

Intelligent Design
by
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FADE IN ON:

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A spacious office, decorated with Ikea furniture. Light streams in through the window.

A figure pauses to appreciate the view. In silhouette, THE BOSS (60s) bears resemblance to Burl Ives - the comparison made even more striking by an artful beard.

TAP. TAP. TAP. Pause.

A COUGH from behind, followed by a plaintive voice.

PETER (O.S.)
Excuse me, sir?

The Boss pivots towards the sound. Prim and proper, PETER (70s) sits hunched over a Tandy 1000 computer. The machine looks as decrepit as he is.

The Boss clears his throat.

THE BOSS
I said, pull the files on the lab specimens, and separate into two groups. It's high time for spring cleaning.

The clerk hesitates, his voice meek.

PETER
All of them, sir?

THE BOSS
Yes, Pete. All of them. And no fudging the numbers this time.

Peter nods. Bony fingers fly over the keyboard with surprising agility. The room fills with the CHUG of the old disk drive.

Peter looks wistfully at a Macbook Pro collecting dust in the corner. A Christmas ribbon still stuck to the box.

The CLUNKING stops. The two men eye each other carefully.

The Boss stands at Peter's shoulder, and watches the clerk scroll through the data.

PETER
Done. Now, what do we do?

The Boss strokes his beard thoughtfully.

THE BOSS

Now, we delete.

PETER

Delete?!?

THE BOSS

Yes, Peter. Delete. Cut out the hopeless cases. Weed the garden once and for all.

Peter stammers, the plea in his eyes hidden behind coke-bottle glasses.

PETER

But sir, think of the lives affected! Do we have the right to play -

The Boss's stare stops him dead in his tracks.

THE BOSS

I'll be the judge of that. Of all people, you should know how important this is. It's not like they didn't have ample warning.

Peter looks down at his gnarled hands.

PETER

Yes sir. I know.

He glances up - eyes lit by sudden hope.

PETER

Why breed for I.Q.? What's wrong with a variety of intelligence? Stupidity isn't a sin!

The Boss lays a hand on Peter's shoulder. It looks like it weighs a ton.

THE BOSS (O.S.)

The dumb ones are no fun, Pete. And don't argue semantics with me. It just isn't done.

The Boss turns back pensively towards the window.

THE BOSS

It's not like we're in this for altruistic reasons. We're breeding a superior race here, and just can't tolerate mistakes.

Can't have the dumb ones running free,
spreading their genes all over creation!

He shakes his head.

THE BOSS

What went wrong? We worked it out so
carefully...

Peter opens his mouth. The words fail to form.

THE BOSS

Start with basic breeding stock. Set them
down in isolated groups all over the
planet, separated by natural boundaries.
That way, test subjects wouldn't meet
until they'd developed the survival
traits necessary to pass the barriers.

The Boss stares out the window at a crystal blue sky;
majestic mountains visible from afar.

THE BOSS

Voracious buggers that they were, they
bred indiscriminately - radiation
mutating each generation into variations
we couldn't have planned, even if we'd
consciously tried. Most died off from
accidents. Inbreeding took care of more.

PETER

(nods)

An excellent plan.

The Boss picks up a stress ball painted like a globe, and
squeezes it in his strong hands.

THE BOSS

Natural selection - that was the magic
ingredient. Some of the offspring were
bound to survive. The fittest, the most
durable. And we wouldn't have to lift a
finger. All it took was lots of time...

He gives the ball a final squeeze, sets it gently aside.

THE BOSS

All to breed a superior species. And it
worked so well. At first.

PETER

We've invested so much. Couldn't we let
it ride? Just... wait and see where it
goes?

THE BOSS

I thought we could. But we never factored in the possibility of a race-oriented view of survival. But now we've got the superior stock keeping the weak ones alive. Promoting them to positions of leadership, even...

The Boss shakes his head sadly.

THE BOSS

I have nothing against mediocrity, Pete, if that's all an organism can aspire to. But they're crushing the alpha strains under the weight. We need to save the project. And get the rest of them off planet. Before we lose *all* of it. Forever.

Peter looks up - face bathed in the CRT's amber glow.

PETER

So what next? Apply the standard I.Q. tests?

THE BOSS

That'd take too much time. Just sample each group, and filter by select criteria.

The Boss perches himself on a corner of Peter's desk. He CLICKS a button onscreen. Pete's list shortens instantly.

THE BOSS

Check the case history for each subject. See if it's acted in a logical manner, adjusted for the locale of its birthplace, and historical viewpoint.

CLICK. The list truncates even more.

THE BOSS

Remove specimens that display a lack of cause and effect reasoning. Those that hold to beliefs regardless of contrary evidence. K.I.S.S. Keep it short and sweet.

ANOTHER CLICK. Peter grimaces. The list no longer fills the screen.

The Boss gathers his long grey hair into a ponytail, and ambles towards the door.

THE BOSS

I've got a golf session. Got to go...

PETER (O.S.)

Boss? What do I do with the others?

THE BOSS

Put 'em somewhere nice. Tell them it's a reward. Give 'em unicorns and rainbows. Anything that keeps them amused.

He smiles with paternal warmth.

THE BOSS

Oh, and Pete? Lose the economists and politicians. Keep the scientists. Especially that one - DeGrasse? Seems like a really cool guy.

PETER

Got it. Any particular group you want to lead the reboot?

THE BOSS

The atheists, of course. Nix the fundamentalists. Poor misguided souls...

The Boss stops, hand on the doorknob.

THE BOSS

Thanks, Pete. I'll let you handle it from here. I have faith in you.

The Boss opens the door.

CELESTIAL MUSIC filters through. He steps out into heavenly light. The door CLICKS shut behind him.

Peter poises his finger above the keyboard.

A command prompt blinks onscreen: "St.Peter@gmail.com - press DELETE to Continue?"

St. Peter GULPS. Hits the key...

FINAL FADE OUT: