

begin the games

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begin the games

by [Bee_4](#)

Summary

It's the quarterfinals, and Joe and Quackity talk about what kind of competition, exactly, they'll be having.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

Quackity leans back in his velvet chair. Joe watches him shuffle the deck. His fingers are pretty fast, Joe thinks, but for a guy who runs a casino, he's actually sorta slow at it, doing the sorts of things that look flashy for an observer but aren't fast enough to keep a consistent flow of games going.

"I've gotta say, I'm glad you didn't want to fight me to the death," Joe says after a moment. "I would have done it, I mean. I've done lotsa death-fighting. UHCs and Vechs and did you know how I met Cleo? But—"

"Nah, man," Quackity says, laying the cards out on the table. "If we've got a chance to talk, why not talk? I'm a lover, not a fighter."

"Lotta scars for a lover."

"Well, you know how it is," Quackity says, gesturing vaguely. "You know how it is."

"I mean, sure?" Joe says, and his tone must be appropriately confused, because it makes Quackity laugh.

Quackity puts the deck of cards down. “Well, my newest friend, well! Pick your poison.”

“Can I pick something that’s not a poison?”

“If you think you can beat me at cards, sure,” Quackity says magnanimously. “You pick the game, man, it’s the players who decide the poison.”

“Philosophical!” Joe says brightly.

“I try,” Quackity says.

“What would you suggest?” Joe asks.

“I like poker, of course, but blackjack might be easier for a beginner.”

“Well, if I do that I’ll be sure to take hits on sixteen,” Joe says.

“What?”

“The audience at home will get it,” Joe says. Quackity grimaces.

“Don’t talk like that. You’ll remind me of Wilbur. I don’t wanna fucking think about Wilbur, man. Fuck off.”

Joe shrugs. “Maybe we shouldn’t play blackjack.”

“Please.”

They’re both quiet for a moment. Joe plays with his drink. It’s a really nice whiskey; he doesn’t normally get whiskey this nice. It’s on the house, apparently, so he supposes it makes sense; he doesn’t normally visit places that would call themselves “the house”, either.

“It’s almost like we’re in Vegas, so I *feel like* I should say poker,” Joe says.

“Almost? We’re *better*,” Quackity says, something almost *bitter* coloring his tone as he does. Huh.

“Well, it doesn’t snow in Vegas,” Joe says. “I’m pretty sure that’s a desert.”

“And we’re not?”

“It’s snowing.”

Quackity’s quiet for a moment.

“You’re an entertainer, right? That’s what you call yourself, isn’t it? Sometimes, man, you’ve gotta put on a fucking party. A fucking *show*. Sometimes, you’ve gotta build a desert in a tundra.”

“Or a pinball machine in an ocean,” Joe says sagely.

“What?” Quackity says.

“Well, it’s the only place I was going to have enough space,” Joe says.

“You’re a fucking lunatic. No wonder you managed to beat Wilbur. Sure,” Quackity says.

Joe pauses to think about that one. “I don’t know if that’s a compliment,” he says, finally.

“It’s not,” Quackity says.

“Oh. Uh. Ouch, I guess...?”

Quackity throws his head back and cackles. “Pick a game, man.”

“How do you feel about gin rummy?” Joe says after a moment.

“In a *casino*?” Quackity says.

“You said we could pick. We’re in the back. And, uh, gotta say, not normally much of a—casinos aren’t my thing.”

Quackity shakes his head. “Yeah, sure, why not then. Let’s play some fucking gin rummy!”

And he deals a hand.

End Notes

self-indulgently allow me to explain the card games here:

blackjack: first game suggested, absolutely the "simplest" game to play here. associated directly with wilbur here (although i'd like to note that while quackity and joe are associating wilbur with hitting on sixteen, the card game wilbur is more associated with in canon is solitaire).

poker: there's a reason they talk about poker at the same time they talk about both being performers who put on acts. relevant for both of them, even though quackity is more explicit about it; joe basically OPENS the conversation by saying "i need to put on an act because i'm here right".

gin rummy: by contrast to the other two games, this is not a "typical" casino game - this is a game i played with my family a lot, and associate with longer games with family members, tallying up points. like poker, you have to play what the other players are doing to win (or get lucky). unlike poker, however, there's no way to fold, just to decide you think you're in the lead and take the smallest hit you can, hopefully less than everyone else. so, sort of like poker in that it's a game about reading people, but typically a LOT less intense with a good deal less bluffing, as the way you read people has more to do with which cards they discard and choose to take. felt like a joe game to me, you know? joe's suggesting a third option here - similar to quackity's wheelhouse, but decidedly joe's own.

anyway. that poll was wild right? come talk to me [on tumblr](#), and say hi! us joe fans will never forget quackity's brave sacrifice <3

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