

CASEY AT THE BAT

based on the poem by Ernest L. Thayer

By Noah Smith

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Mudville is one game away from winning the World Series, but the team's star slugger, the Mighty Casey, strikes out to lose the game. Mudville has one chance left to win, but millionaire Bob Evilman bribes Casey to lose the final game. Jimmy Blake, a young rookie on the team, overhears this and vows to win without Casey. In the game, Jimmy proves that Casey is cheating, which gets the slugger kicked off the team and Evilman taken to jail. Jimmy goes to bat for Casey and manages to win the game.

CASEY AT THE BAT was presented by the Summer Theatre at Mount Holyoke College, at the Outdoor Theater, on the Mount Holyoke College Campus, August 1-4, 2001. Susan Daniels, Artistic Director; Noah Smith, Director; Christie Phillips, Scenery Design; Beth Smolin, Costume Design; Walter Mantani and Ben Enreich, Sound Design; Allison Loos and Chris Dunbar, Property Design; Meredith Fruchtman, Stage Manager; Tom Reing, Students on Stage Director; Jay Miller, Technical Director.

The original cast: In order of appearance:

Phred the Phan: Greg Black

Jimmy Blake: Alec Nelson

Announcer: Brian Smith

Barb Boomberg: Sharona Mizrachi

Lenny Kayne: Tom Reing

Dinah Dixon: Ronni Jane Reich

Rosalia Today: Jackie Rose

Lefty Flynn: Kristina Klemetti

Casey: Steve French

Bob Evilman: Brian Smolin

The Umpire: Heather Strycharz

The Ballplayers: Virginia Constant as Priscilla Perfect, Caitlin Dardenne as "Diamond" Dixie Dubois, Courtney Labrie as Valerie Tamara and her twin sister, Kayla Narey as "Slidin'" Savannah Castillo, Nora Smith as Ida Noe and her twin sister, Brooke Stebbins as Angel Cooney, Jon Wilhelm as Willy Barrows.

Agent Henderson, FBI: Noah Smith

"Maestro," the organist: Allison Loos

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 4 w, many minor roles and extras)

PRINCIPALS:

PHRED THE PHAN: Great fan of the Mudville team.

BARB BOOMBERG: A game commentator.

LENNY KAYNE: A game commentator.

DINAH "DUGOUT" DIXON: Manager of the Mudville team.

JIMMY BLAKE: A rookie player for Mudville.

LEFTY FLYNN: A player (female) for Mudville.

CASEY: The star slugger for Mudville.

ROSALIA TODAY: Catcher for the Dirtburg team.

BOB EVILMAN: The fourth richest man in America.

OTHER ROLES:

CONNEY: A player for Mudville.

BARROWS: Another player for Mudville. Nicknamed "Iron Man."

TAMARA: Pitcher for the Dirtburg team.

UMPIRE: Officiates the game.

FBI AGENT: One or two.

EXTRA MUDVILLE PLAYERS: Priscilla Perfect, Slidin' Savannah, Diamond Dixie, and other optional players as desired.

EXTRA DIRTBURG PLAYERS: Ida and any others as desired.

ANNOUNCER: Voice-over, not seen.

CROWD: Any number of fans in the stands on stage.

Playwright's Notes on Casting

The roles of the ballplayers, other than Casey, Jimmy, Lefty, and Rosalia, are written to be played by children. The roles don't have to be played by kids, of course, if you have actors of the same age as your principals available.

In the original production, there were seven kids in the cast, five to flesh out the Mudville team, and two Dirtburg players. We had those two Dirtburgers put on Mudville uniforms for the training sequence at the beginning of the second act and threw in a line about how their identical twins were on the other team. Ideally, you would have enough actors to have a full nine-person roster for each team. The role of the umpire may be played by a child as well, though we had a member of our regular acting company in the role.

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SETTING

Mudville Baseball Stadium. Behind home plate are the usual things. Dugouts or benches. A desk or table behind which the sportscasters will sit. Perhaps there is a luxury box somewhere in the audience where Bob Evilman will sit. The time period is indeterminate. There is a strong look of late 1800s, but there are plenty of modern things (television, rock music, etc.). It is a fantasy world of co-ed ball clubs, rhyming commentary, and the fans sitting in the infield.

SYNOPSIS OF THE SCENES

Act I: Game six of the World Series.

Act II: The next day, game seven.

PROPS

Poster of Casey, microphones, bat, large bag of money.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES ON DIALOGUE

For the original production, Tom Reing and I wrote some additional dialogue for the young actors who played the ballplayers. This is optional and may or may not work in your production depending on how many actors you have in the crowd; we tried to give our kids an equal distribution of lines, but then again, we only had seven kids. Feel free to use, ignore, change, or expand any of these.

On Poetry: So, yeah, some lines in this play are in verse. Iambic heptameter, to be specific. This is different from pentameter, which sounds like normal speech. This is light verse, so the rhythm and rhyme should be emphasized. (Lines of poetry are in quotation marks and separated by /.)

***Additional playwright's notes are at the end of the script.**

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ACT I

(AT RISE: PHRED THE PHAN enters, singing. He is Mudville's biggest fan, covered head to toe in Mudville memorabilia.)

PHRED: *(Singing.)* Take me out to the ball game, take me out to the crowd ... *(Sees the CROWD, stops singing.)* Now, this is what I call a crowd! Are we all here to see Mudville win the World Series? *(CROWD responds.)* That was pitiful. What is wrong with you? Today is the day! Mudville is gonna win it all! Right? I mean, they just gotta. Yes! They are! They are! My name is Phred, the Phan. I have been a Mudville fan my whole life and today it all pays off! You guys are all Mudville fans, right? *(CROWD responds.)* Oh, come on! Mudville is the greatest baseball team ever! So they haven't won a World Series in my lifetime. Or my parents' lifetimes. Or my grandparents' lifetimes. But today that's all gonna change! You see, in the World Series, you need to win four games. Mudville has already won three. And the other team, those bums from Dirtburg, only have two. So, if Mudville wins today's game, they win the whole shebang. If they lose today, but they win tomorrow, they still win the whole shebang. Of course, if they lose today, and lose tomorrow, then - *(Shudders.)* Dirtburg wins the World Series. But that can't happen! It can't! It just can't! Oh, oh, ooooooh! They're gonna do it to me again, aren't they? They're gonna break my heart! Oh! *(Collapses, sobbing. After a moment, HE rights himself.)* No! They're going to do it! And you know why? Because of this guy! *(Pulls out a poster of CASEY.)* The Mighty Casey! The worst enemy a baseball ever had. This guy can hit the ball here in Mudville, and it won't come down till it reaches Albuquerque! You should have seen the game yesterday. He hit three home runs! Three! We could have won it all yesterday, except for that lousy Jimmy Blake. *(JIMMY BLAKE enters.)* There he is now! Hey! Hey, Blake! You stink!

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JIMMY: Oh, hi there. Yeah, I know I made a mistake, buddy. I feel awful about it!

PHRED: It was so easy! The ball was rolling right to you! All you had to do was scoop it up and step on first base! We would have won the World Series!

JIMMY: I know! I know!

PHRED: These people don't know! He let the ball roll through his legs! Right through 'em!

JIMMY: It was an accident! Look, that's why I came to the ballpark early. I want to get in a lot of practice before today's game.

PHRED: You stink! You're a bum!

JIMMY: No, I'm not! I'm a good player! Honest! I just haven't played as well as I know I can! You have to believe me!

PHRED: Boo!

JIMMY: Well, you make a good point. I'm gonna go practice. *(HE exits.)*

PHRED: Well, if the players are here, we better take our seats. Are you guys ready for some baseball? *(CROWD responds.)* All right! Let's win one! *(Goes to HIS spot in the stands.)* You know, we're lucky, it's not every ball team that lets fans sit right in the infield like this.

ANNOUNCER: *(V.O.)* Ladies and gentleman, boys and girls, welcome to the friendly confines of Mudville Stadium for game six of the World Series. Please give a round of applause for your game commentators for today, Lenny Kayne and Barb Boomberg.

(MUSIC. BARB BOOMBERG and LENNY KAYNE enter. They carry microphones.)

BARB: Good morning, everybody! *(CROWD responds.)* Welcome to the World Series. I'm Barb Boomberg.

LENNY: And I am somebody other than Barb Boomberg.

BARB: He's Lenny Kayne, people, he has a weird sense of humor. Well, the game is going to start in just a few minutes, so let's see if we can get in a few words with some people here at the ballpark.

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LENNY: And if we're lucky, we can string those words into sentences, allowing us to have a conversation.

(DINAH "DUGOUT" DIXON enters.)

BARB: Look! It's Mudville Manager Dinah "Dugout" Dixon! Ms. Dixon! Ms. Dixon! What do you think of your chances of winning today?

DIXON: Fantastic. I have no doubt in my mind. We are going to win.

BARB: Didn't you say that yesterday? And didn't you lose yesterday?

DIXON: Look, we lost because of an unfortunate error that Jimmy Blake made. If he hadn't let that ball get away, we'd be world champions now. And we're still going to be. And you know why?

BARB: Because of Casey?

DIXON: Yeah, because Casey can hit the ball harder than I've ever seen anyone hit it! If he plays as well as he's been playing lately, there's no way we can lose.

LENNY: Are the rumors true? Is Casey a superhuman baseball god or does he have some flaws?

DIXON: Well, he's not very bright. Kind of full of himself. He sometimes does what's best for himself instead of what's best for the team. Chews with his mouth open. Oh, and he's greedy. He'll do anything for money. Other than that, he's perfect.

BARB: Thank you, Coach Dixon.

(DIXON exits.)

LENNY: Chews with his mouth open? Gross! At least he doesn't pick his nose and eat it.

DIXON: *(Offstage.)* He does that, too!

(ROSALIA TODAY enters.)

End of Freeview

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