

Ain't it funny how when a guy fails in baseball, it gets remembered more than a guy winning?... *(Beat)* Like the ball that rolled through Buckner's legs?... And, if you remember Bill Bevens, you remember him for one thing — losin' the fourth game of the '47 World Series. With two outs in the ninth, losin' his no-hitter and the ball game both.

*(YOGI picks up the infielder's mitt from the stool in front of Dale's locker and punches his fist into it.)*

And it was my fault.... *(Pacing)* I threw the ball into center field. If I'd a thrown Gionfriddo out trying to steal, the game woulda been over — and you'd know who Bill Bevens was. But I didn't. And you don't... *(Pounds mitt.)* I've replayed that play over in my brain a billion times. *(Returns mitt to Dale's stool.)* Like you do with something you say to one of your kids.

*(YOGI stares into Dale's locker.)*

Some people said I shoulda made Dale a switch hitter—after he was voted best minor league ballplayer. But I don't like pushing kids. Even when they're *not* kids. They're still your kids. But you still shouldn't push 'em. *(Paces)* When Dale was playing for the Pirates, whenever he stepped up to the plate, the organist there would play that Beatles' song, *Here Comes the Sun...* *(Turns to audience.)* You call me Yogi... but Dale had to call me Dad. *(Beat)* It hadda be tough being Yogi Berra's son... *(Paces)*...If Dale hadn't been a Berra, they wouldn't a-mentioned his troubles in that movie—that Civil War guy's baseball movie.

*(The MAGIC is completely gone from the clubhouse. As if being fired again, YOGI crosses to his locker for his jacket.)*

---

Baseball's the only game where they put the errors up on the scoreboard. The official scorer counts errors, not balls fielded cleanly. Ain't that odd? That's why I mentioned in my speech the people who've been put down in life. 'Cause baseball mentions it. (*Putting on suit jacket.*) But a ballplayer is not an error. He makes them, but he ain't one. (*Beat*) Joe D.'s boy died just a couple months after Joe D. himself passed away. I was reading where they said Jolting Joe never had much time for his son; never went to his high school ball games; that Joe Jr. felt, no matter what he did, in his Dad's eyes, he did it wrong... They say that's why he had the drug problem. Because of his father... (*"The lady doth protest too much"*) But I got to all my boys' ballgames. *Almost* all of them. Baseball *and* football... When Larry, Tim and Dale were kids, I'd bring them down here in the clubhouse. Show them where their Dad went to work. Even let 'em take turns—when I managed—sittin' with me in the dugout...

*(YOGI can no longer kid himself.)*

But one game... After one game, I remember... Mickey had struck out three times... He even dropped a fly ball... We lost the game and the Mick felt real bad. The boys came in afterwards, and Dale went up to Mickey... It was right here. "Boy, Mick," he said, "you stunk today."

*(YOGI, suddenly the young father again, shakes his finger angrily at Dale.)*

Tell Mickey you are sorry! Sit down! Shut up! We'll talk about this when we get home! (*To audience.*) I belted him. Then shook him by the shoulders. (*Guiltily*) But they say now that you shouldn't- That

---



you shouldn't spank your kids. *(Stares blankly.)* Some things you'd like the chance to do over again. Like when you were kids playin', and one kid would holler, "do over!" and then you would do it over. *Deja vu. (Beat)* They say history repeats itself. That that's one of the things wrong with history. *(Shrugs)* History might. But we can't. *(Beat)* Whitey just lost a son. And he was saying, "what is, is always better than what might have been." 'Cause what might have been can't be. *(Beat)* Losin' a no-hitter is not like losin' a son. But... *(Comes downstage.)* ...I think failing gets talked about more than winning in baseball—not little mistakes, but big goofs, somebody gettin' to be the goat—because it's more like how life is. Now I am not sayin' the meaning of life is layin' down the sacrifice, or coming home.... I am not big on reading into things. I am not a reader... But I do know that most people fail more in life than they succeed. Just like in baseball. In baseball, if you fail seven times out of ten, you succeed. That's a .300 batting average. You're good. We got a lot of guys in the Hall of Fame with a lot less... Which is why I couldn't let getting fired get me down too much. Or Dale's troubles... Like I used to say to Carmen, when she'd get mad at the boys for spilling their milk: "People die; why shouldn't milk spill?"

*(YOGI opens his arms to the audience, as if laying his case at their feet.)*

Rookie catchers throw high to second base...*(Shrugs)* Like being a young father... I made mistakes.

*(YOGI stands humbly before us. Pause.)*

*The Phone rings. Startled, YOGI turns and moves quickly upstage. As the phone rings a second time, he circles the desk and picks up the console phone.)*

---

Hel-lo?

*(The phone rings again. YOGI looks confused.)*

Hello!

*(The phone rings again. YOGI hangs up the phone and pats down his pockets. On the fourth ring he finds the cell phone in his jacket and opens it to talk.)*

Carmen?... Oh Dale. I forgot you gave me your portable... Where am I?... *(Looks around.)* In the clubhouse... Yeah, I'm just leaving. How's the traffic?... Oh, that's good. You're takin' the bridge, right? The tunnel'll be murder. Where are you?... You're makin' good time. How's my little girl?... Good. Uh, listen, uh, Dale, I was wonderin' - Sleeping, huh? Well, let her. It's a long ride. She looked real cute today, all dressed up... Oh, nothing. I was just thinkin' - I was wonderin'... You think I shoulda pushed you to be a switch-hitter?... No, no, I was just having a look around... your old locker... thinkin' how you were the last of the Berras to suit up in the Yankee Clubhouse, and I got kinda... *(Pause; pacing.)*... remembering, that's all... That time back when - Remember the game Mickey struck out three times, dropped that fly ball and you came down in the clubhouse after?... When you were kids... Remember? And you told him - *(No anger.)* Tell your mother - Yeah, I hear her. Tell her I'm just walkin' out the door... I will... Anyway - No, nothing. I was just thinkin' — raisin' kids is a lot like managin' players. Some guys need a kick in the butt, others you gotta go easy on 'em. You were always kinda sensitive, and I was thinkin' maybe I shoulda went a little easier on you... Or was I too easy? About the switch-hitting? I don't mean to give a speech — One speech a day

---

is my limit, but I was... What? You were what? "Proud"? Of what? Of me? Today? You were "proud" of *me*?... Heck, all I did was talk. I'm proud of *you*. The job you've done. The person you've becom- It hadda be rough being Yogi Berra's son. With all the pressure, in a fishbowl, and organists playing- An "honor"?... It was? (*Moved; but deflecting.*) Ye-ah... but it was easier being a father back then, just like it was easier being a manager... But being a father *today*, a *good* father — like I see you are, now that's harder to- Like who?... (*Nervous laugh.*) Oh-h, I don't know... A "gift"?... Criminy, I don't know I was a "gift"... Yeah?... (*Choked up; clears throat.*) Ye-ah?... (*Look of alarm.*) Hel-lo?... Dale?... We're breakin' up. Dale? I just wanted to say...

*(YOGI shouts into the cell phone to be heard over the static. Or is because he wants to shout his feelings?)*

You're a better than .300 hitter — in the only game that counts... You there? Hello?... Dale?... Hel-lo?... (*Shakes phone; mutters.*) These portables... you can't take 'em anywhere.

*(YOGI folds up the phone and puts it in his pocket. Gradually, the MAGIC lights begin to rise.)*

I was talking to the players at the batting cage before the game today, about playing catch with my boys when they were young. And one player — gonna be a free agent — said he *never* plays catch with his son. That a mailman never takes a walk on his day off. (*Beat*) Makes you wonder about the comin' future... (*Beat*) I was mad at George, I admit. Mad like maybe only a Red Sox fan can understand. And being mad can make things seem real important sometimes. Like staying away from the Stadium for so long.

Holdin' a grudge is a game, but it ain't baseball. I mighta been right; but I was wrong. 'Cause you gotta ask yourself: would you rather be right or happy? Would you rather be on the road or—at home? *(Glances around the clubhouse.)* Ain't none of us free agents.

*(The MAGIC lights illumine the Stadium facade and clubhouse with a glow.)*

In those early days, every now and again, Carm and me, we used to say, "Wouldn't it be nice to just freeze everything in a photo?"... Hold everything... Just like it was... *(Beat)* But the kids grow up; the body starts aching. Pretty soon the eyesight and skills start to go. Before I knew it, my playing days were over. It gets late early. *(Beat)* I'm only sorry Mama and Pop didn't live long enough to see me come home.... It woulda been nice havin' them here at the Stadium today.

*(The sound of baseball spikes CLICKING on concrete rises faintly in the distance. YOGI freezes.)*

That's funny... *(Cocks his head.)* I think they are.... And they didn't even play baseball.

*(As if trying to make sense of all the love and good fortune he's known, an overwhelmed and awed YOGI states the bare facts of his life.)*

I was born on Dago Hill in St. Louis. *(Beat)* I joined the Navy, and fought in D-Day. *(Beat)* And then I became a Yankee.

---