

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**  
(UNDERGOING A PARTIAL REVISION)



**Reflections on the Origins of Baseball**

A Play

by

**E. Gray Simons III**



Newport, Maine

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## **PLAY BALL!**

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## CHARACTERS (5 any gender)

VENDOR — serves as the Narrator (Actor 1)

SPORTSCASTER — Actor 2

REPORTER — Actor 3

MASCOT— Actor 4

UMPIRE — Actor 5

CAVEMAN 1 & 2 (Actors 4 & 5)

QUEEN — Actor 3

PHAROAH — Actor 2

PRIESTS 1 & 2 — (Actors 4 & 5)

REVEREND ALLEN — Actor 4

CHARLES BULFINCH — Actor 5

CHILD 1 & 2— (Actors 2 & 3)

Premiered at the **Berkshire Theatre Festival** -- 2015-16 (BTG PLAYS! Tour)

**PLAY BALL! *Reflections on the Origins of Baseball*** by E. Gray Simons III. 5 Characters any gender. About 1 hour. *TYA PLAY BALL!* blends history, poetry, and a fantastic sense of humor to create an exciting and hilarious play. Audiences will learn the rules and terms of baseball, while simultaneously celebrating the cultural significance of baseball in the USA. Play Ball! aims to enlighten audiences to the importance of the mascot not just as comic relief, but as a symbol of luck and hope that can bring entire cities together. Through fictional interactions with actual historical figures (from Queen Hatshepsut and her son Thutmose III to Reverend Allen and Charles Bulfinch) the audience is shown the spirit behind baseball and how it has evolved to become America's Pastime. Grab some peanuts and crackerjack and get ready for a home run sure to delight audiences of all ages. **Order # 3177**

Playwright **E. Gray Simons III** has worked for twenty years as an Artist-in-Residence at BTF. In 2000, he became Artistic Director of BTF PLAYS! and has since written and directed more than a dozen original plays, among them *Aesop's Network*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Mystery Sideshow 2: Strange Waves*, and *Mystery Sideshow 3: Way Out West*. Simons made his BTF directorial debut in 2000 with *The Wind in the Willows* and in 2001 he became director of the Summer Performance Stories, *The Odyssey*, *The Magic Flute*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Monkey*. Other directorial credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan*(2009) on BTF's Main Stage, *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* and *Holiday Memories* in the Unicorn Theatre, *Robin Hood* at the Berkshire Museum, *The Who's Tommy* at Brandeis University with co-director Eric Hill, and *Big Love* at Brandeis University. His BTF acting credits include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Peter Pan*, *Moby Dick-Rehearsed*, and *Wilder, Wilder*. Berkshire Theatre Festival's year-round education program, BTF PLAYS! serves area students from kindergarten through high school. At the heart of BTF PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre and all its inherent excitement and creativity to children in our region. Each year, more than 10,000 students in underserved rural and inner city schools throughout Berkshire Country are reached through in-school residency programs, vacation camps, and our touring production. Over the course of the summer, BTF PLAYS! hosts vacation camps for students from grades K-6, providing opportunities to learn about acting, improvisation, storytelling, and working behind the scenes in the theatre.

PERUSAL SCRIPT — **Play Ball!** by E. Gray Simons III

PROLOGUE

Being reworked will be available soon

SCENE 1

SETTING: PRIMITIVE EARTH, BEFORE RECORDED HISTORY

(VENDOR takes a stick and foam rock out of his raincoat box)

VENDOR

Since baseball is America's pastime, most folks would assume that baseball started in America. However, that's not quite true. No one knows for sure how and when baseball got started, but it would be safe to say that it was before recorded human history. Most likely some part of baseball has been around as long as there have been sticks

(Holds up stick)

And things to hit with those sticks.

(VENDOR holds up foam rock. Music from the opening theme from "Also Sprach Zarathustra" is heard and VENDOR places the stick and foam rock on the ground. Primitive, monkey-like CAVEMAN 1 enters and, after a moment, discovers the stick. Soon primitive, monkey-like CAVEMAN 2 enters and discovers the rock. CAVEMAN 1 approaches CAVEMAN 2 and hits him on the head with the stick. CAVEMAN 2 gets mad and, after CAVEMAN 1 retreats, hits CAVEMAN 1 with the rock. After CAVEMAN 1 recovers, he starts to play with the rock and hits it with the stick. CAVEMAN 2 becomes interested. CAVEMAN 1 tosses rock to CAVEMAN 2 and encourages CAVEMAN 2 to toss it back. After a moment of puzzlement, CAVEMAN 2 obliges and CAVEMAN 1 hits the rock with the stick. Both CAVEMEN cheer, hug each other and exit.)

Now, we have no actual proof that primitive humans played any form of baseball because they were a hunting and gathering society that moved from place to place and, aside from a few cave paintings, recorded very little of their daily lives. But, with the advent of horticulture, or planting and cultivating, humans began to stay in one place, developed language and started to write down much more about what they were doing. Before long, great human civilizations began to flourish around the world. One of these early powerful empires was in ancient Egypt.

(Organ music is heard as set shifts to Ancient Egypt)

SCENE 2

SETTING: ANCIENT EGYPT, CIRCA 1479 BCE

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(QUEEN enters, carrying a large basket)

VENDOR

In early Spring of the year 1479 BCE, Queen Hatshepsut was the mighty ruler of the Egyptian empire and her son, Thutmose III, had just become Pharaoh.

QUEEN

My son, come here!

(PHARAOH enters as VENDOR exits)

PHARAOH

Yes, Mother?

QUEEN

Since you are now Pharaoh, I would like you to start to assume certain public responsibilities.

PHARAOH

Public responsibilities?

QUEEN

Yes, there are very important rituals that a Pharaoh must perform, so that he might instill confidence in his subjects that he is a capable ruler.

PHARAOH

But, I'm just a boy... And, anyway, aren't you the ruler?

QUEEN

Now that you are Pharaoh, we shall rule together and someday you will be ruling on your own, so I would like you to get used to several very important duties.

PHARAOH

Oh, this sounds like work.

QUEEN

It is... very important work. Listen carefully. This ritual that I would like you to practice will ensure that our people will have plentiful food and good health. There is nothing so vital and, as Pharaoh, it is your job.

(Looks at ground and points)

Look, you see that scarab beetle rolling its egg along the ground?

PHARAOH

(Looks down and sees the beetle.)

Yes.

(They both follow the beetle's progress across the floor, taking small steps together)

QUEEN

Do you know what the scarab represents to our people?

PHARAOH

Yes, you have told me stories about how the Sun God, Ra is pushed across the sky by the great scarab, Khepri. The scarab beetle is the symbol of life itself.

QUEEN

Yes, very good, I'm glad you remembered. What I would like you to practice today is just as important as the scarab.

PHARAOH

Oh, okay.

QUEEN

I have other matters to attend to, but two of the high priests will assist you and make sure you understand exactly what to do.

(QUEEN claps twice and PRIEST 1 and PRIEST 2 enter.)

Please, take my son to the grass field near the banks of the River Nile, so he that may practice the sacred ritual of Seker-Hemat.

PRIESTS

Yes, exalted Queen.

(PRIESTS move to the basket)

QUEEN

And remember, my son... just because it is work does not mean that you cannot find joy in it.

PHARAOH

Yes, Mother.

(PHARAOH exits followed by PRIESTS, who carry the basket. QUEEN waves and exits.  
Set shifts to grassy field)

SCENE 3

SETTING: A GRASS FIELD NEAR THE BANKS OF THE NILE, A SHORT TIME LATER

(VENDOR enters)

VENDOR

Now, the ancient Egyptians had many rituals and most of them were related to some god or other, who they assumed might have control over the inexplicable forces around them, such as the weather. Back then, they didn't have science to explain a lot of the things that are obvious to modern humans, so they created ceremonies that might appease a beneficent god or banish a malevolent god.

(PHARAOH enters followed by PRIESTS, who carry the basket)

The blessed ritual of Seker-Hemat was specifically related to overthrowing chaos and renewing life. Most likely this ceremony took place around the springtime, when the world once again becomes fertile and things begin to grow. It was one of the most anticipated events of the year for it gave everyone a sense of hope and the belief that the coming year would be prosperous. Although for carrying such a symbolic weight, it was not a complicated gesture. Seker-Hemat, when translated into English simply meant “batting the ball”.

PHARAOH

Why are we here in the grass by the river?

PRIEST 1

So that Pharaoh may have privacy while he learns and gains practice.

PRIEST 2

With practice, Pharaoh may perform Seker-Hemat with power and grace.

PHARAOH

What is Seker-Hemat?

PRIEST 1

When done properly, “batting the ball” will banish Apep.

PRIEST 2

The Serpent God of Chaos.

PRIEST 1

Hence, restoring order and tranquility to all the land

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PRIEST 2

And assuring that life will flourish with abundance.

PHARAOH

Once, I was told a bedtime story of Apep... It was about the Sun God Ra and his first journey across the sky... It was very frightening and my dreams were filled with the most disturbing demons!

PRIEST 1

Pharaoh should not be scared.

PRIEST 2

Pharaoh is more powerful than Apep.

PHARAOH

I am?

PRIESTS

Yes!

PHARAOH

So... what do I do?

PRIEST 1

Pharaoh must take up the consecrated cudgel.

PRIEST 2

And strike the malevolent eye of Apep.

PHARAOH

Where are these things?

PRIESTS

In the basket.

PHARAOH

Oh.

(Moves to basket and cautiously looks in)

Can you show me how to do it?

PRIESTS

Oh, no!



PHARAOH

Why?

PRIEST 1

We are not permitted to touch the cudgel or the eye.

PRIEST 2

Only Pharaoh may handle these most hallowed objects.

PHARAOH

Okay...

(PHARAOH reaches apprehensively into the basket and quickly pulls out the cudgel. He shows it to PRIESTS. They nod and point encouragingly to the basket. PHARAOH again reaches apprehensively into the basket and slowly lifts out the eye of Apep, which is about the size of a softball and resembles a large and frightening, greenish-yellow snake eye. PHARAOH shows the items to PRIESTS and they nod and gesture for PHARAOH to hit the eye with the cudgel. PHARAOH does so, but very timidly, and the eye drops only a few feet away. PRIESTS drop to their knees and bow)

PRIESTS

Oh, well struck! Pharaoh shows such skill and strength! Apep could never hope to contend! Etc...

PHARAOH

That's it?

PRIESTS

That is it!

PHARAOH

That wasn't so hard. Should I try again?

PRIESTS

Yes!

PRIEST 1

The farther Pharaoh bats the eye...

PRIEST 2

The farther Apep, Serpent God of Chaos, shall be banished!

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(PHARAOH retrieves the eye without hesitation and this time actually takes a small swing at the eye which goes a little farther. He repeats this a few more times around the stage with growing enthusiasm and confidence. He finally hits it off the stage and pauses)

PHARAOH

This is a wonderfully entertaining pastime.

PRIEST 1

Pharaoh has shown illustrious dexterity!

PRIEST 2

And marvelous power!

PRIEST 1

Would Pharaoh like to continue?

PRIEST 2

Or would Pharaoh like to rest?

PHARAOH

I would like to continue. However, I find it unpleasant to have to fetch the eye myself. I would like you to retrieve it for me.

PRIEST 1

But we may not touch the eye.

PRIEST 2

It would be extremely inappropriate.

PHARAOH

Who made this rule?

PRIEST 1

Pharaoh's mother.

PRIEST 2

The exalted Queen.

PHARAOH

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But, why?

(PRIESTS look at each other and shrug)

Well, since you cannot explain this rule to me, I will change it.

PRIESTS

But—

PHARAOH

Please! Retrieve the eye.

PRIESTS

Yes, Pharaoh!

(PRIESTS exit quickly and return, carrying the eye together. They bow and hand it to PHARAOH)

PHARAOH

Thank you.

(PHARAOH prepares to hit the eye again and then pauses)

I have just had a thought... I believe it would be much more convenient for you to go out into the field and wait for me to bat the eye to you, would it not?

(PRIESTS shrug.)

It would. Please, go out into the field.

(PRIESTS exit)

Ready? Here it comes!

(PHARAOH hits the eye, high off stage and watches for a few moments. There is a shout of pain heard off stage)

Ooohhh!

(Calls off stage)

I'm sorry! Are you all right?

(PRIEST 1 enters carrying eye. PRIEST 2 follows holding hand as if it's injured)

PRIEST 1

Pharaoh is supremely adept at banishing the eye of Apep.

(PRIEST 1 hands eye to PHARAOH)

PHARAOH

Thank you.

(To PRIEST 2)

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I apologize for hitting you.

PRIEST 2

I tried to stop the eye before it hit the ground, but it hurt my hand.

PHARAOH

Hmmm... perhaps we can do something to make it easier for you... Well, for now, whenever I bat the eye toward you just let it drop on the ground. Let's continue!

(PRIESTS start off)

Only this time, one of you should pick up the eye and, instead of taking the time to bring it back to me, just throw it!

PRIESTS

Throw?

PHARAOH

Throw.

PRIESTS

(Looking at each other, trying to understand)

Throw...

PHARAOH

You, know...

(PRIESTS look at PHARAOH and he demonstrates throwing motion)

PRIESTS

(Finally getting it)

Ooohhh!

PHARAOH and PRIESTS

(All do throwing motion)

Throooowww...

PHARAOH

And, this time go farther afield...

(Just as PRIESTS are about to exit, Queen enters)

QUEEN

My son, how are you faring with Seker-Hemat?

PHARAOH

Mother, I find this ritual to be most enjoyable!

QUEEN

I thought you might.

PHARAOH

May I show you how much I have improved after my brief morning practice?

QUEEN

Please do.

(PHARAOH hits the ball off stage with ease and power)

Excellent, my son!

(To PRIESTS)

My son has progressed splendidly under your guidance.

(PRIESTS bow)

I am proud of you, my son. But, you must be tired from batting the eye so far and having to retrieve it?

PHARAOH

Not really.

QUEEN

Good. Then you won't be too tired to finish the rest of your studies this afternoon.

PHARAOH

Oh, can't I keep practicing?

QUEEN

You may come back tomorrow and continue. For now, I would like you to please fetch the eye and then return to the temple for your afternoon meal and lessons.

PHARAOH

Okay.

QUEEN

This is a sign that your rule shall be filled with glorious achievement, my son. The ritual of Seker-Hemat shall take place in front of your subjects next week and I have no doubt you will perform as well as any Pharaoh in recent memory. I could not be happier.

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PHARAOH

Thank you, Mother.

(Queen exits.)

PHARAOH

All right, we shall meet again tomorrow. I have several ideas that I think will enhance the ritual and at the same time increase our enjoyment.

PRIEST 1

Is Pharaoh sure about this?

PRIEST 2

When the Queen finds out we have been touching the eye of Apep  
(PRIESTS look at each other)

PRIESTS

She will not be pleased.

PHARAOH

Let me be concerned with such matters.

(Puts cudgel in basket)

Please fetch the eye and join me here tomorrow with the sacred items.

PRIESTS

Yes, Pharaoh!

(PHARAOH exits. PRIESTS look at each other pick up basket and exit.)

SCENE 4

SETTING: THE GRASS FIELD NEAR THE BANKS OF THE NILE, THE NEXT DAY

(VENDOR enters)

VENDOR

The next day the priests brought the basket containing the hallowed objects to the grass field on the banks of the Nile River just as Pharaoh had instructed.

(PRIESTS enter with basket)

The Pharaoh arrived soon after, smiling gleefully and carrying a bag over his shoulder.

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(PHARAOH enters with bag and VENDOR exits)

PHARAOH

Good morning, Priests!

PRIESTS

Good morning, Pharaoh!

PHARAOH

We shall continue our practice in the same manner as yesterday, only this time our exercise will be less dangerous because you will be wearing these!

(Pulls 2 primitive baseball gloves out of bag. PRIESTS look confused)

Here, try them on.

(Hands gloves to PRIESTS and they put them on)

They will protect you.

PRIESTS

From what?

PHARAOH

When I bat the eye of Apep toward you and you attempt to catch it.

PRIESTS

Catch?

PHARAOH

Catch.

PRIESTS

(Looking at each other, trying to understand)

Catch...

PHARAOH

Like this...

(PHARAOH takes the eye out of basket Demonstrates catching)

PRIESTS

(Finally getting it)

Aaahhh!

PHARAOH and PRIESTS

Caaatch...

PHARAOH

Yes! Now, you may catch the eye of Apep with the glove, without injury, and then throw it back to me.

PRIEST 1

Catch!

PRIEST 2

And throw!

PHARAOH

Good! Please, go far afield and await my striking of the eye.

(PRIESTS exit)

Farther... farther... a little farther... Okay, here it comes!

(PHARAOH hits the eye off stage)

Outstanding catch!

(Eye is tossed back on stage)

Superb throw!

(Pharaoh picks up eye)

Go even farther afield! Farther...

(PHARAOH exits with bat and eye as VENDOR enters)

VENDOR

For the rest of the week, the Pharaoh and the priests met in the grass field every morning by the banks of the Nile River and practiced “batting the ball”. Over that time, the Pharaoh became increasingly more adept and relaxed with his ability and he felt he was ready to perform well in front of his subjects and his mother, the Queen.

(VENDOR moves basket across stage)

SCENE 4

SETTING: GRASS FIELD NEAR THE BANKS OF THE NILE, THE DAY BEFORE THE PUBLIC SEKER-HEMAT CEREMONY



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(PHARAOH and PRIESTS enter and place sacred items into basket)

VENDOR

The day before the ceremony was to take place in front of all the subjects of his Empire, the Pharaoh and the priests met one final time.

PHARAOH

Priests, I think I am ready to do my very best tomorrow in front of my people.

PRIESTS

Indeed!

PRIEST 1

Pharaoh has become extremely proficient!

PRIEST 2

All who witness Pharaoh's superior abilities at the ceremony will be most impressed.

PHARAOH

Well, since I am feeling so confident with the cudgel, I believe I would like to try to catch and throw.

PRIEST 1

Catch?

PRIEST 2

And throw?

PHARAOH

Haven't we been through this already?

(Demonstrates)

Catch... and Throw...

PRIESTS

Oh, yes!

PRIEST 1

But, if Pharaoh insists on throwing and catching...

PRIEST 2

Then that implies that one of us must use the consecrated cudgel to...

PRIESTS

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(PRIESTS look at each other and then back at PHARAOH)

Banish the eye of Apep!

PHARAOH

That is correct.

(Pharaoh takes a glove out of the basket)

You may decide between yourselves who will go first.

(PHARAOH exits and PRIESTS look at each other and then into the basket. Together they very slowly reach into the basket. PRIEST 1 holds the cudgel and PRIEST 2 holds the eye)

PRIEST 1

Perhaps I should go first.

PRIEST 2

Why?

PRIEST 1

It just makes sense.

PRIEST 2

In what way?

PRIEST 1

I am holding the cudgel.

PRIEST 2

But, I am holding the eye.

PRIEST 1

Don't be difficult, just give me the eye.

PRIEST 2

I'm not being difficult, you could just as easily hand me the cudgel.

PRIEST 1

But I have the cudgel.

PRIEST 2

And I have the eye.

PRIEST 1

This is absurd.

PRIEST 2

I thought you said it makes sense.

PRIEST 1

Give me the eye!

PRIEST 2

Give me the cudgel!

(They begin to argue loudly. Moments later the Queen enters)

QUEEN

What in the name of Osiris is going on!

PRIESTS

Exalted Queen!

QUEEN

Are you touching the consecrated cudgel and the eye of Apep?

PRIESTS

Yes.

QUEEN

It is forbidden! Please, explain to me why this has happened!

(PHARAOH enters)

PHARAOH

Mother, I can explain! It's my fault.

QUEEN

My son, did the priests not make it clear that only the Pharaoh may touch the hallowed objects?

PHARAOH

Yes, mother, they were very clear about the rules.

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QUEEN

Then why have you let this happen?

PHARAOH

I thought it would be fun.

QUEEN

Fun? My son, I thought I made myself clear when I told you that our people rely on this ritual as a sign that life will go on in a well ordered and prosperous way. And now that might be ruined.

PHARAOH

Mother, I will make it right.

QUEEN

How? This is about trust, my son. Our people have to believe what we do is in their best interest.

PHARAOH

That will be clear tomorrow, I promise.

QUEEN

Well, I hope so. For better or worse, the ceremony will go on tomorrow at first sunlight and I will have to tell our people what has transpired here.

(Queen exits)

PRIEST 1

We have failed in our duty, Illustrious Pharaoh.

PRIEST 2

We did not see the Exalted Queen coming in time to drop the hallowed objects

PHARAOH

Good priests, this is not your fault. It was my decision and in my heart I don't think it was wrong. I will just have to figure out a way to make amends.

PRIEST 1

What will Pharaoh do?

PRIEST 2

Once the great Scarab beetle, Khepri pushes the Sun God, Ra, into the sky...

PRIEST 1

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The ceremony must begin.

PHARAOH

The Scarab beetle! That's it! Come help me find one on the ground!

(They all start scanning the ground)

Here's one!

(They all follow the beetle's progress, huddled together, taking small steps)

The Scarab Beetle is the very symbol of prosperity and I will make it part of the ritual tomorrow and everyone will be pleased.

PRIEST 2

How will Pharaoh do this?

PHARAOH

You'll see. Come, I'll need your help.

(PHARAOH exits and PRIESTS look at each other and exit)

SCENE 5

SETTING: THE CEREMONIAL PAVILION, THE NEXT MORNING

(VENDOR enters as set shifts to Pavilion)

VENDOR

The next morning, as the dawn light crept into the sky the people of Egypt began to assemble at the great pavilion to witness the sacred and highly anticipated ritual of Seker-Hemat. Soon the venue was full and moments before the sun appeared above the horizon the Exalted Queen, Hatshepsut, stepped forward to address the assembled audience.

(QUEEN enters)

QUEEN

Good people of Egypt, before our ceremony begins, I must deliver unto you distressing news. My son, in his inexperience and carelessness, has allowed the high priests to handle the hallowed objects of this ritual.

VENDOR

At the queen's announcement, there arose a dismayed murmur from the crowd.

QUEEN

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This, as you know, is forbidden and I am sure must come as a shock, but consider our youthful Pharaoh is new to many of our traditions and did not foresee the depth of his error. Please, consider this and the fact that he has assured me that he will do everything in his power to earn your valued trust. With that said... let the ceremony begin.

(PHARAOH enters)

VENDOR

As Pharaoh stepped forward holding the consecrated cudgel and the eye of Apep, a hush fell over the crowd.

PHARAOH

Good people of Egypt, I know I have compromised the bond of trust between us. However, during the course of my training I realized that in order to grow and flourish we must accept change. And, through change we might enhance our understanding of the great bond between ourselves and the mysterious forces that shape our very lives. And so, with this in mind I perform the cherished ritual of Seker-Hemat with the symbolic help of the Khepri, the great scarab and symbol of rebirth.

(Ceremonial drums are heard. The drum music, which may also include funky chanting, is uplifting in the same way that contemporary music can be electrifying to fans at a modern stadium. An example might be “Jump Around” by House of Pain. PRIESTS enter wearing scarab costumes and, moving to the rhythm of the drums, they do a sort of dance and exhort the crowd. Perhaps they use props, signs, symbols, etc... just as a modern Mascot might use devices to enhance the fan experience. After the dance, the PRIESTS pick up prop microphones)

PRIESTS

Ladies and gentlemen!

PRIEST 1

Now stepping up to bat

PRIEST 2

The Pharaoh who changed the rules

PRIEST 1

Egyptian rookie of the year

PRIEST 2

And consecrated cudgel-wielding ruler

PRIEST 1

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Who's twice as nice as the goddess Isis

PRIEST 2

Thutmose

PRIESTS

Three!

(PHARAOH steps forward and shows the crowd the eye of Apep. The PRIESTS hold up "Boo!" signs and exhort the crowd. PHARAOH points to where he will hit the eye.)

PHARAOH

I will now banish the eye of Apep!

PRIESTS

Thute! Mose! Three!

(Exhorting crowd)

Thute! Mose! Three!

(PHARAOH bats eye off stage)

PRIEST 1

And that eye is going...

PRIEST 2

Going...

PRIESTS

Gone!

(QUEEN who has become totally caught up in the excitement, steps forward)

QUEEN

Apep is outta here!

PRIESTS

Exalted Queen?

PHARAOH

Mother?

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QUEEN

My son, you have just taken a treasured ceremony that has been performed over centuries by many great rulers and through imaginative change... made it better. I could not be more honored to be your mother and rule by your side.

PHARAOH

Thank you, mother.

PRIESTS

Thute! Mose! Three!

(Music is heard as PHARAOH, QUEEN, and PRIESTS exit)

VENDOR

From that day on, Seker-Hemat was never the same. After the addition of new rules, the ritual continued to change and, before long, priests were taking part all around the Egyptian empire. In time, the ritual seemed to transform into more of a pastime that everyone came to enjoy. And of course, no rousing bout of “batting the ball” was complete without the presence of Khepri, the great scarab beetle, and the world’s first mascot.

(Set is transformed back to present baseball park)

SCENE 6

SETTING: A BASEBALL PARK, NOW

(MASCOT enters with sign and holds up hand as if to check for rain. After a moment holds up “STILL RAINING” sign. REPORTER enters carrying an umbrella and SPORTSCASTER enters booth)

REPORTER

And there you have the story of the first mascot and the very early origins of baseball. Obviously, there are many other elements, aside from “batting the ball”, which would come later.

(MASCOT puts sign aside and gestures to home plate)

Yes, home plate and the other bases would become essential to the game along with the addition of more fielders and, of course, pitchers. All of these elements along with more specific rules and equipment were



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added over centuries to several baseball-like games, which slowly evolved into the modern game we know today. For more let's go to the booth.

SPORTSCASTER

Because of injury, the use of gloves became common in the late 1800's.

(MASCOT produces a comically large baseball glove)

Yes, in addition to gloves, other protective gear was worn, not only by catchers, but also the umpire,

(UMPIRE enters, carrying mask and adjusting chest protector)

who gradually moved closer to the action. This allowed the Umpire be protected from errant throws, while enforcing all of the rules and making judgements throughout the course of the game.

(MASCOT stands over home plate and signals "safe")

Yes, like "safe!"

(UMPIRE approaches home plate, points at MASCOT and signals "out")

SPORTSCASTER

And, there is also "out!"

(MASCOT mutely protests)

As well as player ejections

UMPIRE

You're outta here!

SPORTSCASTER

Or even tossing out mascots.

(MASCOT shrugs and exits)

SPORTSCASTER

So, the umpire is not only important while the game is going on, but will also decide when the game can continue after a rain delay.

(UMPIRE holds up hand and looks at sky. Thunder is heard)

UMPIRE

Nope, still raining.

SPORTSCASTER

In that case, our continued commentary will have to serve as our entertainment for the time being. Let's go back down to the field.

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REPORTER

As we were reporting, baseball evolved over time and in various forms, but it wasn't until shortly after the American Revolution that modern baseball was specifically recognized in a historical document.

UMPIRE

People used to think it was invented by Abner Doubleday in Cooperstown, NY in 1839.

REPORTER

But it wasn't.

UMPIRE

That was a myth created to support the claim that baseball was invented in America.

REPORTER

Indeed.

UMPIRE

Historically, the first written mention of Baseball was in 1791.

REPORTER

That's true!

UMPIRE

Baseball was cited as a nuisance in a town bylaw in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

REPORTER

Correct.

UMPIRE

Some people were afraid playing baseball in the town square might damage the windows in the new church

REPORTER

Right again.

UMPIRE

But, that's mostly because baseball was still a little bit different and a little more reckless than the game we know today.

REPORTER

Wait, I thought I was supposed to be reporting this story...

UMPIRE

You're outta here!

REPORTER

Okay, you can take over.

UMPIRE

Like I was saying, back in the late 1700's baseball in Massachusetts was still a little bit different than baseball today. And, the good people of Pittsfield, a small town in the western part of the state, were not sure they wanted it played in the town square anymore. This was mostly because of the local pastor, Reverend Thomas Allen, and his desire to build a new church.

(Music is heard. Set shifts to Pittsfield)

**22 more pages to the end of the play**