

# **POKING THE BEAR**

By Jason&Becky

09/2013

**A Dialogue to be performed  
by two people across a table**

# POKING THE BEAR

By Jason&Becky

## SCENE: CAFE

**Setting:** Inside Annie's café next to the fairground carousel.

**Props:** Cafe table, cheap table cloth, 2 chairs, menu, magazine rack filed with assorted magazines, 2 polystyrene cups, ketchup, mustard, salt, pepper, cutlery, marker pen.

[Jason & Becky are struggling artists in their thirties. Having thrown away lucrative careers in pursuit of their practice, they find themselves presented with a moral dilemma that could change their lives.

Entering a nearby café whilst on a break from their day job manning the fairground carousel, they discuss nervously the events that are about to unfold...]

*Carousel music and laughter clearly audible in the background*

[Entering the café...]

**JASON:** Are we allowed to come and sit down?

**BECKY:** Well I wasn't suggesting that

**JASON:** Enjoy your swim the other night?

**BECKY:** We went the other week and saw jellyfish

**JASON:** But there's not enough space up there for all of us

**BECKY:** Basically you were just suggesting everyone arm wrestled

**JASON:** Well it's an enthusiastic response

[Sitting down at the cramped café table continuing discussion...]

**BECKY:** Is it like a coaster?

**JASON:** It's different isn't it - is it influence or is it skill set or is it experience?

**BECKY:** They reckon seven out of ten is the standard uk response to any question

**JASON:** Are we allowed to use the wall?

**BECKY:** Are we colour coded?

**JASON:** It's just honest

**BECKY:** They're not coasters then?

**JASON:** Does it get in the way though, if you sort of think about this thing, maybe it gets in the way if you're thinking about this

**BECKY:** But I suppose you're always chasing it in your head anyway

**JASON:** Can I get another drink before we start doing this?

**BECKY:** Where are you from then?

**JASON:** We triangulate

**BECKY:** I'm associating the term internal power with, I dunno, resilience. Where are you originally from?

**JASON:** The thing is on a monday I'm a tit

**BECKY:** I think internal power only comes from a place of not having it

**JASON:** Resilience is quite important though isn't it. because if you didn't have that you'd just give up

**BECKY:** You have to have been at one end of the spectrum to experience the other

**JASON:** It's about influence as well isn't it. And if you are influenced by things, like conditioning, the only power is purity isn't it. Total cleanliness of thought and mind

**BECKY:** That's illegal now is it? I also think parody can be a very powerful thing. Rather than purity

**JASON:** So. That doesn't mean anything

**BECKY:** Well I don't know, I can't really relate to the word power very well to be honest - that's why it's a very interesting question

**JASON:** You could say that this is the most powerful of all, and no one will ever reach this point

**BECKY:** It's just a funny question

**JASON:** Just chuck them all randomly

**BECKY:** Oh hang on what I'll do is go like that, and then we'll flip them, right

**JASON:** But the not doing it is the doing of it

**BECKY:** It's like taking away the skeleton of the question

**JASON:** Obviously this doesn't define power at all. It defines how randomly you can throw

**BECKY:** It's like the purest form of water you know, it's like pure air, you need it to survive.

**JASON:** Yeah. How many friends have you got on facebook?

**BECKY:** Is that like Picasso? Or is that like, Tim Davies?

**JASON:** You're able to control what people do

**BECKY:** That's a good point - can you control somebody with the power of your mind?

**JASON:** In what world? Or in whose terms?

**BECKY:** Who's got more sway? Who's got more swagger?

**JASON:** It's a loaded word anyway

**BECKY:** I would put a bear at the height of power

**JASON:** How long has Wales been without bears?

**BECKY:** 1980 - thats when I was born

**JASON:** What? Have we time travelled?

**BECKY:** I have absolutely no control over what's happening to me

**JASON:** Pins and needles all over

**BECKY:** You've got to be a warrior

**JASON:** So it's about ambition as well then

**BECKY:** You could just come back and blow everybody up

**JASON:** I feel quite romantic about it

**BECKY:** It is problematic though

**JASON:** Do we all have two names, in a sense?

**BECKY:** It's a language I'm not familiar with anymore

**JASON:** See i don't think that's true

**BECKY:** The funny thing is that there's nothing exactly directly going to come out of it. I mean if you kind of said right, your career depends on it, you know we might have a Lord of the Flies kind of scenario

**JASON:** If only it was that easy

**BECKY:** That was orchestrated

**JASON:** What are we having?

**BECKY:** I want some

**JASON:** Which happens to be once a year on your birthday

**BECKY:** When I fly on a plane, I never put Dr. in

**JASON:** It's a good word isn't it?

**BECKY:** I make films sometimes

**JASON:** Are we any nearer to resolving anything?

**BECKY:** No. I think we just started though so that's good

[a long pause as the two artists gather their thoughts on the subject of discussion...]

**JASON:** It's about unspoken things. its something that exists that no one's really comfortable talking about.

**BECKY :** And also its such a vague term that you can actually manipulate it to be whatever you want to talk about.

**JASON:** We're orbiting institutions like meteorites

**BECKY:** Like Day of the Triffids

**JASON:** In that respect are you defining power as influence? Is the most powerful thing we can present to anyone an influence on them?

**BECKY:** I thought you were going to say 'if you can define power you can have pudding'

**JASON:** What are you pointing at?

**BECKY:** The salad, it's really nice

**JASON:** I think we're losing focus

**BECKY:** My person changes by the nanosecond I think

**JASON:** I'm not allowed to talk whilst I'm eating at home  
I'm gonna stop talking now

[The silence is broken as the waitress leans across to top up the two drinks in front of them...]

**BECKY:** Did you give that one to me on purpose?

**JASON:** Damien Hirst!

**BECKY:** First fact: never visited my studio. Second fact: never visited my studio

**JASON:** He probably cries when he goes to sleep because he lives such a miserable existence

**BECKY:** This food is really distracting, I've got to be honest

**JASON:** You know what this means don't you? That next weeks table will have our names on it

**BECKY:** He's pretty powerful in the art scene

**JASON:** No he's not

**BECKY:** It's about the networking opportunities

**JASON:** I really admire Peter Kay

**BECKY:** Technically, he's sitting on top

**JASON:** Biased or not, that's an influential position

**BECKY:** Well I won't disagree with you there

**JASON:** Are you just upset because you haven't been nominated?

**BECKY:** Not so much upset, BITTER yeah

**JASON:** It's so polemical though isn't it. You have to be one or the other

[Jason reaches for another magazine on the table and begins nonchalantly flicking through its pages as he eats his food...]

**BECKY:** She's in charge. Everything I do has to go through her, so she's more powerful

**JASON:** She made the most money

**BECKY:** I would gladly sell my house and all its contents for him. I can't put him high enough. He's up there

**JASON:** Whenever I've spoken to him he's been really kind and I think he's lovely

**BECKY:** I've disagreed with him over the years but at least he had a point of view. It's not about agreeing with people. It's about having a point of view

**JASON:** Start throwing your career away

**BECKY:** You talk to her and she's like a normal person

**JASON:** I've worked with him loads of times. He is is mental  
He is genuinely one of the nicest people you'd meet. But he is mental

**BECKY:** Yeah the power of the internet

**JASON:** It's manipulating, whether it's good or bad, it's manipulating other peoples views

**BECKY:** Manipulating other people's minds

**JASON:** It's not personal. I love vampires

**BECKY:** Careful now

**JASON:** He is actually quite buff

**BECKY:** I don't think anyone needs that much information

**JASON:** That is, without doubt, the most popular person in the world

**BECKY:** He was like seventh sexiest male

**JASON:** Game over

**BECKY:** He's a prominent figure

**JASON:** Probably feels quite at one with himself

**BECKY:** Now that's quite powerful.

**JASON:** Is that like an antidote to the other people?

**BECKY:** It's that good feeling that they give to other people

**JASON:** She's an Aries that's my fact

**BECKY:** Oh is she I'M AN ARIES  
I dont know. I'm just being silly - I'm excited

**JASON:** My God if they could see us now

**BECKY:** Because they used to be a Radio 1 DJ?

**JASON:** Because they let us do this!

**BECKY:** But I am an Aries

**JASON:** They are fluctuating

**BECKY:** Fuckinell

**JASON:** Do you know them?

**BECKY:** Yeah they've got dark hair haven't they?

**JASON:** No, blonde

**BECKY:** Oh my God!

**JASON:** I think we don't need to abide by what this concept is. I think we need to transform

**BECKY:** You probably have quite an influential status

**JASON:** I'd rather not say

**BECKY:** I dont want to go up there its embarrassing isnt it

**JASON:** She's doing things

**BECKY:** Knowing of them but not knowing them

**JASON:** Oh that's nice

**BECKY:** Yeah it's a job isn't it, a job which you're really good at

**JASON:** I'm bored

[Jason gets up from the table and walks over to the magazine rack, picking out a selection of newspapers and magazines before returning to the table...]

**BECKY:** She's the least corrupt person on the planet

**JASON:** To be fair they've got a weird name for somebody who's not corrupt

**BECKY:** This is my reaction against corruption

[stands up and steps backwards away from the table]

**JASON:** Who do I need to schmooze with?

**BECKY:** [sitting back down at the table...]

I think he's a little bit corrupt but in a good way

**JASON:** There's no judgement on whether it's good or bad  
I think we're all a bit corrupt

**BECKY:** I'm not very corrupt

**JASON:** Have you brought your own pens?

**BECKY:** I did yes

**JASON:** He negotiates. Down the middle would be negotiating corruption wouldn't it?

**BECKY:** I wish I could be more corrupt

**JASON:** How do you be more corrupt?

**BECKY:** How you do it is by pretending that you don't know what it means

**JASON:** Can somebody school me in corruption?

**BECKY:** I dunno what it means

**JASON:** I got angry at somebody that had a bought a brand new car earlier

**BECKY:** Is that co-operation?

**JASON:** No, close to co-operation, but not

**BECKY:** I suppose in my mind it's the opposite of thinking that the Universe is wonderful and magical

**JASON:** That's cynicism though isn't it?

**BECKY:** Realism!

**JASON:** Is that your own pen?

**BECKY:** Shittinell - It's permanent!

**JASON:** I am corrupt. I found a fiver the other day and I kept it

**BECKY:** That's power AND corruption that is

**JASON:** I went straight to Marks & Spencer to the reduced items

**BECKY:** Where did you find it? On the floor or in somebody's purse?

**JASON:** Who consumes the most? Who spends the most on terrible things? Who's got the most expensive phone contract?

**BECKY:** Mine is £6.90

**JASON:** How is yours £6.90?

**BECKY:** It's £6.90

**JASON:** Who shops at Marks & Spencers?

**BECKY:** Is anyone that corrupt?

**JASON:** I spend a lot on train fares

**BECKY:** I respect that guy. I think he's worked really hard and he's done a really good job. I don't think he's corrupt at all

**JASON:** We may not all agree or like it but he has got there on his own

**BECKY:** I don't have any Apple products

**JASON:** One

**BECKY:** You've got one and I've got none

**JASON:** To have Apple products is power

**BECKY:** Is it? Isn't that like shopping at Tesco?

**JASON:** I bet you've got a little secret

**BECKY:** I think we're not getting anywhere

**JASON:** You've got blood on your hands

**BECKY:** Oh my God

[Becky gets up from the table and rushes to the toilet. She returns smelling of handwash...]

**JASON:** So who's the youngest on this table?

**BECKY:** He looks good but he's older than you.  
He is off the scale

**JASON:** I don't want to be part of this scene

**BECKY:** If it's any consolation, you're not

**JASON:** Why are we here?

**BECKY:** Nobody knows the future for you. Let's see where you can go

**JASON:** This is the height of corruption

**BECKY:** This is the sneakiest game I've ever played

**JASON:** I had a bit of a feeling when I started laughing nervously and my hands were sweating

**BECKY:** Everyone is corrupt and everyone is powerful

**JASON:** How old are you then?

**BECKY:** Why's everyone so fucking interested?

**JASON:** The definition of corrupt is changing all the time

**BECKY:** Last week I noticed that the corrupt people were the people who were in paid jobs

**JASON:** Who's in a paid job around this table?

**BECKY:** With great power comes great responsibility

**JASON:** I wanted to be least honest

**BECKY:** I don't mind where we go as long as I'm more powerful

**JASON:** It is the way to get on though

**BECKY:** I don't get that

**JASON:** It changes every day depending on the situation and the circumstance

**BECKY:** Could we get a kind of commentary on that, like the stock market?

**JASON:** She doesn't belong there

**BECKY:** Stick a fork in her

**JASON:** So she is pulling the strings of all of us - SHE is Keyser Söze

**BECKY:** She's even got the evil dog

**JASON:** Have you been lying?

**BECKY:** It doesn't really matter we're all friends now

**JASON:** I was really determined as well to keep my mouth shut

**BECKY:** Well you could have done a bit of shading

**JASON:** I think we had a real potential to change the world here

**BECKY:** We're all liars

**JASON:** He will throw a fuckin' spanner in the works

**BECKY:** That's the first time I've heard you swear

**JASON:** I can imagine

**BECKY:** At least you haven't got a big penis drawn on you.  
How have you remained unscathed?

**JASON:** I was told not to drink too much

**BECKY:** Are they in the other room watching this?

**JASON:** If Damien Hirst did a piece of work in here and it was shit, he wouldn't invite him back

**BECKY:** What's the commission rate?

**JASON:** Yeah for me I struggled with the whole concept of this. It's everything that's wrong. It's a sad state of affairs isn't it?

**BECKY:** To be fair I thought this was gonna be far more dangerous than it is.  
More uncomfortable

**JASON:** It might be next week

**BECKY:** Nobody's killed each other yet?

**JASON:** Use a variety of colours. We'll get more money for it

[Jason counts out £6.90 in loose change stacking it in a neat pile at the table's edge. They leave the cafe and head back to the carousel...]

