

# Something for Nothing

*Pope Prickly the Pielyamorous Porcupine  
of the Bent Quarter Cabal  
and, more recently,  
the Sunrise If You Dare Cabal*

Before the beginning, there was a 50% chance that nothing would exist and a 50% chance that something would exist. To determine whether something or nothing would exist, something and nothing decided to flip a coin. However, for there to be a coin to flip, something had to exist, so something had already won. Therefore, we exist because something is a lying, cheating bastard.

Many religions have a strong sense of dichotomy between truth and lie. In Zoroastrianism, there are two gods, one of truth, one of lies. In Norse polytheism, the chief god is Odin, who represents wisdom and truth; his chief adversary is Loki, god of lies and trickery. In Christianity, Jesus is “The Truth, The Way, and The Life,” while Satan is often described as a trickster and liar.

However, in each of these cases, existence is *not based on the truth*. According to Zoroastrianism, when the god of truth defeats the god of lies, existence will end. According to Norse polytheism, Ragnarok (the end of the world) will be the final battle between Odin and Loki; when the god of truth defeats the god of lies, the world will end. According to Christian prophecy in Revelations, at some point all the true believers will be swept up, leaving the world to the lie.

The more closely you look at existence, especially at life and at the psychology of most “higher” organisms, the more apparent this becomes. Take dating: the more obvious it is that you want a relationship, the more likely the other person is to run from you, while teasing them, pretending not to like them, and generally playing “hard to get” makes the other person try harder to get you. Take economics: the more you demand, the more you have to pay for what you receive; the more you supply, the less you receive for what you give. Take

physics: every action causes an equal but *opposite* reaction. Take politics (you might disagree on parts of this one): trying to stamp out drug use, alcohol use, gambling, prostitution, deviant sex, poverty, or hunger is almost guaranteed to cause those problems to grow worse. Take chaos magic: consciously focusing on your desires ensures that your spell will fail, while tricking your mind into believing something else makes your spells more likely to succeed.

The closer we get to discovering what things are made of, the less they seem to be made of. A few centuries ago, when people looked at a block of wood, they said, “That’s wood, which is a thing in and of itself.” More recently, they said, “That’s wood; it’s made up of wood cells that are things in and of themselves.” More recently, they said, “That’s wood; it’s made up of cells, which are made up of molecules, which are things in and of themselves.” Next we moved on to atoms. Then protons, neutrons, and electrons. Then quarks. More importantly, with each level, we’ve found that the thing is made up of less and less of itself; molecules are more than 90% empty space, less than 10% atoms. Atoms are more than 90% empty space, less than 10% protons, neutrons, and electrons. Protons and neutrons appear to be mainly empty space, with quarks and such taking up small portions. On a grander scale, most of outer space is just that—space. Existence is at least 99.9% empty space—nothing. The closer we get to discovering what we’re made of, the more we find out that we’re made of nothing.

However, there are tiny pockets of defiance against this nothing which maintain their existence by lying to each other about it; whether this lying comes in the form of gravity, electromagnetism, chemical magnetism, physiological attraction and repulsion, political influence, magic, or some other force, it is a dishonesty that has to perpetrate itself on its surroundings in order to maintain its existence.

Reality is based on lies. Being honest with reality and telling it what you want is the most certain way to ensure that you won’t ever receive it. Lying to reality is the most certain way to get what you want. Now, your truths and lies still have to compete with the truths and lies of six billion other people on the planet, trillions of other organisms,

pentillions of molecules and septillions of atoms and gigantu-fucking-mongously huge numbers of subatomic particles over whose version of reality will win out, and most things are better liars than you are. However, with the proper application of dishonesty, trickery, and sleight-of-mind, you can achieve exactly what you want—doing so by not wanting it.