



Honus and Me

by Dan Gutman

Teacher's Guide

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Synopsis

Introduction

The narrator, Joe Shoshack, explains that the first time he ever touched an old baseball card, he felt a tingling sensation all over his body.

Chapter 1

Twelve-year-old Joe Shoshack is obsessed with baseball, but not very good at it. The other kids mock his ungainly appearance and lack of skill on the baseball field. Nonetheless, Joe persists in playing the game.

Chapter 2

Joe lives with his mother, a nurse. His parents are divorced and the family is short on money. Joe's other passion is collecting baseball cards.

Chapter 3

Joe cleans the attic of Miss Amanda Young, his 100-year-old next-door neighbor. Joe is surprised when Miss Young shares some baseball trivia and shows him half a picture of her long-lost lover, a baseball player. In Miss Young's attic, Joe comes across an amazing find: a mint-condition, T-206 Honus Wagner 1909 baseball card—"the most valuable piece of cardboard in the world," as he says.

Chapter 4

Joe figures that all the family's economic problems are over. Joe knows that he should tell Miss Young about the card, but he doesn't.

Chapter 5

Joe takes the card to Birdie Farrell's card shop to have it authenticated. Birdie, a former wrestler, tries to cheat Joe out of the card by saying that it's not really Honus Wagner, but rather his brother Heinie. When Birdie realizes that Joe is on to him, he frantically offers a thousand dollars for the card. Joe turns the offer down and takes the card with him.

Chapter 6

Back at home, Joe looks up the statistics on Honus'

career and learns that Honus was perhaps the greatest baseball player of all time. Hockey player Wayne Gretzky paid \$451,000 for a Honus Wagner card.

Chapter 7

That night, Honus Wagner appears in Joe's bedroom, magically called forth by the card.

Chapter 8

In the morning, Honus has gone. Joe can't concentrate in school as he thinks about his meeting with Honus. After school, Joe's team plays against the Galante Giants. Using the advice Honus gave him about visualizing himself as a winner, Joe hits the ball. Honus is waiting for him back at home and takes Joe out for some baseball practice. Honus tells Joe about his childhood working in the coal mines and how he broke into baseball with his brother's help. Honus wants to bring Joe back to 1909.

Chapter 9

When Joe tells his mother about finding the card, she insists that he return it to Miss Young. Joe's father argues that they should keep the card, since it will solve all their economic problems. Later that night, Honus tells Joe all about the great African-American baseball players

whose records are largely lost.

Chapter 10

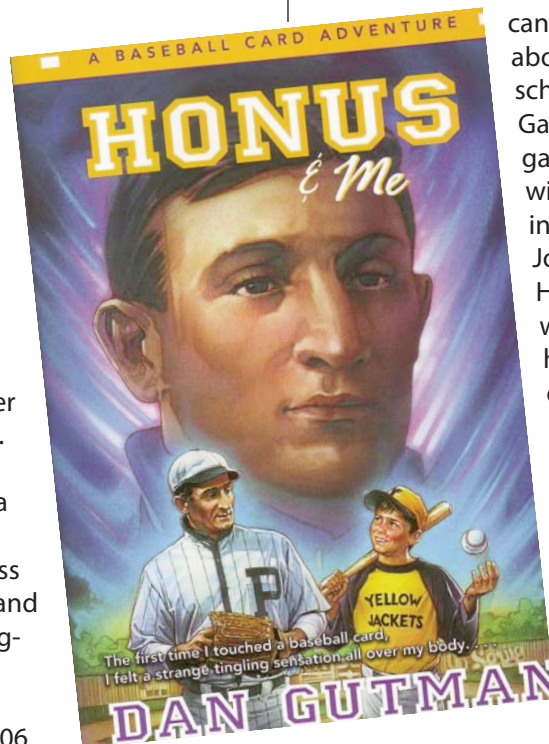
Joe falls asleep wishing he was an adult. When he awakens, he is fully-grown—and it's 1909. He's in Michigan with Honus, waiting to play in the World Series. Honus and Joe look astonishingly alike, and so Honus passes Joe off as his brother Albert "Butts" Wagner.

Chapter 11

Joe takes his seat, very excited to be present at the 7th game of the World Series between the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Detroit Tigers.

Chapter 12

Honus comes to bat and walks. Later, Honus injures his hand while tagging out Ty Cobb and asks Joe to be his designated hitter. Joe hits a long line drive and the Pirates score three runs. They are up 7 to 0.



Chapter 13

The Pirates win the World Series. After the game, Joe sees that Honus has the other half of the picture Miss Young had and realizes that Honus was Miss Young's boyfriend. Joe tells Honus all about Amanda Young, but Honus says that it is too late to rekindle the romance. Honus gives Joe twelve of his mint baseball cards as a memento of the day, but Fred Clarke rips the cards up as a joke. Joe tells Honus what will happen to him during the rest of his life and wishes himself home.

Chapter 14

Back home, Joe's mother tells him that it is his decision whether or not to return the card to Miss Young. Joe finds that Birdie has trashed his room looking for the card. Birdie jumps him, but Miss Young scares him off with a shotgun. She takes the baseball card and rips it up. Joe tells her the truth and then uses the pieces of the card to send Amanda back to 1909 to be with Honus. As she fades into the past, Amanda turns back in to a beautiful young woman.

Chapter 15

A week later, Joe is happily playing baseball with his friends.

Chapter 16

Six months later, Joe is in a baseball card store when he realizes that the magic that worked with the Honus Wagner card might work with any old baseball card. Joe feels the same powerful tingling in his body when he holds a 1932 Babe Ruth card.

To the Reader

The author explains which details were factual and which were fictional.

Timeline

1833	Philadelphia sports club begins playing an early form of baseball.
1845	Alexander Cartwright develops a set of rules for baseball, including location of home plate and 90-foot base-lines.
1846	First recorded baseball game is played at Hoboken, New Jersey.
1860	Seventh inning stretch becomes common.
1869	Cincinnati Red Stockings become the first all-professional baseball team.
1872	Current standards for weight and size of ball are set.
1874	Honus Wagner is born in Mansfield, Pennsylvania.
1875	Players begin wearing gloves.
1876	National League is formed.

1882	The American League is formed.
1887	The strike zone is established.
1897	Wagner plays for Louisville.
1900	Wagner joins the Pittsburgh Pirates. That year, he leads the National League in batting. (He also leads in 1903- 1904, 1906-1909, and 1911.)
1903	Boston Red Sox beat Pittsburgh Pirates in the first World Series.
1909	Pirates win their first World Series.
1912	National League adopts Earned Run Average as its official statistic.
1917	Wagner retires from professional baseball. He has a lifetime ERA of .329 and has played in 2,785 games, with nearly 1,800 runs and 3,430 base hits.
1933-52	Wagner coaches the Pirates.
1936	Wagner is elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.
1955	Wagner dies.
1991	Wayne Gretzky pays \$451,000 for a Honus Wagner card.
2000	A Honus Wagner card sells for \$1.1 million.
2007	A Honus Wagner card sells to a private collector for \$2.8 million.

Biographical Sketch

Dan Gutman was born in 1955 in New York City, and grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Rutgers University in 1977 with a degree in psychology. After spending a few unhappy years in graduate school, he decided to become a writer.

In 1980, Gutman moved to New York City and began writing humorous essays. He met with only modest success for the first two years. In 1982, Gutman started a video games magazine called *Video Games Player* which sold well. Two years later, the magazine had acquired a new name (*Computer Games*) and Gutman had gained a reputation as a computer expert. When *Computer Games* folded in 1985, Gutman became a full-time freelance writer. At first he wrote about computers only, but gradually he started tackling other topics. Eventually, his articles were published in *Esquire*, *Newsweek*, *Science Digest*, *Writer's Digest*, *Success*, *Psychology Today*, *New Woman*, *USA Today*, and *The Village Voice*. In 1987, he decided to try his hand at writing about his favorite topic—sports. He sold an article to *Discover* magazine about the science behind the spitball, scuff-ball, and corked bats. This led to his first adult baseball book, *It*

Ain't Cheatin' If You Don't Get Caught.

In 1992, Gutman decided to try writing for children. He wrote a few baseball books, then branched out to other sports—ice skating and gymnastics. Up until this point, all his books were non-fiction. In 1994, he wrote a sports novel for children, *They Came From Center Field*. As Gutman noted: "It was fun to write, kids loved it, and I discovered how incredibly rewarding it is to take a blank page and turn it into a world. For the first time, I felt that I was doing something I was good at, something that was fun, creatively rewarding, and appreciated by an audience." An extremely prolific writer, Gutman has written dozens of children's novels since, including several series. "Kids often tell me that my books make them laugh," Gutman notes. "This is funny to me, because writing humor was what I wanted to do when I got started back in 1980! It just took me a while to figure out the best way to do it." Gutman lives in Haddonfield, New Jersey, with his wife and their two children.

Critic's Corner

Honus and Me was greeted with positive views. Booklist, for example, said: "This peppy, pleasing offering is well researched and should delight young baseball fans; even readers not into sports will enjoy the fantasy elements. The inclusion of a few historical photos is a nice touch, too." The American Library Association was enthusiastic as well: "Baseball, time travel and magic converge in Gutman's joyfully entertaining yarn.... Gutman's direct, no-frills writing style and the inclusion of vintage photos of Wagner in his heyday add a nostalgic quality to the book. The author also adds an interesting epilogue about the real Honus Wagner and why readers are extremely unlikely to find one of his baseball cards in anyone's attic. For sports fans who like a snappy plot along with the play-by-play, this novel hits at least a triple."

Selected Other Books by Dan Gutman

- Alice in Lace*
- Banana Bats and Ding-Dong Balls: A Century of Unique Baseball Inventions*
- Baseball Babylon: From the Black Sox to Pete Rose, the Real Stories Behind the Scandals that Rocked the Game*
- Baseball's Biggest Bloopers: The Games That Got Away*
- Baseball Card Adventures series*
- Catcher Who Shocked the World*
- Funny Boy series*

- The Greatest Games*
- The Green Monster in Left Field*
- Gymnastics: The Trials, the Triumphs, the Truth*
- Ice Skating: From Axels to Zambonis*
- Ice Skating: An Inside Look at the Stars, the Sport, and the Spectacle*
- I Didn't 't Know You Could Do THAT with a Computer!*
- It Ain't Cheatin' if you Don't Get Caught*
- Jackie and Me: A Baseball Card Adventure*
- Johnny Hangtime*
- The Kid Who Became President*
- The Kid Who Ran for President*
- Landslide!: A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections*
- The Million Dollar series*
- The My Weird School series*
- The Pitcher Who Went Out of His Mind*
- Qwerty Stevens, Back in Time* historical time-travel series
- Scandals that Rocked the Game*
- The Shortstop Who Knew Too Much*
- They Came from Center Field*
- Virtually Perfect*
- The Way Baseball Works*
- World Series Classics*

Bibliography

"Dan Gutman Home Page," <www.dangutman.com>

General Objectives

1. To appreciate the author's use of the first-person point of view
2. To understand the novel's title
3. To recognize the importance of setting
4. To assess each character's personality
5. To recognize the novel's theme
6. To appreciate the main character's intelligence and determination
7. To explore the ways kindness can be shown
8. To grasp the historical information
9. To sympathize with the main character's desire to help his family
10. To enjoy the references to baseball

Specific Objectives

1. To analyze the importance of baseball in Joe's life
2. To see how Joe deals with the valuable baseball card he finds
3. To appreciate how Joe is magically transported through time
4. To probe Joe's conflict over keeping the card
5. To probe the relationship between Joe and Honus
6. To see the effect of setting on a person's life

7. To understand the plot structure
8. To grasp the importance of baseball to the American experience
9. To understand how the plot is resolved
10. To visualize the story's action

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Dan Gutman's style, present the following terms and applications to the novel:

Conflict: a struggle or fight. Conflict makes a story interesting because readers want to find out the outcome. There are two kinds of conflict. In an external conflict, characters struggle against a force outside themselves. In an internal conflict, characters battle a force within themselves. Stories often contain both external and internal conflicts. In *Honus and Me*, Joe faces an internal conflict over the card: should he return it to its rightful owner, Miss Amanda Young, or keep it for himself? He also faces an external conflict with Birdie, who is determined to get the card for himself.

Science fiction: fantasy writing that tells about make-believe events that include science or technology. Often, science fiction is set in the future, on distant planets, or among alien races. *Honus and Me* has elements of science fiction, most notably in Joe's ability not only to travel through time but also to become an adult and then turn back to a child again.

point of view: the position from which a story is told. In *Honus and Me*, Dan Gutman uses the first-person point of view to give the events a personal and immediate slant. The narrator, Joe Shoshack, is one of the characters in the story. The narrator filters the events through his vantage point.

Cross-Curricular Sources

NOVELS

- Clair Bee, *No-Hitter*
Fred Bowen, *The Golden Glove*
Matt Christopher, *Baseball Turnaround*, *Miracle at the Plate* and *The Team That Couldn't Lose*
Barbara Cohen, *Thank You, Jackie Robinson*
Donald Hall, *When Willard Met Babe Ruth*
Maureen Holohan, *The Broadway Ballplayers: Left Out*
Dean Hughes, *Grand Slam*
Johanna Hurwitz, *Baseball Fever*
Paul B. Janeczko, *That Sweet Diamond: Baseball Poems*
Scott Johnson, *Safe at Second*
Chris Lynch, *Gold Dust*
Walter Dean Myers, *The Journal of Biddy Owens: The Negro Leagues*
Miriam Rinn, *The Saturday Secret*
John Roberts Tunis, *The Kid from Tomkinsville*

DVDs AND VIDEOS

(Fiction)

- Angels in the Outfield*
The Babe
Eight Men Out
Field of Dreams
For Love of the Game
Hoosiers
A League of Their Own
Major League
The Natural
Soul of the Game

(Nonfiction)

- Baseball: A Film by Ken Burns*
Baseball's Greatest Memories Myths and Legends
High Heat Major League Baseball 2002
Little League : Official How-To-Play Baseball Video
Superstar Shortstops
There was Always Sun Shining Somewhere: Life in the Negro Baseball Leagues

INTERNET

- "The Official Site of Honus Wagner,"
<<http://www.honuswagner.com/>>
"T206 Honus Wagner Baseball Card,"
<en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T206_Honus_Wagner>
"Honus Wagner Biography,"
<en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honus_Wagner>
"The Official Site of Major League Baseball,"
<www.majorleaguebaseball.com>
"Historical box scores and play-by-play data," <www.retrosheet.com>
"BaseballHistory.com," <www.baseballhistory.com>
"Honus Wagner baseball statistics," <www.baseball-reference.com/w/wagneho01.shtml>
"Legends of the Game: Profiles of players from the Deadball Era," <www.deadball.com>
"National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, New York,"
<www.baseballhalloffame.org>
"Old Baseball Cards," <www.oldbaseball.com>

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Dan Gutman's *Honus and Me* should include these aspects:

- Themes
- . athletic ability
 - . baseball
 - . collecting baseball cards
 - . courage and determination
 - . divorce and its effect on children

- . family love
- . friendship
- . love and marriage
- . money problems
- . time travel Motifs
- . coping with divorce and family change
- . dealing with growth and change
- . enjoying your hobby and learning about it
- . following your conscience
- . having self-awareness and maturity
- . learning to believe in yourself
- . reading science fiction and fantasy
- . playing baseball for fun
- . taking advantage of once-in-a-lifetime situations
- . working hard to achieve your goals

Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. I turned over the card and looked at the other side. I couldn't believe my eyes. (Chapter 3, p. 16)
(Joe finds a T-206 Honus Wagner 1909 baseball card, the most valuable baseball card of all. When the book was written in 1997, the card was worth about \$500,000; today, it is worth over a million dollars. This is the inciting incident that sets the plot into motion.)
2. Suddenly, I realized that Birdie was lying to me. (Chapter 6, p. 26)
(Joe isn't sure that he has found a real Honus Wagner card, but when baseball card dealer Birdie Farrell tries to cheat him, Joe realizes that he has indeed found a veritable gold mine. This passage reveals how some unscrupulous adults try to cheat children. However Joe is too savvy to be fooled by Birdie.)
3. "Honus...Wagner?" I whispered, rhyming "Honus" with "bonus." (Chapter 7, pp. 34-35)
(The baseball card grants Joe magical abilities; as a result, he is able to summon Honus Wagner from his time—1909—to appear in the present. The photograph of Honus Wagner on the face page helps readers visualize the famous baseball player. The other authentic documents included in the text add to the note of realism that balances the science fiction.)
4. A baseball card, for me, was like a time machine. (Chapter 7, p. 40)
(Joe explains the magical ability that old baseball cards have to transport him to the past. By holding the baseball card and wishing that he could meet Honus Wagner, Joe can transport himself through time. This scene also serves to foreshadow the novel's ending, when Joe picks up a 1932 Babe Ruth card and imagines that he could visit Ruth as he had visited Wagner.)
5. I thought about what Honus had told me. The way to be a great player is to pretend that you already are one. (Chapter 8, p. 46)
(Honus has given Joe the self-confidence to become a better baseball player and by extension, to become better at any skill. Joe remembers this lesson when he gets to bat during the 1909 World Series. With this added confidence, he is able to play well.)
6. "Stosh," he said, "I need you to be my—my designated hitter." (Chapter 12, p. 93)
(When he is injured in the game, Honus asks Joe to step in for him. Both men get their wish: Honus gets to win the 1909 World Series and Joe gets to play in a World Series game. The designated hitter did not exist in 1909; Honus got the idea from Joe. This reveals that Joe helped to bring about his own success.)
7. Suddenly it hit me. There was a jagged rip on the left side of the photo, and the girl's hand was extended out to the side with the rip, as if she had been holding hands with somebody. (Chapter 14, p. 103)
(Joe realizes that Amanda Young, his 100-year-old next-door neighbor had been Honus' sweetheart many decades before. Honus had promised to come back for her but he had not. This gives Joe the idea of reuniting the lovers.)
8. "These might come in handy when you get back," he said. (Chapter 14, p. 106)
(Honus graciously and generously gives Joe a dozen of his baseball cards, worth millions today. Joe is busy counting his fortune when Honus' teammate Fred Clarke rips up the cards as a joke. This incident reveals Honus' generous nature and the contrast between the past and the present.)
9. "Do me one favor," she said. "Don't make your decision by simply adding up the totals of those two columns." Chapter 14, p. 117)
(Seeing Joe make a pro/con chart to help him decide whether or not to return the card, Joe's math teacher Mrs. Kelly advises him that real life is often more complex than mathematics. She suggests that he think of the one person in the world whom he respects more than anyone else and try to decide how that person would resolve the situation. Using Mrs. Kelly's advice, Joe quickly decides to return the card to Miss Young. It is plain that he is using Honus'

honor and decency as a lodestone.)

10. If I could use a baseball card to bring Honus to the future, maybe I could send Amanda to the past. (Chapter 15, p. 126)
(In a lovely conclusion, Joe reunites Amanda Young, his 100-year-old neighbor, with her long-lost love, Honus Wagner. Magically, Amanda becomes young again as she is transported through time, a clever play on her name.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What does Joe find in Miss Young's attic? Why is it important?
(Joe finds a T-206 Honus Wagner 1909 baseball card. It is important because it is the most valuable baseball card in existence, worth over half a million dollars when the book was written and over a million dollars today. Joe thinks that by selling the card, he can solve his parents' financial problems and reunite them.)
2. Who is Honus Wagner and how does Joe meet him?
(Honus Wagner was an old-time baseball player; he played in the 1909 World Series. Joe summons him magically by using the baseball card.)
3. How does Joe come to play in the 1909 World Series?
(When Honus is injured during a play against Ty Cobb, he asks Joe to be his designated hitter. Since Honus and Joe—now magically all grown up—look enough alike to be brothers, Joe simply dons Honus' uniform and goes into the game.)
4. How are Honus and Miss Young reunited?
(Miss Young had torn the baseball card into four pieces. Joe uses the four pieces to magically send Miss Young back in time. As she travels to the past, she becomes young and beautiful once again.)
5. What happens when Joe touches the 1932 Babe Ruth card? What does this mean?
(Joe feels the same magical tingle, which suggests that he will be able to use his power to visit any former baseball player. This suggests that Dan Gutman will write the further adventures of Joe and baseball players.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. What lesson does Honus teach Joe?

(Honus teaches Joe to believe in himself to imagine himself as a successful baseball player. The lesson works and Joe becomes a much better player)

7. In what ways does Honus function as a father figure to Joe?
(Joe does not seem to feel any bond with his father but he bonds immediately with Honus. Further, Honus takes Joe to the field and teaches him how to play baseball, as a father would. Most important, when Joe must make the toughest moral decision of his life (whether or not to return the baseball card to Miss Young) he looks to Honus—not his father—for moral guidance.)
8. In what ways is Honus and Me science fiction?
(Characters can travel through time, magically grow to adult size, and magically become young again. These fantastic happenings are characteristic of science fiction, not realistic fiction.)

Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)

9. Should Joe have returned the baseball card to Miss Young? Why or why not?
(Most readers will agree that Joe should have returned the card to Miss Young because it belonged to her not to Joe. In effect, Joe stole it because he removed it from her home without her permission or even knowledge.)
10. What is the novel's theme or main idea?
(Students might suggest the novel's theme as "believe in yourself and you will succeed.")

Questions 11-12 (Creative Level)

11. Write a sequel to the novel in which Joe travels through time to meet another old-time baseball player.
12. Working with a small group of classmates, discuss some ways that you might have coped with Joe's dilemma over whether or not to return the baseball card.

Across the Curriculum

Art/Music

1. Make your own baseball card, in modern style. On the front, draw a picture of yourself or paste a photograph of yourself playing baseball. On the back, write your game statistics and your nickname. If you prefer to play another sport, create your card for it instead.
2. Create a collage of newspaper headlines for 1909. Be sure the headlines cover key events in the world as well as in America during that time.

3. Dan Gutman included some fascinating photographs and art work in *Honus and Me*. Create your own book by compiling at least ten original photographs on an historical person, place, or event. Caption each picture to explain what it shows. Be sure to give full credit to your sources.
4. Joe magically grows to adult size when he travels back to 1909. Draw a picture of yourself as you believe you will look at age 21 and age 50.
5. Make a banner advertising the 1909 World Series.

History and Social Studies

1. Honus Wagner, Fred Clarke, and Ty Cobb were all inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Find at least five other players who received this honor. Then explain the qualifications a player needs for inclusion.
2. Miss Young shares some baseball trivia with Joe about the invention of the baseball bat, the so-called "Louisville Slugger." Create a booklet with other interesting information about baseball, "America's pastime."
3. Make a timeline to show the main events in 1909, the year of the World Series described in *Honus and Me*.
4. There has been a long-standing debate over the origin of baseball. Find out which two groups claim to have invented baseball. Then make the case for the person or group that you believe really created this sport.
5. As a child, Honus worked in the coal mines. What are the current rules about child labor in America? Post the rules on a chart for everyone to read.

Language Arts

1. Imagine that you could go back in time. Who would you want to meet? Why? Select a real historical figure and write the dialogue of your meeting.
2. In Chapter 8, Honus makes a clever pun on the words "hair/hare." Create some puns, riddles, or jokes using word play.
3. Write a news story describing the most exciting moments in the 7th game of the 1909 World Series.
4. Writing as Joe's mother, explain how you would guide Joe to give back the baseball card.
5. Write an entry in Miss Young's diary, describing the main events in her life.

Mathematics

1. Select any baseball player and trace his or her lifetime statistics, to date. Show your results on a chart.

2. "Fantasy baseball" has become a popular pastime, as people create their own teams from real players and follow their statistics during a season. Create your own "fantasy baseball" team and follow their progress. You can do this with a spreadsheet or by hand.
3. Using the numbers and facts provided in the book as well as some outside research, calculate how much money the average person needed in 1909 to live a middle-class life.

Physical Education

1. Write the rules for baseball. Then play an exhibition game with your friends.
2. Joe cleans out Miss Young's attic. Do a good turn for an elderly friend, relative, or neighbor by cleaning his or her attic, garage, or yard. Get some friends to help you.
3. Wayne Gretzky bought a Honus Wagner card for nearly half a million dollars. Who is Wayne Gretzky? Find out and show your results in a web page or poster.
4. Explain the "designated hitter" rule in baseball.

Science

1. Is time travel possible? Find out the latest theories on time travel and share your findings with the class.
2. The narrator refers to the "dead ball." What is the "dead ball"? Explain how baseballs have changed over the years.
3. Report on the physics of baseball. What makes the ball sail through the air?

Speech and Debate

1. Joe seems to believe that money can buy happiness. If he had enough money, his parents would remarry and the family could once again be whole, for example. Create two teams to debate whether or not money can buy happiness.
2. Baseball is considered America's national sport, but does it deserve this honor? Make a case for another sport being the new American pastime. Possibilities include soccer, lacrosse, and football, for example.
3. Author Dan Gutman claims that Honus Wagner is one of the (if not the) greatest baseball players of all time. Select the person you feel is the greatest all-around athlete of all time. In a speech, persuade the rest of the class that your choice is correct.
4. Role-play a skit in which Joe travels back in time to 1932 and meets Babe Ruth.

Student Involvement Activities

1. Many people have collections of special objects.
Create a collection or describe one you already have. Possibilities include baseball cards, sports figures, stamps, coins, or toys, for example.
2. In your own words, state the novel's theme or message.
3. Hold a TV panel discussion interviewing Honus Wagner about his life and accomplishments.
4. Write a new title for the novel. The title should get the reader's attention while fitting the author's message.
5. Using scenes from the novel, create a mural that shows its main events.

Alternate Assessment

1. List examples of difficulties that Joe faced. Then rank these hardships on a scale from most to least difficult. Be ready to justify your rankings.
2. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate how much Joe likes baseball.
3. Compose a scene in which Joe teaches his son or daughter how to play baseball.
4. Make a character list and describe each character.

Vocabulary Test

Match each word to its meaning. Write the letter of your choice in the space provided.

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ 1. devastated | a. woodworking tool |
| _____ 2. stocky | b. fallen apart |
| _____ 3. glee | c. dream |
| _____ 4. budget | d. decision |
| _____ 5. reverie | e. entertained |
| _____ 6. stance | f. story |
| _____ 7. wailing | g. overly suspicious |
| _____ 8. melancholy | h. financial records |
| _____ 9. hubbub | i. collapsed in seizures |
| _____ 10. verdict | j. enthusiastic supporters |
| _____ 11. deteriorated | k. posture |
| _____ 12. yarn | l. destroyed |
| _____ 13. indisputably | m. without question |
| _____ 14. surveillance | n. impudent, bold |
| _____ 15. regaled | o. sad |
| _____ 16. convulsed | p. joy |
| _____ 17. cocky | q. crying |
| _____ 18. fanatics | r. commotion |
| _____ 19. paranoid | s. heavyset |
| _____ 20. lathe | t. supervision |

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Complete each of the following descriptions with a name from the lettered list. Place the letter of your answer in the blank provided at left.

- ___ 1. the woman who advises Joe to return the baseball card to its rightful owner
- ___ 2. the seventh-grader who finds the world's most valuable baseball card
- ___ 3. Joe's math teacher
- ___ 4. the baseball player who tore up the twelve Honus Wagner cards
- ___ 5. the baseball card store owner who tries to cheat Joe
- ___ 6. the man who helped to invent the bat called the "Louisville Slugger"
- ___ 7. the baseball player who worked in the coal mines as a child
- ___ 8. the author of *Honus and Me*
- ___ 9. the 100-year-old neighbor who defends Joe with a shotgun
- ___ 10. the man who advises Joe to keep the card and help his family pay off their debts

- a. Amanda Young
- b. Pete Browning
- c. Birdie Farrell
- d. Mrs Stoshack
- e. Mr. Stoshack
- f. Honus Wagner
- g. Joe Stoshack
- h. Dan Gutman
- i. Fred Clarke
- j. Mrs. Kelly

Part II: Sentence Completion (30 points)

Supply a term to complete each of the following statements. Place your answers in the blanks provided in the sentences.

- 1. Joe collects _____, a hobby started by his father.
- 2. Joe gets paid _____ for cleaning Miss Young's attic.
- 3. While cleaning the attic, he finds a baseball card for an old-time player named _____.
- 4. Honus wants to bring Joe back to the year _____, when Honus played in the World Series.
- 5. Joe is present at the seventh game of the World Series between the _____ and the Detroit Tigers.
- 6. Honus injures his hand while tagging out Ty Cobb and asks Joe to be his _____.
- 7. A long time ago, Honus was Miss Young's _____.
- 8. Honus gives Joe _____ of his mint baseball cards as a memento of the day.
- 9. Joe uses _____ to send Amanda back in time to be with Honus.
- 10. Six months later, Joe holds a 1932 _____ baseball card and feels the same powerful tingling in his body.

Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- ___ 1. Anytime Joe Shoshack touches any baseball card, he feels a tingling sensation all over his body.
- ___ 2. Joe Shoshack is an excellent baseball player.
- ___ 3. Joe's parents are divorced and the family is short on money.
- ___ 4. The card shop owner tries to cheat Joe out of the card by saying that it's not really Honus Wagner, but rather his brother Heinie on the card.
- ___ 5. Honus Wagner appears in Joe's bedroom, having traveled in a time machine that Joe built.

- _____ 6. Joe magically travels to Michigan with Honus, and Honus passes Joe off as his brother Albert "Butts" Wagner.
- _____ 7. Joe finds that Birdie has trashed his room looking for the card.
- _____ 8. Miss Young takes the baseball card and sells it for a lot of money.
- _____ 9. As she fades into the past, Amanda turns back into a beautiful young woman.
- _____ 10. *Honus and Me* is nonfiction so everything in the book is true.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Argue that Joe should or should not have returned the card to its rightful owner.
2. Describe what Honus teaches Joe about baseball and life.
3. What advice do Joe's parents give him about the baseball card? What does this reveal about them?
4. Explain why Joe wants to sell the baseball card so badly.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline a word or phrase from the list below to complete each of the following statements.

1. Every time Joe Shoshack touches (**an old baseball card, a baseball bat**), he feels a tingling sensation all over his body.
2. Joe lives with his mother, a (**math teacher, nurse**).
3. Joe takes the card to (**Fred Clarke's, Birdie Farrell's**) card shop to have it authenticated.
4. Late that same night, (**Honus Wagner, Babe Ruth**) appears in Joe's bedroom, magically called forth by the card.
5. Honus tells Joe about his childhood working in the (**hardware store, coal mines**).
6. Joe finds himself in (**Florida, Michigan**) with Honus, waiting to play in the 1909 World Series.
7. The (**Yankees, Pirates**) win the 1909 World Series.
8. Honus gives Joe twelve of his new (**baseball cards, baseballs**) as a memento of the day.
9. As she fades into the past, Amanda (**dies, turns back into a beautiful young woman**).
10. Honus Wagner was (**real, fictional**).

Part II: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each phrase below with a reason or justification.

1. Joe cleans Miss Young's attic because _____.
2. He wants to keep the baseball card he finds because _____.
3. The next day, Joe can't concentrate in school because he is thinking about _____.
4. Joe's mother wants him to return the card because _____.
5. Honus Wagner can pass Joe off as his brother because _____.
6. Honus does not want to rekindle his romance with Amanda Young because _____.
7. Birdie trashes Joe's room because _____.
8. Miss Young aims her shotgun at Birdie because _____.
9. Joe wants to hold the 1932 Babe Ruth cards because _____.
10. The writer included an afterward because _____.

Part III: Identification (20 points)

Briefly describe each and explain why it is important in the story.

1. Miss Young's attic _____

2. the Honus Wagner baseball card _____

3. the torn picture of Miss Young and Honus Wagner _____

4. the Babe Ruth baseball card _____

5. "To the Reader," the last chapter in the novel _____

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Why does Birdie want the baseball card so much? How do his reasons compare to Joe's?
2. Describe Joe's special power and how he uses it.
3. Compare and contrast the two different settings in this novel.
4. Explain how Honus and Me intermingles fact and fantasy.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

1. i
2. s
3. p
4. h
5. c
6. k
7. q
8. o
9. r
10. d
11. b
12. f
13. m
14. t
15. e
16. i
17. n
18. j
19. g
20. a

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 1.D | 6.B |
| 2.G .F | |
| 3. J | |
| 4. I | |
| 5. C | |

Part II: Sentence Completion (30 points)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. baseball cards | 6. designated hitter. |
| 2. \$10 | 7. boyfriend |
| 3. Honus Wagner | 8. 12 |
| 4. 1909 | 9. the pieces of the card |
| 5. Pittsburgh Pirates | 10. Babe Ruth |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|-----|------|
| 1.F | 6.T |
| 2.F | 7.T |
| 3.T | 8.F |
| 4.T | 9.T |
| 5.F | 10.F |

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

1. an old baseball card

2. nurse
3. Birdie Farrell's
4. Honus Wagner
5. coal mines
6. Michigan
7. Pirates
8. baseball cards
9. turns into a beautiful young woman
10. real

Part II: Motivation (30 points)

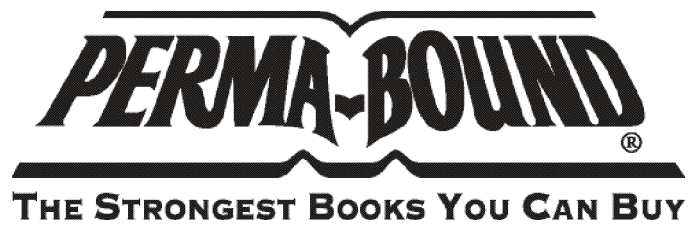
1. he needs the money she is paying him
2. he figures that all the family's economic problems are over
3. his meeting with Honus and the baseball card
4. it is dishonest to keep it
5. they look astonishingly alike
6. he feels that it is too late
7. Birdie is looking for the baseball card
8. Birdie is trying to strangle Joe
9. he wants to see if the same magic works with all old baseball cards
10. he wanted to explain which parts of the book were true and which parts were not

Part III: Identification (20 points)

1. Miss Young's attic is where Joe finds the world's most valuable baseball card. This find sets the plot into motion.
2. The Honus Wagner baseball card is capable of conjuring up the real Honus Wagner, who teaches Joe valuable lessons about life.
3. The torn picture of Miss Young and Honus Wagner proves that they were sweethearts. Joe is able to reunite them.
4. The Babe Ruth baseball card shows that Joe's power to travel through time via baseball cards holds for more than one old card.
5. "To the Reader," the last chapter in the novel, separates fact from

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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