

# Violent Limb Part 1

*by* Aaron S.

Before the new arm, I used to sit outside the players' facility and wonder, in between the throbs of pain pulsing sickly through my temples, how much longer I could be a hockey player. How much more abuse my body could take. I thought about the agent's offer.

"I want to see you taking scalps. You'll be the first with this technology, and you'll dominate." The doctors were willing to pay for it, just to have a guinea pig.

I resisted. With every fiber of my pride I resisted. I trained harder, got stronger. I kept getting tattoos, trying to force my body to keep the iron way. But it didn't matter. The nerves were degenerating. Every time I flexed my right arm, watching the muscles twist the dark ink covering my skin, the pain seared white veins of lava through my skull. *Keep your fucking stick on the ice*, I told myself.

My family had to eat. My pride couldn't stop that.

"Take the arm, Kai," said my wife, laying in bed one night after our boys were in bed and I told her about the offer. "Show them your fire."

I'll never forget that first game. The first hit was a crushing blow that smashed another man into the boards of the ice rink, a big guy named Hoknar. I thought I used about half the power of the prosthetic, but it looked like he had a hard time gathering his marbles. He needed help getting off the ice the next time, after I felt his ribs crack like green sticks. The arm just kept feeling better with each hit. Like it wanted me to commit violence.

And violence was committed. The arm didn't just hit, it shot too. I scored more goals in the next 6 games than my entire previous season, when I'd had 9. When I held the championship trophy high over my head, blood dripping from my beard, I knew joy again. I knew victory.

