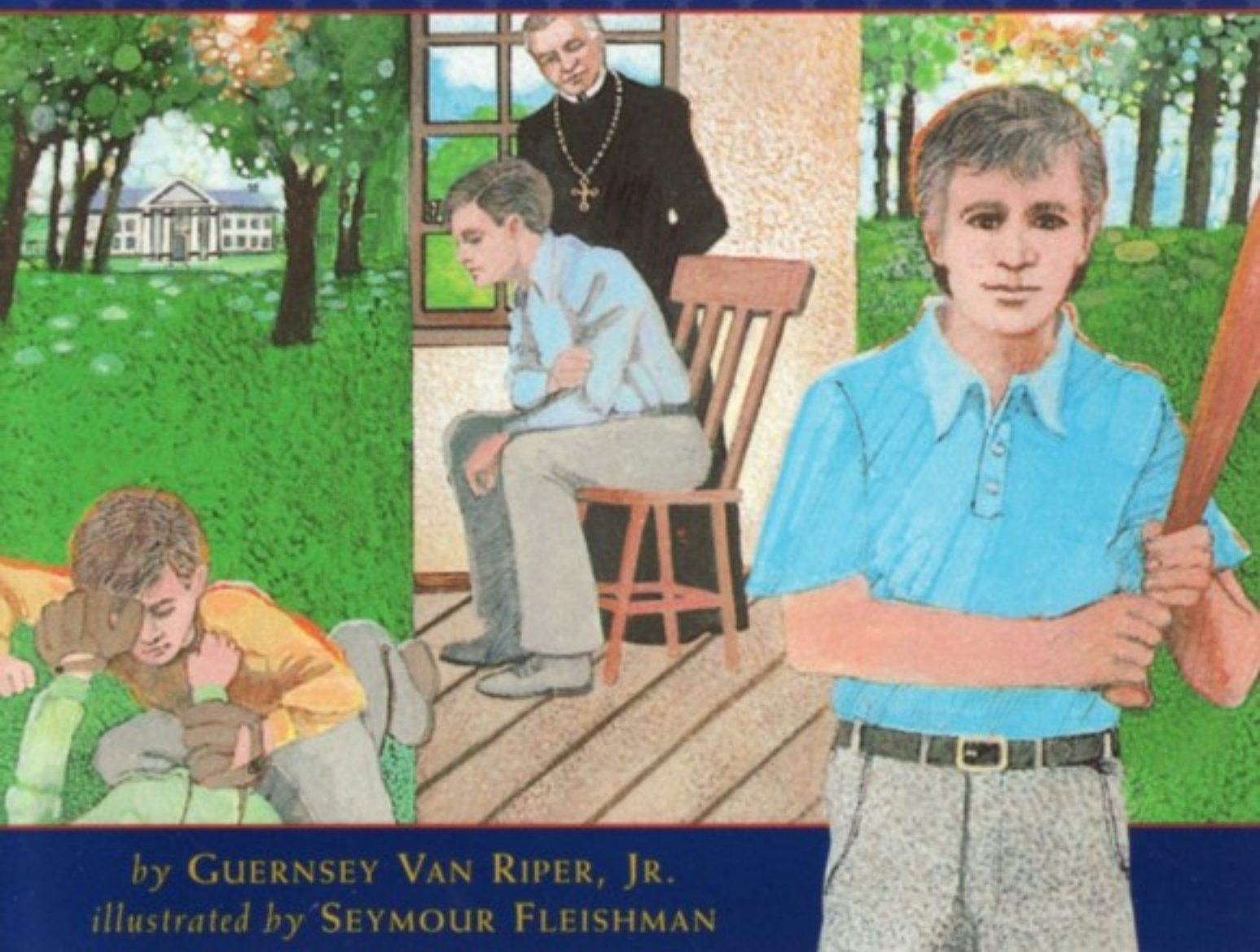


Childhood of Famous Americans



BABE RUTH

One of Baseball's Greatest



by GUERNSEY VAN RIPER, JR.
illustrated by SEYMOUR FLEISHMAN

Oh, That George!

THE DOOR of the little restaurant flew open. A tall, seven-year-old boy dashed out. *Bang!* went the door as it closed behind him. Headlong he ran along West Camden Street in Baltimore. It was a warm day in April, 1902.

The boy nearly collided with two women walking toward him.

“Georgie! Georgie Ruth!” called the shorter woman sharply. “Watch where you’re going!”

George stopped suddenly. He thrust back the mop of dark-brown hair from his forehead. He grinned sheepishly. “’Scuse me, Mrs. Callahan,” he said. “I’m in a hurry!” He pushed past the

women on the narrow sidewalk and ran down the street as fast as he could go.

Both women turned to watch.

“That boy!” said Mrs. Callahan. She shook her head. “But I guess it isn’t his fault. He hardly has anyone to look after him.”

“Why, what’s the matter?” asked her companion, with a concerned look.

“Well, his father and mother work awfully hard trying to make a living in that little restaurant. Half the time Mrs. Ruth is sick. And she’s got a daughter, Mamie, to look after. So nobody pays much attention to George.”

“Oh, that’s too bad!”

Mrs. Callahan sighed. “And the things that go on in that restaurant! The men seem to do nothing but fight and talk loudly.”

“Are they sailors and oystermen?” her companion asked.

“Yes, and the roughest kind, I’m afraid. It’s

certainly the wrong place for a headstrong boy like that George Ruth. One of these days I've a mind to call the police."

ON THE STREET

George whirled around the next corner. He was bubbling with energy. He caught up with three boys walking along halfway down the block.

"Hiya, Slats!" he shouted to a thin-faced, sandy-haired boy. George slapped him on the back in greeting.

Slats stumbled and nearly fell. He gulped hard before he could speak. "Hey, what's the idea?" he managed to say. He picked up a stick and started for George.

George burst out laughing. "What's the matter?" he roared. "Can't you take a joke?"

The other two boys laughed, too.