

Hey, Harlan. Here, uh, here it is.

To be totally honest with you man, I was not planning on doing this again this year. After last time, I... [SIGH] but I got your message and it... kinda freaked me out...

Not sure if this whole "solos" format thing makes me feel better or worse, but...

We, uh, do what we can, and we hope it's enough, right? So, to you, listening, I hope this is good enough.

I clean offices. As a part time, super casual gig. Pays off my student loans, and it's, as far as work goes, pretty enjoyable. It's usually alone, which means some designated- and paid- peace and quiet. Sometimes, though, big jobs, and there are a couple other cleaners I've gotten to know, and we help each other out.

This specific job was with a girl I got along really well with, Autumn. She reached out about this big top floor office needing people to fill in for their regular cleaners. It was a one-off, paid a stupid amount of money, and we'd go for drinks after. It was an easy yes.

The job itself was very normal, aside from getting used to the strange sounds a new building makes, we had a good chat, and before we knew it, we were hauling many, large garbage bags out the door and into the hall.

[SOUND OF ELEVATOR BUTTON BEING PRESSED, GARBAGE BAGS]

AUTUMN: You're taking the elevator?

JESS: You wanna haul this down like five flights of stairs?

AUTUMN: Just send the garbage down on its own.

JESS: No.

AUTUMN: Why not?

JESS: Cause if it falls over and spills gross garbage juice, we're gonna have to clean that up too.

AUTUMN: [TEASING, EW] Don't say garbage juice.

[THE ELEVATOR ARRIVES, DOOR OPENS]

AUTUMN: It looks like it hasn't been touched since like, the 90's.

JESS: There'd be a sign if it wasn't safe.

AUTUMN: Looks like you'd end up in another dimension if you took that thing. Super liminal.

JESS: You don't have to come, I'll meet you at the bottom.

[SOUNDS OF HAULING BAGS ONTO ELEVATOR. PAUSE AS PHONE BUZZ]

AUTUMN: Who's that?

JESS: Just my phone telling me its bedtime.

AUTUMN: You know you can switch that off?

JESS: Shoot.

AUTUMN: What?

JESS: I got two percent battery.

AUTUMN: I got a charger in the car.

JESS: Great. Can you text Ren and let them know we're heading out?

AUTUMN: Yeah.

[FINISHES MOVING THE BAGS]

JESS: Okay. See you on the other side, partner.

AUTUMN: Godspeed.

[ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE.]

JESS: [SIGHS]

[ELEVATOR DINGS, MOVING SOUND. THEN, A BANG. ANOTHER, AND THE ELEVATOR SHUDDERS TO A HALT]

JESS: Shit. Come on, man. Don't-

[FRANTIC BUTTON PRESSING]

No, please... Autumn, can you hear me? The fucking elevator stopped. I bet you think this is hilarious. [BEAT] Can you hear me?

Shit. Okay. There's a big red emergency button for this exact reason...

[PRESSES IT]

Underwhelming. I thought you would make a noise. I- I hope that did something.

[BEAT. ELEVATOR SHUDDERS.]

I don't like that.

[LOUDLY:] Autumn, can you hear me? Are you at the lobby yet?

[SIGHS.]

JESS: Okay. Please have enough juice to call... there's no number? Of course there's no number in here... God, okay. 911 please don't hate me.

[RINGING]

OPERATOR: 911, what's your emergency?

JESS: Okay. Hey. I'm so sorry for calling but I'm trapped in an elevator at work and I don't know who else to call.

OPERATOR: What's the address?

JESS: Shit. Um, I know it's that tall grey building downtown? It's the um, Noel and Ryder Law firm. That's the best I got, sorry, this is the first time I've ever...

OPERATOR: I've got you. What's your name?

JESS: Jess.

OPERATOR: Okay, Jess, just hang tight. I'll get a unit from the fire department over to you as soon as possible.

JESS: Amazing, thank you so much.

OPERATOR: Does the elevator feel unsafe or unsteady at all?

JESS: What a terrifying question... um, not really. It doesn't feel unstable, just stuck. It shuddered a couple times though.

OPERATOR: Would you like me to stay on the line with you until help arrives?

JESS: Um, that's okay. My phone's gonna die any minute now. Wanna save the battery in case. Got any ETA on when they'll get here?

OPERATOR: Shouldn't be more than 10 minutes.

JESS: Amazing. Thank you so much.

OPERATOR: Please call back if anything changes.

JESS: I will. Thank you.

JESS [NARRATING AGAIN: I waited. A long time. Longer than 10 minutes, but it wasn't exactly an emergency, and I didn't want

to inconvenience anyone. Stupid. I just sat on the floor with those stinking garbage bags and tried to keep my mind off the four tight walls strung up by cables and the open drop that was below me and how hot and stale and stinky the air was getting...

I avoided checking my phone for as long as I could hold out, but when I finally did, I couldn't take it anymore.

[RINGING]

OPERATOR: 911, what's your emergency?

JESS: Hi. I called a while ago about being stuck in an elevator and I was told help was coming but it's been- 2 hours and no one has shown up and I wanted to be patient, and my phone's hanging on by a thread, but-

OPERATOR: What's the address?

JESS: It's that Noel and Ryder Law Firm downtown. I didn't drive here, I don't know the exact-

OPERATOR: I see that a unit was sent and no one was there. Two units, actually.

JESS: What? That's not-

OPERATOR: I have several calls coming in from this number. Ma'am, are you aware it's a criminal offense to waste our time-  
?

JESS: There should have been someone there, she would have been- this isn't- I think I literally spoke to *you*-

OPERATOR: [STERN] Firemen spoke to building security who confirmed there's no one in the building at this address, and no one in the elevator.

JESS: What? What security? My friend, she should be there, she wouldn't have left me-

OPERATOR: I suggest you find some other way to entertain yourself. If you call again, charges will be pressed-

JESS: Wait, listen, I swear I'm here and I need help-!

OPERATOR: [CURTLY, HANGING UP] Goodnight, ma'am.

JESS: No-!

[MUTTERING AND PRESSING BUTTONS]

[RINGING]

AUTUMN [PHONE]: Hi, it's Autumn. You know the deal. [BEEP]

JESS: Hey, where are you? I've been stuck for- [CHECKS] Like, five hours, there's no way you haven't noticed. You could have called me. What's going on? Answer the damn phone. Please.

[SIGHS. GETTING FRUSTRATED. STARTS HITTING THE WALLS]

JESS: Please, please, just MOVE please MOVE-

[PANEL COMES LOOSE]

JESS: Shit, what's... Please still be in service, please god still be in service...

[RINGING TWICE:]

JESS: Hi. Sorry. I found this number behind a panel in this elevator. I'm stuck and I literally don't know who else to call, my phone's about to die, I need-

VOICE: Listen kid, I don't know who the hell you are, but I mean it: *stop calling this number.*

JESS: What? I-

VOICE: Prank calls aren't funny. I'm serious. Stop calling this number. Please just leave me alone.

JESS: What are you talking about? I've never called you- please I've been trapped in here for hours and no one-

VOICE: If you call again, I'm going to call the police.

JESS: [GENUINE UPSET] Please do! *Please* call the police and tell them I'm stuck- [THEY HANG UP] Hello? No, no, please- dammit. okay.

One more call. Please just let me make one more call.

[RINGING.]

Come on, please pick up. Please-

RACHELLE, [PHONE]: Hi, you've reached Rachelle. Sorry I can't come to the phone. Please leave a message, I'll get back to you. [BEEP]

JESS: Mum, it's me. Uh- I'm stuck in an elevator and I- I don't know what's going on and I don't know how long this call is gonna last but if you get this, could you please call for help? No one will believe me, I-

Shit! Dammit, no, no no-

[THROWS PHONE. SPENDS A COUPLE MOMENTS CRYING/ FREAKING OUT. THEN: THE ELEVATOR STARTS GOING DOWN, DINGING.]

JESS: Oh thank god. Oh thank you Jesus.

[ELEVATOR KEEPS DINGING]

Wait-

[DINGS REPEATING OVER AND OVER, FASTER]

JESS: Stop- stop! Please- let me off, let me out!

[ELEVATOR STOPS, DINGS AS DOORS OPEN]

JESS: What the -? [CALLING, IT ECHOES] Hello? What is this place? Why is it so... dark?

[FOOTSTEPS OFF THE ELEVATOR, INTO THE SPACE. CALLING AGAIN:]

JESS: Hello?

[ELEVATORS START OPENING ALL AROUND, MANY DIFFERENT JESSES TOO, ON PHONE CALLS, DESPERATELY TRYING TO GET THROUGH]

JESS: What... how... I don't...

OTHER: [LOW, HOARSE, WHISPER] Trapped. Down down down... always down... always dark... The doors open and they sing when they do and it mocks me- it mocks me- they mock me...

JESS: Hello? Who's there?

[SHUFFLING FOOTSTEPS]

OTHER: I strayed from the light, I stepped out of the box and all was lost to me, the way out, the way home...

OTHER: Answer the phone! I am calling, I am calling, I call and no one hears me and I wandered into the dark and I turn around and the elevator is gone-

JESS: What...

OTHER: I have been left- you- you left it empty, you left it open, you-

[GRUNTING AS THE OTHER RUNS TOWARDS JESS AND THE ELEVATOR]

JESS: No, no- stop!

[CRIES AND GRUNTS AS THEY WRESTLE]

OTHER: I want to go home! I want to go home!



[JESS RUNS INTO THE ELEVATOR, SLAMMING INTO THE WALL, THE DOORS CLOSE, THE ELEVATOR DINGS]

JESS: [HEAVING BREATHS, PANTING, SOUNDS OF PAIN] What the fuck... what the fuck... Please, I just want to go home- please...

[ELEVATOR STARTS MOVING. DINGS. STOPS. DOORS OPEN]

AUTUMN: You ready to go? [BEAT] Oh my god, what happened to your arm?

JESS: [NARRATING AGAIN] Anyways. I'm claustrophobic now.

I just... slipped through the cracks of it all for a moment, I guess. I don't know. Sometimes when it's too dark, I- I get scared I'm still down there. Well, I guess, in a way, I am. Or- there's a version of me out there that is.

And- and yeah, I hope this was good enough. If not- I guess we'll find out, huh?