

JOE JACKSON

JOE JACKSON AND RAGTIME BASEBALL by Harvey Frommer tells the story of baseball in the early 1900s. Joe Jackson was one of the eight members of the Chicago White Sox team who is believed to have conspired with gamblers to bring about the defeat of their own team in the 1919 World Series. Because of this, Jackson was banned forever from playing major league baseball.



SOMETIME IN THE LATE 1940S Ty Cobb and sportswriter Grantland Rice stopped off at a liquor store in Greenville, South Carolina, on their way back from the Masters Golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia.

Cobb greeted the heavyset man behind the counter. "I know you," he said. "You're Joe Jackson. Don't you know me, Joe? I came by especially to say hello."

"I know you," said the man behind the counter, "but I wasn't sure you wanted to speak to me. A lot of them don't."

When the two men had last met more than a quarter of a century earlier, it was on a baseball field. Both were celebrants then, close competitors in the rush to be the best. But life had proscribed vastly different paths for each. Cobb had become a baseball Hall of Famer, a hailed legend, a millionaire entrepreneur, while Jackson had lived in the ignominy of tarnished glory, winding down his life not far from the small town where he was born.

"Joe," said Cobb, "you had the most natural ability, the greatest swing I ever saw."

Jackson nodded and looked away for an instant.

"Could I get an autographed baseball from you?" Cobb continued. "I always wanted one."

Jackson hesitated. "I'll get you one, but you'll have to come back tomorrow if that's all right."

"Well, we're just passing through...we'll do it some other time."

There was never another time. It would have been easy for Jackson to get a ball that same day, but still, after all the years, he had not learned to sign his name.

1

This story tells you that Jackson “had lived in the ignominy of tarnished glory.” When used this way, *ignominy* means

- A. bad luck. B. disgrace. C. poverty. D. victory.

2

Based on evidence provided in the passage, what is Joe Jackson’s reaction to Cobb’s visit? He is

- A. pleased that Cobb came to see him.
B. disappointed that he works in a bar.
C. uncomfortable with the attention.
D. angry that Cobb found where he lived.

3

The author of this piece sets up a contrast between

- A. the current status of Cobb and Jackson.
B. Cobb’s and Jackson’s abilities on the baseball field.
C. the intelligence of Cobb and Jackson.
D. Cobb’s and Jackson’s love of the game.

4

When Joe Jackson says, “a lot of them don’t,” to whom is “them” referring?

- A. Baseball players
B. Wealthy business entrepreneurs
C. The press
D. People in Greenville

5

Based on his behavior in this passage, Joe Jackson is

- A. most likely envious of Cobb’s wealth.
B. probably ashamed that he was unable to give Cobb a ball.
C. extremely proud that Ty Cobb had come to see him.
D. pleased to be retired from the difficult life of a professional athlete.