

0. Rookie, The - Story Preface

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Pitcher Jim Morris in his Devil-ray uniform. Image online courtesy The Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

*Maybe the reason I never liked fairy tales
was that
I wondered what followed
"And they lived happily ever after..."*

Jim Morris
2001

It was the bottom of the 8th inning. The Texas Rangers were playing at home against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, a new expansion team based in St. Petersburg, Florida. Royce Clayton was the next Texas hitter.

Jim Morris, a 35-year-old rookie, was warming up in the bullpen. He had suited up for his first game in the major leagues. A few months before, Morris was a high school science teacher in Big Lake, Texas.

Improbably, the bullpen call came for Jimmy Morris. When he took the mound, and fired four pitches at Clayton, each ball traveled faster than 95 miles an hour.

Some might think the moment was the stuff of fairy tales. Except in real life, fairy tales don't "just happen." They usually follow years of disappointment and hard work.

And some might think that fairy tales require a "happily ever after" ending. They usually do. Except in real life, heroes of a story often have their own definitions for that term.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Rookie-The)
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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Rookie-The)
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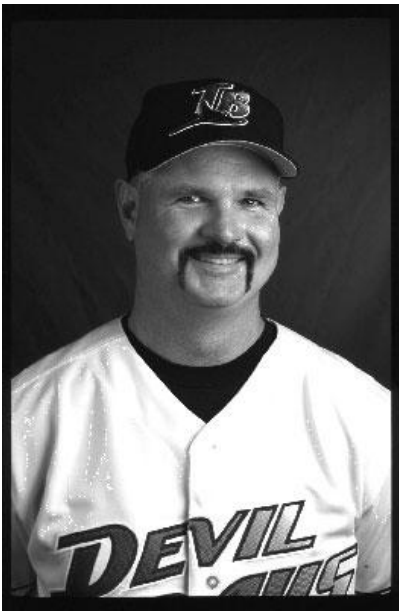


Royce Clayton

Image online, courtesy Texas Rangers via Wikimedia Commons.

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