

## THE BIG ONE

Original Screenplay - No Dialogue  
by Nicolas Hurt

EXT. FISHING PIER - NOON

ART EMERSON saunters along a dinky wooden pier with BUD REILLY closely following. Each has their own tackle box in one hand, cooler in the other, and a collapsible lawn chair tucked underneath one arm. Art reaches what seems to be their usual spot and both men, in perfect harmony, set down their equipment, unfold their respective chairs, and sit ever-so-slowly such that they are facing off the side of the pier.

We can hear a seagull in the distance as they face the water with their backs to us. A gray rocky shoreline extends outward to their left with the calm Atlantic Ocean to their right.

VIEW ON ART

Seventy years old, with a thin, bony frame. He wears a blue trucker cap that says "Crusty's Tackle Shop." His content eyes scan the horizon from behind a pair of thick glasses.

VIEW ON BUD

Also seventy, with a face that looks even older. He has a set of scowling eyes and a large, bulbous figure. A thin strip of white hair wraps around the back of his head from ear to ear, leaving the rest of his head bare.

Art is examining his fishing rod, a rusty, beat-up antique. He is about to make his first cast of the day when his attention is drawn to Bud on his left.

Bud is opening a fancy new tackle-box unlike anything Art has ever seen before.

Art observes with silent curiosity.

Bud removes a mysterious black handle from his case, and 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. Then both cast out their lines at the same time.

Art inhales deeply and leans back in his chair as if to prepare for a relaxing day at the pier. However, this is interrupted by the sound of Bud reeling in his line vigorously.

Bud is now unhooking his first catch, a fish of impressive size, and placing it in his cooler, which is right beside Art's. This whole time Art is watching in silent awe. He reels in his line and they again cast at the same time.

This time Art wears a face of determination. His eyes focus on the tip of his rod, but then we hear that familiar reeling sound. Art continues staring straight ahead for a moment, then turns to Bud.

VIEW on Bud's cooler, as a second fish is thrown into it. Art's cooler is still empty.

There is another exchange of glances. Then both cast again.

EXT. FISHING PIER - AFTERNOON

A group of seagulls gathers on a rowboat docked nearby.

Both men sit waiting with their lines in the water.

Art rests his head on his hand, staring mindlessly. We hear the sound of a line tugging at its reel. Art rolls his eyes and looks to Bud. Bud stares back. After a moment, Art realizes it is his rod that is making the noise, and he excitedly stiffens. He reels in his line furiously, and then stares at his catch: a tiny fish no bigger than a potato chip.

Bud tries sincerely to hold back laughter but is unsuccessful.

VIEW on Art's cooler, still completely empty. The tiny fish is tossed in and the lid is shut. Bud's cooler rests beside it, filled to the brim with fish.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SUNSET

Art is driving a pale yellow 1976 Chevrolet pickup truck down a two-lane country road. Bud is in the passenger's seat reading a newspaper, his head bobbing with the bumps of the road.

CLOSE ON RIGHT REAR TIRE bouncing and kicking up dust.

EXT. BRIDGE - SUNSET

They enter onto a very highly elevated bridge with a four-lane highway and a wide river running beneath it. We hear a loud POP! followed by muffled flapping sounds. Art slows the truck to a stop.

Bud looks up only briefly and then returns to his newspaper. Art gets out and walks around the back of the truck to see a popped tire. He scans the contents in the back of his truck and selects the car jack and a spare tire.

VIEW on Bud's prized fishing equipment case as Art grabs these items from the truck.

EXT. BRIDGE. MINUTES LATER

Art has finished bolting the new tire in place. The truck is raised by the car jack, and the old tire rests behind him upright. As Art stands up to wipe the sweat from his brow, he backs into the old tire. As he turns, he can only watch as the tire rolls in between the railings of the bridge and falls out of sight. Art rushes up to the railing just in time to see the tire hit the surface of the river below with a distant SPLASH!

Art backs away from the railing slowly and returns to the truck. Bud is oblivious to all of this, absorbed in his reading. As Art returns the car jack to its place, Bud's bright red fishing case catches his eye. Art spends a decisive moment staring at it.

Bud is still reading in the truck. Behind him we can see Art creep up to the bridge railing then look to see that Bud is not watching. Art spins in a wild circle twice with Bud's tackle box in his hands. After picking up sufficient momentum, he releases the case and watches it fly freely over the railing.

Art returns quickly to the driver's seat and accelerates away in his truck.

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

INT. ART'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE on the tiny fish that Art caught earlier. Art is holding it 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 and we see 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 drops the tiny fish into a frying pan, making a sizzle.

EXT. FISHING PIER - NOON

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

HIS POV:

Bud staring blankly into the back of the truck. He scratches his bald head, then walks onto the pier without his fishing equipment case.

Art shrugs dramatically to him. After both chairs are set in place, Art offers his rusty old fishing rod to Bud, who reluctantly accepts. They sit down at the same time ever-so-slowly, and Bud casts out. Art watches intently.

Nothing happens. Bud looks at Art, reels in and casts again. Still nothing. Just silence.

Art reveals a wide grin, hoping that Bud will notice. However, while he does this, Bud notices something in the distance.

Bud stands up and walks off the pier to get a closer look, never taking his eyes off of what he sees.

Art directs his eyes to what Bud is looking at. He stops smiling and just stares.

Bud is now on the beach, walking to what he sees. Sitting in front of him, clear as day, is his bright red tackle box. It has washed up on shore, and waves of water are still sweeping it back and forth on the beach. Bud looks back at Art, who is now standing, speechless.

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

Bud returns to his chair and hands Art the cheap rod he had borrowed. Art takes it silently, and they both cast out.

Both men sit and wait. A moment of silence passes.

We hear the familiar noise of a line being tugged on its reel. Bud's eyes shift to his right.

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 wrestles his catch onto the pier, excitement fades.

It is his popped tire from the day before.

INT. ART'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE on a slab of beef being tossed into a frying pan.

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

VIEW ON THE POPPED TIRE mounted on the decorative wooden frame with gold letters beneath it spelling out the words "The Big One."

THE END