

The Astros by Brianna Russell

Tensions rise in Dressing Room Four of the Bay Arena, as the Ascension Astros prepare to face off against their rivals, the Carbonear Cardinals, in the final championship game of their high school hockey careers. Following a group of young men with everything to lose, *The Astros* is a cautionary tale of small-town cycles of abuse, Canadian hockey culture, and the violence of masculinity.

TLDR: What happens when a high school hockey instigator punches the sh** out of the rival team's captain at an underage bar fight the night before their final championship game? *The Astros*, that's what.

After their team enforcer, Scott, gets into an underage bar fight with Laundry, the illusive and charismatic golden boy of the Carbonear Cardinals, the Astros are forced to play their championship game to a packed arena of locals waiting for the two to duke it out on the ice. All the level headed captain, Eddy, cares about is winning, which can only happen if Scott agrees to play nice. Assistant captain Paul vies for more time on the ice, biding his time until next year when he'll be running the place, while left wing Vincent just wants to impress a girl he invited to the game. And the goalie, Geoff, just wants to play some good ole fashioned hockey. Who cares if some blood has to spill?

Told in three vignettes as the team returns to their changing room between periods, *The Astros* captures what it's like to be a 17-year old Canadian boy on the cusp of becoming a local legend. Their girls are in the stands. They're wearing their dad's numbers. And in a few short weeks they'll all graduate and never see each other again. If everything goes right, they will go down in local history with a generational run and the championship. But knowing these guys? Nothing is going to go as planned.