

Sporting Goods

by

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DESCRIPTION

What can touching "sports-approved flesh" lead to?

CHARACTERS

- Two wrestlers, male, Joe and Jim—they should be mid-30s, but they are portraying wrestlers in high school.
- If possible, a third actor should be added as the referee. (However, this script is written without the third actor)

SETTING

- A high school wrestling match

TIME

- Present

SOUND

- A kind of muted crowd roar, played very low, to underscore the action. (Or any other sound/music effects the director feels would work)

MISCELLANEOUS

Two white towels, one on each side of the wrestling area.

During the play the two actors will wrestle, though in a very stylized way and not in "real time": moves do not have to be continuous, sequences can be broken up, and so on. In essence, it should be choreography. They speak, but never to each other: the sense should be that the words are their unspoken thoughts while the "real time" wrestling is taking place.

The wrestlers should dress as if they were at a meet. (The use of helmets is optional)

* * * * *

In the dark the sound of a crowd at a wrestling match—shouts, encouragement, etc.—comes up. The two wrestlers enter and stand opposite each other. The lights come up. They shake hands.

The First Round

JOE

At seventeen they would only allow me to lay my hands on sports-approved flesh—

They take their first pose: JIM on all fours, JOE with his hands in preparation on JIM.

JOE

—which licensed my rude friction and fumbling—at seventeen, I wrestled with such painful abundance.

They begin.

JIM

Man, he's quick for a goddam pansy.

JOE

All public, authorized—such possibility—

JIM

Fuck, shit, he's got my—

JOE

The coach shouting with a rough ecstasy—

JIM

(their faces come close)

Man, I wish these fuckers would shave!

JOE

—as if he were in love, like me, with these bodies arch and vibrating.

JIM

Ease into the grip, feel for a lull, a forgetfulness—

JOE

I am certainly in love.

JIM

—find the opening, then slide into it—there is always a giving in—

JOE

These bodies electric.

JIM

Shit, missed it—! It's like he knows what I'm thinking.

JOE

I know what you're thinking.

They pause and both look stage right, as if at the referee. JIM slaps the floor. They break.

* * * * *

The Second Round

As JOE gets on all fours.

JOE

On the mats, such pure erotic blessing—but in our daily hallways—

JIM puts his hands in preparation on JOE.

JIM

No more fucking tricks.

JOE

—we passed unedited. I suspected, him suspecting me, nothing voiced.

They begin.

JIM

All right—got him!

JOE

No hard proof, everything sensed below the radar.

JIM

Sometimes catch him forgetting—

JOE
He does not like feeling these feelings—

JIM
All right, you fucking fruit—

JOE
—that fall outside his daily hallways.

JIM
—watch this!

JOE
He thinks he has me bound. He doesn't know—

JIM
Hey!—

JOE
—I know his embrace better than he does—

JIM
Hey!—

JOE
—because I desire it.

JOE slips behind JIM.

JOE
Love is slick. Like the sweat in your hair.

JIM
How can he—

JOE
(whispering into his ear)
Love below the radar is fast and strong.

They pause and both look stage left, as if at the referee. JIM slaps the floor. They break.

* * * * *

The Third Round

They begin this in a standing position.

JOE

This is our last pose, friend, last chance. After this, our souls are stamped.

They begin.

JIM

If I can just—

JOE

Don't—for the moment, forget the game.

JIM

Fake a knee drop—

JOE

Believe the report of our bodies—

JIM

Wait for his distraction—

JOE

—carving out this space, together.

JOE moves behind JIM into a full nelson.

JOE

This intimate tangle, rude friction and fumbling—don't let them steal it away so quickly! Remember it!

JIM slides into a half-nelson, but JOE won't let him free.

JOE

Whenever again will we cross the borders so freely, our bodies the only necessity, bearing such fluid passports?

JIM slides free and faces JOE.

JOE

There is grace in our grinding weights. Don't let them. Don't let them.

JIM

This match isn't going to me, is it?

JOE

Not if we're lucky.

They lock again, and JIM more or less allows himself to be pinned but also cradled. They look out to their front, as if at the referee; JIM slaps the floor. They break. Crowd sounds out. They get their towels and wipe off sweat and come back to center stage. They go through a choreography of all the ways guys can touch either other in approved ways: they embrace in that "squeeze-hug" way men have, shake hands, mock-box, high-five, etc. It should start out jocky and jokey, but as the exchanges occur, they can slow down and take on more meaning between them, though it never descends to the frankly sexual: suggestion, not demonstration. They do a final handshake. As JIM leaves, JOE slaps him on the ass, in the approved sports manner.

JOE

I never forgot.

They look at each other. JOE exits.

BLACKOUT