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## The Princess Bride's Lesson the Left Should Have Heeded

By Matt A. Mayer

In "The Princess Bride," the classic fairy tale movie from the 1980s, the Dread Pirate Roberts in pursuit of Princess Buttercup engages in a battle of brains with Vizzini, famously played by Wallace Sean. The two agree to poison a cup of wine with tasteless and odorless Iocane powder then use their wits to determine which cup to drink, with the loser drinking the poisoned chalice. This movie scene gave us the great line "Never go in against a Sicilian when death is on the line!"

After a series of statements by Vizzini showing his brilliance, he tricks the Dread Pirate Roberts to turn away as he switches the cups then states they should drink from the cup nearest them. Upon drinking, Vizzini claims victory before tipping over dead. It turns out, the Dread Pirate Roberts poisoned both cups, but, because he had slowly over time ingested Iocane powder allowing his system to build up an immunity to it, the poison did no harm to him.

What does this movie scene have to do with today's political environment? I respectfully suggest everything. Let me explain.

From the moment Donald Trump descended the escalator at Trump Tower in July 2015, the Left, comprised of Democrats, most of the media, NeverTrumpers, and bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., began attacking virtually every aspect of Trump and his family. We've heard he is mentally unfit, treasonous, a Nazi, a dictator, a sexist, a racist, and countless other slurs. We've heard this nearly every day for almost four years.

Though often accused of violating norms, it is the Left, not Trump, that has destroyed far more norms. For the Left, defeating Trump justifies any actions it takes from wrongfully using government powers to spy on his campaign and presidency to routinely leaking classified data (but only leaks that hurt him), from spending \$30+ million on an investigation into Russian collusion many knew wasn't true far earlier than the release of the Mueller Report to an impeachment based on far less than what was needed to gain strong bipartisan support.

Jim Comey isn't a holier-than-thou, all powerful FBI Director who abused his powers to violate the civil liberties of Americans. He is a hero. George Conway isn't a sexist, disloyal husband undermining his hardworking, high-achieving wife with every tweet. He is truth-teller. Anonymous isn't a rogue employee weakening the Presidency by undermining the concept of Executive Privilege. He is a whistleblower. John Kerry isn't a failed presidential candidate violating the Logan Act used to ensnare Michael Flynn when he tells Iran to wait out Trump. He is a wise Davos man.

I remember when the ACLU would have been deeply alarmed by the actions Comey and his cronies took. I remember when feminists would have been outraged by Conway's demeaning conduct that puts his wife's reputation and work in jeopardy. I remember when character required you to resign your position if you didn't believe in the work of the president you served. And, I remember when politics ended at the water's edge because, whether you liked it or not, America spoke with one voice to our allies and enemies.

The Left's zealous pursuit of Trump went so far as to canonize corrupt lawyer Michael Avenetti and promote any and all means to bring Trump down, including an absurd use of the 25th Amendment. No avenue was too extreme or crazy to drive down.

For four years, Mainstreet Americans, including in Ohio where I live, have quietly ingested each and every one of the Left's claims and attacks on Trump. The result is that, like the Dread Pirate Roberts' built-up immunity to Iocane powder, many Americans have developed an immunity to new attacks. Perversely, instead of keeping their powder dry for all but the most serious issues, the Left's constant drumbeat against Trump has desensitized many people so that they now shrug off the latest line of attack.

In the end, the Dread Pirate Roberts gets the girl and lives happily ever after. Instead of bringing Trump down, the Left may have sealed his reelection by inadvertently making enough Americans resistant to the poison it peddles on a daily basis.

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