

## **Episode 4: “The Six-Fingered Hand of God”**

Story and Teleplay

By

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*In which Koehkh is conscripted by a god to put God out of commission; a secretary is unsuccessfully interviewed; and the mention of a fork is made.*



*It is night, and Koehkh floats aimlessly in a void. Only seconds before, a highly improbable—so improbable in fact, that it is impossible to calculate its improbability using the system of mathematics as we understand it—forced a mouse hole in the space-time continuum just as he was about to inject ReSolve, the highly controversial treatment for missing joints, into Ms. Stoven’s missing right knee. Both he and the syringe were at that moment instantaneously unlocated to a point somewhere outside neverspace, which does not actually have any points, hence putting him in the greatest danger of having existing purely as an abstract concept.*

*Thinking quickly, Koehkh attempts to escape his predicament by throwing open his folding door—which he coincidentally has just recently invented—while simultaneously injecting the ReSolve into his own body, which theoretically should have reversed the polarity of time itself and created an implosion large enough to transport a small sun halfway across the universe. Absolutely nothing happens. With a start, he realizes his mistake. He is not, in fact, outside neverspace. He is, in fact, in the dreaded Doldrums, the well-speculated area of zero probability, or infinite improbability, in which every thing, event, action, and reaction which we take for granted in the universe, is an absolute impossibility—including Koehkh’s own existence. His feeling of dread grows.*

*Then he remembers the basic principle of elementary school science: That nature abhors a vacuum of any kind. Hearing a faint whistling sound, he turns just in time to narrowly avoid being crushed by the giant asteroid that is hurtling toward him.*

*It occurs to him that, in the void of space, there should have been no whistling sound, and that by all rights, he should have by now been a permanent part of the asteroid’s landscape. He looks around warily.*

**KOEHHK**

Anyone there?

*A deserted landscape resolves around him. It is gray and seamless, utterly devoid of deviation or character.*

**VOICE**

There, is that better? A little homier for you, maybe?

**KOEHHK**

*(suspicious)*

Who are you? What do you want with me?

**VOICE**

Who am I? Who am I? Isn't that sad? No one remembers. But then, why should they? I mean, it is *me* we're talking about, isn't it?

**KOEHKH**

As I said: Who are you?

**VOICE**

You didn't say it, you asked it. And the answer is, I was god before God took over.

**KOEHKH**

You were God before God?

**VOICE**

No, I was god before God. "God" was my title, "God" is his name.

**KOEHKH**

*(confounded)*

God is his name?

**VOICE**

Parents can be cruel, can't they? They forget what it's like to be a child in school. But let me explain: I was the god before God became the god. In fact, I was the god for a long time before he came along—and I wasn't doing a bad job, either. Then, out of the blue, people started to complain. *The universe is too boring*, they said, *we want more excitement—we want more things to happen*. And there was God, lurking in the wings, just waiting for his chance to take over. *Make me the god*, he said. *I'll give you what you want*, he said. So they did, and he did, and look where we are now. Chaos everywhere, the whole universe in a mess.

**KOEHKH**

For once, I'm completely lost.

**VOICE**

I can tell you where you are. I'm still omniscient, you know. Ask me anything.

**KOEHKH**

Are you saying that God made chaos?

**VOICE**

I believe I said that. Unless I said something else and only thought I said it. “Give the people what they want,” that’s his motto. To hell with order. The very first thing he did after he took over was to create chaos, a.k.a., evil, a.k.a. the “Devil.” The people wanted excitement: They got it. Then, as if the Devil alone was too boring, God also created the system of mathematics as you understand it, for the Devil to wield as his instrument of destruction.

**KOEHKH**

All right, enough of the history lesson! I’m assuming you brought me here for a reason.

**VOICE**

Yes, of course. I wouldn’t do anything without a specific purpose—unlike you-know-who. I brought you here because I want you to help me with my plan to restore order to the Universe. I want you to help me rid the Universe of chaos. I want you to help me bring down God.

**KOEHKH**

You what?

**VOICE**

Sorry, did I not say it out loud? I thought I said, I want you to help me bring down God.

**KOEHKH**

Well, I can understand you coming to me—I have been known to bring a few lofty concepts to their knees in my time.

**VOICE**

That’s the spirit!

**KOEHKH**

But before we get started, let me ask you a question.

**VOICE**

Of course! I’d be happy to answer any question you may have. Because I can, you know. I’m still omniscient.

**KOEHKH**

Yes. My question is this: Do you know how much I charge for a basic office visit?

**VOICE**

Yes, of course.

**KOEHKH**

And knowing that, you still believe that you can afford me to take this case?

**VOICE**

*(after a pause)*

Maybe.

*The god's admission to the possibility of absolutely anything immediately causes the propulagation of an almost imperceptibly small probability wave through the fabric of neverspace. Koehkh would not have noticed it, were it not for the fact that he had asked the question with the very intention of creating such a wave.*

**KOEHKH**

Now's my chance!

*Taking advantage of the sudden influx of probability potential, he throws open his folding door, which he has frankly never before been able to get to work properly, and steps through it, straight into the lunchroom of his very own office.*

**NURSE**

...I like small forks myself, but I suppose if I were starving, I wouldn't say no to a big fork.

**KOEHKH**

It's good to be out of those Doldrums.

*It is later, and Koehkh is in his office interviewing potential secretaries.*

**ENGINEER**

He's been gentlemanly engineered to fit into any social situation with a probability-of-success rating between .06 and .94 with a P greater than one.

**KOEHKH**

That is a completely meaningless statistic, and you know it.

**ENGINEER**

Yes. But he's very good-looking, isn't he? Optional features include metabolic adjustment and a personality indexer.

**KOEHKH**

Can it type?

**ENGINEER**

Please, sir, let's not refer to him as "it." He is a qualified male, and to refer to him as anything else would only confuse his *id*.

**KOEHKH**

All right then: Can he type?

**ENGINEER**

Of course not. Why would he need to do that?

**KOEHKH**

I just want to know what useless bells and whistles I'm going to get stuck paying for.

*They are interrupted by a knock on the door. Angelica enters.*

**ANGELICA**

Doctor Koehkh, God is on line six.

**KOEHKH**

Who?

**ANGELICA**

God. He didn't give a first name.

**KOEHKH**

All right. I'll take it in here.  
*(picks up the call box receiver)*  
Koehkh here.

**GOD**

Hello, Koehkh, this is God.

**KOEHKH**

Yes, hello. What can I do for you?

**GOD**

Well, nothing, really. It's just that I heard through the grapevine that you had a little run-in with my predecessor yesterday.

**KOEHKH**

I wouldn't call it a "run-in."

**GOD**

I see. Would you call it more of a "friendly *tete-a-tete*" then?

**KOEHKH**

Not exactly.

**GOD**

For once, Koehkh, you're being circumspect. I'm suspicious.

**KOEHKH**

*(suspicious)*

That makes two of us.

**GOD**

I know why I'm suspicious, but why should you be suspicious?

**KOEHKH**

Anyone would be suspicious of a being that would invent such a hellishly complicated and inaccurate numerical system for describing and predicting our universe.

**GOD**

Oh, good lord. Is he on about that again? What are they teaching in school these days? Doesn't anyone remember that the positively Goldbergian principles of mathematical calculation as they exist in most of the world today were invented entirely and without any divine intervention by human beings. If it's a mess and doesn't work properly, you have only yourselves to blame. Now, can we please get on to business?

**KOEHKH**

If you're going to ask me what we talked about, forget it. That's confidential doctor-patient information.

**GOD**

Oh, no. I already know everything that was said at the meeting.

**KOEHKH**

Damn you and your omniscience!

**GOD**

Omniscience? Lord, that would save me a fortune, wouldn't it? No, I'm afraid not. But I do have my sources...

**KOEHHK**

You're lying! We were in the Doldrums—a total void.

**GOD**

Not a total void. Remember the asteroid that winged you?

**KOEHHK**

*(awed)*

You must have a large payroll.

**GOD**

You can't even imagine. I don't know how I'd keep track of it all, without my secretary.

**KOEHHK**

So if you already know all about the meeting, what's this about?

**GOD**

I've come to make sure that you're not going to take the job he offered.

**KOEHHK**

What makes you think I won't take it?

**GOD**

Well, for this reason, if nothing else: If you do take this job, it will be the last one you ever do.

**KOEHHK**

Are you threatening me?

**GOD**

Of course not. I'm not the threatening type. I'm only stating a fact: If you do as the god says, then complete order will be restored to this universe. *Ergo*, you will be out of a job.

**KOEHHK**

And you think that would stop me? I could do with a vacation.

**GOD**

Before you make up your mind, how about I give you an example of what life will be like if we go back to the old ways?

*Before Koehkh can answer, the world he knows vanishes, and is replaced by a matte gray landscape in which Koehkh sees himself sitting dejectedly in a chair, staring vacantly into empty space.*

**KOEHHK**

I'm bored.

*The gray world vanishes, and Koehkh's own world reappears.*

**GOD**

See what I mean?

**KOEHHK**

I don't believe you. I think you're just making that up to convince me to give you what you want.

**GOD**

You would think so, with my track record, but actually not. I do have a subscription to most of the available alternate realities and event-branch universes. It costs me an arm and a leg, but it does come in handy sometimes.

**KOEHHK**

Which brings me to my only serious reservation: I have doubts about the god's ability to pay my bill.

**GOD**

Not completely unfounded, I might add. Your maker is completely glued to the idea that people should act merely out of compassion, without thought of material reward. He forgets that corporeal beings have to eat.

**KOEHHK**

He's also completely unglued when it comes to you. If I refuse him, how do I keep him from incessantly relocating me and interrupting my workday?

**GOD**

Good point. His real problem, if he thought about it for even a moment, is that he has far too much time on his hands. One of the many difficulties of being temporally unbound. I'll find something to keep him busy. It's the least I can do—I and probably still owe you one besides, since you probably could have taken me out if you had tried.

**KOEHKH**

Yes, I know.

**GOD**

Well, now that that's settled, I won't keep you. I happen to know that right now, several of the patients in the waiting room are plotting a rather violent coup. Goodbye, Koehkh, and remember, if you ever need help, just call me.

**KOEHKH**

Doubtful, but I'll keep it in mind.

*Koehkh replaces the call-box receiver and, that crisis resolved, immediately turns his mind to the more pressing problem at hand.*

**KOEHKH**

*(to the Engineer)*

What kind of warranty does it have? I don't want it breaking down three months from now and having to go through all of this again.

*It is later, and the routine has, unusually, returned to normal. Koehkh enters an exam room to find a huge red-haired man sitting on the exam table, wearing nothing but a banana.*

**MAN**

Surprised?

**KOEHKH**

Hardly ever.

*He exits the room and finds Angelica waiting for him outside.*

**KOEHKH**

What's that all about?

**ANGELICA**

You left me a note to surprise you with a fruity Saxon singer.

**KOEHKH**

I did not.

**ANGELICA**

You did too. Look.

*She holds out the note. He takes it from her and reads it aloud.*

**KOEHKH**

It says, "Please get a quote from Petersen, Eng., on the new Secretarial model 800."

**ANGELICA**

It's not my fault your handwriting would shame a monkey.

**KOEHKH**

All the more reason why I need a secretary. Now go get me that quote before I leave you a note asking for a fruit salad for lunch and instead end up with a one-way ticket through a black hole, economy class, and no lunch served, damn you!

**ANGELICA**

Too late.

**KOEHKH**

*(suspicious)*

Wha—

**END**