

future opportunities become much harder, and the debt does not simply vanish. Certain loans I took out personally. Contracts would be broken and that falls on me. In my darkest time, that's when it came to me. That monster. I gave it my mouth, ever since then I cannot get it's name to come out of my mouth. Even talking about it will cause my mouth to be covered in sores for the next few weeks. I also lost something more that day. I couldn't tell you what happened. Not just because of the physical pain, but how the hell am I supposed to tell my brother I gave up part of me for some money. So who told you?" as Winston finishes his speech his mouth already starts to grow sores. As he finishes he starts to mispronounce words due to them blocking his tongue. "Baal did." Lane admits.

"Lane! You made a deal with him?! Why?!" Winston screams. "I made a deal with him, but I refused to let him enter my body. My dream is to become the CEO of Lothsman and co, and use that power to really make the world a better place. I want to build food banks, open parks, give to people, and spread the word of God. But whenever Baal showed me that he already has his finger wrapped around all of them. I couldn't possibly reach the top without something, so I made a deal with him, but not as a lesser. Me and Baal are equals. He does not own me or any part of me. I would never let him." Lane states without blinking or stuttering. He kept eye contact with Winston, even when he broke it.

"I'm sorry you even are involved brother. I wish I could have told you the truth, then maybe you wouldn't have come here." Winston begins to tear up. "I'm happy I got involved, because all of those people are the same. I want to help as many people as possible. Right now the current CEO of the world's largest company is just planning on building more of his businesses. And every single idiot in that room clapped. The only person in that whole room who even thought about giving someone else money, did it by stealing it. You know what else I know about that sick twisted man. Part of his deal to Baal, is donating money to charity. Even when doing good, these people can't help but to capitalize on it. I'm going to be different when I reach the top."

After reflecting for a few minutes, Winston quietly places his car into drive and safely delivers Lane home. Neither say goodbye to each other. No goodbye could possibly feel genuine after such a night. Lane climbs up the stairs to the third floor of his apartment building. He opens his door to see Trace waiting on the couch, "how was it?! I missed you!". She reaches out her arms awaiting a hug. He shuffles to the couch and drops down next to her, "honey what I'm about to say...I don't mean figuratively. This isn't a dream or me being drunk." Trace tilts her head in confusion, "what are you talking about Lane?". "I saw the devil. He said he works with all of them there." Lane's expression is one that cannot be imitated nor described. Anyone who saw it after hearing his story would believe him with no questions asked. "Are you ok?" Trace asks while gently touching his arm. "No I'm not. I refused to work for him. I looked him right in his...his...him. I looked at him, and I didn't give in. I made him look at me as an equal and work with me. When I got out, I could see who worked with him, Winston was one of them. It just makes me wonder if my dream is impossible without giving up like the rest of them." Lane begins to open up. He looks away and rubs his face. "Remember that time our landlord scammed us out of money? He told us our rent would be \$1,500 a month, but our first bill came in at nearly \$2,000. Lord knows how mad it made me, and how I was yelling at you to be mad with me. To go downstairs to his office and beat his door till that little shit would open up. Then lay into him. Let him have it. You didn't. You kept telling me that's just not who you are. You know what I did. I went down there and I yelled and screamed until he nearly called the police on him. Afterward you came to my rescue. You never needed to raise your voice. It took awhile, if I had to guess it was probably over 2 hours you two talked. When you two were done speaking he lowered our rent. I always thought that to get what you wanted in this world you had to get mean or embrace a little evil, but you showed me that there can be another way. I believe in you. I know you can make your dream come true." Lane finally gives her the hug she wanted and they both cry in each other's arms.