

They Played in Peoria

A Play of Baseball Dreams

Updated 2/13/22

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CHARACTERS

Though each player exists in 1948 and present day, they're the same person in each timeline, as in 1948, they're mere manifestations in Donny's dream.

DONNY- Teens-20's. Canadian. Quiet. Kind. Always listening, always present. Smart. A quiet leader who leads the right way. Loosely based on Terry Donahue.

LEFTY- Teens-20's. From everywhere. Flexible, patient, yet never waivers from what she knows to be right. Charming. Is never different depending on what room she's in.

WISH- Teens-20's. Southern. Fabulous athlete. Sharp, hard hitting, one of the best. A real star. Leads by example and is patient, fair, and works harder than anyone. Loosely based on Mary Nesbitt Wisham.

TWI- Teens-20's. From Illinois. "Looks like a model, runs like Ty Cobb." Never gets down too long. Inquisitive, curious, warm, delightful. Loosely based on Twila Shively.

TIGER- Teens-20's. From California. There's nothing she won't do to win, or bring eyes her way. An all out player of baseball and life. A prankster. Fun loving. Flirtatious. Loosely based on Faye Dancer.

TOOTS- Teens-20's. From Illinois. Born with a ball in her hand. Seriously, she screamed as a baby if her ball was taken away. A league veteran a season or two past her prime, but a great clubhouse leader.. Loosely based on Ann Harnett.

BABY FACE- Teens-20's. Cuban. Shy in the clubhouse, brave on the field as that's where she feels most confident in this world. The baby of the team. Loosely based on Gloria Ruiz. In a modern timeline, her parents immigrate to the US during 1994.

PEPPER- Teens-20's. The local. Her family shows up at every game. Loosely based on Mary Cary and Irene Kerwin.

MOOSE- Teens-20's. From Massachusetts. A classic "tomboy." Expresses herself better physically than vocally. Fun loving. Simple. Works hard, doesn't ask a lot of questions. Loosely based on Alice DeCambra.

JOHNNY- 20's-50's. Can be played younger or older, depending on the story you're wanting to tell. Former NHL star. Rough. Tough. Expresses his management style with volume more often than intention. Loosely based on Johannes Gottselig. In a modern timeline, Donny's softball coach.

WACA- 30's-50's. Local. Served as a medic for the military. Organized. Proper. Logical. Literal. Methodical. Loosely based on Ruth Ford. In a modern timeline, Donny's mom.

LEO- 30's-50's. From Pennsylvania, but considers himself local. A college professor, former college baseball star. Kind. More interested in teaching than winning. Loosely based on Leo Schroll. In a modern timeline, Donny's dad.

SETTING

Peoria, 1948 and present day.

CONTENT WARNING

Insinuations of assault and grooming behavior, graphic descriptions of injury

CASTING NOTE

The AAGPBL was never officially integrated, even though there were Cuban players. Their mistake shall not be ours. Because the 1948 timeline only exists in Donny's dream, the team should look like a modern American softball league, meaning Baby Face is NOT the only woman of color on the team. Also, the characters' genders need not reflect the genders of the actors. If an actor is comfortable playing a role, this playwright is offering a personal invitation for them to be part of the Redwings.

SYNOPSIS

They Played in Peoria follows Donny and the rest of the 1948 AAGPBL Peoria Redwings through their ever-shifting dynamics, plenty of losses, a few wins, and the nitty gritty of finding what bands them together as a team. However, as the season progresses, things are not always as they seem.

PUNCTUATION NOTES

Dashes (-) at the end of a sentence mean you are cut off from finishing your thought.

Dashes (-) within a line mean you cut yourself off from finishing a thought.

Ellipses (...) mean you don't know what to say next, but the struggle is still active.

A beat (*beat*) or .. is a breath.

A forward slash (/) means the next line begins at the denoted place. Someone will be talking over you.

Parentheticals ((Whatever you say.)) Is a throwaway, nearly under the breath.

Text in italics and brackets ([*I love you*]) is your subtext.

SCENE 1:

(Darkness. Slowly, the sounds of a game find their way into the space. It rises, slowly. The fans, the venders, the cheers and chants, then the crack of a bat, and the sound of a crowd react to a surprise in unison. Then, sudden silence and light immediately fills the space and we're suddenly in a quiet locker room. Empty, well, nearly. Donny finds herself alone with her mitt and thoughts. It's the beginning of something, as if she's never been in the room before. But she has, right? Right. Many, many times in fact. Yes. She's been here before. That much is certain. Donny has a moment. Then, the door flings open and the Redwings begin to arrive. First is TIGER, MOOSE, WISH, and PEPPER.)

TIGER: *(With a cigar)* I'm not putting this thing out, are you kidding? It cost a bundle and it's my last one!

MOOSE: I wouldn't.

WISH: If Waca catches you smoking in the locker room, you're dead meat.

MOOSE: You didn't see her out there, did you?

TIGER: No, but she's got a way you, know?

MOOSE: A way of what?

TIGER: "A way of what?" A way of smelling every misstep I take.

WISH: Yeah, right. She smells your missteps, but not those giant stogies you've been chain smoking since we got back from Cuba.

TIGER: Bite me, Wish.

WISH: Rather not.

TIGER: She does and you know it. You all know it! If I try to live a little, she's there, like BAM, you know? Fun? Done.

WISH: You act like you're the only one whose case she gets on.

TIGER: Uh, because I am.

WISH: You are not.

TIGER: Am so!

WISH: You are not, Tiger!

TIGER: Oh yeah? When was the last time she got onto you for anything? Or Donny? Or Pepper?

WISH: When was the last time I, or Donny, or Pepper did anything that warranted being gotten onto?

PEPPER: Like I need Waca on my case too. My folks live three streets over.

MOOSE: Are they coming today?

PEPPER: Always.

MOOSE: What's she bringing me?

WISH: (Moose..)

PEPPER: Bringing *you*?

MOOSE: I bet it's something good.

WISH: It's our season opener. [*Get your head in the game*]

MOOSE: Exactly, it's our season opener.

PEPPER: I'm sure she'll bring something.

TIGER: Sponge cake?

MOOSE: Oooooooooomph.

PEPPER: Maybe.

MOOSE: Don't say it if you can't back it up.

PEPPER: Glad *you* like them coming to every game.

WISH: They're precious.

PEPPER: And suffocating.

WISH: Attending.

PEPPER: Smothering.

TIGER: Loving, maddening, doting, annoying; y'all can keep listing adjectives or we can get back to *my* problems. Waca has it out for me! She tore me a new one last year when she found that fish in her bubble bath-

(*MOOSE laughs*)

TIGER: And it wasn't even me, it was Wish!

WISH: That wasn't me, it was Moose.

MOOSE: And it was awesome.

WISH: And it was *you* who egged her to do it!

MOOSE: Totally worth the \$25 fine.

WISH: It was worth a quarter week's salary?

TIGER: She's *still* sore over that one.

MOOSE: Never did know how she knew it was me.

TIGER: You're the only one owns a fishing rod, fat-head.

MOOSE: Hold up, did you say a quarter week's salary?

WISH: Not important.

MOOSE: More like half, isn't it?

WISH: Tiger. Put out the stogie. You'll make our jerseys reek.

TIGER: Not 'til Waca makes me.

MOOSE: Wait, am I bad at fractions or does Wish make more than me?

TIGER: Or?

WISH: Put it out!

TIGER: It's the last one I got!

WISH: I don't care!

TIGER: I do! You think we'll spring train in Cuba again anytime soon if *ever*? Donny?

WISH: Tiger!

TIGER: *Donny!*

WISH: *Just do it!*

TIGER: DONNY!

DONNY: Huh?

TIGER: You seen Waca today?

DONNY: No. No, not yet.

TIGER: There you go. No Waca? I'll-a smoka!

PEPPER: I, for one, hope we never train again in Cuba.

TIGER: Huh? What's the matter with you?

PEPPER: Just didn't like it, is all.

TIGER: What's not to like? The fun? The sun?

PEPPER: The food mostly.

WISH: You didn't like the food?

PEPPER: Not really.

TIGER: You crazy?

MOOSE: What they do with pork...

PEPPER: I just didn't like it is all.

TIGER: That's because you grew up in Peoria-

WISH: Baby Face in on her way-

TIGER: And you only eat food autumnal in color.

MOOSE: Huh?

WISH: What an odd and confusingly specific example.

PEPPER: No I don't.

MOOSE: Autumn tunnels?

TIGER: I've never seen you eat anything that wasn't orange, beige, or yellow.

MOOSE: Summer tunnels are better.

WISH: Summer tunnels?

MOOSE: Like a water slide, duh.

TIGER: It's true! Stew, goulash, bologna casserole-

WISH: What did you eat all month in Cuba?

PEPPER: I ate stuff.

WISH: What kind of "stuff?"

PEPPER: Just *stuff*.

TIGER: Yellow stuff.

WISH: Pepper what stuff?

PEPPER: Stuff!

WISH: What stuff did you eat?

PEPPER: (*beat*) Pineapple.

TIGER: I told you!

MOOSE: (*to Tiger with the awe of someone face to face with Nostradamus*) How did you know that?

WISH: I wish you would have said something.

PEPPER: It's fine.

MOOSE: You know I would eaten your pork.

WISH: So gracious.

MOOSE: Cuban pork is divine.

PEPPER: Which is better, Cuban pork or my mom's cake?

MOOSE: *(Looks to TIGER for a high five)* Or?

TIGER: Did you just steal my joke?

MOOSE: It was funny.

TIGER: Focus on your fractions, okay?

(MOOSE grabs TIGER's hand and gives herself a high five. TOOTS makes her way in, followed by TWI and BABY FACE)

TOOTS: What the heck is that smell?

TIGER: *(making a small attempt to hide the cigar)* Hey, Toots!

WISH: Tiger is nursing her stogie.

TIGER: My *last* stogie.

TOOTS: In our locker room?

WISH: Apparently.

TOOTS: It'll make our jerseys reek.

WISH: That's what I said.

TOOTS: And Waca will kill you.

WISH: That's what I said!

TOOTS: Put it out, Tiger.

TIGER: Toots, could I just-

TOOTS: No.

TIGER: Just-

TOOTS: NO.

TIGER: Ugh. Fine. (*With great pain, she puts it out*)

TOOTS: Welcome to the locker room-

REDWINGS: (*General moments of welcome to BABY FACE and TWI*)
Welcome home!

 Come on in!

 You like it?

 Hey Twi.

 Hey Baby Face!

 Sorry it smells so bad.

 You want to sit by me?

 Make yourself at home.

TOOTS: It usually smells better than this.

TIGER: (*Fanning the hair*) Give it a minute..

TOOTS: Find a spot, it's yours all season.

TIGER: (*knowing she's got some making up to do*) ... Hey Twi.

TWI: Hey.

TIGER: Baby Face.

BABY FACE: Hello.

TOOTS: Where's Lefty?

PEPPER: Haven't seen her.

WISH: Twi, you seen Lefty?

TIGER: Why you bugging the new girl?

WISH: They room together, you nut.

TIGER: No kidding?

TWI: I saw her this morning early, but not since then.

TIGER: How was I supposed to know they room together?

WISH: Because you were on the plane when they talked about it.

TIGER: You know darn well how hung over I was on that plane.

WISH: I'm aware.

MOOSE: Because you puked all over Wish's carry on.

TIGER: I'm aware.

TOOTS: So, what I'm hearing is that no one's seen Lefty today?

(LEFTY comes running in)

LEFTY: Sorry I'm late!

TOOTS: Lefty! Game only starts in half an hour, glad you could make it.

LEFTY: Yeah, I was on the phone with my folks and completely lost track of time, and- *(She smells)* Is something burning?

TIGER: I'm sorry, okay!?

TWI: Tiger was finished her cigar.

TIGER: My *last* cigar.

WISH: (Which, apparently is everyone's tragedy-)

PEPPER: Because she doesn't think she'll ever get any more.

TIGER: And what if I don't? We only ever went to Cuba because of Robinson.

MOOSE: What does Cuba have to do with Jackie Robinson?

WISH: Seriously? How do you think training would have gone for the Dodgers in *Florida*?

MOOSE: Swampy?

PEPPER: And we're all thrilled we went, because otherwise we wouldn't have signed Baby Face, and we all love Baby Face.

(They show how adorable they find the youngest member of the team with love and affection)

MOOSE: Hey! You could just ask Baby Face to bring you back some cigars in the off season.

WISH: She's seventeen!

TIGER: So?

WISH: What if she isn't going home during the off-season?

TIGER: And what if she does?

BABY FACE: I could.

WISH: She's SEVENTEEN!

TIGER: Which is perfectly LEGAL!

WISH: Tiger, you are somehow getting on my every nerve before a single pitch is thrown / this season.

TIGER: If Baby Face wants to get me cigars when she goes home, what's it / to you?

TOOTS: Okay, OKAY ENOUGH.

LEFTY: Don't worry, you can just have one of mine.

...

TIGER: You smoke?

LEFTY: Yeah. I mean, no, but- I mean.. I brought a few back for my old man.

TIGER: Really?

LEFTY: Christmas gifts, you know?

TIGER: And you'd give me one?

LEFTY: Sure.

WISH: You don't have to.

LEFTY: I don't mind.

TIGER: Thanks girl.

LEFTY: Season just started, you'll get me back later, yeah?

TIGER: You got it.

MOOSE: If you got a few, could I try one?

TIGER: Are you kidding me?

(The REDWINGS get ready for their first game of the season, chatting, sharing, being. WACA makes her way in.)

WACA: Hello ladies, I- *(Smells the room)* Moose, I told you to wash your uniform after spring training.

MOOSE: I did.

WACA: I don't know why "lucky socks" must be rancid socks.

MOOSE: It's not me!

WACA: Then what's that smell?

TIGER: It's nothing, Waca.

WACA: Are we all dressed?

(WACA knocks on door to let JOHNNY know it's okay to come in, which he does, in the midst of WACA addressing the team.)

WACA: Welcome to Peoria Stadium for your season opener ladies. I wanted to remind everyone that-

(JOHNNY bursts into the locker room with a hand... partially covering his eyes.)

WACA: That we leave for Rockford tomorrow at 9 am sharp / and-

JOHNNY: ALL DRESSED? *(peeking through his fingers)*

WACA: I was saying that tomorrow-

JOHNNY: *(with disappointment)* Awww, all dressed? Record timing for you lot. Let's move that speed to the basepath, shall we? HA!

WACA: And I expect punctuality as / we're needed-

JOHNNY: *(Sniffs)* What's that? *(sniffs, sniffs)* Jesus, it smells like grandad's Chevy in here, what the-

WACA: We're expected by noon and-

JOHNNY: Jesus, Waca, can't you tell them all this *after* the game?

WACA: I was instructed to make sure that-

JOHNNY: Well now *I'm* instructing you to let them take on one game at a time.

WACA: I'm only saying that / they need to-

JOHNNY: *(A bit too harshly)* And I'm saying it can wait. Lay off. *(Complete switch when talking to the REDWINGS)* Happy season opener, my girls!

(the REDWINGS give varied responses, find your own relationship with JOHNNY. That is, except BABY FACE. She hasn't looked up since Johnny came in the room.)

JOHNNY: Big crowd out there today, and they seem to have found their ways here on purpose. So be sharp, look good, and don't let Racine beat you too bad at your home opener, yeah? HA!

WACA: Nice.

JOHNNY: Thanks, Waca.

(JOHNNY hits her behind. It was NOT welcome.)

WACA: Lineup's announced in 15. Warmups in 2.

(WACA storms off. Most notice, JOHNNY does not.)

PEPPER: Oh darn, I haven't gone yet. *(Starts for the stall)*

JOHNNY: Where you going?

PEPPER: I haven't *gone* yet.

TIGER: She means to the john.

JOHNNY: Cutting it pretty close, aren't you Pepper?

PEPPER: Sorry, Coach.

JOHNNY: (*Looking at his watch*) Number one or number two? Oooh, or number three? HA!

(*JOHNNY "covers" his eyes again. TIGER and MOOSE laugh*)

PEPPER: Um, I-

TOOTS: Just go, Pepper.

WISH: It's fine.

(*PEPPER goes in the stall*)

JOHNNY: We'll wait for a 4, but if it's a 5, you're on your own.

(*TIGER finds this hilarious*)

WISH: (Come on.)

MOOSE: What's a 4?

TIGER: You ask about a 4 but not a 5?

JOHNNY: A one and a three? Equals 4?

MOOSE: I know how to add. But what's a 4 in *there*? (*meaning the bathroom*)

TOOTS: It's a math joke, Moose.

WISH: (Because those are always hilarious.)

TIGER: Gotta know math at a fourth-grade level for that one!

MOOSE: Look, I got it.

TIGER: Do you really?

MOOSE: Yeah so shut up about it.

JOHNNY: Alright! No use standing around to hear her doing any number, let's get out there! Toots and Tiger, on battery, Wish on 1, Moose on 2, PEPPER ON 3!

PEPPER: (*from stall*) Got it.