

A Rough Dance

by Caitlin Spivey

Characters

A young woman

A man

A young woman is seated in a chair center stage. She is pretty, dressed in a short nightgown. She sits nervously, her body tense and expectant. A man stands behind her, his hands on the chair. He is much taller than her, strong and imposing. She clutches the edge of the chair.

He leans down over her and trails his hands up her body from her knees to her shoulders. She shivers and leans away from him, but he grabs her shoulders and pulls her back sharply. She whimpers and he shushes her. He takes his hands off her shoulders and steps stage right around the chair.

She bolts stage left, but he grabs her left ankle and she falls, body extended flat along the stage. He yanks on her leg and flips her over onto her back. He crosses to her with thundering steps and stands over her, one foot on each side of her. He holds his hand out to her to help her up.

She stares at him for a moment, then flips over under him and tries to crawl away. He drops to his knees and grabs her wrists, holding her against the ground. She sobs and he leans down, whispering inaudibly into her ear. She shakes her head. He yanks her up, holding her tightly so that her arms are trapped against her chest.

She struggles, twisting, turning and kicking her legs out. He is immovable, squeezing tighter until she cries out in pain. He stands and throws her over his shoulder, where she hangs limply. He pauses for a moment, then flips her over into a fireman's carry and takes her back to the chair. He drops her into it and holds her there until she stops slipping off.

He kneels in front of her and pushes her legs apart. She sits up and tries weakly to push his hands away and bring her legs together

again. He holds them open, ignoring her hands. She gives up and sits limply while he pushes her legs open wider and puts his face between them.

Suddenly she lurches forward, diving over him and crawling desperately towards the audience, reaching towards them. He scrambles to recover, seizing her and pulling her back. He straddles her, holding her down. She tries to hit him, struggling to escape. He backhands her. She lays silently for a moment, then attacks him again with more intensity. He hits her one, two, three times in succession.

She lays limply on the ground. He gets off of her and kneels to one side. He cradles her head, rubbing her hair and whispering inaudibly. He pulls her into his arms and stands, carrying her like an infant back to the chair. He sits and lowers her into his lap, putting her head against his shoulder and rocking with her. Her arm hangs lifelessly at her side.

End.

