

No Roof Access

A Play in One Act

Characters

JACK – A temporary office worker on his first day. Pleasant. Lazy. In his late 20's.

RACHEL – The girl in the stairwell who is more than what she appears. Cute. Pretty. Active. In her early 20's.

Setting

Various but similar-looking junctures of the stairwell of a twenty-eight floor downtown office building. Mid-afternoon through dusk.

NOTE – The play should run briskly, saving the last few moments for any gravity.

JACK: **(Enters the bottom of the stairwell, speaking on cell phone.)** I don't know, I thought I'd take the stair. I know, highly conspicuous for a lazy, lazy man like myself. **(Pause.)** No, I belong to no gym. Jack belongs to no gym... Yes, since it is my first day at this new job, temporary as it may be, maybe I will take the stair every time, and become less lazy... And well, you heard about that elevator accident... Right, and that was what, two blocks from here? Twenty-eight floors? Big bank building. Splat. The width of a dime. Deader than most Presidents. **(Pause.)** Yeah, I gotta go, too, if I want to reach Base Camp. Yeah, it's gonna be a climb... Alright, my friend.... Go, Celtics! Bye. **(Ends call. Ponders the stairs. Turns to leave.)**

GIRL: So, you're not really going to take the stairs? **(She has been there the whole time.)**

JACK: **(Shocked.)** AH! **(Collects himself.)** How long have you been here?

GIRL: I've been here the whole time.

JACK: What?

GIRL: Well, I was here when you made your entrance.

JACK: You were in-hiding?

GIRL: Like a fugitive? Or an outlaw?

JACK: What?

GIRL: I wasn't *in-hiding*. I was measuring the diagonal from the northwest corner to the southeast corner. You couldn't see me because the overhang of the next landing in the stairwell was casting a shadow over me. Is still casting a shadow. Over there. That's not good. (*Ponders the shadow and the room. Takes notes.*) What would you say, that shadow obscures how much of the room's volume? Twenty-five percent? Thirty? There have to be code regulations. Maybe some better lighting could fix it.

JACK: What are you? The superintendent? An inspector or something?

GIRL: I don't blame you for turning back. It's foreboding isn't it? The stairwell? No wonder no one ever comes this way. It's dark, cold, and scary. And then there are all the innards of the building just haphazardly protruding out of everywhere, or seems like. Dangerous! And that makes them try to Safety It All Up. "Let's paint everything red!" So everything is red, and so nothing stands out! Then that makes them put up all the signage (all in red). 'Don't do this!' and 'Don't do that!' 'WARNING!' And 'CAUTION!' Not to mention all those horrible, stick-people diagrams, dramatizing all the horrors that will befall you: engulfed in flame, crushed beneath a heavy something, or toxically poisoned 'till you're just a skull and crossbones... Electrocuted...

JACK: You're a busy woman, I can tell... I should be--

GIRL: I work here, at the Public Health Bureau. I'm a fellow.

JACK: That's where I'm starting today. (*Beat.*) Your name's Othello?

GIRL: My name is Rachel. (*Beat.*) I am 'a Fellow'.

JACK: Oh. As in Fellowships and Grants, and 'For she's a jolly good...?'