

Shakespearean Baseball

by Wayne and Schuster

Dramatis Personae:

Manager of Stratford's team
Yogi, *a catcher and team captain*
Mighty Whitey, *a pitcher*
Sad Sam, *a relief pitcher*
Peewee, *a shortstop*
Richard, *a third baseman*

Macduff, *another team member*
Bernardo, *an Umpire*
Antonio, *another Umpire*
A Trainer
Baseball players

The Scene: *Bosworth Field, a baseball stadium near Stratford.*

ACT I, SCENE I

Enter two umpires. [Antonio and Bernardo]
[Background music of "Take me out to the ballgame".]

Ant: Hail, Bernardo!

Ber: I give you greeting, Antonio. Thou hast the lineups?

Ant: Aye, the batting order's duly signed by managers both.

Ber: 'Tis well. What o'clock is it?

Ant: 'Tis at the stroke of two.

[A tucket without.]

Ber: Hark, the players come. To our appointed places shall we go, you at first and I behind the plate.

Ant: 'Tis done!

Ber: This game depends on how you make your call. Fare well until you hear me cry, "Play Ball!"

[Exeunt]

ACT I, SCENE II

[Outside the locker room.] Enter [Manager, Richard, Peewee, Sad Sam, and most of] the Team.

Mgr: My excellent good friends! May fortune smile upon our enterprise this day. As manager of this most valiant club, I swear by all that's holy in our game I shall not rest until the pennant over Stratford flies!

Team: Hurrah!

Rich: Most noble manager!

Mgr: Who calls?

Rich: 'Tis I, Richard.

Mgr: Speak, oh faithful Richard.

Rich: I pray you tell us how doth the starting lineup go.

Mgr: 'Tis as it was before, with Harry, Pete, and Joe out in the field. Peewee!

Peewee: Sire!

Mgr: Thou the shortstop spot will play. And you three, guarding your accustomed bags: Stan the first, Bill the second, and Richard the third. And as for you, most noble Sad Sam.

Sam: Sire?

Mgr: Hie thee to the bullpen, so that if our pitcher from his box is knocked, you shall go upon the mound and take his place.

Sam: I go!

Mgr: For this relief, much thanks.

Peewee: Most noble manager, a word.

Mgr: Speak, oh Peewee.

Peewee: Where is the captain of our team, the mighty Yogi? The man whom all the sports reporters call "the noblest catcher of them all"?

Mgr: Alas, the mighty Yogi, he sits and mopes in yon locker room. And well he might, for in his last ten games he has not hit the ball. Not even once! Yes, hitless has he gone, and twenty times has been called out on strikes. To think he led the league in RBI's, and now he reads the record book, and cries. But soft! He comes.

[Enter Yogi.]

Yogi: Oh what a rogue and bush league slob am I! Is it not monstrous that this player here, but in a fiction, in a dream of passion, should gaze upon the record book and find that he has tengames hitless gone. Oh cursed fate, that I who led the league should now bat .208. A hit, a hit, my kingdom for a hit! Once more to hear that welcome crack of bat upon the ball, and then to run from first to second and then to third and then to dig for home—to slide, slide, slide! Aye, there's the rub. There's a divinity that shapes our ends.

Mgr: Most noble Yogi.

Yogi: Who speaks?

Mgr: 'Tis I, the mentor of your team.

Yogi: Oh sweet my manager, gaze not upon my face. This is the poison of deep grief, and springs from a batting slump.

Mgr: Take heart, gentle Yogi, for today your batting slump shall end.

Yogi: What say you?

Mgr: I have devised a plan wherein you shall bat five for five.

Yogi: A hit for every time I go to bat?

Mgr: 'Tis so.

Yogi: Angels and ministers of grace defend us. He has flipped his lid!

Mgr: My lid have I not flipped! Here is the instrument of your success.

Yogi: 'Tis but a bat.

Mgr: Not but a bat, but a most special bat. A Louisville Slugger that once to Babe Ruth did belong.

Yogi: Babe Ruth!

Mgr: And with which the mighty bambino sixty home runs did hit.

Yogi: Is this a slugger which I see before me, the handle towards my hand? Come, let me clutch thee. And with this mighty staff of Birnam wood shall I yet win the day!

Ber: [off stage] Play ball!

ACT I, SCENE III

[The game begins.] Enter the team.

Yogi: Attend me, all. Pitchers, catchers, shortstops, lend me your ears. The game begins and we must win.

Mgr: And win we shall. All hail Stratford!

Team: All hail Stratford!

Mgr: A manager's blessing upon you all. And for your captain, noble Yogi, give me your hand.

Yogi: 'Tis gladly given.

Mgr: Play well, valiant captain, and remember today's game is being televised.

Yogi: Televised?

Mgr: And the TV shall recall each passing play.

Yogi: TV, or not TV—that is not the question. We shall play with might and main! Where is my battery mate, the pitcher Mighty Whitey? Ha! Art thou prepared to take thy place upon the mound?

Whitey: [with southern accent] Marry, sire, I am. I shall do everything thou dost desire. I shall throw a goodly mixture of curves, sliders, and changes of pace that will cause them to saw the air mightily with their bats, thusly.

Yogi: Ah, thou art indeed a southpaw, thy pa is from the South. And now, dear friends, to your appointed places go. Before this evening's sun is set, we'll win the day for Stratford, and Gillette!

Team: Hurrah!

[Exeunt] [Gillette theme music.]

ACT II, SCENE I

[In the dugout, the ninth inning. Enter Manager, Macduff, and Peewee.]

Peewee: How goes the game?

Mgr: Not well. 'Tis the bottom of the ninth with one away and they do lead us by the score of one to nothing.

Peewee: Who's next to bat?

Mac: 'Tis I, Macduff. Ready am I to do thy bidding, sire!

Mgr: Then take thou this bat and hie thee to the plate.

Mac: 'Tis done!

[Exit Macduff. Enter Yogi.]

Yogi: How goes it, cousin?

Mgr: Our chances dim with every pitch.
'Tis one away, Macduff is at the plate.

Yogi: Lay on, Macduff! And nuts to him
cries "Hold, enough!"

[Macduff hits the ball, and the crowd goes
wild]

Mgr: A hit! A very palpable hit!

Ber: Foul ball!

Mgr: Foul ball? He called that foul! A
plague upon him! That ball was fair.

Yogi: Fair it was indeed. You, sirrah, that
ball was fair.

Ber: That ball was foul.

Yogi: So fair a foul I have not seen.
Accursed knave, with heart as black as coat you
wear upon your back, get thee a pair of glasses.
Get thee to an optometrist!

Ber: [very fast] Now look here I gotta call
em the way I see em not the way I feel and I
know that that call was right.

Yogi: I would the gods had made thee more
poetical.

Ber: [very fast] Well that's the way I feel
and I have to see it that way so it was foul.

Yogi: Now for the bum thou art stand'st thou
revealed: thy head is emptier than Emmetts
Field! And I say to thee—

Mgr: Calm thyself, sweet Yogi.

Ber: Strike three!

Mgr: Oh, that was our second out. One
more time at bat do we have to win the game.
Who's next?

Yogi: 'Tis I.

Mgr: 'Tis you?

Yogi: 'Tis I.

Mgr: Then go with aid divine, and hit that
Pabst Blue Ribbon sign!

[Exeunt]

ACT II, SCENE II

[Upon the field]

Peewee: See how the valiant Yogi stands at
the plate, like some mighty Colossus, the bat
resting gently on his shoulder.

Mgr: But soft—here is the wind up, here is
the pitch—

[Yogi is hit by the ball]

Yogi: Ooooh!

Mgr: No! No, I cannot look. The sight doth
sear my eyes!

Peewee: The ball did strike his head—the
pitcher beaned him.

Mgr: Aye. And being bald in the head. And
now he staggers from the plate and rolls his
eyes.

Peewee: He comes this way.

Mgr: I cannot look!

Yogi: [singing]

Take thou me to the ball game

Take thou me to the park

Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack

Wash it all down with a flagon of sack.

Ha ha ha ha.

Peewee: Oh what a noble mind is here
o'erthrown. His noggin hath taken a floggin'.

Yogi: Ha ha ha ha. Alas, poor Deroche, I
knew him well. A man of infinite lip. Ah,
greetings to thee. sweet nymph.

Mgr: Oh horror. Not only hitless, but
witless.

Yogi: Here's a daisy. I would give thee
violets, but they wither. [gasps] I thought I saw
the ghost of Dizzy Dean, calling a game in the
Chavez ravine! 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.

Mgr: Concussion now hath made its
masterpiece. Trainer, hither!

Trainer: You called?

Mgr: Yes, cure him of that.

Trainer: Aye, m'lord. With this bucket shall
I pour water on his pate.

Yogi: Ooh ah ooh ah! Good fortune smiles
upon our club again. The game's been called off
on account of rain. Ha ha ha! [Falls]

Mgr: Now cracks a noble head. Good night,
sweet catcher. Flights of shortstops sing thee to
thy rest. Let four bonus players bear Yogi like a
soldier to the dugout.

Mortals are we all of us—the greatest ones must
fall. As even Casey Stengel knows, you cannot
win them all.

[All exeunt to Funeral March.]