

NEW YEARS EVE

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EXT. PROJECTS - NIGHT

A dilapidated building looms high into the darkness. It's deserted, save one woman who strides through the blistering cold, bundled underneath a parka. We don't see her at first, but we hear her. The click-clacking of six inch heels pounding against the pavement.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

We follow her into the rundown building. Her back to us, she zigzags through a desolate lobby. Removing her gloves. Pulling off her coat. Smoothing down her hair. She reaches the elevator, pushes the button, and waits.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Moments later and the doors creak open to a flickering light bulb. She steps in, her thin hand stretching up, adjusting the bulb into place. Finally, we see her.

JUDAH

A prostitute, teetering on the age of 40. Her leopard dress hugs her scrawny figure. The doors close.

We ride up with her a few floors before the doors open again. She watches as SAMMY, 7, wearing a coat too big for his small frame, shellacks in. He pushes in two bags of groceries.

The elevator doors close.

JUDAH

Hi there, honey.

Sammy looks up at her warily.

SAMMY

(softly)

Hi.

A resounding screech. The elevator lurches to a stop, tossing him forward. He looks around. A beat. Jabs the up button with his finger.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

What's wrong with the elevator?

JUDAH

The power went out again. You would think the tenants of this place would rebel. I get stuck in this thing at least once a week.

He tries pushing the buttons again.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

Let it be hun. It will start back in due time.

(a beat, then)

I don't reckon you want to tell me why you're on this elevator by yourself so late at night?

SAMMY

I had to run an errand for my mommy.

JUDAH

And who would your mommy be? It's late.

Sammy looks her up and down. His chubby face sizing her up.

SAMMY

I'm not supposed to talk to strangers.

JUDAH

Ah, well. Smart kid.

But Sammy keeps looking her.

SAMMY

Why are your shoes so high and your skirt so short? Aren't you cold? It's really cold outside.

JUDAH

In my line of business I get warmed up pretty fast.

Sammy's eyes widen.

SAMMY

Oh.

(a beat, realizing)

Ooooh.

Judah eyes him.

JUDAH

What?

SAMMY

You sell coffee.

JUDAH

Excuse me?

SAMMY

Coffee. Like at Starbucks. That's why you warm up so fast.

She cracks a small smile.

JUDAH

Yea, kid. I make coffee all night long with a bunch of brittle old beans.

(then)

How old are you anyway?

SAMMY

7 and half. My birthday is in three months. Then I'll be 8.

JUDAH

Aren't you a big one. What are you doing for your big day?

SAMMY

Not much. I figured I would invite some friends over to talk about the latest games.

JUDAH

(amused)

Yea? What types of games you like?

SAMMY

Basketball. Football. Baseball. Hockey. Wrestling and snowboarding.

JUDAH

Run the gamet don't ya? How you know about all these sports at such a young age?

SAMMY

I used to watch them with my dad before he went away.

JUDAH

Away?

SAMMY

Yea, one morning he just up and left. Told me to watch out for my momma and make sure she had everything she needed.

A look of empathy crosses over Judah's face. She motions to the grocery bags.

JUDAH

Well, I can tell you're doing a good job champ.

Sammy doesn't respond. They stand across from each other in silence.

SAMMY

When you make coffee, do you make all types of flavors?

Judah shrugs.

JUDAH

Well... it depends on what the client wants. Many are the traditional type and like the same coffee over and over. But then the holidays come around, like tonight for instance, and they want all the special bells and whistles.

Sammy nods. This makes sense.

SAMMY

I don't like coffee much. My mom says its bad for you. When I tried it, it left a bad taste in my mouth.

JUDAH

Yea, that's what coffee tends to do.

SAMMY

My dad used to drink it when he was around, but when he left he took the coffee maker and a lot of other stuff.

Judah shifts her stance, leaning against the railing.

JUDAH

Men do that sometimes. They can just take and take and take and not even realize it. Then one day you look up... and you realize they've been taking from you your whole life.

Sammy stares at Judah. A blank expression on her face.

SAMMY

Don't be sad!

He leans into a grocery bag, pulls out too small packets. He holds them out to Judah.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

You can have some hot chocolate. I had to pick some up for my mommy. She says New Years is a good time to try something new.

Judah looks at him painfully. Gently takes it.

JUDAH

Thanks kiddo.

Suddenly we hear a loud jerk. Sammy and Judah brace themselves. The elevator grinds, then slowly, starts moving.

SAMMY

Yes!

Elated, Sammy refocuses his attention back on the door. He pushes the number 10.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

What floor are you going to?

A beat. Judah stares at the numbers.

JUDAH

You know what?

(a beat, then)

I think I'm going to keep my coffee for myself tonight.

She holds up the packets.

JUDAH (CONT'D)

Gonna try this instead. Just push the lobby button for me.

Sammy does.

SAMMY

My name is Sammy by the way.

He extends his hand. Judah bends down, squeezes it.

JUDAH

Judah.

He picks up the bags from the floor as the elevator reaches his floor. He steps out, turns, and gives a small wave.

SAMMY

Have a Happy New Year!

Judah looks down at the hot chocolate. A smile slips.

JUDAH

Same to you kid. Same to you.

FADE OUT