

accountant before the war. No, it must be something that is pure chance, 50/50, just like tossing a coin.

CAPTAIN WEST

And it needs to be something decisive. We can't keep arguing about it.

CAPTAIN EAST

And one more thing, if you don't trust me to toss a coin, I don't trust you either. So it has to be impossible to cheat.

CAPTAIN WEST

Hmmm...

CAPTAIN EAST

Hmmm...

CAPTAIN WEST

Hmmmmmmmm...

CAN YOU WORK OUT THIS RIDDLE?

I draw you in and keep you out.
I am a lock and a key.
I trap you, and you struggle to be free,
Yet you refuse escape if you are proud.
I torture you until I confess,
And then you turn torturer.

What am I?

HAPPY PUZZLING!

There are an infinite number of possible solutions, some more complicated than others, but they all share some similarities.

HEADS

The challenge is trickier than it first appears. Tossing a coin is a remarkably fair way of determining something by chance:

- It's 50/50.
- It's always one thing or the other – you know who has won.
- You can't cheat.
- Skill, knowledge and timing have no effect on the result.
- It makes no difference who tosses the coin.
- You can't dispute it.
- You cannot gain an advantage by calling heads or tails.
- You cannot gain an advantage by practising

For all these reasons, you can use tossing a coin as a decision mechanism even if both players have strong incentives to cheat and neither player trusts the other. The challenge is to find another decision mechanism that meets these criteria.

There are additional constraints in the situation:

- They can only use sound
- They cannot send human messengers to each other
- Each will cheat if he can, and each expects the other to cheat if he can