

ALPHA

– a one-act by Daniel Curzon

CHARACTERS (3):

DIRK, a friendly TV announcer, male, any age

SMASHER, an aggressive, bullying TV commentator, male, any age

VOICE, over PA, male, any age, overly dramatic

SETTING: Bare stage. The two characters are looking out at the audience, as if at a Mixed Martial Arts octagon. When they sit, they sit on two tall stools.

LIGHTS UP on DIRK with a microphone.

DIRK: Hi there, ladies and gentlemen. Dirk Peabody here. How you doin'? Have we got a series of MMA matches for you or do we not?! Glad to see you! Our top match tonight is between the Number 1 contender, Billy (“In Your Face”) Baluna, the pride of the Philippines, and Chuck (“Eat This”) Kalashnikov, the pride of Pismo Beach, California, and the Number 2 contender for the UFF Heavyweight Title of the World! Can't wait! Joining me in the broadcast ringside tonight is a newcomer, whom I also can't wait to introduce: Smasher Masterson!

(SMASHER slides in next to DIRK, also with a microphone.)

SMASHER: Great to be here, Dirk.

DIRK: Can you believe this?! This is Smasher's first time announcing an MMA bout. So go easy on him if he stammers. (Laughs.)

SMASHER: Actually, I did some announcing for my college back in the day. But not as big as this, of course. I am so grateful to be a small part of this.

DIRK: Well, we're looking forward to having you aboard, Smasher. I'm sure you'll be just fine.

SMASHER: And I did win a title in MMA myself at the collegiate level.

DIRK: I saw that match! You were terrific.

SMASHER: You're kind. Isn't he kind, folks?

DIRK: Oh, looks like the octagon announcer is ready! So over to Fred Fluffer.

VOICE: (over PA, overly dramatic) Ladies and gentlemen, we are *live*! For our first match, fighting out of the red corner, weighing in at 125 pounds, standing 5'1” inches tall, and hailing from Our Lady of the Million Martyrs, Brazil – (screaming) *Jose Flavio Marcello Dos Anjos!*

(Crowd cheers: Sound effect.)

DIRK: (now sitting on tall stool, to SMASHER) He's looking in good shape tonight, is Dos Anjos.

SMASHER: Really? I think he looks a little fat. But maybe it suits him.

VOICE: (over PA, overly dramatic) And fighting out of the blue corner, weighing in at 126.4 pounds, standing 4' 9" inches tall, and hailing from Pork Belly, Mississippi, (screaming) *the reigning, undisputed, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious Sherman ("Warthog") Plebe!* (quieter) And our referee is Big Ted ("Yermamma") Yamasuki.

DIRK: Here we go! Our first match – three five-minute rounds for the Number 3 contender spot in the Flyweight Division! Are you ready, Smasher?

SMASHER: Ready!

DIRK: Here we go! It's good to have Big Ted Yamasuki back with us at last. That bout of malaria almost did him in. But thank God he's recovered.

SMASHER: Really? He looks a little thin to me.

DIRK: Well, he made weight – from the malaria!

SMASHER: Is that supposed to be a joke? Referees don't have to make weight.

DIRK: Yeah, it was a joke.

SMASHER: Okay, if you say so.

DIRK: (chagrined) I thought it was funny.

SMASHER: Look at that leg kick from Plebe!

DIRK: You're right. Dos Anjos's leg is red. Look at that calf!

SMASHER: I'd say it's more his shin bone than his calf.

DIRK: Maybe it's a little of both.

SMASHER: No, it was the skin bone.

DIRK: Whatever it was, he's limping.

SMASHER: Oh, he hurt him! He hurt him, Dirk.

DIRK: Indeed he did. Dos Anjos tagged Plebe right on the bridge of his nose.

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SMASHER: And he's staggering. He's hurt. He's hurt! Now he's recovering.

DIRK: Now Plebe's looking for a take down.

SMASHER: But he doesn't have it. He doesn't have it!

DIRK: You're right. Dos Anjos evaded that take down like a champ.

SMASHER: Plebe's going for another take down attempt!

DIRK: He's almost got it.

SMASHER: It reminds me of the time I took down Killer Kelly Kawalski my junior year. He never got up again.

DIRK: You killed Killer Kelly?

SMASHER: I don't want to brag, but yep I did.

DIRK: From a take down?

SMASHER: He hit the back of his head wrong somehow. Nice guy. . . . Oh, he's stuffed it! Dos Anjos stuffed that take down again!

DIRK: Wizzer! Wizzer!

SMASHER: That's not a wizzer.

DIRK: Sure it is.

SMASHER: Not a real wizzer.

DIRK: You think I don't know what a wizzer is?

SMASHER: A lot of guys call it a wizzer, but it's not the official definition.

DIRK; (to audience) Isn't it great that we have Smasher on the program now, to enlighten us all?

SMASHER: I hate it when people use the wrong terms, especially wizzer.

DIRK: Oh, there's an nasty elbow!

SMASHER: I think it just glanced him.

DIRK: I heard a crack.

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SMASHER: I didn't hear anything. Your hearing must be better than mine.

DIRK: You think?

SMASHER: No!

DIRK: (shivering) It's freezing in here.

SMASHER: You're cold?

DIRK: Aren't you?

SMASHER: Never been cold a day in my life. Guess it's my hot blood.

DIRK: They've got the temperature too low in here. Or could a door be open somehow?

SMASHER: I'm sweating! (Removes a sweater.) God, it's hot in here.

DIRK: You must have thick skin.

SMASHER: Just normal man skin. Oh, look! Dos Anjos just lost his mouthpiece.

(The mouthpiece bounces onto DIRK.)

DIRK: Oh, Christ! Sorry, folks! The mouthpiece flew out and hit me. Gross! (He finds the mouthpiece)

SMASHER: You afraid of a little mouthpiece?!

DIRK: It's been in his mouth!

SMASHER: I swallowed my mouthpiece once.

DIRK: No way!

SMASHER: I did. It was delicious.

DIRK: Did you get sick?

SMASHER: No way.

DIRK: Did you digest it?

SMASHER: Some of it. The rest, shall we say, emerged victorious.

DIRK: Uh, gross.

SMASHER: You got to be prepared for anything and everything in this sport.

VOICE: (over PA system) Will the person who caught Dos Anjos's mouthpiece please return it to the referee?

SMASHER: (taking the mouthpiece from DIRK) Hey, it should be like a foul ball in baseball – a goddamned souvenir! (Starts to hand it back, then throws it behind him.) Sorry, we lost it!

VOICE: (over PA system) No, you didn't! You threw it away! Those things cost money!

SMASHER: Get him another one! Geez!

VOICE: (over PA system) You're going to pay for that!

SMASHER: What a bunch of pussies!

VOICE: (over the PA system) Does someone happen to have an extra mouthpiece? We don't seem to have any others up here.

SMASHER: (to DIRK) Got an extra mouthpiece, champ?

DIRK: No.

SMASHER: (to audience) Anybody got a mouthpiece you don't need, preferably unused?

DIRK: You're asking the audience?!

SMASHER: You're *not* asking the audience? The match can't go on without the mouthpiece.

VOICE: (over PA system) Never mind! The referee found one.

SMASHER: Make sure it's nice and clean and germ-free!

DIRK: (to TV audience) I'm sorry for the delay in the action, folks. It shouldn't be much longer.

SMASHER: Why are you apologizing? It wasn't your fault.

DIRK: I realize it wasn't my fault. I'm just trying to soothe the audience. (Stands up, trying to placate the stadium audience) It won't be long, folks. It won't be long.

SMASHER: You afraid they might start booing?

DIRK: Frankly, yes.

SMASHER: Let 'em boo. Bunch of crybabies!

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DIRK: You'd better not take on the audience.

SMASHER: You think I can't beat their asses?

DIRK: I'm sure you can. Just don't tonight.

SMASHER: (off his stool, to audience) You think I can't beat your asses, every one of you?

DIRK: Smasher!

SMASHER: With one hand tied behind my back!

DIRK: Smasher, cool down.

SMASHER: (mockingly) Cool down! "I'm too cold. I'm not cold enough!"

DIRK: Get back on the stool.

SMASHER: Will I keep my cool if I sit on the stool?! Hey, I'm a poet! A virtual Percy Bitch Shelley!

DIRK: (correcting) Bysshe.

SMASHER: What did you just call me?

DIRK: The poet's name is Percy *Bysshe* Shelley.

SMASHER: You'd know.

DIRK: What?

SMASHER: You know your Percies.

DIRK: Whatever that means. I think Round 2 is about to start. (Points back at the octagon.)
(under his breath about SMASHER) Byshhe.

SMASHER: Are you still freezing?

DIRK: Pretty much.

SMASHER: Well, I'm burning up. (Starts unbuttoning his shirt.)

DIRK: What are you doing?

SMASHER: Cooling down. Isn't that what you want?

DIRK: Just don't take your clothes off.

SMASHER: You shouldn't take yours off, that's for sure.

DIRK: I'm not planning to.

SMASHER: Oh, he hurt him! That uppercut hurt Plebe!

DIRK: I missed it.

SMASHER: Of course you did. Plebe's still groggy. He's smiling at Dos Anjos, but it's fake. He's dizzy.

DIRK: Plebe is recovering. He's got Dos Anjos up against the cage. Look at that dirty boxing!

SMASHER: I hate dirty boxing. It's boring!

DIRK: It's not what the crowd likes, but it's the best part of MMA. You wear out your opponent. Takes real skill.

SMASHER: I want to see a knockout. My grandma can do dirty boxing!

DIRK: Oh, Plebe took him down. He's mounting Dos Anjos! He's mounting!

SMASHER: No, Dos Anjos is almost out. He's going the back way!

DIRK: No, Plebe is in half-guard. Now he's mounting him again. Look at that ground and pound.

SMASHER: What a chin on Dos Anjos! He's barely feeling that ground and pound.

DIRK: Oh, Dos Anjos is bleeding! That elbow from Plebe cut his forehead. Look at that blood!

SMASHER: It's not going into his eyes. That's good.

DIRK: The referee is taking a good look at that cut. He's bending down.

SMASHER: Dos Anjos is free! He's free!

DIRK: Yeah, but he used the referee to get up.

SMASHER: It may not be legal, but it was not illegal. And it was brilliant!

DIRK: It was definitely illegal. If you can't hold onto the fence, you can't hold onto the referee!

SMASHER: Says you. It was brilliant!

DIRK: There's an eye poke from Dos Anjos!

SMASHER: The referee is calling for time out. No way! Plebe is just pretending to have been poked in the eye.

DIRK: Then why is he blinking like mad?

SMASHER: He barely got touched.

DIRK: He should take the whole five minutes he's allowed.

SMASHER: No, he shouldn't. It's just an excuse to catch his breath.

DIRK: He's practically blind!

SMASHER: Are we watching the same match?! I think you're practically blind!

DIRK: You could clearly see Dos Anjos's middle finger go into that eye.

SMASHER: Some guys need a middle finger.

VOICE: (over PA system) Ladies and gentlemen, the referee has called for a time out and called for a doctor to examine Dos Anjos's right eye.

DIRK: That looks pretty bad.

SMASHER: I've seen worse. And that match went on. I think our fighters are getting soft.

DIRK: The man is obviously suffering.

SMASHER: Why does he go into MMA if he can't take the heat?

DIRK: He's taking the heat. He's taking a lot of heat.

SMASHER: Maybe it's too cold for him, up there in the ring. His poor little eye can't take it.

DIRK: You can't stick your fingers straight out anymore. I think it's a good rule.

SMASHER: Can't do this, can't do that. They're taking the Martial out of Mixed Martial Arts. What next? Body armor? Crash helmets?

DIRK: Maybe they should fight to the death!

SMASHER: I'd go.

DIRK: I'm sure you would.

SMASHER: And I'm sure you wouldn't. . . . Bysshe.

DIRK: Stop calling me Bysshe.

SMASHER: Sorry, Percy.

DIRK: And stop calling me Percy.

SMASHER: Sorry, Dork. I mean Dirk.

DIRK: What's wrong with you?!

SMASHER: There's nothing wrong with me.

DIRK: All right, all right, That eye seems to have recovered. We're ready to go!

SMASHER: Of course Plebe is rested now.

DIRK: He's still blinking!

SMASHER: What he needs is a sock in the eye.

DIRK: Maybe it's you who needs a sock in the eye.

SMASHER: Oh yeah? You think you can do it?

DIRK: Smasher, I don't think you're going to work out in this job.

SMASHER: I don't think it's up to you. And from what I hear, they want a real announcer. Whether you know it or not, you're gonna be fired.

DIRK: What?! You're full of –

SMASHER: Trust me. You're on your way out.

DIRK: How come you know so much more than I do?

SMASHER: Could it be because I'm more on top of things than you are?

DIRK: Like hell you are!

SMASHER: Don't lose your cool now. You don't want to lose your Percy status.

DIRK: My Percy status is just fine, thank you.

SMASHER: So it's true then. You like to be grounded and pounded – especially pounded.

DIRK: Okay, I've had enough.

SMASHER: Funny, what I hear is that you can never have enough.

DIRK: How long do you think I will take this?

SMASHER: As long as I give it, I guess. (Smirks.)

DIRK: I have a little gift for you, Smasher.

SMASHER: I can't wait. Flowers?

DIRK: Yeah, flowers. (He finds a large rubber mallet and bangs it on SMASHER'S head) How do you like *that* ground and pound?

SMASHER: Ouch!

DIRK: You dizzy? How about a poke in the eye? (Pokes SMASHER in the eye.)

SMASHER: Hey! That hurt!

DIRK: How about this?! (Grabs SMASHER from behind.) How do you like my rear naked choke, huh? And I'm not even naked!

SMASHER: Stop! . . . Stop!

VOICE: (over PA system) Ladies and gentlemen, never mind Dos Anjos and Plebe. Down there we have the fight of the year!

DIRK: (choking SMASHER from behind) How you feeling now? What are you now, huh? Say it!

SMASHER: No!

DIRK: Come on, say it! You're my what? Huh? What are you? Say it! Say it, Percy!

SMASHER: Okay, okay . . . I'm your Bysshe.

VOICE: (over PA system) And we have a winner!

BLACKOUT