

"LIFE!"
(It Ain't Like in the Brochures...)

by *PETER RUSSELL*

a new play
about
an
old subject.

in One Act



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MEMBER DRAMATISTS GUILD NEW YORK, NY.
REG. WGA.
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CONTACT; AHOWLINGMOON@GMAIL.COM

TIME;

THE PRESENT

PLACE;

A VERTICAL CITY LIKE LOS ANGELES

SETTING;

AN ELEVATOR. IN A DOWNTOWN HI-RISE. THE FOURTH WALL IS THE 'BACK' OF ELEVATOR. WHERE POSSIBLE, CHARACTERS ENTER THROUGH REAR DOORS THAT SLIDE CLOSED BEHIND THEM, SO CHARACTERS AND AUDIENCE FEEL THE SEXUAL TENSION OF CRAMPED PROXIMITY. ELEVATOR IS ACTUALLY A CHARACTER IN ITSELF. AND QUITE THE MATCHMAKER...

CHARACTERS;

JO-ANNE SAWYER. FRENCH CANADIAN. 30's. A NATURAL, HEALTHY BEAUTY. INTIMIDATINGLY SEXY, PROFESSIONAL AND SHARP BUT WITH NO ATTITUDE AS SHE IS BLESSED WITH A SELF-DEPRECATING SENSE OF HUMOUR. FEMININE AND ROMANTIC, IF SOMEONE WOULD JUST SEE THROUGH THAT FABULOUS EXTERIOR...

COSTUME SUGGESTION;

POWDER BLUE BUSINESS SUIT, GLASSES, (SHORT SKIRT) BRIEFCASE (TAN LEATHER) I-POD, BLACKBERRY AND UBIQUITOUS EARPIECE.

PATRICK WESTON. BRITISH. 38? APPEALING, MASCULINE, WORLD WEARY. STILL HAS OCCASSIONAL, SPONTANEOUS, PASSIONATE OUTBURSTS. BOYISH CHARM AND IRONIC SENSE OF HUMOUR. WHICH MAY BE PROTECTING THE LAST OF THE HOPE-FULL ROMANTICS...

COSTUME SUGGESTION;

BEIGE JACKET, BLUE SHIRT, JEANS, LAPTOP CASE, ANCIENT CELFONE.

SET DESIGN SUGGESTION;

CAN BE A SIMPLE WHITE TAPE OUTLINE OF A SMALL ELEVATOR. OR STRIP OF FLOOR LIGHTS. WHERE POSSIBLE, ONE 'L' SHAPED CORNER FRAME (PREFERABLY METALLIC) WITH A FUNCTIONAL ACCESS HATCH IN PARTIAL CEILING.

THE PLAY

'ELEVATION' BY U2 PLAYS. A LOVELY WOMAN IN A SEXY BUSINESS SUIT GLIDES TOWARD ELEVATOR. MULTI-TASKING HER BRIEFCASE/TALKING INTO EAR-PIECE MIC./TEXTING. SHE STABS THE CALL BUTTON, IMPATIENTLY WAITS FOR DOORS TO OPEN.

WOMAN (INTO EAR-PIECE)

Non non ce n'être pas possible parce que j'arrive huit qui le matin. Je m'excuse, maintenant bien sûr, ma battery est finie ! l'auréole allô? Voila!

MAN'S VOICE OFF

...let's chat later. Comin' through. S'cuse me! Yes call me back. Excuse me-OWW! (SOMETHING METAL CRASHES) Sonova!--Sorry,..

WOMAN HEARS A DISTURBANCE BEHIND HER, STABS THAT CALL BUTTON AGAIN. **BING!** ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN. SHE ENTERS. DOORS CLOSING WHEN A MAN DIVES INSIDE CLUTCHING A BOTTLE OF WATER, AND A LAPTOP CASE, PHONE JAMMED INTO HIS NECK. HE SLAMS AGAINST A WALL, SPILLING WATER DOWN HIS PANTS.

MAN

Hi! Going down?

HORRIFIED, HE LOOKS DOWN, SEES THE WET STAIN ON HIS CROTCH. LOOKS UP AS SHE SHOOT HIM A LOOK THAT WOULD DROP A RHINO.

MAN

(TOO FAST) Oops. I...That wasn't uh, *Freudian*, or anything I was just... checking if you were going up..or.. Actually? I'm tons more original than that. *Tons!* (BEMUSED/RESIGNED) Not that I actually go out any more but if I did,-

WOMAN

For future reference -If you could feel any smaller than you do right now and were a teensy, tiny fly on the wall, you'd see how often a lady alone in an elevator hears; 'Going down?'

MAN

Yep. Well at least I'm not wearing my Timberlands...

WOMAN

Excuse me?

MAN

'Cos then I'd have to take my boot off to get my foot this far in my mouth.

WOMAN

How far?

MAN

All the way, please.

SHE MEANT WHICH FLOOR. GLARES HIM ANOTHER ICY LOOK.

MAN

To the *ground*. (ASIDE) Which can now open and swallow my ass.

SHE STABS THE BUTTON. HE INSPECTS HIS LAPTOP FOR ANY DAMAGE.

WOMAN

Sorry?

MAN

(COVERING) Er, these tin cans. Are often hollow. Glass? Elevators, y'know?

WOMAN

(CLAUSTROPHOBIC) At least then I could see out...

MAN

(VERTIGO) But then I'd see how high we were...

BRAMMM! ELEVATOR JOLTS VIOLENTLY.

WOMAN

What. What? Is that a power cut?

MAN

Either that or...(LISTENS) an Earthquake!?

BRAAAMBL! ELEVATOR IS VIOLENTLY ROCKS TO A STOP. SMOKE SEEPS IN.

MAN

Grab on to me!

LIGHTS SHIFT. FLICKER OFF. HE SMOTHERS HER WITH HIS BODY. BUTTON PANEL LIGHTS UP. SLOWLY THE RUMBLE SUBSIDES. LIGHT ONLY 50%. THEY ARE NOW DISHEVELLED AND EMBARRASSED AT THIS PROXIMITY.

MAN

You okay?

WOMAN

Yes, uh huh. Thanks for, um..You?

MAN

Me? Sure! (EXCITED) You saved my Laptop with your, your...

WOMAN

You're welcome. (RUBS BREASTS)

MAN

Pretty good ride, huh! *High-* (SHE DOESN'T RESPOND) *Five!*

WOMAN

'Ride?'

MAN

Yep. Assuming it's a quake! That only felt like a minor one--

WOMAN

I'm from back east so '*minor*' means?

MAN

O. Well, minimal actual, structural damage but electrical usually gets knocked out. Due to well, the primordial forces of nature! Wow!

WOMAN

Which *means*..?

MAN

Hmm? O, Sorry, well, priority goes to stairs and fire-escapes to evacuate employees and visitors. Or in other words, uh while everyone else exits, nobody knows.. we .. exist.

WOMAN

Terrific. While we're jammed in-between floors. *Again!* This *can't* be real life.

MAN

'Again'?

SHE JUST SHAKES HER HEAD.

MAN

Anyhow, this is real life.

WOMAN

No way! I mean I know it's me, I recognize the shoes but as for real life, this? *this! ain't* like in the brochures!

MAN

(CYNICAL) What brochures do you read?

WOMAN

I want my money back.

MAN

(MIMES, CHEERY) "Life customer service! Sorry, no refunds."

WOMAN

Why are you so calm about this?

MAN

It's exciting! We don't get Earthquakes in Clapham Common!

WOMAN

Clapham what?

MAN

In London. Like Notting Hill just not as famous. But now I live in a state of permanent denial so I'm sure an alarm'll ring somewhere and a couple of fellas'll show up. (BEAT) Eventually.

WOMAN

You Brits sure know how to reassure a girl.

MAN

Well, years of Bachelor nightmare dating situations has taught me a little game helps occupy the brain in a crisis.

WOMAN

While our bodies are trapped in here!

MAN

You're nervous. We don't have to talk at all, if you prefer?

WOMAN

Nervous? Me? Who's nervous? But ok, let's try that.

MAN

Try which?

WOMAN

The silence thing.

MAN

(DISAPPOINTED) O. Sure. Ready?

THEY STAND IN AWKWARD SILENCE. TILL SHE STARTS HYPERVENTILATING...

WOMAN

Nope; that's worse. Bad idea. Ok,ok,ok. What're the rules?

LIGHT SHIFT. HE GRABS AN IMAGINARY MIC. AS IT'S A FANTASY SCENE, HE STEPS OUT OF ELEVATOR RUNS INTO CROWD DOING JERRY SPRINGER.

MAN

No rules, folks! Just questions. Question number one; What would you rather be doing at this precise moment?

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD IN DISBELIEF.

MAN CONT'D

C'mon now! Don't be shy. Just think (THINKS) *Hmmmm?* Instead of stuck downtown in a sardine can, where would

you rather be, miss?

WOMAN

(FLAT) Making wild, sweaty, rampant love.

MAN

(AMAZED) Beg pardon?

WOMAN

Like sex-crazed weasels.

MAN

Ookey dokey folks! That's always popular with the kiddies at home! Perfectly fine answer, we're all just a tad--

WOMAN

A tad what, Jerry?

MAN

Surprised you shared that with us all. Right folks!

WE HEAR TAPED T.V. AUDIENCE LAUGHTER. HE STEPS BACK TO ELEVATOR.

WOMAN

Sorry. It was crude of me. Hope you're not intimidated.

MAN

(HE IS) O no. Not actually. Nuh, nope.

WOMAN

Good. 'Cos (SEXY) we might be trapped in here a while..

SHE BLOWS HIS HAIR, 'COOLING HIM DOWN'. O BOY. ADVANTAGE HER. AGAIN.

WOMAN

Where were we?

MAN

Um, (DAUNTED) 'Sex-crazed weasels'?

MORE CANNED LAUGHTER. SHE TAKES HIS 'MIC'. PULLS HIM BACK INSIDE.

WOMAN

Right, right; Sex. (BEAT) On a beach. (BEAT) Swinging in a hammock. Suspended from palm trees. No other human beings seen or heard. And no electronic gadgets. *No distractions..*

SHE TOSSES BLACKBERRY IN A CORNER.

MAN

(Nervous) No T.V?

WOMAN

Just fffax me Jerry.

MAN

No desk-top?

WOMAN

Just ssslap-top. (SLAPS HER OWN BUTT)

MAN

E-mail?

WOMAN

He-male. Me fe-male. No voice mail. No ansafone.

MAN

Then how about a cel-phone?!

HE HOLDS HIS ANCIENT CEL-PHONE TRIUMPHANTLY ALOFT.

WOMAN

(IRONIC) My saviour.

MAN

Thankyou. I'll call for help. If I can get a signal. (FIDDLES)
Nothing! (PUNCHES IT) Useless! I was the last person on
Earth to buy one and only for emergencies! Might as well be
a garage door opener! Technology? Ha!

WOMAN

That is a garage door opener. Like I said; no communication.
Barely alive. Have to make love to survive. 24 hours a day.
Ha! Ha! Ha!

MAN

(NERVOUS) Ha!Ha!Ha!

HE NERVOUSLY GLUGS WATER.

MAN CONT'D

Anyway I think you've got the hang of the game.

WOMAN

Thanks. Your turn.

MAN

Me?

WOMAN

At this precise moment in time what would you rather be
Doing Mister; *Playing cricket*?!

MAN

(RISES TO CHALLENGE) Ok, ok, let's see here. I was a winter baby -born in a blizzard- so I like the frosty-windows, warm girlfriend by a fireplace, scenario.

WOMAN

Hmm. Not bad. But no swinging hammock action, huh?

MAN

Not in the Alps, no. (CRAZY GERMAN ACCENT) Freulien, a man's most zenzitive partz, don't take right kindly to gettin' *frozen zolid*.

WOMAN

(CRAZY GERMAN ACCENT)

Zorry, Commandant; I vaz just tryink to break ze ice.

HE GRIMACES AT THE THOUGHT.

WOMAN

Huh, see? We're loosening up in here!

SHE EXTENDS HER HAND, HE SHAKES IT VERY SERIOUSLY.

MAN

Hi. I'm an obsessive-compulsive, optimistic-depressive, sexually-selective, multi-talented, exhibitionist-recluse. Nice to meet you.

WOMAN

Actually? I just wanted some water.

DOH! HE RETRACTS HIS HAND. RESIGNEDLY HANDS OVER THE WATER BOTTLE.

WOMAN

Thanks. (SWIGS) Well, now I know what you are. What do they call it?

MAN

Patrick. My name's Patrick. Weston.

WOMAN

Jo-Anne Seurs.

MAN

Jo-Anne. Hi. Sawyers?

WOMAN

Seurs. Mon Pere est Francais.

MAN

Ah. Guess, we could've just exchanged cards eh?

WOMAN

Oui. Sorry if I was less than lady-like there. But this is the third, rotten stupid time I've gotten stuck in an elevator! Tho' this one's not so bad, even with a wet stain down his pants. (TO GOD) I mean; *come on!*

MAN

Really?

WOMAN

Third time in two years. So this time I struck first.

MAN

(HOPEFUL) No, I meant me. even with a wet stain. (TO PANTS) Could be third time lucky eh?,-

WOMAN

Easy cowboy. Only compared to the last two guys. Lesson learned; never get on an elevator with a guy with a belt buckle the size of a dinner plate.

MAN

Cheers.

WOMAN

Look, it's not like me to go around blurting out my most intimate thoughts to just every guy I get stuck in these things with!

MAN

Cheers again.

WOMAN

Just couldn't face the awkward silence, knowing the first thing out of your mouth'd be...horrible. Which it was.

HE NODS. IT WAS.

WOMAN CONT'D

Ok. Imagine the scene: In here. No escape from mundane talk. Eyeballs all over me for 96 minutes. Trucker John on that wall, Miss Ice Princess on this wall. And his belly's nearly touching my chin! (BEAT) Twice! Now throw in some BBQ *breath-*

MAN

Ok, so what *do* fat guys talk about in elevators?

WOMAN

Which fat guy?

MAN

First fat guy.

WOMAN

His feet.

MAN

And the second?

WOMAN

His D.I.V.O.R.C.E. Followed by his ten favourite "all you can eat" truck stops on the Pacific Coast Highway!

HE'S AMUSED. SHE'S RIGHT.

WOMAN

So this time I made the first move. (BEAT) Sorry if I intimidated you. (BEAT) I'm told I tend to intimidate men.

MAN

Who? You? By whom?

WOMAN

Men.

MEN

O. Well, I wasn't intimidated.

WOMAN

No jury could tell that from your face.

MAN

Little shocked maybe. But I am waaay beyond ever being intimidated by sexy, beautiful wom-

WOMAN

(COY) Excellent. 'cos, like I said; who knows how long we'll be trapped in this hot box. Just we two. Alone...

LIGHT SHIFT. A RED SPOT FOLLOWS HER AS "THE STRIPPER" THEME PLAYS. SHE PEELS HER JACKET, BARES SHOULDER HEAVES CLEAVAGE. SWINGS HER IPOD LEAD LIKE A LASSOO. SHE DRAPES A LEG 'ROUND HIM AND AS MUSIC CLIMAXES TOSSES HER JACKET OVER HIS HEAD. HE STANDS FROZEN LIKE A LAMPSHADE, SLOWLY PULLS IT OFF HIS FACE. SHE FANS HERSELF. HOT! ADVANTAGE HER. AGAIN.

MAN

Ookay, now I'm intimidated. So my next question is; is this a set-up?

WOMAN

A what up?

MAN

A set-up. A practical joke. Tom? Cochees? Bobby D? Stan?
Could be any of those crazy bastards trying to get me back.

WOMAN

Your brain's drying up. Drink this.

SHE HANDS HIM THE BOTTLE. HE SWIGS.

MAN

So you're not a Strip-o-gram?

WOMAN

You *wish!*

MAN

Absolutely. But it's not my birthday. And it's not April
Fool's day either.

WOMAN

(SLOW BURN) Wait you think I'm just saying those things?

MAN

You told me you're best defence was an offence.

WOMAN

True. But you really don't believe that women know in a
heart-beat, if we're remotely interested or not?

MAN

(CYNICAL) A love at first sight in 2011?

WOMAN

Well, let's not get carried away.

MAN

No, I actually do believe that. Cos I'm the exact same way.
From the very first glance, I've always known if something
exciting was going to happen. But these days, women can look
fantastic and have the *receipts* to prove it but they still
do nothing for me.

WOMAN

Guys too. They'd rather work-out than talk.

MAN

Sounds like my buddies. And then there's the girls who smoke,
curse, have black toe-nails in Frankenstein Birkenstocks

MAN CONT'D

..with tattoos and tongue-bolts who kick-box and botox
and.... doesn't anyone wear dresses anymore?

WOMAN

Sounds like my girlfriends.

MAN

Yea but somehow they're still sexy!

OFF HER LOOK.

MAN CONT'D

Wait. Did I lose track there somewhere?

WOMAN

I nearly sent out a search party.

MAN

But you know what I'm saying, right?

WOMAN

Yes; you think I'm a Strip-o-gram.

MAN

Right. No! Just surprised you mentioned 'it' first.

SHE LOOKS SOO INNOCENT.

MAN

Yeah, 'It': You know the 'Birds and the Bees'?

BUTTER WOULDN'T MELT IN HER MOUTH.

MAN CONT'D

(SEAN CONNERY) You're mother never told you? Allow me, you see when the Birds and Bees come together they make music, sweet as honey to a young girl's ears, right?

WOMAN

(INNOCENT) Like we would even have such thoughts.

MAN

You're worse than us! Except you don't *usually* admit it first.

WOMAN

Well, some of us are different. But if you don't feel the same way about me...it's perfectly fine. I swore I'd never date another actor anyhow,-

MAN

What?

WOMAN

Nothing personal. I'm all done filing restraining orders.

MAN

Hey, me too. Actresses and Prozac. It's like Gorilla's playing soccer with a hand grenade; An explosion's always imminent. But I'm a teacher.

WOMAN

A teacher? So what's with all the goofy voices?

MAN

My only weapon against Twitter and My Space. Kids' attention spans are so short you could blow yourself up and they wouldn't blink. But the funny thing is, they'd watch it on Youtube! The bastards. Ka-BOOM! Go Viral baby! But I have to try. Or they'll end up like me. A ghost in a world of machines. (BEAT) But what you said--

WOMAN

That I'm not your 'cup of tea'. I'm sorry, I must be dizzy.

MAN

Wait, if you're being serious, you have no idea what I went through to even get in here.

SHE'S CURIOUS.

MAN CONT'D

(BILL CLINTON) That's right lady, ah half damn-nearly herniated mah-self. Just so's I could suffocate in your stoopid elevator with you. Now whud-dayathinkaboutthat?

WOMAN

(CHEEKY) I know. I saw you.

MAN

Did not.

WOMAN

Did too.

MAN

No, no. 'Cos I was watching your bottom--

WOMAN/MAN TOGETHER

--all the way down the corridor.

WOMAN

Charmer! But you forget a woman's intuition. That, plus you sounded as graceful as a Bull Moose.

MAN

(HURT) Moose? *Schmoose!* Anyhow, it's Mooses. Or Meese?

WAGS HER FINGER "No".

MAN CONT'D

Ok. So you heard my little 'disturbance'.

WOMAN

Let me guess; you collision with the wheelchair lady?

HE SHAKES "No".

WOMAN

Little black kid at the water fountain?

HE SHAKES "No" AGAIN.

MAN

But Mister Kneecap had a fight with the evil metal fire-bucket thing. (LITTLE BOY'S VOICE) I got an Owie! Wanna see?

HE RUBS HIS LEG, POUTING LIKE A LITTLE BOY.

WOMAN

Cute.

MAN

Keep saying that and the grown-up parts of me will think you mean it.

SHE TAKES A STEP TOWARD HIM.

WOMAN

Good. 'Cos I have the strangest feeling Patrick, if we make it through this dating-game-show-nightmare meeting, we may,-

HE LEANS CLOSER..

WOMAN CONT'D

--we may just find we like each other.

MAN

Honestly, Jo-Anne?

WOMAN

Honestly.

MAN

I hoped you'd be as lovely inside as you are on the outside.

WOMAN

Wow. That works. No-one's ever said that to me before.

CLOSER NOW. HANDS ALMOST TOUCH...

MAN

(TO GOD) Thanks! You move in mysterious but wonderfu-

LIGHTS BLINK OUT. PITCH DARK.

MAN CONT'D

--ways?

WOMAN V.O.

ScreeeeeMMMMBBB!!

MAN V.O.

Whoa. It's ok. It's just the lights, don't be afraid-

WOMAN V.O.

ScreeaaMMMMAAAHH!!

MAN V.O.

You're ok. I wasn't going to hurt you.

A TENSE BEAT, THEN, -

WOMAN V.O.

(DARK VOICE) I'm not afraid. Of the *dark*: Or *you*. I'm starving, my blood sugar's down and I'm late for a major job interview.

MAN V.O.

O.

WOMAN V.O.

Excuse me. Patrick.

MAN V.O.

Certainly.

WOMAN V.O.

HeeeeeeelllllllPPPPPPP!

MAN V.O.

Now they are an impressive pair of lungs.

WOMAN V.O.

I get lots of practise. Third time in two years, remember?

MAN

Ah.

WOMAN V.O.

Well, that's as loud as I get. (SEXY) Without the right encouragement, anyway...(BEAT) O, and thanks.

MAN V.O.

For what?

WOMAN V.O.

For thinking I was scared when the lights went out.

MAN V.O.

Only 'cos I was just about to--

WOMAN V.O.

I know what you were just about to. It was sweet

LONG PREGNANT BEAT.

WOMAN V.O.

Ever wonder if technology's a blessing or a curse? I mean we are totally lost without it. No signal, no charger. A hopeless pile of plastic.

MAN V.O.

Ah but the kids like the Porn sites! Seriously, it's an anti social monster. But as a Translator I'm sure it's useful too-

WOMAN V.O.

We're all slaves to our own damn machines and...wait a second. How do you know I'm a Translator?

MAN V.O.

Oops. (CREEPY BEAT) We use the same Temp Agency. 16th floor? I asked about you.

WOMAN V.O.

You've..seen me before?

MAN V.O.

Twice.

HER EYES GO WIDE. THE VIOLIN FROM "PSYCHO" CHIMES IN. IS SHE TRAPPED WITH A STALKER??

WOMAN V.O.

Heeeeeellllpp!!!

MAN V.O.

Cut that out, I'm not psycho.

ELEVATOR COMPLIES, PSYCHO THEME ABRUPTLY CUTS.

WOMAN

'Cos Psycho's usually *tell* you they're Psycho's.

MAN V.O.

You're right; Here, this'll calm you down.

A ZIPPER SOUNDS,-

WOMAN V.O.

O my Gawwwd.

HE OPENS HIS LAPTOP CASE, THEIR FACES LIT BY A SOFT SCREEN-GLOW. SHE'S LEANING ON A WALL, CASUALLY FILING HER NAILS.

MAN

(REALIZES) You weren't scared at all were you.

WOMAN

No. But you get extra points for being creative. So, why didn't you say hi?

MAN

Gun shy. I didn't wanna hear you were 'in a relationship', or 'alone time' or 'so busy with your career', blah, blah, blah. (COOL-HAND-LUKE VOICE) So, what we have here is a failure to communicate!

WOMAN

And I speak 5 languages!

MAN

Bingo.

WOMAN

My brothers and I are Army brats; grew up all over Europe.

MAN

Daddy's a Marine? Beautiful. (SHOUTS) Heeeeeelp!

WOMAN

(WHISPERED) Patrick?

MAN

(WHISPERED) Yes?

WOMAN

Actually?

MAN

Yes?

WOMAN

I've seen you too.

HE'S CURIOUS.

WOMAN CONT'D

But I've been scared before.

MAN

(ENCOURAGED) Yes?

WOMAN

Uh huh. When I was nine years old.

MAN

O.

ADVANTAGE HER. AGAIN. HIS LAPTOP GOES OUT. PITCH DARK ONCE MORE.

MAN V.O.

Technology.

WOMAN V.O.

Yep. Shall I tell you anyway?

MAN V.O.

In the days before U-Tube humans told stories 'round campfires.

WOMAN V.O.

No fire.

MAN

I'll think of something. Tell me.

WOMAN

When I was small, we had this old apple tree that reached my bedroom window. And when the wind blew, the tallest branch used to tap-tap-tap on the glass and the moon shone right on my pillow till I'd hide there under the sheets!

HE TAP-TAP-TAPS ON WALL. ON CUE HIS CELPHONE LIGHT CUTS THE DARKNESS. SHINES IT ON WHOEVER SPEAKS.

WOMAN

Wow! You're magic, mister.

MAN

You're lucky. Just watching the news terrifies me! Between all the Erectile Dysfunction commercials of course; Half the world's starving, the other half's slaughtering each other while we drop food parcels out the same planes we're bombing them from!

MAN CONT'D

If they don't shoot us down with rockets we sold them 'cos

they live on top of an ocean of oil and we want to drive trucks that get 12 miles a gallon! It's no wonder kids play video games till their eyes bleed. Now that stuff frightens the shit outta me.

WOMAN

Try wearing a skirt some night to get cash from a hole in the side of bank walls. Or buy milk at the market so the cat won't leave home. It's pretty scary just having legs and boobs too.

MAN

Hmm, I like how you said that.

WOMAN

Legs and boobs?

MAN

That too. But particularly; 'The holes in the sides of bank walls'. Makes me feel like robbing one. (BELLOWS) Soon as We GETOUTTAHERE!!

WOMAN

Yeh! yeh! Just drive a big 'ol Tractor up to one and yank the whole damn wall out!

MAN

Security camera too?

WOMAN

Course!

HE SHINES HIS PHONE LIGHT ON SECURITY CAMERA. ITS RED EYE BLINKS AT THEM. HIS LIGHT GOES OFF BUT THEIR LAUGHTER CONTINUES IN THE DARK

MAN V.O.

Would you have a powder-compact in your briefcase?

WOMAN V.O.

Sure. Right here. With my Stun Gun. Here.

MAN V.O.

Where? (BEAT) Yikes!

WOMAN V.O.

Not there.

MAN V.O.

Sorry! (GOD VOICE) Let there be light! Part two.

LIGHT SHIFT. SUDDENLY ELEVATOR FLOOR IS BATHED IN SOFT LIGHT. HE'S BOUNCING HIS CELL LIGHT OFF HER COMPACT MIRROR TO MAGNIFY THE GLOW.

MAN

Voila Mademoiselle, un campfire.

WOMAN

You a boy Scout?

MAN

Secret agent.

WOMAN

Cool. '007 inch'. HaHa! Sorry!

HE FORGIVES HER. USED TO IT BY NOW.

MAN

Jo-Anne? I want to tell you something. Something that does frighten me.

WOMAN

Let me clear my desk. O, I forgot, I have no desk, no lunch. And If I miss my meeting; NO JOB! NO MORE MORTGAGE! NO MORE ME! (KICKS WALL) Ooh new shoes. I've gots to rest mah dogs.

HE PATS THE CARPET BESIDE HIM. SHE SLIDES OVER INTO THE LIGHT. SHE RUBS HER ANKLES.

MAN

(MICHAEL CAINE) 'A fool and her ankles are soon parted'.

WOMAN

That's what scares you?

MAN

No. 'though seeing a helpless and shapely foot, -size six?

SHE NODS LIKE "Yea, weirdo." HE NODS PROFESSIONALLY.

MAN CONT'D

-in obvious need of Patrick's patented toe-rub, is very disturbing.

HE PROCEEDS TO RUB HER FEET. SHE'S ABOUT TO DECLINE BUT IN 2 SECONDS SHE'S IN ECSTASY THO' TRIES HER BEST TO APPEAR UNIMPRESSED.

MAN

See, this crazy stuff happens to me all the time.

WOMAN (secret exstasy)

Um lis'ninn.

MAN

Everyone else I know is having mid-life crisis panic attacks
-and I can see why; What if nobody finds out who we are?
I mean inside. We barely know each other, but-

WOMAN

S'ok..

MAN

...I might sound conceited.

WOMAN

Go on. Blurt it out. I would.

MAN

Yea, you would. Well, every single day at school, I see
that when you're young it's all about us, remember?

WOMAN

O yea, I was a monster. Totally selfish.

MAN

Ice Princess, right? I was Mr. Volcano. Everything
orbiting planet Patrick; girls, sports, parties, travel
abroad to work, -Foreign girls hey! Anything felt
possible. And I swear I had more money in my pockets
than I do now. What I'm saying is, I'm fairly sure I
used to have a life.

SHE NODS SADLY, FAMILIAR WITH THE CONCEPT.

MAN CONT'D

And as long as you're selfish, everything came easy right?
Whereas now, even meeting someone is genuinely ridiculous!

WOMAN

It's all my crew talk about; where are all the men?

MAN

What?! Everywhere! Every lonely golf course, or gym or
computer store! If you got your faces out of Facebook
now and then! We only met 'cos we got stuck in a bloody
elevator! With no signal or battery. Or you'd probably
be on it right now!

WOMAN

You're right. Social networking it's...anti social!

MAN

Absolutely.

WOMAN

Which sucks! Still nobody talks to me any more.

MAN

What?

WOMAN

Not like a person. But go on, it's all about you.

MAN

That's what my last date said: "Enough about me, what do you think about me?" Anyway, the irony is that now I've finally learned the world doesn't revolve around me, the tiniest thing is so bloody difficult!?! (BEAT/SOFT) And what really frightens me?

WOMAN

(WHISPER) Yes?

MAN

I've started to believe like all the others that I may never find...her.

WOMAN

(BEAT) I think I know what to say. I think it's the perfect thing. You think Diamonds are beautiful, right. Pure? (HE DOES) Well, d'you know how they make diamonds?

HE DOESN'T.

WOMAN CONT'D

From lumps of coal. Compressed ugly. Like us. In here.

MAN

I like it.

WOMAN

Seems we can't have one without the other. (GOSPEL) Learned that from Superman. I was a Tomboy. Stole my brothers comics. And I always wanted this Diamond ring he made for Lois with his bare hands. From coal.

MAN

I remember that.

WOMAN

The cheapskate!

MAN

No, no. Just a sensible shopper; Truth, Justice and Argos!

WOMAN

Funny. But what you said was sad.

MAN

O sure; City Coroner reports 'Two bodies found drowned in elevator full of self-pity. Read all about it.'

WOMAN

In fact, I'm a little angry at myself.

MAN

Yeah? Well, sit closer. Conserve oxygen.

WOMAN

How, by breathing each other's?

SHE INCHES CLOSER. ALMOST TOUCHING NOW.

MAN

Till I figure out a brilliant escape plan, Lois. Now tell me about this misplaced anger.

WOMAN

Not anger exactly. I think I may envy you. Your honesty.

HE LOOKS AT HER, CONSIDERS THAT.

WOMAN CONT'D

It feels like I know you already and I can't remember talking like this, y'know? We're so busy racing and chasing. I mean even at a red light I check Facebook!

MAN

See!

WOMAN

God, I'm desperate! Look, I have those worries too; all my friends have kids now and what kind of world are we giving them? But clever me goes to so many classes and seminars, I never have too long to think about it!

MAN

Where *do* girls like you hide, anyhow?

WOMAN

O we overload our social calendar and fool ourselves something'll come from it. I'm usually the blonde standing next to the ex-footballer at a charity fund-raiser or a local politician, if we can get one!

MAN

And?

WOMAN

O some wonderful people get wonderfully drunk and grab my arse but they don't *talk* to me. And I'm glad, 'cos I really don't know how I'd answer anymore. I think I've forgotten who I am.

MAN

In that case (BELA LUGOSI) you are de Princess of De Night; 'Viagra!'

WOMAN

Cool. Better than being a little yellow moth, fluttering home alone before midnight. Or not alone..which can be worse.

SHE'S SAD. HE STROKES HER HAIR.

WOMAN CONT'D

Hey. We can't complain. Thank God we're healthy, sane -ish, right? And I still clean up nice. (BRUSHES CLOTHES)

MAN

I know. I've seen you.

WOMAN

(THUMPS HIM) Then why didn't you talk to me?

MAN

Ow! A live fantasy's better than a dead reality. Maybe you had no sense of humour? Or didn't like dogs!

WOMAN

I got two of 'em!

MAN

Great. So it's just your humour we need to work on! Honestly, I'm gun-shy from women who use their looks as a weapon.

WOMAN

The 'attitude' thing. Makes me glad I was an ugly duckling.

MAN

Well, *obviously*.

WOMAN

Trust me; ears, teeth, tits and zits all over the place. Crying myself to sleep. But it taught me to be nice first, desirable second.

MAN

Even down to your eyelashes that curl incredibly up at the corners like they're smiling all the time.

WOMAN

You see pretty well in the dark, mister.

MAN

He gave me X-ray vision.

WOMAN

Bottom line; we're only human. And it's not humanly possible to fix the world. (BEAT) But I'm glad I met someone who still tries. And despite everything out there I still believe if the right two people meet...

HE'S ALL EARS.

WOMAN

It's just possible they cou--

ANOTHER JOLT RUMBLES ELEVATOR. LIGHTS BLINK ON FULL POWER, SPOILING THEIR MOMENT. THEY SHIELD THEIR EYES. HE GETS TO HIS FEET.

MAN

Power's back on. Must've got everyone else out. Now the rescue teams can get to us.

SHE NODS. HE BANGS THE WALL TO LET ANYONE HERE.

MAN CONT'D

(SNIFFS) Phew! We need air! (THINKS) Stand up a second.

HE PULLS HER UP. POSITIONS HER, CRADLES HIS HANDS. SHE FOLLOWS HIS EYES UP TO THE CEILING HATCH.

WOMAN

This isn't 'Tantric', is it?

HE GRINS, 'Maybe'. SHE CRADLES HER OWN HANDS TOGETHER.

WOMAN

You want to escape now?

MAN

You want to be breathing when they find us?

WOMAN

You go.

SHE CRADLES HER HANDS, HE STEPS UP TO LIFT THE CEILING HATCH. LIGHT AND DUST SPILLS UP. HIS CRUTCH IS INCHES FROM HER FACE.

MAN

Take a big gulp. Really clear your head,-

SHE ROLLS HER EYES, NEARLY DROPPING HIM.

WOMAN

My hero; 'Testeclese'.

HE DROPS BACK INSIDE LIKE A HERO.

MAN

Um, just now? While I was up there saving our lives.

HE GLUGS WATER. SHE'S AMUSED.

MAN CONT'D

It occurred to me I may only have said that stuff due to 'A', oxygen deprivation or 'B', your appearance.

WOMAN

My 'Appearance'. Sounds like your judging a car show. Cassette/radio, sun-roof, ski-rack...

MAN

Don't forget your headlights.

WOMAN

Hey!

MAN

Well, your 'Brights' are on.

WOMAN

Hey!!

MAN

Sorry if I intimidated you.

ADVANTAGE HIM. HE'S FINALLY GOT HER BACK.

MAN

Ok, was it the 'beauty' thing that made me open up?

WOMAN

Boy, you go full out for the flattery, fella.

MAN

Fanks.

WOMAN

You're saying if you weren't so deep, you'd be shallow?

Hey. A lot of guys won't even admit that.

HE'S NOT SURE THAT'S A COMPLIMENT.

MAN

Shh. Movement on the floor above.

NOISES OFF: Klang! Klong! Klung!

MAN CONT'D

(IRONIC) But I could be wrong.

WOMAN

About time. My claustrophobia's about to blow,-

MAN

O boy. You're claustro--

WOMAN

--Phobic. It's ok to say it.

MAN

Yea? My Dad has that. Should've seen him at Disneyland, he blew through those tourists, like...Madonna through a basketball team,-

WOMAN

Yea, you just have to get o.u.t. But you talked so much, I didn't notice.

MAN

Want me to shove your head through the hatch?

SHE GRINS, DECLINING.

MAN

Good 'cos I get vertigo.

WOMAN

Vertigo. This is the tallest building in L.A.

MAN

Hoo boy. Now I just like earthquakes.

WOMAN

Hoo boy, shut up. Patrick, before you start to dribble, I need to know something.

MAN

Capricorn.

WOMAN

Shut up. What do you think of marriage? Before sex.

MAN

Uh..well wait, you mean sex before marriage?

WOMAN

No. Marriage first.

MAN

Well, old-fashioned. Beautiful maybe. Possibly extinct?

WOMAN

So you don't have a problem with it?

MAN

Problem? I don't even have an example of it.

WOMAN

Would you sleep with a woman who's married.

MAN

Knowingly?

WOMAN

Yes.

MAN

Wow. And I could've taken the stairs. (BEAT) You mean the whole... everything, ex-husband's binoculars glinting in the bushes? No, I wouldn't recommend it. Final answer.

WOMAN

Good.

MAN

What is?

WOMAN

That you've got morals.

MORE NOISES OFF Blung! Bonnng! SHE APPROACHES HIM.

MAN

I have? *Damn.* (BEAT) Why?

WOMAN

Because I'm going to break my marriage vows. With you.

MAN

Wha..?

WOMAN

Right here. With you. Kiss me.

SHE FORCES HIM BACK TILL HIS BACK IS UP AGAINST THE WALL.

MAN

Wait! You're married? Aw *no*,..

WOMAN

Kiss me.

MAN

You're really marri--

SHE KISSES HIM.

WOMAN

Only on paper.

MAN

That's an important piece of paper!

WOMAN

Two signatures (KISS) that's all.

MAN

That's all it takes! Where is this guy?

WOMAN

How should I know. Jacksonville? (KISS)

MAN

Whoa, Jo-Anne. Stop!

HE FORCES HER SHOULDERS BACK, SHE SIGHS. SHIFTS DOWN 2 GEARS.

WOMAN

(PATIENT) I married a man. An old friend of the family, who got this great job in Florida. Only he's Canadian and needed a work permit. He's also fifty nine years old and we've never been in the same room together since.

MAN

(DUBIOUS) That's it? That's..all?

WOMAN

He's like my uncle. Cute too. If you like older guys.

MAN

You have no idea how every chromosome in my body wants to believe you, right now but,-

WOMAN

Prove it.

HE'S TORN AS SHE TURNS HER BACK, HE STOPS HER, TURNS HER AROUND.

MAN

But didn't that spoil getting married for real someday?
Brides-maids, roses, wedding dress,-

WOMAN

Absolutely. But his girlfriend told me it was marriage legally
not a *wedding*, 'cos no love was involved. So now they'll have
a better life together once they marry. Um soon as we divorce..

HE HAS TO NOD AT THAT TOO.

WOMAN CONT'D

Which is soon. But next time there'll be love involved.

MAN

Wow. Never a dull moment, huh? Can we keep this pace up?

WOMAN

Be fun trying...(KISS)

THEY SMILE. KISS. FINALLY REALISING THEIR DELIGHT AT FINDING EACH
OTHER. **BING!** LIGHT SHIFT. BUTTONS #11 #10 #9 THEY'RE GOING DOWN!

MAN

We made it. We'll be out of here soon.

WOMAN

Yea but we'll be trapped again. But out there instead; Look.

SHE POINTS TO THEIR PILE OF MACHINES. BLACKBERRY/CEL-FONE/LAPTOP/
BRIEFCASE/EARPIECE/LEADS. THE TRAPPINGS OF MODERN LIFE. #5 #4 #3

MAN

Yea. Life in the 21 century. Maybe it's not like in the
brochures but sometimes?...

THEY EMBRACE CLOSER.

MAN CONT'D

..it's better.

THAT'S WHEN ELEVATOR JOLTS TO A STOP. THEY PART LIPS. EMERGENCY RED
STOP LIGHT FLASHES. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER 'Who stopped Elevator?'
NEITHER OF THEM! THEY SLOWLY LOOK UP AT SECURITY CAM. **BING!**
ELEVATOR'S GOING UP AGAIN! #4 #5 #6. THEY KISS AGAIN AS LIGHT DIMS.
LEAVING ELEVATOR'S RED EYE WATCHING OVER THEM, BLINKING IN THE DARK..
Last chorus of U2's 'ELEVATION' Fades up. **END.**

"LIFE!" (*It Ain't Like in the Brochures...*)

by Peter Russell

"LIFE!" (It Ain't like in the Brochures)

by

Peter Russell

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flat One, #2 Tasker Road. London, NW3 2YR

Email inquiries; ahowlingmoon@gmail.com

Contact P.R.; 07518 626891

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