

THE Bat

by Eli Kent

'STRIKE THREE!'

"I hate this game," Sam yells.

"Why play it, then?" I ask.

"Hey, wimp, it's your turn." I

look up. A giant figure is standing over me.

"Hi. I'm Matt," he says. He hands me a bat.

"Who's pitching?" I ask.

"Me!" he says.



I start to shiver.
I get up.

"Go for it, Tom,"
yells Sam.

I walk up to the
stand.

Matt zooms a
fast ball at me. I
swing the bat.

**'STRIKE
ONE!'**

Matt spins the
ball on his finger
like a basketball or
a soccer ball. Then
he chucks it again.
It comes flying
through the air,
faster than light.
(Well, that's how it
seems.) I swing the
bat. **CRACK!** I
jump in the air.



"I hit it!" I yell.

Silence. No one says anything.

Matt suddenly breaks the silence. "Wanna bet?" he says. Then he bursts out laughing.

I look at the bat. It's snapped in half. I turn around and see that the backstop is lying on the ground, his glove ripped off his hand by the ball.

'STRIKE TWO.'

"Yeah, right," I think. "I've got a broken bat, there's one more strike, and we need a home run to win."



My grandad has been watching all the time. He walks out onto the field. He's carrying something. He hands it to me.

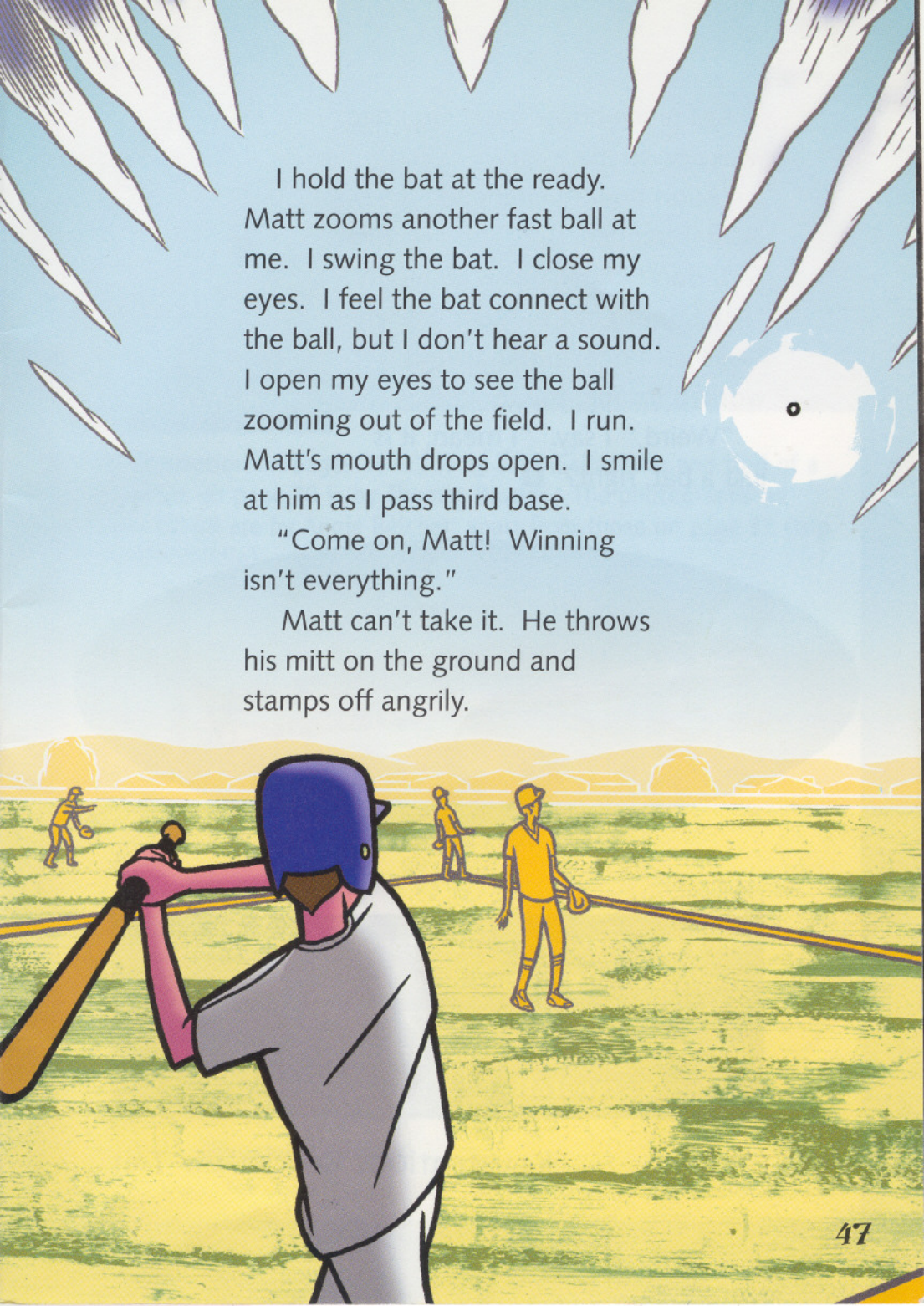
"This bat is very special," he says.

I look at the bat. It's a pretty scrawny thing, but I don't want to say that because it might hurt Grandad's feelings.

"I don't think this bat is up to Matt," I say to myself, "but I'll give it a try."

I turn to thank Grandad, but he's already heading back to the sideline.





I hold the bat at the ready.
Matt zooms another fast ball at
me. I swing the bat. I close my
eyes. I feel the bat connect with
the ball, but I don't hear a sound.
I open my eyes to see the ball
zooming out of the field. I run.
Matt's mouth drops open. I smile
at him as I pass third base.

"Come on, Matt! Winning
isn't everything."

Matt can't take it. He throws
his mitt on the ground and
stamps off angrily.

As I reach home base, Grandad walks up to me.

"I don't get it, Grandad," I say. "What happened?"

"I don't know," says Grandad. "My father gave me that bat when I was your age, and it always worked for me, too."

"Weird," I say. "I mean, it is just a bat, right?" 2



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When Eli Kent wrote this story, he was a year 5 student at Clyde Quay School.

Eli says, "This is a story about a boy who plays softball - his confidence and his relationship with his grandfather. I hope that you like it."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATHEW TAIT