

Soulful conversation

by

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INT. - APARTMENT - NIGHT

In a nice, well-furnished apartment there are a husband PAUL (21) and his wife ANNA (20). They are an intelligent and modern couple.

Paul sits in front of the computer. Anna leaves her room and goes to the bathroom.

ANNA

I'm going to brush my teeth. Don't bother me please.

PAUL

Nobody is going to bother you.

ANNA

I am warning you in advance in case you suddenly decide to enter...

PAUL

No chance of me deciding to enter!

ANNA

Rude again! Your parents made a bad job of educating you.

PAUL

Please do not insult my parents.

ANNA

Don't tell me what I can say.

PAUL

You constantly find fault with my sayings!

ANNA

Oh, you make me sick!  
When will we finally get  
the divorce?!

PAUL

I'm looking forward to  
it too!

Anna enters the bathroom and loudly slams the door behind her. Paul sighs and shakes his head.

The bell rings at the apartment. Paul opens the door.

Before him stands an AGENT (50), a nondescript man of medium height in a decent suit with a white shirt, a tie and a pair of worn boots.

AGENT

Forgive me for the late  
hour but you were  
recommended.

PAUL

I do not understand what  
are you talking about?

AGENT

Sorry but we don't  
approach random people.  
We act according to  
recommendation only.

Paul is starrng unwittingly at the well-worn shoes of the agent.

PAUL

We don't need anything.

Paul intends to close the door.

AGENT

But you were recommended  
by your friend, you had  
a quarrel yesterday!  
Remember?

PAUL

How dare he?! He is no longer my friend, so I do not accept his recommendation!

AGENT

You're right, of course, but may I come in; I have something to offer you. I am sure this will interest you.

The agent looks so tired and miserable that Paul allows him to enter the apartment.

ANNA

(shouts from the bathroom)

Who is it? Who came?

PAUL

(shouts)

I don't know yet.

The agent starts to take out from his bag and lay out on the coffee table photos and stacks of s printed papers.

PAUL

Do I take it that you are a sales agent?

AGENT

More or less, to some extent.

PAUL

Well, what do you sell?

AGENT

In fact, we don't sell, we buy. May I sit down?

Agent sits on the sofa.

PAUL

Buying?

AGENT

Yes, we buy.

PAUL

And what do you want to buy from us? We have nothing to sell!

AGENT

Well, don't be so sure, it depends on the price only!

PAUL

I do not understand, do you want to buy from us something that we do not intend to sell?

AGENT

Exactly! For example, here's an ashtray, the price of it a dollar and I'm offering to buy it for five dollars. Would you sell?

PAUL

No! I like it and I'm not going to sell it.

AGENT

(seriously)  
And if I offer fifty?

Anna comes out from the bathroom; she is looking at the stranger without any interest.

ANNA

What do you want to buy for fifty dollars?

PAUL  
(points at it)  
The ashtray!

ANNA  
(surprised)  
Fifty? I would sell!

PAUL  
You can not sell my  
ashtray. It's not yours,  
it's mine! What right do  
you have to sell my  
things?

ANNA  
Choke on your stinking  
ashtray! You are a petty  
and calculating egoist!

Anna sits down on a chair and purses her lips offended.

AGENT  
Don't quarrel, I'm not  
going to buy this  
ashtray of contention.  
It was, so to speak, a  
vivid example. For a  
better illustration of  
the subsequent  
proposals.

PAUL  
In short, tell me what  
you are going to buy and  
put an end to this  
conversation.

AGENT  
I see that you're an  
intelligent man,  
educated and modern,  
apparently do not  
believe in God, I think  
it will be easy to reach  
an agreement.

PAUL

No, neither in God or in the Devil I do not believe, but what does it have to do with our conversation? Why do you always dodge the topic? Can you answer a simple question?

AGENT

A simple question is usually the most complicated! Let's say that I'm a a strange man that wants to buy from you yesterday's dream. Would you sell?

PAUL

You are not a strange man but a crazy man! What are you talking about?

AGENT

I meant "for example". Do you remember yesterday's dream? No? Excellent! I want to buy this dream that you don't remember, so talking, to buy a spiritual thing with real money. You have nothing to lose any way; you can't use this dream but you can get cash money for it. Wonderful commerce! Don't you agree?

PAUL

I always thought that initially appealing very

profitable deals end up  
as dead ends.

AGENT

I do not understand! You  
get money without giving  
anything substantial and  
without investing in the  
deal. What's the  
problem?

PAUL

You know, I suddenly  
remembered a story where  
one man wished for and  
easily got two hundred  
pounds, and it turned  
out later that by this  
deal he ruined his  
entire family. When the  
one's contribution is  
not specified - it's  
guaranteed to be a bad  
deal!

AGENT

Some story is a bad  
example! Writers are the  
religious moralists;  
they glorify virtue and  
punish evil. A  
miserable, in essence,  
philosophy, but the  
public is thirsty for  
things it lacks in real  
life. An evil man, even  
after turning fabulously  
rich and receiving every  
imaginable good, cannot  
be happy, but on the  
contrary, has to be  
punished by moral  
suffering, only then  
will the public be  
satisfied. Because of  
this psychic attack on  
the common sense, an



ordinary man in real  
 life leans on theories  
 he does not believe! The  
 paradox!

Anna definitely likes this exchange of opinions. She sits  
 with her legs on the chair and follows closely the  
 discussion.

ANNA

But how can you live  
 without novels, without  
 poetry, even if they  
 somewhat embellish  
 reality?

AGENT

Poems are good only for  
 young lovers! I myself  
 once wrote poems, a  
 seventeen years old  
 youngster...

PAUL

Alright! Let us, define  
 finally, as it is not  
 very clear where you are  
 driving? Do you want to  
 buy my dreams?

AGENT

No! I want to buy your  
 soul.

PAUL

My soul?!

AGENT

Yes, your soul! This  
 fictitious idealistic  
 idea theologians and  
 poets praised, in fact,  
 a vacuum, an invisible  
 and immaterial substance  
 or an invented illusion,  
 a phantom. A soul,  
 which, according to your

own view, does not exist. I'm sure you do not believe in afterlife, this type of stupidity, heaven with cherubs and hell, laden with boiling pots with soaring sinners, or that masquerade devil with goat horns and a cow's tail.

Agent smiles sarcastically.

PAUL

Are you joking?! Why do you need my soul?

AGENT

I'm not joking! We operate a reliable well-established company and we pay good money. In cash!

ANNA

You are trying in vain! He has no soul and never had one!

PAUL

Better be silent about the soul, It's you who has always been callous and heartless! Your empathy is not worth a penny!

AGENT

Let's not argue, here I have prepared a contract. Sign and get the money. In cash.

PAUL

Are you out of your mind? This is some kind

of a stupid joke, to participate in which I have no desire. Tell me honestly, who sent you?

ANNA

And how much are you willing to pay?

AGENT

(to Anna)

At last a constructive business conversation! And how much are you asking?

PAUL

(to Anna)

Are you crazy? Bargaining already? Are you trading a soul!?

ANNA

Your soul! Note, we are here discussing your soul only, not mine.

She looks questioning at the agent, who nods in agreement.

PAUL

I didn't expect it from you...

ANNA

There are a lot of things you don't expect from me, but your filthy soul interested someone, and I'm curious to know how much you can earn on it.

PAUL

What is it in for you?

ANNA

Who knows? It can be useful while dividing our property...

PAUL

(to agent)

I think you've come to the wrong address, I do not intend to sell anything to you, so I see no reason to continue this conversation.

AGENT

I understand, just let me ask you one question: "Why?"

PAUL

What do you mean "why"? I'm not interested and that's it!

AGENT

I'm sorry, but I do not quite understand your decision. You are a highly educated man, accustomed to using formal logic and, most importantly, not religious. You don't believe in the legends and tales of the afterlife of the soul mysteriously leaving the dead body. Do I state it right, without confusion? So why are you refusing to make money by selling what you think doesn't exist either in nature or inside a body? Where is the logic? Rationality

and spirituality in one  
bottle?

Anna laughs mockingly.

ANNA

Yes my dear, you'll have  
to explain your point of  
view, otherwise you have  
a problem with the soul.  
Do you have it or don't  
you? Come to a decision  
finally, the public  
wants to know the truth!

PAUL

There is no problem, I  
just do not want to look  
like a circus clown. For  
your information,  
"Faust," is written  
already and there is a  
great movie about a  
young lawyer who sold  
his soul to the devil.  
This brought happiness  
to no one, all of them  
suffered...

ANNA

So, are you afraid?! You  
are a true coward!

She can hardly keep from laughing, joking, as in a spell,  
she raises and extends her arms in the direction of Paul.

ANNA

Fear, my son, fear  
heaven's punishment,  
fear wiles of the  
devil, do not give in to  
flesh temptations on the  
side, do not go to the  
courtesans, do not waste  
on them family savings,  
be a little bit  
righteous and you will

be rewarded... according  
to merit.

She starts being hysterical, and falls helplessly into a  
chair, convulsed with laughter.

PAUL

Well! I did not expect  
this. Staging a  
spectacle, behaving like  
a circus clown! There is  
nothing is sacred for  
you.

ANNA

Yes, I'm not the fool I  
was, hanging on your  
every word, I have  
finally seen the light,  
became free and  
independent. What a  
sweet sensation!

Agent is sitting absently, not reacting. Paul looks at his  
wife, then the agent and suddenly decides.

PAUL

So how much are you  
willing to pay for my  
non-existent soul?

AGENT

And how much do you  
want?

PAUL

What is the difference  
how much I want? It is  
important how much you  
are willing to pay.

AGENT

Sorry, when you want to  
sell any item, such as a  
car or an apartment, you  
have to announce an  
initial price.

PAUL

Yes, but a car or an apartment have an objective value, it is possible, after all, to get it appraised. And who knows how much is the value of a soul?

AGENT

Well, you convinced me, as I suspected, you have a very rational and constructive thinking, nice to talk. I can pay a thousand dollars. This is a good price in my opinion!

ANNA

Nonsense, my husband's soul is worth more!

AGENT

How much more?

ANNA

I do not know, let's check out the Internet. Surely somebody else has already sold a soul.

AGENT

You'll find there naughtiness only.

Paul comes to the computer and enters a query, "to sell a soul for money." He looks at the links.

PAUL

Yes, nothing useful there. Someone sells his soul on the auction, there is the Society of the devil and black

magic, but there are no specific amounts.

PAUL

(to agent)

A pity I haven't believed you, but one thousand dollars for my immortal soul is still not enough.

AGENT

The soul is yours, you must decide!

ANNA

Five thousand! For five thousand dollars, we'll do it.

PAUL

What do you mean "we'll do it"? Who sells the soul you or me? Don't attach yourselves to me? I will not share with you.

ANNA

You can buy or sell nothing! How can you be trusted?

PAUL

Do I have to sell my soul even on your notation? You are a soulless woman!

ANNA

But practical!

AGENT

(to Paul)

No, this is absolutely not serious. I understand to throw in



two or three hundred dollars, but five thousand! No, this is not serious! I hope you won't follow your wife and will come up with a real price.

ANNA

Five thousand dollars - is our final decision! If this doesn't suit you consider that the transaction failed!

PAUL

(to Anna)

You have to play poker!

The agent looks at him again, waiting for his decision, but Paul shrugs with a sigh and looks away.

AGENT

Well, a pity, very sorry. I was counting on you.

The agent begins to gather his things from the coffee table and puts them back in the bag.

AGENT

I need to report this visit to my superiors. This are the roles. Sometimes they want to talk to the customer, to enquire whether there are any complaints. We have strict rules on that. Would you mind?

PAUL

No, you can call, of course.

The agent takes out from a pocket his cell phone.

AGENT

(by phone)

Ale, I want to report a finished presentation... Yes, everything is fine, but we have one problem ... No, they received me very well... nice people with higher education... Well, yes, they want to, but we encountered a problem with the price... What? I explained them everything but they do not agree to our offer... I'm hesitating to tell you, but they want five thousand... Of course, I repeated it several times; we conduct a solid company and can make exceptions. Yes, but I was trying to... I'm sorry, but... I admit it was my fault... What can I do? Maybe you can come up with something? No, I guarantee they are trustworthy people, and will tell no one... Really? Thank you very much! You just saved me! Of course, now we'll arrange everything!

The agent looks at Paul with happy eyes.

AGENT

They agreed! I just could not believe my ears. Five thousand dollars are in your pocket! Congratulations!

The agent comes and solemnly shakes Paul's hand. His face is beaming with happiness. He quickly opens the briefcase, pulls out and lays on the coffee table some things: a banking pack of hundred dollar bills, a stack of papers held together with an imprinted inscription "Agreement", a white cloth napkin, an antique fountain pen, sets a candle in a candlestick.

AGENT

The company likes the  
signing of the contract  
to take a place in a  
nice and festive  
atmosphere.

Then he pulls out from the case a small wallet which contains a metal tool and carefully places it on a napkin.

ANNA

(pointing finger)  
What is it?

AGENT

This is a Frank needle,  
designed to take a small  
amount of blood.  
Sterility is guaranteed.

ANNA

What blood? What for?

AGENT

Well, this contract is  
signed in blood. Such is  
the tradition, but do  
not worry about it. You  
know, either blood or  
ink - are pure  
convention. Well, let's  
get started.

He took out his lighter and lighted the candle.

AGENT

Please give me your  
finger. It does not  
hurt.

Paul stands still and can not move, he feels fear. Before his eyes sweep the fragments of different films, some mystic horrors, scary scenes and bloody images.

AGENT

Well, what are you  
afraid of? Just like a  
little boy.

Agent comes to Paul, takes his hand and leads him to the coffee table.

Paul looks at his wife. Anna sits motionless in a tense posture, leaning forward slightly, and without taking her eyes away from the candle flame.

PAUL

(softly)  
Maybe, it is not  
necessary?

AGENT

What are you talking  
about? This won't take a  
moment.

The agent takes Paul's ring finger and holds it to Frank's needle.

ANNA

Don't touch him, don't  
do that!

However, the agent does not pay attention and pulls the trigger. A large drop of blood appears on the Paul's finger.

ANNA

Stop immediately! We are  
cancelling the  
transaction.

ANNA

(to Paul, shouts)  
Don't sign!

But it is already impossible to stop the agent. Agent gives Paul the fountain pen and brings it to the drop of blood on the finger of his left hand.

At that moment, Anna takes off from her place, in two jumps comes close to Paul, leans forward and quickly brings his finger to her mouth and sucks up all the blood.

AGENT

What are you doing? You ruined everything.

ANNA

He won't sign anything! Please go away!

AGENT

Listen, you're an intelligent woman. How do you behave? Why are you interrupting me? The money is waiting; you can count it yourself...

The agent nervously reveals the banking notes and demonstratively counts the hundred-dollar bills.

AGENT

One hundred, two hundred, three hundred...

ANNA

It's over. Stop counting, we are not interested, please leave.

The agent throws a scornful look at Anna, then a searching look at Paul. Without waiting for an answer, he sighs and begins to gather his things.

At the door, before leaving, he turns around.

AGENT

And after this ugly scene you claim that you

are not religious  
people. You cheated me!

Paul closes the door after the agent. Anna and Paul look at each other and sigh with relief.

PAUL

Do you understand what  
went on hear?

ANNA

And do you?

PAUL

I was in a real stupor!

ANNA

And I was so scared...

PAUL

Buy the way, I know that  
you love to drink my  
blood, but I always  
thought of it in a  
figurative sense, but  
today you proved your  
vampiric nature in  
action. Was it  
delicious?

ANNA

Of course, I suddenly  
realized that I love you  
entirely!

Anna comes to Paul and kisses him.

The end