The God Game

When you decide to play god make sure you know where the games start and end

Chester Longley is many things, chief among them an exceedingly successful businessman and creator of an empire producing the most globally popular games on the mass market.

He is also an upper class elitist who has never endured misfortune. He's a staunch conservative who believes that class isn't just a circumstance of birth; it's an indicator of character.

He is in equal parts superior, insecure, vain, snobbish and fearful – the perfect gentleman with a taste for sadism and elegance.

To a man who spends most of his time concocting new schemes and situations for his company to develop – games playing is what life is all about – everything is a game: sex, life, death.

Long tired of the corporate politics that have overshadowed the empire born of his zealous imagination, Chester decides on one last great game of his own in order to find a candidate, or candidates, who will make befitting successors for his dynasty following his retirement. And it is with this in mind he summons a mishmash of five of his employees to his country retreat and presents them with his proposition.

Four of the five ragtag band couldn't be happier about the surreal opportunity that has fallen in their laps, certain the old man has finally lost the plot and all they are to do is ride out his little charade then leapfrog straight to the top of the corporate ladder.

Only the most junior member of the group, mailroom assistant Billy Hunter, a hard worker who has struggled for every gain in life, has doubts, feeling that any offer seeming too good to be true probably is. He has known pain, hardship and humiliation. For him, games are just another way the rich and powerful assert their clout over the lower lines of society. And Chester's offer, given ever so politely with near-murderous intent, does nothing to change his steadfast opinion.

But his higher ranking and more ambitious colleagues, reluctant to let their cautious subordinate ruin the auspicious chance, apply some fairly relentless arm-twisting. Eventually Billy reluctantly agrees, despite still being certain there must be some deeply hidden twisted catch within the deceptively simply packaging.

And Billy's uncanny moment of foresight turns out to be one to which they well should have heeded for Chester's game turns out to be one that will take them to places they could not have imagined, the challenges and scenarios that come their way proving to be more difficult, and for some more deadly, than they could ever have dreamt possible. But, desperate to get their grubby little hands on the up for grabs slice of corporate pie, greed and ambition force the most headstrong among them to dig their heels in despite seeing their lives fly evermore out of control.

Ultimately when the winners, and more pertinently the losers among the group are announced, all sides finally catch on to the full depth of the game's deception.

With a final twist as cruel as it is inevitable, certain parties discover they have been played from more angles than ever they realised and the "little game" descends into a squirming mass of double-cross and betrayal where the participants, including the great games master himself, find out that if you try to play god too hard god's going to show you just who's boss.

And in the end, it is one of the least expected contestants that demonstrates that not only is he a player of Chester's caliber, but he's faster, less principled, and shrewd enough to save the final winning hand for himself.

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