

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT
THIS PLAY IS FULLY PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT**

All plays, books, music and other materials published by Heartland Plays, Inc. are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries which the United States has reciprocal relations including, but not limited to all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, The Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention. All rights to the plays and materials on our website are strictly reserved including, and without limitation, professional and amateur performance rights; motion pictures; public reading; radio and television broadcasting; audio and video recording and reproduction of any type known or yet to be invented; information storage and retrieval systems of any type known or yet to be invented; and the rights of translation into any and all languages. No individual or organization whether amateur or stock may perform this or any play published by Heartland Plays, Inc. without first obtaining advance permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. and paying the appropriate fees including Royalties and Single-Use Copyright fees. Heartland Plays, Inc. collects royalties on behalf of the Playwrights whose plays it publishes. Unauthorized copying, transcribing or reproduction of this or any play or excerpt, or storage or transmittal in any form and by any means whether known or yet to be invented, is strictly forbidden except as provided by Agreement with Heartland Plays, Inc. Any unauthorized use is a violation of copyright laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES TO REMEMBER

1. DO take advantage of the free online perusal of our plays to help you make the best choice for your particular needs or production.
2. DO enjoy the convenience of our online purchase application for performance rights and single-use copyright.
3. DO understand that this play and all plays and materials on our website are controlled by Heartland Plays, Inc. and fully protected by copyright.
4. DO NOT attempt in any way to copy, transcribe or reproduce this play by any means or perform this play or use any play or material from our website without first receiving permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. Any attempt to use this or any other work without first obtaining permission is a violation of copyright and punishable by law.
5. DO NOT rob this Author or any of the Authors we represent of their right to be paid for the use of their property. **It is a crime and it is wrong!**

Product Code A0887-SP

Not Your Average Jo

by

Allison Fradkin

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
REPRODUCTION WITHOUT SPECIFIC WRITTEN PERMISSION PROHIBITED**

**Performance Rights Available Exclusively through
Heartland Plays, Inc. at heartlandplays.com
playsnow@heartlandplays.com
customer service: 406-431-7680**

Copyright © 2020 by Allison Fradkin

Not Your Average Jo

by Allison Fradkin

SYNOPSIS

During World War II, it was a woman's patriotic prerogative to embrace a man's job. The War enabled women to experience a change of pace and, for members of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, a change of base. But when South Bend Blue Sox teammates Josephine and Penny develop a war bond, it's hardly the kind the government—let alone the League—had in mind. Will the gals take a crack at a romance that, like a baseball, won't be seamless? Or will they take the base path of least resistance and prioritize the game over the dame?

CHARACTERS

JOSEPHINE: 18; female-identifying or non-binary. A real-life ballplayer in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League who identified as gay and who was released during her second season for violating the League's feminine ideals.

PENNY: 20; female-identifying. A fictional ballplayer in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League as well as an homage to the director of *A League of Their Own*, Penny Marshall.

SETTING

A backyard in South Bend, Indiana

TIME

Late summer, 1943

NOTE ON CASTING

The League was comprised almost exclusively of Caucasian women. Integration was cause for contemplation, but beyond the recruitment of a handful of Cuban women, it never progressed to actualization. Assigning one or both of the roles to a Woman of Color would be a subversive and welcome casting choice.

NOTE ON CONTENT

The characters luxuriate in the language and have a ball with the puns and wordplay. The substance, therefore, is frequently found in the subtext, with the language functioning like a catcher's chest protector: providing protection, safety, cover. So while the dialogue sounds delightful, the possibility of having misinterpreted their feelings for each other as mutual—coupled with the prospect of expulsion from the League if their relationship is discovered—is frightful.

Not Your Average Jo
by Allison Fradkin

AT RISE: *JOSEPHINE and PENNY, members of the South Bend Blue Sox team in the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, are in the backyard of their hosts' home, rehearsing a colossally campy—and alarmingly astute—skit lampooning the League's fervent focus on femininity. They stand on top of a long wooden bench.*

PENNY

(Sings to the tune of the AAGPBL "Victory Song")

Batter up...

JOSEPHINE

(Sings to the tune of the AAGPBL "Victory Song")

Hear that call...

PENNY

That catcall, that is.

JOSEPHINE

Naturally. The Blue Sox *are* the bat's meow.

PENNY

When it comes to femininity, we gals don't hesitate to South Bend over backward for you.

They bend over.

PENNY, *Continued*

(Presenting JO)

This is especially true of my teammate JoJo D'Angelo—short for Lay-D'Angelo [Lady Angelo], of course, lest she be confused with Joe DiMaggio. That would be a no-no, JoJo.

JOSEPHINE

Believe me, I know-know. The League drilled it into me like a rivet in an A-20 bomber plane.

PENNY

Speaking plainly, JoJo here has got more steel than the mill she worked at before joining us as an outfielder. Not only is she a model player; she is the model of all mottles.

JO reveals a strawberry-shaded mottle on her thigh sustained from sliding into bases in a skirt.

PENNY, *Continued*

Don't you worry—this rouge bruise is the only spot of color allowed in the League.

JOSEPHINE

Isn't my strawberry a real peach?

PENNY

Don't you worry—this gal doesn't bat for the other team.

JOSEPHINE

The Rockford Peaches, that is.

PENNY

She may be a sore winner, but that beats being the gal who puts the “man” in “sportsmanship.”

JOSEPHINE

(Presenting PENNY playing “Lynette Result”)

Lynette Result—short for Mascu-Lynette [Masculine Ette].

PENNY

(As PENNY)

Don't you worry—I'm really Penny Marscharelli, as girly as it gets.

JOSEPHINE

(As PENNY transforms into the fictional Mascu-Lynette)

When it came to looks, poor Lynette was not only batting average; her masculinity was no masquerade. A diamond in the rough is one thing, but a gal can only act so rough on the diamond before folks start questioning her...value. The net result? That diamond got cut from the League.

(As PENNY transforms into herself—or, rather, a knockout knockoff)

If only that dame had done the same as Penny, a shiny and shining example of ladylike likability. She treats each period of play not as an inning but as a femin-inning. And how could she not, with that killer-diller figure? Observe as she swishes past us in her Sonja Henie hemline, proving—without question—that Penny's from Heaven.

(PENNY demonstrates)

Atta girl. You're really cooking with gas. You've got a real nice swing, you know that?

PENNY

It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that. *(Possibly not kidding)* But were you referring to my bat or my hips?

JOSEPHINE

(Discombobulated)

You're batty. Your bat.

PENNY

Naturally. Don't you worry—

JOSEPHINE

(Dropping the act)

I can't help but worry. We want to poke fun at the League's code of conduct, not conduct ourselves like a couple of...rotten apples. If we perform that skit at the team banquet, we'll spoil the whole bushel.

PENNY

Now just an apple-pickin' minute, Jo.

JOSEPHINE

Let's just rewrite it, Penny, please, so we'll be safe instead of...out. Yes, some players think it's lousy and loony that the League lobs all these rules at us to ensure we look like girls. But I think it's a good move; it's wise. Who wants a bunch of...foul ballplayers?

PENNY

With ball due respect, Jo—

JOSEPHINE

Exactly. We have to be more respectful. I've already gotten one warning from management about butchering my hair: too boyish a bob, they said. So forgive me if some of this is hitting a little too close to home plate.

PENNY

Is there something you'd like to touch base with me about?

JOSEPHINE

No.

PENNY

Oh.

JOSEPHINE

Really? You're just going to let it go?

PENNY

There's no prying in baseball.

JOSEPHINE

Tell that to the Holbrooks, always wondering whether we have “social engagements.” Our host family is supposed to dote on us and cheer us on, not fix us up. The only reason Mrs. Holbrook wants her little soldiers back home—aside from motherly love, of course—is because she thinks we’d make the keenest couples. I’ll take a double header over a double wedding any day.

PENNY

I’m with you. (*Catches herself; moves away*) I mean, I’m in complete agreement—with you. And anyway, they’re far enough away, so we’re safe.

JOSEPHINE

I just hope they stay out of the picture. Scratch that—I hope they stay *in* the picture, every single hotshot snapshot.

PENNY

Speaking of pictures, you should wear your lavender blouse for the publicity shots tomorrow. (*Moves closer*) Of course, the photos won’t be in color, but it’ll still look dapper with your infield-brown A-line skirt. (*Flirtatiously runs finger up the back of JOSEPHINE’s leg*) And I could draw seams on the backs of your legs like I did last time—unless you got new nylons? Granted, I’m not great at it—one seam looked like a jump rope and the other looked like the string on a pull-along duck.

JOSEPHINE

That’s okay. Sometimes it’s hard to stay straight.

PENNY

That explains my fondness for shapely things—like curve balls and crescent moons and...you think we could talk the team into taking paper moon portraits instead of publicity photos? My folks had one made on their honeymoon. We’d look so cute cradled by a cardboard crescent.

JOSEPHINE

How do you even pose for one of those?

PENNY

You just, um, you just sit close, like a ball in the pocket of a glove.

Uncertainly, PENNY guides JOSEPHINE to the bench and demonstrates.

JOSEPHINE

Pen, are we...people of a kind? Never mind. Let’s just pretend there’s an air raid and yank those blackout curtains closed. We want to avoid detection by enemies and traitors—or anyone who can hurt us—not encourage it.

PENNY

You know that song in Oklahoma, “I Cain’t Say No”?

JOSEPHINE

We're not in Oklahoma, Pen. We're in Indiana.

PENNY

I'm talking about the music from the musical, the record I'm always—

(JO laughs)

Hardy-har-hardball. I should say no to your question, about whether we're...people of a kind. But I just can't do it. I can't say no. It's on the record.

JOSEPHINE

Also on the record is "It's a Scandal! It's an Outrage!", not to mention "People Will Say We're in Love."

PENNY

My kind of people.

JOSEPHINE

We aren't though—what they'll say.

PENNY

Aren't we?

JOSEPHINE

Are we?

PENNY

I...can't say. But they taught us in charm school that the eyes "bespeak our innermost thoughts," so we could—just for confirmation's sake—peer into each other's peepers?

They gaze at one another. PENNY takes JO's hand.

JOSEPHINE

This reminds me of that one publicity picture where we're all masquerading as manicurists. Makes sense, since the League loves letting the public know that they've given their players polish. Anyway, uh, you were painting my nails and holding my hand and the way you were holding it—probably just standard shellacking procedure—but it looked like you were about to lift it to your lips and...kiss it.

PENNY lifts JO's hand to her lips and kisses it. They continue to gaze at one another.

PENNY

I didn't want people to say we're in love until we'd said it first.

JOSEPHINE

I certainly feel...bespoken for. But these feelings—did they come out of left field and smack you in the kisser? Or were you always...um... Me, I blame ball—too many girls.

PENNY

Lucille Ball in Too Many Girls drafted me too. I was 17 when I saw that movie in 1940 and boy, did she make my ticker flicker. Now *that* Ball's a great catch.

JOSEPHINE

And what am I?

PENNY

You, Jo, are a humdinger of a gal.

JOSEPHINE

(Saluting)

Thank you. And you, Pen, are more riveting than Rosie.

PENNY

Yeah, well, you've got more brass than a bugle.

JOSEPHINE

Yeah, well, you've got more sand than an hourglass.

PENNY

Jo?

JOSEPHINE

Yeah?

PENNY

Now would be a good time to shoot your snoot to me for a smooch.

JO makes contact, her lips connecting with PENNY's like a bat with a ball—but with a smack instead of a crack.

PENNY

That kiss was more seamless than softballs *and* baseballs. Hurtled my heart right out of the park.
(Notices JO's stunned state)

You all right, Jo? Your eyes are rounder than canteens and you look like you're about to make like a pop fly and plop down. Don't be ashamed—of your talents.

(Once JO is justifiably jubilant)

There we go. But you better be careful with that winning smile. Those chipper choppers might tempt the Blue Sox to trade you to Pepsodent. Oh, but don't worry—I'd fight toothpaste and nail to get you back.

JOSEPHINE

You're lucky I like a little oddball with my baseball, you know that?

PENNY

Am I the ham you just can't can?

JOSEPHINE

I won't even attempt to process that. Not while I'm still processing...us. Pen, do you...do you think we stand a chance? Ours is hardly the sort of war bond the government had in mind. Maybe we should just take the base path of least resistance—

PENNY

We should not. Just because we have to ration our food and our fabric and our fuel doesn't mean we have to ration our happiness too. Why dwell on the swell stuff? Because who knows how long this freedom—or this League—will last, that's why.

JOSEPHINE

The first season isn't even over yet.

PENNY

But it will be over before long.

JOSEPHINE

And then where will we be?

PENNY

Well, we could—just for destination's sake—see if the Holbrooks would let us stay on with them? As long as we don't let on about us. I don't *have* to go back to the Bronx. Do you have to go back to Chicago?

JOSEPHINE

No, I'm happy here in Indiana.

(A nod to the Abbott and Costello skit "Who's on First")

Hoosier on first? I am!

PENNY

So we're *both* playing for the Uncannable Hams, huh? Maybe the head honchos will see us and say, "Give those lezzies a league of their own!"

JOSEPHINE

That sounds like segregation.

PENNY

(Laughing)

Forget the whole thing.

JOSEPHINE

(Mistakes PENNY's meaning)

Right. Sure. Good idea. Come on—All-American Girls kissing All-American Girls? Not exactly all-American, is it?

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes