

THE GIRL WHO CAME OUT OF THE CEILING

screenplay by

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an animated short film based on the Première rhapsodie (First Rhapsody) for clarinet and orchestra by Claude Debussy

FADE IN:

EXT. BIG BLUE CITY - DAWN

Thousands of little shuttered windows stretch down into darkness across a vast expanse of concrete.

Above us, too, the rows of windows cover every inch of the tower as it reaches up into the gloom of a purple sky.

Vast blocks and bloated structures are crowded in upon each other like giant sleeping animals.

A huge steel ball hangs in the sky above the metropolis. It flares brightly with a magnesium flash and throws the buildings into a cold blue light.

Amongst a clump of antennae and radar dishes on top of one building, a sensor pointed into the light sputters and crackles with electricity.

A knot of cables extends from the base of the sensor and trails over the edge of the building.

We follow one group of cables as they fork away from the main span.

Each little shuttered window is fed by a single cable branching off the main group.

Finally, one remaining cable loops around, then ends at the last window in the row, stamped 'SMITH.'

INT. SMITH'S FLAT - DAY

A small receiving box, also stamped 'SMITH,' the other side of the window, sparks and sends a current racing along a wall covered with flower-patterned wallpaper.

A big clock mechanism ticks into life, settings little cogs and wheels spinning and turning beneath it.

Tick. Tock. Tick. Tock.

The wheels turn and drive a metal hanging claw across the narrow ceiling.

The claw stops at the end of its track, shoots down, and plucks the bedclothes from the sleeping man below.

SMITH is a pale little tubby figure, bald, and wearing striped pajamas. He is curled in his bed, asleep.

A rubber suction cap shoots out from the wall and slaps onto the top of his head whilst a set of delicate pincers quickly snatch hold of his pajamas and pull them off, leaving him naked.

SMITH opens his eyes, yawns and stretches.

The bottom of his bed falls open like a trapdoor and he falls through.

He tumbles into a tube beneath the bed, which is blasted full of boiling steam.

A cupboard door pops open and a plate shoots out onto a kitchen table. A hemisphere lid snaps down onto the plate.

The steam tube opens and SMITH is pushed out, pink and clean. A hydraulic arm turns him towards a mirrored door as another, with a bottle of cologne squirts under his arms.

The door in front of him opens to reveal a carousel of brightly-colored suits numbered one to six.

Number seven is a little Hawaiian shirt and shorts.

The lidded breakfast plate boils and hisses. SMITH, in bright green executive suit and tie, is rolled up to the breakfast plate, smiling. The lid opens, revealing a bright green cube.

SMITH's smile disappears. He picks up the cube, nibbles at it, then a mechanical arm quickly shoves him to the front door.

EXT. BIG BLUE CITY, MOVING PLATFORM - DAY

Smith pops out onto the moving pavement.

The people around him are all dressed in executive suits, brightly colored, like his own.

Thousands of tiny specks of color are being shunted along on this and other pavements, all streaming in different directions as the huge machinery of BIG BLUE CITY pumps and writhes around them.

INT. THE OFFICE - DAY

In a vast vaulted hall, nine hundred little figures sit behind rows of executive desks. Everyone is wearing the same type of bright green suit.

SMITH sits amongst them. He is busy operating a mechanical lever that stamps 'OK' on the bottoms of small toy dragons. He looks up as he sees an OLD TEA LADY advancing along his row.

The TEA LADY is a squat little smiling old woman, dressed, today, in a bright green apron. She pours tea and offers green cubes to the workers busy at their desks.

SMITH pauses in his work for a moment and the toy dragons start to pile up. He sees the mess and has to start stamping faster to keep up.

Just one person away now, the OLD TEA LADY's smile freezes and she starts to pour tea over the person she has been serving. Smoke creeps out from her mouth, then her head pops off her shoulders. Springs explode out of her neck.

The headless OLD TEA LADY throws tea and green cubes everywhere.

Up in a high gallery overlooking the office hall, THE BOSS, a thin weasel of a man, wearing a black suit and a sheriff badge, sees the mayhem below. He stabs his control board with venom.

The ground opens beneath the OLD TEA LADY and swallows her up.

SMITH watches as a scuttling robot arm rushes up to sweep away the mess and dry the tea-soaked office worker. The robot arm hurries away. SMITH looks up at the gallery window.

THE BOSS pushes another button on the gallery control board. A mile above the office workers, a single circle of light opens in the arched ceiling. A beam stabs out of the gloom.

SMITH looks up.

The light in the ceiling is right above his desk. He exchanges an anxious look with the worker next to him.

A tiny speck of a figure starts to descend out of the hole in the ceiling.

SMITH stares up. The dragons start to pile up again.

As the figure turns in the light, we see it is a young TEA GIRL with a shiny new trolley.

She has an hourglass figure, beautiful shining eyes, and golden blond hair bobbed up under her hat.

SMITH sees her, and slowly stands.

The beautiful TEA GIRL lands softly with her trolley in the light beside his desk. She looks at him.

SMITH stares back at her.

The TEA GIRL smiles shyly at SMITH.

SMITH stares.

Dragons continue to pile up.

She giggles and offers him tea.

SMITH is enraptured.

The GIRL smiles once more, turns, but throws a glance back at him over her shoulder before moving on to the next in line.

SMITH stares at her in wonder. He starts to walk after her.

Dragon toys spill off the desk and hit the floor.

A flashing alarm signal up in the gallery interrupts THE BOSS's reading. Angrily, he peers out of the window and sees SMITH.

SMITH is standing, watching the TEA GIRL when the robot arm suddenly rushes up and smacks him around the face. It grabs him, plants him back at his desk, and he has to scramble to clean up the tumbling dragons.

CLOCK WIPE TO:

INT. SMITH'S FLAT - NIGHT

As SMITH enters, looking very tired, a small hatch opens beside the door and a tubby, many-legged pet is shot out and knocks him to the ground.

The pet wags its tail. It has a folded newspaper in its mouth and a little barrel around its neck with 'SAMMY' written on it.

SMITH takes the paper, patting his pet, and allows himself to be licked.

CLOCK WIPE TO:

Later, SMITH has his feet up in front of his flashing T.V. screen. The pet is curled asleep on his lap. SMITH strokes its fur.

CLOCK WIPE TO:

Later, SMITH is in bed, asleep. He stirs uneasily.

INT. DREAM - DAY

Hundreds of scaly clawed feet stampede towards him. Rumble!

A great crowd of Smith-sized toy dragons thunder along a moving walkway like a herd of wild bison. Rumble! Rumble!

SMITH trembles in his pajamas on the walkway. Rumble!

The dragons race towards him, overtake, then envelop him. He is like a drowning man as he tries to stay above the crowd, but he is carried along and finally disappears under thumping feet and tails. The dragons race over him.

SMITH lies, flattened, in the dirt, covered with 'O.K.' stamp marks. He sits up and looks around suddenly. His weazly BOSS is standing over him, shouting, telling him he is a disgrace.

SMITH picks himself up apologetically, brushing himself off and tries to explain.

THE BOSS scolds him and orders him back to his desk.

SMITH scrambles up a rocky pinnacle and climbs behind his desk as it balances precariously.

His BOSS screams down at him from a cave in the cliff face high above.

The desk teeters on the pinnacle. SMITH grabs at its sides, as papers and machinery tumble over its edges.

His BOSS screams down from the cave.

The desk slips and carries SMITH down as it tumbles off the pinnacle.

SMITH cartwheels through the air a green cubes shower around him, followed by sheets of paper, twirling machinery, the OLD TEA LADY'S head, and his flashing TV set.

SMITH falls and falls and looks up at the cave in the cliff.

The silhouette of the beautiful TEA GIRL is now standing in the cave, watching him.

SMITH slows and hovers in the air, looking up at her.

INT. SMITH'S FLAT - NIGHT

SMITH, in his bed, opens his eyes.

A robot arm shoots out at him with a bottle of pills labelled 'ZZZ,' but, he pushes the arm aside and sits up.

SMITH, sitting in his kitchen, pours himself a cup of tea. He looks at the tea cup.

The cup rises up out of the saucer, becoming the head of the beautiful TEA GIRL. A miniature version of her shapely body grows down from her head.

SMITH watches in adoration as the little TEA GIRL smiles at him coyly. He tries to reach out to touch her, but she skips back off the saucer, avoiding his grasp with a giggle.

He grabs for her again, across the table, but she dances away like a little Tinkerbell.

SAMMY, the pet, wakes and blinks.

SMITH dives for the TEA GIRL but she vanishes as his hands close around her, leaving him clutching thin air.

SMITH looks around and sees SAMMY looking at him.

SAMMY wags his tail.

SMITH looks thoughtful.

INT. THE OFFICE - DAY

The office is empty.

A door opens at the far end and a little figure, dressed in orange and red and green enters.

It is SMITH. He is carrying a large sack over his shoulder and looks nervously about him before going on. He hurries over to his own desk and turns out the contents of the sack.

A jumble of clothes and rags fall onto the floor.

SMITH excitedly unfolds the jumble to reveal a flat, limp, sewn-together dummy of himself.

The dummy wears a yellow suit and tie, and has a cloth head with button eyes and a grinning mouth.

Another lone figure enters through the door of the hall. It is THE BOSS.

SMITH quickly hides himself and the dummy beneath his desk.

THE BOSS pauses, hearing a noise, then continues to stride pompously across the hall towards another door.

SMITH waits until the other man has left the room, then jumps out with his rag doll.

He frantically sits it in his desk chair and ties its hands to the levers of the stamping machine. He starts to blow into a valve in the dummy's foot and the grinning head bobs and rises as the body inflates.

Later, the TEA GIRL is making the rounds between the busy ranks of office workers. Everyone is wearing yellow today.

The TEA GIRL laughs and flirts with everyone as she deals out cups of tea and yellow food cubes.

She arrives at SMITH's desk where the dummy is sitting, its arms moving up and down on the machine levers. She gives it tea and passes on to the next desk.

From underneath his desk, SMITH scurries out across the aisle of workers and disappears behind another desk, unnoticed.

The TEA GIRL continues to smile and pour as she moves on.

Zig zagging to the next desk, SMITH scurries out, following her, and hides again.

The TEA GIRL finally arrives at the end of the row of workers. She gives the last customer a little wave, then heads for a pair of swing doors bearing a teapot emblem.

SMITH peeps out from beneath the desk he is under, then scampers after her across the office floor.

Up in the gallery, THE BOSS simpers obsequiously to a huge FAT MAN in a black suit like his own, but with both lapels covered with ornate gold badges.

Below, the tiny multi-colored figure of SMITH leaves the hall through the tea doors, following the GIRL undetected.

INT. CORRIDORS - DAY

SMITH steps through the doors and stops in surprise.

The TEA GIRL pushes her trolley ahead of her along an apparently endless, mile high narrow corridor lined with bulging pipes and machinery.

SMITH creeps along after her as she turns down a narrow doorway.

The TEA GIRL descends a sloping ramp that bends off to the left.

SMITH waits for her to disappear around the bend, then runs after her.

Keeping close to the wall, he hurries along but skids to a halt as a huge pile of old machine parts stacked against the wall shoots out a mechanical grabbing arm and tries to seize him.

The TEA GIRL continues on round the bend.

Next to SMITH, a giant slavering mouth appears in the side of the pile. It sneers at SMITH as the claw blindly flails about. SMITH grabs a sharp length of pipe, beats off the claw and, with a swipe, cuts it off. The arm shudders to a halt, then falls lifeless at his feet.

SMITH stands, smiling and panting, then looks around him. He is completely alone. He looks up, then down the corridor, takes a few steps, then stops. He is lost.

Still holding the pipe 'sword' in his hand, he looks at the dormant pile of broken machinery.

He picks up a piece of metal and puts it on his head like a helmet.

The downward sloping ramp becomes much steeper as SMITH, now dressed completely in machine part armor, continues along the corridor, the walls of which are now encrusted with old decaying machines.

A giant mouth of a pipe spews out a waterfall of effluence which cascades down behind a narrow arching bridge.

SMITH, crossing the bridge, stops to look over the side.

Below, is a wide black river of swirling water. A row of little wooden boats are tied up by the bank.

SMITH steers a little boat with black sails along the river. He watches as pipes growing up from the river bank pass by in the darkness like twisted trees.

SMITH pulls up at a jetty where other little boats are moored, but stops to look over his shoulder as he puts down his sword.

Many pairs of yellow eyes peering out of the pipe trees suddenly whisk away as he turns.

SMITH picks up his sword.

SMITH ventures along a winding path through a valley of towering rusty trees, holding his sword out before him. He stops, seeing something in the undergrowth. He cautiously pokes his sword into the bushes and hooks out a broken tea cup with its handle. Nervously, he looks about and sees footprints scattered on the ground. He follows them down the path.

Another shattered tea cup lies in pieces by a bush.

SMITH looks frightened and starts to trot. He passes a line of scattered saucers and splashes through a puddle of milk, breaking into a run.

On the bending path ahead, the tea trolley lying on its side.

SMITH runs up to the trolley, stops and looks around quickly in surprise.

Around the bend in the path, a TERRIFYING SLOUCHING DRAGON, twice his size, lopes off with the laughing TEA GIRL in its claws. It is heading for the forest, moving away from a giant bulging copper teapot-shaped factory.

SMITH stares in horror.

The TEA GIRL laughs in the dragon's claws.

SMITH adjusts his helmet, lifts his sword and charges at the DRAGON.

The ferocious monster turns to see SMITH running towards it.

The GIRL laughs as the DRAGON turns with a threatening snarl.

SMITH chops at the creature's tail but the DRAGON swipes the tail away just in time and snaps down at him with a great mouth full of fangs.

SMITH is thrown onto his back.

The GIRL laughs.

SMITH scrambles to his feet as the dragon snaps at him. He swipes again and again at the monster's belly.

The DRAGON recoils and staggers back into the trees.

SMITH swipes and swipes with his sword.

The DRAGON roars and crashes back in retreat. Iron pipe trees and steel thorns are trampled under the monster's bulk.

The little man forces the monster back until it crashes against a huge stone wall.

SMITH sees the dragon's foot exposed.

He stabs his sword into it.

The monster leaps back heavily against the wall.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Bricks and dust fly everywhere as the office wall implodes.

The DRAGON falls through with SMITH'S sword in its foot, flattening rows of yellow office workers at their desks.

The TEA GIRL scampers free in the rubble.

Crash! A door bursts open, revealing THE BOSS. He is boiling with fury.

SMITH jumps through the hole in the wall with a heroic smile.

THE BOSS strides over and starts screaming at him madly.

The DRAGON picks itself up off the floor and sees, by its feet, THE BOSS shouting at SMITH.

The irate man yells at SMITH -- until the huge jaws of the DRAGON snap down and gobble him up.

The DRAGON looks at SMITH.

Suddenly, SMITH grows.

The whole scene around SMITH falls into insignificance far below as he twirls up and up, becoming a huge, towering giant in a bright blue cloud-flecked sky; away from the dragon, away from the city.

SMITH looks over at the beautiful TEA GIRL who has also grown up with him. She approaches and SMITH takes her in his arms.

They kiss.

THE END.