

Drafty

“Hey! You! What are you doing?” yells the authority.

“Uh? Me?” replies the stranger.

“Yes! You! Who else could I be talking to?”

“I’m not sure.”

“What do you mean you’re not sure? You’re the only one standing here!”

“I’m sorry; I didn’t mean to imply ‘I’m not sure who else you could be talking to.’ I meant, ‘I’m not sure what I’m doing.’”

Surprise overruns the authority, causing him to pause before he continues, “What!? How did you get here?”

“I don’t know.”

With disbelief and annoyance, the authority accuses the stranger, “What are you, some kind of lunatic?”

“What’s a lunatic?”

“Okay Mac, a lunatic is someone who doesn’t know what he’s doing or how he got here.”

“Well,” hesitates the stranger, “I guess I’m a lunatic.”

The authority, shaking his head, mumbles to himself, “Why me? I don’t have time for this.”

“Sorry, I didn’t hear you.”

“Listen Mac, I don’t have time to speak to you. I’ve got a job to do.”

“Oh really? What kind of job?”

“Can’t you feel it? There’s a draft in this place. I’ve got to find out where it’s coming from and stop it.”

“Sounds reasonable to me.”

“Well, that’s my name. Thanks for the compliment.”

The stranger watches the authority walk away and suddenly yells, “Hey, mind if I tag along? I’ve got nothing else to do.”

“What do you mean you have nothing to do? Everyone has something to do! No, don’t tell me! I’ve no time for this and must hurry. Come along if you want, but stay out of my way!”

“Okay.”

The authority, slightly leading, hurries with the stranger tagging along. The stranger suddenly notices that they’ve been walking parallel to a very high, concrete brick wall whose top extends beyond vision. Curiosity strikes him, “This is a nice wall. It matches the floor.”

Quickly, the authority responds, “Thanks, I built it myself.”

“You did!? Wow, this is some structure! It’s nice and smooth; all the blocks fit so well. Must have taken you forever!”

“No, just a lifetime.”

“Oh, really?”

“Yes, it’s my job except I must not be doing too well if there’s still a draft.”

“You mean that breeze?”

“Listen, don’t start any trouble. It’s not a breeze; it’s a draft. Drafts are bad because they mess everything up. We’ve got to keep everything orderly around here. Man, it’s picking up.”

“We must be getting close.”

“Brilliant observation. Why didn’t I think of that,” delivers the authority sarcastically.

“Just a knack I have,” replies the stranger, unknowingly unnecessarily.

“You know, for someone who doesn’t know what he’s doing, how he got here, and what else to do; you cause a lot of trouble.”

“I do?”

“Yeah, I mean I’ve got plenty to do with no time to do it. I’ve got a family to worry about, a job to do, and errands to run.”

“Wow, you sound pretty important to me,” compliments the stranger.

“Thank you, but anyone who has nothing to do and plenty of time just has to be trouble.” A distraction interrupts the authority, “It sure is windy now. This is really going to mess things up.”

The two walk along the wall when suddenly the authority shouts, “Bingo! There’s the trouble now! See that opening? That’s causing the draft. I may be able to seal that in no time and be home for dinner.”

They walk up to the opening, a door granting entrance to a windy darkness. “This place looks neat,” says the stranger.

“You *are* a lunatic,” says the authority. “It’s nothing but trouble.”

“What is it?”

“I don’t know and don’t care.”

“Aren’t you curious?” asks the stranger.

“Not at all. I’ve too much to do and too little time. People rely on me. I have a life to live. I don’t have time to explore the unknown when the known is tough enough. I just want to seal this up so nothing comes and screws up my world. Who knows what may come out? I thought I had all the openings, but I guess I was wrong. I must do better.”

The stranger, suddenly looking at him inquires, “Other openings? You mean you sealed other ones?”

The authority, laughing, “Not just openings. I told you I built this thing. I walled off the whole area! Okay, you wait here. I must get a few things.” Not pausing for a response, the authority leaves the stranger alone. The stranger waits a few minutes which feels like a lifetime, so he decides to run into the opening and see what he can find.

The authority returns soon after with blocks and cement. “That guy is trouble. He doesn’t listen to me.” He begins mixing the cement.

Just before he sighs relief from concluding the stranger is permanently gone, the stranger dashes in from the darkness, “Hey! I found this sign!”

Exasperation fills the authority, “Good for you! Good for you!” Without hesitating he continues his work.

“Don’t you want to read it?”

“No.” He finishes his mixing and reaches for the first block.

“You don’t?” the stranger asks disbelievingly.

“I told you: stay out of my way! I know what I’m doing. I don’t have time to read any sign. You understand?”

“Not really, but . . .”

“Move it, or I’ll seal you in there.”

“You would seal me in there?”

“Yes I would. There’s nothing but trouble in there. Ever since I built this wall, everything has run efficiently and everything is in its place. We send birthday cards on birthdays, Valentine’s Day cards on Valentine’s Day, Christmas cards on Christmas; everything runs so smoothly that we don’t have to waste time thinking what to do. It’s an automatic.”

“Really? Then why don’t you have any time?”

“Easy, I’m not perfect. I still have much to work out. For instance, I find myself wasting time talking to folks like you. One day, everything will be in order, and I’ll have plenty of time.” The authority’s attention returns to the opening. “Now stop distracting me. This draft is reeking havoc on my routine. I’ve got to seal this. Are you going to move or not?”

Hesitating the stranger says, “What if I like it in there? It’s fun. Every minute is an adventure.”

“Hey Mac, adventures can hurt you.”

“My name isn’t Mac.”

“So it’s not Mac! Are you going to move? I’ve got to seal this now! You’re already causing enough trouble, and who knows what may come out of that darkness.”

“What’s your name?” asks the stranger.

“You know my name.”

“I do?”

“Yes, you mentioned it.”

“I did?”

“Yes, yes. Hurry up and move. My name is Reason, Reason Able.”

“I see,” says the stranger. “Do you want to know my name?”

“Only if it will get you to move.”

“I’m Passion.” Reason doesn’t respond, so he finishes, “Passion Nate.”

“Great, now that we know one another . . . move!”

“I’m sorry Reason, but I’m not staying. I’m going to enjoy the adventure and search for the wind’s source.”

“What! You are crazy! Aren’t you listening to me? That place is trouble.”

Passion looks away. Reason shouts, “Then go! I’m going to block you in there. Anyone who doesn’t listen to Reason has got to be no good!”

“Can’t we work this out?”

“No. Either stay or go.”

“But I can’t stay here; I’ll die. Can’t I just wander about?”

Reason ignores Passion and continues his work. Passion takes one last look at Reason, drops the sign, launches himself into the wind and vanishes into the darkness. The wind returns sounds of crying which echo off the concrete wall and floor. Soon, a salty, tearful mist strolls through the disappearing opening and touches Reason.

Muttering to himself, “Damn draft,” Reason finishes the last block. Cleaning the remnants of his work, Reason grabs the sign. Passing a nearby incinerator and tossing it in, the flames devour the wooden shape which was nothing more than a long, slender log split in half with the bark still attached.

Reason watches for a moment, reads the sign and says “I thought I got rid of all those signs. I knew this was trouble,” and slams the incinerator’s door. As he walks away, the flames gorge upon the hand carved letters, “Welcome To Your Soul.”