

# Brothers at Bat

Recommended for Grades 1-3

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## **Book Summary: Brothers at Bat**

1930. New Jersey. The Acerra family has twelve boys who love to play baseball. In the late 1930's the oldest nine brothers form their own semi-professional team with their father as coach and play other teams in the state. Every brother has his place in the team and they all work together to do what they love most. When one of the brothers is injured during a game, the other brothers practice with him until he is confident to return to playing baseball.

## **[SPOILER]**

In the 1940's the team disbanded when six brothers left to serve their country in World War II. When the war ended, all the brothers returned home to resume their all-brother team for another six years. Years later, the Acerra brothers were honored in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

## **Author Biography: Audrey Vernick**

Audrey Vernick grew up with two sisters in Whitestone, New York. She always loved to read but did not start thinking about writing books until college. She earned her Master of Fine Arts from Sarah Lawrence College. While she has written many books for children, she has also written many short stories for adults. She spends her time writing, visiting schools and speaking at conferences. She and her family live in New Jersey.



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## **Discussion Questions: Brothers at Bat**

1. *Brothers at Bat* is about an all-family baseball team. Compare your family with the Acerras. What kinds of activities does your family enjoy doing together? Have family activities changed since 1930? How?
2. The Acerra family had four girls but they didn't play baseball. Why do you think they didn't play? Think about the sports played today. Are there some sports that girls or boys don't play? Which ones?
3. There was no fighting, rivalry or jealousy on the Acerra baseball team. Why do you think that was? How might an all-brother baseball team be more effective than a team of many different people?
4. Alfred lost an eye during one of his baseball games. How was he able to keep playing baseball?
5. In 1940, the Acerra team disbanded when six brothers left to join the army. Why do you think so many of the brothers served in the army together? What do you think the rest of the Acerra family did back at home?
6. During the war, the Acerra family waited for news from the brothers in the army. Why did it take so long for letters to travel overseas?
7. The brothers resumed playing from 1946 to 1952. Is this a long time for a single team to play? Why or why not? How do you think they won the league championship four times?
8. In 1997, a special ceremony was held at the Baseball Hall of fame to honor their team. More than a hundred relatives joined them. Why was this significant for the team? Have you ever been a part of a big family celebration? What happened?
9. On the way back home from the celebration, the bus broke down and all the Acerras took advantage of the opportunity to play baseball. Why do you think it was special for them all to play together? What games does your family play at large gatherings?
10. Think about the art used to illustrate the story. Did you find this drawing style good for telling the story? Why or why not?
11. In the Author's Note, Jimmy's daughter Pat said, "We were all raised to be team players, no matter what situation we were in." How was this team spirit shown in the story? What other ways (not shown in the story) do you think the Acerra family worked as a team?



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