

THE DEVIL'S DICE

Written by

Ralph Smith

FADE IN:

EXT. LONELY COUNTRY CHURCH - NIGHT

RAIN and LIGHTNING. A 1942 Ford pulls over on the single-lane highway. ROBERT (41) exits, eyes locked on the church.

Neither the sleek cut of his suit nor his handsome face can hide what he's looking for so intently: salvation.

SUPER: JULY 16th, 1945

INT. LONELY COUNTRY CHURCH - NIGHT

The church is plain, but well-kept by people who cherish it. Robert walks quietly up the aisle, passing the church's sole other occupant, a dark-skinned OLD MAN with head bowed.

Robert sits in the front pew and clasps his hands awkwardly. His eyes fall on the crucifix and the figure it bears.

ROBERT

H- Hello.

Jesus stares fixedly back. Robert clears his throat.

ROBERT

I understand with Laplace that we do not need you as a hypothesis. But without necessity, I still understand the...desire, to talk. There's something I will do today.

Behind him, the Old Man breaks into a COUGHING FIT. Robert startles, then hunches and talks lower.

ROBERT

I thought with my colleague...with the disciplines of physics and mathematics, indeed...he has said, as you might know, that God does not...that you do not play dice with the universe.

THUNDER outside. The Old Man COUGHS louder. Robert stands and paces, stopping in front of a stoup containing holy water.

ROBERT

I believed, as he does, that we would find the answer.

He dips a finger in the holy water. Ripples emanate outwards.

ROBERT

That we would learn to know the total state of the universe at one time, and that we would learn to know it for all time.

His rippled reflection stares back.

ROBERT

We just want to see as you. The infinity of time and space laid out as a story for the telling. But I fear now that only uncertainty will be certain. I fear Heisenberg's thoughts and I fear for a universe that we will never know. I fear that we will find not the beauty of your sight but the power of your hand.

The final ripples disappear, the water placid again.

ROBERT

You know what we will try to do today. So you know why I must think that you are a player of dice. But the dice that keep us from truth must belong to the Devil.

He reaches into his pocket...

...and draws out a SMALL PISTOL.

ROBERT

The one world that I had power to destroy was housed in my skull. I never wanted power of a greater reach than that. To end all of one existence is too much already. There may still be a time...

He raises the pistol, presses it against his jaw.

ROBERT

To end one existence might cancel the infernal uncertainty I will unleash on the world.

Suddenly, COUGHING. Right behind Robert.

The Old Man claps a hand on Robert's shoulder and gestures desperately at the holy water. His face is bright red. Robert sets the gun down and scoops holy water into his hands.

The Old Man leans down and drinks deeply. Slowly, he regains control of his lungs. His face returns to its normal colour.

OLD MAN

It is my good chance that you were here.

Outside, the RAIN stops.

EXT. LONELY COUNTRY CHURCH - DAWN

Robert strides to the car and pulls away.

INT. LONELY COUNTRY CHURCH - DAWN

The Old Man settles back into a pew. A PAIR OF DICE in his hand, white with black pips. But the pips are MOVING, impossibly black...they almost seem to WHISPER WITH EVIL.

EXT. DESERT TEST SITE - DAWN

A B-29 aeroplane banks high above Robert's head as he walks toward a bunker, pulling on safety goggles.

INT. LONELY COUNTRY CHURCH - DAWN

The Old Man presses a finger against one side of the dice. The PIPS STRETCH OUT and envelop his finger. He presses another finger down, and another, the pips twisting around his hand lovingly. His fingers GLOW WHITE against the black.

OLD MAN

I have thought of it. To give a single life and take these numbers away. To no longer be the bearer of death. I have thought of it. But it is too terrible to think on long.

EXT. DESERT TEST SITE - DAWN

A MUSHROOM CLOUD BLOOMS over the Trinity Test Site. Robert's face is bathed in the light of the blast.

ROBERT

Now.

FADE OUT.