I am Noah Strauss, the Zion Lion. I am the manager and third baseman for the Stars of David Baseball Club. In the past fourteen days my team has played twenty games in six different states. As the summer wears on I can hardly distinguish one town from the next.

This is by no means a complaint. Had I stayed in New York I’d be a pushcart peddler or worse (like my father, a sweatshop tailor).
My father would be gravely disappointed knowing we are playing on the Sabbath. He will always be a greenhorn. His imagination lives in the old country. Mine lives in America and baseball is America.
Today we're playing the Forest Grove Spartans of the Michigan Professional Baseball League.

A few teams in that league might give us a game. The Spartans aren't one of them.

Zion Lion, hard nosed sonofabitch. Used to play for the Red Sox...

He so damn good why ain't he still playin' for'em?

These Jews better be sharp—Tyler's got his good stuff today.

...so I tell him, I'm not giving it away. I'm...

Well I'll be, Hetty Douglas in a ballpark...

Hey, Hetty! Always knew you loved baseball!

Walter, is that Hetty Douglas behind you?

I'm not here for baseball, but to see the Jews... thank you very much.

We spend more time crammed onto the bus than we do on the diamond. Today it takes us six hours to get to Forest Grove (feeling every pebble we roll over).
We’ll have thirty minutes to get our knotted and cramped muscles ready for a team that’s been preparing for us all week.
Our leadoff hitter is our shortstop, Stan “the Wire” Weiss.

He’s a pesky hitter who’s built like a cinder block.

The hometown ump gives the pitcher his first strike.

Kid’s probably the ace of their staff.

He’s got some swift but no hop. Won’t last three innings.
STEEERIKE TWOOO!!

Crowd wants a strikeout.

Pitcher eager to oblige.

With two strikes the third baseman moves back.

Wire checks for my sign.

bunt
Next up is our second baseman, Moishe. Mo is sixteen. He is also my younger brother.

Time out, Fred.

TIME OUT!

The Jew at the plate is just a kid. That’s not a beard, it’s shoe polish.
Dust him off! Let him know he’s playing with men now.

C’mon, Mo! Get your ass off the dirt and stand in there!
Foul ball. Strike two.

C'MON MO MOVE ME OVER
MOVE ME OVER YOU'RE A
HITTER MOVE ME OVER...

Ball two.

ATTABOY MO GOOD EYE
GOOD EYE GIVE IT A RIDE
YOU'RE A HITTER CMON...

Foul ball.
The umpire turns his back. Mo is incensed and stays after him. The crowd starts to get riled up.

The boos and hisses grow louder. A bottle is thrown onto the field.

I've seen enough.

Take a seat, Mo.

Now.