

Satan's Replacement
Word count: 1500

In Hell, Satan sat at his desk with a bottle of whiskey and a bad temper. While it was completely normal for the Lord of Darkness to be in a grouchy mood, this particular day was causing him more and more frustration than usual. Satan's assistant, a wispy little low-entry demon named Steve, entered into the office. The little demon whimpered at the sight of his boss, who was more red than usual and definitely more drunk ~~than usual~~.

"S-sir?" Steve squeaked. "T-the next one is here."

"More?" Satan shouted, slamming down his mighty fists. "More! How can there be *more*? We've gone through every rapist, murderer, gangster, kingpin, drug dealer, lowlife thug, money launderer, and police officer in all of Hell. Tell me, Steve. How can there be *more*?"

Steve chuckled nervously. "Well, uh, you see, sir. Um, there actually weren't any more. But then, a few showed up out of nowhere claiming that they would be best for the job. I figured—"

"And you figured," Lucifer roared with displeasure, "that you would allow such peasants to be interviewed for the job of Great Ruler of Hell? You figured that much, *Steve*? What happened to the last guy? You are more terrible of an assistant than he ever was."

"You, uh, ate him. Sir."

"I what!?"

"You ate him."

Satan leaned back thoughtfully in his chair. He reached for another bottle of whiskey. "Oh yes," he mused after a long gulp. "I remember now. He was far too crispy for my taste. I figured I would dip him into the lava pits to give him a nice char. I went a little overboard. I never was very good at making barbeque."

"Oh Evil One!" Steve cried, throwing himself down at Satan's hooves. "Please don't eat me!"

Satan rolled his eyes at the groveling little snot before him. It was demons like Steve who had forced him into early retirement and perpetual alcoholism. "Get up, will you?" he grumbled. "Just bring in these new interviewees. If they think they can do my job, they must be pretty stupid."

He set his evil gaze upon Steve, and licked his lips. "Besides," he continued, "I'll need some entertainment with my dinner."

"I assure you, sir," Steve whimpered, "that all the interviewees are the most evil of the evil. Worse than Hitler, or Stalin, or Miley Cyrus."

"Fine, fine," Lucifer said impatiently. "Just bring the first one in already."

"The first," Steve announced, "is someone truly despicable. By himself, he has caused more misery and boredom than any creature in the world. May I present, the vindictive IT guy!"

Steve opened the door, revealing a middle-aged balding man with thick glasses and a Star Trek T-shirt. He adjusted his glasses and came forth. Satan looked the man over once and roared with laughter.

"This guy?" he asked, almost spitting up a swig of Jack Daniels. "Seriously? The only thing that this guy has caused misery to is his right hand and a bottle of his mom's Jergens."

"Hey!" the IT guy argued. "I'm left handed!"

"I'm not impressed, Steve," the Lord of Darkness said with glinting fangs. "He's only making me hungry."

"No, wait!" Steve insisted, wiping away a nervous bead of sweat from his brow. "This guy is *pure* evil. In his office, he has blocked every entertaining website. *Every single one.*

That's Reddit, Facebook, every message board ever. He's even blocked Myspace. *Myspace!* No one even knows that exists any more, but he stills blocks it because he is that evil."

Satan twirled his beard in contemplation. "I guess that is pretty evil," he admitted. "All of those employees would have to sit for eight hours at their desks and actually work. But still, this isn't good enough to be the next Great Ruler of Hell."

"Of course!" Steve agreed, shoving the IT guy out of the room. "The next Great Ruler of Hell has to be one-hundred percent evil. They would have to be the creator of the most frustrating object in the universe."

"Go on," Satan took another gulp of whiskey, "I'm listening."

"Lord of Darkness, I present to you—the inventor of cling wrap!"

Once more, Steve opened the door. This time, the inventor of cling wrap stood in the doorway. As per the Third Ring of Hell's rule about inventors being forever tormented by their inventions, this man was wrapped so tightly with cling wrap that he couldn't move. With the help of Steve, he hopped forward toward Satan's desk.

"I hate cling wrap!" Satan growled. "It always clings to itself! This man truly is despicable. But is he despicable enough to be replace me?"

"I think so, sir," Steve answered. "After all, have we not witnessed the nastiest of temper tantrums because of cling wrap's inability to cling to anything other than itself? The inventor of cling wrap would make a fine Great Ruler of Hell."

Satan pondered a moment. It was true that the inventor of cling wrap was much more evil than the IT guy, but was he evil enough? "He won't do either," was his final answer. "Even though cling wrap truly is the most frustrating invention in the history of mankind, it still was made with good intentions. It keeps food fresh, and that is not evil."

With a sad sigh, the inventor of cling wrap hopped out of the room. Once more, Satan and Steve were alone. By this point, Satan had downed yet another bottle of whiskey. He tossed it behind him, and the sharp sound of crashing glass sent an uneasy shiver up Steve's spine.

"I'm growing impatient," the Devil said with a large belch, "and hungry, too. If you don't find me a replacement soon..."

No more had to be said. Steve once more came to the door, poised to reveal the next suitor.

"The last interviewee is truly the most evil," he announced. "In all my days as a demon, I have never met someone so completely backwards and reckless. He takes no one else's life into account, and plans to corrupt the very fabric of society with his wicked ways."

Steve opened with door with a flourish, revealing a teenager in baggy sweatpants and holding a bowl of cereal. Satan blinked, more confused than amused this time.

"This guy?" Satan asked. "What's wrong with this guy? He doesn't look evil to me."

The frumpy teen looked up, and in between a spoonful of cereal said, "I pour the milk before I pour the cereal."

In a blind rage, Satan pounded his fists too hard against his desk that his new bottle of whiskey completely shattered. "BEFORE THE CEREAL?" he bellowed, shaking his fists in the air. "WHO DOES THAT? HONESTLY, WHO DOES THAT?"

"Sir, please! Calm down!" Steve shouted. "It's nothing to get worked up over! He's just truly evil, that's all!"

"No!" the Devil roared. "I won't allow that backwards, redneck way of thinking to take over here in Hell! The Great Ruler must be level headed, not completely batshit insane. Pouring milk in *before* the cereal? How does that even make sense?"

“Sir--!”

“GET HIM OUT OF HERE.”

In a panic, Steve ushered the kid out of the room, and bolted the door behind him. Out of whiskey and now actually breathing fire, Satan marched up to Steve and picked him up by the collar.

“I’m done with this, Steve!” he growled. “There can be no one to replace me! There is no one who is more evil than I! I will just drink myself to death, but only after I roast you over a spit and glaze you with the tears of children! DO YOU HEAR ME, STEVE?”

Suddenly, there came a knock at the door. Both Satan and Steve froze.

“Hello?” a voice came from outside. “Is anyone there? I’m here for the interview.”

“There are no more interviews!” Steve managed to say as Lucifer’s hand began to tighten around his throat.

Satan released him and retreated back to his desk, steam whistling from his ears. “What’s one more?” he asked. “I’m not hungry enough anyways. Let him come in, Steve. It’ll only make me want to eat you that much more.”

Sobbing, Steve opened the door. Who stood before them was shocking to say the least.

“You?!” Satan screeched. “What the hell are you doing here?”

God entered the room with a cool calmness. “I’m here for the interview,” he said. “For the next Great Ruler of Hell, right? Isn’t this where the interviews are?”

“Go back to your own turf,” Lucifer said. “Or do you think that you are so mighty now that you can rule both Heaven and Hell?”

"I'm done with Heaven, man," God admitted with a sad sigh. "It's too boring. Everyone is so nice in Heaven. Everything is too white, and there's too much Barry Manilow music for my taste. I thought this job might be more my style for a while."

"This job is only for the most evil!" Steve squeaked.

"Evil, huh?" God pondered. "Well, you could say I'm pretty evil sometimes."

"You? Evil?" Satan scoffed. "Yeah, right."

"No, it's true!" God proclaimed. "Think about it. I created everything—air, water, animals, humans. When I was making the earth, it crossed my mind that maybe it would be cool to have some sort of horse creature with a horn attached to it. Like, a real badass kind of horse that glowed white and had sparkly rainbow tears. But I'm so evil, I was like naw, screw unicorns, man."

There came a moment of complete silence. Satan stared at God, and God stared right back. This tension of biblical proportions was only ended when the Devil extended his hand to God and Steve cried out in protest. God took Satan's hand, and the deal was done.

Satan's replacement had been found.