

Iron Horse: Character Education scripts

ACT I: "Bullies"

Narrator: Lou's parents moved from Germany to America, where they struggled to earn a living. When Lou was about our age, World War I started in Europe. Later, America joined the war and Germany was our enemy. Although Lou was born in New York, he was picked on because his family was considered German. Lou was a big, strong boy, but he was shy, and usually didn't say too much. This scene is based on situations Lou encountered in school. _____ plays Lou; _____, _____, and _____ play the bullies.

Bully #1: Hey, there's Gehrig. Let's get him! (Bullies rush over to Lou)

Bully #2: We're gonna beat you up, Gehrig.

Lou: I haven't done anything to you.

Bully #3: You're a dirty Hun, Gehrig.

Lou: I'm from New York, just like you.

Bully #1: Your parents are German, and you're a German spy.

Lou: I'm just a kid.

Bully #2: You're a rotten skunk, and we're gonna knock you around. (Lou steps toward bullies)

Lou: Don't make me fight you.

Bully #3: Aww, forget it, guys. He's not gonna fight. (Bullies leave)

ACT II: "The Scout"

Narrator: After high school, Lou entered Columbia University in New York. Paul Kritchell, a scout for the New York Yankees, watched Lou play baseball. Kritchell wrote to his Yankee boss, "I think I've just seen another Babe Ruth." In this scene, Kritchell goes to speak to Lou. _____ plays Lou; _____ plays Paul Kritchell, the Yankee scout.

Kritchell: Lou, I'm Paul Kritchell. I scout for the Yankees.

Lou: Hello, Mr. Kritchell

Kritchell: You're a good player with a lot of power, Lou.

Lou: Thank you, sir. It's nice of you to say so.

Kritchell: Would you be interested in playing for the New York Yankees, Lou?

Lou: Gee, Mr. Kritchell, I'd really like that, but I'd need to talk to my parents and think it over.

Kritchell: OK, Lou, do that. We'd offer you a contract for the year, and bonus money for signing up.

Narrator: So Lou talked with his parents, and one of his professors. The professor advised Lou to play baseball. Lou's mother wanted Lou to finish college, but the family was poor, and the money from the Yankees would help a lot. So Lou signed with the Yankees.

ACT III: "Beaned"

Narrator: During an exhibition game in Virginia in 1934, Lou was hit in the head by a pitch and knocked out. He was taken to a hospital. In this scene, Lou talks to his doctor. _____ plays Lou; _____ plays the doctor.

Doctor: Lou, you were knocked unconscious by a pitch to your head.

Lou: I sure have a bad headache, Doc.

Doctor: Well, you were hit hard, and it gave you a concussion.

Lou: My team has a game in Washington tomorrow. I need to play.

Doctor: You'd feel a lot better if you stayed in the hospital for a few days.

Lou: My team depends on me, Doc.

Narrator: Despite his pain, Lou left the hospital and went to meet his teammates in Washington. In this next scene, Lou gets to the ballpark and goes to his manager, Joe McCarthy. _____ plays Joe McCarthy.

Lou: Hi, Joe.

Joe: Lou, what are you doing here? You're supposed to be in the hospital.

Lou: I came to play, Joe.

Joe: But Lou, you were hurt. You need to rest.

Lou: I can't let the team down, Joe.

Joe: You're my best player, Lou. If you want to play, I won't stop you.

Narrator: Lou did play that day, and he hit three triples in four and a half innings. But then it rained so hard they had to cancel the game, and none of his triples counted.

ACT IV: "Records"

Narrator: Lou set many baseball records. This scene imagines a conversation Lou might have had with his friends toward the end of his career. _____ plays Lou; _____, _____, and _____ play the friends.

Friend #1: Lou, you were a great home run hitter. You were the first American League player to hit four homers in one game, and you hit 23 grand slam home runs in your career, more than anyone in history.

Lou: It's nice of you to mention it. I've been very lucky in my career.

Friend #2: In the 1931 season, you set the American League record for "runs batted in." And in 1934 you won baseball's Triple Crown. Only a few players have ever done that.

Lou: My teammates helped a lot, and I had a wonderful manager.

Friend #3: Lou, you haven't missed a ball game for over 13 years. They call you The Iron Horse. Even though you broke every finger on both hands at least once, you kept playing.

Lou: Playing is my job. I just go out every day and do my best.

Narrator: Lou set a famous record by playing in 2,130 consecutive games. That record was finally broken in 1995 by Cal Ripken Jr., but many of Lou's records have never been broken.

ACT V: "Retirement"

Narrator: When the 1939 season got under way, Lou was really struggling on the field. He looked awkward, even stumbling at times. But Lou was team captain and had played in every Yankee game since June, 1925. His manager refused to take him out of the lineup. By the end of April, Lou knew what he had to do. In this scene, Lou goes to see his manager, Joe McCarthy. _____ plays Lou; _____ plays Joe McCarthy.

Lou: I'm benching myself, Joe. I'm taking myself out of the lineup.

Joe: Why, Lou?

Lou: For the good of the team. I'm not helping my teammates any more. The time has come for me to quit.

Joe: You don't have to quit, Lou. Take a rest and then maybe you'll feel better again.

Narrator: On May 2, 1939, in Detroit, Lou's playing streak came to an end. The Iron Horse had worn down. Even though he wasn't playing, Lou traveled with the team, giving support to the other players, but he wasn't feeling well. In this scene, Lou talks with his wife, Eleanor. _____ plays Eleanor.

Eleanor: Lou, it's been a month since you stopped playing, but you're not feeling any better.

Lou: I know, Eleanor.

Eleanor: You have to find out what's wrong with you.

Lou: I guess you're right.

Eleanor: I made an appointment for you at the Mayo Clinic, Lou.

Lou: All right, Eleanor, thanks for looking out for me.

Narrator: So Lou went to the Mayo Clinic, a famous hospital, for medical tests. The doctors found that he had a disease called "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis," or ALS. It's a disease of the central nervous system which weakens your muscles. There was no cure then and there's still no cure today. On the Fourth of July, 1939, they held [Lou Gehrig Appreciation Day](#) at Yankee Stadium. Lou was honored by his team, family, famous dignitaries, and about 62,000 fans. With tears in his eyes, Lou expressed appreciation for the people in his life. Here is part of his speech:

Lou: Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

ACT VI: "Life After Baseball"

Narrator: After Lou retired from baseball, he was offered different jobs, including one by Mayor LaGuardia of New York City. Although other jobs would pay more money, Lou preferred the chance to help people. In this scene, Lou talks to Mayor LaGuardia.

_____ plays Lou; _____ plays the Mayor.

Mayor: Lou, I'd like you to come work for the city of New York.

Lou: What would I do, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: You'd serve on the Parole Commission. You'd help young people who have gotten into trouble.

Lou: I wish I could, sir, but I'm not trained for that kind of job.

Mayor: You would do a great job. All you need is common sense, Lou, and you have plenty of that.

Lou: All right, Mr. Mayor, I'd like to help others if I can.

Narrator: So Lou worked hard for the city until his ALS made it impossible to continue. Lou died on June 6, 1941 at the age of 37.