



Chapter Nine: Survival of the Luckiest Freaks

"Hence, instead of 'survival of the fittest,' I jokingly refer to it as 'Only the lucky survive' or 'The Freaks shall inherit what's left of the Earth,'" Dr. Yawney quipped.

"I sense some grumbling," he continued. "You may argue that evolution is a continuous process, where some offspring evolve into more advanced organisms, some remain simple, and some perish. You might argue that it's a gradual accumulation of changes over time, with organisms better adapted to their changing environment being considered 'more fit' than those weakened by different circumstances," Dr. Yawney presented alternative perspectives.

"But fundamentally, it's all the same. They are all survivors of change. It's possible that many inferior organisms survived precisely because they were inferior. Some recent evidence supports this notion."

"Look at us," an Explorer jokingly remarked. "We are survivors..."

"So far at least," another Explorer said gloomily.



"Can anyone reasonably argue that humans will survive the next century?" another Explorer asserted with conviction. "With AI, plague, drought, climate change...."

"Maybe one of us will be lucky enough... or freaky enough," one explorer said, "to survive."

"And then you get to mate with another freak...and produce more freaks..."

"In general," Dr. Yawney affirmed, "mere survival is not considered a remarkable achievement. It usually sets a fairly low threshold. As we all know, inferior entities survive for various reasons—sometimes due to their simplicity, resource requirements, or inherent inferiority."

"And sometimes objectively superior specimens die out. Wholesale," Dr. Yawney concluded.

"Unlucky nonfreaks," an Explorer offered, "die young."

"I intend to present evidence," Dr. Yawney continued, "Some of which has never been seen before, that challenges the notion that modern humans are biologically or qualitatively superior to previous organisms," Dr. Yawney stated. "It suggests that some earlier versions of 'man' may have been superior to contemporary humans in many ways."