

STRANGERS

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INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 1

The start of a workday. Several OFFICE WORKERS wait for the elevator to take them to their jobs. Among them stand SAM, a young white guy, and JAE, a young black woman.

Jae, her clothes a bit worn, has a pleasant, cool-as-a-cucumber demeanor.

But Sam's shy and nervous.

He steals an indirect glance at Jae. Receptive, she looks at him directly.

He avoids her eyes, walks around a bit, lightly kicking the wall, not saying anything.

The elevator comes and everyone gets on.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Nobody looks at anyone else.

Jae gets off on the third floor. She heads to the double doors of her day job.

Sam exits on the fifth floor, walks toward the entrance of his day job.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 2

Sam walks to his accustomed spot, waits for the elevator with the familiar strangers.

Jae's not among them.

He frowns imperceptibly, kicks the wall.

The elevator arrives. He looks around for Jae, doesn't see her.

Disheartened, Sam enters the elevator, and the doors close.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 3

Jae joins the others, minus Sam, awaiting the elevator.

When the elevator doors open, she holds them, quickly looks at the building's entrance. She doesn't see Sam, so reluctantly she gets on.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 4

The normal crowd, including Jae and Sam, waits for the elevator. Also waiting this morning is a MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR. The elevator arrives, Jae and Sam hold the opposing doors, and the Man in the Wheelchair wheels himself in.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Jae and Sam stand on either side of the Man in the Wheelchair. They exchange glances--Sam's furtive, Jae's straightforward--but neither speaks. Jae departs at the third floor. Sam stays on.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 5

As Jae and Sam wait for the elevator, Sam finds the courage to talk to her.

SAM
(very nervous,
awkward)
Do you know what time it is?

Always cool as a cucumber, Jae points matter-of-factly at the phone he's holding, which clearly displays the time. Sam, embarrassed by his pathetic attempt to start a conversation, resolves to never try talking to her again.

The elevator's here. They step in.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

No one, including Jae and Sam, looks at or speaks to anyone else.

Jae steps out on the third floor. Sam continues upward.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - MORNING 6

Sam walks to his customary spot and waits for the elevator. All the regulars are there except Jae. He's concerned he missed his chance to talk to her. Frowning, he lightly kicks the wall. The elevator doors open. He scans the lobby for Jae, but to no avail. Then he joins the others inside. The doors close.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 7

Jae and several others await the elevator. Sam's absent. She worries she'll never see him again. As the elevator arrives, she eyes the building's entrance, but no Sam. Frustrated, she gets on, and the doors close.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MORNING 8

Jae waits with the others for the elevator. Sam's not there.

The elevator reaches the ground floor, and the doors open.

To the annoyance of those trying to get to work on time, Jae holds the doors. She spots Sam entering the building.

He sees she's holding the elevator for him.

With her free hand, she waves and smiles.

He hurries and they join the others inside. The doors close. The elevator starts its ascent.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Sam looks nervously at Jae.

SAM
(whispering)
Thanks.

Knowing he's very shy and self-conscious, Jae whispers back.

JAE
You're welcome. I'm Jae.

SAM
J-J-J-ohn.

Jae smiles.

JAE
(gentle, warm)
J-J-J-ohn?

SAM
I'm nervous.

JAE
Don't be. I won't bite.

She feigns a playful bite in his direction.

Jae's affectionate lightheartedness help Sam manage a smile.

They rejoin the silence of their fellow passengers.

The elevator stops at the third floor.

JAE
(hinting)
This is my stop.

SAM
(extremely anxious)
Can I walk you to your office?

Jae smiles.

JAE
Sure.

They exit together.

INT. THIRD-FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jae and Sam walk to the double doors of her day job.

We slowly pull back, beyond earshot, as Sam nervously takes out his phone.

He asks for her number, which she gives him, then heads back to catch the next elevator.

He glances behind him, sees her watching.

She smiles at him.

He presses the elevator button, beaming brightly.

THE END