

FELIX FONTAINE'S DICE-THROW MEANINGS (3-DICE)

(circa 1862)

Introduction

The divinatory significance of the various-numbered dice throws can change slightly over time, yet some similarities persist. These dice-throw meanings are based on all the numerical results which can from the throwing of three dice into a circle of sufficient size for divination, no smaller than 7 inches and no larger than 12 inches in circumference. Fontaine cautions the caster to shun throwing the dice for divinatory purposes on either Mondays or Wednesdays, as these two days are considered unlucky for dice divination. No explanation is given as to why, it's just one of those rules of divination.

Fontaine states that if, when you throw the three dice and any land outside the circle, then the cast 'goes for nothing' and you must throw again, but the fact that it happened at all means sharp words will be exchanged, and worse, if any of the dice fall to the floor, then the verbal argument will come to blows.

If when you throw the dice, two of the three dice show the same number face-up, it means news is coming from abroad, apart from the significance of the whole number derived from the face-up sides of all three dice.

If when throwing the dice, one of the dice lands on top of another, then it means a gift is coming, apart from the significance of the whole number derived from the face-up sides of the dice.

Fontaine's predictions on the dice are mostly long-term prophecies, but a few are more short-term. He does not pull his punches, either. Don't ask of Fontaine's dice throw interpretations what sort of person you're going to marry, or if you're going to marry your current lover, if you aren't as much prepared to hear a cold, unvarnished truth as you would be good news. If you're going to marry a drunkard, a ne'er-do-well, or a person of low-character, Fontaine will tell you.

This glossary of dice-throw meanings covers the significance of throws three through eighteen; two and one are disregarded by Fontaine. Unlike any other writers on dice divination I have seen, Fontaine breaks down his dice-throw meanings demographically. A young girl will not draw the same meaning from a given throw as either an adult businessman, a farmer or a married woman might. These demographically-distinct predictions come from a nineteenth-century mindset, so that must be kept in mind when interpreting a throw. I offer Fontaine's take on the dice's meanings here in order to augment and add depth to the other extant lore about the dice's meanings.

Fontaine states these meanings are based on three years' worth of personal observations by him as to how they manifest in people's lives, so I credit him with telling his truth in this matter. Aside from correcting much of the punctuation, changing a word whose meaning has changed, or adding a word or two in order to clarify meaning, I have left these dice divination meanings substantially as Felix Fontaine wrote them in the early 1860s C.E.

-Euphonia Carstairs

FELIX FONTAINE'S DICE-THROW MEANINGS

Three: If a young girl throws this number (three aces), it foretells that she will have numerous lovers, and if she marries, she will become a widow. To a young man, it denotes he will never marry, but will be a great favorite of the ladies, and probably a cheerful seducer. If a married person throws it, he or she will become a widower or a widow, as the case may be.

Four: To throw this number denotes frivolity in love matters. Unmarried persons who throw it will have many lovers or sweethearts, and will not be fully satisfied with either. It foretells to a married woman that her husband admires the sex generally, quite as much as he does her. But it also denotes that she will have many children and that both herself and her husband will live to raise them.

Five: To throw this number of spots of the dice, foretells good luck in land speculation to anyone who is about buying lands. It is a very good number for farmers, prognosticating a fortunate season to come. To lovers, it shows that some obstacle will present itself to their marriage, or else they will quarrel. In a family, it is a sign that some person will soon visit there that is not welcome. If you are about to go on a journey, and throw this number, you will meet with someone who will bother you, or that you dislike, or else some disagreeable accident will happen; but the accident will not be serious.

Six: If a girl throws this number (three deuces), it denotes that she will be of a lively, cheerful disposition and have many lovers, but will never marry. If she escapes illicit connections, she will be fortunate, and she will probably get some money by will. To a young man, it denotes he will marry a high-spirited wife, who will be of loose principles; and also that he himself will keep a mistress, and perhaps become a gambler. He will not be poor, as long as he is young and attractive, but he will either die young, or become poor in middle age. To gamblers, the throwing of this number is a sign of success in winning money.

Seven: If a man throws this number, it foretells he will never marry, but will be lucky in business speculations. A young lady who throws it will be apt to marry a wealthy husband, though he may not be an agreeable companion. To farmers and mechanics, it is not a particularly bad number, though it does not promise them much success, and it foretells that they will have to work pretty hard to keep even with the world.

Eight: This is the miser's throw. Those who throw it will probably be well-off, though not rich. It foretells a miserly or stingy disposition, and a character too close in money matters to be very prosperous. If a girl throws this number to test the character of her lover, she may be assured that he will not be poor, though it is possible he may lead her an unhappy life from his selfish and penurious habits.

FELIX FONTAINE'S DICE THROW MEANINGS (CONT.)

Nine: If you throw this number with the dice in reference to your future husband or wife, be assured that you will be lucky in your choice. It foretells an orderly, energetic and industrious person. I should not want a better wife than this number predicts. To a young girl, it does not promise riches with a husband, but it foretells thrift and plenty, and that she may be rich too. It is a fair business throw also—foretelling pretty good luck in everything except games of chance, and predicting bad luck in such games.

Ten: If a young girl throws this number, she will not marry very soon, and perhaps not at all. But she will have good luck in other matters, and rise above her present situation in society. If a man throws it, he will get a rich wife. It is a favorable number to the male sex in love matters. A married woman who throws it will rise in the world, or have a legacy left to her.

Eleven: This throw foretells extravagance and fondness of show and display. Those who throw it, or for whose fortune it may be thrown, will probably have the command of means, but all will be spent in gimcracks, parties of pleasure, and in adorning the person. And though they may not come to poverty, they will leave nothing but debts to their heirs. To laboring people, it denotes that they will always be in debt, and live above their means.

Twelve: Shows that an event of some kind is soon to occur in your affairs, either for good or ill. To a farmer or a laboring man, it will probably be fortunate, but it may be otherwise. To a banker, a money-dealer or a jeweler, it is generally a bad omen—to other trades, uncertain. It has no special reference to love-matters.

Thirteen: I hope no virtuous young girl will ever be so unfortunate as to throw this number, unless she is possessed of a resolution as firm as a rock, for it foretells she will be sorely-tempted to become profligate. It is emphatically the throw of the unchaste female. If a man throws this number, it is a sign that he will never marry, but will associate with harlots, or live with a woman who is not his wife. If he throws it with a view to discover the character of his lady-love, he may guess the result.

Fourteen: This is the gambler's throw, and denotes dishonesty and an unprincipled disposition in men, and misfortune in women. If a man throws it, he will be either a gambler or a rich rogue, if he has brains-enough. If his intellect is not sufficient, he will probably be a small-time swindler, or the favored lover of a lewd woman, or both. Although these will be his characteristics, yet circumstance may place him in a different position. But he will always be mercenary, selfish, impudent, and without pride of character. To a girl, this number foretells an unhappy marriage, and misfortune by that means. But if she remains single, and keeps clear of lovers, she will avoid the ill-omen.

FELIX FONTAINE'S DICE THROW MEANINGS (CONT.)

Fifteen: If you are a speculating character—a buyer of lottery tickets, or lottery policies, or are engaged in any games of chance, such as gambling, horse-racing, shooting at a mark, betting, or in fact any scheme that you expect to win money by, this number foretells bad luck and discomfiture. If you try to test your luck in such matters, and this number turns up, you may be sure you will lose, and had better give up at once. If you want to buy land, you will be apt to get a good bargain and be fortunate. This number foretells good luck to a farmer, putting in his crops, and the same to a girl choosing a husband—for though she may not get a rich man, yet he will be industrious, thrifty, comfortable, and good-hearted. To consumptive people, this throw is not a favorable one, as in many cases it predicts a short life for them.

Sixteen: This is an unlucky number to a merchant, a banker, or a mechanic. It foretells bad luck of some kind, though it is generally a forerunner of a brisk and profitable business. An excellent run of business may come first, and the bad luck come afterwards, or vice-versa, but the misfortune is sure to come in somewhere. To a farmer, this throw foretells abundant crops, and to a gold-digger, good luck and plenty of the precious metal. A young girl who throws it will get a thrifty husband, and have a numerous family.

Seventeen: If you are a girl, and think of getting married, you will be apt to lose your lover, unless he is a farmer, a gardener, a well-digger, a gold-miner, a brewer, a coal-heaver, a grave-digger, or some occupation that makes him use a shovel a good deal. If you think of marrying any such man, this throw is a good one. For a man of any other occupation, it foretells disappointment. To a young man, this number shows that by perseverance and industry, he will do well in this world—that his luck will be good if he only tries his best to get along. If you have had anything stolen from you, or have lost valuable property while walking or riding, this throw is unfavorable; you will probably never recover what you have lost.

Eighteen: People who throw this number may congratulate themselves, as it foretells riches, honors, and a happy and contented life. It predicts exceptional prosperity in all kinds of business, good luck in love matters, and advancement to those who are honorably ambitious. To rogues and dishonest people, it is an omen of discomfiture, detection and punishment.