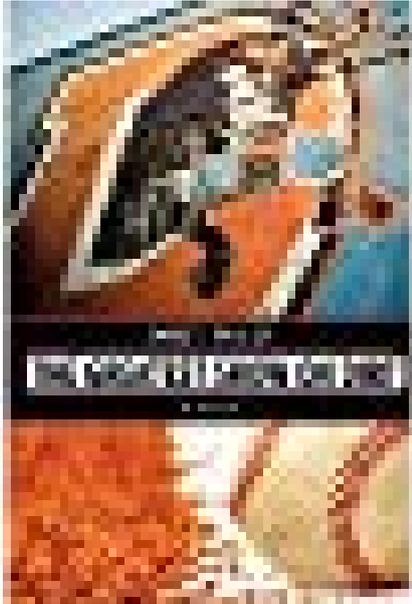


The Greatest Show on Dirt



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Minor league baseball is the land of dreamers, where young men endure months on the road, long bus rides, bad food, and constant pressure while they hone their craft and reach for the next rung up the ladder. Like the players on the field, the men and women who work for the teams put in long hours for low pay to be part of the game they love. It doesn't take Lane Hamilton long to understand the appeal. When he's fired for sleeping through an important meeting at the bank where he works, Lane hooks on as an operations assistant with the Durham Bulls. Every day at historic Durham Athletic Park brings something new, and despite the grueling hours, Lane's too busy ducking jealous co-workers and amped-up relief pitchers to ever get bored. Set in the same beloved old stadium where Bull Durham was filmed, *The Greatest Show on Dirt* provides a look at baseball from a different angle. Players come and go, but there would be no games without a front office to sell the tickets, groom the field, and open the gates to let the fans in. A former Bulls employee who later spent six years covering the minor leagues for Baseball America, James Bailey has crafted a realistic, yet often hilarious, account of a young man's indoctrination into life in the bush leagues. Reviewers have lauded the colorful cast of characters, from foul-mouthed, 12-year-old groundskeeper Spanky Paul to subtle middle-aged cougar Faith Andrews, who's looking to peddle more than t-shirts out of the team's souvenir shop. Ben Steelman of the *Wilmington (N.*

C.) *StarNews* says, "Lane's co-workers are colorful enough to make Damon Runyan's characters look like the cast of a Henry James novel." And Tom Hoffarth of the *Los Angeles Daily News* says, "[I]t's not just believable, but is easy to imagine as being the starting point for a movie script--even with Bull Durham already a classic. Bailey doesn't use baseball locker-talk for shock value, but keeps the reader moving at the right pace, fully locked and loaded, trying to figure out how this crumbling old minor-league park will somehow expose the secret to life for at least one person who feels disconnected, but is willing to listen to see if it's speaking his language."