

**Elevator**

**Episode 2: Maximum Capacity**

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(Two strangers meet, waiting at elevator. There is an awkward, silent attraction.)

WOMAN 1

I hate this elevator

WOMAN 2

I hate this building but it's all I can afford right now

WOMAN 1

Me, too. What floor?

WOMAN 2

Seven

WOMAN 1

Seven? I'm on seven. You must be new?

WOMAN 2

Yeah. Gotta love moving day, right?

WOMAN 1

Yup. Gotta love it.

(Awkward smiles)

WOMAN 1

Well let me warn you: These elevators are weird. Like, obviously, there are two, but this is the only one that goes to seven.

WOMAN 2

Okay. So, I can't use the other. That's not so weird. Could prove inconvenient but not weird.

WOMAN 1

No, let me finish. It's weird like haunted or something. Like, you press seven. You know you pressed seven, but the elevator does what it wants. Eventually, you get to seven though.

WOMAN 2

What do you mean "does what it wants" and "eventually, you get to seven?"

WOMAN 1

It's gonna take us past seven. All the way to the top at thirteen. Stops and opens at every other floor like someone is getting on. Nobody ever really gets on though. Then the same thing at eleven, nine -

WOMAN 2

Wait! You mean we're going to go past our floor and stop at every floor just to get to our floor?

WOMAN 1

I said, "Every other floor" ...aaand ride with everyone who gets on!

WOMAN 2

You just said, "nobody ever really gets on."

(Elevator arrives. Doors open. Both women step inside. Doors close. Woman 1 looks at Woman 2 and grins.)

WOMAN 1

You'll see what I mean. Press seven. Welcome to the neighborhood.

(Elevator moves pass floors two through six. It dings at seven but doesn't open. Woman 2 begins pressing seven hard. Each time, it dings but doesn't open.)

WOMAN 1

Already tried that. Doesn't work. Call Cancel doesn't work either. I've just learned to live with it. You'll learn to live with it, too. They won't hurt you. I think they just want to be heard, someone to listen-

WOMAN 2

What are you talking about? Who are they?

(Elevator stops at thirteen. Doors open slowly. Doors close slowly.)

WOMAN 1

Thirteen. Here we go.

(Elevator lights blackout. A dim light is cast on Woman 1 as she seems to become someone else. These "elses" speak poetically.)

WOMAN 1 (*Homeless person. Hum-Animal Cruelty*)

Hours of infomercials streaming  
Late night and Sunday mornings  
2.2 million spent on a 30-second  
Super Bowl ad  
111.9 million watched  
Yet, no one sees what's happening to me  
The smartest phone doesn't capture  
The frame of my struggle  
Pixelating, disguising my identity

13 degrees last night  
Wind chill 3, coldest of the season  
*Code Blue* issued  
My refrigerator box and I  
Made the 4, 5, 6, and 7 o'clock news  
We went viral  
But by 10, they were bored  
On to the next *breaking story*

A happy-heart feature  
The anchorman found about puppies  
Everyone loves puppies  
Put designer coats  
On their puppies  
But look away from my cardboard sign  
Ad by day  
Pillow by night  
It's hard to *Sharpie* over *Life's Good*  
It reached 59 today  
*FOX News* set up at my home  
A tripod's stakes punctured my bed

The groundhog made  
Predictions of an early spring  
Soccer Moms armed  
With Cappuccinos and juice boxes  
Take leave from *Bold & Beautiful* labor  
Unleash their puppies  
Let them piss on my cardboard sign

A hostile takeover of my park bench  
Puppies and kids chasing black and white balls  
While I chase blanket pages of *New York Times*

(Elevator lights up as it moves past floor twelve. Woman 1 instantly returns to her normal self. Woman 2 is in disbelief.)

WOMAN 2

You play too much. I don't know what you're doing but this is not funny. I mean, it is funny but not "ha ha ha" funny. Cute trick, though. You should save that for April Fool's or Halloween.

(Woman 1 is silent. The elevator stops at eleven. Doors open and close. Lights blackout again. Dim light shines on Woman 1.)

WOMAN 1 (*Mother Grieving. Inarguable Content*)

Because I can, badge in hand  
This ain't your land Blue  
Stepped on my shoes, ego bruised  
Something to prove Black  
*Stand Your Ground* right, bitter  
Tobacco-stained cotton White  
The *Why* and the *Who*  
Don't give me back you

Black Lives

Profitable, inconsequential, disposable matter

Bended knees

Bare hands

Cradling ashes with soil

Like the first time I held you

Peace it gives

No funeral

No memorial

In Momma's garden

Your Black Matter Lives

(Elevator lights up as it moves past floor ten. Woman 1 instantly returns to her normal self. Woman 2 is in tears.)

WOMAN 2

Stop it! Just stop it! You're not funny! You're mean! You're cruel! You're sick! You're -

WOMAN 1

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! I'm not doing anything. I warned you about the elevator. I warned you.

WOMAN 2

You did not warn me about this!

WOMAN 1

It'll be okay. I told you they won't harm you. They just want to be heard. That's all. Now, you're going to have to be tougher than that if you're going to live here.

(Woman 1 gives Woman 2 a little hug.)

WOMAN 1

We've got one more floor to go. Just gotta get past nine.

WOMAN 2

And what happens at nine? Somebody with nine lives jumps on and I gotta deal with nine people coming out of you? I just want to get to my seven.

WOMAN 1

No, silly. There's no nine people. Nine is almost like looking in a mirror. It's like seeing yourself. And, you know, seven is God's number for perfection, for completion, for rest and restoration. You will get to seven, but **you must go through** nine first.

(Woman 1 and Woman 2 are silent. The elevator stops at nine. Doors open and close. Lights blackout again. Dim light shines on Woman 2.)

WOMAN 2 (*Gender-queer Person. I AM ME*)

She/her? He/him? They/them? I got to choose a pronoun, now? What's up with that? I gotta choose because you're confused? Hell, I'm not. And ain't nobody got time for that! I just want to go to the bathroom, people. I am me. That's my pronoun: ME. I AM ME.

(Woman 1 and Woman 2 are silent. Lights up as the elevator moves past eight. They look at one another through tears and smiles. There is a sense of relief about their initial, awkward attraction. The elevator stops at seven. Doors open. Hand in hand, they step out of the elevator.)

BLACKOUT

