

THE EDGE
By Mark Bellusci

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CAST:

DIRK: Male, 20-40. Any size, as long as he acts tough. Dressed in athletic warm-up suit. Speaks in clipped pattern: think, the Human Hulk.

COACH: Male or female, anywhere from mid 20's on.

ANNOUNCER: Male or female. Classic ringside announcer. Think, Michael Buffett, the announcer who trademarked, "Letttt's get rrrready to rrrrrumble!"

MYRON (or MYRA) LESKY: Small, scared, mousy man or woman.

SCENE:

A Lockerroom.

AT RISE:

Offstage applause. DIRK enters. Beat, then COACH enters.

COACH

Great game, Dirk.

DIRK

(Arrogantly.)

Yes, Dirk had game face on.

COACH

Well, you're going to need it again in about ten minutes.

DIRK

What?? How can Dirk keep such a grueling schedule?

COACH

I know, I know.

DIRK

Believe or not, even the Dirk is human.

COACH

I'll try to buy some time. Either way, don't worry. It's just a game.

DIRK

Just a game??

COACH

You try your best and--

DIRK

Oh, woe is Dirk. To call this a mere game is to blaspheme the--

COACH

Just trying to calm you down. So relax.

DIRK

Easy for you to say. You are not under magnifying glass like The Dirk.

COACH

Look, you're down to nine minutes, so ...

DIRK

Dirk will recline to conserve energy.

COACH

Good. And I'll try to push the schedule back.

(COACH exits. DIRK paces.)

DIRK

World is against Dirk. But Dirk cannot let world win. Dirk will do what Dirk must.

(HE pulls a small bag from his locker, pulls out a syringe and sticks it into his thigh.)

Yes, Dirk is revitalized. Strong. DIRK WILL SMASH!

(COACH barges in.)

COACH

Hey I just bought you five more minutes to--

(Sees DIRK with the needle in his thigh.)

Oh my God--

DIRK

Dirk demands privacy!

COACH

Buddy, your days of demanding anything are over.

DIRK

You no understand what it's like to be ... the Dirk.

COACH

How could you do it, son?

DIRK

Dirk does what it takes to win. That is what has been taught to Dirk.

COACH

No! You were taught to compete hard -- but fair. To be the best because of your talent -- not that crap.

DIRK

As if Dirk has any choice, with back-to-back competitions.

COACH

Well, don't worry about that now, because you're pulling out.

DIRK

Pulling out?

(He laughs)

Dirk finds coach funny. As if Dirk's Denizens would stand for that.

COACH

This is more important than your crazy fans. Dirk's Denizens will be Dirkless.

DIRK

Doubtful.

COACH

Definitely.

DIRK

Damn!

COACH

Disappointing. Watching you go from the fast track to the junk heap.

DIRK

Think Dirk did this by himself?

COACH

Calling it like I see it.

DIRK

Then take off blinders. See how Dirk's Denizens deluge destinations, demanding to see Dirk dazzle. See how league overworks Dirk to push ticket sales. How other puny players will do anything -- and take anything -- to deliver Dirk's demise.

COACH

(Sarcastic.)

Poor Dirk. A superstar life in hell.

DIRK

Dirk's cross to bear.

COACH

Well now it will be easy for you, because you're out.

DIRK

Not possible.

COACH

You don't think the league will let you continue after I report *that*?

(Pointing to syringe.)

DIRK

No!

COACH

Sorry, but some of us still believe in the sanctity of the game.

DIRK

Dirk does, too. The game as it is played today.

COACH

The game as it always has been played. And I will not stand by and let it be sullied by anyone - even its superstar.

DIRK

(Gets on his knees.)

Dirk is groveling.

COACH

Sorry, son. I have no choice.

(Turns to leave.)

DIRK

Neither does Dirk.

(DIRK grabs COACH in a bear hug.)

COACH

Hey! Let go of me!

(DIRK locks COACH in a locker or closet. COACH pounds the inside of the locker as DIRK exits.)

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2:

A table with a chessboard and stop clocks. Two chairs.

AT RISE:

Lights come up halfway.

ANNOUNCER

(In an animated, boxing ring announcer voice.)

LLLLLLLLLLLLradies and gentlemen, hhhherrre is your challenger:

(LESKY is shaken by the voice.)

Hailing from Spionk, New York, and weighing in at 143 pounds, with a record of eighteen wins, five losses and three draws: Introducing the Knight-to-e-three thrasher: Mmmmmmmmmmyron Lesky.

(Crowd boos. LESKY is now scared.)

Annnnnnd now. The man you've been waiting for ...

(Crowd cheers.)

He hails from parts unknown, weighing in at weight unknown, with a perfect record of 26 and 0, including eight submissions and three knockouts --

LESKY

Knockouts?

ANNOUNCER

Hhhhhhhhere is your Westchester chess league champion: Dirrrrrrrrk the destroyer!

(DIRK enters and flexes for the cheering audience. HE then points menacingly at the shocked LESSKY. DIRK sits down, still growling.)

No more hesitating, itttt's time to beeeeeee checkmating!

(The crowd roars. LESKY cringes.)
To start the match, the champion has the honor of flipping the ceremonial coin. The challenger will call it.

(DIRK pulls a coin from his pocket and gets ready to flip it. HE then growls at LESKY, who shrieks.)

LESKY

Hhhh - heads!

(DIRK winds up and flips the coin, which travels so high, it never comes down.)

ANNOUNCER

For the seventh time this month, Dirk the Destroyer has lost the ceremonial coin, which means that the challenger is awarded the first move.

(Crowd boos. DIRK howls in agony and returns to his seat, where he growls menacingly at LESKY, who recoils in horror.)

ANNOUNCER

Thirty seconds, Mr. Lesky.

(With the crowd booing and DIRK growling, LESKY makes the first move with a very shaky hand. He then steadies his hand long enough to hit his clock.)

Ooooh, a bold Knight-to-C3 stomp. And now, the move of your champion, DIRRRRKKKKK the destroyer!

(DIRK stands and flexes. The crowd roars. LESKY recoils. As part of his flex, DIRK randomly takes a piece and moves it.)

Wow, a powerful pawn-to-e4!

(Crowd roars. DIRK then winds up to hit his clock. He hits it so hard that the entire chess table overturns. LESKY pulls back so suddenly, he falls off his chair. HE then runs offstage, screaming in fear.)

Submission after only two moves: it's a new Westchester chess challenge record for the winner -- and stilllllllll champion -- Dirrrrrkkkkk the destroyyyyyyerrrrr!

(Crowd roars, DIRK does a flex victory dance. Crowd chants his name. COACH enters, unseen by DIRK, and whispers to ANNOUNCER. COACH is holding a urine sample flask.)

Ladies and gentlemen, a challenge has been lodged by The Dirk's former coach. Allegations have been made ...

(DIRK looks scared as COACH approaches, presenting the flask. DIRK recoils in fear, shaking his head.)

ANNOUNCER

According to league rules, refusing a drug test results in permanent expulsion.

(Crowd boos. Instead of taking the offered flask, DIRK pulls out a small bottle of yellow liquid.)

DIRK

(Pleading.)

Dirk brought his own?

(COACH shakes head and points to the flask, then to DIRK'S crotch. DIRK reluctantly takes the flask and cries. HE slinks offstage. Spot up on COACH, who turns to the audience.)

COACH

Sorry you had to witness this sordid, seedy side of sport. People like that: paid to be centerfolds in Extreme Chess Challenge and Pimp My Chessboard while they decimate chess history. These muscle-laden losers have already destroyed the time-honored sports of checkers, tiddly winks and playwriting. Well I, for one, won't let them destroy ours. So to all you steroid sycophants - and I see your bulges out there - beware ...

(He pulls out a flask.)

The cup cometh.

END