

World of Fantasies

by Tom Finnegan

WHY WE LIKE IT:

There is a strange dream-like gravitational pull in this mystifying dystopian future-logue where freedom is replaced by die-determinism. There is a sense of whirling atoms beneath the stillness of the story surface such that something ethereal and spectral rises before the reader like an apparition. The metronomic steel gray voice results in a curiously hermetic prose that lays low until it bursts upon the ear with passages of unexpected lyrical beauty. Quote: 'Sleeping involved heavy dreaming. And we slept for long periods. People couldn't remember most of their dreams, but almost everyone said, 'God was in their mind' while they slept.' And 'When you first appeared here you learned about the dice but could only throw a 12 or less. There were 20 sides to each dice with the high numbers at the top. So if you rolled high you could maybe get an 18 or a 19...'

PART ONE: THE FIERY DICE

My name is XY-04, I was a female and I didn't know much else.

I lived in a world of thousands of rooms. People constantly had 3 dice (20-sided dice) floating around their head and when they were lying down the dice hovered above the head. The dice were 20 cm squared but with 20 sides.

Sparkling golden dice...

It was as if someone was rolling us and we were the dice. We tumbled often in low gravity.

But we also rolled our own dice, we settled disputes like who was king or who loved who or duels of honor. Generally, the one with the strongest will power won but sometimes those inside the dice controlled the roll. So, one needed to defeat good people to strengthen your own three dice. And there was an element of luck which the computers generated.

The loser was engulfed in flames and sucked into one of the winner's dice. But most people felt they had nothing to lose.

The rolled dice spun and landed on the ground typically.

It was rumored that this world was dice within dice. If you kept losing you would go to lesser and lesser worlds. But our world seemed to be high on the layers of dice worlds. But we certainly weren't the highest as they kept rolling us.

When the Gods rolled the dice, we didn't know the result of the God's roll; we just tumbled. We all tumbled when the dice were rolled by our "God," very low gravity. Sometimes the dice were rolled again and again in quick succession... There were those who called it "rock and roll". The dice had 20 sides and the high numbers were clustered together. So too with the low numbers.

Roll high was the secret to the dice games.

It was rumored that these people in our dice themselves had others within a die and so on layer after layer. This seemed correct as the losers were sucked inside of the winner's dice in our disputes.

Our three dice each had 20 sides (d20) and the numerals sparkled like "stars." We all knew there were stars somewhere, somehow.

It was best to have disputes with clever people because if you defeated them they would make good kings in your dice.

Some said there were too many of us "simulacra." People said the Gods had a body which was "heavy," but we didn't know what to believe. People estimated there were thousands and thousands in our die alone. And we all had 3 personal dice, some stronger than others. And all of us could remember being in other dice.

One newcomer, she said, "All that we are is a die within a die."

I conceived of the dice as an extension of one's mind.

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When you first appeared here you learned about the dice but could only throw a 12 or less. There were 20 sides to each dice with the high numbers at the top. So, if you rolled high maybe you could get an 18 or 19 (they were next to each other on the dice. The high the low and the medium were each clustered together on the dice.

One needed to defeat a lot of smart people in dice games to make your dice stronger. And you needed to be promoted (moved) by the loudspeaker in your head to be a high number for your God and his/her dice. No one knew what happened to those who

disappeared, we presumed they were given new dice. As for the winners they gained the dice of the losers. Our king in #19 in the dice we lived in, had one hundred dice.

Some were terrified and so did not challenge anyone but we told them if they lost they'd go to another dice world. No big deal.

God plays dice. And there must be several Gods, most of us agreed.

It was rumored the Gods could produce unlimited people like us (simulacra).

"It was all virtual reality," one girl said. "We are all in the show..." I said, "It is a pretty boring show."

We felt good doing good deeds for one another, but to "kill" someone in a roll off was the best feeling of all, better than wand sex (we all had wands which we touched each other for bliss or to attack).

But some acted like saints and offered their life to others, by not using their full mind powers and so were sucked into the winner's dice. Altruistic...

But these saints were trying to please the "Roller Gods." And they made great speeches about freedom and fairness. But everyone knew it was a world partly of luck. And people wanted more.

Some said we were just a dream within a Gods' dream. Some were apparently demoted after "dying" but it didn't seem anyone was promoted beyond our d20, that we were all in. But some people seemed to disappear without a roll off. So we deduced there must be countless worlds out there only we couldn't escape the die. It was commonly believed that Gods existed in all of us. And God wanted us to use our combined brain power to try to roll high. Or so we thought.

Newcomers appeared regularly and asked why were they here? We couldn't answer them.

Some newcomers were riff raff and were relegated to the 1 and 2 and 3 d20 and nobody cared about them. But they had their kings and lovers. However, some newcomers were quite bright.

But after seeing so many losers of the dice games who disappeared, everyone had an inferiority complex with the outside world. But one guy claimed that there was no outside world and we were the top notch. But if so why were we tumbling?

As mentioned, we had sex with others with our wands, there was also "human style" which was unusual sex, for most. But touching one another's wands could only be used for sex once every "half-hour." Sometimes you touched wands with people you didn't

even like. Most people did it all day and then not when they were sleeping. I wondered aloud what the purpose of all this sex was. Was it just a life of bliss?

Sleeping involved heavy dreaming. And we slept for long periods. People couldn't remember most of their dreams, but almost everyone said, "God was in their mind," while they slept. I had a recurring dream in which I was king but no one in the kingdom liked me... On one particular day I was dreaming of throwing the dice over a game of real war. Millions "died." But I knew that anyway death just led to relegation. I had been born with that idea.

But some were not in bliss, quite the opposite in fact. People would say someone was "going" when they contemplated suicide.

And one girl said there were many Gods, and all had their favorite dice. If you tumbled a lot that meant you were in a favorite die of your master. Or so she said. But most people believed our die was in the possession of a single God.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I wrote this story as an adventure in the future, which will be strange.

BIO:

Tom Finnegan has published short stories in a number of magazines. He spends his time teaching English in varying countries.