

PLAY BALL!!!**The Fan** by Peter Abrahams**[F/ABR]**

Two men, one is a baseball star. He has an ex-cheerleader for a wife and a girl in every big-league town. The ball comes off his bat like a firecracker. Bobby Rayburn isn't just a ballplayer. He's a god. The other has a wife who's left him. His bank balance slides toward zero while his child support and car payments soar past the roof. He hates his job and the product he pushes. But the license plate on his 325i reads "WNSOX." Gil Renard isn't just a knife salesman. He's The Fan.

Baseball Cat by Garrison Allen**[M/ALL]**

Famous for its yearly Elizabethan Festival and annual Arabian Horseshow, Empty Creek, Arizona, would truly be nowhere without a visit from a semi-professional baseball team. Barely out of the dugout, trying to break a hot losing streak, the Coyotes are hoping to star in the minor leagues. But before the first note of the National Anthem is sung, somebody uses the owner's head for a baseball and scores a deadly hit.

Brittle Innings by Michael Bishop**[F/BIS]**

For seventeen-year-old Danny Boles, a 5'5" shortstop out of Tenkiller, Oklahoma, the summer of 1943 would be a season to remember. The country's at war and professional baseball needs able-bodied men. Danny's headed for Highbridge, Georgia, home of the Goober Pride peanut butter factory and the Highbridge Hellbenders, a Class C farm club in the Chattahoochee Valley League. He's a scrappy player with one minor quirk; a violent encounter on the train to Georgia has rendered him mute, his vocal cords tied up in knots.

Strike Zone by Jim Bouton**[F/BOU]**

It's 1992. The Chicago Cubs win ten straight to tie the Phillies on the last day of the season. With an exhausted pitching staff, the Cubs call on thirty-two-year-old rookie and clubhouse oddball Sam Ward to pitch the big game. This is his chance to prove that he's not a "baseball bum", that maybe his wife shouldn't have left him, that he's not crazy. But something is wrong. He is not getting the calls from the umpire. Was it that wisecrack he made a few years ago at the sports dinner, the gay rights petition, and the clubhouse incident with President Nixon? Sam only knows that he has to win. What he doesn't know is that the game is fixed.

If I Never Get Back by Darryl Brock**[F/BRO]**

Imagine stepping off a train to stretch your legs and stepping into the 19th century when baseball was the new national pastime. Sam Fowler joins the Cincinnati Red Stockings to alter the past and future.

Havana Heat by Darryl Brock**[F/BRO]**

A former star hurler for John McGraw's brawling Giants, Luther "Dummy" Taylor was also one of the major leagues first deaf players. After a strong season in the buses in 1911, Taylor comes to believe that he has one last shot at returning to his old team. He works his arm into shape by pitching to his brother in the evenings and after wrestling with the decision to leave his wife to pursue his dream, becomes determined to ask for another chance. On the trip to Cuba, he gets more than he bargained for as he faces the renowned Havana teams and a profound challenge thrust upon him by a deaf Cuban youngster.

Play For A Kingdom by Tom Cyja**[F/DYJ]**

May, 1864, in a moment of quiet during the endgame between Grant and Lee, a Union and a Confederate company meet not entirely by accident. The Union soldiers are part of the 14th Brooklyn and left behind on picket duty to guard their army's flank, the soldiers decide to relax with a baseball and bat, when a company of Alabama infantry appears from the woods. These ordinary soldiers were determined to play baseball with the enemy. What began, as a game turns into a business as serious as death and dishonor?

Fear in Fenway by Crabbe Evers

[M/EVE]

Fenway Park, Boston's "lyric little bandbox" and the home of the doleful Red Sox, has served up more New England tears than the Parker House Hotel has rolls. Now a death of a literal variety has slunk past the gates on Yankee Way. It's Old Timers' Day at Fenway, three innings of nostalgia, buffet lines and straining uniform buttons. As Red Sox by-gones are being heaped upon by-gones, two ex-Sox whose critical blunders at crucial moments have robbed the franchise of World Series titles are struck down like line drives whacked at the Green Monster. Perhaps not coincidentally, the two victims were also partners in an attempt to buy the franchise from an embattled Beacon Hill widow.

Tigers Burning by Crabbe Evers

[M/EVE]

Tiger Stadium, the house of Ty Cobb and Al Kaline, Trammell and Whitaker and the Bless You, Boys, is in flames. News of the blaze sears the souls of Tiger fans the world over, yet it warms the heart and pocketbook of an unpopular team owner, a chicken and pasta tycoon, who has long wanted to abandon the old ballpark in favor of a synthetic, suite-filled multiplex. Watching the inferno is veteran sportswriter and ballpark sleuth Duffy House. The fire investigators confirmed they found evidence of arson. Their task turns morbid when the murdered body of Katherine "Kit" Gleason is discovered in the debris.

The Sweetheart Season by Karen Joy Fowler

[F/FOW]

A rebellious young woman of the sixties tells her mother's story of playing on an all-girl's baseball team during the buoyant forties.

How All This Started by Pete Fromm

[F/FRO]

This story portrays with strength and subtlety the heart-wrenching struggles of a family dealing with manic depression and the visceral bond between a brother and his sister.

Suicide Squeeze by Victor Gischler**[F/GIS]**

After Teddy Folger burns down his comic book store for the insurance money, repo man Connor Samson reclaims Teddy's boat, unaware of the priceless stowaway on board and finds himself taking on eccentric billionaire collector Ahira Kurisaka and a gang of would-be ninjas who will stop at nothing to get what they want.

Spirit of the Season by Heather Graham**[F/GRA]**

Becky Wexham was more than willing to make her newly orphaned nine-year-old nephew a member of her family. Since Davey is happiest when playing baseball, Becky does everything she can to help him through Little League tryouts, even though her flame is Tim Yeagher and is the coach. Davey prays every night to his idol, Babe Ruth, to help him improve his game and his aunt Becky's love life. They both learn to just keep swinging, even when the strikes and fouls seem insurmountable. Just keep giving it your all, keep believing and anything's possible.

The New York Yanquis by Bill Granger**[F/GRA]**

Famous hotheaded Yankee owner George Bremenhaven is fed up with his losing spoiled millionaire ballplayers. After firing everyone but a relief pitcher, he replaces them all with young, talented players from Cuba.

A Painted House by John Grisham**[CAS/F/GRI][F/GRI]**

The hill people and the Mexicans arrived on the same day. It was a Wednesday, early in September 1952. The Cardinals were five games behind the Dodgers with three weeks to go and the season looked hopeless. The cotton, however, was waist-high to my father, over my head and he and my grandfather could be heard before supper whispering words that were seldom hear. It could be a "good crop."

Another Jackie Robinson by M.L. Hester**[F/HES]**

It is 1953 in Alma, North Carolina and Sam Bean, the owner of the Class D Behemoths, decides he needs to find “another Jackie Robinson,” a young player of stupendous talents who will bring his minor league baseball franchise out of the cellar. They find Josh Loganberry, a miracle pitcher who also hits home runs and doubles like he was swatting flies and who just may be the best ball player anyone has ever seen. The problem is, he really doesn’t like baseball and wants to back home to Cleo, Florida, become a volunteer fireman and spend time with his pig, Old Joe.

Making the Call by Pat Hines**[F/HIN]**

Wesley Garvin has finally realized her dream – becoming a baseball umpire in the major leagues. As the first woman to enter this male dominated field, she is determined not to let the prejudices of baseball players, other crewmembers, or even the fans deter her from her chosen career. However, Andy Butler, the all-star first baseman for the Pittsburgh Pirates throws a curveball into her well-planned life. Can she have both? Can she make the right call?

Last Man Out by Donald Honig**[M/HON]**

It is February, 1946 in New York is the first glorious postwar baseball season. Best of all, the Dodgers have a sensational rookie prospect, Harvey Tippen. Then fate throws a curve. Society heiress Gloria Manly is found brutally murdered in her East Side townhouse, along with her live-in maid and Harvey had been her lover and now he tops the list of suspects.

7,000 Clams by Lee Irby**[F/IRB]**

When Frank Hearn, a down-on-his-luck bootlegger and tough guy looking to score big in 1920s America, gets his hand on a handwritten IOU for \$7,000 signed by Babe Ruth, he embarks on an odyssey from New Jersey to St. Petersburg, Florida, where the Yankees are about to begin spring training, in order to convince the Babe to give him the money.

The Youngest Hero by Jerry B. Jenkins

[F/JEN]

Determined to protect her son, who has been blessed with an amazing talent, from overly enthusiastic baseball scouts, difficult coaches and greedy agents, a single mother uses wisdom and love to help her son make it to the major leagues on their own terms.

Taking Lottie Home by Terry Kay

[LP/F/KAY][F/KAY]

When Foster Lanier and Ben Phelps are released from a professional baseball team in 1904, it is the only experience they have in common until they meet a runaway on a train that takes them from Augusta, Georgia and away from their dreams of greatness.

The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon by Stephen King

[LP/F/KIN][F/KIN]

Nine-year-old Trisha McFarland, lost in the woods after she wanders off to escape the bickering between her mom and her brother, boosts her courage by imagining that her hero, Boston Red Sox relief pitcher Tom Gordon, is with her, helping her survive an unknown enemy.

Box Socials by W.P. Kinsella

[F/KIN]

This is a story of how Truckbox Al McClintock, a small-town greaser whose claim to fame was hitting a baseball clean across the Pembina River, almost got a tryout with the genuine St. Louis Cardinals but instead ended up batting against Bob Feller of Cleveland Indian fame in Renfrew Park, Edmonton, Alberta. Along the way to Al's moment of truth at the plate, we learn about the bizarre, touchingly hilarious lives and loves of just about anyone who ever passed through New Oslo, Fark, or Venusberg.

The Iowa Baseball Confederacy by W.P. Kinsella [F/KIN]

Gideon Clarke is a man on a quest. He is out to prove to the world that the world-champion Chicago Cubs traveled to Onamata, Iowa, in the summer of 1908 for an exhibition game against all-stars from the Iowa Baseball Confederacy, an amateur league. The game, which was to be short, pleasant, and, the cubs thought, one-sided, turned into a titanic battle of over two thousand innings, played mostly in the pouring rain. This game is not on the record books; no one remembers it or the Confederacy, but Gideon knows it happened and he is determined to set the record straight.

Shoeless Joe by W.P. Kinsella [F/KIN]

The book that inspired the movie Field of Dreams.

Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa by W.P. Kinsella [F/KIN]

Almost equally divided between the real and the fantastic, these ten stories showcase the author's use of precise detail, on-the-mark dialect and shape-shifting variations on the theme of how to survive in the world.

Ring Around the Bases by Ring Lardner [F/LAR]

Historically accurate, richly textured, this book reveals the mast at the height of his craft and celebrates America at play. This collection, then, is the ultimate lineup in baseball fiction.

Battle Creek by Scott Lasser [F/LAS]

Gil Davison is the coach of an amateur baseball team in Michigan. He has spent his adult life juggling his roles as coach to the team, father to his estranged son who has made it clear he is doing just fine without Gil and caretaker to his disapproving father who is dying of cancer. When a hot rookie hitter wanders into town, fresh from a stint in prison, Gil convinces himself that this season his team must win the championship, their last chance to fulfill an elusive dream. As the events unfold, their lives will be changed forever.

The Dryfus Affair by Peter Lefcourt [F/LEF]

In the middle of a pennant race, a team's star shortstop falls in love with his second baseman.

The Natural by Bernard Malamud

[LP/F/MAL][F/MAL]

This is a classic tale of baseball, money, glory, greed and the tarnishing of a shining American Hero.

The Kid Who Batted 1,000 by Troon McAllister

[F/MCA]

The Des Moines Majestyks are deep in the cellar and nothing short of a divine intervention could even get them up to the ground floor. Manager Zuke Johansen has just about given up hope when an unexpected thing happens: A scout introduces him to Marvin Kowalski, a straight-A student, valedictorian of his high school class and on his way to MIT. Marvin has a good eye that he can tell what kind of pitch is coming almost before it leaves the pitcher's hand.

Hitting into the Wind by William Meissner

[F/MEI]

This book contains a series of stories which include a minor-league ballplayer who realizes he'll never make it; an umpire makes his toughest decision – that his marriage is on the rocks; a man fondly collects old baseballs; what really happened to Joe DiMaggio and Marilyn; a kid affectionately calls his Wiffle ball “JFK” until tragedy strikes; a man leaves his wife every morning to hit baseballs until his wife finally leaves him.

Be My Baby Tonight by Kasey Michaels

[F/MIC]

It seemed like a great idea at the time jetting off to Las Vegas to marry All-Star Phillies catcher Tim Trehan, the high-school crush she couldn't forget. If Tim's serious about recapturing her heart, he'd better be prepared to bat a thousand.

Waiting For Teddy Williams by Howard Frank Mosher

[F/MOS]

Kingdom Common, Vermont is noted for its fervent devotion to the Boston Red Sox, and sports a replica of Fenway Park's Green Monster on top of the local baseball bat factory. Ethan “E.A.” Allen has only one close friend to talk things over with, a statue of his namesake on the village green.

Double Play by Robert B. Parker

[CAS/F/PAR][F/PAR]

Joseph Burke is hired as bodyguard to a spoiled twenty-five-year-old woman. This story intertwines with the story of baseball player, Jackie Robinson.

Mob Power Plays by William F. Roemer, Jr. [F/ROE]

FBI Agent Bill Richards is back and he's out to beat the La Cosa Nostra, better known as the Mob, with everything he's got. Opposing Richards are the dons of the New York and Chicago mobs who are teaming up to build the luxurious Tahoe Summit Casino: John Gotti, Tony Accardo and Rocko Robustelli. Robustelli is the boss from Chicago whose son Ricky is a star pitcher for the Chicago Cubs. Will the mob control pro baseball through Robustelli?

Caught In A Rundown by Lisa Saxton [M/SAX]

The bases are loaded with humor and suspense when Jewel and Dee, the wives of two major league baseball players, team up to locate the legendary and mysterious Two-Mile McLemore, star slugger from the old Negro Leagues.

The Cuban Prospect by Brian Shawver [F/SHA]

Hunting out prospects for the minor leagues, failed major league ball player Dennis Birch endeavors to smuggle a promising young pitcher out of Cuba in an effort to make something out of his own career.

Be The One by April Smith [F/SMI]

The only female scout in the majors, hard living Cassidy Sanderson impulsively hops a plane to the Dominican Republic to snatch up young phenom Albert Cruz for the Los Angeles Dodgers but Cruz may have something even Cassidy's well trained eye can't catch – "a bad spirit on him" and when she tangles with Joe Galanis, she becomes ensnared in a tightening triangle of blackmail, voodoo and violence.

The Cincinnati Red Stalkings by Troy Soos [M/SOO]

The warm lazy days of June, 1921 are dark ones for baseball fans as the trial of the Chicago "Black Sox" player's accused of throwing the 1919 World Series begins. But utility infielder Mickey Rawlings thinks he has something to cheer about – playing for the team that won that series, the Cincinnati Reds, until he gets involved in murder.

Hanging Curve by Troy Soos

[M/SOO]

Mickey Rawlings is about to discover there's more at stake than winning a baseball game. East St. Louis is a city scarred by the events of 1917 when white residents massacred their black neighbors in the worst explosion of racial violence in American history. When the game against the East St. Louis Cubs begins, Mickey soon finds that it's considered one more battle in a race war. Pitcher Slip Crawford gives Cubs fans something to cheer about as he shuts down the white club while the black team rolls up the score. But jubilation turns to alarm when the Ku Klux Klan appears in hoods and robes, brandishing rifles.

Murder At Wrigley Field by Troy Soos

[M/SOO]

It's 1918, a grand era in our history and in baseball. Until, that is, a rookie Cubs player is shot in the ballpark!

Hoopla by Harry Stein

[F/STE]

Innocence and corruption, greed and talent, baseball and newspapers are mixed together in this novel about the 1919 World Series.

About 80 Percent Luck by Gene Wojciechowski

[F/WOJ]

A good day for the failed sportswriter-turned-copy editor, Joe Riley, is drinking his beloved Old Style, checking his 401(k) account and staring longingly at the lingerie section of the Sears ads. Riley reluctantly reports to spring training in Arizona, where he is immediately mocked, ridiculed and frozen out, and that's just by some of the veteran Chicago seam heads. Wait until the Cubs get to him.

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**F=Fiction
LP/F/Large Print Fiction
CAS=Book on Cassette
M=Mystery**