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AP Literature and Composition

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A Little Death

My name is Marno Glade and this is the firsthand account of the massacre in Area 51. Now for those who do not know, Area 51 is a nuclear testing site in Nevada used for intimidation. Cuba has become a threat to the United States in the past year and well, America needs help. As the commanding officer in the United States Air Force, it has been my pleasure to take over the happenings of Area 51 including the misty enigma of the name. What no one realizes is that Area 51 has not helped in this cold war in any way.

A letter was sent.

Dear Mr. Check,

It has been a difficult task for me to find someone with as much experience in radioactive science as you, so when I came across your file it seemed like a glorious turn of fate. Now I may be asking a lot from you, but what you will be working on will change the basis of everything you currently know about the topic. Your task is to visit the nuclear testing site in Nevada (part of the United States Air Force) to test and check some of the nuclear reactors there. It is a dangerous task, but looking at your paperwork, it seems as though you can handle any surfacing problems. A car will pick you up at 5am on Thursday morning and drive you to the facility.

Thank you for your time,

Femco Testing Facilities

Now I sent this letter in order to have some of my radio actors tested upon since they had been acting up in the last week. Once I finally found a worthy candidate, I naturally sent him a letter to bring him to the Femco Testing Site. Sal Check, a man from New Mexico had been waiting on my letter for three lifetimes. I read in his file that after an illegal radio actor test in his home town he had a problem separating himself from explosives. I find it dangerous to bring him to Femco Facilities, but he was the most experienced man I had seen in years.

But onto his trainee, I find it surprising that an extra personnel arrived when not invited. The men jumped out of the car I had sent for them and to my astonishment a man I knew by the name of Chase Evans followed. I went to high school with him-hopefully he will not recognize me, but even plastic surgery cannot hide a past.

Anyways, I greeted the guests whole heartedly, “Welcome to Femco Testing Facilities, I hope your experience treats you well as our facilities need help. Several of our reactors have fried up and I need someone to test what still works and what needs an upgrade. Sal Check, I assume you can provide this help for me, otherwise I have brought you here for nothing. As for this unexpected guest, I pray he is not here for a free ride. I will show you to your bunks.”

We took a four wheeler to the small building where the two of them would stay for the week placing all bags and belongings inside the musty cave. Breaking the silence Sal stated, “I apologize for bringing Chase here without warning, he is a co-worker of mine and I thought I could bring him along for training. And we obviously met Matt Burlow. Will he be staying with us?”

I replied, “Yes, we will have another mattress sent up, I hope he was a good police escort for you two. Once you have settled in I will show you to the reactors and you can begin work at dawn tomorrow. The Sun scorches midday so work will be improbable at that time.”

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The next morning I sent Matt to wake up the two scientists only to find that they were already awake and working. Sal sure had a love for his job. My plan was to show them the actual testing site in the afternoon, so as the hours passed, Sal and Chase found the problems in one reactor, still leaving two of them useless. Soon enough nuclear testing would be back up and running.

“At 5pm I will be showing you the testing zone so you can see the before and after of our tests. I hope you find it as exhilarating as I do,” I mentioned to them.

“Sounds good to me,” Chase said. “You know I think I went to school with a girl named Marno in high school. But you don’t look anything like she did. I guess that’s a good thing for you, she was on the chubbier side if you know what I mean.” I turned so he would not see my cheeks flush. I should feel proud of how far I have come, but that did not stop the hate from seeping in. How dare he say such a thing to me-if he only knew.

Two

On our way to the testing zone, Sal and Chase murmured over reactor plans in a way that made my confidence in them quiver. Why would someone I hired keep something from me? But I dismissed my superstitions to focus on the task at hand: innocent tourism.

We reached the testing zone, bringing bewilderment to Sal and Matt’s faces. The zone was made up of a fake suburban street, complete with houses and people. The manikins were fully dressed, completing actions mid-stride; the perfect accessory to an already desolate setting. The eeriness arose from the fact that these seemingly harmless images were to be blown off the surface of the earth. When I looked at Matt, I could see the gears turning, putting together the fact that these “people” were to be exposed to death early on.

He said, “So you’re actually planning on blowing up towns in Cuba? I thought this testing zone was only to intimidate the enemy, not cause a genocide.”

I replied with, “Well of course it is for intimidation, but if need be, we need to know just how powerful these bombs we have actually are. Let’s say nuclear war breaks out. We don’t want to drop something that erases the whole Western Hemisphere. Naturally this suburbia doesn’t show exact results. We can’t test on real organisms just yet.”

And that’s when Chase broke down. “We are part of a contracted murder! I can’t stay here. Sal we need to go, right now.”

“Are you kidding,” Sal added. “Things just got interesting. I was shocked, but this information just set the standards to a new level. I have never loved my profession as I do right now. Commander Marno, anything you need done, consider it my privilege to help. And if you honestly have no stomach Chase, you can run home to your safety goggles and lab reports. I am here to test the most powerful force known to man. If you don’t like it, you can leave.”

“Well it’s settled then,” I intervened. “I will send for a car before dusk. Sal, I will get you a list of the tasks to be completed. Matt if you would escort Sal through the town, I want him to understand the before and after of his actions. This isn’t quite as much of a game as he wishes it to be. I will be on my way to the main complex. Chase, do as you please.”

The two men went off as Chase sat in the middle of the newly paved suburban road.

Three

Once I returned to the test zone I found the spot Chase previously occupied to be empty, so I assumed he had followed the other two. I strode down the block long street to find Matt and Sal gawking at the kitchen in one of the houses. I entered behind them, “what have you found you two found so interesting?” And to my astonishment there on the door of the refrigerator hung a list titled “To Do.” “I have never seen any personal items in the testing zone before. In fact I haven’t been down here in a week.”

Matt’s confidence shifted in his eyes. “Continue reading. This isn’t a casual Sunday grocery list.”

To Do:

-Disappear

-Intimidate

-Disappear

-Count Down

-Dead

The confusion saturated my face. “Why would anyone place this here? More importantly what does it mean? Wait, I thought Chase followed you two. He wasn’t where we left him.”

Matt nearly yelped, “This must be his list! How else would it have gotten here? I was with Sal the whole time and you went back to headquarters. If you haven’t seen the test zone in a week you couldn’t have put the list here unless it was one of your men. And I highly doubt anyone in the Air Force would place such an idiotic list here.”

“But it could be someone in the Air Force. Not to say that it is. If I were to put this list here I would have done it when no one was around,” Sal interjected.

“I’ll investigate this more. The problem is, we haven’t put any cameras up yet to watch nuclear testing. That was scheduled for next Monday. Until then, don’t fret, I doubt whoever put this here is serious. Any actions of suspicion should be seen for miles. There’s nothing here but sand,” I mentioned.

Matt suggested ,“we should go back to the bunker, maybe get some food. Staying here is making my nerves act up.”

“Alright, let’s go,” Sal added. “Hopefully Chase will show up and explain where he’s been all this time.”

And later that night the list seemed to carry out its “To Do”s.

Four

I woke up, dressed and set out to wake the men up. But what I saw would make the sun hide behind its clouds. Approaching the bunker, I realized that one of the manikins had made its way in front of the door. Reaching the doll, I noticed that it’s wig was splattered with blood just as the rest of the body was. The eyes were Xd out like a cartoon’s, only these Xs were clearly made with e knife. But the most intimidating factor was the bloody note left on the stomach. It read “you’re next.”

I rapped on the door, “Wake up this is urgent!”

Matt answered the door in a hurry with Sal right behind. “What is this?” I questioned, motioning to the manikin.

“Oh my god. Sal look,” Matt demanded.

“Number two on the list is complete. Wait a minute. Matt, aren’t those your clothes? The hair looks like yours too,” Sal said.

“No. It can’t be. I’m not dying here. I won’t be murdered. Marno get me out of here now,” Matt demanded.

“I would send all of you away immediately, but the car just went out to pick up new recruits to help on the reactors,” I said.

Matt turned sideways and muttered something to Sal. They both glanced at me with questioning eyes.

“If you honestly think I would bring you two all the way out here to kill you I highly question your logic. I’m in charge of an *Air Force Base* in Nevada. Should I be a murderer, I think someone would have found out by now, don’t you?”

The tension lingered, but in the moment I thought I relieved some suspicion. “For all I know it could be either one of you,” Matt added. Sal just looked at him and nodded, as if he had just confirmed Matt’s idea. The whole nuclear reactor topic seems to have finally gotten him.

Five

The hours passed and I tended to my work as Matt escorted Sal. Ironic considering Matt seems weak next to Sal, not to mention intimidated by him. We met in the headquarters for lunch and a break as the scorching hours of the day approached. “How has your progress come on the second reactor?” I questioned Sal.

“Very well, I believe they all have the same issues. It’s not surprising considering they are all in the same situation. Basically, I have to replace a few plates, clip some wires, and within the next few days they should be up and running.”

Interesting. One could kill three people within that time frame.

“I’m off to the bathroom. I’ll be back in a couple minutes,” Matt interrupted.

“Well we should still be here when you get back,” Sal chuckled. And off Matt went.

Six

What occurred within the following five hours seems like a blur to me now. When Matt started taking a long time, Sal and I went looking for him without any clues as to where he could have been. Every building and crevasse was checked. We even checked in the test zone but no sign of the man. And then enigma hit.

I was the first to see it-the grocery list once again left on the refrigerator. I called Sal over to take a look and he seemed hardly surprised to see the check marks next to each item that had been completed.

To Do:

* Disappear
* Intimidate
* Disappear

-Count Down

-Dead

“Two left to go,” Sal stated. He didn’t even blink.

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We were about to leave the test site when the sound of an intercom sounded. It started as a muffled drone and built into a screech from a speaker. A deep voice boomed, “Five minutes and 30 seconds remaining.”

“What was that?” Sal asked.

“That’s the announcement we give when the reactors are to be set off. A bomb is going to explode. We need to evacuate now,” I answered.

“But one reactor isn’t fixed yet. Anything could happen. Its energy can’t be controlled, and besides, even leaving the site won’t get us far enough. Everyone in the vicinity will be exposed to radiation.”

I said, “There’s a bunker nearby. It’s underground and is used for exactly this purpose. I’ll take us there and then send a message to headquarters. There should be a phone in the bunker you stayed in that can contact me to them. Once I take you there I’ll run to the bunker. Yes, that should be enough time.”

“I could go instead, you’re the commander. You have more to lose.”

“This isn’t your Facility that is about to blow you and your guest up is it? This is my duty to call. I’ll try my hardest. If I’m not back by the minute count down, lock the underground shelter from the inside.” My heart pounded out of my chest. Death was upon us and I would try my best not to lose to it.

Seven

The door handle was clear through the sand and I bent to lift up the latch. Swinging the door open, I heard the sounds of muffled struggling, and possible yelling. I peered into the shelter to find that Matt and Chase had been gagged, tied, and tossed into it. I glanced up at Sal, a horrified expression crossed his face.

“Next time I would pick a better facility to go grocery shopping at,” I stated. Latching my foot between his, I shoved Sal into the abyss below. Throwing the door close, I pad locked it from the outside and sprinted to the bunker where the men had slept.

What a disguising way to live. Oppressing everyone around them. The blood and sweat I had given to get where I am now. Yes, that is what they deserve. Low life men who take everything, thinking they are entitled to the world. Too bad the underground bomb shelter sat on top of the actual bomb shelters. Ironic isn’t it? But this is just the beginning. See I find that Hitler was onto something, but killed for the wrong reasons. I wish to carry out his love for genocide; the reason for my creation of Femco Testing Facilities. This Female company tests the science of male death. How fast they can be slaughtered, how many at a time.

One problem still remained- make it to the bunker before the bomb went off or die alongside pigs.

Shining darkness and dust filled my life for the next week. Stale food and boredom. The bomb had exploded, taking all those with it. And after waiting a week I came out of the bunker with the intentions of carrying out a genocide of my own. Entering headquarters, I was greeted by one of the women in charge of watching all movement after the explosion. “Test one has been a success Commander. All men have perished. Phase two can begin at your call.”

“Fantastic, I will round up another group to test. We will soon have a full army of corpses,” I chuckled. Justice with a side of death may just be my favorite morning snack.