

FLIP

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EXT. NIGHT. TRAIN STATION.

A small town, four platform station. It isn't very busy. Lightly scattered PASSENGERS are waiting for their connecting train. The overhead board shows that the train has been delayed by 13 minutes. The digits on the display change.

A phosphorescent half moon can be seen, clouds scudding across it. It almost looks like a special effects.

Three other people can be seen just outside the ticket barriers, a MIDDLE AGED BEARDED MAN (ADRIAN), a YOUNGER MAN (GRAHAM) and his GIRLFRIEND (SUSIE). A tall MIDDLE AGED MAN, smartly dressed, is also having a cigarette, further out from the station, in the car park.

In the distance of the station car park is a YOUNG MAN (COLIN), early 20s. He's on his mobile phone, pacing around, clearly agitated. We can't properly hear what he is saying. The smoking MIDDLE AGED MAN (SETH) peers at him as he puffs on his cigarette. COLIN'S reflection can be seen in a puddle in the car park.

The call finishes. COLIN looks anguished. He glances over at SETH then starts walking towards him. SETH glances at him then then looks back at the station. Soon, COLIN reaches SETH.

COLIN

Could I borrow a coin?

SETH takes a drag on his cigarette.

SETH

Just one?

COLIN

Yeah.

SETH rummages in his pockets looking for change. There is none.

SETH

Sorry man, I don't have any. What do you need it for?

COLIN

I've got to decide something. But I can't. Just can't do it. So I'm going to flip a coin.

SETH

Oh! Ok. Old school. (beat) I'll have a look and see if there's one on the ground.

SETH starts pacing around, searching on the floor, using his phone torch. We see the glints of quartz in the car park material. Cigarette butts. Detritus. Not a single coin.

COLIN stands for a while, watching, before spotting ADRIAN, GRAHAM and SUSIE. He paces toward them. COLIN reaches the group of three. They are quite disparate.

GRAHAM and SUSIE are clearly connected but ADRIAN is apart from them. Just a small conglomerate of smokers. As COLIN approaches, they almost shun him, not wanting to engage at first.

COLIN

Have any of you got a coin I can borrow? There's none anywhere. Unbelievable.

Initially there is no response, thinking he is on a scrounge.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Please. It's important.

ADRIAN coughs, and flicks his cigarette on the ground. He's intrigued.

ADRIAN

You want to flip for something don't you.

COLIN

How did you know?

ADRIAN

I can see it in your eyes. It's written all over your face. That fear and yearning. Always the same.

COLIN looks down at his feet for a while, somewhat embarrassed.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

So. What is it?

COLIN

Brazil.

GRAHAM and SUSIE perk up at this, and move a little closer, also now intrigued.

ADRIAN
Moving or visiting?

COLIN
Moving. But ... it's just ... it's
too ...

ADRIAN
Too big a decision for you to
handle.

SUSIE
(interjecting)
Why do you want to move there?
(Searching his eyes)
It's a girl isn't it.

COLIN
(finally looking up)
No, nothing like that.

GRAHAM
(teasing)
You've been selected for Bota Fogo!

COLIN
What?!

GRAHAM
Football team mate! In Rio.

COLIN
No. It's something else. I'm bad at
football anyway. (annoyed) So have
any of you got a coin or not?

GRAHAM
No, sorry mate. Hardly anyone does
these days.

COLIN
Seems like it.

SUSIE
No, nor me. I don't use cash
anymore.

COLIN is resigned. He goes to move off.

ADRIAN
You don't need to toss a coin son.
You already know the answer. You
know. It's inside.
(MORE)

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Trust your instincts. Never trust the flip. Ever.

Everyone turns to the man, surprised by what he says.

COLIN

I've tried. Trust me, I've tried. It's doing my nut. Can't sleep. I just get more confused the more I think about it.

GRAHAM

Ah, I know! It's a drug run isn't it! Don't do it mate! Have you watched Banged Up Abroad?!

SUSIE

For God's sake Graham! Stop it will you.

GRAHAM

Sorry Susie, I'm just having a laugh.

SUSIE's face crumples a bit. She glances at GRAHAM, then COLIN, then ADRIAN.

SUSIE

Well, this isn't a joke. This is serious isn't it.

COLIN

(nodding)

Yeah. It is.

ADRIAN glances at SUSIE, then stares intently at COLIN. He leans towards him. COLIN stiffens a little. His energy is quite intense.

ADRIAN

That confusion is your conscious brain messing you around, like it always does. It's the subconscious that has the answer. YOUR subconscious. (he gently taps Colin on his third eye) Right in there. And to access that, you have to properly relax. Turn your brain off. Meditate. Start to listen to your inner voice, your inner guide. Put worldly thoughts aside. Let your soul guide you.

GRAHAM
 (Condescendingly under his
 breath)
 Pfft!

SUSIE elbows him. She's not amused in the slightest. COLIN is mentally stymied for a while as he takes this in. Contemplates what he has heard. He rolls a cigarette. We see SETH in the background still scouring the car park with his phone light, glancing back at the group.

CUT TO:

The train time display changes in slow motion. The pastel painting half moon still glows. The PASSENGERS shuffle and wait, a slight breeze ruffling hair. We see a SMALL GROUP OF FOUR that looks suspiciously like the smoking group.

CUT TO:

ADRIAN
 What's your name?

COLIN
 Colin.

ADRIAN
 Don't let an emotive flip rule your life Colin. It's not worth it. Make that decision yourself.

COLIN
 I get what you're saying. But I still want to do it. It's my choice. I'm not into that spiritual stuff anyway.

GRAHAM
 Exactly! Bunch of bollocks!
 (glancing at Adrian) No offence mate.

ADRIAN remains totally impassive, just staring at COLIN.

SUSIE
 Oh, is that right? Bunch of bollocks? You know I'm into all that.

GRAHAM
 Yeah, I know, but that's what I think.

ADRIAN
(interjecting)
Have you heard of the Diceman?

COLIN
No. Who's he? Sounds like some MMA
fighter.

GRAHAM
Excellent book! Love it.

ADRIAN
It's a book by Luke Reinhart.
Well, his real name is George
Cockcroft. An English Professor.
It's a 70s cult classic. A
psychiatrist decides to rest his
fate on the throw of a dice.

GRAHAM
He does get screwed up by the end
of it though.

ADRIAN
Exactly my point! If you shun
personal responsibility, let
external forces take over, you get
into trouble.

COLIN
What other forces? It's me flipping
the coin, no one else. It's pure
chance.

GRAHAM
Course it is! Why not let the coin
decide? Saves a lot of time and
effort. I say go with the flip
mate. You can always come back if
it doesn't work out. No harm done.
You're young.

COLIN
No. I can't come back. It's a one
way trip.

ADRIAN
(addressing Graham)
Is it though? You sure? Just
chance? What about quantum
mechanics? If you observe something
you can influence it. All of us
here will bring bearing on the
outcome.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Whether we want to or not. JB Rhine proved it. Psychics know it. Magi and mystics definitely know it.

SUSIE

I've read JB Rhine. It's beyond doubt.

GRAHAM

Sorry, it's bullshit. You can't influence a spinning coin like some Jedi. It's just air resistance, gravity and inertia. Nothing else. Let him flip.

COLIN

Look, I don't want a physics lesson! I just want to do this. (to Adrian) Have you got a coin?

ADRIAN sighs. Resigned. The kid isn't going to change his mind.

ADRIAN

Well, if you are dead set on flipping on something this important to you, you shouldn't use any old coin.

At that moment, SETH appears, clutching something. He appears happy.

SETH

Hey guys. (tapping Colin on the shoulder) Here mate, I found you a coin.

He goes to proffer it to COLIN. It's a dull 10p piece.

SUSIE

Give it to me.

SETH

What? No, it's for this guy, he wants to ...

SUSIE

I know what he wants, but GIVE ME THE COIN! NOW!

GRAHAM

Jesus Susie! What the hell!

SETH
 (fertive look at Graham)
 Wow. Well, OK. Since you insist.

He hands it over. Everyone has their mouths open at her outburst, especially GRAHAM, who stares at her as if she's gone mad. Tears are welling up in SUSIE'S eyes.

GRAHAM
 (taking her by the shoulder)
 Susie! What's got into you?!

She violently shrugs him off. He looks aghast. SUSIE grabs the coin, her hands shaking. She clutches it like a talisman, stroking it, rubbing it. It's bizarre.

CUT TO:

The platform display board clock morphs into another digit. Passenger legs and feet shuffle as if sensing the stressful situation unfolding behind them in the car park. The signal light still beams red.

CUT TO:

SUSIE wildly flips the coin. All watch it rise and fall in silence. It clatters to the ground, the sounds amplified, scorching through their heads. She remains frozen. She can't look, stares directly ahead. No-one moves. It's so sudden.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
 What are you doing?! The coin was for him, not you to play with!

SUSIE
 (choking)
 I've been thinking of leaving you.
 For quite some time.

ADRIAN
 Oh god.

SETH
 Jesus.

GRAHAM
 (choked up)
 W ... what? WHAT?! You serious? For how long?

SUSIE
Several months. I couldn't make up
my mind. I just couldn't. It's been
making me ill. So ... so ...

SETH
(to Graham)
Mate, I'm sorry, if I'd known she
was ...

GRAHAM
It's not your fault.

He turns to SUSIE again who still remains frozen.

GRAHAM (CONT'D)
(suddenly realising)
What is this?! Our relationship?!
On a fucking coin?! In front of all
these people?! We've been together
FIVE YEARS!

SUSIE
I couldn't make my mind up! I'm
sorry. You were all for the flip
earlier. Not so keen now are you!

GRAHAM holds his head in his hands. Everyone looks mortified.

GRAHAM
This is my life ...

SUSIE finally becomes animated, rushes over to the coin on
the floor.

SUSIE
(screaming)
It's my life too!

She looks at the result, then rushes off sobbing.

ADRIAN
(to Graham)
You better go after her.

He needs no second bidding.

SETH
Bloody hell!

COLIN
That was messed up.

ADRIAN

(sternly)

That's why this is a dangerous game.

COLIN

Maybe. But at least she's been decided now. Been put out of her misery.

SETH

Yes, but into another kind of misery.

ADRIAN

Fate, destiny, pre-determination ... is she better off in or out of that relationship? Who knows.

COLIN

He was a bit of a dick.

We can hear GRAHAM and SUSIE argue in the background. SETH guiltily sparks up another cigarette. The coin stays on the floor. Silence, until COLIN reaches down for it. Suddenly, ADRIAN crouches down and grabs his wrist. We can see he sports a copper bracelet and large amber ring.

COLIN (CONT'D)

(trying to shake Adrian off)

Hey! Let go!

ADRIAN

Drop it! If you're still going to flip, and it looks like nothing I say will change your mind, it's not going to be with that.

COLIN

(really pissed off but frozen under Adrian's grip)

No need to grab my arm mate!

ADRIAN

Sorry, but this is a serious business and I'm going against my better judgement doing this. I didn't mean to scare you.

ADRIAN lets go of Colin's arm suddenly and stands, motioning for COLIN to do the same. This is almost like a ritual. COLIN stands, eyeing ADRIAN warily, now under his spell.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Listen. The Romans had the best mints and the best coins back in the day. Wonderful thing, to hold one in your hand. They called this game Navia Aut Caput - ship or head. It's been going on a long, long time.

What you need is a special coin. One that's been treasured for years. Has history. Meaning. Has ... lived a little. A lucky angel. An Emperor Vespasian golden angel no less ...

SETH

Oh come on. You're trying to tell us you've got a gold Roman coin on you?

COLIN

Seriously? (beat) Naaaah. Wind up merchant.

ADRIAN remains utterly impassive. Then a slight knowing grin creases his face. His eyes twinkle. There is a magic in the air. Slowly he reaches into his pocket.

CUT TO:

GRAHAM and SUSIE arguing soundlessly below. Clouds scud across the moon, this time in the opposite direction. The train times shifts. Three minutes left before the train arrives. A PASSENGER stretches her arms up towards the lunar surface. The train signal is still red.

CUT TO:

ADRIAN holds something reverently in his outstretched palm, still sporting a mischievous smile, eyes a'twinkle.

COLIN (CONT'D)

That's a Roman coin? Let's see it then!

Both he and SETH move in for the reveal.

ADRIAN

(grinning)

Of course it's not you plums. You think I'd carry something like that around?!

SETH

Oh for god's sake ...

COLIN

Oh, shit man! You got me.

They all chuckle.

ADRIAN

Emperor Vespasian! Dear me. (beat)
It is a special coin though.

He opens his palm. A silver coin shimmers in the light.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

That my friends is a 1916 Silver Florin, handed down through my family over the years. My great-great Granddad, Albert, kept it with him as a lucky charm when he joined the middle of WW1. Seemed to have worked. He survived Gallipoli, Somme, Ypres and Mons.

He crawled out of many trenches while the remains of his colleagues drained into the ground around him. A German shell landed six feet away from him once, and failed to explode. He kept a meticulous diary. Each time he survived a serious attack, he sent back a rubbing of the coin with the date and time. Strangely, they all averaged 13 days apart. Someone stole his coin once.

It was the only time he took a bullet. The chap who stole it was found bayoneted three days later. Only there wasn't a German attack that day. Apparently the man had been sleeping with his friend's wife before the friends enlisted, and he'd taken ultimate retribution once he found out.

Albert discovered the body and was searching for belongings to send back to England when he found his coin, quite by chance. He never received another injury after that.

(MORE)

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
By the way, its date of coining,
1916, is an angel number in
numerology.

He holds it up vertical. It glimmers in the light.

SETH
Bit better than a 10p.

COLIN goes to take it. ADRIAN'S whips his hand back.

ADRIAN
Are you really sure son? Truly? And
you'll stick to the outcome no
matter what?

COLIN
(straightening up)
Yes. I'm like that woman. I can't
bear it anymore. I've had enough.

SETH
Go on. Let him.

The hand opens, the coin grabbed.

CUT TO:

The train sign. Only one minute remaining. Some PASSENGERS stand, readying themselves. Some leaves scud across the platform. We see a sobbing SUSIE in the waiting room being comforted by a KINDLY WOMAN. GRAHAM is crying, slumped outside against the wall, his head in his hands.

Whispery clouds scud across the half moon, seemingly a bit faster than before.

CUT TO:

The Florin is flipped. It glints in the air, rises, spinning, a kinetic destiny.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATFORM STATION. NIGHT.

SETH and COLIN shake hands.

SETH
All the best mate. Glad it's been
decided. What a strange night.

COLIN

Yeah it was. (beat) See ya mate.
Thanks for helping.

SETH nods goodbye and walks off along the platform.

COLIN turns to ADRIAN.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Thank you. So much. You have no
idea.

ADRIAN

Oh, I have an idea. Remember son,
you're always in control of your
destiny. Always. Never let chance
intrude ever again. It's always
held dangerously between the
Devil's thumb and forefinger. Right
above your head, like a sword.
Ready to drop.

COLIN nods sagely.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

You take care.

COLIN

You too.

They both hug, and pat each other on the back as the train
rolls in behind them. They walk off in different ways. ADRIAN
recedes in the background as we see the determined face of
COLIN.

ADRIAN

(quietly)
Fica con dios.

CUT TO:

A very smartly dressed ELEGANT LADY walking towards us down
the platform, having got off the train. She's on the phone,
agitating about a business deal and whether she should accept
a merger offer.

ELEGANT LADY

I just think our agreement doesn't
yet have the proper representations
and warranties. (beat). No, they
haven't! At all! (beat) Well, I
think we should hold off on it for
a while ... (beat) OK, maybe I am
being paranoid.

(MORE)

ELEGANT LADY (CONT'D)
It's just such a big deal. I can't
make my mind up. Maybe I need a
little push ...

She walks into the car park then spies the still discarded
10p piece from the first flip. It glints slightly, as if
trying to entrance.

ELEGANT LADY (CONT'D)
Hang on Tim, I'll call you back.

She pockets her phone, crouches down and reaches for it. We
hear footsteps approach. She begins to turn. A hand suddenly
grabs her arm. It's ADRIAN's arm as we can see his peculiar
bangle and amber ring. However, this time we see a Diceman
tattoo just visible under his arm hair.

THE END