

A STORY BY JOHN PYKA

# TRIXIE GOES DOWNTON



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## **A Story of The Decoverse**

(Adapted from the musical play Swingin' At  
The Roxy)

**Written by John Pyka**

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**From the Files of Detective Logan Smythe,  
Chicago Police Department**

*Transcribed by Julia Witherspoon, Cook County  
Clerk*

Officer Smythe: Alright, Miss Malone, just start at the beginning and tell us what happened.

Trixie Malone: Am I being arrested?

Officer Smythe: No, ma'am, we just need to get your statement about what happened at the Roxy.

Trixie Malone: Is Johnny going to jail? 'Cause I don't wanna say nothin' that would get him in trouble. He was doing the right thing.

Officer Smythe: I'm sure he was, ma'am. Still, we just need to know what happened that night. Just a formality. Just start at the beginning and tell us

exactly what happened. Miss Witherspoon here will take down your statement. Just be truthful.

Trixie Malone: Okay... Okay... Well, we go back, see? Me and Tony Grieco, and Johnny. I used to dance at the Sugar Shack, and Tony Grieco made me his girl. But he was always jealous of Johnny and Tahloola, ya know?

Tony killed her. He claims Johnny pulled her in front of the bullet, but I was there. I seen it all. Tony put a slug in her as sure as I'm sittin' here...

I know you gotta wonder why I would stay with him all these years, as mean as he was. Well, what would you do? He threatened to kill me too if I left. See this shiner? He gave it to me that night...

Anyways, we was at some club – I can't remember which one. He was playing cards, and like always, I was helping him cheat. The other boys caught him and things went bad. He stabbed two of the boys and then killed the rest with his Tommy gun. I didn't know who they was, to be honest. But I scooped up the money and we hightailed it outta

there. "Not bad for a night's work..." he says to me.

I asked him, "Tony! What are we gonna do now that we got all this dough, huh? Hey, I know! You gonna take me out dancin'?"

He says "Nah, not dancin', but we are goin' to Club Roxy."

"Johnny Dellarocca's place? Oh, goodie! They gotta great floor show, and Big Daddy is so boss..."

"Stifle it, dingbat! We ain't goin to see the show."

"Then why's we goin'?" I thought it was a good question, and he answers, "To take over the joint."

I didn't think that was a good idea, so I tell 'im, "I don't know, puddin'. I think Big Daddy might not like it..."

But Tony don't ever listen to me. "Of course he won't like it! That's the point. He stole Tahloola from me, killed Johnny Zucko, and got me thrown

in prison for three months. So I'm gonna take the one thing from him he loves more than anything!"

See? That's the thing. He went to jail for three months, and then he kills Tahloola, but that was years ago. And Tony killed Johnny Zucko his self. You'd think he'd gotten over it, but Tony felt like Johnny and Sims sold him up the river, ya know? And he blames Johnny for Tahloola. And now he was doing it again. He wanted to go after Lana LaMoore. But I says, "Hey, I'm supposed to be your best girl!"

"No, ya dumb broad," he says. "I'm gonna take over his club. Club Roxy. He loves it more than anything else."

"Ya think he'll let ya?" I thought it was a valid question, but Tony just yelled at me to get in the car.

I tried to want him. I says, "But puddin' what if he whacks ya like he did Zucko? Ya know he tried to take over the club once and he ended up sleepin' with the fishes. You know Big Daddy knows from

cement loafers, right?" But he didn't wanna hear none of it.

Officer Smythe: Go on. What happened next?

Trixie Malone: Well, we get to Club Roxy and there is a set of high windows that you can peek into the club and see the show floor. Tony stacked up some crates and made me climb up to get a look. He was impatient and keep askin', "Whadda ya see? C'mon, Trix, what's goin' on?"

Well, Big Daddy had just left the stage. I remember telling Tony that Big Daddy was so cool! I was wishing I could be one of his Bombshell Kittens again. Boy, do I miss those days.... Johnny took me in, after getting thrown out of Club Xanadu. Convinced Tommy Sims to give me a job at the Sugar Shack. I was one of Lulu's Sweet Ladies. Don't get me wrong, I didn't mind turning tricks, but I loved being on stage the most. The music, the spotlight, the applause... It was me and Rose Lane. We was best friends, two peas in a pod. And now, here I am with Tony... I coulda been a star! Can ya just imagine it? The

music is playin', the curtain opens, and it's *me* center stage at Club Roxy? The spotlight hits me and I enchant the audience with a special Trixie treat...

Officer Smythe: Um, ma'am? Miss Malone? You were telling us about that night at Club Roxy.

Trixie Malone: Hmmm? Oh. Right. So I'm spying the joint and Tony asks if could see another way to get in. Well, I tells him, "Baby cakes, the front door's right around the corner..."

Well, Tony didn't like that answer at all. "First of all, don't call me baby cakes. Second of all, they ain't gonna just let us stroll in the front door."

I didn't catch his drift, so I ask, "Why not? They let all kinds of people in the front door." Tony got mad and decided he'd look for himself. Tony was not kind to Johnny. Tony called him a big fat jerk and said he couldn't wait to get his mitts on that "jabronie." Then Tony spotted another way in through back stage and told me load up the heaters.



But I put my foot down. No killin.’ I made Tony promise me he wouldn’t kill anyone else that night. He thought I was kiddin’ but I was serious. I wasn’t goin’ nowhere ‘til he promised me that he wouldn’t kill nobody. He finally promised, but then said, “‘Course I didn’t say nothing about hurtin’ ‘im real bad...”

Tony sent me around the back to the stage door, but I didn’t have good news for him. I told him, “Tony, puddin’? It’s no good. Deuce is watching the back alley like a hawk.” Tony thought someone musta ratted us out, and warned ‘em we was comin’. Well, maybe I did. Maybe I didn’t want to hurt Big Daddy or any of the Bombshell Kittens. Ginger Lee was in there. She was my best friend. I just wanted to go home.

“So what now? We’s goin’ home?” I asked, ‘cause that’s all I wanted. I mean he might have changed his mind, right?

But no, he just says, “No, doll, we’s ain’t goin’ home. We just gotta take care of Deuce.”

I tried to sweet talk him outta it. I swear to God I did. I even called him baby cakes. But he didn't like that none either. He said, and I quote: "I swear to God, Trixie, you call me baby cakes one more time... Look, I'm not gonna kill him. I'm just gonna swing this Louisville Slugger like the Bambino and give Two-Dollar Deuce an attitude adjustment, *capiisce*? Now go use yer feminine wilds to lure him out to the alley, and I'll handle the rest."

So I go around the corner and show Deuce a little leg, some T and A... He was really into it. It was a little nostalgic for the Sugar Shack days, ya know?

Officer Smythe: And then what happened, Miss Malone?

Trixie Malone: Then Tony bashed Deuce's head in with the baseball bat. It was awful. I'm sorry... Can you give me a minute?

Officer Smythe: That's fine Miss Malone. Take your time.

Trixie Malone: Can you give me one of your smokes?

Officer Smythe: Sure ma'am... Now, you were saying?

Trixie Malone: Hmmm? Oh. Yeah... We snuck in backstage just as Johnny was finishing the trick about Tahloola. You know the one, right? Where he gets audience members up and recreates the night Tahloola Jones was killed by Tony, but then it's really a card trick? You know? It's a little bit morbid but the audience loves it, and I think it helps Johnny get over his first love getting whacked.

Tony couldn't take it anymore and jumped onstage. He was clapping, but he didn't mean it none. He hated that trick 'cause it really made him look foolish, and in his mind that ain't quite the way he remembered it. Johnny didn't help his mood none either when he said, "Well, if it ain't little Tony Grieco. What you think you're doing here, baby cakes?"

Tony hated that name. I was the one who started callin' him by it. So when Johnny used it, it just made him even madder. Plus, everyone knew why we was there, and it pissed him off that Johnny asked.

Ya see, the way Tony remembers it, the bullet Tahloola took was meant for Johnny Dellarocca. Only she jumped in the way and now she's pushin' up daises instead of him. What a dame she was. But Tony had it in his little head that he was there to finish the job and take over the club, and said so.

Johnny moved towards Tony, but Tony drew his gun. Johnny stopped and took a step back, and Lana jumped in front of him. It was that horrible night with Tahloola all over again. But Johnny wasn't having it. He pushed Lana aside and said, "Over my dead body."

Tony said, "That can be arranged," and I jumped front of Johnny this time.

“No!” I screamed. “You promised you wouldn’t hurt him!”

“I don’t need to hurt him – I just gotta beat ‘im!” That’s what Tony said, and Johnny took it as a challenge to do it Club Roxy-style!

Tony said, “No, no, no! I don’t even know what that means, but it got Zucko killed, so I ain’t falling for that.” So Johnny wanted to fistfight him, *mano y mano*.

Tony said, “No way!” He said he ain’t no chump, and that he had a better idea. He knew that Johnny was a bettin’ man, so he proposed a bet. A game, really. Winner takes all. It was simple, really. Tony wanted to upstage Big Daddy, so he proposed a game of back alley roulette.

I brought him the stuff for the game and called him baby cakes. He got mad and said, “I told you never to call me that.” So I called him puddin’ and he says, “That ain’t no better.”

Then Tony explained that they was gonna play a game of back alley roulette with a beer bottle.

Now, there ain't nothing dangerous about a beer bottle, I know, but Tony was gonna change that. You ever play back alley roulette, Officer Smythe?

Officer Smythe: I can't say that I have.

Trixie Malone: Well, trust me, you don't wanna. Here's the gist: Ya break of the end of a beer bottle and then ya put it neck first into a hole in a brick or a block of wood with a hole, see? Then ya got three other blocks with holes in 'em, but nothing goes in those. Then you put a paper bags over all four blocks, including the one with the broken beer bottle, so you can't tell which one is which. Then they get mixed up and you take turns slamming your hand down on the bags until someone gets stabbed and cut by the broken glass. That's the loser. The one who's hand is bleeding. Men are so stupid.

Anyway, so Tony starts mixing up the bags like he's working the shell game, and Johnny don't savvy that. He called him out and says it ain't fair. If Tony mixed 'em up, he could keep track of the bottle. I had to agree. That ain't fair.

So they left me shuffle 'em up. But I made them both turn their backs. No cheating.

When I finished, I let the boys turn around, and Tony says to Johnny, "Okay, Dellarocca, whoever hits the shattered bottle first loses and leaves. The winner gets the club. Your club, your turn first."

Johnny smashed the first bag, showing nothing under it. Tony asked me to shuffle the bags again, and he took his turn. He smashed a bag, showing nothing under it. Two down, only two left.

Tony had me to shuffle the remaining two and invited Johnny to go again. Johnny smashed another empty bag, leaving only one for Tony. He smiled as he invited Tony to take his final turn. Tony was furious. He pulled the bag off, revealing the shattered bottle, and pulled his gun. That's when Tony said, "You gotta be kiddin' me! I guess I gotta do this the old fashioned way."

Johnny reached under his coat for his gun, but came up empty. Somehow, Tony had boosted Johnny's gun.

"Lookin' for this? Say your last abracadabra, magic man." Tony tried to be all dramatic and all, but he was just an ass.

I spoke up and reminded Tony that he promised me he wouldn't kill nobody else. He did remember, and I was relieved when he suggested Plan B.

Officer Smythe: Plan B?

Trixie Malone: Yeah... Tony wanted to make sure Johnny couldn't make any trouble, so he had me chain him up like Tony showed me to do. I wasn't thrilled, but at least nobody was getting whacked. So I chained Johnny up straitjacket-style. When I finished, Tony handed me a gun and told me to keep an eye on him and to shoot him if he did anything sneaky.

Then Tony turned to the audience and started acting like he was the host. "Ladies and



gentlemen, I will now be taking over as your host. But before we go any further, I got some unfinished business to attend to. I want the Bombshell Kittens to get their sweet tassels out here. C'mon, girls!

Now, ladies – and I use the term loosely – I am your new boss, and there are going to be some new rules around here. Maestro, some music please.” I remember that almost word for word, because he made me help him practice it over and over.

The girls came out. Lana LaMoore, Ginger Lee, Mitzi Lee, Honey Love... Tony Grieco decided to take turns with each Kitten – inspecting the merchandise, if you catch my drift. After he finished feelin' each of 'em up, he forced a kiss from them. Lana was the last in line, but she refused to kiss him. She started to sing softly, but Tony threw her to the floor. Hard.

He was mad and screamed, “Cut the music! Cut the music, damn it! Just what do you think you're

doing? Stand up! All I ask is for a little kiss. Is that too much to ask? Huh? Answer me!"

Lana replied by telling him the only man she'd kiss was Johnny.

Now I remember this next part clearly. It is burned into my brain. "Shut up!" That was Tony. "Maybe you don't get it. You're mine now. This is my club and you belong to me. Johnny can't do nothing! Now, you have exactly three seconds to give me the kiss of a life time. One..."

Lana was defiant. Is that the right word? "I am not your property, Grieco."

I was getting nervous and tried to get his attention. "Tony..."

"Not now, doll."

Tony grabbed Lana by the chin and pulled her face towards his.

"But Tony..." I says. I was supposed to be his best girl. Me.

“I said stifle it, Trix!”

He tried to go in for the kiss, but Lana pulled herself free from his grip. In anger, he threw her to the floor a second time and then said, “Now, look, I’m a patient man, doll, so I’m gonna give you a break. Besides, I’d hate to have to ruin that pretty face by rearranging it.”

I pleaded with him. “Tony, you said we wasn’t gonna hurt nobody!”

And of course he had to correct me. The big man. The big blowhard. “No, I said I wouldn’t kill anybody else tonight. I didn’t say nothing about nobody gettin’ hurt! Besides, ain’t no one gonna be hurt, doll. That is, as long as Lana LaMoore apologizes, and shows me how much she appreciates me. What’s it gonna be, Lana?

Lana was silent. Johnny Dellarocca was still chained up and was struggling. He wanted to be free so bad, and I wanted him free. I threw the gun away. I wasn’t gonna do nothing to him.

When I threw the gun away, Tony looked at me and said, “Ya know I’m gettin’ a little tired of this.”

I begged him to stop. “Tony, please!”

He told me to shut up, and when I tried to tell him what I thought, he said, “I said shut up.” Then he turned back to Lana LaMoore and said to her, “All right, Lana, I’ve had enough of this game. Kiss your pretty mug goodbye.”

Tony raised his fist to hit Lana, and I grabbed his shoulders. “No, Tony!” I told him. “You promised me we wouldn’t hurt nobody! You promised!”

Tony swung around and hit me hard across the face, and I hit the floor even harder and nearly passed out. That’s how I got this shiner. But that ain’t what hurt. He told me, “Shut up, you ditzy blonde bimbo,” when he hit me. After all that time. After all those years of sticking beside him. Putting up with the abuse, the fear... I coulda been a star, dammit, but I let him take that from me!

I’m sorry... I need a minute.

Officer Smythe: That's fine. Take a deep breath... Continue when you are ready.

Trixie Malone: Forgive me. I'm such a mess... Now, where were we? Oh, yeah, Tony Grieco was about to give Lana LaMoore a nose job. Just as he was about to rearrange her face, Johnny Dellarocca had freed himself from the chain straitjacket. Of course he did. What dope puts a world-renowned magician in chains and expects he can't escape? Is that dumb or what?

Johnny wrapped the chains around Tony's neck and started choking him. Tony reached toward me, but I backed away. I wasn't helping that creep any more.

Almost as fast as it all started, it was over. Tony's eyes rolled back in his head and his body slumped to the ground as Johnny let go of the chains. Johnny killed him. Johnny Dellarocca killed Tony Grieco! I was never so happy in my life. I jumped into Johnny's arms and kissed him. Then I kissed him again. And again. And then once again. It was good. But it was even better when Johnny said,

“It’s good to have you back where you belong, Kitten.”

And that’s it, Officer Smythe. That’s what happened.

Officer Smythe: Thank you, Miss Malone. Miss Witherspoon, please let the record reflect that Miss Malone’s testimony is consistent with the testimony of the other eyewitnesses, and that the Chicago Police Department considers this case closed. No charges will be brought against Mr. Dellarocca. Please note the time is 9:45 p.m. Miss Malone? You are free to go.

Trixie Malone: Really? Oh! And I have time to get back to the Roxy to see the late night burlesque show. Ginger Lee is doing her famous playing card fan dance Oh, and thank you again for the smokes Officer Smythe! See you in the funny papers...

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