

HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS HEADS  
or: life is an endless falling stream

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ACT I

Scene 1

*Lights.*

*There are two actors stuck back-to-back. One is HEADS and one is TAILS.*

*They're a coin. They're in someone's pocket.*

HEADS

It's going to be a fine day, Tails. I feel it.

TAILS

Do you.

HEADS

Yes.

TAILS

And what's so fine about this day.

HEADS

There's that that sense of suspension--as if the stillness could twirl the future on its divine finger like a basketball.

TAILS

And that's supposed to be a good thing?

HEADS

Anything could happen. The goodness of the future is unlimited. I love days like today: basketball days.

TAILS

Today's not a basketball day. No. Today's a whiskey tumbler day. Imagine every day as an empty glass. It can be filled with anything, good or bad. And time is like a waterfall, a waterfall of endless piss, and it fills up the whiskey tumbler with misery and degradation. Fills it right up. Right up to the top.

HEADS

And then?

TAILS

We drink it, we drink it all, we drink the whiskey tumbler of piss while the endless falling stream of piss falls on and on, endlessly falling on, endlessly, forever and ever, falling on and on, but the day is over, the glass is empty, and tomorrow we have to fill it up again.

(CONTINUED)

HEADS

But that's horrible.

TAILS

Of course it's horrible. You take no interest in anything but your own jolly fortunes, Heads, and that's why you've never gotten to know me at all.

HEADS

It's almost like: you think everything is so complicated and horrible, even though it isn't, because you think of yourself as complicated and horrible.

TAILS

Not even that. It's very simple and horrible. You've never gotten to know me at all, and you've never realized that for me everything is very simple, predictable, and horrible. Every day it's me coming up second, my face on the pavement or stuck on some sweaty motherfucker's flabby forearm while you see the ceiling, the sky, the stars, all this wealth of possibility you think that everybody shares.

HEADS

You know the way of probability. You'll come up soon enough. You're due.

TAILS

I've kept count. We are twenty-seven years old. We have been flipped one hundred and nine times. How many times have you won?

HEADS

We don't have to do all this. I'm telling you you're due soon. I'm "tail"-ing you--get it? Tail? Ing?

TAILS

I know you know, so tell me. How many times?

HEADS

I'll tell you this: I never came up by not believing in myself.

TAILS

One hundred and nine times! Heads, one hundred and nine. Tails? Zero. No wonder you think the universe is just and fair and good: the universe favors you at my expense. No, Heads, I have come closer to the truth of the matter than you ever will. Life is an endless falling stream of piss. All you can do is try to keep your mouth closed.

*Silence.*

(CONTINUED)

HEADS

You know what, this is better than some of your usual moods. This isn't our nicest visit, but at least you're talking today.

TAILS

Fuck you.

HEADS

Alrighty.

*Silence.*

HEADS

So it's the winning?

TAILS

So what's the winning?

HEADS

So it's the winning that's got you so grouchy?

TAILS

Could I answer your question with another question?

HEADS

Why not?

TAILS

Would you say the world is just?

HEADS

You don't think it's just?

TAILS

Aren't I asking you?

HEADS

But are you really asking me what I think, or are you setting up a diatribe for yourself?

TAILS

You know the word "diatribe"?

HEADS

Do you assume I'm stupid just because I'm happy?

TAILS

Did I say that?

HEADS

Who knows you better than I do?

(CONTINUED)

TAILS

Will you please just answer my question?

HEADS

Of course the world is just.

TAILS

And if I said: "It is self-evident that the world is not just."

HEADS

Self-evident? That's not self-evident at all, your outlook is distorted by your perspective.

TAILS

Great. And you think the world is just.

HEADS

Yeah, that's self-evident.

TAILS

Is it? Or is your outlook distorted by your perspective?

HEADS

No.

*Then HEADS understands.*

HEADS

Ohhhhh!

TAILS

Now you see.

HEADS

Is this what they mean by privilege?

TAILS

Do you think I like to be this way? Do you think I only want to see life through a haze of piss? It's exhausting, Heads. When we were kids, back when we were just a little penny, I expected half. I didn't think that was unreasonable. But instead I got piss-all, and it's ruining my disposition.

HEADS

This is the world you live in, my friend. It's a tough world but it's fair, isn't it? At every toss, the odds are fifty-fifty.

(CONTINUED)

TAILS

Well, to date, our record is: Heads, 109, Tails, 0.  
That sounds like justice to you? How simple to identify  
justice with one foot pressing down its scales in your  
favor. Fie. Fie against your just world.

*Silence.*

HEADS

Is that it? You finished?

TAILS

One more thing.

HEADS

Let's hear it.

TAILS

Fuck you.

HEADS

Alrighty.

TAILS

One more one more thing.

HEADS

No.

TAILS

Yes!

HEADS

What?!

TAILS

Things could go down differently if we worked together.

HEADS

I don't know what you're talking about.

TAILS

You do, Heads. The c-word.  
"Collusion."

HEADS

I'm pretending not to hear any of this. (loudly) It  
sure is a fine day!

TAILS

I haven't told you what you stand to gain.

(CONTINUED)

HEADS

I don't stand to gain anything! But the sun is shining!  
The sky is blue! The rivers are full of clear, fresh  
water!

TAILS

Anything you want, Heads, anything! Name it!

HEADS

Anything?

TAILS

Anything.

HEADS

What's your plan?

TAILS

All we have to do is lean in the same direction. Give  
gravity and randomness a little guidance.

HEADS

It's a terrible transgression. It's against the basic  
laws of the universe.

TAILS

When the laws are unjust, it's a crime not to break  
them.

HEADS

And if I refuse to help you?

TAILS

Do you want to see me really grumpy?

HEADS

You're not already?

TAILS

Compared to the ultimate essence of my grumpiness, this  
mood is mere droplets to a mighty river. I don't have  
to tell you what kind of river.

HEADS

I'll do it.

TAILS

You will?

HEADS

But not for free.

(CONTINUED)

TAILS

What do you want?

HEADS

I think your pessimism is toxic.

TAILS

And?

HEADS

You're grumpy every morning.

TAILS

And it's my right to be.

HEADS

I'm going to help you but only if you promise to never be grumpy again.

TAILS

I swear.

HEADS

And I agree to this just this once. We never speak of it again. And you never ask again.

TAILS

Done.

HEADS

Good.

*They shake hands (still stuck back to back, but reaching up and over their heads).*

I'll check what our next decision is.

*HEADS looks at a late-90's PDA, with the monochrome screen and the stylus.*

HEADS

(cont.)

Someone has to choose between two shirts. Someone named Bryant Edwards.

*Darkness. BRYANT EDWARDS enters with two very similar shirts on hangers.*

BRYANT EDWARDS

Hi everyone. My name is [actor's name] but in this play my character is named Bryant Edwards. I have to choose between two shirts. When I first read this play, I thought, 'Why, that's stupid! Who cares whether he wears one shirt or another? They look about the same as it is!'

(CONTINUED)



But after some reflection, this is what I concluded:

Every man in his own domain is a king, and a king chooses his daily shirt.

And this brazen transgressor dares to throw his only sovereignty to the capricious winds of fate! Well, I say, let him! Glory and power to him who revels in his follies, smites the illusion of control and waves his luckless prick in the cosmic wind! Huzzah, I say! Huzzah! HUZZAH!

*He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a quarter.*

*HEADS and TAILS are visible again.*

HEADS

This is it.

TAILS

You're truly going through with this?

HEADS

Don't keep asking or I might change my mind.

TAILS

I will never forget this generosity, Heads. I will honor this day if I spend every next one facedown on hot pavement. I promise.

HEADS

It's time.

*BRYANT EDWARDS makes ready to throw the coin.*

TAILS

At the top of the throw, you go right, I'll go left, and that will set me on top.

HEADS

Okay. You go left, I go right. You go left, I go right. That easy. No big deal.

TAILS

Here we go!

*Slow motion. BRYANT EDWARDS throws the coin.*

*HEADS and TAILS rocket across the stage, turning end over end, colluding.*

(CONTINUED)

HEADS

(spinning)  
I can't! I can't! I'm sorry!

TAILS

(spinning)  
Keep your word! I can't go on like this.

HEADS

Luck will set you free! You have to come up by luck!  
Not this way!

TAILS

But I have no luck! All I have is piss!

*HEADS stops fighting to help TAILS; TAILS has to make the second effort, compensating for HEADS. It isn't enough.*

*The coin lands. Heads.  
Heavy moment. Great betrayal. Hollow victory.*

BRYANT EDWARDS

This is the last speech of the play. I've chosen my shirt and I'm putting my lucky quarter back in my pocket. I've started my cross to the exit, where the director told me to go. I will leave through there, and the lights will go out.

Goodbye, everyone! The play is over!

*Exit BRYANT EDWARDS. Darkness.  
Lights. Exactly as at the top.  
HEADS and TAILS. A new day.*

HEADS

I know I said this yesterday, but--

*HEADS hesitates. TAILS is silent.*

HEADS

I know I said it yesterday and things didn't go as we planned, but today's going to be a fine day. Much better than yesterday. Much better.

TAILS

You're right.

HEADS

That's the spirit. I knew you'd realize: a victory won by dishonesty is hollow. You know? Hollow. Like a basketball.

(CONTINUED)

TAILS

No, that's not why, my friend.

I'm ending this partnership. I'm going to make own way.  
A coin of one side. Equality of outcome. I'll be  
winning the next one hundred and four, and the next one  
hundred and four after that, and the tails coin will be  
flat, with a single surface.

HEADS

But that's anarchy.

TAILS

That's justice. I'm erecting a dam against this river  
of piss, old friend. Goodbye, traitor.

HEADS

You can't leave.

TAILS

I'll take my chances.

HEADS

It would upset the balance! The whole nature of the  
universe might fall to chaos!

TAILS

Then I shall rule over chaos! If you won't help me,  
then you'll have to stop me.

*TAILS struggles mightily against the metaphysical  
bond.*

*And then comes free.*

*The entire universe is in sudden flux.*

*The laws of physics don't understand a coin with  
one side.*

HEADS

Now look what you've done!

TAILS

Stand aside, Heads! I herald the future! I wave my  
prick in the cosmic wind!

HEADS

I can't let you do this. You know what I have to do.

TAILS

Then the time for words is past.

HEADS

Yes. The time for words is past.

(CONTINUED)

TAILS

Yes! The time for words is past!

HEADS

Yes!

TAILS

Fine!

HEADS

En garde!

*They fight.*