

# THE STORY

*Damn Yankees takes place over one baseball season during the 1950s.*



**ACT I:** On a summer evening in a comfortable Washington, D.C. suburb, baseball widow Meg Boyd prepares to turn in for the night as her husband Joe, a middle-aged real estate salesman, stays glued to the television watching the Washington Senators do what they do best—lose.

“One long-ball hitter, that’s what we need. I’d sell my soul for one long-ball hitter.” No sooner does Joe makes this reckless remark than the mysterious Mr. Applegate appears. “Handy with fire,” Applegate offers to turn Joe into a 22-year-old slugger in exchange for his soul. Joe agrees under the condition that, should he choose to return to his wife, he has an escape clause which can be exercised before the final game of the season. He has just enough time to leave Meg a goodbye note before Applegate transforms him into young Joe Hardy.

In the Senators dugout, manager Benny Van Buren exhorts his team to make up in enthusiasm what they lack in skill. Applegate arrives with Joe Hardy, who soon astonishes the skeptical team with his prowess. The newest Senator becomes an instant sports superstar and media magnet, with the help of sportswriter Gloria Thorpe. Applegate, worried that Joe will not toe the line, sends his seductive assistant Lola to keep an eye on Joe.

WORDS AND MUSIC BY RICHARD ADLER AND JERRY ROSS

# DAMN YANKEES



## 2ND BASE-1958

The musical goes to Hollywood: Abbott and Stanley Donen direct Verdon, Walston, and Tab Hunter as Joe Hardy. Choreographer Bob Fosse makes a dynamic appearance in the number “Who’s Got the Pain?”

## THE HI STORY

**ON THE PITCHER’S MOUND-1955**  
Douglass Wallop writes the best-selling book *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant*.

## 3RD BASE-1993

Jack O’Brien stages a revised version of *Damn Yankees* at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego, aided by George Abbott. Victor Garber and Bebe Neuwirth star as Applegate and Lola.

## HOME PLATE-1995

After the show has played on Broadway for nearly a year, Jerry Lewis takes over the role of Applegate in late February, 1995.

## 1ST BASE-1955

Directed by George Abbott, and starring Gwen Verdon and Ray Walston, *Damn Yankees* opens on Broadway and runs for 1,019 performances. It wins eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical.

Despite the Senators’ new winning streak, Joe is miserable. He returns to his old home on the pretext of renting a room from Meg and her sister. And when even Lola fails to distract Joe, Applegate launches a smear campaign against Joe—suggesting that his real identity is that of a corrupt ballplayer, Shifty McCoy.



**ACT II:** Just two days before the end of the season, Washington is leading the league. If they can win one more game, they will clinch the pennant one full day before Applegate’s contract runs out, and Joe can escape with his soul intact. During the chaos of a hospital benefit show organized by Meg’s sister, Applegate coerces Gloria Thorpe into triggering a hearing concerning Joe’s identity. At the benefit, Lola performs a show-stopping mambo.

The next day, Joe tells Applegate and Lola that he intends not only to testify, but also to play as much of the game as possible before exercising his escape clause. Fuming, Applegate plans his revenge. After the hearing takes place, a furious Applegate sends Joe into Limbo. But, with Lola’s help, Joe rallies while Applegate’s attention is elsewhere.

While Joe plays desperately for the Senators, Applegate begins to foil Joe’s final attempt at bat as the moment of reckoning arrives. Just as he is to lose his soul, Joe Hardy throws down his bat and is transformed into Joe Boyd. Taking a final swing at a pitch, Joe sends the ball over the wall and clinches the pennant for the Senators.

Back in the suburbs, a wiser Joe reunites with Meg. Applegate makes a final effort to lure Joe back to damnation with the promise of the World Series to come. But Joe, safe in his wife’s arms, is now impervious to temptation.