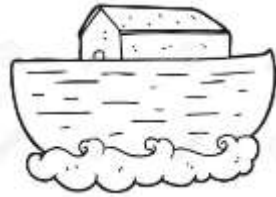


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BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

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OPPOSITES OBLIQUE?

NAME	MONIKER	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
D L Mitchell	Cry Baby	6' 9"	325 lbs
EYES	HAIR	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	CAREER
Brown	Auburn	USA	Pizza Chef

Everything became the opposite.

Gay became masculine while masculine decorated the world.

Race lacked rhythm while Caucasians busted a move.

Art came from calm, – pain brought with it, reason.

Age lacked insight.

Intelligence was present, where it originated from, and its purpose, invisible to all.

Leadership was derived from honesty and wasn't challenged by anarchy.

Gerry's hard wiring was different. He was the only member of the new world who seemed to have depth. Perhaps a past. He spoke of events that were foreign to the others. A busy street – dissecting a nonexistent city. Countless people scurrying about doing an endless array of tasks. Approached at a traffic light, *traffic didn't exist*. Gerry was occupying a different plane. He was a visionary, and his stories were chalked up to hope.

“Do you think we should build a Space Craft?” The man asking was broken, with a three-day growth on his face, filthy yet coherent. Gerry found him directly to his left at the stoplight. “A Space Craft... do you think we should build one?”

“Excuse me?”

“I built one, designed it in 1969, it'd blow your mind. The government shut down the program too expensive. Really, it'd blow your mind.”

These events intrigued Gerry. He vaguely recalled many encounters of this sort regularly, but where?

I must've hit my head on impact, he thought. “Well, depends on the motive behind the construction. Earth may run out of time. We're

consuming all she offers. Like animals—extinction comes when resources are exhausted. Man, we're no different, except we have an ego. Some of us believe that we're actually the first ones. Look, in just over a hundred years, we've destroyed our home. Earth."

The man was smiling. "Who's to blame? Leaders want to blame us. They point fingers—look what we've, meaning, you've done! Now fix it. What's that? You're overwhelmed. Don't worry, like hot stock tips—when the message is delivered, it's likely too late, anyway."

The man continued to smile.

"You never answered my question. I'll ask again, should we build it?"

"Sorry to say no. We've got seven billion people on this rock—the decision to continue life would only fall in the hands of evil, and the cost to save all humankind would eliminate any workable way of bringing the project to life. How could the masses possibly be so blind to approve hundreds of billions in spending to save only the Elite? Ludicrous. Don't you think? However, ignorance, stupidity and ego likely would lead to approval. Timmy at the Burger Barn, you don't get to survive the apocalypse; your course has been mapped out. Doesn't he get that? No, he's too stupid. I think that when humankind's number comes up, POW. That's it, and as the earth evolves again, new life will start, and the process will begin all over. After a regeneration period, of course. So again, no. I'm not fatalistic. I like to think of it as realistic. The message of life has been lost. And is simply this: live each day to the fullest. Who the fuck cares if tomorrow ever comes? It doesn't matter if you're living. Time is irrelevant. It's a concept of man, and it's flawed."

The man continued to smile.

"They shut me down in the sixties. Ended my career. I can see what's coming our way. It's not so good."

Gerry collected his thoughts and wondered why he was taking so much time to engage with a man most would discount and ignore, and he continued.

"We don't get it. Deception has clouded enlightenment. One question springs to mind: what makes man so special that he can destroy what is vital to his existence, and at the end of the destruction, a select few get to continue the destruction in a new world? I suspect this is not the first time the 'end' has come. Our egos don't allow us to accept that. My friend, if we build the Spaceship, corruption will move forward while extinction would consume the innocent. God wouldn't be on the selection committee unless, of course, he was sitting next to Satan. Laughing."

"Interesting."

It was time to part company. Gerry looked at his new friend, shook his hand, wished him

well, and asked one more question.

“Out of all the people on this street, here, today, why me? Why did you come up to me?”

“Because. Because I'm not crazy.”

As Gerry walked away, he pondered, am I?

Without appointment of opposition, Gerry assumed the role of leader in the new world.