

Bad Guys Always Have a Plan

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Rated: G

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Summary: In 1887, HG Wells dropped out of getting his biology degree. Why? Maybe he was bored. Or maybe, someone planted an idea in his mind ... that might change the outcome of Lois and Clark's entire universe.

"Competition. The word brings many different thoughts to mind. Games, contests, sports- even simple accomplishments can be considered showing a competitive spirit. People compete to get land, to get the best jobs- even to become President of the United States! Yes, truly. Competition," the professor paused to turn around and underline the word on the chalkboard, "Is everything."

He allowed for a small pause as his students scribbled down his notes as quickly as they could. The man smiled slightly as he stroked his beard, glancing back at the board. Something was missing ... *Ah*. He reached up and wrote in the upper righthand corner of the board *April 17, 1887* underneath his name. He turned back to his pupils with a smile on his face.

"So," he continued. "Man's struggle- to better himself, to achieve greatness, or create a perfect world- becomes not only redundant, but utterly ridiculous! Everything man wants to accomplish is only to be the first, the best and the greatest. Recognition. Flattery. Control. Power. It all boils down to these things. Nothing would exist in our world without competition."

"Mr. Tempus, sir?" A student shot his hand up. Quite predictably, too.

Tempus made a show of struggling with the name. "Yes, Mister ..."

"Wells, sir."

"Ah, yes. Wells. Of course. What is it?"

"Pardon me for speaking out of turn, but that doesn't seem to quite add up to me. I mean, if humankind struggles to reach some kind of utopia, then that is only for the betterment of society, is it not? Bettering of self can only lead to that. And in which case, isn't that a good thing?"

Tempus smiled. Yep. Predictable behavior, as usual. "Well, Mr. Wells, that very well may seem to be the case. But if everyone's intention is more nefarious, then wouldn't that just imply that society itself is based on a corrupt system? In fact, I'm actually glad you brought up that topic, Mr. Wells. What is Utopia? If we follow through with our logic on competition and power, then we ultimately come to the conclusion that the very idea of a utopia is corrupt. Who defines what Utopia is? Who keeps it in place? If it's a conscious choice by everyone to be as Utopian as possible, then what prompts them to do that? There is always a cause that comes with the effect. Therefore, even ideas are not original. So what use would a Utopia be when, truly, it isn't what we have come to accept what the word 'utopia' means?"

Tempus glanced back at Herb, who seemed struck by the concept. A small smile graced his lips, and he looked at his watch. "That will be all for today's lecture. You are free to go." He turned away from his pupils and began to erase the chalk off the green surface before him. He was trying to hold it together, hoping it had worked ...

"Uh, Mr. Tempus, sir?"

Tempus bit back his grin as he recognized the voice. So he had successfully baited him. "Yes, Mr. Wells?"

"Oh, please, call me Herb."

He smiled. "Alright, then. Herb."

"Don't take this the wrong way, but ... do you really believe all of those things you spoke of?"

Tempus appeared to think a moment. "Well, yes. I see no reason why I shouldn't. I mean, if it makes sense, then it's really only reasonable that I do believe it."

"It's just ... it's a very different way of thinking. I always believed that one day in the future we could eliminate things like wars and sickness and create a utopia ... but the way you put it, well, it's just so different."

Tempus feigned indifference. "We're all entitled to our own opinions. This is a philosophy class. Then again, to a certain extent you should feel a mild curiosity. After all, to remain staunchly in your own ways of thinking isn't exactly forward-thinking, now is it? Not very Utopian."

Herb seemed to think about this a bit, nodding in acceptance. "I can understand that."

Tempus smiled. *Of course you can. After all, you penned it.* He turned and closed the briefcase on his desk, successfully hiding the copy of *A Modern Utopia* within it. "Let me ask you something. First, where are you from?"

"I was raised in Bromley, Kent, sir."

Tempus had to bite his tongue in order to clamp down on his laughter, but a sharp burst escaped anyways. *Ironic. Perhaps that explains the fascination.* He shook his head. "And have you done very much travelling?"

"Some, sir. Most of England."

Tempus nodded. "Might I suggest you expand your world knowledge?"

The younger man frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Well, if you're wanting to know human nature, and what makes us tick- where we're going, where we've been- you've got to see the world. You'd be surprised by some of the things you'll find."

"Have you travelled a lot, sir?"

He smiled. "Yes. More than you might guess."

"And what did you find?"

Tempus shot the younger man a cryptic smile as he stood up, gathering his things together and heading for the door. He paused at the doorway, unable to resist. "Utopia will never work for any society, no matter how powerful or good the man in charge is."

H.G. Wells was standing on edge, excitement lacing his expression as he waited for his instructor to provide more details. "Why?"

"Duh." He paused for effect. "It's boring."

And with that, Tempus left H.G. Wells alone in the classroom. He only hoped his plan had worked.

THE END

Author's Note:

Herbert George Wells did actually drop out of his lessons while pursuing a degree in biology at the Normal School of Science in London, England in the year 1887. It is said that he taught classes without a degree until he went back and completed his B.S. program in 1890. Of course, we know what he was really up to ... building a working model time machine ;)

And what if, just maybe, someone decided to interfere with that?