

Metagame (review)

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A friend of mine sent this to me with guarded praise. "It's not great, but it's interesting". Quite a rave.

And let's just be clear that when I read, my editing light is lit. I love well-crafted prose, and the horn goes off when something jostles the story flow. For example, in *Metagame*, we have "R-shaped streetlights" (an issue of case, I think). A smiler: "Lily let go of D_Light's hand, no longer needing him to guide her; he, however, did not let go of hers." And this jolly description: "Even so, D_Light thought he could make out a large humanoid head like that of a large man." (a rose like a
rose, perhaps?)

Overwriting aside, *Metagame* is the story of a future utopia where everyone plays games termed as "spankers" (fun games) or "grinders" (work games). It's an interesting concept, as success in either will bring points (I liked the guy directing cleaning bots in his grinder game, trying to keep them as efficient as possible). In this, the world do
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approach utopia levels, because finally most people can find work suitable for their passions. Even the pursuing investigators are playing their game with an eye to their score.

D_Light, the main character, is quite interesting in his flaws, that of being successful in his games yet immature in his worldview (so recognizable as the office Everquest champion who babbles about elves in elevators). He becomes infatuated with Lily, a girl with a mysterious (and, as he find out, horrifying) past. In this, D_Light represents the accomplishment of maturity. When the time comes and the last page nears, he steps admirably into the only heroic mold he can.

Really, *Metagame* is like a movie shot on a tight budget with second-rate actors, yet in the final few minutes of screen time suddenly makes a worthy point, one you think about on the way home. You might not buy the DVD, but it was fun to watch. Once.