Clarion Review

General

The Unknown Baseball Player
Marvin P. Ferguson
Parker Publishing
978-1-882286-01-0
Two Stars (out of Five)

Orville Hodge was a quiet boy from Indiana. Tall and lanky he did as he was told was polite and rarely talked to other people. What he loved more than anything was baseball and much to his surprise he found himself playing ball for the Redlegs a national team.

In Marvin P. Ferguson's book The Unknown Baseball Player a fictional story about an underprivileged farm boy Ferguson shows the difficulties Orville faces growing up talented while in the midst of various obstacles. Orville loves playing baseball and his memories of the game are fond with uncles sitting around the radio listening to the Chicago Cubs play.

The Unknown Baseball Player is a story about persevering despite self-doubt. Orville has a hard-working farm life and he is often ridiculed by kids at school and in his community. His father died when he was young and he lived with his mother a docile woman with a talent for cooking and his "Unck" the patriarch of the family who viciously beat and emotionally challenged Orville.

Ferguson writes "Uncle John was a hard working man and a good provider. But he was always telling Orville what to do. All work and no play was his motto. Whenever the Boy was reading a book or playing catch with a friend feelings of guilt quickly swelled up within him. 'Do something Boy! Stop wasting your time!'"

Ferguson's book isn't only about a farmer boy from Indiana. The story comes to life because of Orville's new position on the Redlegs professional baseball team. A mystery to all on the team including the coach somehow Orville makes it into the big time league. Unfortunately he must battle the emotional pains of being ridiculed as the coach and other players try to determine whether he is good enough to actually play.

Ferguson author of Boys on the Gold Coast knows his baseball. He writes the baseball scenes with familiarity and detail—from the players on the field to the fans on the bleachers.

From Chicago himself Ferguson also manages to get the lingo of baseball players and coaches showing his love and knowledge of the history of baseball.

While Ferguson writes his story with knowledge and while he helps readers feel compassionately toward Orville's life Ferguson could have clarified Orville's inner dialog which often is confusing alongside the voice of the narrator. Also the reviewer's copy of the book included many spelling and grammatical mistakes though it is unknown whether this is a galley POD or printed copy. Despite these issues the story still remains interesting.

The Unknown Baseball Player is a journey through overcoming life's obstacles. In the end sometimes even the "losers" can surprise the most skeptical and "hit" a happy ending.

Christina Claassen