

CURLFRIENDS

Show Pitch

Bowen

The Show:

Curlfriends is an elevated, animated series about 4 young, black girls navigating their friendship and school life while venturing into the world of early teenage-hood. Early teenage-hood is rife with drama and new experiences, from crushes, to body changes, to in-crowds and out-crowds, discovering new insecurities and establishing identity. In this show, we'll see these universal dilemmas through the eyes of young black girls. The audience, no matter their background, will find themselves flashing back to their own middle school struggles, as wonderful or as humiliating as they remember them to be.

These girls are funny, goofy, strong, intelligent, while also stubborn, insecure, arrogant, timid, and impulsive. They are complex little women, figuring out the world and their place in it. Often, we try to idolize black women as being strong, can-do-anything types (and often they are), but to see them in all their complexities and idiosyncrasies is to embrace them as fellow human beings. Black women can be strong and but can also be weird, different and complicated, too. This show plays with those attributes and lets little girls in the audience embrace such attributes about themselves too.

An important aspect of the show will be music, playing a big role in setting tone. Popular music and sound alike music will help connect this world to our world, and amp up or clarify emotions a scene is trying to create. We all remember how important music was to us as teens: the songs we got hyped to, the songs that reminded us of our crushes, memorizing the lyrics to songs, playing a single over and over and over again. Music is just as important to this show in creating memories and emotions we never forget.

Animation will also play an important role. Animation will be used to heighten emotion and imagination, helping the audience understand the gravity of the world to a 13 year-old. A note from a crush is more than a note, it can lift you in the air and carry you through the school day. Did you accidentally fart in class? We can see our characters actually shrink 2 inches tall at this mortifying experience. Animation will be used to heighten emotion and imagination, making the world and story more vibrant and more exciting.

This show will be packed with intrigue, flavor and fun. A hip, electrifying experience, much like the tone of Spiderman: Into the Spider-verse, but featuring the lives of four young black girls and their adventures into teenage-hood.

Our audience is going to want to hang out with Charlie, Zora, Cara and Bea, four black girls, in all of their magic and mayhem.

Review of Characters:

Charlie Harper is an only child and traveler of the world. Her dad recently retired from the air force, but while he was active she lived in Alaska, Germany, Singapore and India. She has an international, eclectic taste and her interests include manga and cartoons. She's shy and is often an observer, as she's never lived in any one place long enough to grow roots.

Nola Parker is an outgoing, honor roll student with a bubbling personality and trendy eye for the latest style. She's a people person that always wants her friends to have a good time. She lives with her single mom who owns a hair salon called Carol's Curls.

Cara Wilson is a fun, goofy track star. She has a laid back style, cares little about clothes or fashion and her favorite thing to do is hang out with her friends. She has three brothers, which has toughened her skin, though her kindness shines through above all. She lives with her brothers, dad and step mom. Her biological mother lives 3000 miles away and she unfortunately has a strained relationship with her.

Beatrice "Bea" Jeannot is of Haitian descent. She's an ambitious go getter. She is gunning for Class President of Hill Valley Middle School and won't let anyone stand in her way. She's the oldest of 4 and lives with her parents and her Grann who moved in with them after her house was destroyed by hurricane Matthew. Bea is studious and responsible but is also an independent leader that often sets the rules.

Pilot:

Charlie's dad has retired from the air force and moved their family back to his hometown. Charlie's excited about finally having a forever home and a forever school. But, she feels the pressure of needing to make a good impression as she'll most likely never move again. She's a bundle of nerves her first day of school. Her clothes, hair, shoes, are laid out perfectly, she's planned this day for weeks. Her mother has never seen her this nervous!

In her first period science class, she sits next to and meets outgoing Nola, who invites her to sit with her crew at lunch.

At lunch, Nola introduces Charlie to Cara and Bea. Charlie is overwhelmed by this tight crew of girls. They laugh at each other, have inside jokes, catch phrases, tease each other and eat each other's food. There is an intimacy between these four girls completely foreign to Charlie. Charlie flashes back to instances of lunch at her other schools in Germany, Singapore and Alaska... they're all memories of stilled lunches spoken in broken English. Charlie is amazed at the girls' camaraderie, in fact, she realizes she's never had a girls group of 4 black girls. Charlie starts to feel very self-conscious and out of her league at the comfort and ease the girls have with each other.

Charlie tries to break into the girls' groove as they chat about music. Charlie exclaims, "I know how to play the Hurdy Gurdy! It's like a German violin." The girls stare at her. Uh oh, silence. The color fades from the room and the lunch table suddenly grows 20 feet long. This is it. The

moment Charlie screws up her first day of school. But instead, they all laugh! “You better show us sometime, girl!” Charlie smiles. She’s in.

Charlie goes home excited about possibly having a friend group. Her mom asks how the day went and she said it “went perfect,” and she has to be careful or she’ll mess it up. Her mom reminds her it’s okay if it’s not perfect, things happen.

The next day the girls are at P.E. playing basketball. Bea doesn’t really play, while Cara is a natural. That’s when Nola breaks down their friend group for Charlie. “Bea is the politician aka the bossy one. Cara is the sporty one and I’m the trendy, coolest one.” Cara rolls her eyes. Nola asks Charlie, “What are you?” A swath of images passes through Charlie’s mind: her favorite manga, her favorite food is kraut strudel, her favorite thing to do, go fishing in Alaska. None seem interesting enough and even lame, so Charlie says “I don’t know... um everything?” trying not to say the wrong thing.

Charlie spends all of her math class on her phone taking BuzzFeed quizzes trying to figure out what type of friend she is... all she knows is if she were an animal she’d “be an armadillo... cool, thanks BuzzFeed.” Charlie gets in trouble after she’s caught on her phone by the teacher. She’s so enveloped in googling quizzes and astrology sign traits, she can’t hear the teacher call on her. The teacher sends her to the principal’s office. On her way there, she runs into Nola who asks what she’s up to. Charlie embarrassingly tells her she’s being sent to the principal’s office for using her phone in class and Nola proclaims, “Oh, you bad girl. I’ve never been friends with a bad girl.”

A light bulb goes off in Charlie’s head. That’s it. She must be a bad girl.

After school, the girls meet up and Nola demands that Charlie tell the rest of the girls what happened at the principal’s office. We see a flashback to the moment she walked in. She was quiet, obedient and took a warning after agreeing to never do it again. However, Charlie looks into the girls’ eager eyes and decides to indulge their curiosity. She hears echoes of Nola saying, “Oh, you bad girl,” Charlie tells them she told the principal to “Get over it.” When the principal told her if she does it again she’d be expelled, Charlie said she replied, “Sure, whatever. Like, I care.”

They girls go absolutely nuts that Charlie had the guts to do that. They are impressed and admit they could never. Charlie is high off the attention. Nola invites everyone over to her mom’s salon. Charlie is stoked! She got asked to hang out after school.

Charlie goes home to change before going to the salon. She rummages through her things and throws into the closet anything that doesn’t seem like a bad girl would have. Her mom asks her, “what’s up?” She tells her she’s found the perfect group and discovered her type. She’s just making some changes. Her mom doesn’t approve.

At the salon, the girls have a ki. Things are going great until one of the hair dresser’s son, Rob, walks in. Suddenly, Bea jumps up and rushes to the back of the salon. Nola and Cara follow. Rob ponders, “Why do they always do that?” Charlie replies, “Beats me.” Rob introduces himself to

Charlie and she introduces herself. They have a little chat and Charlie is stoked to have made another friend. Could this week be going any better?

Suddenly, Charlie feels something is stabbing the back of her neck. She turns to see Bea staring at her with angry daggers. Is Bea so mad, Charlie can actually feel it? Nola tells Charlie that Rob is Bea's crush. The "R" to the "R+E" written all over Bea's notebooks.

Charlie tries to explain to Bea she wasn't flirting, she was just trying to make friends. Bea is so pissed and doesn't buy it. She tells Charlie she could never trust her anyway, she's a bad girl, she should have known.

Charlie goes home mortified. It's all lost. She ruined her friend group. Charlie tries to convince her dad to move again, somewhere, anywhere – she tries to convince her mom that she's a genius and should skip a grade, but these attempts to disappear from school forever fall on deaf ears.

The next day at school she's iced by the girls. Charlie catches up to Cara in the hallway to plead her case. Cara tells her that the other girls know she didn't mean anything by it, but they've known Bea for longer and they've only known Charlie for a day... it isn't personal.

As Charlie laments her aloneness she gets a note from Bea to meet her after school behind the gym. Charlie dives deep into the recesses of her imagination to decipher what this means. Is it a trap or maybe an intervention? No, it could only mean one thing. Bea wants to fight her.

Charlie meets Bea behind the gym. To her surprise, Bea apologizes to Charlie. Bea could tell that the other girls were bummed out about ignoring Charlie, and if there is ever a gauge about what is the right thing to do, it's listening to her two besties. To all of their surprises, Charlie confesses why she really went to the principal's office. In fact, she's not a bad girl at all! She's a dork who likes manga, the Hurdy Gurdy and German dumplings made of sour kraut. The girls are puzzled. She tells Bea, "It's like an empanada made of pickles," to which Bea replies, "Eww."

They all forgive her and ask her to go to the salon after school. Charlie is ecstatic and tell them she'll settle for being the nerdy one. They tell her she doesn't have to be anything. She can just be Charlie.

Tone:

Comedy is going to play a big factor in framing a lot of the dilemmas the girls find themselves in. As we navigate complicated situations that face the average 13-year old, we'll handle it in a light and fun way, while honoring the real emotions an average 13 year-old would face. It's super important to ground these character's reactions in very real emotions, in order to connect with our audience, while providing a comedic angle that helps them see through the ordeal.

There will also be space to strip comedy out of a situation and have dramatic or tense moments, such as a relative passing away, heartbreak, or falling out with a friend. These moments would never overwhelm the show but provide enough balance to keep the show grounded, while elevating the nature of the show to expand its audience.

Arc of Season:

The story arc will provide a storyline that will start in episode 3, 4 or 5 and progress until episode 10. It will feel like each fun and compelling episode of Curlfriends is part of a larger story. By episode 10, it will feel as if we've traveled with these characters. It'll be bookended by a compelling cliffhanger that will get us excited for the next season of the show.

Each season will have one main story arc that will play out over the 10 episodes. The following is a list of a few possible story arcs, that can be worked, shopped and expanded through development:

1. Nola's mom's salon is failing. Because Nola's mom can't keep up with the bills and rent, she moves them into the back room of the salon. Cara, Charlie and Bea find out she's living there. Nola is embarrassed and Charlie feels guilty because her dad's business is going well.

Nola, Charlie and the girls have to wrestle with image, money, poverty and helping.

Nola's mom needs to move back home 2 hours away to save money, but Nola doesn't want to leave school so she moves in with Charlie to finish off the school year. It's rough. Charlie got a best friend this year, but didn't expect a new roommate. Charlie has never had a sister, and is only child. She grapples with sharing her space.

2. Bea learns that her grandmother is having immigration issues. Her Grann's paperwork was incorrectly filed and her status has been compromised. Bea is embarrassed and struggles talking to the girls about it because she's not sure they would understand. The girls find out and do everything they can to help Bea and her family. Bea's grandmother is ultimately deported.
3. Now that Charlie's parents are settled down in one place, some marital problems are starting to fester. The details of the problems are a total mystery to Charlie, though she can sense something is wrong. Her parents' issues, such as talking behind closed doors and silence during breakfast, are big changes in Charlie's life that she tries to decipher with the help of her Curlfriends. The Curlfriends all have different familial experiences: Nola is with a single parent and Cara's parents are already divorced. We see what it's like to endure a storm in a marriage from a young teen's perspective and her demands to be recognized and have a say in her mom and dad's choices. Her parents eventually are fine by the season finale. They just had a rough patch.
4. Cara plagiarizes a poem she's assigned to write for English class. She thinks it's not a big deal, but it blows up to an even bigger deal when her teacher submits her for a national poetry contest. She's awarded and then asked to recite the poem in front of the City Council. Over the course of the season Cara deals with her shame, concocts plans to avoid a mess and also comes to terms with confessing, all with the help of her Curlfriends.