

A

The Baseball Game**Plot Summary:**

A man and his grandson are attending a baseball game. The grandson's favourite player is expected to have a big game. Suddenly a neighbour of the grandfather sits down in an empty seat next to them. Years ago, the two men were best friends. However, they have hardly spoken in years. The neighbour is not a very kind man by any means. He harasses the boy and the grandfather throughout the game. The grumpy man finally lets his conscience get the better of him.

Characters:

Earl: A "crusty" old man who has a deep passion for baseball and its collectibles. He met Hans many years ago when Hans bought the house next to him. They do not get along very well at all.

Hans: Not a very big baseball fan but goes to the games occasionally with his Grandson. In his opinion, nobody is more arrogant or selfish than Earl.

Andrew: Hans' eleven year old Grandson. He is a very innocent boy who doesn't understand why his Grandpa does not like sitting next to Earl. His favourite player is Enrique Lacroix.

B

Setting: A crowded baseball field complete with roaring fans, snack vendors, and on field entertainment. The sun is shining with the accompaniment of a slight breeze. It is a picture perfect day for a baseball game.

(Enter Hans and Andrew from stage left stopping at centre stage. Spotlight following the two characters)

Hans: Ahhhh! *(sitting)* Feels good to finally sit down eh Andrew? It took us quite a while to get to our seats, but from what I can tell from our view, it looks like it'll be well worth the wait.

Andrew: Sure does Grandpa! Thanks for bringing me! I never thought I'd ever get the chance to see my favourite player Enrique Lacroix in person. We're close enough to the field that maybe we'll catch a home run ball. You think so Grandpa?

Hans: Maybe ... we'll have to see how things go. Look! There's Enrique now! *(pointing out to their left)*

(Enter Earl from stage left stopping at centre stage into the spotlight. Earl sits down in seat beside Hans)

Hans: *(ending his gaze on field to acknowledge Earl's sitting down)* Oh. Hi Earl. *(sounding noticeably displeased)*

Earl: Oh hi Hans. Didn't see you there! *(equally as irritated)*

Hans: Earl, I'd like you to meet my grandson. Andrew, this is Mr. Orbach.

Andrew: Hi Mr. Orbach, are you here to cheer for the Brown Pants too?

Earl: *(coughing grittily)* No. *(bluntly)*

Andrew: Why not? *(baffled)* They're the greatest! They're going to win the pennant this year. And Lacroix is going to win most valuable player!

LOW LEVEL 3

C

(Earl grins with the narrowing of his stare. Their conversation ends abruptly with the sound of a bat cracking.)

Hans: Hey Andrew! You see that? The bases are going to be loaded for Lacroix's at bat.

Andrew: Alright! *(on the edge of his seat)* He'll hit a grand slam! I know he will!

Earl: I'm going to bet that he chokes! *(harshly)* he'll swing at the third pitch and the bat will slip from his hands and hit the umpire in the head. One strikeout ... and one angry umpire. But that's only my assumption.

(Andrew quickly sits back in his seat and tries to hide his upset face with his jacket. Hans glares at Earl and without words asks him to lighten up.)

Vendor: Hot dogs! Peanuts! Ice cold pop! Only one hot dog left! *(cupping his hands to amplify his message)*

Hans: Are you hungry Andrew?

Andrew: Sure am!

(Hans lifts his arm and signals for the hot dog. Earl sees what's happening and stands up, blocking Hans' gesture)

Earl: I'll take that hot dog! *(to the vendor)*

Vendor: One hot dog coming up.
(the hot dog gets passed down the aisle)

Earl: Thank you kindly! *(with a mouthful of hot dog)* Oh sorry Hans, did you want this?
(waving his half eaten ball park frank towards Hans' face)

Hans: Really Earl, lets try to be mature about this. Just let the boy enjoy the game.

Earl: Whatever you say old man. *(chuckling)*

Andrew: Look Grandpa, it's almost a full count against Lacroix. Two balls, two strikes so far.

D

(They all wait to see what happens)

Hans and Andrew: yeah! *(shouting in joy)*

Andrew: Ball three! Full count here we come

(crack! Ball seems to be flying right in Andrew's direction. All three characters stand up. Earl reaches in front of Andrew's face and catches the grand slam ball.)

Earl: Yeah!

(Andrew's face shows that his heart has shattered. Earl stops his celebration and glances down at the boy. His look pans up to Hans who is staring at him needily. Without saying a word, Earl flips the ball into Andrew's hands, smiles modestly, and stands up.)

Hans: Can we give you a lift home, Earl?

(The three exit Stage left. Spotlight follows their exit)

Teacher's Notes

Knowledge/Understanding

- The student provides information about the characters that is of considerable appropriateness. Much of the information given in the introduction is essential for understanding Earl and Hans's behaviour towards one another in the scene (e.g., that they were once "best friends", but are now on very bad terms and that Hans thinks "nobody is more arrogant or selfish than Earl"). However, one item of information in the introduction is not borne out (i.e., Andrew is described as not understanding "why his Grandpa does not like sitting next to Earl", but shows no confusion or curiosity about this in the scene).

Thinking/Inquiry

- The student portrays character development with some effectiveness. The relationship between grandfather and grandson seems natural (e.g., Hans points out highlights of the game to Andrew as the scene progresses). The characters are fairly believable (e.g., Earl displays his "crusty" nature in both words and actions, belittling Andrew's favourite player by saying, "I'm going to bet that he chokes!" and grabbing the last hot dog from the vendor). However, because there is no real transition from his mean behaviour to his kind gesture at the end of the scene, Earl's change of heart is too abrupt to be realistic.

Communication

- The student creates dialogue that is convincing to a considerable degree. For example, Andrew's "Alright! . . . He'll hit a grand slam! I know he will!" effectively demonstrates his excitement as his idol Lacroix comes to bat with the bases loaded. However, the dialogue is occasionally stilted rather than realistic (e.g., when Andrew tells his grandfather: "I never thought I'd ever get the chance to see my favourite player Enrique Lacroix in person.").
- The student provides stage directions that are of considerable appropriateness. Those for movement on stage and interaction among the characters are abundant and realistic (e.g., "*Hans lifts his arm and signals for the hot dog. Earl sees what's happening and stands up, blocking Hans' gesture*").

However, at times, there could be more instructions for the delivery of lines. For example, "**Hans:** Really Earl, lets try to be mature about this." is weak because it lacks directions for gesture and/or intonation.

Application

- The student creates a working script that is of considerable effectiveness. The setting is appropriate, and the addition of the hot-dog vendor gives it a realistic touch. The student skilfully builds tension through the increasingly obnoxious behaviour of Earl and the growing excitement caused by Andrew's hero coming to bat with the bases loaded. The climax is carefully crafted (e.g., "*Ball seems to be flying right in Andrew's direction. All three characters stand up. Earl reaches in front of Andrew's face . . .*"). However, the resolution is unsatisfyingly brief and leaves the audience/reader somewhat bewildered.

Comments

This work is representative of a low level-3 performance. The student demonstrates a considerable degree of achievement of the expectations in the Knowledge/Understanding, Communication, and Application categories of knowledge and skills. However, in the Thinking/Inquiry category, the student demonstrates only some degree of achievement – i.e., achievement that is more characteristic of level 2.

Next Steps

In order to improve his or her performance, the student needs to:

- ensure that all the information provided about the characters is borne out in the script;
- ensure that the dialogue is appropriate to the speaker (e.g., that of eleven-year-old Andrew should not be stilted);
- supply adequate directions for the delivery of lines;
- rewrite the climax and the resolution to the conflict to shed more light on Earl's complete reversal of attitude and behaviour (e.g., the sentence "*His look pans up to Hans who is staring at him needily.*" could be expanded on).