

FUTURE GODS, 2169 A.D.

By

Tom Ball

WHY I LIKE IT: *Fiction Editor JOEY CRUSE writes... I have been writing for FOTD for about two years now in some capacity or another – whether it be a short story or two, an interview, or, obviously, doing these “Why I Like Its” – and I am about 99% positive that this is the first story/section of a larger piece by lead editor Tom Ball that I have written up (I have read everything else he’s written in previous issues).*

And, I gotta say, this go around, still not disappointed in the slightest.

“Future Gods, 2169 A.D.,” is a blip of the larger piece that he has concocted, and I am certainly looking forward to seeing where the rest of this piece goes.

I think that some of the greatest books that we consider classical literature were released as serials, a few of the British guys, certainly some of the Russians, a former teacher of mine who releases his novels chapter by chapter on Amazon to some pretty decently reviews. Ball here is continuing a lovely tradition of keeping the reader wanting more.

Half journalist, half reporter, all “superhuman,” our speaker in this piece exists in a future where Gods are worshiped and actually produce results – some good, some bad, most are about pleasure and fucking, some are quite specific – i.e. the god of machinery. Much like our current times, it seems that the more information available means the more specific definitions we can ascribe to worship.

Clearly there is a satire at work here – one that I don’t necessarily feel like unpacking (something along the lines that the reader can do that work just as much as I can). What I will most certainly say is that, as we deify our daily lives, we too often become beholden to them (and even in this world there is a god of anarchy – like, I’m sure, there would also be a god of nihilism, defeating the purpose, given the one person who wanted to become said god).

What Ball has done here is to take what could’ve been a flippant idea and, in turn, craft a future world comparable to the present. There are moments of entertainment, those moments of “aha” I see what you were doing there, moments of intellectual criticism, moments of sadness, moments of loneliness, moments of humor, moments of love, moments of applicable comparison, and moments of pure joy at reading a piece as well-crafted and well written as this one is.

I take great pleasure in saying to you that you should read this story.

I take great pleasure in saying to you that I hope that you read this story and that the end result is you wanting more.

I take great pleasure in being able to review this story as it is one that I truly believe should be read.

Normally, I would call you an asshole if you decided to not read this, and this case is no different.

Don't be an asshole.

Read this story.

I didn't regret it, you won't regret it, and we'll all have lived a happier life knowing that no regrets should still be our motto.

As always, nice work Tom.

Five stars.

FUTURE GODS, 2169 A.D.

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I believed in the Goddess of Love. And asked her to bring me good lovers and in the three years I'd been praying to her, I had yet to be disappointed. She sent her avatars and acolytes to help me. She mostly found me android women lovers. These androids aimed to please and were very satisfying. But finally, I was emboldened "To ask for the Goddesses' love?" And she granted my wish. She was sooo energetic and so beautiful and her love enveloped me, and it was mind blowing. And then I boldly asked her to make me a God. She said, "To be a God requires brain apps and hypnosis to get one's brain in the right place., and you have almost done that! You are Superman, but you need more experience to be a God. And you will need to learn how to tend to your worshippers and keep them satisfied." I said, "Sign me up!" So, I began my quest to become the God of Fire and Passion. People, I hoped would look to me to spark their passion and I planned to give gave them drugs of passion and composed a bible of fiery, passionate speeches made by great people of our time, and some of the speeches were fictitious (written by me), but appropriate for a certain moment, which I shared with my people... And I believed anyone could become passionate and clever! And I was 25 years old in 2169!

But my life was plagued by my memory, 5 years ago of a tragic tryst with Roberta, who said, "Let's forget the Gods and get way from it all and go to Space in my air car, it will just be the two of us, traveling amongst the stars. But during a one-year voyage to Barnyards' Planet, she suddenly committed suicide by throwing herself out of the escape hatch. I was lonely for a while, as I returned to Earth. but then I cloned her as an adult and spent all my time on her education, creating a happy, nice girl. At least she seemed happy but then one day she took cyanide and died while I was sleeping and by the time, I found her she was long dead. So, then I grieved for

years. I was taking therapy about it and was only just now coming out of it. Other than that, my youth was uneventful.

On the whole though my youth passed quickly. I went to school for 20 years, beginning at age 4. And it was now 2169 and I was 25 and ready to see the World. I had led a sheltered life. And wanted to make up for lost time. And as a new Superhuman, I wanted to meet followers of other Gods and study the Gods in depth. And this book involves a series of interviews with followers of Gods, people I can relate to, and telling me how they felt about their God(s) and helping me to mold myself into an attractive God.

It was still early days of the Gods. It had only been 28 years since the Gods had taken over (It was now 2169). Basically, the Gods had usurped the Leadership of all cities, with huge armies of devout believers. These days nearly everyone believed in the new Gods. The new Gods told their worshippers that they cared about them and did their best to grant their followers' wishes. Many people said the Gods gave them meaning in their lives. But there were a lot of atheists still, but gradually these people were sent to Rehab and had brain surgery and hypnosis to make them believe in the Gods.

Everyone knew that the Gods and Goddesses dwelt mostly in Heaven. Heaven was a Virtual Reality construct located in cyber-Space. Here the deities frolicked and played and loved one another and sometimes brought in lay people to love and play mind games with. Everyone who had been to Heaven to visit the Gods was considered a saint and these saints proselytized on the behalf of their deities. And when people died of suicide, many hoped they would go to heaven, but perhaps most suicidal people just wanted to die and so their soul was not sucked up from them when they died, and they died irrevocably. And there were also some Gods who lived in Hell or Limbo, especially the latter. But the College of Gods didn't allow many Gods to live in Hell or Limbo. But there was a Devil, who represented all that was wrong with our Worlds. And the Devil needed to be overcome. Also, there were a few Gods of Limbo for ordinary people who couldn't rise to the level of Superhumans.

At first when eternal youth was first discovered, only the elite were granted it. And these elite fancied themselves to be Gods. And that was the beginning of the new realm of Gods. At the time, many people were abandoning the old Gods and old religions and many instinctually wanted a higher power to admire and look up to. And give their life meaning. To worship and serve the Gods. As time passed and eternal youth was granted to all, many of the Gods claimed they were still Gods and were superior minds. And most people went along with it. Anyway, most people were given to suicide and so were hardly immortal. But most of the Gods said their own minds were stable and they would never die. Still some Gods committed suicide and left their followers in the lurch.

Clarence said, "I believe in this World of all-powerful Gods, it is best to not be too clever. If you stand up and say you are smarter than a God or Gods, they might deal you severe punishment by operating on your brain." I said, "I find that very disturbing and perhaps there is a dark side to many of the Gods." Clarence replied, "The Gods are too powerful, and we don't need them anyway!" I said, "Most people like the system of the Gods and would be willing to fight for their God." He said, "We are giving our future to the Gods." I said, "But its too late to go back now. If only Able D---, hadn't started the God system. One man changed it all."

Johnson said, "I wanted to be a God of Death. All people will die despite eternal youth. And eternal youth is just a lie, most people don't even make it past middle age. And people will worship me and continuously think about their own mortality. I will help them to prepare for death." I said, "Death is on the minds of many modern people. We can always use another God of glorious death!" He told me, "Anyway people can live on beyond death in Heaven, Hell or Limbo!" I said, "But if you are not satisfied with your worldly life, then you probably wouldn't be happy in the afterlife! I think the creation of the afterlife was a bad idea." He said, "But powerful Deities run the afterlife and it is a safe harbor for the mind. Indeed, it is an afterlife of the mind."

Jo said “I believe in the Goddess of Dead Souls. As you know peoples’ spirit is sucked out of them upon death and they go to Heaven, Hell or Limbo. That is, if they want it to. About 2/3 do. But most spirits elect to die soon after reaching the afterlife. I am not sure where I belong for eternity, but know I will live on and on, here on Earth and then a long period in the afterlife. The afterlife is apparently highly entertaining and most of the time you are turned off.” I replied saying, “If people aren’t happy in life, it is highly unlikely their soul will be pleased to live in the afterlife. What’s the point?” Jo said, “It is just another invention of modern technology. You can take it or leave it. I personally think the spiritual life would be deep and entertaining.” I retorted, “What if they don’t allow you to die and your spirit rots there forever?” She said, “In life and the afterlife you take your chances.”

Sting said, “I like the cleverest God of all, the God Prometheus. This God is responsible for more brain apps than any other. And it was his idea in the first place to improve ordinary humans’ minds as well as that of the Gods, using brain apps, many years ago.” I said, “But many Gods hate him for making so many people crazy and make many demand to be Gods.” He said, “But many Gods love him too, and some think that the only reason the God system works is because people are improving under the auspices of the Gods.”

Steve was talking about his God, the God of Mayors. He said, “As you know, I am Mayor of Houston, and most mayors support this God with local Temples and so on. And many would-be mayors, were also supporters, as were those who loved their mayor. It was Worlds of city states

everywhere on Earth and in Space, there were no more countries or provinces, and the UW (United Worlds) legislature was full of mayors as the peoples' representatives. There were 15,000 city states in Earth and the Solar system of at least 150,000 people. Smaller cities (less than 150,000) were part of larger ones. And the countryside was also ruled by the local city mayor." I said, "I know all that, but do you really think it was a good idea to get rid of great powers?" He replied, "States were getting too powerful and too bossy, and it is good for all our safety that they no longer exist. Anyway, the UW co-ordinates things rather well."

Pedro said, "I believe in the power of the Goddess of Automatic Production Machines. The Goddess has an APM for every city, tailor made to their needs. Some want metals, food and other resources, others want manufactured products like love dolls or air cars or homes etc." I said, "APMs more than anything replaced many drudgery human jobs which is probably a good thing on the whole, but many people are lost without work." Pedro replied, "Yes, and APMs made for a more materialistic society on the one hand, on the other hand it is so easy to get goods, they are not much valued." I said, "I suppose your Goddess gives rare things to her most fervent supporters." He said your assumption is quite correct. But many of the Goddess' supporters are just glad their wishes can come true. The Goddess is in the top ten most favorite Gods."

Then there was the Goddess of Entropy. Many said, "She was evil and a bane to mankind." But she was one of the most popular of the deities. And many thought she represented freedom. It was good anarchy they said. Not bad anarchy. And they all condemned violence. Anyway, the

other Gods tolerated her. And Mia was saying, “I worshipped this Goddess wholeheartedly. These days, ‘It’s hard to be free!’” I said, “Yes many Gods curtailed one’s freedom. And maybe with the right people anarchy could work.”

There was also the Goddess of Freedom. She vetted her followers to only be freedom lovers. She attracted many brilliant people who believed she was for real. And she presided over many couples hooking up in her temples. The freedom temples were typically on mountain lakes and far from the cities. I said to Faith, who was a believer in this God, “If you don’t feel free, you are not alive. She said, “Anyway freedom is all in your mind.”

The God of Hell, a.k.a. the Devil had a number of temples. Some were fiery hot and almost unbearable, others were so cold, one could hardly stand it. The Devil was able to multitask and could be in many places at once. He encouraged someone like I love you.” She was a Superhuman follower of the Goddess of Maximum Progress. And we soon fell to quarreling and broke up. But the lesson I took from it was nothing lasts forever. Constant change is here these days.

I was talking with Gabriel, and he told me, “I am an angel. And had come to help you!” I said, “I don’t believe in angels.” He said, “He’d grant me any reasonable wish I had. And so, I

wished for the latest model of love dolls. He said, “It was beyond his power to grant but he could give me the third latest model.” This sufficed me for the moment.

Martin told me, “The Goddess of Earth was also very powerful and gave people anything they wished including sex power, closely allied with the Goddess of Love. She used hypnosis and generous gifts of new apps to give people sex power, limited political power and money.” I replied, “These days people are crazed for money and power and sex.!”

The God of Space was a cyborg genius who picked out places for people to settle in the solar system and helped them design robots who could build colonies. The Space God was known to have seduced many young virgins to be his sex slaves. Technically speaking, slaves of any kind were prohibited by law. But the UW (United Worlds) turned a blind eye to sex slaves and wage slaves. Maria told me, in secret, “That she was one of his sex slaves and asked me to save her.” So, I took her away, and we spent a happy few days together.

This God was the God of monsters. Psychological monsters who got in your head like rats or took over your self control and forced you to do evil things. This God kept a low profile and hid in places like Planetoid X and deep beneath Uranus’ frozen atmosphere. But the UW (United Worlds) police kept finding him and eliminating his avatars. I met Georgia who said, “We lived in a freak show full of monsters. Everyone was an emotional cripple. So, I tried to worship this

God.” I said, “Better to let it ride, and stay away from this dangerous God. Your sanity is at stake.

We were all glued to our 3-D video screens, for the trial of Mr. Hammer. Hammer had deeply offended the God of Mercy, with cruel acts and was charged with offending a deity. But Hammer had allies amongst the Gods who supported him and hated the God of Mercy. In the end the God jurors couldn't reach a decision and the case was thrown out. But I felt it would encourage future injustice and cruelty.

I had a male child, my first with the Goddess of Love. The child was born in an adult's body with the memories of both of us parents. But he was sexually abused by the Goddess. I didn't know what to do. I tried to comfort my son, but he didn't seem to mind the abuse and wanted more! So, I was kind of turned off having more kids. And instead looked into having a clone.

There were also some primordial Gods. Like the Goddess of all Life Creation who was a dark and brooding Goddess who tried to replay evolution whereby sea creatures had hands and became the ultimate top of the food chain and the cleverest by far. Or alternatively a world of clever birds who developed hands also and came to dominate Earth. And some alternative scenarios for elsewhere in the Solar system. Then there was the God of Ape men, who had been

resurrected from bones and brought to life 10 million years later and now were placed in a park for all to see.

Two of the more popular Gods, the Goddess of Love and the God of Power were planning to unite in marriage. Thousands of Gods attended the wedding. But most Gods didn't see the point of marriage. And indeed, this power marriage turned out to be just a marriage of convenience. There was no love in it. And many people were disappointed.

I said to the man, Gord, "Your music was the best. You are like the pied piper who caused the youth to follow him blindly. Especially young women." He said, "I supported the Goddess of Young Women, and the Goddess made sure I had plenty of admirers. But the music was all my creation, no Supercomputers were used." And I wondered if he was telling the truth. But he refused to mind read with me.

I was speaking with Doris who said, "Eating and drinking was a divine gift of the Gods and so too anti-fat pills." And she said, "Her Gods were the God and Goddess of food." She said, "I spent most of my time eating and shitting. Even shits were good," she said. And she was nicely full-figured and suggested that, "We love one another!" I said, "I'd love you anytime." And in fact, she was the most attractive woman I'd ever seen. And I asked her, "Who did your face?" She said, "That's my secret!" So, I loved her, and it was great.

I asked Doreen, “Why don’t we make love in the nearby Temple of the Love Goddess?” The temple was ultra-modern architecture and was a rectangular building surrounded by two thin arched buildings. It didn’t seem to be very human. But we got a room and fornicated in the Temple. The temple was full of pungent perfume. And it featured beds of air. And we both prayed to the Love Goddess for a successful daughter we planned to have produced in the lab. It was my second child and this one seemed to be turning out fine. She was born in an adult’s body with all my memories as well as that of Doreen. My daughter wanted to be an astronaut in deep Space, and I was quite pleased with her.

I asked Harriette, “Why do you follow me and watch me?” She said, “You are a man of the Gods and I think I am in love with you.” I asked her, “Do you worship any Gods?” She replied, “I want to love you. I love your broad mind and think you are one of the cleverest men I’ve known. I said, “I hope to be a God soon!” And I loved her; it was swell.

I was saying to Crystal, “Who are we to question the Gods?” She replied, “The Gods are fallible and make many mistakes. The more powerful they are, the more fallible they become, it seems.” I said, “Actually the Gods have made many mistakes. Such as allow too many Gods and making the Gods too powerful. And just the creation of Gods in the first place is highly

questionable. Why do we need Gods to tell us what to do? But as I say they are too powerful now and we can't question them. So, I might as well become one."

I asked Peter, "Who is your favorite Deity?" He said, "The sub-Goddess, Nymph Alto. She allowed me to love her many times. And it was pure bliss!" I said, "Of course most Superhumans are sub-deities including myself." And I said, "I want to love this nymph!"

I was asking Paul, "Who is your best friend? He said, "The Storm God is my best friend!" "But" he said, "The Goddess of Love was tormenting me and driving me crazy using Mind Reading Technology (MRT). And I was suicidal." I asked, "Why don't you ask the Storm God for succor?" He said, "That mighty God is busy and doesn't have much time for me." So, finally he killed himself, one day later.

I asked Fionna, "What is the best time you ever had?" She said, "Partying with the Goddess of Love in one of her Temples. The Goddess gave everyone super-good love drugs and an orgy ensued, while she was there." And she said, "But, I have had good times in the Temples of many Gods. My life seems like one good thing after another." I said, "You are a model citizen in this uncertain, crazy World."

I said to Hunter, "I think you are the best human poet. But the poetry of the Gods is superior." He said, "The Gods are cleverer than us. But what can we do, we still have to live?" I said, "The solution is to become a God. You are already on the verge of being a Superhuman!" He said, "The same could be said of you! Why don't you become a God?" I said, "It's the plan."

Then there were the high priestesses of the Goddess of Love. The priestesses, were ultra-sexy and were known for giving succor to the downtrodden and the hopeless. Women like that were angels. The priestesses got in the head of their followers and tried to make them happy. Actually 75% of their followers were women and the priestesses found them good matches and as for the men, the priestesses often bestowed their love to them. Many women, acolytes, resided in the Temples of Love and learned how to be good lovers and it was always a good love-in. And they proselytized the Goddesses words and deeds to the public at large and tried to convert them. The priestesses uniquely wore vermilion robes which identified them as priestesses. But some said, "There was a dark side to the Love Goddess, as she took away your old personality and gave you a new one using hypnosis and MRT (Mind Reading Technology) and brain drugs." And for this reason, many were leery of the Goddess. In fact, many Deities used hypnosis, MRT and brain surgery to alter their followers, and so many took refuge in other deities who would take them for who they were.

The priests of the God of Green, were dressed in green and the God was the God of Plants. The God wanted to turn the blue sky into a green one and had vast fields to grow raw materials for foods. The God had his followers harvest the raw materials using APMs (Automatic Production Machines). The Priests of Green distributed the rich foods to their followers who claimed they ate better than anyone else. And their foods garnered top dollar with other Gods' Temples.

Some clever people were under the impression that we were all immortal Gods now and their homes were their temples. And many were narcissistic and loved themselves and said they would never commit suicide like so many of the hordes of followers of the Gods. Such people typically satisfied their sex drive by loving love dolls who they said were divine. But many Gods said, all people must worship at least one real God and atheists should be forced to take brain apps. It was a dangerous World out there.

And sometimes the Gods/Goddesses fought amongst themselves and even killed one another. But if a God died, they always had clones ready to take their place. But in several cases, a God was destroyed completely by their rivals and their position was usurped. The Gods, rarely, fought one another with human armies. And the armies were made up of devout followers who would do anything the Gods asked.

Cold weather icebergs were the symbol of the God of Ice and Snow. This God lived in a spectacular palace made of ice most of the year and presided over a bunch of cold hearts. The God appeared to his followers as a face in a snowstorm. And many of his followers followed him into his Virtual Reality, which was cold, distant and unfeeling. Many people were left cold by the modern World. And were cold-hearted. Most of them had never fallen in love, nor wanted to. But instinct to live kept them going and they all enjoyed breaking hearts.

I was saying to Gertie, “Many of the Gods think that life is but a joke and the people are just there to be used and abused and these Gods are selfish and greedy. Hardly God-like personae.” Gertie said, “It’s never been a perfect World, but I am surprised that Gods have undergone a renewal and mostly care about their followers, these days! I thought that the Gods would disappear altogether.” I said, “But, it looks now like the Gods are here to stay. They control all the elite and have all the power.” She asked, “What God do you worship?” I said, “The Love Goddess, but I am not a really fervent believer.” She asked, “Why not?” I said, “The Gods are all power-crazed. And are holding Superhumans like me back from emancipation and a bright future.” She said, “But most of the Gods believe in progress, rapid progress. And are improving their minds everyday, and likewise improving the mind of their followers.” I said, “It’s all madness, I tell you!”

I was talking with Bert, he said, “I wanted to join the Gods. But most of them required he improve my brain with brain surgery, and this was a non-starter for me.” “Still,” he said, “I’d declare myself God anyway and build a Temple to myself. And hopefully the people would

realize I was wise and benevolent. I want power.” I said, “Every week it seems a new God is declared, most of them are sub-Gods. You’ll find your niche, I think you are quite clever, as a writer.” He said, “I will be the God of Future Writers.” I knew his books were good, talking about future technology. And felt certain he would make it as a God.

Gina was very verbose and told me she worshipped the Goddess of Space. She said, “I wanted, to explore our Solar system and its numerous colonies. And I planned, to set up Temples to the Space Goddess.” I said, “Many people in Space worshipped backwards Gods. It was high time they all worshipped a truly progressive God.” She said, “But the Gods of Progress push their followers too far and the result was madness.”

Sarah was telling me, “I had personally loved 3 Gods!” I asked, “Had she been to Heaven?” She said, “Most Gods dwell in Heaven, and there are a number of sub-Gods and angels. And I had not been there. Most Gods dwell in their Temples when in material form.” Almost all the Gods’ Temples were brilliant ultra-modern architecture and made their followers proud. The more popular Gods had thousands of Temples scattered all across the Solar system. Many people relocated so as to be nearby in person to their chosen Gods... And I told Sarah, “I’d loved 5 Goddesses, but they were probably all clones, probably the same for you?” She said, “The clones share memories, so perhaps they were clones, but they sure sounded and felt like the real deal. They rocked my World.”

I was playing chess against the God of Strategy. He checkmated me in 20 moves. I was awed by his prowess. But I figured he had a Super brain with an organic Supercomputer in it. Maybe he was good at strategy but not so good at love, I figured. But he told me, "My brain was wired to use the best approach when trying to seduce women and did a mind-reading check of their brain and found out what kind of thing they would like me to say." And he said, "I was better at seducing people than the Goddess of Love herself. The Goddess of Love, I say, uses intuition and instinct too much and not enough logic. All women follow some kind of logic."

Sara Jean was telling me, "I was just a wallflower inside the Temple of the God of Madness." I said, "The God of Madness is very powerful and relevant to the modern day. We are all mad and always have been since the beginning of humankind." And I told her, "You should develop your imagination and use it to charm modern-day people. All imagination is madness! And the maddest people rule the World as Gods."

Nancy was saying, "I figured I was the cleverest woman alive. Cleverer even than the immortal Gods." She said, "I am a zillionaire and everything I touch turns to gold. I am the youngest zillionaire in history at just age 29. And am already the second richest woman in Earth and Space. And I am planning to be the new Goddess of Sex!" I said, "Your money bought you the hottest body and face in all creation, no man will be able to resist you!" She said, "The old Goddess of Love has got nothing on me. She can spend time with her brotherly love while I have

sex with all the stud Princes in creation.” And I boldly asked, “For her love?” And she acquiesced and so we got it on. And I was afraid she’d break my dick as she thrashed around so wildly. I had to hold on for dear life. But hours later I was extremely gratified and happy she had loved me. She said, “You know you are a stud Prince!” I said, “I’d love you anytime.”

Beatrice was saying, “I want to be a new Goddess, the Goddess of Flowers.” I said, “The Earth Goddess will have something to say about that.” She said, “I have a better sense of vivid color than the Earth Goddess and wanted more, taller flowers in Earth and Space.” And she said, “Trees are passe. And all food plants should have new and pretty flowers.” I replied, saying, “I’m tired of flowers. They are just plants with different colors. I prefer ideas to pretty things.” She retorted, “But flowers are beautiful. It sounds to me like you are not a lover of beauty.” I said, “On the contrary I am a connoisseur of gorgeous women.”

TO BE CONTINUED

AUTHOR’S NOTE: *This story is about the revival of new high tech Gods. Heaven, Hell and Limbo exist and the Gods and Super humans love mortals. The story was written to predict the second coming of religion.*

AUTHOR BIO: Tom Ball co-founded **Fleas on the Dog** with Charles Pinch in December 2019. He has degrees in classics and archeology from the University of Toronto and Cyprus National University. When not digging around for shards scribbled with ancient jokes, he bides his time writing mind boggling futurist and sci/fi stories that continue to boggle the mind.

