1959

See How Your Daddy Won The Game

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol39/iss6/8

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I WAS JUST TEN when my folks took my cousin and me to Chicago to see a baseball game. I had never been such a distance from our Iowa farm and there could not have been a happier kid in the city. Thousands of cars streamed down streets half a block wide.

Dad took us to an amusement park after the game and our eyes were as big as dollars. It was like the county fair in a dream. For a price you could even take a boat ride.

"How much for a ride for the boys?" asked my Dad.
"That'll be two fifty, gent," said the ticket seller.
"No, that's too much," Dad said, and he looked at Mother like he needed help.

You're Cheap, Mister

"You're cheap, mister, that's what's wrong with you," said the man. "We get guys like you. You don't want the kids to have a good time."

My feeling at first was disbelief. Nobody could say that about my dad. Then it was rage, and then hate.

I was glad to leave Chicago. Its lights, that had flashed so brilliantly against the sky the night before, were a dull glow as we left the city. A man had lied about my dad.

I know dad was hurt because I watched his face and I had seen the same expression the summer before when it had hailed and our corn was a total loss.

"There's nothing we can do about the corn, son. Get your glove and we'll play catch."

At a Ball Game

While I looked for my glove on the porch I cried because I knew how much that crop meant to dad. He had farmed during the depression and he was still in debt.

Not long ago at a ball game I saw a young lad learn that everyone did not think his dad was perfect. I was sitting beside the boy and his mother when we heard a man talking behind us.

"Look at the third baseman show off," he said. "He must really think he's good."

The boy turned around with a puzzled, hurt expression and looked at the man.

"It's a good thing we come to these games isn't it, Davey," his mother said loudly. "We find out more things about our daddy."

Two innings later the boy's father won the game by hitting a home run.

"Did you see that, Dave?" I said. "Did you see how your daddy won the game?"

But the boy just looked at me with a faint smile and I knew that the home run had not made up for what he had heard.

This boy's father had been hit by shrapnel and had outlived by two years the time given him by army doctors. He had only one lung and he was playing with a metal plate in his face, that if struck by a ball would mean instant death. And yet, an outspoken stranger, eager to gain an audience for his clever remarks, smashed this little boy's perfect image of his father.

Closeness of a father and son is nearest perfection in moments of shared experiences.

'See How Your Daddy Won The Game'

By Robert J. Leonard