

Maybe There's Nothing to Look At

Inside the 100-story building across from the coffee shop, someone has left the better part of a vegan burrito in the elevator. You, a person named Rachel, are in the tall building. You have walked past the Man at the Front Desk, who has nodded at you, and you are waiting at the elevator. You press the up button so that you can go up, and wait for the elevator to come.

The doors open. The half-eaten vegan burrito is perfectly framed by the track lighting in the elevator. It looks like the kind of modern-art you aren't sure how to feel about. The Man Behind the Front Desk dives and knocks over the landline.

"Are you okay?" you, Rachel, said to the Man Under the Front Desk.

The Man Under the Front Desk looked horrified, "Get down! Get out of here! What are you doing!"

Rachel walked around the front desk and sat under it. "Who are you calling—?"

"A bomb squad!"

"Is there a bomb?"

"Yes! In the elevator!"

"Looks like a burrito to me."

"Sure it *looks* like a burrito, but it's obviously a bomb."

"Is that common—"

"On the News! You see the sort of thing all the time. It's a terrorist—Hello? Yes, there's a bomb in the elevator of the Pearl Street Building—great, great, okay—The bomb squad will be here in a few minutes, but if it blows up in the lobby the whole building is going to come down. Send it to the top floor!"

Rachel got on the elevator and pressed the button to go to the 100th floor. The Man Peeking Out from Under the Front Desk started yelling again, "Get out of there! It could explode at any moment!"

"Well, there's a yoga class up there, so I should probably tell them to leave."

"You're crazy, woman, but you're a hero," said the Man Crouched Partly Behind the Front Desk.

"It's a burrito, Darek," you say as the doors slide shut.

The doors open to a room of mostly white women stretching. The room was mostly windows and hardwood. A sign on the wall says: Yoga Cured My Depression!

One of the people in the yoga class is your ex, Jordan.

"Hey, Jordan."

"Hey, Rachel."

You move out of the elevator.

One of the women yells, "A bomb!"

"It's not a bomb!" Rachel says.

"It's a terrorist plot!"

"It's a half eaten burrito!"

"Somebody call a bomb squad!"

"They're already on their way!"

The room clears out quickly as streams of people rushed down the stairs. Jordan is still there, eating a burrito. "Well, you can't stay here," says the yoga instructor.

The slant of the sun on the 99th floor makes it seem like evening. “No, no, no!” says the old woman in the chair. “We can’t have bombs in the china shop!” The dark burgundy rolling chair is stained in two places. Her cats are the walls and shelves and are breaking all the china. She pressed the down button with the tip of her cane and the doors slide shut.

By the time the doors opened on the 65th floor, Rachel stepped out onto the spotless white carpet. With the muffling, thick carpet, the perfectly empty room was almost perfectly quiet, and they could hear the burrito ticking. Almost.

“Are you the bomb squad?” Rachel asked the men and women in uniforms that said “bomb squad” on them.

“Yes,” nodded the men and women in uniforms that said “bomb squad” on them.

“Is that safe to eat?” Rachel pointed at the half eaten vegan burrito.

They picked it up and looked.

“Yes,” said the men and women.

“Do you want to get coffee at Pastel’s later?” the men and women from the bomb squad said when they had all crammed into the elevator. The men and women in uniforms that said “bomb squad” on them looked a little awkward, like this was a thing they had been meaning to ask her for a while.

“Oh,” Rachel said. “Sure. Is that the one right across the street?”

“It is. You’re free?”

“I just have to finish up one thing here first.”

The elevator opened to the lobby. The yoga class, the yoga instructor, the old woman, the cats, the accountants, the 18th century literature enthusiasts, the preschool, the daycare, Ernest Hemingway, the Princess of Luxembourg, the environmentalists, the horticulturists, and every other inhabitant of the building were busy streaming down the stairs and out the revolving glass doors.

Everyone stopped and looked at Rachel. Rachel stood on top of the couch in the middle of the lobby.

“Hey!”

Rachel said.

“Maybe,”

They held the burrito loosely and ignored the juice leaking down their arm and elbow onto the floor,

“Maybe! There is nothing. To look at!” “What,” somebody said.

“There is no Bomb, is what I’m saying.”

“But,” a different somebody said.

“Shh—! I, Doctor Rachel Blyth, am telling you, that this—” Rachel raised the burrito slightly higher. One of its green sides flopped over and some rice spilled out. “Is not a bomb or a terrorist plot. It is a burrito and I am going to prove it.”

“What are you a doctor of?”

“Ethnomusicology!” Rachel took a big bite of the vegan burrito and everyone gasped in shock.

Rachel ate all of it, until it was gone. They balled up the tinfoil, and threw it in the trash bin.

Everyone blinked twice, and said ‘oh,’ and went back to their business.

Rachel got down and retrieved her satchel from the front desk.

She went out through the middle-left revolving door to her date with the bomb squad.