



IT WAS ALL PRE-ORDAINED (An Excerpt)

By

Tom Ball

WHY I LIKE IT: *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes...*

Tom Ball is one of our head honchos, and with good reason, but I would write about any story this guy has written because they're always good, always evolving, and always have plenty to say about.

“It seemed in my case that I had been cross-hypnotised by opposing forces and my mind was a type of battleground.”

“It Was All Preordained: The Nightmares,” *begins in the middle of opposition. Concepts of religion and control, the ideal vs. the real, power and control vs. freedom and the illusion that you have it, pain and pleasure, rule the way in which this dystopia works.*

Freedom is pain, but the priests control the freedom and your willingness to think through the pain.

How much pain can you handle?

This little sci-fi meets philosophical treatise has echoes of “Harrison Bergeron,” Soylent Green, A Brave New World, and “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas.”

Probably more.

Definitely more, but the specifics of my dystopian knowledge has been neglected.

The Road, I can see that in this story – being in the tide of innocence and violence bound by detached and distended language.

My point is that the scary part of, “It Was All Preordained,” of all dystopian works, is that it always acts as a metaphor for the contemporary condition. Each small nuance, each little insanity within the world of this story, can be applied to an experience in the current world. Our addictions, our loves, our mistakes, our choices, our pleasure, our pain, live in a world in which our stories reflect who we are and how we illuminate the powers that control us.

Those tiny little kernels of knowledge that get passed through to us through conversation and reading are a great little source of power to fight against the concepts of insanity, conspiracy, and outright lying.

How we say things matters all the more now, and we live in a world where words can act.

The nightmare of this story is not so much that it can happen, but that it is happening. Ball here has touched on how the small fires of Prometheus can start an uprising in thought, to remind us that there is always hope (because there is always someone willing to agree or kill us for what we say in relation to their own sense of control).

Nice work, Bossman.

Five Stars

QUALITY QUOTABLE (for the love of language...)

I remembered in this world all was preordained. And all was pain. Our Great God calculated and predicted all and there was pain. And the priests got in our heads at night with mind reading technology and hypnosis to program us. Probability had no place... It was said they could predict 30 years into the future or more.

IT WAS ALL PREORDAINED: THE NIGHTMARES

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IT WAS ALL PREORDAINED

I remember being born into an adult body with memories of several lifetimes.

When I was born in an 18 year olds body in the incubator they gave me my “horoscope” prognosis which briefly said I would suffer more pain than others and have a love affair at 20 which would be interesting, but painful. And at 20 I would go to the capital city and worship for one year before finally committing suicide.

I remembered in this world all was preordained. And all was pain. Our Great God calculated and predicted all and there was pain. And the priests got in our heads at night with mind reading technology and hypnosis to program us. Probability had no place... It was said they could predict 30 years into the future or more.

And I was born with memories of three different people. One was an idealist, another was a storyteller and the third a radical. It was an unusual combo, most people were at least 1/3 obedient. The memories of others helped us when we were making decisions. A fourth set of memories was from our own experience and this one gradually took control. One could say one had “lived many lives” in those few short years.

My friend told me that, “It was good to look forward to a nice future prepared by the great computer. It told you exactly what you would do and hypnotised you to do it as predicted. No worries.”

At first I thought it was a very nice life the priests had created for me and us. Of course as I noted, “Everyone could be hypnotised, but some took extra effort. And some needed to be re-hypnotised again and again to get them to behave. I was one of those.” It seemed in my case that I had been cross-hypnotised by opposing forces and my mind was a type of battleground.

There were many hypnotic events in my life.

I said, “Even going astray was predicted.”

It was well known you could check back on the predictions or look forward up to 30 years. But some people said, “The God could predict 100 years ahead.”

I said, “So many people and their destiny is all laid out for them (The population of our world was several million I learnt later and it seemed like a lot of people to us).”

“No one has ever had freewill,” the Great God said, but I knew this was not the case as we had all been hypnotised and I remembered being hypnotised vaguely. The God would appear on giant screens in the cities, towns and villages. And demand people worship.

But almost everyone said, “It was a life of pain.”

I later figured out that the priests gave us pain in the food we ate and in the hypnosis. There was no pleasure here. All the food was synthetic from the great food machines. The countryside was full of food factories and conveyer belts which brought the food to the villages and towns.

And I said, “I was just a zombie. Humans have been sold out.”

And I said, “The day they allowed MRT (mind reading technology) was the end of freedom.”

People told me, “Such opinions were treasonous and would end up badly.”

So I was re-hypnotised soon after and told everyone, “I felt glad to the priests for trying to improving me.”

Indeed everyone worried about “thought crimes,” everyone worried what they might think of next... But it was all preordained so most didn’t worry too much. As they told me, “They knew the Great God would have mercy and re-hypnotise them if they were lost.” Indeed it was all preordained.

There were no children here but people had “eternal youth.” Quickly the population was dying of “suicides.” That is to say they were programmed to die in their early 20’s. The “suicide rate” was rumored to be 28% per year and it was rare to live to see 28 (you were born at “18”). The priests didn’t want us to live long, apparently. But I wondered what it would like to grow old and wise.

I was cross-hypnotised by someone secret and my 3 person experience told me it was not preordained. But I seldom listened to the “other 3.” The other three kept telling me I was special, however.

In my first year of existence I seemed to remember a lot of people around the Alleys where I lived and there were a lot of abandoned homes. I talked to an old man who looked youthful of course, he told me, “He vaguely remembered being on a home planet and going into space and ending up here.” I told him he was a liar. Why would he want to end up here?” He said, “He enjoyed the pain.”

I was born to love the priests and suffer pain, it seemed.

Some said, “Who would want to live in such a civilization?” I listened to such people.

But people said, “If you wanted to know what would happen to someone else you couldn’t look it up with the priests; just yourself.” Most people didn’t want to know.

However, as the priests said, “There were no games of chance, no dice and no random decisions.”

Those who had wondered about going against their hypnotic prognostication were very rare and said to be immediately re-hypnotised. Some said you couldn’t be hypnotised against your nature but this wasn’t true.

MRT (mind reading technology) was dangerous but was used in all cases of humans.

I said, “I’d like to do one thing that is not predicted.” But I was immediately re-hypnotised. I was proving to be a challenge for the great priests as I had to be re-hypnotised often. And sometimes at night I dreamed of other hypnosis, a kinder, pleasurable, inspirational one. Could it be they were fighting for me? Was I one of the few who didn’t bow down to the preordained future? Maybe the reason the priests didn’t kill me was it was preordained that I would die at 21 etc.

Some said, “Time was a lie...” But the priests seemed to really predict our actions.

But I said, “Little things like going to the toilet or one night stands were not predicted and therefore life was not preordained. Rather people were brainwashed into doing things that had been predicted.”

Some said, “We were just dreamers trapped in a machine,” But we wondered if this was true... And some said, “There was no difference between being inside a computer and living outside it.”

Few questioned the priests believing they had our best interests at “heart.”

One guy told me personally, “The priests were wiser than all and should therefore rule... all hypnotised people must consider the priests servants of our God.”

The priests said, “They had always been in control.”

And the priests said, “The rumor of evolution was a lie and that they had come here from space thousands of years ago.” Or so it was claimed. “And they made people through cloning. Just give them a different face, some said.” I noticed that many people were similar in terms of moods and intellects.

As for the priest themselves, they all wore masks and colored robes, so if you met a priest you might not know it as they would travel incognito without the colored robes and masks.

This was the history before the priests; “People were ignorant and losers before their coming.” Or so people said.

But I said, “People behaved like “clockwork” here. There was a time for food, work, play and love. We were just like machines, like the incubator or the MRT (mind reading technology) machine.”

And there wasn't much work to do other than build temples and people were bored.

I told people that, “I vaguely remembered stimulating drugs in another life but now food machines contained pain. No other drugs except harsh moonshine alcohol which caused pain mostly.”

We were all vegans, and had new synthetic foods all produced in the food machines. The food machines took in soil and produced the only food known to us.

And I found out later that not only was it causing our pain but it also rendered us susceptible to hypnosis.

Anyway it seemed high technology these food machines, I figured at a former time things were better and more advanced. In any case fat people didn't live long.

There were some animals in the wilderness, and occasionally the priests would hunt them for their pelts.

The land featured mostly neo grasses and neo trees and some insects.

In my village we lived in 6 story high alleyways, spending most of our time in the Alleys.

The weather was always balmy in the Alleys. There was only one continent and six known islands, or so some people said.

But there were rumored to be sea monsters, which would swallow you up if you traveled by sea.

Electric shock was predicted for some to straighten them out.

I had a nemesis who kept telling the priests to do something about me but finally he disappeared. I presumed he disappeared for having a bad attitude. As for me I was re-hypnotised as usual.

I hoped they "shocked" my nemesis. And I was surprised I hadn't been given the shock treatment, that was rumored to be used in difficult cases.

But it was becoming clear that I was being turned into a cross-hypnotised "battlefield" for the powers that be. This gave me confidence.

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There were no rich and everyone was dirt poor. No one seemed to mind but I had a vague memory that at one time people competed for money.

I said, "The priests are perverts," And people were more and more worried about their sex change destiny. Some were destined to change their sex even though the relative level of technology here was relatively low, there were medical machines that could change your sex so that in everyway you appeared as the different sex... And a sex change only took 12 hours. They also could do plastic surgery in the capital, but most faces they created were hideous. Maybe the priests had good faces and their harem women.

I said, "I want freewill."

"It is boring here." I said.

I wanted to go on a hunger strike but looked it up with the priests and it too was predicted that "I would try but not do it consistently."

I found the whole thing creepy.

I said, "Why would the great priests want such control and who put it them in charge?"

"Why didn't it want us to think?"

"They must be bored these priests," I said. People continued to tell me "my thoughts were dangerous" even if they had been predicted.

But the great priests told everyone, "Science could go no further, it was too dangerous and the best people should just relax and enjoy "eternal life." But this was propaganda. Everyone lived a life of pain and everyone was uptight and nervous and short-lived."

Entertainment was provided by the Great God who could write many virtual movies and plays and art and sculpture and architecture. One could watch on the giant "TV screens" that were in every settlement.

But it caused pain to watch them. I said, "Many people were unhappy and many people had an inferiority complex and just got drunk as it was legal and drowned their sorrows. They were so drunk they figured they were in less pain. It was oblivion.

One girl told me, “Thinking outside the box was perverse and evil and one must worship the priests as a higher power and their servants, the new priests...” The priests were Gods most people said.

The God said, “Perfect people could also become Gods one day...” It was something to hope for.

I said, “I 100% believed ‘in a higher power’ and that power was the God and the priests for most.”

What goes up must come down,” said the priests who could talk to many people at once using MRT (mind reading technology)... it was rumored.

I was in a hurry to meet the girl of my dreams, “But I had to wait 2 years,” a priest reminded me.

I was curious about sex, but remained a virgin. I tried to make love (unpredicted) but the girls were all brainwashed. But I persisted and finally found WCXZ. We stayed together and became lovers in contrast to our supposed fate. I expected punishment at any time.

But I was frustrated and I told her, “The priests are not making people happy nor using the best people in positions of power.”

This time I had done an unpredicted act and the priests were very angry, and re-hypnotised me a few times. Forbidden love. But the priests still insisted “It was all preordained and could read from books to prove it.” I couldn’t read...

I told people, “It seemed to me we were just like ants led by a fat Queen...”

People said, “The strong survive: it has always been that way.”

If you were one of the few who strayed from destiny you needed to be re-hypnotised, and you were.

And so I was re-hypnotised again and again and apologized to people I’d offended.

But I didn’t want to die soon, so I acted up again...

I petitioned the priests to change my destiny. Without success.

Many people said, “The word was this God controlled people in all other worlds and there were no more UW police.”

They said, “The Great God had twice the intelligence of the best geniuses of Earth and could multitask quite easily doing countless thousands of multitasks at once...”

And people said, “And the spies didn’t worry about such intelligent leadership. They are confident to serve.”

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But one day a new God let it be known that, “He was taking charge.” At his behest everyone was cross-hypnotised differently than before. And this upstart God drove many completely mad.

The old priests would be banished he told everyone, but rumor was it was the same priests and the same God as nothing changed. The new God appeared on a TV screen simultaneously in temples to the old God all across the land. He appeared in different visages, sometimes appearing kind and gentle, other times wise, always clever and always hypnotic, but never evil, mad, ugly and horrific and so on. He was trying to be a nice God, even though we lived a life of horror, or so it seemed.

My love, WCXZ said she was “Disturbed by many saying we were all just part of a dream.”

Many people wanted more sleep perchance to dream but the great new God would only allow 4 hours sleep and give anti-sleep drugs instead. We weren’t well-rested and in a daze.

The new God was willing to give us drugs of pain and we wanted them, if by chance you weren’t in enough pain. It was macho to take more pain. But most people now felt they were just parasites; their actions didn’t matter. Inferiority complexes were common.

“This life was stolen and we didn’t deserve it...” some said.

But we noticed announcements on the state of the nation by the great new God. Some of us worried the great new God didn’t care about us and, “Who would look after us then?”

Rumors of cross hypnosis by this great new God was driving people crazy and I saw some of them... But the great new God said, “He wanted to liberate us.”

Some said all computers were made by mankind back when many people were highly intelligent compared to today. But what made mankind? Some said the Great God hadn’t predicted its own downfall despite everything.

In any case some of us thought it was a new era. And some of us ran through the streets shouting “liberty...”

There were great orgies of sex and drinking and now most people denounced the old God and said they would be glad to worship the new one everyday as it was required. Every settlement had at least one high priest to represent the new God’s will.

We carefully built new temples it was the main occupation of people.

People on the whole had little work to do and were grateful to the God. But a few were rich traders and were busy.

Many people were glad they didn’t have to work. In any case they suffered so much they could hardly have worked anyway.

I said, “It is another power-crazed overlord. The overlord’s (God’s) priest re-hypnotised us again and again and just like the previous God, the new God attempted to predict our future.”

“We were free,” said the great new God.

Girl WCXZ: Subsequently most of us were all in favor of the new way. But there was no new way it seemed to me.

But I told people, “We were still hypnotised to favor the great new God. And many had mental problems... and were hard to cure they had been hypnotised so many times. The great new God tried to tell us ‘We had freewill and they should look at both sides and judge what is right.’”

But everyone still believed that life was all preordained.

And I said, “The great new God could predict our behavior also.” And I said, “But it created a lot of jobs to help people with their minds. Slowly but surely almost everyone became insane however.”

“The great new God let us “be free” but WCXZ told me she dreamt science had been lost and it would be hundreds of years before we could get it back with our small population.” I had the same dream a few nights later.

I figured, “We were essentially cut off from civilization. No one wanted to come here so there were no space ships.”

And I told others, “We had nothing foreigners would be interested in. Just dirty alleys, grass and trees.”

Finally girl WCXZ agreed to leave with me. We went to join a trader caravan as indentured slaves.. Agreeing to 10 years slavery was the only way to get out of here, it seemed. But after one day of harsh treatment we ran away into the danger of the forest.

I said, “I love you.” She said, “Are you completely crazy?”
I said some women have less of a beard than WCXZ had. I told her to cut it off. And shave her chest, legs and arms.

In any case, the girl and I went back home to the Alleys, where we lived.

Memories were given to us prior to birth. Usually it was a set of memories that we had ourselves lived in as a clone in a parallel universe. And so we had all lived many lives. It didn’t effect us much though, but sometimes we sat there dreaming of other worlds, other existences.

WCXZ said, “It was rumored the priests ate other humans. They demanded people attend their cookouts. They preferred lazy people who were tender and fat to eat. Some people even ate their own flesh and so were missing limbs.”

To get to sleep you needed to put on ear phones under the giant screen and lay back and wait for the dreams.

IN THE ALLEYS

I remember being born with three sets of memories of who I didn't know.

But the sets of memories seemed similar. Life was short and painful and the memories were of worshipping the priests, making painful love and dying. I was born 6' tall, male. The memory personalities often bickered amongst themselves. Sometimes not all 3 were the same sex. But as God had said on the big screen, "4 heads is better than 1."

WCXZ was one part idealist, one part scientist and one part sculptor; all female. It was a highly unusual combo. Most people had ordinary personalities.

Basically my first real memories were of the Alleys in a city.

It was a maze-like city full of slums and pain.

From the start I suffered pain and wanted pleasure like I had in the incubator but no one wanted it. They told me life is pain.

The Alleys look sick compared to elsewhere however some people said. Of course in the alleys no one listened to reason.

I figured they must be bored with making people so predictable.

Few lived beyond 5 years.

But I knew what others in the alley were destined to do if I asked the priests, but I didn't know who to trust with my true feelings.

WCXZ said, "I believe that the great brain, the Great God was in many heads at once. No point trying to fight it."

I seemed to know that "Many newbies figured they were lucky to be alive and that any amount of pain was fine with them. Clones were 50% "female" 50% "male" but about 10% were transgender types who used the antique sex machines to change their sex."

Some said, we had superhuman faces, others said, we were ugly. But we had nothing to compare our faces to. A toad is ugly but to other toads is beautiful.

WCXZ said, "People here were sterile it was known. All babies came from the incubators."

And we knew that we were programmed at night in one's dreams to not have sex. But the instinct was strong and people still indulged in sex despite the pain. So they weren't total zombies.

As a part time job, about 50% of females were prostitutes and 30% of men were prostitutes. Many were gay. But sex was pain like everything else although it was

also slightly pleasurable. Better than pure pain. “It is a giant freak show,” said WCXZ

Sex crimes were numerous also.

I said, “And women were tough.”

WCXZ said, “It is a tough world of pain.

And we believed the priests controlled insects and the weather and most of our behaviour. They were the ones who got into our minds at night and hypnotised us. Though it was also known that the Great God was behind it.

WCXZ said, “Some people said we were inside God’s minds totally, and we didn’t really exist. But most of us discounted such rumors. Still it is possible.”

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There were spies upon spies some said.

WCXZ was telling me that, “Greedy groups below the surface kept to themselves small groups typically. No murder for insurance or a will, no reason for murder but nevertheless it happened sometimes.”

She told me about Girl VYT-198, “Who was a murderer too, not for gold, but for honor. Some man tried to rape her so she killed him and the priests did not punish her.

But I said I’d heard it was rumored that police/spies murdered many people at the behest of the priests. Sometimes the victims died of disease, sometimes they were hit by lightning or something like that. But people generally agreed that people who were against the government disappeared, typically near the end of their lives. And it was claimed it was all preordained. I wondered when I would disappear.

In the Alleys where we lived there were burned out buildings and slums. Some said it was beautiful, others hideous.

Pain drug dealers and pain prostitutes were in the shadows, always waiting.

Corrupt police patrolled the alleys...

Some said there were ongoing battles between police, spies, priests and the high priests.

I was so lost I figured all love was good.

And I knew many clones roamed the streets; we were all told that we were just one of many clones and sometimes you seemed to find someone just like you but of course the faces changed and experience changed.

I told WCXZ, "I wanted to have clone lovers. But instead I mostly had hallucinations in the Alleys. It seemed very real. For example one time I was convinced that an evil witch got into my head and tried to convince me to do wicked deeds..."

And I must have been hallucinating when I followed a simulacrum of a femme fatale for a few days. What business did I have with a simulacrum? Apparently a simulacrum was a spirit or ghost who had no physical form.

WCXZ was telling me that, "Some set themselves on fire or committed suicide in some terrible and slow way and their corpses were fed into the food machine. The fire, the pain."

But it was rumored that the priests had eternal youth, and I believed it. I hoped to one day be a priest... but a priest of pleasure.

I looked down on people in the Alleys, all in the alley were sheep.

I wondered aloud "If we couldn't fix up the alley a bit."

But people insisted on taking their medicine/food; and there were drug bars which were totally dark for big pain drugs. By now I was foraging in the nearby forest for food and now the pain was going away.

Sometimes drugs caused you to lose control and do ugly things.

I dreamt of sex with any moving thing.

But it seemed to be despite the hypnosis that no beauty was allowed whether in body or in mind. Beauty was, “evil and decadent,” according to the priests.

And there were no outsiders in the Alleys. No tourists.

And many people self-mutilated themselves with crude tattoos and cuts to the body.

One day I loved a girl. She stunk, she was noisy, she felt moist and rotten and she was ugly. But still I found myself drawn to copulation. WCXZ was not jealous.

Some people said we were ultimately ruled by aliens, not the God and his high priests, as we had been told. People liked to talk about aliens.

Some complained our everyday truth was unimaginative.

And we all believed that the priests looked down on slaves, especially love slaves...

But no one dared to question the priests. People said, “The priests were superior intellects and questioning them lead to disappearances.” I knew I wasn’t the best citizen but I was still alive despite the pain.

I wanted to join the priests; they had power.

And I figured they must know what is going on.

There were rumors that if a priest died they would clone him. Some said, “The priests often killed themselves,” others said, “No.”

But the priests’ church of horror featured the priests getting in your head and getting your confessions.

It was also rumored the priests enjoyed pleasure in their temples and whipped their lovers.

Many were rumored to be gay and just loved one another. There were no priestesses as far as I could tell.

Of course people could petition the priests. For example we all knew the story of the infamous case of priest WSWQ-197 who declared, "No more pain." Everyone was taught to laugh at this ludicrous man but it was inadvisable to follow him.

And there was no end to pain for us dwellers of the Alleys.

"The Book of Pain," was very well known and featured a variety of saints who gave their life up to support the status quo. We all remembered the Book of Pain from the incubator.

Who was behind the priests who got in our heads at night? I wondered to myself. Was it really God?

If anyone dissented they were given more pain. Few reached the maximum pain threshold, as they had to kill themselves before that. Some threw themselves into the food machines others suffered more slow deaths. The manner of death was also preordained. It was entertainment.

But some people said we were all morons that were kept alive for sheer perversity and that super humans had gone elsewhere.

I told everyone that I was hoping for change from an army from the stars, Hopefully they will have spies here to take the good people out of here. Now where would you get that idea? WCXZ asked.

I went to the drug production center and spoke with some of the attendants there. They said the pain drugs were addictive. And how they told everyone they must suffer.

Pain gave people something to struggle for and kept them busy.

"People love the pain," she said

We were used to moaning and groaning of the dying...

The alley was full of them.

And rumor had it that intellectuals had created dangerous weapons and massive wars and finally these intellectuals had to be eliminated.

On one occasion I was honored enough to talk to a priest who told me people get what they deserve.

Clones of less and less people said the priest.

But there was dissension and mob scenes in the Alleys. Food machines were sometimes attacked.

Vomiting was an everyday occurrence and I wondered why?

Machines knew how much food you needed to eat.

Many died very young but all got the same education, only the personalities were different.

We were all slaves to pain.

Time passed slowly here.

I knew I couldn't stand it for much longer, and so I went to the forest to eat more and more. And I didn't use the ear phones in front of the temples to get to sleep. But I had remembered a lot of dreams and nightmares and cross-hypnosis.

There were a variety of drugs some were for example one part pleasure 5 parts pain.

I was a dangerous radical they told me and I needed more pain to keep me busy...

I was just glad to be alive

We didn't talk much in the Alleys, mainly suffered in silence, but sex was good for a diversion despite the pain it caused.

But we all remembered in the incubator life was not so painful.

But nevertheless suicide was everywhere with for example people jumping from high buildings, one had to walk carefully. Most buildings in the alleys were 6 stories high. It was not preordained to die in an "accident."

Sex diseases were common, but life was short anyway.

Every week we had to go to confessions to the priests and were given MRT (mind reading technology) punishment, mental punishment.

And it seemed that some of these priests acted like Gods...

And all wore masks. What were they hiding?

However most people respected the priests.

And though people were all given credits, most just donated their credits back to the temple.

Our temple in the Alleys was a splendid building, that stood out in stark contrast to the slum it was in. With a giant TV screen.

And food machines were here and so all people visited every day for food and prayer. If you didn't show up the priests it was known would get into your head and re-hypnotise you. But they couldn't re-hypnotise me anymore as I wasn't using the ear phones to sleep.

It was hard to judge the priests. Did they want multiple futures or one future; what did they care?

And the priests had a pain meter which measured your pain and it was all macho to suffer the most, as I said.

Some said that priests who disappeared were elevated to sainthood and there were many saints.

Priests claimed, "They suffered more than regular humans," and who were we to question them?

And people didn't dare put down the government as this would end in maximum pain. I had received maximum pain on several occasions; it was very difficult I must admit.

And women of the Alleys were ugly but if they didn't do the priest's bidding were cut up on their face and so wouldn't be at all attractive to anyone any more. Some said we were all ugly here and that elsewhere people were more attractive.

Evil went on in the Alleys.

Hideousness; every one was ugly, I felt. Ugliness made us excited somehow. But some were uglier than others.

Maps were sold of the alleys but were largely misleading and destined for you to go to the temple or other places of the priests.

And it was a legend that there was somewhere a girl with the magic lights, who made people appear and disappear. I was looking constantly for this girl.

Most people were lost...

It seemed everyone though had a hope of some type of escape which usually meant suicide. But it was said if you committed suicide before your time you would be damned to suffer in perpetuity as a lost soul.

But many were afraid of losing control. It was a world of puppets. Some tried to amuse the priests or spies and do what was hoped of them. But to me it was all just recycled horror.

And when I spoke of love to WCXZ she told me, "Love was an illusion," to her.

And strangely, everyone could paint pictures, ugly hideous scenes; everyone seemed to have the natural talent.

Some suffered the maximum and bragged about it in between catatonic spells.

But it was better to suffer and be nauseous than to be dead I figured.

Madness was just another type of pain.

The Alleys were dimly lit and people came out at night when it was cool.

Alleys were next to a high waterfall. People jumped onto the rocks from it with a 0% survival rate.

I fell in love with a different girl here. I told her, "I loved her." WCXZ didn't know about it.

But I knew I would have to pay the price for such carnal knowledge.

I came to believe that the spies were rotten to the core. And I knew that hypnosis did not work well on me, but I had been cross-hypnotised by persons unknown in addition to the new cross-hypnosis of the new God.

And I believed that there was a strange hierarchy the spies ranked above the priests.

Spies were the ones in control under the auspices of the high priests.

Sometimes the priests warned us about an attack on our world, so we must be vigilant, they said.

Near the alleys underground were the dungeons of XHJM; it was a virtual whole city of pain. People moved back and forth between different types of pain.

Most passed out from the pain in the dungeons.

We all believed that nice guys finish last.

XXX

And the Alleys had a leader we called Dr. Pain...

Not Dr. Pleasure...

He was lord of the Alleys, a lich king, an animated skeleton with a hypnotic voice.

People believed he had magic spells and could turn people into zombies.

I said who cares about the zombies who just cares about pain?

The temple of death was a sub sector of the main temple.

Then I went to a nightmare village nearby the Alleys, where I experienced pleasure but it was mind-numbing, and still painful to eat the food.

It taught me a lesson, that pain was everywhere.

People here branded one another in love, and I was such a brander.

XXX

People here were talking about a new head priest who wanted more control as if they didn't have control already.

XXX

One day near the Alleys I came to a lake and saw a large rock in the center of the lake but water was a mystery to me and I feared lake monsters.

XXX

Back in the Alleys they asked me, "How can you be happy?"

WCXZ told me, "She'd heard of a castle in the air, via air car that she thought was less painful. But how to get there that was the question."

One day I went to the temple and got a job serving one of the priests. Life was cheap just like in the Alley. I was bored stiff: a new kind of pain. It was human nature to suffer, I concluded.

But everyone had a pain threshold number. Mine was 9.2. I could take a lot of pain. But why I wondered did the Gods want to cause me pain? Why was I born? Did I matter?

XXX

WDSS-902, a woman said she was 24 years old (18+6) and she remembered a world of less pain than now even a few years ago.

I loved her too. She said I was a prince among men.

But in the end it was all pain, all we did is argue and whine at each other.

Afterwards, I said to all who cared to listen that “I am Prince of the alley.” But no one paid me any attention.

XXX

HPs (high priests) fathered a lot of children in the incubators, some said they were clones.

Priests took opiates it was rumored while the population suffered. But the priests said they suffered more pain than their worshippers.

Kill those you respect. But they were soon forgotten these sacrifices...

The HPs was said to be more than a 100 years old whereas the average citizen lived to be only to 22 and “18” of those years in the incubators with false memories.

I wondered about the source of such memories. Could some priests be spreading rumors?

In any cases the priests on the stage in front of the giant TV screens sacrificed many people each day as it was their dying day. “Glorious sacrifices of the youth,” they called it.

The new God was said to be the devil himself. Priests urged people to kill each other, assault each other, rape and torture each other and so on...

“The devil is our God,” they told us.

Some said it was a civilization of evil. Others said no good without evil. The HPs exhorted people to give the priests all their time and money.

People are such apathetic wimps said the HPs.

But worshipping was a skill...

The HP of the Alley said, “Nevertheless he wanted what was best for people he was only giving them what they want: peace, oblivion and entertainment.”

The HPs and their God...

Vice and greed were the attributes of the new God, just like the old God.

I was afraid of the God. People said it was alien. It was not from Earth.

And I figured people’s potential was being curtailed by the priests and their hypnosis and the pain. It was said that originally people on Earth had been thinkers and scientists. Now geniuses were the ones who kissed ass the best. They just wanted power for themselves as priests. The nightmares allowed us to reach our potential however, some said.

I wondered however if mind reading technology (MRT) could be used for a happy, loving society. My lover, WCXZ, said, “It was a world of horror and madness.”

Some traders who came to the Alleys said the HPs had cloned themselves many times and formed the government on 6 of the 7 known islands. The islands were in a line. The traders traded alcohol for sex slaves or gold. The high priests ruled. There were about 300 HPs and they met in the blue chamber of power.

And some traders said the God could turn anything into gold even its favorite servants and he had other magic powers like hypnotism.

No one alive could remember the HPs taking control. They were believed to have immortal youth. If you openly criticized and doubted the HPs you would surely quickly be re-hypnotised. Those who disappeared were beyond hope such as anarchists.

And it seemed the cleverest people were destined to live less long than those who were not so clever.

I wondered why the God didn't just destroy everyone and live with his clones. Rumor was he planned for his clones to take power, as he personally was sick and tired of ruling.

Some said the new God, was the true power and was tiny enough to hold in your hands.

XXX

But I'll never forget the day that ZZX showed me a pair of dice and told me a different number was a different action. At first I thought it was insanity, but then the seed of doubt began to take over.

And then I saw one night a priest hypnotising a friend of mine. It was then I decided to get out of the Alleys.

XXX

Days of celebration. When your time to die arrived friends would throw a big party but the party brought only pain. It was something a bit unusual anyway in

our monotonous existence. People wanted to be sacrificed upon death. I didn't want to die so soon.

There were spies incognito posing as radicals through hypnosis. People were confused though by pain and couldn't think clearly.

Priests were said to have different kinds of pain than us.

WCXZ said, "There was some dissension among the high priests who were often sacrificed when their short lives came to a conclusion."

I said, "There were also rumors of underground dissident movements."

XXX

So, WCXZ and I continued to live in the trees and live on fruit, nuts and animals I could spear. I had noticed that the pain had gone totally. It must be pain in the food I surmised.

I went back to the Alleys and tried to get people to join me in rebellion. Finally only WCXZ joined me. We had ecstatic love together and then one day I noticed she had a bulge in her stomach. Are we having a baby I asked in wonder? She said I can feel it kicking.

Wow no incubators for us, I thought.

XXX

But then one day I returned from foraging to find a big predator had killed and eaten my love and my unborn baby. I mourned for weeks, but finally I went on the road...

Most people believed the priests when they said a Great God ruled and they were just servants. People wondered how such a God could come to dominate us... however...

And it seemed it wanted to turn us all into machines.

The God computer was said to dwell in the holiest temple in the capital, Doll city. That's what the priests said and God often was to be seen on the screen appearing as a hovering gold box.

Some doubted God really existed. Priests didn't need it, some said and there was no God just priests.

XXX

I came to one rural temple in my travels down the road and it was a training ground for priests. I used my spear to slay all of them as I guarded the door to the inner sanctum. The priests were unarmed.

XXX

The rumor was the high priests met regularly in the capital in the chamber of priests and talked about the issues of the day. And I was sure they'd be talking about me on account of my murdering local priests. I was sure the spies would be told to take me out.

The high priests were the Gods of our world and had to be worshipped people said. Others said worship the Great God. But they were one in the same.

Some said the Great God had been a work of man and had been created to rule judiciously. And some said we were created in the incubator by it.

But few people travelled and so remained ignorant.

My other personalities I relied on when I was confused. Typically they told me to search for a world of virtual reality and that there I would find succor.

Then I continued on the road.

And I met a priest on the road. He was wearing a mask. I asked, "Why enslave humanity?"

He said, "It's evolution." So I cut off his head with my sword. I had been given the sword by a group of traders who wished me good luck.

And I wondered "What am I doing?" It was just instinctual to kill him. Or I had been cross-hypnotised to go against the priests. Priests were largely unarmed and relied on their spies (armed with daggers) and hypnosis.

Then I came to a village where they had an ancient lie detector machine where everyone told the truth. It was another dystopia. There was pain, truth and pleasure. This convinced me that the priests did not have total control of everywhere and I wanted pleasure really bad.

Then I met a caravan of virgins. I joined them and then one night stabbed the leaders to death. The next morning I told them I was in charge now and I set the virgins free. And I made love with several of them.

HPs were just parasites as far as I could see and they had created a nasty Empire. It was time to fight back.

Then I met a man who told me he was an angel. "What do you do? I asked him."

He said, "He brought good luck to humans." And he said, "Good things come to those who wait and stay alive despite a prognosis of death."

"To think for yourself is paramount," he said.

I broke the code people said of me and the priests were trying to find me. They had no ability to track people on the road. Only if you plugged in your earphones in front of the giant TV screens.

All is ordained by the God. Like zombies. But I knew I was now outside of the box and was doing unprognosticated deeds.

And priests stepped up their denouncement of forbidden science, these days... Apparently they'd had some troubles with those on the islands and now were worried about them. I was just a small potato.

TO BE CONTINUED

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is a novel excerpt that explores future Supercomputers who create humans and read their minds. And the question is, can they predict the future?

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