

Dogma (film)

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Dogma is a 1999 American adventure fantasy comedy film written and directed by Kevin Smith, who also stars in the film along with an ensemble cast that includes Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Linda Fiorentino, Alan Rickman, Bud Cort, Salma Hayek, Chris Rock, Jason Lee, George Carlin, Janeane Garofalo, Alanis Morissette, and Jason Mewes.

Brian O'Halloran and Jeff Anderson, the stars of Smith's debut film *Clerks*, have cameo roles, as do Smith regulars Scott Mosier, Dwight Ewell, Walt Flanagan, and Bryan Johnson.

The fourth film set in the View Askewniverse is a hypothetical-scenario film revolving around the Catholic Church and Catholic belief, which caused organized protests and much controversy in many countries, delaying release of the film and leading to at least two death threats against Smith.^{[2][3]} The film follows two fallen angels, Loki and Bartleby, who, through a loophole in Catholic Dogma, find a way to get back into Heaven after being cast out by God. However, as existence is founded on the principle that God is infallible, their success would prove God wrong and thus undo all creation. The last scion and two prophets are sent by the Voice of God to stop them.

Aside from some scenes filmed on the New Jersey shore, most of the film was shot in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Kevin Smith
Produced by	Scott Mosier
Written by	Kevin Smith
Starring	Ben Affleck George Carlin Matt Damon Linda Fiorentino Salma Hayek Jason Lee Jason Mewes Kevin Smith Alan Rickman Chris Rock
Music by	Howard Shore
Cinematography	Robert Yeoman
Editing by	Scott Kev

Plot

An old man standing outside a skee ball arcade in New Jersey is beaten into a coma by three hockey stick-wielding teenagers, the Stygian Triplets.

Two fallen angels, Bartleby and Loki, were banished from Heaven after an inebriated Loki, with Bartleby's encouragement, resigned as the Angel of Death. Exiled to Wisconsin, the pair see their salvation when a church in Red Bank, New Jersey celebrates its centennial anniversary with a plenary indulgence. They can have their sins forgiven by passing through the doors of that church, and—upon death—regain access to Heaven. They fail to realize that this will overrule the word of God and destroy existence.



Metatron, aka the Voice of God

Metatron, the Voice of God, appears to Bethany Sloane and tasks her with preventing Bartleby and Loki's return. Bethany resists the mission, as she lost her faith in God due to her infertility and resultant divorce. Bethany is attacked by the Stygian Triplets, but is saved by Jay and Silent Bob, two prophets whom Metatron said would appear. She is also aided by Rufus, the thirteenth apostle, and Serendipity, a Muse with writer's block.

The demon Azrael, a former Muse, warns Bartleby and Loki that the forces of Heaven and Hell are attempting to kill them, as Satan will not let them succeed where he has failed and make him look bad. Bethany's party unwittingly meet the angels on a train, where a drunk Bethany reveals her mission to Bartleby, who threatens to kill Bethany before a melee ensues, in which Bartleby and Loki are thrown off the train by Silent Bob.

Bartleby rants that existence would be better off destroyed as God shows man infinite patience, while angels are punished after one transgression. Loki is alarmed by the ramifications of their plan and becomes reluctant to continue, comparing Bartleby's attitude to that of Lucifer. Bartleby orders him onwards.

Bethany learns she was chosen for the mission because she is the last relative of Jesus Christ. The group ponders who orchestrated the angels' plan, and Metatron explains that God goes to Earth in human form every now and again to play skee ball, and has gone missing; someone knew enough to incapacitate God but leaving Him alive in a mortal form, and thus be unable to return to Heaven. The group deduces that Lucifer has as much to lose if Bartleby and Loki succeed as anyone else. Arriving at the church, they fail to persuade Cardinal Glick to cancel the celebration.

When Bartleby and Loki reach the church, Bartleby kills everyone attending the celebration. At a nearby bar, Azrael captures the heroes and explains that he is the mastermind behind the Angels' plan; he wants to destroy existence rather than spend eternity in Hell, but he needed to manipulate Bartleby and Loki, as demons cannot become human. Silent Bob kills Azrael with Cardinal Glick's blessed golf club. Serendipity tells Bethany to bless the sink, making the water in the sink holy; Jay, Rufus and Serendipity kill the Stygian Triplets by dunking their heads into the water.

Studio	View Askew Productions
Distributed by	Lions Gate Entertainment
Release date(s)	November 12, 1999
Running time	128 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$10 million ^[1]
Box office	\$30,652,890 ^[1]

The heroes reach the church before Bartleby and Loki enter. Loki's wings have been torn off by Bartleby; he is now human and decides to help them. Bartleby kills Loki and fights off Rufus, Serendipity and Bob. During an attempt to seduce Bethany, Jay mentions John Doe Jersey, a comatose patient in a hospital across the street who was attacked outside a skee ball arcade and is being kept on life support. Hoping this is God, Bethany and Bob race to the hospital. Jay shoots off Bartleby's wings with a submachine gun, turning him human.

Bethany removes the life support, allowing God to escape while inadvertently killing Bethany. In the form of a woman, God manifests at the church before a remorseful Bartleby, and kills him with the power of Her voice. Silent Bob shows up with Bethany's blood-stained corpse. God resurrects Bethany and conceives a child inside her. The heavenly beings return to Heaven, leaving Bethany, Jay and Bob to reflect on events.

Cast

- Ben Affleck as Bartleby, a former grigori.
- Matt Damon as Loki, the former angel of death.
- Linda Fiorentino as Bethany Sloane, an abortion clinic worker who is given the task of stopping Bartleby and Loki from returning to Heaven.
- Jason Mewes and Kevin Smith as Jay and Silent Bob, two stoner drug-dealing prophets from New Jersey who join Bethany on her quest.
- Salma Hayek as Serendipity, a muse who got a body on Earth so she could get credit for her work.
- Chris Rock as Rufus, the thirteenth apostle who claims his absence from the Bible for being black.
- Alan Rickman as Metatron, the voice of God.
- Jason Lee as Azrael, a muse who was sent to Hell for refusing to take sides during the war between God and Lucifer.
- George Carlin as Ignatius Glick, a pompous, publicity-seeking Cardinal.
- Ethan Suplee as Voice of Golgothan "Shit Demon", an "excremental" (a play on elemental) formed from the excrement of all who were crucified at Golgotha when they died.
- Barret Hackney, Jared Pfennigwerth, and Kitao Sakurai as The Stygian Triplets, three teenagers brought from Hell by Azrael to aid in his machinations.
- Bud Cort and Alanis Morissette as God
- Janeane Garofalo as Liz, Bethany's co-worker at the abortion clinic
- Dwight Ewell as Kane, a gang leader
- Brian O'Halloran as Grant Hicks, a reporter
- Jeff Anderson as Gun salesman
- Guinevere Turner as Bus station attendant

Reception

The film was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay as well as a Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America honor for Best Screenplay.^[*citation needed*]

The film opened at #3 in its opening weekend with approximately \$8,669,945, behind *The Bone Collector* (the previous week's champion) and the newly released *Pokémon: The First Movie*.^[4] The film would eventually gross a domestic total of \$30,652,890 from a modest \$10 million budget.^[1]

Critics were mostly positive about the film; it has a 67% "fresh" rating on Rotten Tomatoes with the consensus "Provocative and audacious, *Dogma* entertains without overtly offending"; it fared much better with fans, ranking 84% by the community.^[5] On Metacritic, the film received a rating of 62 percent based on 36 reviews, with an 7.7/10 by fans based on 35 votes.^[6]

The film was screened out of competition at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival.^[7]

Production

Before shooting, Kevin Smith warned Jason Mewes that he needed to be on point due to the involvement of "real actors," such as Alan Rickman. As a result, Mewes memorized not only his dialogue, but the dialogue for every character in the entire screenplay, much to Smith's surprise.^[8]

According to Smith's comments on the *Dogma* publicity stills on the film's official website, there was going to be a final face-off between Silent Bob on one side and the redhead Triplet and the Golgothan on the other side in the hospital. The Triplet would come back with a burned-out face, and at the end of the battle, God would turn the Golgothan into flowers. The scene was dropped from the final cut of the film.^[9]



The fictional "Mooby's" restaurant, as depicted in the film.

Controversy

When the film was released, Smith and his friend Bryan Johnson participated in a protest at the Sony Multiplex in Eatontown, New Jersey, carrying a sign which read "*Dogma* is Dogshit." A news crew captured the incident and broadcast an interview with Smith (though he wouldn't give his real name and gave Johnson's as his own) on News 12 New Jersey.^[10]

Soundtrack

Main article: Dogma: Music from the Motion Picture

Sequel

In late November 2005, Smith was asked about a possible *Dogma* sequel on the ViewAskew.com message boards. His response:

“ So weird you should ask this, because ever since 9/11, I have been thinking about a sequel of sorts. I mean, the worst terrorist attack on American soil was religiously bent. In the wake of said attack, the leader of the "Free World" outed himself as pretty damned Christian. In the last election, rather than a quagmire war abroad, the big issue was whether or not gay marriage was moral. Back when I made 'Dogma', I always maintained that another movie about religion

wouldn't be forthcoming, as 'Dogma' was the product of 28 years of religious and spiritual meditation, and I'd kinda shot my wad on the subject. Now? I think I might have more to say. And, yes — the Last Scion would be at the epicenter of it. And She'd have to be played by Alanis. And we'd need a bigger budget — because the entire third act would be the Apocalypse. Scary thing is this: the film would have to touch on Islam. And unlike the Catholic League, when those cats don't like what you do, they issue a death warrant on yer ass. And now that I've got a family, I'm not as free to stir the shit-pot as I was when I was single, back when I made 'Dogma'. I mean, now I've gotta think about more than my own safety and well-being. But regardless — yeah, a 'Dogma' followup's been swimming around in my head for some time now."^[11]

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References

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External links

- Official website (<http://www.dogma-movie.com/>)
- Dogma* (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120655/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- Dogma* (<http://www.allrovi.com/movies/movie/v180080>) at AllRovi
- Dogma* (<http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=dogma.htm>) at Box Office Mojo

- *Dogma* (<http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/Dogma/>) at Rotten Tomatoes
- *Dogma* (<http://www.metacritic.com/movie/dogma>) at Metacritic
- Why are Catholics so set on dogging "Dogma"? (<http://www.salon.com/ent/feature/1999/11/09/catholics/index.html>)
- God Stuff: Kevin Smith Chases Jehovah (<http://www.citypaper.com/film/review.asp?rid=5941>)
- Kevin Smith considers 'Dogma 2' (<http://www.timeout.com/film/news/781.html>)
- Radio Interview with Kevin Smith (http://www.fbi945movies.libsyn.com/index.php?post_id=132290) from FBi 94.5 Sydney Australia

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