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A Little Decision

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I've been running this elevator up twenty one floors for six years and I tell ya I got no regrets. My mother calls me up twice a month to remind me how well my brothers are doin' in college, and I tell her the same thing when she tells me this, "Mother I'm very happy for them, as I'm sure you all are."

And then she goes on to tell me how I could still go if I found enough initiative in my soul to want to be somebody instead of working in the same apartment building all my life. And I tell her I'm not going to work in the same apartment building all my life, I'll move on to new ones. And I laugh. She doesn't laugh. She tells me I should talk to my father, but I know it will just be the same ol' crap in a lower and louder tone of voice. So, I smooch out some kisses and tell her I'll see her at Christmas, and I hang up, regardless of whether she is speaking or not.

But really, why should I leave? My brothers are at college bustin' their balls over school work so they can be a big somebody someday and make all kinds of big decisions for other big people, and I tell ya I want no part of it! I've had my share of making decisions, and I'm happy leading a simple life where I can avoid them. Every day I see the results of this little decision I made just a few years ago, right here on the job. And some might be thinkin', "Bill, my friend, you don't have any decisions to make! You open the door, you let people in, you close the door when they're all in, and you go where they tell you to go." And for the most part you would be oh so right. But there are peculiar people in this world that come in and just stand there like they didn't know where they were. Well, I gotta make a decision. Should I close the door and try to get them to tell me where they want to go, knowing they'll just stare at me with a wicked smile that shows you they're a little nutty from the start? or should I kick 'em out right there?

Granted, I shouldn't get so stressed over such a little thing, but it's enough for me. It just seems like when I get muddled up in people's lives, bad things happen.

I guess the one and only reason I feel this way is because of some poor sap that I still have to take up to floor eight during the week and up to floor twelve on the weekends. You figure it out. The guy's a louse. But don't go gettin' your dukes up to condemn the fellow. He's already done that himself.

And I could have turned things around the first time I saw him. I hadn't been here more than a year when they moved in. I had a few words with a resident of the building a few days before so the manager told me to take a week off without pay to cool me down and said if it ever happened again I was out the door. So I wasn't here the week they moved in. But I heard that nobody never saw him or his wife together. One of them was out

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getting groceries while the other was bringing in more furniture. And they tell me that neither of them could have been in the apartment together for more than three minutes. Ok, we got some pretty nosy maids, but they're cute, and they get the job done.

So anyway, I come back, and I don't see this couple that everyone is so nosy about for several days. They all tell me they must be up there throwin' lamps across the room at each other, but I don't want to hear about it because it's the same old Pa beatin' the shit outta Ma story, and I had enough of that when I was a kid. But nobody really knew nothin' anyway, so it doesn't matter.

So I'm standing there and the little light on floor fourteen requests my presence, and I cart the old heap up to floor fourteen, and I open it up. Well, here he comes, his face all twisted up in a grimace as if he's going to bust out crying at any second. And there she is, standing right in the doorway with tears streaming down her pretty little face. And she says to him, "Please, don't turn away from me like this, I love you so much." And so I look at him and he looks like he just can't handle these words. I don't know if it was my imagination or what but I thought I saw her move forward a little bit, and I closed the door.

Please, don't ask me why I did it.

I guess it was just impulse. I know that when I'm in a fight with the old lady all I want to do is to get the hell away. So, I guess I was sidin' with him and tryin' to get him outta there just as soon as I could. I guess that's what I was doin'.

He told me to take him to the lobby, and I didn't see him for several days. In the meantime, she moved out. She only took a few clothes, and she cried the whole way down. I thought she must have hated me, but the truth is she probably didn't give me a second thought. That's what I like to think.

But that was that for them two. He still lives here, and, like I say, he spends the week with one woman and the weekend with another, and I don't know how he pulls it off, unless

he just doesn't care. I seen the woman he's married to now, and she looks like a walking raisin and she bitches all the time. He's either drunk or hung over when I see him, and I have yet to see the poor sap smile.

Oh yeah, I seen her once, too. About six months ago. I was takin' my lunch break, and just as I stepped out onto the sidewalk, here she comes with a little girl that was just the cutest thing I ever did see. I don't know who the father was, could have been him, ain't none of my business.

She looked alright, but I could tell she hadn't had new

clothes in a while. The girl looked about the same. But all in all I'd say they were a lot better off than he was. She didn't recognize me; she just gave a sad little glance up the side of the building where they used to live for such a short time. She probably knew he still lived there. And I could see the loneliness spill out right in front of me. She still loved him and it tore me to pieces. I walked down the street and all I could think was, "I closed the door for him when I should have left it open for her."



Michelle Jones