

THE EQUITABLE LIFE

Written by

?

FADE IN.

INT. BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - DAY

CLOSE on a bank of three elevators, modern and clean. All doors are closed, awaiting passengers.

One arrives in a hurry. ISAAC (30), handsome and well-built, steps to the closest elevator. Pushes the button to call it. He wears a UPS-like uniform and carries a small package. A Bluetooth headset rests on his ear.

ISAAC  
(to himself)  
Fuckin' slow ass elevators. C'mon.

A DING announces the approaching elevator. Its doors open to reveal

A LITTLE GIRL, about 5, standing in Isaac's way. Her hair is dark, her eyes darker. Her dress, though impeccably kept, is far from contemporary. She stares silently.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
You getting off?

LITTLE GIRL  
Are you getting on?

She responds with a more mature tone than one would expect.

ISAAC  
Well, no shit!

She pouts, glares.

LITTLE GIRL  
If that's what you want.

The girl steps out of the elevator, allowing Isaac to quickly step in.

INT. ELEVATOR - GROUND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The space is small, undecorated but for the mirrored back wall. Isaac reaches for the elevator control panel, pushes the button for the fiftieth floor, the top level.

He steps back and finds the little girl stands in front of him, on the other side of the still open doors.

She cracks a wicked little smile and waves goodbye. The doors close.

ELEVATOR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The elevator creaks upward.

ISAAC  
Weird little bit...

A ring tone interrupts him. Isaac reaches for the Bluetooth.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
(in conversation with  
unheard caller)  
What? I am, yessir, there now.

He shuffles, listens. Turns to the mirror behind him. Fixes his hair, picks his perfect teeth.

I'm in the building now. Yeah, I'm  
in the fu... I'm in the elevator.  
Okay.

He reaches up to end the call.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Fat fuck... the hell?

Isaac takes a closer look at himself in the mirror. He's a bit disturbed to find a gray hair, plucks it out. Turns and looks up to find the elevator has reached the fourth floor.

His phone rings, he answers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
What?

This time we hear the CALLER.

CALLER (V.O.)  
Choose your path wisely, Isaac.

ISAAC  
Choose what? Who is this?

Isaac reaches into his shirt pocket, pulls out his phone. The screen shows an "Unknown" caller.

CALLER (V.O.)  
Or it will be chosen for you.

ISAAC

Shit. Jacob, is that you? I told you not to fuck around on my phone when...

The Caller hangs up.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hello? Asshole.

Isaac places his phone back in his pocket. Looks up to find he is now at the seventh floor.

DING! The doors open.

ELEVATOR - SEVENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

An elderly man (70+) shuffles on. He coughs and wheezes as he pushes the button for the tenth floor. Finds a place next to Isaac. The doors close.

ELEVATOR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

OLD MAN

Afternoon. Beautiful day.

ISAAC

Sure.

The old man draws a handkerchief from his back pocket, as he does so his

WALLET falls to the floor. The old man doesn't notice, but Isaac does. The old man blows his nose, Isaac looks back down to the wallet and then to the old man. Says nothing.

OLD MAN

Gonna watch the game at Buck's up on 10. Should be a good one.

ISAAC

Great.

Isaac drags the wallet closer with his foot, pushes it behind him. The old man is oblivious.

OLD MAN

Who do you like this week?

ISAAC

I don't watch, don't give a shit.

OLD MAN  
Fair enough. Your choice.

His words catch Isaac's attention, for a moment. He looks up to find they have reached the tenth floor.

DING!

ELEVATOR - TENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors open to reveal a pretty TEENAGE GIRL, about 15. She looks familiar, with the same dark traits as the little girl on the ground floor.

She smiles at the old man but ignores Isaac. Pushes the button for the twentieth floor and finds a place near the front.

The old man shambles off the elevator. The doors close.

ELEVATOR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Isaac kneels down to retrieve the old man's wallet, quickly puts it in his back pocket. He pretends to tie his shoe to hide his actions. The Teenage Girl shifts her eyes but doesn't look down at him.

As he rises, Isaac takes a moment too long to enjoy the view of the healthy young woman's bare legs. She catches him. Isaac, unashamed, smiles.

ISAAC  
Hey.

She ignores him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
You have a sister?

Without looking at him, she responds.

TEENAGE GIRL  
No.

He steps closer to her.

ISAAC  
No? 'Cause there's a little girl downstairs who looks a lot like you.

She glances at him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Not nearly as pretty though.

She glances back, smirks.

TEENAGE GIRL  
So?

ISAAC  
So...

TEENAGE GIRL  
Is that what you want?

Isaac steps back. The girl turns to face him.

TEENAGE GIRL (CONT'D)  
Hm, old man?

Isaac laughs it off.

ISAAC  
Old man? Older than you, sure. But,  
c'mon, what's that matter?

She looks down, he follows her eyes.

TEENAGE GIRL  
What's in the package?

He laughs coarsely.

ISAAC  
Oh, you wanna see what's in my  
package? I think you'll like it.

She pauses, pivots to see they have reached the fifteenth floor. Turns back to Isaac.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
So, do you live here?

TEENAGE GIRL  
Sort of.

She turns away, steps to the control panel. Pushes the button for the seventeenth floor.

ISAAC  
I see.

DING!

ELEVATOR - SEVENTEENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The doors open. The Teenage Girl turns to Isaac.

ISAAC  
Scared you away, huh? Can't handle  
a real man yet?

She backs out of the elevator, eyes fixed on Isaac. As the doors close, she cracks a wicked little smile and waves goodbye.

ELEVATOR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Just as the elevator ascends, Isaac's phone rings. He hesitates, but soon answers it.

ISAAC  
Hello?

CALLER (V.O.)  
It matters.

ISAAC  
What matters? What the fuck are you  
talking about?

CALLER (V.O.)  
Your choices matter. Your behavior  
matters. I've presented you with  
opportunities, paths to take - or  
not take.

ISAAC  
What fuckin' path? I'm going  
straight up!

CALLER (V.O.)  
Well, that's true. But you're not  
paying attention, Isaac. You  
haven't noticed the changes, have  
you?

ISAAC  
What?

CALLER (V.O.)  
No. Open the package.

He looks down at the package in his hand.

ISAAC  
I'll losing my fuckin' job if I  
open this package!

CALLER (V.O.)  
You might lose more than that if  
you don't. Turn around.

ISAAC  
Why?

CALLER (V.O.)  
Do it.

Isaac turns, looks at himself in the mirrored back wall.

ISAAC  
What the fuck?

He's aged, about 20 years. Gray at his temples, wrinkles crisscross his face. Isaac inspects himself to be sure that it's real. It is.

Shocked, he pushes away from the mirror. Falls to the floor.

DING! The doors open at the twentieth floor, the Teenage Girl's original destination.

ELEVATOR - TWENTIETH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Isaac jumps to his feet. Bounds out of the doors - but doesn't make it far.

An unseen force yanks Isaac back. He SCREAMS as he is thrown to the rear of the elevator. He lands on his ass.

The doors close, much more quickly this time.

ELEVATOR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The elevator hums loudly, it's moving at an accelerated pace upward. The lights flicker.

Isaac looks up, the floors are flying by. Twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-eight.

Isaac turns, now on his knees, looks at himself in the cracked mirror. He's a haggard, elderly man.

CALLER (V.O.)  
You chose a path, Isaac. Is this  
what you want?

ISAAC

No!

CALLER (V.O.)

Then open the package!

Still on his knees, Isaac scrambles across the floor, finds the package in the corner.

Fumbles, tears it open. Looks inside. He's puzzled, unsure of what to do.

CALLER (V.O.)

Take it.

Isaac pulls a small HANDGUN from the box. Grips it shakily.

ISAAC

No.

The elevator slams to a halt at the thirty-seventh floor.

CALLER (V.O.)

No?

ISAAC

I won't kill myself.

CALLER (V.O.)

No. Of course not.

The elevator resumes upward at normal speed.

ISAAC

(defeated)

What do you want?

CALLER (V.O.)

I don't want anything. Stand up.

Isaac tries to stand. Bones pop, creak. He groans with the effort of getting to his feet.

CALLER (V.O.)

What do you want? Do you want it back? Your youth, your life?

ISAAC

Yes. Please.

CALLER (V.O.)

Then take it.

DING! The doors open at the fortieth floor.

ELEVATOR - FORTIETH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

CALLER (V.O.)

From her.

A lovely WOMAN, about 30, walks on to the elevator. She shares the same dark traits as the former female passengers. Isaac quickly hides the gun behind his back.

She notices that the button for the fiftieth floor has already been pushed. She also notices that she shares this elevator with a frail, withered old man.

WOMAN

Sir? Are you feeling okay?

ISAAC

Sure. Yes, I'm fine. Thanks.

She smiles, turns to the front of the elevator. A long pause.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Do you live here?

She turns back toward him, surprised by the question.

WOMAN

No sir. I work here. Sort of a cleaning job.

He nods. The woman turns back.

CALLER (V.O.)

Take it.

Isaac is startled, stands up straighter, which hurts him.

CALLER (V.O.)

If you want it.

He jerks his hand from behind his back, looks down at the gun. Looks at his other hand, the hand of a very old man.

Isaac peers over his shoulder. Finds his reflection. He's now a man of at least 75.

CALLER (V.O.)

If you do. Put a bullet in that woman's head. Isaac?

He raises the gun, aims it at the unsuspecting Woman's head. His arm wobbles, barely able to manage the weight.

CALLER (V.O.)  
What path do you...

BANG!

A bullet rips through her skull. Blood splatters across the elevator doors.

CALLER (V.O.)  
...choose?

Isaac stands in silence for a moment. Looks down at the Woman's body.

Isaac spins around to find a now youthful reflection staring back. He lets out a tearful, joyous laugh. Pounds on the mirror in victory. The gun is no longer in his hand but he is too enraptured to notice.

He catches something else in the mirror: his victim's body.

But it's not. He turns to find the body of the Little Girl he met on the ground floor. He moans in horror. The unopened package lies at his feet.

DING!

The doors open at the fiftieth floor, Isaac's destination.

ELEVATOR - FIFTIETH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

It's the Old Man, though he's looking much younger. Robust and dapper, he smiles at Isaac, and speaks. His voice reveals that he is the Caller.

CALLER  
Good to meet you, Isaac. I believe  
you have a package for me?

Isaac bends down to retrieve it, pauses to look at the girl's corpse.

CALLER (CONT'D)  
Oh, don't bother. Judith?

The Little Girl springs up, grabs the package at Isaac's feet.

She wipes the blood from her face, flicks it at Isaac. He's repulsed. She bounces from the elevator with child-like innocence. Joins the Caller beyond the open doors.

LITTLE GIRL  
(to the Caller)  
I guess he got what he wanted,  
Daddy.

CALLER  
(to the Little Girl)  
So it seems, my dear.  
(to Isaac)  
But it was a very poor choice.

She cracks a wicked little smile and waves goodbye to Isaac.

The doors SLAM shut. Metallic CLANKS surround the elevator.  
It shudders and creaks.

And free falls.

INT. BUILDING - GROUND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

An increasing louder SCREAM echoes through the elevator bank  
space.

It ends with a thunderous CRASH.

FADE TO BLACK.