

Miracle in the Ballpark

'Tis the season for America's pastime. And baseball fans will talk about the first game of the 1996 American League championship series between the New York Yankees and the Baltimore Orioles for years to come.



The game was played in New York. Going into the bottom of the 8th inning, Baltimore led 4-3. With one out and Armando Benitez on the mound, Yankee Derek Jeter hit a towering blast to right field. Orioles right fielder Tony Tarasco ran back to the wall and timed his jump perfectly to snatch the ball before it hit high off the right-field fence.

But ... before the ball landed safely in his glove, the unexpected happened. "To me, it was a magic trick," said Tarasco later, "because the ball just disappeared out of midair."

Not quite. A 12-year-old boy from New Jersey named Jeff Maier had skipped school that day to come to the game, and was seated in the front row in right field. When that towering fly ball fell straight in front of him, he did what any Yankee fan would do: he reached out over the wall with his baseball glove and scooped the ball into the stands.

The "magic" continued. The umpire erroneously called it a home run, tying the score. The game went into extra innings, and in the bottom of the 11th, Yankee Bernie Williams hit the home run that won the game, giving the Yankees a 1-0 lead in the series. Afterward, the Orioles called the fan interference an outrage. Yankee fans called it a miracle. The Yankees went on to win the series 4 games to 1.

Like the Yankees, sometimes we need outside intervention. We need God to reach out and help us.

Miracles are possible for those who pray and believe.



– Beecher Hunter