

Forces of Evil Anonymous

A circle of plastic chairs sits in the middle of a dirty carpeted room. The table by the announcement board creaks under the weight of the day-old butter cookies, leftover turkey and lettuce sandwiches, and a rusted coffee pot plugged into a dripping power socket. He shifts in his seat, eager to share.

“It ain’t easy, ya know? Scouring the earth, constantly moving around. Don’t get me wrong, I’m good at what I do. But sometimes you—”

“Sorry to interrupt, but we usually start with our names.” The vetala offers him a welcoming nod and a kind glance through her crimson eyes.

“Oh sorry, sorry,” he trembles, taking a sip of coffee from his *world’s best grandma* mug. “Hi, my name is Ben Horvath, and I’m a level 4 possession demon.”

A chorus of “hello Ben” rises from the group.

“So... like I was saying... I think I’m getting tired of the whole... possession stuff. I mean it’s fun making people do whatever I want: crash cars, jump off buildings, rob ban—.”

“Ooo! Ooo! Do you do the head spinny thing?” A poltergeist interjects, pulsating with excitement.

“Uh... no. Not into the whole dismemberment thing. But I just don’t see much point in it anymore. There’s so much more that I want to do. Maybe ride a bike *with* the direction of traffic, or make some soup *without* adding cyanide, or hike a mountain *without* jumping off.” Met with baffled looks and curious mumblings, Ben digresses, “Anyway, thanks for listening, I guess.”

A moment of silence separates the group, so thick it chokes him.

“I vill share now!” A horned warlock with a thick Russian accent pipes up three seats away from Ben. “I am Darius Von Maliputh ze Horrible, Terrible and Evil”. Darius searches for the group’s response but is greeted by eye rolls and awkward seat shifting. “It seems to me, Ben, zat you’re saying you don’t vant to possess people and serve your purpose anymore. You vant to go on holiday, read books, wear sweaters and all of zat rubbish. Don’t tell me you vant to be one of zose... DO GOODERS!” A flurry of anger and murmurs erupts from the circle, all aimed at a very discouraged demon.

“Alright everyone, settle down,” the vetala attempts, only to be drowned in the uproar.

“I bet Gabriel put him up to this, that cretin!” sneers the Legion, its voice vexing from demon to demon.

“How dare you dishonour your purpose?” cries an appalled Lycan, gnashing her teeth at the very thought of doing good.

“Okay everyone, let’s just take it dow—”

“How can he be trusted ven he’s got zose kinds of zoughts in his head!” Darius bellows, standing to lead the barrage as Ben melts into his plastic seat, wishing God would smite him where he sat.

“SHUT YOUR DIRTY TRAPS!” the vetala thunders, silencing the hoard. Even St Peter would tremble at the icy glare she shot at Darius. Regaining her composure and rehinging her jaw, she continues, “Everyone here has problems, that’s why we have this support group. We’re here to work through them in a safe space where we can talk *without* being attacked.”

Darius opens his mouth to respond but chooses to keep his tongue and return to his seat. The group appear uneasy, shooting unnerving looks at Ben.

“Legion, when you were torn between possessing the twins or the parents, did we attack you?” the vetala questions, finding eye-contact with one of the legions many moving faces.

“No... we worked it out... in the group session,” the Legion hesitantly replies, struggling to focus their voices on a single response.

“Exactly, we worked it out as a team. And Rudi,” the vetala continued, directing her question towards a Lycan, “who helped you turn without shredding your skin?” Rudi slumps in her seat and crosses her arms.

“I would have figured it out *eventually*,” she retorts, daring not to meet the vetala’s eyes. “But... I guess the group helped me out.”

“You see, we’ve all been through some rough times.” The vetala observes as the circle of myths and rumours gradually nod in agreement. “Thank for sharing Ben. It seems like you want more out of life, which is completely natural. But we will help you work through this toge—”

A blood-curdling wail suddenly tore through the room, vibrating the moulding bagels from their plastic platter and onto the floor. The group turned to see a banshee in the doorway, tapping her watch with a bony hand.

“Agatha, we still have the room for 4 more minutes,” the vetala called, rolling her eyes as the ghostly figure floated out of view. “That hag is a piece of work.” Turning her attention back to the group, she stood to address them, “And now, to conclude our meetings like we do every week, let’s say our creed.”

The circle rose and joined together, Ben holding the spiny leg of an Arachne and the padded hand of an Oni. Simultaneously, the group recited their creed:

“Lucifer, give me the greed to steal what I want, the wrath to destroy lives, and the pride to enjoy every moment of my evil deeds. I promise to be my very worst at everything I do and wreak havoc in your name. May I be damned to hellfire and brimstone, forever to live at your side and corrupt the world for your glory.”

“Have a terrible night everyone”, the vetala concluded. As the ensemble of terrors dispersed, packing away chairs and shovelling the uneaten food into a plastic container for the next meeting, Ben was left to ponder his thoughts. *There must be more to life than this.*