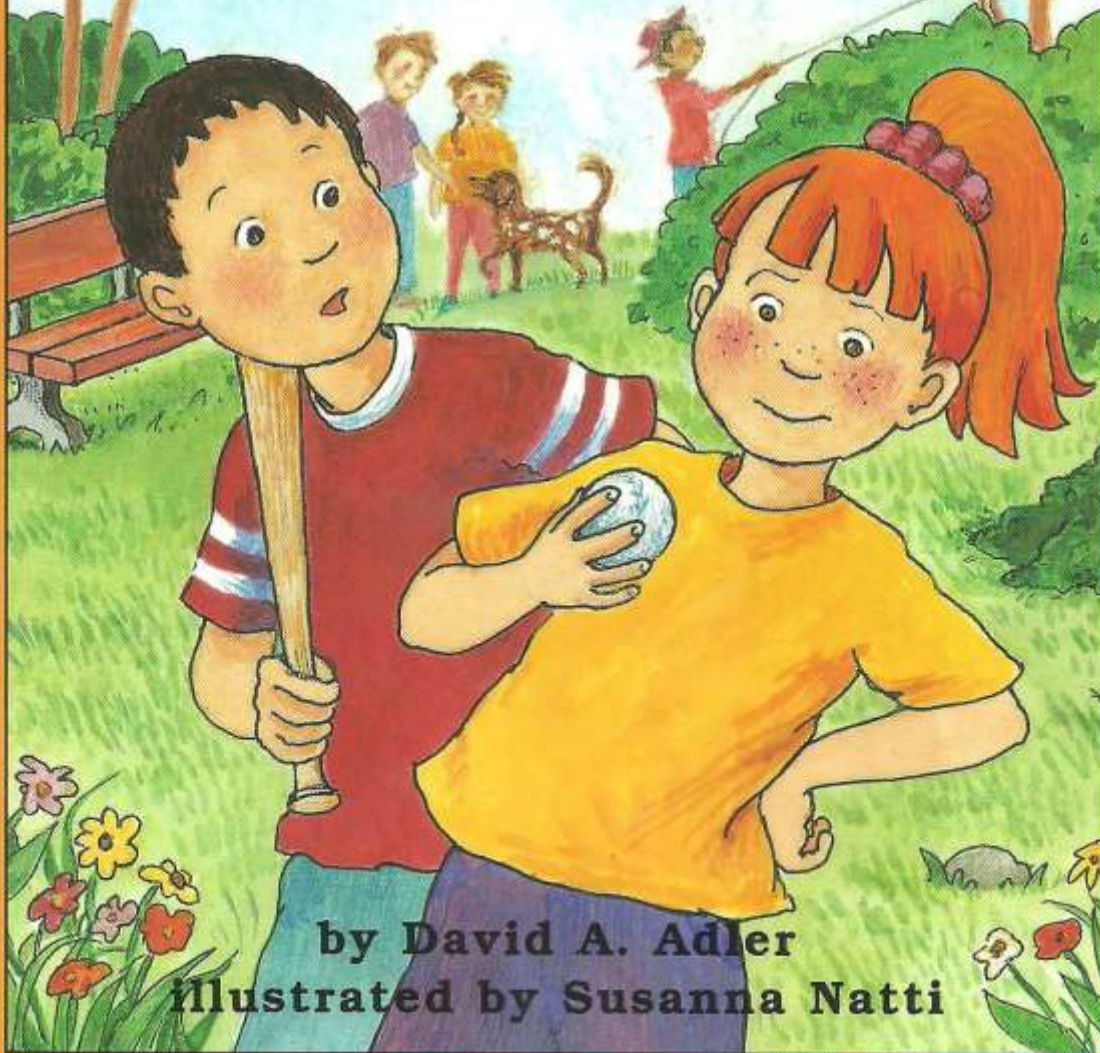


**YOUNG
CAM JANSEN
and the
Baseball Mystery**



by David A. Adler
Illustrated by Susanna Natti

1. PLAY BALL!



“Watch out!”

Cam Jansen called
to her friend Eric Shelton.

“Watch out!”

“Why?” Eric asked.

They were walking in a park.

Splash!

Eric stepped into a puddle.

“That’s why,” Cam told him.

The park was crowded.

People were sitting on benches.

Some were reading.



Some were talking.
Some were resting.
Children were riding bicycles
and flying kites.
“Watch out!” Cam said again.
Eric looked down.
He wasn’t about to step into a puddle.
“Why?” Eric asked.
Just then a red ball flew by.
It almost hit him.



"That's why," Cam told Eric.

"Watch out!" Cam said a third time.

A dog was playing catch
with an old man.

The dog almost ran into Eric.

It ran to the red ball.

The dog stopped the ball with its foot.

Then it picked up the ball in its teeth
and ran back with it.

Eric was careful.

He watched where he walked.

He didn't want to step into another puddle.

He watched the kites
and the children riding bicycles.

He didn't want anyone or anything
to knock into him.

Cam and Eric walked
to the edge of the baseball field.

"There's Robert," Cam said.

She pointed.

"And there's Rachel."

Robert and Rachel were on the baseball field.

Some of Cam and Eric's other friends
were there, too.

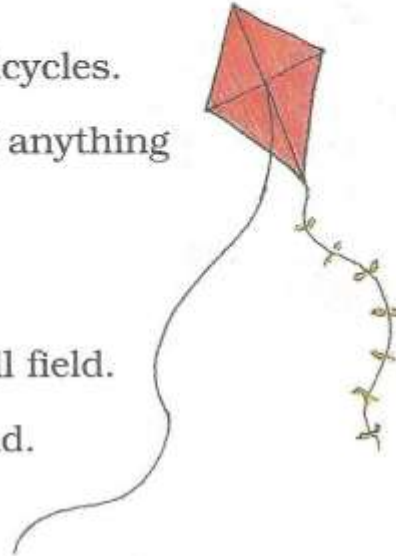
Eric said, "I hope they're not waiting for us."

Cam and Eric hurried to the baseball field.

"I'm glad you're here," Robert told them.

"I brought a bat."

"And I brought a ball," Rachel said.





"But we still don't have enough players."

Robert said, "A lot of people
told me they would come.

I had a list of them all,
but I left it at school."

"I saw the list," Cam said.

She closed her eyes and said, "Click!"

Cam always closes her eyes
and says, "Click!"

when she wants to remember something.

Cam has an amazing memory.

"My memory is like a camera," she says.

"I have a picture in my head
of everything I've seen.

Click! is the sound my camera makes."

Cam's eyes were still closed.



"I'm looking at the list," she said.

Then she opened her eyes.

She looked at all her friends
on the baseball field.

"Jane, Annie, and Evan were on the list.

They're not here yet."

Cam's real name is Jennifer.

But because of her great memory
people started calling her "the Camera."

Then "the Camera" became just "Cam."

Cam, Eric, and their friends waited.

Then Jane, Annie, and Evan

all came at the same time.

Robert and Rachel divided everyone
into two teams.

Then Robert called out,

"Play ball!"



2. HOME RUN!



Cam and Eric were on Robert's team.

They were on the field
at the start of the game.

The first batter hit the ball
high into the air.

Robert ran back.

He reached up and caught it.

"One out!" he called.

The next batter
hit the ball onto the ground.

Cam reached down for the ball.

She threw it to Eric at first base.



“Two outs!” Robert called.

Then Amy came to bat.

“Move back,” Robert told his team.

Amy swung hard at the first pitch
and missed.

“Strike one!” Robert called.

Amy swung hard at the second pitch, too,
and missed.

“Strike two!” Robert called.

Amy held her bat.

She looked out at the pitcher and waited.

She swung hard at the third pitch.

She hit the ball high over Robert's head.

Amy ran to first base.

Robert ran back for the ball.

Amy ran to second base.

Robert kept running back.

Amy ran to third base.

Robert ran off the baseball field.

He ran past some children

who were flying kites.

Robert ran to where

people were sitting on benches

reading, talking, and resting.

He stopped and looked for the ball.

Amy ran home.

"Home run!" Amy shouted.

"I hit a home run!"

Amy and the others on her team cheered.

Rachel took the bat.
She stood at home plate.
Everyone waited for Robert
to throw the ball to the pitcher.
“Hurry! Hurry!” Rachel called.
“I want to hit a home run, too.”
Robert ran back onto the field.
“I can’t find it,” he called.
“I can’t find the ball!”



3. THERE IT IS



Cam closed her eyes and said, "Click!"

"The ball went over Robert's head," she said.

"It bounced near a tree."

Cam opened her eyes.

She pointed to a tree
at the edge of the baseball field.

"That's the one," she said.

Cam, Eric, and the others
ran to the tree.

They looked for the ball.

"I see it. I see it," Rachel said.

She ran past the tree
and picked something up.
“No, it’s not the ball,” she said.
“It’s just a rolled-up piece of paper.”
Dara pointed to something near a bench.
“There’s a ball,” she said.
“But it’s not ours. It’s red.”
Eric looked at a puddle.





"This looks deep," he said.

"Maybe the ball is in here."

Eric found a branch on the ground.

He used it to poke in the puddle.

"It is deep," he said.

Eric kept poking.

"Hey!" he called out.

"I found something."

Eric used the branch
to push it out of the puddle.
“It’s not the ball,” Eric said.
“It’s just an empty soda can.”
“There it is,” Robert said.
“I found it.”
He pointed to a girl and boy
who were playing catch.
Robert said, “They’re playing with
our ball.”



4. THAT'S OUR BALL



The girl threw the ball high
over the boy's head.

The boy jumped,
but he didn't catch it.

He turned, ran,
and stopped the ball with his foot.

Just then Cam remembered something.

The boy picked the ball up.

Cam closed her eyes and said, "Click!"

Robert walked over to the girl and boy.

Eric, Rachel, and the others
followed him.



"That's our ball," Robert said.

"Amy hit it over my head
and you found it.

Now we want it back."

Cam opened her eyes.

She looked at the benches.

She looked at the people sitting on them.

Cam closed her eyes again
and said, "Click!"

"This ball is ours," the girl said.

"We brought it from home."

Robert held out his hand and said,

"Let me see it."

The girl gave the ball to Robert.

He showed it to Rachel.

"Is this yours?" he asked.

Rachel looked at the ball and said,

"No, it's not.

I wrote my name on the ball."



She gave the ball back to the girl.

"I'm sorry," Robert said.

"I was wrong. It's not our ball."

Rachel told Robert and the others,

"Let's keep looking."

"No," Cam said and opened her eyes.

"We don't have to look for the ball.

We have to look for a dog."



5. RUFF! RUFF!



"That's silly," Rachel said.

"We didn't lose a dog.

We lost a ball."

Cam led them to the red ball.

"I found that before," Dara said.

"It's not ours."

Eric told Cam, "Our ball is white."

Cam picked up the red ball.

She showed it to her friends.

"Do you see the teeth marks

in this ball?" she asked.



"An old man was playing catch
with his dog."

"That's right," Eric said.

"First the ball almost hit me.
Then the dog almost ran into me."

"This is all very nice," Rachel said.

"But I want to find my ball.

I want a chance to hit a home run, too."

Cam said, "I think the old man
threw this ball.



The dog ran for it.
But it took back Rachel's ball.
That's why this red ball was left
near the bench.
We should look for the dog.
It's small, brown, and has white spots.
If we find that dog,
we'll find Rachel's ball."
"No," Robert said. "Let's just
keep looking for Rachel's ball."



Robert and some of the children
kept looking for the ball.

Cam, Eric, Rachel, and Evan
looked for the dog.

They found it in the open field.
It was running to the old man.

There was a ball in its mouth.
Cam, Eric, Rachel, and Evan
ran to the old man, too.

The old man took the ball
out of the dog's mouth.

It was a white ball.

He was about to throw it.

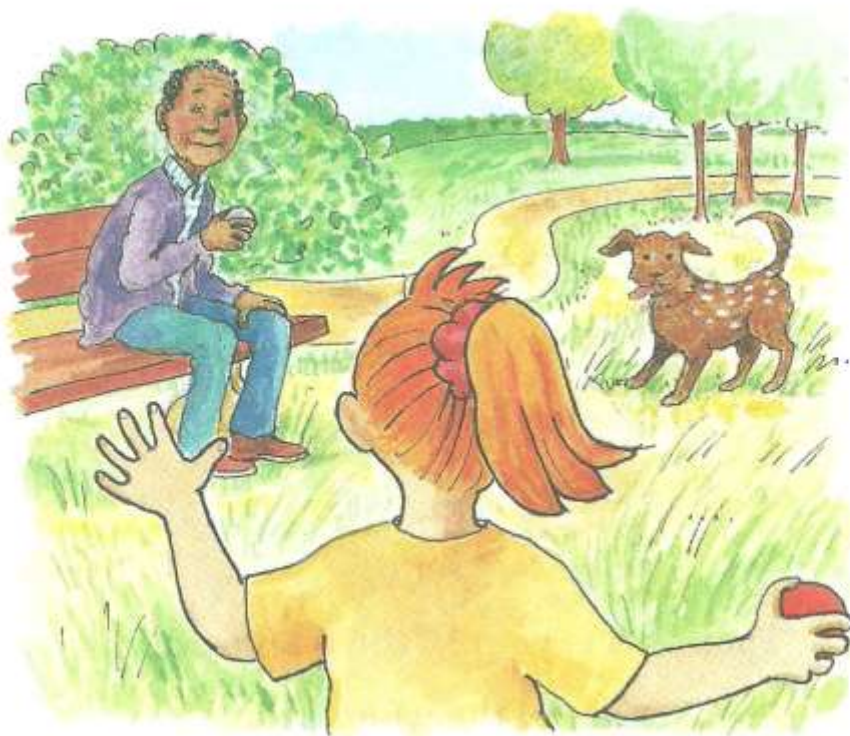
"Stop!" Cam called to him.

"Don't throw the ball."

He stopped.

He didn't throw the ball.

"That's mine," Rachel told the man.





Cam gave him the red ball.

"This is yours," she said.

The old man looked at
the red and white balls.

"The white one has a name on it.

Are you Rachel?" the man asked.

"Yes," Rachel told him.

"Then this is yours," the man said.

He gave Rachel the white ball.

"I'm sorry we had it.

I wasn't watching what ball

Pal brought back."

Ruff! Ruff! Pal barked.

Rachel ran to Robert

and showed him the ball.

"You were right," Robert told Cam.

"Let's play ball," Rachel said.

She walked to home plate.

"Pitch it here," Rachel said.

"I want to hit a home run."

