

The Big Race

Written to support a talk on "the Costs and Pitfalls of Leadership."

Themes:

Costs

Fatigue

Sacrifice

Underappreciation

Temptation

Pitfalls

Self-pity

Isolation

It's all up to me (indispensability)

Sin (giving in) → competition and quitting

Characters:

Betty Buff

Manly Mike

Coach

Sports Announcer

Setting: Triathlon with 2 athletes, their coach and a sports announcer covering the event. Ideally, we'll have actual bikes for the bike leg and wear some costume stuff, even down to body marking.

Scene 1

Announcer interviews Coach and 2 athletes as they prepare for the upcoming race

(cue some good Jock Rock type music to introduce the broadcast)

Announcer: Welcome back to our race coverage. It looks like the Big Race is just a few hours away; it's the one these guys have been getting ready for; the swimming, the biking, the running! The sport of Triathlon! This is what it all comes down to, sports fans. Let's see if the athletes are ready!

Here's one of our competitors, Betty Buff. Looks like she's getting her gear ready. Oh, and here's her Coach! Welcome, Coach (Coach enters the scene)
Betty tell us, ARE..YOU..READY!?

Betty Buff: Hey, woah now, back off, mister. Don't you think I've got enough pressure on me without you guys here crowding me? I mean, give me some space here! This is the Big Race we're talking about. Does no one understand this?

Announcer: Okay, easy there, little missy.

Coach: Betty, just want you to know, I think you're definitely ready. I'm right here if you need to go over strategy or anything.

Betty: (annoyed) Alright, okay, gotcha. Just need a little breathing room here. Lot of pressure on me, okay?

Announcer: Wait a minute! It looks like another of our competitors is here getting himself ready for the big race as well! Race day is almost upon us. I tell you, you can almost...SMELL the excitement in the air!

Manly Mike: Uh, well, that might be my lucky racing socks. They're lucky, so I uh, never wash em.

Announcer: Whew...oh yeah, that's definitely what I was smelling.

Coach: Mike come on, I thought we talked about that. Good hygiene, a key to winning?

Mike: Oh...yeah...sorry Coach.

Announcer: Well, lucky socks or not, I gotta ask you Manly Mike: The Big Race is just a few hours away! Manly Mike, are you ready!?

Mike: Well, I feel that this race is a big one with a lot riding on it. But Coach and I have worked real hard in training and I feel ready. I think it'll be a good race.

Coach: You're gonna do great Mike. I'm behind you all the way!
(the racers exit)

Scene 2

Coming out of the water after the first leg of the race

Announcer: (with Coach looking on) Well, we're here at the end of the swim leg and here comes Betty Buff out of the water. Betty, you seem to have a good lead on the pack heading into the transition. How's the race going so far for you?

Betty: (sits down to put on shoes and bike helmet for the bike leg; acts unenthusiased)) Well, the swim would've been a lot better if people hadn't been trying to drown me. I mean, you have no clue how hard I'm working out here! This is grueling stuff!...Alright, time to do my time on the bike...

(Betty rides off on the bike)

Coach: (shouting after him) Keep it up, Betty! You're doing great!

Betty: Yeah, alright! Whatever!

Announcer: Oh, and here comes Mike. Mike, looks like you're back in the middle of the pack.

Mike: (putting on shoes and helmet) Yeah, Coach and I had a little pre-race meeting this morning, and he said don't worry about the competition, don't compare yourself to the other racers, just run your race...and enjoy it. Just keep thinking about the things we talked about in training and we'll have a good race...Right Coach? (gets up to ride off)

Coach: You got it, Mike. You're doing just fine. Keep it up!

(Mike rides off on the bike)

Announcer: (shaking his head, waving his hand in front of his face) Wow. Couldn't get him to give up on those lucky socks, huh?

Coach: He was...pretty insistent.

Announcer: Seems like it.

Announcer: (coach with him) Okay, well, we're quite a ways into the 112-mile bike leg, and things are really cookin. Let's see if we can catch up with them...And don't look now, but it looks like our man Mike has hit some technical difficulties. Fill us in, Manly Mike!

Mike: Well, I was really covering some miles when all of a sudden, and it's kind of a blur now... there was just this blinding flash of fur and teeth leaping out from the bushes!...(sombre) And uh...I think I mighta killed a doggy...(tearing up)I'm not proud of that...(pause, shakes it off) So anyway, I got a flat tire here I'm trying to fix. I've been talking over some strategy with Coach while I fix it. I think I still got a shot at the race.

Announcer: (to the audience) Even with the trauma of a rodent collision, Manly Mike presses on in the race! Let's see if we can catch up with Betty. (goes to Betty who is pretending to ride; Coach goes to join them) Betty Buff! Looks like you've established a good lead here in the bike leg. How are you feeling?

Betty: Wait a second, how can you even interview me? You guys aren't even on a bike or anything!

Announcer: (steps out of character) Uh, Betty, remember we talked about this...It's just a skit.

Betty: Oh...yeah...right...

Announcer: (pauses) So like I was saying, (with intensity)Betty Buff you're in the lead on the bike...how are you feeling!?

Betty: Well yeah, I'm in the lead and all, but I'm just so tired. I mean, my back is hurting from being hunched over on the bike, my calfs are cramping on me, and man, I feel like I'm riding my bike inside an oven! I'm dyin out here!

Announcer: But you're in the lead, Betty Buff!

Betty: Yeah, sure, but I mean, where are my fans, you know? Where are my supporters? I'm having to do it all by myself out here. I got no help. Where is the LOVE, you know what I'm sayin?

Coach: SOMEBODY NEEDS A HUG! Come here to Coachy!

Betty: Gimme some space! I need space! Got a lot of work to do, Coach. You're kinda smotherin me here. Gotta push on. (rides off)

Announcer: Well, things have definitely been very exciting around here, have they not, Coach!

Coach: Wow... What can I say?...Wow.

Announcer: Okay, thanks, Coach. Very exciting color commentary! Well, the race has definitely taken a new twist! Let's find out about it first-hand from Betty Buff! Tell us Betty, what happened?

Betty: Well, it's pretty simple, really. I'm packing up. I don't feel like finishing. No

one sees how hard I'm working out here. My fans aren't being real supportive. So I figured, what's the point? (getting up) I'm just gonna go take some time for me, you know? Drink some lemonade...relax...cause I'm worth it. I don't need all this. (Walks off)

Announcer: Well, this is definitely not the expected outcome for the day. Let's find out how Manly Mike finished the race. Here he comes now! Mike, a top-20 finish, but maybe not the finish you were hoping for today.

Mike: Well, yeah, I would liked to have done better. But it was a great day to race. I love this course. It's a beautiful place to race. And the competition just gets my blood going. It's a real rush to compete.

Announcer: Even with, as they're now calling it, the "suicidal rodent" incident, you're still pleased, Manly Mike?

Mike: Oh yeah. I just want to apologize to that family whose dog I killed...I'm real sorry about that. (breaks up a little, pulls himself together) But you know, there'll be other races. I've got a great Coach and we'll work together to get ready for the next one. It's just a great feeling to be out here.

Announcer - (turns to Coach) Coach, a big day for you on the race course! Your feelings on the events of the day?

Coach - Well, I just really appreciate both these guys. They're both fine athletes.

Announcer - I'm sorry Coach. You mean you're pleased with Betty as well?

Coach - Oh yeah. I see a lot of potential in her. Maybe more than most people see, and definitely more than she sees. Both these guys are tremendous. I love em like they're my own kids. I'm just glad to have em on the team.

Announcer - Well there you have it! Guess that's the mark of a good Coach! Join us next week as we cover the newest in Adventure racing: Off-road, blind-folded, full-speed, down-hill, running in the scorching dunes of the Sahara Desert! WITH NO SHOES!!!! Until then, thanks for watching! (cue music)