

JUST A KID AT HEART

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

“Be careful what you wish for because it might come true.” Freshman transfer student Bobby Hill hears these words for the first time, but not before he takes drastic steps to become an adult. The process includes a down-and-out high school baseball coach, an inventor uncle and a potion that turns him from a bratty teen into a 25-year-old man! Suddenly, he finds himself appointed the assistant baseball coach, given an expense account and has the coach’s daughter chasing after him. “All I wanted was to play baseball,” he whines to Wally, another young teen who spends more time on the psychiatrist’s couch than behind the plate.

Assuming the identity of Asher Masterson, whom everyone was already expecting, Bobby now has to run the team, duck newspaper reporters and try to help the losing Zephyrs win a tournament. Then he finds out that if HE helps the team to victory, Coach Marcus will be fired. When the REAL Asher Masterson shows up, it’s every man (and boy!) for himself. Brother, does he wish he’d stayed a kid. But as Coach Marcus points out, where baseball is concerned, each of us is just a kid at heart.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 M, 8 W)

COACH SY MARCUS: High school baseball coach of the Zephyrs, he is a grouchy type in his late 40s.

PRINCIPAL LYDIA TERHUNE: An equally argumentative high school principal in her 40s.

CLARENCE HILL: A science teacher in his mid-30s who's always just on the verge of some new discovery.

BOBBY: A smart aleck freshman know-it-all.

HILL: Bobby after he's taken the potion. A 25-year-old lost in a world he did not create.

KAY HILL: Bobby's long-suffering mother, in her mid-30s

WALLY: A meek freshman who just tries to get along.

EVELYN MARCUS: The coach's 22-year-old daughter. She's a little man hungry.

MARLA BAXTER: A no-nonsense security type.

LUANN MILES: A pushy newspaper reporter.

DUTCH: A lady photographer who's seen it all.

MACKEY: A high school ball player, something of a loud mouth.

JENKINS: Another high school baseballer, the pitcher for the squad.

HOPNAGLE: A not-so-bright high school team member.

JUNE BAXTER: Marla's sister and a police woman in her early 30s.

PHYLLIS LONG: A research representative for the Dexter Bishop Laboratories.

Time: The present, spring.

Place: Coach Marcus's office.

SETTING

The office belonging to Coach Sy Marcus. The room, like the gymnasium, is a bit run down but still has about it a trace of dignity. Framed pictures of past ball teams and champions are scattered at random on the wall behind the coach's desk. And on a couple of shelves rests a few tarnished trophies. On one shelf, all by itself, is an old baseball bat.

There are four doors utilized in this floor plan. The first door is located DS on the SR wall that leads outside. The second door, located UPS on the same wall leads to the showers. The third door, USC, leads to the gym and the fourth door, located on the SL wall, leads to storage.

The furniture represents a motley collection of leftovers from the teachers' lounge. The desk, located between doors one and two faces the rest of the room. It is forever cluttered with schedules, travel brochures, aspirin bottles and a telephone. There is a large two-door locker against the UPS wall which will be utilized for Bobby's transformations. A large couch rests almost CS and has an end table near it covered with sports magazines.

PROPS

Set Props: bat, newspaper clippings, baseball, trophies, plaques, phone, envelopes.

Clarence: 2 corked potion bottles, wristwatch, notepad and pen.

Sy: wad of cash, newspaper.

Evelyn: car keys.

Mackey: eyeglasses, baseball glove, baseball cap.

Hofnagle: baseball glove, baseball cap.

Dutch: camera.

Marla: notepad and pen.

June: notepad and pen, handcuffs.

Jenkins: baseball glove and cap.

Luann: notepad and pen.

Wally: 2 shattered bats.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: SY is standing behind his desk glaring at Principal LYDIA TERHUNE on the other side who is glaring right back. Their noses are almost touching.)

SY: I bet your parents wanted a boy.

LYDIA: Yeah? I bet your parents wanted a child. Little did they know he'd be one forever.

SY: Oh, so I'm a child, is that it?

LYDIA: Little, arrogant child.

SY: You're calling me a child?

LYDIA: And whiny, too.

SY: Is that what you're saying?

LYDIA: Whiny, whiny, whiny.

SY: Look! *(HE storms over to the couch.)* I was hired to coach baseball. Do you know what that means?

LYDIA: Yeah, you couldn't get a real job.

SY: Excuse me, Principal Terhune, but there's a lot of guys that WANT this job.

LYDIA: Yeah? Who are they?

SY: The team is just now shaping up. If you'll give us the rest of the season ...

LYDIA: You say that every year, and every year it's the same old story.

SY: I keep telling you I need an assistant coach! Remember when I wanted to hire Darryl Bodell?

LYDIA: Bodell? He's incompetent.

SY: I don't care if he has to wear diapers, we need him.

LYDIA: You sure you graduated high school?

SY: What's that supposed to mean?

LYDIA: It means you're simple-minded, that's what!

SY: If my mind is so simple, then I wouldn't have any trouble working it, right? *(HE realizes what he just said and sits on the couch.)* You know what I mean.

LYDIA: Yeah, I know what you mean. And you DO have an assistant. Clarence Hill, remember?

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SY: He's the chemistry teacher! *(HE jumps up.)* You should've seen him when we started this year. *(As if talking to a team.)* OK, boys, here's your formula for a winning compound. Wally, let's say you are X ...

LYDIA: At least you got somebody.

SY: *(Pulls out a newspaper clipping.)* Yeah, well, that's what I figured you'd say. That's why I sent for this guy here.

LYDIA: What? *(SHE snatches the clipping.)* We don't have any budget for any more personnel.

SY: Right. Unless we win a few. THEN the school board would be MORE than happy to let go of the funds. I tell you if we sweep the tournament ...

LYDIA: *(Reads the clipping.)* Bat Masterson?

SY: Asher Masterson, nicknamed "Bat." He's up-and-coming and just out of college.

LYDIA: You've already talked to him?

SY: Never met him. That's why I sent for him.

LYDIA: If he's so great, how come some pro hasn't spotted him?

(WALLY enters through the UPS door.)

SY: Because he didn't go to some highfalutin college, that's why. And I do my own scouting. I always keep an eye out.

LYDIA: That's your problem. You need to put it back in.

WALLY: Coach?

SY: What is it, Willy?

WALLY: Wally. We want to start practice.

LYDIA: So go start. What's the problem?

WALLY: He's got the ball.

LYDIA: Oh!

(SY opens the locker and hands the ball to WALLY.)

SY: OK, here.

WALLY: Thanks, Coach. *(HE starts to leave.)*

SY: *(Stops HIM.)* But, listen to me, if anybody hits it, everybody watch the ball reeaal good.

WALLY: Right, Coach. I love this game. *(HE exits.)*

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LYDIA: (*Disgusted.*) THE ball, here's THE ball?

SY: And we wouldn't have had that if that carnival hadn't been in town last week and I stopped by the dunking booth.

LYDIA: (*Indicates the bat on the shelf.*) What about this? Is that THE bat? Don't they need that?

SY: No, that one's special. I was with the Panthers. You remember them?

LYDIA: Large cat? About this tall? (*SHE indicates a three-foot height.*)

(*SY takes down the bat and caresses it fondly.*)

SY: Semi-pro team and it was my first time at bat during a major game. I'll never forget it. It was my turn at the plate. I reached down and tested out all the other bats and, well, it's hard to put into words but there was something about this one. There was determination in it. It seemed to say: "I'll win, just give me the chance."

LYDIA: (*Mocking HIM.*) And you strode up to the plate while a hush fell over the crowd.

SY: Yes, I did. (*HE takes a stance, facing the audience.*) I was facing Bubba Hodges and he had struck out two batters ahead of me. You remember Bubba Hodges, I'm sure.

LYDIA: (*Not caring.*) Large cat, about this tall?

SY: Well, he was known for his lightning pitches. Well, lady, let me tell you he rifles the first one at me and ... (*HE slowly and gracefully swings and watches an imaginary ball soar.*) My first hit, my first time at bat, my first home run.

LYDIA: And your last. They didn't pick up your option and you went into coaching umpteen years ago. You never played another game. And old man McGregor saw that game and gave you this job. And that was over 20 years ago. But you can just bet if he hadn't held so much sway over the school board ...

SY: (*Replacing the bat on the shelf.*) You have no romance.

End of Freeview

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