

LENDING MY LIGHT FOR OTHERS TO SHINE

Sometimes I feel like a seemingly misplaced lamp post on the top of a hill in the countryside. A lamp post was placed there for no other reason than to prompt questions from the public, simply a stunt to bring attention to something that may have little else to offer. I've always believed being gifted with height was one of the greatest things a person could be given. Throughout any type of media, being tall is associated with being great. Notable basketball players, multitudes of seasoned actors, and so many others are given opportunities in their profession purely because their legs are a couple of inches longer than the next best person for the job. These examples, these people, are their own type of lamp posts. A lamp post placed in a bustling city, seen by all and understood by all. No one questions why a person is a basketball player if they are tall, just like no one questions why a lamp post is placed in a city. But what if I've never been capable of truly capitalizing on my height? I've tried to, of course, but I've never been good at sports, so I could never be the tall player on a basketball team. So I guess the real question is: what does being tall mean for someone who has never really benefited from it?

As a tall person, people naturally see you as a paragon of the human race. They act like being tall has anything to do with being a good person, making a meaningful impact in the lives of others, and, most importantly, that being tall is a great gift they wish they had. Of course, being tall has its benefits, but if I had the option to be maybe just a couple of inches shorter, I would. I've hit my head one too many times on the most random of objects to act like being tall has only upsides. Because of my height, I've always felt that no matter how much I tried, I could never escape the attention I've always been scared of. I shrunk my internal being to counteract the space I take up physically. I was scared to express myself, believing I could never live up to the expectations everyone had for me when we first met. There is one thing, though, that I don't think I could ever do if I were shorter. If I were shorter, I could never act like a beacon for others like I do today.

I've never been good at using my height, but I personally believe it never was and never will be my best attribute. To me, being tall isn't some grand achievement. It's not some easy way through life or a crutch. It's just the result of genetics. Being tall isn't glamorous; it is what you choose to do with it, in combination with who you are, that truly matters. A randomly placed lamp post in the middle of the country is strange. Some will say that being out there is a waste, that maybe it would be smarter to put it somewhere else to ensure it is used effectively. But no matter where it is, it illuminates. It casts light on the complex beauty of the wildlife around it, highlights the vines slowly growing up its base, and gives a stunning view of what surrounds it. I may not have used my height to dominate a court or to act for a large audience, but I have learned to use it when it matters. Being tall, to me, was never about the height difference I had over others. It has been about learning that presence alone does not create purpose; character does. And wherever I stand, I intend to be more than something people question. I intend to be something that brings light.