

See You on the Fourth Floor

by Kylie Sanders

Sara walked toward her dinosaur-age apartment building, trying to avoid any falling bricks as she entered. The familiar stench of molding wallpaper met her nose as she pushed through the rusty, metal door. Walking in, she almost tripped on the old, murky brown, decaying carpet.

Anger ceased through Sara's body. *Nothing's going my way today!* She thought, *First my phone died, now I almost die on this wretched carpet!* She steadied herself on the splintering entrance table pushing her long red hair out of her face. Sara then began making her way over to the elevator.

She waited for the ancient elevator to come down to the lobby when a man she vaguely recognized walked up to the elevator. He was a tall, bulky man with hair that matched the carpet. His clothes hung off his figure with no fashion taste at all. But what interested her was his empty eyes. Eyes that looked like they had seen too much or not enough. The man turned his head toward Sara as she quickly tried to remove her eyes and look as though she was staring behind him and not at him.

Sara began tapping her foot as she anxiously waited. She didn't know what was taking so long. Basically, no one lived here. This is the place where the cheap of the cheap people live in New York. Yet still, the elevator took its own jolly time making its way down to the first floor.

Silence fell over the lobby of the building. The busy streets outside made plenty of noise. *Clink! Clink, clink! Ding!* The elevator finally arrived, breaking the silence. A teen, probably around the age of eighteen, stepped out and made her way toward the exit. Sara sighed in relief as she walked in and pushed the button to the fourth floor. When it didn't turn on, Sara quickly hit it a few more times before relaxing a bit as it glowed a soft golden color. The man walked into the elevator and after examining the buttons for a minute pushed the level three, getting it on his first try. The rusty doors slowly closed as the clinking from the chains began again.

The man then looked up from his phone that was pasted to his face before. "Oh, you live on the fourth floor?" He asked.

Sara hesitated, not knowing if she wanted him to know where she lived. "No, I'm just visiting a friend," she lied. The man nodded as Sara assumed he bought it.

"Well, who are you visiting? I have lived here for a while and know pretty much everyone." He stated.

Obviously not, Sara thought. *Otherwise, you would know who I am.*

"Umm, Valorie. We met in... college," she lied again.

The creaking of the old elevator and each squeak from the floorboard made for a great mask for the density between them. As they stood there in the thick atmosphere they created, the man awkwardly crept closer to Sara, setting her on high alert. She kept quickly glancing over at him and each time it was like his grin grew a little scarier.

Breath, Sara thought, *Don't overthink it. He's probably not even realizing that he's doing that.* Ding! They passed floor two. Sara almost jumped out of her skin at the sound, her nerves climbing into her throat. *Just think of something else,* she told herself, *Ummm, stairs.*

Sara didn't know why she even took the elevator. It would probably be quicker and safer to take the stairs, but she was far too lazy to walk up all those flights. The stairs were located right by the elevator and if someone ran fast enough could easily beat you to your floor. Sara and her friend raced a few months ago and Sara won with flying colors all thanks to the stairs.

"So what's your major then?" His words broke the silence.

Catching her off guard, Sara's thoughts swam away from her, "Sorry, what?"

"Well, you said you were visiting a friend from college, right?"

I nodded slowly.

“So what's your major then?”

“Oh, just uh,” she paused, “business.”

“How interesting,” his grin began to grow.

Ding! The elevator doors opened and presented the third floor. The man stepped out and turned back around facing Sara. His grin grew as he stared at her. Sara felt knots tying in her chest as the entrance to the elevator started to slowly close. But before it did, the man suddenly pulled out a knife and grinned, “See you on the fourth floor,” then jettied toward the stairwell. Before Sara could say anything, the doors slammed closed.

Sara's body and mind froze as she stared at the now-closed doors. Then the familiar *clink, clink clink*, of the wheels returned as the elevator began to rise. Sara's eyes started to frantically search around the small elevator. The peeling ivory wallpaper, the splintering floorboards, the soft golden buttons, and the rusting elevator door, but no emergency button.

Screw this god-ancient building! Her thoughts screamed. *Come on there has to be a way out of here!* Sara desperately searched the small four-by-four elevator, patting down each of the walls, and pressing all the buttons, to no avail.

Tears began welling up in Sara's eyes. She quickly grabbed her dead phone out of her pocket just to double-check if there were any signs of revival in it. She was met with nothing but a black screen. Screaming, Sara threw the phone at the doors, shattering it.

“I can't die in this godforsaken elevator!!” She yelled, panic taking over her body.

She let sobs out as her legs collapsed, sliding her body to the floor. Sara folded herself into a shaking ball, her breaths became tighter and shorter. Wrapped in her own thoughts, she hardly even noticed the familiar *ding* of the elevator. As she slowly lifted her head she saw the shine of the blade and an eerie smile.