

FORTUNE COOKIE

Written by
Thomas S. Evans

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INT. DAY - DINGY APARTMENT

An overweight, bespectacled, balding man with long locks wherever hair still grows - BOBBY - is looking into a camera, adjusting the frame. He pulls back into his chair, adjusts his stained wifebeater stretched across his bloated abdomen, and begins a monologue.

BOBBY

Video Diary five thousand, eight-hundred and twenty-nine. Dated June 15th, 2021. Year of the OX! Hello to all my faithful viewers. I'm currently in the midst of preparing for the upcoming World of Fortune Cookie Expo! I'll be bringing some of the choicest objects from my formidable collection to place on display in the Veteran's Enthusiast Corner. All are welcome to stop by and marvel! But remember - NO TOUCHING!!!

BOBBY uploads this video to Youtube. His channel has zero subscribers, and his previous video diary has an all-time high of six views.

BOBBY begins pacing around his apartment, which is completely full of Fortune Cookie collectibles. Posters of the four major characters line the walls: Kung Fu Ninja, Panda Princess, Yin-Yang Gaysha and Pachinko. Pizza boxes and dirty clothes reflect a mind that does not smile upon itself, but the immaculate care and organization of the collectibles shows a concern which some might consider a form of love.

BOBBY, obviously not alone in the room, starts ranting about his collection as he looks into the camera occasionally, which follows him about.

BOBBY

Oh, CRAPOLA! There's an old slice of pepperoni almost touching this '99 Panda Princess Punch Action Figure! Jeez, jeez, jeez. You should NOT have seen that. But whatever! This is the dream, man, this is the dream! I've got every collectible, every figurine, every game, every episode, every poster, lunchbox and trading card. And ohmanohmanohman, my cookie collection. Perfection.

(MORE)

BOBBY (cont'd)
 Vacuum-sealed, dated, with expiration
 date on every pouch. Back-ups for
 each and every sample.

BOBBY pulls open layers of specimen drawers, which reveal rows upon rows of small fortune cookie-shaped cereal pieces in vacuum-sealed pouches. He puts on a latex glove and gingerly holds one up for the camera to see in detail, before hastily hiding it back away.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 There is no doubt about it. I am the
 Fortune Cookie Master.

BOBBY looks into the camera and reveals a grin as unkempt as a long-untended shrubbery.

CUT TO BLACK

INT: CONVENTION CENTER, WORLD OF FORTUNE COOKIE EXPO

A hype video for the World of Fortune Cookie Expo introduces the scene. Cheesy transitions and hyperbolic zooms showcase fans of all ages (though predominantly aged 6 to 14, generally with parental accompaniment) milling about the various exhibits, nearly all of which are devoted to new Fortune Cookie Merchandise.

Eventually, a Kung Fu Ninja mascot, surrounded by the other Fortune Cookie characters, appears on screen. In used car salesman vigor, he hypes a mystery product that will be debuted at some point during the convention.

KUNG FU NINJA
 Hey kids! Exciting news for ya! This
 year at the WORRRRLD of Fortune Cookie
 EXPO, we'll be introducing a BRAND
 NEW MYSTERY PRIZE for you all to win!
 And one lucky Cookie Cadet who proves
 themselves as the biggest Crunch
 Squad fan will be the FIRST to take
 home this awesome new prize! Be the
 envy of all your friends! Make your
 fortune!

ALL (RAISING ARMS)
 CRUNCH!

BOBBY (RAISING ARM)
 CRUNCH!

INT: CONVENTION CENTER, VETERAN ENTHUSIAST'S CORNER

At the Veteran's Corner, a number of older fans - generally 30 and up, and among whom BOBBY is in fact one of the younger - are preparing their exhibits. The corner is not limited to collections alone, but is also home to fan fiction writers and Fortune Cookie pop artists, as well as tournaments for the world's premiere players of Fortune Cookie interactive media.

The tinny sound of a cheap bugle erupts out of nowhere, as a red carpet rolls out to a large, empty exhibit stall.

BOBBY, dressed in a cheap yukata and waving his bugle in one hand, a fan in the other, shouts as he approaches his exhibit stall, with two security guards lugging armored cases behind him.

BOBBY

GREETINGS, my fellow-but-not-quite-equal Cookieheads! The great BOBBY has come to grace you all with his presence! Don't crowd, now, don't crowd, let the master get to work!

Other enthusiasts roll their eyes at this grand entrance to which they have become only too accustomed, as BOBBY undergoes the laborious process of unlocking his exhibit cases and setting up his collection sample.

BOBBY speaks to the camera as he works.

BOBBY

I'm going to be the one to win that mystery prize, who else is Fortune Cookie's biggest fan? Who else goes to measures like THIS?

BOBBY demonstrates how his exhibits are bolted to the floor and encased in hinged, padlocked heavy-duty fiberglass cases.

BOBBY (cont'd)

Top security. Top security. This way I can leave my exhibit and still enjoy the conven-

A number of Japanese amateur programmers are displaying their Fortune Cookie video game. They've just finished preparations for the interactive console, and are booting it up.

Suddenly distracted by the Fortune Cookie theme song emanating from their display, BOBBY rushes over to them, waving his arms in excitement, leaving a display case unlocked and open.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 Holy Pachinko, guys, this is incredible! You're going to release a collector's edition of this, I'm sure? I've never seen a fan-made game of this caliber before. Uh, dough moe a reeguh toe! Oats curry samas!

BOBBY continues to attempt to make small talk with the programmers, when out of the corner of his eye, he spots a child of about 9 reaching over to meagerly grasp onto a Yin-Yang Gaysha doll. BOBBY's facial complexion takes a tour of the rainbow in the blink of an eye, and he storms back towards his exhibit with all the fury of an indignant heifer.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 KID! WHAT IN CRUNCH DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

KID
 Your collection is so awesome!!! Can I play with your Yin-Yang Gaysha??? I've never seen one like this before!

Slamming his fist onto one of his yet-unpacked exhibit suitcases, BOBBY screams at the child.

BOBBY
 GET YOUR OWN! You should have collected enough slips to get one back in '03! Oh, I'm sorry, you weren't born yet? Well I guess you're not good enough to be MY friend!! Your perverted jam-covered little hands have NO BUSINESS on Yin-Yang's bosoms, you sick twisted little freak! Get out of here! Come back when you've proven yourself!

The KID begins to cry, and is escorted away by his mother who looks at BOBBY with disgust and spits in front of him.

BOBBY (TO CAMERA)
 You see?? I was only gone for 30 seconds, EVERYONE wants in on this! That's why I need all this security!
 (MORE)

BOBBY (TO CAMERA) (cont'd)
 Jeez...but I'd totally kiss his mom.
 Wouldn't you, man?

BOBBY readjusts his doll, shuts the lid, and locks it.

BOBBY
 Ok, back to work...all that's left
 now is the cookies.

BOBBY opens up the display case he had just hit with his fist, and starts arranging his cookies. Before long, however, he lets out a blood-curdling scream.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 NO! HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? HOW COULD
 THIS POSSIBLY HAVE HAPPENED?

Some of the people milling about in the Veteran's Corner take notice, and move to BOBBY's exhibit, inquiring what's wrong.

BOBBY, hunched over, attempts to shoo them off.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 DON'T LOOK! DON'T YOU DARE LOOK! GET
 AWAY, GET AWAY!

As some people turn to leave, BOBBY changes his tune.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 NONONONO...ok...fine...look. Look.
 Expiration date May 5th, 1993. Look.

BOBBY holds up a clear plastic pouch, inside which is a fortune cookie cereal piece, slightly cracked.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 THE COOKIE! How will I ever win the
 mystery prize now????

Somewhat astonished at the insignificance of the event, BOBBY's audience disperses.

With a look of genuine concern and pain, BOBBY looks down at his cracked cookie in his cupped hands.

BOBBY (cont'd)
 The cookie...great...now I have to
 talk to HIM.

DOCUMENTARY MONTAGE

A series of photographs of Bobby as a child and his friends, clips from the Fortune Cookie animation and video games, television commercials, news clips about the phenomenon, etc. as BOBBY narrates.

BOBBY

The World of Fortune Cookie!! To this day I remember the first box of cereal I ever opened. I was 7 years old. Fortune Cookie was the newest cereal, I found out about it from a commercial, also advertising the animation. Two in one!

A photograph of Bobby and another boy as young children.

BOBBY

That's Joseph. He was my best friend. We were always trying to one-up each other on the newest Fortune Cookie stuff.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

The montage ends, returning to BOBBY's face.

BOBBY

He's an executive at Fortune Cookie now...but he doesn't really care about any of it at all. He stopped believing a long, long time ago...

INT: CONVENTION CENTER, MAIN EXPO HALL

A man in a slick suit - JOSEPH - is having an early afternoon brunch with a number of marketing and media executives in a VIP lounge behind the main stage.

JOSEPH

-and so I told her, "Hey, it's been 9 months since I left my fortune in your cookie!"

EXECS

ALL LAUGH

JOSEPH

But seriously, this new gender equality charity drive will-

JOSEPH is distracted by a banging and a muffled yelling from the other side of the plexiglass barrier.

He looks to see a sweaty mass of blubber - BOBBY - with his hand cupped against the glass, banging and waving.

JOSEPH

Oh god...let him in, let's see what he wants.

BOBBY bursts into the room, making a fuss.

BOBBY

JOSEPH! Hey guys. Sorry, we got some bro business here, with my best bud.

JOSEPH

Hello, Bobby. How are you?

BOBBY

Joseph, Joseph, the most terrible, the most WRETCHED thing has happened! One of my cookies...one of my dearest cookies...the cookie...

BOBBY's display does not seem to faze JOSEPH at all, as he waves BOBBY to calm down and speaks into a pin on his lapel.

JOSEPH

Hello, security? Just checking in, we got Bobby here. ... yes, that's right. Another cracked cookie. The date? It's uh...Bobby, what date was that cookie?

BOBBY (SNIFFLING)

May...May 5th, 19...1993...

JOSEPH

Right, that's May 5th, 1993. Can you take a look in the...cookie vaults? Bring it to the VIP lounge as soon as you can. Great. Thanks.

JOSEPH releases the pin on his lapel and looks at BOBBY.

JOSEPH

Don't worry, Bobby. I'm sure that was a very rare specimen, and it may take some digging, but hopefully we'll be able to find something for you.

BOBBY

Thank you, Joseph...my best friend... thank you...thank you...

A SECURITY GUARD walks into the VIP room with a vacuum-sealed aluminum pouch, which he hands to JOSEPH.

JOSEPH

Ah, that was fast, wasn't it. Here you go, Bobby. May 5th, 1993.

BOBBY's face lights up like a child on Christmas morning.

BOBBY

NO. WAY. CRUNCH yeah! YEAH YEAH YEAH! HA! COMPLETION! The full collection, once again!

JOSEPH offers an awkward smile.

JOSEPH

It's always good to see you happy, BOBBY. I-

An announcement over the intercom interrupts JOSEPH. It's the voice of Kung Fu Ninja.

KUNG FU INTERCOM

HEY all you Cookieheads! Guess what! We're all ready to unveil the new MYSTERY PRIZE, and pick Fortune Cookie's biggest fan! Come one, come all to the main Expo Hall, we're starting right away!

BOBBY begins jumping up and down in excitement.

BOBBY

OH YEAH OH YEAH OH YEAH! I win, Joseph, I WIN!!! I gotta go. Look for me, buddy!

BOBBY runs off towards the Expo Hall, leaving Joseph standing with a look of apathetic bewilderment.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - MAIN EXPO HALL

A large number of children, their parents, and a smattering of older fans are gathering in front of the main stage. BOBBY rushes up in a huff as Kung Fu Ninja opens ceremonies and the festivities begin.

KUNG FU NINJA

-and now, introducing the brand new mystery prize, give a cheer for the lovely Yin-Yang Gaysha!

A woman dolled up as Yin-Yang Gaysha comes onto stage, waving and holding a fancifully-decorated box.

KUNG FU NINJA

What is it? What could it be? Well, before we get ahead of ourselves, we'd like to announce who we've selected as Fortune Cookie's biggest fan!

BOBBY starts pushing people out of the way as he approaches the stage.

BOBBY

Make way, guys, make way, that's me, I gotta get up there! I'm the For-

KUNG FU NINJA

Coming all the way from Littleton, Ohio, Andy Grupert!

BOBBY

WHAT?!

A squeal of delight erupts from the audience. The young KID who was grabbing at BOBBY's Yin-Yang Gaysha doll earlier runs up onto the stage, all grins.

BOBBY, clearly furious, pushes his way to the stage even faster, shaking his head.

BOBBY

Unbelievable. Unbelievable.

BOBBY storms up onto the stage.

BOBBY (cont'd)

KUNG FU NINJA, WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

KUNG FU NINJA, YIN-YANG GAYSHA, and ANDY all look at him in astonishment.

BOBBY (cont'd)

I'M the Fortune Cookie Master! How could this little thief POSSIBLY be Fortune Cookie's biggest fan? Does he have the Limited Release '04 Pachinko Pinball Palace? Does he even OWN any cookies, or does he just chew them all up and spit out the slips? What could he have done to prove himself?

ANDY moves closer to KUNG FU NINJA, who kneels down to him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

KUNG FU NINJA

Andy is a very talented artist! We dropped in on him at the Drawspace, and saw this wonderful drawing he did.

BOBBY

Drawing?...

ANDY walks over to Bobby, extending a stiff piece of drawing paper he had carried up to the stage with him.

BOBBY reaches out and takes it. On it is a drawing of people holding hands: Fortune Cookie characters on the edges, and in the middle, a rendition of BOBBY (under whose name is written "Fortune Cookie Master") and ANDY ("Fortune Cookie Student"), holding hands with a Yin-Yang Gaysha doll in the center. At the bottom is written the word, "FRIENDS."

BOBBY, seeing this, is taken aback.

INT. BOBBY'S HOUSE

Bobby's MOTHER, seated at a wooden chair at the kitchen table, talking about Bobby's childhood.

MOTHER

I remember the very first prize BOBBY got, a Ninjo Fugung doll, or something. How the kids loved those prizes! Bobby was always, always telling me how he needed more and more to be popular. I guess whoever had the most prizes was the most popular in school. Bobby...never had many friends. Fortune Cookie was his only real friend.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - STAGE

BOBBY reaches into his pocket, and pulls out the broken fortune cookie from the prior incident.

BOBBY

Here. It's cracked, but...it's rare. If you want to be a Fortune Cookie Master...you have to know your cookies.

ANDY
This is for me?

BOBBY, somewhat surprised, smiles.

BOBBY
Yeah man...for you.

ANDY grins a huge, semi-toothless grin.

ANDY
Thank you...Fortune Cookie Master.

CUT TO BLACK