

Act I
Scene 1

of Prelude

(Early morning. The poorest, filthiest urinal in town. Above the entrance to the urinal hangs a sign that reads "Public Amenity #9". THE POOR lie sprawled across the stage, sleeping quietly. Music for "Urinetown" plays softly in the background. OFFICER LOCKSTOCK enters from the house, inspecting the theater for orderliness. Satisfied, HE takes his place onstage and addresses the audience directly.)

LOCKSTOCK

Well, hello there. And welcome - to Urinetown!

(Pause)

Not the place, of course. The musical. Urinetown "the place" is...well, it's a place you'll hear people referring to a lot throughout the show.

It's kind of a mythical place, you understand. A bad place. A place you won't see until Act Two. And then...? Well, let's just say it's filled with symbolism and things like that.

(THE POOR sing the "Urinetown" theme on an "ooh" ever so softly as THEY prepare for another day. LITTLE SALLY enters, counting her pennies.)

But Urinetown "the musical," well, here we are. Welcome. It takes place in a town like any town...that you might find in a musical. This here's the first setting for the show. As the sign says it's a "public amenity," meaning public toilet. These people have been waiting for hours to get in; it's the only amenity they can afford to get into.

(LITTLE SALLY approaches LOCKSTOCK.)

LITTLE SALLY

Say, Officer Lockstock, is this where you tell the audience about the water shortage?

LOCKSTOCK

What's that, Little Sally?

LITTLE SALLY

You know, the water shortage. The hard times. The drought. A shortage so awful that private toilets eventually became unthinkable. A premise so absurd that-

LOCKSTOCK

Whoa there, Little Sally. Not all at once. They'll hear more about the water shortage in the next scene.

OVER

LITTLE SALLY

Oh. I guess you don't want to overload them with too much exposition, huh?

LOCKSTOCK

Everything in its time, Little Sally. You're too young to understand it now, but nothing can kill a show like too much exposition.

LITTLE SALLY

How about bad subject matter?

LOCKSTOCK

Well-

LITTLE SALLY

Or a bad title, even? That could kill a show pretty good.