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Satan's Literature

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satan's literature

I have little use for the classics. I realize they're well-written, timeless stories that truly exemplify the human condition, but I don't really have any desire to read them. Anything that has been raised to the lofty title of "literature" is likely too full of itself to realize that it is no more than words on paper. I realize literature is not self-aware, but it's difficult to mock something that has no self-concept. You just don't get the satisfaction of fine ridicule.

Being inanimate, literature has never done anything to harm me personally, but others have used it against me on many occasions. The main culprits for my functional "alliteracy" are my English teachers. I don't know if *alliterate* is actually a word, but my beloved spell-check isn't rejecting it, so I guess it's kosher. I'm using *alliterate* to mean I can read—I just usually choose not to. I can read *Macbeth*. I can tell you what it means. I can tell you what the trees symbolize and how they indicate Shakespeare was gay. I just choose not to. God has given me the right to make such decisions, and I tend to be pro-God. These diabolical English teachers ignore my decision to avoid "the classics" and force me to read them, laughing maniacally all the while. It's feasible that I would have enjoyed these books had I read them of my own volition; this I can believe. But by forcing my nose between the pages these teachers have ruined it for me. Let me give you an example.

In seventh grade we read *The Golden Goblet*. I wouldn't equate this book with *Anna Karenina*, but it must have won a Caldecott or Newberry or Golden Globe, or whatever they're giving books these days. Its protagonist was a plucky young Egyptian lad named Raq. Raq bothered me right off. According to what these same English teachers had been teaching me for years his name should have been Raqu. There's always supposed to be a U after Q; even I can remember that spelling rule. And I learned how to spell in England. I still occasionally spell *color* as *colour*, and have never figured out *grey* versus *gray*. Yet this Q-U rule doesn't seem to apply to Raq. I'm pretty sure this is the exact reason we attacked Iraq back with Read-My-Lips Bush. They didn't respect the U then, and they don't respect George Double-U now.

Raq wanted to be a goldsmith, which I didn't care about at all. I'd already learned all I needed to know about metal working from Johnny Tremain and his silver and Alma and his dross. Raq should pick a career they haven't written a book about yet, like professional recumbent bicycle salesman. I never got to hear about that in grade school. But Raq wanted to be a goldsmith, and soon he got involved with secret societies, ancient treasure, and that sort of thing. In reality it should have been the type of thing I'd like. It almost certainly had more plot, better dialogue, and more scarab beetles than *The Mummy*. But no one forced me to watch *The Mummy*, so I enjoyed it. They forced *The Golden Goblet* on me, just as Satan would if he were a middle school teacher. And I strongly suspect he may be in his spare time.

A greater sin than forcing me to read *The Golden Goblet* was forcing me to respond to it. For most of the books I read through school there was some type of an activity to go along with it: creating a diorama, writing a book report, or training monkeys to reenact a chapter. For this book we had a response journal. We needed to respond to each chapter with an entry in our journal describing our personal reaction and feelings on what occurred. My teacher wanted us to write a page of response about the page and a half we had just read. It seemed to me that seventh graders had become the new Gutenberg printing press: producing twenty-something handwritten copies of *The Golden Goblet*, only slightly abridged and extremely misspelled. This is a cruel waste of time to inflict upon any child, but doubly so to inflict upon me. I had no emotional response to this book. Only after nine years of constant thought on this book have I been able to come up with this response, such as it is. And had I turned in a response of this nature I would have received a poor grade and a trip to the school guidance counselor. The school shrink

would only be a temporary setback, but the poor grade in a seventh-grade English class would almost certainly be a smudge on my transcript keeping me from all higher education. I'd probably be flipping burgers instead of enjoying the benefits of a college education (i.e., girls).

That which I am forced to do, I do not enjoy. It's Satan's plan: to force us all to read fine literature and refine ourselves, whether we like it or not. Well perhaps this isn't his plan exactly; his plan involves ensnaring us with sin and making us miserable like unto himself, or some such thing. But this is the exact manner in which he would go about educating the masses. And since I'm not a devil worshipper, I won't stand for it. I'm taking a stand against the classics. Perhaps it's just a post-adolescent rebellious streak, but the world should be so lucky if all the teenage punks out there rebelled by refusing to read *The Great Gatsby*. From this point forward I will read nothing published before 1997. I will read nothing that has won any awards or received praise from anyone with an English degree. I'd prefer it if the book contains typos, missing pages, and switches between the present and pluperfect tense without any grammatical reason. Anything that indicates that neither love nor care was put into its writing. Any book I read should have at least four sequels, and I should be able to figure out how the book will end by page ten. The book should have flexible binding and be short enough to fit in my back pocket. And lastly, the book should be based on a movie, so I can see the movie and pretend I read the book. But I don't want to read any book that is later made into a movie, because this would indicate it's of literature quality.

So it looks as if I'm down to cheap sci-fi, romance novels, and Dean Koontz. But I still have my standards. The romance novels must at least have Fabio on the cover; I don't want any of the cheap stuff. Or better yet, I'm just going to go watch *American Idol* reruns.