

From: [REDACTED] dcc.int

To: [REDACTED] dcc.int

Subject: uh. something wrong downstairs? (first week)



Hey boss.

Not sure who else to send this to, so I'm just gonna write it straight and you can tell me where I messed up.

I was doing rounds like you said. Basement stuff. Sublevels. The ones with the yellow tape that says DO NOT USE but everyone uses anyway. I had the cart, mop bucket, the whole deal. Smelled like hot dust and old wires like usual.

Then I hit a stairwell that ain't on the map you gave me.

I know because I checked it twice. Numbers skip. I didn't go looking for anything, I just followed the floor marks like I'm supposed to. Concrete steps, green paint, same rails. Felt normal until it didn't.

First thing I noticed was the sound.

The building makes noises. I get that. Pipes knock, metal ticks, elevators groan like they're tired. This wasn't that. This was like when you twist a bottle and it don't crack yet. Like it's thinking about it.

I stopped walking. Sound kept going.

Floor felt weird too. Not shaking like an earthquake, more like when a truck idles too long and the ground gets that soft buzz. I could feel it in my boots. Not my head. My boots.

Lights flickered. Not out. Just wrong.

Shadows didn't line up with stuff anymore. Mop bucket shadow went sideways even though the light was overhead. I waved my hand and the shadow lagged like it was stuck in traffic.

I said "hello" out loud because I don't know what else to do when stuff gets like that.

The building answered.

Not with words. With like another sound. Like a long breath through teeth.

Wall on the left got cracked.

But not like busted. It was neat. Lines. Straight lines. Like somebody scored it with a ruler, only the ruler kept changing its mind. Little shiny bits inside the concrete, like salt or glass or ice depending on how you looked at it.

I touched it. I know I shouldn't have. It was cold, but not wet. My glove came back stiff at the fingertips, like it got starched.

I threw the glove away.

Then the shaking got worse.

Not violent. More like the building was settling into a different position and forgot to tell anyone. Ceiling tiles slid without falling. Bolts made popping sounds. A pipe bent just enough to scream.

I swear on my paycheck the hallway got longer.

I don't mean perspective. I mean I walked and walked and the door stayed the same distance away. I stopped walking and the door got closer anyway.

That's when I ran.

I didn't see a monster or nothing. If that's what you're wondering.

But I saw shapes where shapes shouldn't be. Like the air was folded wrong. Like somebody tried to stack glass sheets and missed.

I could hear stuff breaking behind me, but it didn't sound like breaking. Sounded like everything snapping into place real careful.

Like somebody fixing something that wasn't meant to be fixed.

I got out. Don't ask me how because I couldn't tell you. I just came up a stairwell and suddenly I was back where the vending machines are. Normal lights. Normal hum. My watch said I was gone six minutes.

My legs say longer.

I checked the map again. That stairwell ain't there. The numbers don't go that low. Or that high. Or whatever direction that was.

I don't want to go back down there.

I will if you tell me to. That's the job. But I need someone to say out loud that it's supposed to do that.

Also one more thing and I know this sounds stupid:

The building felt busy.

Not like people busy. Like thinking busy.

Like I interrupted it.

Anyway, sorry for the long email. First week nerves I guess. Just didn't want this coming back on me later if a wall falls over or something.

Let me know what you want me to do with the stairwell
that doesn't exist.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

fire this person
and fire them.

P.S. I left the cart where I dropped it. Don't go
looking for it. Seriously.

TK

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