

DING  
BY  
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**FADE IN:**

**INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

The HUM of machinery.

A row of coat buttons, shiny, polished.

A white gloved hand straightens a bell-boy cap.

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, preens his elevator operator uniform with pride.

Stuffed into a corner behind him is the SUIT, 50s, his terrified eyes dart between the scissor door and the steadily falling floor indicator above.

DING!

SHADWELL

Lobby--

**INT. GROUND FLOOR - LOBBY/ELEVATOR - DAY**

Shadwell opens the old fashioned scissor door --

SHADWELL

Door opening.

The Suit can't get out of there fast enough. He brushes Shadwell aside and bolts for the exit.

SHADWELL

Sir.

The Suit skids to a halt, back-pedals 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 deposits loose change into Shadwell's waiting hand.

Shadwell relinquishes the suitcase.

The Suit turns and bumps into BARTRUM, 50s, joyless, sour-faced, knocking a file from his hand.

Bartrum scowls.

The exit door swings shut -- the Suit already gone.

Bartrum collects the file, adjusts his tie, annoyed.

SHADWELL  
Good morning, sir.

Bartrum grunts a reply and steps inside the elevator.

Shadwell draws the gate.

SHADWELL  
Door closing.

**INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

Bartrum stares at Shadwell, waiting.

SHADWELL  
Will we be going up, sir?

BARTRUM  
There's a down?

SHADWELL  
Just a basement, sir.

BARTRUM  
Do I look like I've got business in  
a basement?

SHADWELL  
No, sir.

BARTRUM  
Fourteen.

SHADWELL  
Floor fourteen?

Bartrum's stare hardens.

SHADWELL  
Fourteen it is.

Shadwell throws the lever. The motor HUMS.

Bartrum taps his foot, impatient. He watches the arrow rise through the floors.

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

Floor thirteen...

A BANG on the elevator roof...followed by heavy FOOTSTEPS. Bartrum 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.

Bartrum watches in stone-faced silence as Shadwell 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.

Bartrum eyes him testily, still processing the moment.

SHADWELL

Door opening.

**INT. FLOOR FOURTEEN - CORRIDOR/ELEVATOR - DAY**

Shadwell opens the scissor door.

Bartrum fires Shadwell a parting glance and slinks away.

Shadwell looks to his empty palm, stung.

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. Door closing!

**INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

The elevator RUMBLES. Tuchman buries his nose in the newspaper. Shadwell springs, 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, unfazed.

Shadwell drops briefly into view, managing a furtive glance at the floor indicator before he's yanked away.

His foot hooks the cage door, using it as an anchor.

The arrow drops to floor 12 -- CLUNK!

An out of breath Shadwell resumes the controls.

TUCHMAN  
A damned business. I hear HR are  
involved. Ought to speed things up.

SHADWELL  
Oh, it keeps me busy, sir.

TUCHMAN  
Every job has its ups and downs.

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

DING!

SHADWELL  
Lobby. Door opening.

**INT. GROUND FLOOR - LOBBY/ELEVATOR - DAY**

Shadwell opens the door.

MS. FROST, 40s, dressed for business, steps back as Tuchman exits. They greet one another with a smile.

TUCHMAN  
Good morning, Ms. Frost.

MS. FROST  
Eric, how are you?

TUCHMAN  
Just dandy.

Ms. Frost hops inside.

SHADWELL  
Morning, Ms. Frost. Back so soon?

MS. FROST  
Flying visit. Proposals and general  
what-nottery. Floor thirteen my  
darling.

Shadwell winces.

MS. FROST  
Oh, yes...

SHADWELL  
I'm afraid so, Ma'am. No stopping  
on floor thirteen.

MS. FROST  
Still..?

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

MS. FROST  
Perhaps I should take the stairs,  
for safety?

Shadwell stiffens, offended. He thumbs the lever in silence.

SHADWELL  
Stairs, Ma'am..?

MS. FROST  
Oh, Shadwell, that was simply  
thoughtless of me.

SHADWELL

No, Ma'am, It's not my place--

She pats a dollar-bill into his pocket.

MS. FROST

Make it fourteen.

SHADWELL

Door closing!

**INT. FLOOR FOURTEEN - CORRIDOR/ELEVATOR - DAY**

DING!

A flush looking Shadwell opens the door. He snugs his cap back into place as Ms. Frost makes to exit.

MS. FROST

About before, it was rash of me.  
You know I'd never take--

He looks away, not wanting to hear the word.

SHADWELL

Please. It's my job.

MS. FROST

And you serve the uniform proud.  
Travel safe my sweet.

SHADWELL

Ma'am.

And with that she sweeps away.

Shadwell primps his uniform and moves to draw the door -- it jams. He looks down to see papers spilling from a file...

He looks up to see Bartrum wedged in the gap, jaw set, rage simmering beneath the surface.

SHADWELL

Sorry sir. I was--

BARTRUM

Woolgathering. I'll say it, that way you'll be sure to hear it.  
Bunch of Goddamn woolgathering...  
(addresses the lobby)  
...candy-nosed assholes! You can stick your offer, it's beneath me!

Shadwell bends to collect the paperwork -- Bartrum scatters it along the hallway with a kick.

BARTRUM  
Choke on it. Lobby, doors closing,  
now, and hold the sass you suit  
wearing drum-monkey.

SHADWELL  
Right away, sir.

**INT. ELEVATOR - DAY**

Shadwell throws the lever. The elevator rumbles away.

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

SHADWELL  
No, sir. I don't think so.

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

SHADWELL  
My Grandfather was a little  
Finnish--

BOOM! Bartrum thumps the wall.

BARTRUM  
That's what I'm talking about!

Shadwell swallows, nervous.

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

BOOM! Bartrum punctuates his words with wall thumps:

BARTRUM  
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 stop here, sir--

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

BARTRUM  
Son, I'm takin' the stairs.

SHADWELL  
Stairs..?

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

SHADWELL  
Very well, sir.

BANG!

Bartrum tracks the footsteps as they CLOMP across the roof.

BARTRUM  
What the hell is that?

TUNK.

Shadwell shuffles sideways -- distancing himself.

Bartrum 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 sprout from either side. Little paper hands give a thumbs-up.

The line jiggles, the spring arms waggle...

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

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

WHAM! A meathook punches out through his chest in a mashing of blood. His hands grope furtively, legs thrashing at the walls as he's lifted from the floor.

Blood spatters Shadwell's face. He stares calmly ahead as Bartrum GAGS O.S.

Bartrum'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!

**INT. GROUND FLOOR - LOBBY/ELEVATOR - DAY**

Shadwell opens the door.

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

BALDING EXECUTIVE  
Morning, Shadwell.

SHADWELL  
Morning, sir.

Shadwell quickly tucks the tongue into his pocket.

BALDING EXECUTIVE  
What a damned nuisance.

Balding Executive boards, careful to avoid 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  
Door closing!

**FADE OUT**