

5 Minutes
By
Clay Robeson

28 Plays Later

Day 12

February 12, 2018

ACT I

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP ON A WATER COOLER ON A COMPLETELY BLACK STAGE.

THE WATER COOLER'S LINES ARE RECITED VIA GOD MIC.

AS PEOPLE ARE NAMED, THEY WALK THROUGH AND PANTOMIME THEIR ACTIONS IN AND AROUND THE COOLER.

COOLER: I'm not sure anyone really gets it, you know?

They show up here, fill their cup, and leave.

SOMETIMES, when the stars align, two of them show up at once. If they are unacquainted, it merely proves to be an inconvenience for the latter. If they DO know each other, it extends their stay through some pleasantries.

If the season is right, usually early fall, or late spring, and there are premiers or finales to talk about, that almost triples the thirty seconds they spend filling their cups.

And if it's sports? Awww, man, that's when I'm happiest. The sports conversations, win or lose, last FOREVER.

Sometimes, I dream of being a sports cooler. You know, the one that gets dumped over the coaches head after a win? That would be one sweet gig.

But the office job isn't that bad, really. I mean, I know everyone. I see them every day of the work week. EVERYONE needs me, except Joe who is on one of those raw water trips, and brings in his own muddy gallon jug that he got from god-knows-where.

Anyway... I like it when they stay. The TV here in the break room is always on mute, so while I can see

what's happening, I never get the words unless someone is talking about it.

They lost the remote ages ago, so it stays on CNN with no volume, because no one knows there are buttons along the side that will let you change it.

The TV comes on at 7AM and turns off at 6PM every day. Unless it's daylight savings, of course, then it's 8AM to 7PM... because no one knows how to fix it.

Chuck used to know. But he left two years ago. A lot of people think he may have taken the remote with him, but I know where it is. It fell behind the coffee pot, and Sam, the janitor puts it right back there every time he cleans.

I'm kinda glad. People talked less when the TV had sound. Now, they kinda have to converse if they're in here at the same time. At least rudimentary pleasantries. But sometimes, if I'm really lucky, I get a whole five minute conversation.

It may not seem like a lot to you, but five minutes of conversation for me is like getting to binge watch an entire season of *How to Get Away With Murder*. I get to peek through the windows of these people's lives, at least at a surface level.

Humans, if you don't know, are amazing creatures. So fragile on the inside, wrapped in a coating of false bravado. Even Doug, the office Bro, comes in here occasional and stares sadly out the window. But if someone walks in, he immediately turns the "HEY YO!" back on and Bros out all over the place.

I'd love to get to spend a whole five minutes listening to his story. So much hidden just beneath the surface.

Five minutes, man. How awesome would that be?