

Bottom-up.

By

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BOTTOM-UP

There is an empty space. There is a lift in the middle of the space. The audience don't see this lift. It is made of metal. There is a mirror on the wall. The lift can travel up to Level 48. Level 49 and 50 are for very important people. It is a hot day.

Harry a young man enters stage right. He is on his mobile phone. He is beautifully dressed in a smart sharp suit and tie matched with expensive classy shoes, he has immaculate hair and from his physicality we can tell he looks after him self.

HARRY:

At 10.30... Its 10:15. That's not to late is it?... Well my father said not to get here to early. He said I mustn't look to desperate. Apparently this guy absolutely hates desperation... They went to boarding school together...

He presses the button to call the lift
Mate seriously, you wouldn't believe the size of this building, I'm being interviewed on the forty fifth floor... No literally, the forty fifth floor... I know...I know...totally, it's like Canary Wharf or something. It's actually making me bit nervous.

The lift arrives. Harry gets in. He looks in the mirror and checks his hair. He looks at the buttons.

Right, floor forty five here I come...Yeah I'm in the lift...I should get off the phone...

From off we here the call of 'Hold the lift!'
Harvey Runs to make the lift. He just manages to stop the doors as they close. Harvey is white, skinny and smaller than Henry. He is wearing a white shirt with a green tie, faded black trousers and black trainers.

HARVEY:

Yes! I dint think I'd make it.

The lift doors close. Henry presses the forty fifth button.

HENRY:

OK, yeah, ill call you after, let you know...

HARVEY:

What floor you going to mate?

The lift sets off.

HENRY:

...It's just a guy. Ill let you...

HARVEY:

Excuse me.

HENRY:

I'll call you later...

HARVEY:

What floor you going to?

HENRY:

...Yeah Bye.

Henry finishes the conversation and puts the phone away

HARVEY:

What floor you going to mate?

HENRY:

The forty fifth.

HARVEY:

That's got a gents there yeah?

HENRY:

I guess so.

HARVEY:

Thank fuck man, I need to piss bad mate!

The lift continues going up. Pause.

HARVEY:

Big building innit?

Henry doesn't respond

HARVEY:

Geezer. Big building innit?

HENRY:

Yeah it is.

HARVEY:

It's like the empire state building or some shit.

HENRY:

It's a very similar design to Canary Wharf.

HARVEY:

Reminds me of one of those big ass New york buildings, you know what I mean? Off like batman or something.

HENRY:

That's actually Gotham.

HARVEY:

What is?

HENRY:

The buildings off Batman. It's set in Gotham city not New york.

HARVEY:

It's filmed in New York though innit?

HARVEY:

I'm not sure...

There is a large grinding noise and the lift jolts to a stop.

HARVEY:

What the fuck?

HENRY:

You have got be joking.

Henry goes to the button and presses the forty fifth button several times.

HARVEY:

That sounded bad man.

HENRY:

Come on.

HARVEY:

We can't be stuck, I need to piss.

Henry continues to press the button.

HENRY:

It isn't stuck.

HARVEY:

Didn't sound right though did it, sounded like something broke.

HENRY:

It can't be stuck.

HARVEY:

How high up are we?

Henry continues pressing the button.

That ain't working bruv, you need to press the red one to talk to someone.

Henry goes to the red button and presses it. It starts to beep repetitively.

HARVEY:

This happens a lot where I live. The lift is a right piece of shit. Doesn't work more than it does work you get me? Don't know why they cant just fix the thing right...

A Male voice comes over the intercom.

VOICE:

Hello.

HENRY:

Yes hello, I think the lift has stuck.

VOICE:

We know sir, we have radioed through to our engineers and they should be along shortly.

HENRY:

The thing is I have a job interview in about five minutes...

HARVEY:

And I need to piss!

HENRY:

And you see it's really important I don't miss...

VOICE:

Like I said sir, they'll be with you as soon as they can. If you just stay calm and relax we will have you out in no time.

HENRY:

Well look, if it's not to much bother, would you mind getting a message to someone for me.

VOICE:

No problem sir.

HENRY:

Could you tell Phillip Brown at The Fort and Bank news corporation on floor forty five, that Henry Wallace, James' son, is really, really sorry and sends his sincere apologies for being late but I'm stuck in the lift.

VOICE:

Will do sir.

HARVEY:

And that I really need a piss.

VOICE:

Yes sir.

The voice goes.

HENRY:

No, Christ, no don't tell him that, that wasn't me.

He presses the button.

Hello, that wasn't me, hello are you still there?

It starts ringing.

HENRY:

Why did you say that?

HARVEY:

Cos I do.

HENRY:

But that had nothing to do with you.

HARVEY:

I just want the guy who runs the place to know I'm busting. I can't be waiting to long man, I've got a weak bladder.

HENRY:

But he doesn't run the building. He run's a paper.

HARVEY:

Yeah I know, that's who I'm taking about.

HENRY:

What do you mean?

HARVEY:

The paper fella, Philip. He's the guy I want to know.

The intercom answers it is a female voice.

VOICE 2:

Hello?

HENRY:

Where has the guy gone?

VOICE 2:

What guy?

HENRY:

The man, the man I was just talking to a second ago.

VOICE 2:

He's gone to fix a lift.

HENRY:

I thought he was getting the engineers?

VOICE 2:

There on there break love.

HENRY:

But were stuck.

VOICE 2:

That's why he's gone to fix the lift.

HENRY:

But he's not an engineer.

VOICE 2:

No, but he's always been very good with his hands.

HENRY:

Could you be as quick as possible please, I'm going to be late for an interview.

VOICE 2:

Don't worry he'll be as quick as he can.

HENRY:

I left him a message to...

The voice has gone.

HENRY:

Hello? Hello? Damn it!

HARVEY:

That's funny.

HENRY:

What? My message.

HARVEY:

No, Damn it. Is that how you swear? Damn it.

HENRY:

What's that got to do with you?

HARVEY:

Just saying it's funny.

HENRY:

Look just because I respect the English language doesn't qualify me as being amusing.

HARVEY:

I respect English innit? It's just that I like to express myself to the fullest. Damn it sounds like you stubbed your little toe or something. If your stuck in a lift and you can't get to your job interview, you should be more like, Mother fucking lift! or like, this lift is totally fucking my shit up!

HENRY:

Could you not swear please.

HARVEY:

I'm just saying...

HENRY:

Well please don't.

Pause. There is a moment of silence as they both take in the situation they are in.

HARVEY:

How come your late?

HENRY:

I'm not late.

HARVEY:

You said to the lady you were late.

HENRY:

No, I'm going to be late if this lift is stuck.

HARVEY:

It is stuck.

HENRY:

That's why I'm going to be late.

pause

HARVEY:

You should have set off earlier man.

HENRY:

Pardon?

HARVEY:

You should have set off earlier. Your interview is in five minutes yeah?

HENRY:

Yes.

HARVEY:

Then you should have set off earlier. Plan for every eventuality, that's what my granddad taught me, always be prepared.

HENRY:

I'm incredibly prepared. I'm just stuck in a lift, you can't prepare for that.

HARVEY:

Look at me though. I'm an hour early for my interview. Been sitting outside ten minutes having a coffee and a smoke, planning all my answers and that. Only reason I came in is for a piss and I'm still *Harvey looks at his watch* fifty minutes early. Even though I'm stuck, I'll probably still be on time.

HENRY:

Being early isn't always a good thing, it can show you as being desperate.

HARVEY:

I'd rather be desperate than late.

HENRY:

At the moment I'm not late. They just need to get a move on.

Harvey wonders over to the buttons

HARVEY:

What floor we on?

HENRY:

Twenty seven.

HARVEY:

Twenty seven. Shit, that's high innit? Can you imagine if this fell?

HENRY:

I'd rather not, I'm not good with heights.

HARVEY:

But imagine it though, Twenty seven floors bruv, twenty seven! We'd be like squashed to shit. We'd be stuck to the fucking ceiling blood, legs all messed up and that, all broken and wrapped round our ears, our faces sticking out of our bum holes...

HENRY:

I don't want to think about that thank you and I did ask you to please stop swearing.

HARVEY:

Oh yeah, sorry bruv, they just slip' out. *pause* This reminds me of this film yeah, like one of the Superman films, the old school ones with that dead geezer in em. The one who could only use his head. In real life I mean, not in the film. Wouldn't be much of a Superman just moving his head. It'd be called Superhead then. Imagine that man, like a head with a cape, saving the planet. Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No it's a flying head...(Harvey laughs to himself)... That would be jokes... Anyway, I watched it when I was really young. My uncle played it me on one of those old style video things... There was this lift yeah, just like this one, and it got stuck up this metal tower thing and it made this noise like the one we heard and it just went whoosh and fell, like all the metal ropes holding it snapped, you know, and it dropped out of the sky, and Superman he just appeared out of nowhere, swish, red cape flapping about in the wind and all that, music blasting out den den den den den den, and he flew underneath it fast as lightning and caught the lift and stopped all the people dying, he rescued everyone! And they were all like 'shit man who is that guy in the cape and undies man, we gotta thank that guy, we need to buy him a burger and shit'. Sorry I swore. But just saying that would be sick man, that would be bare good. Superman rescuing me from wetting myself twenty seven floors up. *Pause* It's hard innit, not swearing? I've been swearing since I was little man, just like my mum.

(MORE)

HARVEY: (cont'd)

She can swear like no one bruv, like when I was young she used to be like 'Harvey get fucking inside now and get your dinner you little bastard and wipe that fucking grin off your fucking face as well you little fucking shit.' That wasn't me swearing, that was my mum, so you can't blame me...

HENRY:

Can you just be quite please! I don't think this is really the best time to be talking about falling lifts. I just want to get through this and then get to my interview. I think its best if we just both stay quite. We can then hear if there working on the lift. OK?

HARVEY:

Yeah. Whatever. I'm cool with that. I'll be quite as a mouse bruv.

The two of them stand in silence. Pause. Harvey starts to make some drum beats with his mouth. Henry looks over at him with irritation. He looks at his watch.

HARVEY:

My bladder is in bits man!

There is the sound of another loud metal clunk, the lift shakes. Henry grabs the side of the lift.

HENRY:

Oh my God!

HARVEY:

The metal things are breaking!

HENRY:

Don't be ridiculous!

HARVEY:

What was it then, the wheel thing at the top?

HENRY:

It was nothing!

HARVEY:

The lift shock man!

HENRY:

I want to get out.

HARVEY:

This lift is seriously fucked.

HENRY:

I want to get out now.

HARVEY:

You OK mate?

HENRY:

Why the hell is it taking them so long?

HARVEY:

Your sweating.

HENRY:

I'm fine! It's just incredibly hot in here.

HARVEY:

You've gone white bruv.

HENRY:

I just don't like to be in confined spaces to long, we should be out by now for god sake... and the heat is, the heat is...

Henry goes dizzy.

HARVEY:

You feeling alright?

Harvey touches his shoulder.

Henry flinches.

HENRY:

Don't touch me! Sorry. I'm sorry it's just, this is a very expensive suit, it cost a small fortune so please...

HARVEY:

I'm just asking if you're OK.

HENRY:

I know, I'm sorry. I need to look my best for my interview. It's really important. Please leave me alone, I just need to sit a while.

Henry sits in the corner of the lift. He puts his hands on his head, closes his eyes and start's to do slow breathes in and out. Harvey looks down at him and shakes his head.

HARVEY:

Rude.

Harvey goes to the other corner and stands looking in the mirror and checking his hair. He feels his stomach where his bladder is with a wince of pain. He is starting to do the wee wiggle, starting to strain slightly to keep the wee and his bladder under control. He looks up to the ceiling. He sighs heavily.

HARVEY:

(To himself) Just wanted to use the toilet.

He rests against the side of the lift. He looks down at Henry then back up to ceiling. He shakes his head again. He reaches in his pocket and pulls out a packet of Cigarettes. He takes one out puts it in his mouth then pulls a lighter out and light's it. He lets out a big puff of smoke with a sigh.

HENRY:

What an earth do you think your doing?

HARVEY:

Having a cig.

HENRY:

You aren't allowed.

HARVEY:

Says who?

HENRY:

The Law. This is a public space.

HARVEY:

I need to distract myself. This is a very stressful situation so I need a couple of blasts a ciggie innit.

HENRY:

Put it out.

HARVEY:

No.

Henry stands up.

HENRY:

Put it out now. You are breaking the law.

HARVEY:

It's just a quick ciggie.

HENRY:

Smoke is getting on my suit. It stinks. I'll smell in my interview.

HARVEY:

But I'm stressed.

Henry grabs the cig out of Henry's mouth and chucks it on the floor he then grinds the cig out with his foot.

HARVEY:

What the fuck you do that for?

HENRY:

I told you to put it out. Are you some kind of flaming idiot. If there was a fire in here we'd be dead.

HARVEY:

It's made of metal, how the fuck is a fire gonna start?

HENRY:

Stop swearing!

HARVEY:

You know you have a shitty attitude man, yeah that's what I said, shitty! I'm just trying to get through this with out wetting my self and your dishing out a load of grief. Why don't you just sit down and do your Thai chi gay breathing and ill stay over here.

HENRY:

I'm not gay!

HARVEY:

I dint say you were gay, I said your breathing was gay.

HENRY:

I do not breath gay!

HARVEY:

Not now, what you were doing on the floor...look fuck this yeah, I ain't dising you, just go chill out over there and lets not speak.

HENRY:

That's what I said, lets not speak.

HARVEY:

Fine then, lets both shut up.

HENRY:

Don't tell me to shut up!

HARVEY:

Jesus bruv your more sensitive than my girl. Right, look, I'm gonna stand over here yeah. You sit over there and we don't talk. That cool?

HENRY:

Of course it's cool.

HARVEY:

Cool.

Harvey goes and stands in the corner, Henry looks at him a second then turns and goes an stands in the other corner. He wafts at the air to make sure the cig smoke has gone. He then sits and puts his head in his hands. Silence. Harvey is still wiggling from the need to pee. He bends over in pain. He straightens himself up and starts walking from one end of the lift to the other.

HENRY:

What are you doing now?

HARVEY:

I'm walking.

HENRY:

Why?

HARVEY:

I've got to walk it off.

HENRY:

What off?

HARVEY:

The piss.

HENRY:

You said you would stay over there.

HARVEY:

I can't bruv, if I don't walk I'm gonna have to have a slash in here.

HENRY:

Don't you dare!

HARVEY:

That's why I'm walking innit, so just let me get on with it.

Harvey continues walking.

HARVEY:

What's your interview for?

HENRY:

I thought we weren't talking.

HARVEY:

I need to be distracted. Come on man, I'm sorry about the cig, I was selfish.

HENRY:

It's for an internship.

HARVEY:

Me too.

HARVEY:

What do you mean?

HARVEY:

My interview its for the same thing. With the paper guy right?

HENRY:

Your joking?

Harvey stops walking and stands back where he was.

HARVEY:

Phew that's better. Nah man it's like some scheme to help young people get a leg up. Help the skint people thing. I got it through the job centre.

HENRY:

The job centre?

HARVEY:

Yeah bruv. I did a media course last year. I told the job centre and they got me an interview last week.

HENRY:

You got an interview with Philip Brown through the job centre?

HARVEY:

Yeah.

HENRY:

But that's impossible these interviews are like gold dust.

HARVEY:

I went to my first one last Thursday.

HENRY:

You've already had one?

HARVEY:

Yeah he said I had a lot of character and to come back today. He's a top geezer is Philip.

Henry stands up

HENRY:

Are you sure this is for an internship?

HARVEY:

Yeah man.

HENRY:

But you do realize this isn't paid? You won't get any money.

HARVEY:

I'll get a part time job as well.

HENRY:

It doesn't work like that. This is a full time job on it's own. You need to give it a hundred and ten percent.

HARVEY:

Trust me mate, I know how to work two jobs.

HENRY:

I don't think you understand, you have to be prepared to spend every waking minute working for the company, it's fucking hard work.

HARVEY:

Careful mate I think a swear word word may have slipped out.

HENRY:

I just can't believe you got an interview from the job centre.

HARVEY:

Why?

HENRY:

Because this is a very difficult role that takes an incredible amount of energy and intelligence?

HARVEY:

You saying I'm thick?

HENRY:

No, I don't mean your thick, just maybe not at the academic level this role requires.

HARVEY:

What but you are yeah?

HENRY:

I went to a very good university.

HARVEY:

And that's what life's about good university's?

HENRY:

It is if you want to work at the top companies.

HARVEY

So let me get this straight yeah. If you don't wear a nice suit, go to university and have a posh voice your fucked?

HENRY:

It's actually called an RP accent.

HARVEY:

Does that stand for right prick?

HENRY:

I beg your pardon?

HARVEY:

You posh boys man, you think your it innit. If you don't live in Chelsea or Sloane square or something then your shit.

HENRY:

I'm actually from Richmond.

HARVEY:

That's posh though yeah?

HENRY:

If your asking if my family have any wealth, then yes they do and they worked bloody hard for it.

HARVEY:

But my family haven't worked hard?

HENRY:

I didn't say that.

HARVEY:

No but you thought it. I saw the way you looked at me when I got in the lift, like a bad fart had just been dropped.

HENRY:

(Getting angry) Look if your having some poor working class rant, then you can drop it right now. I might sound posh to you but my family's achievement's are through enterprise, bloody hard work and trying there damndest to make something of themselves. If it wasn't for the likes of my parents, they'd be no tax paid in this country, which means you couldn't go to hospital, or use our road's or enjoy the comforts of benefits from places like the job centre. You should be grateful there are so called posh people living in this country. Your lucky to have them.

HARVEY:

Oh right I get you, I'm lucky cos your rich. Yeah that makes sense. You sound like one of those fucking politician's man.

HENRY:

This is the last time I will ask you, stop it with the swearing.

HARVEY:

You swore.

HENRY:

That was by accident!

HARVEY:

How did you get this interview?

HENRY:

What?

HARVEY:

How did you get your interview?

HENRY:

I have contacts.

HARVEY:

Your dad?

HENRY:

No.

HARVEY:

That's what you said to the woman. You said James' son.

HENRY:

So what if he did? Philip has been a good friend of his for a long time.

HARVEY:

And that's better than the job centre yeah? Getting a favour from your dad's mate! That's better than working your arse off for a year at college to get a media qualification.

HENRY:

I have qualifications.

HARVEY:

Oh yeah i forgot the posh university. Bruv you know what, you ain't nothing but a fucking daddy's boy.

HENRY:

Right that's it!

Henry takes off his jacket and puts it on the floor.

HARVEY:

What you gonna do hit me?

HENRY:

If I have to.

HARVEY:

Why?

HENRY:

For insulting my father.

HARVEY:

I ain't insulting your father, I'm insulting you.

HENRY:

Either way, come on. You think I'm such a daddy's boy, lets go.

HARVEY:

Let's go? You want have a fight in a lift?

HENRY:

Yes.

HARVEY:

You couldn't take me you pussy.

HENRY:

I was UK under 16's judo semi finalist, I think I can handle you.

HARVEY:

Did your daddy pay for that to?

HENRY:

I'm warning you, I still no all the holds!

HARVEY:

You know what, fuck it.

Harvey turns go to the corner of the lift and start pulling down the fly on his jeans.

HENRY:

What are you doing?

HARVEY:

I'm gonna have a piss.

HENRY:

You can't.

HARVEY:

Why not. You don't respect me so i ain't respecting you.

HENRY:

Don't you dare!

HARVEY:

Fuck you man.

HENRY:

I'm warning you!

HENRY:

Here is comes.

HENRY:

Stop it!

HARVEY.

Go swivel Prince William.

HENRY:

I SAID STOP!

Henry completely loses it and launches at Harvey. He grasps him by the neck in a Judo hold and precedes to chock him out.

HENRY:

You fucking disgusting pig!

Harvey grabs at Henry's arms but Henry just tightens his grip. Harvey wets himself.

I might be posh but at least I don't behave like an animal! How do you like this, eh? Is it fucking hurting Bruv? Finding it hard to breath bredrin? Why don't you people learn to speak properly!

Henry doesn't notice but Harvey has passed out. Henry continues to strangle.

Had enough? Come on, I thought I was a posh boy, I thought I was a fucking pussy, I thought you could take me. Not so chatty now are we? ARE WE!

Harvey gives him one final squeeze. He stops realizing he may have gone to far. He lets go, Harveys limp body falls to the side. He is dead.

HENRY:

Oh no.

Henry kneels and turns Harvey over. He starts slapping Harveys cheeks.

HENRY:

Mate. Hey mate. I'm sorry. Wake up. I, I got a bit carried away mate.

Henry feels Harveys pulse. He realises Harvey is dead. Henry recoils in horror.

HENRY:

What have I done?

Henry goes to the red button and presses it. The ringing starts. The female voice answers.

VOICE 2:

Hello.

Henry says nothing.

VOICE 2:
Hello?

HENRY:
I...I...

VOICE 2:
They shouldn't be long now darling. They've figured the problem out, it was something to do with that wheel thing at the top. I reckon another two minutes and we'll have you home and dry.

HENRY:
I...

VOICE 2:
Don't worry, you just stay calm, relax and we'll have you out in a jiffy. Oh and look love, I know it's stressful but if you could refrain from smoking that would be great, it plays havoc with our sensors.

The voice goes. Henry continues looking at the red button for a while. He turns and looks at Harvey's dead body on the floor. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his mobile phone. He dials the number and puts it to his ear.

HENRY:
Hello, Daddy...Sorry, James...I've, I've...Ive really fucked up... Sorry, sorry for the profanity, it's just, oh God, Ive done something really, really bad...I've... I've...Daddy, I think I've killed a chav...

The lift jolts. It start to move up to level 45. Henry puts the phone down to his leg and looks up at the ceiling. He looks down at Harvey's body.

Lights fade to black.

The End