

Just The Tip

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**FADE IN:**

**INT. OLD-FASHIONED ELEVATOR - DAY**

The HUM of machinery.

A white gloved hand straightens a bell-boy style cap.

A row of coat buttons, all shiny and polished.

The same gloved hand rubs at a red stain on a name-tag. It reads: SHADWELL

SHADWELL, late teens, a scratch of fuzz on his upper lip. A pride in the way he preens his elevator operator uniform.

Stuffed into a corner behind him is the SUIT, 50s. His terrified eyes hover between the old-fashioned scissor doors and the steadily falling floor indicator above.

DING! Shadwell opens the doors -- the Suit can't get out of there fast enough. He bolts across the lobby for the exit.

SHADWELL

Sir.

The Suit skids to a halt, back-peddles to the elevator.

Shadwell holds out a briefcase.

The Suit grabs the case -- Shadwell doesn't let go. A brief game of tug ensues until he spots Shadwell's upturned palm.

Coins rattle across the floor as the Suit hastily deposits loose change into Shadwell's hand.

Shadwell relinquishes the suitcase.

The Suit turns and bumps into HEAVYSET MAN, 50s, joyless, sour-faced -- the collision knocks a file from his hand.

Heavyset turns to scowl.

The exit door swings shut -- the Suit gone.

Heavysset collects the file. He adjusts his tie, annoyed.

SHADWELL

Good morning sir.

Heavysset grunts a reply and steps inside the elevator.

Shadwell draws the gates.

Heavysset stares at Shadwell, waiting.

SHADWELL

Will we be going up sir?

HEAVYSET

There a down?

SHADWELL

Just a basement sir.

HEAVYSET

Do I look like I've business in a basement son?

SHADWELL

No sir.

HEAVYSET

Fourteen.

SHADWELL

Floor fourteen sir?

The stare turns to a glower.

SHADWELL

Fourteen it is.

Shadwell throws the lever. The motor HUMS.

They watch the arrow rise through the floors: four, five...

Heavysset taps his foot impatiently.

The arrow indicator reaches eleven...

Shadwell removes his cap and places it on a little wall-hook. He flexes his knuckles.

Floor twelve...

A BANG on the elevator roof -- it's followed by heavy FOOTSTEPS. Heavysset frowns as Shadwell ushers him aside.

SHADWELL

Excuse me sir.

Shadwell leaps up and grips a handle fixed to a roof-hatch.

The elevator rocks. Shadwell is lifted several inches -- it's as if SOMEONE or SOMETHING were pulling at the hatch.

Heavysset watches stone-faced as Shadwell's skinny frame is shaken back and forth.

The floor indicator passes to fourteen...

The hatch CLUNKS back into place. Shadwell drops, executes a perfect landing.

He resumes his station, bringing the elevator to a halt.

SHADWELL

Fourteen sir.

Heavysset eyes him warily, still processing as Shadwell opens the scissor doors. Heavysset exits.

Shadwell looks to his empty palm, stung.

ERIC TUCHMAN, 60s, portly, smiles warmly as he steps inside the elevator. He carries a newspaper.

TUCHMAN

Morning Shadwell.

SHADWELL

Morning Mr. Tuchman. Not taking the stairs today sir?

They share a knowing smile.

Tuchman folds a dollar-bill into Shadwell's pocket.

SHADWELL

Away we go sir.

Shadwell switches the elevator into gear. Removes his cap.

Tuchman buries his nose in the newspaper as Shadwell springs and takes hold of the roof-hatch.

BANG! CLOMPING of feet from above...

Shadwell jerks violently upward. He kicks at thin air several feet from the floor.

Tuchman turns a page.

Shadwell drops back into view -- he manages a furtive glance to the floor indicator before he's gone again.

He stretches out a foot, his shoe hooking the cage door as an anchor.

The arrow drops to floor 12 -- CLUNK!

An out of breath Shadwell resumes the controls.

TUCHMAN

Keeping you busy are they Shadwell?

SHADWELL

Oh I rather like busy sir.

TUCHMAN

It has its ups and downs.

Shadwell swivels and snort-laughs at the joke -- it's forced and just plain creepy. He turns back to the lever.

**MOMENTS LATER**

DING!

Shadwell opens the doors to the lobby.

MISS FROST, 40s, dressed for business, steps back as Tuchman exits. He's all smiles.

TUCHMAN

Good morning Miss Frost.

MISS FROST

Eric how are you?

TUCHMAN

Just dandy.

Miss Frost hops inside.

SHADWELL

Morning Miss Frost. Back so soon?

MISS FROST

Flying visit. Proposals and other what-nots. Floor thirteen please.

Shadwell winces.

MISS FROST

Oh, yes...

SHADWELL

I'm afraid so Ma'am.

MISS FROST

Still, this whole..?

Shadwell throws up his hands 'what you gonna do?'

MISS FROST

I'll take the stairs from twelve.

Shadwell stiffens. He thumbs the lever, offended.

SHADWELL

Stairs..?

MISS FROST

Oh, Shadwell, how thoughtless of me.

SHADWELL

No Ma'am, twelve it is.

She pats a dollar-bill into his pocket.

MISS FROST

Make it fourteen.

SHADWELL

Right away Ma'am!

**MOMENTS LATER**

DING! The arrow points to floor fourteen.

Shadwell opens the doors. Miss Frost exits as he fits his cap back into place. He looks winded and disheveled.

MISS FROST

Thank-you Shadwell.

SHADWELL

My pleasure Ma'am.

He primps his uniform as he draws the outer door -- it jams. He looks down to see papers spilling from a file...

He looks up to see Heavysset wedged in the gap. His jaw set, his rage boiling beneath the surface.

SHADWELL

Sorry sir. I was--

HEAVYSET

Woolgathering. I'll say it, that way you'll be sure to hear it.  
Bunch of Goddamn woolgathering--

He turns back to address the lobby.

HEAVYSET

(shouts)

Candy-toed assholes! You can stick your damn job in your asses!

Shadwell bends to collect the paperwork.

HEAVYSET

Leave it. Sons of bitches can choke  
on it. Ground, now, and hold the  
sass you suit wearing drum-monkey.

SHADWELL

Right away sir.

He throws the lever. The elevator rumbles on its way...

HEAVYSET

So what're you s'posed to be,  
Chinese?

SHADWELL

No sir. I don't think so.

HEAVYSET

Sure? I can't tell under that  
fucking hat.

SHADWELL

I am a little Finnish--

BOOM! Heavyset thumps the wall.

HEAVYSET

That's what I'm talking about!

Shadwell swallows, nervous.

SHADWELL

Please don't do that sir, you'll--

BOOM! Heavyset punctuates his words with wall thumps:

HEAVYSET

I. Do as I. Damn. Well. Please!  
To hell with this, to hell with  
you, lemme outta this damn cage!

Shadwell throws a look to the indicator: floor 13.

SHADWELL

I really can't sir--

Heavyset grabs the lever and halts the lift. He shoves his sweaty face in close to Shadwell's.

HEAVYSET

Son, I'm takin' the stairs.

A strange calm washes over Shadwell. He simply steps aside.

SHADWELL

Very well sir.

BANG! Heavyset tracks the footsteps as they CLOMP across the roof.

TUNK.

Shadwell sidesteps -- distancing himself.

Heavyset looks up at the open hatchway. He squints at the small black void...

SQUEAK... SQUEAK...

A ping-pong ball is lowered through the hatch on a line. A smiley-face drawn on it. 'Arms' made from springs fixed to either side -- little paper hands give a thumbs-up.

The line jiggles, the spring arms waggle...

Heavyset stares at it unamused. He gives it a tap.

HEAVYSET

Ping-pong... Know who likes  
ping-pong Chi-chi? God-damn Chin--

WHAM! A meathook punches out through his mouth in a mashing of blood and teeth.

He's lifted bodily from the floor. His hands grope furtively above his head. Legs thrash at the walls.

Blood spatters Shadwell's face. He stares calmly ahead as Heavyset GAGS and SPLUTTERS O.S.

Heavyset's legs give one final spasm and fall limp before rising fully from view.

SQUEAK... SQUEAK...

The 'jiggle toy' retreats from view. The panel CLUNKS back into place.

Shadwell throws the lever...

He sighs at the blood on his lapel. Something on the floor catches his attention. He shakes his head and crouches...

DING!

Shadwell quickly opens the doors.

BALDING EXECUTIVE, 50s, takes in Shadwell's bloodied face and uniform -- notes the severed tongue in his hand.

BALDING EXECUTIVE

Cancel my two o'clock will you  
Kathy.

Shadwell shrugs apologetically and tucks the tongue into his pocket.

Balding Executive boards, carefully avoiding the blood.

He pops a dollar-bill into Shadwell's pocket -- cramming it in alongside the tongue.

SHADWELL

No stairs today sir?

BALDING EXECUTIVE

Over my dead body.

Shadwell hooks his cap on the peg and rolls out his neck.

SHADWELL

Thank-you sir.

**FADE OUT**