

Jackie and Me

Dan Gutman

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Joe Stoshack (Stosh), insulted by an opposing baseball team's player, Bobby Fuller, about his Polish heritage loses his temper and charges the mound to teach Fuller a lesson. Following the fight, Stosh is banned from his Little League. The next day Stosh receives an assignment to write a report on an influential African American in the United States. Stosh, being a baseball fan, chooses Jackie Robinson, traveling back in time to witness Robinson's first game in the Majors. When he arrives, Stosh realizes he has become African American as well. After meeting the Robinsons, Jackie takes Joe to see Opening Day game, becoming a bat boy for the team along with a deranged teenager named Ant. Ant thinks Stosh is a Commie, stealing his modern card (the only vessel to transport him back into his modern time) before Stosh takes it returns to the present. Joe goes back in time once again, this time as a Caucasian, to the Yankee Stadium for the 1947 World Series where the Brooklyn Dodgers were playing the New York Yankees. When there, Stosh enjoys the game before Ant, once again, discovers one of Stosh's present day items, forcing him to return to the present before seeing Game 7 of the series but with the cops after him, he knows it is not possible. Joe leaves 1947, this time for good. For the last game of the season, the Little League lifts Stosh's ban, Stosh once again facing Fuller in the last inning with the score tied. This time Stosh ignores Fuller's jeers and gets a single, managing to successfully steal second, third, and home base to make the winning run.

This is a book I personally recommend for any reader, be they a girl, boy, or even an adult for even now, at the age of 15, this book awakens in me such an, amazing for lack of a better word, feeling which not many other books have or, maybe, ever will. Just the blatancy, yet kid-friendly, manner with which Dan Gutman writes this book, he paints a very vivid picture of the harsh reality of the White America of the 40's and 50's. The courage that ran through the blood of Jackie Robinson, painted by Gutman's words, is infectious to its core. Imagine a man standing when everything was in its harshest point, a time when not even light had the energy to show its face in the delirium of darkness, to go against every civil order that had been considered Gospel at the time. Imagine a man who, receiving hate-letters and death-threats almost daily, stood up and literally dared someone to a shot at him. Jackie Robinson is a man who I wish to embody someday. Dan Gutman gives full credence and affability to a man who, despite his color, race, and quick temper changed our world for the better.