



TITLE:	PEN, THE	FORMAT:	Script
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STORY/CONCEPT:	4/10	CHARACTERS:	5/10
STRUCTURE/STYLE:	5/10	DIALOGUE:	6/10

LOGLINE: A once-promising minor league player grapples with a quarter-life crisis as he turns 30 and finds himself relegated to the bullpen.

SYNOPSIS:

PARKER THOMAS (30, handsome yet goofy) watches his old highlight reel in a coffee shop, but the connection times out. He stands alongside BJ BURCH (27, tall, handsome black man) who reads the latest copy of *The Economist*. A KID (13, ginger) approaches the two, asking BJ to sign his to-go menu. BJ declines, saying Parker's signature will be worth more soon. After Parker signs it, the kid throws it out upset. The pair ride to the Rough Rider's Stadium where BRETT COOLEY (25, Abercrombie-esque slugger) unsuccessfully flirts with aspiring agent KATIE MULLINS (22, laser-focused PR intern). Parker saves Katie from Brett's terrible flirting before getting interviewed by local baseball youtuber WHIZBOY (19, ambitious, oblivious). Whizboy asks humiliating questions about the plateau of Parker's once promising career. Before Parker can redeem himself to the camera, the organization's top starter, KODY 'BUBBA' BOGGS (19 but could pass for 12), arrives, distracting Whizboy.

Parker nervously converses with BJ in the stadium's clubhouse. He wonders what Katie sees in Brett, alluding to his own feelings towards her. BJ reminds Parker he was the same way when he was a hotshot prospect. Parker winces at BJ's use of past tense. On their way to strength training, Parker is called into the manager's office. The scene quickly cuts to: Parker talking to BJ about some of the details of the meeting once they're in the weight room—claiming he's benched because the organization wants him to reinvent himself. TOMMY LESHAY (24, short, buff, unathletic), the strength coach and team punching bag, along with



teammates JED HYATT (26, team oddball) and EDUARDO 'EDDIE' CASADIEGO (23, Latino Greek god, infectious smile) begin, somewhat jokingly, singing happy birthday to Parker.

Later, Parker and BJ play a game of mancala outside in the picnic area. Katie, frustrated after an intense phone call, is soon approached by a curious Parker. Katie takes the opportunity to ask Parker to be a guest at an event tomorrow for young students. Wanting to impress Katie, Parker agrees, also forcibly inviting BJ. Now enthusiastic, Katie emails Parker the information for the event. Parker returns to BJ, who is linked to the email chain and notices that the students are middle schoolers. BJ groans at the prospect of having to mentor young adolescent boys, even if just for a day, reiterating the ruthlessness of their age group. Still smitten by his interaction with Katie, Parker dismisses BJ. Parker and BJ then prepare for the upcoming game.

Sitting in the outfield is pitching coach BEAU 'BO MAC' McMULLINS (63, walrus of a man) and DEREK REEDY (26, quiet, Charles Manson vibes). The teammates banter and play with one another, Jed throwing a baseball close enough to scare a buzzard off a light tower. The first inning approaches and fans begin to file in. In the underground tunnel, the de facto team therapist, JESS JEWELL (27, smart, upbeat, takes pride in her job), warns Katie against dating any of the teammates. Katie retaliates, suggesting that maybe she is using the boys as much as they are looking to use her. Back in the bullpen, Parker's teammates 'initiate' him for being the newest player in 'the pen' and the game begins.

During the game, RUSTY FULTS (42, short, hefty), the local volunteer bullpen catcher joins the teammates in the pen. The kid from earlier returns, asking if he could have a baseball. After Parker refuses, his mother, MILF (late 40s, trashy smokeshow) arrives and is able to seductively convince the teammates to throw her a ball. Katie watches the game next to team clubhouse manager DOOKIE (47, overweight, unkempt), revealing that she's more knowledgeable in baseball than she often lets off. Soon Parker is up to be the next hitter but... Cut to: Whizboy streaming the details of the game—Parker fumbled hard. Jess meets Parker in the training room to wrap up his bruised shoulder. He heads to the clubhouse where Brett, the star of the game, dances atop a table as teammates cheer. After, Parker heads to the local dive bar, everyone in celebration. Parker is still wearing his uniform with sticky residue on it after a ridiculing prank by the other boys. Brett returns drunk and with MILF obviously fawning over him. Fed up, Parker pours his entire beer on Brett.

Now with dried blood on his sticky shirt and around his swollen nose, Parker and BJ drive back to their place. His mom calls, calling him out for conforming to the organization's demands instead of playing his best game. Frustrated, Parker throws the ball at the wall where it goes through the drywall, revealing BJ making out with the bar's barista, JASPER (24, hot, bearded hipster). Parker awkwardly retrieves his ball.

The next day BJ and Parker mentor the middle schoolers. Brett wakes up in MILF's apartment, now cringing at yesterday's turn of events. He leaves. Meanwhile, Katie thanks Parker for showing up to the event, saying that it was hard to convince any of his teammates to



come. They watch BJ awkwardly fumbling around the teasing children. Katie gives Parker her number, offering to grab coffee at a later date. Satisfied with his win, Parker and BJ drive home together, Thelma and Louise style.

COMMENTS:

THE PEN is a humorous script with an array of personalities. The comradery and emphasis on character dynamics is similar to *A League of their Own* and *Sandlot* with a tone comparable to *Ted Lasso*. Parker shares similarities with Morris Buttermaker from *Bad News Bears*, although isn't as gruff or cynical, but rather more dejected. The piece is easy to follow with little spelling or grammar mistakes and a clear chronology. The dialogue of each character is realistic and personable. It fits within the context of the individual and flows smoothly. The story features strong characters, but it is important to be mindful of the number introduced, as the pilot includes around 15 notable characters. However, it does a solid job of creating memorable introductions for almost each one. It should be noted that AARON is lacking an introduction with age and description but is mentioned more than once. The strongest aspects of this piece are the characters and humor.

While the story sets up a possible romance between Katie and Parker and a potential love triangle between Parker, Katie, and Brett, it is unclear what the other conflicts or goals are aside from Parker's general aspiration to be successful. It feels as though the team has little to look forward to. The pilot does not set up plot progression or high stakes to pull the audience into the next episode. Katie mentions the baseball team going to Tulsa, but it is unclear when or what for. On another hand, Parker himself undergoes an increase in motivation which places emphasis on his character's personal journey but there are no outside conflicts to further propel the story. The intended audience for this piece includes older teen or young adult fans of sports and comedy, with elements of romance and underdog themes. The cast is male dominated, suggesting a stronger appeal to a male audience, but it also includes a few strong female characters and elements of romance that could resonate with a smaller female audience. That being said, it doesn't notably push the bounds of the genre and may blend in with similar media. There have been popular and successful sports comedies in recent television but if the script were to move forward, there should be consideration to incorporate more stakes or have the piece reviewed by another reader closer to the intended demographic to further assess its marketability.