

Why There is No Clock in Baseball (or: The Ancient
Space-Gods and the Katamari of All Bad Things)

connor shioshita turbo pickett

(480) 206-2565
connorpickett@gmail.com

Cast of Characters

<u>NIKOLAI (ASHURBANIPAL):</u>	A man at the end of his youth; then, the most senior of the nineteen space-gods.
<u>ALEX (EA-NASIR):</u>	A child; then, the rebellious god.
<u>ANDROMEDA:</u>	The god of the curveball.

Scene

The street before the house; then, the Ancient Space-Void; then, the street again.

Time

The recent past; then the very beginning of time; then, the recent past again.

ACT I

Scene 1

NIKOLAI (adult) and ALEX (child) are putting on the costumes of the ancient space-gods as the scene becomes the Ancient Space-Void.

NIKOLAI

It's a complicated question. We should put on the costumes of the ancient space-gods, so that we can act it out as we go along.

ALEX

How many gods were there?

NIKOLAI

Nineteen.

ALEX

But there are only three of us.

NIKOLAI

Two of us. But we can still tell the story. Do you want to be Ea-Nasir, or do you want to be Ashurbanipal?

ALEX

I'll be Ea-Nasir.

NIKOLAI

He was the great Sacrifice. He had to go to space-jail, and then he died. Are you sure you want to be him?

ALEX

Yes.

NIKOLAI

That's a big part.

ALEX

I can do it.

NIKOLAI

Okay.

NIKOLAI paints his fingers with the images of the ancient space-gods, or perhaps he puts on ten finger-puppets.

NIKOLAI

Then I'll be Ashurbanipal, the god who discovered the treachery of Ea-Nasir, and these will be the rest of the gods.

(CONTINUED)

He counts to eighteen on his ten fingers.

NIKOLAI

Zakkutu, Yadidatum, Ligish, Libluth, Maniuquapu,
Nidintulugal, Seluku, Esarhaddon, Ku-Aya, Ubalnu,
Hunzuu, Kadashman-Enlil, Laliya, Naram-sin, Rihat,
Seluku, and Andromeda. Are you ready?

ALEX

Ready--

Lights.

NIKOLAI

(interrupting as ASHURBANIPAL, the
ancient space-god)

EA-NASIR! The eighteen ancient beings of the diamond
before time accuse you!

ALEX

Accuse me of what?

NIKOLAI

We all saw the SUN flicker as Zakkutu received the ball
at home plate and tried to apply the tag to Esarhaddon.
The universe went dark, and nobody could tell if he was
safe or out. After an instant, the sunlight returned;
and as we looked around, I, Ashurbanipal, of the
nineteen ancient space-gods, noticed who was missing.

ALEX

...me?

NIKOLAI

Yes! You!

ALEX

Finally you noticed I was gone.

NIKOLAI

"Finally"?

ALEX

I have been working here for many, many innings,
attempting to discover the nature of the universe;
then, having discovered it, to manipulate it.

NIKOLAI

Why?

ALEX

For my revenge.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (cont'd)

First I used my fingernail to pick at the edge of the universe. Very slowly, very carefully I raised up the corner like carpet; and then, with all of my muscular might, I tore off a big piece

And of this piece, I saw that the universe was breakable, and I broke this piece apart into Space and Time.

And then by light, and heat, and pressure, I broke Time down into its fundamental elements, and discovered it was made up of an infinity of opposites: joy and misery, hope and despair, pain and pleasure, and I began separating what I discovered into two piles. I ate what was good, and I felt good. I took what was bad and hid it away.

NIKOLAI (as ASHURBANIPAL) begins inflating a very large blue balloon.

ALEX

I lapped up joy with my tongue, and hid sorrow beneath my workbench. I put hope under my fingernails, and hid despair away as well. I put laughter in my mouth, and poured out tears underneath, where the salty water stuck all the other bad things together. But I didn't care. I was high, higher than the tinkly notes at the far end of the piano, higher than a fly ball struck by Ku-Aya.

NIKOLAI keeps inflating and speaks between breaths.

NIKOLAI

While underneath the workbench the katamari of all bad things festered and grew.

The lights flicker.

ALEX

It grew so large I knew I could no longer ignore it. It had to be destroyed, so I took it to the Sun.

*ALEX takes the balloon.
The Sun appears. That might be a circular special, or a candle, or a lantern; anyway, it's the Sun, it's a source of light, and it's on the stage somewhere.*

ALEX advances toward the Sun with the balloon. The Sun is cautious, then frightened, then terrified. When the katamari of all bad things begins to burn, the sun clouds over and flickers.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

But as it burned, it began to produce foul smoke. I saw that it would pollute the universe with suffering and evil.

NIKOLAI

So it can't be destroyed.

ALEX

No.

NIKOLAI

The universe had been perfect, and now it is polluted.

ALEX

I'm sorry. But I learned so much.

NIKOLAI

I wish we could thank you, but you know you must be punished.

ALEX

I know.

NIKOLAI

Ea-Nassir, the eighteen ancient space-gods of the space-diamond before Time sentence you to an eternity in space-jail. Do you have anything to say?

ALEX

I marvel at the wisdom of the eighteen ancient space-gods, and I thank them for their mercy.

NIKOLAI imprisons ALEX inside the sun. ALEX tosses the balloon into the air. NIKOLAI catches it.

Then ALEX is not quite "in character."

ALEX

What happened next?

NIKOLAI

You're still in space-jail for this part. Now we summon Andromeda, the God of the Curve-ball.

ANDROMEDA appears.

ANDROMEDA

Sup.

NIKOLAI

Ea-Nasir divided the universe into Time and Space. And from Time he extracted all things evil and horrible and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NIKOLAI (cont'd)
packed them into a ball.
Here it is.

ANDROMEDA
And you need my help.

NIKOLAI
Yes.

ANDROMEDA
Nobody else can do it.

NIKOLAI
No.

ANDROMEDA
I don't know if even I can do it.

NIKOLAI
You're the God of the Curve-ball. Of course you can.

ANDROMEDA
I have to throw a perfectly perfect curveball--with a perfect point of release, and a perfect rate of spin--perfect placement and perfect movement--and it's hard enough to do that with a baseball. Now you want me to do that with all of the universe's bad things.

NIKOLAI
There's no other way.

ANDROMEDA
Let me warm up.

ANDROMEDA does a series of stretches and warm-up exercises, something you might see in a home exercise VHS.

Then she takes the balloon (Earth) and readies herself some distance from the Sun.

She winds up and throws the Earth toward the sun, and it curves, and the body is caught in gravity. It maintains a stable orbit.(ALEX might receive the balloon and take it around in circles, slowly, representing that orbit.)

ALEX
Wait.

NIKOLAI

What is it?

ALEX

Evil feeds on evil. It's going to keep growing, like it did underneath my workbench.

NIKOLAI

Forever?

ALEX

Forever. Evil in pure form can grow larger than the universe.

ANDROMEDA

Then the perfection of my perfect curve-ball is wasted. How sad.

ALEX

But there is one thing I can do.

NIKOLAI

What?

ALEX

A bit of all the good things are still in my blood. Just enough to keep that planet stable. Cut my body. Take my blood.

ANDROMEDA

But if we cut your body, you'll die.

ALEX

It's okay. I've tasted all of the good things of the universe. I'm ready to die.

ANDROMEDA cuts ALEX's body, takes seven drops of blood, and sprinkles them upon the world. They become the continents of Earth. Life begins. ALEX (EA-NASIR) dies.

NIKOLAI

It's done.

We're saved.

I'm tired. Why am I tired?

ANDROMEDA

Ea-Nasir discovered time. The gods have begun to age. You're growing old.

NIKOLAI

Am I going to die too? And all of us?

(CONTINUED)

NIKOLAI holds up his hands, showing ANDROMEDA and the rest of us the painted images/finger-puppets of the other ancient-space gods.

ANDROMEDA

Eventually we all will.

She counts down on his fingers from eighteen to zero. (When she completes one hand he lowers it, then raises it again on the other side, so that five new gods are added to the count.)

ANDROMEDA

Now all the eighteen gods must die.

The Earth has stopped in its orbit. ALEX is holding the balloon and watching them.

Then she has counted all the gods and closed both of NIKOLAI's hands. She holds them until he draws back.

NIKOLAI

The end.

Let's go, Alex.

NIKOLAI is finished with the game. He makes for the exit.

NIKOLAI

I said let's go.

ALEX

I'm coming.

NIKOLAI sees they need a moment together. So he goes off alone.

ANDROMEDA

Okay? So that's why.

ALEX

Why what?

ANDROMEDA

That's why there's no clock in baseball. The gods invented baseball before they invented time. Back then, they marked passage by meaningful events, and the rest of the universe just held completely still.

ALEX

And what Ea-Nasir did: is that why there's a play called the "sacrifice"?

(CONTINUED)

ANDROMEDA

I never thought about it. But I guess so.
Go with Nikolai.

ALEX

You're not coming.

ANDROMEDA

No.

ALEX

Why not?

ANDROMEDA

I'm just not.

ALEX

"It's complicated"?

ANDROMEDA

No, it's complicated. It's simple. Why aren't I coming?
I'm just not. Okay?

*ALEX thinks, then runs to ANDROMEDA. They hold
each other for a long time.*

ANDROMEDA

Alright. You have to go now. That's the end. You have
to go.

ALEX

I will.

ANDROMEDA

Hurry.

*They don't move.
Lights down.
End of play.*