

Writing Sample "Blister"
by Linda Barsi

Blister

By

Linda Barsi

Writing Sample "Blister"
by Linda Barsi

** Here are the first 10 pages of a high school,
coming-of-age feature spec script I wrote. **

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK - EARLY MORNING

We hear DRIVING MUSIC. The sun has just come up over an empty track field. Silver bleachers gleam under the morning light. A GIRL - lean and fiercely muscular - runs up the steps.

We get closer: She starts running them two at a time, faster and faster - she runs up, she runs down. This is RILEY SLATER (16) and this is her therapy.

A bell RINGS.

CUT TO BLACK:

The title card appears: **BLISTER**

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

In an overcrowded hallway, Riley walks, trying to ignore everyone. A loner if you've ever seen one.

She walks by a TRACK GIRL, wearing a bright track team shirt.

TRACK GIRL

Ugh, don't look now.

A young woman with a statuesque frame, an athletic body, and long luxurious hair turns and looks. This is NAOMI EDIN (16).

NAOMI

Good. I won't.

Naomi glares at Riley as she walks away.

Riley looks away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Students sit in class, half listening to their TEACHER.

TEACHER

One week of school left, people.
Try to stay focused for me.

Riley, not paying attention, stares at --

(CONTINUED)

A boy. He sits diagonally in front of her. As if sensing her, he turns around to reveal a piercing set of eyes and an impossibly symmetrical face. So cool, yet so fine. This is DEVON (16).

He keeps staring. Riley can't look away.

TRACK GIRL (O.S.)

You want to study with me later,
Devon?

It's the track girl from before. He turns to her. She gives Devon a flirty smile.

DEVON

Sure.

Riley looks away.

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT EVENING

Outside at night, Riley walks by a fence.

A high school track and a CHEERING CROWD are on the other side. Thinking about it a moment, she climbs the fence.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK BLEACHERS - MINUTES LATER

The stands are packed. The lights are bright. Naomi walks on to the track with a goddess-like vibe. This is her scene.

Riley sneaks underneath the bleachers where all the students sit.

From Riley's POV: We see Naomi crouch at the blocks.

A YOUNG MAN in the bleachers above Riley shouts --

YOUNG MAN

C'mon, Naomi! Show 'em who's boss!

The gun FIRES.

The sprinters take off.

Students cheer and the young man KNOCKS OVER a soda. It splashes on Riley. She keeps watching --

GREEN GLOWING NUMBERS speed by on a race clock. The track noises fade as Riley watches... Finally the numbers freeze:

It reads: **24.20 SECONDS**

(CONTINUED)

The silence in Riley's head is shattered by CHEERING.

Track girls rush to hug Naomi, who knows she's won.

Riley writes Naomi's running time on her hand: 24.20. She walks away from the track. But as she does --

Naomi, still standing amidst her fans, turns in time to see Riley walk away. She GLARES at her.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

The next morning, a BELL RINGS. Riley walks quickly to a side entrance of the school, running late. Then suddenly --

GUY (O.S.)
Hey Riley!

Riley's hit with a RED WATER BALLOON. Then another. And another. She's covered in RED DYE.

The GUY and his FRIEND laugh and run off. Riley's left there to drip. Naomi walks over.

NAOMI
(fake nice)
That's a good look for you.

Naomi keeps walking.

INT. SCHOOL - MINUTES LATER

Riley walks into an empty hallway, looking redder than a strawberry. She rings out her shirt.

Devon, too cool to care if he's late, SHUTS his locker. He sees Riley. He stares.

Riley, mortified, turns a corner.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - THAT NIGHT

RILEY
AGH!!

It's dark out now on a deserted dirt road. Riley punches air aggressively, like a boxer.

(CONTINUED)

RILEY

GAH!!

Wearing running clothes, she kicks the air karate style.

A car pulls up. A young man in a Catholic school polo gets out. This is SAM MOLLOY (16), a handsome, well-kempt boy with an unfair amount of charisma.

SAM

Hey! Sorry. Dad had to "have a talk" with me. Apparently my pants were "too tight" again for St. Mary's. I think they mean "too gay," but, you know.

He laughs, then sees Riley isn't laughing. She swings a punch at air again.

He claps his hands together --

SAM

So! Shall we get started?

Riley hands him a stopwatch.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Sam stands by the side of the road.

SAM

On your mark!

200 yards down, Riley crouches into race position, full of focus.

SAM

Get set!

He sets the watch with a BEEP.

SAM

GO!

Riley SPRINTS.

She runs.

She crosses him.

He hits the stopwatch.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Nice, girl! Twenty-four,
twenty-five.

But Riley's not pleased.

RILEY

I need twenty-four, twenty.

She turns back.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Riley WHOOSHES past Sam. He hits the stopwatch.

SAM

Twenty-four, twenty-four.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

She WHOOSHES past him again. He hits the stopwatch.

SAM

Twenty-four, twenty-three.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

She WHOOSHES past him. He hits the stopwatch.

SAM

(grimacing)

Twenty-four, twenty-five.

RILEY

NO!

She KICKS the dirt.

SAM

Riley, calm down. Maybe it's just
not happening tonight.

RILEY

It has to!

Sam gives her a look.

SAM

Alright. What happened today? Why
is there fruit punch on your neck?

RILEY
It's not fruit punch. It's dye.

SAM
What?

RILEY
I got hit with balloons filled with dye.

SAM
That's messed up.

Riley sits down on the dirt. Sam joins her.

SAM
At least tomorrow's your last day.
Riley, with mock enthusiasm --

RILEY
Yes, then I get to go to move in with Aunt Julia and go to the hippie private school in her town an hour away.

Riley picks up a rock and chucks it.

SAM
(trying to help)
At least you can run track there.

RILEY
Yeah... running track at a school known for its agricultural club before its track team. I'm sure that's what colleges want to see.

She sighs.

RILEY
I mean, who knows! Maybe the sprinters at hippie schools are just as mean.

Riley gets up, and begins kicking a rock down the road. Sam follows, his hands in his pockets.

SAM
Why do you think she hates you so much?

RILEY

If I had to guess, I'd say beating her in a race the first day at track tryouts probably didn't help.

She KICKS a rock.

RILEY

That's when the hazing started.

SAM

That's crap.

RILEY

I just thought it was going to be different, you know? High school.

SAM

Tell me about it.

RILEY

They talk it up, say it'll be the best years of your life - You'll party, make out for the first time, be young and alive - but none of it happens.

She kicks another rock. They're quiet for a beat.

SAM

Hey.

Riley looks at him.

SAM

You want to run it again? One last time, before you move off to hippie town?

Riley smiles.

RILEY

Sure.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Sam BEEPS the stopwatch.

Riley closes her eyes, getting ready.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

GO!

She sprints. She WHOOSHES past him. Sam hits the stopwatch.
A smile spreads across his face.

SAM

Twenty-four, twenty, baby.

He HIGH FIVES her.

Riley is supremely out of breath, but she smiles.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

At her locker, Riley packs up her belongings, putting books
and binders in a box.

Down the hall Devon is at his locker. They make eye contact.

Suddenly a CHIPPER GIRL comes up to Devon. Riley looks away.

CHIPPER GIRL

Devon! I was just talking to my
cousin and her friend who are going
to be in town this weekend. Would
it be *too much* to ask if they could
come to your party tonight?

DEVON

Of course not. Everyone's invited.

Then, loud enough for Riley to hear easily, almost as if he
wants Riley to hear --

DEVON

Just come to twenty, sixty-nine
Sycamore Ave. tonight at eight.

CHIPPER GIRL

Awesome! Thanks Devon!

Devon looks at Riley.

Riley SHUTS HER LOCKER and walks away, alarmed.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Riley turns a corner in the school and dials on her phone.

SAM (O.S.)
What's up?

RILEY
Can you meet me after school?

INT. SAM'S DEN - LATER THAT DAY

Sam sits on his bed, fully alert.

SAM
And he just practically shouted his
address?

Riley paces in front of him.

RILEY
It's probably nothing.

SAM
Uh. No. Nothing is what happens to
my love life every day. *This* is
something.

RILEY
Sam, we're reading too much into
this.

SAM
(gleeful)
He said *everyone's* invited.

RILEY
I know, but...

Riley sits on the bed.

SAM
But what?

RILEY
She's going to be there.

SAM
Who?

Riley gives him a look: "You have to ask?"

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Oh...

They're quiet for a beat. Suddenly Sam gets up.

SAM

You know what? To hell with her!

RILEY

Sam, no. I can't-

SAM

But you can, Riley!

Riley sighs.

RILEY

Sam...

SAM

You said it yourself. You haven't done half of the things in high school you wanted to.

Riley nods. She did say this. Sam gets up close to Riley, looking her in the eyes.

SAM

(quietly)

I swear you won't regret this.

A beat. Riley closes her eyes, and then opens them.

RILEY

Fuck it. Let's do it.

Sam could not smile any bigger.

SAM

That's what I'm talking about!

INT. NAOMI'S CAR - SAME NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Naomi's face -- frowning. She sits in her car with her friend, TRACK GIRL.

NAOMI

You heard her say WHAT??

TRACK GIRL

Something about going to a party.

Naomi takes a swig of a bottle in a paper bag.