

GYMNAUSEAM
by Stephen Gnojewski

Cast of Characters

BRUTUS

TITUS

REFEREE

CHEERLEADERS

It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.

Muhammad Ali

Some of the text is borrowed and re-arranged material taken from the notebooks of Richard Foreman – “Zero” and “Thrones”.

Setting

A circuslike coliseum

Time

1984

SETTING: Boxing ropes stretch across the performance space separating the actors from the audience. In the background are the ruins of toppled, Doric columns and pillars. Gymnastic rings hang down, as well as punching bags with bullet holes that drip blood. The floor is covered in dark rubber mats that are marked with dissecting white lines and curves. Barbells, weights, cheerleader cones, and black-and-white stripped hurdles are littered around the room. The walls are graffitied with the numbers 1 and 0 and with arrows pointing in various directions. There is a wooden see-saw and a large bulls-eye/target that spins and lights up. (A suggested vocabulary list of images, sounds, and actions follows the text of the play.)

AT RISE: BRUTUS and TITUS actively stretch and warm-up. BRUTUS wears a black catcher's mask, and a black, cowboy hat that is adorned with golden laurel leaves. His football shoulder pads are decorated with ribbons and gold stars. He wears black boxing gloves, knee pads, a jock strap, and black, leather sandals with leg straps. His left arm is in a white cast. BRUTUS chews a big wad of tobacco. TITUS wears a blue, wrestling singlet with black karate belt cinched around his head. He sports white batting gloves, wrist bands, a white neck brace, and legwarmers. TITUS wears white cleats and black marks under his eyes.

(Sound – Whistle)

(The REFEREE is heard, but never seen.)

REFEREE

On your mark...

(BRUTUS and TITUS frantically run around in circles.)

REFEREE

Get set...

(BRUTUS and TITUS freeze, striking strange poses.)

(Sound – Machine Gun)

(Sound – Clock Ticking)

TITUS

(Frozen.) This is weird.

BRUTUS

(Frozen.) You're weird.

(Sound – Buzzer)

REFEREE

Out of Bounds.

TITUS

(Still frozen.) Perhaps you feel threatened by the unpredictability of my weirdness, and so feeling defenseless, you have unwittingly exposed a possible weakness, which I would be wise to exploit to my advantage.

(BRUTUS pushes TITUS over.)

BRUTUS

Weirdo.

TITUS

It takes 1 to know 1.

(Sound – Whistle)

REFEREE

Look alive!

TITUS

Or maybe, you are just jealous of my weirdness.

(TITUS stands up and starts twirling in place.)

TITUS

For I am not stuck half-asleep in a certain way of seeing things that I should certainly have seen before, because it was all set up for me to see those things in a certain way. But instead, I am inspired to spin my own story.

BRUTUS

2 can play that game.

(BRUTUS also twirls in place.)

BRUTUS

This isn't my idea of fun.

TITUS

You don't have any ideas. That's why it isn't fun.

REFEREE

I am not my brother's keeper.

(Sound – Cock-a-doodle-doo)

(Both TITUS and BRUTUS stop spinning.)

BRUTUS

Fine. Have it your way, but I'll bet the farm that you can't lift that there doohickey.

TITUS

Well, for what it's worth, that's not worth very much.

BRUTUS

All righty then, I bet my bottom dollar.

(TITUS spits in his hand.)

TITUS

You're on.

(BRUTUS spits in his hand. They shake.)

(Sound – Boxing Ring Bell)

(Sound – Ticking Clock)

(TITUS struggles to lift the barbell.)

TITUS

Such intense...density...all this emotional emptiness. One struggles...to fill in the gaps of guilt...that might have otherwise led to some very real revelations.

BRUTUS

Don't give up, Titus. Don't-give-up. You don't get anything unless you work for it.

TITUS

What if you wish for it?

BRUTUS

Wishes without work? No results.

TITUS

That's why life sucks.

(TITUS drops the weight.)

BRUTUS

No! That is why YOU suck. Giving up is something you can hardly avoid doing because you lack discipline. BUT, if you were to acquire self-discipline, you would be able to sustain in your consciousness this entire arena as an endless vista, and the truth would start to speak to you as it bounces randomly around from object to object.

(TITUS struggles, once again, to lift the barbell.)

(Sound – Clock Ticking)

BRUTUS

But of course, you are not yet really in a position to allow this to happen and so for the moment you are busy making discoveries that only reinforce old routines, which are just as valuable as new routines, but that is not the point, is it? No. The point is – oh, look over there, there's a recognizable checkered flag waving from that hole in the wall...but who said anything about a wall? That is the point! Who ever said anything about a wall?

(Sound – Glass Shattering)

TITUS

(Resting the barbell on his chin.) Ah, yes, I struggle, but at least I do it with finesse, a subtle, artistic quality that you have yet to acquire, which, when added to my compulsory scores, makes me quite a formidable opponent.

(TITUS lifts the barbell over his head.)

(Sound – Lion Roar)

REFEREE

Holy Cow!

(TITUS swings the barbell, hitting BRUTUS over the head.)

(Sound – Explosion)

(Sound – Cock-a-doodle-doo)

BRUTUS

(Rubbing his head.) Hey, whose side are you on anyway?

TITUS

The right side.

BRUTUS

But I'm on the right side. So, you then, must be on the wrong side.

TITUS

Perhaps, my dear, Brutus, but the arch of history bends ever so slowly towards righteousness, so one is always on the wrong side until they eventually find themselves on the right side.

BRUTUS

Hey! Can't we just bend that rule a bit?

(Sound – Whistle)

REFEREE

Offsides!

BRUTUS

Well, in that case, then, I must be on the wrong side of right.

TITUS

Let's just agree to meet in the center of cooperation, shall we?

(Sound – Cheering Crowd)

(Three CHEERLEADERS tumble, somersault, and cartwheel on to the stage. They pose and shake their pom-poms menacingly. The CHEERLEADERS wear dirty tank-tops and pleated shirts. Their bare arms are bruised and covered with bloody scars and needle marks. They wear black fishnet stockings and red basketball high-tops. Their faces are smeared with clown makeup. They are either bald, or their greasy hair is twisted in pig tails.)

CHEERLEADERS

Ready? Okay!

WE'VE GOT SPIRIT, YES, WE DO

WE'VE GOT SPIRIT, HOW 'BOUT YOU?

(Sound – Glass Shattering.)

TITUS

Why are you even here?

BRUTUS

Why are YOU here?

TITUS

(Thinking.) Well, let's see. Because I was born.

(TITUS starts doing aerobic squats.)

TITUS

Because having been born, I continue existing.

REFEREE

This is not a race.

TITUS

Because the world evolved in such a way, that creatures arose from a primordial morass through a natural selection of small, inherited variations that increased their ability to compete and survive in a hostile and unforgiving world.

(Sound – Eagle Screech)

(BRUTUS joins TITUS in aerobics, but BRUTUS does leg-lifts.)

BRUTUS

Success comes best from adversity and conflict.

(TITUS switches to waist twists with a punch.)

TITUS

Because every creature when in the fatal clutches of sudden death will fight like hell to survive.

(BRUTUS does jumping-jacks.)

BRUTUS

Creatures that trouble their own houses will inherit only the wind.

(TITUS joins BRUTUS in jumping-jacks.)

TITUS

Because without competition there is no stretch forward...into the beyond.

(Sound – Buzzer)

(TITUS stops aerobics.)

TITUS

There, I have said enough. I don't want to talk about it anymore, okay? I just want to express it – no – not express it, experience it.

(BRUTUS stops his jumping jacks and wipes himself down with a towel.)

BRUTUS

Experience what?

TITUS

If I communicate 'it', it changes.

BRUTUS

There you go again. Always moving the goal posts.

(Sound – Whistle)

REFEREE

Traveling!

TITUS

Oh, what's the use. I can't continue with this conversation anyway.

BRUTUS

There is more to life than this conversation

TITUS

That is exactly my point, God dammit. Evolution has happened.

BRUTUS

By intelligent design.

TITUS

No, man. We are way beyond that. Right now – we have evolved – much more – unimaginably more...

BRUTUS

If we've evolved, then what are some of our unimaginable attributes.

TITUS

That is exactly what can't be put into words. Because we have evolved beyond words. Beyond feelings, beyond emotions. Primitive stuff! Just imagine... We are beyond what we are. And we know much more than we have words to express. So, let's let life itself write the next word in a language that has not yet been spoken, shall we?

(Sound – Trumpet Fanfare)

(A gigantic, golden, chalice-like trophy descends into the arena, spewing sparklers and smoke. In reverence, the CHEERLEADERS all bow, taking a knee.)

CHEERLEADERS

HOLY! HOLY!

TRIUMPHANT TROPHY
VESSEL OF VICTORY
HERO OF HISTORY
WE WORSHIP YOU
WE GIVE YOU THANKS
WE PRAISE YOU FOR YOUR GLORY

(The CHEERLEADERS rush towards the trophy and fondle it and polish it, but the trophy slowly ascends out of reach and disappears into a bright shaft of light.)

(Sound – Scream)

REFEREE

On your mark...

(BRUTUS and TITUS frantically run around in circles.)

REFEREE

Get set...

(Sound – Fart)

TITUS

Hey. Why can't we all be winners in this zero-sum game?

BRUTUS

Impossible. There can be only 1 #1.

TITUS

Then what if I just remove myself from the equation.

(Sound – Buzzer)

REFEREE

Holding!

BRUTUS

Don't be such a sore loser. $1 - 0$ still equals 1. That is its power. 1 is pure, singular, and yet, at the same time, represents unity.

TITUS

Well, you were always the more extravagant 1. There aren't ever 2 alpha A's in an alphabet. But it just so happens, my dear brother, that 0 is more powerful than 1. I mean, both are binary, true, but without 0, there is nothing. 0 explodes every value and makes it disappear.

BRUTUS

Well, perhaps you should disappear.

TITUS

Perhaps I HAVE disappeared. Perhaps I have opened my eyes and seen a checkered flag, fluttering in the wind and said – ah, yes, that is the very essence of me.

(Sound – Cheering Crowd.)

TITUS

But I need your help to complete the transformation. I need you to see me the way that I see myself.

BRUTUS

Well, in some areas I could be of help.

TITUS

Oh, then let's travel to those areas then where you can be of help.

BRUTUS

Do you suppose we become equals inside such an erudite arena?

REFEREE

Think fast!

(The CHEERLEADERS rush into the space wearing different mascot hats – Viking, Indian, Pirate)

CHEERLEADERS

Ready? Okay!

SCORE! SCORE!

WE WANT MORE!

DRIVE IT TO THE LINE

AND OWN THAT BOARD!

(The CHEERLEADERS set up a series of hurdles. TITUS and BRUTUS struggle to climb over the hurdles.)

TITUS

Goodness gracious. How am I to ever overcome all these emotional obstacles, when I am constantly pulled back down by the gravity of doubt and critical thought?

REFEREE

Center yourself.

TITUS

It is as if we are racing around in an amazing maze, that always leads to a satisfying conclusion of a huge hunk of cheese.

BRUTUS

Out of my way, I'm starving!

(BRUTUS rushes towards a hurdle and freezes.)

BRUTUS

Oh no! There's nothing left in my bag of tricks.

TITUS

(Stuck on a hurdle.) Look again.

BRUTUS

Well, I don't have any bag I can look into.

TITUS

Then how do you know it's empty?

BRUTUS

I suppose I want it to be empty. After all, it's much easier to get over these mental blocks without excess baggage.

TITUS

Cheater!

BRUTUS

Hey, now? If you ain't cheating, you ain't tryin'.

(Sound – Boxing Ring Bell)

REFEREE

Out of Bounds!

BRUTUS

Because if you succeed, then I fail. If I get ahead, then you fall behind. And if you hold me down, then you somehow lift yourself up. That is the point, after all, isn't it?

TITUS

(Still struggling to get over a hurdle) What point? There isn't a point to any of this, God dammit.

BRUTUS

Well then, we'll just have to make 1 up. A good point. A solid point, a world-record point. 1 that will stand the test of time and never be broken.

TITUS

Oh, no. Whatever we do, we must not let the point break. Good heavens, if we were to ever reach a breaking point...then all of our reasoning would collapse in on itself, and we would be left in the rubble of our own thoughts and ideas.

BRUTUS

1 could get seriously hurt in all that heady bullshit.

(Sound – Cock-a-doodle-doo)

TITUS

Yes, better step lightly. 1 could get seriously hurt in all that...

BRUTUS

Ouch!

TITUS

Oh no, are you okay?

BRUTUS

I'm fine. Just fine. It's nothing. Merely a brain sprain.

TITUS

Well, you should have that brain sprain of yours examined.

BRUTUS

I told you it's nothing. Merely a – Oooo! Ouch! Oh!

(BRUTUS limps around holding his head.)

TITUS

Does it hurt?

BRUTUS

Not as much as losing.

TITUS

On a scale from 1 to 0 then?

BRUTUS

Oh, for crying out loud! It hurts! It hurts! This brain sprain is killing me! So many destructive, negative thoughts.

TITUS

(To the CHEERLEADERS.) Quick, get him to the score board!

(The CHEERLEADERS catch BRUTUS before he collapses and drag him to the dart board/bull's eye. They strap him inside the circle spread-eagle.)

TITUS

(Adjusting his batting gloves.) Now, relax. Relax. And think only beautiful, symmetrical thoughts...like snowflakes or sunflowers.

BRUTUS

Will spider webs or seashells, do?

TITUS

If they must. Now, close your eyes and imagine...

Once at the center of time, life was like a circle – a perfect, symmetrical circle. You could rotate it any direction – backwards, forwards, up or down – and it remained the same. Perfection at the center of time.

(TITUS spins the wheel.)

(Sound – Ticking Clock)

TITUS

BUT hidden, in the in-between, was a very fine crack in this otherwise perfect circle at the center of time. And this very fine crack, eventually caused the whole circle to shatter into a bazillion infinitesimal pieces.

(TITUS spins the wheel in the other direction.)

(Sound – Scream)

TITUS

And from that moment on, our challenge has been to put all those bazillion infinitesimal pieces back together again. To restore the balance of the perfect, symmetrical circle at the center of time.

(TITUS stops the wheel from spinning.)

TITUS

Well?

BRUTUS

Well, what?

TITUS

Does your brain sprain feel better?

(BRUTUS pukes.)

BRUTUS

What brain sprain?

TITUS

It worked! (Suddenly suspicious.) Or were you just trying to attract everyone's attention?

BRUTUS

Well, there is, inside me, a deep seed of need to be the best.

(BRUTUS pukes again.)

TITUS

Very well, let's suppose that you succeed in attracting everybody's attention, or at least the attention of a significant number of people. They all turn towards you and behold: you're the center of everyone's attention!

(Sound – Fart)

BRUTUS

Well, I suppose I am in the middle of things. Is that good?

TITUS

How should I know, when I'm focusing all of my attention on you.

BRUTUS

And I'm returning the favor with force.

TITUS

Well, then, we find ourselves locked together again in a circle of mutual attention.

(Sound – Explosion)

REFREE

Square 'em up!

(BRUTUS and TITUS square dance, while the CHEERLEADERS clap and stomp and sing "Skip To My Lou".)

CHEERLEADERS

FLY'S IN THE BUTTERMILK, SHOO, FLY, SHOO
COW'S IN THE BARNYARD, MOO, MOO, MOO

TRAIN IS A-COMING NOW, CHOO, CHOO, COO
SKIP TO MY LOU, MY DARLIN'

(Sound – Buzzer)

REFEREE

On you mark...

(BRUTUS and TITUS prepare to arm-wrestle.)

REFEREE

Get set...

(Sound – Machine Gun)

(TITUS and BRUTUS arm wrestle.)

BRUTUS

There really is no use in trying to outdo me. Any effort is like a cry in cheering crowd.

REFEREE

I am not my brother's keeper.

(BRUTUS forces TITUS to his knees. TITUS lets go before he loses.)

TITUS

After much consideration, I have decided in my next life to become a table. Because then I would be useful. You could have dinner off me. You could sit at me and read books. You could play cards or do puzzles with somebody else sitting on the other side of me. You could have negotiations.

(BRUTUS challenges TITUS to arm-wrestle again.)

BRUTUS

Okay. Let's try some negotiations.

TITUS

What about?

BRUTUS

About winning.

(TITUS accepts the challenge, and they arm wrestle again.)

BRUTUS

Once, on my way home, a stranger approached me, and we wrestled. We wrestled until the break of the day. And when the stranger realized that he could not beat me, he punched me hard on the hip and said...

TITUS

"Let me go, for it is morning."

BRUTUS

But I said, "Never! I will never let you go unless you bless me." And the stranger said, "What is your name?" And I said, "Brutus." And the stranger said...

TITUS

(Struggling.) No.

BRUTUS

"No longer shall you be called "Brutus", but "Victor", for you have wrestled with God and prevailed."

(BRUTUS breaks TITUS's arm. TITUS screams in pain.)

(Sound – Glass Shattering)

(BRUTUS picks up TITUS and body slams him onto the mats.)

BRUTUS

(Standing over TITUS victorious.) And as the sun rose over the land, I continued on my way home, limping, but triumphant. I AM THE TROPHY! I AM ELITE!

(The CHEERLEADERS cartwheel out again, wearing black ski masks.)

CHEERLEADERS

Ready? Okay!

BE AGGRESSIVE. B-E AGGRESSIVE.

B-E A-G-G R-E-S-S-I-V-E

BE AGGRESSIVE!

TITUS

Such blasphemy!

(TITUS kicks BRUTUS's legs, tripping him. TITUS kneels on BRUTUS's neck. BRUTUS struggles and gasps for air, slapping the mat with his hand.)

TITUS

For I WILL defeat you, crush you, frustrate you, push you down and break your spirit until you cry out for mercy! And then, and only then, with a feigned indignation, I will ask, why are you so upset?

BRUTUS

Mercy! Mercy! Please!

(TITUS lets BRUTUS go.)

BRUTUS

I am only upset because you know where my wounds are. And you pick and poke and pry at the scabs until they bleed...

(BRUTUS picks up a weight and hits TITUS over the head, knocking him down. BRUTUS bludgeons TITUS with the weight over and over.)

BRUTUS

Fresh!

(Sound – Eagle Screech)

BRUTUS

Red!

(Sound – Lion Roar)

BRUTUS

Blood!

(Sound – Machine Gun)

BRUTUS

(Screaming in TITUS's face.) There is no time for nuance here! There is no room for interpretation!

(TITUS grabs BRUTUS by the throat, strangling him.)

TITUS

Then, you have never learned the lesson of losing, have you?

BRUTUS

You mean, making up excuses?

(Sound – Whistle)

REFEREE

Almost isn't enough.

(The CHEERLEADERS pull TITUS and BRUTUS away from each other. They bandage TITUS's broken arm.)

TITUS

No. Experience. Experience is what you win when you lose. So, you can just come down now from off your pedestal.

BRUTUS

Never. Once, in the past, that was possible. But now, for reasons unfathomable, it seems unlikely. For I am on a pedestal of my own imagining, and from these heights, nothing real is really visible.

TITUS

Come down or suffer the consequences!

BRUTUS

Describe them.

TITUS

Loneliness, Anxiety, Depression, Diarrhea...

BRUTUS

Fortunately, for you, I have come down from my pedestal, and therefore will be unable to provide you with what you require.

TITUS

Ah, so you see, in the end, things eventually do balance themselves out. But tell me, was it lonely at the top?

BRUTUS

Most will never know...the pressure, the profound weight that comes over the 1 who stands in the center of the winner's circle. That weary realization, that you are the only 1 left standing among a pile of broken dreams. And as you look down on all those you have defeated, you discover that you needed them all along. Their faults had become your friends.

REFEREE

Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing.

(Sound – Buzzer)

BRUTUS

For if you are not 1st then you are forgotten! So, here are the odds, my brother. 1 of us will ascend. But only 1.

TITUS

(With a maniacal laugh) Ah, yes, but the sizzling suspense is, which 1 it will be.

(Sound – Scream)

BRUTUS

That still doesn't address the fundamental issue that the outcome is never in doubt. There will always be 1 winner and 1 loser.

TITUS

Yes, but, you have eliminated the possibility of a tie.

BRUTUS

A tie? Only a loser would be content with a tie. How could any 1 live in a world of such equality?

REFEREE

Practice makes perfect.

TITUS

Suppose then that the tables were reversed, with the winner on the bottom and the loser on top?

BRUTUS

Preposterous. What you are suggesting is absolute anarchy. An impossible revolution as the winner is always on top because they are, by nature, better, stronger, faster.

TITUS

But you said so yourself there can only be 1 winner.

BRUTUS

Precisely.

TITUS

That leaves us with many, many losers then.

(The CHEERLEADERS gather around brandishing hockey sticks and bats.)

CHEERLEADERS

Ready, Okay!

BRUTUS

Uh, about how many are we talking about here?

TITUS

ALL others. An infinite amount. And since there is great strength in numbers, suppose all of the losers teamed up, then they could quite easily topple the winner.

BRUTUS

But there must be a best for us to best determine how better we are than others?

REFEREE

Where there is a will; there is a way

BRUTUS

After all, it isn't how you play the game, but how you win the game.

TITUS

Look closer, my brother, look closer.

BRUTUS

I'm looking. I'm looking.

TITUS

Then you will see that there is something else that separates the winner from the losers.

(The CHEERLEADERS lead BRUTUS and TITUS to the see-saw.)

BRUTUS

Passion, perseverance, pride.

TITUS

No, something else, hidden in the in-between. It looks like a path, but it is not.

REFEREE

Holy Cow!

TITUS

It is a line!

BRUTUS

Ah, yes! I see it now. A very fine line.

(BRUTUS and TITUS both mount the see-saw.)

BRUTUS

Why, this whole game is just 1 big scale of some sort, with the winner on top only because all of the losers are on the bottom.

(BRUTUS rises to the on top of the see-saw, with TITUS on the bottom.)

TITUS

Only as long as the losers stay on bottom. For if all of the losers suddenly stood up...

(Sound – Scream)

(TITUS rises to the top, with BRUTUS on the bottom.)

BRUTUS

So, it is really to the winner's advantage that all the losers stay at the bottom and never ever rise up or else:

(BRUTUS is on top. TITUS is on the bottom.)

TITUS

Game Over!

(TITUS is on top. BRUTUS is on the bottom.)

BRUTUS

Then for the good of the game, there has to be a #1!

(BRUTUS is on top. TITUS is on the bottom.)

BRUTUS

So, why did you descend then?

TITUS

It just came over me

BRUTUS

Will it happen to me also?

TITUS

No.

(TITUS gets up from see-saw, and BRUTUS comes crashes down.)

(Sound – Cheering Crowd)

TITUS

Because you are not a hero.

BRUTUS

Does that make me a loser then?

TITUS

No. Just a zero hero.

(Sound – Trumpet Fanfare)

(The gigantic, golden, chalice-like trophy descends, spewing sparklers and smoke. In reverence, the CHEERLEADERS all bow, taking a knee.)

CHEERLEADERS

HOLY! HOLY!
TRIUMPHANT TROPHY
VESSEL OF VICTORY
HERO OF HISTORY
WE WORSHIP YOU
WE GIVE YOU THANKS
WE PRAISE YOU FOR YOUR GLORY

(The CHEERLEADERS flagellate themselves with their pom poms, as the trophy slowly ascends out of reach and disappears into a bright shaft of light.)

(BRUTUS begins to sob.)

TITUS

Would it make you feel better if I gave you your injection, now?

BRUTUS

I suppose.

(The CHEERLEADERS present TITUS with a large paddle or racket.)

TITUS

Do you want your shot in your arm?

BRUTUS

That's where I usually get them.

TITUS

What about your buttock?

BRUTUS

I think that might hurt, so I'd rather have the shot in my arm.

TITUS

(Rolling his eyes.) Suit yourself. Do you want it in your right arm or your left?

BRUTUS

Let's just skip the injection all together.

TITUS

But it would be to your advantage to have your injection now.

BRUTUS

OK. Then do it in my right arm, for Christ sake.

TITUS

Yes. That is the best place.

(TITUS winds up ready to hit BRUTUS with the paddle/racket.)

BRUTUS

Is it really a good time for my injection?

TITUS

Of course, it is – but I can see – you don't really want your injection.

BRUTUS

I am afraid of injections.

TITUS

What? Wait. Look over there!

BRUTUS

Where?

TITUS

There!

(TITUS whacks BRUTUS in the arm with the paddle/racket.)

(Sound – Eagle Screech)

BRUTUS

OUCH! That hurts!

TITUS

Well, how do you think I feel?

BRUTUS

Come on, man. That hurt way worse than my brain sprain.

TITUS

Hold that thought for a second, will you? I think I feel kind of woozy.

(TITUS stumbles, grabbing a punching bag for support.)

TITUS

Oh, no, I think your injection is affecting me.

BRUTUS

Well, you do look completely out of proportion. Hey, I am wondering if this is really happening or am I just imagining it? I mean, I got the injection, but you seem to be suffering the side effects...but then maybe that's only the way it appears to me, which is an allergic reaction to my injection.

TITUS

(Panicking.) Good heavens! What should we do in this situation? Especially since it may or may not be happening?

BRUTUS

You mean like in a dream?

TITUS

Whether this is a dream or not may depend upon my reaction to your injection. Whatever I do or say could be interpreted in your DREAM experience.

BRUTUS

Whatever you do or say can't be all that important.

TITUS

Well, that's not exactly right. It could be quite terribly important that I feel like we're going around and around in circles.

REFEREE

Time for a Hootenanny!

(BRUTUS and TITUS square dance again, while the
CHEERLEADERS clap and stomp and sing "Skip To My Lou".)

CHEERLEADERS

LOST MY PARTNER, BOO, HOO, HOO
I'LL FIND ANOTHER ONE, PRETTIER THAN YOU
CAN'T GET A RED BIRD, JAY BIRD'LL DO
SKIP TO MY LOU, MY DARLIN'

(Sound – Lion Roar)

REFEREE

On your mark...

(The CHEERLEADERS rush around.)

REFEREE

Get set...

(Sound – Boxing Ring Bell)

(The CHEERLEADERS hula hoop.)

BRUTUS

And yet, all around, dreams are poised on impossible mountains, that is to say, balanced precariously, high above, in places impossible to reach.

(TITUS climbs onto the dart board/Bull's eye and straps himself in.)

TITUS

I had a dream of winning once – a moment of lucid alignment, with all arrows pointing in the same direction towards the very center of happiness. And at every turn I took, I found myself enclosed in a circle that is centerless. For I was, at last, a target person!

(BRUTUS spins the wheel.)

BRUTUS

Always on the verge of happiness. That's because you are afraid of falling.

(BRUTUS stops the wheel. The CHEERLEADERS drop their hula hoops.)

TITUS

And who on earth isn't afraid of falling, when you have experienced the deep stinging bruise of losing. But it is not the fall that frightens me. No. It is the fear of falling forever down an infinite abyss with no one there to catch me.

(The CHEERLEADERS jump rope.)

BRUTUS

And why would I risk falling with you?

TITUS

Because we are brothers, bound by generations of blood and memories.

BRUTUS

Blood maybe thicker than water, but water is wider.

(Sound – Cheering Crowd)

BRUTUS

No, the real danger in dreaming, is that sometimes they just don't come true.

(One by one, the CHEERLEADERS hang themselves with their jump ropes. Their bodies twitching until they hang lifeless next to the boxing bags.)

BRUTUS

And all of these don't-come-true dreams are just abandoned, until they die or disappear from neglect... Look, over there's a dying dream, and there's a dying dream. Why, this whole arena is just a graveyard for dead and dying dreams.

(Sound – Lion Roar)

TITUS

This isn't the moment I expected.

BRUTUS

How could you have expected a moment before it happened?

TITUS

No – after it happened, that's when I realized I'd been expecting it, but it was somehow...different.

BRUTUS

Right now, are you expecting anything?

TITUS

I don't think so?

BRUTUS

Good.

TITUS

But what happens next may prove me wrong. What happens next may suddenly make me realize – Oh, I was expecting this, but with a difference.

BRUTUS

That's why I ask. What are you expecting?

TITUS

Nothing.

BRUTUS

Cheater!

TITUS

You see? I didn't expect that.

REFEREE

On you mark...

(BRUTUS and TITUS pull the bodies of the CHEERLEADERS down.)

REFEREE

Get set...

(Sound – Shattering Glass)

BRUTUS

Hurry, the arrow of time points forever onwards.

TITUS

Relax. What's the rush? There is plenty of time to merry go 'round, like a circle rotating from season to season. For indeed, if the circle of time is a cyclical line, stretching forwards into the future and backwards into the past, then if we could somehow contract the cyclical line, then we could, quite possibly, leap from our current coordinate to a corresponding coordinate in the future, thereby ensuring our victory.

BRUTUS

Time is not some meandering circle, as you suppose, but a blunt, straight forward arrow. A certain series of beginnings and ends, with each moment ending the one before it.

TITUS

Then, when precisely, does the present cross over the dividing line into the future to become the past.

(Sound – Whistle)

REFEREE

This is not a race.

BRUTUS

Why, there is an obvious difference between the future and the past.

TITUS

But a difference is not a direction. Suppose, it is possible for a trophy to fall off a table and shatter on the floor into a bazillion infinitesimal pieces.

(Sound – Explosion)

Then, it is quite possible for those bazillion infinitesimal pieces to push themselves up off the floor, recombine into a trophy and jump back up on to the table.

(Sound – Ticking Clock)

REFEREE

No risk. No reward.

BRUTUS

Aha! But in both descriptions, there is a direction. That is, there's a difference between the trophy falling and the trophy jumping, between the trophy shattering and the trophy recombining. And the difference, my brother, is always which direction is the future, and which direction is the past.

(TITUS collapse to his knees, in despair.)

TITUS

Our problem then is with our difference in opposing understandings. Either way, the odds are in our favor that we fail. For where do we wind up, after winning. But back at the beginning, with a desperate need to win more. You dedicate your whole existence to achieving greatness, forgoing family and friends, that no matter how much you win, you always end up losing.

(BRUTUS comforts TITUS.)

BRUTUS

Don't despair. Someday, the trophy will return, and then all will be judged accordingly. But until then, we have only 1 choice and only 1. Either we stay here on the floor in defeat, or we get up and push forward to the bitter end.

(Sound – Fart)

BRUTUS

There, you have it. I have laid it all out for you, right on the line.

TITUS

Then, we have finally arrived, have we, at the finish.

REFEREE

Think again.

TITUS

You mean to tell me this is not a finish line, but a starting line? That we have only just begun?

REFEREE

This is not a race.

BRUTUS

Oh, on the contrary, the race started a long, long time ago.

TITUS

When precisely?

BRUTUS

Well...it's rather hard to pin point the exact moment, but back at the beginning, I suppose.

TITUS

Back at the beginning?

BRUTUS

Before we were even born.

(Sound – Scream)

REFEREE

Holy Cow!

(Sound – Explosion)

TITUS

Well, for crying out loud...let's boogie!

REFEREE

On your mark...

(BRUTUS chases TITUS.)

REFEREE

Get set...

(BRUTUS and TITUS continue to run around in a circle until it is hard to tell exactly who is chasing who.)

(Sound – Machine guns)

(The CHEERLEADERS jump up.)

CHEERLEADERS

Ready? Okay!

LET'S SPELL FIGHT IN A WAY THAT'S BETTER
WHEN WE SHOUT GO, YOU YELL THE LETTER
GO!

(F)

GO!

(I)

GO!

(G)

GO!

(H)

GO!

(T)

WHAT'S THAT SPELL?

(FIGHT!)

WHAT DO WE DO?

(FIGHT!)

ALL DAY, ALL NIGHT

(FIGHT!)

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

END OF PLAY

THEATRICAL VOCABULARY

SOUNDS

- Machine gun
- Cheering Crowd
- Whistle
- Lion Roar
- Eagle Screech
- Cock-a-doodle-doo
- Ticking Clock
- Fart
- Scream
- Buzzer
- Boxing Ring Bell
- Shattering Glass

IMAGES

- Cheerleader Cone
- Sticks
- Rings
- Gold Stars
- Silver
- Bronze
- Ribbons/Rhythmic Gymnastics Ribbons
- Blood
- Bulls eye
- Arrows
- Disks/Halos
- Balls
- Cheese
- Stripes
- Red Cards, Green Cards, Yellow Cards
- Towels
- Weights, Mats
- Bright Flashes like Paparazzi
- Flags: Red, White, Checkered
- Letters: A
- Numbers: 0, 1

ACTIONS

- Running in place
- Jazzercise/Aerobics
- Lifting weights
- Pushups/Sit ups
- Tight rope walking
- Jumping rope

- Hurtles
- Taking a knee
- Tip toeing