



Richie G.
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Gary Carter Thanks Kid!!!

Thanks for the Memories Kid

"There's a little roller up along first, behind the bag! It gets through Buckner. Here comes Knight and the Mets win it!"

Any Mets fan worth his salt remembers Vin Scully's epic line, when Mookie Wilson hit the ground ball that went through Bill Buckner's legs, allowing Ray Knight to score and the Mets win Game 6 of the 1986 World Series. That game was definitely one of the highlights of my childhood and I will be forever grateful that the Mets won that game. Of course the Mets would go on to win Game 7 as well and that was the last time the good guys won the last game of a baseball season. (Line stolen from the movie Moneyball)

Now before I get to the crux of this story, I am obliged to say had Buckner fielded the ball and beat Mookie to the bag, the game would have went on to the 11th inning since the Mets already had tied the game on a wild pitch (that should have been ruled a passed ball). So quit thinking the Mets only won because of Buckner's error.

But I digress. A part of my childhood is about to die. And that makes me so sad. Gary Carter, the great catcher for those 86 Mets, has tumors all along his brain and isn't long for this world. So I wanna share a story about a great day in Chicago for me, and the man they call, "The Kid." It was 1980, I was 9 years old. My brother, sister and me all returned from our baseball and softball games. My Mom said to my Dad, "The only team we didn't see play are the Mets." The Mets were playing in Philadelphia that night, so my parents decided to pack up and take a ride to the Vet. It was a doubleheader and the Mets won the first game, but losing the second game when we left to go back to NY. They ended up winning but when we left, they were losing. We decided to make this a yearly tradition, and from 1980-1988 they lost everytime we went to see them play. It was miserable.

But in 1988 we decided to break the curse and see the Mets play in Chicago at Wrigley Field. Wrigley is awesome. But as fate would have it, the Mets lost the first two games of the series, played on August 9, 10 1988. My family had enough. They tapped out. They decided not to go to the last game of the series. But there was no way I was gonna miss it. So despite only being 17-years-old, I went to Wrigley by myself and tried to end this horrid losing streak.

Another person on a pretty bad streak was Carter. He no longer was the great player he once was, and he was on a very long and public homerless streak. Carter hit career home run # 299 on May 16, and here we were 64 games later on August 11 and he was still stuck on 299. But in the 2nd inning he launched one off of Al Nipper and the crowd went crazy. Actually they didn't. It was in Chicago and I don't think anyone even knew. (The guy who caught the ball certainly didn't know, as he explains in this blog <http://randombaseballstuff.com/2011/06/13/reader-shares-memory-of-catching-gary-carters-300th-home-run/>).

But as per usual with me and my pursuit of a Mets road victory, it wasn't looking pretty. By the time the top of the 9th rolled around, it looked like another Mets loss as they were trailing 6-4. But I didn't give up hope and prayed for a miracle. I was still having fun bantering with all the Cubs fans around me. The inning started out great with three straight singles. The Mets scored a run and had the bases loaded with one out for Daryl Strawberry, our best hitter. I looked to the heavens and prayed. "Please Daryl, I can't go all the way to Chicago for three losses. Please just tie the game with a sac fly." He struck out.

The Cubs then brought in future Hall of Fame pitcher Rich Gossage, better known as Goose. I knew it was over. Kevin McReynolds was up for the Mets and I hated him. He sucked, never got a big hit and never hustled. Of course I'm probably wrong on everything but that's what I felt at the time.

But then low and behold McReynolds did the unthinkable. While I was praying for a balk or something, he went out and hit a grand slam. No, it was a GRAND SLAM!!!! I'm 17 and in a foreign land and I start screaming, "THE GOOSE IS COOKED, THE GOOSE IS COOKED!!" A Mother tells her son, "This is why I don't want you being a Mets fan." The Mets closed out the Cubbies in the bottom of the 9th and I walked out of Wrigley, a very happy man. Actually, a very happy kid.

But today I'm not happy, since The Kid is dying. We get older every day, I just wish I wasn't so harshly reminded of it. Thanks for the memories Mr. Carter. You played the game the right way and from all indications, lived it that way as well. Lets go Mets.