

From the Devil in Sherman Marsh

A modern retelling of the Dr. Faustus story, Sherman Marsh is an incredible nerd. He accidentally summons a devil from his Yu-Gi-Oh deck.

SHERMAN, 17
LUCIFER, ageless

(LUCIFER enters in a cloud of smoke.)

LUCIFER
WHY HAVE YOU SUMMONED ME?

SHERMAN
I apologize, I didn't mean to—

LUCIFER
YOU, SHERMAN MARSH, WHAT IS YOUR BIDDING?

SHERMAN
Um... Bidding?

LUCIFER
EXCUSE ME—
(LUCIFER coughs.)
That's better. Interdimensional travel sometimes gets my throat all scratchy.

SHERMAN
Are you... The Devil?

LUCIFER
I wouldn't go so far as to say *The Devil*. I'd say representative of the nether regions.

SHERMAN
Epic.

LUCIFER
There's a hierarchy, you know. I'm kind of like a regional manager. I have domain over those souls who placed gum underneath desks.

SHERMAN
So if you place gum underneath the desk, you—

LUCIFER
You're going straight to the underworld where countless horrors will meet you. I've devised some pretty cruel tortures—there's the Mariah Carey listening hour, the

standardized testing week, the dentist visit, and most... unnatural and soul-crushing of all... the watching of Battlefield Earth.

SHERMAN

Oh.

LUCIFER

Dreadful movie. John Travolta dressed up as a Psychlo? Man, we were cheering in the underworld when that one came out. We were like, 'yes! More viewing nightmares for the damned!' In fact, we've been behind a lot of Travolta's movies lately. We're his silent partner.

SHERMAN

This is very educational.

LUCIFER

But... enough about me. Let's learn about you: Sherman Marsh. How's it going?

SHERMAN

Disastrous.

LUCIFER

Uh huh. Do you mind if I write some of this down? I like to take notes.

SHERMAN

Shouldn't you be able to use your unholy powers?

LUCIFER

Of course, but note-taking isn't one of them. All right, so... you're not doing well.

SHERMAN

Everyone else is an idiot.

LUCIFER

And you feel superior to them?

SHERMAN

I am superior to them.

LUCIFER

Even better. What in particular distresses you about the rest of humanity?

SHERMAN

The educational system. It's churning out mindless drones who's only goal is to consume natural resources and gorge themselves on fast food.

LUCIFER

Right. It's doing its job.

SHERMAN

And then... when someone does show a glimmer of intelligence—

LUCIFER

Crushed.

SHERMAN

Exactly.

LUCIFER

And you also have the hots for Amber Thompson?

SHERMAN

She's foxy.

LUCIFER

I see. Well... those are some significant issues. But I might just be able to help you.

SHERMAN

How?

LUCIFER

Just because I'm not actually *the* devil, doesn't mean I can't do some pretty devilish things. I have a few supernatural powers which might be able to assist you.

SHERMAN

Such as?

LUCIFER

Such as let me worry about that. Now, if I have the terms correctly, I think we can get a contract that can get you what you want in no time. You can ride out of here today in a fancy new life.

SHERMAN

I don't want a new life, I want a better life.

LUCIFER

Right, right, but let's try this on for size. Let's say you wake up in the morning, you flex your toned legs, you look in the mirror, sweep the flowing blonde hair out of your gorgeous blue eyes and get ready for a new day. You look good in your clothes. You're able to wear those little short shorts that look really nice.

SHERMAN

Pardon me?

LUCIFER

Your boyfriend picks you up in his red thunderbird, his name is Chip, he works for an investment banking firm, he buys you expensive dresses and you take vacations to Italy together—

SHERMAN

Wait a minute. I'm a girl?

LUCIFER

Yeah.

SHERMAN

I don't want to be a girl.

LUCIFER

Well you could have said that earlier. How am I supposed to know? Most people like you want to be girls.

SHERMAN

I would prefer to stay male please.

LUCIFER

But you'll consider female? Because I've got some great packages—

SHERMAN

Male.

LUCIFER

All right, all right. How about this? You become an extremely talented rock and roll musician, you form a band, put out a few albums, everyone loves you—you go tour, women are throwing themselves at you, you settle for marrying Pamela Anderson, which goes all right for a little while and then you switch to Carmen Electra because she's not quite as crazy, and all you have to do is put a few backwardly masked lyrics in your song.

SHERMAN

What?

LUCIFER

You know, when you play the album backwards it says things like Hate your Parents and Family Guy is smart entertainment.

SHERMAN

If they're recorded backwards how does anyone ever hear it?

LUCIFER

Fine, shoot down all my good ideas. I don't know that we can do a deal here then. I'll be leaving.

SHERMAN

Wait! Wait! I desire to be popular.

LUCIFER

Well, both the rock star idea and the hot chick plan include being popular—

SHERMAN

No, I mean—I want being intelligent to be popular.

LUCIFER

So you want me to warp the entire fabric of reality then?

SHERMAN

Can't you accomplish that?

LUCIFER

Oh I can accomplish that. I just choose not to.

SHERMAN

I don't think you're capable of it.

LUCIFER

I can do it.

SHERMAN

If you could do it, then why don't you do it?

LUCIFER

You think you're the only person I make deals with? What about the politicians that I've got agreements with? You think it'll be easy to explain to them that their whole "I'm a common man" garbage won't work any more and they'll have to be perceived as intelligent in order to be elected? That's a lot of work!

SHERMAN

Okay, fine. You're not terribly powerful. I understand.

LUCIFER

Oh I—I can do it.

SHERMAN

Do it then.

Fine. I will.

LUCIFER

Right now.

SHERMAN

Fine!

LUCIFER

(If you would like to read more of this play, please visit www.playscripts.com)