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From School Library Journal

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Steven Engelfried, Beaverton City Library, OR

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Review

Adler (The Babe and I; Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man) heads back to the ballpark for this tale of a girl whose mother makes it into a women's pro baseball league during WWII. "While Dad's away, I need to work," Mama tells Amy, who wonders, "What kind of job is that?" In fact, Mama needs Amy's help to practice for the tryouts (they play catch). Adler includes such period details as mentions of war news and The Jack Benny Show on the radio, but unlike the subjects of his picture book biographies, the characters here never take on much dimension. An evening with Amy and her grandparents gathered around the Sunday dinner table seems designed only to demonstrate her grandfather's memory loss ("You told Amy last night about the war and your medal," his wife says. "Well, I did fight and I did win a medal," Grandpa replies). Scenes of Mama trying out and bringing home her uniform (a fetching pink number) liven up the proceedings, and readers unfamiliar with the start of the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League (explained in an endnote) may well find this story satisfying, especially when Amy's soldier father comes home at the end. The high point here is the work of debut artist O'Leary, whose sinewy artistic style recalls Depression-era murals. The physicality of his oil paintings, rendered in subtle earth tones, energize the action on the baseball diamond and are equally effective in conveying warmly lit interior scenes. Ages 5-8. (Mar.)

(Publishers Weekly)

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Amy's dad is away, fighting in World War II, and her mama must take a job. But it's no ordinary job--Amy's mother becomes a baseball player in the first professional women's league! Amy cheers louder than anyone at all of the home games. And while Mama's team travels, Amy works on a secret project--a surprise for her dad when he is finally back home.

With warmhearted, historically based text and lush illustrations, award-winning author David A. Adler and talented new artist Chris O'Leary bring to life the soaring spirit of the 1940s. Featured in the major motion picture A League of Their Own, the All-American Girls Professional League helped women prove that no war could stop the great game of baseball.

An author's note provides historical context for the era.

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

"Mama Played Baseball" - A Home Run Book

By David Doughan

Through the eyes of a little girl named Amy, we can experience a little bit of life during World War II. During this time many athletic women vied for spots in the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League. When Amy's mother first tells her of her plans to get a job in the league, Amy wonders, "What kind of job is that?" Baseball is only a game she thinks. Amy's perception of her mother playing pro-baseball changes as her mother makes the team, wins games, and is popular with the fans who ask for her autograph. The reader can easily sense Amy's excitement as she watches many of her mother's games, jumping up and down when her mom scores a hit.

Through a simple plot line, award-winning author David Adler has adequately shown the events of that time. He works a little humor into the story giving the reader a laugh or two and reminding us of common life experiences. "Mama Played Baseball" has a happy ending as Amy's father returns home safely. This is illustrator Chris O'Leary's first picture-book and he has done a magnificent job bringing the story to life. His artwork depicts the 1940s and contributes immensely to the overall story. The story is suitable for children in

the lower elementary grades and could also be used in social studies or to introduce sports.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.Great baseball book for boys or girlsBy Patrick M. ByersAnother reviewer has done a terrific job encaptulating this book, so I won't go there.

But I will say, my two toddler age kids love books, especially about baseball. I've read them (and purchased) just about every children's book worth considering regarding baseball and this is in the top five.

Beautifully written and elegantly illustrated, this book tells the story from a young girls perspective about a mother that plays baseball during WWII.

It sends a number of positive messages to boys and girls alike. Pick up a copy of this book -- it's a keeper.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Girl's Baseball

By L. J. Butler

One of the many true stories involving the All American Girls Baseball League (AAGBBL), this small volume recounts some of the history of the women who played professional baseball, beginning when so many of the men were drafted or enlisted during WWII, and ending in the early 1950's. An important part of baseball history that is often neglected. Your kids, especially the girls, will love it.

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