

DR. HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON EXPLAINS VERY LITTLE FOR YOU

Written by

Mark Chrisler

Mark Chrisler
201 Columbus Rd.
Apt 202
Athens OH, 45701
(815) 757-5321
Markchrisler@gmail.com

ONE

Dr. Huckleberry Persimmon sits inactive, with eyes closed--as if perhaps meditating or sleeping. Down-Counter perks up, jumps downstage with great fanfare.

DOWN-COUNTER

Ladies and gentlemen! Listen up, for you have a wonderful opportunity here tonight, free of charge, to hear--and then immediately dismiss--the last great thoughts of that infamous prolific failed genius, Dr. Huckleberry Persimmon!

(Huckleberry does not move)

That's right! Inventor of the flightless jet plane. Writer of the epic unpublished novel "Life and Times of a Kitchen Table." Postulator of the non-local Bell's Inequality Equality! Dr. Huckleberry Persimmon!

(Huckleberry does not move)

Dr. Persimmon holds, among his many backhanded honors, four Guinness Book World Records: Man with the most ideas, man with the most brilliant ideas, man with the most unsuccessful ideas and man with the most unsuccessful brilliant ideas! Ladies and gentlemen, Dr. Huckleberry Persimmon!

(Huckleberry does not move)

Folks, you'll have to forgive the good doctor's languor. You see, he has recently been told, by no less an authority than myself, the charming yet decidedly demonic Down-Counter, that he is running out of thoughts. So, in a breath of dazzling and impotent ingenuity, he's concocted this public lecture which, if he chooses finally to speak, will serve as his last badly misinformed attempt to make something of himself! But we understand his reticence. After all, as of this moment, he has only forty five thoughts left to have before I take his mind all for myself.

(Huckleberry does not move)

Still. That's no excuse to quit trying, yes?

(Huckleberry does not move)

Fine. Be that way.

END ONE

TWO

A long moment of Down-Counter circling Dr. Persimmon. Then, suddenly, Dr. Persimmon's eyebrow cocks up.

Forty four!

DOWN-COUNTER

That doesn't count!
That one doesn't count!

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Forty three.

DOWN-COUNTER
(Huckleberry considers protesting further,
backs back into silent meditation)

END TWO

THREE

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON
(perking up)

I think...

DOWN-COUNTER

Forty two.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Now hold on! I think...

DOWN-COUNTER

Forty one.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

This is the same one! It can't count twice!

DOWN-COUNTER

Forty.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Oh, so that's a thought?

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty nine.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON
(a long silence)

I think--let me finish--that this is really... shitty.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty eight.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

I think, when you make a deal with a demon, you expect to be able to do something really well, not just do a lot of it.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty seven.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

So, I'd say, if you're going to make such a deal, be careful about your wording.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty six.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

That's advice, not an idea!

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty five.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

(long silence)

When I wished for genius, all I wanted was to have one significant thought.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty four.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

I have so far failed.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty three.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

So, I wonder, is there some way to manage that now, with only thirty three thoughts left?

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty two.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

(silence)

What's clear is that, if I'm to stand any chance, I must develop some kind of methodology for determining what a significant thought is.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty one.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

I can't simply start thinking things willy-nilly, hoping one will be coincidentally significant.

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirty.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

That's the strategy I've been up to so far, and it has failed.

DOWN-COUNTER

Twenty nine.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Fuck you!

DOWN-COUNTER

Twenty eight.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

(silence)

You see, I've figured out how to not think. Learning how not to think cost me several hundred thoughts.

DOWN-COUNTER

Twenty seven.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

But developing a methodology to find significant thoughts must, itself, be economical. Because I have only twenty six thoughts to develop that methodology before I must use my last thought to *be* significant.

DOWN-COUNTER

Twenty six.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Then, with one last significant thought, this demon can take the brain right out of my head and do whatever he wants with it, because I'll be happy as a clam.

DOWN-COUNTER

Twenty five.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Quiet as one, too. But happy.

Twenty four. DOWN-COUNTER

I'm being wasteful. HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Twenty three. DOWN-COUNTER

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON
(silence)

END THREE

FOUR

Dr. Persimmon is motionless again.

Hey, hey. What's the matter? DOWN-COUNTER

Dr. Persimmon remains motionless again.

Ssssh. You're so worked up. DOWN-COUNTER (CONT'D)

Dr. Persimmon remains motionless.

Just try to calm down. DOWN-COUNTER (CONT'D)

I am calm. HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Twenty-two. DOWN-COUNTER

Goddammit. HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Twenty-one. DOWN-COUNTER

(silence)
How about I help you take your mind off things?
(silence)
(MORE)

DOWN-COUNTER (CONT'D)

Maybe read you some heartening scripture?

(silence)

Contemplate the revelations of Einstein?

(silence)

A little music?

(silence, then sung)

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(silence)

Fine. Be boring then. Want to play a game of chess?

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Nice try.

DOWN-COUNTER

Twenty!

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Why are you doing this? We both know I'm screwed either way.

We do, don't we?

DOWN-COUNTER

Nineteen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

This is how it is, always with him: I get quiet, he talks my ear off. I respond, he clams up and... counts.

DOWN-COUNTER

Eighteen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

And the chess games, oh the chess games!

DOWN-COUNTER

Seventeen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

He's a terrible player, but constantly he wants to have a match.

DOWN-COUNTER

Sixteen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

So I beat him over and over. I can think ahead of him, you see? He's no good with long-term strategy, methodology. But I've got methodology. And that's why I'll win.

DOWN-COUNTER

Fifteen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

I've wasted thousands of thoughts beating him at chess.

DOWN-COUNTER

Fourteen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Wait. Did you do that on purpose...?

DOWN-COUNTER

Thirteen.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

(Returns to thoughtlessness)

END FOUR

FIVE

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

I've thought...

DOWN-COUNTER

Twelve.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

...of a problem with my methodology plan.

DOWN-COUNTER

Eleven.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

(silence)

See, if I take up all but my last thought to develop my methodology for significant thought, I run the risk of my methodology having more than one step, and thus of not being able to think significantly.

DOWN-COUNTER

Ten.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

So, if we imagine my methodology will need five steps--five little thoughts--to finally conclude with one significant thought, and I have nine thoughts left--will have eight thoughts left at the conclusion of this thought--then I can safely take only three more thoughts to develop the five thought methodology.

DOWN-COUNTER

Nine.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

So it's important I don't dally any longer.

DOWN-COUNTER

Eight.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Okay. Two steps left to develop my method. None to waste.

DOWN-COUNTER

Seven.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Shit. Alright, what if I start with an idea and then add significance to it?

DOWN-COUNTER

Six.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Okay. Scrap it. Time to just think of something.

DOWN-COUNTER

Five.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

Um... Consider the lilies of the field... no, no.

DOWN-COUNTER

Four.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON

What if E equals MC cubed?

DOWN-COUNTER

Three.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON
(singing)

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DOWN-COUNTER

Two.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON
I can't do it! There's no significant thought to have!

DOWN-COUNTER

One.

HUCKLEBERRY PERSIMMON
(smiling)

I've got it! Listen: there's no such thing as a significant thought!

Huckleberry smiles widely, then falls back
limply on his chair. He sits, still, but continues to
smile through end.

DOWN-COUNTER

Alright, folks. I hope you've enjoyed Dr. Persimmon's presentation, but also that you
won't pay it any mind. After all, what good could that do anyone, right? This is your
friendly imp Down-Counter saying goodnight!

End of play.