

The Window

By Stanley Xin

On that eerie night, the whole scene felt ominous. The moon was an imperfect circle as if someone had sanded it down. I considered retreating, but duty beckoned, so I climbed the creaky, dingy stairs to the ghostly black door, lugging a substantial package. A quick knock and I announced, "Delivery."

After a brief silence, the door swung open, revealing a bald man, approximately 40 years old, with a skeletal build. "Here's your package," I offered. He accepted it but then focused on the conspicuous dent. I blurted my words preemptively.

"I don't know what to say, man. Your package is at least forty-five pounds. I dented it when I loaded the truck. Call the company if you want a refund, but I'm done for the night." His eyes, instantaneously dilating, met mine with a hint of foreboding, and he grumbled, "Fine, but this dent is going to hurt you more than it hurts me," before slamming the door shut. His words meant nothing to me, as I have heard all the vitriol imaginable from dissatisfied customers.

Yet, I couldn't shake the feeling of being watched when I descended the stairs. As I started my car, the distant sound of another engine revving further unsettled me. I hurried back to the delivery hub, seeking refuge.

To ease my nerves, I stopped at a nearby fast-food restaurant before heading home. On the drive back, I glanced at a white Ford truck, a vehicle I'd always dreamed of owning. It was in pristine condition except for a mark indicative of a fender bender that must have been recent. I'd never be careless with a truck like that.

Arriving home, I locked the doors and noticed the same white truck parked behind me by the sidewalk. Its owner was nowhere in sight. I retreated into my house, securing the door against the disquieting night.

Feeling fatigued, I decided to take a shower before bedtime. Just as I prepared to do so, a loud banging startled me, but I dismissed it as a harmless raccoon scavenging for leftovers, as raccoons often do in this neighbourhood. Later, I went for a brief walk, observing various animals, including a thin wiener dog that only had three legs.

Returning home, I attended to some work and eventually retired around 10:00. However, my sleep was short-lived as I awoke at 2:59. Determined to get more rest, I closed my eyes once more.

As I did, I heard a strange noise, like something sliding open. I brushed it off as my imagination, but then a loud thump shook me from my bed. Rubbing my eyes and gazing ahead, I witnessed an open window. Standing before me was the bald man, his eyes with diabolical dilation, and face contorted with malevolence. In his hand, he gripped a giant axe with a significant dent in the middle of the blade, creating a warped edge. I wanted to plea, but it was the old man who was preemptive this time.