

The Elevator

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Splat.

The rainbow swirled lollipop hits my freshly cleaned tongue.

Today was Sunday, and Sunday meant deep cleaning. The steam cleaner had been used, my tongue scraped clear of granola crumbs, gum wrapper, and other debris tucked into corners, no longer recognizable.

What a clumsy child. I shouldn't judge too harshly, after all they are only a child. The mother quickly glances at the lollipop, taking a break from their phone, but does not crouch to pick it up. She tugs her child's arm away, as they try to reach for their lost prize. As it lays on my tongue its yellow, red, blue, and green stickiness start to seep into the fibers. I've never had a sweet tooth, so the experience is not pleasurable. I wish I could spit it out, but alas I am only an elevator with no bodily motion except to run up and down and open and close my mouth.

Ding, I open my mouth to let out a groan as I reach the ground floor. The family of two hurries out, the child looking back longingly at their sweet sweet lollipop before being whisked away by their mother. I watch them walk away and close my mouth seeing no other visitors to board. I stay suspended in the pitch black elevator chute. I start counting the hours to when the building cleaners will make their rounds. No steam cleaner today, but at least the lollipop will be disposed of. My home is an elite establishment, no rainbow lollipop would be left to stay for too long. The Royal Hotel is what the people call my home. I do have to say myself, the name gives it justice. The hall I can see from my domain is lined with gold pillars standing on each side carrying the large expanse of ceiling arched over in a dome shape. The pillars have it better, sure they have more to carry but at least they have each other.

Shimmering white marble encased the hotel. Marble desks, marble floor, and marble winding stairs. Who wanted to use the

stairs, am I right? The addition of myself appealed to the more contemporary folk. My lightning speed is an added bonus to the hotel for all impatient guests, which I find most guests to be. Speaking of my lightning speed, I really should be ready for more passengers by now. I wonder what the wait is. I yearn for the light. It gets cold in this dark chute. I rarely ever have to sit with my thoughts for too long. Business men and women, couples on their anniversaries, and families on vacation are constantly boarding me as they rush in and out of the hotel eager to fulfill some purpose in their lives.

Then I hear it.

Gunshots. Screams. The sounds break through the once eerie silence and pump adrenaline into my body. I race up to follow the sounds. Whatever could be happening out there? I open my mouth at the twelfth floor, revealing my home in disarray. Before I am able to take everything in, a tall lean man dressed all in black rushes in and presses my ground floor tooth. I can't see his face but I know right away. He breathes heavily, and leans over trying to catch his breath. Whatever chaos had befallen the hotel, he was the perpetrator. He fidgets with his bulky tote bag, puffing out quick short breaths. The smell of cigarette smoke wafts off him into my vents and lingers so strong I can taste it.

Bang!

The man hits the side of my mouth out of frustration with how slow I am moving. I usually am so quick to let off my passengers but today I seem to be taking my time. It's not within my functions to be able to decide whether to speed up or slow down. Why am I taking so long? I finally drop to the ground floor and pause. Hmm. I can't open my mouth. The dentists really should come take a look at me soon, I seem to be wearing down. My gears need oiling, my appointment should be coming up soon. My passenger lets out a banshee-like scream when he realizes the doors aren't opening. I feel his coarse hands pry at my jaws to no avail. For what is human strength compared to machines? I feel nice, glad, happy? Yes..I feel happy at this moment that the man is trapped. Better in here than out there. Out there where the hurried mother and clumsy child might still be. Perhaps eating a bright pink bubblegum

icecream, a hotel favorite for young newcomers. Or visiting one of the many brightly lit gift shops with plushies the size of the child. I ponder on this scenario for a while before coming back to the situation at hand.

The man paces back and forth muttering to himself. His shoes scuff my tongue as he makes sharp turns. My tongue burns as his pace quickens and hardens. Suddenly the passenger drops into a crouch, cradling his head in his hands. His eyes flit up to the lollipop stuck on my tongue. I see, no, I'm imagining it. For a moment I thought I saw a slight smile run across his face. Did it bring back memories for him? He then curls up into a fetal position on my tongue and rocks back and forth, as if to comfort himself. I sigh, well not really, as I am just an elevator. I feel at peace seeing the man become more and more passive as he lays trapped in me. His breathing slows down.

He'll be alright.

The sound of sirens intensifies, thuds of rushed footsteps follow. Gruff shouts sound over the ruckus. Then miraculously my mouth opens up as it should have done ten minutes ago. I grow heavy with the weight of many passengers and then in a few minutes I am empty again. That couldn't have been my doing, could it?

After all it is the fate of an elevator to only watch over the people that board them. But it seems today that was not the case.