CHARLIE *pitches.)*

CHARLIE. What the hell was that?

ANNOUNCER. In an amazing turn of events, folks, the Bambino didn't even bother to swing at that pitch.

CHARLIE. Why the hell not?

ANNOUNCER. He just let that strike sail by him. And now he's got two strikes on him. Why in the world would he do that?

CHARLIE. Cause he's an arrogant a-hole, that's why. Let's see him hit this.

*(*CHARLIE *goes into the motion.)*

ANNOUNCER. Wait a minute, folks.

*(*CHARLIE *stops pitching.)*

CHARLIE. What?

ANNOUNCER. What's the Babe doing now?

CHARLIE. What's he doing?

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