

TEXT ADVENTURE

*'BASEMENT
LIFE'*

by
Stanley
Lieber

1

August 31, 1942.

We headed into the apartment.

Lots of space. Two rooms and a closet.

Incredibly, the closet was larger than the two rooms combined.

I asked about the carpet.

“Don’t worry about it,” said the realtor.

I could easily have done my school work in that closet. Intriguing possibilities.

There was a kitchen sink, but no stove. One living room wall was mirrored, creating the illusion that the room was more than six feet wide.

Turned on the closet light. Wood paneling. A little door, all the way in the back. I walked over and tapped it with my foot.

The door didn’t budge, but the carpeting on the floor began to pull away from the wall. A hand emerged from the folds, groping at my shoe. The hand brushed my ankle and then abruptly disappeared beneath the carpet.

Noted.

I pulled back the rug and there was no floor underneath. Someone or something scurried away, just beyond the range of my vision. Almost certainly the owner of the hand that had tried to grab my foot.

For obvious reasons, I found this unacceptable.

I slipped off my backpack and followed the hand into the crawlspace.

2

The air was wet with men’s cologne. Basement humidity lapped at my neck. I dabbed my forehead with my handkerchief and then returned it to my back pocket. Adjusted my visor.

Heat signatures.

I crawled after what could only have been a small child.

At one point I got stuck between the floor supports and whatever it was supporting the crawlspace from underneath. A piece of insulation jammed into my ear and I nearly broke my arm trying to get out of my jacket and dig it out.

Finally, I caught a glimpse of the boy. He flashed a small light in my eyes and then giggled as he rounded a corner, once again out of my sight. I couldn’t move, so I simply grunted and tried to relax my shoulders. I was still stuck in place. Still couldn’t get out of my jacket.

I realized suddenly that my shoes had gone missing.

3

I took a moment to collect myself. Just what was going on here?

Weapons checked out. My visor was functioning normally. But I still couldn’t connect to anything beyond a few feet in any direction. Local lighting was also

unresponsive.

I managed to get out of my trousers and advanced several more feet into the darkness. Unlogged.

The passage began to widen, and eventually I came to the end of whatever the surface was I was crawling on.

Another small door.

Fortunately, I still had my jacket. I was able to login and the door opened into a full basement.

Hm. No furnishings, but no overt signs of flooding, either. Could it be converted into a sublet? This might nudge the apartment several positions higher on my list.

I could hear a group of children singing. Arguing? In any case, they were making a lot of noise.

Hadn't counted on neighbors.

I climbed down from the ceiling.

4

An elderly couple. Well dressed. Tied to a pair of kitchen chairs. Also, blindfolded. The children I had heard laughed and hit them repeatedly with rattan sticks.

This was puzzling.

"Being sexy changed my life," said the old woman.

The old man smiled conspiratorially and seemed to relish the repeated blows to his stomach. "We're old, not dead!" he suddenly shouted.

"He's hard of hearing," explained the old woman.

"What?"

"I SAID, YOU'RE HARD OF HEARING."

One of the children sat on a cardboard box, framing the scene with his hands. Apparently, taking video.

I realized then that I was nude from the waste down.

5

The old woman rose from her chair and made her way over to me. Grasping my scrotum in her weathered hand, she whispered in my ear that she wanted to remove her blindfold.

"Hey lady, don't we all?"

She pulled hard on my penis. Too hard. It hurt. Uncomfortable silence.

Weapons finally charged, I shot some of the children and then the old man. Kicked over his chair. Reloaded. Finished the job. Logged the events and cloned memory to my jacket.

Finally alone.

The old woman slipped out of her shoes. Rolling down her beige pantyhose, she asked me to unzip her blouse from behind and then help her with the clasp of her necklace.

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