

ROBBERY

Johannesburg. South Africa.
Present day.

The van was driving through the stuffy night toward the city's outskirts.
Thabo was behind the wheel, silent and grim.
Sibusiso was crying, clutching a machete in his hands.
The corpse of Sifo, his brother, lay on the back seat.

"Was it worth it?" Sibusiso asked Thabo.
"We barely took anything—just some junk, no gold, no money.
And where would you even find them in such a huge house..."

"Right, after you killed the owner," Thabo said.
"Shoved the machete into his gut all the way to the hilt."

"He killed Sifo, goddamn it! My brother!!!
That fucking old white man shot him point-blank in the head with a rifle,
as soon as we walked into the house," Sibusiso shouted, spitting saliva.
"It was like he was waiting for us!!! Blew his damn head off!!!"

Sibusiso started to break down.
"So what do we do now?"

"Calm down," Thabo said.
"There's no evidence, we took the body,
and on the video you can't tell who's who anyway — we were masked."
He almost joked about Sifo — that no one would recognize him for sure — but held back.

Sibusiso went silent and began to calm down.
"We'll bury your brother when we get there,
and tomorrow we'll sell the loot to the fence," Thabo said quietly,
lost in his own thoughts.

What Sibusiso didn't know was that Thabo had changed the plan —
they had gotten too little from the heist,
and the panicky Sibusiso no longer fit into it.

Staring at the road through the dusty windshield,
Thabo was mentally reviewing the layout of the house
they had ransacked in a hurry.
But something slipped away from him, hid —
something cold and alien, beyond understanding.

"Did you notice anything weird? In that house?" Thabo asked.

"The weird thing was how he met us on the carpet like we were celebrities!
You were the last one to enter, Thabo!" Sibusiso hissed.

"But that's not it," Thabo said quietly.
"Then what is it? Explain to me,"

Sibusiso shifted his grip on the machete.
“Mirrors. In such a big, expensive house — and not a single mirror...
And your machete — there was no blood on it
when you pulled it out of the old man’s stomach.
No blood. You get it?”

Sibusiso froze. Then, horrified, he tossed the machete aside
and covered his face with his hands.

A silence fell so heavy and grim
it was like something black and sticky had filled the air,
touching the back of their necks and stealing their ability to think.
Fear seemed to materialize, swelling behind their backs.

And in that moment, Sifo’s corpse suddenly sat up on the seat.

Thabo and Sibusiso lost all sense and control
at the horror they saw —
the van swerved off the road and slammed into a pole.

No one survived. Except for Sifo.

At dawn, Sifo brought the bodies
to the owner of the house they had raided the night before.

The necromancer was waiting in the backyard, sipping coffee.

“Finally, you showed up,” he said.
“Good boy.
I’d give you a bone to chew,
but you’ve got no head.”

The End

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