

THE GLASSHOUSE GANG



WELL, HI THERE! My name is Jay Hanna Dean, or, perhaps you might know me as Jerome Herman Dean or simply J.H. Dean ... but never mind all that, you can just call me Dizzy! Dizzy Dean.

You've heard of me, I suppose? Well, if you haven't then you should've.

I think we'll start from the beginning. I was born in a **sharecropper's** cabin near Lucas, Ark., on Jan. 16, 1911. Some might tell ya it was Holdenville, Okla., on Feb. 22, 1911, others Bond, Miss., on Aug. 22. But I'm here to say all that's nothin' but hogwash. The facts are Lucas, Ark., on Jan. 16. I simply gave out those other dates and towns to a handful of reporters so that everyone might feel they was gettin' the real scoop on ol' Diz. You see, I try to be a nice guy, and I always liked to offer those pesky writers a good story.

And why would reporters want the scoop on a poor sharecropper's son, like me? Well, we'll get to that.

My mama named me Jay Hanna—Jay after the Wall Street man **Jay Gould** and Hanna after the politician **Mark Hanna**. A name set up for success. So, where did Jerome Herman come from, you ask? Well, when I was a boy I had a buddy named Jerome Herman. When that lad unexpectedly passed, I went up to his daddy and told him not to worry, from that day forward I would call myself Jerome Herman in his stead. And that's how I got those two names. It's all a bit less confusing if I sign my name simply J.H. Dean and go by Dizzy. We'll leave it at that.

I was born ready to take on this big world, and trust me when I say I've always been smart and strong enough to do it. But life wasn't always very easy. My mama passed on when I was just a little one, so I grew up with my daddy and my two brothers—the elder one, Elmer, and the younger one, Paul. We drove from place to place, looking for work as sharecroppers, picking cotton under that hot and heavy sun.

I was a boy doing a man's work, and I quickly grew in strength and size. In 1927, when I turned 16, the Army allowed me to join up, on account of me being so strong and all,

even though it's customary for a new recruit to be at least 18. I was stationed at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio with Battery C of the 12th Field Artillery and here is where I found my true calling. That's right, baseball.

Sure, I'd picked up a glove and a ball out on the farm a time or two, but there, in the Army, I had two things I'd never had before—a coach and a radio.



I listened to the World Series, and I realized for the first time that a man could make a living playing this game.

POP UPS

SHARECROPPER: A sharecropper is a farmer who does not own land, but raises crops on that land for a portion of the owner's profits.

JAY GOULD was an American railroad developer and speculator who lived from 1836-1892. He is known as the ninth richest U.S. citizen in history.

MARK HANNA was a U.S. Senator from Ohio who lived from 1837-1904. He was the friend and political manager of President William McKinley.

THE FARM SYSTEM was created by Branch Rickey and became the foundation for modern baseball. Teams were organized in small towns and attracted local talent who developed their skills until they were ready for the Major League. The Farm System allowed teams with smaller budgets, particularly during the Great Depression, to compete with the East and West coast teams with much larger budgets for attracting talented players.

You see, I was a ball player decades ago—before big screen TVs and bobble heads, when all a kid really needed to experience the magic of the game was a few coins or a good radio. It was the dawn of baseball's **Farm System**. Thanks to my manager, Branch Rickey, a kid could grow up hurling baseballs next to a cotton field and in only a few short years find himself the starting pitcher in the World Series.


I was the best ... that's right, BEST baseball player to ever grace that holy dirt mound 60 feet from home plate. My fastball was unstoppable, my curve just as swell, and there ain't never been a batter nowhere that I couldn't strike out if I should just happen to get the fancy.


What's that you say? Me? Bragging? Well, it ain't bragging if you can back it up.

And I can certainly back it up. I had 150 career wins as a pitcher for the Chicago Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals. Twice I led the National League in shutouts and, these days, you can even find my name in the Hall of Fame. Anyone who ever had the privilege of seeing me play knew that I was the greatest pitcher in the world.

You see, I learned right quick that a man could do more than just make a living—with baseball, a man could be *great*.

EXTRA INNINGS!

 The Hall of Fame is a goal that many athletes aspire to reach. Look through the newspaper to find an example of a potential hall of fame athlete.

 Why was Dizzy Dean a newsworthy story for reporters? What are the top news stories in today's newspaper?

Learning Standards: I can identify important information in the news. I can use the newspaper to locate information.

