**kabootrr**

***Starring:***

**KHUBHRRO,** the Supreme Kabootrr

**SANCHIRPTA,** the General of Khubhrro’s Army

**CROWDANI,** a hippie crow

**BRRAPTEX,** younger brother of Sanchirpta

**CAWHESH,** a sage; and others

**ACT I**

**SCENE I: The Crowded Road**

*Khubhrro and Sanchirpta fly in from the right. The stage is busy and upon their entrance, everyone turns towards them and the jostling subsides.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

My subje- my people! My terrific, venturous people!

**SANCHIRPTA***awkwardly, to Khubhrro’s ear*

Sir, venturous is no-

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO***still looking at his people*

Silence; for I have an announcement to make.

*The gathered kabootrrs share stifled looks with each other. Bad news was the last of what they needed.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

It’s a grand affair. *The* grandest affair for us since our ancestor’s worldly capture of our cities. For decades, and then for some more, we kabootrrs have been working without a cause. A haystack without a needle, a sun without its setting.

**SANCHIRPTA***interrupting*

I believe those are good things, the abse-

*Khubhrro smacks Sanchirpta with his stronger wing, making him roll into the crowd. The kabootrrs back away making space for the General of their Armies to roll farther in. A palpable shmuck energy radiates from the crowd.*

**SUPREME KHUBBHRO**

Now, yaddle along my seedlings, yaddle along.   
*[Opening a scroll]* I found the intentions of the establishment of our civilisation. Lost sanctuaries ago, I am bestowed with greatest pleasure to share its contents with the ridicu- young minds of you. Let it mark the commencement of Kabootrr Din.

*Little birdies fly onto the stage; some from the audience. MUSICAL NO. 1 is in action.*

“*Thou hath not be hasty, naught’s all and all’s naught,  
to crown the prince is duty of us,   
doth crown him we must, else all’s rot.  
Wouldst he find thine pleasure, pleasurable  
Yet reek in pearls of crime, so it shall seem;  
He doth be prince, the façade of our rocks and fables.”*

*[****note: to the tune of something cool, like the circle of life from lion king****]*

*Everyone gradually leaves the stage. Curtains roll in.*

**SCENE II: The Sage’s Sanctuary**

Cawhesh rests cross footed on a pedestal in the middle of the stage. His disciples sit below him.

**CAWHESH**

Pray, my dear kabootrrs, you pray to the universe, for the universe, as the universe.

**DISCIPLE 1**

Or we can pray that we be the promised princes…

**CAWHESH**

I’m sorry, my least favourite student, was that a prayer?

**DISCIPLE II**

He’s very right, however. His Supremacy has announced Kabootrr Din. Whoever wins gets to succeed him as the Supreme.

**DISCIPLE I**

Right, and if any of us were to win, we’d surely bring some good into this universe. I’d say it makes absolute sense to modify our prayers a tad bit.

**CAWHESH**

My sweetnesses. Echo what he had said.

**DISCIPLE III**

Whoever’s the best kabootrr will get to be the prince.

**DISCIPLE IV**

Because he’s infertile.

**DISCIPLE II**

He didn’t say tha-

**DISCIPLE III**

She knows. She’s saying it to sound “funny”.

**DISCIPLE II**

You don’t need to put quotes on it. And either way, she might cloud Caw’s judgement, as he’d only asked to reiterate what we were told.

**DISCIPLE I**

You think a dumb remark from a three weeks old can cloud the judgement of the sage of the universe?

**DISCIPLE IV**

And *Caw’s* judgement*?* Are you both fornicating that we don’t kn-

**CAWHESH**

Silence.

**DISCIPLE IV**

He said that too.

*Cawhesh smacks Disciple IV with his strong wing. She doesn’t move.*

**CAWHESH**

Take the pristine thrusts, the vehement brushings of the hair, for which I have no contempt for. The kabootrrs have lost their respect and I blame you. The sexualisation of the feathers, the financial abdications, the lost homes. I blame you, the future, the temptations’ magnets. Shame on you all and-

*Crowdani enters. A joint in his mouth, half smoked. A cape over his brazened head, embroidered with talon shards.*

**CROWDANI***sneers, pigeon-like*

Why, hello there.

*Hippie birds, like smaller versions of Crowdani himself fly in just as before. Jazzy music blows.*

*MUSICAL NO. 2*

*“The humans have done one thing right,  
and it’s the psychedelics.  
Went home a pop rock,  
now I’m popping rocks.   
Went to the haystack a cowboy,  
now I’m a boy who’s riding cows.  
Smear me, oh, smear me,  
kiss me till I’m spewing fire,  
change my Darwinian tendencies, babe.  
Change them, make me ca-caw.  
Ca-caw ca-caw ca-caw…”*

*Cawhesh has exited first. His disciples follow, and moments later the songbirds.*

*Crowdani stays. The curtains roll in on him.*

**ACT II**

**Scene I: House of Sanchirpta and Brraptex**

*Sullen windows and dimming fireplace. Brraptex is sitting on the altar, Sanchirpta kicking away his shoes at the doorstep.*

**BRRAPTEX**

For how long will you be his court jester?

**SANCHIRPTA**

Till a dimwit employs you.

**BRRAPTEX**

You’re aware that I choose this laid-back life. We don’t need a fireplace, let alone a walk-in closet. We aren’t kabootrr Barbies.

**SANCHIRPTA**

Then why do you warm yourself by this materialistic entity that you have no need of? I do not fancy this life either. I broke a bone today. I do this for you, my brother. Don’t guilt me. Daren’t you make me feel as though a time waster if you have no need of my services. Keep it in you.

**BRRAPTEX**

Then I’ll keep it in me.

*A long, awkward pause.*

Mr Dosst is ready to employ me in his haystackery, if that pleases you.

*Sanchirpta sneers. Another awkward, long pause.*

Why?

**SANCHIRPTA**

I have to be the Supreme.

**SCENE II: The Sage’s Sanctuary**

*Cawhesh sits on his pedestal. Crowdani is flying from branch to branch ca-cawing.*

**CAWHESH**

I shall report you to the authorities. To the Mistress. Crows like you, trespassing on our territories. You desecrate our lands while bringing disdain to yours. For the universe, shall I make you pay.

**CROWDANI**

Shall you?

**CAWHESH**

Tell me why you’re here.

**CROWDANI**

I wish to be one of you.

*Cawhesh is taken aback. He shifts on his pedestal nervously, unsure of what to say next.*

**CROWDANI**

I can see the tension in your face.

**CAWHESH**

Congratulations. The universe doesn’t know what to say to the likes of you.

**CROWDANI**

Please save me this derision I could’ve easily attained from my own community.   
Show me you’re better. Show me that I, a non-conformist, an easily label pig in this world of hippopotami, has a place in this world. I come to you not to defile but to seek help.

**CAWHESH**

I know not how to trust you. A crow, the killer of my brothers, the convict of all our crimes. I shall not fall for your hoodwinking.

*Crowdani looks down. After a while, he flies in front of Cawhesh and shows him his bare chest. In place of the C that marks all the crows of their hinterland, lies a G.*

*An upside down L has been carved on the lower curve of the former marking. Crowdani has been marked as an outsider. Last done only to Jack the Cripper, the incestual crow, a thousand years ago. The great insult, the greatest death warrant, imprinted on his own body.*

**CROWDANI**

You’re a sage. Disciple me.

**SCENE III: The Supreme’s Palace**

*Khubhrro sits on his High Chair, awaiting his iced lemon water. Sanchirpta rushes in, dropping the flask he was carrying.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Buffoon! My General is a buffoon!

**SANCHIRPTA***under his breath*

A General shouldn’t be getting iced lemonades.

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Repeat what you just said.

**SANCHIRPTA**

A. GENERAL. SHOULDN’T. BE. GETTING. FUCKING. ICED. LEMONADES.

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Lemonades?

**SANCHIRPTA**

Holy Sage I-

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Lemon aid…?

**SANCHIRPTA**

I’m furiously appalled by my behaviour, that was very out of place, I apologi-

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

What is a lemon aiding?

**SANCHIRPTA***taken aback*

I- Uh, what? A lemon aiding, sir?

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

You just said it. A general shouldn’t be getting fucking lemon aidings. I would like to know what that is.

**SANCHIRPTA**

Your Supremacy, I realise the rightfully taunting nature of your st-

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

No. Tell me what it is.

**SANCHIRPTA**

The lemon drink you asked for.

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

I requested a lemon water.

**SANCHIRPTA**

A lemon water’s called a lemonade.

*Khubhrro looks straight in his eyes. He turns back, reaches for his bobby pin and flings it at his 12 year-long general. It hits him in the chest. He dies.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

No it’s fucking not.

**SCENE IV: DISCIPLE IV’s household**

*The stage is set for a ritual. Flower petals, important looking water and embroidered carpets. Birdies enter from all over. Crowdani sits in the middle of the stage. Cawhesh stands behind him. All of Caw’s disciples are spread across the stage. Punk music cues in.*

*MUSICAL NO. 3*

*“To be a kabootrr is to have it worse of all,  
our moms left us too,  
searching for our broken wings,  
our talons unshaven,  
but we found our stage and in him he found his disciples,  
to be us is to become us,  
the sleep which comes in,  
as the death of each day,  
let this be the sleep of your crow life,  
let us be your guide, the   
initiation.”*

*Birdies fly in bringing drapes to cover Crowdani’s skin. The sage starts singing, as all the disciples and birdies exit.*

*“Look around you,  
you’re in heaven. The stars,  
the voices, they’re all past you.  
Look for the dirt in the dirthole, a   
pigeon knows how to tell;  
lemon from aids, and sphincters from herons.  
Dreadlocks and curries, twigs  
and reproduction;  
babies from wormholes and wormholes from babies,  
colloquialisms and the number seven.   
The pigeon is in you, yet  
you’re not in the pigeon;  
be your pitcher, throw the hairstack,  
make your nest, don’t  
let the haystack go dry. Look  
out for needles. One day, you’ll need them.  
Remember, one day you’ll need them…”*

**ACT III**

**SCENE I: The fields**

*Brraptex has his brother’s ashes in his hands. He lets them go.*

**Brraptex**

The world hasn’t been kind to you, brother. It’s in my stars to make sure it remembers that.

**SCENE II: The High-Garden of Khubhrro’s Palace**

*Khubhrro has no repentance for what he did. He drinks a lemon water and strokes his beady hair.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Guards!

**GUARD 1***fearfully*

Yes, Your Supremacy?

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Today is the Kabootrr Din. Call my prospective successors.

*Khubhrro flies outside leaving the guard alone.*

**SCENE III: The Sage’s Sanctuary**

*The pep talk crowd is gathered. Crowdani stands out.*

**CAWHESH**

Political battlefields are beyond my perspicacity. Yet I hope it is one of my disciples who win. The universe’s forever in your favour.

*The disciples run out, excited. Crowdani stays. Cawhesh gives him an all-knowing look. He knows.*

**CAWHESH***frightened, for the first time in eighty years*

You’re going to-

*Crowdani stabs him. He doesn’t have time for old kabootrrs.*

***SCENE IV: The High-Garden of the Palace***

The rambunctiousness is ascertained by the roaring kabootrrs, queued up in thousands. Enthralled at the thought of holding power, every last kabootrr has found its way to the gardens.

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Silence.

*They silence. Khubhrro mouths something to his guard, making him move swiftly to the crowds below. He directs them all to individual stands. A thousand stands for a thousand birds.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Make me a lemon water.

*Convolution forms a distinct image in the kabootrrs. No one moves. No one, except Crowdani and Brraptex.*

**CROWDANI***muttering to himself*

Lemon from aids, lemon from aids, lemon from aids, lemo-

*He bumps into Brraptex.*

**BRRAPTEX**

Watch where you’re going, assho- you’re a crow.

**CROWDANI***snickering*

And?

*Brraptex can’t be interrupted today. Not even by the sight of a crow. Nothing shall diminish his spirit.*

**CROWDANI***under his breath*

Hope you join your family today.

**BRRAPTEX***pecks his drapes from his beaks*

A’ight, too far! I shall rampage your body and land you in-

*He notices the G. Snickering, Crowdani flies away.*

**CROWDANI***landing in a haystack*

Needle, needle, remember the needle, the old kabootrr had said.

*He hunts through the thick haystack. He has got to be right about the needle. The one thing he had been taught, the one thing he was sure he knew.*

**CROWDANI***feeling an iron substance in his beak*

AHA! That was too-

**BRRAPTEX***imitating Crowdani’s snicker poorly*

Surprised to see me?

*Two kabootrrs. Two needles.*

*Crowdani didn’t respond and flew with all his might to the high gardens. The kabootrrs were already giving their drinks to the Supreme. Khubhrro was flinching and throwing away every single one of them.*

*Brraptex rushed to the stage with his half empty flask, a needle however sturdily placed.*

**CROWDANI***half crying*

I’ve lost. After all my attempts, my sacrifices, I have fUCKING LOST.

**STRANGE KABOOTRR**

So have I.

**CROWDANI**

FUCK YOU, YOU DON’T KNOW MY STRUGGLES.

*Just then, a bald eagle was sighted. Aiming for the stage, all the kabootrrs rushed towards the palace entrance. All, except of course, the determined Brraptex whose spirit shan’t be broken that day. The eagle grabbed him in his claws and flew away swiftly. His spirit might have remained intact. As for his organs, we can’t quite say.*

**CROWDANI***laughs maniacally*

Thank you, the Mistress, for I know you exist now.

*He gets up and rushes to the stage, needle in the drink, a sneer on his face and poise even in his rushing.*

**CROWDANI**

You have a winner, My Supremacy.

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Getting cocky, are w-

*He looks at his flask. It’s perfect. It’s a lemon water. Enough iron in it to taste like iron. Enough lemon to taste like lemon. Enough water to be a water. He has a winner.*

**SUPREME KHUBHRRO**

Hand it here. And to all you others, hand it to him. He is your s-

*Crowdani had already taken out the needle and stabbed the Supreme’s back.*

*He laughed, maniacally.*

**ACT IV**

**SCENE I: THE FINALE**

*No birdies enter. The kabootrrs remain in their places, too shaken to move. Crowdani sings.*

*“Oh! Do not envy me for he,  
he has said it too, I am your Supreme!  
I am your saviour! I am your Christ!  
I will make you jostle your little feathers,  
drop your drapes with me! Never forget the needle, never indeed.  
It’s a wedding and I’m the bassoon. I’m the climate and I’m the change.   
For so long have you been swept by the ugly,  
the bad, and the evil. I am the good. I am what is pristine. The gold without the need of a shovel.  
Look up here. You’re now in heaven. I have won your love, and your support.  
TO be the wretched, I have defeated the wretched. Gone!  
Gone are the days of Kabootrr Din!  
Repeat after me:  
I have won the crowde-in.”*

*The end.*

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