

Felix had read stories about fantastic glass elevators that could go this way and that, whichever way the operator wanted it to. He remembered all of its passengers having to brace against the walls so they wouldn't jostle each other as the elevator took them where they needed to go. This was not that type of elevator, though it did have windows opposite the door so he could see just how high up he didn't want to be, and he still found himself gripping one of the waist-high hand railings like his life depended on it.

The other passengers either didn't notice or didn't care. To be fair, they had no reason to do either. They were family, and they knew this reaction well. The one standing near the buttons was (hopefully? Probably?) his father, looking straight ahead in stoic anticipation of their arrival; and the other, just next to him was (again, hopefully?) his mother, who was far more interested in the view out the window. Felix didn't dare look, though. If he did he might realize how high up he was, which of course would lead to imagining going back down accelerating at ten meters a second a second, and after that, well, not moving at all. So if he was going to look anywhere, he was going to look forward.

He was shaking too, and his hand had nearly turned white when the elevator made that final "ding" signaling their arrival. Together the family stepped off the elevator and onto open air.

Well, obviously not "open air". The plexiglass platform did a well enough job simulating such an experience, though. One errant look down could have sent the weaker-willed into spasms. Felix, for his part, simply kept his eyes closed, his hands firmly locked with his parents', and tried to imagine that this was just a stroll through a local park. Maybe it was a windy day, and if he strained to hear, the trees would all shake and the leaves would all rustle and whatever nightmare this was would all soon be over.

Something was shaking all right. The architecture of skyscrapers had been explained to Felix many times, but the swaying of the building, bending with the air currents, still threw him off and broke his illusion. He still didn't dare open his eyes, though. Only bad things could come from doing that.

His parents (he really hoped they were his parents!) had no such fears. They walked right up to the edge. Felix assumed they could see the city in its full glory from there.

"Felix, it's caged and the glass is practically unbreakable," someone said. "Nobody could fall from here unless they wanted to."

"Mm" was all Felix could say, his half-hum half-mumble almost lost against the wind.

"I don't think this was a good idea."

"He's going to have to get over it eventually."

He really didn't. If Felix had his way he'd stay on the ground, on God's green earth forever. At least then if he tripped the worst thing he'd have to deal with would be a sprained ankle (or maybe a broken arm if he braced wrong).

He felt one of his parent's grip soften a little as they slowly guided his hands to a new guardrail. "Don't leave me," Felix said.

"I'm not leaving you. I'm just going to look around."

It still felt like they were leaving him. There wasn't the same connection. Between hand-in-hand and hand-on-guardrail, Felix knew which one he preferred and now he had to suffer without it for at least a few minutes. And when minutes seemed like hours...

He wasn't crying. He *wasn't* crying. Sure, tears were welling up like he wanted to cry, and he was still trembling all over like someone who was crying would, but it was important to Felix that he made that distinction. Maybe once they all took the elevator back down he would break into sobs, but right now all he could do was wish for that to happen.

"It really is a nice view, Felix," someone said. "I know you don't want to look, but do you want me to describe it to you?"

Felix nodded. It was a subtle nod, the kind of nod that if someone wasn't looking for it they might not see it at all, but it definitely was there.

"Alright," they said. They paused a moment, Felix assumed it was to take in their surroundings, then began:

"It's just after noon, right? So there aren't any shadows or if there are they all hug the buildings they're attached to. This is the highest building so you can see everybody's rooftops. A couple people have their clothes hung up on lines; it must be laundry day for those families..."

And on they went. They tried for every last detail they could see, from where their home was in relation to the skyscraper to trying to spot specific people floors below. If there was a particularly interesting person or a particularly cute Pokémon, they tried to point it out.

"And then, because we're so high up, you can see the forest just outside the city..."

Now that they were describing things further than a couple of blocks away, their descriptions became more focused on color than on action. They talked about how it looked like roofs and walls blended their different shades, creating an industrial rainbow of color, and how that contrasted with the solid green of the trees or the bright blue sky.

"...and if you crane your neck and squint your eyes, you just might see the next town over."

Felix loosened his grip, both on the guardrail and his parent's hand. It was a good view, or at least he could imagine it as one from all the smaller pieces he'd been given. A crucial part of the tableau hinged on him being so high up, so he didn't allow himself to relax all the way, but he still felt better about the experience. "Thank you," he said.

"Of course. Oh, here they come. Ready to leave?"

Again, a nod was all it took. But as the family made their way back to the elevator, the picture in Felix's head began to fade. As hard as he tried to hold on to it, even the most basic details had started to disappear. And he was starting to shake again. He had to keep that image.

Almost on instinct, Felix turned his head and opened his eyes, looking back over his shoulder at the city. It was even better than he pictured it. Every color was brighter, every building stood prouder, and there was a greater variety of people and Pokémon down below, flowing from place to place, than he could have imagined.

As the family stepped back onto the elevator, Felix still wedged himself in the corner, hands back on the rail as his father pushed the button for the ground floor. But Felix did mumble another "Thank you" as the doors closed and the elevator descended back down to earth.