

The Devil May Care – Jesus Cares Most:  
The Gerasene Demoniac

Setting: Gerasa, around 30AD (modern day Jordan). Gerasa is a Gentile town in the Roman Empire. It's part of the Decapolis – a group of ten cities that had some independence under Rome. They minted their own coins and each had control over the countryside around their cities. Gerasa had fertile soil and a reliable spring nearby. They were known for their pottery, iron mining, and agriculture.<sup>i</sup>

Characters

- Eustace – a soon to be demoniac
- Lydia – his savvy wife
- Felix – their son
- Phoebe – their daughter
- The Devil – at no one's service
- Jesus – at everyone's service
- Joanna – following Jesus
- Titus – a swine herd, unhappy as a pig without slop
- Chloe – a swine herd, sweating like a pig chasing after lost livestock
- Helen – one of the town folk who found no piggy at the market
- Rufus – one of the town folk who might have bought a pig in a poke

Eustace: (*enters and sits down, grabs paper to start writing, paces as he thinks*) Gerasa, Gerasa – shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (*pauses*) No. No, no, no! (*paces*) Gerasa is beauty and beauty Gerasa. No. Curses! It has to be good! It has to be just right.

Lydia: (*enters and sees Eustace pacing*) Oh, no, Eustace. Writer's block again?

Eustace: O, Lydia, I just can't get it to come out right. People need to know what a great town Gerasa is. How about this: I left my heart in old Gerasa.

Lydia: (*thinks for a moment*) Nah...too soon.

Eustace: It's just that everyone goes on and on about Gadara...like it's so great. We're in the Decapolis, too. We've got a hippodrome and temples and forums and roads.<sup>ii</sup> What do they got that we don't got?

Lydia: Well, they're better fortified against attack than we are, they're bigger than us, 25 miles closer to the sea, they have mineral hot springs,<sup>iii</sup> and –

Eustace: Don't say it.

Lydia: (*in an affectionately taunting manner*) They've got Menippus and Meleagros! Menippus and Meleagros!<sup>iv</sup>

Eustace: Gah! I know. Gadara gave the Roman empire some of her greatest philosophers and poets. Who comes from Gerasa? Nobody! That's why I need to be the next great writer

*(Felix and Phoebe walk in. Eustace pouts off to the side)*

Phoebe: Here's your wool from the market, Mom.

Lydia: Thank you, Phoebe. Now I'll be able to do some weaving first thing in the morning.

Felix: What's with Dad?

Lydia: Don't mind your father, Felix. I just used the M-words.

Phoebe: You didn't...

Felix: *(sighs)* Now he'll never stop...

*(Eustace comes over, corrals the kids)*

Eustace: Sit, sit! Listen to this, kids. It's just – so – brilliant. *(dramatically)* “Noisy cicada, drunk with dew drops, you sing your rustic ditty that fills the wilderness with your voice, and seated on the edge of the leaves...you shrill music like the lyre's. But sing, dear...strike up some strain responsive to Pan's pipe, that I may escape from Love and snatch a little midday sleep, reclining here beneath the shady plane-tree.”<sup>v</sup>

Phoebe: Gross! He's in love with a cicada?

Felix: Bugs dancing and taking naps?

Eustace: No, don't you see?! This is some of Meleagros's finest poetry from more than 150 years ago! He's in love and the whole world is coming alive and singing the soundtrack of his quest to be with his true love!

Lydia: Yes, dear, he did a nice job: earth friendly, Pan-positive – can we all just go to sleep already?

Eustace: Alright, good night, kids.

Felix & Phoebe: Night, pop!

Lydia: Good night!

*(Felix and Phoebe fall asleep and the front pew)*

Lydia: Honestly, dear, I know you love this town, but –

Eustace: I know, I know. Good night.

Lydia: Good night.

*(Everyone falls asleep. The Devil tiptoes in and looks to make sure that everyone is sleeping)*

Devil: *(sung to the tune of "We're in the money!")* I am the devil. I am the devil. I've got an awful lot of – tempting to do! I am the devil. I am the devil. I'm gonna get everyone's souls before I'm through. *(The Devil lifts his hat and bows to the congregation to reveal red horns. He winks.)* Now, what have we here? A pretty average, unsuspecting Roman family – just ripe for the picking.

Phoebe: *(rubs her eyes and wakes up; speaks sleepily)* Hey, mister. What are you doing in my house?

Devil: Oh, I'm your fairy godfather and I'm here to grant your dearest wish.

Phoebe: Really? Umm...let me think about it.

Devil: Think – nothing. What do you want to do more than anything else?

Phoebe: Well, that's easy! I want to make the world a more beautiful and wonderful place!

Devil: I can make you a beauty queen with wealth and power and influence – just say the word.

Phoebe: Beauty queen?! Let me tell you something, Mister, I am gorgeous just the way I am. Besides, I already know how to make the world a more wonderful place.

Devil: What can you do? You're just a child!

Phoebe: *(hands the Devil a flower from her bag)* Here you go. *(the Devil looks at the flower with confusion)* If I can make people happy, then the world's a better place already.

Devil: Yes, fine. Go back to sleep then.

Phoebe: G'night!

Devil: *(shudders and tears up the flower)* Innocence of a child – it's like fingernails on a chalkboard and ice cubes in your underpants. Next up: Felix?

Felix: *(sits up)* Yeah?

Devil: You're having a crazy dream.

Felix: Oh yeah? So that means I can do anything I want?

Devil: That's right.

Felix: Then I dream of having vast magical powers, a pet owl named Hedwig, going to school to learn to make potions, riding around on broomsticks, and teaming up with my friends to stand up against the forces of evil.

Devil: What are you talking about?

Felix: (*scoffs*) Well, maybe they don't have them where you come from, but here in Gerasa it's a really common job. I will be a potter...and they will call me Harry.

Devil: (*pause*) That's not – you can't... Fine, yes, I can make that happen for you if you follow only me and do just what I say.

Felix: Wait just a minute...I know you.

Devil: What? No, you don't.

Felix: Yes, I do and I'm not gonna do a word you say. (*decisively and accusatorily*) You're Voldemort!

Devil: I'm not, well...never mind. Go back to sleep, kid. (*Felix goes back to sleep.*) Rough night – oh for two. (*wakes up Lydia*) Good evening, ma'am. So, sorry to trouble you.

Lydia: What do you want? I was having the best dream about a dragon named Norbert.

Devil: I do apologize. I'm a stranger in town and I was wondering if I could stay in your house. I'd give you anything you'd like in return.

Lydia: Stay in my house? You just appeared in my bedroom! What kind of game are you playing?

Devil: Come on, isn't there anything I can tempt you with?

Lydia: Hmm...nope.

Devil: There's nothing on earth that you want?

Lydia: I hate to break it to you, but I'm happy.

Devil: (*surprised*) You're what?

Lydia: I'm happy. Life is simple and it's good. Look, I'm a weaver. Each thread, each stroke of the loom – they don't seem like much on their own. But thread by thread, row by row, something soft and warm and beautiful emerges. The sun is warm, the ground is rich,

there's springs and streams of clear, cool water. I've got my crazy family, I've got my work. That's all I need.

Devil: But, but, but rubies and diamonds! Revenge against your enemies! Immortality! You could have anything.

Lydia: Sorry, guy. I'm happy. I'd say good luck, but it seems to me you're up to no good. Now, get out of my house!

Devil: (*waves his hand*) Back to sleep. (*Lydia goes back to sleep*) Sheesh! Thank badness you don't meet many people like that anymore. Just one left.

Eustace: (*still lying down, speaking in his sleep*) And the crowd goes wild. Greatest writer of all the Roman Empire – champion of his home town – Eustace of Gerasa.

Devil: Pardon me, sir. (*Eustace wakes up slowly*) You want to be a famous writer?

Eustace: (*stands bolt upright*) Writer? Yes, I'm sick of being a scribe – copying other peoples' boring shopping lists, reading mundane love letters, creating gorgeous manuscripts for rich people who'll never appreciate the true genius of my craft!

Devil: I can see you have quite a sensitive soul. It would be such a shame if the world missed out on your great, untapped talent.

Eustace: I'd do anything to become a famous writer....

Devil: Anything? Then please allow me to introduce myself: Cornelius T. Soulgrabber. My card. (*hands him a business card*)

Eustace: (*shakes Devil's hand*) It's lovely to meet you Mr....Soulgrabber?!

Devil: Don't let that trouble you. It's just an old, old, very old family name.

Eustace: Riiight...so, you can help me become a famous writer?

Devil: Naturally! It's what I do.

Eustace: Well, you understand, of course, that I already possess the blessing of the muses, the power of word-craft, the raw talent that it takes to be the greatest writer of all time.

Devil: (*Smiles and nods*) Oh, yes, of course you do (*shakes his head to the congregation incredulously*).

Eustace: Then, really, all I need is a break from the distractions of daily life – Felix and his pottery, Phoebe running around with flowers all over the place, Lydia's endless

fascination with making afghans! I mean, seriously, how many afghans can one woman make? A house only needs so many afghans!

Devil: Sure, sure, you want to go some place quiet where no one will come bother you.

Eustace: Yes!

Devil: Some place where no one would dare disturb you.

Eustace: Yes!

Devil: Some place where no one will come after you even if you – say, screamed at the top of your lungs.

Eustace: Scream at the top of my lungs? Oh, yes, I see what you mean. Writing can be very frustrating, but I'll conquer any writer's block. So, what do I have to do?

Devil: (*pulls out a contract*) All you have to do is sign right here on the dotted line. (*Hands Eustace a pen*)

Eustace: Say, that's a fine looking pen you've got there. What kind is it?

Devil: Why, cloven-footed, of course.

Eustace: Ah, that's a good, old-fashioned pen. But, wait. What are we going to use for ink?

Devil: Don't worry, I've got that covered. (*Devil takes the pen and stabs Eustace in the arm with it*)

Eustace: Ouch! What gives?

Devil: Don't be such a baby. Now we have ink.

Eustace: Signing in blood? I don't know about this...

Devil: You want to be a writer, right?

Eustace: Well, yeah...what's in the contract again?

Devil: Just what you asked for – all the distraction-free time you'll ever need.

Eustace: Alright, Mr. Soulgrabber, you talked me into it. (*Starts to sign the contract. Devil starts laughing evilly.*) Oh, shoot!

Devil: (*stops laughing*) What? You can't stop now!

Eustace: No, I'm not. I just ran out of ink.

Devil: Oh, why didn't you say so? *(Stabs him with the pen again)*

Eustace: Youch! Thanks. *(Finishes signing. Rubs his arm)*

Devil: Well done, my boy. You've made this old fiend glad. Now, let's try this out. *(Devil starts to do the macarena and Eustace copies him automatically and against his will. Keep dancing while talking.)*

Eustace: What are you doing? What's happening?

Devil: It's a dance! We're dancing!

Eustace: Dancing? But I don't want to be dancing!

Devil: This isn't for you...I just thought it'd be funny!

Eustace: Well, it's not funny. Knock it off!

Devil: Oh, you knock it off! We look fantastic.

Eustace: How come I can't control myself?

Devil: Don't you know? I won your soul – I own you for all eternity.

Eustace: Some scribe I am...I didn't even read the fine print...

Devil: I know! It's hilarious! Okay, we can stop dancing now. *(They both stop dancing.)*

Eustace: *(groans)* Oh, I know what I'll do. *(starts barking)*

Devil: My dear boy, what are you doing now?

Eustace: Dogs can sense evil – maybe barking can scare you off. *(Barks more enthusiastically)*

Devil: *(pets Eustace's head)* Who's a good boy? Who's a good boy?

Lydia: *(waking up)* Honey? Honey, is that you? *(Lydia walks over to Eustace, but can't see the Devil)* Are you – barking? *(Eustace continues to bark at the Devil)* Eustace, dear, snap out of it. Honestly, Eustace, your name means “level-headed” – this is not level-headed! Level out, already! *(Eustace continues barking)*

*(Felix and Phoebe wake up)*

Felix: Is Daddy barking?

Phoebe: Mommy, I thought you said we couldn't have a dog! But we can keep Daddy, right?

Lydia: Yes, of course we're keeping Daddy. We just have to figure out what's wrong with him first.

Devil: Eustace, they can't hear or see me. You just look crazy to them. For that matter, everything you say will just sound like barking to them.

Eustace: Why you, dirty, stinking, low down –

Devil: *(feeling complimented)* Oh, go on...

Eustace: Well, maybe if we're connected, then I know how to hurt you. *(Picks up a rock and starts hitting his arm)*

Devil: That's – an interesting idea.

Felix: Daddy, why are you hitting yourself?

Lydia: This is not good.

Phoebe: You should stop that. Hurting yourself hurts!

Eustace: *(continues hitting himself)* Had enough?

Devil: *(chuckles to himself)* No, I think you'd better keep doing that.

Eustace: *(barks loudly)* I'll get you! *(chases after the Devil. The Devil runs towards the family members and they run out of the way.)*

Lydia: Family meeting! Family meeting! I think your father is having a tough time right now. Felix, Phoebe, run and get the family chains. You know, the nice ones from my mother's side of the family. *(Felix and Phoebe run out and come back with paper chains)* Come on, dear, sit down right here in this chair. *(Lydia backs Eustace into the chair)* Now, kids! *(Felix and Phoebe run around the chair in opposite directions while holding the paper chain to tie up Eustace.)* Hold still, dear. Everything's going to be alright.

Devil: *(chuckles to himself)* I do love my job. *(Waves his hand and Eustace stands up, bursting out of his chains. He barks a few times and then whimpers.)*

Lydia: Alright, family. I'm out of ideas. We need to find some serious help: Artemis, Hestia, Zeus – heck, maybe a vet would do us some good at this point. Let's get out of here!

Phoebe: Feel better, Daddy! *(Phoebe puts a flower in his pocket and then runs back to the rest of the family)*

*(Lydia, Felix, and Phoebe exit to the stairwell)*

Eustace: What have you done to me?

Devil: It's just deliciously terrible, isn't it?

Eustace: My own family is afraid of me! I've gotta leave.

Devil: And where will you go?

Eustace: The cemetery, I guess.

Devil: Where no one can bother you, right? So you can be a genius in peace? *(evil laugh)*

Eustace: Man, you're a jerk.

*(The Devil chases after Eustace and they wind up hiding in the back. After they are hidden, Joanna and Jesus come in from the stairwell.)*

Joanna: Oh, Jesus, I can't believe what just happened! There we were, on the Sea of Galilee and the wind picked up and the waves crashed against the side of the boat and it was filled with water – just filled! And there you were –

Jesus: I was sleeping.

Joanna: I couldn't believe it! I thought we were all goners for sure!

Jesus: You were safe with me, dear one.

Joanna: But then – I never imagined you could do what you did next.

Jesus: I spoke to the wind and the waves. I said, "Peace! Be still!" and they were calm.

Joanna: It was amazing. So quiet.

Jesus: Then and now, you should have faith.

Joanna: I know, Jesus. It's just scary and hard for us sometimes. I mean, even the wind and the water listen to your commands. What's next?

*(The Devil chases Eustace back and forth in the back while Eustace barks at him.)*

Joanna: *(pulls at Jesus' arm)* We'd better turn back, Jesus, there's a crazy guy in that cemetery!

*(Eustace sees Jesus and runs up to him and bows down before him. Joanna hides behind Jesus)*

Jesus: Come out of this man, you unclean spirit!

Eustace & Devil: What have you to do with us, Jesus, Son of God? I beg you by God, do not torment me.

Jesus: Not to torment you? After you've been tormenting this poor man so mercilessly? Unbelievable. What is your name?

Eustace & Devil: My name is Legion for we are many.

Joanna: A whole legion of demons?! 5,000 demons in one person! Oh, that poor soul...

*(A herd of pigs enters from the stage right with Titus and Chloe)*

Joanna: Demons and pigs in a Gentile cemetery? It's like an unclean bonanza in this town!

*(Pigs graze and oink happily)*

Eustace & Devil: Don't send us to the abyss, Jesus. We beg you, please!

Chloe: Oh, you cute little oinkers! Find some grass – a fine part of a piggy diet. *(pets some pigs)*

Eustace & Devil: Send us into the pigs! Please!

Jesus: Go!

Titus: I wonder what's happening over there...

*(The Devil leaves Eustace's side and Eustace falls forward. Eustace sits down at Jesus' feet. The Devil runs to the middle of the pigs and they all run together across the chancel and out stage left.)*

Chloe: Pigs? Whatcha doin'?

Titus: Come back! Stop. NO!!!!

*(Titus and Chloe run after the pigs and stop at stage left, looking out the exit)*

Chloe: I can't believe it. They just jumped off a cliff – right into the sea.

Titus: Two thousand pigs.

*(Helen and Rufus enter from stage left)*

Chloe: This will be the worst fiscal quarter in the whole history of our town!

Helen: What's wrong? What happened?

Titus: We lost all the pigs – every single one of 'em.

Rufus: That's unbelievable. First Eustace goes bark raving mad and now the pigs go nuts?

Chloe: We're ruined.

Rufus: Well, Helen, I guess I owe you those diamond earrings after all.

Helen: How do you figure, Rufus?

Rufus: I said I'd buy them for you when pigs fly. *(pause)* Ha!

Titus: This isn't funny, Rufus! We need to find out what happened.

*(Chloe, Titus, Rufus, and Helen approach Jesus and Eustace. Eustace has begun to drink tea and Joanna is sitting beside him.)*

Jesus: Children, the eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

Joanna: Jesus, you're the greatest healer I know. If anyone can make our eyes healthy and fill us with light, it's you.

Eustace: I had no idea how full of darkness I was until I lost myself entirely.

Rufus: I don't believe it.

Helen: Is that the same Eustace who was hitting himself with rocks and howling like a dog?

Chloe: He looks so calm and normal sitting there. Is that you, Eustace?

Eustace: Yup, hullo!

Titus: What if it's a trap so he can infect the rest of us with his craziness?

Rufus: No, it was that man – that stranger! *(to Jesus)* We don't take kindly to demons in this town, Mister!

Helen: We don't know what you're mixed up in, but you get outta here right now!

Chloe: Please don't hurt us! You're clearly some kind of powerful wizard.

Titus: Please, leave! You've caused us enough trouble and you've scared us senseless.

Joanna: What's wrong with you people? This is Jesus, here! He's the Son of God and he kicked the devil's butt right out of your town! How about a thank you?!

Jesus: It's alright, Joanna. We'll leave.

Rufus: And good riddance! (*Jesus takes one step towards them and Helen, Titus, Rufus, and Chloe yelp and exit to the education hall*)

Eustace: (*pulls the flower from his pocket*) I can't thank you enough, Jesus. You've given me everything. You've given me my life again! Let me come with you. I'll be your follower, your disciple. Anything! Please!

Jesus: Go home to your friends and your family, Eustace. Go home and tell them all what the Lord God has done for you and the mercy God has shown you.

Eustace: You bet your sweet bippy! I'm gonna tell everyone all about you, Jesus – at home, in town, and all over the Decapolis! The Devil might seem big and bad and strong and clever, but even with his strongest forces, he's no match for Jesus! You are the light and the life of all humanity. And all God's children said: Amen.

*(Whole cast comes out for a bow)*

All: Christ is Risen! Hallelujah! Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerash>; <https://followinghadrianphotography.com/2017/05/09/gerasa/>;  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decapolis>;  
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0006%3Aalphabetic+letter%3DG%3Aentry+group%3D1%3Aentry%3Dgerasa>; <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/australian-archaeologist-sorts-through-gerasene-pottery-shreds>

<sup>ii</sup> (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerash>);  
(<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0006%3Aalphabetic+letter%3DG%3Aentry+group%3D1%3Aentry%3Dgerasa>)

<sup>iii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm\\_Qais](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Qais)

<sup>iv</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm\\_Qais](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Qais)

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.attalus.org/poetry/meleager.html>