

FINESSE

Written by

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Escapists (c) 2016

2nd Draft

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FADE IN:

INT. CAGE - NIGHT

The fenced in blood stained ring sits surrounded by a packed and raucous arena.

DING! DING!

Three men in black short sleeve button downs with black vinyl gloves place a red stool up against the cage and a bucket beside it.

A man in zebra print and blue trim trunks plops down. His chest expands and retracts rapidly. Blood rushes from multiple cuts above the brow. The red mess leaks past a swollen face and all the way down to the mans sternum.

Meet the champ...

FINESSE JACKSON, twenty-nine, the middleweight's corner men work on him like a pit crew on a Chevrolet SS. One delivers water, the other smears petroleum jelly over cuts and rubs cold steel over swollen eyes, the other rubs his shoulders, arms, and legs.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

You wanna be the man, dontchu? The one in the movies and the late night talk shows, right?

MALE VOICE 2 (V.O.)

No doubt. But I want to show em I'm the best by beating the best. That's why I need the Calderone fight.

Finesse stands as the cornermen take the stool and equipment out of the cage.

MALE VOICE 2 (V.O.)

I need more than the belt. I need to be legit.

Finesse bounces on his toes. He nods to the ref.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Then we have a problem...

DING! DING!

MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
...we have a big problem.

The man in zebra print brings his hands up, ready, and pushes ahead.

INT. HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

EARLIER THAT DAY

Two men sit in a spacious living room with a minimalist style.

One of the men, Finesse Jackson, sports a flawless face. He sits on the couch, his MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP on the glass coffee table in front of him.

To his right sits a well dressed man in his mid fifties. NATHANIEL RUZE, the mid fifties male across from Finesse says;

NATHANIEL  
We need you to fight Danny Bruhmmmond.

Beat.

FINESSE  
Hell no.

NATHANIEL  
You scared of Bruhmmmond?

FINESSE  
He's ranked seventh and was knocked the fuck out in the first in his last bout.

NATHANIEL  
He's also a pretty boy that's bringing in viewers by the boatloads based off his willingness to fight anyone.

FINESSE  
Willingness to fight anyone? That means he's reckless.

NATHANIEL  
He's entertaining.

Nathaniel lets that sink in.

NATHANIEL  
We need a show, a war.

FINESSE  
You want me to draw out the fight...

NATHANIEL  
Not necessarily, we just need to have  
a dramatic fight. Not a bout, not a  
exhibition, a fight.

Nathaniel leans in.

NATHANIEL  
That's where the money is. Fans care  
more about the fights and how they  
unfold. Now, what we found out is  
people will respond more positively  
to a dog fight between two no names,  
than their fave who wins by decision  
on a regular. This gives us  
options --

FINESSE  
I'm out then. I don't want any parts  
of a fixed fight.

Nathaniel rises from the couch, snatches his championship  
strap and turns to leave.

NATHANIEL  
You don't play ball, they'll find you  
full of holes in Black Rock waiting  
to become another cold case.

Finesse stops on a dime.

NATHANIEL  
We need you to make Bruhmmmond look  
strong throughout. Get the crowd  
behind em before you turn on the  
pressure in the fourth.

FINESSE  
What's all this 'we' shit?

NATHANIEL  
Never mind that. Do the job, we  
triple profits on the rematch.

Finesse stands speechless.

NATHANIEL  
Nice chattin' with ya, now get the  
fuck out.

After a moment, Finesse does as he's told.

INT. CAGE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

POP! POP!

Finesse eats two jabs from...

DANNY BRUHMMOND, thirty-six, the blonde haired blue eyed  
opponent of Finesse.

Finesse shuffles out of Bruhmmond's reach.

Bruhmmond stalks and lays into the body of the champ.

The man in zebra print slips to his opponents right, which  
forces the challenger to pivot.

Bruhmmond reaches for the plum as his thumb pokes Finesse's  
eye.

The middle aged REF calls time.

The Ref checks on Finesse.

REF  
Change of plans, boss needs you to  
force a draw.

Finesse shoots the ref a look, then looks to his opponent.

REF  
Says a rematch after a draw will  
quadruple the profits of this fight.  
Bruhmmond's up on the scorecards, you  
need to win the round.

The Ref gestures for the fighters to go back to their  
corners.

Finesse looks to the crowd and finds Nathaniel with a half  
plastic half silicone blonde. Nathaniel winks at him.

Finesse takes his time as he chews on that gesture by the man with the yellow haired floozy.

The ref claps his hands once.

REF

Fight!

The fighters meet in the middle of the ring. Bruhmmond throws a barrage of strikes that Finesse evades with stunning fluidity.

The crowd pops at the display of defense.

Bruhmmond smiles and pushes forward.

Finesse throws his back against the fencing and drops his hands.

Bruhmmond, like a shark who smells blood in the water, launches fast blows to the body and head.

The champ guards his body and keeps his head on a swivel. Bruhmmond dispenses thirteen shots and hits a whole lotta nothing.

Nathaniel's face scrunches in anger.

The challenger pushes the champ against the cage, but the champ slips out and delivers a three hitter quitter that floors Bruhmmond.

The fans erupt.

Bruhmmon stays on his back and invites Finesse into his guard. Finesse jogs away, the ref stands up Bruhmmond.

The clincic continues...

Finesse puts on a defensive and counter-striking clinic. The title holder makes Danny Bruhmmond look like...the seventh ranked fighter in the division.

With six seconds left, Finesse side steps Bruhmmond's right straight, and fires a looping right hook that crash lands right on the button.

Bruhmmond's muscles turn off from the vicious right hand. His body collapses to the mat at the final bell.

The crowd roars.

Finesse takes his mouth piece out and raises his hands. He points to Nathaniel...

and winks.

Naathaniel sits stoically.

Slow motion replays loop on the monitors around the arena.

The RING ANNOUNCER walks to the center of the ring. The ref flanked on both sides by Jackson and Bruhmond, the fighters wrists in the officials hands.

RING ANNOUNCER  
After this five round war, we go to  
the judges score cards for the  
decision. McMichael sees it forty  
nine-forty six, Bruhmond...

Part of the crowd pops.

RING ANNOUNCER  
Burke, forty eight-forty seven,  
Jackson...

The other part of the crowd cheers.

RING ANNOUNCER  
And Campuzano scores it forty seven-  
forty six. For the winner...and  
STILL--

The fans mixed reaction damn near rips the roof off its damn hinges.

Finesse falls to his knees, and throws his arms up in celebration.

FRONT ROW

Nathaniel rubs his grey beard and chuckles to himself. He pokes at the cellphone held in his lap.

A sharp as a straight razor Italian man...

CAVALCANTE, sixty-eight, lays his hand on Nathaniel's shoulder.

The Italian man brings his mouth close to Nathaniels left ear and says;

CAVALCANTE

We had a deal you squirrley sonuva bitch. Jackson forces the draw.

NATHANIEL

Well, obviously he eeked out a fucking decision.

CAVALCANTE

Don't get sassy you greasy fuck. There's plenty of space out in Black Rock for two timin fucks, you don't start saying something I wanna hear.

Nathaniel squints his eyes at the phone and smirks.

NATHANIEL

The rematch stands to make more than previously thought. It's looking to quadruple the amount this fight did.

CAVALCANTE

What?! He just fuckin' beat Bruhmond. I just seen it with my own eyes.

NATHANIEL

By split.

Cavalcante stands and stares at the back of the cocky bastards head.

NATHANIEL

Our projections show your profits quadruple, guaranteed, on the rematch. We quoted you a tripling of your money, now we guarantee you more.

CAVALCANTE

That's the thing, you said that with this one. I need your word that this thing multiplies my money by four.

NATHANIEL

You want a guarantee? Listen to that reaction. That's not just these people part happy, part pissed about the decision. It's them unsatisfied, it's them begging for the rematch. It's the sound of your money multiplying.



Cavalcante chuckles to himself, he leans back down.

CAVALCANTE  
Send me the details.

Cavalcante stands and nudges his way through the crowd.

Nathaniel watches Finesse with a shrewd smile.

END