

Slider



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Each summer, on the fields of glorious Cape Marlin, off the New England coast, the nation's best college players gather to play the most important baseball of their lives. Jack Faber is one of them. The son of a struggling Louisiana sugar farmer, Faber is a young hotshot pitcher with an unhittable slider and rocket for a fastball. He plays for the fabled Seapuit Seawolves and dreams of making the Big Show, like many of his teammates: the catcher, Tony Garcia, fast-talking, irreverent prelaw student from Northwestern; Doughnut Davis, the erratic pitching phenom from the University of Georgia, who can throw a heat-seeking 93-mph screamer over the edge of the plate, followed by a 93-mph screamer over the umpire's head; the Citadel's slick officer cadet infielders, Rick Adams and Bobby Madison; the steel-armed outfielder, Ray Sweeney, son of a Maine fisherman; and the Sooner's first baseman, Zac Colbert, from Mickey Mantle's hometown of Spavinaw, Oklahoma. In the middle of it all, Jack's dad, Ben Faber, who can barely make ends meet on his bayou sugar farm, is falling in love with Garcia's mother, Natalie, the beautiful and penniless classical music teacher from the Chicago tenements. Their budding long-distance romance can hardly make it off the ground, as they can't travel and can't afford even a phone call. And their hopes for their sons are at odds: For Natalie, it is for Tony to get his act together-forget about this school yard game, go to law school and

become a successful attorney. For Ben, it is for Jack to land a huge contract in the major leagues. Jack triumphantly becomes the Cape s MVP, but disaster awaits him when he returns to school in Louisiana. A new coach, the scowling Bruno Riazzi, a former pro catcher, resents the kid s celebrity status and decides he needs to knock him down a peg or two. And he ll stop at nothing to make it happen. Humiliated, Jack loses his lifelong art, and with it his passion for the game and, mysteriously, his ability to throw. His fastball has become tentative, his curve timid, and the beloved slider floats up to the plate like a volleyball. It has happened before to pros like Rick Ankiel and Mark Wohlers, brilliantly successful pitchers who suddenly lost it. A devastated Jack Faber is released from the St. Charles College roster. But the Seawolves coaches won t give up on him. They bring Jack back to Cape Marlin, determined to help him rediscover his lost talent. He finds himself again under the summer sun, coaches and old friends standing by him. But in the end it will be up to Jack. Based on a true story, Slider celebrates the national pastime, a game that can break grown men s hearts -- as well as make them whole again.

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