

Wonderdread and The One-Way Elevator

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

It is a stormy, Florida night at an outdated, Florida trailer park doubling as a retirement community according to the sign out front, though rude graffiti is painted overtop.

A pole flying the American flag nearby begins to rock harshly as a storm approaches. A HANDYMAN in a golf-cart wearing a flag outfit to match rushes out to lower it.

One trailer on one lot in particular stands apart as shabbier than the rest, weeds sprouting from every side and smoke visibly flowing from the windows. Music THUMPS loudly.

The handyman, putting the flag onto the passenger seat of his cart, eyes the troublesome lot with a judgemental stare.

Lightning and thunder CRACK in the distance, making impact enough that it gets him starting his cart and rushing away.

INT. SCOOTER'S TRAILER - NIGHT

SCOOTER, a stocky, pudgy, mish-mash of a rapper and rocker in style, who wears unmatched socks and jingles from his many rings and necklaces, closes his refrigerator.

He stands upright and steps from the kitchen, handling a sandwich greedily, maneuvering a lit joint from one hand to his lips so as to better open its cheap paper wrapping.

Between his ear and shoulder is tucked his phone, a woman's voice yelling from the other end. She mentions him by name and calls him trouble, but he hangs up without concern.

Rounding the corner to the living room a sleepy DOG can be seen to raise her head, ears alert and eyes begging.

He spots this, and for a moment gives her the same expression back, but keeps on walking, eating and humming.

INT. TRAILER HALLWAY - NIGHT

He hums and eats and keeps walking along the hall to the bathroom, a funny bounce to his step as he goes from smoke to food in time with whatever song he has stuck in his head.

Reaching the intended doorway, he spins, throws a dance move into his turn, socks making it easy, and flips on the light.

Before fully entering, he flashes one last glance of suspicion toward the living room, re-clutching his sandwich. He quickly dips inside, still, and slides the door closed.

INT. TRAILER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Scooter sidles up to the toilet, chest puffed and adjusting his aim with more dainty little steps.

The effort to unzip has him place both joint and sandwich in his mouth momentarily, then grab back at both with one hand to smoke and chew at the same time.

From beneath him comes a water-on-water TRICKLE of relief, his eyes closed tight as he continues to bob his head.

After a short time, he goes to settle things with a bounce and zip his pants back up, returning to the trick of holding the sandwich in his teeth while flushing reflexively.

He carelessly makes his way back to the door, skipping the sink, but taking another chew. The song in him seems to die down as he gets further, a look of suspicion returning.

Rather than bolt, he slows himself and peers from the door. The view down the hallway reveals the dog to have made its way to the other end, standing there expectantly.

Just then, another roll of THUNDER can be heard to seem closer, rumbling the foundation of the trailer.

In response, the dog drops its ears, shakes, and allows her tail to lower, frightened the same as many dogs by a storm.

Scooter looks closely at the behavior as if trying to analyze it, then down at his sandwich, then back at the dog, his face contorting with the formulation of a worry.

WAVE OUT:

WAVE IN:

INT. TRAILER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In a nightmare vision of a possible future, Scooter sees himself returning to the living room as planned only to be confronted by the waiting dog, her eyes on his sandwich.

The tension in both their bodies and expressions grow as he nears her, the begging look of the dog turning to one of impending action. From Scooter comes a look of fear.

That instant the dog lunges for the food, ripping most of it from Scooter's hand in the first go before coming back for the rest. He SQUEALS, high-pitched, and wrestles for it.

His feeble attempt to salvage his munchie proves useless, his arms flail worthlessly, and his expression is a jumbled mask of trauma as if having just witnessed a murder.

The dog GROWLS viciously, possessed far from its usual self, and she doesn't brook any resistance. She swallows the meal almost as quickly as she'd taken it, daring to be stopped.

Once finished, an abused Scooter retreats from the dog as if it has become a stranger, the sadness and terror shown in his eyes remaining unchanged, becoming a rictus.

He backs like this all the way to the nearest wall, and plants himself against it while unconsciously trying to back away even further in spite of it blocking his path.

WAVE OUT:

WAVE IN:

INT. TRAILER BATHROOM - NIGHT

In reality the traumatized expression is mirrored on Scooter's face as he finishes considering his vision. That turns quickly to his own look of action over his food.

He pounds his way back through the door to the toilet, stands before it, and with a display of serious authority tosses what remains of the sandwich into the bowl.

He nods like he's done it a favor, and flushes.

He walks off, but in the toilet as the water is spinning, while the contents of the sandwich are swallowed well enough, the bread comes floating back up to the surface.

The bite marks grow more pronounced as the bread soaks up water and expands, left to sit there floating indefinitely.

INT. TRAILER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Self-satisfied, Scooter swooshes past his dog who continues to be more scared of the storm than she is bothered with anything else. He turns his nose up at her.

From here he can head straight for the door to the trailer's carport, and he does so with pride in his step.

As he reaches the door, his hand wrapping around the metal of the knob, there is a flash of soft but consuming light and a CRASH from far away. Time slows to a crawl.

His face deadens slightly at this, his grip and arm slackening throughout the stretching moment, but his focus returns and he carries on opening the door.

Like nothing is out of the ordinary, he swings it wide, paying no attention to the fact that instead of outside the door has opened onto an elevator, simple but clean chrome.

He steps in, the doorways phasing together naturally as if built to purpose, and he then turns like it were any other elevator to examine the buttons. There is only one: down.

Causing him no alarm, he looks up at the information panel. It states the floor-level to currently be at zero.

Also causing him no alarm or pause to think, he presses the button. The trailer door swings shut by some unseen magic, and the elevator doors close on his own side.

With the casual patience of a regular to riding in elevators, he stands contented as it begins down, chiming a standard DING.

INT. ELEVATOR TO HELL LOBBY - NIGHT

The information panel displays, "minus one," in numerals, then continues to, "minus seven." It settles and stops.

Once more there is a DING, off-key in tone from the first, and the doors reopen with a minor struggle. Through the doors can be seen hints of a dingy, hotel lobby.

Scooter steps through. The lobby is dark with a few, green-shaded lamps around the periphery, art-deco decoration circa the 1930s. All is dusty, and the air is smoky.

At the front desk sits a bored RECEPTIONIST wearing a tacky, ill-fitted hat and uniform, reading a paper and not bothering to look up at Scooter's arrival.

Scooter approaches, taking in the unwelcoming decor.

A few moments without being acknowledged go by when Scooter notices a bell, the mesmerized look since riding the elevator wearing off to be replaced by mild confusion.

His hand smacks the bell with a dull CLANG, its mechanism broken, but the sound is enough to give the receptionist a jump, having only been pretending to read, taking a nap.

The receptionist looks around in a daze and yawns, scratching an itch before centering their eyes on Scooter, looking him over and sitting up some to grab a logbook.

RECEPTIONIST

Got a reservation?

SCOOTER

Uhh, I don't know.

RECEPTIONIST

Hmph. Name?

SCOOTER

(uncertain)

Scooter?

RECEPTIONIST

Scooter!?!

The receptionist begins flipping through the book.

RECEPTIONIST

(cont'd mumbling)

They shoul'da called you wheelchair.

SCOOTER

What?

RECEPTIONIST

Nothing, nothing... Welp, looks like you're a walk-in, but we do have a vacancy.

The receptionist turns and stands from their ratty chair and heads to the key-holders with room numbers, scanning with a finger for the right one, then returns it to the desk.

The key is held over the desk for Scooter to grab, but then is pulled back just slightly when he reaches for it.

RECEPTIONIST

(forboding)

We always have vacancies.

Scooter doesn't have much reaction except to look like he has just smelled something mildly gross.

SCOOTER

That's, uh, good?

RECEPTIONIST

No.

Scooter adjusts his footing, seeming to think.

SCOOTER

That's creepy.

RECEPTIONIST

(smiling)

Yeah.

Scooter trails away from the desk keeping his eyes on the receptionist, who is still smiling and nodding.

Once Scooter passes from view toward the stairs, the receptionist lets the smile drop as if another boring part of the job, sighs, and sits again to reopen the newspaper.

INT. HOTEL HELL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Scooter reaches a floor some way up the staircase, and stops to re-check the number on his key. The floors are a match.

He follows the signs in the direction he needs, stepping his way past wooden doors typical of old hotels, but the further he goes, the more he stalls, finally showing concern.

SCOOTER

(to self)

Wait, what is this? Where am I?

Before he can puzzle it out, the sudden, initially muffled sound of a dog's paws CLATTER closer at a run, heard from behind him in the direction of the stairway.

This gets him alert and looking, fear following confusion, and his eyes go wide at the sight of his dog rounding the corner, except she is as tall as the ceiling and enraged.

Her eyes are full of fire, and muzzle dripped with blood. Without pause she keeps charging straight for him. The hall stretches back and forward, expanding almost forever.

Scooter turns and runs as fast as he can along the hall, checking over his shoulder to see the giant dog getting closer. He begins panting, trying to go faster.

In front of him to the side one of the endless doors stands open. He notices it, keeps towards it, the sound of running still increasing behind him, and he bolts inside once there.

He slams the door shut, from the hallway showing the room's number is a match for the key given at the front desk.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Scooter stands against the inside of the door, eyes closed, catching his breath. He starts to regain his senses.

Opening his eyes, down the room's smaller hall with a bathroom door to the side, from somewhere within the darkened space an orange light flashes and lighter CLICKS.

His stomach GROWLS, and he puts his hands to his belly.

He begins to slide down as if to sit on the floor in exhaustion, but the door also grows behind him as he lowers until he has shrunk to around the size of a newborn.

Seeing what he sees, he sees a full-sized version of himself standing in the middle of the room, revealed by another CLICK of the lighter, lighting a joint of his own.

Red light peeks through the curtains from the rear, outlining the figure who moves to turn on a lamp and fully reveal himself. Smiling large, his eyes remain on Scooter.

On a table in the room, the brightest spot with the lamp, sits a room-service tray with a covered dish. His double removes the lid, revealing a perfect, delicious sandwich.

Scooter sees this as his double holds it up, and his stomach GROWLS once again, forcing him back to his feet. He reaches his hands toward his double, begging in his eyes.

His double mimics Scooter's earlier habits in mockery, smoking and eating, then casually walks toward Scooter.

Scooter jumps as he nears, hands raised, and tries to ask or say something, but his voice seems to catch in his throat.

The double's giant feet step over Scooter, not paying him mind, and he enters the bathroom then flicks on the light. There, he stands over the toilet, watching Scooter beg.

The harder Scooter begs, the bigger the double's smile grows, until after only two bites he flushes the sandwich.

Scooter looks dejected, the double taking a happy puff of the joint before stepping back into the main room.

Back at the table the tray has been reset. The double reaches it, looks down at it, then back at Scooter, and once more removes the lid to reveal a perfect sandwich.

The horror of realization fills Scooter, but his stomach GROWLS with this permanent, hollow emptiness.

INT. HELL LOBBY - NIGHT

The receptionist is lounging with feet on the desk, still reading the paper, but bored and nearing the last page.

Distracted, they turn their head to the side, where behind them sits a small office, a security monitor visible inside with nondescript events occurring on a split-screen.

The receptionist ruffles the paper and begins to read again, but grows restless, setting it down to walk to the office.

In the office the receptionist turns the monitor to face them, scans what is currently showing with mild interest, then begins to change the channel with a new grin showing.

On the screen it lands on a view of Scooter from some hidden cameras in his room, four-ways to show different angles.

The small, helpless version of Scooter is chasing around the larger double, still hopping after sandwiches that continue to be chewed then flushed down the toilet.

Seeing this, the receptionist has a short giggle of satisfaction, stands back from the monitor, nods at no one in particular, and returns to the front once more.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Scooter's stomach is GROWLING perpetually, voiceless cries rising from his throat as he chases his gigantic double with the ever-burning joint and impossible to reach sandwiches.

Slowly replacing desperation, Scooter's brow is beginning to show mounting anger. The double, too, begins showing concern around the toilet, much of the bread not flushing.

The cycle begins again, the double heading back to the table with the tray, except this time, when looking up with the new sandwich Scooter has not returned to the hall.

The double's face furrows over this, and though still grabbing the next sandwich, he no longer smiles as he walks faster to the bathroom, skipping the taunting.

Around the corner Scooter is climbing the toilet's side, plunging himself into the bowl. Now it is the double who is horrified as he rushes over to get a better look.

Over the rim Scooter is clinging to the edge, and trying to scoop the soaked remnants of bread and fixings that did not make it down the pipe into his mouth.

The double shows his silent disgust, and indecisive for a moment, sets the fresh sandwich and joint on the bathroom counter before attempting to pull Scooter out.

Squeamishly, the double can't bring himself to make contact, Scooter being so covered in toilet water.

The double takes a new tactic by grabbing a length of toilet-paper, covering his fingers with it, but as he closes in Scooter only bites at his hand, animalistic with hunger.

This is enough to get the double to surrender, and after a pause to look about and think, simply tries flushing again.

It is too much for the toilet to handle along with the previously flushed sandwiches, making a total clog.

As the water overflows, a now-panicked double seeks around until finding a plunger under the sink. He plunges with all his might until Scooter is POPPED out from the suction.

Somehow, all of Scooter's clothes except for his boxers have been sloughed away by the water pressure, revealing the juggalo logo on both his shorts and multiple tattoos.

Scooter's double now regards him with unmitigated terror, and backs out of the bathroom, slamming the door.

INT. HELL LOBBY - NIGHT

Fingers wrapping on the desk, the receptionist is watching a clock on the far wall of the lobby. Nearby, an old phone's sudden RINGING catches the receptionist off guard.

Taking it from the receiver and pressing the blinking light for the incoming line, retro fashion, the receptionist answers hesitantly as if it has never rung before.

RECEPTIONIST

Front desk. Er, may I help you?

The voice from the other end is the hissing, low rasp of a demon, one who has absolutely had it with their job.

DEMON VOICE

I can't do it anymore. I can't.

RECEPTIONIST

Slow down. What do you mean you can't? What's going on?

DEMON VOICE

It's eating out of the toilet!

RECEPTIONIST

Uggh! Really!?!?

The receptionist cannot hide the disgust, gagging some. They glance through to the office at the monitor again, but quickly turn away, removing their hat, revealing horns.

RECEPTIONIST

(cont'd)

Look pal, this job's never pretty.
Keep it together, alright? We're
just going to have to try again.

DEMON VOICE

(conspiratorially)

It has a juggalo tattoo.

RECEPTIONIST

Huh?

DEMON VOICE

It has a juggalo tattoo. You know
the little guy with the hatchet and
that dumb haircut? And it's on his
boxer shorts. He's actually wearing
juggalo boxer shorts and he eats
out of toilets.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh. Oh, I'm so sorry.

DEMON VOICE

I'm going to sue for this. Nobody
ever seems to want to check these
things, and you know...

The voice on the line trails away from the receptionist's attention as another line begins to blink on the phone, an accompanying BEEP signifying a second call waiting.

RECEPTIONIST

(fearfully)

I'm going to have to call you back.
It's the management.

Without waiting for a response from the demonic voice, the receptionist switches lines. This time the other end is silent, but the receptionist goes cross-eyed listening.

When finished, putting the phone back, they stand, walk around to the front of the desk, and head for the stairs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door to Scooter's hell-room swings open and the receptionist strides in to see the double huddled in a

corner, rocking back and forth and hugging himself.

It begins to renew complaining, but the receptionist cuts them off with a hand.

Cracking the door to the bathroom, they see Scooter returned to full size again, eating what remains of the sandwich left by the demon on the counter with unrestrained gusto.

The receptionist takes a deep breath, and opens the door fully, straightening themselves up with forced authority.

RECEPTIONIST

Get out.

Scooter looks up, stopping mid-bite. They make eye-contact.

SCOOTER

Huh?

RECEPTIONIST

Get out. Your kind isn't welcome in this establishment.

Scooter, a full mouth muffling his response, points at his face and skin with a quizzical gesture.

The receptionist responds by pointing at Scooter's boxers.

SCOOTER

(barely intelligible)

But I like Insane Clown P...

RECEPTIONIST

(interrupting)

Not. On. My. Watch. It's a permanent ban. Effective immediately. Get out.

The receptionist, confident now, jabs a thumb toward the waiting door and the hallway outside. Scooter lifts himself to his feet, finishing the sandwich, and walks through.

RECEPTIONIST

(cont'd)

And who in holy hell eats out of a toilet? I mean, really.

As Scooter leaves the room, the receptionist takes one last look at the demon who is seeming relieved, then faces the hall, adjusting some hair from around a horn with a huff and following out with all the stiffness of marching in a drill.

INT. HELL LOBBY - NIGHT

The pair crosses the lobby, Scooter in front, the receptionist hovering a hand behind him as if to push, but not quite willing to make skin-contact.

Scooter begins to turn as he walks, but the receptionist gestures with their hand and eyes to keep forward. Scooter still has questions, though, and is undaunted.

SCOOTER

Does this mean I'll get to go to heav...

RECEPTIONIST

(interrupting)

No!

SCOOTER

Well then where am I supp...

RECEPTIONIST

(interrupting)

Just, no!

They reach the elevator, the doors opening as if predicting their arrival, and the receptionist wastes no time pushing Scooter onto it, leaning in to press the button for him.

Another question almost comes, Scooter raising a hand as if in class, but the doors shut too fast and silence him.

At this, the receptionist brushes their hands on their shirt, gives the same satisfied nod as before, and returns triumphantly to their desk where boredom reasserts itself.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

The storm continues above the trailer park. A tree by Scooter's trailer has a scorch mark, steam and smoke rising as the rain puts out the last of a small fire.

From the street a car approaches, headlights beaming and wipers running, which turns into the covered driveway.

INT. SCOOTER'S TRAILER - NIGHT

His eyes blinking open in a daze, still immobile in the kitchen by the door to the carport, Scooter assesses his surroundings. He grunts with the effort.

From on his back he looks behind to see his dog at the other side of the room on her belly, chin to paws and staring at him. She lifts her head and wags her tail at his movement.

Suddenly, he takes in the fact of his somehow being divested of his clothes right down to his boxers, at the same time he notices the car pull in and its engine shut down.

The sound of two doors opening and closing can be heard, followed by two male voices--those of his ROOMMATES.

Scooter stands and makes a hasty retreat to his unkempt bedroom, the closest to the kitchen at the front, shutting himself inside and making no further noise.

A set of keys JANGLE unlocking the trailer from outside, and the roommates enter wearing half-removed construction gear while carrying bags of fast-food burgers and fries.

As they set the food and tools down around the counter and by the door, one of them bounces in place.

ROOMMATE 2

Man, I have got to go!

That one speedily gets his things down and heads past the kitchen in the direction of the main bathroom.

The other roommate takes his time, sorting the burgers before turning to Scooter's bedroom.

ROOMMATE 1

Scooter? You here? We got you an extra sandwich! You awake?

Scooter's reply comes distantly from behind the door.

SCOOTER

Give it to the dog!

ROOMMATE 1

What?

The bedroom door opens and Scooter peeks out.

SCOOTER

I said, give it to the dog!

Another great WHIP-CRACK of thunder peels away nearby, the roommate jumping only slightly, but it scares Scooter to shut himself back in his room for good.

ROOMMATE 1

(muttering)

Hm. I just don't get that guy sometimes.

The roommate with the burgers spots the dog and signals her to come over, unwrapping one and stripping off a small bit of meat which she gleefully scarfs down.

She wags her tail and he pats her head, then a small commotion can be heard from the bathroom.

ROOMMATE 2

Hey! Why is there bread in the toilet?

The dog continues looking at the burger. The roommate looks down at her, then at Scooter's door, and back at her again.

THE END.