

You had just gotten your lease approved for an apartment at the brand new “Weatherly Tower” downtown. You’d heard it was state of the art architecture made from breakthroughs in bio-technology, but you never really cared enough to pay attention to the whole marketing spiel. To you this wasn’t some breakthrough in science or anything, it was just a place to stay.

Your application was approved for unit 8-V, on floor 22. It wasn’t anything fancy, it had a small bathroom with a tub that could barely fit a model boat in it, the kitchen was cramped and the cabinets all felt cheap, the bedroom fit a queen-sized bed and had a small window that you doubted would pass a safety check from the city, the list of inadequacies went on. The saving grace was that this place was cheap as hell, rent was \$350 a month in downtown so it was well worth the price and you didn’t even have to pay a deposit for some reason. The first few weeks you were worried that there was some kind of “catch” with how too-good-to-be-true it all was, but day after day went by and your anxieties faded as you focused on your work and social life and got comfortable in your new home.

It was on the second week of the second month that you started to notice little things. Weird little things. The elevator was drafty as hell, the air would rush in over your head and from below your feet at points, the entire building would shudder every other day, the power would flicker, the tap water would sometimes not come out quite... right. Other tenants would sometimes chat with you in the hall about it, and more than a couple of them said they had already had enough and were going to be terminating their lease the first chance they got. Some of them even started leaving even over the course of the very next month. The whole building seemed to be getting emptier and emptier. The staff started to look careworn and ragged, from the lobby to the maintenance. Then they started increasing rent, which for you, was the final straw. The only thing that made this mediocre unit worth living at in the first place was the price and location, and with the rent doubling on you? Not worth it. You complained to the management, but they made up excuses about tenants just “leaving without so much as a second word” and others not paying their rent at all. “Bullshit” you thought. Typical of landlords to make up reasons to squeeze money out of you, you’d seen it before a hundred times. “Oh the pandemic, oh this, oh that, oh its so hard to amateurishly coat entire walls with white lead paint every other year!” blah blah blah. Whatever. Enough was enough.

That Friday, you’d started packing up all your possessions to move out of this groaning, drafty, overpriced building. And now to top it off, the whole place started to take on this strange scent that you couldn’t for the life of you place. Whatever it was, it was just another straw on the camels back. You made your way down your hall to the elevator; the time had come to turn in the paperwork and the parasitic fine they’d slapped you with for terminating your lease early. You got in, the doors closed. And of course, the fucking power in the elevator goes out on you after going down a total of like two floors. Great. The red emergency lights kicked on, and not only did they hurt your eyes (which you were pretty sure was the opposite of what they were supposed to do) but they emitted a high-pitched buzzing noise that got old after the first hour of sitting there. Wonderful. Several hours of sitting in a headache-box and screaming for the staff to get off their ass and get you out of there. What a fantastic way to spend the start of your weekend of packing and moving. All the while, the draftiness of this janky ass elevator shaft picked up and pretty soon you could feel the whole thing sway from side to side, adding nausea to your already splitting headache and irritation.

Then, with a sudden jolt, the floor of underneath you swung open. You let out a yelp, but you went into shock immediately. You were free-falling down the shaft at terminal velocity in pitch darkness. After a few seconds however, the air got... warm. The fuck? And then the walls of the drop narrowed, they enveloped you and slowed your decent down to a crawl. They were sopping wet and OPPRESSIVELY warm. It was like those videos of those inflatable fire escapes that you saw on twitter

that one time, but why was it so wet? You thought to yourself. “Was that... normal? Why the hell would they put one of those in an elevator shaft? Maybe they have a problem with people FALLING to their doom in that deathtrap of a box above you-” Who could blame you for such a lucid thought process given the sheer surrealness of your situation. For all you knew, this was an awful dream and you were still in your warm, ramen-stained bed. As you felt the walls around you tense up and writhe over your form pushing you further down, it totally broke your line of rationalizing thoughts about your predicament. Once again, you were no longer thinking about what was happening or why. You were paralyzed with shock and fear. It had come out of nowhere, and just like that a new thought entered your head, a distant memory. Bio-engineered architecture. Was this-

Another undulation around you once again broke your concentration. Panic set in, and you finally started to do what most other people probably would have done a few minutes ago: freak the fuck out. You thrashed and tossed and turned and tried to get any sort of grip to pull yourself back up, but a few more seconds passed and your hopeless fight was put on a reality check, as another pulse of flesh pulled you down deeper. In a matter of moments, these motions probably pulled you down by a few meters each time they had happened, a far cry from the mere inches you were able to scale back up over the course of a several minutes. “Ah fuck.” you thought, “I guess I’m going to be seeing where this thing leads whether I like it or not.” You now tried pulling your phone out of your pocket but with how your surroundings hugged you with such claustrophobic zeal, and how slippery your hands were, you were unable to even turn it on or manipulate anything on it.

Helpless, tired out, and completely at the mercy of this tunnel; the only thing you had with you besides the slime, heat and pitch darkness to envelop you were your own thoughts. A few things came to mind during this peristaltic journey, a couple of them comforting. First thing was, of course, at least you weren’t dead. If this had been any other “normal” building’s elevator shaft, you’d be a pancake right now. Not only that but somehow- you were still having no trouble breathing which was a big plus. You troubled yourself with where this might lead, you shuddered trying to think at where such shaft in an “organic building” might end, or if it would at all. Perhaps there was a secret basement that they abandoned when they had first made this place that hadn’t turned out the way they wanted. Perhaps you were actually in what you had initially thought, some strange new fire escape system that they had made using... organic tissue... creepy. Oh! Maybe this was actually some massive underground worm or something? Your mind went rampant with what-ifs, as it was really the only thing you could do except “enjoy” the ride.

All of a sudden, it seemed that ride was over. You were dropped again into this, larger chamber. Your first thought was “BASEMENT! I WAS RIGHT” (wrong, it wasn’t a basement) and you splashed into a pool of thick mucky... something. Some sort of substance that was not quite what you’d encountered during your trip down. This was thicker, and almost felt like some sort of resin or glue in substance. You felt this slime invade your clothes and hair, soaking and passing through the fibers of your outfit and drenching your skin. The walls around you seemed to once again shrink and contact you like it had when you fell, the soft texture of it all caressing you in a lewd embrace. You then heard that very same groan you’d heard all those weeks living in your apartment, only this time it deafened you. To you, although none of this even remotely made any sense- it was at least starting to come together. The missing tenants, the groaning, the draft, the smell, everything. This apartment complex was alive. And it had what every other organic creature had, an appetite. This epiphany clicked in all but a few moments of being secured and compressed in this... stomach. Or as they would later call it in the news reports a few months later, a “digestive sack” one of a few dozen, actually. How could you have known that below your feet for that half a year, countless other denizens of your building had been quietly and efficiently engulfed and absorbed. The metabolism, while voracious, was quite impressively low-

maintenance considering the size and scope of this building's biomass. And efficient, for that matter. "It only takes the complex 4-5 hours to reduce a fully grown adult human being into a thin indistinguishable paste" said one article.

That paste, along with the chyme, digestive enzymes, and saliva of your former home was actually what was currently soaking between every last strand of fabric on your person, it was getting in your eyes and ears, your mouth. That soup was indeed starting that very process, and you were very much feeling it. You had no idea that your pitiful writhing form had only about 3.5 hours left of being solid, but *c'est la vie*~ Nobody can know everything. It actually was a very short time to tire you out, the constant heat and lurid motions of the flesh around you was enough to break your spirit in shockingly short order. Pretty soon, you were once again just along for the ride. You were a hundred or so feet below the surface with only one way back up, and you never had it in you to make that kind of climb, even when you were near the top. You just went limp, cried a little to yourself – both in sorrow and frustration, and let your prison work its will upon you. The slime was massaged into your flesh with loving tenderness. As your skin became sensitive, your libido perhaps didn't know what else to do with the sensory overload around you but pitch a tent in your half-digested underwear. Against your will, you were molested by soft walls around you, and you were overwhelmed with quiet shame as it relieved you of your pent-up frustration.

Just as well it happened when it did, as soon the process went from a sensitive itch, to a dull burning. It was like you'd been in the sun too long, and as you tossed around the slime would soothe, and then accelerate, and then soothe, and then accelerate, subtly the sensations coerced you into helping the process along. You turned yourself over constantly chasing that sense of relief from the pain, only for your surroundings to take advantage and make sure every last spot was getting fresh enzymes. Its amazing that you'd forgotten about your phone through all of this, perhaps you would get as far as some of the others had. Which of course was the realization that there was no signal through hundreds of feet of flesh and earth.

Soon enough, it was over for you. And all that was left was, although recognizable, far beyond "presentable". Your limbs and features started to blend and soften, and your form was transformed into what could only be described as what it was- meat. With one last press from all sides, it was liquefied into a pool of what you'd originally fallen in to.

"Past Due Notice" read the bright red paper, shoved under your apartment door that Monday morning.