

**TEXT**

**ADVENTURE**

*'IMPRESSIVELY  
ARTICULATE'*

by  
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## 1

The Chrysler Building. New York. 1989.

New Year's Eve.

"I'd like to propose a thought experiment for anti-Evolution Creationists: Suppose God created the 4-D space/time football six thousand years ago."

"Complete with billions of years of real history?"

"Exactly."

"Are you suggesting this would bypass their objections to evolutionary theory?"

"I'm suggesting it would confuse them."

## 2

"Here you are, doing the Devil's work."

Super-Sonic. John Ratcliff. White Male wearing tattered jeans and a gray sweater. Acclaimed poet. Enforcer.

"The Devil can cite Scripture for his own purpose. I'm merely speculating on possible angles of attack."

The Raven. Christopher. No last name on record. African-American vigilante. Black T-shirt with slogan in white News Gothic: 'Impressively Articulate.'

"I'd really like to hear what my father would have to say about all this."

Sonic Boom. Ken Thompson. Not *that* Ken Thompson. Asian-American speedster. Green polo shirt. Jeans.

"You're drowning in rhetoric," John observed. "Argumentation is not the best weapon against these types."

"Stipulated," allowed Christopher.

"You guys are too cynical."

In unison: "Shut up, Ken."

## 3

"Brothers, please. Decorum."

Actron. Thomas Bright. White male. Ostensible leader of the Actron Team. Blue cotton button down shirt with black silk tie. Thomas brushed aside the disturbance and poured himself a glass of water from the fridge. Ken popped up the collar of his polo shirt and leaned back into his seat.

"I don't mind, really. My ideas are still forming."

"Shut up, Ken," said Thomas.

"Enough of this dick party. We need a woman's opinion. Where's Eva?"

Christopher pushed his chair away from the table and stood up. He made eye contact with John before vacating the room.

"Nevermore," he rasped, sarcastically, and left.

## 4

“What’s his problem?” asked Ken.

“They’re not getting along,” said Thomas, stating the obvious.

“Seriously though,” continued John, “Where *is* she? We were discussing this just last week. I know she has something to contribute, but I don’t want to speak for her. I want to hear her explain it herself.”

Thomas gestured with his glass, spilling a small amount of water onto the kitchen floor. “I think she’s on the phone with Los Angeles.”

## 5

“Yeah, let’s not tell him I called,” Piro wheezed into his mouthpiece, still catching his breath. “I don’t think we need to bother him with every detail of the operation.”

“Fine with me. You take care of yourself out there. From what I understand, L.A. is starting to...”

“Yeah, L.A. *is*.”

Eva clicked her phone shut and crushed her cigarette in the retractable ashtray. She wondered when it would be possible to move her corporation away from the cocaine trade. Recent developments in domestic politics were making it difficult to keep her agents’ names out of the news. She sighed, then drew the blinds in her office and made her way to the kitchen.

## 6

“Why did economists not do a better job of anticipating the crisis?”

“Tom, it’s just not that simple.”

“You *always* say that.”

“The causal mechanism behind growth and decline is not fully understood. All known models are essentially useless.”

“You always say *that*, too.”

“I don’t know what else to tell you.”

“Well, tell me *something*. Tell me *anything*. I need answers.”

John rolled his eyes.

## 7

“What are you guys talking about?”

Eva sat down at the kitchen table and dealt a hand of cards.

“This and that,” said Thomas, picking up his cards and inspecting his hand.

“Christopher was going on about Creationists. Then he got mad and left.”

“Shut up, Ken,” said Eva.

Ken fumed silently. John remained silent for an appropriate interval and then picked up the dangling thread.

“Our Chris has an antagonistic bent. I suggested we should hear your side of the story. That was too much for him to bear.”

“It’s not like I would have *defended* the Creationists,” said Eva. “But I would have been fair.”

“Exactly,” smiled John.

“Whatever. Christopher is really focused on this issue. I’m sure it will come up again.”

“It’s inevitable,” sighed John.

“By design,” added Ken, and this time no one bothered to correct him.

## 8

Thomas’ luck was infuriating to his teammates. He won every hand but didn’t even understand the game.

“I’ll just take this one out of your paychecks,” he said.

“Your poker record is truly remarkable,” started John, “Considering we have to remind you of the rules every time we play.”

“What’s to remark? The fruits of a superior motivation.”

“Also known as the *Will to Power*. Tell us, just what lengths are you willing to go to in order to achieve your goals?”

“Not funny. Just a fact. Besides, I’ve moved on from Nietzsche.”

“There are no facts. And no one moves on from Nietzsche. We’ve caught you before. I suspect you’ve found a new way to cheat.”

“All right, I feel stupid,” admitted Thomas. “I don’t know what to say.”

John relaxed his posture, enjoying the easy victory. “I’ll give you a few seconds to come up with a story.”

“Fuck,” said Thomas.

“All right boys,” interrupted Eva, scooping up her playing cards and returning them to the deck. “Let’s keep it PG-13.”

“Mom, he’s cheating!” cried John. “Punish him!”

“No, I’m serious. You’re all fired,” Thomas said, and left the room. No one was sure if he was serious.

“And that settles that,” said Ken.

Eva’s phone rang as the clock turned over into 1990.

She switched off the ringer.





