

The Darwin Awards

by Jake Barnes

Peter was sitting in a chair by the main gate, his head in his hands. The Boss, who was out for a morning stroll, stopped and asked the elderly man if he were all right. "No," Peter replied.

"What's the matter?" the Boss inquired.

Peter sighed, and looked up at his employer. He shook his head, for a moment at a loss for words. "It's the people we're getting now. They're so dumb!"

His employer bristled. "Now, now," He said. The Boss was a bit sensitive about this matter. He had heard the criticism before, and He wasn't happy about it, but in His heart of hearts, He knew that it was true.

The Boss pulled up a chair and sat down next to His old friend. "Okay," He said. "I screwed up. I'm sorry."

"Oh, I'm not complaining about what You did," Peter said.

"Nobody's perfect. Even You. What gets me is that, well, it's getting worse!"

"Worse?"

Peter nodded glumly. "Yes," he said. "People are stupid. They've always been stupid. But these days...." His voice trailed off.

"Dumb and dumber, huh?" the Boss asked.

Peter nodded.

The Boss brightened. "Okay, but what's the problem? Get rid of them. You don't have to let them in, you know."

"I know," Peter said, "but what am I going to do with them? I can't send them to the other place. They're not evil, they're just stupid and selfish."

"Hmm," replied the Boss. "I think I see the problem."

The two sat in silence for a long time until at last the Boss got to His feet and announced that He had thought of a solution. He outlined His plan. They would set up a new place for people to go. They would call it The Dumb Room.

Peter was enthusiastic about the idea and even more so after he gave it a test run. The new room was ready the next day. So now there were three doors leading out of the reception area. The doors were marked ↑, ↓, and D.

Peter's first customer of the day was sent through the door marked with a D. He was a man from Macon, GA who wore a red, white, and blue shirt and a hat with tea bags hanging from the brim who had been standing outside Democratic headquarters waving a six gun. Later that morning Peter consigned another man to The Room, this one a zoned-out housewife from Tampa who fell off the stage at a Tea Party rally and fractured her skull. There were others to screen as well, of course, and the majority were pointed to the other doors, especially the one marked ↓.

At the end of the day, the new room had four residents. Joining the first two was a man who tried to force his way into the White House "to have a little talk with the President," and was shot by a security guard, and a man who died at a parade in Dallas when he fell out of tree while trying to snap a photograph of Ted Cruz. .

At the end of the day, Peter could not resist taking a peek into The Dumb Room to see how the new arrivals were getting on. All seemed to be well. Two of the men were watching *Dancing with the Stars* on TV, another was watching Fox news, and the fourth was reading *The Weekly Standard*. The gatekeeper could not help but smile when he saw how the Boss had decorated the room. The furnishings were a mishmash of styles from a variety of department stores. The kitchen and bathroom decor was copied from floor displays at Home Depot.

The Boss was happy that Peter was pleased with the way things had worked out. He wondered why he hadn't thought of it before. Now his only problem was the overcrowding in the Netherworld. Or almost his only problem....

One morning that week the Boss and his loyal employee were enjoying a cup of coffee in the cozy kitchen of the gatekeeper's cottage and chuckling about the newest resident. She had died of

shock when she had been told that half of the Tea Party members didn't pay taxes.

"Boss," said Peter, "you're a genius! Without the Dumb Room, what would we do with these people?"

The Boss nodded his head and smiled. He was worried. The new room wasn't very big. What would they do when the rest of those folks from the red states started showing up?

