
HYSTERICAL.

I worked in a building that contained the offices for both the most famous smut magazine in the world, and the most expensive ob/gyns in the city. Basically, cheap sex, and the result, expensive babies. The only real evidence of the former was a tasteful yet flashy gold plated sign for the magazine in the lobby, along with that oddly cute little animal they use as their logo.

As for the obstetricians, however, I saw their clients constantly. Any time I left the enclave of my office to eat or smoke or mail a letter, I ran into them. Pregnant women, everywhere.

And I hated them.

It's not like I wanted to be pregnant myself. I didn't want to be married, or have babies, or start a family. And I didn't hate newlyweds, newlyengageds, or families. I didn't hate pregnant women in general. But this particular breed, this brand of procreators, I did.

They were queenly. They wore cute little outfits and adorable little lobby-clacking heels and fabulous matching purses. Their hair shined and they jealously clutched the hands of their husbands, who gave them enlarged jewelry to fit onto their newly pudgy fingers. I hated the smug way they carried themselves, as if they had something every woman wanted. And I hated that in a year, they'd take up even more room in the already tiny elevators with stroller containing their red-faced, squalling brats.

As someone who not only stands up for pregnant women on the bus but glares at those who don't, I especially hated the way that everybody was supposed to bow down to them. These are not the

women for whom I stood up on the bus. These women would never ride a bus in the first place. These were women who seemed to emit an invisible force field, because when they entered the elevator, other passengers weakly smiled and waited for the next one, because God knows that if a pregnant woman is in a too crowded elevator...well, something bad will happen. Something mysterious that we peons wouldn't understand.

And then of course, one rainy morning, it happened. The lobby was packed and passengers swarmed into all open and available elevators and I found myself carried along, not really paying attention. I pushed my button and sighed and collapsed against the wall, ready to start another tedious day. But then I felt the eyes.

Four pregnant women glared at me with a combined peevishness I had never witnessed before. They folded their arms across their swollen chests and sighed and huffed and glared at me. I was in their enclave and I was ruining everything. If I weren't there, they'd probably be talking about disgusting giving-birth miscellany and expressing regret for the days when they weren't pregnant, *ordinary*. The elevator crept along and I finally gave in. I *glared* back.

One of the women, a dark haired beauty in a fur jacket, continued her icy stare but smiled at me.

"Don't worry," she said smoothly, almost comfortingly. "You'll join us soon enough. And then you'll know."

The eleventh floor dinged and I hustled out, glancing back to see the women smirking at each other and opening their mouths to talk about their doctors and their aching breasts and their adorable maternity clothes and god knows what else.

That was seven months ago. Now I rub my belly, full of hot air, like a magic lamp and I do know what they mean because things happen now. People get out of my way and I look fabulous. This will be a bit embarrassing and hard to explain in a few months but for now my friends and I smile to each other when we ride the nice, spacious elevator together to

the doctor's. And yes, the doctor, he knows that I won't give birth to anything but he's going along with it, for now, just because it's made my life so much more fulfilling. It's a shame for the women who aren't able to do it, and for those who choose not to, well, they don't know what they're missing.