

# EVIL

I've never understood the concept of being a villain. Y'know, like being a villain for the sake of being a villain. The classic, "I'm a bad guy, just because..." the "I'm gonna blow up the orphanage just because..." Even as a youth I had a hard time wrapping my mind around this concept, which caused me to become quite obsessed with the devil;

"So mommy, the devil is a monster that used to be an angel?"

"Yes, Jayson."

"And the devil lives in hell and he stays down there punishing the people who did bad things while they were alive on earth?"

"Yes, Jayson."

"And he stays down there all day and all night for ever and ever, punishing bad people for ever and ever until forever?"

"That's right Jayson."

"But mommy! If he's always punishing bad people then why is the devil so bad?" "Because he's the devil, Jayson."

"Yeah, but mommy! If he stays down there doing bad things to bad people because they broke God's rules, then devil is really a good guy, right? It's just like how daddy punishes me, right mommy?"

"Jayson, your father is not like the devil (though her opinion would soon change after their divorce, but as always, I digress), the devil is the embodiment of evil, your father on the other hand is—"

"But mommy! It can't be fun living in hell! The devil must care about being good or why would he punish bad people? If he was bad wouldn't the devil give bad people super powers to do more bad things more efficiently? But mommy! All he does is stay in hell punishing the bad people! He must love good!"

"Jayson, go to your room, turn the lights off and don't come out until you hear me call you for dinner."

"But mommy!"

So yeah, I never really could understand arbitrary evil at all.

Admittedly, the devil may be a pretty extreme example of villainy, yet he still illustrates the problem my young mind had with the concept of evil and villains all together. Being an avid lover of super hero comic books during my teenage years, I was a witness to a great many of grand plots contrived by the supposedly mad and genius minds of countless super villains, but all these evil plots seemed to lack any real vision. From Magneto down to Gargamel, none of the greatest villains from the comic book pages or the television screen had anything really planned past the ruling the planet stage. For example, Gargamel was hell bent on capturing 6 Smurfs so he could use them in some alchemical process that would result in the Smurfs turning to gold. Understandably this made sense because there were mad fucking Smurfs in Smurf Village, so one could postulate that if you could capture the entire village full of smurfs and subsequently turn them all into gold, you'd be a rich bastard. But poor old Gargamel couldn't even catch 6 fucking Smurfs and he tried every episode of The Smurfs to do so.



And rather than throw in the towel and be reasonable about his numerous failures, our homeboy Gargamel kept at it like a dog in heat humping on a young lady's calf. I guess there are worse sisyphian stones to push, but goddamn Gargamel, how much gold are you really expecting to get from 6 tiny Smurfs? It couldn't be as much as you could get if you gave up the Smurf chase and got yourself even the most menial of day jobs. Which leads me to believe that Gargamel's feverent need for gold, coupled with his apparent unwillingness to work for gold, leads me to two conclusions that (a) Gargamel never really needed the gold in the first place or he'd just get a job so (b) he was most likely a trust fund wizard and really only pursued villainy out of boredom, which I think is archetypal of many villains and their being evil just because. This being evil without any apparent purpose is the defining essence of the villain, whether super or just mad, and it is this that differentiates the villain from a criminal.

Now criminals are a lot that exist on the complete opposite end of the evil spectrum, if such a spectrum is said to exist, and they are much more easy to understand than the villain. For starters, most criminals are simple in their schemes and want not for the total annihilation of the globe, or for the destruction of the orphanage or to construct a giant laser beam that they'll use in order to inscribe their name upon the side of the moon. That type of shit is just too far out for a criminal, to bourgeoisie for the true criminal mind. Schemes of that nature take tons of extraneous capital to execute, and takes the free time that is normally afforded only to the affluent in order to concoct. And simply put, most criminals are poor as fuck. You know what 90% of criminals want? They want to fucking eat. Literally. Excluding insider traders, child rapists, pedophiles, and serial killers, most criminal activity is born out of varying degrees of desperation which is steeped in an everyday

need for the pragmatic articles of sustenance instead of the large scale and fantastic assertion of one's will over the mass of the population. Often many a criminal will find their way onto the payroll of a supervillain, but it's highly debatable if the criminals share the ideology of their employers who'd soon wipe out their own employees if they could only surmount the main obstacle of their villainous desires which normally comes in the form of the super hero or the UN. And when confronted by the superhero, the criminals in the employ of the villain will put up little or no fight, often feigning defeat as soon as a superhero enters the villain's secret compound, either by falling down at the slightest physical contact with the hero or intentionally missing their shots at the superhero. Shit's really sad, and it is understandable why the villain grows in resentment for the world at large, when not even the proletariat lugs in their employ will put forth an effort worth their wages.

But like I said before, criminals just want to eat, not dominate. A stick up kids wants your money and valuables, the possible pistol-whipping of a victim may be a bit on the sadistic side, but all they want is luchini falling from the sky (i.e. the money in your pockets). A burglar wants the same thing, but bad timing will place a resident at home at the same time the burglar is shopping in their home, and hilarity ensues. Most drug dealers, even though they desire the evisceration of their competition, ultimately want this out of security for their conceived drug empire, which really stands for the security of family, while the villain wants the evisceration of mostly everything because, well, just because.

-jayson musson