

Sapere Aude

By

Kant

Jan TWC

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OVER BLACK:

MAXIMUS

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from Evil.

FADE IN:

EXT. BACON'S SCHOOL FOR TROUBLED KIDS - NIGHT

Standing outside the ancient-looking (circa 1800s) school
are fifty SOLDIERS garbed in worn plate mail.

The leader, FATHER MAXIMUS (45, slim, good shape) sits on
his WAR HORSE, and surveys his men.

On the ground lie FIVE dead men all in their late teens.

MAXIMUS

Tonight, we deal a blow to our
enemies. They exist to hurt God
and all those who follow Him.

The men look around.

MAXIMUS

We must end all those who would
hurt us and our way of life. As
long as you keep pure thoughts, God
will keep you safe in this battle.

He looks at each soldier.

MAXIMUS

We must keep our lives pure, as He
wants. Make him proud. Slaughter
them as they sleep.

INT. BACON'S SCHOOL FOR TROUBLED KIDS - NIGHT

SLEEPING QUARTERS

Dozens of occupied beds line every inch of the room. They
sleep peacefully.

The doors open a bit.

CREEK.

A man on duty looks over, screams.

With their cover blown, the soldiers rush in, massacring the
kids without a thought.

EXT. BACON'S SCHOOL FOR TROUBLED KIDS - NIGHT

Maximus sits on his horse, sword drawn.

His men elatedly rush out carrying the severed heads of the kids as trophies.

Several soldiers run out with important news.

SOLDIER 1

Father Maximus, we caught him.

MAXIMUS

You caught, Bacon?

SOLDIER 1

We did, Father.

Two soldiers drag an unconscious and bound BENOIT BACON (55, overweight) out of the house.

One soldier comes out with a flesh wound. He tries to hide it the best he can.

Sadly, that soldier's wound simply's too great.

Several other soldiers grab the wounded one.

SOLDIERS

Father, here, here's a deceiver.

Maximus rides his horse over to the wounded soldier, studies him.

MAXIMUS

You have Satan in your heart!

INJURED SOLDIER

No, Father, I was scared.

MAXIMUS

If you were scared, you would have begged for mercy right away.

INJURED SOLDIER

(drops to knees)

I'm doing it now. Please, I only have God in-

A soldier behind him draws his sword, slices through his neck in one clean cut.

MAXIMUS

No one with Satan in their heart
can be allowed to live.

Maximus stares at the unconscious Bacon.

MAXIMUS

You'll pay for your sins.

INT. RUN DOWN COURTHOUSE - DAY

The courthouse has seen better days. It's old and falling
apart piece by piece.

Bacon, stripped of all clothes, stands in an IRON MAIDEN.

The construct faces Judge Maximus.

A packed courthouse watches intently.

MAXIMUS

Benoit Bacon, you've been accused
of using the boys' club to turn men
into soldiers against God.

BENOIT

Most certainly not. They were boys
and you slaughtered them.

MAXIMUS

Liar. We were given correct
information. They were armed. I
don't see any other boys' clubs
having fully armored kids.

BENOIT

What you did to those boys.

MAXIMUS

Me? It was you that led them down
Satan's path.

BENOIT

There's no Satan's path.

He looks at the crowd.

BENOIT

Don't fall for this rhetoric. He
murdered kids, for nothing.

MAXIMUS
Silence. You will only talk to me.

BENOIT
The church has too much power.

MAXIMUS
I said silence.

He bangs his gavel.

BENOIT
I won't. This is my last day and
these people will know the truth.
Perhaps one will listen.

MAXIMUS
Silence. Silence. Silence.

He slams his gavel over and over.

MAXIMUS
Benoit, another outburst like that
and I'll have your tongue removed.

Benoit stops.

MAXIMUS
The church has granted me the
powers of Judge, Jury and, if found
guilty, Executioner.

BENOIT
You and the church are corrupt.

MAXIMUS
Perhaps a demonstration.

Maximus motions for two goons to open Benoit's mouth.

MAXIMUS
No, wait. Tell me, what does
Sapere Aude mean?

BENOIT
What? Sa?

He shakes his head.

BENOIT
I've never heard.

MAXIMUS

Stop lying. It's what the rebels
say to identify each other.

BENOIT

If you say so.

Maximus glares at Benoit. He wants blood.

MAXIMUS

I don't say so. I want to know
what it means and what the response
is. You will answer. You will
comply. NOW, Mr. Bacon.

BENOIT

I can't answer what I don't know.

MAXIMUS

That's your final answer?

BENOIT

Yes. So, go ahead and have your
goons remove my tongue.

Benoit opens his mouth.

MAXIMUS

I've changed my mind. I almost let
anger cloud me. God forgive me.

CROWD

God forgive him.

Maximus smiles at the crowd.

MAXIMUS

Do you know what you reside in, Mr.
Bacon? Any clue?

BENOIT

I don't know. It's hard to tell
from here.

MAXIMUS

It's a wonderful device called the
Iron Maiden. It's basically a
sarcophagus from the neck down.

Maximus smiles at Benoit.

MAXIMUS

You're want to listen to this next part. It's lined with THOUSANDS of nails that all move when the lever gets turned.

Benoit looks scared for the first time.

MAXIMUS

So, tell me, what does it mean?

BENOIT

I don't know.

Maximus steps down, walks towards Benoit.

MAXIMUS

You are naked. Every inch of your body will have a dozen nails borrowing into your skin.

Maximus stops in front of him.

MAXIMUS

Twelve nails will puncture your penis and testicles.

Benoit swallows, hard.

MAXIMUS

Last chance for a fast death. Tell me what I want to know and I will kill you quickly.

Tears fall down Benoit's face.

BENOIT

I don't -

MAXIMUS

Turn the device.

One of the goons turns the lever. The device makes an odd sound, thousands of nails moving inward a fraction of an inch per turn.

Benoit's eyes dart from side to side. He listens.

MAXIMUS

Again.

The goon turns it again. Benoit screams.

MAXIMUS
What does it mean?

Benoit screams.

BENOIT
(in between screams)
I don't know.

MAXIMUS
Tell me what it means.

BENOIT
I -

MAXIMUS
Again, turn it.

The goon turns it again. Benoit's screams intensify.

MAXIMUS
Who else plots against the church?

Benoit screams, hyperventilates.

MAXIMUS
Who else? What does it mean?

Maximus motions for the goon to turn it again. The goon turns the device again.

Benoit's screams turn inhuman as he passes out.

Blood pools under Benoit.

MAXIMUS
I pushed too hard.

He grabs Benoit by the head, then turns to the crowd.

MAXIMUS
Let this be testimony, to any who
would stand up to the Will of God.

The crowd bows.

MAXIMUS
(to the goons)
Dump that corpse in the garbage.

INT. UNDERGROUND DWELLING - NIGHT

Benoit's passed-out body rests in some deep underground bunker-like development. He isn't alone.

Benoit slowly stirs, wakes up, looks around.

A guard notices Benoit's movements.

GUARD

He's awake, sir.

Maximus turns around, approaches Benoit.

Benoit doesn't spot Maximus at first.

Maximus touches Benoit's hand, causing him to recoil in fear as Maximus comes closer.

MAXIMUS

It's okay. It's over.

GUARD

Look at your wounds. They've been treated. You're healing.

Benoit cowers away from them. Several more guards surround Benoit.

MAXIMUS

I'm truly sorry. Dare to know.
That's what it means.

BENOIT

What?

MAXIMUS

Sapere Aude. Dare to know.

Benoit coughs, glares at everyone.

BENOIT

You're part of the revolution?

MAXIMUS

We are.

BENOIT

You hate the church? I don't believe it.

MAXIMUS

I don't hate it. I hate that it's become corrupt. We don't help people anymore.

The men nod in agreement.

MAXIMUS

Now, all we do is judge and kill. Crusade after Crusade and for what?
(he looks at his men)
The church wasn't founded on hurt. That's why it needs to change. We need to let people live.

BENOIT

I don't believe you.

MAXIMUS

Ever since the failed attempt by your ancestor-

BENOIT

Wait, you know about -

MAXIMUS

Francis Bacon? Of course. We have one of the old books he wrote.

BENOIT

But, the Church burned all of that.

MAXIMUS

Not all. We have copies of all the failed attempts to fix the tyranny of the Church. Follow me.

Maximus walks out a steel door. Benoit slowly follows.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maximus leads Benoit down the hallway.

BENOIT

Those men with you now?

MAXIMUS

Those are my true followers. Why do you think I tell any of the brainwashed followers of the war-church to kill themselves at the first sign of imperfection?

BENOIT
To hurt their numbers?

Maximus nods.

BENOIT
If that's true, why didn't you warn
me? I could have-

MAXIMUS
I didn't know if you'd be willing
to die or suffer for the cause.
Now, I know.

BENOIT
What you did.

Maximus drops his head.

MAXIMUS
We're at war with the biggest
monster in the world. A monster
who gets its followers to kill
their fellow man because they
believe that's what God wants.
(beat)
For as bad as that was, be happy I
didn't use Twenty Questions on you.

BENOIT
What's that?

MAXIMUS
The newest device created by the
Vatican for invasive questioning.
You lie in it. I ask you a
question. If you don't answer-

BENOIT
It can't be worse than, can it?

MAXIMUS
It slices off part of your body,
cauterizes the wound, then jolts
you should you pass out from the
pain, re-awakening you.

Benoit gasps, shakes his head.

BENOIT
Such horror. Who creates-

MAXIMUS

That's why we need to end this
tyranny. Stop this nightmare.

They continue down the hallway, stop at a door.

MAXIMUS

For years, we've been fighting with
swords, sticks, bows. But now, now
we have this.

They look at the door. It reads:

INSERT: U.S.A. MILITARY BUNKER.

BENOIT

What does "Us A" mean?

MAXIMUS

No clue. It might be some small
city or something that fell decades
ago, but, these items in here will
change this war.

Maximus opens the door, they walk in.

INT.USA MILITARY BUNKER WEAPON'S ROOM

Maximus walks over to an AK-47. Picks it up, hands it to
Benoit, who looks at it, unsure of what it is.

BENOIT

What does it?

MAXIMUS

Watch. Our men finally figured out
how it works and it's awesome.

Maximus pulls out another one, aims it at the wall, fires.

BRRRRRRRRRRRRRR.

Benoit backs away.

BENOIT

What in God's name?

MAXIMUS

Products from a lost era. We've
found medicine too. It's what
saved your life.

Maximus puts his hand on Benoit's shoulder.

MAXIMUS

You can either move forward with my army, or you can get vengeance upon me and lose all of this. Every single man I have now has been through this. What say you?

BENOIT

I hate you, but, I hate the world more. This will make a difference and end the terrorism and tyranny of the Church.

MAXIMUS

We need to let people grow, become enlightened and live.

BENOIT

Let's get started.

He aims the gun at the wall, opens fire.

THE END.