

## The Elevator

By Violet L.

My friend **Alexandrite** (Alex for short) told me about “The Elevator Game” a while ago. A game where you travel from floor to floor in a hotel elevator in certain pattern with hopes of getting transported to an alternate dimension. You see, I’d never believed a word of the stories and games that **Alex** would tell me but for some reason I felt compelled to try this one out.

There was nothing I would particularly count as wrong with my life, I got good grades in school, had a few friends, and pretty much anything I could’ve asked for. However, I just had to see if this game really could change your reality. I think I sat around contemplating the pros and cons for about a week or so before I decided to finally find a hotel and book a room, you know, to not seem suspicious about being in the elevator and only that.

It was late at night so not many people were even in the lobby. Only the employee at the front desk who was quite interested in his target magazine and some old lady who looked even more bonkers than this game sounded. I entered the elevator and read from the numbers written on my palm. “Go to floor four” I noted, reaching out my hand. I then realized how much I was shaking. I snickered and chided it up to me just being excited to prove my friend wrong about their stories. I pressed the button and waited for the soft chime to signify the doors were closing and my adventure was really about to begin. The slow jazz elevator music was making me feel anxious and I questioned how long I was going to be able to last. Once arriving at floor four I looked at my hand again.

“Floor two” I said out loud.

I caught my breath when I realized how nervous I sounded. I let out a shaky sigh before pressing the button and further disembarking on my journey. I continued this pattern of visiting floor to floor and checking my hand. “Two, six, two, ten..” Before pressing the dusty number ten key, I heard a whisper call out to me.

“Hey, you. Come here.” A raspy voice called out. “You need to get out of the elevator.” My knees buckled, there was no one in sight. I remembered what **Alex** had told me about someone or... “something” trying to get you off the elevator once back on floor two. Immediately, I’d jammed my finger onto the key and stared down the hall overridden by terror.

Right before the doors closed, I heard footsteps all around me click-clacking at a normal pace and then rapidly coming closer and closer towards me. Freaking out, I jammed my finger onto the “close” button about five times and clenched my free fist as the doors shut before anything real could happen. I was beyond freaking out but decided to continue reading the numbers on my hand to tapping the corresponding buttons. The feeling of dread settling deeper and deeper into my bones with every passing floor.

Once I reached floor five, the woman **Alex** talked about entered making the small room turn ice cold. **Alex** made it clear that she wasn’t to be acknowledged or interacted with whatsoever as bad things could happen. Deciding I valued my life, I made sure to not even look in her general direction. Now for the last step, I hit the button for floor number one. Instead of descending, I went in the opposite direction.

I felt like throwing up when the woman disappeared. This means I did it right. Had **Alex** been telling the truth? Getting off that elevator, I noted what floor I was on and realized everything felt strange. Colder, emptier, hungrier. I decided to take the stairs down to this

lobby and out of the building but was shocked to see that here it was light out. People walked down the street and smiled back at me as I'd made my way through the town. I remained unsettled as I passed them and could feel their razor sharp gazes still fixed me, as if waiting for me to show any signs of fear. I had no clue where I was going, nor did I know how long I'd been walking the streets. I knew something was definitely wrong when I finally looked back and saw all the people I'd passed unblinking, smiling and running full speed in my direction.

My breath was caught in my throat and my heart was pounding. I knew I had to do something but what? Before I could decide, my body took over and I began to run. It started as a straight line but then I made a 180 and found myself facing the angry mob. I was charging full speed the crowd of potentially homicidal otherworldly beings. My mind was protesting but my body knew full well that I could not stop. Next thing I knew, I was back in the hotel lobby crashing towards the stairs. I still had seven flights to go but my legs were burning and my vision was blurring with tears. As soon as I saw the sign indicating which floor I came from, I leaped for the large iron door.

As I ran down the hallway, I could hear angry footsteps in the stairwell. Being so wound up in those things behind me, I lost my footing and came tumbling down. My now skinned knee burned, but I knew I had to get to that elevator. With the doors still open I lunged and crashed into the back wall. I slammed my hand onto the "close" button. A sigh of relief escaped my burning lungs before dozens of hands were stuck through the gap between the doors. A loud screech rang out and my heart plummeted.