

**small  
spaces**

written by

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**EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT**

**CEDRIC** (30s) opens his car boot and pulls out 6 ABSOLUTELY-LOADED SHOPPING BAGS.

He walks a few steps out of the garage before dropping the bags to soothe his already-tender fingers.

He's much taller than average, broader, too. His clothes are more baggy than comfortable.

In the near distance, his TOWER BLOCK looms over him.

**INT. TOWER BLOCK, GROUND FLOOR - NIGHT**

Cedric struggles into the building with no hands. Pain and exhaustion.

Cedric stops between the LIFT and the STAIRWELL DOOR. He drops the bags and tends to his crippled fingers.

Suddenly, cables and engines DRONE above.

Cedric follows the sound down as it reaches the ground floor. The lift arrives.

The steel door SCRAPES open. It's empty.

Cedric stays put ...

The lift door remains open ... waiting.

Cedric glances at the stairwell door ... then down at his hands and bags.

The lift still waits ...

Cedric finally grabs his bags and cautiously shuffles into the lift. Pebbles of sweat. Sharp breaths.

**INT. TOWER BLOCK, LIFT - NIGHT**

Cedric frantically looks around the steel box, until landing on his shoes... GULP! Black water slowly encroaches and touches his toes ...

Panic ensues -- shut eyes, sharp breaths, trembling hands.

The door slowly closes -- Cedric jams his foot in the door at the last second --

**INT. TOWER BLOCK, GROUND FLOOR - NIGHT**

Cedric squeezes out of the lift, GASPING for air. The door GRINDS shut behind him.

He drops his bags again. His hands frantically tremble.

**INT. TOWER BLOCK, STAIRWELL - NIGHT**

Concrete. Windowless. Harsh lights on each level. Sticky steps. Feels like an ascending sewer.

**THE TWELFTH FLOOR**

Cedric climbs, dragging his shopping bags behind him. He's fit, but it's still a workout.

He stops for a breather and to wipe his brow ... Then starts off again -- Bumping into a **LADY** (70s). Tiny in stature, eccentric in style. Wispy grey hairs in a sea of white.

The Lady has a cheerful disposition: The chirpy neighbour.

CEDRIC

Sorry!

LADY

Not at all!

Cedric starts off --

LADY

You're new, ain't ya? Settled in alright?

Cedric doesn't recognise her, but he doesn't let on.

CEDRIC

... Yeah, just about. No more furniture to carry up fourteen flights of stairs.

There's a polite LAUGH, then a brief lull ...

CEDRIC

Anyway, I'd better get home --

Cedric attempts to leave --

LADY

Why didn't you take the lift?

Cedric forces another LAUGH.

CEDRIC

I doubt the sofa would fit --

LADY  
Today, I mean.

CEDRIC  
... I could ask you the same  
question.

The Lady doesn't flinch.

The silence grows awkward.

She spies the sweat at the edge of Cedric's hairline. Cedric holds his breath, bags slicing through finger meat.

LADY  
It's okay. I had it too.

Cedric eases. Relief.

CEDRIC  
"Had"?

The Lady nods. Her sunny disposition begins to fade ...

LADY  
Do you remember the moment?

CEDRIC  
... What-- [moment]?

LADY  
The moment you knew you couldn't  
get out.

Cedric squeezes the shopping bags. He searches his mind for a redacted memory... but nothing comes.

LADY  
You can't keep pushing that  
boulder uphill forever.

CEDRIC  
I've tried all the therapies.  
Nothing --

LADY  
I have a trick that I think  
works.

The Lady pulls out a small, old BOX OF MATCHES from her coat pocket. It's pitch black with concentric white squares on it. It looks handmade.

CEDRIC  
(resigned)  
I've tried them all ...

LADY

How can you fix the problem when  
you can't even remember the  
cause?

The Lady slides the matchbox drawer open revealing the bed of  
already-burned matches.

LADY

You can trick that scared little  
child in your head into not being  
afraid. You've just got to start  
small. So small even I can't  
fit...

The Lady pours the matchsticks onto the floor, then presents  
the empty drawer to Cedric.

He stares into it ... The Lady watches him closely. Darkness  
in her eyes.

LADY

... Get in this box.

Cedric SCOFFS. The Lady isn't joking.

CEDRIC

... I obviously can't fit in  
there. Maybe a finger --

LADY

Then a finger.

Cedric looks at the empty matchbox. He concedes, freeing his  
right hand of bags.

The matchbox fits barely an inch of his index finger.

A few seconds of silence go by ... Cedric CHUCKLES it off.

CEDRIC

I really should get going --

He attempts to retrieve his finger -- but The Lady SNAPS the  
matchbox drawer tight, locking him in --

Cedric GASPS in sudden pain!