

A BASEBALL STORY

Written by

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EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Home of the EAGLES BASEBALL TEAM. It is nestled behind a vacant meadow, and has a small concession stand/locker room.

The Scoreboard shows, Eagles 2, Panthers 2, bottom of the 7th inning. (\*High School Baseball only plays 7 innings).

In the **ON DECK CIRCLE** is KARL MAPLE (17) - an average looking student/athlete walking to home plate. COACH BUTCH (50s) - an intense ex-minor leaguer, interrupts him.

COACH BUTCH

Maple! You know what to do.

Maple loses his focus and looks in the **STANDS** at the PEOPLE he wants to impress as he walks to **HOME PLATE**.

Eagle BASE RUNNERS on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd take their leads as The PANTHER PITCHER winds up, and delivers the pitch.

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

PANTHER THIRD BASEMAN makes a nice backhand catch and quickly turns a double play to end the inning.

Coach Butch, the Eagles, and Maple are heart broken.

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, 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.

Now, 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, hitting the ball well.

COACH T.J.

Next.

Tevvy exits, and Maple enters the Batting Cage.

In **LEFT FIELD** are 3 returning players:

JASON PERRY, a pro-caliber player wearing his catcher's mit,

TRENT LAZ JR., a top-prospect starting shortstop, and

TOM BASEDOW, a top-prospect starting pitcher.

PERRY

Sad, no one even wants to help him coach this year.

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

PERRY (CONT'D)

(to Maple)

There you go kid!

Perry gives chase on the ball.

COACH T.J.

(from the Pitcher's Mound)

Next. Perry, Laz, Basedow, come take some swings.

Maple steps out and another TRYOUT KID steps in the batting cage, as Perry, Laz, and Basedow jog in. He swings and misses.

BASEDOW

So, we have no pitching coach.

We hear the ball smack the back-stop.

PERRY

And, no hitting coach.

Coach T.J feeds another ball, it smacks the back-stop.

LAZ

Just this jamoke.

The last ball smacks the back stop.

COACH T.J.

Next.

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

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

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)

Next.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - LATER

Maple rides his bicycle on a path around the lake that is surrounded by apartment buildings.

CAROLINE JONES, Maple's new neighbor and classmate skips a stone across the lake like a pitcher from the stretch, and it travels nearly 30 ripples.

MAPLE

That's the greatest skip I've ever seen, Caroline!

CAROLINE

You should have seen the one before that.

Maple removes a collapsable fishing rod from his backpack and casts his line in the lake.

MAPLE

You really never skipped a stone before you moved here?

CAROLINE

Nope. Want to look for more skippers with me? That was my last one.

MAPLE

After a little fishing.

CAROLINE

I saw some fish jumping over there. Where did you just come back from?

MAPLE  
Baseball tryouts.

CAROLINE  
How's the team look?

MAPLE  
Really good. But, I'm not sure our  
new coach is going to be accepted.  
And this isn't the year for a funk  
or a slump.

CAROLINE  
Baseball, boring me already.

MAPLE  
We can talk about something else.

CAROLINE  
I was just kidding, Karl. I've  
never seen you this excited.

MAPLE  
I'm pumped! If I have a big season  
I'll get to the next level. I got  
to. I got to get out of here.

CAROLINE  
Why?

MAPLE  
Do you like this school better than  
the other one you went to?

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.

MAPLE  
Oh.

Maple re-casts his fishing rod, as Caroline skips the stone  
across the lake at least 50 ripples.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
Incredible!

CAROLINE  
I realized when I do it like *that*  
it goes like 20 more times.

LIA (O.S.)  
Karl! Dinner!

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

MAPLE  
Gotta go home. See you in school.

CAROLINE  
No bus?

Maple picks up his bicycle.

MAPLE  
This cowboy's gotta ride.

CAROLINE  
Goodnight.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A standard 2 bedroom apartment on the 1st floor with sliding glass door that faces the lake.

LIA MAPLE-RUSSO-RONSON (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)  
He's hitting me.

LIA  
Blaise, help your brother or I'll  
call your father.

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.

MAPLE

Baseball tryouts were today mom.

LIA

Oh yeah hunny was it fun?

MAPLE

We're going to have a lot of scouts out there this year.

LIA

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

MAPLE

Practice is every week-night, starting tomorrow. And I've switched to weekends at the golf course.

LIA

Why didn't you remind me earlier?

MAPLE

It's on the calendar, mom. I'm not bailing on Saturday. But, it's been the same baseball schedule for 4 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

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

MAPLE

Mom, let's focus on the future. I'm doing this for dad. He taught me the game, and I'm really-really good at. I'm going to college just like he always told me.

LIA

And leave me here alone with your brother and sister?

MAPLE

The only way I'll ever be able to help myself or you is through baseball and an education. The golf course ain't a meal ticket.

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.

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 a stone skippers club. You have to join. You are the one who taught me.

Caroline holds out a pen for Maple to sign up.

MAPLE

Sure.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Practice is running late, and 12 players meander on the **LEFT FIELD** foul line.

RUSS SABO, high school DJ and returning 3rd baseman.

SABO

What kind of coach no shows on the first day of practice?

BASEDOW

Unacceptable. I'm wasting my time. I came to pitch. Dasher, let's go.

FRED DASHER, returning backup catcher, hustler, slacker, and Maple's oldest childhood friend.

DASHER

Yeah, I need a heater.

Dasher takes out a cigarette and Basedow takes out a can of dip (chewing tobacco) as they walk to the **BULLPEN**.

THREE PITCHERS follow Basedow and Dasher.

MAPLE

(from left field)

You want to take b.p. I'll pitch. Infield shags?

BRET PETERSON, infielder, immature, exhausting, and new to the squad.

PETERSON

He wants to shag us. I got center field.

BEN CHAP, first baseman, also new to the squad.

CHAP

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

SABO

Ok, let's do it.

Chap picks up the bucket of balls next to them and walks towards the pitcher's mound.

MAPLE

Who's up?

Tevvy, and TWO returning outfielders RON FIORELLO, and CHRIS TAGGE - race for **HOME PLATE**.

Fiorello outruns them all. Chap dumps the bucket of balls at the pitcher's mound, and the rest of the team scatters in the field to shag balls.

15 feet in front of the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Maple throws from behind the safety screen.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
 (to Fiorello)  
 Give me two to get loose.

Fiorello is in the **BATTING CAGE** ready and waiting. We hear Maple's pitch smack the back-stop again. Tevvy and Tagge lean on the batting cage ready to hit next.

FIORELLO  
 Maple, watch my swing.

MAPLE  
 Here we go.

Maple pitches and Fiorello hits a line drive up the middle.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
 Don't change a thing.

Sabo is standing at the **SECOND BASE AREA** picking up clumps of dirt and playfully throwing them at players in the field.

SABO  
 Dirt bombs!

Coach T.J. arrives and walks past the **DUGOUT** onto the field waving the team in.

PETERSON  
 (from center field)  
 Finally!

COACH T.J.  
 Sorry I'm late guys.

The team starts to gather in the **ON DECK CIRCLE**.

BASEDOW  
 (from the bullpen)  
 What the crap, man!

Basedow takes out the dip in his lip, Dasher puts out his cigarette and all the Pitchers jog back in.

TEVVY

Not a good look, Coach.

COACH T.J.

I've got news. Bring it in, come on, come on, grab a knee.

FIORELLO

Coach, you look pretty crappy.

PETERSON

Is it contagious? Better not be contagious.

COACH T.J.

Did anybody see Laz or Perry today?

ALL

No.

BASEDOW

Spit it out.

COACH T.J.

We lost them.

TEVVY

They're dead?

COACH T.J.

Wolverines.

SABO

They went to the other frigging school!

MAPLE

What?

FIORELLO

Are we on a prank show or something?

TAGGE

I don't get it.

DASHER

They flipped, man. Joined our rivals across town.

SABO

Do you think old Coach, poached?

BASEDOW  
 Whatever. I'm going home.

Basedow exits the field followed by another Pitcher.

COACH T.J.  
 Season just started. Let's go!  
 Let's take the field!

The remaining players are depressed but take the field.

BASEDOW  
 (from afar)  
 Season's over coach!

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

PETERSON  
 Coach, want me at short?

COACH T.J.  
 Maple go to shortstop. Pitchers, go  
 do something in the bullpen while I  
 figure this out.

Dasher heads back out with the two remaining Pitchers.

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

DASHER  
 Duh. Habit.

In the **BULLPEN** are Pitchers,  
 MIKE DEWITT, a huge, returning pitcher and,  
 BRAD RABINO, a small, left handed, returning pitcher.

DEWITT  
 You throw? I threw.

RABINO  
 Me too.

DEWITT  
 What do you want to do?

RABINO  
 Without a catcher. Up to you.

DEWITT  
 Ok. Come on. I'll give you the  
 tour.

DeWitt and Rabino jog on the warning track along the outfield.

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

COACH T.J.

That works...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.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Tevvy, go to 2.

Coach T.J. hits a high pop fly to Tevvy in **CENTER FIELD**.

The pitchers DeWitt and Rabino watch the ball as they jog and DeWitt trips on a sprinkler head in the grass.

He stumbles, and steps on Rabino's heel. Rabino cries out, and DeWitt falls down in a wince, tearing his ACL (knee ligament).

From **HOME PLATE** Coach T.J. takes out his cell phone.

The **WARNING TRACK** in center field is where DeWitt is down. Rabino and Tevvy stand by as Fiorello and Tagge jog over.

Back at **HOME PLATE** Coach dials 911 and puts the cellphone to his ear.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

Who else can pitch?

From the **INFIELD** Maple raises his hand, so does Peterson at 2nd Base, Sabo at 3rd base and Chap at 1st base.

TEVVY

(from centerfield)

Coach, let me pitch!

Back at **HOME PLATE** Coach T.J. puts up 1 finger to talk on the phone.

911 DISPATCHER (O.S.)

911, what's your emergency?

COACH T.J.

(to phone)

Got a baseball player with a broken a,f,kn - leg at Eagles Park. Please send an ambulance.

Coach T.J. ends the call and puts the cell phone back in his pocket.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
 Tevvy, then who's going to play  
 center field?  
 DeWitt. Help's on the way buddy.  
 Who else can catch?

Maple raises his hand, alone.

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

Later in the **BULLPEN** Maple throws a pitch to Dasher and we hear the glove pop.

Coach T.J. watches Maple while the rest of the team does batting practice on the field with the machine in the batting cage.

DASHER  
 (to Coach T.J.)  
 He's got a good fastball, curve and  
 change. I've been catching him  
 since we were kids.

COACH T.J.  
 He hits his spots.  
 (to Maple)  
 How come you never pitched before?

MAPLE  
 Nobody ever asked me.

COACH T.J.  
 Dasher give him the gear and let's  
 have you catch: Rabino, Sabo, Chap  
 and Peterson.

DASHER  
 Gladly. Rabino, show him your  
 stuff.

RABINO  
 Let me just get used to him.

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

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Maple rides his bike home, Caroline does her homework by the lake with a flashlight.

CAROLINE

No fishing?

MAPLE

Need ice. Can't walk, can't talk.

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 two, maybe three - best players left the team today and we're a frigging mess.

CAROLINE

Yikes.

MAPLE

Coach asked me to pitch, and catch and that's why I'm dying here.

CAROLINE

You were worried you wouldn't play enough. This sounds like you'll play every game.

MAPLE

This is way different. This is pitching and catching. Involved and responsible for the whole game. I've never ever 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

Not yet. Could you catch me up please? I'll fall asleep if I open a book tonight.

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

Really. 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. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Maple is eating an apple, sitting with the Baseball Team.

The school bell rings, indicating lunch is over. STUDENTS slowly start moving to their next class.

MAPLE

(to team)

I'll see you guys after school.

Maple exits the doors, throws out his apple core and passes by GRAYSON HENRY, a large social outcast.

EXT. CAFETERIA/COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Maple smiles and waves but is suddenly shoved by Henry.

Maple brushes it off and walks over to his classmates Caroline, LACEY, and CHANDI gathered in front of a classroom.

CHANDI  
Karl, what was that about?

MAPLE  
He must be hangry.

LACEY  
That's the new kid, Henry. I heard  
he's been thrown out of 3 schools.

CHANDI  
Creeper.

MAPLE  
Should I do something?

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASS - LATER

Dasher is doing a presentation of a chemistry experiment and CHEMISTRY TEACHER, young and attractive is mesmerized by one student's interest, and passion.

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

CHEMISTRY TEACHER  
This is brilliant. I'm nominating  
you for the Starfinder Science  
Award.

DASHER  
Oh, thanks teach!

Dasher returns to his seat and high fives Maple.

CHEMISTRY TEACHER  
Lacey, you're next?

Maple gets tapped by a CLASSMATE, and handed a note.

CLASSMATE  
Read it and pass it on.

Maple opens the paper note.

INSERT: "Truck Stop Party after the Basketball game."

Maple enthusiastically taps the woman next to him, ALICIA LYNN, a classmate Maple wants to impress. Alicia was in the stands in the opening scene where Maple blows it.

MAPLE  
Hey Alicia.

ALICIA  
What?

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 only have a few more - you'll  
be done in a five minutes. Just try  
again. 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.

BLAISE  
Can I go out with you? I'm almost  
done.

MAPLE  
Not tonight.

LIA  
Why can't he go?

MAPLE  
We're going to a party after. You  
can't bring a kid to a party.

LIA  
You're a *kid*, don't you forget  
that. Be safe.

BLAKE  
Can I use your fishing rod?

MAPLE  
Anytime.

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

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
Bye.

EXT. GYMNASIUM - PARKING LOT - LATER

Maple, Dasher and his girlfriend DANIELLE, (20) a child beauty  
pageant queen and hairdresser 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, so should be a good  
party tonight.

DASHER  
Hell yeah! I thought about going  
before the game, but then they  
wouldn't be cold, and that's just  
not good business.

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.

DASHER  
What's up, baby?

VINNY  
My guys, how are my two favorite  
guys?

MAPLE  
Good. How are you?

VINNY  
I could complain, but it could be  
worse.

Dasher looks at his list and starts to pick out items from the refrigerators, handing them to Maple until he's full.

And then loading up Danielle to the brim as well.

Dasher carries nothing but the list. They walk to the cash register.

DASHER  
Here's what I need, Vin.

Dasher hands his list to Vinny, who starts pulling out half-a-dozen packs of multiple brands of cigarettes and bagging them. Dasher takes out his cash.

VINNY  
Any glass pipe?

DASHER  
Yeah, sure. And, don't forget.

Dasher points to the bottom of the list.

VINNY  
Two pornography DVD's on blu-ray.

Vinny starts to calculate the purchase and holds up the number 5 with his hand.

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

DASHER

I love you brother.

Vinny bows graciously, Dasher takes the bag from Vinny and opens the doors for Danielle and Maple who are starting to sweat and shake from the weight.

MAPLE

Later Vin.

VINNY

Have a great baseball season boys!  
Come back soon.

EXT. TRUCK STOP PARTY - MOMENTS LATER

On a large concrete slab several students cars are parked like it's a car show and a tail gate.

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.

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

Maple, Caroline, Chandi, and Lacey stand around Lacey's car. Dasher, and Danielle are kissing against his truck.

CHANDI

I'm so happy the dilemma is over.  
It was so stressful deciding.

LACEY

Tell me about it. I'm still torn  
between two colleges...Caroline,  
what are your plans?

CAROLINE

Waiting to hear back from my  
applications.

CHANDI

Maple, where are you going to  
school next year?

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.

Enter Fiorello, Sabo, Tevvy and GIRLFRIEND (17), walking by.

SABO

Hey ladies and gentlemen.

LACEY

Hey Sabo.

FIORELLO

There's a keg over there, come have a drink with us.

MAPLE

Alright Fi, we'll come over in a little.

DASHER

Tevvy! Your girl's hot, bro!

TEVVY

You're crazy man.

SABO

We'll see you, we're taking a lap.

Fiorello, Sabo, Tevvy and his Girlfriend continue walking.

LACEY

So, Maple, how do you feel about baseball season now that your two best players left? No offense.

MAPLE

We're not in good shape.

DASHER

Struggling big time.

CAROLINE

But, Karl's been promoted to pitcher, and catcher.

LACEY

Pitcher and catcher, really?

DASHER

And, starting shortstop.

Dasher clinks Maple's cup.

MAPLE

May all the pain be worth the  
pleasure.

Maple puts up his drink again to toast.

CHANDI

Let's put on some music.

Lacey enters her vehicle and turns on the car's stereo.  
MUSIC PLAYS and a high school DUDE, 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, get open.

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, Maple catches it and throws it back to the Dude stiff as the "Tin Man".

MAPLE (CONT'D)

My arm feels like it might fall  
off.

DUDE

Dasher, wanna have a catch?

DASHER

Gotta piss quick. Be right back.

Dasher goes to pee, Danielle joins the party. Caroline walks over to Maple as the Dude throws the football back to him.

CAROLINE

Can I try?

Maple hands Caroline the football.

MAPLE

Nah, do it your way.

Caroline reconfigures, and throws the football like she were skipping a stone. It skips off the ground 10 feet in front of her. The Dude and PARTYGOERS laughs.

DUDE

For the sake of the ball. For the love of the game.

MAPLE

Wait a second. One more time.

Dude wipes off any scuff marks, and Maple calls for the football again. Dude reluctantly throws it back to Maple who hands it Caroline.

DUDE

Dude, not if she's gonna grate it on the pavement.

MAPLE

(to Caroline)

Just sling it.

Caroline like a pitcher from the stretch slings the football to Dude with zip and everybody's head whips.

DUDE

Gnarly!

CAROLINE

Cool.

Caroline walks back to the car where Lacey, Chandi, and Danielle are speechless.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

What?

The Dude throws the football back to Maple.

Just as Maple catches the ball he is blindsided tackled by Henry, the new guy who shoved him after lunch.

Maple goes to the ground, but he holds onto the ball, and gets back up.

Henry comes at him again and Maple throws the football right into Henry's nuts, stopping him in his tracks.

Maple is about to go in for the kill, but he stops, and walks away leaving the party.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Dasher rolls up in his truck with Danielle and Caroline as Maple is walking home.

DASHER  
I can't believe I missed it!

MAPLE  
Why does that have to even happen?  
Over what? I don't even know this  
dude. How could we have beef?

DASHER  
Messed up people, mess people up.  
And sometimes they get messed up.

MAPLE  
Very poetic.

Maple stops walking, Dasher stops the truck in the street.

DASHER  
Hop in.

Maple gets in the truck.

DANIELLE  
Everyone was talking about you.

CAROLINE  
Are you ok?

MAPLE  
I just want to go home.

DASHER  
Next stop.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The Eagles are stretching on the **LEFT FIELD** foul line.

SABO  
What is with this frigging guy and  
showing up on time?

Coach T.J. arrives late again, but with **THREE NEW PLAYERS**  
from Junior Varsity.

PETERSON  
It just keeps getting worse.

BASEDOW

Says the guy who can't throw to first.

PETERSON

I threw your mom to first.

BASEDOW

That doesn't even make sense.

COACH T.J.

Peterson take a lap. No moms. Now, let's take the field.

Peterson runs a lap.

SABO

Bring it in. Bring it in. New guys bring it in. Welcome to the club. Only three things we need from you out here - play hard, pray hard, stay hard. Team on three.

ALL

1,2,3, team.

Not much enthusiasm as the team takes the field.

COACH T.J.

Welcome back, Basedow.  
Where's that other pitcher?

BASEDOW

You won't be seeing him for 1-7 depending on the Judge.

Basedow heads out to the bullpen, and Coach T.J. takes the final blow to the squad.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - PRE-SEASON STRUGGLES

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

-- Maple training as a **pitcher**. DeWitt, back on crutches helping him.

-- Maple **hitting** batting practice from DeWitt sitting on a bucket flipping him soft toss.

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

COACH T.J.  
Tagge go to 2!

TAGGE  
Time out, Coach. I gotta go number  
2.

Tagge drops his glove and runs off to find a bathroom and the ball bounces to the wall.

-- Peterson fields the routine ground ball at **SECOND BASE, and SHORTSTOP**, he just can't throw to 1st base. He throws one over the fence and hits a PEDESTRIAN.

-- Pitchers Infield Practice at the **FIRST BASE AREA**. Basedow throws a temper tantrum. Three Infielders can't seem to figure out how to flip him the ball at First Base.

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

TEVVY  
(from center field)  
I go.

TAGGE  
(from right field)  
I got it.

PETERSON  
(from second base)  
I got it.

TEVVY  
I got it, I got it.

TAGGE  
Me, me, me.

PETERSON  
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 Peterson 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 Peterson yells.

PETERSON  
Got room!  
TAGGE  
Fence! Fence! TEVVY

Fiorello runs into the **Left Field Fence** and falls down.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BEARS BASEBALL FIELD - 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.

INSERT: Lineup

#11 Fiorello - LF (7)

#7 Peterson - 2B (4)

#3 Tevvy - CF (8)

**#8 Maple - SS (6)**

#4 Sabo - 3B (5)

#5 Chap - 1B (3)

#10 Basedow - P (1)

#6 Tagge - RF (9)

#9 Dasher - C (2)

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

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

FIORELLO  
Lead off.

PETERSON  
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.

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

At **HOME PLATE** Fiorello pops up, and Peterson strikes out to start the game.

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

Maple is next, and he hits another solo home run. And then it all falls apart.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- Basedow's **Pitching** over 90 MPH striking out BEARS BATTERS.

-- Dasher can't handle Basedow's velocity as **Catcher**, and a lot of strike outs turn into base runners, and eventually runs.

-- Dasher also doesn't block wild pitches so a lot of past balls turn into baserunners, and turn into more runs.

BASEDOW

(from the mound)  
Let's go man.

DASHER

(from home plate)  
Don't start.

BASEDOW

You're useless back there.

DASHER

You're no picnic either.

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

Maple at **SHORTSTOP** and Peterson run after the ball having their own power struggle at middle infield.

-- Maple makes all the plays at Shortstop.

-- Peterson can't make the routine throw from **SECOND BASE**, but makes a diving play.

-- Sabo gets a ground ball at **THIRD BASE** and the bases are loaded. He throws it and hits the BEARS BASE RUNNER running from Second Base right in the chest.

END MONTAGE

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

BASEDOW

We need another catcher. Dasher is going to kill us.

Coach T.J. looks at Maple.

Scoreboard reads, 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 bottom of the brim, "Hits," on one side, "Wins," on the other.

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

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

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

In the home **DUGOUT** the Eagles are huddled around the lineup. Maple gets a helmet and a bat, still hitting cleanup.

Fiorello finds his name moved down on the lineup.

FIORELLO

Coach, 7th?

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

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

-- A FALCON BASERUNNER on 1st base. Maple throws two bad pitches. The crowd starts to turn on him.

COACH T.J.

(from the dugout)

That's six in a row. Don't make me pull you, Maple.

Maple finally throws a strike.

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

Maple winds and 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 the new guy RUSSELL turns a nice double play and throws it to Chap at **FIRST BASE**.

-- 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 about himself.

-- 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.

Maple blew it with one pitch.

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 - 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 to explore.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

At **HOME PLATE** Fiorello is at bat.

FALCON PITCHER delivers, and Fiorello hits one deep.

EXT. LOT BEHIND BASEBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

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

INSERT: ball crashes down, a small owl burrows underground.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Maple is at 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 and walks to the next hole.

Maple puts the club in the bag, and 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 Leadoff is Tagge and Fiorello. The LIONS BASEBALL TEAM is on the field.

FIORELLO  
Two spot, that feels just right.

TAGGE  
Not as good as not hitting 8th.

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

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

- Maple's first game at **catcher**.
- Maple blocking pitches.
- Maple throwing out a runner.
- Maple fielding bunts, surprising Basedow.

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

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

-- Peterson makes another diving play at **SHORTSTOP**, but still can't make the routine throw. 4 throwing errors.

-- Eagles offense can't score any runs.

-- Sabo strikes out.

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

COACH T.J.

(to Sabo)

You're doing this. Try that, Sabo.  
Try that. 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.

On the crack of the bat, Basedow puts his head down as Fiorello gives chase towards the **LEFT FIELD** fence.

PETERSON

(from Shortstop)

You got room!

TEVVY

(from Center field)

Fence! It's gone, gone. Gone.

Fiorello stops running as he reaches the fence to slow himself down. He hits the fence with his glove.

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

PETERSON  
 (from shortstop)  
 Just habit.

FIORELLO  
 You need me to break that habit?

Peterson puts his head down and walks back to his position.  
 From the **THIRD BASE AREA**, Sabo throws a clump of dirt at  
 Peterson, scolding him.

SABO  
 Dirt bombs!

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

Tevvy asks Caroline.

TEVVY  
 Little help please miss.

Caroline slings it back over, and Tevvy only has to take a  
 few steps to catch it.

TEVVY (CONT'D)  
 Thanks.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- Sabo continues to strike out, Coach keeps altering his  
 swing.

-- The new guy Russell, hits a single.

-- Peterson's 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)  
 Freeze!

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

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

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

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.

CAROLINE  
 Good luck tonight Maple.

EXT. TIGERS BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

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

Maple's at **SHORTSTOP**, and the TIGERS BASEBALL TEAM is in the dugout.

On the **PITCHER'S MOUND** is the small left hander, Rabino.

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

COACH T.J.  
(in the dugout )  
Has he always had this problem?

BASEDOW  
(in the dugout)  
It's gotten significantly worse.

COACH T.J.  
Worst case I've ever seen.  
(to Umpire) )  
Time Blue.

*\*Note: Umpire's are nicknamed "Blue" in baseball.*

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

Warming in the **BULLPEN** is the new guy MARTINEZ.

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

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - EAGLE PITCHERS 4th INNING

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

-- Coach T.J. puts Sabo into pitch, he gives up two runs, pulled.

BASEDOW  
(in the dugout)  
What happened to the 10 run rule?

COACH T.J.  
(in the dugout)  
It's only the 4th inning.

-- Coach T.J. puts Chap into pitch, he gives up three runs, pulled.

-- Coach T.J. puts Peterson into pitch, he gives up two runs.

On Peterson's next pitch, TIGER BATTER hits a ground ball to Maple. He makes the throw to 1st for the final out of the 4th inning.

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

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
Maple, you're pitching. We got  
nobody else.

The Scoreboard reads, Tigers 18 - 2 Eagles.

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

10 run rule after 5 innings goes into affect. Game over.

END MONTAGE

INT. EAGLES SCHOOL BUS - LATER

On the quiet 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, Maple get's a 75 - C.

CAROLINE  
Must have been a long night getting  
your butts kicked again.

MAPLE  
We stink.

EXT. WOLVERINES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

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

The WOLVERINE BASEBALL TEAM is on the field.

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

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

In the **BULLPEN** are SEVEN BASEBALL SCOUTS with radar guns watching Basedow warm up with Dasher.

Back in the Eagles **DUGOUT** Sabo taunts the traitors, Laz & Perry.

SABO  
Hope the grass is greener!

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

LAZ  
(to Sabo)  
Luscious. Who do you think those  
scouts are here for, you?

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

LAZ (CONT'D)  
Dirt bombs! Hey, don't strike out  
Sabo.

SABO  
Screw you, Laz! You don't get to do  
dirt bombs anymore! I invented  
that.

COACH T.J.  
(to team)  
Ok, bring it in. I know you're mad.  
I know you're mad. They hurt us by  
up and leaving this team like they  
did. So, get out there and give  
them hell!

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - PITCHERS DUAL

-- Basedow and WOLVERINE PITCHER have shutout both teams with 20 strike outs collectively.

-- Both pitching over 90 MPH and the Scouts are in the **STANDS** with radar guns, and stop watches.

-- Scoreboard reads, 0 - 0, top of the 7th inning.

-- At **HOME PLATE**, Fiorello gets on base with a walk.

This brings up Tevvy to hit. Maple is next, on deck.

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

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

Coach T.J. is waving Fiorello past **THIRD BASE** and home all the way.

The WOLVERINE CENTER FIELDER picks it up 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 the lead 1 - 0.

END MONTAGE

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

Laz walks up to home plate.

Rabino and Martinez are warming up in the **BULLPEN**.

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 - strike 2. Seems Laz was taking all the way.

On the 0 - 2 pitch, Basedow throws a curve ball Laz defensively swings at.

He hits a routine ground ball to Peterson at **SHORTSTOP**. Peterson makes a fielding error.

BASEDOW  
(from the pitcher's mound)  
Hold it! Time.

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

Maple, Basedow, and Sabo meet at the **PITCHER'S MOUND**.

BASEDOW (CONT'D)  
Now, he can't field either.

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

SABO  
Hexed by the yips.

MAPLE  
Yip. Yip.

Coach T.J. arrives and Basedow hands him the baseball and leaves the field.

COACH T.J.  
Sorry Basedow. 100 pitches just comes too quick.

Coach T.J. calls out.

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

Dasher and Rabino come into the game and Maple takes off the catcher's gear.

PETERSON  
Coach, you want me at second?

New guy Russell stands in limbo at **SECOND BASE**.

COACH T.J.  
Peterson, you're out.

PETERSON  
But Coach?

COACH T.J.  
Pipe down Peterson.

Peterson runs off the field as the defense get's situated.

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** left handed Rabino faces the dangerous 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. Peterson is pouting, and Coach T.J. is nervous.

BASEDOW  
How fast you wanna bet he blows it?

COACH T.J.  
You ever think that attitude is why they-

Coach T.J. points to Perry at home plate.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
-left without you?

At **HOME PLATE** Perry waits to hit. Rabino shakes off the sign from Dasher.

DASHER  
 (to Rabino)  
 It's good to go, bro, and you don't  
 even know.

Instead, Rabino throws a bad curve ball, that Dasher has to block allowing Laz to steal **SECOND BASE** where he meets Maple.

LAZ  
 Where don't you play, Maple?

Rabino is terrified facing Perry, and shakes off Dasher again. He throws another curveball right down the middle.

Perry hits it 400 feet to **LEFT FIELD** for a walk off home run.

Basedow walks out of the **DUGOUT**.

Coach T.J.'s face is in the fence.

COACH T.J.  
 One pitch!

Scoreboard reads, Wolverines 3 - 2 Eagles.

In the **STANDS** The SEVEN SCOUTS have split up to talk to Basedow, Tevvy, Laz, Perry, & the Wolverine Pitcher.

Maple packs up and gets on the school bus.

INT. EAGLES SCHOOL BUS - MOMENTS LATER

The Eagles have a very quiet bus ride home, Maple tries to study. But he doesn't have enough light and he squints.

And, the bus is too bouncy to focus on the pages in the dark. Maple slams the book shut and looks out the window in frustration.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE -- EAGLES LOSE ANOTHER FOUR GAMES IN A ROW

-- Game 6: Maple **pitches** well at EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD. Coach starts tweaking the offense and defense trying to find the fit.

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

-- Basedow strikes out 15. But errors cost the Eagles the game.

-- The new guy Russell, moves over to **Shortstop**.

-- Tagge switches with Peterson at **Second Base**. Tagge isn't a great infielder, but he can make a routine play.

-- Peterson is bored in the **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.

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

-- 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.

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

CAROLINE  
What?

MAPLE  
I'm freaking out. I'm about to make up being sick. Or should I say I'm hurt.

Caroline hands Maple her index card study sheet.

CAROLINE  
Read this.

MS. FOWLER

No passing notes in my class.

Caroline puts her head down and Maple hides the index card. When Ms. Fowler turns her back, Maple slides the index card under the test.

Caroline shakes her head at him, no.

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

(Game 10) Scoreboard reads, Eagles 1 - 2 Panthers, top of the 3rd inning.

Maple is at **SHORTSTOP** and the left handed Rabino is on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** with bases 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.

COACH T.J.

Peterson, 2nd base.

(to Umpire)

Time Blue.

Peterson jolts off the bench and runs into the game.

Russell moves from **SECOND BASE** to **SHORTSTOP**.

Maple warms up on the **PITCHER'S MOUND**, Dasher at catcher.

Now, with the bases loaded, runners on 1st, 2nd and 3rd, Maple winds up and throws his first pitch.

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

Peterson 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.

The diving Peterson gets a glove on the ball and flips it to Maple at 1st base.

UMPIRE

Out!

One run scores.

COACH T.J.  
 (from the dugout)  
 That's the way, you got the out.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 2 - 2 Panthers.

Runners on 2nd and 3rd. Two outs.

Back on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Maple winds and delivers, PANTHER BATTER 2 hits a pop up to Tevvy to end the inning.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - SAME GAME

-- Maple continues pitching and shuts down the Panther Batters in the 4th and 5th innings with, 3 strike outs.

-- Scoreboard reads, Eagles 3 - 2 Panthers, top of the 7th.

END MONTAGE

Maple is still on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** and he already has two outs.

On the next pitch, PANTHER BATTER 3 hits a solo home run, and now the score is tied, 3 - 3.

Caroline gets up from the **STANDS** to retrieve the ball.

Umpire throws Maple a new ball.

Maple throws two more pitches, and gives up, two more hits.

Caroline has returned with the baseball and is back in the **STANDS** cheering.

CAROLINE  
 Come on Karl!

DASHER  
 (to Umpire)  
 Time Blue.

Dasher heads to the mound.

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

COACH T.J.  
 (to Dasher)  
 Yes. No. Yes. Me. No. 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  
 Don't throw, pitch.

MAPLE  
 I thought that was what I was -

DASHER  
 Shh - stop thinking.

Dasher runs back to home plate.

Maple throws 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.

Now, at **HOME PLATE**, Tevvy leads off and hits a single.

Maple steps up to bat next.

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 hole just created allowing Tevvy to run all the way to **THIRD BASE**.

COACH T.J.  
(to Tevvy)  
Get here, get here, get here!

Tevvy safe at 3rd base, Maple safe at 1st base.

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

UMPIRE  
Infield fly rule. Batter's out.

Basedow returns to the dugout disappointed.

BASEDOW  
(to Sabo)  
Pick me up.

Sabo steps up to home plate with 1 out.

Sabo swings and misses at strike 1, and 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.

The PANTHER CATCHER receives the throw and quickly applies the tag, but Tevvy slides and touches home first.

The Eagles finally win.

INT. LOCKER ROOM/CONCESSION - LATER

The team is celebrating and we see a little more into the lives and personalities of the players by how their lockers are decorated.

Drawings, superstitions, quotes, and all the memorabilia the past high school players left behind.

INSERT: Maple writing on his Baseball Cap: "HITS" - fourteen tally marks, "WINS" - 1 tally 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, through the sliding glass door.

BLAISE

I'll be right back to help you, Blaise.

Maple exits through the sliding glass door.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - CONTINUOUS

Caroline is looking at the lake as Maple approaches.

MAPLE

That last one went clear across the lake Caroline!

CAROLINE

No way.

MAPLE

I'm telling you. You're not wearing your glasses. I saw it.

Maple pulls out a phone and looks up the record.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

The world record is 80, what do you think that was?

CAROLINE

Fun. Goodnight Karl.

Caroline says playfully and heads in.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Maple is at his locker and Alicia Lynn, from Chemistry class approaches him.

ALICIA  
Hey you.

MAPLE  
Hey, Alicia.

ALICIA  
You going to the party tonight?

MAPLE  
Which one?

ALICIA  
Listen to you Mr. Popular. Give me  
your phone.

Maple hands Alicia his phone, she enters her number.

ALICIA (CONT'D)  
Text me.

MAPLE  
Ok.

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.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

BLAISE  
Can I play baseball at the park  
with Karl mom?

LIA  
Sure hunny.

MAPLE  
Mom.

LIA

What?

MAPLE

I'm sorry bud, but I can't play with you when we have a game.

BLAISE

You never let me play with you 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 in 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 team starts making fun of Caroline as she's **BEHIND THE FENCE**.

PETERSON

That weirdo's been out there all game again.

SABO

The new girl? She drives me crazy. What's she doing?

PETERSON

Kicking rocks or something. Everything about her just bothers me.

SABO

Me too.

MAPLE

This you two agree on?

TAGGE

She cute, and throws home run balls back. But, who walks around by themself in the dark?

Maple picks up a bat.

SABO  
Where's she even from?

BASEDOW  
Ask Maple, she's his girlfriend.

SABO  
You got a girlfriend?

MAPLE  
No.

BASEDOW  
You live next to her.

MAPLE  
That would make her my neighbor.

DASHER  
She moved into my old apartment.

BASEDOW  
But, you're always with her.

SABO  
(Sing-songy)  
You got a girlfriend.  
You got a girlfriend.

COACH T.J.  
(to team)  
Hey!

We hear the crack of the bat, and Fiorello gets a hit.

Coach T.J. and the team clap until the play ends.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
Everyone, two laps after the game.  
I don't want to hear about  
girlfriends either.

At **HOME PLATE** Tevvy draws a walk on four pitches.

Maple steps to home plate and hits a double - scoring  
Fiorello and Tevvy.

Then, from the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Maple throws his 100th pitch  
and Coach T.J. comes out to change pitchers.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
 (to Umpire) )  
 Time Blue. Double switch...  
 Peterson.

On the **INFIELD**, Peterson puts his head down and runs into the dugout.

Rabino enters as pitcher, Dasher as Catcher.

Russell the new guy moves over to 2nd base, and Maple goes back to **SHORTSTOP**.

MAPLE  
 You got 1 on, 1 out.

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 LION BASERUNNER scores from 1st base.

Scoreboard reads, Eagles 5 - 3 Lions.

Again, Rabino shakes off Dasher's sign.

LION BATTER 2 hits a single, another run scores.

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.

And, Rabino shakes off Dasher for the third time.

DASHER  
 (to Umpire)  
 Time Blue.

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  
Give it to me right now! I want it.  
I need it. Now let me have it!  
Unleash it!

RABINO  
You're a freak.

DASHER  
Throw it right freaking now!

UMPIRE  
Let's go gentlemen.

DASHER  
Do it.

Dasher runs back to home plate.

Rabino looks in for the sign, 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 the heck was that?

UMPIRE  
(from home plate)  
Strike one.

ALL  
Yeah!

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

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

UMPIRE  
Strike 3.

Lion Batter 3 slams the bat on the ground.

RUSSELL  
That's two. Let's go!

Rabino delivers and LION BATTER 4 hits the knuckleball on the ground to Sabo at **THIRD BASE**.

Sabo throws it to Russel at **SECOND BASE**, getting the force out to win the game.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

The Baseball Team is having lunch together.

Maple gets up to throw away his trash and Alicia Lynn enters the cafeteria.

ALICIA  
(To Maple)  
Wanna pick me up tonight and go to a party.

MAPLE  
Cool.

ALICIA  
7?

MAPLE  
Practice ends at 6, so I can bike over at 7.

ALICIA  
I guess I'll pick you up then. Text me your address.

Caroline, Lacey, and Chandi throw out their trash and pass Maple talking with Alicia.

Alicia kisses Maple on the cheek making sure the 3 girls can see.

Maple doesn't even notice Caroline, Lacey, or Chandi.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - LATER

Maple is in class with Caroline doing a lesson. Ms. Fowler walks by Maple and sees something on his face.

MS. FOWLER  
Karl Maple. This isn't fleet week, please wipe the lipstick off your cheek.

Maple proudly but shyly removes it.

INT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The Eagles have packed up after practice and only Sabo, Basedow, and Peterson are in the locker room with Maple.

SABO

Can't believe you signed, Basedow.

Basedow shows off his new College Baseball Cap.

BASEDOW

Yup! Bye-bye small town.

MAPLE

Congrats man! Wanna celebrate?

BASEDOW

Can't, got dinner with the fam. See you guys tomorrow.

Basedow exits the locker room.

SABO

What are you and your girlfriend doing tonight, Maple?

MAPLE

Actually-

PETERSON

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

MAPLE

Ali-

SABO

I bet they're going on a nature walk.

They start laughing and Maple walks out.

INT. ALICIA'S FATHER'S CAR - NIGHT

Maple rides shotgun, Alicia's friend BROOKE, another student is in the back seat.

ALICIA

We're gonna drop off Brooke at her boyfriend's then go to the party - but like, let's do something.

BROOKE

Yes!

ALICIA

Maple, what kind of crazy stuff are you into?

MAPLE

Um, I like dancing.

Both girls laugh.

BROOKE

He's so cute.

ALICIA

So, cute.

Alicia leans over at the stop light and sticks her tongue in Maple's ear.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

I could just eat your face. Have you seen his baseball booty?

BROOKE

Yes, like every game. I wanna get drunk. Let's try to buy booze.

MAPLE

If you want booze, call Dasher.

ALICIA

I'm never calling Dasher.

BROOKE

Maple, can you get us drinks?

MAPLE

Yeah, sure.

ALICIA

I knew you were cool. Where to?

MAPLE

20th, and 4th.

INT. KWIK STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Maple is at the register with two cases of alcohol as Vinny looks out the window to the women in the car.

VINNY  
That's a very nice car out there.

MAPLE  
Girl's dad's.

VINNY  
You should charge them more.

MAPLE  
It's not like that.

VINNY  
Of course it's not. I won't say anything to your partner.

MAPLE  
There's nothing to say.

VINNY  
Nothing at all.

MAPLE  
Ok, but you're indicating that we're in cahoots here, and we're not.

VINNY  
Never saw you, Maple. Keep hitting that ball buddy!

Vinny winks. Maple picks up two cases of alcohol and exits.

INT. ALICIA'S FATHER'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

They arrive at a house and Brooke exits the vehicle carrying a case of alcohol.

Alicia picks up her cellphone and starts texting.

BROOKE  
Thanks Karl Maple.  
(to Alicia)  
I'll call you later, girl. Bye.

ALICIA  
Bye!  
(to Maple)  
(MORE)

ALICIA (CONT'D)

Hey, so my dad is being a dick, and grounding me for coming home late. So, I can't go to the party.

MAPLE

Ok.

ALICIA

So, is it cool if I like drop you off?

MAPLE

As opposed to leaving me here, very cool, super cool, you'd be the coolest.

ALICIA

Don't be extra.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

The Baseball Team is sitting together again.

PETERSON

(to Tevvy)

You ain't got no girlfriend. I've never seen her.

TEVVY

She goes to another school, fool.

Enter FEMALE STUDENT, and her BOYFRIEND. Female Student runs past Boyfriend and hits Peterson in the head.

FEMALE STUDENT

(to Peterson)

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

Peterson 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 behind my back ever again!

Female student hits Peterson again and then her Boyfriend escorts her away.

DEAN O'DONNELL, in a shirt and tie pokes his head around the corner, just missing the altercation.

SABO  
 (to Peterson)  
 You just got beat up by a girl!

PETERSON  
 I gotta go to the bathroom.

Peterson exits the cafeteria as Lacey and Caroline throw their trash away having witnessed the incident.

FIORELLO  
 (to the team)  
 She said "if I catch you talking--"

Fiorello reenacts the scene, hitting Sabo.

TEVVY  
 Only Peterson.

MAPLE  
 Yips and flapping lips, not a good look.

FIORELLO  
 Neither is getting beat up by a girl. "You'll regret the day you were born!"

Fiorello keeps hitting Tevvy and they laugh, Maple gets up.

MAPLE  
 See you at the field.

Maple catches up to Lacey, Caroline and Chandi after they've exited the cafeteria.

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

TEVVY  
 Any of you getting any?

SABO  
 What happened?

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They walk down the hall towards their next class.

LACEY

I forgot my lucky pencil in my locker, I'll see you in class.

Maple and Caroline keep walking in silence.

CAROLINE

What?

MAPLE

Nothing.

CAROLINE

Something. You're being weird.

MAPLE

Well, weird you should say weird...the truth is the team thinks it's weird you walk behind the field.

And, it's becoming this big thing and they're ragging on me about you.

CAROLINE

What are you saying Karl?

MAPLE

They don't want you back there anymore.

CAROLINE

I don't care what they want.

MAPLE

But, if you're back there it's going to become a new focal point for them, and they're going to constantly make fun of me cause you and I are friends.

CAROLINE

Apparently not. My friend would have stuck up for me.

The school bell rings.

MAPLE

I just don't want to lose my focus.

CAROLINE

You're a bunch of babies.

MAPLE

Then don't come at all.

CAROLINE

Fine.

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

EXT. GOLF COURSE - CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Maple is cleaning up a golf cart and Clubhouse MANAGER, 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 career. So, get serious or I'll find someone who will.

MUSIC MONTAGE - Victory Bus Karaoke over Highlights

-- The team collectively singing \_\_\_\_\_ on the school bus ride home after a few more wins.

-- Maple's pitching, catching and hitting is great.

-- 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.

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.  
Ok.

PRINCIPAL PARISH, in a suit calls out from the fence.

PRINCIPAL PARISH  
Coach, I need to speak to you for a moment.

COACH T.J.  
(to Dasher)  
I'll be right there.

Coach T.J. Turns back and approaches Principal Parish.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
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 practice  
come playoffs.

Coach T.J. reads the paper.

COACH T.J.

What?

INSERT: EAGLES FIELD DEMOLITION BEGINS JUNE 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," seventeen 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.

(MORE)

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)

We finally got this train on the tracks, but I just spent the last 20 minutes thinking -- and I don't know a better time or way to tell you this.

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

SABO

What's up coach?

BASEDOW

That's a shame. Good thing I'm graduating and pitching in Texas next year.

Basedow passes the note and exits the locker room.

TEVVY

Where'd you get this?

MAPLE

What's it say?

SABO

How can they do this?

Peterson grabs it from Sabo.

PETERSON

Well isn't that the cherry on top of this poop sundae.

COACH T.J.

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

MAPLE

This park has been here forever.

DASHER

That's why.

MAPLE

There's nothing wrong with this field.

FIORELLO

This is awful.

TAGGE

Worst season ever.

MAPLE  
 ...And we're the last team.

TEVVY  
 The last dance.

MAPLE  
 Yeah. The last frigging dance.

ALL  
 Yeah!

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

ALL  
 Last dance!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - BIKE RACK - MORNING

Maple puts his bicycle in the rack, locks it up and heads to class.

Henry enters the bike rack on foot, pulls out a knife and stabs Maple's tires to death.

EXT. HALLYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

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

Henry walks up and suddenly flips over the desk Maple is seated in.

Maple defensively hurls the desk at Henry who uses his arm to deflect the projectile as Maple gets back up.

Dean Odonnell enters the hallway as the desk crashes down.

DEAN ODONNELL  
 Both of you go to the Principal for fighting!

MAPLE  
 I was attacked!

DEAN ODONNELL  
 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.

PRINCIPAL PARISH  
What's your problem with him?

Henry just sits there and doesn't say a thing.

MAPLE  
...How can you suspend me for that?  
This guy's been attacking me since  
the day he showed up.

PRINCIPAL PARISH  
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 a desk. I had  
to pick it up and throw it just to  
get it off of me.

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

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.

MAPLE  
(mocking) )  
"Use your words not your fists,"  
right?

PRINCIPAL PARISH  
Go home, cool off, both of you.

EXT. BIKE RACK - MOMENTS LATER

Maple arrives to find his bike with flat tires. Maple kicks the rack.

MAPLE  
Come on!

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - LATER

Maple is sitting alone in the **DUGOUT** with his bike when Sabo arrives.

SABO  
Damn, how'd you beat me here?

MAPLE  
Got suspended for fighting, been here all day.

Peterson enters the dugout.

SABO  
With who?

MAPLE  
Some frigging new guy.

SABO  
I didn't hear about a fight.

MAPLE  
Because there was no fight, and the Principal didn't want to hear any of it.

Basedow enters the dugout.

SABO  
Maple got suspended today, man.

BASEDOW  
How many games?

MAPLE

Two.

Basedow just shakes his head in disapproval.

SABO

You're gone until playoffs.

Coach T.J. enters the dugout.

COACH T.J.

Now what?

PETERSON

(pointing at Maple)  
Suspended for two games.

Dasher enters the dugout.

MAPLE

Plus the psycho sliced my tires.

DASHER

I'll give you a ride home.

INT. DASHER'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Dasher drops off Maple in the parking lot facing his apartment.

MAPLE

Thanks man, see you in a couple days.

DASHER

Sorry this shit happened to you.

MAPLE

Crazy world. Hey, hit a bomb for me.

DASHER

Will do brother!

EXT. LIA'S APARTMENT - FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Maple takes his bike out of the truck bed in the parking lot as Lia comes out of the apartment hot.

Maple wheels the bike in as Dasher pulls out.

LIA  
You got suspended from school!

Brother Blaise enters.

BLAISE  
What'd you do?

LIA  
I'll ask the questions thank you  
very much. Karl?

MAPLE  
Can we go inside please. It was out  
of my control, mom.

LIA  
What the hell does that mean?

MAPLE  
I'll tell you inside.

LIA  
Tell me now.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Lia and Blaise question Maple.

MAPLE  
The Dean threw me in 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, this guy came out of no-  
where. 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 is ready to explode with sadness and rage.

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

Maple lies awake in bed staring at the ceiling. Next to him is Blaise asleep in the other bed.

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

MAPLE

(whispering) )

I gave it everything dad. I didn't leave an ounce in the tank. I hope I didn't let you down.

INT. MAPLE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Maple is asleep, and Blaise is asleep.

Lia slams the front door on her way to work.

The baby starts crying, and Maple wakes up Blaise.

MAPLE

Get ready, 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 with baby in the stroller, picking up stones for skipping.

-- Maple does all his school work.

-- Maple reads while baby Helen plays with toys.

END MONTAGE

Maple doesn't understand his assignment and rips it to shreds.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

I need help! Mom! Dad! God!  
Somebody help me!

(to Helen) )

What? I don't get it. It's too hard. I'm not good enough. I'm such an idiot - now I can't even ask Caroline.

What kind of a moron does that?  
I'll tell you. This one. This one right here. The moron with two flat tires.

And that's perfect, because that's exactly where I'm going. Nowhere.

The phone rings. Maple answers.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

(to phone) )

Hello. Now? No, I can't.

Blaise walks in the front door back from his school day.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

I'm babysitting.

BLAISE

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

MAPLE

(to phone)

I'm sorry there's nothing I can do.

(MORE)

MAPLE (CONT'D)

I can't leave a baby alone...on such short notice. 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.

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

Maple looks outside the sliding glass door and sees Caroline walking out to the lake.

MAPLE

Watch the baby please.

EXT. BREEZE TREE LAKE APARTMENTS - DAY

Caroline is reading a book by the lake.

CAROLINE

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

MAPLE

I'm sorry. You've been nothing but supportive. Now that I'm doing hard time, I've thought a lot about what a mistake it was to tell you not to do what you love. And, I should stick up for you too. Peace offering.

He hands Caroline two dozen skipping stones in a bag.

CAROLINE

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

MAPLE

I'm not allowed.

CAROLINE

Doesn't feel good does it?

MAPLE  
Lesson learned.

CAROLINE  
I'm gonna skip one.

MAPLE  
I also got you these.

Maple offers a racketball canister to Caroline.

CAROLINE  
No, I'm not playing baseball with  
you.

MAPLE  
You can throw these at the school's  
racketball court, or on any wall.  
This way you'll never run out.

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

CAROLINE  
There'll be no ripples in the  
water. But, I'll try.

Maple stands with his glove about 50 feet away.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Ready?

MAPLE  
Yup.

Caroline slings the racketball way over Maple's head.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
Forget it. Grab the other one, try  
again.

Caroline gets her grip and slings the ball, this time Maple  
has to reach, but he's able to catch it.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
Nice! I have an idea.

CAROLINE  
Should I be concerned?

CROSS FADE

Maple is standing in front of a garbage can with a taped  
strike zone as the catcher.

Caroline from the stretch delivers, and Maple swings and misses as the ball smacks the garbage can.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
You had enough?

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

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

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

PETERSON  
I'm going lefty.

SABO  
Maybe you should learn how to throw  
before taking on other challenges.

PETERSON  
Maybe you should learn how to hit,  
strikeout king.

SABO  
Coach changes my swing every other  
at bat.

PETERSON  
(mocking)  
Coach changes my swing.

FIORELLO  
(to Coach T.J.)  
You do, do that.

SABO  
(mocking Peterson)  
And Daddy pads my stats.

COACH T.J.  
I do that? *He* does that?

SABO  
You really wanna go Peterson?

BASEDOW  
You both suck, so what, shut up.

COACH T.J.  
Enough! We have a game to finish.  
What happened to the last dance?  
You guys are acting like it's  
already over.

FIORELLO  
It's not?

BASEDOW

What's the point? These games are meaningless.

SABO

That's my bad. I lost my cool.  
Let's bring it in.

TEVVY

Give it a rest man, nobody wants to hear that. At least some of 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)

Next year - where will the rest of us be?

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 the can.

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

Oh my god, you're obsessed...Ok, for a little.

Caroline puts her bag down and picks up the racketball and stretches.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Is she safe down on the ground like that?

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

MAPLE

As long she doesn't get near the water and there are no alligators.

They both get into position.

MAPLE (CONT'D)

Throw two to get warm.

Caroline throws it smack into the garbage can.

CAROLINE

I'm ready.

Maple throws the racketball back, and Caroline delivers a pitch. Maple swings and misses.

MAPLE

It's not even fair.

CAROLINE

Are you serious? You're not just doing it on purpose?

MAPLE

I swear to you, stone skipper. But, I'm a glutton for punishment. One more.

CAROLINE

Fine.

Caroline pitches the racketball.

Maple connects and hits it into the lake - splash.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Now you lost the ball.

MAPLE

Totally worth it!

CAROLINE

Good hit. I should go in anyway, see you in school tomo- oh, no. No, I won't.

MAPLE

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, and  
we'll hype up the baseball team on  
our last game of the season  
tonight!

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-Russo-Ronson, 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.

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

Caroline, Lacey, and Chandi stand by watching.

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

LACEY  
 Poor Karl.

Caroline nods in agreement.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maple has replaced his bicycle's tires. He slams the tool box shut and baby Helen jolts up.

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  
 Get in the bath tub and strip.

Blaise walks to the bathroom as Maple picks the boxes, and reads them.

INT. BATHROOM - 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?

Reveal Maple, and Blaise with shaved heads.

MAPLE  
Little bro got lice at school.

Maple tosses her the racketball.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
Wind blew it back in.

CAROLINE  
You got a lucky hit last night.  
Let's see if you can do it again.

MAPLE  
Watch this, bro.

Maple gets the bat.

INT. LIA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maple and Blaise clear the dishes from dinner.

MAPLE  
Mom, I have to go to the field tonight.

LIA  
You don't have to do anything except be grounded.

MAPLE  
Mom, I've honored your wishes and I've done my time. This is the last game of the season, and the last season for the field.

LIA  
What do you mean?

MAPLE  
Remember I told you they're demolishing it next week to build a new school.

LIA

Oh no. Yeah. But, that's good though, right? Blaise will get to go to a brand new facility.

MAPLE

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

LIA

Ok, go ahead. But, take your brother.

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.

BLAISE

You said there was a game.

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.

CAROLINE  
Something on your mind?

MAPLE  
I mean, tonight was my last chance to impress a scout. And I wasn't even in the lineup.

CAROLINE  
That really sucks. I'm sorry. I know how much you had riding on this season. And, you played really well, Karl. You hit over .450, and your pitching came around.

MAPLE  
So what? Wait, how did you know that?

CAROLINE  
I read the newspaper, Karl. And, I watch the games. Plus, I get all the gossip from-

Lacey. CAROLINE (CONT'D) Lacey. MAPLE

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
But, what do I have to show for it? Nothing.

CAROLINE  
You didn't get tonight. But, you do get one more game, right?

MAPLE  
The Playoffs.

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.

CAROLINE

Seems you study better when you  
stay home.

Maple looks and sees 100% - A+.

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER

Maple is in P.E. class with Coach T.J. and several STUDENTS.

It's free play: basketball, volley ball, pickle ball, spread  
out across the gym floor.

Maple is in the middle of the basketball game 21 with FOUR  
GYM CLASS KIDS.

GYM CLASS KID shoots, misses and Maple grabs the rebound.

GYM CLASS KID 2

Tip him!

From mid air Maple shoots a lay up through the hoop.

GYM CLASS KID

Two hands, I only go back to 13.

MAPLE

I got fifteen.

GYM CLASS KID 2

Tip this frigging kid!

Maple shoots the free throw and instantly is hit in the face  
by another basketball launched across the gym.

Coach T.J. sees Henry throw it at Maple and blows his whistle  
immediately. The entire Gym Class freezes.

Coach T.J. walks right at Henry and swiftly removes him from  
the gym.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Henry is sitting across from Principal Parish.

PRINCIPAL PARISH

You again. Empty your pockets.

Henry puts his hand in his pockets and removes keys, paper,  
tissues and candy.

PRINCIPAL PARISH (CONT'D)

Now, the other one.

Henry reluctancy reveals a lighter, fireworks, and a knife.

The Principal confiscates the lighter, fireworks, and knife.

PRINCIPAL PARISH (CONT'D)

I'm transferring you. You are  
trouble.

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?

Coach T.J. walks in. Everyone stays in their zone, and 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.

Dasher and Basedow enter the dugout and see the school bus.

BASEDOW

(to Maple)

Have a game tonight, kid.

MAPLE

You too ace.

Basedow and Dasher walk to the bullpen as Maple hits a baseball off a batting tee, into the fence, next to the dugout.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

EXT. EAGLES BASEBALL FIELD - LATER

At **HOME PLATE** Coach T.J., Maple and Sabo meet Coach Butch, 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

Let's play ball.

Basedow is in **BULLPEN** with Dasher ready to start the game.

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

COACH T.J.

(to team)

I'll make this quick. Nothing before this matters. We're both in the same boat. Loser goes home. We can beat these guys! We almost had them last time.

SABO

Bring it in!

MAPLE

I got one thing to say. This is the last dance fellas. It's the last night in *our* house. What'd you come to do?

ALL

Yeah!

SABO

Bring it in! Win on 3.

ALL  
1,2,3 win!

The Eagles run out and take the field.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE  
Batter up.

From the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Basedow strikes out the Leadoff Wolverine Batter with a swinging curve ball in the dirt, and he starts running to 1st base since the pitch was not caught.

Maple blocks the ball, chases it down, picks it up and throws it to Chap at **FIRST BASE** before the Wolverine Leadoff Batter gets there.

BASEDOW  
That a way to pick me up!

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

Sabo gives the ball back to Basedow.

SABO (CONT'D)  
(to Basedow)  
That's one big guy.

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

Sabo gives the ball back to Basedow again.

SABO (CONT'D)  
Let's go baby. 1,2,3.

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 - grounds out to Laz at **SHORTSTOP** 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 a 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.

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**.

PETERSON  
(from 2nd base)  
Yes, yes.

Russell fields the ground ball and flips it to Peterson.

Peterson 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.

Bottom of the 2rd inning, and at **HOME PLATE** Maple leads off. Coach T.J. gives him a sign.

Maple bunts and gets a base hit.

Basedow follows up with a pop up.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE  
Infield fly rule. Batter's out.

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 and breaks up the double play, allowing Sabo to reach 1st base safely.

Maple limps off the field.

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

Top of the 4th inning, and from the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Basedow meets Laz again.

Basedow delivers 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**.

Perry easily jogs into **SECOND BASE** with a double.

And, Laz is safe over at **THIRD BASE**.

Basedow from the windup delivers from the **PITCHER'S MOUND** and Wolverine Batter 3 hits a ground ball in the hole to Peterson at **SECOND BASE**.

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

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

Wolverine Coach Butch kicks the dirt in frustration.

MAPLE  
(from home plate)  
Peterson's 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. Let's go! Last night. Last  
dance!

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.

Maple chokes up on the bat and the Wolverine Pitcher throws 3 balls in a row.

INSERT: PLAYOFF SCOUTS in the stands with radar guns registering 94 MPH velocity.

Now, with 3 balls and 2 strikes, Wolverine Pitcher winds and delivers the pay off pitch.

Maple swings and connects, hitting it high and deep to **CENTER FIELD**.

Back, back, back, gone! The ball sails over the fence, for a solo home run.

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**, his mom Lia comes over to the fence to surprise and congratulate him.

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

Back on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** Basedow is in a jam with no outs.

WOLVERINE BASERUNNERS on 1st and 2nd base.

Basedow with determination strikes out the next two WOLVERINE BATTERS.

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

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

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
 Pitch limit. It breaks my heart not  
 letting you finish this.

BASEDOW  
 (to Maple)  
 We got them as far as we could.

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

The fans have put up 11 poster boards with the letter "K" on  
 the fence indicating Basedow's strike outs.

Maple starts taking off the catcher's gear, as Rabino and  
 Dasher enter the game from the **BULLPEN**.

Peterson runs off the field into the dugout.

COACH T.J.  
 Great game, Peterson.

Russell moves over from **SHORTSTOP** to **SECOND BASE**.

COACH T.J. (CONT'D)  
 4 more outs fellas. Just keep on  
 dancing.

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

DASHER  
 Let's do this!

Maple goes to **SHORTSTOP**, Dasher the 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 Wolverine Baserunners to advance to **SECOND BASE and THIRD  
 BASE**.

Coach T.J., Basedow and Peterson start getting very worried.

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

Rabino's third pitch is a dancing knuckleball and Wolverine Batter 4 hits a towering pop up to Maple at **SHORTSTOP**.

MAPLE  
 Yup! Mine. All mine.

Maple is basking as he makes the catch for the final out of the inning. The team runs into the dugout fired up.

New on the **PITCHER'S MOUND** is WOLVERINE PITCHER 2.

At **HOME PLATE** Dasher leads off, and strikes out.

DASHER  
 (to Tagge)  
 Big boy is bringing it.

Dasher says on his way past 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. exits the dugout to argue with the Playoff Umpire.

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

PLAYOFF UMPIRE  
 Back to the dugout coach.

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 rushes on the transfer and makes a throwing error.

DEWITT  
 Go! Go, go!

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

Fiorello turns and runs for second base on the over throw.

But, Perry is backing up the **FIRST BASE AREA** and picks up the ball.

DEWITT (CONT'D)  
 (To Fiorello)  
 Wait! Back! No, go!

ALL  
 Pickle!

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

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

Laz pursues Fiorello but has to quickly throw the ball to the WOLVERINE FIRST BASEMAN before Fiorello get's too close.

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

DEWITT  
 Now!

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

Wolverine First Baseman realizes he's got to get rid of the ball quick.

He tries to throw it as fast as he can, but it's too late.

Fiorello slides into **SECOND BASE**, safe.

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

Wolverine Pitcher 2 from the stretch delivers the pitch.

Tevvy swings and misses purposefully because Fiorello is stealing.

Perry snaps the throw down to WOLVERINE THIRD BASEMAN, at **THIRD BASE**. But, it's too late.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE 2  
 Safe!

Fiorello gets up dusting himself off, and clapping.

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 ball for strike 2.

Wolverine Pitcher 2 follows up with his first change-up of the game, fooling Tevvy who swings and misses for strike 3.

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, they both non-verbally and nonchalantly communicate.

Maple steps up to home plate and Wolverine Pitcher 2 winds up and delivers the pitch.

Fiorello takes off running to steal home.

Maple steps out of the box as Perry catches the pitch and Fiorello slides.

Perry dives to apply the tag on Fiorello and blocks home plate.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE

Out!

Coach T.J. comes out of the dugout to argue the call.

Fiorello is pissed and hangs his head as he walks back into the dugout. The Wolverines cheer, and run off the field.

FIORELLO

(to Maple)

Sorry to take the bat out of your hands.

MAPLE

I'll take those odds any day.

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 and comes up limping again.

SABO

That's one, that's one!

Rabino delivers another knuckleball and Wolverine Batter 2 hits a line drive to Tevvy in **CENTER FIELD**.

Tevvy runs in and makes a diving catch.

FIORELLO  
My man got moves!

TAGGE  
Sexy moves!

MAPLE  
Two down, two down!

Laz steps to **HOME PLATE** and looks up at Coach Butch on the 3rd base line.

COACH BUTCH  
(to Laz)  
Come on. You know what to do.

Rabino throws a flat knuckleball and Laz hits a screaming line drive foul almost taking Coach Butch's head off at **THIRD BASE**.

Rabino throws a great dancing knuckleball, and Laz only gets a piece, but hits a bloop single.

Perry steps up to the plate, as Laz leads off **FIRST BASE**.

Rabino, from the stretch tries a pick-off move and throws over trying to get Laz out at 1st.

Laz slides back to 1st base safe, and the Wolverine Fans boo.

At **HOME PLATE** Dasher calls a pitch-out.

Rabino delivers to the plate testing Laz to steal 2nd base. But, he stays put.

Rabino again from the stretch throws a flat knuckleball from the **PITCHER'S MOUND**, and Laz starts running for 2nd base.

Perry at **HOME PLATE** swings and hits it 375 feet over the left field fence, foul.

Dasher hand delivers the new ball back to the **PITCHER'S MOUND**.

DASHER  
(to Rabino)  
You got one more pitch. Let me see that thing move.

Rabino from the stretch comes set. He checks Laz at 1st base and throws a great dancing knuckleball.

Perry swings, only getting a piece of it, sending a high bouncing cue shot off the end of the bat towards Russell at **SECOND BASE**.

Laz on his way to 2nd crosses in front of Russell to further complicate his view of the ball.

Russell 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 is hot on the trail.

COACH BUTCH  
(to Laz)  
Come on, get here! Get here!

Laz touches **SECOND BASE**, and sprints for 3rd base.

MAPLE  
I got it!

Maple who'd been running to back up on the swing 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**.

COACH BUTCH  
(to Laz)  
Down! Down!

Laz comes in full speed and slides as Sabo catches the ball, and applies the tag.

PLAYOFF UMPIRE 2  
Out!

Game over. Eagles win.

Coach Butch argues and kicks dirt at the Playoff Umpire.

Coach T.J. throws up in the dugout again, rallies and runs on the field with his team to celebrate.

The Stands rush the field joining the players and the team starts to chant.

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.

Caroline walks over, and Maple walks down to meet her.

CAROLINE  
I thought you might want to keep  
this.

Caroline hands Maple his home run ball.

MAPLE  
Thanks.

CAROLINE  
Great game, Karl.

MAPLE  
I want to tell you something.

CAROLINE  
What's that?

MAPLE  
Thank you for throwing back all the  
home runs we gave up this season.  
It's pretty much our fault for  
keeping you out there.

Caroline hits Maple in the arm playfully.

MAPLE (CONT'D)  
Did you find that many skipping  
stones? What else can you even see  
out there in the dark?

CAROLINE  
I found the cutest tiny baby owls.  
They're so teeny-tiny and cute.

MAPLE  
We got owls out there?

CAROLINE  
Come on I'll show you.

CONCESSION STAND MOM (O.S.)

What?

From around the counter enter CONCESSION STAND MOM, in an Eagles t-shirt.

CONCESSION STAND MOM (CONT'D)

Did you just say you saw small owls  
out there?

CAROLINE

Yes, why are you freaking out?

CONCESSION STAND MOM

Those are burrowing owls! Look.

Concession Stand Mom hands Caroline her cellphone with burrowing owl information.

CAROLINE

Yes, that's them! They're  
endangered.

MAPLE

If they're endangered.

CAROLINE

The land is protected.

Concession Stand Mom takes her cellphone back and runs off screaming.

CONCESSION STAND MOM

We're not going anywhere! We can  
stay! We're on a frigging national  
wildlife refuge!

A BASEBALL SCOUT appears from around the corner and walks to Maple.

BASEBALL SCOUT

That was heads up baseball, kid.

MAPLE

Thanks.

BASEBALL SCOUT

Where are you playing next year?

MAPLE

Nowhere.

CAROLINE

He also pitches.

SCOUT

Is that right? Well, when this is all over give me a call. We could use someone like you.

Baseball Scout hands Maple his business card, and walks away. Maple and Caroline look at each other and freak out silently over the Scout's card.

MAPLE

...So, how does it feel to save the day?

CAROLINE

Like this.

They kiss.

EXT. BIG LAKE - DAY

TITLE CARD: 6 Months Later

Caroline is about to skip a stone and 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.

Caroline, grips the stone, places her back foot in position and skips the 1st stone.

The MODERATOR makes the official count.

MODERATOR

10. 20...30...39. Fist skip, 39.

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. What'd you come to do?

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!

We have a new world record holder!  
Caroline Jones.

Caroline, Maple, friends and family celebrate.

FADE OUT: