

PIGEON... WHOLE

By

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

PIGEON 1: A pigeon. Middle-aged, so, about 5. Loving life and Cheetos.

PIGEON 2: Also a pigeon Getting old - almost 7. What's the point?

NOTE: The actors playing pigeons don't have to act like pigeons... until they do. As far as wardrobe, grey or black sweats would work. Something plain. Pigeons aren't known for their fashion sense.

**ACT 1**

*SETTING: Saturday in the park. Definitely not the Fourth of July. Two pigeons at a bench. Not on it, but under it. PIGEON 1 is enjoying the day. PIGEON 2 seems distracted. Not sad but... not happy. PIGEON 1 notices a Cheeto on the ground. He gets PIGEON 2's attention and motions toward it it.*

PIGEON 1

(To PIGEON 2) Hey. Are you gonna...?

PIGEON 2

(Distracted) Hmm?

PIGEON 1 points to the Cheeto.

PIGEON 1

That. In front of you. Unless you we're...

PIGEON 2

(Looking down) Oh. No, be my guest.

PIGEON 1 places his hand over his heart in thanks. PIGEON 1 goes down to eat Cheeto then comes back up, chewing and contended.

Mmm. LOVE a Cheeto. Don't get me wrong. Throw a piece of bread at me, I'm all over it. But a Cheeto? Jackpot!

PIGEON 2 is still deep in thought.

Even the Flamin' Hots, although they fuck with my stomach. But, yeah, a Cheeto...

PIGEON 1 savors the Cheeto.

And school yards! (Looks to PIGEON 2) School yards?

PIGEON 2

(Realized he's being spoken to) Hmm? Right. School yards.

PIGEON 1

BEST place to find them. The little ones LOVE Cheetos. AND they're fucking little slob. Perfect combination. After recess, it's like a Cheeto buffet out there.

PIGEON 2 still deep in thought.

PIGEON 2

(Non-committal) Yeah, that's...

Beat. PIGEON 1 goes back to  
admiring the surroundings.

PIGEON 1

Nice day. Hot, though. Thinking about going to the fountain  
later to cool off. (Looks to PIGEON 2) Wanna go? Cool off?

PIGEON 2

Hmm? Yeah sure...

PIGEON 1

Yeah, fountain'll be great. Cool off. A Cheeto and then the  
fountain. Nice. (Pause, then excitedly) Oh! Earlier...

He tries to get PIGEON 2's  
attention.

Earlier?...

PIGEON 2

Earlier. Right.

PIGEON 1

I was at the plaza earlier. EVERYONE is there. Everyone.  
Going this way, going that way. (Pause) But mostly the same  
way because, you know, that's what we do.

PIGEON 2

Right. What we do...

PIGEON 1

Every once in a while, somebody takes off, so we all take  
off. They come back, we all come back because, again...

PIGEON 2

It's what we do. Right.

PIGEON 1

Exactly. And there's a person of... let's say, significant  
age...

PIGEON 2

Old.

PIGEON 1

Exactly. Sitting on a bench about to chow down a pretzel. Eating it the way they do, with their... whaddyacallit?

PIGEON 2

Mouth.

PIGEON 1

Right, mouth. Just...

Imitates a person chewing as much  
as a pigeon can.

...munch munch munch munch.

PIGEON 2

Munch munch munch munch.

PIGEON 1

Exactly. But the guy just gets one bite in when... (Tries to tell story without laughing) He dropped it! Just right to the fucking ground. PLOP! A whole pretzel, just right out of his hand straight to the ground. Like it had lost the will to live. (Laughing)

PIGEON 2

(Half paying attention) The will to live...

PIGEON 1

(Still in hysterics) And before the old guy could even BEGIN to pick it up - and he tried, but the old ones, they're slow - we were all OVER that thing! Like, THOUSANDS of us coming from every direction. Which, again, is how we do.

PIGEON 2

How we do.

PIGEON 1

Just dive-bombing the hell out of that pretzel.

Starts running imitating hundreds  
of pigeons, maybe making plane and  
bombing noises.

Old guy goes running for cover, screaming and shit. (Imitates old guy) "Help! They're all over me! Someone help!" Pulling his little jacket over his head 'cause, you know, some of us lose a little control when stuff like that happens.

PIGEON 2

Right.

PIGEON 1

(Still laughing) Shit was crazy. (Calming) But I got mine, yes I did. DEFINITELY got a couple of pieces of pretzel.

Comes back to the bench.

Yup. Fucking pretzel. Nice day.

PIGEON 2

Mmmm.

PIGEON 1

So let's go to the fountain. Cool off. Look for Cheetos. Whaddya say?

PIGEON 2

(Distracted) Yeah. Sure.

PIGEON 1 stops and finally notices  
PIGEON 2 is a bit despondent.

PIGEON 1

(Looking at PIGEON 2) Hey. What's up?

PIGEON 2

Nothing.

PIGEON 1

Bullshit. Something. Hey. Look at me. Look at me.

They try to look at each other but  
they're pigeons, so their heads  
keep jerking around.

PIGEON 2

Nothing's up. Finish the story about the pretzel

PIGEON 1

I DID finish. Seriously, what's up?

PIGEON 2

Nothing!

PIGEON 1

Hey. How many times have we sat on the same statue just shitting all over it?

PIGEON 2

Hundreds of times.

PIGEON 1

Thousands. We've made statues look like the top of Mount Everest. You shit with somebody that many times, you get know them. So, c'mon, what's up?

PIGEON 2

(Frustration) Nothing, just... Look, you wanna go to the fountain? Ok, let's ALL go to the fucking fountain. We ALL went to the fountain yesterday and the day before that and the day before that, but... fuck it. Why not ALL go today too? We'll ALL go to the fountain and ALL wait for someone to drop a piece of bread or a Cheeto or a pretzel...

PIGEON 1

Alright, alright. Just thought it'd be cool to go to the fountain. We can do something else.

PIGEON 2

(Getting angry) You can go to the fountain by yourself, you know. We BOTH don't have to go. It's possible for YOU to go the fountain and I go do something entirely different.

PIGEON 1

I mean, we always go to the fountain together but... fine, I'll go by myself. (Half mumbling) I mean, it's just THE FOUNTAIN, but... whatever.

They both seething a bit. PIGEON 2 finally speaks.

PIGEON 2

What are we doing here?

PIGEON 1

Well, I THOUGHT we were going to the fountain, but...

PIGEON 2

No, I mean what are we DOING here?

PIGEON 1

What, like, life and shit? (Thinking) We're... doing our thing. Living that pigeon life. Flying around in big clusters. We're up there, then we're down here. One of us takes off, the rest follow. One of us lands, we all land. Eating free Cheetos. (Pause) Having babies nobody ever sees. It's a short to-do list but, we're pigeons. We're doing us.

PIGEON 2

(Despondent) "Us."

PIGEON 1

What we're meant to do.

PIGEON 2

What we're MEANT to do.

PIGEON 1

(Sensing despondency) Seriously, what's up?

PIGEON 2 hesitates, then forges ahead.

PIGEON 2

I was talking with this seagull the other day...

PIGEON 1

They're assholes.

PIGEON 2

Whatever. We were talking and in the middle of our conversation, the seagull just... took off.

PIGEON 1

See? Assholes.

PIGEON 2

That's not the poin... anyway, it was the WAY they took off. Not because everybody else was doing it, but just... because they wanted to.

PIGEON 1

Still sounds rude.

PIGEON 2

It wasn't rude, it was... liberating. Just taking off like that, on a whim. Going where their heart leads them...

PIGEON 1

Still rude. Taking off in the middle of a conversation. And we at least WAIT for a pretzel to drop on the ground. They'll snatch food right out of somebody's hand like a... common criminal. The dickheads of the sky. Fuck seagulls.

PIGEON 2

They do more than snatch pretzels.

PIGEON 1

Hardly.

PIGEON 2

They go to sea. It's in their name.

PIGEON 1

They go to "lake." This is Chicago. They should be called lakegulls. Besides, what's out "there?"

PIGEON 2

Doesn't matter. They go. They don't wait around for Cheetos.

PIGEON 1

No, they steal 'em from you like a flapping, squawking thief.

PIGEON 2

That's... ambition. Drive. They have a dream, they go for it. They don't wait until everybody else agrees to do it.

PIGEON 1

(Frustrated) Look, I just wanted to know if we're going to the fountain together later and hang out with the crew.

PIGEON 2

That's my point! "Us." "We." "The crew."

PIGEON 2 grabs PIGEON 1 by the collar... wing? He's intense

What about YOU?

PIGEON 1

Me?

PIGEON 2

You. And me. As individuals. The swooping, the pretzels, the shitting on statues, the Cheetos... That's "us." All of us. But what about just... you?

PIGEON 1 thinking.

PIGEON 1

Just me...? (Thinking)

PIGEON 2

Just you.

PIGEON 1

On a statue?

PIGEON 2

Yes, fine. On a statue. You. No one else. You alone.

PIGEON 1

Alone? (Thinking) Like, everybody else is on one side of the statue and I'm on...?

PIGEON 2

No, I mean NO ONE else around. Nowhere. Not on other side of statue. Nowhere around. Just you.

PIGEON 1

Just me. On a statue.

PIGEON 2

Yes. Just you on a statue. Alone.

PIGEON 1

(Thinking) Shitting?

PIGEON 2

Yes, fine, shitting. But just you shitting on a statue by yourself. You ever wanna just shit on a statue by yourself?

PIGEON 1

Well, I... (Thinking) It'd be a lot of work.

PIGEON 2

You don't have to shit on the WHOLE statue. But yeah, just you. Shitting. Alone.

PIGEON 1

Ok, but... Who shits alone?

PIGEON 2

Well... (Points to "people.") They do.

PIGEON 1

The pretzel droppers?

PIGEON 2

The pretzel droppers, yes. They do a lot of things alone. They sit alone. They eat alone.

PIGEON 1

True. Don't see them fighting each other over a pretzel.

PIGEON 2

And they don't seem to mind. They're together, but... not. That doesn't fascinate you?

PIGEON 1

Only when they're eating pretzels. (Laughs, holds out a "wing" for wing bump) C'mon, up top...

PIGEON 2

I'm serious.

PIGEON 1

(Miffed) Oh, what's "fascinating" about them? They spend most their time trying to avoid each other anyway, going around with their head down, not making a sound. They can be sitting right next to each other and... nothing. That's seagull-level rude.

PIGEON 2

OK, but...

PIGEON 1

And when you DO get a sound out of them, ho boy, watch out. They'll go for HOURS! Just - gagagagagagagagagagaga. Even when they're holding up those little boxes to their ears, just gagagagagagagagaga..

PIGEON 2

It's probably something important.

PIGEON 1

And the the smaller ones? Fucking horrible. Laughing like idiots while they chase us to do who-knows-what to us. And the bigger ones just smile and cheer them on. "Ooh! You almost got it, baby! But don't touch! Don't touch! Germs!" Germs? Fuck you! Fascinating? Hell no.

PIGEON 2

Fine, not everything they do is worth envy but... it's still different.

PIGEON 1

Meh.

PIGEON 2

They have... variety. We're just this... flickering jumble of feathers darting back and forth with no... distinction, no real purpose. THEY have moments of inspiration. Serendipity. WHIMS! They have whims.

PIGEON 1

Whims?

PIGEON 2

Fucking whims! It's like they'll just think of something and - boom! - they're off doing it.

PIGEON 1

Right. Like us.

PIGEON 2

NOT like us. We march in lockstep.

PIGEON 1

(Trying to be positive) FLY in lockstep...

PIGEON 2

First of all, mixed metaphor. And second, that makes it worse. We fucking FLY and we use that ability for... what? Chasing down Cheetos. Avoiding getting stepped on.

PIGEON 1

Two very important skills.

PIGEON 2

Well, I want whims. I want randomness. Aspirations. I want the possibility that tomorrow will be different than the day before. I want a purpose bigger than Cheetos.

PIGEON 1 stares at him, studies him. Then figures it out.

PIGEON 1

Existential crisis.

PIGEON 2

What?

PIGEON 1

Existential crisis. You're having one of those.

PIGEON 2

And that is...?

PIGEON 1

You're questioning your place in the universe. You're seeking something but you're not sure exactly what.

PIGEON 2 thinking.

PIGEON 2

Huh. (Pause) Where'd you come up with that?

PIGEON 1

Heard two of them talking about it the other day. They were sitting on a bench, reading some book. I was on this statute next to them...

PIGEON 2

Of course.

PIGEON 1

I listened for a while, shit on their book, and flew off. It was interesting. But, yeah, that's you. Existential crisis. You've got a... need.

PIGEON 2 thinks.

PIGEON 2

I think I want to walk.

PIGEON 1

Good idea. We'll walk over to the fountain and...

PIGEON 2

No, like them.

PIGEON 1 stares incredulously.

I wanna walk like them. Try to, at least.

PIGEON 1

But we're pigeons.

PIGEON 2

Right, but, I think I wanna try walking like them.

PIGEON 1

Ok, but we already got a walk. Very distinctive, I might add.

PIGEON 2

But they kinda... glide.

PIGEON 1

Glide? They clomp around like... like they're having trouble staying upright. Like they'll fall over any second. No grace, no style. They don't "glide."

PIGEON 2

And we're graceful? Some of us - not naming names - some of us walk like we're scared of the ground. Like we're trying to peek around a corner that ain't there. You know, the whole...

PIGEON 2 starts to do a pigeon walk. Head bobbing, light stepping lightly. Whatever the actor perceives to be a pigeon walk.

PIGEON 1

It's called attitude. We walk with style. With a bit of swagger. We strut. Proudly. (pause) At least, I do.

PIGEON 1 starts to strut around, pigeon-style. It is about the same as the earlier example but he does it with his head held high.

Like that. Jaunty.

PIGEON 2

That's... pretty much what I did.

PIGEON 1

But it's the attitude that sells it.

PIGEON 2

And where has it gotten us? We're still just shitting on statues and dive-bombing for Cheetos like savages.

PIGEON 1

Hey, cool it with the "savages" stuff.

PIGEON 2

If I could walk like them... just for a little while, maybe...

PIGEON 1

"Maybe" nothing. Look, you're going through some stuff, I get it. But we're pigeons. Nothing wrong with that. But you insinuating that there is...

PIGEON 2

I didn't mean to... It was just an idea I had...

PIGEON 1

Get better ideas.

PIGEON 2 is sad/angry/frustrated.

PIGEON 1 feels bad and relents... a bit.

(Sigh) Look, I didn't mean to shit all over your parade.

PIGEON 2

I think it's... rain all over your...

PIGEON 1 gives him a "Seriously?" look. He relents a bit.

PIGEON 1

I'll admit it might interesting. The walking.

PIGEON 2 brightening.

PIGEON 2

Exactly! It might be fun.

PIGEON 1

I said interesting, not fun. (Thinks) Fine, I don't wanna step on someone's dreams, even if I do it ungracefully. So how do we do this? Just walk and... ?

PIGEON 2

Just... (looks around) through that door, I guess. Like we belong there. (Greets imaginary office workers) "Hey, how ya doing? Nice day, huh? Just walking in like everybody else. Later, dude."

PIGEON 1

(Sarcastic) Sounds like a great time.

PIGEON 2

Might be. Might not. But unless we try... Look, it's not the journey, it's the decision to MAKE the journey. Walking through that door might change everything. Right now, our lives are just flying in circles, pretzels and shitting.

PIGEON 1

And Cheetos.

PIGEON 2

Well, walking is my Cheeto!...

PIGEON 1 sees how much this means  
to PIGEON 2.

PIGEON 1

Fuck it, let's do it.

PIGEON 2

Seriously?!? Cool! (Now, suddenly hesitant) Um, so, should we practice so we can assess each other's form?

PIGEON 1

You haven't thought this through...

PIGEON 2

Well, I assume we just can't... You have to plan...

PIGEON 1 ushers him out of the way.

PIGEON 1

Move...

PIGEON 1 starts "walking," or more accurately, walking like a pigeon trying to walk like a man. A kind of herky-jerky walk, part pigeon bob, part upright, nose in the air strut.

PIGEON 1

(Excitedly) Am I doing it? How do I look?

PIGEON 2

You look... Hmmmm...

PIGEON 1

I'm doing it, right? I feel it. (to PIGEON 2) C'mon, get your ass up. This was your idea. Start walking.

PIGEON 2 gets up hesitantly and starts to walk. He is even less successful at it than PIGEON 1.

PIGEON 2

This doesn't feel right.

PIGEON 1

You said it yourself, you're walking into new territory. Well, right now, you're at that weird intersection where hope meets reality. Strange shit happens there.

PIGEON 2

You're right. Fuck it.

PIGEON 2 starts walking again. They both are pigeons walking like humans.

PIGEON 1

We're going inside.

PIGEON 2

OK, but maybe first we should...

PIGEON 1

Don't overthink it.

They walk offstage and into a  
"building." Suddenly the voices of  
two people talking are heard.

PERSON 1 (O.S.)

The hell...?

PERSON 2 (O.S.)

Who let the pigeons in?

PERSON 1 (O.S.)

And why are they walking... funny?

PERSON 2 (O.S.)

Who do I look like, a pigeon guy?

PERSON 1 (O.S.)

Well, should we call somebody?

PERSON 2 (O.S.)

Who? They're pigeons. Nobody's in charge of pigeons.

PERSON 1 (O.S.)

OK, but, again, why are they walking like that?

PERSON 2 (O.S.)

Again, not a pigeon guy.

The PIGEONS think they're killing  
it.

PIGEON 1 (O.S.)

See? They're digging it.

PIGEON 2 (O.S.)

I know! Goddamn it! We're doing it!

PERSON 1 (O.S.)

(To PIGEONS) Hey, get the fuck outta here! Go on, shoo!

PIGEON 2 (O.S.)

Are they talking to us?

PIGEON 1 (O.S.)

Just keep walking. Act like you belong.

PERSON 2 (O.S.)

(To someone) Hey! Shoo! Shoo! Get outta here! Go on, shoo!

PIGEON 1 and PIGEON 2 suddenly scurry back onstage as they're being shooed out. PIGEON 2 gets back outside but gets depressed again. PIGEON 1 notices.

PIGEON 1

Hey. C'mon, you did it.

PIGEON 2

No, that was... They weren't impressed.

PIGEON 1

Of course, they were.

PIGEON 2

They seemed more... annoyed.

PIGEON 1

You've seen how they walk around. They always seem annoyed. But who gives a fuck? YOU did it.

PIGEON 2

I thought they'd be impressed.

PIGEON 1

They were impressed.

PIGEON 2

Bullshit.

PIGEON 1

True-shit! We ALWAYS impress them. We impress them just by existing.

PIGEON 2

Right.

PIGEON 1

Yes! Buddy, we fucking FLY!

PIGEON 2

Us and about a bazillion others. Big deal.

PIGEON 1

Yes, big deal. We. Fly! We soar! We're able to break free of the earthly bonds of gravity and effortlessly lift off into the heavens whenever the mood hits us. Gently gliding overhead, silhouetted against the crisp, azure sky as they look up in awe.

PIGEON 1 is on the soapbox now.

We're living metaphors for their dreams. The embodiment of their wildest designs, their aspirations. Walking? Fine, whatever, it gets you from here to there. But, buddy, us being able to touch the wild blue yonder? That's the shit.

PIGEON 2

(Reflecting, but...) I just hoped...

PIGEON 1

Dude, we ARE hope. Whether we're dive-bombing a pretzel or just fluttering from one statue to the next, every time we do it, we give them a little bit of wonder, a little hope.

PIGEON 2

You think?

PIGEON 1

I know.

PIGEON 2 shrugs but... ok.

Look, I get it. Not everything we do is glamour and excitement and razzle-dazzle. Sometimes it's just shitting on a statue, sometimes it's trying not to get stepped on.

PIGEON 2

And sometimes it's just a Cheeto.

PIGEON 1

Now, could I stand to aim a little higher? Sure, why not? Everybody needs a dream. But at the end of the day, we're all the only hope we got or need. Use it or lose it, motherfucker.

PIGEON 2

You're a pragmatic as hell, you know that?

PIGEON 1

"Pragmatic"? Ooh, Mister Big Words.

PIGEON 2

Hey, I shit on dictionaries.

Abrupt, weird laughing.

PIGEON 1

C'mon. Race you to the fountain.

PIGEON 2

Are we walking or...?

PIGEON 1

Nah, son...

They fly off.

**END OF SCENE**

**NEW SCENE**

PIGEON 1

You are the symbol of hope!

PIGEON 2

Bullshit.

PIGEON 1

To them. You are the symbol of hope. The symbol of dreams, of success, of endless possibilities. You are hope.

PIGEON 2

I don't understand.

PIGEON 1

You fly. You are untethered while they're trapped by by the never-ending bonds of gravity. You inhabit both realms, something they can never do without some assistance. They see you just (flaps wings elegantly) and there you are soaring. Angels, (used to hang out at a church) They think you're a dove. You represent everything they can't do but everything they WANT to do. You. ARE. Hope.