

# A Walk on the Dark Side

*Abandon hope all ye who enter here.*

Dante Alighieri coined the above phrase in his Divine Comedy, an inscription hung by the poet above the gates of hell.

Today “Abandon hope all ye who enter here” might serve as the perfect slogan for that band of anarchists, Marxists, thugs, and all-round loonies running amuck in our cities, who appear in the media bemoaning the evils of America, who seek to “cancel culture” and their opponents by mobbing dissenters on social media, and who revel in destruction rather than in creation.

Recently, a friend wondered aloud how people faced such disasters as COVID-19 and the looting and burning in so many of our cities without a belief in God. A devout Christian, she couldn’t imagine coping with these horrible disasters and indeed with everyday life without her faith.

Her musings ignited a series of questions about the vandals bringing devastation to our urban streets.

How do those who torch a small business feel about themselves? Perhaps they’re proud of what they’ve done. Or perhaps they lack empathy, unable to see in their mind’s eye the anguish of the husband and wife who spent the last twenty years investing themselves in that enterprise. Do they ever stop in the middle of trashing a 7-Eleven and ask themselves, “What on earth am I doing?”

What about the Marxists and anarchists directing this revolution? They seem to truly believe that destruction will bring an end to an evil America – that making an omelet means breaking a few eggs – and that they will someday achieve utopia by wreaking havoc. Do they find joy in their lives or are they miserable and sour all the time like some? When

“Everything is political,” an expression I detest, can anything at all be fun?

And what of those politicians and members of the mainstream media who condone, justify, or approve of these vicious attempts to shred our culture and civilization? Do they ever consider the lives damaged by their failure to take action, to speak out against the violence, to quell the riots with police and the National Guard? They may sleep like the proverbial babe, happy with the chaos they’ve helped create... or perhaps they still have a bit of conscience which causes them to jerk awake in the middle of the night, fearful they’ve made terrible decisions.

For the entire summer, Antifa, Black Lives Matter, and various other groups have savaged some of our cities. Murder rates in places like Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia have also skyrocketed, another sign of the collapse of law and order. For the entire summer, most of us watching this violence either shake our heads in astonishment or rage at the destruction.

I have long felt disgust with these people who have wrecked so many lives and livelihoods.

But beginning today, inspired by the thoughts of my friend, I will mingle pity with that revulsion.

Can you imagine living like one of these “protesters”?

Can you imagine walking through every hour of every day so embittered and crazed?

Can you imagine a life where you judge everything by politics, where, for example, you see a young woman laughing with delight while waterskiing, and all you can think of is the damage she’s doing to the environment?

Can you imagine bragging about that brick you hurled through

the plate-glass window of a small jewelry store?

Can you imagine how miserable a human being you'd have to be to yell obscenities at a woman old enough to be your grandmother?

Can you imagine yourself as being so petty of soul, so without honor and dignity, that you would give yourself over to a mob without shame?

I can't.

For the life of me, I truly can't imagine enduring such a wretched, nihilistic life – and I thought I possessed a pretty good imagination.

Like many readers, I suspect, my moods bounce up and down these days. Just when I think the news has reached an extreme beyond which there is no passage, some new headline will shock or anger me. We live in crazy and unhappy times.

Like many readers, however, I also experience bits and pieces of joy throughout my day, moments that surprise me or moments that by force of will I create: a phone conversation with a friend, a cheery greeting from one of the employees at the little store near my house, the sparkling eyes of the barista in my coffee shop when she talks about her little nephew.

When I read of the latest outrage in Minneapolis, or Kenosha, WI, or Washington D.C., I'll continue to wish for more arrests, for the rioters and looters to get the justice they deserve. I'll still feel repulsed by their destruction and nightmarish chaos.

But I will also pity them.

Because I can't imagine living in such a place of spiritual darkness.

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