

A WEIGHT IS LIFTED

by Janice Tyler



As the lift door in the shopping arcade creaked to a close, all three passengers looked at each other waiting for someone to press the button. Hazel was standing closest to the panel and, although she didn't feel like speaking to anyone in her current mindset, put on her brightest voice, "Which floor?"

"Oh, um, third please," the teenage boy said, face looking down to the floor, blushing.

"Fifth for me." The businesswoman glanced briefly at Hazel and carried on texting.

"Same as me." Hazel pressed the buttons and then leant back against the side of the lift. God she was scared. Even though the decision was made, she felt like getting out at the first floor and legging it down the stairs, back onto the safety of the street. A bit of yoga breathing would help calm her. In, hold, out, and repeat.

"Are you alright?" The woman was looking at her with concern. "I know the lift is a bit old, but it hasn't broken down in years."

"Sorry, no, I'm fine, honestly."

Hazel shuffled her feet and looked upwards as the lift door opened and the teenager dashed out calling, "Bye mum, see you later." As the door closed, she heard him laughing with his friends, "There's a right weirdo in the lift today."

The woman looked at Hazel, "My apologies, teenage boys you know."

Hazel nodded and then gazed blankly at the opposite wall. Just two stops to the fifth where the management offices were, two stops to when she would finally confront Jeremy and demand he make a decision. As she thought about it, her heart beat faster and her palms felt sweaty.

The woman looked up again, "You really don't look well. Why don't you sit on the floor and put your head between your knees."

"Thanks, I do feel a bit faint." As Hazel sat on the floor, the lift spun off its axis and the floor rose up to meet her in blackness.

She came to as the door opened on floor five. The woman helped her to her feet. "I didn't stop the lift as we were nearly there. Are you okay now? You've only been out a few seconds and you do have a bit more colour."

"Yes, you've been very kind," was all Hazel managed to say before she saw Jeremy heading toward the lift.

"Hallo darling," he said as he bent to kiss the woman on the cheek. "I didn't expect you so early." Then he looked behind her and noticed Hazel leaning against the wall. His face paled.

Hazel stepped back inside the lift.

"I thought this was your floor," the woman said.

"I did too," Hazel smiled briefly, "But I was mistaken. Thank you again."

As the lift door closed, Hazel felt lighter and brighter than she had in months. She didn't need Jeremy to make the decision to leave his wife; she had just made the decision to leave Jeremy.

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