

## Synopsis

URINETOWN begins at the poorest, filthiest urinal in town. A policeman, Officer Lockstock, enters, determined that all be in order. Penelope Pennywise and Bobby Strong enter with a table on which is a ledger. They are talking about someone being carted off to Urinetown just the other day. Lockstock, addressing the audience directly, tells them that Urinetown is a mythical bad place that we won't see until Act Two.

After a brief chat about how much exposition an audience can digest, Lockstock and Little Sally discuss the current water shortage which made private toilets unthinkable and that public bathrooms have replaced them for a fee which is controlled by a private company that keeps the prices high so people down on their luck need to come to a place like the one we are looking at—one of the poorest, filthiest urinals in town. Since using the bushes is illegal, Little Sally has been saving her pennies and is only a few pennies away from being able to enter. Lockstock and the company sing of "Urinetown", the place you are sent if you try to pee (now you weren't offended were you?) for free.

The Urine Good Company with offices, a gleaming tower, on a distant hill controls all the public bathrooms and Lockstock tells Bobby and a questioning newcomer, Hope, that we will meet the guy who runs the company later. Hope turns out to be the daughter of the owner of the Urine Good Company.

The song "Urinetown" continues and we learn that: "It's the oldest story—Masses are oppressed; Faces, clothes, and bladders All distressed. Rich folks get the good life, Poor folks get the woe. In the end, it's nothing you don't know". Note: If you haven't guessed yet this is a musical filled with social significance!

Bobby's pa, Old Man Strong, is trying to get a free mercy pee (there's that word again) and Penny sings to him "It's a Privilege To Pee". She explains that after twenty years of drought, the reservoirs are all dried up and now toilets are taxed and public urination is illegal so that now you have to pay for the privilege to pee (!).

Bobby's father intends to use a wall to relieve himself and Lockstock and the other policeman, Barrel, remind him that breaking the Public Health Act is an exiling offense and Old Man Strong, asking his son not to forget him, is dragged off to Urinetown to be exiled.

The next scene finds us in the executive offices of the Urine Good Company and its president (and our resident villain) Caldwell B. Cladwell is taking a meeting. Cladwell is convinced that new fee hikes will breeze through while Senator Fipp thinks that the powder keg is going to blow (note: here is some foreshadowing of social significance). Hope enters and is going to be the new fax/copy girl for the company

founded to keep the pee off the street and the water in the ground. Cladwell (and his yes men) sing a song lauding, who else but "Mr. Cladwell".

That evening police officers Lockstock and Barrel talk about the exiles to Urinetown whose screams can be heard. In "Cop Song" Lockstock and Barrel sing about the journey to Urinetown. Hope enters after a long day of faxing and copying (the legislature is keeping long hours—remember social significance) and meets Bobby Strong, still smarting from the removal of his father to you know where. They then sing the song "Follow Your Heart" which hopes for a world with "No anger or badness. Just laughter and gladness. If only I follow your heart." They say good night, kiss, and say good night again. After they leave, Lockstock and Little Sally discuss Urinetown and he tells the girl that "There is no Urinetown! We just kill people!" but the information must be oozed out slowly, until it bursts forth in one mighty, cathartic moment. Somewhere in Act Two."

The new fees are announced and Bobby and Penny talk about Bobby's feelings that perhaps the laws about peeing are just plain wrong. Penny tells Bobby to get his head out of the clouds and in "Look At the Sky" Bobby sings about winning if the crowd looks to the sky. Meanwhile, given the new fee structure, Bobby's mother doesn't have enough money to pee and might have to "meet" her husband in Urinetown.

Back in the offices of UGC Cladwell and Fipp discuss the recent legislation, Hope talks about falling in love, and Penny enters (shares a long, meaningful look along with a musical sting: there's the foreshadowing again) and tells Cladwell there is rioting and free peeing at Amenity Nine where Bobby Strong is letting people go for free. When Hope tells her father that he should find out what is in the heart of Bobby, the man her father calls the rabble-rousing son of a convicted criminal. He responds by singing "Don't Be the Bunny". He tells her "Don't be the bunny. Don't be the dope. Don't be the loser. You're much better than that, Hope!"

Back at the poorest, filthiest urinal in town, Bobby is letting everyone in for free. When asked by Little Sally what is happening, Lockstock tells her that it is the Act One finale where Cladwell arrives to snuff out the uprising and that there will be a big song-and-dance number involving the entire cast. That happens while Bobby discovers who Hope's father is and he and the rebels kidnap Hope, run for their lives, and the Act ends.

Act II begins in front of a sign "A Secret Hideout", the place where Bobby and the rebels are hiding and holding Hope. In the song, "What Is Urinetown?" everyone ponders the above question giving their own views on its location. Little Sally when threatened by Lockstock tells him, "...the way I see it, I'm already in Urinetown. We all are..." and then she and the ensemble sing..."For Urinetown is your town if you're hopeless, down-and-out!"

Inside the hideout, the rebels are wondering what to do with their hostage, Hope. They sing "Snuff That Girl" until Bobby explains that no man would be denied his essential humanity due to the condition of his pocketbook and that we will look into the faces of our fellow men and see not only a brother, but a sister as well. Just by chance this segues in another song, "Run, Freedom, Run". The song says that some day the sun will shine some sweet day.

Penny arrives (she knows how to navigate the sewers—sounds familiar? Not a unique plot twist.) and tells Bobby that Cladwell wants his amenities up and working and is willing to discuss a solution with Bobby. Hope is left with the rebels as collateral and Bobby and Penny leave for the meeting after Bobby tells Hope to think about what they have and she reprises, "Follow Your Heart".

At the offices of Urine Good Company, Cladwell offers Bobby lots of cash to end his rebellion and offers full amnesty to those involved as long as they are willing to return to the improved fee schedule. Bobby refuses the cash and tells Cladwell that all he wants is free access to the amenities for all. Bobby's wish will not be granted and Cladwell has him sent to Urinetown even if it has dire consequences for Hope. Cladwell says, "I closed my heart to love once, I can do it again." Penny, Hope, and Fipp, the Senator ask, "Why Did I Listen To That Man?" at the end of which Bobby is hurled from the UGC building roof into Urinetown—DEATH! (I think you were warned in Act I by Lockstock).

Back at the secret hideout, Little Sally tells the rebels that she saw Bobby being thrown off a building and that his last words were, "Tell Her I Love Her". The song (also sung by the ghost of Bobby) tells Hope and the rebels that they must fight for what they know is right. It is decided that Hope is to die but Penny (who turns out to be Hope's mother) offers her life instead. Hope then tells the rebels, "Kill me and the rebellion dies with me. Let me lead you and the rebellion will triumph!" They agree and march towards Cladwell's headquarters singing, "We're Not Sorry". Hope confronts her father and he tells her that love is not as important as food, water, and shelter as well as piles of cash. He is taken away to Urinetown (we know where that is now, don't we?) proclaiming that he kept pee (there's that word again) off the street and the water in the ground. Hope sings "I See A River" about a river of freedom and justice. People could now pee as often and as much as they pleased and the UGC was renamed the Bobby Strong Memorial Toilet Authority and operated for the benefit of the public. But Lockstock tells us that before long the water disappeared and that all of Cladwell's measures to regulate consumption were to spare the town the same fate as Urinetown. Hope wanted the people's love too much but she eventually changed her mind. The story ends unhappily even though the music, as Little Sally muses, is happy. With a hail to Malthus, who in the 19th century hypothesized that unchecked population will exceed the means of subsistence unless checked (are you following all this?), the musical ends.

At this point, you will have to stop laughing at this very funny tale of greed, corruption, love, and revolution. In case you hadn't guessed before, the show is a satire on issues that affect us everyday even if it does use the word "pee".