THILLENS STADIUM

By Lonnie Carter

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860 824 8011

Time: Late August 1954.

Place: Thillens Stadium, Devon and Kedzie, Chicago.

Characters (in order of appearance):

Billy Powell, III, 12 years old; African-American

Lonnie Carter, 11 years old; White

Both boys are in Chicago Cubs' uniforms.

Billy Powell, III

Last game.

Lonnie

No.

Billy Powell III

Last game.

Lonnie

No.

Billy Powell III

One more time.

Lonnie

I'm ready.

Billy Powell III

You're not ready. You never ready.

Lonnie

I'm always ready. I'm ready. Of course, I'm ready.

Billy Powell III

I'm going to wipe you out.

Lonnie

You and who? Tommy Thillens? Elliot Josephson? Paulie Biebel?

Billy Powell III

Paulie on the team because his uncle the announcer. Paulie last chosen number 25. What your number? Seventeen? Come on, tell me.

Lonnie

I don't know.

Billy Powell III

You know. O, I just guessed it. Twenty-four. Next to last ahead of Paulie whose uncle announces the games. And Elliot Josephson? He got some talent.
And Tommy got an arm, roaming center field, throwing home and a bat as well. Doesn't matter his old man and uncle own the place, that's what my dad says. He got talent. Could go far.

Lonnie

That's what my dad says. Could go far.

Billy Powell III

Your dad; my dad.
Twenty-four? Well, you got some…talent.

Lonnie

My mom; your mom.

I got some talent. And you will see it on display. To-DAY.

And tomorrow. You know tomorrow?

Billy Powell III

I know tomorrow?

Lonnie

Picnic.

Billy Powell III

What picnic?

Lonnie

You know. It's been in the works for weeks. Your parents. My parents. Us?

Billy Powell III
O, yeah, I heard them say something.

Lonnie
We'll bring Russell's.

Billy Powell III
Russell's?

Lonnie
I thought you lived on the South Side. The best pork in all Chicago.

Billy Powell III
I doubt you know your pork, sonny.

Lonnie
You'll see.
Now, you ready? I'm ready.

Billy Powell III
I'm going to wipe you out. You got Paulie on your side. Number twenty-four and twenty-five, how they say, intertwined, no whinin' from the intertwinin'.
I don't need help. Tommy, Elliot - don't need them.

Lonnie
You going to start or not? It's your turn.

Billy
My turn. Hold on to your cap, boy.

Larry Doby. Newark Eagles. July 5, 1947. Cleveland Indians.

Lonnie
Jackie Robinson. Kansas City Monarchs. April 15, 1947. Brooklyn Dodgers.

Billy Powell, III
Monte Irvin. Mr. Murder. Newark Eagles. July 8, 1949. New York Giants.
Roy Campanella said Mr. Murder best all'round player he ever saw.

Lonnie
Campy sees Jackie all'round every day.

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Mr. Murder led the league in RBI's and stole home in the 1951 World Series.

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Billy Powell III
James Thomas Cool Papa Bell. "Quick as a wink, fast as a blink." "All my life I wanted to find someone so fast he could steal first base. His name is Cool Papa Bell."

Lonnie
Jack Roosevelt Robinson, Born: January 31, 1919 in Cairo, GA
High School: Muir Technical (Pasadena, California)
School: University of California, Los Angeles

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Cool Papa went from first to third and no one ever saw him cross second.
Cool Papa, The Tan Cheetah. College? Hell, Satchell Paige said, "If Cool Papa had known about colleges or if colleges had known about Cool Papa, Jesse Owens would have looked like he was walking."

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Jackie Robinson. Rookie of the year 1947.

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Henry Louis Aaron. Bad Henry. Indianapolis Clowns.
Willie Mays. Say Hey. Minneapolis Millers. .
Ernie Banks, Such a nice day; let's play two. Kansas City Monarchs.
Ernie going to be Mr. Cub. Just you watch.

Lonnie
Most Valuable Player 1949.

Billy Powell III
What's with you and this Dodger stuff?

Lonnie
I'm a Jackie fan.

Billy Powell III
Cool P many times scored from first on a bunt.

Lonnie
Once maybe.

Billy Powell III
Jackie ever do that?

Lonnie
Lots of times.

Billy Powell III
Go on. My father says there are lots of ball players better than your Jackie.

Lonnie
My Jackie? Thought he was your Jackie.

Billy Powell III
Maybe he's everybody's Jackie.

Lonnie
What are you going to do next year?

Billy Powell III
What do you mean?

Lonnie
I mean in the summer. You going to play Pony League?

Billy Powell III
Pony League?

Lonnie
Pony League. Thirteen, fourteen.

Billy Powell III
There ain't no Pony League where I live.

Lonnie
There ain't no Thillens where you live. I mean, you live on the South Side –

Billy Powell III
I know where I live.

Lonnie
So you mean you're not going to play? You got to play.

Billy Powell III
You got another year here. You're eleven. I'm twelve, so I'm done. It's been nice, but I'm done.

Lonnie
You're a great pitcher. You're not done.

Billy Powell III
Maybe I'll wait a couple of years and play in the Negro Leagues.

Lonnie
They're not still going to be around. I bet –

Billy Powell III
You bet, you probably win that bet. Well, my Dad says nobody goes to see them any more. Everybody wants to see Jackie.

Lonnie
And Don Newcombe and Roy Campanella and Junior Gilliam..

Billy Powell III
That's the point. There aren't enough of us to go around. And I'm the only one here.

Lonnie
What about our picnic? We're still having our picnic, aren't we?

Billy Powell III
I guess. Is that what your folks say?

Lonnie
Yeah. Isn't that what your folks say? End of the season picnic. We play the last game tonight and then tomorrow we have a picnic. We'll meet you someplace near where you live. That park. My dad says he knows where it is. Bring your glove. I'll bring a couple of bats and a couple of balls. Our dads say they'll play too.

Billy Powell III
Is that what our Dads said?

Lonnie
Yeah, didn't you hear them? And our Moms will bring the food. My Mom makes great fried chicken and potato salad.

Billy Powell III
My Mom makes that too. And sweet potato pie.

Lonnie
What's that?

Billy Powell III
O, sonny, you got a lot to learn.

Now what about this Russell's?

Lonnie
We'll bring that too. You'll see.
And our Moms will maybe have a fried chicken cook-off.

Billy Powell III
I guess we won't have a sweet potato pie cook-off.

Lonnie
I mean it ain't going to be a contest. I'm sure your Mama's chicken is just as good, but different than my Mama's. Why I heard them talking about special ingredients.

Billy Powell III
You heard our moms talking about what?

Lonnie
Well, I didn't exactly hear, but they were talking about our picnic.

Billy Powell III
I didn't exactly hear either. I don't eavesdrop.

Lonnie
I didn't eavesdrop. They talked about it. I heard them. Overheard them. Couldn't miss it. Surprised you missed it. You must have heard them too. And my Dad will bring some beer, if I know him. Your Dad drink beer?

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Yeah, my Dad drinks beer.

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My dad drinks beer when he paints. He says, Evelyn, I need beer for this paint.

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Lonnie
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Maybe your dad can come by and paint my house. My house can use a little paint.

Lonnie
Well, he might do that. For some beer and stuff. We'll see about that.

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Yeah, we'll see about that. Sure 'nuf.

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We'll have a picnic and eat some great food and our Moms will talk and our Dads will play ball with us and then drink some beer.

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Last game. You warming me up or what?

Lonnie
You can come back next year and watch me play.

Billy Powell III
Maybe I'll be too busy playing Pony League.

Lonnie
Tonight I can feel it. I'm going to hit for the cycle. I thought you said –

Billy Powell III
You're going to hit for the cycle? I did say –
Hit for the cycle? You dreamin'?

Lonnie
Maybe I'll just settle for a triple. But I'll run so fast you won't even see me run over second. Or I'll score from first on a bunt.

Billy Powell III
That's Cool Papa. I'm Cool Papa. You're Jackie.

Lonnie
I'm Jackie. You're Cool Papa. Is that OK with you?

Billy Powell III
Is it OK with me? What do you think?

Lonnie
What do you mean, what do I think? You trying to start a fight?

Billy Powell III
No, man. No fight. You throw a good game.

Lonnie
You're a great pitcher. You're a lot better than me.

Billy Powell III
You're still pretty good. For number twenty-four.

Lonnie
And what's Jackie's number?

Billy Powell
Number forty-two. The reverse of you.

Lonnie
I'm just glad to have the same numbers.

Reverse Jackie's going to steal home someday.
Maybe in the World Series or the All-Star Game.

Billy Powell III

And I'm Cool Papa. Number Seventeen. And I stole it all a long time ago.
Come on, warm me up. Last game, sonny.
And then we got our picnic to go to. Maybe we'll lay out some bases in that park. Yeah, that's what we'll do alright. But right now tomorrow can wait.

Lonnie

It can wait 'til I steal home from first on a bunt.

Billy Powell III

Alright, already. Warm me up, will you, Mr. Forty-two.?

Lonnie

Yeah, Mr. Seventeen.

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