

BIRD VS. DUVALL

Written by

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CAST

BIRD

Boxer in red. A stitch across his right cheek. Heavyweight.

DUVALL

Boxer in blue. Blood-stained gauze taped on his left cheek. Lightweight.

THE ANNOUNCER

Androgenous male. Shorter than both boxers.

[Music cue: "To Defy the Laws of Tradition" by Primus.]

[Lights up to a dim. THE ANNOUNCER skips on stage with the energy of a spry fawn. He begins to set the arena. He pins posts along the edges of the stage and places wooden stools upstage left and upstage right. He rips off two water bottles strapped to his belt and takes a sip out of Duvall's. He violently gags and coughs through the taste. He sets them down by the stools.]

[The Announcer runs off and first pulls on stage BIRD. Lights up. He's yanking his arm all giddy-like, dragging him with his entire bodyweight. Bird keeps toppling. His walking is erratic, and he's hesitant to move ahead like a dog at the vet. The Announcer shoves him onto his bench.]

[The Announcer runs off again and pulls out DUVALL. Duvall is slow, trying to appear unaffected by The Announcers' hands digging into him. He looks straight ahead and doesn't acknowledge the presence of anyone. He takes his own seat and shoves The Announcer away.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Ladies and-

[He squints. He glares into the seats. He can't see anybody.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Gentlemen... and.... ladies .. and - uh -

[He continues to look for an audience. Can't find them. He turns around to the two boxers, hoping they'd know where everyone is. Duvall shrugs. Bird looks around.]

THE ANNOUNCER: ...Anyone else?

[He taps his mic, shakes it, and gives up.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Well, to whomever this may concern, and to however many are watching, you better get ready to rumble because you don't have a damn choice! Welcome to a night of frying and bruising. A night of violence and vitriol. A night of combat of the highest, harshest degree. Now, clench your fists together and shut your mouths and let's meet these beasts!

[The Announcer trots over to Duvall.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Folks, this lil' chickadee's gained notoriety through his championing smile and equally championing win streak. Ain't he just a cuuutie?

[He goes up to Duvall and pinches his cheek. Duvall slaps his hand off.]

THE ANNOUNCER: *[Unbothered]* And tonight is Bird's first match out of the pound following a suspension for throwing an audience member at his opponent. This pint of cinnamon schnapps can, has, and will bite anyone with a pulse. Isn't that right, buddy?

[He ruffles Bird's hair. Bird swats him away.]

THE ANNOUNCER: If everyone in attendance has braced themselves - we'll jump straight into the rituals! To begin the match, we'll-

[Duvall stands up.]

DUVALL: Ohhh no no no no no. *[To Bird]* Come on, buddy. Yeah, you can just throw your best hit at me and we can call this a day.

[Bird hits his gloves and is ready to spring up.]

DUVALL: Come on.

THE ANNOUNCER: Not yet, Bird.

[Bird puts his arms down. Filled with stress, he stops paying attention and angrily bounces his leg.]

THE ANNOUNCER: *[To Duvall]* You'll get your turn to be hit in the face, I promise.

DUVALL: That's - no - I meant I can kick his ass-

THE ANNOUNCER: Now that you're both ready to be brutalized, let's get this into first gear! We'll - uh...we... we must - uh -

[At a loss, The Announcer runs off stage. Duvall sits back down as the sound of rustling and frustration emerges. There are hints of honks and hoots in the rustling. Something off stage falls noticeably loud and Bird jerks up at high alert into a defence position. He darts his head around the area and looks over at the nonchalant Duvall.]

BIRD: I thought we were starting.

DUVALL: *[Low voice]* You know, we can just start instead of waiting for that guy.

BIRD: *[Sits back down. Loud.]* Why would we do that?

DUVALL: Come on, I can - nevermind...

[The Announcer comes back reading a book labelled "DIARY"]

THE ANNOUNCER: Alright, touch gloves!

[The two stand up, touch gloves, and drop their hands. They look to The Announcer for what to do next. The Announcer flips through the book at lightning speed.]

THE ANNOUNCER: And next you... *[Feels around his pockets]* Ah, cripes.

[The Announcer exits again. Duvall shakes his hands off as if he touched something gross. Bird whacks his hand. Duvall retaliates. They start to get into a slap fight. The Announcer returns with a box labelled "BOX", he drops it and scoffs.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Excuse me!

[The Announcer takes out a small servant bell and rings it - it makes a light twinkling sound. The two immediately stop.]

THE ANNOUNCER: You animals! It's impolite to have Dualice start working before I even introduce you.

[Bird and Duvall are silent. The Announcer gestures to the bell.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Dualice! My beautiful, sweet Dualice! Her angelic voice and luscious curves - my true love! What I was going to explain was that in this match, you'll do a full reset whenever you hear her.

DUVALL: What do you mean rese-

[The Announcer rings the bell. Duvall stops.]

BIRD: But we just -

[The Announcer rings the bell. Bird stops.]

THE ANNOUNCER: *[Laughing]* You two are too easy.

BIRD: Get to the part where I can smack him.

DUVALL: Hey, you can't just ask that. *[To The Announcer]* Can he? Can I go first?

BIRD: I thought you wanted me to hit you.

DUVALL: Oh my god, I did not *want* you to hit me -

THE ANNOUNCER: You don't want to be hit?

DUVALL: Who the hell wants to be hit?

THE ANNOUNCER: Someone who's a boxer?

DUVALL: A boxer wants to win.

BIRD: A real boxer can take it. A real boxer's a warrior. A real boxer is willing to do anything for the fight. Even if it means putting your life on the front lines of violence.

DUVALL: A real boxer shuts the fuck up.

BIRD: Look, if you're afraid of getting demolished, don't get in the ring.

THE ANNOUNCER: That's right! And isn't being demolished your top priority, Duvall?

DUVALL: Stop twisting me into some kind of masochist. I was gonna dodge his attack without any hesitation and knock him out before his dumb face could see anything. Then I'd win and I'd leave. It's called intellectual combat, sweetheart.

[The Announcer gives a sour smile and taps his head with the handle of his bell.]

THE ANNOUNCER: You can't call me sweetheart. And if you're going to be so obsessed with being absolutely eviscerated by Bird, you'll have no trouble adding some spice to this match.

[The Announcer gestures to the box.]

BIRD: Spice? I'm here to hit people. I don't need spice. Get that box away from me.

THE ANNOUNCER: Oh, these are for your fight don't worry.

DUVALL: Oh what bullshit are you pulling?

BIRD: What's in the boxes?

[The Announcer happily starts digging through the box. Bird starts to get tense.]

BIRD: Are there weapons?

DUVALL: Weapons?

THE ANNOUNCER: Weapons?

BIRD: I think about weapons a lot.

THE ANNOUNCER: No! No weapons! Liiike...

[He pulls out a chew toy and Bird shrieks. Duvall snickers.]

THE ANNOUNCER: This guy!

[The Announcer tosses it aside. Bird's eyes follow it to the ground.]

THE ANNOUNCER: I've gathered every single thing I own for this match. We're here for the fight, sure. We all love boxing, yes. But I'm tired of the same old hits and crosses and [*inspects diary*] punches, you know? I want you to be inspired. I want to see something fresh. Some authentic passion for toe-to-toe combat! Think inside this box and outside your own. Boxing is an art, you know?

[*A beat.*]

BIRD: So, can I... [*gestures punching Duvall*]?

DUVALL: You lost your chance! I'm hitting you first!

BIRD: Nu-uh!

DUVALL: Yahuh!

THE ANNOUNCER: Stop yelling! Just think for a second! **Think!**

[*Duvall and Bird drag their stools in a bit and get into poses a la shit attempts at "The Thinker". The Announcer mimics them. A beat.*]

THE ANNOUNCER: So what are we thinking about?

DUVALL: Roadkill.

BIRD: Tasers.

THE ANNOUNCER: Come on. The box, guys - the box! Use those noggings- is there any other way you two think you could start this match?

DUVALL: Look - as a fellow intellectual, I could sit and intellectualize here all day. But I got places to be and people to beat.

BIRD: Ha! You couldn't even touch gloves with me without shaking off those prissy little hands of yours!

DUVALL: Dainty!? These sculpted limbs of mine?

[*They begin to bicker and their words topple over each other. The Announcer sits in the stress. He sporadically taps various parts of his body and lands on his mouth. A pause. He looks at them arguing. Lightbulb moment.*]

THE ANNOUNCER: Oh! Oh!! [*Jumping and manically pointing at the two*] Fight with your tongues!!!

[Bird and Duvall stand up from their stools and back away from each other]

BIRD: What!?

THE ANNOUNCER: Yes! Yes! Your tongues!

[Bird frantically looks back and forth between The Announcer and Duvall.]

BIRD: But that's all the way in my mouth! And he's all the way over there!

[Duvall blows raspberry.]

THE ANNOUNCER: No! Your words! Your Wit! Sarcasm! Insults! Slander! Just be rude!
Anything!! *[He rattles the bell]* **GO!!!**

DUVALL: *[Immediately]* You look like if a tank and a fucking loser had a baby.

BIRD: Hey - I wasn't ready-

THE ANNOUNCER: BE ready, ya bastard!

BIRD: Well - uh - your voice sounds like a saxophone trying to kill itself

DUVALL: I bet you couldn't even spell saxophone.

BIRD: Oh yeah? *[pause]* Maybe, but I bet you couldn't even lift one up - the fuck are those gains?

DUVALL: Well I bet that - that... that...

BIRD: Better yet, where the hell are your arms at all, dude?

DUVALL: *[Cont.]* That...that...

BIRD: *[Doubling down]* 'Cause spending all your time on your hair doesn't count as going to the gym.

[Silence.]

DUVALL: Hey.

BIRD: What?

DUVALL: Has your nose always looked *[vague gestures]* like that?

[Bird is caught off guard and covers his nose.]

THE ANNOUNCER: HA! Yes! He DOES look deformed! *[He gives the bell a courteous ring.]*
MORE!

DUVALL: You only want to hit me first because you're too scared that my fist is gonna turn your face into a flat tire.

BIRD: *[Face still covered]* I eat tires for breakfast. If it's good for cars, it's good for me. You gotta think like a car to ... uh ... run like a car. And hit things. Like a car.

DUVALL: Huh?

BIRD: I mean I'm going to hit you like a car.

DUVALL: [Egging on] Huh??

BIRD: I SAID -

DUVALL: Ohhhh, sorry. Yeah - sure - you're a car. Then you shouldn't mind me rear-ending my foot up your ass.

THE ANNOUNCER: *[Rattles the bell]* GO HARDER!!!

[They drop onto the floor and lie on their stomachs parallel to each other. They kick their feet around like girls at a sleepover.]

DUVALL: *[Valley girl voice]* Ohhhhh my god. I'm really digging how your entire existence screams insecurity and regret and that you've made every wrong decision a man can ever make in his life. Like - I loooooove your confidence.

BIRD: *[Valley girl voice]* Oh my gwad, thenk yewwww. I think your gloves are sooo CUTE. I mean - I think I'd throw up, light myself on fire and slit my throat open if I ever wore that but - like - that's soooooo great for you.

[The Announcer rings the bell. They stop kicking.]

BIRD: Your mama's so old her favourite movies were cave paintings!

[A beat.]

DUVALL: What's a mom?

[The Announcer rings the bell.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Put your whole body into it!

[They stand up and point their hands out toward each other. Then, they begin doing rock-paper-scissors with their gloves on. Frantically fast. Each boxer reacts like he won every other try. They don't stop. They can't stop. The Announcer rings the bell. They try to move away but come straight back into it.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Come on! Move on!

BIRD: *[Still doing it]* But we keep tie-ing.

THE ANNOUNCER: I can see that! Just... uh...

[He's at a loss for words. They keep going.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Just try something different!

[The Announcer rings the bell hard. Actors of the opposite gender for Bird and Duvall run on stage and tag team in. They just continue to do the same thing - throwing in a few "HA"s and "YOU SUCK"s in.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Oh my fucking Dualice...

[The Announcer rings the bell. He starts tossing random debris from the box out onto the arena. Bird starts running away from everything that's coming out. The Announcer pulls out a bedsheet. As Bird is distracted, Duvall takes the bedsheet and throws it over Bird's head. Bird freezes.]

BIRD: *[Pause]* I CAN'T SEE.

[Duvall looks to The Announcer for approval, who gives a "so-so" gesture. The Announcer rings the bell and takes out a piñata. It falls over to Bird, who struggles his way out of the bedsheet. Bird rips the head off the piñata and looks inside of it. While distracted, Duvall runs over, picks up the head and walks back to stage left. Duvall throws it so hard that it misses Bird and goes off stage.]

BIRD: THAT'S MINE!

[Duvall comes over and wrestles the rest of the piñata out of Bird's hands. Bird starts to chase after Duvall to get it back. The Announcer rings the bell. The opposite-gender actors chase each other off stage as the original Bird and Duvall tag back in. The Announcer takes a small car out of the box and drops it in the middle of the stage. It breaks in half.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Oh nooooo. My most prized possession: my vehicle. My baby. It broke. Fix it.

[Duvall spits into his gloves, picks up the car pieces, and inspects it.]

DUVALL: Yeup. Looks here like you got what I call a busted up piece of shit.

THE ANNOUNCER: Oh. Really.

DUVALL: Alright, calm down, pea brain. I got this.

THE ANNOUNCER: You can't call me a pea brain!

[He tries to jam the two pieces together. A few times. To no avail. He drops the car.]

DUVALL: Yeah she can't be fixed. You probably messed her up too bad. She's gone and she's your fault. See this part of her and her's part of this? Yeah. She's done.

THE ANNOUNCER: That's not a woman.

BIRD: It's not?

THE ANNOUNCER: It's a car.

DUVALL: *[To Bird]* Does this look like a woman to you?

THE ANNOUNCER: Of course not.

DUVALL: Of course not!

BIRD: Yeah, of course not. Duh. Women. They - um - have... way larger - uh - heads, rings, and *[vaguely gestures to his chest and puts out his hands.]* like five to six eyes?

[The Announcer grabs the car and rings the bell. He throws hula hoops at them. They both start aggressively hula hooping.]

THE ANNOUNCER: A stamina contest! I love it!

DUVALL: Your form is off, Bird!

BIRD: Focus on your own problems!

DUVALL: I don't have problems. I'm too smart for problems. I execute everything with excellence.

BIRD: Well, I don't need excellence - I got this hoop.

DUVALL: I bet that's the only thing you're ever been good at.

BIRD: Oh yeah? I bet that hoop is the only thing that's ever touched you.

[Duvall stops hula hooping. The hoop falls onto the floor.]

DUVALL: Oh yeah? I don't think so because I have a girlfriend.

BIRD: *[Also stops]* Huh?

THE ANNOUNCER: Huh?

DUVALL: *[Nonchalant]* Yeah, you wouldn't know her. She goes to another arena.

BIRD Oh...really? What's her name?

DUVALL: Um.

[A beat.]

BIRD *[Coy]* Does... she have any single friends....?

DUVALL What?

BIRD: Nothing.

DUVALL: She's a gorgeous jalapeño of a woman, and she's completely obsessed with me. All she does is come in and out of the room to say hi and hello to me and tell me I'm the love of her life. She has her arms around me constantly - like it's keeping her alive. Honestly, I'm surprised her arms don't fall off.

[A beat.]

BIRD: *[To himself]* Man, I wish I had a gorgeous jalapeño...

[The Announcer rings the bell.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Keep those hoops up!

[Bird grabs the hoop off the ground, but gets lost in his thoughts in the process]

BIRD: I think your girlfriend has bad taste.

DUVALL: Please, she's the only one with taste.

BIRD: And what's that taste then, huh? She loves the taste of sweat and hair grease? Because *[gestures to Duvall]* ew.

DUVALL: Don't come for my gorgeous jalapeño's taste like that!

THE ANNOUNCER: Unbelievable!

[The Announcer bickers to himself and marches off stage.]

BIRD: And you know what? I bet your girlfriend's not even your girlfriend. I bet you just pay some random girl to be your girlfriend. And I bet she's got some ugly ass eyes.

DUVALL: She is SO real. In fact, she's so real that she left me some of her stuff in this here box.

BIRD: Didn't he say that that's his stuff?

DUVALL:

BIRD: Oh, okay.

[Duvall digs through the box. He strings out a long, red piece of lingerie.]

BIRD: Is that from your girlfriend?

DUVALL: Yeup.

BIRD: She left that for you?

DUVALL: Yuuuuup.

BIRD: *[Pause]* Does she wear that on her eyes?

DUVALL: Oh, you better believe it.

BIRD: God damn it.

[The Announcer comes back in playing a trumpet. He's absolutely horrible but he's absolutely into it. The two watch unamused. He dances around and rests the trumpet.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Do I have your attention?

BIRD AND DUVALL: ...Yes.

THE ANNOUNCER: Your athleticisms have fallen below par, gentlemen.

BIRD: You take that the fuck back.

DUVALL: You don't know what you're talking about.

THE ANNOUNCER: I do. I'm The Announcer.

DUVALL: Like that means shit. Anyone can watch men fight, put on a tiny little button-up and swing a stick around.

THE ANNOUNCER: Ohhh but you don't have my eyes. Look at me - these eyes haven't seen the right type of fight from you, D.

DUVALL: Never call me that again you sick little fa-

BIRD: *[Laughing]* No, no, I get it. Take your time, Duvall. I mean - I wouldn't fight me, either.

DUVALL: What's that mean?

BIRD: Because I'd chew your head off.

THE ANNOUNCER: No! What did I say about any more chewing, Bird?

DUVALL: No, no - let him yap his little head off. *[To Bird]* I'm only fighting you because I can. You mean nothing to me otherwise.

BIRD: Oh, I mean nothing to you?

DUVALL: Nothing! Nobody does!

THE ANNOUNCER: Not even me?

DUVALL: Not even you.

THE ANNOUNCER: Aw, man.

[The Announcer sadly plays the trumpet and exits.]

BIRD: No - no! Come back! Please!

DUVALL: See? The way he left? Completely forgettable.

BIRD: Why the hell did you do that?

DUVALL: He'll come back. That guy's got nothing else to live for.

[Bird moves back to his stool and starts bouncing his leg.]

DUVALL: We can do this without him, you know.

BIRD: I'm not moving. I'm not doing anything until he comes back.

DUVALL: For the love of - you don't fucking work for him.

BIRD: Well, I have to fight for someone-

DUVALL: Oh, just drop it, you and your weird little hero complex. Why would anyone ever want to fight for someone? I have never, in my life, met a single face, heard a single voice, or met a single person worth "fighting for". You're an idiot if you think it means anything.

BIRD: *[Pause]* You're one lonely man, Duvall.

[Duvall stares daggers at him. Bird fidgets.]

DUVALL: No - I have no choice. Nobody's living right; it makes me sick. They're all a bunch of fucking ants, Bird. No independent thought - just cells working and invading because they're bred to. It's frankly sad if you understood it. And here I am - perched up here not because I enjoy the silence - but because I have no other choice. You really think I'd ever stoop down to that level? To your level? The fuck do you take me for?

BIRD: They obviously depend on people like us -

DUVALL: People like me.

BIRD: *[Rolling his eyes]* - to defend them. What do you mean you won't fight for anyone? You have to. Just shows you don't have the guts. You're weak. I'm made to fight battles. And I'll do what it takes - I don't even care if it leaves me dead! I already feel like I'm being stabbed with pins and needles all the time - it just means I need to fight harder. I won't stop trying until I'm good enough. I mean - don't you feel like you'll be shot on the spot if you ever stop trying?

[A beat.]

DUVALL: That's not what I meant at all, actually. But it's cute that you're trying to follow along.

BIRD: Oh, go to hell.

[The Announcer returns. He's holding a mostly eaten banana and has two more bananas attached to his belt.]

DUVALL: I'd never want to sacrifice myself for you brainless fucks. I'll give y'all the light of day once you get less forgettable. It just eats at me every single day that I live a life where *[gestures to himself]* all of this has always been overlooked. It feels like I've been left in the middle of a saharah fucking desert. I'm DYING, Bird. The world is STARVING me, Bird.

BIRD: Oh, YOU'RE starved? I'm FAAAAMISHED.

DUVALL: Well I'm MALNOURISHED

BIRD: I'm a FUCKING SYNONYM-

THE ANNOUNCER: Eat!

[He throws the eaten banana offstage and gestures at the belt bananas. Duvall stares at them.]

DUVALL: Do you have anything else?

THE ANNOUNCER: Hmmm - Cucumbers, zucchinis, popsicles, eggplants... Oh, and I got this biiiig fat girthy gourd.

[He takes out a biiiig fat girthy gourd.]

DUVALL: *[Pause]* I'm not hungry. I don't eat anything that's longer than the palm of my hand. I know what you're trying to do, you weirdo.

THE ANNOUNCER: You can't call me a *[pause]* meh.

[The Announcer drops the gourd and offers Bird a banana. Bird stares at him blankly. The Announcer gently places it on his stool and pats it. Bird approaches it. Mid-reach, Duvall snickers - Bird's about to hold something phallic. Bird catches his judgement and recoils his hand. He cautiously makes a second attempt, and Duvall stifles a harder laugh. Bird glares. Maintaining eye contact, Bird drops onto the floor on all fours. He begins to inspect the banana. From under, from the sides, at every angle - to see if he can hold it in a non-phallic way.]

[Meanwhile, The Announcer crosses the stage to hand Duvall the other banana. Duvall squirms his body as far away from it as possible. The Announcer inches in - Duvall squirms away harder. The Announcer steps forward, and Duvall scurries towards the edge of the ring. It becomes a waltz of avoidance. He circles around to Bird and tries to use him as a shield. Bird shoves him off. A full loop around the arena, Duvall crawls at anything and everything he can. He returns to his stool and perches his entire body on top of it. The Announcer stops in his tracks. A hint of frustration on his face.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Ring ring. *[He puts the banana up to his ear.]* Hello?

[Silence.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Oooooooh helloooooo ~. *[Covers the banana].* It's the girlfriend. The girlfriend from the other arena.

[Bird's attention shoots over. Duvall panics. The Announcer twirls an imaginary phone cord.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Mm-hmmmmmm. Yeahhhhh. No, for sure. No, I totally get it. Okayyyyyyyyy. Yeah. Yeah.

[The Announcer hands the banana over to Duvall.]

THE ANNOUNCER: *[Deadpan]* It's for you.

[Duvall dreads taking the banana like it's a live grenade. He looks at Bird, and back at The Announcer. He eventually gives in and slowly brings the banana close - holding it in the air.]

DUVALL: ...Hello?

[A beat. His face sinks. He snugs the banana-phone up against his ear.]

DUVALL: *[Disbelief]* What do you mean your arms fell off? *[Pause]* That's not my fault. Wait - I can fix this I - wait no - baby - when I said you're gorgeous jalapeño I just meant because I thought you'd be hot and green and ... no that - no - wait! I -

[Silence.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Is she gone?

[Duvall doesn't respond. The Announcer comes over and taps him on the shoulder.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Can't win them all, buddy.

[Duvall chucks the banana at him on the verge of tears. The Announcer jumps out of the way.]

DUVALL: Call her back.

THE ANNOUNCER: Whoa! No no no - we have a game to finish!

DUVALL: But she's -

BIRD: *[Cheeky]* Just forget about her, man.

[Duvall stares at Bird and falls back onto his stool.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Alright! Break's over! Let's keep going!

[The Announcer rings the bell. Duvall stands back up.]

DUVALL: You wouldn't know how to keep a woman if you tried.

BIRD: What? Yes I would!

DUVALL: Oh yeah? *[Picks up lingerie and throws it at him.]* Well tell me what this is called you dopey piece of shit.

BIRD: What does that have to do with anything?

[Duvall shoves his head in the box and starts taking out objects and throwing them at Bird]

DUVALL: Can you name any of these things, you fucking idiot?

BIRD: Hey - stop that! The hell are you doing?

DUVALL: I bet you caaaan't! Because you're illeterateeee! That's why you're a boxer, ain't it? What's wrong, Bird? Brain damage got your tongue?

[Bird kicks his bottle and it hits Duvall's.]

BIRD: You're IMPOSSIBLE.

DUVALL: *[Following the bottle]* Ooh, good idea!

[Duvall takes the lid off his bottle and splashes the water into Bird's face. Bird yelps.]

BIRD: What the fuck is in that - acid!? I can't see! What the hell is wrong with you!? *[He shakes his arms and head.]* Fuck! Get this shit off of me!

DUVALL: *[Laughing]* Is it too much for you? Huh? Is that all it takes?

[Bird picks up his hula hoop, throws it at Duvall, and misses.]

DUVALL: Awwh, you thought that'd knock me out? Knock me dead?

BIRD: You're an asshole, Duvall.

DUVALL: And you're a baby, Bird.

BIRD: SHUT UP.

DUVALL: Well, you could have convinced me! Because those baby hands of yours haven't hurt me at all. Look at me - not a single scar! I even gave you a head start and you managed to do nothing. And the sad thing is you're trying. I'm right here, Bird. I'm a few steps away from you in this damn arena and you haven't laid a dent on me. Is that all you can do? Have you ever done anything in your entire life, Bird?

BIRD: **STOP TALKING.**

DUVALL: Yeah you're a warrior, alright. But you're not the warrior leading armies or earning medals or conquering nations. You'd be one of those dumb fucks who die in the first second of battle over something you could have easily avoided. You'd be the first body in a pile of rotting corpses. You'd be the one that's buried and marred and unrecognizable by the time everything is over. That's you.

[Bird is silent.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Alright, I think we are just about good to start the final round! You're both ripe, ready, and *[puts a hand on Bird]* a little toasty! You've picked up the fight, gentlemen. Now carry it home! I need to see, I'm begging to see, which one of you is going to win this over. Which one of you is gonna be crowned the next champion? The next executioner -

[Bird marches to The Announcer and chokes his shirt. Twisting it, he drags him off stage. He comes back and kicks his stool over. He stares at Duvall.]

BIRD: We don't need him.

DUVALL: What-

BIRD: I'm gonna fucking kill you.

[He steps towards Duvall. Duvall takes a step back.]

BIRD: You think I can't? You think I can't, huh?

DUVALL: *[Pause]* What do you mean-

[Bird uses his teeth to rip the velcro on his glove loose. He throws off his gloves and stomps over to his stool. He grabs it by the legs - his bottle topples over. He lifts the stool high and sprints toward Duvall. Aiming for his head, he swings the stool. Duvall runs.]

DUVALL: Jesus CHRIST!

BIRD: **YOU SON OF A BITCH!**

[He swings again. And again. Duvall runs to the opposite ends of the arena.]

DUVALL: PUT THE DAMN STOOL DOWN! PUT IT DOWN! FUCKING **DROP IT!**

[At Duvall's call, Bird freezes. His grip loosens and the stool falls onto the floor. His hands are trembling.]

DUVALL: *[Catching his breath]* Oh thank god...

BIRD: Wait - what... No. Wait - shut the fuck...

[Bird is hyperventilating. His mind is racing.]

BIRD: No no no no no no NO! **THIS HAS TO WORK.** I don't need this. I don't need this. I don't need any of this. I hate you. I really fucking hate you, Duvall. I can't stand looking at you - I - I feel like a bullet goes through my body every moment I have to exist beside you. I need you gone. I don't care what I have to do. I'll tear your limbs, your ribs, your veins out of your body with my BARE HANDS.

[Bird stands still. The two are on opposite ends of the ring. Duvall begins to lower his guard.]

DUVALL: Well...?

BIRD: What.

DUVALL: Aren't you gonna kill me?

[Silence.]

BIRD: Fuck you.

DUVALL: Aren't you gonna kill me?

BIRD: **FUCK YOU.**

DUVALL: Come on, buddy.

[Bird screams.]

BIRD: I'M GONNA BREAK YOUR NECK.

DUVALL: Yeah?

BIRD: I'LL **RIP YOU APART.**

DUVALL: Uh-huh.

[Duvall takes one step in. Bird jumps. He can't take it anymore. He begins to shiver.]

BIRD: I feel like I'm gonna throw up.

[Bird is shaking]

BIRD: I can't feel my legs. My gut's getting torn apart. Where the hell am I? I - why did I...

[Bird falls onto his knees - hunched over. Duvall stares at the helpless Bird on the floor. He tiptoes backwards upstage. He quietly goes to grab Bird's stool.]

BIRD: I can't end up like this. This can't be it. This can't be real. I can't feel anything. I'm fucked. I'm absolutely fucked. Everyone's going to know. Everyone's going to hate me. Nobody will save me. Nobody can save me. They're going to hurt me. They're going to pull my skin off and tear my muscles apart. They're going to spit on my bones and throw what's left of me away. They're going to take everything I have. They'll want nothing else to do with me. *[Hitting his head]* I hate myself.

[Bird's words turn into incessant mumbling. Duvall slowly raises the stool high over his head. Bobbing it to get the aim just right - he takes a sharp inhale and reels the stool back when suddenly - The Announcer, tripping over himself, dashes back on stage. He's coughing - rubbing his throat with one hand and beggingly ringing the bell with the other. Both men cover their ears and wail for him to stop. The stool is dropped again and Duvall falls onto the floor.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Dwalice needs her beauty sleep, so Gwendolyn is stepping in. *[Notices Bird's stool.]* Whoops!

[The Announcer grabs the stool. Duvall flinches. Bird is hunched over on the floor - covering his head and shaking. The Announcer turns around to Duvall with the stool in his hand. Duvall jumps. The Announcer shrugs and resumes putting it back in place, giving it a few twists and tweaks.]

THE ANNOUNCER: A few interruptions never stopped a boxing match! At least not this one! Now where was I...

[He polishes off Gwendolyn and looks down at Bird.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Up and at 'em, Bird!

[The Announcer rings the bell. Bird doesn't look up. The Announcer clears his throat.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Come on, bud! Rise and shine! Arena to Bird!

[At every sentence, he rings the bell. A beat. He gives it one more aggressive shake and Bird screams. He doesn't snap out of it. The Announcer sighs.]

THE ANNOUNCER: He seems tuckered out. *[To Duvall]* He kick your ass or something?

DUVALL: What!?

THE ANNOUNCER: You can be honest with me.

DUVALL: He threw a stool at me and started speaking in tongues - look at him! He's a fucking mess!

THE ANNOUNCER: Well, did you block the stool?

DUVALL: What? No.

THE ANNOUNCER: Did you fight him? Hit him with any jabs?

DUVALL: ...Jabs?

THE ANNOUNCER: Hooks? Crosses? Blows?

[Duvall is silent.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Did you do anything?

[The Announcer looks Duvall up and down.]

THE ANNOUNCER: Why are you on the floor?

[Duvall stands up.]

DUVALL: I could have beat his ass if I wanted to. You know that. I know that. He knows that.

THE ANNOUNCER: A real shame I didn't get a chance to see it.

[The Announcer pretends to reach for the stool. Duvall flinches again.]

DUVALL: Stop doing that!

THE ANNOUNCER: Doing what?

DUVALL: What he did wasn't fair!

THE ANNOUNCER: I just thought you could take it. *[Pause]* I need to start cleaning up. Don't you two go anywhere!

[The Announcer sighs and exits. Duvall keeps looking over at Bird. The Announcer is gone for an awkwardly long amount of time. Duvall starts to inch toward Bird with his arm out - wanting to comfort him. The Announcer starts whistling as he re-enters the stage and Duvall runs back to his stool.]

THE ANNOUNCER: *[To Duvall]* Lighten up. This was fun, wasn't it?

[Duvall gives an insulted, confused look. Bird's head is still in his hands. Softly rocking. The Announcer takes a swig of water from a cleaner, nicer-looking bottle. Refreshed, he grabs the broom and starts to brush up the arena. He brushes their bottles back to place - not wanting to touch it. A beat.]

DUVALL: Hey.

[Duvall is ignored.]

DUVALL: Hey.

[The Announcer is completely tranquil.]

DUVALL: So did I win or what?

[The Announcer keeps cleaning up.]

DUVALL: HEY. DID I -

[The Announcer drops the broom and walks over to him. He gives him a peck on the head. Walking across the stage, he does the same to Bird. He stays with him for a moment, his hand nestled in his hair. Bird stays in shambles. The Announcer wipes his mouth. He goes back to Duvall and rips the gauze off his cheek.]

THE ANNOUNCER: You two were adorable.

[Music cue: "Medicine for Horses" by Viagra Boys (Fade in from 2:23)]

[The Announcer shakes out his hair and begins to undo his tie as he exits stage right. He's had his fun and wants to go home. Duvall stares; his head is glued to the direction he exits. Bird's head sinks even further into his body. Fade out.]

END.