

Evil (Is Going On)

Out from a window, its frame's old white paint chipped, one could hear the light pitter-patter of a deep blanket of rain battering upon the brick sides of a building. A well-dressed man looked out that same window, and down the alleyway, wondering what vague miscreants were hidden by the shadows of the night. He leaned back in his chair, taking a drag from his cigarette, and looked back at what he was working on. A piece of paper, half-blackened by ink, sat upon a typewriter. For minutes the man simply looked at the paper. As though he had made a sudden, emphatic decision he rushed out of his chair, throwing his coat and hat on. He shoved open a wooden door at the side of his room, and he rushed down the old rusted metal stairs, creaking and groaning as he roared himself down. He ran down the block, rain slowly seeping through his brown coat, running to his car. It seemed as though it took an hour for him to finally reach it, at the city outskirts. He himself was out of breath as he leaned on the car, waiting for his breath to come back to him. Just as he was taking his keys out of his coat pocket, he saw two men walking towards him. They held canes, pounding with each step, slowly walking down the street, their shadowy figures incomprehensible by the coming darkness of the evening. *Maybe some poor fellows whose car broke down down the road? Shouldn't have come here.* He thought as he stood up straight, his bones lightly cracking in a brief speck of comfortable, honey-like relief. Taking a moment to put his keys back in his pocket, he too steadied his hand on a revolver he carried. He walked towards them, waving his other hand as the streetlights suddenly came on. Gazing upon them, he saw they were two young men, one blonde, the other brown-haired. Both incredibly fair-skinned, and both in white coats, both bearing very similar gold-and-teak canes. A sure, lovely light seemed to surround them as he greeted them. For some odd reason, he knew these men were Good. Undeserving of the sin of this city. They walked up to him and exchanged greetings.

"Hello, the name's Lot" the man said as he took his hand out from his pocket, letting go of the revolver and extending his hand in a friendly handshake. He continued, "Are you lost, sirs?"

They looked at one another, then the blonde one, taking the lead, stepping forward said, "Maybe. We've come to meet someone here, a Good man, but that may be for tomorrow. We've only just arrived, as you can see."

"Sirs, please then, come to my house and spend the night. There you can wash yourselves and tomorrow you may continue your journey."

The men said to him, "No, we'll spend the night in the city's public square."

Lot replied, "No, sirs, please, I pray you sleep in my hearth this night. This city is not Good, it is Evil, sirs. They'll just as like gnash you to bits in the public square as I would house you. Please, sirs, I beg you stay in my house."

The men finally said unto him, "Fine, you have convinced us. Let us go into your household, and we shall stay the night, just this night."

Lot sighed, and went to unlock his car. Its body shone a fine orange in the streetlight, its well-kept white-painted metal top tapping as the rain repeatedly found its mark upon it. A sleek grouping of chrome stars lined its side, there were two wide metal strips leading up from the grill, across the hood, to the windshield. A little metal winged ornament shaped like a rocket stood upon the very front of the hood. Even when still, it looked as though it was in motion. Just below the hood ornament lined the spaced letters, *Pontiac*. From the rear, its stubby round tail lights shone a bright, lively red as the car roared to life. The white men opened its rear doors and carefully entered the car, its frame lightly bouncing as they both put their weight on its fine white carpeted floorboards. They rested their canes at the side of their seat. Lot turned on the radio, slow and low, as a lonely trumpet bellowed out, followed by a violin. A crooner came way, budgeting himself between the violin as the trumpet slowly died

out. The brown-haired man inquired of Lot as he let the engine idle and warm up. "Lovely car you've got here, sir. Where'd you get it?"

Lot smiled a bit, cheerful memories rekindled in his mind, adjusting his rear view mirror as he replied, "Where'd I get her? My uncle, actually. Name's Abraham, real righteous guy, I tell you. Rich as all get-out, he is. Servants darting about him and his wife. He knows how to treat a guy right, let me tell you. I once visited him, he even killed a fattened calf, just for me and my family! But, and get this, he ain't got no kids. Funny ain't it? Going on a hundred, yeah, a hundred, and he ain't got nobody to take all that wealth after him!"

The men looked at each other, laughed, and looked back at Lot, and the brown-haired man spoke again, "Abe? Yeah, we know him actually. Just came from his place, as a matter of fact. Good friends, us and him. Us and our Boss, actually. Yeah, our Boss, He plans on getting into the open real estate business here. That's what we're here for."

Lot raised a brow at their remark, and as he turned down one of the alleyways, a man leaned upon a fence smoking, grimacing at the car as it blew past. Lot sat up in his seat and spoke, "You know him? Guess I don't gotta tell you boys about his opulency. But that ain't here nor there. The car's lovely, a nineteen-fifty-five *Pontiac Star Chiefs* sedan. Just a few years old, and it revs up like a bull every turn of the key. And, what's this, free real estate you talk about? The city's barely able to hold up the amount of vagabonds as is."

The song on the radio faltered a bit, getting scratchy, and Lot pounded his fist on the radio. The radio changed its tune, and started playing a slow electric guitar with a growly man howling slowly, *If you're a long way from home, can't sleep at night, grab your telephone. Somethin' just ain't right. That's evil, evil is goin' on wrong. I am warning you brother, you better watch your happy home.*

They replied again, "Well, us and our Boss think that's gonna change real soon."

Lot eased his foot on the gas pedal as he went to park the car on the street. He put the car in park as he said, "Here we are. 4452 Brimstone avenue. Ain't much, but this here apartment's mine." He continued as he checked the car's clock, "Say, boys, it ain't too late yet and you've had a long journey, I'll make yous some bread afore bedtime. Now, do keep your voices down when we get in, the wife and kids are probably in bed by now."

The men thanked him as they opened the car door and got out, Lot locking the car after them.

They walked down the sidewalk to Lot's house, one of them whistling a tune. The rain seemed to worsen until it was a down-pour, rain billowing roll against the house windows. From outside, a murder of crows gathered about the branches of a lonely fig tree, withered and blackened. From inside, however, cheery but quiet voices could be heard as the men inside exchanged stories and tales and Lot made bread. But, outside, more and more eyes yet watched the house from the alleys.

"So, I tell the kid before he goes to pump, 'Hey, don't overfill her and run me outta my wallet, she don't like her tank being flooded, not one--.'" Lot was interrupted by a loud, ravenous knocking at his door. As all the men of the house turned their eyes to the door, it still yet repeated. Lot swiftly walked over to the door, peering through the door's peephole, his view turned fish-eyed as he gazed down into the small, round rat-like face of a man. He went to unlock the door, steadying his hand again on his revolver. As he unlocked the door, the man outside forcefully opened it. Now with the light of the house bursting out into the streets below, he could see a crowd of men had gathered around his house. An odd, rowdy group of the city's inhabitants surrounded him, most bearing weapons of different sorts. Some bore bats, others guns. The rat-faced man, stepping back, sized up Lot, commanding, "The men you brought into your house, where are they? Bring them out."

Lot, bewildered, slowly cocked his revolver as he said, "Sir, please, whatever you intend to do, do not harm these men. Do not go about with this evil, take me or my daughters, but do not take these men. They came to my house as guests, and I ought to protect them!"

The men surrounding him inched forward towards the house, many growling at each other to make way. One of them shouted to another, "This man, Lot, came to our city as a stranger, and now he tells us what to do! We'll do worse to him what we were to do to his companions, lads, get him!"

Lot jumped back, drawing his revolver. Many hands shot out to rip it away from him, one succeeding in slapping it away. Lot skipped back further, tenuously but swiftly. Shutting the door, barely holding it back with his body, he locked it, barricading it further with his dinner table. He hid behind a counter as he yelled at the men in the house to get down. He curled up further as the windows were shattered, seconds moving as though they were hours, when he turned back to the men. They seemed to glow brighter, drawing their canes as they unsheathed them to reveal swords. They moved forward towards the door as Lot looked in wicked disbelief, one of them tossing aside the table barricading the door with ease, the other throwing it open. All at once, the racket outside ended as they turned back to Lot.

The following day, if one was watching from afar, they could view four small figures out for a morning run, heading towards the outskirts of the city. If, however, one was watching from the street, then they would see a distressed family running down the street, large cars with tail fins surrounding them. Dystopian billboards lined the sky-line, reading advertisements for varying companies. Plastered upon these signs were many happy faces, some holding bottles or cigarettes in their hands, others golf clubs or the wheel of an automobile. However, not one smile could be found upon the inhabitants of the very same high-rises these billboards laid upon. As the family ran closer and yet closer to the end of the city's streets, the apartments thinned out into dark, broken houses that had lawns with blackened flowers and cracked, desert-like dirt. Finally, the family managed to get to what marked the end of the foul metropolis. A large, metal sign adorned the side of the street, dented and scraped in many places, it rest crooked and bent upon its stand. From the grey sky, a single fiery spark of ash hit the ground. In large letters, the sign read: NOW LEAVING: SODOM.