

The Shakespearean Baseball Game

A Comedy of Errors, Hits, and Runs

By Wayne and Shuster

The Persons of the Play

Manager

Rocky, captain and bat catcher of Stratford

Richard

Rusty

Sam

Bill

Sandy

Macduff

Harry

Joe

Pete

Umpire 1

Umpire 2

Bosworth Field

(A Baseball Stadium Near Stratford)

[Enter Two Umpires]

Umpire 2 Hail Granato!

Umpire 1 I give you greeting, Antonio.

Thou hast the starting lineups?

Umpire 2 Ay. The batting orders duly signed

by managers both.

Umpire 1 'Tis well. What o'clock ist?

Umpire 2 'Tis at the stroke of two.

[Trumpets sound]

Umpire 1 Hark! The players come. To our
appointed places shall we go, you at first
and I behind the plate. This game
depends on how you make your call.
Farewell! until you hear me cry "Play ball!"

[Enter The Players]

Manager 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!

Players Hooray!

Richard Most noble manager.

Manager Who calls?

Richard 'Tis I, Richard.

Manager Speak, o faithful Richard.

Richard I pray you, tell us,
how does the starting lineup go?

Manager 'Tis as it was before with Harry, Joe,
and Pete out in the field. Rusty.

Rusty Sire!

Manager Thou at the shortstop's spot shall play.
And you three guarding your accustomed bags:
Sam the first, Bill the second,
and Richard the third.

And as for you most noble Sandy,

Sandy Sire!

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

Sandy I go! [*Exit Sandy*]

Manager For this relief, much thanks!

Rusty Most noble manager, a word.

Manager Speak, o faithful Rusty.

Rusty Where is the captain of our team,
the mighty Rocky? The man
whom all the sports reporters call
the noblest catcher of them all!

Manager Alas, the mighty Rocky sits in
yonder locker room and mopes, and
well he might, for in these 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.
But soft, he comes.

[*Enter Rocky, reading a book*]

To think he led the league in RBIs,
and now he reads the record book, and cries.

Rocky O, 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 is ten games hitless gone?
O, curséd fate, that I, who led the league,
should bat .208.
A hit, a hit, my kingdom for a hit!
Once more, to hear the welcome crack of bat
upon the ball, and then to run for first,
to second, and then to third, and then to
dig for home. To slide, slide, slide!
[Slides, then reaches for backside]
Ay, there's the rub. There's a divinity
who shapes her ends.

Umpire 1 Play ball!
Manager The game begins!
Rocky Pitchers, catchers, shortstops, lend me your ears;
the game begins and we must win.
Manager And win we shall. All hail Stratford!
Players All hail Stratford!
Manager A manager's blessing upon you all.
And for your captain, noble Rocky, give
me your hand.
Rocky 'Tis gladly given.
Manager Play well valiant captain, and remember
today's game is being televiséd.
Rocky Televiséd?
Manager And the TV shall record each passing play.
Rocky TV, or not TV: that is not the question,
We shall play with might and mane!
Players Hooray!

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Rusty How goes the game?
Manager Not well. 'Tis bottom of the ninth,
with one away, and they do lead us by
a score of one to nothing. Who's next to bat?
Macduff 'Tis I, Macduff. Ready am I to do
thy bidding, sire.
Manager Then take thee thy bat and hy thee
to the plate.
Macduff I go! *[Exit Macduff]*
[Enter Rocky]
Rocky How goes it cousin?
Manager Our chances dim with every pitch.
'Tis one away; Macduff is at the plate.
Rocky Lay on Macduff!

And watch out for that breaking stuff!
[*A crack of the bat*]
Manager A hit, a hit, a very palpable hit!
Umpire 1 Foul ball!
Manager Foul ball? He called that foul?
A plague upon him. That ball was fair!
Rocky Fair it was indeed.
You, sirrah, that ball was fair!
Umpire 1 That ball was foul!
Rocky So fair a foul I have not seen!
Ancient knave with heart as black
as coat you wear upon your back,
get thee a pair of glasses, get thee
to an optometrist!
Umpire 1 [*Hollers unintelligibly*]
Rocky I would the gods had made thee more poetical.
Umpire 1 [*Hollers unintelligibly*]

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Manager Now is the summer of our discontent.
'Tis two away. Just one more chance do
we have to win the game. Who's next?
Rocky 'Tis I.
Manager 'Tis you?
Rocky Merry, 'tis.
Manager Then go my friend with aid divine
and hit that Pepsi-Cola sign.
[*Exit Rocky*]
Rusty See how the valiant Rocky stands
at the plate, like a mighty colossus,
the bat resting gently off his shoulder.
Manager But soft, here is the wind-up,
here is the pitch.
[*Pitch hits Rocky in the head*]
Oh no, I cannot look, the sight doth
sear my eyes.
Rusty The ball did strike his head.
The pitcher beanéd him!
Manager He comes this way. I cannot look.
O, what a noble mind is o'er thrown.
Rocky [*Picks up bat catchers mask*]
Ah! Alas, poor Durocher, I knew him.
A man of infinite lip.
Hail to thee, sweet nymph.
[*Picks up bats*]

I would have brought thee violets,
but they withered.

Manager O horrors! Not only hitless, but witless.

Rocky Two outs, damp spot. Life is but a
walking shadow. A poor player who
hits and bunts this weary hour upon
the field, and then is heard no more.
It is a tale told by an umpire,
full of sound and fury,
signifying one-nothing.
[*Falls down unconscious*]

Manager Now cracks a noble head. Good night
sweet catcher. Flights of shortstops sing thee
to thy rest. Let four bonus players bear Rocky
like a soldier to the dugout.
[*Players lift Rocky*]
No more shall Stratford see him play ball;
I'm trading the bum to Montreal.

[Exeunt, with a flourish of Bat-boys]

Transcribed from *Wayne and Shuster: 50 Years of Comedy*. Perf. Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster. Morningstar Entertainment, 2000.