

## **4 PM Daydreams**

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Comedy, Drama, Anthology

## **LOGLINE**

An elevator attendant goes about his day, carrying his passengers up and down and in-between, as his musings go about the same way. Pondering on the need for necessities, the curious case of purpose, the many peculiarities of man, and the nature of the self among others. Like a lucid dream, we follow his thoughts as it weaves around one seemingly uneventful afternoon. From floor to floor, passenger to passenger, we dream and ponder with him, almost touching this unnameable shared experience of wonder and wondering.

## **SYNOPSIS**

We meet the man in charge of the buttons, his existence seems to be cut off from the rest of reality, an elevator attendant, his presence in this 8 feet by 4 feet space is at the same time plain and trivial. Here is a man seemingly confined to one spot but whose mind runs free. Like the flowing of water down a stream, dancing around pebbles and earth as it finds its way to a river, we follow his meditations and ruminations. Of the curious mundanity of everyday existence, of the nature of man, of community, and the trappings of society. Finding ourselves all the way downwards, to the depths of one man's psyche, as he ponders upon the nature of purpose and necessity, of change and finality. Much like the elevator that he attends to that leads to nowhere, in particular, we navigate the ups and downs of his thoughts, which if we would consider long enough, isn't far unlike ours.

## **STORYLINE**

It's early in the morning and we meet the man in a small, family-run canteen. He is holding a cup of coffee, a half-empty plate of corned beef with rice sits beside his left hand. He is silent for a moment. He seems to be pondering deeply about something or the other, he stares into his cup, unwavering and intense, as if trying to bore a hole into it. He shakes himself out of his reverie, looks at the time, thinks twice before finishing the remainder of his coffee, stands up, proceeds to pay the woman at the counter, and leaves for work.

The man arrives at his place of work, a relic of a building, beautiful, and brittle, a silhouette of what it used to be. Once a place of business and commerce, it is now slowly being turned into a cheap condominium complex. The man finds the marriage of modern-day technology and sensibilities, all of its long cables, and shiny acrylic finish, with the decaying remnants of the building's art-deco fashion and facade, fascinatingly grotesque. He enters the building, clocks in, and proceeds down corridors that seem to grow narrower by the turn until he reaches a pale brown door and enters. We follow the man throughout his morning routine of changing out of his civilian clothes and into his uniform, this drab, undeterminable shade of blue. There was a time when he thought his uniform handsome, sharp even. Nowadays he doesn't think much of it or much of anything at all. He fixes the hem of his sleeves one last time, closes his locker, and departs for the elevator.

The man goes through his shift in somewhat of a daze, seemingly half awake. Hours drip slowly, days start to blend into one another, weeks turn into years. It has been a long while since he felt truly awake.

This job doesn't demand much other than an understanding of floors and numbers, an adeptness at listening to commands, and a finger to push one button after the other. He misses the true demands of life, the pressure to perform--backbreaking as his old job

may have been at least the rest of his body had a bigger purpose, he had a bigger purpose.

The rice fields feel like a different lifetime, the constant ache on his back and his arms, the heat of the sun burning through his skin, all a distant memory. His calloused hands that planted crops and carried sacks have grown soft, save for his index finger which had formed a different callous, flattened into a stub, perfect for pushing buttons. His back that was once strong enough to carry sacks upon sacks of rice, now brittle and hunched just ever so slightly over. Life was never easy as a farmer, the man grew food but he and his family are often left with empty bellies. So he decided to leave the fields and move to the city. Greener pastures.

Now he stands still inside a metal box, with a constant breeze from the AC, surrounded by high ceilings and concrete walls, no longer required to move anything but his hand.

During his shifts, he encounters many a face the same way you encounter people on the streets, fleeting and oftentimes forgettable. He catches many conversations, sometimes at their beginning, often at their middle, and sometimes at the very end. He wiles away the time by pondering about his passengers' lives, 'why (go to) this floor', 'why that shirt', 'why in such a rush'. He finds himself asking questions about his passenger's lives and finding answers for questions of his own.

His seeming insignificance renders him invisible to most of his passengers, the man discovered that people tend to be more heedless with their words when they feel like no one is listening. No one of consequence that is.

It's these fragments of conversations, these small glimpses into their inner lives that reminds the man of their humanness, and consequently his own.

The man rarely gets to see the passenger's faces, his attention, what remains of it, is drawn towards buttons, the floor indicator, and the droning of the elevator as it carries them on that seemingly endless trip, going up and down and up and down.

On this seemingly uneventful day at work, pushing buttons for people who've decided they are too important, or too busy to do so, he encounters four people who make an insignificant day a little bit less so.

There is a woman, weary and well dressed, she is with her young child. The floor they needed to go to wasn't that far up, the trip was brief and quiet. They both kept mostly to themselves. They held hands the whole time.

(conversation/rumination about family/responsibility)

There is a man flustered, with a furrow on his brows that he tries ever so hard to conceal. He seemed young but felt old. Young in the words that he used, speaking to friends on his phone. Old in his demeanor, in that furrow that won't seem to leave.

(conversation/rumination about identity/honesty with self and/or others)

There is a couple, they carried many things and spoke of much. They tried to involve the man in one of their discussions. They pondered on many peculiar topics. The man found the trip up quite amusing.

(conversation/rumination about companionship and commitment)

There was a woman. She and the man spoke a little. He asked her where she came from 'from elsewhere, somewhere far' she said. He asked what she was doing here 'searching' she said, though exactly what she kept to herself. Something good, she hopes.

(conversation/rumination about searching for home, goals, and aspirations)

In meeting these people, having been allowed glimpses in their lives, it is gradually revealed to the man that his experiences are not all that unique to himself, to his existence. Much like the elevator that he attends to that leads to nowhere in particular,

we navigate the ups and downs of his thoughts, which if we would consider long enough, isn't far unlike ours.

The man's shift for the day was drawing to a close. We see the man exit the elevator and begin to walk back to the office, straight into the locker room. He dresses out of his blue uniform, gathers his things, and clocks out. Another day has passed. He bids goodbye to the custodian mopping down the floor, and the security guard at the lobby. Another day lost to this job, tiresome at times, uncomfortable most times, but perhaps not all that purposeless after all.

**END.**