

A BASEBALL STORY

Written by

Jimi Rossi Schram

EST. BOCA RATON FLORIDA - NIGHT

Aerial shot moving inland from the shore of the Atlantic ocean, across the inter-coastal waterway, across Lake Boca and the mega yachts parked at the Boca Resort. Past the multi-million dollar waterfront mansions and golf courses to the the suburban single family homes, and lower-middle class apartments and duplexes that are nestled between Boca Raton Community High School, and the adjacent baseball field where a game is currently taking place.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Located in front of a vacant meadow, it is a typical public ball field that is home to the Boca Eagles. The aluminum bleachers are full of spectators.

Behind a small concession stand there's a locker/equipment room the team uses, and a staircase that leads up to an announcers booth on the 2nd floor.

The Scoreboard shows, Eagles 2, Panthers 2, bottom of the 7th inning. Runner's on 1st and 2nd, with 1 out.

The visiting PANTHER PITCHER delivers, and the EAGLE BATTER takes ball four. He jogs to first base, and now the bases are loaded.

EAGLES ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Now batting for the Eagles, right
fielder, Karl Maple.

In the **ON DECK CIRCLE** is KARL MAPLE (17) - an average looking student/athlete walking to home plate.

COACH BUTCH (50s) - 6'5 and intense, walks towards Maple from his 3rd base coaching position, as Maple meets him halfway.

COACH BUTCH
Maple! This is your shot. You know
what to do.

Maple nods nervously to the coach, turns back towards home plate and looks up into the **STANDS** at the PEOPLE he wants to impress.

The PANTHER PITCHER winds up, and delivers the pitch.

Maple, impatient and over-eager, swings and hits a hard ground ball to **THIRD BASE**.

The PANTHER THIRD BASEMAN makes a nice backhand catch, steps on 3rd base, then throws across to 1st base and quickly turns a double play to end the game.

Coach Butch, the Eagles, and Maple are heart broken, as the Panthers celebrate their victory. Maple drops down to a knee after he runs past 1st base, embarrassed and upset he let down his team.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Title Card: 9 Months Later

Maple stands at **SHORTSTOP** in a line with 50 students at high school baseball tryouts.

TYSON TEVVY (16), a pro-caliber athlete and Eagles returning center fielder, nudges Maple.

TEVVY
You're up, kid.

From **HOME PLATE**, new COACH T.J.(39) - Eagles P.E. teacher, hits a ground ball to Maple at **SHORTSTOP**.

Maple fields it, makes a strong throw to first base, and jogs to the back of the line. Tevvy steps up with a nervous smile.

Coach T.J. hits another ground ball, but Tevvy get's scared, laughs, and runs out of the way.

TEVVY (CONT'D)
Nope. I'll be in center field.

Later, from **THE PITCHER'S MOUND** Coach T.J. stands behind a safety net, feeding a pitching machine.

In **THE BATTING CAGE** at home plate is Tevvy again, he hits a line drive.

COACH T.J.
Nice. Next.

Tevvy exits, and Maple enters the Batting Cage.

In **LEFT FIELD** are 3 returning pro-caliber players:

JASON PERRY (18), wearing his catcher's mitt,

TRENT LAZ JR. (18), the starting shortstop, and

TOM BASEDOW (18), their best pitcher.

PERRY

Sad, no one even wants to help him coach.

From **HOME PLATE** Maple hits a line drive.

LAZ

I can't believe Coach Butch retired before our senior year.

BASEDOW

Three years of progress, and he's just gone. What a-

From **HOME PLATE** Maple hits one over their group.

PERRY

(to Maple)

There you go Karl!

Perry gives chase on the ball.

COACH T.J.

(from the Pitcher's Mound)

Nice, Maple. Next.

Maple steps out and another TRYOUT KID (16) steps in the batting cage.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Perry, Laz, Basedow, come take some swings.

Perry, Laz, and Basedow jog in.

BASEDOW

So, we have no pitching coach.

Coach T.J feeds a ball in the machine and we hear the ball smack the back-stop as try out kid swings and misses.

PERRY

And, no hitting coach.

Another ball smacks the back-stop and tryout kid swings and misses.

LAZ

Just the JV Coach.

The last ball smacks the back stop as tryout kid swings and misses for strike three.

COACH T.J.

Next.

LAZ

Not a good look for us getting
recruited or drafted.

Moments later Laz in the **BATTING CAGE** hitting a line drive
right back at the machine causing Coach T.J. to fall over.

COACH T.J.

Nice Laz. Next.

Laz walks out and Perry steps in. Coach T.J. gets up.

Coach T.J. feeds the machine & Perry hits a home run.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Beautiful Perry. Next.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - LATER

Standard, Florida rental apartment complex with two story
buildings that surround a small lake.

Maple rides his bicycle on a path that circles the lake.

CAROLINE JONES (18), a first generation immigrant and Maple's
new neighbor/classmate skips a stone across the lake, and it
travels nearly 30 ripples.

MAPLE

Caroline, that was awesome!

CAROLINE

The one before that went almost
twice as far.

Maple lays his bike in the grass.

MAPLE

Are you serious?

Caroline nods and removes a collapsable fishing rod from his
backpack to begin fishing.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

Wow. You really never skipped a
stone before you moved here?

CAROLINE

No. I never even heard of it. Where
I lived there weren't any lakes.

MAPLE

In three months you're the best skipper I've ever seen.

CAROLINE

Thanks for teaching me. How come you weren't on the bus today?

MAPLE

I had baseball tryouts.

CAROLINE

Is it like cricket?

MAPLE

Yea, it's kinda like cricket.

CAROLINE

Probably pretty cool then.

MAPLE

It'd be a lot cooler if I have a big season and get a college scholarship.

CAROLINE

They'll give you a college scholarship for sports?

MAPLE

Welcome to America.

CAROLINE

You should try to get an academic scholarship too, you're smart.

MAPLE

I'm the dumbest one in our gifted classes, I need all the extracurricular help I can get. It's the only way I'll be able help my mom. Ever since my dad died I'm all she's got.

CAROLINE

Really? I knew he didn't live with you, but I had no idea. I'm sorry Karl. When?

MAPLE

When I was 10, he had heart attack during my little league game.

CAROLINE
That's got to be really hard.

MAPLE
It is what it is. Anyway, do you like this school better than the other one you went to back home?

CAROLINE
I like our classes. But, some of the other kids...they're mean... if... you're-

MAPLE
Poor, play right field and bat 8th.

Maple finds a skipping stone by the water's edge and gives it to Caroline.

CAROLINE
I was going to say different. Thanks.

LIA (O.S.)
Karl! Dinner!

Maple reels his line, and hooks the lure on the rod.

MAPLE
See you in school.

CAROLINE
No bus?

Maple picks up his bicycle.

MAPLE
I have to ride my bike so I can get home after practice and games.

CAROLINE
Oh, okay. See you in class.

MAPLE
Goodnight Caroline.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A two bedroom apartment on the 1st floor with sliding glass door that faces the lake.

LIA MAPLE (40) - holds her 1 year old, HELEN RONSON while Maple's little brother BLAISE RUSSO (12) and Maple clean up after dinner.

LIA
Karl, I need you to watch your
brother and sister Saturday night.
It's Barbara's birthday.

MAPLE
Sure mom.

Blaise hits Maple in the butt while washing dishes.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Mom, he's hitting me.

LIA
Blaise!

BLAISE
You're the meanest mo-

LIA
Yes, I keep you alive, give you
love and gifts - tell me more mean
things I do?

BLAISE
I don't want to talk to you
anymore, and neither does dad.

Blaise runs off.

LIA
He made that crystal clear when he
ditched us, ditched his phone and
left the country.

Beat.

MAPLE
Baseball tryouts were today mom.

LIA
Oh yeah hunny, was it fun?

MAPLE
We're going to have a lot of
college and pro scouts out there
this year watching.

LIA

I wish I could be out there more often, but now I have your sister.

MAPLE

I know mom. Starting tomorrow, I have practice every night. And I switched to weekends at the golf course.

LIA

Why didn't you remind me earlier, Karl?

MAPLE

It's on the calendar. I'm not bailing on Saturday. But, it's been the same baseball schedule for four years. And this is my senior year, my last shot.

LIA

I'm sorry, I'm so out of it. Look where my life is now. I really miss being out there watching you, Karl.

MAPLE

It's ok mom. I understand.

LIA

Your father and I loved going to your games. I can't believe he's gone.

MAPLE

Me too.

LIA

We've had a rough life. You've had a rough life.

MAPLE

Mom, let's focus on the future.

LIA

Does this future include you going to college and leaving your brother, sister and me behind?

MAPLE

How far ahead am I going to get picking up driving range balls? I have to go to college mom, and we can't afford tuition.

LIA
I'm sorry honey, I wish there was
something I could do.

INT. MAPLE'S ROOM - LATER

Two twin beds, a desk, dresser and fish tank. Blaise is asleep and Maple is doing homework.

His hand cramps from writing so he shakes it out. We see a basket of all the activities, awards, and accolades Maple has received over the years. Mainly we see the Little League photos with his father.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BULLETIN BOARD - DAY

Maple finds his name on the posted Baseball Roster.

INSERT: Eagles Baseball Roster: VARSITY: KARL MAPLE, and 13 more names. JUNIOR VARSITY: another list of 20 names.

Caroline walks up to Maple and pins a flyer on the bulletin board.

CAROLINE
Karl, you've inspired me to start
"the stone skippers club".

MAPLE
Oh, cool.

CAROLINE
You want to be our coach?

MAPLE
I wish. I'm a little overwhelmed
right now Caroline. But, I'll be
the first one to sign up.

Maple writes his name on the club signup list.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Practice has yet to begin, and the 12 Varsity players meander on the **LEFT FIELD** foul line playing pepper.

RUSS SABO, 3rd base, also the high school DJ, picks up a clump of baseball dirt and throws it at Maple.

SABO
Dirt bombs!

The dirt hits Maple right above the ankle.

MAPLE

Now, I got dirt in my cleat.

Maple takes off his cleat and shakes out the dirt.

TEVVY

He fellas, where's Laz and Perry?

Returning left fielder RON FIORELLO (18).

FIORELLO

Yea, I didn't see them at school today either.

SABO

Me either.

BASEDOW

And where's our freaking coach?
This is unacceptable. He's wasting my time. Dasher, let's go to bullpen.

FRED DASHER (18), Backup Catcher, and Maple's oldest childhood friend.

DASHER

Yeah, I need a heater.

MAPLE

I thought you quit smoking cigarettes?

DASHER

New coach has me stressed.

Dasher lights a cigarette, and Basedow takes out a can of chewing tobacco and puts a pinch in his lower lip as they walk towards the **BULLPEN** in the left field corner.

TWO EAGLE PITCHERS follow Basedow and Dasher.

MAPLE

I guess we gotta practice without him. You want to take b.p.? I'll pitch? Infield shags first.

BRET PETERS (16), immature, exhausting, and new to the squad.

PETERS

He wants to shag us. I got center field.

BEN CHAP (17) also new to the squad, has an established conflict driven relationship with Peters from Junior Varsity.

CHAP

No one wants to shag you. I'm up
when the bucket's full.

Coach T.J. arrives, and drives his 10 year old sedan right up to the dugout, past all the parked cars of the team: a Porsche, Corvette, old mustang, new mustang, two new SUVs, as well as an old Buick, Honda, and a pickup truck.

T.J. hustles onto the **FIELD** and waves the team in. The team gathers in the **ON DECK CIRCLE**.

COACH T.J.

Sorry, I'm late guys. I promise it
will never happen again.

TEVVY

Not a good look, Coach.

COACH T.J.

I know. I'm sorry. It's been a
crazy day. I've got news to tell
you guys.

FIORELLO

Coach, you look pretty crappy.

PETERS

Better not be contagious, because
I'm going on vacation this weekend.

CHAP

Shut up Peters.

PETERS

Jealous?

COACH T.J.

Guys, listen! Has anybody seen Laz
or Perry today?

BASEDOW

Just spit it out T.J.

COACH T.J.

We lost them.

TEVVY

They're dead?

COACH T.J.
Wolverines.

Beat.

SABO
They switched schools!

MAPLE
What?

FIORELLO
Are we on a prank show or
something?

TAGGE
I don't get it.

COACH T.J.
They changed schools, and will be
playing for our rivals across town.

BASEDOW
Seasons over, I'm going home.

Basedow exits the field.

COACH T.J.
Where are you going Basedow? We
need you!

CHAP
What are we going to do now coach?

COACH T.J.
I was talking to the principal
about how we're already short
players, and if we move guys up
from JV then they'll be short
players. The Principal was trying
to convince me to merge both squads
and form one team. It took me this
long to talk him out of that. I
don't know what's going to happen,
but we're here, so let's practice.

The remaining players are depressed, but take the field.

Coach T.J. realizes his team has suffered a catastrophic
blow.

PETERS
Coach, want me at short?

COACH T.J.
 2nd base. Maple go to shortstop.
 Everyone else go to your position.
 Pitchers, go do something in the
 bullpen while we figure this out.

Dasher heads back to the bullpen with pitchers, DeWitt and Rabino.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
 Dash, gonna need you at the dish.
 Basically everyday now.

DASHER
 What? I'm the bullpen catcher. I
 haven't played a game in 2 years.

COACH T.J.
 Going to be a lot of firsts for all
 of us this season.

Dasher has a look of fear and responsibility.

Back in the **BULLPEN** are Rabino and DeWitt.

DEWITT
 I'll catch, you can throw first,
 rookie.

RABINO
 Cool. Want to see the pitch Dasher
 taught me?

DEWITT
 Not really.

Rabino takes the mound and Dewitt stands behind home plate in the bullpen.

Back at **HOME PLATE** Coach T.J. analyzes the new Eagle defense.

COACH T.J.
 We'll have to make this work.
 Fiorello, go to 2.

Coach T.J. hits a ground ball to **LEFT FIELD**, Fiorello catches it and throws it to Maple his cut off man at shortstop, who transfers the throw to Peters at 2nd.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
 Tevvy, go to 2.

Coach T.J. hits a ground ball to Tevvy in **CENTER FIELD**.

Back in the **BULLPEN** Rabino throws a curveball to DeWitt and it hits the edge of home plate, bounces up into DeWitt's right hand and takes off his index fingernail. He screams in pain.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
What the - who else can pitch?

Coach T.J. begins to jog out to the bullpen to attend to DeWitt who's walking back to the dugout.

Maple at SS raises his hand, so does Peters at 2nd Base, Sabo at 3rd base, and Chap at 1st base.

TEVVY
(from centerfield)
Coach, let me pitch!

COACH T.J.
Tevvy, ground balls and line drives
from 60 feet away?

TEVVY
Never mind Coach, I'm good.

COACH T.J.
Who else can catch?

Maple raises his hand, alone.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
Karl kid!

Later, the rest of the team takes batting practice on the field. A melancholy DeWitt with his hand wrapped in gauze and on ice feeds a pitching machine as Chap hits.

Meanwhile, in the **BULLPEN** Coach T.J. watches Maple pitch to Dasher.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
(to Maple)
You got good stuff.

Maple walks off the mound towards Dasher and Coach T.J.

DASHER
(to Coach T.J.)
I've been catching him since we
were kids.

COACH T.J.
How come you haven't pitched in
high school?

MAPLE
Nobody ever asked me.

COACH T.J.
Dasher, give him the gear.

Dasher puts the catcher's helmet on Maple's head.

DASHER
Gladly.

COACH T.J.
Let's see what you got behind the plate.

Maple has a look of uncertainty.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - LATER

Maple rides his bike home, and sees Caroline doing homework by the lake with a flashlight.

CAROLINE
No fishing?

MAPLE
Need ice. Can't walk.

CAROLINE
Rough day?

MAPLE
It's either my best day or my worst day - I still don't know.

CAROLINE
Why, what's up?

MAPLE
Our best players quit the team today and it's a disaster.

CAROLINE
Yikes.

MAPLE
Coach asked me to pitch and catch, today, and I've never been so tired in my entire life.

CAROLINE

You were worried you wouldn't have a big enough part, this sounds like you've got the lead.

MAPLE

Caroline, this is way different. This is pitching and catching. Involved and responsible for the whole game. I never caught in my life.

Plus, I haven't pitched in years. What if I walk everybody, or hit everybody, or get hit by everybody? Then we're really going to stink. And, what if I can't hit?

CAROLINE

I'll be there and I can let you know.

MAPLE

I could tell Coach the curve ball hurts my arm.

CAROLINE

Stop lying. Did you do your reading?

MAPLE

Could you catch me up please? I'm about to pass out.

CAROLINE

Oh my god, it's nuts! This guy in the story says spirits told him to be king, so he kills the king and claims the throne.

MAPLE

Savages.

CAROLINE

Seriously. So, now, the new king's killing everybody around him, and society revolts, and civil war just erupted.

MAPLE

And this is Shakespeare?

CAROLINE

Lady Macbeth.

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - LATER

Maple is doing a presentation of a chemistry experiment and the CHEMISTRY TEACHER (20s) is mesmerized by one student's interest, and passion.

MAPLE

The chemical equation requires precise detail, or the recipe will fail.

CHEMISTRY TEACHER

This is brilliant. I'm nominating you for the Star-finder Science Award.

MAPLE

Oh, sweet. Thanks teach!

Maple returns to his seat and high fives classmates CHANDI, and LACEY (18).

CHEMISTRY TEACHER

Lacey, you're next?

Maple gets tapped by another CHEMISTRY CLASSMATE, and is handed a note.

CHEMISTRY CLASSMATE

Read it and pass it on.

Maple opens the paper note.

INSERT: "Party at the Truck Stop after the Basketball game tonight. Order your alcohol with Dasher, and pre-pay before 5th period."

Maple enthusiastically taps the woman next to him, ALICIA LYNN (18), a classmate Maple is attracted to. Alicia was in the stands in the opening scene where Maple blew it and ended the game.

MAPLE

Hey Alicia.

ALICIA

What's up?

MAPLE

Read it and pass it on.

Alicia takes it and doesn't look up, or back. Maple deflates.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maple helps his brother Blaise with homework while Lia holds baby Helen and scrolls her phone.

BLAISE
Is this right?

MAPLE
Close, bud.

BLAISE
Mom! Why do I have to do homework
on Friday night?

LIA
Because you refuse to do it on
Sunday.

BLAISE
Karl's not doing his.

MAPLE
You'll be done in a five minutes,
Blaise. Just keep going. I'll give
you a hint.

Maple points to a spot on the page where Blaise made the error.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Mom, Dasher is picking me up for
the basketball game.

LIA
Uh-huh. Tell him to tell his mom I
said hi, I really miss having her
next door to babysit.

BLAISE
Mom, can I go out with, Karl?

MAPLE
Not tonight bro.

LIA
Why can't he go?

MAPLE
We're going to a party after.

LIA
You better be home by 11.

BLAKE
Can I use your fishing rod?

MAPLE
After you finish your homework.

We hear a truck horn beep three times, and Maple heads for the door.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
See you later. Love you guys.

EXT. GYMNASIUM - PARKING LOT - LATER

Maple, Dasher and his girlfriend DANIELLE (18) a child beauty pageant queen walk out of the basketball game.

DASHER
Sorry, we gotta leave so early but
we've got a big order to pick up.

MAPLE
We're up 20 points, a big win means
it should be a good party tonight.

DASHER
Hell yeah!

INT. DASHER'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Dasher drives, Danielle sits shotgun, and Maple in the back.

Music plays loud, and Dasher pulls into the parking lot of a Kwik-Stop and cuts the engine. Everyone gets out of the truck.

EXT. KWIK STOP CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

A stand alone establishment on the edge of town with an empty parking lot. The three enter the store.

VINNY (60s) - the Kwik Stop cashier shakes hands with Dasher and Maple.

DASHER
What's up, baby?

VINNY
My guys, how are my two favorite
baseball players?

MAPLE

Good. How are you, Vinny?

VINNY

I could complain, but it could be worse. I live vicariously through you playing baseball. Beer league softball games don't give me even a little bit of arousal.

DANIELLE

Baseball is the hottest game in the world.

Dasher and Danielle makeout for one second.

VINNY

That's what I'm talking about! When I was in high school playing for the Eagles, I was making out with everybody.

MAPLE

Everybody?

VINNY

Everybody. Wearing that jersey does something special for a man and a woman.

DASHER

Cool. Here's what we need tonight, Vin.

Dasher hands Vinny a list. Vinny, starts pulling out multiple brands of cigarettes and bagging them as Dasher, Maple, and Danielle head to the refrigerators.

Danielle takes out 12 packs of several different adult beverages and hands them to Dasher and Maple until they both have six, 12-packs stacked in their hands.

Danielle leads the way and they walk out of the store as Vinny writes down what they're carrying.

VINNY

Any glass pipe, Dasher?

DASHER

Yeah, sure. And, don't forget the pornography!

Next, Danielle drops the tailgate of the truck so Maple and Dasher can unload.

Dasher re-enters solo, Maple and Danielle re-enter the truck. Vinny hands Dasher the bag of cigarettes, and other paraphernalia.

VINNY
\$300 today my friend.

Dasher takes out three, \$100 dollar bills and hands them to Vinny. Dasher peels off another \$10 and tips Vinny.

DASHER
Thanks brother.

Vinny bows graciously, Dasher takes the bag from Vinny.

VINNY
Have a great baseball season boys!
Come back soon.

EXT. TRUCK STOP PARTY - MOMENTS LATER

On a large concrete slab 200 people are gathered like it's a car show, and a tailgate party.

INT. DASHER'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Dasher pulls into the parking lot and the crowd cheers.

DASHER
Even in the off season they cheer
for us.

DANIELLE
And we made \$100 bucks profit.
Maple here's your cut.

Danielle hands Maple a \$20 bill, tucks the rest in her bra and rubs Dasher's inner thigh.

EXT. TRUCK STOP PARTY - LACEY'S CAR - LATER

Maple, Caroline, Chandi, and Lacey stand around Lacey's car. Dasher, and Danielle are having a romp inside his truck, and it's rocking.

CHANDI
I'm so happy my dilemma is over.
The college decision is done. No
more stress.

LACEY

Lucky you. I'm still torn between two. Do I go where my parents want me to? Or go where I want to?...Caroline, what are your plans?

CAROLINE

Still waiting to hear back since my applications were submitted late.

CHANDI

Maple, what about you?

MAPLE

We'll find out after this season.

Maple puts up his drink to toast his friends, and the baseball Gods. The group raises their cups and cheers.

A caravan of vehicles rolls by Maple, led by Fiorello, in his older honda coupe, Sabo in his vintage Mustang, Tevvy in a Porsche with his GIRLFRIEND (16), Chap and Peters in separate brand new SUVs, followed by Basedow in a corvette.

SABO

Ladies, gentlemen. Maple.

LACEY

Hey Sabo.

Maple walks up to the vehicle and high fives them all as they drive by.

SABO

Football team just dropped the keg over there. We're gonna park. Come meet us.

MAPLE

Alright, cool.

LACEY

So, Maple, how's it going without Laz and Perry? No offense.

MAPLE

May all the pain be worth the pleasure.

Maple puts up his drink again to toast. Dasher and Danielle exit the truck post romp.

High school DUDE (18) with football walks by.

DASHER
(to Dude)
Hit me!

Dasher runs a short route. Dude throws the ball and Dasher catches it.

DASHER (CONT'D)
Maple, go long.

Maple puts his drink on the trunk of Lacey's car, and runs a short route very stiff and sore.

MAPLE
(to himself)
Oh, no.

Dasher throws the ball, but Maple can't bend down to catch it and it scuffs the pavement.

DUDE
For the sake of the ball. For the
love of the game. Make an attempt,
Maple.

MAPLE
Sorry dude, super sore.

Maple laboriously picks up the football and throws it back to the Dude.

DUDE
Dasher, wanna have a catch?

DASHER
Gotta piss. Be right back.

Dasher runs off to pee, Danielle joins the group. Caroline walks over to the Dude.

PARTYGOER (O.S.)
I'm open!

Dude throws the ball to Partygoer.

And then bam! Maple gets hit in the face with the football.

Maple looks up with rage in his eyes, as he sees Partygoer walking away.

DANIELLE
Maple, you ok? Who was that?

MAPLE

I don't know, but I better find out.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The Eagles are putzing on the **LEFT FIELD** foul line at practice again.

SABO

What is it with this frigging coach and starting practice on time?

Coach T.J. arrives late, but he brought **THREE NEW PLAYERS** (15-16) from Junior Varsity.

PETERS

It just keeps getting worse.

BASEDOW

Says the guy who can't throw to first.

PETERS

I threw your mom to first.

BASEDOW

I wish that made enough sense to be an insult.

COACH T.J.

Peters take a lap. No moms.

Peters begins to jog a lap around the field.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Guys, this is Russel, Martinez and Drexel. Now, let's get to work. Take the field.

The team slowly disperses.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Welcome back, Basedow.

BASEDOW

(to Coach T.J.)

I only pitch, and DH now. The pro scout told me to save my arm for "the bigs".

COACH T.J.

Ok, I get that. We're grateful to
have you. The guys need you.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - PRE-SEASON STRUGGLES

-- Maple training as **catcher**, with Dasher helping him. Maple gets beat up blocking balls, as Dasher feeds the pitching machine like it's a rocket launcher.'

-- Maple training as a **pitcher** with DeWitt and Basedow.

-- Maple **hitting** soft-toss from Sabo sitting on a bucket.

-- At **HOME PLATE** Coach T.J. hits a pop fly to Tagge in **RIGHT FIELD**.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Tagge go to 2!

TAGGE

Time out, Coach. I gotta go number
2.

Tagge drops his glove and runs off the field towards the bathroom.

-- Peters fields the routine ground ball at **SECOND BASE** and throws it away, next **at SHORTSTOP**, but this one he throws over the fence and hits a PEDESTRIAN walking a DOG. The dog then steals the ball.

-- Pitchers Infield Practice at the **FIRST BASE AREA** goes poorly and Basedow throws a temper tantrum. The infielders can't seem to figure out how to flip Basedow the ball at First Base, and he's furious.

-- Three players converge for a pop up to short **RIGHT CENTER FIELD**.

TEVVY

(from center field)

I go.

TAGGE

(from right field)

I got it.

PETERS

(from second base)

I got it.

TEVVY

I got it, I got it.

TAGGE
Me, me, me.

PETERS
Ball, ball.

They all keep one upping the next, by calling it.

Tevvy abruptly stops and throws his glove on the ground as Tagge and Peters collide.

The ball falls and Tevvy casually picks it up.

TEVVY
If I *call* the ball, I don't want to
hear none of y'all!

-- At **Home Plate** Coach T.J. hits one to the fence.

COACH T.J.
Fiorello, go get it!

Fiorello goes back, back, back on the warning track, and Peters yells.

	PETERS	
	Got room! Got room!	
TAGGE		TEVVY
Fence!		Fence!

Fiorello runs into the **Left Field Fence** and falls down. The team stares daggers into Peters.

END MONTAGE

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Practice has just ended, and the team is meeting in the dugout.

COACH T.J.
Before we go home we need to vote
for our team captain. Take one and
pass it on.

Coach TJ hands out a stack of papers and pens. The players all circle their top choice. Coach TJ removes his cap and walks past the players as they drop their votes in the hat.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
I'll count it up tonight, and
announce the Captain tomorrow.

INT. COACH TJ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Coach TJ's modest apartment where he counts the votes.

COACH T.J.
It's a tie. Revote? No. Co-
captains. Basedow and Maple.

EXT. BEARS BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

TITLE CARD: OPENING DAY

(Game 1) The Eagles are on the road against the BEARS
BASEBALL TEAM.

In the visiting **DUGOUT** Coach T.J. tapes the starting lineup
to the wall and the team gathers around it.

In the **BULLPEN** Basedow throws a final warm up pitch. He and
Dasher head into the dugout.

Maple, Fiorello, Peters, and Tevvy grab helmets and bats.

INSERT: Lineup

#11 Fiorello - LF (7)

#7 Peters - 2B (4)

#3 Tevvy - CF (8)

#8 Maple - SS (6)

#10 Basedow - P (1)

#4 Sabo - 3B (5)

#5 Chap - 1B (3)

#6 Tagge - RF (9)

#9 Dasher - C (2)

Bench: #12 Rabino, #2 Russell, #1 Drexel, #13 Martinez

FIORELLO
Lead off.

PETERS
Get on, so I can hit a bomb.

TAGGE
 Batting 8th, playing right field.
 So not sexy.

DEWITT
 I'll coach first. Have a day
 fellas.

At **HOME PLATE** with one out Peters strikes out.

Tevvy comes up with 2 outs and hits a solo home run. The team celebrates Tevvy at home plate.

Maple steps up to the plate, he hits another solo home run.

The team goes wild celebrating the back-to-back home runs.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- Basedow's **Pitching** over 90 MPH striking out almost every BEAR BATTER.

-- However, Dasher can't block balls in the dirt, and the would be strikeouts turn into baserunners, and eventually runs.

-- The Eagles quickly blow their early lead.

BASEDOW
 (from the mound)
 Let's go Dasher.

DASHER
 (from home plate)
 Don't start.

BASEDOW
 You're useless back there.

DASHER
 You're no picnic either.

BASEDOW
 Make a play. You're killing me.

DASHER
 I haven't played in years, what do
 you want from me?

Dasher throws the baseball over Basedow's head. Basedow doesn't even go for the ball. He just stares a hole into Dasher.

-- Maple makes his plays at Shortstop.

-- Peters fields the ball but can't make the routine throw from **SECOND BASE**.

-- Sabo gets a ground ball at **THIRD BASE** and the bases are loaded. He throws it and hits the BEARS BASE RUNNER at Second Base right in the chest. The runner scores as the ball rolls to a stop on the infield unattended.

END MONTAGE

In the **DUGOUT** Basedow approaches Coach T.J.

BASEDO
We need another catcher,
immediately.

Coach T.J. looks at Maple, and Basedow exits the dugout.

INSERT: Bears 10 - 3 Eagles.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - MAPLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maple is at the desk with a marker, and his baseball cap.

He writes on the brim of the hat, "Hits," and on the other side "Wins".

INSERT: Maple's Baseball cap with 2 tally marks under "hits."

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

(Game 2) Opening Night for the Eagles. The FALCONS BASEBALL TEAM is in the opposite dugout.

In the **BULLPEN** Maple throws a final warm up pitch. He and Dasher head into the dugout.

In the home **DUGOUT** Coach T.J. posts the line up and the Eagles huddle around it.

Fiorello finds his name moved down on the lineup.

FIORELLO
Coach, 7th?

TAGGE
Still not 8th.

FIORELLO
I guess it's a good time for us to
lose our announcer too.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- Maple's 1st game **Pitching**.

-- A FALCON BASERUNNER on 1st base. Maple throws another pitch and it's another ball. The crowd starts to turn on him.

COACH T.J.
That's six in a row. C'mon, Maple.

Maple, from the stretch finally throws a strike.

SABO
(from 3rd base)
There it is kid!

Maple throws the next pitch, it's hit on the ground to Sabo at **THIRD BASE**.

He fields it and throws it to **SECOND BASE** where RUSSELL turns a nice double play and throws it to Chap at **FIRST BASE** to end the inning.

-- Later in the game, Maple's in trouble with FALCON BASE RUNNERS on 1st and 2nd base, 1 out.

-- Maple strikes out the FALCON BATTER, and is feeling pretty good.

-- Caroline cheers in the stands with Lacey, Chandi & Danielle.

-- FALCON BATTER 2 comes up to the plate. Maple from the stretch, delivers the pitch and it's hit for a 3 run - home run. The ball lands and rolls to a stop in the undeveloped field behind the fence.

END MONTAGE

From the **STANDS** Caroline gets up.

CAROLINE
(to Lacey)
I'll be right back.

The Umpire throws Maple another ball as the Falcon Batters touch them all.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 0 - 3 Falcons.

EXT. LOT BEHIND BASEBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Caroline picks up the baseball that was hit for a home run.

Then she picks up a skipping stone, puts it in her pocket and continues looking for more stones.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

At **HOME PLATE** Fiorello is walking up to the plate.

 FIORELLO
Maple, watch my swing.

 MAPLE
You got it. Hey, Coach!

Coach T.J. at the **Third Base Area** looks at Maple in the dugout. Maple gives Coach a hit & run sign, and signals that it's for Fiorello. Coach nods his head in approval, and repeats the sign that Maple gave him. Fiorello gets in the box, and the runner on first base takes a lead.

FALCON PITCHER delivers, the baserunner steals second base as Fiorello swings and hits a ball way back, and gone, over the fence for a two run home run.

EXT. LOT BEHIND BASEBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

The ball lands about 10 feet from Caroline who notices a **SMALL OWL**.

INSERT: ball laying on the ground and a small owl burrows underground.

 CAROLINE
What is that little bird doing?

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Maple working his day job as a Caddy. He stands on the **PUTTING GREEN**, attending the pin as a GOLFER, dressed in ridiculous attire - lines up the putt.

Golfer hits it and misses.

 GOLFER
That's a gimmie.

Golfer tosses the putter to Maple who has to quickly catch it. Maple winces because his pitching arm is sore.

Maple stiffly bends down to retrieve the golf ball from the green.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

(Game 3) In the **ON DECK CIRCLE** ready to lead-off is Tagge, and behind him is Fiorello. The visiting LIONS BASEBALL TEAM is on the field.

 FIORELLO

Two spot, that feels just right.

 TAGGE

Not as good as leading off.

The clink their bats together in a "cheers."

Tevvy and Maple are in the background with helmets and bats. Maple is wearing catcher's shin guards.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- Maple's first game at **catcher** with Basedow pitching.

-- Maple blocks the wild pitches Dasher missed.

-- Maple throws out a runner trying to steal second base.

-- Maple fields a bunt, and throws the lead runner out at 3rd base, surprising Basedow.

-- Basedow's whole demeanor changes, and we see a glimmer of hope for the first time in the star pitcher.

-- Maple protects **HOME PLATE** on a hard slide from a LION BASE RUNNER.

-- Basedow's pitching is better than ever with a trusted catcher.

-- Peters makes a diving play at **SHORTSTOP**, but still can't make the routine throws, and makes 2 throwing errors.

-- Eagles offense can't score any runs.

-- Chap strikes out for the dozenth time already.

-- Coach T.J. tries to fix Chap's swing in the game on the field.

 COACH T.J.

 (to Chap)

You're doing this. To The ball, to the ball. Head up, you'll get him next time.

END MONTAGE

EXT. LOT BEHIND BASEBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Caroline is walking around behind the field again looking for skipping stones, and she sees another tiny owl.

CAROLINE
Hi-ya little fella.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Basedow throws a pitch.

The ball is hit deep and Fiorello gives chase towards the **LEFT FIELD** fence.

PETERS
(from Shortstop)
Room! Got room!

TEVVY
(from Center field)
Fence! Fence!

Fiorello stops running and hits the fence with his glove.

FIORELLO
(from left field)
What's the matter with you Peters?

PETERS
(from shortstop)
Just habit.

FIORELLO
That habit I can break!

From the **THIRD BASE AREA**, Sabo throws a clump of dirt at Peters, scolding him.

SABO
Dirt bombs!

Peters puts his head down and walks back to his position while the team stares daggers into him.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- **BEHIND THE FENCE** Caroline picks up the ball.

-- Chap strikes out again, Coach T.J. alters his swing again.

-- The new guy Russell hits a single.

-- Peters is next, and lays down a bunt for a base hit.

-- Leadoff batter Tagge steps up to the plate.

LION PITCHER delivers and Tagge hits a line drive at the LION SECOND BASEMAN.

ALL
(from the dugout)
Back!

Except, Peters took off running, and the Lion Second Baseman catches the ball.

LION SECOND BASEMAN
You're going the wrong way dip
stick.

Peters scrambles to get back, but Lion Second Baseman throws it to LION FIRST BASEMAN, for an easy double play to end the game.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 1 - 4 Lions.

END MONTAGE

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Maple is at his locker and Caroline approaches him.

CAROLINE
Tough loss last night.

MAPLE
I've never thought my entire body
could be this sore from a sport
I've played my whole life.

CAROLINE
What position are you playing
tonight?

MAPLE
Who knows.

CAROLINE
Ready for the test tomorrow?

MAPLE
Not really. I'll study best I can
on the bus to the game.

CAROLINE

You better, this chapter's hard.

MAPLE

Great. If you say it's hard, I better read it twice. How's your stone skippers club coming along?

CAROLINE

Cancelled it. No one else signed up.

MAPLE

That really sucks.

CAROLINE

It's fine. I still get to skip them on the lake and have fun by myself.

MAPLE

I'll bring back a skipper from our game tonight.

CAROLINE

I can't believe you have to travel two hours away today. Aren't there enough schools near by?

MAPLE

It's a district game. I don't know. I didn't draw the district. All I know is it's going to be a late night.

CAROLINE

Good luck, Karl.

EXT. TIGERS BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

(Game 4) The Scoreboard reads, Tigers 8 - 2 Eagles, bottom of the 4th inning.

Maple's at **SHORTSTOP**, and the TIGERS BASEBALL TEAM is up to bat.

On the **PITCHER'S MOUND** is Rabino.

Rabino's pitch is hit by a TIGER BATTER to Peters at **SECOND BASE**. He fields it and throws it in the dirt to **FIRST BASE**, but Chap catches it to save Peters.

BASEDOW
 (in the dugout)
 Has he always had this problem?

COACH T.J.
 (in the dugout)
 It's gotten significantly worse.
 You wanna play infield?

BASEDOW
 I told you, I can only pitch, and
 DH.

COACH T.J.
 (to Umpire)
 Time Blue.

Coach T.J. leaves the dugout to change pitchers.

Warming in the **BULLPEN** is the rookie, Martinez.

He runs to the pitcher's mound passing Fiorello in left field who is practicing his swing.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - EAGLE PITCHING FIASCO - 4th INNING

-- Martinez gives up four runs immediately and gets pulled.

-- Sabo take the pitchers mound, and he gives up two runs immediately and gets pulled.

-- Chap is next to pitch, he gives up three runs immediately and gets pulled.

-- Peters takes the pitchers mound, and he gives up two runs immediately.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
 Peters, you gotta get us out of
 this.

-- On Peters's next pitch the TIGER BATTER over-swings and hits a ground ball to Maple. Maple makes the throw to 1st for the final out of the 4th inning.

The Scoreboard reads, Tigers 18 - 2 Eagles.

The team heads into the dugout to hit, and Coach T.J. comes over to Maple.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
Maple, I know it's your day to
rest, but we're gonna be here til
midnight with Peters pitching. Can
you get me three outs?

MAPLE
Sure Coach.

-- Maple pitches a 1,2,3, 5th inning.

The 10 run mercy rule goes into effect after 5 full innings.
Game over.

END MONTAGE

INT. EAGLES SCHOOL BUS - LATER

On the quiet dark ride home, Maple falls asleep on the bus
failing to study.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Maple and Caroline are handed back a quiz from MS. FOWLER, an
elegant teacher.

The school bell rings, STUDENTS leave, Caroline gets up as
Maple stays seated.

Caroline gets a 93 - A.

CAROLINE
Must have been a long night.

Maple get's a 75 - C.

EXT. WOLVERINES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

(Game 5) In the visiting **DUGOUT** the Eagles are getting ready
to bat first.

The rival WOLVERINE BASEBALL TEAM is on the field.

Several COLLEGE SCOUTS and PRO SCOUTS are in the **STANDS** with
radar guns, and stop watches.

Maple takes off his baseball cap, puts it on the bench, and
puts on a batting helmet.

INSERT: Maple's baseball cap "HITS" - nine tally marks.
"WINS" - still blank.

Back in the Eagles **DUGOUT** Sabo taunts Laz & Perry who left the Eagles and now play for the Wolverines.

SABO
Hey chump! hope the grass is
greener. You sellout!

From **SHORTSTOP** Laz, their ex-teammate walks closer.

LAZ
(to Sabo)
Who cares about high school? I just
signed to play Division 1 next
year. I'd say I made the right
move.

SABO
Eat a bad hop!

Laz picks up a clump of dirt and throws it at the dugout.

SABO (CONT'D)
You don't get to do dirt bombs! I
invented dirt bombs.

COACH T.J.
(to team)
Guys, bring it in! I know you're
mad. I know you're hurt. I know
you're hungry for a win. Nothing we
can do about the past, but we got
another shot right now. We out
hustle them from the first pitch to
the last we got a shot. Get out
there and give them all you got!

SABO
1,2,3-

ALL
Eagles!

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - PITCHERS DUAL

- Basedow and WOLVERINE PITCHER have shutout both teams with 20 strike outs collectively. Both sides of the field are lined with "Ks"
- Scoreboard reads, 0 - 0, top of the 7th inning.
- At **HOME PLATE**, Fiorello gets on base with a walk.
- This brings up Tevvy. Maple is next, on deck.

-- On the first pitch, Fiorello steals **SECOND BASE** on ex-teammate Perry, the Wolverine catcher just beating the tag.

-- Wolverine Pitcher delivers from the stretch and Tevvy rips a base hit to **CENTER FIELD**.

Coach T.J. waves Fiorello past **THIRD BASE** and home.

The WOLVERINE CENTER FIELDER gets the ball and makes a great throw to Perry at **HOME PLATE**, but they're too late.

Fiorello sails in standing up, and the Eagles have taken a lead, 1 - 0.

-- Maple strikes out, as the Scout radar gun displays 94 MPH.

COACH T.J.

Head up kid. That's only your first strike-out this season.

-- From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Basedow strikes out another WOLVERINE BATTER.

-- Coach TJ looks at his pitch counter, basedow has thrown 97 pitches, he's got to come out after three more.

-- Laz walks up to home plate.

-- Rabino and Martinez are warming up in the **BULLPEN** with Dasher.

-- Basedow stares down Laz at home plate as he takes the sign from Maple.

Basedow nods. He throws strike 1.

INSERT: Scout radar gun registering 92 MPH velocity.

Basedow quickly comes back with a 93 MPH fastball as Laz swings and misses. Strike two.

Basedow throws a curve ball Laz defensively swings at, and hits a routine ground ball to Peters at **SHORTSTOP**. Peters makes a fielding error.

BASEDOW

(from the pitcher's mound)

Eat it! Eat it. Eat it.

Peters shamefully throws the ball back to Basedow and puts his head down kicking the dirt as Laz is safe at **FIRST BASE**.

COACH T.J.

Time blue.

Coach T.J. comes out of the dugout to change pitchers.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
Dasher! Rabino! Double switch.

Maple, Basedow, and Sabo meet at the **PITCHER'S MOUND**. Maple begins to remove the catcher's gear.

BASEDOW
If he can't make a play why's he on the field?

SABO
That boy is hexed.

MAPLE
Yip.

COACH T.J.
(To Basedow)
Great pitching Ace. 100 pitches just comes too quick.

Basedow hands Coach T.J. the ball and exits the field to an ovation. Basedow lifts his cap in recognition but hangs his head. Rabino begins to warm up.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
Peters, you're out.

PETERS
But Coach?

Peters runs off the field, and Maple takes over at shortstop.

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Rabino faces Perry at bat.

Laz takes his lead from **FIRST BASE**, and Rabino quickly throws over trying to pick off Laz for an out.

In the **DUGOUT** Basedow has ice on his pitching arm, he and Coach T.J. sits silently and sandwich Peters.

At **HOME PLATE** Rabino shakes off the sign from Dasher.

DASHER
(to Rabino)
It's good to go, Rabino, let's go.

PERRY
What are you dweebs doing?

Rabino shakes off Dasher again, and throws a curve ball in the dirt, that Dasher blocks. However, that allows Laz to advance to **SECOND BASE**.

LAZ
Damn, Maple. You're everywhere.

MAPLE
Never thought I'd be playing your position, that's for sure.

LAZ
You do a pretty good job, for a nobody.

Bam! A clump of dirt hits Laz in the stomach.

SABO
Dirt bombs, bitch!

Rabino is terrified of Perry, and shakes off Dasher's sign again. He throws another curveball right down the middle, and Perry hits it way over the **LEFT FIELD** fence for a walk off home run.

LAZ
(to Maple & Sabo)
Later losers.

Coach T.J.'s face melts into the fence.

Scoreboard reads, Wolverines 2 - 1 Eagles. Game over.

Moments later, in the **STANDS** The SCOUTS talk to Basedow, Tevvy, Laz, Perry, & the Wolverine Pitchers.

Maple packs up his gear and gets on the school bus with the rest of the Eagles who are not getting any attention.

INT. EAGLES SCHOOL BUS - MOMENTS LATER

The Eagles have a silent bus ride home, Maple tries to study. But he doesn't have enough energy, light and can't focus.

Maple slams the book shut and looks out the window in frustration.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE -- EAGLES LOSE THE NEXT FOUR GAMES

-- Game 6: Maple **pitches** well at EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD. Coach T.J. starts rearranging the offense and defense and it only makes the team worse.

-- Game 7: Maple is **catching** Basedow at BEARS BASEBALL FIELD.

-- Basedow strikes out 15 Bear Batters, but routine errors by Peters, Sabo, Russel, and Tagge cost the Eagles the game.

-- Russell, moves over to **Shortstop**.

-- Tagge switches to **Second Base**.

-- Peters is in **Right Field** and starts practicing his swing like Fiorello. Tevvy rolls his eyes.

-- Game 8: Maple **pitches** at FALCONS BASEBALL FIELD.

-- Maple pitches well, but the team is still out of sync, and don't score any runs.

-- Game 9: Maple **catches** Basedow at EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD.

-- Basedow strikes out a dozen.

-- Maple throws out a base runner.

-- Maple hits a triple.

-- Peters, back at **Second Base** makes an amazing diving play but still can't make a routine throw that ends up costing them the game.

CHAP

Maybe just roll it to me.

PETERSON

I'll roll your-

ALL

Peters!

Peters pipes down.

-- In the **Stands** a COLLEGE SCOUT, in a collard shirt talks to Basedow after the game. The College Scout hands Basedow a shirt and hat from his University, they shake hands.

-- Maple gets on his bike, and rides home.

END MONTAGE

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Ms. Fowler passes out tests as the students dive in.

MAPLE
(whispers to Caroline)
I didn't read the chapter.

CAROLINE
What?

MAPLE
I fell asleep. I'm gonna fake sick,
or should I say I'm hurt?

CAROLINE
Ask to go to the bathroom, and read
this.

MS. FOWLER
No talking, it's test time.

Caroline hands Maple her index card study sheet.

MAPLE
Ms. Fowler, may I please use the
restroom before I begin the test?

Caroline puts her head down and Maple hides the index card.

MS. FOWLER
Yes you may Karl, make it quick.

MAPLE
Absolutely.

Karl takes a sigh of relief, and exits the class room.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

(Game 10) Scoreboard reads, Eagles 4 - 1 Panthers, top of the
3rd inning.

Maple is at **SHORTSTOP** and the left handed Rabino is on the
PITCHER'S MOUND and throws ball four. The bases are loaded.

The Panther's Baseball Team is back in the visiting **DUGOUT** on
the fence and they've rattled Rabino.

Coach T.J. heads out of the dugout to change pitchers. He
looks back in the dugout at Peters.

COACH T.J.
Peters, second base.
(to Umpire)
Time Blue.

Peters jolts off the bench and runs into the game.

Coach T.J. points to Maple who heads to the pitcher's mound.

Then Coach T.J. points to Russel at **second base** and indicates he move over to shortstop.

RABINO

My bad Maple, didn't mean to leave
you with the bases loaded.

MAPLE

Good pitching Rabino, you only gave
up one. I'll try to get us out of
here.

Moments later Maple winds up and throws his first pitch.

The PANTHER BATTER swings and hits a ground ball to the **FIRST BASE AREA**.

Peters and Chap both go for the ball leaving 1st base empty.

Maple runs to cover **FIRST BASE** as the ball skirts past the 1st baseman, Chap, but the diving Peters gets a glove on the ball and flips it to Maple at 1st base who catches it and slides with his foot beating the baserunner by an inch.

UMPIRE

Out!

Maple pops up and turns to stop the remaining base runners in their tracks.

COACH T.J.

(from the dugout)

That's the way. Way to get an out.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 4 - 2 Panthers.

Runners on 2nd and 3rd. Two outs.

Maple winds up and delivers strike one. Maple again winds and delivers the pitch. PANTHER BATTER 2 swings and hits a pop up to Tevvy in centerfield. He makes the catch to end the inning.

Maple continues pitching and he's in command. A few strike outs, but mostly pop ups and ground balls as he holds the Panther's scoreless for the 4th, 5th and 6th innings.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 4 - 2 Panthers, top of the 7th.

Maple on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** and he has two outs, with one runner on.

On the next pitch, PANTHER BATTER 3 hits a home run to centerfield to tie the score, 4 - 4.

As Tevvy gives chase he gets to the fence, and sees Caroline who walks to pick up the baseball.

CAROLINE
(to herself)
I'm sorry Karl.

TEVVY
What are you doing back there by yourself?

CAROLINE
I'm watching the game.

TEVVY
Why aren't you watching from the stands?

Umpire throws Maple a new ball.

FIORELLO
Tevvy, who is that?

TEVVY
I don't know.

FIORELLO
Is that Francesca?

TEVVY
I don't know.

Maple throws the next pitch and gives up another hit to left field that Fiorello fields, and throws into 2nd base.

TAGGE
I've seen you somewhere.

Caroline walks back towards the stands with the rest of the fans.

COACH T.J.
(to the outfielders)
Fellas focus!

TAGGE
(To Caroline)
Do you work at Dairy Queen?

Maple throws another pitch, and it sails over Dasher's head.

DASHER
(to Umpire)
Time.

Dasher heads to the pitcher's mound.

Coach T.J. gets up from the **DUGOUT** like he's supposed to join them. Dasher waves him off.

COACH T.J.
(to Dasher)
Yes. No. No.

Maple and Dasher talk at the **PITCHER'S MOUND**.

DASHER
This thing you've started doing,
don't do it anymore.

MAPLE
Don't do what?

DASHER
Don't do anything.

MAPLE
What was a I doing?

DASHER
Nothing.

MAPLE
Nothing.

DASHER
Just pitching.

MAPLE
Ok.

DASHER
Just pitching.

MAPLE
Ok.

DASHER
Don't throw, pitch.

MAPLE
I thought that was what I was -

DASHER
Shh - stop thinking. You're
thinking you need to be throwing,
when you know how to pitch.

Dasher runs back to home plate. Maple takes a deep breath.

Maple delivers the next pitch, and PANTHER BATTER 4 hits a ground ball to Sabo at **THIRD BASE**. He steps on 3rd base to end the inning.

At **HOME PLATE**, Tevvy leads off the bottom of the 7th inning with a single right past the pitcher's head.

Maple steps up to bat next.

COACH T.J.
Here we go Maple.

Coach T.J. gives Maple and Tevvy the sign for "hit & run."

On the pitch, Tevvy steals **SECOND BASE**, so the PANTHER SECOND BASEMAN runs to cover, and Maple hits a ground ball through the infield allowing Tevvy to run all the way to **THIRD BASE** as the PANTHER OUTFIELDER tries to throw out Tevvy.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
(to Tevvy)
Get here, get here, get here!

Tevvy beats the throw and is safe at 3rd base, Maple safe at 1st base.

Peters steps up to **HOME PLATE** with a chance to win it. But, on the first pitch, he hits a pop up to the infield.

Peters returns to the dugout disappointed.

PETERS
(to Sabo)
Pick me up.

SABO
I got you.

Sabo steps up to home plate with 1 out.

Sabo swings and misses at a fastball for strike 1, he watches a curveball for strike 2.

On the 3rd pitch, Sabo hits a pop fly to **RIGHT FIELD**.

COACH T.J.
(to Tevvy)
Keep your foot on that base!

Tevvy is standing on **THIRD BASE** ready to sprint home.

The PANTHER RIGHT FIELDER makes the catch. Tevvy sprints for home, and here comes the throw from the outfield as the PANTHER CATCHER applies the tag, but Tevvy slides and touches home first.

The Eagles finally win their first game.

INT. LOCKER ROOM/CONCESSION - LATER

The team is celebrating and we see a little more into the inner lives and personalities of the players. Families, girlfriends, stickers, posters, quotes that they've decorated their personal lockers with.

INSERT: Maple writes tally marks on his Baseball Cap: "HITS" - 14 marks, "WINS" - one mark.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maple is in the tub with ice on his shoulder from pitching, and bruises from catching.

Blaise bursts into the bathroom with his homework.

BLAISE
Can you help me with my social studies?

MAPLE
Sure thing bro.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maple see's Caroline down by the lake as she skips a stone.

BLAISE
I'll be right back, Blaise. And I'll help you.

Maple exits through the sliding glass door.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS

Caroline looks at the lake as Maple approaches.

MAPLE

That last one went clear across the lake Caroline!

CAROLINE

That's the new goal. If they don't sink, I can pick them up on the other side to throw again.

MAPLE

Wow.

Maple pulls out a phone to do quick research.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

The world record stone skip is 88, what do you think that was?

CAROLINE

Fun. Ok, I'm going back in to finish my homework. The mosquitos are eating me tonight.

MAPLE

Oops, me too. I gotta help Blaise.

They both head back to their separate domiciles. They look back at each other but at different moments not making eye contact.

EXT. FALCONS BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Maple catches the final strike at **HOME PLATE**, and heads to the mound to shake Basedow's hand.

BASEDOW

(To Maple)

Finally.

MAPLE

Atta boy.

BASEDOW

Great game, kid.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maple, Lia, Blaise and baby Helen sit and play a board game.

BLAISE

Mom can you tell Karl to let me play baseball with him tomorrow.

LIA
Sure hunny.

MAPLE
Mom.

LIA
What?

MAPLE
I'm sorry bud, we have a game.

BLAISE
You never play with me anymore.

LIA
Happy?

MAPLE
We're playing right now!

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 3 - 1 Lions, top of the 6th inning.

The Lions Baseball Team is in the dugout, the Eagles are on the field.

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Maple strikes out the Lion Batter to end the inning.

In the **DUGOUT** Maple puts on a batting helmet and the Eagles start making fun of Caroline because she's **BEHIND THE FENCE**.

PETERS
That weird girl's been out there all game again.

CHAP
Everything about her just bothers me.

PETERS
Me too.

MAPLE
This you two agree on?

TAGGE
She cute, but I don't know where she came from.

Maple picks up a bat.

BASEDOW

Ask Maple, she's his girlfriend.

SABO

Girlfriend?

MAPLE

She's not my girlfriend.

BASEDOW

You live next to her.

MAPLE

That would make her my neighbor.

COACH T.J.

Everybody owes me a lap after the game, no girlfriends either.

We hear the crack of the bat as Fiorello gets a hit.

Tevvy draws a walk on four pitches.

Maple takes a deep breath and steps to home plate and hits a double - scoring Fiorello and Tevvy. Scoreboard now reads Eagles up 5-1.

Then, from the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Maple throws his 100th pitch.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

(to Umpire))

Time Blue. Double switch, Rabino, Dasher... Peters.

Peters puts his head down and runs into the dugout.

Russell moves over to 2nd base, and Maple goes to **SHORTSTOP**.

MAPLE

(To Rabino)

You got 1 on, 1 out, 1 ball, 1 strike.

RABINO

My turn to get us out of here.

MAPLE

That's the attitude.

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Rabino shakes off Dasher's sign, and throws a curveball.

LION BATTER hits Rabino's pitch for a double, and the LION BASERUNNER scores from 1st base.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 5 - 2 Lions.

Again, Rabino shakes off Dasher's sign.

LION BATTER 2 hits a single, another run scores. Scoreboard:
Eagles up 5-3

COACH T.J.
(from the dugout)
Not again.

Maple tosses the ball back to Rabino.

MAPLE
(to Rabino)
Come on kid, get me a ground ball.

Rabino shakes off Dasher for the third time.

DASHER
(to Umpire)
Time.

Dasher heads out to talk to Rabino.

DASHER (CONT'D)
Throw it!

RABINO
It's not ready.

DASHER
I didn't teach you the art of the
pitch, for it to sit.

RABINO
Next season.

DASHER
All we got is right now! Give it to
me! I want it. I need it. Unleash
it!

RABINO
You're a freak, Dash.

DASHER
Throw it right freaking now,
Rabino!

UMPIRE
Let's go gentlemen.

DASHER
Do not shake me off.

Dasher runs back to home plate.

Rabino nods, sets, and delivers a dancing knuckle ball that LION BATTER 3 looks at.

In the **DUGOUT** Basedow's jaw drops, Coach T.J. smiles.

BASEDOW
What was that?

UMPIRE
(from home plate)
Strike one.

ALL
Yeah!

MAPLE
(from shortstop)
Whoa! That's the way kid! Let me
see it again.

Rabino, throws another dancing knuckleball and Lion Batter 3 swings.

UMPIRE
Foul tip. Strike two.

Rabino delivers a third knuckleball and Lion Batter 3 swings and misses.

UMPIRE (CONT'D)
Strike 3.

Lion Batter 3 slams the bat on the ground.

SABO
That's two. Let's go, Rabino!

Rabino delivers another knuckleball and LION BATTER 4 hits a weak routine ground ball to Maple at **SHORTSTOP**.

Maple fields and flips it to Russel at **SECOND BASE**, getting the force out to win the game. The team celebrates, their winning streak.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

The Varsity baseball team is having lunch together.

Alicia Lynn, the girl Maple's always had a crush on is sitting on his lap. Alicia kisses Maple on the cheek with her red lipstick leaving a print.

The bell dings and they disperse to class.

Alicia hooks Maple's arm and she walks him to class.

ALICIA

Hey, I have an idea. Why don't we skip class and go to the beach?

MAPLE

Ah, okay. How are we going to get there?

ALICIA

Drive, of course. We can take your car.

MAPLE

I don't, uh, I don't have a car.

ALICIA

Ok, we'll take mine. Follow me.

They turn around and prepare to leave school property when Ms. Fowler comes around the corner.

MS. FOWLER

Mr. Maple where are you going?

MAPLE

I just, to the lock-bath-

MS. FOWLER

Make it quick or you'll be late.

Ms. Fowler continues walking to her classroom. Alicia tries to usher Maple to carry on with the truancy. Maple's stuck in limbo.

ALICIA

Come on Maple, let's get out of here.

MAPLE

I can't now. She saw me.

ALICIA

So what. It's just one class.

MAPLE

I know, but.

ALICIA

But, what? Are you cool or not?

MAPLE

Of course, I just don't want to do anything that could prevent me from playing?

ALICIA

Would you rather play with boys and stupid baseballs, or with me, at the beach?

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MOMENTS LATER

Ms. Fowler has begun her lesson. Maple enters class late.

MS. FOWLER

Mr. Maple, glad you could join us. Did you forget your locker combination?

MAPLE

Yeah, sorry, I'm late.

MS. FOWLER

I'll have to mark you as tardy. And please wipe the lipstick off your cheek, what do you think this is?

Maple proudly but shyly removes the lipstick print with the back of his hand.

INT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Most of the team has gone home, just Maple, Sabo, Basedow, and Peters are in the locker room.

SABO

Can't believe you signed, Basedow. Scholarship to UF, that's so sick.

Basedow shows off his new College Baseball Cap.

BASEDOW

I guess I'll pitch in college first, the offer the Cardinals gave me was just too low.

CHAP

How much?

BASEDOW
\$25 thousand.

MAPLE
Holy shit. Congrats on both of those milestones! Wanna go celebrate somewhere?

BASEDOW
Can't, got dinner with the fam. Maybe this weekend. See you guys tomorrow.

Basedow exits the locker room.

MAPLE
Wow! Can you believe that? Dreams do come true.

SABO
Not that hard to believe. He throws 95 mph. I'm out of here too.

Sabo exits the locker room.

CHAP
What are you and your girlfriend doing tonight, Maple?

MAPLE
Actually-

CHAP
Do you do it at her place, or your place?

MAPLE
Ali-

PETERS
I bet they're going on a nature walk.

They start laughing and Maple walks out.

MAPLE (O.S.)
Goodnight.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

The Baseball Team is sitting together again. Alicia is sitting at another table today, ignoring Maple.

PETERS

(to Tevvy)

I've never met her. I've never seen her. She doesn't exist.

TEVVY

That's by design. She goes to another school.

Enter FEMALE STUDENT, and her BOYFRIEND.

FIORELLO

Mr. Know it all, you don't know-

Female Student runs past Boyfriend and slaps Peters in the head.

FEMALE STUDENT

(to Peters)

You better quit running your mouth about me, or I'm gonna make you regret the day you were born!

Peters cowers in his seat.

BOYFRIEND

Baby, stop. You'll get suspended.

FEMALE STUDENT

I never did anything with you, and don't let me catch you talking about me ever again!

Female student punches Peters and then her Boyfriend picks her up and escorts her away.

DEAN O'DONNELL (40s) pokes his head around the corner, having just missed the altercation.

Beat.

SABO

Peters got beat up by a girl!

PETERS

I gotta go to the bathroom.

Peters shamefully exits the cafeteria.

FIORELLO

(to the team)

She said "if I catch you talking-"

Fiorello reenacts the scene, hitting Sabo.

TEVVY
Only Peters.

MAPLE
Yips and flapping lips, not a good look.

SABO
"You'll regret the day you were born!"

Sabo keeps hitting Fiorello & Tevvy as they laugh.

Maple sees Caroline get up and exits the cafeteria to follow her.

MAPLE
See y'all later at practice.

BASEDOW
I told you. Look where he'd rather be.

TAGGE
That's where I've seen her.

SABO
Seen who?

FIORELLO
That girl who hangs out behind the fence during our games.

CHAP
So weird.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Maple and Caroline walk in silence.

CAROLINE
What?

MAPLE
Nothing.

CAROLINE
Something. You're being weird.

MAPLE
...What is kinda weird is you wandering behind the baseball field alone every single game.

CAROLINE

Since when?

MAPLE

Since always.

CAROLINE

What do you want? Baseball's boring.

MAPLE

It's become a thing now and it's distracting the team. They're being annoying to me about it, and making fun of you, and teasing me, and I just don't like it, so could you please stop going out there?

CAROLINE

Why do you care what they think?

MAPLE

I care about not rocking the boat that we just got moving in the right direction.. it's going to be too distracting with you back there.

CAROLINE

I don't understand why it's an issue?

MAPLE

Because I just can't handle their crap right now. At this point in the season. Things are finally going well, and I can afford any distractions.

CAROLINE

Wow. Are you kidding me?

MAPLE

Can we still friends?

CAROLINE

Apparently not. My friends stick up for me.

The school bell rings.

MAPLE

Just please don't do it during the games.

CAROLINE
You are all a bunch of babies.

MAPLE
Then don't come at all.

As soon as Maple says it he wishes he could reel it back.

CAROLINE
Fine.

Caroline walks away.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Maple is cleaning up a golf cart and Clubhouse MANAGER (50s) walks over to him.

MANAGER
Maple, need you here all next week to cover for Mason. He got in a car accident.

MAPLE
Is he alright?

MANAGER
No, he can't work.

MAPLE
I can't either, I'm at the end of my baseball season.

MANAGER
Like I give two spits about baseball. This is your job. So, get serious about making money, or I'll find someone who is.

MUSIC MONTAGE - Victory Bus Karaoke over Highlights

-- The team collectively singing _____ on the school bus ride home after another win.

-- Maple's pitching, catching and hitting is great. 17 hits in 37 at bats. .460 AVG, 1 HR, 15 RBI.

-- Rabino's knuckleball is awesome.

-- Basedow's striking out everyone.

-- The team has finally meshed and found their stride.

-- Maple tries to focus on studying, but can't and joins in on the fun.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - LATER

Karl and Caroline awkwardly ignore each other in class. The tension is thick, but neither one wants to say anything. Angst and intermittent eye contact.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Coach T.J. at **HOME PLATE** finishes pregame warmup and he heads into the dugout with, Dasher.

The visiting Bears Baseball Team takes the field to do their pregame warmup.

DASHER
(from home plate)
Dear winning streak, we want one more.

COACH T.J.
You don't talk about it!

DASHER
Don't talk about it? I need to speak it into existence.

COACH T.J.
What?

DASHER
Manifest destiny.

COACH T.J.
I guess that makes sense. Ok.

PRINCIPAL PARISH (50s), in a suit calls out from the fence.

PRINCIPAL PARISH
Coach, I need to speak to you.

Coach T.J. stops and approaches Principal Parish as Dasher continues into the dugout with the rest of the team.

COACH T.J.
Principal Parish, what's up? You staying to watch the game tonight?

Principal Parish shoves a paper through the fence.

PRINCIPAL PARISH
Big news. We've got a major
renovation under way.

COACH T.J.
Ok.

PRINCIPAL PARISH
Read that. The state. This field,
renovate.

Principal Parish gestures slice to the neck "cut."

PRINCIPAL PARISH (CONT'D)
Brand new school coming this way.
Big. Clean.

Principal Parish points to the ground, with another vague
gesture.

COACH T.J.
So what?

PRINCIPAL PARISH
Read the paper. The start date is
in one week. So you may have to
find somewhere else to play for the
remainder of the season.

Coach T.J. reads the paper.

COACH T.J.
What?

INSERT: EAGLES FIELD DEMOLITION BEGINS MAY 4th. NEW SCHOOL
COMING SOON.

PRINCIPAL PARISH
Good luck tonight, Coach.

Principal Parish walks away and Coach T.J. gets his reaction
in check.

He folds the paper, and puts it into his pocket.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

INSERT: Maple's Baseball Cap: "HITS," eighteen tally marks,
and with a marker Maple adds a fifth tally to the "WINS" -
column.

Coach T.J. enters the locker room.

COACH T.J.

Hey guys. Guys. Guys. Listen up a minute. You played a helluva game tonight, but I got some news, and I just spent the last 20 minutes thinking what to say... and this is all I could come up with.

Coach T.J. hands them the paper that says it all. Basedow grabs it first.

SABO

What is it Coach?

BASEDOW

That's a shame. Good thing I'm graduating.

Basedow passes the note to Tevvy and exits the locker room.

TEVVY

Where'd you get this?

MAPLE

What's it say?

SABO

How can they do this?

Peters grabs it from Sabo.

COACH T.J.

They own the land, they can do whatever they want. Says it right there.

MAPLE

This park has been here for like 40 years.

DASHER

That's why.

MAPLE

Why do they have to destroy the ball field to build a school? They got all that room.

FIORELLO

This blows.

TAGGE

What is this season?

MAPLE
So we're the last team.

SABO
The what?

TEVVY
The last team. This is the last dance.

MAPLE
The last freaking dance.

Slowly it hits the rest of the team.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Let's go boys!

ALL
Yeah!

SABO
Last dance on 3. 1,2,3.

ALL
Last dance!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLYWAY - MORNING

Maple is sitting in a desk outside a classroom talking to Chandi and Lacey.

A student walks up to Maple and abruptly flips over the desk Maple is seated in. It's the partygoer who hit Maple in the face with the football. HENRY (17)

HENRY
You wrote that about my mom on the back of the bus seat?

Maple quickly gets up, picks up the desk and hurls it at Henry, who injures his arm deflecting the projectile.

MAPLE
I haven't been on the bus in 3 months.

HENRY
They said it was you.

Dean O'Donnell enters the hallway as the desk crashes down.

MAPLE

Who?

DEAN O'DONNELL

Both of you go to the Principal for fighting!

MAPLE

No, no, no Dean.

DEAN O'DONNELL

Not another word.

Dean grabs the desk and stands it back up.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Maple and Henry sit in silence as Principal Parish enters and sits down at his desk.

PRINCIPAL PARISH

You're both suspended for two days.

MAPLE

Please, sir you -

PRINCIPAL PARISH

It's the mandatory minimum.

MAPLE

I was attacked by this guy. How can you suspend me for this?

PRINCIPAL PARISH

These are the rules. Dean said he saw him tip you in a desk, and you threw it at him - sounds like a fight to me.

MAPLE

I was thrown out of the desk. I had to pick it up just to get it off of me.

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Maple.

MAPLE

Sir, please, I'll do Saturday detention for the rest of the year. I'll wash your car, I'll get your dry cleaning, I'll walk your dog, I'll clean your gutters.

(MORE)

MAPLE (CONT'D)

Don't suspend me, please, I'm
begging you, I need to play
baseball! I'll do anything!

PRINCIPAL PARISH

You should have exercised good
communication skills in the
hallway, Maple. I'll see you next
week gentlemen.

EXT. LIA'S APARTMENT - FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Maple rides home on his bike. Lia comes out of the apartment
hot.

LIA

You got suspended from school!

Brother Blaise enters.

BLAISE

What'd you do?

LIA

I'll ask the questions thank you
very much.

MAPLE

I'll tell you inside.

LIA

Tell me now!

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Lia and Blaise question Maple.

MAPLE

And then the Dean sent me to the
Principal's office, and I got the
mandatory minimum. The end.

LIA

What were you thinking?

MAPLE

Survive.

LIA

Don't be smart with me.

MAPLE

I'm not. I didn't start a fight, I didn't join a fight, I didn't end a fight. I only defended myself.

LIA

You should have just stayed away from him.

MAPLE

Mom, you're not hearing me.

LIA

Hear this. You get suspended in this house, you're grounded. Your punishment will be to watch your brother and sister for the next two days. You're not to leave.

And your Manager called from the golf course. His message was, "this is strike two."

MAPLE

Damn it.

Maple walks to the sliding glass door and sees Caroline outside, but he can't go talk to her, she's mad at him too. Maple doesn't want to go inside, doesn't want to go outside. He trapped and the anger swells.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - MAPLE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Maple lies awake in bed staring at the ceiling. Blaise asleep in the other bed.

Maple takes out a photo of him and his father on the baseball field.

MAPLE

(whispering))

Why ddad? I gave it everything I had. It's not going to be enough. I let you down, I let mom down, I let everyone down.

A tear drops out the corner of his eye.

INT. MAPLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Maple and Blaise still asleep.

LIA
Have a great day my lovely
children.

Lia slams the front door.

The baby starts crying. Maple and Blaise wake up.

MAPLE
Get ready Blaise, the bus leaves in
15 minutes.

INT. LIA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Baby sister Helen is in her 'pack n play' in the middle of
the room.

Maple enters and she instantly stops crying and becomes very
happy and cute. Maple picks her up.

MAPLE
At least someone's happy.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - AT HOME SUSPENSION

-- Maple outdoors running around the lake with baby in the
stroller, picking up stones for skipping

-- Maple changing diapers

-- Maple feeds the baby, and again changes her diaper

-- Maple does his school work while baby Helen plays with
toys

Maple is mid assignment and doesn't understand.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
I don't get it. This doesn't make
any sense. It's too hard. I'm such
an idiot. This is why I got
nothing, and I'm going nowhere.

The baby starts to cry. Maple picks her up and regulates
himself.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
It's ok, Helen. It's ok. I'm sorry.
Shh, shh, shh.

The phone rings. Maple answers.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
(to phone))
Hello, this is Karl. Now? No, I
can't.

Blaise walks in the front door returning from school.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
I'm babysitting.

Blaise drops his backpack and goes to the fridge for a snack.

BLAISE
I'm not a baby, you're a baby.

MAPLE
(to phone)
I'm sorry there's nothing I can do.
I can't leave a baby alone on such
short notice. Wait, what? You're
firing me? Why can't you hire more
people instead of firing me? How
does that solve your- please, don't
do this.

Maple hangs up the phone.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
(to Blaise)
Let's go have a catch.

BLAISE
I don't want to.

MAPLE
Then don't complain to me I don't
play ball with you.

Maple walks out the sliding glass door.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Watch your sister. I need fresh
air.

BLAISE
What's your problem?

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - LATER

Caroline gets off the school bus and Maple exits his
apartment to meet her.

MAPLE

Hey.

CAROLINE

Hey.

MAPLE

How was school today?

CAROLINE

If you're still going to be Broski Bonehead, you can buzz off.

MAPLE

I'm sorry Caroline. You've been nothing but supportive all season, and I made a foolish mistake to take your friendship for granted. I realize it meant a lot more to me than I thought. I just really like spending time with you. In and out of school. I miss you. Peace offering.

He hands Caroline a dozen skipping stones in a bag.

CAROLINE

We're cool, for now. You going to your game tonight?

MAPLE

I'm not allowed.

CAROLINE

That must hurt.

MAPLE

Yup. I got you something else too. I thought you might like this ball to practice your skips if you don't have a stone.

Maple offers two racketballs to Caroline.

CAROLINE

Huh?

MAPLE

You can throw or skip this on the water and it won't sink. Or practice against any wall, like at the school racketball court.

Caroline considers the concept, takes the ball and squeezes it for a grip.

CAROLINE

Okay, I'll try.

Caroline takes the ball and slings it half way into the lake where it just sits on top of the water.

MAPLE

Grab the other one, try again.

Caroline gets her grip and slings the ball across the water, as is skips and get stops 3/4 across the lake. Both balls sit on the water.

CAROLINE

Different matter, same result.

MAPLE

Maybe better for the walls. But, I have an idea.

CAROLINE

Should I be concerned?

Maple runs inside and returns with his golfball retriever.

Maple is knee deep in the lake but he manages to get both racketballs back.

MAPLE

I have another idea.

Maple runs back to building and returns rolling a large recycling bin.

CAROLINE

What's that for?

Moments later maple has a bat and stands in front of the chair as Caroling is about 45 feet away like a pitcher.

MAPLE

Try to hit the chair.

CAROLINE

I can't believe you're making me play baseball.

MAPLE

Think of it as skipping stones.

CAROLINE

Fine.

Caroline throws it and Maple swings and hits the ball in the middle of the lake.

MAPLE

I'll get it.

CAROLINE

You're obsessed. I'm going inside for a little. I'll see you later.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 2 - 5 Panthers, bottom of the 6th.

In the **DUGOUT** the team gets prepared to bat.

PETERS

I'm thinking about going lefty.

CHAP

Maybe you should learn how make a routine throw before taking on other challenges.

PETERS

Maybe you should learn how to hit the ball. What are you up to now 25 strikeouts?

CHAP

25 less errors than you.

PETERS

At least I can hit.

CHAP

Coach changes my swing every other at bat.

PETERS

Coach changes my swing.

SABO

You do, do that.

CHAP

(mocking Peters)
And Daddy pads my stats.

COACH T.J.

I do that? *He* does that?

CHAP

I've had enough of you Peters!

COACH T.J.

Cut it out! We have a game to finish. What happened to the last dance? You guys are acting like it's already over.

BASEDOW

It's not?

SABO

Come on guys, bring it in.

TEVVY

Give it a rest Sabo, nobody wants to hear that.

SABO

Coach is right, it a'int over.

TEVVY

It is over, for me. At least you got to play your last year here.

At **HOME PLATE** Russell hits a pop up to left field, inning over.

The team gets ready to leave the **DUGOUT** and play defense.

TEVVY (CONT'D)

They're not taking anything away from you, they're taking it away from me.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - DAY

Maple is pitching to the garbage can, and we hear it smack.

Baby sister Helen is playing in the grass on a blanket next to Maple.

The school bus rolls up and Caroline exits the bus with other students.

MAPLE

Can you come play?

CAROLINE

You're ob-sessed... Ok, for a little. But then I have to leave, we're going to my grandmas.

Caroline takes a racketball out of her backpack and puts the bag down.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Is she safe down on the ground like that?

Maple picks up baby Helen and straps her in the stroller.

MAPLE
Sure, as long she doesn't get near the water and there are no alligators.

Maple flips Caroline another racketball. She's not great at catching.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Throw two to get warm.

CAROLINE
I took your advice and tried it at the racketball court, I'm warm.

MAPLE
Nice.

Caroline delivers a pitch. Maple swings and misses.

CAROLINE
You're getting better.

Caroline pitches again, and Maple hits it into the lake - splash.

MAPLE
Throw the other one.

CAROLINE
Nope, I'm hanging on to this one. I'm going to go and get ready. See you in school tomo- oh, no. No, I won't.

MAPLE
Tomorrow's Day 3. I'll be right here when you get back.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Caroline is in class inaudibly talking to Lacey, and Maple's seat is empty.

Over the loud speaker we hear Sabo, the high school DJ.

SABO (O.S.)
Announcement students. Impromptu
Pep Rally during lunch. I'll be
playing your favorite tunes, come
cheer the baseball team on for our
last game of the season!

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - INFIRMARY - LATER

SCHOOL NURSE, looks at Blaise, Maple's brother, in disgust
while dialing mom, Lia.

LIA (O.S.)
Hello.

SCHOOL NURSE
Hello, Ms. Maple, your son, Blaise,
has lice.

LIA (O.S.)
What? No, no, no. He had them
already.

SCHOOL NURSE
Doesn't work like that ma'am. So,
you need to pick him up and keep
him at home until it clears up.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA/COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Sabo is set up behind a DJ booth and the students are eating
and hanging out. The baseball team is wearing their game
jerseys.

Tevvy, Tagge, Russell, and Fiorello are dancing.

Peters, Basedow and Chap stand behind the DJ booth with Sabo.

Caroline, Lacey, and Chandi stand by bobbing their heads.

SABO
(to microphone)
Special shout out to one of our
captains, the kid Karl! We miss you
man, we'll see you in the playoffs
baby!

LACEY
Karl would have loved this.

Caroline nods in agreement.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maple finishes up the dishes, and turns to the baby.

MAPLE

Let's go.

Suddenly, the front door swings open.

Lia shoves Blaise in the apartment and throws two boxes on the floor.

LIA

(to Maple)

Here's the lice treatment, I have to get back to work.

Bye baby!

See you tonight.

Lia slams the door shut, and Blaise stands there.

MAPLE

You know the drill. Put your clothes in a bag, and I'll meet you on the porch.

Maple picks up the boxes, and reads them.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

Nah, we'll save mom some money.

EXT. LIA'S APARTMENT - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Maple has finished shaving off all of Blaise's hair.

MAPLE

You look good... What?

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - LATER

The school bus rolls up, and Caroline gets off the bus.

She walks over to Maple, Blaise and Helen in stroller by the lake.

CAROLINE

What's up with you two?

Maple, and Blaise remove their baseball caps and reveal they both have shaved heads.

MAPLE

Little bro got lice at school.

CAROLINE

Oh my god! And what happened to you?

MAPLE

I didn't want him to feel bad. Is it that bad?

CAROLINE

It'll grow back. Maybe leave the hat off and get some sun.

Maple tosses her the racketball.

MAPLE

Wanna play?

CAROLINE

Okay.

BLAISE

Can I play?

MAPLE

Yea, you're up.

Blaise enthusiastically gets the bat, Maple goes back to catch.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maple and Blaise clear the dishes from dinner.

LIA

It's going to take some getting used to the both of you with bald heads.

MAPLE

That treatments expensive. So now you can return it and we won't need haircuts for a while.

LIA

You're so smart Karl. Thank you.

MAPLE

Mom, can I go to the field tonight?

LIA

No, you're still grounded.

MAPLE

Please? They're demolishing the field next week. It's going to be gone.

LIA

What do you mean?

MAPLE

I told you they're building a new school, and bulldozing our baseball field.

LIA

What? Wait. That's good though, right? Blaise will get to go to a brand new school.

MAPLE

He'll just never get to play on that baseball field again.

LIA

Ok, go ahead. Have fun my babies.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Maple and Blaise have the field to themselves. They park their bicycles in the **DUGOUT** and Maple takes out two gloves, a bat and balls from the locker room.

MAPLE

You want to pitch or hit?

BLAISE

Hit!

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - MAPLE PLAYING WITH BLAISE

-- Maple pitches for Blaise to hit. Blaise runs the bases.

-- Maple as catcher, Blaise as pitcher.

-- Maple & Blaise just having fun.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Blaise and Maple return on their bikes, Caroline is doing homework by the lake.

CAROLINE
Where were you two?

MAPLE
The field. Go inside tell mom we're home. I'll be in, in a minute.

CAROLINE
Night Blaise.

BLAISE
Bye, Caroline.

MAPLE
How was your visit to your grandmas?

CAROLINE
Okay.

MAPLE
Cool.

CAROLINE
Something on your mind?

MAPLE
I mean, I missed my last regular season high school baseball game. I wasn't even allowed to play. The playoff game is win or go home, and I just realized it could be the last baseball game I ever get to play.

CAROLINE
I doubt that. You had really good season like you wanted.

MAPLE
So what? What do I have to show for it? A three day suspension.

CAROLINE
You didn't get tonight. But, you just said you do have one more.

MAPLE
Last dance.

CAROLINE
What last dance?

MAPLE
Ours.

CAROLINE
Who? Me and you?

Maple laughs and then looks at Caroline.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Ms. Fowler hands a graded quiz to Maple.

MS. FOWLER
Welcome back, Mr. Maple.

Maple's afraid to look at the quiz, but Caroline peaks.

MS. FOWLER (CONT'D)
Seems you study better at home.

Maple looks and sees 100% - A+.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The field lights have just been turned on and are warming up for the Playoff Game.

We hear music coming from the locker room as Coach T.J. comes around the corner and vomits.

He covers his puke by kicking dirt on it, and then looks around to see if anyone saw him.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The team is doing all of their pre-game superstitious rituals.

MAPLE
Anybody wanna hit off the tee?

Maple walks out of the locker room.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Field lights are hot and Maple takes a quick drink from a water fountain in the **DUGOUT**.

From across the way he sees the Wolverine's school bus approaching.

Basedow walks over to Maple.

BASEDOW
(to Maple)
Let's get these guys tonight.

MAPLE
Light them up ace!

Basedow walks out to the bullpen solo as Maple hits off a batting tee solo. The calm before the storm.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The Wolverines exit the school bus in matching warmups, bags and shoes.

We see ex-teammates Laz, Perry step off the bus.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - LATER

At **HOME PLATE** Coach T.J., Maple and Sabo meet Wolverine Coach, Laz, and Perry for a ceremonial high school stare-down.

The **STANDS** start to fill as the game is about to begin.

Both Coaches hand their starting lineups to the **PLAYOFF UMPIRE**.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE
Play ball.

Basedow is in **BULLPEN** with Dasher warming up.

In the **DUGOUT** the rest of the team is huddled ready to take the field.

COACH T.J.
(to team)
I'm really proud of you this season, you all worked your asses off and I'm proud of each and every one of you. Tonight, we're both in the same spot. Winner advances. This doesn't have to be the last dance. You can beat these guys!

SABO
Bring it in!

Everyone huddles and all hands are in.

MAPLE
I got one thing to say. If this is the last game anyone ever plays on this field, leave it all out there. We owe it to ourselves, all those before us, and to those who will never know how special this diamond is. Let's make it a dance marathon.

ALL
Yeah!

MAPLE
What did you come here to do?

ALL
Win!

BASEDOW
What'd you come here to do?

ALL
Win!

SABO
Last dance on three.

ALL
One, two, three, last dance!

The Eagles run out and take the field.

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Basedow strikes out the Leadoff Wolverine Batter with a curve ball in the dirt.

Maple blocks the ball, and chases it down, as the batter running to 1st base. Maple picks up the ball and throws it to Chap at **FIRST BASE** just beating the Wolverine Leadoff Batter for the first out.

SABO
(from 3rd base)
Sweet move, Maple. We got one.

BASEDOW
That a way to pick me up!

On the next pitch, Wolverine Batter 2 hits a pop up to Sabo at **THIRD BASE**. He catches it for out number 2.

Sabo throws the ball back to Basedow again.

SABO
Let's go baby. One, two, three.
One, two, three.

Next up at **HOME PLATE** is Laz.

Basedow stares down Laz, and throws the pitch.

Laz hits it high and deep to **LEFT FIELD**.

Fiorello runs after it.

TEVVY
Got room, got room!

Fiorello scales the wall and makes a spectacular catch to end the inning.

TEVVY (CONT'D)
Yeah baby, yeah!

Eagles run into the dugout fired up.

MAPLE
(from home plate)
I love that move!

SABO
(from 3rd base)
Beautiful move.

BASEDOW
(From the pitcher's mound)
I owe you!

At **HOME PLATE** our Leadoff Hitter, Tagge swings at strike 3 from the same Wolverine Pitcher earlier in the season.

WOLVERINE PITCHER
(under his breath)
Bye bye.

Next batter, Fiorello - hits a ground ball to Laz at **SHORTSTOP**, the ball just beat's Fiorello for the second out.

Tevvy steps up to **HOME PLATE** and hits another ground ball that Laz dives for. He gets up and throws Tevvy out at 1st base, taking away another hit to end the inning.

Top of the 2nd inning, at **HOME PLATE** is ex-teammate Perry.

PERRY
(to Maple)
Cup check.

Perry taps Maple's protective cup with the end of his bat as he walks by.

Basedow winds and delivers, his pitch is hit on a screaming line-drive to the gap in **CENTER FIELD**.

Tevvy dives to stop the ball from going all the way to the wall.

He hops up and throws it in quickly to **SECOND BASE** holding Perry to a single.

SABO
Way to get it in. Way to keep him
at one.

Basedow comes right back, and strikes out Wolverine Batter 3.

Next up is Wolverine Batter 4, who hits a ground ball to Russell at **SHORTSTOP**.

PETERS
(from 2nd base)
Yes, yes.

Russell fields the ground ball and flips it to Peters.

Peters makes the transfer, and the Eagles hold their breath as he throws it to Chap at **FIRST BASE**.

The crisp throw beats the runner and the double play ends the inning. The Eagles run into the dugout fired up again.

Bottom of the 2nd inning, and at **HOME PLATE** Maple leads off. Coach T.J. gives him a sign noticing how deep the Wolverine 3rd Baseman is.

Maple lays down a rare bunt and gets a base hit.

Basedow follows up with a pop up.

Next to bat is Sabo who hits a ground ball to the WOLVERINE THIRD BASEMAN.

He fields and throws the ball to WOLVERINE SECOND BASEMAN as Maple slides into 2nd to break up the double play which allows Sabo to reach 1st base safely.

However, Maple sprains his ankle, and limps off the field.

Back at **HOME PLATE** Peters strikes out to end the inning.

Top of the 4th inning, two out and up to bat is Laz again.

Basedow delivers the pitch and Laz hits a single through the diving infielders.

Perry steps up to **HOME PLATE**.

Basedow from the stretch delivers, and Perry hits a line drive to the gap in **CENTER FIELD** that Tevvy can't get to in time and Perry easily jogs into **SECOND BASE** with a double. And, Laz is safe over at **THIRD BASE**.

Basedow, in a jam delivers from the windup and Wolverine Batter 3 hits a ground ball in the hole to Peters at **SECOND BASE**.

The ball looks like it's got base hit written all over it, but Peters makes a diving catch.

And, from the ground he throws a bouncing ball to Chap at **FIRST BASE** who makes the pick to end the inning.

Wolverine Coach kicks the dirt in frustration.

MAPLE
(from home plate)
Peters making moves!

Dasher starts dancing in the **DUGOUT** as the Eagles come in to bat.

DASHER
It's turning into a disco. Oh oh,
oh, oh. Last dance, let's go!

Scoreboard reads, 0 - 0, bottom of the 5th inning.

At **HOME PLATE** Maple is at bat with 2 outs.

Wolverine Pitcher winds up and delivers.

Maple swings and hits a foul ball, strike two.

INSERT: PLAYOFF SCOUTS in the stands with radar gun display 94 MPH.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE
Full count, three balls, two
strikes.

Maple chokes up on the bat and gets back into the batter's box. Wolverine Pitcher winds and delivers the pay off pitch.

Maple swings and connects, he hits it high and far, deep to **RIGHT CENTER FIELD**, back, back, back, gone!

The ball sails over the fence, for a solo home run. Everyone starts celebrating and rushes to home plate.

The Eagles fans go crazy in the stands, and the **BASEBALL SCOUTS** nod to each other in affirmation of Maple.

Maple touches them all, and the Eagles come out of the dugout to celebrate Maple at **HOME PLATE**.

As Maple is heading back into the **DUGOUT**, Lia, Helen and Blaise come over to the fence and congratulate him.

LIA
(to Maple)
Way to go baby! You did it. I'm so
proud of you! And you know who is
too.

The Wolverine Pitcher strikes out Basedow to end the inning.

Top of the 6th, Basedow is in a jam. **WOLVERINE BASERUNNERS** on 1st and 2nd base, and no outs.

Basedow musters all his determination and strikes out the next two **WOLVERINE BATTERS** on six straight fastballs. The last one jams Maple's thumb and he winces.

Coach T.J.'s Pitch counter crosses to 100 pitches.

COACH T.J.
(to himself)
Shit.
(to Playoff Umpire)
Time Blue. Double switch.

Coach T.J. leaves the dugout, and he infielders head to the pitcher's mound to meet him.

Rabino and Dasher enter the game from the **BULLPEN**. Peters starts to jog off the field.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)
Peters second base. Russy great
game.

Peters is ecstatic to stay in the game, and Russel jogs off the field.

Maple takes his hand out of the glove and shakes it as he removes the rest of the catcher's gear.

MAPLE
(to Basedow)
Damn you were throwing gas. I think
you broke my thumb.

BASEDOW
Sorry brother.a

COACH T.J.
It breaks my heart not letting you
finish this.

BASEDOW
You got us the lead, now hang onto
it Maple.

Basedow hands Coach T.J. the ball and exits the field.

The fans give Basedow a standing ovation as he passes 11
poster boards with the letter "K" on the fence indicating his
strike outs.

COACH T.J.
4 more outs fellas. Just keep on
dancing.

Coach T.J. hands Rabino the ball and returns to the dugout.

DASHER
Let me see that knuckle ball dance.

Maple goes to **SHORTSTOP**, Dasher at catcher.

Rabino gets set on the mound from the stretch. He winds up
and throws the knuckleball but he misses big.

Dasher has to stand up and catch it.

The Wolverines start to get louder in their dugout.

Rabino throws the next pitch way over Dasher's head allowing
the two Wolverine Baserunners to advance to **SECOND BASE and
THIRD BASE.**

Coach T.J., Basedow shake their heads in disbelief.

DASHER (CONT'D)
Rabino, just flow bro, just let it
go.

MAPLE
Come on kid, you got this.

Rabino's third pitch is a dancing knuckleball and Wolverine Batter 4 hits a weak pop up to Maple at **SHORTSTOP**. He slams his bat in frustration.

MAPLE (CONT'D)
Mine. All mine.

Maple is basking as he makes the catch for the final out of the inning. The team runs into the dugout with a sigh of relief.

INSERT: Scoreboard Eagles 1 - 0 Wolverines.

Bottom of the 6th inning and new on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** is WOLVERINE PITCHER 2.

At **HOME PLATE** Dasher leads off, and strikes out. Scout radar gun 96 MPH.

DASHER
(to Tagge)
Big boy is bringing it. I didn't even see it.

On his way back to the dugout.

Tagge steps in and crowds the plate, like usual, but Wolverine Pitcher throws a pitch that hits Tagge, and he goes down to the ground.

Coach T.J. comes down from 3rd base to argue with the Playoff Umpire.

COACH T.J.
He threw it at him on purpose!

TAGGE
I'm alright, coach.

Tagge gets up and jogs down to **FIRST BASE**.

Next up is Fiorello. Wolverine Pitcher #2 delivers and Fiorello hits a ground ball to **SECOND BASE**.

Laz wants to turn the double play.

LAZ
(from shortstop)
Yes, yes.

Wolverine **SECOND BASEMAN** flips it to Laz, who gets the out at second, but knows he's got to rush to get the speedy Fiorello he makes a throwing error.

DeWitt the **FIRST BASE** Coach tells Fiorello.

DEWITT

Go, go, go!

Fiorello runs for second base on the over throw, but Perry the catcher is backing up the **FIRST BASE AREA** and picks up the ball.

DEWITT (CONT'D)

(To Fiorello)

Wait! Back! No.

Perry throws the ball back to Laz standing on **SECOND BASE**.

Fiorello turns back and runs for **FIRST BASE**.

Laz pursues Fiorello and has to throw the ball quickly to the WOLVERINE FIRST BASEMAN before Fiorello gets too close.

As Laz let's the ball go, DeWitt screams.

DEWITT (CONT'D)

Now!

Fiorello turns on a dime back towards 2nd base, and runs for his life.

Wolverine First Baseman realizes he's got to get rid of the ball, and throws it as fast as he can, but it's too late.

Fiorello slides into **SECOND BASE**, safe. The Eagles all celebrate.

At **HOME PLATE** Tevvy steps up to bat.

Wolverine Pitcher 2 from the stretch delivers a curve ball.

Tevvy swings and misses purposefully because Fiorello is stealing third.

Perry snaps the throw down to WOLVERINE THIRD BASEMAN, but it's too late Fiorello is safe.

Fiorello gets up dusts himself off, and claps to hype up his team.

MAPLE

Those dance feet are so fast!

FIORELLO

Come on Tevvy, knock me in!

Back at **HOME PLATE** Tevvy is ready. Wolverine Pitcher 2 winds up and delivers.

Tevvy swings and hits a line drive, foul, for strike 2.

Wolverine Pitcher 2 follows up with his first change-up of the game and fools Tevvy who is way out front. He swings and misses for strike 3, and out number two.

Tevvy's disappointed as he passes Maple in the on deck circle. Maple pats Tevvy on the back.

Before Maple steps into the batter's box he looks right at Fiorello on 3rd base.

Fiorello looks right back, and gives a little nod.

Maple steps up to home plate.

Wolverine Pitcher 2 winds up as Fiorello takes off running to steal home.

COACH T.J.

Wait!

But, here comes Fiorello full speed trying to steal home. Here comes the pitch. Maple steps out of the box and Perry grabs the pitch, and then applies the tag as Fiorello slides in and touches home plate.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE

Out!

Coach T.J. runs to home plate to argue the call.

MAPLE

No way, blue, he beat it!

COACH T.J.

He got under it! He beat him! His foot was in there!

FIORELLO

You missed it blue, you missed it.
I was in there. I beat him.
Everybody saw it.

The fans start to boo as the Wolverines hustle off the field, fired up.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE

Top of the 7th.

Fiorello is pissed and hangs his head as he walks back into the dugout.

 FIORELLO
 Sorry Maple.

 MAPLE
 Fastest guy on the field 90 feet
 away from an insurance run. I'll
 take those odds everyday.

Fiorello cracks a smile and they head back out to the field

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Rabino's knuckle ball is still shaky and the Leadoff Wolverine Batter hits a hard ground ball to Maple at **SHORTSTOP**.

Maple makes a tough play for the 1st out. He takes his hand out of his glove and inspects his thumb as he licks back to position.

 SABO
 My man making moves all over the
 floor. That's one! That's one.
 Maple, you alright?

 MAPLE
 That really hurt.

Rabino delivers another knuckleball and Wolverine Batter 2 hits a line drive to Tevvy in **CENTER FIELD**.

Tevvy runs in and lays out to make the diving catch.

 FIORELLO
 Superman moves!

 TAGGE
 Sexy moves!

 MAPLE
 Two down, two down! Come on fellas.
 Last one.

Laz steps to **HOME PLATE**.

Rabino throws a knuckleball that doesn't do anything and Laz hits a screaming line drive, foul.

Rabino throws the next pitch, a dancing knuckleball, and Laz gets a piece, and hits a bloop single over the divine Peters behind second base.

Perry, the tying run steps up to the plate. Laz leads off **FIRST BASE**.

Rabino, from the stretch tries a pick-off move to first but Laz dives back safely.

At **HOME PLATE** Dasher calls a pitch-out. Rabino delivers a fastball to the plate testing Laz to steal 2nd base. But, he stays put.

Rabino from the stretch throws a flat knuckleball and Laz starts running for 2nd base.

Perry swings and hits it 375 feet over the left field fence, foul.

PERRY

God, he throws so slow.

Dasher walks the ball to the pitcher's mound.

DASHER

(to the baseball)

I need you, we all need you. Stay away from the barrel of his bat.

Dasher hands the ball to Rabino.

DASHER (CONT'D)

You can only get away with that once. Don't aim it, pretend we're in the pen. Let the pitch do the work.

Rabino from the stretch comes set. He checks Laz at 1st base and throws a great dancing knuckleball.

Perry swings, and mishits a cue shot off the end of the bat bouncing towards Peters at **SECOND BASE**.

Everyone holds their breath as Laz on his way to 2nd crosses in front of Peters to complicate his view of the ball.

Peters gets in position to field the ball, but on the last bounce the ground ball kicks to the right field foul line behind the **FIRST BASE AREA**, fooling everyone, except Maple, who read it the whole time and is already running full speed across the diamond to get the ball.

MAPLE

I got it!

WOLVEROINE COACH
 (to Laz)
 Come on, get here! Get here!

Laz touches **SECOND BASE**, and sprints for 3rd base. Perry arrives at first base safely.

Maple quickly grabs the ball on the roll behind the **FIRST BASE AREA**.

SABO
 (from 3rd base)
 Three! Three! Three!

Maple plants his foot and throws a line drive to Sabo at **THIRD BASE**.

Laz running full speed slides as Sabo catches the ball, and applies the tag beating Laz by a full step.

SABO (CONT'D)
 Bye-bye.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE 2
 Out!

Game over. Eagles win.

Wolverine Coach argues and kicks dirt at the Playoff Umpire.

Coach T.J. runs onto the field with his team to celebrate.

The fans rush the field and join the Eagles players chanting.

ALL
 One more game. One more game. One
 more game. One more game.

EXT. CONCESSION STAND - LATER

Maple sits in the **STANDS** by himself looking out at the field. There are a few FANS still lingering.

COACH MAC (40s) approaches Maple in the stands. Maple stands up and shakes his hand.

COLLEGE COACH
 Congratulations. That was a helluva
 game, kid. Really heads up play
 there at the end. Impressive. I'm
 coach Mac, from Deluth University.

Caroline walks over, and observes the conversation.

MAPLE
Where's that?

COACH MAC
We're in Broward, not too far from
here. We're D3, but we could
definitely use somebody like you.
Give me a call when your season
ends.

COACH MAC hands Maple a business card, shakes his hand again,
and exits.

MAPLE
Ok, great. Thanks Coach Mac.

Maple walks down from the stands to meet Caroline.

CAROLINE
What was that about?

MAPLE
I'm not too sure.

CAROLINE
Sure looked like a good talk from
my perspective.

MAPLE
I'm kinda at a loss of words.

CAROLINE
Here.

Caroline tosses Maple a baseball.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I went out and got your home run
ball.

Maple grabs Caroline and gives her a huge bear hug.

MAPLE
Thank you Caroline, thank you for
everything. Will you sign it?

CAROLINE
Me. Really?

MAPLE
Yes.

Karl walks to the concession stand.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

Have you got a pen?

CONCESSION STAND MOM (40s) in Eagles t shirt and cap counts the money.

CONCESSION STAND MOM

Here you go.

Maple hands the ball and pen to Caroline, who signs it.

MAPLE

Did you find any skippers out there tonight?

CAROLINE

Just one, I think I picked them all up.

MAPLE

What else can you even see out there in the dark?

CAROLINE

The cutest tiny baby owls. They're so teeny-tiny, and they go underground.

MAPLE

We got owls? Out there? In the ground?

CAROLINE

Come on I'll show you.

CONCESSION STAND MOM (O.S.)

What? What did you just say?

MAPLE

Huh?

CONCESSION STAND MOM

Did you just say you saw small owls out there?

CAROLINE

Yes. I think so.

CONCESSION STAND MOM

Are they burrowing owls?

MAPLE

What's a burrowing owl?

Concession Stand Mom hands Caroline her cellphone with burrowing owl information.

CONCESSION STAND MOM

Look.

CAROLINE

Yes, that's them! They're an endangered species?

MAPLE

If they're endangered.

CONCESSION STAND MOM

The land is protected.

Concession Stand Mom takes her cellphone back and runs off screaming.

CONCESSION STAND MOM (CONT'D)

We're not going anywhere! We can stay! We're on a national wildlife refuge!

MAPLE

So, how does it feel to save the day?

CAROLINE

Can I kiss you?

They kiss.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

So, I guess it's not the last dance.

MAPLE

Can I take you to the last dance?

CAROLINE

Me? Where's that?

MAPLE

You'll see.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Maple and Caroline exit the truck with Dasher and Danielle. They are dressed in gowns and tuxedos and walk from the parking lot towards the entrance.

MAPLE (V.O.)

The baseball team lost our next game on the road three days later to St. Anthony Aquinas 7-1, ending our season. That team went on to win the state championship. And someone else won spectacularly that summer as well.

EXT. BIG LAKE - DAY

TITLE CARD: 1 Month Later

Caroline is about to skip a stone and she's more focused than we've ever seen her.

Maple stands by as do several SPECTATORS for the Guinness book of world records competition.

Our friends Lacey, Chandi, Dasher, and Danielle all watch in anticipation.

Even Caroline's PARENTS, are in attendance to watch their daughter take a shot at the history books.

MAPLE

(to Caroline)

The first one wasn't bad, for this one, really focus on the follow through.

Caroline, grips the stone, places her back foot in position and skips the 2nd stone.

The MODERATOR makes the official count.

MODERATOR

30, 40, 50...1, 2. Second skip, 52.

Everyone's disappointed. Some Spectators laugh, and leave - giving up on Caroline.

Caroline talks with Maple as she prepares to skip again.

MAPLE

You get one more, and it only takes one. Pretend we're home at the lake and this is your last skipper of the day. And you want to get all the way across the lake so you can pick up up and skip it again. You got this!

Caroline takes a breath, and picks up another stone.

She gets her grip, places her back foot in position, and like a pitcher from the stretch slings the stone across the water as the Moderator counts.

MODERATOR

...30. 40. 50. 60. 70. 80. 81, 82,
83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89. 89! 89
is the official count! And we have
a new world record holder with 89
skips from Boca Raton, FL -
Caroline Jones.

Caroline, Maple, friends and family celebrate.

FADE OUT: