

THE ELEVATOR

By Patrick Gabridge

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CAST: JUNE and BERT

AT RISE: An elevator in a high rise apartment building. (everything here should be mimed for contest purposes) BERT enters an elevator and presses a button. JUNE enters and also presses a button. Both of them stare into the air above the door, as they watch the numbers light up. BERT's eyes wander from the lights to the woman and then quickly jump back to the numbers. All of a sudden, he turns around and hits a large stop button on the panel. Both BERT and JUNE fly into the air and land in piles on the floor. BERT gets on his knees and takes JUNE's hand.

JUNE: What the—you hit the stop button. What are you—?

BERT: I just had to tell you that—

JUNE: Get away from me!

(SHE jerks her hand away and stands up. HE jumps to his feet.)

BERT: I just want to tell you—

JUNE: Stay away from me!

(SHE reaches into her purse and mimes pulling out a can of mace.)

BERT: Wait, I just—

JUNE: I'm trained in self defense and could gouge your eyes out in a second.

(HE moves towards her.)

BERT: I just wanted to touch your—

(SHE sprays the mace in his eyes.)

JUNE: Rape! Rape! Help! Help!

BERT: ***(screaming)*** Owww! Oh, my eyes, my eyes!

(JUNE starts pushing buttons in an attempt to get the elevator to start.)

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JUNE: It won't start!

BERT: My eyes!

JUNE: How do I start this?

BERT: I can hardly see anything.

JUNE: **(JUNE pushes at the buttons, but nothing happens. SHE keeps pushing on them frantically.)** Nothing's happening! We're stuck. I'm stuck in here with a rapist. Help! **(SHE starts pushing buttons again and then stops suddenly, looking up.)** It's dark. What happened?

BERT: Oh, my gosh! I've gone blind. My eyes, my eyes. Someone help me!

JUNE: You're not blind, I just—

BERT: You've blinded me. I hope you're happy. I hope you're happy that I will never see again. **(softly)** I'm blind.

JUNE: You were going to attack me, and I defended myself. I don't feel sorry for you one bit, Mister.

BERT: I don't know why you think I was going to attack you.

JUNE: You stopped the elevator and grabbed me. What am I supposed to think?

BERT: If I was going to hurt you, why would I do it in a crowded building in the middle of the day?

JUNE: Well—

BERT: There will be people at every floor. And you can always push the alarm button.

JUNE: Maybe you're crazy.

BERT: If I was that crazy, I would have already hurt you.

JUNE: Okay, maybe you didn't want to rape me... So what were you doing?

BERT: I just wanted to touch your hand, and in punishment for that, you've blinded me.

JUNE: You're not blind.

BERT: I'm not?

JUNE: No, the lights are just out. I hit the wrong button. **(SHE tries the buttons again. Pause, and they suddenly look upward)** Okay, the lights are back on. How are your eyes?

BERT: They hurt.

(SHE mimes giving him a water bottle from her purse.)

JUNE: Wipe your eyes with this; it's just water.

(HE wipes his eyes but still can't open them all the way.)

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BERT: Thanks.

JUNE: Better?

BERT: A little.

JUNE: I'm sorry I maced you.

BERT: I'm sorry I frightened you.

JUNE: So how do we get out of here?

BERT: We wait for them to get us out.

JUNE: That could take a long time.

BERT: There's nothing we can do.

JUNE: We just have to sit here? **(beat)** What's your name?

BERT: Bert. I live in 1510.

JUNE: I'm—

BERT: June. You live in 1702.

JUNE: How did you know?

BERT: I heard you talking to a friend on the way up once.

JUNE: That's funny, I don't remember seeing you before. Did you just move in?

BERT: Two years ago.

JUNE: **(obviously embarrassed)** It was in this elevator?

BERT: I've seen you lots of times.

JUNE: Oh. **(long pause)** I didn't mean anything by it. I wasn't consciously ignoring you.

BERT: That's okay. It's happened before.

JUNE: I just didn't see you, that's all.

BERT: It's okay.

(JUNE looks around the elevator, not sure what to say next. Her eyes stop on the panel of buttons. SHE stands up.)

JUNE: Look, there's a phone. It says here to "Open door and use phone in case of emergency." Should I open it?

BERT: I think this would count as an emergency.

(SHE takes out the phone.)

JUNE: Hello. **(silence)** Hello. **(silence)** Nobody's there.

BERT: We can try again later.

JUNE: What if nobody finds out that we're in here?

BERT: People have to use the elevator.

JUNE: But maybe they don't know anyone is in here.

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BERT: They'll find out.

JUNE: We could be here for days.

BERT: I'm sure we'll be out soon.

JUNE: We could starve. We don't have any water. We'll die of thirst.

(SHE grabs the phone again and screams into it.) Help! Help! Can you hear me? We're stuck in here! Is anybody there? **(to BERT)** Someone answered. They heard me. **(back to phone)** Hello, is anybody there? Yes, yes. This is June from 1702. I'm stuck in here... Yes, I'm fine. Am I alone? No. This guy, uh...

BERT: Bert, from 1510.

JUNE: Bert from 1510 is here. Is he all right? Yes. I mean, no. His eyes are hurt. **(with some pride)** I maced him. No, everything is fine. Really. There was just a little accident, that's all. Okay. Thanks. Yes, we will. It's not like we're going anywhere.

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