

Lucifer's courage

Hell's angel demonstrated courage rather than foolish pride



"For who can think Submission?
Warr then, Warr
Open or understood, must be
resolv'd."
—Milton, "Paradise Lost"

I hate it when the good guys always win.

Such a thought struck me the other night while watching Kevin Smith's "Dogma," a movie about two fallen angels' attempt to re-enter heaven through a loophole in Catholic teachings.

Although their success would have caused the end of existence, my companion and I both had the same reaction after the movie ended with God smiting the fallen angels and making everything magically all better.

We both wished the bad guys had won.

In a general sense, I find myself rooting for the bad guys for a variety of reasons. For one thing, good guys are often bland and boring compared to their evil antagonists.

Who would Luke Skywalker be without Darth Vader? Who would read Sherlock Holmes if not for Dr. Moriarty?

I even feel sorry for some of the bad guys. After all, the Penguin can only get pummeled by Batman and Robin so many times before you start feeling sorry for the poor bastard. Sometimes, if only for the sake of originality, the bad guys should win.

But my desire for the fallen angels to succeed in "Dogma" was based on something else: They *deserved* to succeed.

There's a crucial scene in the movie where the two fallen angels,

Loki and Bartleby, are arguing about whether they should even attempt to re-enter heaven if it means facing God's wrath. Loki says "Do you know who you remind me of? The Morning Star. You're following in the footsteps of Lucifer, and you saw what happened to him!"

We've all heard the biblical story of Lucifer. Once the most respected of angels, he craved power for himself and incited a rebellion in heaven before being defeated and banished to hell. The traditional, Judeo-Christian spin on this story is that it's a parable on the dangers of foolish pride, a lesson on what happens to those who disobey God.

But I see it differently.

Imagine coming into existence in a world where you have no choices, where your every move is decided in advance, where your destiny is to obey a despotic ruler, and the slightest deviation from his laws results in torture and death.

Imagine coming into existence in a world where your every move is observed, your every word is monitored and your very thoughts are scrutinized.

Lucifer didn't rebel because of pride. He rebelled because of tyranny.

Although he lived in an eternal paradise and had everything anyone could ever desire, one thing was missing: freedom. And without freedom, all

of his supposed joys became a constant, painful reminder of his captivity.

So Lucifer decided to fight back, and one-third of his brethren flocked to his side. One-third! Clearly Lucifer wasn't the only angel to chafe under the chains of God's enslavement.

Of course, Lucifer wasn't insane. He knew his chances of success were slim at best, and that the consequences of failure were the harshest we can imagine—an eternity in hell. It

was worth it to him, though, this desperate lunge for freedom. I wish we all had this trait—Lucifer's courage.

All of heaven was embroiled in this war between the oppressed and the oppressor. Eventually Lucifer lost, and he was banished to hell with all of his rebellious allies.

But he didn't stop fighting. Much as Prometheus was chained to a mountainside for daring to introduce fire to man, Lucifer convinced Eve to eat the apple from the Tree of

Knowledge.

Some say he seduced her into sin. I think he showed her that she, too, was free and could rebel against God's tyranny. And according to the "good book," because of Eve, we all have this option.

Lucifer never existed, of course, no more than Jesus or Zeus. The story of a demi-god rebelling against his fellows is not original to Christianity. But I know that if he had existed, Lucifer and I would have the same outlook on life. To quote Milton:

"Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven."



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We're not gonna take it

Starting an uprising can be easy, just follow these steps



This is number two in the series, "How to do important things." The first installment was called, "How to earn respect with your free time." It was ambiguous, rowdy and prone to error. It seems that I broke a few grammatical common laws in a very unapologetic fashion.

To remedy myself this time around, I used several literary resources and crafted some good advice. "How to..." is now concise, straight-to-the-point and very steady, as well as proper. There is no underlying meaning. I will just tell you how to do important things.

By turning on the television at any given time, you can view vivid images of unrest, revolt and rebellion—looting and pillaging, a village in flames, people in tears. Why does everyone caught on camera seem to be sad?

They wanted to start the uprising, that's why. Someone didn't let them in on the joke. You don't have to be a poop! C'mon! Get yourself involved!

Just what does it take to initiate a moderately severe moment of panic? Your brain and some donkey blood, that's all. Just don't be afraid to be an innovator—there's always more than one way to do something.

Take a minute to evaluate your unbridled character attributes. Are you passive? No! Are you an activist? Yes! Are you conscientious of others? Maybe. But you can get around that. (I'll go into greater detail later in "How to appear robust.")

But how can you act with just your little pathetic self? It's like going up against an army of Stoli-fueled Russians!

The secret to a thorough insurrection lies in the establishment of a diligent, like-minded committee. Your team members may hold invaluable information about politics and social annoyances. Don't block the influx of unique ideas. Have your meetings in a well-aerated, well-lit, idea-friendly environment (try drawing happy donkeys on the wall.)

Choose a concept that will cause a ruckus (for example, a rabies-infected donkey collective). Flesh out the idea into something tangible and headline-worthy. You may need to write a manifesto in order to do this.

(I'll go into greater depth later in "How to be a dictator.")

Once you pare that platform down into a few key points, make a giant sign and many, many individual fliers. Put one of those points in large letters

on a T-shirt that you yourself can wear and conceal that shirt with a coat. Now you're ready to leave the fort and make things happen!

Find a large crowd of people standing next to a semi-busy roadway. Rush hour is an opportune time, or, if you are next to a campus, the end of a class period. Motorize your entire committee, and possibly several dumfounded lackeys, while you personally start the reaction.

Grab your Target-style megaphone and prepare to wreak havoc. Try this statement for starters: "The blood of the satanic donkey will stain your flesh." (You may refer to your manifesto when speaking.) Scream more obscenities at the tippy-top of your lungs. Exaggerate gestures. Jump up and down. Wear crazy headgear, like a hat out of which you can drink lukewarm domestic beer.

While you begin to turn heads with your speech, have your committee pass out the fliers in a systematic fashion.

While the people are busy looking at the fliers, the lackeys will set up small, discrete roadblocks, thereby trapping drivers in your makeshift web. Barbed wire and yellow streamers strung across the road can be effective. You don't have anything that could officially be categorized as a roadblock? Try debris that has fallen out of the sky (meteors, SCUD missile casings, broken satellites, big buzzard carcasses or donkey corpses).

People are in their cars, and they can't move. Donkey corpses are in the way. By pissing off the motor vehicle community, you have disrupted a large number of people who otherwise would have driven right by you with their stereos cranked. Channel that road rage energy into something productive. Motorists will roll down their windows to see what the heck the problem is. Now you have their attention as well. Now you're cooking with gas.

Take your coat off and get comfortable. Have your committee gesture toward the shirt you have made, which might say "The donkeys will eat you," and have them use those words to start a chant. Attempt to get the crowd to scream the words you have written on your shirt. Some people will catch on and start chanting; others will look for cover at this point. Just make sure your committee keeps everyone within the circle. (Try using electric cattle prods to do this.)

Remember to ignore all pleas for sanity. Sanity is counteractive to your goal. (I'll touch on that later in "How to prevent your brain from decaying.")

After everyone is worked up, start a chain of physical abuse. (In other words, push the person next to you.) Everyone will start pushing each other. You and your committee are now all screaming irrational ideas at the top of your lungs, and everyone is just getting angrier.

Here comes the important part. While others are rioting and having a good time within their own little circle, run around the perimeter of that circle and unnerve the onlookers who have just arrived.

"Godzilla is coming! Everyone is going nuts! Protect your own selfish interests!" Women with small children will scurry across the street with little or no cognizance of others. They just want to get the last 250 Happy Meals.

Now you can make your escape—don't take time to sit back and reflect because the cops are coming. The ideal situation would be to hop in your awaiting chopper(s), zoom over the top of your well-constructed party and throw balloons filled with donkey blood at the crowd. But you may have not had that bowl of Wheaties that morning, so it's entirely possible you didn't develop your plan into fruition. So go someplace and read dirty magazines. (I'll probably talk about that some other time when I tell you "How to appear sick and twisted.")

So there you have it. You've done it. That wasn't so hard, was it? No ifs, ands or buts about it, you have started an uprising. Feel the sense of accomplishment. You've climbed that mighty mountain. You've crossed that mighty river. And you have crossed over into the realm of irrationality. And you, too, will make people cry for the six o'clock news.

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