

A Short Story

THE LUCKY BAT

AGE 7 TO 10



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The Lucky Bat

“Can I carry your bat?”

“No,” said Jeff.

“Come on, I want to,” said little brother, Davey, as he tagged along behind.

“No, I said. I don’t want anything to happen to my lucky bat.”

This afternoon was a big game and Jeff was sure to hit lots of home runs with his lucky baseball bat.

“Aww, I don’t want to carry your old bat anyway,” grumbled Davey. He turned back towards home, scuffing his sneakers in the dirt.

“Tell you what,” Jeff said. “You can take care of it when I’m playing at short-stop, OK?”

“Race you to the field.” And they both took off.

Davey sat on the bench and held the bat tightly between his legs. Nothing was going to happen to Jeff's lucky bat.

"Safe and sound," Davey told his brother, as he held out the bat. Jeff took a few practice swings and went to the plate.

Crack!

"It's a home run," shouted Davey. Not quite, but almost.

"Next time it's sure to be a home run," Davey told Jeff. His brother just grinned as he handed over the bat.

The game was close and Davey wished he was playing. "I can hit, too." He swung the bat back and forth. "Here's a homer," he yelled. *Crack!* Davey accidentally hit the bench. Now he clutched just a short piece of the handle. The rest of the bat lay in the dust at his feet. The tingling in his hands quickly went away, but not the sick feeling in his stomach.

"Dead," mumbled Davey. "I killed Jeff's lucky bat."

Jeff was furious. "I trusted you with my bat and now look at it!"

When Jeff struck out and the game was lost, he almost hit Davey. "I hate you," he screamed. Then he raced away.

Davey sadly picked up the pieces of the bat and trudged home. "Maybe dad can fix it," he said to himself hopefully.

"Well, I don't really think so," his dad said later, "but I'll try after supper.

Jeff wouldn't talk to Davey at dinner. He didn't say "Good Night" when it was time for bed. Davey felt terrible. He groped through the dark to his brother's bed. "I'm sorry." There was no answer. As Davey slipped back into his own bed, he whispered: "It wasn't a lucky bat, anyway. You can hit home runs with any bat, Jeff."

"Oh, shut up. Now I'll probably lose tomorrow's game, too."

Davey did not sleep well. Bad dreams of broken baseball bats haunted him all night. Very early the next morning he took a box from a hiding place in his chest of drawers. Quietly, Davey got his bike from the garage and pedaled away.

Jeff had slept late. He was rubbing the sleep from his eyes when Davey burst into the room. "Jeff, Jeff, come and see. Dad fixed your bat."

There on the work bench was a bat. To Jeff's amazement, it looked like his lucky bat, but all in one piece. "I can't even see where it was broken," whispered Jeff. He took a swing. "We'll win for sure, now."

Davey was happy to see his brother smiling. He was even happier when Jeff gave him a friendly slug on the arm and raced upstairs laughing the whole way.

It was an exciting game that afternoon. Davey felt very proud that Jeff trusted him enough to guard the lucky bat, again.

“Hi there! How goes the game?” It was Dad. Davey had a sudden sinking feeling.

“I hit two homers, but it’s our last ups and they’re still ahead by one.”

“Two home runs? Why, that’s great, Jeff! I guess you didn’t need your lucky bat after all,” said Dad.

“But you fixed it,” Jeff said with a puzzled voice. He looked at Davey. “You said Dad fixed it.”

“Well,” began Davey, but his father interrupted.

“No, Jeff. The bat was shattered beyond repair.”

Davey felt shattered, too. “Well, I - -“ began Davey once again.

“You lied to me!” shouted Jeff, his face just inches from Davey’s.

The bat dropped to the ground and Davey tried to explain. “I bought it this morning. I rubbed it in the dirt and banged it around a bit to make it look like your lucky bat. I wanted you to think Dad had fixed it. I wanted you to hit home runs.” Jeff turned away. Davey was desperate. “Now it *is* your lucky bat, Jeff,” he called. “You hit two homers with it, remember?”

Jeff stopped. “No,” he said, “it’s not a lucky bat.”

Davey felt like crying, but Jeff’s hands on his shoulders surprised him. He looked up into a smiling face.

“You’re my luck, Davey. Or, I should say I’m lucky that I’ve got such a great little brother.” Jeff picked up the bat and hustled to the plate.

“Did I do right, Dad?”

“You did a marvelous job, Davey,” said his father with obvious pride.

Crack! “It’s a home run,” screamed Davey. It wasn’t, but it was close enough.