

# THE GHOST AND JOSH GIBSON

*A Play in One Act*  
*by Robert Joseph Ahola*

# The Ghost and Josh Gibson

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# THE GHOST AND JOSH GIBSON

## *Premise*

Pitcher Satchel Paige and catcher Josh Gibson are believed by many to have been the two greatest baseball players who ever lived.

Both had the misfortune of being black in an era when they were not allowed into what were sometimes erroneously referred to as the Major Leagues.

Close friends and rivals for more nearly 20 years, each man in the twilight of his career faced his own present demons, his own dire sense of mortality, and ultimately his own unique kind of redemption.

The following is a legendary account of their last time together on a warm spring evening in Georgia in 1947, just before Jackie Robinson is brought into the Major Leagues as the first player to break the color barrier — and the bittersweet aftermath of what would soon become a piece of history.\*

*\* Author's note: Although the baseball records, career highlights, professional association and personal friendship of these two are established, some details have been altered for dramatic impact.*

# THE GHOST AND JOSH GIBSON

## *Synopsis of Scenes*

Scene 1: Announcer's Booth. Radio Show.

Scene 2: Josh Gibson's Living Room in Georgia. March. 1947.

Scene 3: The Same Living Room in October 1948.

Scene 3A: (Simultaneously) Announcers Booth on the fly space.

# THE GHOST AND JOSH GIBSON

## *Production Considerations*

The play takes place in one setting with possible use of fly space and simultaneous settings for Scene 2. This would simulate a radio broadcast with two announcers. It is, however, also possible to save set cost and additional actors to pre-record the broadcast and play it as a radio segment on the set. The brevity of the piece would lend successfully to that interpretation.

There are five actors in this brief one act. And it is essential that the three leads be performed by actors of color.

## **Cast of Characters (In order of Appearance)**

**MIRANDA GIBSON:** Josh Gibson's attractive unmarried sister (a black woman about 30).

**JOSH GIBSON:** A massive, powerful, (but obviously ailing) black ballplayer, about 35.

**SATCHEL PAIGE:** A tall, lean, nattily attired, black pitcher of some renown. (In his 40s.)

**ANNOUNCER 1:** A younger announcer. (Also Bill Stern or a Bill Stern type.) (White)

**ANNOUNCER 2:** An old ball player and baseball professional. (White)

# *The Ghost and Josh Gibson*

## **A Play in One Act.**

**Scene 1. Announcer Booth.** *It is the late 1940s. A 1940s era announcer (like a Bill Stern) remembers the ancient days.*

### **BILL STERN (ANNOUNCER 1)**

Dateline, February 19, 1947. And here's what's news in the world of sports. It's not official yet, but the rumor mill has been grinding. And the buzz is that that Baseball Commissioner Branch Rickey has finally taken the first step to lowering the color barrier to Major League Baseball. Over some very serious criticism, he has met with Brooklyn Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley to run the first test case to let a Negro player into the league. And though they have many detractors, both men are determined to push forward with this bold initiative. Still, it does make you want to ask: What about the other great colored players who never had the chance to play in the National or American Leagues, some of whom may have been the greatest ever to play the game? What of them? What indeed...

*Blackout.*

**Scene 2. Living Room of a modest Georgia Home.** *It is 1947. Josh Gibson a tall athletic black man in his mid-thirties is coming into the room, still getting dressed in coat and tie – some of his finest clothes. It is evident that he's having some difficulty and that every movement is an effort to him. He tries to get up when, his sister Miranda, comes over to help him.*

### **MIRANDA**

Now Josh Gibson! You get back in that bedroom and get in bed! You know you're not supposed to be up running around.

### **JOSH**

I'm better now. I'm feeling fine.

### **MIRANDA**

You do not need to put on no show. He's going to see right through it, and you know he is. Satchel Paige is whipcrack smart! And nothin' gets by him.

**JOSH**  
*(fondly remembers)*

The Ghost!

**MIRANDA**  
He does not hold to that nickname, neither.

**JOSH**  
That's why I do it.

**MIRANDA**  
Gets his goat.

**JOSH**  
*(pleased at the thought of it):*  
That's why I do it.

**MIRANDA**  
The only one he'd even let get by with it.

**JOSH**  
That's why it do it.

**MIRANDA**  
That's 'cause he respects you.

**JOSH**  
Still doesn't keep him from runnin' an hour late.

**MIRANDA**  
If he didn't respect you, he' be two hours late.

**JOSH**  
One time with the Crawfords, he kept the whole damned ballpark waiting an hour and a half. 20,000 people! And they waited too! Cause it was Satchel Paige. And then he finally shows up at the pitcher's mound in a limousine! Gets out wearin' a top hat, bows to the crowd, and pitches himself a one hitter. Nobody could put meat on the seats like old Satchel. Not even Babe Ruth. Well... maybe the Babe!

**MIRANDA**  
Well, you're gonna put your meat back in that bedroom and back in that bed!

**JOSH**  
It ain't manly.

**MIRANDA**  
No! But it sure is smart. But you'd rather be "manly" than smart. That's for damn sure.



**JOSH**

I can't let him see me like that.

**MIRANDA**

Well, it ain't exactly a national secret now!

**JOSH**

What national secret?

**MIRANDA**

That you're not feelin' ...

**JOSH**

*(interrupts)*

And that's all they know!

*(He posts himself on the arm of the couch.)*

Maybe if I just sit on that couch...

**MIRANDA**

Maybe if I just slap you up side the head!

**JOSH**

Not my head, thank you.

**MIRANDA**

Too thick to hurt. That's for sure.

*(Notes his difficulty).*

You need to be back in that bed!

**JOSH**

I need to be right were I am at the moment. And this is where I'm stayin'.

*(The bell rings. Miranda fusses like a schoolgirl.)*

**MIRANDA**

That's him.

**JOSH**

You don't have to fuss. He's not gonna propose anyhow. Well he might, but he won't mean it!

**MIRANDA**

Aw shut up. Just shut up.

**JOSH**

Already got him a wife.

**MIRANDA**

Just shut up.

**JOSH**

Had several in fact.

**MIRANDA**

Josh Gibson, you shut up! Just shut up, now!

**JOSH**

Got the sweets for his meat!

*(She glares, and turns to go.)*

**MIRANDA**

I hate you sometimes. You're my brother, and I hate you sometimes.

*(She runs out of the room Josh tries to straighten himself upright on the couch. He does so with some difficulty.)*

**JOSH**

*(to himself)*

She does! Carrying a torch like a lighthouse! .

*(He sits gingerly back down on the couch, then realizes that he should be standing when his guest arrives. So, he stands back up. As he does, Miranda comes back into the room with a tall lean stately black gentleman — Satchel Paige.)*

**MIRANDA**

Look at what I found wandering around outside.

**SATCHEL**

*(obviously delighted)*

Josh Gibson, the legend his own self!

**JOSH**

The Ghost!

**SATCHEL**

*(steps back, shakes his finger)*

Satchel! Don't you be callin' me no ghost now!

**JOSH**

The Ghost!

**SATCHEL**

*(admonishing)*

No Ghost! Satchel Paige, now! I worked too hard to get this name.

**JOSH**

*(to Miranda)*

I mean! Look at this man. So skinny, that if he turned sideways you couldn't see him. Damn sure couldn't see those fastballs he was throwing. Like he wasn't there. Like a Ghost!

**SATCHEL**

*(holds out his hand then pulls it back)*

Satchel's the name. Baseball's the game! Don't go callin' me no ghost. Or I am gonna disappear! You hear?

**JOSH**

Well, I just guess I'll be calling you Leroy.

**SATCHEL**

Don't you be callin' me no Leroy neither, or I will leave.

**JOSH**

Your first ex-wife used to call you Leroy.

**SATCHEL**

Lucinda? She used to call me lots of things. Now she mostly calls me for money.

*(Laughing to think about it.)*

That's what she calls me.

**JOSH**

And calls and calls. I got me one of those.

**SATCHEL**

Only one?

**JOSH**

One's enough in that area, I think you very much.

**MIRANDA**

Would you two just stop it now? You two do this every time you get together. Nagging each other like to little boys taunting' in a schoolyard. Who's got the most of what. Who's better at what! Just grow up now! Or you're not getting my lemonade.

**SATCHEL**

Well, that does it. Don't want to miss none of Miranda's lemonade.

**JOSH**

No, it's good all right. I drink it everyday, myself.

**SATCHEL**

You used to drink somethin' a little harder than that.

**JOSH**

Well, we all did. But times have changed.

**SATCHEL**

But you haven't. Damn! You look great!

*(He comes over to shake Josh's hand. Josh takes Satchel's hand and his arm. They're obviously very glad to see one another but stop short of embracing.)*

And I heard you weren't feelin' too well.

**JOSH**

"Rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

**SATCHEL**

Mark Twain!!

**JOSH**

That where that came from? You always was a reader, Satchel.

**MIRANDA**

Well, that's better now. I'm gonna go get us some lemonade.

**SATCHEL**

Miranda's lemonade, like Miranda herself! High yellow and sweet to the last drop.

**MIRANDA**

Satchel. You are trouble! That's what you are.

*(Flattered and flustered, she exits.)*

**JOSH**

Well, you lookin' for another bride?

**SATCHEL**

Had me enough of them already, thank you just the same. Damn women! They're a cure for fat wallet. That's for damn sure!

*(They sit down. Josh struggles onto the couch. Satchel notices.)*

You feelin' all right then?

**JOSH**

Oh, sure. Sure! Be back in action next season. Next season for sure. Got a call from Cum Posey just the other day.

**SATCHEL**

You still talking' to that old tightwad? That man squeezes the eagle 'til it screams.

**JOSH**

Well, educated niggers do that. They count their money, because they can.

**SATCHEL**

Just because he graduated from Penn State doesn't mean he ain't the stingiest man ever born.

**JOSH**

Had my best years with the Homestead Grays.

**SATCHEL**

Best years with the Crawfords and with me! Where the money was! Three batting titles. And what... 800 home runs?!

**JOSH**

I never counted. Didn't seem to matter all that much.

**SATCHEL**

More than 800 in big league parks?! Most of them were home run graveyards and you blew the ball out of 'em like they was on a flight to Paris.

**JOSH**

But they say it don't count because we're coloreds. Stats for coloreds don't count. They say we can't keep statistics right.

**SATCHEL**

Well, they say a lot of things. They are so full of shit, it turns their blue eyes brown. And you are the greatest hitter of all time. And no one can take that away from you. Babe Ruth ought to shine your shoes.

**JOSH**

Now, Satchel! Babe was a great player, now!

**SATCHEL**

He was no Josh Gibson. He never knocked the ball out of Yankee Stadium. Clean out! You did! You did it.

**JOSH**

Well, they don't know that. They just couldn't find it, that's all.

**SATCHEL**

Come back out, and “lose” some more of them balls. The game needs you, man. Ain’t the same. And you miss it. You know you do.

**JOSH**

Hadn’t been that long.

**SATCHEL**

*(rhapsodizes)*

You step out on that field and you can just smell the fresh cut grass. You feel that soft red dirt beneath your feet, and you dig in them spikes. And you catch the fresh smell of hot peanuts.

**JOSH**

And the stands filled with crackers!

*(They both laugh at the irony of it.)*

**SATCHEL**

Yeah, but black folks too, all sittin’ together — black and white in the stands. Ten... twenty thousand all out to see us. All with admiration in their eyes. Looked like one big polka-dot quilt.

**JOSH**

I don’t know about them big polka-dot quilts, now.

**SATCHEL**

You know what I mean. They was there to see us. Not the Washington Senators. Not the Pittsburg Pirates. They had to pay people to come watch them. They was there for us — The Crawfords! You and me. Cool Papa... all of us!

**JOSH**

You know what I miss most. I miss being shoulder to shoulder with some of the best men ever to wear spikes.

**SATCHEL**

I know.

**JOSH**

I could look down that first base line and see Buck Leonard on my team. And Smoky Joe Williams. That man could throw a lamb chop past a wolf.

**SATCHEL**

I know. Nothin’ else like it...

*(He weighs his words.)*

I also know they talked to you about goin’ up to the white leagues.

**JOSH**

Some idea Mr. Rickey had. Nice man, Branch Rickey. But it was just talk.

**SATCHEL**

Maybe not, now.

**JOSH**

They busted the idea. Said I was “a loose cannon.” Too unpredictable.

**SATCHEL**

If that don’t beat all.

**JOSH**

Said if they did it, they’d need a “educated Negro” — a college man.

**SATCHEL**

See there! They never asked me.

**JOSH**

Well, you ain’t no college man, neither.

**SATCHEL**

That’s cause they think I’m past it. They say my arm’s froze up.

**JOSH**

Just because you’re 75 years old...

**SATCHEL**

Don’t you go callin’ me no 75 , now!

**JOSH**

All right... 65!

*(They both laugh at the thought of it.)*

**SATCHEL**

What we need to do is educate them. They don’t know it, but they need us both!  
But we’re gonna show ‘em. Because they’re gonna get us both!

*(Satchel gets up out of his chair and goes to the mantle.  
Josh looks out a window that isn’t there.)*

**JOSH**

You maybe!

**SATCHEL**

Both of us! We’ll show ‘em what they’re missing.

**JOSH**

Not in this lifetime.

**SATCHEL**

That's why you got to come and play – with me!

**JOSH**

What team? You played for so many, they couldn't even find you half the time.

**SATCHEL**

*(leans on the mantle, holding out his hand as if to display the banner)*

With the Satchel Paige All-Stars!

**JOSH**

Again! You doin' that "All-Star" thing again!

**SATCHEL**

You made some money with them, now. Better money than anyone else, any time. We got white man's wages then. Better! Better than the National League!

**JOSH**

As long as it lasted. Didn't last long.

**SATCHEL**

Nothin' lasted long in our league. Hell we're coloreds. You do what you can. You got to keep movin' and never look back...

*(He quotes himself with pride.)*

"Something might be gaining on you."

**JOSH**

*(remembers with amused horror)*

Like the Trujillo All-Stars. They were gainin' on us down in the Dominican Republic. Damn near got ourselves shot. Object lesson: Never play for a dictator and come close to losing.

**SATCHEL**

*(laughs to remember)*

Old Rafael didn't like losin'. Not to Batista's Cuban Giants! Did not like losing!

**JOSH**

*(pleased at the recollection)*

Good as you were, you picked the wrong time to have an off day, that's all I can say. Down 3 to 2, and I never saw you pitch so hard. Nine strike-outs in the last three innings. Shut 'em down.

**SATCHEL**

If you hadn't hit that three run homer in the ninth, we'll all be kickin' up daisies!  
*(Sings it.)*

Buried alive in Santo Domingo!!!

*(Satchel paces about in front of the couch like a cat trying to sense the degree of Josh's infirmity.)*



**JOSH**

*(laughs to remember)*

When twenty soldiers step onto the first base line with loaded Tommy guns, you get real focused.

*(He shakes his head, starts to get up but thinks better of it.)*

**SATCHEL**

But the pay was good: \$3000 apiece for six weeks! More than they paid for a whole season in the bigs.

**JOSH**

I suppose... At least they let us play.

**SATCHEL**

And never had one of 'em ever call us a nigger. Or tell us we couldn't play ball.

**JOSH**

Well, no... But all men are created equal down the barrel of a gun. I was just glad to hitch a ride on that bi-plane of yours and get on off that island.

**SATCHEL**

*(laughing to remember)*

Never flew so fast neither.

**JOSH**

Lawdee! Lawdee law! Quickest take-off I ever saw!

*(He remembers)*

You still got all them airplanes?

**SATCHEL**

Nope. Down to one. But it still says "Satchel Paige's Travelin' Road Show."

*(He paints the image with his hands)*

In great big yellow letters on the side. Red Plane – Gold letters!

**JOSH**

Style. Always with style.

**SATCHEL**

You got to have style. Or you got nothin' now.

**JOSH**

Whole world travels by train, and you got to have a plane. Not just a plane. Your own plane.

**SATCHEL**

Had to. It's too hard for coloreds to fly commercial. Besides... Did you know they let you write all that off for taxes?!

*(Again, he paints the image with his hands)*

"Promotional Expense."

**JOSH**

You always was smart with a nickel, Satchel.

**SATCHEL**

And how about you, Josh? You all right? For money, I mean?

**JOSH**

Oh... getting by.

**SATCHEL**

Well, we want more than just "getting-by."

*(Miranda reenters, carrying a tray of lemonade. She sets it down. She has probably overheard. Satchel goes to help but she waves him off.)*

**JOSH**

Satchel was just tellin' us about his promotional airplane.

**MIRANDA**

*(Hopeful, she starts pouring.)*

I ain't never been in no airplane.

**SATCHEL**

Well then, it's high time you did.

**MIRANDA**

And I don't know if I'd go up with no barnstormer like Satchel Paige! I'm not like all them loose women you hang out with.

*(She hands the lemonade out while the men laugh. They all sit back down)*

**SATCHEL**

I'd treat you like a goddess! Like my own mama.

**MIRANDA**

Hmmmph! I seen your "goddesses" a time or two. And you're mama won't even claim you.

**SATCHEL**

*(sipping)*

Oh, man! Lemonade like that, and I might have to propose.

**JOSH**

Too mean to marry... too pretty to ignore.

**SATCHEL**

Besides, I've come back for the greatest hitter in baseball! Take him to the majors with me.

**MIRANDA**

*(looks to Josh)*

What have you two been up to while I've been that kitchen?

**JOSH**

Just talkin'.

**MIRANDA**

I think you've been smokin' something. That's what I think.

**SATCHEL**

Just talkin' business. Serious business.

**MIRANDA**

Now, Satchel. Josh hasn't been feelin' too well this last year.

**JOSH**

Just a little dizziness, that's all.

**MIRANDA**

More than dizzy!

**JOSH**

That's all, woman! That's all it is!

**SATCHEL**

Sure it is. Sure it is. That's all. Hell you always was a bit dizzy Josh. With those foul balls. Always losin' 'em in the sun. Still the best catcher ever to play the game. Still the best battery ever to take a field. Right?

**JOSH**

Those were the days.

**SATCHEL**

And more to come! And we're goin' to the bigs. Goin' to the majors.

**MIRANDA**

Come on Satchel. Still that dream? Don't do it, Satch! It only brings you pain.

**JOSH**

Man's gotta dream now Mandy. Don't got a dream, and you don't got nothing.

**SATCHEL**

I will play baseball in the major leagues. That is my dream. That is my promise. And you too, Josh. You're still a young man. Thirty Five?

**JOSH**

Thirty-six next week.

**SATCHEL**

That's young. Hell, I'm damn near forty.

**JOSH**

Older than that. I know for a fact, you're forty-four.

**SATCHEL**

Shhhh.... You don't know nothin', hear? I'm thirty-nine.

**JOSH**

Like Jack Benny. Been 39 so long, it's startin' to look like 49!

**SATCHEL**

Now, don't you go throwin' no numbers like that at me. Baseball numbers okay!  
But no age numbers!

**JOSH**

I'd like to have that age number. I'd take that age number right now.

**SATCHEL**

You're gonna live forever.

**JOSH**

So, you say.

**SATCHEL**

Besides age is all mind over matter. "If you don't mind, it don't matter."

**JOSH**

Only man I know who quotes his own self.

**SATCHEL**

Well, you can quote me on this. I will play in the majors. And you will too. They can't keep the two best ballplayers ever in the game out of the game. We're goin' up together. You and me. But for now you play for the Satchel Paige All-Stars. One more time!

**JOSH** (*Thinking about it.*)

One more time...

**MIRANDA** (*upset bursts out*)

Stop it, you two — just stop it, now! You're not goin' up. Never! They'll never let black players in the National League. Or the American League. Or the Texas league. Or any league with white players, because they're all scared to death of you. They're scared of the power in you. Because, you're dangerous, and they know it. Because if you go up, then we all get to have dreams. And dreams are dangerous things in the wrong hands. [Or so they think... And that is how they think!] And they want to keep us thinking we're inferior.

**SATCHEL**

*(laughing but losing it)*

We're so inferior, we played the white all-stars how many times?

**JOSH**

421!. But you know that, Satchel. You're always the man with the numbers.

**SATCHEL**

421 times! And the white Major League All-Stars won 139 times! And we won 282 times. Twice as many times against their best – Ruth, Gerhig, Jimmy Foxx. DiMaggio, Rogers Hornsby, Lefty Grove. We beat 'em all. And they tell us we're inferior, that we can't play with them. Hell, Josh hit Dizzy Dean so hard Old Diz ran and hid behind his second baseman the last time he came up.

**JOSH**

Ol' Diz always did have a sense of humor.

**SATCHEL**

And we packed them in. Griffith Park, the Polo Grounds, Ebbets Field – wherever we played.

**JOSH**

Every time you showed up, Satch. You was the attraction.

**SATCHEL**

We were all the attraction!

*(Remembers as if he sees it.)*

Buck Leonard, could catch moonbeams if he had to. Cool Papa Bell, fastest man on earth between the bases. So fast, he could turn out his night light, jump in bed and pull up the covers, before the room went dark. And Josh Gibson... Lifetime batting average just under .370. That's cause you had a bad last year. Because you wasn't feeling well.

**JOSH**

*(to Miranda)*

Ever notice how we all gets better every time we talk about it?

**SATCHEL**

We are better. We are the best. You are what you think you are: Nothing more; nothing less.

**JOSH**

Inspirational! You always were inspiring, Satchel. You make a man want to believe! You make a man want to hope!

*(He gets emotional and gets to his feet).*

And all this lemonade... makes me have to make water.

*(He struggles to his feet and stumbles. Miranda starts to run to him but he waves her off. Satchel gets up as well.)*

**SATCHEL**

You all right?

**JOSH**

Leg just went to sleep. That's all.

*(Josh exits with some difficulty. After they watch him leave, Miranda turns to Satchel. Seeing her concern, he turns away, sipping his lemonade.)*

**MIRANDA**

Satchel Paige don't you do this!

**SATCHEL**

I got to.

**MIRANDA**

Don't you dare give him hope.

**SATCHEL**

Without hope a man stops taking in air. Without dreams, a man stops living.

**MIRANDA**

He's dying, Satchel!

**SATCHEL**

Don't you think I know that?!

**MIRANDA**

Got a tumor on his brain the size of a grapefruit!

**SATCHEL**

I know. I know.

**MIRANDA**

Wouldn't let the doctors operate. Never!

**SATCHEL**

Given the odds they have with brain tumors, I don't blame him. He'd be a vegetable or a cripple.

**MIRANDA**

He'd never stand for that. He's a proud man, Satchel. He's such a proud man! Don't let on that you know!

**SATCHEL**

I know that. I know that! I know everything that's going on here! You think I wouldn't find out. You don't think Cum Posey doesn't know about this?! Why do think he's been calling?! You think Cool Papa doesn't know that?! And Babe Ruth! And Joe DiMaggio!? That's right! White players too! They all care about Josh! A lot of them wanted to play us. They wanted us in the League! The League just wouldn't let us... But they're gonna let us. They're gonna let us, now!

**MIRANDA**

He won't live to see it, Satchel.

**SATCHEL**

He's got to!

**MIRANDA**

He's old before his time now.

**SATCHEL**

He's got to hang on. Just a while longer.

**MIRANDA**

I don't know that he can. He's sicker than you think. He's sick, Satchel! Sick....

**SATCHEL**

I know. But I'm going to live it for both of us! For all of us! You hear, girl?

**MIRANDA**

You are the most determined man I ever knew.

**SATCHEL**

They've got a young black player in the minors now. Jackie Robinson. They say they're gonna bring him up to the Brooklyn Dodgers before the year is out.. That's what this Mr. Branch Rickey's doin'. He's worked it out, so that we can play. It's just a matter of time.

**MIRANDA**

That's cause they finally got rid of that colored hatin' old man, Kennesaw Mountain Landis!

**SATCHEL**

Hated us so much, it took him 20 years before he'd ever wear a black suit. Well, evil has a way of getting rid of itself. Good will always win out. That is the divine spark in us after all.

**MIRANDA**

Why Satchel? Why bother? You got nothing to prove. You've won more than any five pitchers who ever lived.

**SATCHEL**

So, they say... But that was then... This is now we're livin' in. This moment! And this moment's all we've got!

**MIRANDA**

But why? You've got money. You've got fame. What have you got to prove?

**SATCHEL**

I got to prove they can't keep us down. Nobody can keep a man down if he believes in his own self. That goes for me. And that goes for Josh.

**MIRANDA**

Oh, Satchel! You are the damndest, most stubborn man!

*(She runs over and hugs him, starts to heave.)*

I'm so scared.

**SATCHEL**

It ain't over yet. Not yet!

*(As they embrace, Josh enters the room, likes what he sees.)*

**JOSH**

See there, now! Caught you two, flagrante dilecto. Idn't that it? Flagrante Dilecto? See I knew that.

**SATCHEL**

My, my! Latin at that!

**JOSH**

Well, that's what my wife's lawyer said she caught me doing. Flagrantin' the Dilecto. Anyway, it sure was expensive whatever it was. And now that I caught you two, you got to do right by my baby sister.

**SATCHEL**

Well, all right then.

**JOSH**

Always wanted a rich relative.

**SATCHEL**

I will marry Miranda if you come and play with us. With the Satchel Paige All-Stars!. And then on to the majors. You got to play with me!

**JOSH**

Got to play with you. Wouldn't play against you. That's for damn sure. Tried that. Don't want to do that again.

**MIRANDA**

That famous moment.



*(Recalling, Miranda walks away, bows her head).*

**SATCHEL**

Well, that's what you get for goin' back to them candy-ass Homestead Grays.

**JOSH**

*(walks uneasily over by the couch)*

The whole world was waitin' to see us square off at each other. Me at the Grays, and you at the Crawfords. Like old times.

**MIRANDA**

The two best ballplayers ever finally face-off against each other.

**SATCHEL**

And what did you tell me? What did you tell me, now?

**JOSH**

*(embarrassed)*

Naw, I didn't say that.

**SATCHEL**

Sure did! Sure did! You said: "Hope you know the way to China. Because that's where your first pitch is going." That's what you said. You said it. Got it on record.

*(Satchel strolls over opposite Josh, as if to reenact the moment. Josh almost instinctively takes up the batters position on the opposite side of the couch. He crouches with an imaginary bat.)*

**JOSH**

*(quoting)*

And you said...

**ALL THREE**

You can't hit what you can't see!!

**SATCHEL**

And then I said here comes a snake at the waist.

**MIRANDA**

*(remembers almost like a Greek Chorus)*

And you blew the ball by him so fast his bat never left his shoulders.

**JOSH**

But I swung on the next one.

**SATCHEL**

A pest at the chest.

**JOSH**

Missed it like I was late for church.

**MIRANDA**

*(Sad reflective)*

And then you called it right at him.

**SATCHEL**

I said. "Strategy says I should send in some chin music about now. But I'm not throwing smoke at the yoke. I'm gonna toss a pea at the knee."

*(He winds up and hurls an imaginary strike, and Josh good-naturedly takes a wild swing and falls down behind the couch.)*

And you swung so hard... It was like a train blew by. But you didn't fall down now!

*(They're both laughing, but Josh tries to get up and can't. He struggles, but can't pull himself up.)*

Josh Gibson never fell down!

*(Suddenly Satchel realizes his friend can't get up and rushes over to him. Miranda does as well. They help him up. He gets to his feet and waves them off, brushing off his pants.)*

**JOSH**

Just a little shaky. That's all. Just a little dizzy. That's all.

**SATCHEL**

Why sure. Why sure!

**JOSH**

I think I may have to go rest for a while. But I'll be ready come summer. You hear? By July at the latest.

**SATCHEL**

It's a long season. Of course you will.

*(They try not to make too much of it. Josh shakes his hand and gives him a pat on the shoulder as he walks by.)*

**JOSH**

I'm gonna lie down for a bit. But you stay and visit. Hear? Mandy will cook you some dinner. Won't you girl?

**MIRANDA**

Sure thing...

*(Slowly, with the gait of a man twenty years his senior, Josh makes his final exit. Miranda turns to Satchel.)*

You staying aren't you, Satchel?

**SATCHEL**  
*(shakes his head)*

I can't. How are you for money?

**MIRANDA**  
*(reluctant)*

We're okay.

**SATCHEL**

The truth now!!

**MIRANDA**

Not good. The medication and all has cost so much. And he's too proud to ask for help. You know him, Satchel. You know him as well as any...

**SATCHEL**

You take this.

*(He pulls out a wad of bills)*

**MIRANDA**

That's a thousand dollars! That's a year's wages for some. I can't take that.

**SATCHEL**

Hell woman, I can make money in my sleep! Money is nothing. Money is a symbol; that's all! Now... you keep that! That'll take care of some things... An advance on his salary for the Satchel Paige All-Stars!

**MIRANDA**

*(pockets the money, hugs him)*

Oh, Satchel.

*(He holds her, then backs off to go.)*

**SATCHEL**

And I am going up to the majors! And I will pitch in a World Series! And when I do, I'm going to take off my hat to the crowd, and bow. And then I'm going to take off my hat to the outfield and bow. And then I'm going to take off my hat to home plate. And they won't know why. But it will be to honor the greatest catcher ever to play the game of baseball. And the greatest hitter who ever lived! And I will do that, you mark my words!

**MIRANDA**

*(tearful, acknowledges him)*

I know you will. Because you're Satchel Paige!!

**SATCHEL**

And there's only one.

*(He smiles and tips his hat, and almost instantly vanishes.)*

## MIRANDA

Here one minute. Gone the next...

*(To be continued...)*

If you wish to read the complete script, please contact the playwright directly:

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