

# LIMINAL DEVIL

## Book Adaptation From Screenplay \_ First 3 Chapters

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### Chapter 1

Lance rolls, the skateboard a familiar extension of his being. The city blurs around him, a canvas of indifferent faces and towering steel. He affects a carefree swagger, the kind that comes from a life lived on the periphery. Late 40s, Australian, with long brown hair - a combo of wavy locks mixed with dreads that fall beneath a backwards baseball cap and frame aviator sunglasses. A loose-fitting Hawaiian shirt and khaki pants complete the picture of a man perpetually on vacation, or perhaps, perpetually running from something. For Lance, it's always at something.

The bistro is a haven of quiet sophistication, a world away from the city's frenetic energy. Gee Gee sits alone, a study in ambiguous ethnicity. Mixed? Mediterranean? Black Asian? Her features defy easy categorization. A white tank and white yoga pants speak of a deliberate simplicity, a blank canvas. She watches the clock.

Lance strides in, a burst of color in the muted atmosphere. He's late. Every second counts.

Gee Gee glances at a wall clock.

*2:59 pm.*

The seconds tick by, each one a hammer blow to her carefully constructed composure. She doesn't like waiting.

"Thought you were a no show, Lance," she says, her voice cool, devoid of warmth.

He slips in across from her, his movements fluid, practiced. "And miss out on all the fun?" His heavy Australian accent drips with sarcasm.

A stately-looking man sits pondering at the table next to theirs. Mr. Talbott, a man in his 50s with a distinguished air, speaks into a cell phone.

"Hey, it's dad. We need to talk. I want to apologize...but not over the phone. I'm going to make it right, okay. I know I haven't told you in a while, but I love you, son."

A waitress stops at Talbott's table. "Refill?"

"Just the check,"

At Gee Gee's table, the air crackles with unspoken tension. Time is running out.

"You got the list?" Lance's eyes dart around, taking in every detail of the bistro.

Gee Gee slides a piece of paper across. The paper feels thin in his hand. The names on it, heavy with consequence.

"You know the rules?" she asks, her eyes locked onto his, unwavering.

"We've been over this, Gee Gee," Lance replies.

"Humor me."

At Talbot's table, the waitress scribbles the total and tears the check off. "I only charged you for one coffee."

KA-BOOOOMMM!!!!!!

The words are barely out of her mouth when a thunderous exterior explosion shatters windows and rattles furniture!

Everyone screams in an uproar!

Talbott and several restaurant guests run out of the bistro.

Lance stands. His eyes are alight. A dangerous glint apparent even through his sunglasses.

"I'm watching you," Gee Gee warns, her voice a low thrum.

"Gee Gee, I'm asking you nicely. Don't interfere, it's distracting. And no tricks!"

## Chapter 2

FIFTEEN MINUTES EARLIER.

The L Hotel punctures the Vancouver sky, a monument to luxury and aspiration. Pedestrians stream through the ground floor doors. A uniformed doorman greets affluent patrons.

A lesbian couple zooms up in a convertible sports car. Nora, a Latina in her mid-20s with a quick wit and a defiant face, leans over to her girlfriend, Lou. Lou exudes an air of affluence, her polished appearance and the gleaming convertible speaking volumes about her financial status. Despite being in her 40s, she carries herself with the energy of someone much younger.

Nora plants a long lingering kiss on Lou.

Lou pulls away breathless. The world is perfect. Beautiful. "Marry me," she blurts.

Nora giggles. "Why do you have to ruin perfect PDA?"

"Because you're killing me with this vag-teasing limbo."

"Limbo? I thought this was the heavenliest sex you ever had."

A voice interrupts from outside the car. "You can't park here."

The Doorman stands by the passenger side. Impatient.

"I was just leaving. See you inside," Lou says.

Nora kisses her and climbs out. A sense of excitement washes over her, a flickering promise.

"Edible or peel-off panties?" she calls out.

The Doorman perks up.

"He definitely wants to know," Lou laughs as she shifts into gear and skids into traffic.

Inside the hotel lobby, the air thrums with the anticipation of travel, of new experiences. Couples. Families. Luggage.

At the check-in counter, a figure commands attention. Abe Heiskopf stands out, not just for their domineering presence, but for the way they defy easy categorization. Somewhere between 30 and 40, Abe's androgynous appearance speaks to their non-binary identity. Their Jewish heritage is evident in their features, but it's the fire in their eyes that truly defines them.

Today, that fire is directed at Tammie, the Asian woman in her 30s behind the counter.

"You and me have a problem," Abe states, their voice a mix of frustration and determination.

Tammie tries to maintain her composure. "Ma'am, I've explained to you..."

"I'm a They," Abe corrects, their tone brooking no argument.

"Mr...Mrs...?" Tammie fumbles, clearly flustered.

"Move on," Abe commands, impatient with the pronoun dance.

"There are no available rooms on the top floor."

Abe leans in, their voice dropping to a fierce whisper. "It's my little sister's birthday. She loved the view from up there."

Abe stabs the countertop with stiff fingers to punctuate their demand.

"So you need to get me a TOP. FLOOR. ROOM. NOW!"

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By the seating area, Maddie Stallworth, a 40-year-old Irish woman with an eight-month baby bump straining against her dress, sits with her husband, Many, who's Mid 40s, and just as Irish. They sit in a lounge chair playfully bantering with heavy Irish accents.

"You're so sure of yourself, are you?" Maddie teases.

Many grins. "I'm not the one who's gonna be out of five quid when a strapping young lad comes kicking his way out in a pair of footy boots."

"You mean a little princess in a pair of ballet slippers."

Maddie grows pensive. A shadow crosses her face.

"What is it?" Many asks, concern, but knowing creeps into his voice.

"Nothing."

"Stop thinking about them."

"I can't help it."

"We're not going through this again." He stands.

"Wait, Many, don't run-off," Maddie pleads.

"I'm just gonna pop out for a fag," he assures her.

By the elevator, a ding echoes through the lobby. The arrow above the doors illuminates, pointing up. The doors open. People pile on and off. A bellhop pushes a cart full of bags. He passes a seated man whose face is concealed by a newspaper.

The man folds the paper, revealing his face. He places it on the table next to him. Mohamed Henosis sits with an air of quiet intensity. His eyes are steady and calm. His French Canadian upbringing belies his underlying Muslim heritage. He looks more French than Islamic, his appearance giving little hint of his faith. At 40, he carries himself with a poise that suggests a life of discipline and purpose.

Mohamed's eyes methodically scan the lobby. He doesn't miss a thing.

They finally come to rest on Maddie. He observes her sitting in a button-down maternity dress and a wrap-around shawl, lovingly rubbing her mountainous tummy. A flicker of something unreadable crosses his face. Pity? Regret?

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Outside the hotel, Many steps out and lights a cigarette. He exhales and loosens his shoulders. The air is crisp, clean. A false sense of peace.

KA-BOOOOM!!!

The explosion from inside the lobby rips through the first floor facade.

Many is thrown into a car that rammed into the back of another. He lands hard but unharmed. Dazed, he pushes himself up, staring in shock at the chaos unfolding around him. The world has turned upside down in a heartbeat.

Smoke billows from shattered windows, obscuring the scene in a hazy veil. Shards of glass crunch under panicked feet as people stumble and run, their faces contorted with fear and confusion.

Screams pierce the air, mingling with the wail of car alarms and the distant sound of approaching sirens. A woman clutches a bleeding arm, her eyes wide with shock. A businessman, his suit now tattered and dusty, helps an elderly couple navigate the debris-strewn sidewalk. The acrid smell of smoke and fear hangs heavy in the air, a palpable reminder of how quickly normalcy can shatter.

Lance exits the bistro adjacent the hotel entrance carrying his skateboard. He stops to survey the mayhem.

Pandemonium! Panicked people rush about chaotically! The horn of a crashed car blares unceasingly. A Muslim woman screams at her bleeding unconscious husband.

Lance is amused by it all. A predator in his natural habitat.

"I love this game," he mutters to himself.

### **Chapter 3**

BOOOOOM!!!

It sounds more like a rumble and feels like an earthquake inside the elevator.

The nearby exterior explosion rocks the cabin. The five passengers, Abe, Nora, Mohamed, and Maddie included, stumble around inside. They bounce off the walls and the double doors.

Abe faces the doors by the button panel on the right side of the Elevator. A knot tightens in their stomach. Something is terribly wrong.

Irritating elevator music loops softly in the background adding to the tension. The kind that makes you wish the ride was over, an absurd soundtrack to their potential demise.

"That was another one," Abe says, their voice tight with barely suppressed fear.

"What was it?" Nora asks.

"Sounded like a bomb."

Maddie's face is pale. "Felt like something worse."

"I knew I should have taken the stairs." Abe says. A bead of sweat trickles down their temple.

"We're not moving anymore," Maddie observes.

Mohamed is front left across from Abe. His face is impassive, but his eyes betray a flicker of unease. "It's probably a safety precaution activated in an emergency."

"I don't like this," Abe mutters.

Abe presses buttons. Nothing.

"The lights on the buttons are out," Nora points out.

Abe jabs the emergency button. Desperation claws at them. "Shit!"

"Hello!" Mohamed calls out, pounding the doors. "Anybody out there?"

"Step aside, slick. I got this," Abe says, pushing past Mohamed.

Abe tries to pull the doors apart. Nothing happens.

Grunts and more effort. Nope.

A smack of frustration.

Maddie groans and doubles over. A sharp intake of breath echoes in the confined space.

Nora is immediately at her side, concern etched on her face. "Are you okay?"

"You gotta be kidding me," Abe mutters, their mouth curling with disdain.

Maddie takes a deep breath, trying to compose herself. "Don't worry. I'm not due for another month."

Abe moves closer with aggression. "So what was that then?"

"Probably just stress," Maddie replies, her hand protectively cradling her swollen belly.

Nora shoots Abe a pointed look. "Do you mind? Giving us a little air?"

Abe backs off, the air in the elevator thick with unspoken anxieties.

It's then that they all notice the teenager cowering behind Abe. Chad, an African American boy of about 16, looks out at them with wide, frightened eyes. His schoolbook backpack seems to weigh heavily on his slender frame, and when he speaks, his voice is soft and trembling.

"Are we going to die?"

"Hey, easy kid!" Abe feigns reassurance but fails.

Chad's voice quivers. "What about the air? We could run out."

Mohamed shakes his head. "I don't think so. These doors are not airtight. Even if they were, someone would come find us before we suffocated."

"I'm not waiting around for that," Abe declares.

"What are you going to do?" Maddie asks.

Abe's jaw sets with determination. "Find a way out of here."

"I thought all elevators had a phone," Nora says.

"Apparently not this one," Abe replies.

Mohamed nods. "This building was probably built in the '80s."

"And they haven't updated the elevator?" Nora asks incredulously.



Nora removes a phone from a little purse and presses some buttons. Nothing.

"Has everybody tried their cell?" Abe asks.

"I don't have a signal," Maddie says.

"Me neither," Chad adds.

"You?" Abe turns to Mohamed.

Mohamed shakes his head. "No."

"Any ideas?" Abe asks, frustration evident in their voice.

"Why don't we just all breathe," Maddie suggests, her voice barely a whisper.

"I don't like this!" Abe exclaims.

Abe jabs the Emergency button again. Suddenly the elevator drops a few feet and stops with a jarring jolt.

Everybody screams!

"What did you do?!" Nora shouts.

"I pressed the emergency button," Abe says defensively.

"It didn't work the first time!"

"I was just trying something!"

Mohamed tries to calm the situation. "Perhaps it's better if we just wait until someone comes for us."

"Waiting for others can get you hurt," Abe retorts.

"Panicking is not going to help us," Maddie says softly.

Abe looks up. Their gaze fixed on something above. "What about the ceiling?"

"What about it?" Nora asks.

"That square panel in the middle," Abe points out. "I think I can get it off."

"It's too high," Maddie says.

"And it's bolted down," Nora adds.

"Maybe the blast knocked it loose. Guys, give me a hand," Abe insists.

"What do you want us to do?" Mohamed asks.

"I'll sit on your shoulders."

"Seriously?" Nora scoffs.

Mohamed looks skeptical. "Is there a plan b?"

Abe and Mohamed are about the same size.

"Maybe you're right," Abe concedes. "Okay, why don't you each grab a thigh and hoist me up."

"You're wasting your time," Nora warns.

"At least I'm doing something besides blowing hot air," Abe snaps.

Nora's eyes narrow. "I don't blow."

"I suppose it's worth a try," Mohamed says with a sigh.

Abe faces the front.

With their backs to the doors, Chad and Mohamed squat down and wrap their arms around one thigh each and hoist Abe up. It's a wobbly and unbalanced effort.

"Whoa, steady! Get me a little higher," Abe instructs.

They double their effort.

Abe claws at the panel.

"It's not moving," Abe grunts.

"I told you," Nora says.

They list on Chad's side.

"I need more from you, Junior!" Abe shouts.

"I'm trying," Chad says, strain evident in his voice.

"Move back a bit."

They back up towards the doors.

Abe yanks the panel, trying to pull it loose.

"Is it working?" Mohamed asks.

"Can't tell yet," Abe replies.

"You're getting heavy," Chad warns.

"Hang on kid!"

Pound! Yank!

"I can't anymore!" Chad cries out.

"Hang on!"

Chad lets go under the struggle.

Abe comes crashing down and falls on top of Nora. They land on the floor with Abe between Nora's legs. Their faces are close together. They stare into each other's eyes.

The elevator song loops relentlessly.

Abe sniffs.

"What's that you're wearing?"

"Get off me!"

Nora shoves Abe to the side and stands up.

Abe pulls-up laughing.

"That was worth the effort."

Nora goes and stands at the back of the elevator.

"What do we do now?" Maddie asks.

"I'm running out of ideas." Abe throws their hands up.

Mohamed pounds the doors again.

"Hello! There are people stuck here! Can anybody hear us? Hello?"

Chad backs into his corner behind Abe.

Maddie rubs her tummy in the corner opposite Chad.

"Guess we're stuck here 'til somebody comes for us."

Abe turns to Nora. "So. Where you from babe?"

"No. My name is not babe. It's Nora. And where I'm from is not your business."

"Just makin' conversation."

"Why don't you make like a ghost and disappear."

"Alright. That's cool. That's cool."

Abe turns to Mohamed. "How 'bout you, slick? What'll they call you?"

"My name is Mohamed Henosis."

Abe assumes an aggressive tone.

"Oh really? Well my name is Abe. Like biblical Abraham Abe. Abe HEISKOPF."

Mohamed extends a hand.

"Pleased to meet you, Abe."

Abe ignores it.

"Let me tell you something, Mo-Ham-Head."

"Mohamed. My name is Mohamed."

"Whatever! There's like fourteen different spellings."

"Don't be a penis." Nora quips.

"I'm having a really shitty day." Abe continues.

"We all are." Maddie says.

"This elevator just got smaller."

"We get it, you're Jewish." Nora says.

Abe lays down the rules. "Do me a favor. That's your side of the elevator. This is mine. Stay on your side and you and I will get along just kosher."

"I'm Catholic. What side should I stand on?" Maddie asks.

"This is a cozy coincidence." Nora says. "A Jew, a Muslim, a Catholic, and an Atheist get stuck on an elevator. Sounds like the beginning of a sick joke."

"You think this is a coincidence?" Mohamed asks.

"What else would it be?" Nora shrugs.

Abe turns to Chad. "What's your story, Junior? What, are you a Hare Krishna?"

He looks cornered. "I'm just Chad."

"Chad?" Abe repeats incredulously.

"Yeah, that's my name."

"That's a white name. Who gave you that?" Abe's tone is condescending.

"My dad," Chad whispers.

"Well, he's obviously very mixed up." Abe shakes their head.

"Were you born a dick or did you grow into one?" Nora wants to know.

"This is not a coincidence." Mohamed interjects. "Perhaps Allah is trying to tell us something."

Abe scoffs. "That's the problem with you people. Always with the 'Allah Allah Allahu Akbar!'" They mockingly imitate a terrorist.

"Born that way," Nora decides.

Mohamed speaks in a measured tone. "In spite of preconceived notions you may have about me, I'm not your enemy. We are brothers in the eyes of Allah."

"You are not my brother." Abe says, anger rising.

"In the eyes of Allah, I am."

"My little sister lost an arm and half her face because one of your *brothers* had a bomb."

"Can we dial it down, please?" Nora tosses in.

Mohamed's tone is firm, yet controlled. "I am not the person responsible for injury delivered upon your family."

"You smell like him."

"Like who?"

"A stinking terrorist!" Abe spits the words.

"Alright, that's it. Stop it right there." Nora's voice is sharp, cutting through the rising animosity. "You don't even know each other. Nobody's bombed villages or severed limbs in this elevator. Okay? And Abe, you should know what it's like to be hated just for breathing."

"That's just it. I've taken shit my whole life, so I have no qualms with shitting back." Abe retorts.

Nora's eyes narrow. "I'm sorry, but these quarters are too cramped for anybody to take a shit. Besides, what's the point of all this religious crap? God? Is a lie."

"You mean to say you have no affiliation whatsoever?" Abe asks.

"A lesbian Latina in the church? Pigs will fly first."

"Are you not concerned with the afterlife?" Mohamed asks

"I'm more concerned with this elevator music."

"Answer the question," Abe demands.

"You're born. You die. You're done."

Maddie asks softly. "And where do you go after?"

"Nowhere."

"You mean like limbo?"

"If that means nowhere. You probably just sit in a chair somewhere and do nothing. Forever." Nora says.

Abe scoffs. "Somebody lied to you sister."

"And I guess you know the truth?" Nora challenges.

"At least I believe in something."

Nora smirks "I'll tell you what I believe in. I'll tell you what the truth is."

"Oh, this is going to be interesting," Abe responds.

"The truth is personal. Whatever you believe to be true, that's the truth."

A beat of silence hangs in the air, thick with unspoken judgment and simmering resentment.

"Said the TikTok guru with the perky nips," Abe sneers.

"Screw you!" Nora snaps.

"We already tried that."

"Before this is over, you might regret you ever felt that way," Mohamed warns.

"I'll take my chances. It's all worked out so far."

"Yeah, and look where it got you." Abe reminds her.

"We're all on the same barge." Nora counters.

Chad, who has been silent until now, pipes up "I thought we were in an elevator."

Everyone turns to look at Chad.

Chad shrinks back, apologetic. "Sorry. Just trying to..."

"Why don't you crawl back to your corner, Junior. Leave the discussion to the adults," Abe says dismissively

Suddenly, an alarm on Mohamed's wrist watch goes off, piercing the tense exchange.

Mohamed raises his wrist to his face. "Excuse me please."

"Going somewhere?" Abe asks sarcastically.

Mohamed prepares himself as well as he can under the circumstances.

"How do you know which way is east?" Abe says, tone dripping disgust.

Mohamed begins to sing an Islamic ritual prayer. His voice sounds odd and out of tune with the elevator music looping round and round.

Everyone just kind of looks at him, not sure how to react. Chad looks at the floor.

"This is embarrassing."

Maddie gasps "Aahhh!"

Maddie has another contraction. Nora places a hand on her back, concern etched on her face.

"Are you sure you're okay?"

"I think so."

"Hey, home-ed! I don't wanna hear that," Abe warns.

"Is this normal?" Nora asks Maddie.



"That's a loaded question," Maddie replies between clenched teeth.

Abe grabs Mohamed by the collar.

"I said I don't wanna hear that crap!"

Mohamed looks Abe squarely in the face. "אתה בצד שלי" Mohamed utters the perfect Hebrew translation for "You're on my side."

Abe shoves him and backs off.

"So you know some Hebrew. That still doesn't make you my brother."

"Guys," Chad says softly.

The elevator doors have just begun to open.

The music stops playing abruptly.

Everyone stares at the brick wall the open doors reveal.

"Great! The doors finally open and we're in the middle of nowhere," Abe says and starts pressing and knocking on the bricks.

"You looking for a secret opening?" Nora asks.

"Hello?" Abe shouts

"Is there anybody out there?" Mohamed calls

They continue calling for help.

The slow draining sound of water dripping onto the floor. It is an unsettling splash.

Nora looks down between Maddie's feet.

A tiny pink pool of liquid has formed there.

Maddie has an apologetic, helpless look on her face.

Nora whispers, "Oh no."

*REEUUUM!!!*

Without warning, the elevator plummets at breakneck speed! The brick wall races past the front. A dizzying blur of red brick and mortar.

Abe hollers and clings to the walls in terror! Their knuckles turn white as they grasp for purchase.

Chad stumbles back to his corner. His face is pale, eyes wide with a terror that reflects their shared fate.

Mohamed drops to his knees and prays fervently in Arabic. His words are a desperate plea against the chaos.

Maddie is *GIVING BIRTH*! Her face contorts with moans and agony. The sounds are guttural, animalistic.

Nora screams at her to breathe and push! Her voice is raw, urgent, barely audible above the din.

PLUMMETING!

PRAYER!

HOLLERING!

LABOR MOANS!

The elevator becomes a vortex of fear and desperation.

Nora screams, "Push! It's coming!"

Suddenly the elevator is engulfed in total darkness and comes to a thunderous halt! The impact is bone-jarring, the silence that follows, absolute.

At first, there is just silence in the darkness. A heavy, suffocating blanket.

Then the sound of something dense and wet plops onto the floor. The sound is sickening, like a spoonful of vomit seeping up into your throat.

Maddie screams! A blood-curdling, skin-pricking scream! A sound that will haunt their dreams long after they escape this metal tomb. If they ever.

The lights flicker on sluggishly with a sickening low drone. The dim light reveals a scene of horror.

The doors are closed again.

The elevator music gradually seeps back into a nerve-gnawing loop. The cheerful tune is a grotesque mockery of their despair.

Mohamed's point of view is blocked by Nora standing over Maddie, who sits on the floor screaming down at the thing between her legs.

He crawls over to them and immediately recoils in horror! He averts his gaze, but the image is seared into his mind.

The smell of blood and something else, something indefinably awful, fills the air.

Abe and Chad stare down at Maddie, dumbfounded. Their faces are masks of shock and disbelief.

Chad turns away as Maddie's screams die down to convulsions and sobbing. He clutches his stomach, fighting back nausea.

Nora helps Maddie out of her shawl and wraps it around the stillborn baby. Her movements are gentle, almost reverent.

Maddie rocks her dead infant. Back and forth, back and forth, a macabre cradle.

The relentless loop is an agonizing lullaby. The music mocks her grief.

Abe finally finds something to say. Their voice is shaky, strained.

"The doors are closed again."

"How far did we fall?" Mohamed asks.

"How should I know?" Abe says.

"We should have hit bottom." Nora points out. "We're lucky we're not dead." Her words are toneless, devoid of hope.

"Maybe we are. And we just don't know it." Chad says. His eyes are distant, lost in a private hell.

Abe snaps, "Hey! What's the matter with you? Saying stupid shit like that!" Their voice is sharp, laced with panic.

Chad stammers, "But this hotel only has..."

"What if I smacked you upside the head?" Abe threatens, "Then you'd know if you were dead or not." Their fist clenches, threatening violence.

"Leave him alone." Nora says, stepping between Abe and Chad, her eyes blazing.

Mohamed says, "We should remain calm." His voice is a thin thread of reason in the chaos.

Maddie moans softly. The sound is heart-wrenching, a lament for what was lost.

Abe says, "How can I be calm with all this? I don't wanna die on this elevator." Their voice rises, hysteria creeping in.

Abe starts to throw a tantrum. They lash out, kicking the walls, a futile display of rage. "I don't want to die in here!"

"Pull it together, Abe!" Nora snaps. Her voice is firm, commanding control.

"This is madness." Abe says. "There's a dead baby on board!" Their words are raw, brutal.

Maddie moans louder. The sound is unbearable.

Nora says, "You're upsetting her!" Her eyes flash with anger.

"I'm upset!" Abe counters.

Mohamed says, "Abe please." He reaches out a hand.

He tries to touch. Abe recoils violently.

"Get your hands off me man! Did I say you could touch me?" Abe's voice is high-pitched, frantic.

Maddie cries out loud. A piercing, shattering scream.

**BANG!**

Everybody jumps and looks up at the ceiling. Their bodies tense, anticipating another disaster.

BANG! BAM!...BANG! The sounds are rhythmic, deliberate, terrifying.

The music has stopped. The silence is heavy, pregnant with dread.

Maddie stands up with her baby. Her face is a blank canvas, her eyes devoid of life.

BANG! The ceiling shudders.

"What the hell is going on up there?" Abe asks. Their voice is laced with fear and morbid curiosity.

BANG! The crashing sounds are getting louder, more insistent.

The panel knocks loose.

BAM!

"Look out!" Mohamed shouts.

The panel comes crashing to the floor! Dust explodes into the air, choking them.

Everyone stares up at the opening. Breathless. Hearts pounding in their chests.

Suddenly a head pokes into the hole.

It's a fireman wearing a fireman's helmet. He's a black man approaching 50, but you can still see the dirt on his face. His expression is grim, but his eyes hold a flicker of compassion.

"Hello, ladies and gentlemen. I've come to get you." The Fireman says.

A rush of relief washes over the group, happy to see a rescuing face and hear a declaration of saving grace; oblivious to the underlying weight of the words that will, in not a short time from now, come to mean something far more sinister and demonic.

## Chapter 4