Petteri Hannila, Science Fiction, Detective-mystery, Neutral, English, Long

Hard Day's Night

Dystopian drama of impossible choices.

It is said, that the City has always existed. It was vast already, when people still could breathe fresh air and stand below a naked sky. It is true even though there is no man alive who could understand why people would cram themselves into this place if they had the choice of roaming the entire world. Nowadays, such things happened only in dreams and movies of old.

Besides that nature, the City has everything from the intoxicating heat of the outer rim slums to the etheric coolness of the city central. Everything and everyone works here in their own place, besides the few climbers and crashers that move in the everlasting ladder of society.

The City is a perfect sphere, domed and divided into five, ring-like levels. The automated system, now hundreds of years old circulates and cleanses the water and the air, but most importantly cools the city down. Outside temperature can rise up to 250 degrees of celcius, killing almost everything subjected to it very quickly. The automatons create food out of bioengineered seaweed and nutritional supplements. Even though there is plenty of food, the law of demand and supply distribute it very unevenly.

At level one, in the heart of the City live the people without boundaries or restrictions. They are called nobles, even though heritage has nothing to do with them being there. In each year, a hundred people are voted for an access to the first level, as well as a hundred are voted back to level two. Most of them never fall lower than that.

Second level is dedicated to the free people. They have no obligations for work, and their possessions usually is sufficient to grant them every service and product the city has to offer for a lifetime. If they somehow manage to deplete those funds, they are dropped to level three, but it is a rare thing indeed to witness such an event.

Level three is where all the workers live. They get their basic needs fulfilled through work, but are practically unable to obtain any prosperity or wealth. They have no protection against misfortunes of life like an ilness or injury, and can keep their position only through the service and workforce they provide.

Level four is occupied by the unemployed, who still have an education to some profession and a shred of possibility to get back to the organized society. They try to grow some food of their own and fill their days with shadowy dealings and temporary jobs to survive. There is some aid for the poor but it is insufficient to say the least.

Level five, the outmost level is filled with dropouts, fugitives, criminals and dangerous individuals who have been cast out from level four. Their home is a suffocating hell, in where survival on a day to day basis requires special skills and animal ruthlessness.

Level one hosts a population of hundreds, where level two has thousands and levels three and four tens of thousands. Nobody knows the amount of people trapped in level five, and most do not even care.

Grains

- The weak always climb up, towards the light
- Oppression breeds violence
- Small incidents can change the course of the future

John McGill

John is a third level citizen, a straightforward patrol cop, who has spent 40 years minding his own business and doing as he is told. His wife, Cecilia works at tax management center and their daughter Eljena is in her first year of public school. John and Cecilia are proud parents, as they have been able to save enough money for their daughter to attend general school, instead of directly entering occupational education. Only few third level citizens share this possibility, as it is terribly expensive.

Two events rock the foundations of their family idyll. Police informs about cutbacks and John is working in an area with only little reported disorders. So he is among the suspended officers and is transferred to social class four; unemployed professionals. At the same time Eljena, who has been sick a lot is diagnosed with leukemia. Citizens of level three can get basic medical attention easily enough, yet expensive cancer treatments are out of the question. In addition, the family now has a society status of 3.5, which makes the situation worse. Living community control of level three informs, that whether John can't find a job in next three months, they will have to move to level four.

Yet, a possibility of sorts emerges itself. John knows that Arvidson is a shady character, but when this gentleman of level two, a bar chain owner suggests a “once in a lifetime” -opportunity for him, it doesn't take long for JOhn to say yes. He is supposed to pick up a *package* from level one. One can get there only with certifications, but he is told that such matters will be taken care of. The *package* is then to be delivered to level five, quietly, and no questions asked. For a price, Arvidson promises cancer treatments for Eljena in level two medical facility.

John doesn't hesitate, yet he struggles whether to tell his wife about this business or not.

	Traits
3	**Patrol Cop** Stern and rational, he is of the backbone of local society.
2	**Rough history** John has faced ill situations before, and can survive where an ordinary man of his occupation would resign.
2	**Just** In a world built around ownership John often tries to help the weak. He has paid for this trait in the past, but refuses to submit.
1	**Calm** Rational and calm, he seldom loses his cool even in tight spots.
	Burdens
1	**Another Brick in the Wall** John is a part of machinery and gotten used to it. Sometimes it can prevent him from doing what he feels is right.
1	**Ghosts of the Past** There are things in his past, he hasn't told his family about.

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