

Fading Dreams

by J. Tuomas Harviainen (2005).

Game Information

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Organizing Guidelines

The players are allowed and even encouraged to invent things to flesh out their characters and to provide more playable content.

The genre is realism, so no fantasy elements are to be included, nor any drastic surprises like “by the way, I have won the lottery and pay everything for you all”. Explain this in advance so that everyone understands this.

The intent is to explore minimalism. Boredom can be an inspiring part of that.

The game starts by one character saying in a neutral voice “I am unemployed.”, and then another one saying “So am I.” After that discussion is free.

THE MASON

You are a mason and a bricklayer, recently divorced. You have for some years had a low-scale drinking problem and find it difficult to hold up a good work quality any longer. Your hands shake when you should concentrate and focus. You are aware of your situation and not happy about it. You dream about getting to see your children again without a social worker always being present and watching over. You live in a tiny apartment in the suburbs, paid by the city. Your hobbies are playing cards and drinking non-fancy beer. You like dogs.

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THE PAINTER

You are a skilled interior wall painting specialist, but can no longer do your work. Your asthma has become so severe that you are seriously oversensitive to the chemicals you would need to do it right. This is the first time you have been unemployed in your entire life and you are afraid that your spouse will leave you because of this situation. You own a car but not much else, and are unsure of whether you will even be soon able to pay its insurance or gasoline costs.

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THE SECRETARY

You are a trained secretary with a vocational degree for it. You have become unemployed some months ago, because you did not agree with your boss making passes at you. As the boss won't recommend you for new employers either, you find it difficult to get a new job. You live alone, in a rented apartment owned by the city. You have a cat. You love sunsets, the smell of coffee in the morning, and care and tenderness given to your hair. You are a very neat and clean person. You devotedly believe in God.

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THE ENTREPRENEUR

You are a former entrepreneur, a victim of market forces that prevented your company from becoming a success (choose both company size and business as you see fit, just not too large). You are highly organized, efficient and good at taking initiative. You dislike the idea of having to work for someone else. You are married and have two children, Marc and Elise. Your hobbies include books, going to the church, and evening walks.

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THE CLEANER

You are a trained industrial and facility cleaner, but currently unemployed. You have trouble falling asleep, which causes you to easily sleep too late in the morning. Because of that, holding on to a job is very difficult for you. You like art and other forms of “high” culture a lot, even as you do not always understand it very well. You also like beer, dancing and jogging, and taking care of your sister’s two small children. You do not have any of your own, or even a spouse or significant other.

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THE UNSKILLED WORKER

You have no formal education beyond basic schooling and you make do with welfare and occasional cash in hand jobs that you do not report. You find all social situations somewhat threatening and you react accordingly. You are not really aggressive, however, and dislike fighting. What you would really just want is someone you could love and who would happily fall asleep in your arms every night. You like simple, basic rock music, films made in your own country, and newspaper comic strips.

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THE STAY AT HOME PARENT

You have been home with your three children for many years. Now your spouse has suddenly left you without warning, not even filing divorce papers yet. You no longer have a clear idea how to handle many things in modern society beyond things like going grocery shopping, and your account balance has dropped below zero because you did not anticipate the service fees charged by your bank every month. You desperately want to get a job, any job, and are worried sick that the social services will take your children away from you.

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THE TEACHER

You teach in elementary school. Or, in fact, that school was closed down and since you were always employed there on a one-year contract, no longer have a job. For some reason you have ever been selected for any of the new posts to which you have applied and you are becoming desperate. What you want is to teach others, both children and adults, and make them see how many things are actually happening in the world all the time. You live alone. Your self-esteem and self-confidence are right now very low.

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THE SOCIAL WORKER

You are a former social worker who became an early retiree because of a severe nervous breakdown. You are feeling much better now and would like to get back to work. It frustrates you that you have to sit here and wait for your turn to beg for money from the society. You had a significant other who lived with you, but that ended soon after you fell ill and you are now alone. What you most love in life is helping others and showing that you care about them.

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THE STUDENT

You are a physics student whose financial support months have run out. Therefore you have to wait here and ask for welfare until you graduate. You think that you are much more intelligent than most people and you have a hard time adjusting to situation when they do not know as much about basic things as you do. You are nevertheless also very lonely and would like to make friends. You like reading, following many news channels, and drawing (even as you are not really good at it, and you know it).

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THE FISHER

You love being at sea and were thus a professional fisher. Unfortunately your business was too small and thus went under. Now you support your family through occasional mixed work at harbors, plus welfare. Your spouse is an invalid bound to a wheelchair. You have a four year old son, Tim. You believe that you are the only thing keeping your family alive and functional, and if you cannot endure, they cannot either. Your other big love besides the sea is the slow drinking of black coffee in morning without any hurry.

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THE TROUBLED YOUTH

You are lazy and dislike honest work. You think it is the society's duty to support you. You like alcohol, lying on couches, and watching sports on the TV. You are lonely and crave human contact and attention, especially the admiration of your good traits. You have no idea, really, what those good traits actually might be. You have come to the social series office today because you need money to buy a new phone that you desire. Despite your tough exterior, you are not very fond of the selfish person you see in the mirror, and know that you will one day have to change, even if you deny that for now.

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THE DRUNKARD

Your life revolves around alcohol. You live your days between the states of being hung over and being drunk. You have little energy for keeping yourself well or healthy. You would never, however, desert or betray your friends and drinking buddies, and despite your problems are utterly loyal to people that you like. A long time ago you had a family and financial success, but that feels more like a dream nowadays. When you talk to people you tend to get close to them and even touch them on the hand or shoulder, in a kind, fatherly manner.

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THE FACTORY LINE WORKER

You are a former factory worker who used to do package processing, but you are now an early retiree. You have severe arthritis and can no longer do physical work. You do not have any formal education either, and would frankly not fit a white collar job anyhow. Therefore, you have no idea what to do now. Your spouse left you years ago and you are very lonely. Your best, almost sole, friend died just a couple of weeks ago. Your main hobby is daily soap opera watching, and occasionally shopping channel watching as well (you never buy anything from there, though). You believe firmly in God.

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THE CASHIER

You work at the checkout counter of a large grocery store, but the pay is not enough to support your family. You have six children. Your spouse went out six months ago “to buy some cigarettes” and never returned. You nevertheless firmly believe that everything will somehow work out well in the end. The welfare state takes care of its citizens. You believe in God, always vote socialist, and enjoy playing board games with your kids.

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