

## Hero's Journey Analysis – "Bull Durham"

### ORDINARY WORLD

ANNIE (Susan Sarandon) does voiceover  
Images of baseball

I believe in the church of baseball  
I know things  
108 beads in a rosary, 108 stitches in baseball  
Baseball like sex  
Never slept with a ball player who didn't have the best  
season of their career  
She's getting ready to go to the game  
Puts speed gun in her handbag  
What I give them lasts a lifetime  
What they give me lasts 142 games  
The only church that truly feeds the soul is the game of  
baseball

As she says that, we enter her "church" – Durham Bulls  
stadium

3:46

Anyone seen Ebby? (Tim Robbins)  
Professional debut  
He's fucking Milly in the locker room

He thinks he needs a nickname

After the coach has left, with 3 minutes to the game,  
He believes there is time for another quickie

Managers not happy

Milly says she got lured  
Annie says women do not get lured

Milly holds the speedgun up as Ebby throws  
Ball goes over the top  
95 miles per hour

Then he hits the batter

Annie sends a note out to Ebby  
That he needs to bend his back on his follow through

And when he does that he starts striking

He walked 18 – a league record  
He struck out 18 – a league record

He's got some serious shit

8:56

Crash Davis (Kevin Coster) comes in

Who is this?

The player to be named

I'm too old for this shit – REFUSAL

What am I doing back in the A league?

CALL TO ADVENTURE

His job is to tutor Ebby

Who has a Million dollar arm with a 5 cent head

What do I get?

MENTOR

You get to keep coming to the ball park

And keep getting paid to do it

REFUSAL

Fuck this fucking game

I quit

He walks out

They wait

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

He comes back in

What time's batting practice?

TESTS, ALLLIE & ENEMIES

Bar – classic watering hole scene

Ebby is dancing with everyone

Annie sitting with Max – the Clown Prince of Baseball

Crash sends drinks to Annie

Max says Crash is different

Actually saw him read a book without pictures once

Crash comes to her table

Annie asks him to dance

He doesn't dance

Ebby invites her to dance

Crash says he's dancing with her

Stands up – RIVALS

Ebby invites him outside to sort it out

Crash eventually comes

14:26

Crash says he doesn't believe in fighting

Ebby calls him a pussy

TEST

Crash throws him a baseball

Says hit him in the chest

Ebby says no

Crash says he couldn't hit water if he fell out of a boat

Throws the ball – misses him and goes through the window

Who the fuck are you, Man?

Comes to him

Crash punches him and lays him out

You just got lesson 1

Don't think. It can only hurt the ball club

Annie invites them both back to her place

TEST

She says each year she chooses one player

Crash wants to know why she gets to choose

She says no-one gets to choose

Quantum physics, molecular attraction

Ebby says is someone going to sleep with someone?

Crash says he's leaving

I don't believe in quantum physics when it comes to  
matters of the heart

What do you believe in?

A bunch of stuff that leaves Annie breathless

Oh my

19:00

FABULOUS SCENE

She chases him outside

CALL TO ADVENTURE

Says she just wants a date

He says he's not interested in a woman that would be  
interested in that boy – REFUSAL

No-one's ever said no to a date with me before

20:00

Annie schools Ebby – MENTOR

Tells him to slow down

When he knows how to make love, he'll know how to pitch

Have you ever been tied up in bed?

Crash walks down the street

Picks up a cardboard tube

Takes a swing  
As he looks in the window

She reads Walt Whitman as he's tied up  
22:39

Are we going to fuck or what?  
She keeps reading.

Ball club  
One of the players, Jimmy, is going to lead a bible class  
Loosen up and get laid

Ebby arrives  
Call me Nuke (as in Nuclear meltdown – Annie's name)  
He looks like shit  
Didn't fuck  
She read poetry to me all night

MENTOR  
Crash says that Nuke's shower shoes (thongs) have fungus  
Think classy, you'll be classy

Crash comes to the plate  
Trash-talking to the pitcher  
25:09

Foul ball  
Talks to himself  
Get out of your fuckin head  
Voiceover

Annie comes into his head  
And he has to take a Timeout  
She's messin with him

He strikes out  
Annie sends a note to him  
27:39

Kid reads it  
Pulling his hips out early  
Meet at the batting cage tomorrow to work on it

Sends a reply  
I want to make love to you  
Oh, my

APPROACH  
They are at the batting cage  
Annie is batting  
Is this going to happen between us, Crash wants to know

I'm committed to Nuke for the season  
 What does she see in him?  
 Young men are uncomplicated  
 He says that their job is the same  
 To help Nuke grow

He's hit 227 home runs in the minors  
 He could get the record  
 He's embarrassed by it  
 He says is it going to happen  
 She says she's monogamous

He says that she's afraid of men like him  
 Because it might be real  
 He's rockin her world too

In bed  
 Annie makes love  
 You cant' see who to  
 Oh, Crash  
 But it's Ebby  
 Would you rather I was making love to him using your  
 name, or making love to you using his?

43:49

Milly courts the team  
 Jose is decursing his bat  
 Guy who is 0 for 16 wants him to do his bat

Nuke takes the mound  
 Gets slugged  
 Crash goes to the mound  
 MENTOR  
 Says Strikeouts are boring  
 Throw a few groundballs

Ebby says what does he know  
 Annie chose me

Crash says that Annie only chose him because she can boss  
 him around

Crash calls for a curveball  
 Meat shakes him off  
 Calls a timeout again  
 Meat says he wants a fastball  
 Crash warns him  
 But Meat won't concede it

Crash tells the batter that a fastball is coming  
 He hits a home run

So Crash has made his point  
Don't think, just throw

Ebby throws a curveball  
Gets a strike

But then reverts to his old ways

Crash hits a homer  
38:00

Crash talks with the manager  
At the end of his tether  
Crash says scare them – MENTOR

He gives them a dressing down in the showers  
You lollygag your way, etc  
Lollygaggers  
Their record is 8-16  
Simple game, you throw the ball, you hit the ball, you  
catch the ball

12 day road trip starts tomorrow

Manager lets go the guy who was 0 for 16  
Foreshadows what will happen later  
He releases the guy  
Throws some furniture around

40:39  
The bus is about to leave  
Annie wants Ebby to wear a garter while he pitches

Bus heads off

MENTOR  
Nuke plays guitar – badly  
Crash says stop it  
The team thanks him  
He's getting all the words wrong  
Why don't you like me  
You don't respect yourself  
You don't respect the game  
You need a curveball in the majors  
How would he know

Crash has been in the majors  
None of them knew that  
You were in the show?  
He was in for 21 days once

Says Nuke could be one of those guys  
 They start fighting again  
 Ebby says he wants crash to teach him the curve ball

6 game losing streak  
 Worst road trip in years  
 Worst Durham team in half a century  
 Lowpoint

Iceskaters arrive  
 What they need is a rainout

They go to the ground  
 Set the sprinklers going  
 Crash goes running and they dive on the basepaths  
 Letting off steam  
 Releasing the tension  
 Classic antics of the APPROACH

On the bus  
 Meat has a dream about pitching naked in his garter  
 Crash has that dream all the time too

When they get back  
 Annie is waiting with open legs for Ebby  
 Crash looks on – envious

Annie says he needs a game of catch  
 She gives him a lot of hocus pocus  
 Says that he's patronising her  
 Throws it – goes throw the window

He just wants to go to bed  
 She says that he should hold in all that sexual energy

Crash finds him putting on the garter  
 Annie says it will keep his brain where it needs to be  
 He adjusts the garter for him

54:50  
 He starts with a strike  
 Two strikes  
 Three strikes

MENTOR  
 Ebby is pleased with himself  
 Crash says his fastball is up, his curveball is hanging  
 In the show, they'd have ripped him  
 Enjoy the moment  
 The moment is over

Crash hits a homer

Crash says throw the next one at the mascot  
 Takes out the mascot  
 Scares the hitter  
 Don't stick around, advises Crash

Nuke close to 2 hit shutout  
 Shakes Crash's call off  
 Tells the hitter what's coming

Home run  
 1:00:13  
 You told him, right?  
 Crash laughs it off  
 Again he's made his point - MENTOR

When Nuke starts listening to Crash  
 The bulls go on a winning streak  
 Nuke is unstoppable

But Nuke won't sleep with Annie because he's on a streak

She needs a man

On the bus  
 Ebby asks to be taught something  
 Work on his interviews  
 Learn your clichés  
 1:03:02

How's Annie  
 Pretty steamed because he's rechannelling his sexual  
 energy - says he might cave in  
 Crash says if he gives in now he might start losing  
 Never fuck with a winning streak  
 (Of course he has an ulterior motive)

Milly hooks up with Jimmy, the Christian  
 Can I give you my testimony  
 You can do anything you want

Annie is so proud of them  
 She's flirting with Ebby  
 You can't seduce me  
 1:05:09

Crash says that a man can lost in a pussy - the Bermuda  
 Triangle  
 There are times for discipline and self control  
 Nuke can't unhook her stocking  
 FORESHADOWING



Ebby tells Annie what Crash said  
Annie is furious

Goes to Crash's place  
He's ironing in his undies  
How dare you tell him to stay out of my bed

ORDEAL  
Who are you?  
They argue  
Then she says I want you  
He says stop it

You're scared she says  
Maybe I am but I still think you should leave  
Annie frustrated

This is the damndest season  
The Bulls can't lose  
And Annie can't get laid

Nuke isn't loose  
His father is there

Jimmy and Milly are getting married  
Crash says noone can say anything bad about Milly  
Mound meeting  
1:11:48

Annie fixes Milly's dress  
Jimmy and Milly only been together 5 hours.  
Do I deserve to wear white?  
We all deserve to wear white.

Crash challenges a call  
Gets thrown out of the game  
Never seen Crash so angry

Winning streak comes to end  
Good news – a man about to come calling, says Annie  
Bad news – it was the wrong guy

She waits listening to Piaf  
Knock at the door  
But she doesn't immediately go  
When she opens it Ebby is with his father

1:15:53  
Father is pleased that she has taught him self control  
So glad he met a Christian woman  
Nuke is trying to race her off  
She says they need to talk

He gets the call  
 He's going to the show – the Major Leagues

Annie grabs him to say goodbye  
 He says he'll come back later  
 She indicates there'll be no later  
 1:18:26

She farewells him

ORDEAL

Crash plays pool  
 Nuke comes to tell him the news  
 Nuke wants to celebrate  
 Crash isn't interested  
 Points out the difference between being successful and  
 being a failure  
 Says he got talent, and he got brains  
 Goads him  
 Nuke punches him – very common at this point

REWARD

Nuke packs his gear in the locker room  
 Crash comes in  
 Apologises  
 Tells him to be cocky and arrogant in the big leagues  
 Nuke thanks him

Jimmy and Milly get married  
 Crash watches on

ORDEAL

Crash comes in  
 Gets the word from the manager  
 He's getting fired  
 Is told he might have a future in management  
 Opening over at Byzantium

Crash drinks a beer alone in the pool hall  
 Walks home alone  
 Goes in to see Annie  
 1:28:46

REWARD

Tells her he got released  
 She heard already  
 They kiss  
 Crash reaches up and releases her suspender  
 What Nuke couldn't do  
 Oh my

They fuck

Annie thinks she was Catherine the Great in a former life  
 He wants to know why no-one in a former life was Jo Schmo  
 They laugh  
 As they eat breakfast  
 She thinks he's gorgeous  
 Asks him to dance  
 But they start fucking on the kitchen table instead  
 Then they dance in the lounge – something he said earlier  
 that he didn't do

She's tied up  
 As Crash does her toe nails

Make love in the bath surrounded by candles  
 (This is a lot of Reward for one man)

The candles get swamped by the water  
 Crash wakes up  
 This looks like it's THE ROAD HOME  
 Crash needs to find a job

He writes a note  
 1:34:29

He drives to Ashville for a job in the South Carolina  
 leagues

He hits his 247<sup>th</sup> homer  
 The record for the minor league

Annie not worried about Nuke  
 World is made for people without self awareness

Nuke gives his first interview  
 Uses all the clichés

Annie watches from the stands as the Bulls are rained out

RESURRECTION  
 Crash is waiting at Annie's  
 1:38:28

Crash says he quit after getting the record

SHARING THE ELIXIR  
 Annie says she's quitting boys

There's an opening in Byzallium (?) for a manager  
 Could he make it to the show as a manager?  
 She starts sprouting her theories

Crash says he wants to hear every one of her theories but right now he doesn't want to think.

They dance.

1:41:00

#### SUMMARY:

Bull Durham is one of my favourite films but it is not a great example of the application of the Hero's Journey. It has absolutely fantastic characters, fabulous dialogue and a generally wonderful feel but it's adherence to the monomyth is fleeting at best.

Who's story is it? It's Crash's, but unusually he's also the Mentor. Nuke is the one he needs to nurture but it's a baseball growth rather than a character growth. Nuke is still the same shallow, ignorant hayseed he was at the end that he was at the beginning, and I don't really feel that there is much of a bond between the men by the time that Nuke gets called up to the show.

Crash is fully grown as a player but does he need to grow as human? That's not clear. His unwillingness to play Annie's game at the beginning and submit to being compared to Nuke seems reasonable, and when he walks away Annie is left feeling that she's the one who made the mistake. When she comes back to him, he declines – she says because he's scared – but it's still hard to see how anything that follows changes that.

Annie is probably the one who needs to grow. She's been doing the same thing for years – schooling young players for a season and then being left behind. Presented with the opportunity of a real man in Crash, she shies away from it as Crash points out.

So, it's Crash's film but he doesn't really have anywhere to go. He has no external goal – who knows where the Bulls finish that season – and it's not obvious how he is meant to grow as a person. Without an outer or an inner need, it's going to be hard to feel a lot by journey's end. And that's the way it finishes up with this film. You feel as though you have had a beautiful and worthwhile journey but you don't feel greatly moved – because the character hasn't really gone anywhere. If you can write a film like this, do it – and good luck to you – but this is the rare exception where a film that doesn't really follow the Hero's Journey turns out to be a critical and popular success.