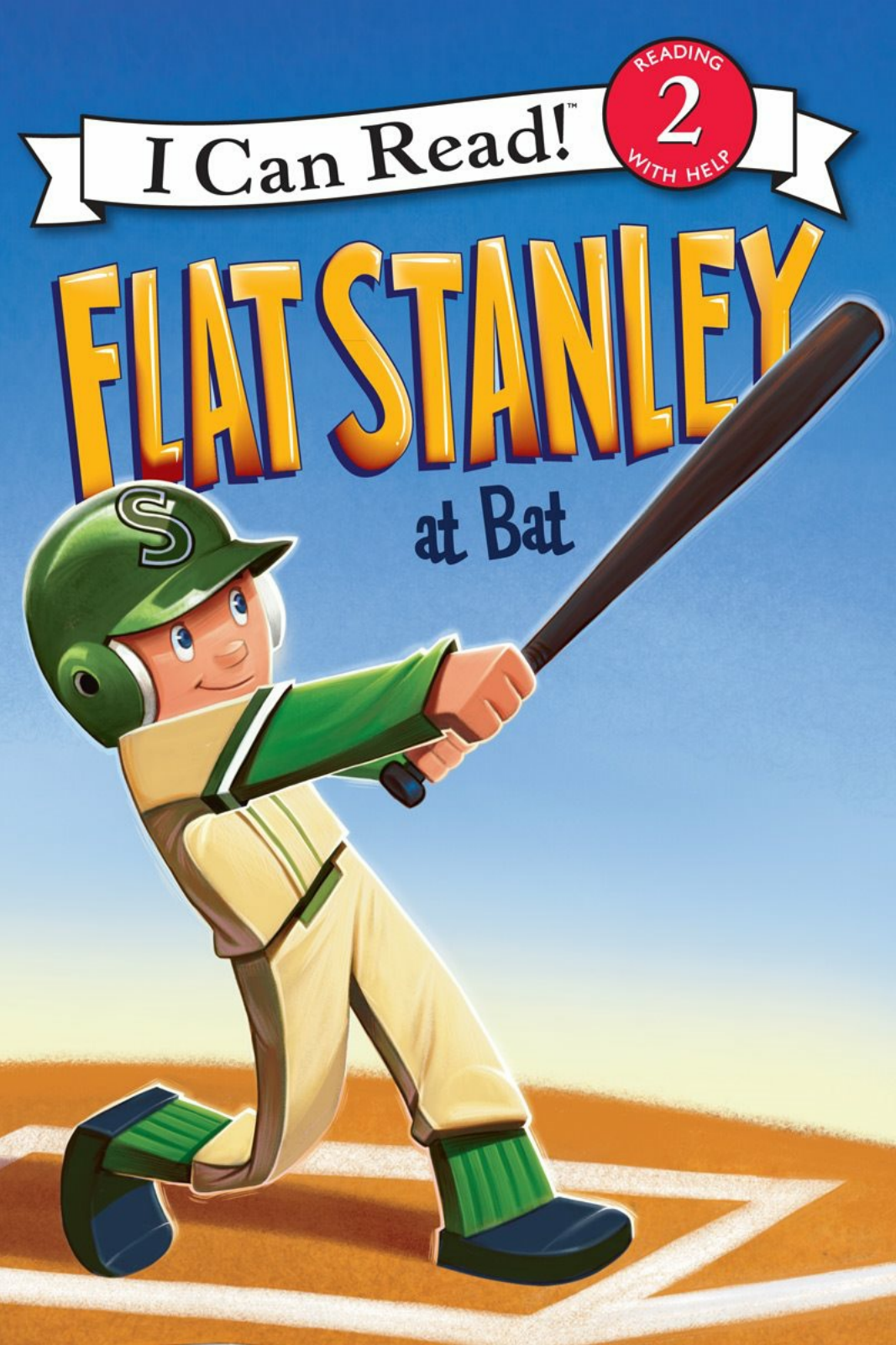

I Can Read!™
READING 2 WITH HELP
FLAT STANLEY
at Bat

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FLAT STANLEY at Bat



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HARPER

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Stanley Lambchop lived
with his mother,
his father,
and his little brother, Arthur.



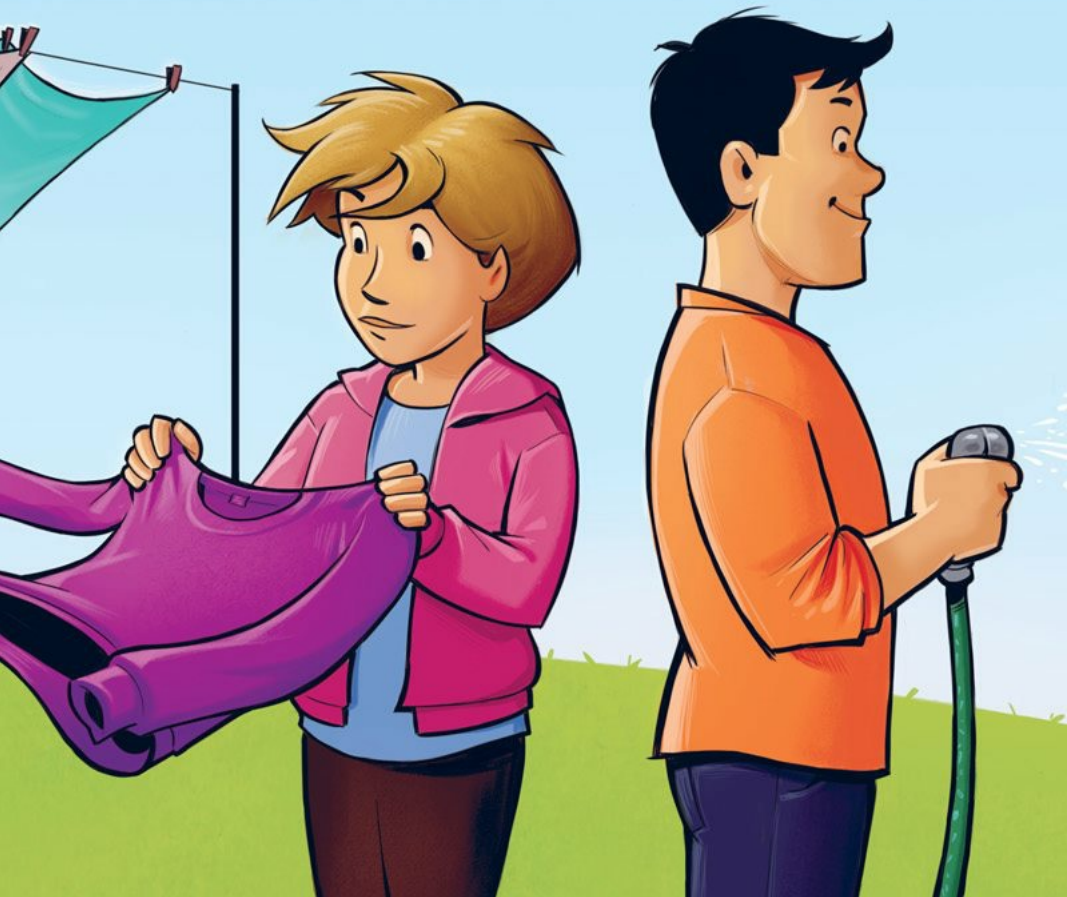
Stanley was four feet tall,
about a foot wide,
and half an inch thick.
He had been flat ever since
a bulletin board fell on him.



Sometimes being flat
was a bit tricky.
When he turned sideways,
Stanley was hard to spot.



And a good gust of wind
could sweep Stanley off his feet.
But he never let his flatness
get in his way.



“I’m trying out for baseball,”
Stanley told Arthur one day.
Arthur helped Stanley practice.
Stanley hit a thousand pitches.
He caught a thousand fly balls.



Stanley's hard work showed
at tryouts.
"Congratulations," said Coach Bart.
"You're our new center fielder!"





Opening day was bright and breezy.
The teams ran onto the field.
"There's Stanley!" cried Arthur.
Mr. Lambchop snapped a picture.
Mrs. Lambchop cheered.
"Hooray for the other players, too,"
she added politely.



Stanley was the first batter.
He stepped up to home plate,
turned sideways,
and pulled back his bat.



The pitcher squinted at Stanley.
“This guy is so skinny,” he said,
“I can hardly see where to throw.”
He threw a pitch.



“Ball one,” said the umpire.

Another pitch.

“Ball two,” said the umpire.

Two more balls,

and Stanley earned a walk.

“Good job!” called Coach Bart.



Stanley's team played well.
By the ninth inning they led,
six to five.
The other team had one last chance.
Their best hitter came to bat
and blasted the ball toward the fence!





Just then, the breeze picked up.

Stanley ran and leaped into the wind.

WHOOSH! Up floated Stanley.

PLUNK went the ball into his glove!



"Great play!" Arthur called.

Not everyone agreed.

"No fair,"

yelled someone in the crowd.

"Are flat players even allowed?"

Stanley felt crushed.



That night, Stanley talked to Arthur.

“I’m a good player,” he said.

“And not just because I’m flat.

But how can I prove it?”

“I think I know a way,” Arthur said.



The day of the second game
was bright and breezy again.
But something was different.
“Stanley!” gasped Mrs. Lambchop.



Her son was not flat.

He was bursting out of his uniform!

Mrs. Lambchop gasped again.

“My nice clean laundry!”

A sock stuck out of Stanley’s collar.

A purple frilly blouse

trailed from his pant leg.

“That’s my favorite one!”

Mrs. Lambchop said.



There was no time to worry
about the clothes.



A batter smacked the ball
over Stanley's head!
Stanley ran and leaped into the wind.

But this time Stanley didn't float up,
and the ball didn't land in his glove.
It sailed right over the fence.



Soon it was Stanley's turn to bat.
The pitcher had no trouble
seeing where to pitch now.
"Strike one," called the umpire.
"Strike two. Strike three!"



In the bleachers, Arthur gulped. Had he made a terrible mistake helping Stanley unflatten himself?



The last inning rolled around.
The game was tied.
Stanley came to bat again.
He heard Arthur's voice
in the crowd.
"Come on, Stanley!
You can do it!"
The pitcher threw the ball . . .
and Stanley SMASHED it!



The ball flew into the outfield.

BAP! It bounced off the wall.

The right fielder ran to pick it up.



Meanwhile, Stanley tore
around the bases.
First base. Second base. Third base.
Stanley was headed home!
But so was the ball!
“Stanley, SLIDE!” shouted Coach Bart.



Arthur's heart raced.
If Stanley were still flat,
he could slide easily
under the catcher's glove.
But now?



Stanley stretched out his arms
and dove onto home plate.
There was a swirl of dirt and socks.
Then the umpire spread his arms.
“Safe!” he called.



“Wahoo!” Arthur hollered.
Mr. and Mrs. Lambchop clapped
so hard their hands hurt.



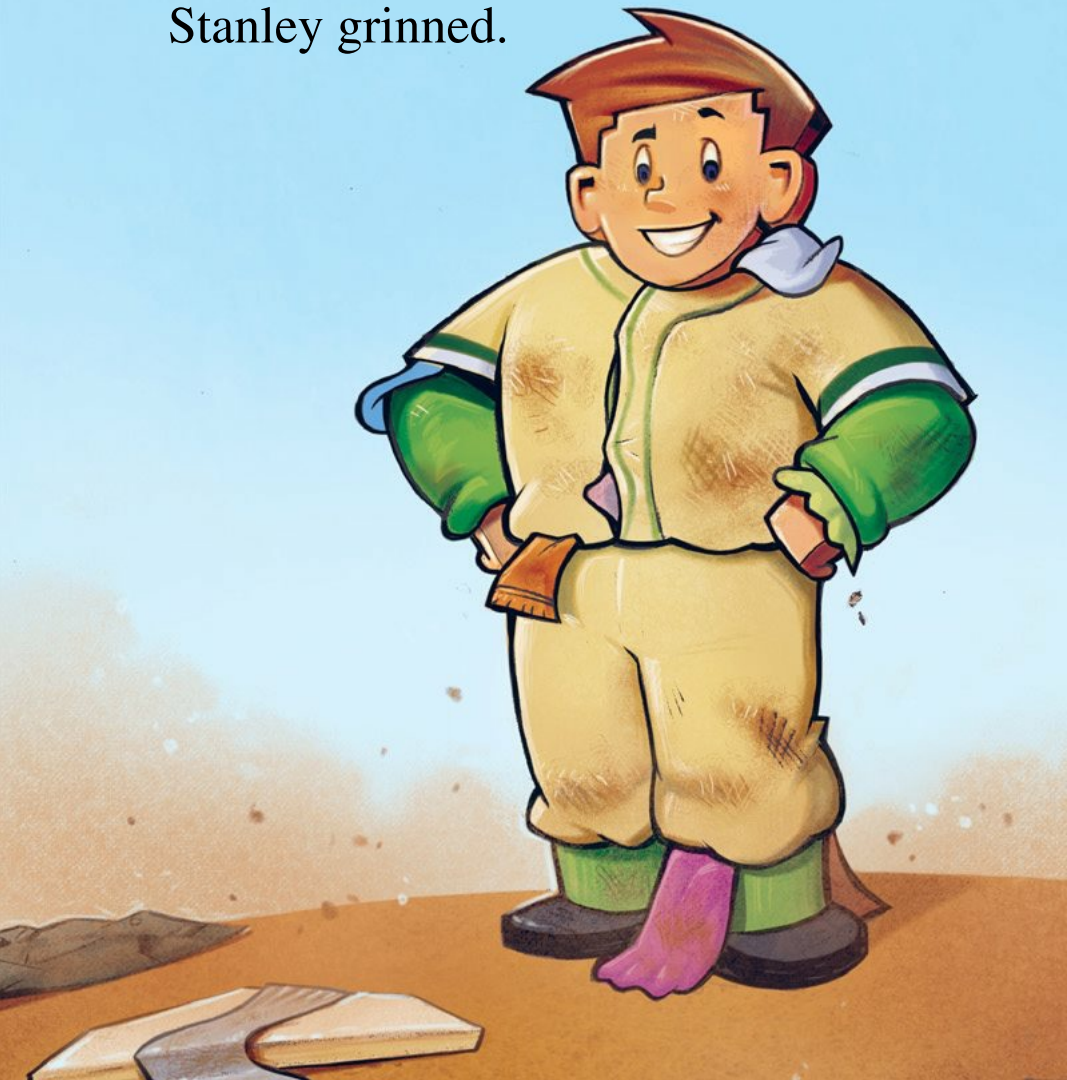
“No fair,”

yelled someone in the crowd.

“Look at the muscles on that kid.

Are players that big even allowed?”

Stanley grinned.





"Not so many socks next time,"
Mr. Lambchop called down to Stanley.
Mrs. Lambchop looked at Arthur.
"And NO blouses!"



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