

The Big One

By

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The part of "Art" written for  
Mark Tierno

The part of "Bud" written for  
Richard Rauh

EXT. FISHING PIER - DAY

ART EMERSON (50s) saunters along a dinky wooden dock. He has a thin, bony frame and wears a blue trucker cap.

BUD REILLY (60s) follows closely behind. He has a round figure and a bald head.

Each man has his own tackle box in one hand, cooler in the other, and a collapsible lawn chair tucked underneath one arm.

In perfect harmony, both men set down their equipment, unfold their chairs, and sit down, facing off the side of the pier.

A beach shoreline extends to our left. Calm water to our right. A seagull SQUAWKS in the distance.

Art examines his fishing rod. It is a rusty, beat-up antique. Just before he makes his first cast of the day, his attention is drawn to Bud. Art watches with curiosity.

Bud opens a fancy red tackle-box. He removes a mysterious black handle from his case. With a swift flick of the wrist, it extends several feet outward to reveal a bright red telescoping fishing rod, the Ferrari of fishing gear.

Bud glances at Art matter-of-factly, with some traces of smugness. Both men cast out their lines at the same time.

Art leans back in his chair and inhales deeply. However, his relaxation is immediately interrupted by the sound of Bud REELING IN HIS LINE vigorously.

Bud unhooks a fish of impressive size. He places it in his cooler, which sits beside Art's empty cooler.

Art watches in silent awe. The two men cast their lines again.

Art wears a face of determination. However, his focus is broken by the familiar REELING SOUND. Art turns to Bud.

A second fish is tossed into Bud's cooler.

Art and Bud exchange glances. They both cast again.

EXT. FISHING PIER - DAY - LATER

A group of seagulls gathers on a docked rowboat.

Art and Bud sit with their fishing lines in the water.

We hear the sound of a LINE TUGGING at its reel. Art rolls his eyes and looks to Bud. Bud stares back. After a beat, Art realizes it is his rod making the noise! He reels in his line furiously. His catch: a TINY FISH no bigger than a potato chip.

Art's cooler is still completely empty. He tosses the tiny fish inside and shuts the lid. Bud's cooler rests beside it, filled to the brim with fish.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Art drives a antique Chevrolet pickup truck down a country road. Bud reads a newspaper in the passenger's seat.

CLOSE ON the truck's rear tire, bouncing along the road.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The truck drives onto a bridge with a river running beneath it. There is a loud POP followed by muffled FLAPPING SOUNDS. Art slows the truck to a stop.

Bud looks up briefly, then returns to his newspaper.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Art pumps the truck up with a car jack. We see Bud's prized fishing tackle box as Art reaches for a wrench from the truck.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Art has finished bolting the new tire in place. The old tire rests upright behind him. Art stands up to wipe the sweat from his brow. He backs into the old tire, causing it to roll away.

Art turns. He watches the tire roll between the railings of the bridge and fall out of sight.

He rushes to the railing and peers over. The tire hits the surface of the water below with a distant SMACK!

(CONTINUED)

Meanwhile, Bud is oblivious, absorbed in his newspaper.

Art returns to the truck. He places the car jack into the back of the truck. Bud's bright red fishing case catches his eye. Art stares at it. Contemplates.

Bud reads in the truck. Behind him, outside the window, Art creeps up to the bridge railing. He looks to see that Bud is not watching. Art spins around in a wild circle twice with Bud's tackle box in his hands. After picking up momentum, he releases the case and watches it fly over the railing.

Art returns quickly to the driver's seat. The truck accelerates away.

Bud's tackle box floats silently in the river below.

INT. ART'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Art holds the tiny fish he caught up in the air so that it looks like a much bigger trophy fish, hanging on the wall.

Art squints with one eye, distorting his face to envision the massive fish on the wall.

He lowers the tiny fish. There is a decorative wooden frame hanging on the wall. It has no fish on it, only the words "The Big One" below it in gold lettering.

Art sighs longingly. He plops the tiny fish into a frying pan, making a SIZZLE.

EXT. FISHING PIER - DAY

Art strolls to his usual spot on the pier with his gear in-hand. He turns around.

ART'S POV:

Bud stares blankly into the back of the truck. He scratches his head. Looks at Art. Art shrugs.

Bud joins Art on the dock. They unfold their chairs and sit. Art offers his rusty old fishing rod to Bud, who reluctantly accepts. Bud casts out. Art watches intently.

Nothing happens. Bud looks at Art, reels in and casts again. Still nothing. Silence. Both coolers are empty.

Before Bud casts for a third time, he notices something in the distance. He stands up and walks off the dock to get a closer look, never taking his eyes off of what he sees.

Art stops smiling and stares.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Bud continues walking. Washed up on shore is his bright red TACKLE BOX. Waves of water sweep around it. Bud looks back at Art. Art is speechless.

Bud opens up the case, pulls out his bright red telescoping fishing rod and extends it expertly. It still works perfectly. Art sits back down in his chair, defeated.

EXT. FISHING PIER - MOMENTS LATER

Bud returns to his chair. He hands Art the cheap, rusty rod he had borrowed. Both men cast out.

A silent beat.

We hear a LINE TUGGING at its reel. Bud's eyes shift to Art.

Art pulls on his line, hesitates a moment, then starts reeling in frantically. The men make brief eye contact. Art continues reeling in, his eyes glowing with excitement. His rod bends intensely from the pressure. As he pulls his catch out of the water, excitement fades.

At the end of his line is the POPPED TIRE from the day before.

INT. ART'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A slab of beef PLOPS into a frying pan with a SIZZLE.

Art inhales the aroma with delight. He looks up to his wall.

The popped tire is mounted on the decorative wooden frame. The golden letters beneath it spelling out "The Big One."

THE END