

PROLOGUE

(The stage is quiet and dark, except for an eerie, blue glow emanating from a TV set that sits downstage center. The screen of the TV faces upstage towards a couch.)

ANNOUNCER

Well, if you're a Red Sox fan you've got to be asking yourself: is this the moment I've been waiting 68 years for? It's the middle of the tenth inning of the sixth game of the 1986 World Series, and the Boston Red Sox are leading the New York Mets by a score of five to three.

(A middle-aged man dressed in a bathrobe enters, carrying an infant. He settles on the couch, his face illuminated by the glow from the TV.)

ANNOUNCER

Which means the Sox are just three outs away from what has eluded them, in often frustrating fashion since 1918, a World Series championship.

(The lights rise on the Father. The sound from the television fades.)

FATHER

(Speaking to his daughter)

I know you're too young to realize what's happening, but someday you'll be able to tell your children that you saw the Red Sox finally win a World Series. You know you come from a long line of Red Sox fans. Did I ever tell you that your grandfather worked for the Red Sox? Maybe that's where we got this family tradition of having our hearts ripped beating from our chests every year.

ANNOUNCER

You know, back in 1920 Red Sox owner Harry Frazee sold Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees and the Red Sox, who had won five of the first 15 World Series ever, haven't won another one since. Now some folks up in Boston call that the Curse of the Bambino, but with a two-run lead over the New York Mets here in the bottom of the tenth, even the most hardened Sox fan has got to admit that the old Curse may finally be broken.

FATHER

My dad – God rest his soul – he was one of the most conscientious men I ever knew. Started working when he was only 14 and never took a day off of work, no matter how sick he was. Except for two days each year - Good Friday... and the Red Sox home opener. Said both God and the Sox counted on him being there, but that the Sox needed him more. He used to say they couldn't start the season unless old Joe Waterman was sitting in his usual seat along the first base line.

ANNOUNCER

Wally Backman lofts a fly ball to left where it is grabbed easily by Jim Rice, and now the Red Sox are now just two outs away from a World Championship. Up next is first baseman Keith Hernandez....

FATHER

When I was old enough he started taking me, too. He'd buy me a hot dog and a soda and get a beer for himself... He'd look around the field, watching the rookies and the veterans. Then he'd smile at me and say 'this is the year. We finally got the pitching we need' or 'we finally got a slugger to drive in the big run...'

ANNOUNCER

There's a ball, high and away...

FATHER

They'd start off great, some of those teams, but most years they were 14 games out by August. By then my old man is screaming at the morning paper 'they're nothin' but overpaid bums' and he was swearing off the sport entirely. Wouldn't even watch the World Series. But he always came back the following April. Too bad he isn't here to see this...

(The lights slowly rise near the back of the stage, silhouetting four men.)

ANNOUNCER

And there's another fly ball, this one easily caught by Henderson in center, and now the Mets are down to their last out. Here in New York's Shea Stadium, you can almost hear a pin drop...

FATHER

One out.

(Looks briefly up to heaven)

You hear that dad? Gramps?

(To his daughter)

You hear that sweetheart? Just one more out.

(The upstage lights rise to full, revealing four solemn men.)

ANNOUNCER

Gary Carter, the catcher, the Mets' last chance to keep this game alive, steps up to the plate

(pause)

The first pitch is a fastball high and inside for strike one.

FATHER

Two strikes honey. Just two more strikes.

ANNOUNCER

Schiraldi winds, delivers, and it's another fastball. But this one is high and inside. A ball.

FATHER

That's all right, honey. They can't all be strikes.

(The music gets louder.)

ANNOUNCER

Schiraldi steps onto the mound, there's the windup, and –

(Total surprise)

a hit! A hit to left field and Carter is safe at first. The Mets now have one aboard with two outs, and this New York crowd begins to come alive...

(We hear the sounds of cheering as the music gets louder, more ominous. The four men move forward just downstage of the Father, who rocks gently with his baby.)

ANNOUNCER

Stepping up to the plate is the Mets' next last great hope - Kevin Mitchell.

ANNOUNCER

Schiraldi delivers a fastball, high and inside. Ball one.

(Father clutches his baby tighter. The Rooters look on sympathetically)

ROOTER #1

Behold, a fellow Rooter.

ROOTER #2

A noble Red Sox fan,

ROOTER #3

His team up by two

ROOTER #4

They need but a single out

ROOTERS (ALL)

To win the prize of World's Champions!

ANNOUNCER

Schiraldi delivers... Mitchell swings...

(Excited)

and rips it into center field! Henderson grabs it on the first bounce but has no chance for a throw. Carter takes third and Mitchell takes first. So, how about this? The Mets are still alive with two outs in the bottom of the tenth.

(The Father is distressed)

ROOTER #1

Look at him. Though he knows only the past.

ROOTER #2

He can see the future.

ROOTER #3

As can every Red Sox fan.

ROOTER #4

Poor bastard.

ANNOUNCER

With two outs the Mets have the tying run on third and the winning run on first. But Ray Knight has two strikes on him.

FATHER

Come on! We've got a two run lead with two outs and two strikes in the count. We're just one strike away. Who can't hold a two run lead with two strikes on the batter?

(Answers his own question)

Who am I kidding? The Red Sox, that's who.

ANNOUNCER

Knight swings and...

(more excited)

it's a fly ball... that drops into centerfield! Henderson can't get it. Here comes Carter... he'll score... and Mitchell will make it to third. And now the Mets, just one strike away from elimination have scored one run, have men at the corners, and need only one more run to tie the game. Here comes manager John MacNamara to talk to Schiraldi.

1. SONG - SO MANY YEARS AGO

ROOTERS

SO MANY YEARS AGO IT WASN'T QUITE LIKE THIS,
YOU WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE THE OLDE TOWNE TEAM.
WE HAD PRIDE. WE HAD CONFIDENCE.
WE HAD CHAMPIONS ON THE FIELD,
AND FIVE WORLD SERIES VICTORIES IN 15 YEARS...

ROOTER#1

FANS WHO WENT TO FENWAY SAW GREAT BASEBALL,
THE RED SOX ALWAYS MADE THEM GLAD THEY CAME,

ROOTER#3

BUT SINCE THAT AWFUL DAY THE SOX SOLD BABE RUTH,
THE FORTUNES OF OUR TEAM ARE NOT THE SAME.

ROOTER#2

IT'S ONE THING WHEN THE UMP FORGETS HIS GLASSES,
OR ANOTHER WHEN YOU CANNOT SCORE A RUN,

ROOTER#4

BUT HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN YOUR GOLD GLOVE FIELDER,
JUST LOST A CRUCIAL GROUNDER IN THE SUN?

ROOTERS

WHEN A MAN NAMED HARRY FRAZEE
MADE THE BABE A NEW YORK YANKEE
HE HAD NO IDEA THE IMPACT IT WOULD HAVE.
FOR NOT SINCE WORLD WAR ONE,
HAVE THE RED SOX WON
LEAVING US TO WONDER, ARE WE CURSED?

ROOTER#1

WE SAW PESKY HOLD THE BALL,

ROOTER#2

WE SAW GALEHOUSE GET THE CALL,

ROOTER#3

IN '49 THE RED SOX BLEW A ONE GAME LEAD,

ROOTER#4

'72 CAN'T ROUND THIRD BASE,

ROOTER#1

TWO YEARS LATER - LOST FIRST PLACE,

ALL

THEN WE WATCHED AS CARLTON YELLED OUT GO GO GO

ROOTER#2

BUCKY DENT HITS A FLY BALL,

ROOTER#3

THAT SAILS OVER THE WALL.

ROOTER#4

IF THE WIND WAS IN THE SHORTSHOP WOULD HAVE CAUGHT IT!

ALL

AND NOW WE HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO END THE CURSE,
WE'RE IN THE LEAD AND WE NEED ONE MORE OUT
COULD THIS BE THE MOMENT WE HAVE
WAITED FOR ALL THESE YEARS

FATHER
OR WILL THIS TWO-RUN GAME TURN INTO ONE... MORE... ROUT?
(END.)

*(The Rooters and the father turn towards the television with great anxiety.
The lights slowly fade.)*

ANNOUNCER
Calvin Schiraldi will stay in the game to pitch to the next Mets batter, Ray Knight, and the Red Sox are still just one out away from ridding themselves of the Curse of the Bambino after 68 years.

FATHER
68 years? Wow. Imagine that. 68 years... 68 years...

ACT 1
Scene 1

(It is late November, 1919, in a bar, in which a sign reads: WELCOME TO THE THIRD BASE. "Nuff Ced" McGreevey is behind the bar. A large sign reads BEER 10 cents, SHOT: 10 cents. BOILERMAKERS: 20 cents. NO CREDIT. Patrons Carelli, and Wiznowski sit at the bar listening to MacMullen, who sits with Myron, a recent Russian immigrant, at a small table, looking at a book

MACMULLEN
And it was right here in Boston that a bunch of patriot fellows – dressed as Indians they was – dumped the King's tea into the harbor.

MYRON
Why they do this? What did the King do to them?

MACMULLEN
What did the king do? He did what an Englishman always does.

(Loud)
Tried to rob us of our freedom! And that, my fine lad, is why we had the American Revolution, so we could be free to do what we wanted, when we wanted.

MCGREEVEY
(Bitterly)
Except take a drink.

CARELLI
You mean legally.
(The others laugh)

MYRON
Ah, yes, you speak of this... how you say, Pro-bi-hi-tion

MACMULLEN
(Correcting him)
Pro-hi-bi-tion.

MYRON
Prohibition.

CARELLI

You know, I hear that on the Beacon Hill they have a supply of the good stuff that will last for many years.

MACMULLEN

Ain't that the way? One set of rules for them and one for us.

WIZNOWSKI

Listen to you.

(Indicating Myron)

You sound like that Red.

MACMULLEN

Now, now. Myron here is no Red. A little pink, maybe, but he works just as hard at the factory as any of you loafers and I'll not have you besmirching the lad's name just 'cause he's got a few crazy ideas about the, what is it you call us, the Pro-te-la-riat?

MYRON

Pro-le-ta-ri-at.

MACMULLEN

Proletariat, yes.

(Satisfied, MacMullen picks up a newspaper, which Myron studies from his chair)

MYRON

Mister MacMullen, explain please.

MACMULLEN

What is it, lad?

MYRON

(Pointing to the paper)

It says there that 'There is much...' what is word, please?

MACMULLEN

(MacMullen turns the paper around)

Eh? Ah, speculation.

MYRON

(Taking the paper back)

Speculation, yes, 'speculation these past days and weeks over the fate of Babe Ruth, who batted clean-up and was our greatest hero on the diamond.' Tell me, MacMullen, why is baby named Ruth forced to clean up diamonds?

MACMULLEN

Babe Ruth isn't a baby, lad. He's a grown man. But the fans call him the Babe.

MYRON

And how does a grown man get to be named for a baby?

MACMULLEN

(Looks to the others for help. They are amused)

Well... I guess because he's so large.

MYRON

(Momentary confusion)

Because he is so large. What about this diamond?

MACMULLEN

A diamond is a field made of grass.

MYRON

A diamond made of grass?

MACMULLEN

Yes.

MYRON

I see. And it is this grass that this Babe must clean up?

MACMULLEN

No, the Babe doesn't clean up. He bats clean up.

MYRON

So he cleans the diamond with the bat.

MACMULLEN

No, he does not clean anything.

MYRON

But you just said -

MACMULLEN

He bats clean-up and if he hits a home run, he clears the bags.

MYRON

He clears the bags but he doesn't clean them.

MACMULLEN

Right.

MYRON

And where did these bags come from?

MACMULLEN

The bags are on the diamond.

MYRON

Ah, now I see. So it is these bags that the Babe uses when he cleans the diamond.

MACMULLEN

No, the Babe bats clean up and clears the bags if he gets a home run.

MYRON

A home run? What is this home run?

MACMULLEN

It's a hit that clears the bases.

MYRON

(Horried)

You mean top of everything else they hit this Babe?

MACMULLEN

No, the Babe hits the baseball.

MYRON

I am so confused.

MACMULLEN

It is really a simple game, Myron. Children play it every day.

MYRON

(Points to the paper)

But what child gets thousands of dollars to play a game? This is just what they tell me in Russia, how in America the bourgeois exploits the workers for the profit.

MCGREEVEY

That's it! I'll have none of that Red talk in me bar! Nuff said!

(McGreevey starts to roll up his sleeves, but Carelli and Wiznowski restrain him.)

MACMULLEN

Take it easy, McGreevey, it's not his fault. The lad got off the boat only a month ago.

MCGREEVEY

You know how I feel about that stuff, MacMullen.

MACMULLEN

Don't get your knickers in a twist, McGreevey. He just doesn't understand the game, that's all.

(To Myron)

Don't you worry, lad, I'll teach you all you need to know.

(Steve enters the bar)

MCGREEVEY

Ahhh, how are you going to get that Red to understand anything?

STEVE

Hello, big brother.

WIZNOWSKI

Eh? Who is that speaking to me?

STEVE

Philip, it's me. Your brother, Steve?

WIZNOWSKI

My brother? If I had a brother his name would be Wiznowski, not... not... what is that you call yourself? Ah, yes, Waterman.

(To the others, who are listening in)

My brother, he have the brains, so the family send him here to America to learn so he not have to work factory, get his hands dirty.

STEVE

Philip...

WIZNOWSKI

So he learn and he get job. Becomes the business manager of the Boston Red Sox.

STEVE

I wish you wouldn't do this every time -

WIZNOWSKI

Then he sends for family. But when we arrive with mother and father, what do we find? Not a Wiznowski. But a Waterman.

CARELLI

I have cousin. Is no longer a Carelli. Is now a Smith. I guess that makes them Americans, eh?

WIZNOWSKI

It is such... disrespect, you know. For the family.

STEVE

I noticed no one in the family minded the money I sent back home.

WIZNOWSKI

(To Carelli)

My brother. The big shot American. Listen how he speaks like American. Goes to college. Wears a tie and works for great baseball team.

STEVE

Are you through?

WIZNOWSKI

(Smiling)

Yes, I am through. You may now buy me a beer.

STEVE

Why do I come in here? Why do I spend time with you?

WIZNOWSKI

Because you can change your name but you cannot change who you are. My brother. My Polish brother whose name is Wiznowski.

STEVE

And it has nothing to do with the fact that I get you into Red Sox games for nothing?

WIZNOWSKI

Brother. I am hurt.

(There is laughter from everyone.)

CARELLI

So, Steve, you are at the Fenway Park every day.

WIZNOWSKI

Of course he is. Works side by side with the owner, too.

CARELLI

So tell us then, are we are going to do better than the 6th place we did this season?

STEVE

I think we have a good chance, Thomas.

MACMULLEN

With Babe Ruth on the team, they always have a chance.

CARELLI

That is why Babe Ruth is the greatest Italian since Columbus!

MACMULLEN

Italian? Where do you get that stuff?

CARELLI

Why do you think they call him the Bambino?

MACMULLEN

No no no, the Babe is from Baltimore, right Steve?

STEVE

Yes. From a place called... Camden Yards, I think.

MACMULLEN

Which is the Irish section where he grew up as O'Ruth!

WIZNOWSKI

Where do you get that stuff? It was the Polish section and his name was Ruthinski. Right, brother?

MACMULLEN

Don't let your big brother bully you. You tell him the truth, that the Babe is Irish!

CARELLI

The Bambino is Italian!

WIZNOWSKI

Polish!

MYRON

No, the Bambino must be Russian!

ALL

What?

MYRON

Why else would he wear the Red Sox?

(There is a roar of disapproval, some of it good natured, against Myron, as the bar explodes in simultaneous yelling by the patrons)

MCGREEVEY

(Shouting to be heard over the noise)

Lads, lads... listen to me!

(They finally quiet down)

What does it matter, as long as he's on the Red Sox?
(*McGreevey bangs his fist on the bar*)
Nuff 'ced, right?

ROOTERS

Nuff 'ced, McGreevey!

2. SONG - EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR HEROES

MCGREEVEY

GENERAL PERSHING LED OUR NATION'S TROOPS
TO WORLD WAR VICTORY,
BUT BABE RUTH PITCHED 6 SHUTOUT GAMES,
AND BATTED THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THREE,
TEDDY ROOSEVELT LED THE RIDERS, AND
BEAT THE SPANISH NATION,
BUT RUTH ONCE HIT A BALL SO HARD
IT LANDED ON SOUTH STATION

ROOTERS

EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR HEROES,
MINE'S THE GREAT BABE RUTH
HE CAN PITCH, HE CAN HIT, HE'S THE BEST AND THAT'S THE TRUTH
NEVER MIND YOUR SOLDIERS AND THEIR TALES OF BATTLES WON,
WHO EVER PAID A DIME TO SEE A SOLDIER FIRE A GUN?

CARELLI

BACK HOME THEY TOLD ME THAT THIS WAS
THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY
AND EVEN THOUGH THE WORK IS HARD
I'M GLAD I'M NOT IN ITALY

MACMULLEN

CAUSE HERE'S THE PLACE WHERE ANY LAD CAN
MAKE ALL KINDS OF RICHES
WITH HOME RUNS, HITS AND R B I'S
IF HE CAN HIT FAST PITCHES

ROOTERS

EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR HEROES,
MINE'S THE GREAT BABE RUTH
HE CAN PITCH, HE CAN HIT,
HE'S THE BEST AND THAT'S THE TRUTH

WIZNOWSKI

THE FACTORY WORKER'S LIFE IS HARD BUT WE GET OUR REWARD,
WHEN WE READ HOW MANY RUNS OUR HERO BABE HAS SCORED!

STEVE

Woodrow Wilson says we need a League of Nations to end all wars. But here's how I'd do it...

I'D TAKE THE KINGS AND THE PRESIDENTS
WHO RULE THE MANY LANDS,
BRING 'EM DOWN TO FENWAY EAT A HOT DOG IN THE STANDS,
WATCH 'EM CHEER AND HUG EACH OTHER

WHEN BABE STEPS TO THE PLATE,

ROOTERS
AN AMERICAN LEAGUE OF NATIONS,
WHO WILL CURE THE WORLD OF HATE!

ALL
EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR HEROES,
AND MINE'S THE GREAT BABE RUTH
HE CAN PITCH, HE CAN HIT, HE'S THE BEST AND THAT'S THE TRUTH
GO ON KEEP YOUR SOLDIERS AND EXPLORERS WITHOUT FEAR,

MCGREEVEY
WITH BABE RUTH ON THE SOX WE'LL WIN THE
SERIES EVERY YEAR.

ALL
EVERYBODY'S GOT THEIR HEROES,
AND MINE'S THE GREAT BABE RUTH! **(END.)**

(Another cheer arises from the patrons, who sit down at the bar as McGreevey pours them all a beer. Betty enters and all their heads turn to watch her warily. Steve crosses and sits down at her table. The other patrons shake their heads and slowly return to their drinks during the following)

STEVE

(To Betty)

Excuse me, miss. Is everything all right?

BETTY

Yes, I'm fine, thank you.

STEVE

Are you sure? It's just that we don't get too many strangers in this place –

MCGREEVEY

- Especially unescorted women.

BETTY

I just needed a place to get warm. It's awfully cold tonight.

STEVE

How about a drink? Might warm you up.

BETTY

(Hesitates)

Well... all right.

STEVE

(Motions to McGreevey, who goes to the bar to get the drink)

I'm Steve Waterman.

BETTY

Betty Danvers.

STEVE

So, are you from the neighborhood?

BETTY

No, my husband is... was. He was killed in France a month before the Armistice. My sister-in-law took me in until I could get settled. She has three kids and I've been helping out, you know, as a way of paying her back. I just wish there was more I could do...

(Steve eyes her sympathetically. McGreevey arrives with the drink and breaks the moment)

STEVE

Betty, meet "Nuff 'ced" McGreevey. He owns the Third Base.

BETTY

The Third Base?

MCGREEVEY

It's the last place you stop before you go home.

MACMULLEN

Hey McGreevey, I want to settle up. I've got to be getting home to the wife.

CARELLI

Me, too, Nuff 'Ced.

MCGREEVEY

(To Betty)

What did I tell ya?

(McGreevey returns to the bar)

STEVE

So what more could you do?

BETTY

(Downcast)

With all the men back from the war there isn't much work out there for a woman. I was the bookkeeper at my husband's filling station.

(Sees Steve looking at her with a big smile)

Is that funny?

STEVE

Betty... do you like baseball?

BETTY

I guess so. I don't get out much.

STEVE

Well I'm the business manager of the Red Sox. I work for the owner, Harry Frazee, and we've been looking for a bookkeeper.

BETTY

A job?

STEVE

A job.

BETTY

I don't know what to say.

STEVE

Say you'll come to Fenway Park tomorrow and meet your new boss.

(The lights fade to black as Betty smiles gratefully.)

CURSE #1

(The soft blue glow of the television begins to fill the stage, as we hear the announcer speak. During the following speech the lights will slowly rise on the four Rooters, who appear back in their raccoon coats. Now the pennants they carry read - 1946.)

ANNOUNCER

Welcome back to our coverage of the 1986 World Series. You know, before the last commercial break we started talking about the fact that the Red Sox haven't won a World Series since Babe Ruth was sold to the New York Yankees back in 1920, what some call the Curse of the Bambino. Could there really be a curse on the Red Sox? Well, if you think about all the times it looked like they would win the World Series or get into the World Series only to have things go terribly terribly wrong, it just might be. Like in 1946....

3. SONG - 1946 - RED SOX BOOGIE

ROOTERS

WHEN THE SOX CAME BACK FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR
FROM THE ARMY AND THE NAVY AND THE MARINE CORPS
THEY HAD JOHNNY PESKY AND DOM DIMAGGIO, PLEASE
AND WITH THE MIGHTY TED WILLIAMS, WON THE SEASON WITH EASE.
SO FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BABE WAS IN TOWN
THE SOX WERE IN THE SERIES WITH A CHANCE FOR THE CROWN.

ITS THE RED SOX BOOGIE
SINGIN' BOUT THE TEAM THAT NO ONE COULD BEAT
ITS THE RED SOX BOOGIE
SENDING EVERY OTHER TEAM DOWN TO DEFEAT.

THE WORLD SERIES WENT TO A SEVENTH GAME
'CAUSE THE RED SOX BATS HAD PULLED UP LAME
SOME SOX FANS ALMOST LOST THE FAITH
WHEN THE ST LOUIS CARDS HAD A LEAD IN THE EIGHTH
THEN THE SOX FOUGHT BACK, THEY WOULDN'T GET BEAT
THEY TIED THE GAME, THEY TURNED ON THE HEAT

ITS THE RED SOX BOOGIE
SINGIN' BOUT THE TEAM THAT NO ONE COULD BEAT
ITS THE RED SOX BOOGIE
SENDING EVERY OTHER TEAM DOWN TO DEFEAT.

SOX COULDN'T SCORE - THEY REALLY TRIED
BOTTOM OF THE NINTH AND THE GAME'S STILL TIED
WHEN A CARD NAMED SLAUGHTER GETS ON FIRST - oh no!

IF HE SCORES THAT'S ALL FOLKS, THAT'S THE END OF THE SHOW.
THAT'S WHEN A GUY CALLED HARRY "THE HAT,"
REALLY DID SOME DAMAGE WITH HIS NEXT AT-BAT.

HARRY HITS THE BALL INTO CENTERFIELD
WITH SLAUGHTER ON FIRST, MAN! HE REALLY PEELED
JOHNNY PESKY GETS THE RELAY THROW
BUT HE STOPPED... FOR A MOMENT OR SO.

FANS STILL ASK, "JOHNNY WHY WAS IT DONE
THAT YOU STOOD THERE WITH THE BALL WHILE SLAUGHTER SCORED THE RUN?"

ITS THE RED SOX BOOGIE,
SINGIN' BOUT THE TEAM ST. LOUIS COULD BEAT;
ITS THE RED SOX BOOGIE
SUFFERING THEIR VERY FIRST SERIES DEFEAT,
SUFFERING THEIR VERY FIRST SERIES DEFEAT.
CAUSE IF YOU'RE GONNA HOLD THE BALL THEN YOU'RE GONNA
GET BEAT!
OH NO! (END.)

Scene 2

(A month later, January 3, 1920, and we are in the office of Harry Frazee, owner of the Boston Red Sox. There are two doors, the entrance to the room and the bathroom. Betty sits behind a desk, copying figures from the ledger to a small notebook, shaking her head. Steve enters. She quickly hides the small notebook.)

STEVE

(Jovially, as he removes and hangs up his overcoat.)

Hey, I thought I told you to go to lunch.

BETTY

You did. But, uh... right after you left Mr. Frazee came in said he needed a total of the team's expenses from last year.

STEVE

Really? Did he say why?

BETTY

Uh... no. He just said he needed it quickly.

(Steve is confused by this, but shakes it off as he sits down at his desk. Betty returns to the ledger, and Steve tries to concentrate on his work. He casts furtive glances in her direction.)

STEVE

(Getting up the nerve)

Say, Betty?

BETTY

Yes?

STEVE

I was just thinking, you've been working so hard over the past month. You missed the team's New Year's Eve party and

all, so I thought maybe you and I could –

BETTY

I'm afraid I can't. One of my sister-in-law's children has been sick and things have been so busy, what with this new job and all. Thank you anyway. It's very sweet.

STEVE

(Feeling sorry for himself)

Yea, that's me. Sweet all over.

BETTY

You are sweet. The gifts for the kids. I really wish you wouldn't.

STEVE

(Defensively)

I'm not doing it because I expect something in return.

BETTY

I know that. And that's what makes it so –

STEVE

Don't say it. I know.

(He goes back to his desk as Betty returns to the ledger. After a few moments her eyes suddenly widen)

Something wrong?

BETTY

(Hiding something)

Wrong? No. It's just that I... I never realized how much debt a business this size carried.

STEVE

(Laughs)

And those are just the Red Sox books. You should get a gander at the ones for Harry's shows.

BETTY

Really.

STEVE

(As if divulging a great secret)

Between you and me, Harry Frazee's biggest fear is Prohibition.

BETTY

Why?

STEVE

Because once the public sobers up they'll realize how bad his shows really are.

(Laughs at his own joke)

BETTY

If you feel that way, then why do you work here?

STEVE

It was just a joke, Betty. You know how much I love working here.

BETTY

So I've heard. I've just never understood why.

STEVE

(Casts a loving glance towards the field)

Why? Because I love this game.

BETTY

(Unimpressed)

That's a reason I suppose. It just doesn't seem like a very good one.

STEVE

(Taken aback)

And what is a "good" reason?

BETTY

Well, I was thinking that maybe, instead of juggling Harry's Books, you could be using your talents to do something more... substantial.

STEVE

Substantial?

BETTY

Just think about all the people who are in need.

STEVE

Is that what you want to do Betty? Help people?

BETTY

Yes.

(Pause)

Or at least give them hope that things will get better.

STEVE

(Very excited)

And that's why I'm a baseball fan.

BETTY

I don't understand.

STEVE:

The baseball season is 154 games long.

BETTY

So?

4. SONG - THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

STEVE

IN THE TIME OF ATTILA THE HUN
HOMES WERE TORCHED UNTIL THERE WERE NONE
BUT VILLAGERS COULD ALWAYS BUILD ANOTHER ONE, THEY KNEW
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

THE TAXMAN KNOCKS AND HE SAYS TO PAY
WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU'D KEEP YOUR MONEY ANOTHER DAY
WHAT CAN YOU DO? JUST STAND UP AND SAY
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR
SPOKEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR
A VIEW, I TOO, BELIEVE
WHEN THE WORLD CAN BE A STRUGGLE
AND THE OBSTACLES ARE NEAR
IF YOU SEE WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

MY PARENTS SCRIMPED TO SEND ME TO SCHOOL
EDUCATED WHERE FREEDOM RULES
SO THE BOOK WERE MY FOCUS FOR HOPE AND SUCCESS
TO MAKE MY FAMILY PROUD

I SAY THERE'S THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR
SPOKEN THROUGHOUT HISTORY
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR
A VIEW, I TOO, BELIEVE
WHEN THE WORLD CAN BE A STRUGGLE
AND THE OBSTACLES ARE NEAR
IF YOU SEE WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

APRIL? BETTY

ENTHUSIASTIC STEVE

MAY? BETTY

SOME DOUBT STEVE

JUNE? BETTY

WE'RE SLIGHTLY CONCERNED STEVE

JULY? BETTY

WATCH OUT! STEVE

AUGUST? BETTY

STEVE
PACK IT UP, THE SEASON'S ALMOST DONE

BETTY
SEPTEMBER

STEVE
DON'T BE BLUE, BECAUSE THERE'S ALWAYS THE NEXT ONE!

WHEN YOUR TEAM GOES FOR THE FINISH LINE
AT THE HALFWAY POINT THEY'RE DOIN' FINE
BUT AT THE END, THEY FINISHED AT THE END OF THE LINE
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR

BOTH
THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR. **(END)**

(They are both startled by the ringing of the candlestick phone. Half annoyed and half startled, Steve picks it up.)

STEVE
Hello? Long distance? New York? Harry Frazee? Yes, he's here. Wait a minute.
(Gets up and walks to the stage left door and knocks on the bathroom door)
Harry, it's the operator. Are you expecting a long-distance call from New York?

(Suddenly the door flies open and Harry Frazee – a large middle-aged man – emerges. He rushes to the phone.)

HARRY
Hello? Yes, this is Frazee. Put him through.
(Casting furtive glances at both Betty and Steve, who are terribly curious).
Hello? Hello? Ah, yes, there you are. Yes, I can hear you fine. What? Yes, I'm on the four o'clock today and should be at your office first thing tomorrow. Right, I'm looking forward to it as well. Goodbye.
(Hangs up the phone. Crosses to the window and looks out over Fenway Park. Betty listens carefully to the following conversation)

STEVE
Harry?

HARRY
(Breaks from his reverie)
Huh?

STEVE
What is this about New York?

HARRY
Oh, I've... got some business to attend to down there.

STEVE
One of your shows?

HARRY

If you must ask, yes.

(Suddenly animated)

It's a lovely little musical called No No Nanette. Everyone is going to love this one song, it's called "Tea for Two," and it goes like-

STEVE

(Quick to interrupt)

Well, how long will you be gone?

HARRY

Long enough to work on some financing issues. A week, perhaps.

STEVE

A week! Harry, you never told me.

HARRY

Don't get so upset, son.

STEVE

I mean this is a heck of a thing to spring on me like this.

HARRY

My boy, come here.

(Looking out of the window)

Look at that. What do you see?

STEVE

(Frustrated)

A snow covered ball field.

HARRY

And what does a snow covered ballfield mean to you?

STEVE

(Sarcastic)

I guess it means... it's winter?

HARRY

(Correcting him, with rising anger)

It means there are 25,000 seats I can't use six months out of the year. And when we do play half my dates are on the road where I don't see a dime.

(Stares forlornly out of the window)

Hell of a business. Why in the theater we close only for Christmas, Easter, and the 4th of July. Open every other day of the year, we are, and we pack 'em in, too.

(Grunts)

It's just like soup in a can.

STEVE

Excuse me?

HARRY

When I was a boy it took my mother hours to make a pot of soup, what with the chopping of the vegetables and boiling the meat and all, but it sure was worth the trouble, it always tasted so good. But you know, each time she cooked the soup it tasted just a little different. And that made every pot, every bowl, special.

STEVE

I still don't understand.

HARRY

Back in Ohio, it was a small theatrical company. We'd rehearse each show for six weeks to get every line, every movement and song just right. But even after all that work, each and every performance was just a little bit different than the one before, and that made it special.

STEVE

(Thinks he understands)

Oh, I see. So that's what made it so great, right?

HARRY

Hell no! That's what made it so expensive! That's why they invented movies. Movies that costs you nothing more the 23rd or 54th time you show it than it did the first. Just thread the machine and all the work is done for you.

(Deliberate)

Just like -

BETTY

The soup.

HARRY

Precisely.

STEVE

(Impressed)

Well, if that's the case, Harry, why don't you invest in movies instead of stage shows?

HARRY

(Thinks)

I guess I've always liked home-made soup.

STEVE

And you bought the Red Sox because...

HARRY

Why else?

(Pause)

I'm an idiot. I thought it was all the same.

STEVE

What was all the same?

HARRY

Showbiz.

5. SONG - SHOWBIZ

HARRY

WHEN THE MAN AT THE GATE OF THE CIRCUS TENT
SAYS "STEP RIGHT UP AND YOU'LL SEE,
A BEARDED LADY, A SIX-FOOT MIDGET AND
A GUY TWO HUNDRED AND THREE",
TRUST ME BOY YOU WON'T REGRET

IF YOU GRAB YOUR WALLET AND FLEE,
'CAUSE BACK OF THE TENT THERE'S GLUE,
A PAIR OF STILTS, AND A GUY JUST TWENTY-THREE!

CHORUS:

IT'S ONLY SHOWBIZ AND SHOWBIZ IS ALL THERE IS.
IT'S NOT THAT HARD, YOU DON'T NEED TO BE
SOME KIND OF BRILLIANT WHIZ,
BARNUM WAS WRONG ABOUT THE SUCKERS,
ONE BORN WHEN A MINUTE HAS PAST,
I KNOW THAT EVERY SECOND ONE SHOWS UP
MORE GULLIBLE THAN THE LAST.

WHEN THE CANDIDATE SAYS HE'LL PASS NEW LAWS
AND RID THE STREETS OF CRIME,
AFTER HE'S IN, HE GETS INDICTED
NOW HE'S THE ONE DOING TIME,
TELLING THE FOLKS WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR,
THAT'S THE OLD POLITICAL GAME,
THAT'S JUST THE OLDEST PROFESSION
GOING BY A DIFFERENT NAME,

SO BOY, I BOUGHT THIS CLUB A FEW YEARS BACK
AND THOUGHT THAT I HAD IT MADE,
WITH NINE PERFORMERS ON THE FIELD
THEIR TALENTS ALL ARRAYED,
THE PEOPLE WOULD JUST STAND IN LINE AND
FIGHT TO GET A SEAT,
BUT TIMES ARE TOUGH, AND AS YOU KNOW,
THE PAYROLL'S HARD TO MEET.

HARRY, BETTY & STEVE
IT'S ONLY SHOWBIZ AND SHOWBIZ IS ALL THERE IS.
IT'S NOT THAT HARD, YOU DON'T NEED TO BE
SOME KIND OF BRILLIANT WHIZ,

HARRY
NOW I'VE BEEN AROUND, I THOUGHT I KNEW
ABOUT SHOWBIZ AND ITS TRICKS
BUT THIS TEAM HAS GIVEN ME QUITE A RUN,
AND I'M TAKIN' SOME HEAVY LICKS,
BUT THOUGH I'M DOWN, I SURE AIN'T OUT,
AND THE CLOCK HAS A FEW MORE TICKS,
IT'S ONLY SHOWBIZ,

BETTY & STEVE
IT'S ONLY SHOWBIZ

HARRY
THAT'S ALL THERE IS
THERE IS
THERE IS
OH YEAH! (END.)

STEVE

I guess I understand, Harry, but opening day will be here before any of us knows it and –

(The phone rings and Betty picks it up.)

BETTY

Hello?

(Pause)

I'll tell him. Mister Frazee? It's the operator downstairs? She says there are some reporters who want to speak to you.

STEVE

(Before Harry can say anything)

Tell her to let them up.

(Betty speaks into the phone and then hangs up while the following occurs.)

HARRY

Reporters. I don't have the time for reporters. I've got a train to catch.

STEVE

You have to make the time, Harry. Look, whether you like it or not these guys hold a lot of sway in this town.

(Harry grunts)

It's not easy selling tickets to a sixth-place team, Harry. You need to show these guys that you have confidence in the team and appreciation for the loyalty of the fans... that kind of thing. You know... showbiz.

(Harry smiles and nods his head as the four reporters burst into the room.)

REPORTER #1

Mister Frazee, I heard a doozey today!

REPORTER #2

Hey Harry, give me a minute!

REPORTER #3

Got a few questions for you, Harry!

REPORTER #4

Want to get your comment on this, Frazee!

STEVE

Gentlemen, we are always happy to speak with you, but I should tell you up front that Mister Frazee really doesn't have that much time -

REPORTER #1

Yea, we know. You're headin' for New York today, aren't you, Mister Frazee?

REPORTER #2

To meet with Colonel Ruppert of the Yankees.

(Steve looks with great surprise at Harry)

HARRY

Boys, I'm a businessman with interests in many endeavors -

STEVE

(Tries to compose himself)

But, uh, none more important than the Red Sox.

REPORTER #3

Mister Frazee, the word is that you're a bit strapped for cash.

REPORTER #4

And that you're lookin' to unload some of your players.

REPORTER #1

And Babe Ruth is at the top of the list.

HARRY

As I said, I'm a businessman with interests in many endeavors -

STEVE

Where do you guys get this stuff? No one knows better than Mister Frazee that without the Babe's pitching and hitting we never would have won the 1918 series -

REPORTER #2

Old news, Waterman.

REPORTER #3

This is 1920, remember?

STEVE

Do you really believe that Mister Frazee would trade one of the greatest players this franchise has ever seen?

REPORTER #1

That's what were here to find out.

REPORTER #2

So how about it, Harry? You got a statement?

STEVE

Gentlemen of the press. The Red Sox are not trading Babe Ruth. You may quote Mister Frazee on that.

REPORTER #3

To quote Harry he's gotta say it.

STEVE

Fine. Harry?

HARRY

Yes, well, uh... that is... the Red Sox are not trading Babe Ruth.

REPORTER #1

Well that was convincing.

(The rest of the reporters grumble their agreement)

Come on, we're not going to get anywhere here. I don't know about you, but I'm gonna go see what the Babe has to say about all of this.

STEVE

What?

(REPORTERS #2, 3, and 4 look skeptical at first.)

REPORTER #2

Listen kid, you're still new at this sports writing game. Maybe barging in on the Babe isn't such a good idea.

REPORTER #1

But you guys told me the Babe will give interviews to anyone who asks, right?

REPORTER #3

Yea, sure, during baseball season.

REPORTER #1

Well, I don't know about you guys, but my paper still gets printed whether or not it's baseball season.

REPORTER #4

Don't get wise with us, kid. We all have deadlines. But Sudbury's a long drive and it's pretty cold today.

REPORTER #1

I hear the Babe keeps a well-stocked bar.

REPORTER #2

Then what are we waiting for?

REPORTER #3

Somebody warm up the car.

REPORTER #4

Sudbury, here we come!

(The reporters all exit. Steve looks sternly at Harry.)

STEVE

Harry, this could get serious. You've got to level with me. Are you going to trade Babe Ruth?

HARRY

My boy, I am not going to trade Babe Ruth. Trust me.

STEVE

All right. I'll get over to the Babe's and keep an eye on things. I'll see you when you get back from New York, I guess.

(Notices the strange look Betty has been giving Harry)

Betty, are you all right? Don't worry, it's just a typical day in the Red Sox front office.

(One last glance at Betty, then he exits)

HARRY

(Notices Betty hasn't taken her eyes off the door)

He's a fine boy.

BETTY

Yes, he is.

HARRY

Kind of reminds me of a lad who used to play Puck in our Dayton production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I was the stage manager there and he played the part on stilts while juggling two swords and a croquet ball...

CURSE #2

(The soft blue glow of the television begins to fill the stage, as we hear the voice of the announcer. During the announcer's speech the lights will slowly rise on the four Rooters, in their raccoon coats, carrying pennants that now read 1948.)

ANNOUNCER

In 1948 former Yankee manager Joe McCarthy was hired to manage the Red Sox. McCarthy had turned the hated Yankees in a winning team and it was thought some of that magic would wear off on the Sox. And with a team that was stocked with great pitching and great hitters they looked to many people like sure winners. That's why, even if you don't believe in the Curse of the Bambino, it's hard to look at what happened that year and not wonder if there isn't some kind of dark cloud over Fenway...

6. SONG - 1948 - A SURE THING

ROOTERS

DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN, THAT'S A SURE FIRE THING
DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN, SAY IT WITH A SWING
DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN, REPUBLICAN VICTORY'S HERE
JUST AS SURE THAT THE RED SOX, WILL WIN IT ALL THIS YEAR.

SOLO (ROOTER #2)

AS IT TURNED OUT THE VAUNTED YANKS,
WERE NOT THE FOE WE FEARED,
DESPITE THE GREAT JOE DIMAGGIO, THE RED SOX PERSEVERED
THEN WE FACED A SINGLE GAME, AGAINST THE CLEVELAND TEAM
SO WHO WOULD PITCH THIS ONE GAME CHANCE
TO BRING US TO OUR DREAM?

ROOTERS

DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN, NEARING THE END OF THE RACE,
RED SOX VERSUS CLEVELAND, ONE GAME FOR FIRST PLACE
BOTH FIGHTS ARE A SURE THING, BET THE FARM AND THE HOUSE,
WE'VE GOT ALL STAR PITCHERS, HOW CAN WE LOSE WHEN MCCARTHY PICKS...
Denny Galehouse?!

ROOT1

SO GALEHOUSE GETS BEATEN

ROOT3

MC CARTHY'S PICK WAS WRONG

ROOT2

THE ALL-STARS HELPLESS, ON THE BENCH

ROOT4

BUT SOX FANS KNOW THAT SONG!

ALL

TRUMAN DEFEATS DEWEY, IT SEEMS THAT THE PUNDITS WERE WRONG
CLEVELAND BEAT THE RED SOX, THE SEASON WAS ONE GAME TOO LONG!
YEAH! (END.)

(The Rooters exit.)

Scene 3

(The lights rise on the well-furnished, rustic living room of the Sudbury, Massachusetts home of Babe Ruth. The Babe enters and crosses at the sound of a knock on the door)

BABE

I'm coming! Hold your -

(Opens the door, sees Steve. Inspects him as if he were a bug)

Who the hell are you?

STEVE

Steve Waterman. I work for Mister Frazee.

BABE

(Not impressed)

Oh, yea. Harry's boy. So what are you doing way the hell out here?

STEVE

It's awfully cold out here. May I come in?

BABE

(Reluctantly)

Uh, yea, sure, I guess.

STEVE

(As he removes his coat and looks around)

Am I the first?

BABE

First what?

STEVE

Never mind.

BABE

So. Whattya want, kid?

STEVE

Well, you know, Babe, lately there's been some talk around town about where you'll be playing next year.

BABE

(Really steamed)

So that's why you're here. Frazee's traded me!

STEVE

No, no, not at all. Just the opposite, in fact. Harry's looking out for you, Babe. That's why he sent me. You see, in a few minutes a bunch of reporters will be here. They've heard some crazy rumor about you being traded, and, well...

BABE

And you want me to back Harry up?

STEVE

It's not about backing Harry up, Babe. Trade rumors wouldn't do much for business.

BABE

And why should I care about Harry's business?

STEVE

(Bravely)

Because it pays your salary.

(There is a knock on the door, then we hear the Reporters. The Babe glowers at Steve as he crosses and opens the door)

BABE

(In contrast to his treatment of Steve, with great enthusiasm)

Well, look who's here! Hiya boys! Come on in.

(The reporters enter. Simultaneously they speak)

REPORTER #2:

Thanks, Babe.

REPORTER #3

Yea, thanks.

REPORTER #4

Wow, what a swell place.

BABE

Thanks, boys. Help yourself to a drink.

(Simultaneously;)

REPORTERS #1, 2, and 3

Thanks, Babe.

REPORTER #4

You're the best, Babe.

(They all go the table and pour themselves drinks)

BABE

So what can I do for you boys?

REPORTER #1

Babe, we'll get right to the point. Word is you're leaving Boston.

BABE

Leaving Boston?

REPORTER #2

So what do you know, Babe?

(Steve holds his breath as he and the Babe look at each other.)

BABE

Me? I only know what I read in the papers.

(Steve relaxes)

REPORTER #1

So you haven't heard anything about a trade?

BABE

Look, even Harry Frazee wouldn't be stupid enough to trade a guy who hit 29 homers last year.

(Almost simultaneously,)

REPORTER #2

I guess you're right.

REPORTER #3

Even Harry wouldn't do that.

REPORTER #4

It's just a rumor, probably started in New York.

BABE

Now come on boys, I'm seeing some empty glasses.

(The Reporters (except for #1) laugh appreciatively as they head for the bar. Reporter #1 looks pensive as he eyes the Babe and grabs Reporter #2's arm.)

REPORTER #1

So that's it?

REPORTER #2

What do you mean?

REPORTER #1

We're just going to forget the whole thing now?

REPORTER #2

What more can we do? Harry's not talking. The Babe's not talking...

REPORTER #1

But you told me in the car that you got a phone call from New York just like I did, from a guy saying that there was some kind of deal in the works.

(The Babe, Steve, and the other two Reporters look slightly annoyed in their direction)

REPORTER #2

Tell you what kid, just take my advice and let it go.

REPORTER #1

I don't understand, we didn't give in this easily with Frazee.

REPORTER #2

Of course we give Harry the business. Harry didn't hit 29 home runs last year. Now come on and have a drink.

(Reporter #2 joins the others at the bar, but Reporter #1 stewes. Then he steel himself for a confrontation.)

REPORTER #1

Course, you know, Babe, there's some fans up here that think all those homers ain't worth a damn, anyway.

(There is shocked silence. The Babe recovers quickly.)

BABE

Yea, well they was prob'ly the same guys who was ootin' for the Kaiser.

(There is appreciative laughter from the other reporters.)

REPORTER #1

No, I mean it Babe. Lot of fans say what good are all those homers if the Sox end up in sixth place, anyway.

BABE:

(Getting steamed. To the other reporters)

Who is this clown?

REPORTER #3

He's a new guy, Babe.

REPORTER #4

Writes sports for the Globe.

BABE

Oh yea? What's your name, kid?

REPORTER #1

(Defiantly)

Shaughnessey.

BABE

Listen Shaughnessey, why don't you talk to Harry Hooper or Duffy Lewis or some of them other guys on the team? I did my part.

(Almost simultaneously the three Reporters say:)

REPORTER #2

Why don't you knock it off, kid?

REPORTER #3

Yea, you're getting him mad.

REPORTER #4

Just lay off him okay?

STEVE

Hey, Shaunessey, you better start realizing that this isn't the way things are done here in Boston.

REPORTER #1

But –

BABE

He's right, kid, you got a lot to learn...

7. SONG - HOME RUN KING

BABE

A BALLPLAYER IS A SPECIAL KIND OF GUY,
HE STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD,
WHEN A BALLPLAYER WALKS INTO A ROOM,
PEOPLE SHOUT HIS NAME (I SAID PEOPLE SHOUT HIS NAME)
PEOPLE SHOUT HIS NAME OUT LOUD.

THEY SAY LOOK WHO'S HERE, WHAT A THRILL,
LET'S BUY THAT MAN OVER THERE A DRINK,
THE BABE'S ONE HELLUVA A GUY,
THEY ARGUE 'BOUT WHICH ONE OF THEM IS MY BIGGEST FAN,
YOU WON'T FIND A BETTER LIFE NO MATTER HOW YOU TRY.

(I TELL YA) EVERYBODY'S CRAZY 'BOUT THE HOME-RUN KING,
THEY WATCH MY EVERY MOVE FROM THE START OF THE SPRING,
I CAN'T WALK IN THE COMMON WITHOUT CAUSING A SCENE,
I'M BIGGER HERE IN BOSTON THAN THE COD OR THE BEAN.

REPORTER #1

Now just a minute –
JUST BECAUSE YOU HIT MORE HOME RUNS THAN ANYONE BEFORE
DOES THAT GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BE A RUDE LOUD BORE

BABE

IF I DON'T PRODUCE YOU REALIZE

BABE & REPORTERS 2,3,4

I'M (HE'S) IN A TOUGH SPOT,

BABE

WHAT DO YOU WANT, FOR ME TO CALL EVERY SHOT? (PAUSE)
Nahh.

(I TELL YA) EVERYBODY'S CRAZY 'BOUT THE HOME-RUN KING,
THEY WATCH MY EVERY MOVE FROM THE START OF THE SPRING,
HE CAN'T WALK IN THE COMMON WITHOUT CAUSING A SCENE,
CAUSE HE'S BIGGER HERE IN BOSTON THAN THE COD OR THE BEAN.

REPORTERS 2,3,4

HE'S BABE RUTH

BABE

AND THE PEOPLE LOVE ME

REPORTERS 2,3,4

HE'S THE GUY

BABE

THEY WANT TO SEE
WHO ELSE COULD HIT 29 HOMERS

BABE & REPORTERS 2,3,4

IT SURELY WON'T BE HARRY FRAZEE

REPORTER #1

SO YOU PLAY A KID'S GAME, AND YOU PLAY IT WELL
YOUR HOME RUNS HAVE MADE YOU QUITE A STAR

BABE

BUT BUDDY DON'T FORGET THAT WITHOUT ALL OF YOUR WORDS
I NEVER COULD HAVE GONE THIS FAR

REPORTERS 2,3,4

COME THIS FAR, THIS FAR, TELL HIM, BABE!

All but REPORTER#1:

(I TELL YA) EVERYBODY'S CRAZY 'BOUT THE HOME-RUN KING,
THEY WATCH MY (HIS) EVERY MOVE FROM THE START OF THE SPRING,
I (HE) CAN'T WALK IN THE COMMON WITHOUT CAUSING A SCENE,
CAUSE I'M (HE'S) BIGGER HERE IN BOSTON,
I'M (HE'S) BIGGER HERE IN BOSTON,
CAUSE I'M (HE'S) BIGGER HERE IN BOSTON THAN THE COD OR THE BEAN.

REPORTERS 2,3,4

GO, GO, GO, BABE! (END.)

(The Babe, the Reporters (except #1) and Steve cheer and applaud.)

REPORTER #2

Well, kid, I hope you've learned something here.

(Reporter #1 seems prepared to say something when he is interrupted)

REPORTER #4

Geez, look at the time. I got a deadline.

(REPORTERS #2 and 3 down the rest of their drinks, and head for the door as they speak.)

REPORTER #3

Me, too.

REPORTER #4

Thanks for the drink, Babe.

REPORTER #2

Yea, we'll see you at the ballpark.

STEVE

Fenway Park.

REPORTER #3

(Notices Reporter #1 hasn't moved)

You coming, kid?

REPORTER #1

I guess.

BABE

See ya 'round kid. And remember what I told ya.

REPORTER #1

Uh huh. See you, Babe.

(The door shuts behind them. The Babe finishes his drink and prepares to exit.)

STEVE

Excuse me, Babe?

BABE

Huh? You still here? Ain't I done yet?

STEVE

Sure you are, Babe. And you did great. You really helped me – Harry – out of a jam.

BABE

(Sarcastic)

Yea, and I'm sure Harry will remember what I did for him.

STEVE

Of course he will. Harry always appreciates it when one of his players –

BABE

Yea, yea. How about doing me a favor and telling me the real story?

STEVE

The real story?

BABE

The Babe didn't get no higher education, but even I know where there's smoke, there's fire. There's go to be some truth to those trade rumors.

STEVE

You said it before, Babe. Would Harry Frazee trade a guy who hit 29 homers?

BABE

Carl Mays won 21 games for us in '18 – won the Series clincher, too - and he's playing for the Yankees now. Look at Harry Hooper. Hoop's a helluva payer and was with this team a long time – helped us win that series, too - but he's playing for the White Sox now.

STEVE

But you're different, Babe.

BABE

I know that. But it don't mean I don't have to be careful around guys like Frazee.

STEVE

Harry's only looking out for his bottom line.

BABE

And on Harry that's a pretty big job.

(Laughs, tries to get Steve to join in)

Hey, that was a good one, huh?

STEVE

(Defensively)

Babe, I'm just telling you that Harry's only doing what's best for the ball club.

BABE

Why don't you wise up, kid? Harry does what's best for Harry Frazee.

STEVE

So why did you back him up just now?

BABE

Because the Babe does what's best for him.

STEVE

So... maybe you and Harry aren't all that different, huh Babe?

BABE

And would you be here if it wasn't best for you?

STEVE

No, I guess I wouldn't.

BABE

I didn't need no college education to figure that out...

(Satisfied, the Babe returns to his chair)

STEVE

Say, Babe? Mind if I use your phone?

BABE

Hot date back in town, huh?

STEVE

Me? No, I just want to check in at the office.

BABE

You calling Frazee? In that case make it collect.

STEVE

Whatever you say, Babe.

(Steve picks up the candlestick phone on a table as the Babe pours himself another drink.)

Operator, I'd like to be connected to Fenway Park switchboard. Operator? Reverse the charges, please. Fenway Park? Would you connect me with Harry's office? Oh, that's right, I forgot. Well let me speak With Betty Danvers. She did? When? Oh. Okay. Thanks.

(Confused. Hangs up the phone)

BABE

So much for your hot date, huh?

STEVE

No, that wasn't... I mean she isn't...

(Pause. Trying to be "regular.")

Yea, I guess so.

CURSE #3

(The soft blue glow of the television begins to fill the stage again, as we hear the voice of the announcer. The lights will slowly rise on the four Rooters, who appear on stage in their raccoon coats carrying pennants that read 1949.)

ANNOUNCER

The 1949 Boston Red Sox may have been one their best teams ever, with five All-Stars on the team. Can you name them? There's Ted Williams, of course, pitcher Mel Parnell, catcher Birdie Tebbetts, shortstop Vern Stephens, and first baseman Billy Goodman.

8. SONG - 1949 - TWELVE GAMES BEHIND

ROOTERS

IN NINETEEN FORTY NINE

SOLO

IN NINETEEN FORTY NINE

ROOTERS

ON THE FIFTH OF JULY

SOLO

The All-Star break, don't cha know

ROOTERS

WE WERE TWELVE GAMES BEHIND
BUT WE PICKED UP THE PACE, AND REACHED FIRST PLACE.

SOLO

We were number one,

ROOTERS

NOW WITH TWO GAMES TO GO

SOLO

The season's almost done

ROOTERS

ONE GAME OVER OUR FOE

SOLO

The Yanks were in second by a game

ROOTERS

WE JUST HAD TO WIN ONE, TO GET THE JOB DONE
BUT OUR TEAM WAS OUTDONE.

SOLO

The Yanks swept both games.

ROOTERS

HOW MUCH MORE CAN WE TAKE?

SOLO

HOW MUCH MORE CAN WE TAKE?

ROOTERS

HERE'S OUR HEART, DRIVE THE STAKE!

SOLO

STRAIGHT THROUGH MY HEART, NOW, BABY!

ROOTERS

GET THE COALS, AND WE'LL RAKE

SOLO

OUCH! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!

ALL

A WORLD SERIES CELEBRATION WE'LL NEVER PARTAKE!

ROOTERS

NOW WE SIT HERE AND CRY

SOLO

The tears just won't stop

ROOTERS

AND ASK OURSELVES WHY?

SOLO

How could it happen again?

ROOTERS

CAUSE THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR,
AND THAT'S WHAT I FEAR
SO EXCUSE ME, THIS TEAR, BOO, HOO HOO HOO

ALL

CAUSE WE COULDN'T FEEL WORSE
ITS LIKE THERE'S A CURSE
THAT THE END OF THIS VERSE. OOH AAH. (END.)

Scene 4

(It is the next day, January 4, 1920, in the office of Colonel Jake Ruppert, who is the owner of the New York Yankees. Lights up on Ruppert on a candlestick phone, sitting at his desk, in an office decorated with Yankees paraphernalia.)

RUPPERT

(On the phone)

You know, Charlie, every time they review one of Frazee's shows I just know I'm gonna get another player or two for peanuts. Why I'm willing to bet that in the past 3 years he's sold me half his team.

(Pause)

Why? Are you kidding? Have you ever seen one of his shows?

(Pause)

Yea, he'll be here any moment. Uh huh. Must have another show in the works.

(There is a knock at the door)

Look, Comisky, I gotta go, he's here. I'll call you later.

(Hangs up the phone, opens the door. We cannot see who is on the other side)

What are you doing here?

(Betty enters. Ruppert is momentarily surprised.)

BETTY

Aren't you glad to see your only niece?

RUPPERT

(Smiles)

Of course I am. Come on in.

(She enters)

But you know, if you're going to be a reporter you're going to have to learn about deadlines. You were supposed to be here an hour ago. Frazee is going to be here any minute, you know.

BETTY

I'm sorry, I was busy trying to make some sense out of these figures.

RUPPERT

Did you have any luck?

BETTY

I think so.

(Hands him the notebook)

RUPPERT

(Goes through the book and with each turn of the page his smile grows)

Oh, this is incredible. Amazing.

(Then he becomes wide-eyed)

Betty, this figure here. Is that correct?

BETTY

Which one?

RUPPERT

This one. The one for the mortgage on Fenway Park.

BETTY

Yes, it is.

RUPPERT

Well, Nellie Bly, you've done a fine bit of reporting here, and it looks like you're going to get your reward. With these figures from Harry's own books I'll have the Babe in pinstripes by lunchtime and you'll have your scoop in the evening paper. You must be very proud. What's wrong?

BETTY

I'm just not feeling very proud of myself, Uncle Jake.

RUPPERT

Why not? You did a wonderful job.

BETTY

But I had to lie to get it. I had to pretend to be somebody I'm not.

RUPPERT

And how do you think your heroine, Nellie Bly, got the story that made her famous? The one on the lunatic asylums? She posed as a lunatic and got herself committed. Come to think of it, that may be the best analogy for your posing as a bookkeeper for Harry Frazee.

BETTY

But Nellie Bly didn't fall for one of the inmates.

RUPPERT

(Feels bad for her)

Oh, Betty.

BETTY

He's wonderful, Uncle Jake. Why I didn't have to ask - he didn't hesitate to offer me a job.

RUPPERT

(Sarcastic)

Mmmm, I'll bet.

BETTY

No, no, it's not like that at all. He's been so sweet to me. And all this time I've been such a rat to him.

9. SONG WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO

BETTY

HOW LONG ITS BEEN
SINCE YOU TOOK ME IN
YOU SHOWED ME MY SMARTS
YOU SHAPED ME WITH STYLE, TO BEGIN
BUT IN ORDER FOR THIS GIRL TO PLAY
I'D HAVE TO MAKE THE RULES MY WAY

YOU PLAY THE WORLD
WITH AN IRON HAND
YOU KNOW WHAT TO SAY
TO KEEP THEM AT YOUR COMMAND
ITS A FACT, WITH THE OLD BOYS YOU WILL WIN
BUT THIS GAL NEEDS TO USE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT SPIN

RIGHTING THE WRONG
FIGHTING THE STRONG
WAS ALL I EVER WANTED, I KNEW
TO BREAK THE STORY WHILE STAYING TRUE
AND SHOW JUST WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO

TOP OF MY CLASS
LEADING THE WAY
WOULDN'T LET ANYONE LEAD ME ASTRAY
NO TIME FOR MEN, JUST STORIES AND FACTS
I DIDN'T CARE, WHAT THEY HAD THERE
I STAYED ON MY TRACK, I KNEW THAT

ON THE EDGE OF MY FIRST BIG BREAK
I'D BE OUT OF YOUR SHADOWS
I'D SHOW I'M NO FAKE
THEN THIS GUY COMES AND WALLOPS ME
RIGHT AT MY HEART
A SUCKER PITCH, I DIDN'T SEE
THAT COULD RUIN MY START, AT

RIGHTING THE WRONG
FIGHTING THE STRONG
WAS ALL I EVER WANTED, THIS I KNEW
TO BREAK THIS STORY WHILE STAYING TRUE
I WONDER WHAT THIS MAN WILL DO?
NO, I'LL SHOW HIM WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO! **(END.)**

RUPPERT

Betty, before the flu took her, your mother, God rest her soul, she said to me Jake, take care of my Betty, help her any way you can. Now I know that the one thing you've wanted all your life is to be an investigative reporter.

BETTY

But an investigative reporter is supposed to help people. Expose sweat shops and unsafe schools and unhealthy living conditions. She isn't supposed to help her uncle buy Babe Ruth.

RUPPERT

(Feeling helpless)

And why shouldn't a reporter be able to help her own flesh and blood? You know that with Prohibition coming and my breweries being shut down all I have left is the Yankees.

(Stews about it)

Did you know that Boston has had five World's Championships and I haven't even been to the Series once. Now is that fair?

BETTY

No, I suppose not.

RUPPERT

Of course it isn't.

(There is a knock at the door).

It's Harry.

(Arms paternally on her shoulders)

This is what you've been working so hard for, Betty. You can't let sentiment get in the way. You are a reporter. A member of an noble, honorable profession. Now go hide in the closet.

(She crosses to the closet and enters it just as Ruppert opens the door for Harry)

RUPPERT

Harry, how nice to see you. Come in, come in.

HARRY

(Enters as Ruppert opens the door)

Hello, Colonel Ruppert. I appreciate you taking the time to see -

RUPPERT

Nonsense, I always have time for fellow club owner who wants to do a little business.

HARRY

Thank you.

RUPPERT

(Holds up a bottle)

Come on, Harry, help me empty out my warehouse. The stuff is only legal for a few more days, and after that I won't be able to offer you anything stronger than root beer... at least out loud.

(Laughs)

HARRY

You seem to be taking prohibition very well. What about your brewery?

RUPPERT

Harry, Harry, don't worry about me. I'm going to be fine. My only concern right now is seeing that you get something to drink.

HARRY:

Well, truth be told I'm still a bit tired from my trip yesterday.

RUPPERT

Oh, well, suit yourself.

(Pause)

Seems to me living in Boston has softened you up, Harry.

HARRY

Well... I guess a short one wouldn't hurt.

RUPPERT

That's the boy.

(Pours a small drink and hands it to Frazee)

I was afraid those Brahmins had gotten to you.

HARRY

Oh, the Brahmins drink plenty, Colonel, trust me.

RUPPERT

So that's how you get them into your theater.

(Laughs. Frazee makes the effort to laugh along)

Just kidding, Harry, just kidding.

HARRY

Boston's not New York, Colonel, but it's a lot more cosmopolitan than most people believe.

RUPPERT

Well, I'll say this, Harry, it's not every cosmopolitan city that floods its streets with molasses.

HARRY

(Defensive)

Well, now, that was a terrible accident...

RUPPERT

Or elects a mayor who was in jail.

HARRY

He actually had been released by the time he was elected.

RUPPERT

Well, that's something then, isn't it?

HARRY

(Looking at framed articles on the wall)

Colonel, I must say, I am impressed.

RUPPERT

Oh? Why?

HARRY

Well, the press here in New York certainly seems to like you.

RUPPERT

I suppose. But you're the one delivering the World Series to Boston, Harry. I haven't had that pleasure, yet.

(Pause)

Harry, what is it?

HARRY

(Pause)

They don't like me, you know.

RUPPERT

Who? The players?

HARRY

No, the players like me. I think.

RUPPERT

So who do you mean?

HARRY

(Harry motions to the framed articles)

Them.

RUPPERT

The reporters? Does it really matter if reporters like you?

HARRY

That's your way of saying that I'm right.

RUPPERT

(Pulls out and looks at Betty's notebook. Gets an idea)

I'm sure they like you enough, Harry, it's just that... well, you're not a baseball man.

HARRY

For Chrissakes, Wrigley owns the Cubs and he makes chewing gum! You own a brewery! Me? I produce Broadway shows. What's the difference?

RUPPERT

Well, Harry... You're a rich guy who happens to own a baseball team. Wrigley and the rest of us may have made our money elsewhere, but deep down, we've always been baseball men.

HARRY

Baseball men?

10. SONG - A BASEBALL MAN

RUPPERT

HARRY - YOU KNOW A LOT ABOUT THE SPOTLIGHT, AND
HARRY - YOU KNOW WHAT MAKES A GREAT SHOW, BUT
HARRY - THE PUBLIC STILL ISN'T BUYING, 'CAUSE
HARRY - YOU AIN'T A BASEBALL MAN.

It's hard to explain, Harry, but...

HAVE YOU EVER LOST THE SEAT OF YOUR SUNDAY-BEST PANTS,
SNEAKING UNDER A FENCE INTO A DOUBLE-HEADER?
THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE A BASEBALL FAN,
THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE A BASEBALL MAN.

HARRY

Can't say I have, Colonel, but let me ask you...

HAVE YOU EVER TORN THE KNEES OF YOUR DAD'S HAND-ME-DOWNS,
CRAWLING PAST THE TICKET-BOOTH INTO THE MATINEE?
THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOUR LIFE WON'T BE COMPLETE,
UNTIL EACH SHOW YOU'RE IN A FRONT-ROW SEAT.

RUPPERT

That's not the same thing!

BOTH

OH PLEASE JUST LET ME GO WHERE I WANNA GO,
JUST LET ME IN I WANNA SEE THE BIG SHOW,
SO MISTER TICKET-TAKER STEP ASIDE,
I'M GONNA MAKE MY WAY INSIDE.

HARRY

You see Colonel, I do understand.

RUPPERT

I don't know, Harry. It's just not the same thing...

HAVE YOU EVER GOTTEN PUNCHED, WHILE GRABBING FOR A FOUL BALL,
THAT YOUR HERO JUST HIT INTO THE STANDS?
THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE A BASEBALL FAN,
THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE A BASEBALL MAN.

HARRY

Well, no, Colonel, but...

HAVE YOU EVER LOST A TOOTH WHILE DIVING FOR A ROSE
THAT THE INGENUE HAS THROWN FROM THE STAGE?
THAT'S WHEN YOU KNOW THAT YOUR LIFE WON'T BE COMPLETE,
WHEN AT THE SHOW YOU'RE IN A FRONT-ROW SEAT.

RUPPERT

I still don't think that you get it!

BOTH

OH PLEASE JUST LET ME GO WHERE I WANNA GO,
JUST LET ME IN I WANNA SEE THE BIG SHOW,
SO MISTER TICKET-TAKER STEP ASIDE,
I'M GONNA MAKE MY WAY INSIDE.

RUPPERT

But Harry, catching a rose and a foul ball are two totally different things. And I dare say the matinee audience doesn't cheer the lead tenor of an opera the same way we baseball fans do a home run.

HARRY

Yea, but...

THERE WAS A TIME IN SAN FRANCISCO
WHEN I WENT TO SEE THE GREAT CARUSO
AND I -

RUPPERT

Harry...

HARRY

Right. A baseball man... *(sighs)*

BOTH

YOU GOTTA KNOW, RIGHT, FROM THE START,
YOU GOTTA KNOW THAT YOU HAVE IT IN YOUR HEART,
YOU GOTTA BE MORE THAN A ONCE-A-YEAR FAN,
IF YOU'RE GONNA BE A BASEBALL
GOTTA BE A BASEBALL
GONNA BE A BASEBALL MAN! **(END.)**

RUPPERT

So tell me, Harry, how are things with your latest show?

HARRY

(Spirit picks up)

Oh just splendid. Thank you for asking. It's called No No Nanette and we've got a stunning new blonde to play the ingenue -

RUPPERT

I understand the early reviews haven't been too kind. So tell me, Harry, how much does it cost to produce one of those shows of yours? Must be a pretty penny, I'll bet.

HARRY

Well, it's -

RUPPERT

Costumes, lights, the actors. You do pay the actors, don't you Harry?

HARRY

Of course I do. They get more than my ballplayers.

RUPPERT

And we both know what you pay your ballplayers!

(They both laugh)

Of course, some of those players of yours do get a pretty good salary. For instance, how much are you paying that Babe Ruth?

HARRY

(Tries to pass it off)

Ten thousand dollars a year.

RUPPERT

(Whistles)

Ten thousand dollars. For how many years?

HARRY

Three.

RUPPERT

(Shaking his head sympathetically)

Ten thousand dollars for three years. Wow. That's 30 thousand dollars!

HARRY

But he did hit 29 home runs last year. That's more than any man has ever hit in a single season.

RUPPERT

Harry...

HARRY

Yes, Colonel?

RUPPERT

I read the boxscores.

HARRY

Yes, of course you do. And you know what a bang-up player the Babe is...

RUPPERT

I've also heard that the Babe... how shall I put this... has a rather hearty appetite for life.

HARRY

He enjoys the game, that's for sure.

RUPPERT

He enjoys carousing and drinking and staying out till all hours of the night is what he does. I know that ballplayers are no saints, but I heard that things got so bad that your manager had to lock the Babe in his room one night.

HARRY

Well, now, that was during the pennant race last year -

RUPPERT

Harry, I'm sorry, I just don't know if that's the sort of man I want in a Yankee uniform.

(Pause. Harry looks downcast)

At least at the price you're asking.

(Harry smiles and Ruppert grins. Betty - unseen by Harry - peeks out of the closet)

Why don't we go to my club for an early lunch. We can discuss the details there.

HARRY

Are you buying?

RUPPERT

Of course. Isn't that why we're here.

HARRY

In that case, it sounds like a great idea.

RUPPERT

(Leads Harry to the door, opens it)

Wonderful. But before we go... if you would give me a minute - let me make a quick call to call my banker.

HARRY

Of course, Colonel. Take your time.

RUPPERT

Thank you, Harry. I'll see you in a few minutes.

(Harry exits, Betty enters)

RUPPERT

Did you hear everything all right?

BETTY

Yes, I did.

RUPPERT

Oh, Betty this was even easier than I thought. And if I'm right about Harry and this latest show of his... well, let's just say I've had my eye on that shortstop and right fielder of his and... Betty, why so glum? By this time tomorrow the papers will be fighting each other for the right to call Betty Danvers their own. You're going to be a big success. It's not this inmate you've supposedly fallen for, is it? Look, if you're going to show the world what a woman can do, you've got to be tougher. Now, come on. I've got a cat to skin and you've got a scoop to write.

Scene 5

(The scene is Harry Frazee's bedroom at 3 a.m.)

11. SONG - THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO

(The phone rings.)

Hello? Hello?

HARRY

BABE

HARRY, HARRY, THE BAT-BOY COMES AND TELLS ME,
HE SAYS, "BABE, YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE THIS,
I HEARD IT FROM A FRIEND, WHO HEARD IT FROM A FRIEND
WHO SAYS THAT YOU ARE NOW A NEW YORK YANKEE, YANKEE!"

"CAP," I SAID, "HAVE YOU BEEN DRINKING AGAIN,
CAUSE THAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS THING I'VE EVER HEARD?
I AM THE BABE, THE MAN WHO HITS THE HOMERS!
WHO SINGLE HANDEDLY BROUGHT THIS TOWN A CHAMPIONSHIP!"

ROOTER

"BABE, I KNOW,"

BABE

HE STARTS,

ROOTER

"WHO FANS COME TO SEE FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD,
WHO ENTERTAINS AND WINS THE GAMES AT FENWAY PARK."

BABE

So I tell Cappy to stay out of the liquor chest, its only for me and the press!

(Lets out a big laugh.)

But then he stops smiling.

ROOTER

BABE, ITS TRUE. HARRY FRAZEE'S UNLOADED YOU.

BABE

I thought about this for a moment, and it started to tick me off:

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NERVE, WITH ONE SHAKE OF A HAND
YOU SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR WINNING TEAM
WITH ME GOES THE GARTER, THAT HELD UP YOUR SOX
AND WILL LEAVE WRINKLES THAT YOU'LL NEVER EVER STEAM.

NO MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS IS YOUR CURSE
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING UP
THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE.

THROUGHOUT THE AGES, THIS TALE WILL MAINTAIN
NEVER FORGETTING THE CULPRIT
MAKING ALL FANS OF BOSTON GROAN IN PAIN

ALL

"HARRY'S HEAD!"

BABE

YOU CAN DEPEND ON IT.

YET NOW I'LL FINALLY MAKE MORE MONEY
THE RICHES MY FAMILY DESERVES
BESIDES, I BET I LOOK REAL GOOD IN PINSTRIPES
BUT, HARRY, YOU STILL HAVE A LOT OF NERVE!

NO MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS IS YOUR CURSE
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING UP
THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE.

HARRY

ALL I WANTS THE CASH AND FAME
SMILES FROM ALL WHO KNOW MY NAME
THAT RUTH WILL NEVER RAIN ON MY PARADE!

BABE

Then I get REAL angry!

SOLD! SOLD! WELL, HARRY, WHAT A PLAN!
YOU'LL NEVER GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS A BASEBALL MAN!

NO MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS

ROOTERS

THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO

BABE

IS YOUR CURSE

ROOTERS

THE BAMBINO'S CURSE

BABE

JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING UP

ROOTERS

THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE!

BABE

LISTEN, LISTEN!
YOUR PLAYERS WILL ALWAYS KNOW
YOUR FANS WILL NEVER SHOW
THE DAY YOU TOLD ME TO GO GO GO!

STEVE & ROOTERS

YOU OPENED THE DOOR AND SAID GOODBYE TO HIM!
FOR MONEY! WHAT A GREEDY THING TO DO!
YOU BANISHED OUR BEST PLAYER TO THE RIVAL TEAM
DID YOU AND RUPPERT DANCE TO "TEA FOR TWO"?

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
NO MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS

ROOTERS
THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
IS YOUR CURSE

ROOTERS
THE BAMBINO'S CURSE

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING UP

ALL
THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE!

STEVE & ROOTERS
THEY'LL DROP THE BALL WHEN ONE OUT FROM A WIN
BASES LOADED WHEN YOUR SLUGGER SEES STRIKE THREE
YOUR RUNNERS WILL FALL, UMP'S BLOW ALL YOUR CALLS
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHO YOUR PITCHER'S GONNA BE

THE FINAL GAME MAY SOMETIMES BE ACHIEVED
BUT BOSTON WILL NEVER SEE THE CROWN
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THE TITLE'S IN YOUR REACH
THROUGH YOUR LEGS, YOUR HOPES GO DOWN, DOWN, DOWN...

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE:
NO MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS

ROOTERS
THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
IS YOUR CURSE

ROOTERS
THE BAMBINO'S CURSE

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING UP

ALL
THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE!
STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE:
NO MORE CHAMPIONSHIPS

ROOTERS
THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
IS YOUR CURSE

ROOTERS

THE BAMBINO'S CURSE

STEVE, RUPPERT & BABE
JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING UP

ALL
THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO WORSE!
THEY'LL GO FROM BAD TO

BABE
You'd better watch out, Harry, cause the Babe is leaving town!

ALL
WORSE! **(END.)**

END ACT

ACT II
PROLOGUE

(We are back in the Father's house, the blue glow of the television set lighting the Father, who clutches his baby to him like a life vest. The stage lights slowly rise.)

ANNOUNCER

What a ballgame we're seeing here tonight. The Red Sox, with a two run lead here in the bottom of the tenth inning, were just one strike away from winning their first world championship in 68 years when Gary Carter, Kevin Mitchell, and Ray Knight all got hits. That led to one run which cut the Sox lead by half. Sox manager John MacNamara brought in Bob Stanley to finish off the Mets, but Stanley threw a wild pitch that catcher Rich Gedman couldn't get a hold of, and Kevin Mitchell, who was on third base, scored. So now we now have a tie ballgame here. Mookie Wilson is at the plate. Almost any kind of hit by Wilson will do it for the Mets. Stanley delivers... and Wilson fouls off his eighth pitch.

FATHER

(Looks to the heavens)

Can I ask you a question? Is this fun for you? Or did someone in Boston's past do something really awful, so bad that you have punish us all?

(A horrifying realization)

Or... is it possible... are you a Mets fan?

ANNOUNCER

Here comes Stanley's tenth pitch to Mookie Wilson...

(excited)

and Wilson gets a piece of it! It's a chopper down the first base line! First baseman Bill Buckner charges the ball, and it's behind the bag and through his legs! The ball gets past Buckner and Ray Knight scores the winning run! The Mets win game six!! Can you believe it!? How many times in this inning alone were the Red Sox just one strike away from their first World Series victory in 68 years, only to watch it go dribbling through the legs of –

(The father, who has picked up the remote, clicks off the TV. He sits mournfully looking at his daughter, whom he places in the bassinette. That's when he sees the Rooters. There is momentary shock, but it quickly dissipates and the Father gently places his baby in the bassinette. One of the Rooters holds out a Raccoon coat, which he slips onto the father.)

ROOTERS AND FATHER

There's always next year.

(None of them look as if they really believe that, and the lights fade)

Scene 1

(We are back at the Third Base on January 6, 1920,. Lights up as Carelli and Wiznowski enter the bar, behind which stands McGreevey)

CARELLI

Hey, Mister McGreevey. How about a round of drinks – Scotch - for my friend?

(Wiznowski slaps Carelli on the back)

MCGREEVEY

Now that's what I like to hear. So, Carelli, who put the crowbar in your wallet?

CARELLI

Crowbar? Eh? Oh, I just feel like celebrating.

WIZNOWSKI

Yea, it's Saturday and the foreman let us out a whole hour early. So we could all spend some time with our wives and children.

CARELLI

That is why we came to the Third Base!
(All three laugh)

MCGREEVEY

Nuff 'ced!

(The door opens and MacMullen enters with Myron)

Well, look who's here. You've set that Red straight, I hope, MacMullen.

MACMULLEN

I told I would, McGreevey, and I have.

MYRON

Mister McGreevey, please. My friend Mister MacMullen has taught me so much about your great sport of baseball.

MCGREEVEY

(Skeptically)

Yea?

MYRON

Yes, he has told me of this great Babe Ruth and the many games he win for the Red Sox with his home runs.

MCGREEVEY

(Softens)

'Zat so?

12. SONG - BEISBALL MANIFESTO

MYRON

LET'S SAY YOU HAVE A MAN AT PLATE,
HIS AVERAGE IT IS TRULY GREAT,
WITH A MAN ON THIRD HE WANTS TO CRUSH THE BALL,
BUT THE MANAGER HE GIVES THE SIGN,
HE SAYS TO BUNT DOWN FIRST BASE LINE,
AND SACRIFICE TO LET HIS TEAMMATE SCORE.

MCGREEVEY

So? What has that got to do anything?

MYRON

A SACRIFICE TO HELP THE TEAM,
THAT IS BEISBALL'S COMMON THEME,
HELP YOUR FELLOW MAN TO ROUND THE BAGS,
WHEN THESE WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE,
THEY'RE NOT JUST DOING WHAT IS RIGHT,
THEY'RE DOING WHAT THEY CAN TO WIN THE GAME.

(McGreevey is getting agitated)

THAT'S THE BEISBALL MANIFESTO,
TO WORK TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOAL,
AND SO ONE SACRIFICES AVERAGE,
TO MAKE SURE THAT HIS TEAMMATE REACHES HOME.

MCGREEVEY

Manifesto? I knew this Red was going to -

MYRON

Mister McGreevey, at beisball game, do not factory workers and owners sit together in the stands?

MCGREEVEY

Yes...

MYRON

Ahhh, you see? No burgeois. No proletariat. Just fans royally rooting for their team!

MYRON

BEISBALL PROVES WHAT LENIN SAID,
WHY A PROBLEM MOST WIDESPREAD,
IS WHEN ONE MAN IS PLACED ABOVE THE REST
FOR IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE LEAGUE,
YOU'LL SEE TEAMS THAT CAUSE FATIGUE
ARE THOSE WHO HAVE JUST ONE MAN WHO IS BEST.

TY COBB LEADS HIS TEAM TO SLAUGHTER,
BUT DETROIT WAS IN HOT WATER
SO HIS TEAM THIS YEAR DID NOT DO WELL,
THE BABE HIT MORE HOME RUNS THIS YEAR,
HE WAS A SLUGGER WITHOUT PEER,
YET THE RED SOX AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL.

MYRON

So the needs of the many,

MCGREEVEY

Outweigh the batting average of the few!

MYRON

Exactly!

ALL ROOTERS

THAT'S THE BEISBALL MANIFESTO,
WITH A LESSON FOR THE PROLETARIAT,
FOR A WIN IN LIFE THE ANSWER'S SIMPLE,
ROOT FOR THE OTHER GUY TO HIT!

THAT'S THE BEISBALL MANIFESTO,
IF YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE ALL THAT YOU CAN,

MYRON

THEN CARE NOT FOR YOUR SELFISH AVERAGE,
BUT GO TO BAT FOR FELLOW MAN! **(END.)**

MYRON

(To McGreevey)

Nuff 'Ced McGreevey?

ALL

Nuff 'Ced!

(The other Rooters laugh and cheer as McGreevey pours the drinks. Steve enters.)

WIZNOWSKI

What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be at your job?

STEVE

It's Saturday, Phillip.

WIZNOWSKI

So what? We still had to work.

STEVE

The Red Sox business office is closed on Saturday.

WIZNOWSKI

My brother, the big shot businessman, only has to work five days a week.

STEVE

Are you through?

WIZNOWSKI

Yes, you may now buy me a beer.

(Steve enters)

MACMULLEN

(As he unfolds the paper and we see the headline SOX SELL BABE RUTH).

Now let me have that paper Myron, and let's see what else we can teach you about –

MCGREEVEY

(Sees the headline. Screams)

Jesus Christ!

MACMULLEN

Please, Mister McGreevey, let's not be blasphemous.

(McGreevey crosses to him, grabs the paper, and holds up the headline to MacMullen)

Jesus Christ!

CARELLI

What is going on, eh?

MACMULLEN

The Red Sox sold Babe Ruth to the Yankees!

(They all gather around MacMullen's table.)

STEVE

You must be mistaken. Harry assured me that -

(MacMullen holds up the paper)

Jesus Christ!

CARELLI

(Looking at the paper)

It's true. My God. It is true.

MACMULLEN

(To Steve)

How could you do this?

CARELLI

(Points to the paper)

For 100 thousand dollars, that's how!

MYRON

So is true. In America, a man can be sold, like... cattle. It is just like they say back in Russia.

CARELLI

Look what it says here – the Bambino will receive fifty thousand dollars a year to play for the Yankees. Why that's five times what he made with the Red Sox.

MCGREEVEY

The bourgeois bastard!

CARELLI

(To Wiznowski)

So much for your loyal Polish Babe.

WIZNOWSKI

(Indicating MacMullen)

I never said such thing. Besides, MacMullen here said he was Irish.

MACMULLEN

Yea, well, Carelli said he was Italian.

CARELLI

I did not.

WIZNOWSKI

(To Steve)

Steven, why did you not tell me this?

STEVE

Because I didn't know.

WIZNOWSKI

(In Steve's face. Pushes him)

Don't lie to me, little brother.

STEVE

(Pushes Phillip back)

And don't push me, big brother.

WIZNOWSKI

(Another push)

My brother. Gets American education. Gets American name. They teach you how to lie at college, too, brother?

STEVE

(Grabs Phillip as he pushes him back against the bar)

I didn't lie. And I said don't push me.

(Steve and Phillip struggle. Phillip punches Steve, and the rest of the Rooters - minus McGreevey and Myron - jump in)

MCGREEVEY

That's enough! I'll have no fighting in my bar! Nuff Said!

(They keep wrestling)

Did you hear me? Nuff Said!

MYRON

(Dripping with sarcasm and superiority)

Yes, look at how much the working class is royally rooting and enjoying themselves, now.

(The lights dim as the fight continues.)

CURSE #4

(We fade to black, with only the glow of the television filling the stage. During this next speech the lights will slowly rise on the four Rooters, who appear in their raccoon coats carrying pennants that read 1967, 1972, and 1975.)

ANNOUNCER

Following the 1950 season the Red Sox never made it higher than third place in the American League, and their fans watched as the New York Yankees won another 6 World Series titles in the 1950s alone. By 1960, when Ted Williams' last home run in his last at bat cleared the outfield fence at Fenway Park, the Red Sox had fallen into the bottom half of the American League standings, and that's where they stayed for a long time. The team didn't have much company in those dark years, either. Fans stayed away from Fenway park in droves. Then, in 1967, when Dick Williams took over as manager, something happened that would turn the franchise around and signal the beginning of a new kind of Red Sox team, a team that would return to contention on a regular basis. But it also signaled the beginning of a team that would exhibit a very nasty habit...

13. SONG - 1967/1972/1975 - THE FINISH LINE

SOLO

CARL YAZSTREMSKI, RICO PETROCELLI
FLOWER POWER, NINETEEN SIXTY SEVEN
JIM LONBORG,
THESE WERE THE MEN WHO TOOK US TO THE SERIES
DIDN'T WIN, BUT WE DIDN'T EXPECT TO.

WE'RE GETTING CLOSER
BUT THE FINISH LINE IS STILL FAR AWAY
WE'LL JUST STOP AND STARE (TWENTY YEARS!)
THRILLED WE JUST GOT THERE.

DUET

ITS FIVE YEARS LATER
THE SOX MAKE THEIR PLAY FOR
THE PLAYOFFS ONCE AGAIN
LAST THREE GAMES OF THE SEASON WOULD DETERMINE
WHO'D MAKE IT FIRST TO THE FINISH LINE.

TRIO

WE'VE FALLEN DOWN
WE'VE FALLEN DOWN
WE'VE FALLEN DOWN LIKE LUIS APARICIO
BOOP, BOOP SHOO-BE-DOO-WAH

SOLO1

THE FASTEST PLAYER ON THE TEAM

SOLO2

MOST IMPORTANT GAME OF THE SEASON

SOLO3

ON HIS WAY TO SCORE, HE SLIPS AND FALLS

ALL 4 ROOTERS

NO ONE WOULD EVER KNOW THE REASON

WE'VE FALLEN DOWN,
THE RED SOX HAVE FALLEN DOWN
THEY'VE FALLEN DOWN, LIKE LUIS...

SOLO1

WORLD SERIES!

SOLO2

NINETEEN SEVENTY FIVE!

SOLO3

CINCINNATI!

ALL

COULD WE WIN THIS TIME?

SOLO4

ITS ONE A.M. IN THE MORNING
CARLTON FISK STEPS UP TO THE PLATE
HE HITS THE BALL! HE WAVES HIS ARMS!
WE CAN SMELL THE FINISH LINE THAT FAR AWAY!

SOLO2

BUT PUDGE'S HIT WAS ALL WE HAD
AND CINCY TOOK THE TITLE AWAY FROM US

SOLO4

HEY! ALL YOU RED SOX, IS IT IN YOUR HEART TO WIN?!
OR ARE YOU JUST ALONG FOR THE TRIP ON THE BUS, YEAH?!

ALL

WE'RE GETTING CLOSER
BUT THE FINISH LINE IS STILL FAR AWAY
AND WE'LL JUST STOP AND STARE
THRILLED WE JUST GOT THERE,
THRILLED WE JUST GOT THERE
THRILLED WE JUST GOT THERE,

THRILLED WE JUST GOT THERE
WE STILL HAVEN'T CROSSED THE FINISH LINE!!!! (END.)

(The Rooters exit, and the lights dim momentarily.)

Scene 2

(It is the next morning, January 7, in Harry Frazee's office at Fenway Park. Harry is standing reading the paper, looking preturbed. Steve enters, disheveled and with a black eye, holding a newspaper. He is pissed.)

STEVE

Harry, I'm... I don't know what to say. I'm speechless. This is the worst display of... I can't think of any other word but treachery that I have ever seen.

HARRY

(Sadly)

I think treachery is precisely the right word.

STEVE

So what are you going to do about it?

HARRY

What do you mean, what am I going to do about it? What is she going to do about it?

STEVE

She? Who are you trying to pass the blame on to this time, Harry?

HARRY

The person who wrote the article, of course. And let's not forget it was you who hired her.

STEVE

Hired who? Harry, what are you -

(Harry shoves his paper under his eyes and points to it. Steve reads)

"What the general public did not know, but this intrepid reporter was able to ferret out, was the financial strain the payroll of the Boston Red Sox has been placing on Mister Frazee's theatrical productions,

(Betty enters, unseen)

most notably his efforts to produce his latest endeavor, a musical titled "No, No, Nanette..."

HARRY

Look at the byline.

STEVE

No, it can't be.

BETTY

I'm afraid it is.

STEVE

You? You wrote this?

(Betty nods)

So all along you were...

(Light dawns over Marblehead)

They were all lies so you could do this?

BETTY

(Reaches for his hand)

It wasn't all a lie, Steve.

STEVE

(He pulls back)

Oh, and I'm supposed to believe that, too?

BETTY

My goodness, Steve, your eye. What happened?

STEVE

My brother. He thinks I lied to him, thanks to you.

HARRY

(Crosses to a despondent Steve, and puts his arm around him)

It's all right, boy. I know how you feel. Why I remember back in Scranton, Pennsylvania - I was running The Biloxi Theater there, and there was this young gal - a trapeze artist, she was, and -

STEVE

Shut up, Harry, you're not off the hook, either.

HARRY

What are you getting upset at me, for?

STEVE

What am I - Harry, not only did you trade the greatest player the Red Sox have ever known but you lied me and every reporter in town about it.

BETTY

Steve, the fact is that I needed this scoop. Without it no newspaper would ever consider hiring a woman. Even with the scoop I had to accept half what they're paying the men.

STEVE

But that doesn't explain why -

BETTY

Steve, you know the state of Harry's books, and you must know that whether I worked here or not he was going to have to unload the Babe to make enough money to keep himself afloat. I never wanted to hurt you, Steve, you have to believe me. It was just something I had to do.

STEVE

And that's supposed to excuse you for what you did?

HARRY

I don't think you're correct.

STEVE

(To Betty)

Hold on.

(To Harry)

Correct about what?

HARRY

I mean you're not correct about my lying. I didn't lie about trading Babe Ruth.

STEVE

Harry, it was in this very room that I heard you say you wouldn't trade Babe Ruth.

HARRY

And I didn't. I sold him. For \$100,000.

STEVE

Semantics. Sold, traded, the result is the same, isn't it?

(There is a vicious pounding on the door. We HEAR the reporters calling out to Harry)

And now you're going to have to explain that to them.

HARRY

Getting so a man can't run a business - his own business, damn it - without having to answer a lot of fool questions from a bunch of...

(disgust)

reporters.

STEVE

Harry, even the President has to answer questions from the press.

HARRY

And Wilson won a World War. All I did was bring this town a baseball championship. What chance have I got?

14. SONG - FACE THE MUSIC

REPORTERS

BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM.

FACE THE MUSIC, MISTER FRAZEE, WE KNOW YOU'D RATHER NOT, BUT
THE MEMBERS OF THE FOURTH ESTATE CAN BE A NOISY LOT, AND
ALTHOUGH YOU MAY NOT LIKE US, THERE'S POWER IN OUR HANDS,
WHAT WE TYPE UPON OUR KEYBOARDS IS READ UP IN THE STANDS.

FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, HARRY YOU SEE
FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, MISTER FRAZEE.

REPORTERS

BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM, BUM.

STEVE

FACE THE MUSIC MISS DANVERS
FOR YOUR PLAN SO UNFAIR
THE TRAITOR'S BEEN ABDUCTED, CIG AND BLINDFOLD RIGHT HERE
YOU DECEIVED ME SO SEVERELY
YOU ABANDONED OUR TEAM
BETTY, WHY DID YOU DO IT?
SO MANY HURT BY YOUR SCHEME?

REPORTERS

FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, HARRY YOU SEE

REPORTERS
FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,

STEVE
BETTY, FACE THE MUSIC
WAS IT REALLY WORTH IT?

FACE THE MUSIC,
MISTER FRAZEE.

COULD YOU
ANSWER ME PLEASE?

REPORTERS
FACE THE MUSIC, MISTER FRAZEE,

STEVE
(to Betty) THEY KNOW YOU TOLD A LIE,
(to Harry) CAUSE TO SAY YOU SOLD, INSTEAD OF TRADE,

STEVE & REPORTERS
IS JUST AN ALIBI, THAT ANSWER DOESN'T CUT IT,

BETTY
(to Steve, pointing to the Reporters)
THEY'RE GONNA WANT TO KNOW,

REPORTERS:
ARE THE RED SOX

BETTY:
ARE WE

STEVE:
AM I

ALL
LESS IMPORTANT THAN ANOTHER BROADWAY SHOW?

REPORTERS
FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,

HARRY
WITH THAT RUTH GONE
NOW WE CAN IMPROVE THE TEAM

FACE THE MUSIC,
MISTER FRAZEE.

BETTY
I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU
I WAS GOING TO COME CLEAN

FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,
MISTER FRAZEE.

STEVE
BETTY, FACE THE MUSIC
WAS IT REALLY WORTH IT?
SACRIFICE
OUR OWN NEEDS?

ALL
FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC.

REPORTERS
FACE THE MUSIC, MISTER FRAZEE, TELL US BOUT THE DEAL,
CAUSE RED SOX FANS ARE SAYING THAT THE YANKS JUST PULLED A STEAL,
YOU SOLD THE MIGHTY BABE RUTH, SURE YOU GOT A LOT OF CASH,
BUT FANS DON'T ROOT FOR DOLLARS, BUT A SLUGGER WHO CAN BASH!

BETTY
STEVE, THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR, WERE THE WORDS THAT YOU USED
I NEVER MEANT TO HURT YOU, MAKE YOU FEEL ABUSED
I HAD TO BREAK THE STORY, AND THIS METHOD WON MY VOTE

REPORTERS
WE'VE GOT OUR NOTEBOOKS READY, HARRY,

BETTY (to Steve) & REPORTERS (to Harry)

HOW BOUT A QUOTE?

REPORTERS
FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,
MISTER FRAZEE.

STEVE
BETTY, FACE THE MUSIC
HOW COULD YOU BETRAY ME?
WHAT A HORRIBLE
DEED YOU'VE DONE!

REPORTERS

FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, MISTER FRAZEE,

REPORTER #1 (*simultaneously*)
MISTER FRAZEE, TELL US,
SOMETHING WE CAN USE,
IF YOU DON'T THEN WE'LL
WRITE OUR OWN GODDAMN NEWS!

STEVE (*simultaneously*)
HARRY, FACE THE MUSIC
GIVE THE MEN AN ANSWER
AND THEY'LL
LEAVE YOU ALONE

ALL

FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC, MISTER FRAZEE

(*REPORTERS hold note, while*)

STEVE, HARRY, BETTY & REPORTER #1

FACE THE MUSIC, FACE THE MUSIC,
FACE THE MUSIC,

STEVE, HARRY, REPORTER #1

OH WON'T YOU PLEASE!

BETTY

STEVE, CAN'T YOU SEE!!

REPORTERS

HARRY FRAZEE! **(END.)**

REPORTER #1

(*Points out Betty to the other reporters*)

So look who's here. The star reporter for the Post.

REPORTER #2

And look who she's with. I told ya. You gotta be a dame to get the details in this office.

REPORTER #3

(*Crudely*)

Yea, one guess as to how she got her story.

STEVE

(*Grabs Reporter #3 by the collar. The other Reporters pull him off as he yells*)

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

REPORTER #4

What are you doing, Waterman?

REPORTER #2

Yea, whattya getting' so upset about?

STEVE

He's got no right to be saying things like that.

REPORTER #3

All right now, just take it easy, Waterman. Just calm down now, okay?

(The other reporters have already returned to Frazee as Steve and Betty talk and Reporter #3 rejoins them)

BETTY

You didn't have to do that.

STEVE

You've done a lot of bad things here Betty, but that wasn't one of them.

(There is a swell of activity around Harry as the reporters pester him)

REPORTER #1

Come on Harry.

REPORTER #2

Yea, how about giving us a scoop?

STEVE

I'd better get back to work before Harry says anything stupid.

BETTY

I'd hurry if I were you.

(All the Reporters suddenly explode with surprise, and speak simultaneously:)

REPORTER #1

Are you kidding us?

REPORTER #2

You got that much dough?

REPORTER #3

Even the dame didn't have that in her story.

REPORTER #4

This is unbelievable.

BETTY

Looks like you're too late.

(Steve crosses to Harry, but is pushed aside as the reporters rush out the door.)

REPORTER #3

Thanks for nothing, Waterman...

STEVE

What's that supposed to mean?

REPORTER #2

As if you didn't know.

STEVE

Know what?

REPORTER #3

About the \$300,000 mortgage on Fenway Park that Harry got from Jake Ruppert.

(The reporters exit as Steve looks at Harry.)

STEVE

Harry? What's this about a \$300,000 mortgage on Fenway Park?

HARRY

It was part of my deal with Colonel Ruppert for the Babe. Of course, it will free up cash, not only for the ball club but for a dandy new musical I've been working on. It's called No No Nanette and it's got this lovely tune called -

STEVE

You son-of-a-bitch!

HARRY

I beg your pardon?

STEVE

I defend you. I protect you. I help you justify selling off the best player this town has ever seen just so you can produce
(dripping with disdain)
a musical, and this is how you pay me back? What a sap I've been. I was so wrapped up in this job, so wrapped up in being the brother who made it... Well, you know what? From now on you can clean up your own messes, Harry. I quit.

BETTY

Steve, wait. I know you're angry with me and angry with Harry, but how can you just walk away from a job you love? A job you've worked so hard to get?

STEVE

Because, Betty, maybe I finally got it through my thick skull that there really isn't a next year.
(He crosses to the door)

HARRY

My boy, please. Don't you realize what a vital ingredient you are to this ball club?

STEVE

Enough Harry! I'm not interested in any more of your "canned soup." Good bye.

HARRY

Steve, wait, please...

(Steve exits, followed quickly by Harry, leaving Betty alone in the office. She crosses to and picks up the candlestick phone.)

BETTY

Operator? Long Distance please. Long Distance? In Manhattan, Jake Ruppert. Thank you. Uncle Jake? It's me. Yes, Harry told them about the mortgage. Uh huh. They were pretty steamed. Ran out of here to write something for their morning papers. I don't know why they're bothering - when they can read my scoop in the afternoon edition of the Post. But Uncle Jake, that's not why I'm calling. Remember that favor you said you owe me? Is it too early to collect?

(As the lights fade to black)

Good. I need you to make a request of your newest employee...

CURSE #5

(The television's glow fills the stage as we hear the voice of the announcer. The lights will again rise on the four Rooters, who appear in their raccoon coats carrying pennants that read 1978.)

ANNOUNCER

In the summer of 1978 Disco was hot, and so were the Red Sox. Led by manager Don Zimmer, this star-laden team that featured Carl Yastremski, Carlton Fisk, Fred Lynn, and Jim Rice won 62 games and lost only 29 by the middle of July, at which point they held a ten-game lead over Milwaukee, while the hated Yankees sat in third place. Everything seemed to be in place for a Red Sox celebration that October. And it might have been, if not for one man...

15. SONG - 1978 CURSE - PASS THE BUCK

ROOTERS

BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT, BABY
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT, OH YEAH!

SOLO

A FOURTEEN GAME LEAD BY MID-JULY
RED SOX ROOTERS WERE RIDING HIGH
SITTING IN THE STANDS WITH THEIR BILLY BEER
THEY HAD NO IDEA THAT A FOLD WAS NEAR
BY SEPTEMBER SEVENTH WHEN THE YANKS CAME TO TOWN
FOUR WAS THE NUMBER TO WHICH THE LEAD WAS DOWN
YANKS SWEEPED FOUR GAMES, IT CAUSED US PAIN
THE BOSTON MASSACRE ALL OVER AGAIN!

ALL

BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT, HIT ONE
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT, WE'RE DONE!

SOLO2

THE REST OF THE MONTH DIDN'T HELP THEIR CAUSE

ALL

UH UH!

SOLO2

THE GERBIL, HE BLAMED IT, ON MURPHY'S LAWS

ALL

IT ALL GOES WRONG

SOLO2

AND JUST LIKE THE SOX DID IN FORTY-EIGHT

ALL

GALEHOUSE!

SOLO2

IN A ONE GAME PLAYOFF THEY'D PARTICIPATE
SOX LED BY TWO IN THE SEVENTH FRAME
THEN THE YANKS GOT TWO ON IN THE OLD BALLGAME
NOW THE BOTTOM OF THE LINEUP STEPPED TO THE PLATE
A GUY FOR WHOM POWER WAS NOT A TRAIT!

ALL

BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT IS UP!

TORREZ IS ON THE MOUND, DENT COMES UP
BOUNCES A FOUL BALL RIGHT OFF HIS FOOT
TORREZ HURRIES THE FOLLOWING THROW
OVER THE WALL BUCKY'S POP-UP GOES! WHOA!!!!

SOLO3

NOW WE'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE
WE'VE WATCHED COUNTLESS TIMES AS THEY'VE TIED THE SCORE
BUT NOTHING IN OUR HISTORY HAS CAUSED MORE LAMENT
AS THE HOMER WE GAVE UP TO THAT MAN...

ALL

BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT, THEY WON!
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT
BUCKY BUCKY BUCKY DENT, SONG'S DONE! **(END.)**

(The lights dim on the Rooters.)

Scene 3

(It is several days later and we are back in the bar, which is empty save for McGreevey, who is glumly wiping down the counter. Steve bursts in, out of breath, and as his eyes sweep around the empty bar, his face turns to confusion.)

MCGREEVEY

(Annoyed)

What do you want?

STEVE

Where's my brother?

MCGREEVEY

What's it to you?

STEVE

(Still catching his breath)

I got a phone call... someone said there was an emergency here at the bar.

MCGREEVEY

Emergency? There no emergency here. Now why don't you run along. The lads will all be here soon and I don't suppose they'll be wanting to see the likes of you.

(Steve is crushed. McGreevey softens. He pours a drink for Steve)

Look, I'm going to give you two things I think you need right about now. One is a free drink and the other is some free advice. You look like you could use both. They were all very proud of you.

STEVE

They were? Even Philip?

(Betty enters, unseen by either man)

MCGREEVEY

Especially him. Many's the night he'd go on and on about how a Wiznowski had made it off the docks and into the front office. Some nights the lads would buy him extra rounds just to shut him up.

(Steve laughs)

So when you stabbed them in the back -

STEVE

But I didn't stab them in the back.

MCGREEVEY

You stood by Harry Frazee while he sold the Babe, didn't you?

STEVE

But Harry never told me what he was going to do.

MCGREEVEY

(Disgusted, turns away)

Whatever you say, lad. Whatever you say.

STEVE

(Sees Betty)

Well, if it isn't Mata Hari. Spying on bars, now, Betty? The Yankees looking for a bartender?

BETTY

Steve, I called because we need to talk -

STEVE

You? You made that phone call? Unbelievable.

(Steve crosses to exit, but she blocks his way)

BETTY

Steve, I don't blame you for being mad at me -

STEVE

Oh, you don't? Isn't that generous of you?

(The Rooters and Myron enter the bar and see Steve and Betty.)

CARELLI

Well, look who's here. The big shot with the Red Sox.

MACMULLEN

And look who's with him.

(To Carelli)

I told you they were in this together.

MYRON

Yes, conspirators. You think?

WIZNOWSKI

Why don't you just go home... Mister Waterman.

BETTY

Wait a minute. Gentlemen. Mister McGreevey. Please, listen to me.

(To Wiznowski)

Philip?

WIZNOWSKI

And what do have to say?

BETTY

I wanted you to know that Steve is telling the truth. He didn't know about the Babe. He didn't know about me.

MCGREEVEY

And why should we believe you? You already lied to us once about who you were.

CARELLI

He is right!

BETTY

I had a feeling you'd say that, so...

(Betty crosses to and opens the door and in steps Babe Ruth.)

BABE

Hey, what's with all the sad faces?

CARELLI

Look who it is!

MACMULLEN

Well I'll be, it's the Babe himself!

MCGREEVEY

Babe Ruth! Here in my bar!

BABE

So, what's a guy hafta do to get a drink around this place?

CARELLI

McGreevey, get my Italian brother, the Bambino, a drink?

MACMULLEN

Italian? Where do you come off? McGreevey, get our Irish friend, Mister McRuth, a glass of –

WIZNOWSKI

He means my Polish brother a glass of beer!

(As they continue to argue over his ethnicity, the Rooters swarm around the Babe, who soaks up their adulation.)

BABE

Okay, boys, okay. We'll all have a drink together.

(The Rooters all cheer)

But it'll be on me!

(They cheer louder as the drinks get poured)

Now listen boys, I just want you to know that I loved playing for you fans in Boston, I really did. But going to New York ain't my choice, you see? In baseball, you go where the owners tell ya. And this was Harry Frazee's decision, not mine. And it wasn't Steve Waterman's, either. He's a working stiff like the rest of us, just doing his job, ok?

CARELLI

Jeez Babe, if it's the way you say...

MACMULLEN

Yea, if we were outta line...

(The patrons and Steve look awkwardly at each other.)

BABE

Are you guys gonna shake hands or do I have to do that for ya, too?

(That breaks the tension, and all the patrons - except Wiznowski - and McGreevey begin shaking hands and slapping each other on the back. As the group disperses, only Steve and Philip remain, looking sheepishly at each other.)

BABE

Come on, come on. Ain't blood supposed to be thicker than water?

STEVE

So... do you believe me now?

WIZNOWSKI

Yes, brother.

STEVE

And we'll have no more talk about me being a liar?

WIZNOWSKI

No, brother.

(Pause)

Are we through?

STEVE

Yes, you may now buy me a beer.

(Everyone cheers as Wiznowski and Steve embrace, then take a drink together. Betty stands to the side, beaming. Steve crosses to her. Betty smiles in anticipation of the "moment.")

STEVE

(Still angry)

I suppose you think this makes up for everything?

BETTY

(Deflated, defensive)

I just thought I should do more than say I was sorry.

STEVE

You're not too sorry to stop writing for the Post, I've noticed.

BETTY

It is my job.

STEVE

Your job. I seem recall something about wanting to help people.

BETTY

That's right.

STEVE

(Skeptically)

By writing for a newspaper.

BETTY

One person can't clean up the tenements or make the factories - like the one where your own brother works - safer, but one writer can expose the back rooms deals with the corrupt politicians who let landlords and factory owners get away with those things.

STEVE

Okay, okay. I get the point. So are you making any progress?

BETTY

Well, let's see. My married editor wants to know when he can take me out to dinner. Until then he's sorry but I'm needed on the graveyard shift. The other reporters won't give me the time of day. They can't even seem to find a desk for me...

STEVE

So why do you put up with it?

BETTY

Because someone once told me there's always next year.

(They both seem to relax. The Babe and the patrons laugh loudly. The Babe crosses to Betty.)

BABE

So how about it? Am I done?

BETTY

Yes, I suppose you are. Thank you for coming.

BABE

Ahhh, forget about it, kid.

(To Steve, menacingly)

And you. You tell Harry that the Babe says...

(Lightens up)

Thanks for the ticket to New York.

STEVE

You'll have to tell him yourself, Babe. I don't work for Harry anymore.

(Proudly)

I quit.

BABE

Well good for you, kid. Maybe it'll keep you honest. What are you doing?

STEVE

I'm making a fresh start. I'm the new bookkeeper for the Boston Braves.

MYRON

(To MacMullen)

Braves? Who are these Braves?

BABE

(The Babe turns to the patrons.)

Well, boys, I gotta be going!

MCGREEVEY

So soon, Babe?

CARELLI

We gonna see you again, Babe?

BABE

Why sure, I'll be at Fenway Park twelve times this season.

MACMULLEN

Gonna hit any home runs?

BABE

I got a few saved up just for Harry Frazee!

CARELLI

Well, good luck this year, Babe.

MCGREEVEY

But not too much luck!

(The Babe leaves with the Rooters, while McGreevey cleans up. Steve and Betty begin to follow...)

STEVE

Say Betty, how about dinner to celebrate my new job?

BETTY

Uh, sure, that'd be nice.

STEVE

There's just one thing I don't understand. How did you get Babe Ruth to come to the Third Base?

BETTY

I think you're going to need a drink before that dinner.

(Steve and Betty exit)

15B. SONG – SLAP THAT HAND (The “Uncurse” of 2004)

ALL ROOTERS (Flexible assignments)

TWO THOUSAND AND FOUR, YANKEE STADIUM
THE SOX AND THE BRONX MEET ONCE AGAIN
TO DECIDE WHO IS GOING TO THE BIG DANCE THIS YEAR
USUALLY IT'S BOSTON SHEDDING THE TEAR, NOW THEY'RE GONNA CHEER

GAME SIX ON IN THE BOTTOM OF THE EIGHTH (BOTTOM OF THE EIGHTH)
THE SOX HAD WON TWO AFTER LOSING THREE STRAIGHT
ARROYO PITCHING THE BALL ON THE MOUND (BRONSON GO!)
WHEN A-ROD HITS THE BALL ON THE GROUND (ROLLING, ROLLING...)

HE RUNS, BUT KNOWS HE'S STUCK IN BETWEEN
AS ARROYO AND MIENTKIEWICZ DESCEND UNFORESEEN
SO A-ROD THINKS TO AVOID THE TAG
HE'LL RUN OUTSIDE THE LINE, WITH THE ONLY TRICK INSIDE HIS BAG IS...

CHORUS

SLAP THAT HAND (HAH, HO)
SLAP THAT HAND – YOU GONNA SLAP THAT BALL AWAY
SLAP THAT HAND (HAH, HO)
SLAP THAT HAND – YOU AIN'T GONNA WIN TODAY
SLAP THAT HAND (HAH, HO)
SLAP THAT HAND – IT SHOWS NO MATTER WHAT YOU PAY
SLAP THAT HAND (HAH, HO)
SLAP THAT HAND – ANYONE CAN WIN ON ANY GIVEN DAY

NOW THIS MAN A-ROD, HE'S NOT AT ALL POOR
HE MAKES MORE MONEY THAN THE COUNTRY OF EQUADOR
CAUSE HIS BOSS (STEINBRENNER!) THINKS THE WAY TO THE TOP
IS TO SPEND EVERY PENNY HE KNOWS THAT HE'S GOT (A LOT!)

BUT THIS YEAR, FATE HAS FINALLY UNDERSTOOD
THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE RICH, DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU'RE GOOD
SO A-ROD'S CHOP DOESN'T LEAD TO A SCORE,
AND THE RED SOX WIN THE PLAYOFFS AND MORE. CAUSE A-ROD WENT TO...

CHORUS

BACK TO THE GAME ON THAT PROPHETIC NIGHT
WHEN THE UMP'S SAID, “INTERFERENCE”... THE CALL WAS RIGHT

SO INSTEAD OF ONE OUT AND A YANKEE RUN SCORED.
JETER HAD TO GO BACK TO FIRST, AND TRY ONCE MORE.

THIS WAS THE NIGHT THE GODS CAME TO NEW YORK
AND SAID THAT THE RED SOX WOULD POP THE CORK
THAT IS DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU'RE FROM
IF YOU PERSEVERE LONG ENOUGH, YOU'LL GET THE JOB DONE.
"COWBOY UP." HAH! (END.)

EPILOGUE

(The lights rise, and we are where we began, in the Father's house with the blue glow of the television illuminating the set. The Rooters, in their Raccoon coats, stand upstage holding pennants that say 2004. The father, also wearing his raccoon coat, sits on the couch holding a telephone. He has aged appropriately)

ANNOUNCER

Welcome back to our broadcast of the 2004 World Series. It is 10:35, Central Daylight Time on October 27th, 2004, and you're looking at a live picture of the moon in total eclipse over Busch Stadium here in St. Louis, Missouri, a sight astronomers tell us has never happened during a World Series game. But then, this postseason has been filled with the improbable – no, with the impossible coming true. It's the bottom of the ninth inning, with the Red Sox leading the Cardinals three to nothing. There's two outs, and the Cards have a man on first.

FATHER

You still there? How are you holding up? Me too. I just can't bring myself to get too excited, yet. Remember we were one strike away in 1986 – twice – and still couldn't do it.

ANNOUNCER

Incredible to think that just for the Red Sox to get to the World Series they had to come back from a three games to none deficit against their rivals, the Yankees, and improbable comeback that began by beating Mariano Rivera, arguably one of the great relievers of his time. In Boston they are already etching the names of Kevin Millar and Dave Roberts in granite. Millar for his hit and Roberts for his steal in Game 4 of that series...

FATHER

You know, it seems like only yesterday I was holding you in my arms right here in this living room, telling you how you were going to see the Red Sox win their first World Series. That was 18 years ago. Yes, I know I've told you the story before. Indulge the man whose paying that college tuition of yours?

ANNOUNCER

After a disastrous outing against the Yankees, Curt Schilling – the Boston ace - had to have his ankle surgically stitched into place so he could pitch again. Which he did, twice, winning once against the hated Yankees and then against these Cardinals.

FATHER

Someday you'll get married and have your own family and you'll do for your kids what my dad did for me, and Gramps did for him – you'll teach them this game. You'll tell them the stories. The heartbreaking defeats. And maybe now the occasional victory.

ANNOUNCER

Here comes Foulke's pitch...

FATHER

Hold it...

MUSIC IN.

ANNOUNCER

It's a soft grounder up the middle... Foulke one-hands it... tosses it to Mienkiewicz... and there it is! After 86 years the Red Sox are the World Champions of baseball.

(The Rooters hug each other for joy. Tears begin to well up in the father's eyes)

FATHER

(After a brief pause) Yea, I'm still here. *(Wipes tears from his eyes)* I am. Well, I guess because I'm thinking about my dad. All those opening days and he never got to see this, you know? *(Another pause)* That's a nice thought. Maybe he can. *(Watches the TV)* Look at them. I wonder if they realize what they've done. How they've changed everything. For us. For Buckner and Aparicio and Pesky and Galehouse. *(A pause)* Yes, even for Grady. *(Pause)* Because none of that matters now. We can say "World Series Champion Boston Red Sox."

(The father realizes that the Rooters are standing behind him)

FATHER

Honey? Can I call you back? No, everything is fine. Everything is wonderful. There's just something I have to do. Love you, too. Congratulations to you, too, sweetheart.

(The father hangs up the phone, and crosses to the Rooters, with whom he shakes hands and exchanges hugs. Then they all stop to listen to the TV)

ANNOUNCER

In just a few minutes we're going to take you into the Red Sox locker room where the Commissioner will hand the World Series trophy to the Boston Red Sox. We'll take a time out while I let those incredible words sink in.

16. SONG - SO MANY YEARS AGO (REPRISE)

FATHER & ROOTERS

FOR MANY YEARS YOU KNOW THE CURSE WAS NOT A JOKE
WE ALL ASSUMED THEY'D FIND A WAY TO CHOKE
JUST BAD LUCK. OR BAD KARMA.
STILL, WE'D CONTINUE TO BE FANS
AND NOW THEY'VE WON AND HONOR BOSTON'S "EVERYMAN."

THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO'S FINALLY OVER
IT TURNS OUT THAT THE BABE WAS REALLY NOT TO BLAME
THE BOSTON RED SOX NOW ARE BASEBALL'S CHAMPIONS
AND THE FEELINGS FOR OUR TEAM WON'T BE THE SAME. **(END.)**

(One by one, Rooters take off their raccoon coats and hang them on the coat rack. Then the Father takes off his coat, and with a smile, he places his coat there, as well. He joins the Rooters front and center.)

ALL

There's always THIS year!

BLACKOUT