

BUILDING 523

Written by

A.J. Sheeran

Based on the short story *Fubar* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

INT. GYM - DAY

The main entrance - empty. Chalk-white walls. Flickering fluorescent lights.

The basketball court is dimly lit by its dusty windows and has not been used in years. Party streamers hang from the basketball hoops. In the center, a phonograph collects dust. Slow dripping from another room.

The dripping comes from the shower heads in the locker room. Suddenly, a shower head chokes out a burst of water. After a pause, it continues to drip.

The hallway is long and musty. The sound of someone rustling some papers in the distance. A sign on the wall points to the "Public Relations Department."

Around the corner is another hallway. At the end is an open door to a room the size of a broom closet. A desk sticks partly out into the door entrance. A pair of hands removes a letter from an envelope.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FUZZ LITTLER (45) sits hunched over at his desk. Fuzz is tall and scrawny with grey, wiry hair, wearing a colorless suit. He looks ten years older than he should. Fuzz pushes in his glasses to skim the letter, holding no interest in what it says.

The clock reads 9:00.

He turns to the filing cabinet to his right. There is little walking room between his desk and the cabinet. He files the letter in one of five sparse folders.

He opens the next envelope. Only two remain unopened.

INSERT - The letter reads "Dear Employee of the Public Relations Department."

Fuzz hears the main doors open and close far off in the distance. The sound of heels clacking hurriedly against the linoleum floor approaches. He stares off into the empty hallway. A long, stretched shadow approaches.

Fuzz drops the letter.

Fuzz desperately stands up, sneaks between the desk and filing cabinet and tries to close the door, but instead slams it into the corner of his desk, knocking some of his things to the floor.

He hurries to pull the desk all the way against the cabinet. He closes the door just as the figure comes into view down the hallway.

The heels clack closer and closer until they stop. Fuzz waits nervously for another sound. Three shy knocks.

Fuzz takes a deep breath and opens the door.

Between two slabs of white, concrete walls stands FRANCINE PEFKO (18), a beautiful woman, overdressed in a bright, vibrant blue dress.

FRANCINE
Mr. Littler?

Fuzz is dumbfounded.

Francine waits for a response, her cheerful smile never wavering.

Fuzz coughs, then nods his head quickly, still unable to speak.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
I'm Francine Pefko. Your new secretary.

He turns to look at the letter on his desk.

INSERT - The letter reads "appointed secretary."

FUZZ
Right, come in.

Francine steps into the crowded room and looks around.

FRANCINE
This is nice.

It is not.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
Is this my desk?

FUZZ
Yes. That's it.

Francine sits at the desk, failing to notice how cramped it is. Though her side of the room does have slightly more room than his.

FRANCINE
I'm ready to go to work any time
you are, Mr. Littler.

FUZZ
Yes. All righty.

Fuzz picks his things off of the ground.

FRANCINE
This is my very first minute of my
very first hour of my very first
day of my very first job.

FUZZ
That so?

FRANCINE
Yes.

Fuzz has to open the door all the way just to get to his
desk. He sits and scans his papers.

FRANCINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mr. Littler?

The door has blocked Francine from view. He jumps up to close
the door. Francine remains as cheerful as ever.

Fuzz sits back down. He attempts to match her enthusiasm,
but fails.

Francine waits patiently. Fuzz takes a moment to realize why.

FUZZ
Oh.

Fuzz grabs the two envelopes on his desk. He considers what
to do with them. Ultimately, he reaches over his desk to hand
them to Francine. She has to stand in order to grab them.

FRANCINE
Thank you, Mr. Littler.

The clock on the wall ticks on. 9:07.

The sound of pipes clanging somewhere in the walls. Francine
sets the last letter aside for filing.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
That's all for now?

FUZZ
It's a slack morning.

FRANCINE
What time does the mailman come?

FUZZ
The mail doesn't come all the way
out here.

Francine begins to speak.

INSERT - A shower head in the locker room inhales noisily--
--making Francine's speech incomprehensible.

FUZZ (CONT'D)
What was that?

FRANCINE
I'm sorry, I asked 'When do the
people come?'

FUZZ
People?

FRANCINE
The public. For public relations.

FUZZ
I'm afraid the public doesn't come
all the way out here.

FRANCINE
Is that so?

For the first time, Francine's bright demeanor lessens a bit.

Pipes clang as the two sit across from each other,
motionless.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
I suppose I'll distract myself with
some reading. They gave me some
pamphlets to look over.

FUZZ
Yes, maybe that's a good idea.

Francine pulls some pamphlets out of her purse. She starts to
look them over.

Fuzz studies the beauty of her face, the glimmer in her hair.

FRANCINE
Hmm.

FUZZ

Pardon?

FRANCINE

It says there are company events every Friday night. This weekend there's bowling.

FUZZ

I didn't know that.

FRANCINE

Do you bowl, Mr. Littler?

FUZZ

No, I don't do much bowling, I'm afraid.

FRANCINE

I love to bowl.

Silence. A shower head flips out again. Francine only looks content now. She forces herself to smile as she speaks.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Do you dance, Mr. Littler?

Fuzz breathes in. He closes his eyes. Darkness.

FUZZ (O.S.)

Miss Pefko. I don't think you'll like it here.

Fuzz closes his eyes tighter.

FUZZ (CONT'D)

Go to the employment office. Demand an assignment to a new supervisor. Tell them about the freak you found in Building 523.

Fuzz opens his eyes to see a pale face where there was once vibrance.

FRANCINE

You don't like me, Mr. Littler?

Fuzz stands.

FUZZ

That has nothing to do with it.
This is no place for a pretty,
clever, ambitious, charming little
girl like you. If you stay here,
you will rot!

FRANCINE

Rot?

FUZZ

Rot! Rot like I have. Good bye,
Miss Pefko. It was extremely nice
knowing you.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Fuzz slams the door. He slowly rests his head against it.

For a moment, there is silence. Then he hears Francine turn
and walk back down the hallway, more slowly than before. The
sounds fades away.

Fuzz looks at the secretary's desk, empty again.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Fuzz sits at his desk, staring at the ceiling. He hears music
play in the distance and looks toward the door.

INT. GYM - LATER

Fuzz walks gradually through the hallways, approaching the
sound.

He turns into the basketball court to see Francine looking
through the records in a box by the phonograph.

Fuzz clears his throat.

Francine turns and smiles wide at him.

FRANCINE

Isn't the music wonderful?

Fuzz looks around as he walks toward her. There are cobwebs
hanging from the streamers.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Do you dance, Mr. Littler?

Fuzz shakes his head.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
Well, now's the time to start.

FUZZ
In here?

FRANCINE
Why not? You have this place all to yourself! Think of all the things you could do in here!

FUZZ
On company time?

FRANCINE
(stern)
Mr. Littler. Don't you have work to do?

FUZZ
Miss Pefko, you know I don't have any work--

Francine snatches his hand and hauls him out of the basketball court.

She pulls him through the hallways until they reach the swimming pool.

FRANCINE
(yelling giddily)
Care for a swim, Mr. Littler?

INT. POOL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Francine stops just in front of the pool.

FRANCINE
You haven't used this pool, have you?

FUZZ
No.

FRANCINE
Someone must use it. It's perfectly clean.

It is.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
Well... Jump in!

FUZZ
I can't.

Francine gives him an incredulous look.

FUZZ (CONT'D)
No suit.

FRANCINE
Then don't wear a suit.

She backs up toward the hallway.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)
I'll be waiting by the phonograph.

She skips toward the exit.

Fuzz stands alone at the edge of the pool. He stares into the water as if it were boiling.

Fuzz gradually removes his clothes.

He stands on the diving board, hesitating.

FUZZ
This is silly.

Fuzz plugs his nose and jumps into the water.

He comes up for air. With wet hair and a wet face, he immediately looks younger. He catches his breath, then laughs.

He swims back and forth, freestyle one way, breast stroke the other, backstroke, etc.

He floats at the surface, looking up at the ceiling. He hears faint music.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Fuzz walks down the hallway, hair damp, fully dressed except for the shoes in his hands. A waltz grows louder in volume as he approaches the court.

INT. GYM - BASKETBALL COURT - LATER

Two bare, wet feet enter.

Fuzz's face lights up at what he sees.

Francine dances slowly by the phonograph, eyes closed.

Fuzz watches. The cobwebs are gone.

FUZZ

(to himself)

I cannot imagine an entire day
spent with you.

Her feet are bare as they take gentle, elegant steps. Fuzz's wet, bare feet step up next to her. Francine's stop as soon as they've turned to face Fuzz.

Fuzz's hands take Francine's. They dance.