

Shining Son

A biopic narrating the rise, fall, and survival of an infamous
1936 sports legend.

Hoofbeats pound in rhythm with your racing heart. Adrenaline coursing through your veins, as if in unison with the thoroughbred beneath you. Rounding the final turn, you are neck and neck with War Admiral, the favorite to win the race. The commentator frantically shouts updates into the microphone that he grips with white-knuckled anticipation.

On the straightaway, all motion seems to slow. The nostrils of the beast you ride flare with each exerted breath, until you stop on the other side of the finish line. Looking up, you watch the top contender ride into the distance. Sweating and glass-eyed from strained focus, you find yourself being lifted into the air. A hand thrusts a chilled mint julep into your trembling fingers. You stare at the glass bewildered, watching condensation drip onto the sandy ground. A moment passes as bright oxygen-filled bulbs flash and pop while journalists jockey for position to capture a photo of the 1936 Triple Crown winner.

Your manager slyly replaces the mint julep you had been given with a glass of milk. It was widely known that you were in favor of the prohibition. Even though the law had changed, your reputation stood for being a man of honor and being beyond reproach.

Still coming to terms with the fact you just won the most important race of your life, you toast towards the crowd of cheering fans and take in the moment of glory. You question if this was a dream until you feel the heft of the trophy you were presented. Your distorted reflection peers back from the silver-plated victory cup as you hold it high above your head, a monument to your achievement. The sun glares off the metallic facade causing you to squint...

The light shifts as the familiar thumping of the guard's baton beats against the cell door as he shines his flashlight in your eyes. "Come on, time to get up. You wouldn't want to miss your parole hearing".

You slide your feet off the cot you had used as a bed for the past 5 years. You take a moment to get your bearings after being so abruptly brought out of your reminiscence of your glory days. Yesterday's lunch still sits on the floor, a stale baloney sandwich that has now become the interest of a well-nourished four-legged resident of the Kentucky State Penitentiary.

The parole board reviewed your conviction, a bar fight that took place the same evening as your triumphant victory. A juxtaposition of circumstance where you had been at the wrong place at the right time. Even though the events of that fateful evening resulted in permanently injuring a drunken patron and earning you a trip to prison, you take solace in the fact you prevented that man from killing one of the workers after they accidentally spilled a drink on them.

The conclusion was read, and your release issued. Hours later you squint into the blue sky, once again a free man.