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Servent Vastenavond, Rafael. Echoes from the Abyss.

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Echoes from the Abyss

Shadows, they're alive, aren't they? Lurking, stretching, creeping along the walls like... like fingers, cold and clammy. There! In the corner, did it move? I swear, I swear it moved, just a sliver, a shift in the darkness, watching, always watching. Can't trust the shadows, no, no, no, they whisper too, whisper secrets, dark secrets.

This room, it's changed, hasn't it? The walls, they breathe, in and out, like a sleeping beast. And the light, flickering, flickering, taunting me with its dance. Can't trust the light either, it lies, it hides, hides the truth in the shadows.

My face, in the mirror, is that me? It can't be, it's twisted, warped, a mask of... of what? Fear, yes, fear and something else, something darker. The eyes, my eyes, they don't blink, just stare, stare into my soul, if I still have one. Do I? Have a soul?

Objects, ordinary objects, but are they? The chair, it looks different in the half-light, like it's waiting, waiting for something, or someone. And the pictures on the wall, they're watching me too, their eyes follow me, judge me. Can't escape their gaze, can't escape any of it.

What's that sound? The ticking of the clock, or is it? Sounds more like... like whispers, yes, whispers, getting louder, more insistent. "Guilty," they say, "guilty, guilty." But guilty of what? I can't remember, can't—wait, there's a fragment, a piece of... of something. A scream, was it a scream? Whose scream?

The room spins, or do I spin? Hard to tell, hard to hold onto anything. The shadows merge with the light, the objects seem to move, just at the edge of vision. And my face, in the mirror, it grins, a ghastly, grotesque grin. It knows, it knows the secret, the dark, terrible secret.

I want to shout, to scream, to break the silence, but the words, they're tangled, caught in the web of my fractured thoughts. "What did I do?" I try to ask, but the question gets lost, lost in the chaos of my mind.

The darkness grows, it swallows everything, the room, the shadows, the flickering light. And me, it swallows me too, pulls me down into the depths of madness, where the secret lies, where the truth and the lies are one and the same.

And in that darkness, I realize, there's no escaping, no escaping the room, the shadows, the twisted face in the mirror. They're all part of me, part of the secret, the dark, terrible secret that I can't remember, can't forget.

So, I laugh, a hollow, haunting laugh that echoes in the empty room because what else is there to do when the world is a jigsaw puzzle with too many missing pieces? Laugh at the absurdity, at the horror, at the madness of it all.

But the laugh turns into a sob, a sob that racks my body, because deep down, in the place where the last flicker of sanity clings, I know, I know the truth is there, hidden in the shadows, whispered by the voices, reflected in the twisted grin in the mirror.

And I'm afraid, so very afraid, to find it.

A flash—a laugh, high and clear, the sound of innocence. But it's cut, sliced by a darker tone, a shadow passing over the sun. Another flash—a toy, a simple thing, lying broken, its pieces scattered like the fragments of my mind.

The room spins faster, the shadows thicken, coalesce into shapes, forms—faces? His face, my son's, but it shifts, distorts, becomes something unrecognizable, something monstrous. "Daddy?" The voice is small, afraid. Or is it mine? Am I the one who's afraid?

Flash—A sharp sound, a crack, like the breaking of bones, or is it the breaking of my soul? Hard to tell, the line between the two has blurred, smeared by the darkness that seeps into every crevice of my being.

The whispers grow louder, more insistent, a chorus of accusation and denial. "No, no, couldn't have, wouldn't have," I mumble, but the words sound hollow, even to my own ears. The room tilts, a surreal landscape where up is down and down is nowhere to be found.

Flash—Red, the color of anger, of passion, of... blood. It stains my hands, drips from my fingertips, a macabre painting that I can't seem to wash away. "Accident," I whisper, but the word is a lie, a poor attempt to cover the gaping wound in my reality.

The faces in the shadows nod, they understand, they know the truth even if I refuse to see it. They've been here all along, waiting for the dam to break, for the flood of memories to wash over me, drown me in the undeniable truth of what I've done.

Flash—Screaming, so much screaming, it fills the room, fills my head, a symphony of terror and despair. It's mine, it's his, it's ours—a duet of the damned. The toy, the broken toy, it's in my hands, but it's not a toy, it's—what is it? The line between the real and the imagined blurs, fades, disappears.

The room collapses, the walls, the ceiling, they crumble into nothing, leaving me exposed, vulnerable to the storm that rages around me, within me. The faces in the shadows, they're closer now, so close I can feel their breath, cold and damp on my skin.

Flash—A moment of clarity, sharp and brutal in its intensity. I see it all now, the pieces of the puzzle slamming into place with a finality that leaves no room for doubt. The broken toy, the screams, the blood—it all leads back to me, to my hands, to my actions.

I try to run, to escape the room, the shadows, the faces, but there's nowhere to go. The darkness is inside me, a part of me, consuming me piece by piece until there's nothing left but the madness, the terrible, suffocating madness.

And in that final moment, as the last vestiges of sanity slip away, I embrace the darkness, let it envelop me, become me. The shadows, the faces, they're not my enemies, they're my companions, my compatriots in this dance of despair.

The room is gone, the memories are gone, all that remains is the darkness and the laughter, my laughter, echoing in the void, a sound devoid of joy, of hope, of anything resembling humanity.

I am the shadows, I am the madness, I am the darkness made flesh. And as I succumb to the void, to the endless night that awaits, I realize that this, this is my reality now, a reality of my own making, a reality from which there is no escape.

And so, I laugh, a laugh that is both an epitaph and a birth cry, for in the heart of the darkness, I have found my true self, and it is nothing, nothing but shadows and madness.

Prompt:

Create a 1200 words story of a man that holds a very dark secret. Little by little he explains a little more of it, until it finally reveals he killed his son. I want you to mimic a person with schizophrenia, it must be written like an internal monologue to itself, it must be scary, and make the reader feel uncomfortable while reading it. Several personalities may emerge, but darkness always pulls through. I want a lot of mumbling to oneself; I want the main character to feel extremely little lucid. I want the character to piece little by little the information. I want the character to remember some fragments, and not be sure of what's real and what's fake at the end. I want him to shout and confront himself. I want him to feel very mad, it can't be reasoning too much. I want him not to finish his own thoughts and cut them in half, making it difficult for the reader to follow. I want it to be darker themed, scarier. I want some description of glances the character made to the room, the face, the objects, the shadows. Towards the end I want many more flashes of what happened, cut, and jumping between each other, until the final realization of what he did, finally succumbing to the shadows and becoming completely mad.

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