

# The Elevator

by  
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“Life,” as my Grandma used to say, “is full of possibilities...”

I was standing in front of the elevator with my head down—Monday morning blues and lots to do—meetings, phone calls, to-do lists, projects, and boss-stuff that I’ve been putting off for days—I was already feeling the pressure, yet it was only 8:30. Don’t let it get to you, I thought. Rather, think of the possibilities that each day can bring...

The elevator doors opened, gleaming steel that parted as in a science fiction movie. I shuffled in, staring at my shoes that desperately needed polishing.

I rotated my body in slow motion toward the front as the twin slabs of steel whisked shut. The shining metal was mirror-like. I raised my head toward the slight crowd, picked out a woman at the back left—a folded newspaper held in front by long, slender hands. Something about her caused me to slow my already unhurried turn. And at that moment she lowered the paper below her nose and looked up, inhaled, and smiled with recognition.

I stole a glance at her—noticed first her hair, shortly cropped and fine, then her eyes as they found mine and paused as if to say hello. My first reaction was to pull away, but I resisted—there is something about this one, my mind told me...was it the possibilities?

“Miaki, right?” Her voice was soft and sensuous. Was she speaking to me?

“Excuse me?” I met her stare with mine. Strong eyes that focused on my face without wavering, long eyelashes, and a hint of sculpted, rising cheekbones above the edge of newsprint.

“Your cologne. It’s Miaki. I know that scent anywhere.”

“Yes, you are good.” My eyes darted from left to right as I smiled. The paper slid down her face. Her mouth came into view. Her teeth were perfect, white and shiny as the short, pearl necklace that adorned her neck. Her wonderful, captivating face held my attention. And her smile, Jesus—it spoke to me. Her gaze was hypnotic, her eyes balmy and inviting. I pulled my look away, embarrassed—slid my gaze down but

quickly relented and raised my head...the possibilities here were infinite...and quite unexpected.

Forty-eight floors, I was thinking, as we ascended. Forty-eight stories in this blessed building. And I was here with her. But *exactly* how long did I have with her? It depended...on...me.

I stood perfectly still the way night creatures do when their lair is disturbed—I peered in front—gleaming steel bouncing my reflection back along with hers. Those around me melted away, images falling like warm, summer rain that comes down in sheets, slanting through the clouds at angles that defy logic. I imagined being alone with her; turning towards her, reaching for the paper and watching it flutter to the ground like snowflakes. Taking her hand, going to her in one fluid motion like that of a cougar—the other hand reaching for her waist and twirling her around to music only the two of us could hear. Her face resting against my chest as we danced—the feeling of her breasts pressing against mine as we moved in unison—a single being that fed on the rhythms of dual heartbeats.

The elevator chimed and came to a stop. People filed out around me as I moved deeper into the recesses of the elevator. This lovely woman brushed against my arm, and the feeling was electric—like a storm—exciting and invigorating—her pulse feeding me as if intravenously. We savored the touch, this unspoken communication that was magical. The paper dropped to her side. I turned and smiled. We exchanged small talk—dancing around each other delicately the way young lovers do.

The elevator thinned out. Thirty-first floor—the last of the passengers disembarked and we were finally alone. The conversation continued. Our eyes sustained their contact—her smile infectious like a virus. A minute later she gathered her leather bag and readied to go. My mind whirled—there was so much to say—so little time to get it out—I very much wanted to grab her hand—ask her to stay, flee this confined space and venture out into the countryside where we could run free, twirl and dance along crabgrass-covered ground, pursue this *thing* that was blossoming inside us like a wildflower. Dine with me, sit with me at an outdoor café where the wine flows freely, and we can stare into each other's eyes while our fingers interlace and intertwine like grape vines...

But something stopped me from taking her there. There were reasons—many, if I took the time to count and display them neatly in bins for all to see. But there was not the time—my thoughts were interrupted as the doors again opened; forty-seventh floor—she smiled one last time as her stride carried her out. She bid me a good day and I was left with the remnants of her fresh face and warm glow, her presence hugging me like

a warm blanket that one pulls over them late at night when they are chilled. The possibilities, I thought as the steel slid to a close, sealing me in tight...

Forty-eight stories. Three to four seconds of loneliness—thoughts of never again seeing that wonderful smile that made my heart alight like a sparkling flame. My body was beginning to hum, swelling from the void like that of a balloon over-inflated and about to burst. The ache began deep in my gut and radiated outward, accelerating with the anticipation of a growing wave. I exited hastily; hit the down button furiously and anxiously as if I were an impatient child. The elevator finally came, and I ran inside and traveled down. Down to her floor—one long stop that seemed to stretch without end, like an ocean meeting the horizon. But then I was out, thankfully, on dry land, and I scanned the empty hallways—first right, then left. Seconds, only seconds had gone by, and yet, she was gone.

Time for me seemed to slow down, walls curving in and darkening like a Dali painting, as realization seeped in—she was gone—I had been given my chance...nevertheless, I had let her slip through my digits like coarse sand. I glanced down at my shoes. For some strange reason I focused on the leather that was un-buffed. And at that moment I felt a stirring—whether it was a breath or a wisp of air that grazed my neck—I cannot say. But as I looked up, her smile was there, bright and unwavering, like the dawn.

“I’m glad you came back,” she said, lightly touching my arm. I felt my chest and heart swell. Once again I felt the quiver of the wildflower.

“It’s the possibilities,” as my Grandma used to say...“the endless possibilities...”

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