

SAMPLE

ON THE BLADE

Screenplay

by

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Story by

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Inspired by true events

Registered WGA

EXT. FROZEN POND - DAY

New England. Snowy branches fringe the perimeter. Sun glints off the ice. The air is still.

Sounds SMASH the silence. A GANG of 13-year-olds scrimmage, hockey sticks battling, shouting and skating rough.

On a bench, a small boy laces up his skates. He's LITTLE TONY RUSSO, 10 years old. Eyes bright with anticipation, he pushes out onto the pond. He starts to drill slap-shots into a wall of snow, stealing glances at the bigger boys, hoping they'll see. If they do, they don't seem to care.

LATER

The sun has set. The older boys are gone. Dejected, Little Tony skates off. He sits and pulls off his skates. Then reaches under the bench. His boots aren't there.

TOUGH KID (O.S.)

Baby can't find his baby shoes?

Behind him, a TOUGH KID holds up a pair of small boots.

TOUGH KID (CONT'D)

Ew. They stink. Like baby shit.

He hurls them onto the ice. Little Tony tenses, then starts to rise. A shove sends him to his knees. He doesn't move.

TOUGH KID (CONT'D)

Whatsamatter? Baby can't get up?

He starts to rise again. Another shove knocks him flat. His face hits packed snow. And now, the big boys move in...

FAT BOY

Come on, he's a little kid!

TOUGH KID

Shut your pie hole, Fatty, or you get it again.

He kicks Little Tony, hard. The others join in. And as each kick lands, Little Tony whimpers, fighting not to cry...

Finally, they're done. Above him, a new face appears.

TALL KID

Get up.

Little Tony hesitates, then stands, socks in the wet snow.

TALL KID (CONT'D)

You want it?

Little Tony nods. Tall Kid pulls back his fist. Tony winces. But the fist only nicks his shoulder. Respect.

Hands slap his back and shove him around. A beer can snaps, gushing foam. Tony swigs, then wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. A cheer goes up as Tall Kid raises Tony's arm like a champ. And through his pain, Little Tony smiles.

VARIOUS SPORTSCASTERS (V.O.)

In New England hockey / Hayden looking
to regain the Division One title / But
after last year's defeats-

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT (THE PRESENT)

Sports clips continue on the television above the bar.

LOCAL SPORTSCASTER

... I don't envy Don Gosek. He's got a
tough road ahead.

ON TV: COACH DON GOSEK, 50, rinkside, sharp-eyes a game. He's powerfully present yet tightly coiled.

TONY RUSSO, now 18 and a field of energy, cruises in like he owns the place. With him are VINNY (Tall Kid), BUCK (Tough Kid) and FATTY (Fat Boy), all grown up.

VINNY

Lou - four cold ones! Starting
tomorrow, our boy Tony's playin' for
Hayden!

(grabbing Tony in a head lock)
Always knew he was down with a stick.
Who knew he was a brainiac?

He knuckle-rubs Tony's skull. Grinning, Tony shoves him off.

BUCK

He's gonna start goin' a-Noopaw...

TONY

I ain't goin' to Newport!

FATTY

Fulla shit, Russo.

VINNY

Will be, after he starts brown-nosin'
Coach Gosek. Your snout's gonna be so
far up his ass...

Tony grins. Vinny pulls out an envelope, fat as a fist.

TONY

Vinny...

VINNY

From all of us. Bucky's aunt even pitched in. Make it last.

He slips it in Tony's jacket. Tony clench hugs him.

VINNY (CONT'D)

Yo, Brianna! Wanna get with a Hayden stud?

Vinny pushes BRIANNA, a townie waitress, into Tony's lap.

BRIANNA

You guys are so screwed...

VINNY

You mean, he's so screwed!

FATTY / BUCK

Woaaaaahhhhhh!

As Brianna nuzzles his neck, Tony's all smiles.

INT. RUSSO HOME. TONY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Junior trophies. Team photos. Clippings from local papers tacked up on a board. On top: "Waltham's Pride Picks Hayden."

Tony finishes packing. He thumbs the worn twenties in the envelope, puts it in his duffle and zips it up. But for the first time, he seems unsure. He sits on the edge of the bed.

MARSHA RUSSO, 40s, a tomboy mom with a cross on a gold chain, passes with a laundry basket. She stops in the door.

MARSHA

Tony. You're as good as any of them. And if they don't think so... you prove it.

EXT. HAYDEN YARD - DAY

Duffle bag over his shoulder, Tony moves through imposing iron gates... into a grand yard with ivy-covered dorms.

SKATES, STICKS AND POWERFUL BODIES

- rush along the ice.