



A Regimented Post- Apocalyptic Society

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scarsuohteolqnd

“We want you, big brother.”

David Bowie, “1984”

It was the year 2103, and my memory of the post apocalyptic days was vague. I was displaced by the fighting and found myself in what used to be known as India.

Everywhere was radioactive and I had a one-year supply of the best anti-radiation medicine that I had acquired while serving in the American army.

China/India/Russia against the US and its allies. And basically, the whole world was virtually destroyed by viruses, satellite death rays and nuclear missiles.

Finally, all the satellites were shot down, but the viruses and radiation continued to take their toll.

Most formerly large cities were rebuilt nearby the original. And so, there was New London, New Munich etc. But on a much smaller scale

People wore anti radiation, anti virus masks most of the time all over the world it was said.

And in general population was declining fast...

There were still skirmishes going on and armed gangs of ruthless men roamed the countryside. They killed the men they encountered and enslaved the women and children. They were just armed with rifles and machine guns, but everyone was afraid of them.

There were no more cities, in India, but finally I came to the Himalayas and met a peaceful group of people who invited me to their settlement. I could feel them reading my mind no doubt with some MRT (mind reading technology).

They assigned to me an agreeable lover and my job was to use my scientific learning to help them.

I was to coat the tunnels with technology which could hide the tunnels from ground penetrating radar.

And we had a well-insulated nuclear reactor which powered our food, drink, drug and clothes production. Also, nuclear bombs which we stored away carefully.

The population here was 3,997. The people here figured it was probably the largest settlement in India today, but there was no way of telling. We had no radios for communication nor phones.

I immediately befriended a man known as Jake. He was a former professor of meteorology. He said the Earth's weather was becoming stormier. At least in India. And there were more deserts and more swamps he figured, and it was windy.

And I met Bill who was the head hydroponic farmer. Also, a swell guy.

And Mary who said she had developed MRT with a range of 50 km. That was how they found me she said.

And I also remember meeting Boris who was to become my best chum here. He was a painter of pictures.

But after my welcoming party they debriefed me on the nature of the settlement...

This society was set up like an army. And they said they could use me for sure since I was a mechanical engineer. They were building rockets for military purposes and to get off this Earth into space.

I felt I was like a robot whose life was largely orchestrated.

The USA had used MRT (mind reading technology) and nuclear weapons and death ray satellites and above all clever viruses to win the world but there were only 8 million survivors worldwide. It was now the year A.D. 2103. People everywhere took anti-radiation medicine.

Everyone was required to eat the synthetic food. Three meals a day at 8 am, 1pm, 7 pm.

And everyone had to report any "dissidents" to the spies. If you knew them and didn't report them, you could be jailed. Everyone was paranoid and afraid.

The rank #1 group, had seven leaders and these leaders were called "Perfects." They let it be known that changeling aliens had been captured and executed and the future was secure. There were 40 ranks. Each rank was about 100 members for a total population of about 4,000 in the Himalaya. Everyone else had died in the war. There were 4 cities left Lake Placid, the Maldives, Bermuda and Okinawa. The rest were mostly in small hamlets including the bomb shelters. For example, India had two small hamlets only in addition to the Himalaya settlement.

The war lasted 2096-2099 A.D. and most of the survivors were immune to the killer viruses.

There were still a couple thousand living in air raid bunkers sealed off from the surface and the viruses didn't get them.

Here in the Himalaya settlement, eternal youth continued to improve with the governments auspices. And video games were at modern levels. Many people spent a lot of time creating video games or trading them with wandering traders.

The government forced everyone to have at least two kids. They needed to boost the population.

And they forced people to have plastic surgery on their face at least twice a year. Some faces were patented. Some wanted to have an intelligent, voluptuous look. Unusually good-looking people had a wonderful life.

Everyone had to speak English all of the time.

Everyone had to work at least 20 h a week.

Everyone had to give 10% of their salary to a charity of their choice.

And everyone had to wear the latest fashion and had to keep fit.

Also, all had to keep trying to improve and rise in ranks.

In free time all were expected to use their imagination to best effect. I thought this was the one good rule of this society.

And all had to play video games/sports in their spare time.

And everyone had to know something about everything and were continuously learning. Everyone was required to earn at least a B.A. by the time they were 25.

No violence was to be tolerated except in video games.

And everyone had to go to at least one party for at least one hour every-day. It was considered important to socialize. But most parties were only for certain ranks. If one was the life of the party one improved in rank.

Materialism was stigmatic except for possession of an air car and a permanent dwelling.

Everyone had to shower every day four times at least (and have 4 lovers at least). Most had the same 4 lovers for a month or two and then moved on.

Acts of kindness were necessary, several times per day. It could improve your rank.

And everyone needed to have a thought for improving things, no matter how small, every week. But you couldn't appear as a dissident.

Everyone had to play a musical instrument and write a play.

The Perfects used MRT to check everyone every six months for compliance with the rules; if they didn't measure up they were sent to Limbo indefinitely.

The world had no computers (except video games) and no Internet, but they had MRT.

Air cars were for the rich and ran on solar/wind/gas/battery hybrids and were driven manually. You could typically only stay at one particular hub for a few weeks and then moved on. Some air cars traveled together.

The fact that there were no computers created a lot of jobs especially in the service industry.

Lower ranks were servants and workers. They built air cars and homes mostly.

People had to watch the News every day for half an hour.

People had to take stimulants, which made their brains work at 100%; no opiates were allowed. But many broke this law and were on opiates, more than half the population. The Perfects feared if they enforced this law, they would have a revolution on their hands. So officially opiates were illegal, but it wasn't enforced.

It was the only law that could be broken without a trip to Limbo.

No MRT (mind reading technology) was to be allowed except for shrinks. And Perfects.

And one had to disclose one's secrets in public and were judged appropriately for their new rank. Everyone "knew" everyone else. Some said it was a twisted brand of communism.

But the confessions were the highlight of most peoples' day. People especially liked kinky behaviour.

Everyone had to visit a shrink once a week. Shrinks were all ranked in the top 2 rankings and rated people for ranking. Ranking began at age 18.

The Perfects group of the top 7 people of rank #1/40 effectively were responsible for all laws and the enforcement of the laws. People were to regard the law as inevitable.

And many people had their memories altered to believe the rank system had always been here and gave them sunny, pleasant "experiences" in their dream, which they would remember.

Many were mentally ill, you'd be sent to Limbo with MRT to try and cure you. Bad instincts such as greed, lying, deceit, being a jerk etc. were gradually removed with MRT.

During holidays everyone had to march with the bands. Everyone was in it.

New Year's Eve... was the greatest holiday.

The essence of a good citizen was to be useful, or so said the ruling 7 Perfects. Some said it was a world of cliques and that people were not open minded by nature. The government should correct this, they said.

Each rank had two colors, for example mine (#1) was black and blue. Perfects were orange and blue.

I was motivated by Elitist Utilitarianism which was maximum good for the people, ruled by the best. Just like most rank #1s. But I was drunk most of the time, I don't know why.

My first lover told me, “I was useless, except as a lover,” and I felt I had never lived that one down. At the time I was 16 and unranked (rank started at 18), but at the time I tried to be a writer, but totally failed.

She told me, “She envisioned a new city in the air which would be an air car hub. And she imagined the day when no one lived in a house or apartment/condo.”

I told her we needed more builder robots, but she said, “ridiculous; it’s illegal.”

And I told her, “Spies control the world.” She retorted, “That, too, is ridiculous.”

#

Exclusive parties... When someone was demoted or promoted there was always a big party. Party for the promoted and a party in the newly demoted rank.

Usually your kids you would be about the same rank as you, but not always. I had some children with rank #1s and others.

Women took egg producing drugs and so had about 50 eggs a month and these were combined with sperm of the high ranks mostly and raised in an incubator.

But some worried the rank #1s were using their own sperm and eggs to make our children... which were formed in a test tube.

Also, the rich could afford clones of themselves which were born in adult bodies but no memories.

So, education was very important and the rank #1’s spent a lot of time designing ever-improving curricula.

And one learned to be familiar with MRT and would summarize your sins for the Perfects once a year. Typically, they let you go with an absolution.

And they forced people to take drugs via a syringe.

Confess your errant thoughts...

And if you were sleepy, they’d give you an active lover.

To get a lover you needed to get 50% approval from the Legislature here.

And you needed a job and past times.

Most brains were being subtly altered.

Mindless zombie small armies roamed the countryside.

If you were an average human they’d let you live your own way. The Leadership feared these zombies.

If you were clever they’d put an implant in your head which would sound like a siren when you’d done the wrong thing.

#

Wildlife parks, no humans allowed. People wondered what was going on there, so they sent drones, illegally. Punishment for using advanced technology was a trip to Limbo, and the Perfects would find out.

But a lot of wildlife was not killed by the war and now roamed free. But nearly all were sick from the radiation. We ate synthetic, non-radioactive food so we left the animals alone. There was plenty of Earth for all of us.

One day, I asked my latest love, "What did she think of the rank #14 palace? I had done some of the design in stone and wood. She said the palace was just as nice as rank #2, but not as good as rank #1.

Luxuries of the rich were unnecessary I felt.

Rank #1 architecture was the architecture of lights and was copied by many of the lower ranks.

Rank #1 got 4000 units of salary and rank 40 got just one unit.

There were 4,000 of us. 2,290 were female.

Every rank had a group of 7 leaders, and I was on group ranked one. They ruled by consensus. The leaders were called mayors.

But anyone could propose legislation to their respective mayors.

Low ranks were not allowed into the high-ranking clubs. There was a lot of snobbery.

And medium ranks made up a lot of bodyguards for the rich and high ranking.

On one occasion a group of 12 low ranks attacked the #3 rank and killed them all and their bodyguards. But the surviving 2 attackers were put to death. It was just a blip on the radar. The high ranks sincerely believed that our society would last forever.

Many wanted to look and feel like the Perfect person. Great faces and minds were patented.

Ranks changed every two months. If you gained a lot of money or wisdom in the previous two months, it would help you increase in rank.

Change homes with a changing rank and people were always redecorating.

If one dropped in rank one would often commit suicide, but there were still plenty of people. Death was final whether it be by murder or suicide.

Everyone had to see a shrink every two months and they ranked you.

Shrinks sometimes used computer surgery to alter your mind to make you blend in better and be happier. Sometimes you went to rehab.

I said, "Ranking is a great evil." And I thought this world was unenlightened. The authorities treated most people poorly

But I was still reasonably happy. I wrote the "Book of Loners" from my experiences and it earned me enduring higher rank. I figured I was a saint.

Many lower ranks were depressed and poor and were generally unhappy. But the leaders reminded the low ranks that they had enough food, drink, drugs and shelter and at least an ordinary car... And were not required to work much.

And the leaders pointed out that eternal youth was here, and people were living longer and longer.

Air cars congregated in a couple of places for the rank #1-3s. In general, only they had enough money.

A rank #1 woman owned the air car business and was very rich.

A certain playwright had moved from rank #10 to rank #2, and everyone was inspired by him. Many others didn't care about rank or were too lazy.

I said my IQ was at the top and my imagination was second to none.

I said we should bring back democracy with no political parties or ranks and everything would be decided by a 2/3 vote. No leaders, everyone can propose legislation.

I wanted communication with the USA federal government which was still relatively powerful and had no Perfects to rule them. There were only 4 cities left on Earth. So, I encouraged people to have children.

"No more regimentation," I said.

And I legalized drugs. In that first year, 70% were on opiates, even though the federal government banned them. Most said their lives were "stressful."

Also, I said, "Bribery should be harshly punished."

"We needed more MRT (mind reading technology) police."

And we needed to, "Get rid of robots."

Freedom counsellors were started by me and could teach people to be freer, instead of law abiding like the shrinks would have it.

I wanted to lead the world.

I said to another rank #1 girl, that I was superior to her and that mediocre minds didn't understand the nature of my work and the shrinks kept trying to demote me... Hoping I wouldn't complain too much.

I said humans were all Gods. Immortal and powerful. We had created meaning.

#

Then I met a girl, rank #13 who said democracy and 2/3 vote for new laws would be preferable to the secret 7 leaders. No political parties, she said.

And she said she'd made some clever porn movies in which the plot was paramount. Henceforth all porn had to be clever everyone agreed.

And she said I was the King of madness and she was the Queen.

But she said she was attracted to cruel men, men of power.

She said, "She didn't like artsy types." And she said, "Imagination is out of control."

"Sanity is just imagination under control," I said.

"Anyway, I have thrown sanity to the winds," I said.

She said, "It is like a freak show, an amusement park were people get their kicks". I asked her if "She had any regrets?"

She said, "Of course, I am not a Perfect. But I just know this world could be more perfect."

But we loved each other anyways and it was good, and then we went our separate ways.

Then I met a girl who said "I was the ideal man, the best man she'd met so far.

Of course, I was cleverer than her, but I basked in her praises. We did everything we wanted in movie script writing. For example, we went to a concert where we were the only concert-goers. And I showed her my book of "Fables." And, we danced. And we went to a jungle full of dangerous wild animals. And your characters could die in the movies, killed by monsters/aliens and other ranks. But violence was limited in movies.

She said, "She was a saint and dedicated her life to helping the mentally ill." I said, "There are certainly a lot of mad people in our society."

And we parted ways after loving.

#

Then I met a girl from the European secret police. She said, "She felt the weight of the world on her shoulders."

I said, "I wanted to live forever as I never got sick of drinking and parties and sex."

This girl, my latest love said, "You are brilliant, but you throw it all away." I said, "I had written a number of fine things." She said, "I had to try harder, to breakthrough with a masterpiece."

She said, "I was masquerading as a rank #1 when I should be the supreme Leader."

She herself was ranked #2. She said, "I know I am a lower ranked than you, but could you love me a little?"

I said, "I want to get into your head, using MRT (mind reading technology)." She said, "It's impossible. Too many secrets."

#

Finally, I gave up drinking, just like that and concentrated on my books. I continued to be one of the Perfects. I had a lot of fan mail. I had a following it seemed.

Then it was my birthday and my favorite love bought me an air car, so I could travel with the upper ranks (she was rank #1).

She said let's go to space and have children (she figured we could do it). But I said we'd only get sick and tired of one another in those cramped spaces.

Anyway, we had a child. We wanted to raise her ourselves, but all children had to go to state day care and boarding schools. People were encouraged to just let their children be free.

She liked my female adventure story, about two females looking for love, in particular.

She said I should write a story of rank #1 females in space and expose them for who they are, that is mostly greedy and power-crazed.

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On one particular night, I asked a girl if "She was feeling crazy tonight?"

It was my favorite pick up line.

But she said, "People like you are the problem, you destabilize society."

She said my art "was empty. And I had been brainwashed by the lower ranks to believe in anarchy."

I said, "There is freedom in madness."

#

Then I met a woman who said, "Every day should be a celebration."

I said, "Life's not that good, but we should certainly live for the day."

She said, "She had an open mind and could love anyone man or woman old or young."

I said, "I couldn't love a man, but I could love pretty much every woman."

And I applied for two female clones...I was successful due to my relatively high rank. The girls said I was the best. The clones had all my memories.

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I wrote a play about an alien from the planet Scyronia. In the play, I said, "I was an ambassador to Earth. I liked the fact that Earth was largely peaceful now and people were kinder and kinder."

"But all this regimentation was an anathema."

"The creator wanted everyone to be free," my character said.

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But the ranks #1 had recently built a temple to alien kind and claimed aliens walked amongst us.

AI was absent from our world and I thought that was a good thing.

I did some research and designed a new beer that had simulated alcohol with all its effects but without any calories. It was quite a feat as many people didn't feel right on the anti-fat pills. The other Perfects were disturbed by my science, but it was so popular they didn't think they could deny it to the people.

#

Different groups travelled from one air hub to the next and partied at every one.

Air hubs had bars and restaurants, dance halls and video game worlds (using very simplistic computers).

Rank didn't matter at air hubs, but only the rich could afford an air car.

I was one of the rich. And I dressed in black which indicated I opted out of rank.

Many were proud of their rank and dressed in the colors. About 99% did that.

Then I met a woman who said, "The world was ready for revolution. All this regimentation has to stop," she said.

She said, "She just wanted to live in a cave and work on her art and not be forced to do all these things that society demanded."

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Then I met a girl who said, "She was heavily in debt and could I help her?" She asked.

I said my high-ranking friends could put up the money but then we would control her company. She reluctantly agreed. It was a lingerie business and now I was a businessman.

I told her "I know what men like."

#

I met a lot of people who scorned this regimented society we lived in. But many of the upper ranks said the people needed regimentation and discipline.

And we needed to "fight against evil."

And people "Need to feel good about themselves."

Yes, I said, "Kind acts are important."

She said, "Cruel to be kind."

And she was a writer of horror scripts. Her tales were full of the beast within.

She said to lose control of your mind was common with MRT (mind reading technology) and it was the worst thing that could happen to you. Worse than death, even.

She liked my “Tales of Madness.” She said, “Horror and madness go together.”

#

Then I met a girl who was rank #1, but was having problems trying to be a writer. I told her, “Start with flash fiction, short shorts and work from that. Just try and be intelligent I said.

She said, “She was pleased to meet me. And she liked my hell fire paintings and limbo paintings and stories to go along with them.”

But I had met members of the “Diabolical Society,” and I was wary of writing more madness. For example, “Black Widow.” Who used my fingerprints and a picture of my iris to clean out my bank account.

I said, “I would never stop writing and would go on partying and writing for thousands of years.”

And I said, “To feel eternally youthful is sublime.”

But she said, “This society is doomed. There’s too much regimentation. It is just a matter of the straw that will break the camel’s back.”

Another girl told me, “Life is truly Utopia. It is like an addiction.”

Another girl told me, “Freedom is like poison. We weren’t meant to be free.”

Another girl said, “She was an old-fashioned girl.” I told her, “She was a joke.”

Then I met a mama san from a house of ill repute. She was looking for more girls and had just recruited 2 new ones. She wanted me to try them out. So, I did, and they were both lusty and the sex was excellent.

Sex disease was all cured. This happened in 2041 and was advanced technology but the Perfects let it ride.

I said I had no more patience in hunting the AGH sloth tiger. But finally, two of them attacked us and we used our machine guns to kill them both. But not before they ripped off one of my four accomplice’s leg. Of course, we could regrow it. Anyway, they made a nice trophy. Some got a head, others a paw.

#

Then I met the “flower man.” He had designed new flowers which were very colorful. In total 41 flowers for the 40 ranks and 1 for the perfects. They were very colorful and gave off a magnificent scent.

And he had written some scripts for films about fighting evil. In one of the films he had an evil character who sought to undermine the whole civilization. A true debaser.

It was legal to base your characters on real people.

And he also said that deep down we are all beasts, vicious beasts.

And he said that ambition and adversity need to be emphasized more in education. Life was too easy with everything arranged for you.

He told me my problem was I “laughed at rank.” I said, “I am trying to find my own way.”

“Dissent,” he said.

#

And my friend Boris and I, had a rank #1 informant tell us that the other rank #1s were holding us back. It was a conspiracy of “the evil 5.” which included all 5 other Perfects.

We put the documentary together in 10 days. I guess they weren’t in our minds during this period.

And we put kindness first which made us difficult to hate. And we showed the documentary on TV. It made quite a splash.

Other people came forward and disputed their assigned rank.

Then there was war.

It was hand to hand combat many victims of the regime helped us. Finally, the evil 5 were jailed. They were guilty of using MRT (mind reading technology) to get into many peoples’ heads and drive us to drink and drugs.

Finally, order was restored, and my friend, Boris and I, were promoted to Perfects.

They hoped we would keep the system. But we insisted that the evil 5 remain jailed in Limbo and henceforth everyone could use MRT if all parties were willing. In particular the various spy agencies would be monitored by civilian groups to make sure they didn’t abuse MRT.

And we took away all the regimentation. And brain surgery was outlawed, and we checked this with MRT. And hypnosis.

And now people were free to do anything and love anyone they wanted anytime. If they had no lover they could get state lovers, who were very skilled and somewhat charming.

Sometimes a person of low rank came up with a musical hit (one hit wonder) or told a single brilliant story. We believed everyone had this potential. And they would get a lot of money for their higher ranking. So, there was always hope.

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My friend Boris and I spent all our money on test tube babies, creating 50 each. We need more people like us, we both agreed. And we proposed a law allowing the purchase of up to five clones, but in reality, only the top few ranks could even afford one.

And we set up a monastery for the youth to learn discipline and the wonders of literature. Kindness and imagination.

And I changed my face completely to look more intelligent.
My latest love said, "You sure put a lot of emphasis on intelligence."

#

Then I was back in the imagination game. The topic was use wooden barrels to create architecture. I filled all my barrels with beer and rigged a hose to mix different beers together. And I made pillars of barrels and half barrel roofing. And I made a beer waterfall. But I finished 3rd out of 40. It was a disappointing result.

#

Then I went to a new shrink, this one was a beautiful woman. I asked her if, "She was crazy?"

She said, "Most people fear/hate crazy people."

She said, "Optimists form the upper echelons of this society. Those who are cynical and have bad attitudes or crazy are a detriment to society. You shoot yourself in the foot."

I asked, "How would you judge your other clients?"

She said, "Most are on opiates and wallow in the low ranks." She said, "We should ban opiates." I retorted, "Some didn't like this society, and should be given, the option to opt out."

She said, "We should press people harder."

I said, "You are crazy."

She said, "She was a driven woman, seeking perfection."

And I talked to her about the barrels, I didn't feel my design was perfect. But I said how can I be a perfect, if I am not always #1? She said, "In the end you are #1 rank and will always be a Perfect for your past deeds. Seven Perfects... My face was perfect, my voice was electric, I smelled especially good."

Then I talked with her about the butterfly subject for the imagination game. I had played it recently. When I thought of butterflies I thought how people who love them kill them and put them in a book. These thoughts were all the work of a Perfect.

#

Then I met a girl who said she was truly in love with her partner. But she was my type and I asked for her love. I said, "It would be unkind not to love me." She replied, "It would be unkind to leave my partner. But let's have sex by all means."

And she said, "Haven't I met you before?" I said, "Perhaps you have changed your face. I certainly have."

I said, "We probably met at an air car party for southern Asia." She answered, "I believe in air car freedom."

Then I met a girl who was a former high-class escort. She said she had to sow her wild oats, to get it out of her system. Now she wanted love affairs.

My nemesis in rank one laughed at me for loving a prostitute, and said I knew nothing of love.

Then I met a guy who was pleased I'd legalized drugs and I had made him astonishingly rich, so, he gave me a gift of \$1 billion to do with as I saw fit. He had a Southern Asia chain of drug stores called, "Imagination Drugs."

Then I met a girl who said, "We should get rid of rank altogether. And open people's minds to different types of freedom."

She was Miss Universe and claimed to be the sexiest woman alive.

She said, "We'd make an excellent royal couple," she said.

"We are only limited by our imagination," I quipped.

And we saw each other exclusively, it was no longer against the law. But we had many supporters and the top rank didn't dare try to come after me again.

Then I met another lover who asked, "You are an alien aren't you?"

I replied, "What if I am?"

She said, "You are trying to take over the world; just you, one little man.

I said, "I only wish for kindness and less regimentation. Is that too much to ask?"

She said, "I would be assassinated."

I said, "There hasn't been a political assassination since the war. Enough of violence."

Then I met a woman who'd made a movie about a mad man that was "beyond ranking." And it was about me. She wrote in the script that I was the devil incarnate.

I was getting to be kind of infamous but at the same time a hero to others.

As a Perfect I had much better conversations than others.

Love games, kind games, imagination games and future games...

And as a perfect I wondered why humans who left during the nuclear war on Earth didn't come back. We were all given a cure to radiation which still existed all over the place.

The violent video games were so popular we couldn't limit or ban them. Just encourage people to play games that were artistic and peaceful, historical worlds (we sometimes cloned ancient people from burials) and worlds of future science. But no improving your DNA.

The video games were all recorded by an invisible camera on your forehead. If it was a good game you'd sell it as a movie. And this could result in a rank promotion.

Some movies had an open ending and the players/watchers had to devise one of their own. Great movies had hundreds of good endings.

Some movie worlds grew many spices and types of synthetic food and drink. Some copyrighted new dishes/drinks and increased rank.

Rank vote was now once a year during the New Year's holidays (2 weeks vacation for all).

I was working on a history museum of great women and also a history of stock market successes.

We had a stock market based on individual CEOs of their own company with a market rating/rank.

I now lived in a house of concentric concrete circles around each of 3 square houses of wood and grey stone, connected by wooden bridges. I wasn't the greatest architect, but I thought I was good.

Magic land, people flew and moved objects with their minds, appeared and disappeared and so on. I came to a magic land and met a nymph. She was a sexy and she said she wanted to take me to her village. The village was of mud brick painted all sorts of different colors. She introduced me to her elders and then grabbed me and made love to me in one of the houses of color. She said, "Life is all about luck. She enjoyed playing games of chance."

"Civilization, A.D. 2350, #151," was the latest version of this classic game of world dominance. Most players had a craft in the game such as tailor or architect.

Despite everything, many people thought imagination was largely useless, but even they admitted the way you used your knowledge was imagination.

Then one day in the game I signed up for a mission to Mars. The population of 210 there was in revolt about Earth rule. We killed the 10 ringleaders and reasserted control. But they weren't really dead

But I didn't want to go back to Earth... But I did anyways.

Space was very dangerous however. It was estimated that 10% of those away from Earth died every year.

But then some 100 humans who had left Earth many years ago returned to Earth in a powerful space ship and announced rank was over and they were the rulers now.

And I put my new lover in chains and told her she served my pleasure only. If she didn't please me I'd send her back to Earth as a very low rank.

And super humans were better emotionally, physically, mentally, spiritually and so on... but were still just in the planning stage.

And we were sometimes visited by an apparition who demanded gold, or she would haunt us, we gave in to her demands.

Then one day I met a woman who confided in me that she was a member of physics anonymous. It was an underground movement which was working on building an interstellar engine. I said I am not a scientist, but could make a good astronaut, being multi-talented in the Sciences and the Arts.

And she said they had invented a more effective anti-radiation medication that led to good health and boisterous offspring.

No more two-headed humans or humans born missing organs or limbs.

And as time passed I found I had loved all 2,219 women here. It was time to move on.

And so, one day in A.D. I left the Himalayan enclave. They said I was crazy to leave but gave me a jeep to drive and I headed West.

I didn't know what I was looking for but was curious how humanity was holding up, and I just wanted to be free. Free of regimentation.

I immediately came upon some wandering victims of radiation poisoning. They were covered in sores and were hairless.

They were all dying.

Air motorcycles roared overhead almost every day. I envied their freedom, but reflected that they were probably not as free as they seemed.

For several weeks I headed deeper and deeper into the Indian plain.

I had a jeep with 200 gallons of gas stored in the back.

One day I met some traveling cyborgs. They told me they were the future and could survive virus attacks. I wished them luck, but they gave me the creeps.

They had MRT (mind reading technology).

And they knew I didn't like them, but they let me go on my way saying, "liberty."

And Boris and I we cooked some heroin and sold it for gold to buy laser weapons on our jeep.

Many people were sick from radiation or viruses and wanted opiates to kill the pain. We were doing good deeds, I figured.

We told people we met that we had been gold miners and now had the jeep and gas and gold.

We heard rumors that Washington DC, USA had put a group of people on the Moon. And we wanted to go there. To get the hell off of Earth. But we also wanted to go to D.C. which was said to be a booming town

In time our group expanded dramatically. After one year of leaving our enclave we were now in Iraq and had five gasoline trucks and 100 tanks and a few fighter aircraft as well as 2,000 ground troops.

In Turkey they allowed us safe passage and wished us good luck; they were very hospitable to us.

Drug dealers...

Set up my officers in control of European countries. Our main army quickly grew to 20,000 personnel.

"Join me, join the Empire," I said.

I now had a busload of women who were my lovers. If they cheated on me I'd leave them behind on the road, I did MRT on them regularly.

We were now in Macedon following the road to Serbia via Greece. We had read the books of the ancient Greeks. But the modern Greeks were dismal hovel dwellers and had no intellectual ferment. But I said my convoy army and spin offs with my generals made me the King of the Middle East!

Our convoy now had two hundred laser tanks and 300 other vehicles and 3000 troops.

We seemed to be invincible.

In Serbia we came across a traveling circus with rare animals and acrobats. They filled local arenas that were largely in the open air with no roof on the arenas (destroyed during the wars).

And an artist made a statue of me with a copy of my brain and people could ask me questions on any subject. We set the statue up in the center of Belgrade. It was very advanced biogenetics. We decided to set one up in every city I controlled. A Temple of Mankind would house the statue in the holy of holies. Priests were armed with lasers and subject to MRT often.

Official historians told us we were destiny.

They tranquilized the animals and themselves took opiates.

And they had all sorts of mutants traveling with them. It was a freak show.

And they sold us video games from 2301, last year, which they manufactured. It was their biggest export.

And we met some traveling gypsies who had attractive prostitutes and original music and stealing from others to make ends meet.

And if would be recruits wanted to join us they needed to pass an IQ test of my own design.

And I met a neat lover, an Irish poetess, who told me Art was the future. She was my favorite lover.

I continued to trade in weapons and drugs.

In Serbia, Boris and I, we each met a lover and got elected to the town council in Belgrade.

We used our position to enrich ourselves and bought another jeep. We took each of our lovers with us. They spoke good English. Their names were Daphne and Gretchen. I had the latter. And we commandeered a laser rifle that would waste other people in front of you at a 90- degree angle.

But unbeknownst to Boris, I made love on several occasions to Daphne and impregnated her.

And we had two-way MRT which we purchased as city councillors.

So, we left for the Dalmatian coast. We had a large supply of opium which we sold there.

Many of the Croats were cancer victims and so lived for the day; the hospitals weren't much good.

Then we came upon a fortress house surrounded by vineyards. They welcomed us here like old friends and we partied for several weeks before moving on.

It was my 51st birthday...

We elected my Irish lover "Queen" so she was in charge of women's issues, which had been sadly neglected in post apocalyptic days.

And I was elected Emperor.

And I went to a new shrink who had an attractive personality. Intimate just like in the Himalayas' Regimented Society. I read her mind and she read mine.

I said if we had just had MRT on everyone in the first place the war never would have happened.

I had agents all over the Middle East and Eastern Europe who were loyal to me.

We sunbathed on the beaches and soon were in Venice. We bought a gondola and partied with the Italians.

I loved an Italian prostitute and had good love. But I told Gretchen if she cheated on me we'd leave her behind.

Then Gretchen was pregnant also.

We went to Austria and bought another laser and soon we were in Germany where we planned to have our two babies.

Germany was uneventful. And the babies were born. Gretchen had twins. The Germans still had remnants of an army and air force, but they welcomed us as guests.

In Germany neo-Nazi gangs roamed the countryside, but we traveled in convoys from city to city.

All hamlets in Germany had walls usually with an electrified fence.

In the Black Forest it was full of monsters like a nightmare fairy tale.

Then in Germany we came to a castle near Frankfurt which was rich from beautiful prostitutes and it was rumored the blood of travelers was drunk by the nobles. We just stayed here one night and then went our way without episode.

Then we came to a village in which a man's home was his castle. But most of the dwellers here were simulacra. And they used MRT (mind reading technology) to get into our heads.

But we got into their heads too, and they agreed to let us pass.

They told us that all of Africa was controlled by holograms. And many settlements elsewhere. I wondered if it was true.

And then our jeep was stopped by a zombie blockade. But we zapped them with our lasering front of us, killing these freaks.

I kept dreaming of large white balls.

The white balls were clever and used synergy to make things with telekinesis.

They were in my mind and told me to build a nice settlement in Europe.

And then we were in France. The French military was 1,000 men and they had a number of tanks and aircraft. But they bowed to me as Emperor. And we just passed by and went to Calais where we heard we could get a ship to England. There were no long-distance jets or air cars, so we had to go by boat.

People asked us why we were going to America and we told them it was Boris and I's home.

While in France, Gretchen caught one of the deadly viruses, so we let her out on the road to die. It was a tearful goodbye, but we couldn't risk catching the deadly disease. I took her child with us.

The population of England was 6,000, most living in New London.

In London we had a good time in the pubs and after a week we purchased passaged on a boat.

But nearly everyone in New London was on opiates...

And they grew drugs and food hydroponically in safe underground greenhouses...

We arrived in DC, where they said much of their brain trust had been wiped out. But they were glad to see us. I was originally from Boston which was now abandoned completely.

Boris decided to stay with me in DC (his home was in Portland, Oregon, which no longer existed).

We communicated by short wave radio as there were no more satellites and DC had a lively arts scene.

Cities in the US all had their own mint, but all printed the same USD. Counterfeit was difficult to determine.

For work we recovered steel from the ruins of East coast cities and sold it for a large profit. The girls helped us dig and we had a backhoe which we'd purchased and anti-radiation medication for the radioactive ruins.

DC had a number of air car bombers to MRT attack the other American kingdoms. And the city had a defensive aura that would deflect missiles back to where they came from.

DC population was 5,000. The total population of America was about 250,000. The five kingdoms were DC, Dallas, L.A. Lake Placid, and Tulsa.

Tulsa was the last Christian state in the world, population 8,000. Crazy Mary was their leader.

Some said Crazy Mary was a death worshipper.

L.A. was still generating movies, mostly horror and the people weren't laid back like before; tense rather.

Lake Placid was a trading entrepot between L.A. and DC and there were a lot of new factories there.

And Dallas was a haven for scientists of all types including biochemists. They wanted to cure viruses above all.

We also cooked amphetamines to sell to the hungry DC market. People here were eager to get high.

It was rumored that there were some super humans here in DC who talked down to us, so we could understand, and it was not officially illegal for genetic enhancement.

Daphne was pregnant, and I liked having her around me. I assumed the baby was mine.

But there were many other women in my life. Many women were just grateful to still be alive and were lonely without most or all of their families.

There were still some people hiding in sealed underground bunkers, we radioed them and told them it was safe to come out, but they didn't believe us.

New gas masks were produced and given to all DC's citizens and most people had a sealed room where they could safely take off their gas masks.

No one knew when the next virus attack was going to happen.

Earth is dying many people said.

Many roadside wanderers succumbed to viruses without the new gas masks and lay dead by the roadside and flies would transmit the virus to others.

D.C. had a truck pick up the corpses and burn them.

And D.C.'s population was finally growing again. It gave people a lot of hope for the future.

And telephone service had been re-established with Europe.

I agreed with the authorities to use MRT on all humans within range (50 km range) to suss out who was making new viruses.

We broke up two killer labs that were using their viruses to depopulate land so that they could have the land.

And WW III was finally coming to a close. After a number of years.

Still Russia, China and India had gangs of armed men sent to de-stabilize America and its allies.

And prostitutes with slow acting viruses killed many.

Boris said, "There are 5 different independent regions of the USA. And technically they were all at war with one another. But the fighting was dying down now.

The Kingdom of D.C. was in chaos before my coming.

I said there's a way. Use MRT (mind reading technology), to control the thoughts of the dissidents.

Problem of scientist who'd work for money doing illicit deeds. MRT couldn't happen fast enough.

Jobs were disappearing, and many people had no use.

To be a free man was the crux of the situation.

Kindness and intelligence.

Limited only by imagination.

The End

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A Regimented Post-Apocalyptic Society
Tom Ball
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