

SCENE 1

AT RISE: A Tar Paper and Bare Wood room. A single window. A chair and a small table with a radio on it. Sparse.

A Screen, maybe the window, breaks up the room upon which images will be shown.

FATHER, Japanese, sits in the only chair, staring out the window, rubbing his knee.

A mournful Japanese flute plays, floating on the wind.

IMAGE: a dusty Internment Camp street.

JOHN enters.

JOHN

My father wasn't always like this. Before. Before this we played baseball every Sunday after temple.

FATHER stands up and puts on a baseball cap. BILLY enters as a teammate, and MOTHER as the Umpire.

A small crowd murmurs and cheers.

IMAGE: Baseball game in a park

UMPIRE

Batter UP!

JOHN

Oh no...

FATHER

We are down but we are not out! Hiro!

JOHN

Not yet. Father, do I -

FATHER

Enough Hiro. Remember what we practiced.

BILLY

Get out there and knock one over the fence!

JOHN

Bottom of the ninth, down by one. And I'm up. Great.

John gets set. The pitch! John misses.

UMPIRE

Strike one!

Father mimes a hitters stance.

JOHN

If only I was as good as Billy. Or my Uncle!

Another pitch. Another swing and miss.

UMPIRE

Strike two!

BILLY

You got em, John!!

John concentrates. Another pitch. He strikes out looking.

UMPIRE

Strike Three! You're OUT!

*John slumps down, defeated.
Father and Billy console him.
Umpire transforms into Mother.*

BILLY

Get 'em next time.

A Car HONKS.

BILLY (CONT'D)

There's my dad! See tomorrow John, Mr. Yamamoto-san.

FATHER

Mata Ashita, Billy-san.

JOHN

Mata ashita. Bye Billy.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Maybe.

FATHER

Nonsense! Do you think your Uncle never strikes out? That the Tokyo Giants always win? I remember his professional debut. The stadium was electric. Our entire family was there. Even my father, begrudgingly of course. And do you know what happened?

JOHN/BILLY

He struck out.

FATHER

He struck out! He didn't get his first professional hit until his fourth game! And he was the best baseball player I had ever seen.

BILLY

Besides DiMaggio

JOHN

Or Williams!

FATHER

Better! Because he was my brother!

*MOTHER, Japanese-American,
enters. They all bow to each
other.*

MOTHER

Hiro! You played second base very well today.

JOHN

Only because Roger was sick.

MOTHER

What matters is that you did your best.

JOHN

At the easiest position. And even then I wasn't that good.

MOTHER

Then why does your Uncle play there?

FATHER

Like your Uncle, you saved a run or two at least.

JOHN

But we still lost.

FATHER

Now lets see if there is a baseball game on the radio for the drive home. Then it is time for you to finish your homework.

JOHN

I already finished it.

FATHER

And the homework from Japanese School?

JOHN

All done.

FATHER

Then I shall assign you more.

SCENE 2

1940's music plays on the radio.

IMAGES: School Kids pledging Allegiance, eating Lunch.

The next day. The Music fades away as a school bell rings. JOHN grabs some books as FATHER and MOTHER transform into KEN, a Chinese boy, and AKIKO, a Japanese girl.

KEN

He didn't!

BILLY

That's terrible. And thanks for the assist with my math homework, John.

JOHN

What are friends for, right?

AKIKO

My father already had me do that assignment.

JOHN

Show off.

AKIKO

It is important for us to learn our culture, Hiro. That's what my father always says.

JOHN

Your father teaches our Japanese class! Of course he'd say that. So no. I didn't get to hear last night's Lone Ranger episode.

BILLY

Me neither. Homework.

KEN

It was the best! The Lone Ranger and Tonto stopped some train robbers from stealing the load of Christmas presents for the orphans. And guess what? My badge finally arrived!

JOHN

I should be getting mine any day now!

*KEN pulls out a Lone Ranger
Badge, the kind you mail off
for. BILLY pulls his out as
well.*

ALL BOYS

Hi ho silver!

School bell rings.

SCENE 3

All EXIT, except JOHN. He removes his shoes, sits down, and listens to a 1940's radio show. Lone Ranger? The Shadow? John is enrapt.

FATHER enters, wearing his Work Apron. MOTHER, enters, getting ready for dinner.

Mother and Father bow to each other. Father gives John a stern glance as he turns off the radio. John quickly bows and sits at the table.

MOTHER

Konnichiwa. O-genki desu ka?

JOHN

Good. Um... Watashi wa genki desu. Arigato.

FATHER

Totemo yoi, Hiro. Very good. Mr. Mori-san's classes are improving your Japanese every day. Soon you will be able to teach Billy.

MOTHER

A package arrived for you today, Hiro.

JOHN

For me? Is it my Lone Ranger badge? Or The Shadow handbook?

MOTHER hands JOHN a package that is covered in Japanese postage and customs stamps.

FATHER

Something even more important! But before you open it, translate please.

JOHN

"To Hiro Yamamoto. From Uncle Yamamoto. Merry Christmas and peaceful blessings." It's from UNCLE?! May I open it?

FATHER

We should wait until Christmas...

JOHN

Please father!

FATHER nods. JOHN pops open the package. He pulls out a brand new baseball hat. But not just any hat. A TOKYO KYOJIN hat, orange and black. JOHN puts it on. It fits perfectly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It fits perfectly!

FATHER

You must write a thank you letter to your Uncle. In Japanese.

JOHN

I'm never going to take it off.

Mother takes John's hat off.

MOTHER

No hats at the table. After dinner-

FATHER

-If you have finished all your homework-

JOHN

-I have-

MOTHER

-You may play outside.

They all bow before dinner.

JOHN gets up, grabs his hat, and goes outside.

SCENE 4

IMAGE: Kids playing baseball in a street.

BILLY is there with a bat and glove. FATHER transforms into KEN.

BILLY

Wow! A New York Giants Hat! How'd you get one of those?

JOHN

It's a Tokyo Kyojin hat! My uncle plays for them! He mailed it to me for Christmas. Well, an early Christmas present.

KEN enters. They all set up to play stickball. Billy pitches to John.

KEN

Strike one! Cool hat!

JOHN

Early Christmas present from my uncle.

KEN

Strike two.

BILLY

A line drive to the catcher!

JOHN

Better watch out! I'm gonna get four aces this time.

KEN

Your uncle lives in New York?

JOHN

No. Japan.

KEN

So how's he get a New York Giants --

JOHN

Its from the Tokyo Kyojin! Kyojin is Japanese for Giants.

KEN

Oh.

JOHN

They based their uniforms off the New York Giants. And they won the championship this year! They are the best team in Japan!

*JOHN strikes out. KEN is up.
JOHN pitches, BILLY catches.*

KEN

But not better than the Yankees.

BILLY

Or Red Sox.

JOHN

They sure could be!

KEN

No way! No one's better than DiMaggio!

BILLY

Williams is!

KEN

Williams is terrible!

BILLY

DiMaggio stinks!

JOHN

My uncle's average is as good as Williams! And he had almost the same RBI's as DiMaggio this season!

BILLY AND KEN

Wow.

*KEN hits the ball. The boys
watch it fly.*

JOHN AND KEN

Your turn to get it!

BILLY

Aw man.

KEN

Maybe some of his luck will rub off on you.

JOHN

If I ever get picked. I'm always the Bat Boy.

KEN

Better than being scorekeeper.

JOHN

Just because I'm short doesn't mean I can't play. And yeah, maybe some of my Uncle's luck will rub off on me.

MOTHER

Hiro! Time to come in.

JOHN

See you guys tomorrow! After Temple? I'm going to knock one out of the park!

SCENE 5

*The next day. Sunday morning,
December 7th.*

*IMAGE: Store with Christmas
decorations*

*MOTHER enters carrying John's
Temple clothes. She turns on
the radio. Christmas music.
She hums along with it as she
helps John change into his
Sunday Best for temple.*

MOTHER

You are going to wear that hat out!