

Satan smokes marlboro

written by

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FADE IN:

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

so close it has no boundaries.

The vintage DOS environment, a blinding cursor pulses.

A few KEYSTROKES break the silence. Nothing on screen.

A short pause, follows the familiar sound of the enter key.

Link established, downloading data.

Weird data slashes across the screen, forming a table with two distinct columns; first one looks encrypted, second includes a number, ranging from five to fifty thousand.

The table updates, a new screen, data looks never-ending.

INT. MANHATTAN - DAVID'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A hand moves, tobacco stained fingers stub out the cigarette in the empty ashtray that rests next to the computer mouse.

DAVID (30s), clean cut and serious, stands up, grabs the ashtray, carries it across the room at the kitchen sink. The apartment is cleaned to the extreme, spartan, sterile.

David uses the cleaning brush to throw away the cigarette stub in the trash bin, his moves are precise, ceremonial.

Warm water and dish soap follow, the whole process suggests a person obsessed with cleanliness, or just someone eccentric.

Computer BEEPS, draws David's attention.

David dries the ashtray with a towel, moves to his desk, eyes the highlighted line that's frozen on the screen. The only thing that makes sense is the number; *five million*.

DAVID
(mumbles)
What the hell?

With a grin suggesting curiosity, David sits down, takes his time staring at his screen, lights up another cigarette.

Hesitant finger hovers over the keyboard, dives down decisively, punches the enter key.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

All data disappear, the blinking cursor makes an appearance. Screen splits in two, a chat window emerges.

H: Hello

David thumbs a few buttons.

Location?

Former words fade away with every new question.

H: Manhattan

Security?

H: None.

Time?

H: Midnight.

Payment?

H: Up front.

DAVID

grimaces, takes a deep breath, leans back in his chair. His eyes dart left and right between the cigarette and the computer screen.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

H: Interested?

DAVID

Pro league at last baby!

Confirm.

Everything turns black, data scroll past at unreadable speed, finally arriving at a visible message.

Contract signed. Payment completed. Sending file...

/connection terminated.

THE HUGE PRINTER at the far side of the room works overtime, multiple pages exit the beast.

David rolls his chair to the printer, eyes the very first of the printed papers.

A computer BEEP.

David whips his eyes back to the screen.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Good luck, David.

INT. MANHATTAN - SOME TOWER - LOBBY - NIGHT

Clad in a formal black suit David walks inside the lobby, the LOBBY MANAGER (40s) doesn't spare a single blink at him.

Confident and fearless, David moves to the elevator, gets in, thumbs the penthouse button, punches the required keycode on the panel.

Doors shut with a THUD.

INT. MANHATTAN - SOME TOWER - PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Sheer extravagance rocks David's eyes. He takes a step forward, chokes back his amazement, paces further inside.

At the far end of the living room, a golden door carved with scary drawings alerts his instincts.

David gets a tablet out of his inner pocket, a layout of the whole building pops up.

Constantly shooting looks back and forth, he beelines for the luxurious door. He pauses, gazes at the drawings.

DAVID
(whispers)
Cowboy the fuck up.

Sterile gloves are on, palm rises, David pets the door.

The door CREAKS open.

David steps backwards, breathes heavily.

INT. MANHATTAN - SOME TOWER - PENTHOUSE - LIBRARY - MIDNIGHT

A legion of old books infest the walls, one more litter the floor, the size of the library is staggering, surreal.

David looks stunned, strolls inside, his eyes land on the massive manuscript that rests on a silver stand at the middle of the room, like the crown jewel of all knowledge in there.

DAVID
Codex gigas, here I come.

David nears the manuscript, retrieves a pen from his suit, leans over the open pages.

With his pen, David copies everything line by line using the tablet. First couple of lines done.

David SNEEZES. Ignores it, back to writing.

David COUGHS. Frowns, ignores it again, back to writing.

Ten or so lines already done, David pauses, rubs his throat, feels uncomfortable, itchy.

David braves his discomfort, gets back to writing.

A couple more lines done and...

David stops. His vision blurs, fingers shake, tablet crashes to the ground. Chest burns, Chris looks in terrible pain, both palms against his heart suggest a heart attack.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What is happening to me?

David tries hard to move out of the room, fails miserably, collapses three feet away the codex.

Wearing shades and at night, an OLD MAN (70s), clad in a black robe, walks inside, his walking stick leads him all the way next to David.

Before the codex, the Old Man bends the knee, grabs David's tablet, paces away.

INT. MANHATTAN - SOME TOWER - PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

With his back turned to us, seated deep in his red leather throne, a YOUNG GUY in a silver suit works his tablet.

YOUNG GUY
How much?

OLD MAN
Thirteen lines master.

The Young Guy shakes his head in disappointment.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
It's taking us too much time.

YOUNG GUY
Time is irrelevant, mortal.

The Old Man is out of words, bows.

OLD MAN
You will keep your promise though,
whenever we finish it?

YOUNG GUY
Of course. This life, or your next
one, once I complete my father's
book and get rid of this mortal
form, your sight will be yours
again.

OLD MAN
Thank you, master!

The Old Man walks away.

YOUNG GUY
What do you think he died from?

The Old man pauses.

OLD MAN
Judging by his addiction, his lungs
failed him, master.

YOUNG GUY
I thought you were blind.

OLD MAN
The smell betrayed him.

The Young Guy performs a magic trick with his hands, a pack
of cigarettes appears in his palm. He examines it thoroughly,
eyes the devil image on the packet, burns it to memory.

YOUNG GUY
Hell. Fire and smoke. If only men
could fathom the irony of this.

FADE OUT.