

rope-a-dope
nicolas bachofner





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NICOLAS BACHOFNER

ROPE-A-DOPE

a play in 3 scenes

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CHARACTERS

JOSH, former boxing coach

SARAH, young boxer and clubber

TYRONE, dealer

SCENE I

Stage dark. Boxing noises: boxing gloves clashing in various combinations. Then spot on, a corner of a boxing ring, stage right.

Coach in vest and tracksuit, aged 35, crouching opposite a 17-year old girl in full boxing-gear on a stool. She is sweating, breathing heavily.

Sarah. Josh.

SARAH, *furiously*. That damn girl's gone bloody mental, innit? Gave me three or four heavy blows below the belt there. What was she up to, for fu..

JOSH, *shouting, cutting her off*. Oi, calm down now, Sarah. Look at me already, ey. Look at me! D'you get me?!

SARAH, *to the other ring corner, stage left*. You better not do that again, you spineless bit..!

JOSH, *cutting her off again, standing right in front of her so she cannot see the other ring corner*. Will you bloody shut up and listen. She's not worth it.

SARAH, *angrily*. Next time 'round I'll put her in her place, trust me. I'll tear her to pieces!

JOSH. Gosh, get a hold of yourself right now. She had

some dirty punches, I'll give you that. But you gotta keep your defence up. I told you not to drop your left arm, didn't I?

Sarah, *still agitated*. What's that got to do with my defence? She can't box properly, pulling off those dodgy punches all the time. It's not my fault. I dealt out blows left and right, didn't I? Gave her a couple of nice ones. I can see the black eye coming already.

JOSH. Yeah, you pulled off your right quite well, but don't overdo there, you're supposed to not always come with the cross right away, wait for a counter-punch, then go for a nice combo, are you with me?

SARAH, *slowly calming down*. True. Though I keep forgetting about it, dunno why. I could do loads better than that. Somehow I never manage to take her straight down. (*Taking off her head protection*). I don't get to that final uppercut. I should be flooring her in the first two rounds, ain't I? You're meant to help me improve, seen? (*Josh scrutinising her face*). What are you looking at me for like that? Are YOU with me? Josh? What's wrong with you? You look all caught up in something.

JOSH, *all confused and irritated*. What? I was kinda gone, I suppose. It's just that you..

SARAH. What about me? What d'you mean? What's going on?

JOSH. I dunno, for a second I thought ... you're reminding me of someone, I knew.

SARAH. You're talking rubbish. Stop looking at me like that. That's all creepy. Are you going mental as well, huh?

JOSH. Is it possible that you ... ? – (*Turning away from her*). Forget about it, this practice session is over. Go n' get a shower! (*Josh still turning away, stares into nothingness*).

SARAH. 'Over'? What d'you mean over? I got another twenny minutes left! Josh, talk to me!

JOSH, *turning back to her*. Gosh, just leave it OK?

SARAH. You're not talking sense, Josh?!

JOSH, *shouting at her*. I'm telling you, we're finished here. Seriously, sod off! Go, Go!

Spot off. Stage Dark.

SCENE 2

A booth in a Nightclub. Tyrone, aged 27, sits with his legs apart on a L-shaped, cheap leather sofa. Next to him is Josh, obviously confused and slightly intoxicated. Both in clubbing shirts with smart trousers and shoes. Some small packages of pills in front of them on a table.

Tyrone. Josh.

TYRONE, *overly excited*. Blud, what's going on? You alright. You look completely blown away. Though that was only a small one. Gotta love that stuff, whipes you off your feet like proper straight!

JOSH, *still muzzy*. Bloody 'ell, 'Tyrone, I'm all smashed. That stuff is bloody killing me. Was like a real day dream and all that. Thought I was somewhere else. What happened?

TYRONE, *complacently*. You've been looking at the wall like a lunatic, your eyes wide open, not moving a muscle. Defence all down, trust me.

JOSH, *puzzled*. Was I? I felt like I was at ringside coaching, giving instructions... Like back in the days, you know. It was all so real, seriously!

TYRONE, *slightly mocking*. That shit's just gets off your

face, blud. Look at you: You're still on the robes. Good gosh, you were just gone. Well I don't blame you, it's kinda roofies, just that it gives you a nice trip as well, like you've been daydreaming. Though it's hard to proof in a blood test.

JOSH, *impressed*. What the heck? Where d'you get that from? How much is a package for me, bruv?

TYRONE, *patronising*. Some take a hundred fifty quid a package, gonna make it one forty for ya, coz I know we've been close since day, blud. Brand new gear, I'm telling ya. Ships from Thailand, actually; everybody's getting properly wasted on that shit. It's been mashing up the place all over since.

JOSH, *slightly sceptical*. Wow, nice one, mate. Though you told me you had something to party on me for me?! Why would I take a whole one on a proper night out?

TYRONE, *amused*. Uh, to be honest, I wouldn't recommend doing that if I was you; unless you wanna wake up at your gaff in a fag's dress, d' you know what I mean? (*Laughing*). Wanna do another small one to get convinced?

JOSH, *shaking and scratching his head*. Nah, man. I'll rather get shit-faced on some more vodkas then. But thanks, mate.

TYRONE, *puts package back into his pocket*. Alright then. So I'll hit the dance floor to get me a decent lady for tonight. Seen a couple of fit ones already, if they just didn't know they are, they'd be easier to pull. (*Smiling, he gives Josh a small package of pills*). I'll leave you with those ones, but be careful about the filths.

JOSH. Yeah, I know. Don't worry.

TYRONE. Just let me know, when you made up your mind.

JOSH. OK, cheers. Take care.

TYRONE. Catch ya later, blud.

*Tyrone gets up and leaves stage to stage left while spot light darkens.
Josh remains seated until stage is completely dark.*

SCENE 3

In the corner of the night club. Behind a huge white linen, stage left, shadows of people are dancing. Tyrone leans against the wall with Sarah standing next to him. She is in a clubbing outfit, all dressed up.

Tyrone. Sarah. Josh.

TYRONE, *worriedly looking down on her.* You feeling alright, luv? You look kinda tired?

SARAH, *slightly irritated.* No, not all, I'm good really, enjoying the vibe, you see?

TYRONE. OK, what's wrong with you then, darling?

SARAH. Nothing, I'm just looking for my girls. They were here a second ago. Might have gone to the loo, I guess.

TYRONE. You mean the others you was with, earlier? Like the blonde one with the curly hair and them lot?

SARAH. Yeah right, them guys. Have you seen them lately?

TYRONE. I think I saw them near the cloakroom? They were queuing to get their coats, I suppose.

SARAH. What? Why would they be leaving without me?

TYRONE. They had enough? Knackered? What do I know? Didn't they tell ya?

SARAH. No, but it can't be. I'll ring them. Hang on ...

Sarah moves aside, stage left, fiddling with her mobile. Tyrone looks at her first and then reaches into his pockets for a pill which he examines quickly in his palm and then puts away again. Sarah comes back with her phone in hand, turning back to Tyrone.

SARAH. Aww, dammit. No bloody reception in here.

TYRONE, *reassuringly*. Don't worry luv, they'll be fine, won't they? Maybe one of them just had one too many so they left, that's probably all. You'd wanna leave if you're sick, innit?

SARAH. Yeah, maybe you're right.

TYRONE. Listen, luv, it's time to make a move anyway, it's kinda late.

SARAH. Nah, I so don't wanna go yet. Let's get back on the dance floor, dancing!

TYRONE. What for? Nothing really good, is there? Music's lame, the crowd's a bunch of wastemans!

SARAH. C'mon, don't just say that. The up n' comings competition is about to begin soon, there's gonna be a new DJ playing, called Pinju. Should drop some big dubs tonight.

TYRONE. D' you really feel like staying and watching that, luv? We could go n' look for your friends by the entrance, you see?

SARAH, *protesting*. Yeah, I do feel like staying actually. And you just said they'll be fine, didn't you?

TYRONE. Hm, alright, luv. I'll throw in the towel. Let me just get us some more booze then. Gin tonic?

SARAH. Yeah, definitely!

Smiling, Tyrone goes to get some drinks, leaving stage right. Left alone, Sarah fiddles with her phone. DJ Pinju is being announced via the PA system as the next contender in the DJ competition. Tyrone comes back with two drinks in hand.

TYRONE, *handing her one glass*. There you go, luv. Have a big sip.

SARAH. Thanks, Tyrone. What are you having, strong man?

TYRONE. Vodka on ice to get me going again.

SARAH. Ok, cool. Let's finish this quickly and go dancing. They just announced the next ...

Unexpectedly, Josh comes by from stage left, cutting her off.

JOSH, *fairly intoxicated and excited*. Tyrone, man. I've been looking for ya. (*Raising his glass to him, Tyrone raises his reluctantly*). Cheers, bruv. Wanted to give ya a call, though no bloody reception in here.

TYRONE. Cheers ... Aww, yeah right ...

JOSH. Listen, I made up my mind about our little business, yeah. Got a moment for me, then?

TYRONE. I'm kinda busy with another business right now, as you can see. And, I don't wanna leave this nice lady on her own, blud. This'll have to wait till whenever, you get me?

JOSH. Alright. Who's this lovely lady anyway?

TYRONE, *annoyed about Josh's curiosity*. Ahh, man. This is Sarah.

SARAH, *to Josh*. Hi, nice to meet you.

JOSH, *to Sarah*. Hi, you look familiar. Don't we know each other?

SARAH. Sorry? Nah I don't think. I've never seen you before, have I?

JOSH. I thought we might have ...

TYRONE, *cutting him off*. OK, listen. Why don't you just go and take what I gave ya, alright? We'll settle this later, seriously, don't worry, blud.

SARAH. Hey guys. Why don't you just sort your things out and I'm gonna try to text my girls, huh?

TYRONE. Yeah, well, go on.

Sarah leaves stage right, fiddling with her phone again.

JOSH. OK, if you're fine with that. I'll be around again on ...

TYRONE, *cutting him off*. Fine with that?! Fuck that! D' you enjoy messing up my business, blud? I'm just trying to pull that girl and you're putting her off!

JOSH. What d' you mean 'pull'? You're having a laugh! I thought she was one of your punters. I didn't realize I was playing gooseberry. (*Puzzled*). I didn't mean to, seriously. She's fit, yeah, I'll give you that, but bloody 'ell, how old is she? Just don't mug yourself.

TYRONE, *agitated*. ‘Mug myself’? Since when are you telling me who to fancy, blud? Now go n’ mind your business, will ya, or I’m gonna get proper angry!

JOSH, *bewildered*. Wot the heck? Bruv, all I’m saying is she’s a bit young, ain’t she?

TYRONE, *defensively*. That’s none of your business, is it? You better piss off now for you own good, I’m telling ya!

JOSH, *meditatively*. Gosh, no need to go bonkers, is there? You’ve had a fair few shots, haven’t you, that’s all! You’d rather left that girl alone for your own sake, trust me!

TYRONE, *infuriated*. So you can snatch her right away, huh? I ain’t no wasteman! Don’t take the fucking piss, blud!

JOSH, *affronted*. Don’t be a bloody prick! I ain’t no knob, am I?

TYRONE. So you think I am a prick, then. Is that what you’re saying?

JOSH. Stop causing trouble. That’s all I’m saying, mate.

TYRONE, *threatening Josh*. You ain’t even seen fucking trouble yet.

Sarah comes back putting her phone away. Tyrone tries to swallow his anger and backs off a little.

SARAH. You two still ain't finished yet? *(To Tyrone)*. Let's go dancing then as we said, you promised!

TYRONE. Yeah, you're so damn right. Let's leave this tosser here and have some fun, luv.

JOSH, *to Sarah*. If I was you I'd rather try to find my friends. For everybody's sake!

SARAH, *irritated*. What's the matter with you? *(To Tyrone)*. What is this all about?

JOSH, *grabs her arm firmly*. You have no idea, have ya? You'd better left long ago, I'm telling ya!

SARAH. What are you talking about? Let go! *(Manages to loosen his grip)*.

TYRONE, *screaming furiously, he jumps in between the two*. What's ya fucking problem? I'll batter ya! Piss off!

Gives Josh a straight right on his chin, gets hold of Sarah's arm, while she tries to run off stage left.

TYRONE, *to Sarah*. You're going nowhere!!!

*While tumbling backwards, Josh takes a small package of pills
out of his pockets and throws them high up in the air.
Immediately Sarah, Josh and Tyrone are tackled down by six huge
dark figures in black ropes; three of which come from each side of
the stage.*

Spot off.

*Then screams are heard. Off voice says: You're being arrested
under the suspicion of drug dealing ...*