

(The elevator is quiet, then, it awakens. The light turns on, the muzak begins to play, and it hums as it ascends empty, electromagnets humming. Later, the elevator stops, clamps, and as the doors open, utters its chime for the first floor.)

ELKAN: (as the doors open) [We've taken] advantage of the recent chaos to upgrade everything.

(Gedeon brushes a plastic tree in the corner. Elkan presses a button, and his eyes are scanned. It chimes positively.)

ELEVATOR: With the world returning to stability again, we know that many people are looking for better options. You've made the right choice. You're almost there. Welcome to the most secure vault in the world, Etemenanki.

ELKAN: If you'll step over here, Barrister Gedeon, we'll begin your eye registration.

(Gedeon bumps into Elkan as she comes over.)

GEDEON: S-Sorry. How many more of these checkpoints? Have we... reached the final circle of Hell?

ELKAN: Hell has less security. Just the last barrier before the vault.

(The scanner gives a negative response. A headset in Elkan's ear chirps, the two-way radio's speaker inaudible.)

ELKAN: Are you wearing contact lenses?

GEDEON: Oh! Yes! Sorry. Can't remove them. They're for retinopathy scarring.

ELKAN: Oh. That's- I'm sorry.

GEDEON: I'm surprised you held out this long. Most people ask sooner. (Takes a breath) A case I was trying turned... ugly. The defendant attempted to cow us during a partner's meeting and well, sitting at the head of the table saved my life, but there was some lasting damage. We made some powerful enemies – Why else would I come to the most secure vault in the world?

ELKAN: Well, you're in the right place...(Sighs) Sorry, I'm not sure what to do here. I'm waiting for direction.

GEDEON: Did the iris scan not work?

ELKAN: It did, but we use double verification for your file. The contacts are warping the retinal lasers.

GEDEON: Can you use the record warped by my prescription? It'd be another layer of protection and make me your most secure customer. More publicity.

ELKAN: Ha! That's... an interesting-

(Elkan's headset chirps.)

ELKAN: ...Alright. You will need to wear them every time-

GEDEON: They go where I go, no need to worry.

ELKAN: Well, once more with feeling?

(The scanner chimes positively. The elevator ascends upwards.)

ELKAN: Sorry about that. I appreciate your patience and understanding.

GEDEON: (Sighs) Can't this elevator go any faster?

ELKAN: Another precaution.

GEDEON: Why? I can hear the connections; this is an electromagnetic lift. Same maglev technology used in trains?

ELKAN: Good ear. The only elevator to the vault moves slowly, if there were any issues, well-

GEDEON: Ah, We'd be in a holding cell.

ELKAN: Oh, no, the elevator opens to a small office outside the vault door. It has a holding cell. (Chuckles) The slow rise means we have time to send a second check of your credentials. The Tower has never been breached, and our vault has never been compromised. We've had attempts, but no one has managed to escape.

GEDEON: I-I noticed each step trapped us further behind your security.

ELKAN: It's boringly bureaucratic but I hope our customer service makes up for it. That panel hides a mini-fridge, could I get you a beverage while we wait?

(Elkan crosses and opens a panel; a small refrigerator fan rattles inside.)

GEDEON: I'm fine. No thank you.

ELKAN: Are you sure? It's going to be a whil-ah, then would you mind if I?

GEDEON: Sure! Go right ahead.

ELKAN: Thank you. Sorry it's just very-

GEDEON: Don't worry about it.

(Elkan selects a can and closes the panel. He pops the seal with a hiss.)

GEDEON: I, uh, thought it was safer to keep the vault in the basement. Why the thirty-seventh floor?

(Elkan drops the empty can in a receptacle.)

ELKAN: The official line is that with seventy-five stories, it's harder to tunnel four hundred feet in the air. Unofficially, it's publicity.

GEDEON: What if you're a floor above or below the vault? Or coming from the outside.

ELKAN: I'd want to know how they managed to break concrete without any seismic activity.

GEDEON: Ha! Maybe something more powerful? Rocket-propelled grenade?

ELKAN: Wouldn't work. The outer walls are reinforced to withstand an impact from forty-millimeter rounds. It was... tested recently.

GEDEON: Wow. You really do think of everything. (beat) Explosives on the floor below?

ELKAN: Bad idea if you're on that floor. It'd bring the building down upon you. The thirty-sixth floor has no walls in it's interior. It catches intruders hiding behind the support beams.

GEDEON: For a guard, you're very open about your security measures.

ELKAN: Company policy is to reassure our clients, and remind them they are bound by a strict Non-disclosure agreement. Besides, we guarantee your next visit will be completely different, depending on what changes we've made.

GEDEON: Nothing more reassuring than the threat of legal action.

(Elkan's earpiece chirps.)

ELKAN: I have to say, it's nice to be starting an individual account.

GEDEON: Really? Is that special?

ELKAN: The majority of our clients are large corporations and some smaller governments. You're a... nice change of pace for me, and-... upstairs wants to know why for a survey.

GEDEON: At least I'm not boring. Let's just say I know people who use your services, and what they've kept hidden in there.

ELKAN: Heh. I should remind you that anything you see in the vault is also confidential. No details, but among the servers, and documents we protect... there are a fair number of... risqué portraits.

GEDEON: Really? Anything... memorable?

ELKAN: There was a trend. What better show of dominance for your office than a manly display of you posing like a Burt Reynolds' centerfold. Paid for with company funds, of course.

GEDEON: Ah. Now they are company property.

ELKAN: Indeed. Not much longer, about twenty seconds to...

(Elkan's headset chirps multiple times, urgently.)

ELKAN: (Sighs) And today was a good day.

GEDEON: I-Is something the matter?

(The elevator initiates an emergency stop. Clamps lock in place, and the emergency lighting activates.)

ELKAN: And there goes the power. I'm afraid the building is in lockdown. We caught a domestic terrorist in the lobby. Probably another techno-anarchist with a grudge.

GEDEON: That's... terrifying. Will we be safe here?

ELKAN: We already have them in custody. We're completing a sweep of the lower levels and we'll reopen.

GEDEON: Impressive efficiency... How long would you say until we begin moving?

ELKAN: That... might be some time. Are you sure about not wanting something to drink?

GEDEON: Do you have anything cherry-flavored?

ELKAN: I think so. Let me take a look.

(Elkan crosses to the fridge. Away from it, something is inserted into a slot. Elkan opens the panel.)

ELKAN: Here, we go, all the way in the back.

(Elkan shifts a couple cans, then closes the door. Gedeon fiddles with her watch clasp.)

ELKAN: Oh, did your watch come loose?

GEDEON: (Grunts) The, uh, clasp comes undone if I flex too much.

ELKAN: Allow me... oh dear. This is a fake

(Gedeon taps the top of the can as Elkan fumbles with the clasp.)

GEDEON: Fake? I shouldn't be surprised, yet...

ELKAN: The logo on the clock faces to the left. Similar materials... guessing the factory sold their defective units at a discount.

GEDEON: I'll have a word with my stylist.

ELKAN: Probably not their fault. Too many people trying trick others for money.

GEDEON: Considering most of your clients are corporations, I'm sure you're well aware.

ELKAN: (chuckles) Slightly. Though, my experience is more with security than fraud.

GEDEON: Two sides of the same coin, aren't they? Fraud preys on those weak enough to be fooled, and burglars exploit weaknesses in security.

ELKAN: I doubt they're going to make any high-stakes movies about running exiled prince scams – can't believe anyone falls for the misspellings.

GEDEON: That's part of the trick. If you're smart enough to notice that, you're smart enough to not fall for it.

ELKAN: Oh! That makes sense. Easy targets!

GEDEON: Yep. That's why no one is famous for performing it. Fool an easy target, and everyone blames the victim. (chuckles) Trick an expert and everyone wants to know how you did it. You need to go big to make an impression.

(The elevator begins moving. Elkan tries the radio repeatedly.)

ELKAN: Elkan to Tower! Vault Elevator is in motion! Tower? Hello? We're not supposed to be moving! ...Why are you so calm?

GEDEON: Shouldn't I be? My distraction worked, the elevator is moving, and your comms are down.

ELKAN: Wait, are you- If you're- who do we have in custody?!

GEDEON: A singing telegram.

(Elkan draws his sidearm on Gedeon.)

ELKAN: Hands where I can see them.

GEDEON: Must we? Alright. Not making any movements. Can I put my drink down?

ELKAN: How did you take control of the elevator?

GEDEON: I inserted a data stick in the console.

ELKAN: We went through... Where... the watch.

GEDEON: Not only fake, but lead-plated too; You almost caught both.

ELKAN: You're not even Tracy Gedeon, are you? That is why you insisted on wearing contacts; iris modification

GEDEON: No, I am me. The scarring ended my legal career. I needed to come in person in order to do this.

ELKAN: Why? What are you after?

GEDEON: Have you seen the world outside? Five hundred trillion raised by your clients exploiting others. I will destroy everything they hold dear the same way they caused retinopathy damage to me – explosively.

(Thirty-seventh floor, doors open. Gedeon's watch beeps.)

ELKAN: Don't you dare move.

GEDEON: We need to get out of this elevator, you said there was a holding cell?

ELKAN: You're not going near the vault. We're going back down.

GEDEON: I reprogrammed the controls to stay here for only one minute.

ELKAN: One minute... then what happens?

GEDEON: I'm using the roof to escape.

ELKAN: The elevator doesn't go that high.

GEDEON: You turned this building into a fortress, but the shaft goes to the roof. There's less protection over us here than above the vault. I reprogrammed the elevator to drop this car down before using the electromagnetic system as a railgun. We need to get out of here before the controller goes Full Charlie and the Chocolate Factory with us inside it.

ELKAN: ...Fine. With me... slowly.

(The two move carefully, step and step, out onto the floor.)

GEDEON: Thank you. I am sorry. The plan was to execute the program when we walked out below.

ELKAN: You act like you're justified doing this, but innocent people get hurt.

GEDEON: Your clients call that an operating cost. Oh! That's right, I forgot!

ELKAN: What! Do you want me to shoot you?

(Gedon's watch beeps.)

GEDEON: I set the controller to thirty seconds. (lunges)

(Gedeon smashes the soda can into Elkan, spurting. Elkan's gun fires up into the ceiling, but he falls into the elevator as the elevator brakes disengage.)

ELKAN: (grunts in impact)

(The car plummets with a squish. Gedeon slides down the wall to the floor slowly.)

GEDEON: (Heavy breathing) Shit, that was close.

(Below the elevator slams down on the brakes. Gedeon stands.)

GEDEON: (grunts) ...and that violence, Elkan, makes this a robbery; not a burglary. Well, If I were taking anything.

(The elevator whooshes up, picking up speed and force.)

GEDEON: I guess this would be forcible and unlawful entry, not to mention arson and destruction of property. Not that anyone cares what the law actually says anymore.

(The elevator races past and upwards to smash through the roof! Chunks of rubble rain down.)

In freefall, the elevator plummets down past with an ugly impact. A helicopter is heard, pushing air down into the corridor. A case is lowered.)

GEDEON: (coughing) Package and ride, just in time.

(Gedeon unhooks the case and opens it. They arm the bomb, which beeps. They put on a headset, then clip on a harness.)

GEDEON: Gilgamesh, this is Enkidu. Ready for extraction.

GILGAMESH: (Over headset) Gilgamesh here. We have three minutes until interception by fighter jets. We'll drop you off before crashing your getaway. Ishtar has your next ride. Any issues, Enkidu?

GEDEON: Security was in the elevator. We'll have to forge the life insurance for our little Elkan.

GILGAMESH: Noted. Commencing lift off. Standby for detonation.

(Gedeon rises out of the elevator shaft and into the sky, as the timer counts down to explode.)