

Twelve stories high and it's all the same. Stainless steel doors shut softly behind me, and then a faint ding! rings in my ears. I lean forward against the banister, staring out the glass at swirls of people dancing on the concrete from this activity to the next - from that swimming pool to this tennis court; above it all I stare, alone, quiet.

The metal is cold on my hands. I welcome it. My peripherals spot streaks of color painting the highway. A glance here, a glance there, and my eyes land hard on that tennis court. Four friends play. Friends of mine? Of course.

They hit the ball. Why can't I just... I can. Since when? I drag my eyes to something else.

Ding! Someone walks out of the elevator. My head turns to find a man stumbling out, carrying a rather large suitcase behind him, pillows and blankets tied and tacked loosely, dragging and falling to the floor. He stops and glances at his plastic key. I turn back to discover a small black spider climbing - or at least, attempting to climb - the dusty windowpane. It twitches for a second, stops, twitches, stops...and then it moves on. Something to analyze? Or just something to watch. It crawls slowly, stretching limb after careful limb, hanging - slipping. The elevator doors shut.

Ding!

It falls and lands with a tiny thud.

Hm. I peer over the railing to find the little thing up and attempting the climb again. An invisible rope tugs at my pupils. My head glitches between this spider and those friends. Friends. One blink and my eyes flit to that tennis court twelve stories below. Nothing's changed. Are you sure? Yes. I shift my legs on the rail.

Metallic blurs race along the highway, their tiny sparkles split my eyes like a hundred needles. Anger. But why? Because I'm not where I'm supposed to be. Says who?

They hit the ball over the net again. One of them lunges and misses. I glance back at the spider. Now it is trying a different route. Instead of climbing the pane, it scuttles along the sill, reaching the white concrete. Terra firma.

Something spins me round, and I lean back against the banister, elbows up, fingers on the icy railing. I stare at that elevator. The stainless steel doors shimmer in the silver sun, like an invitation to a wedding or some pleasant occasion. I can't help but stare at the ground. I'm not meant for them. I can't live like them. I glance at those doors. I stare at the floor again.

Introvert. God, why am I like this? Go to the elevator. No. My hands leave the comfort of those cold rails and walk to the elevator. God, just let me be alone. Like always. I'll just be alone. The metal doors loom in front of me. I don't want to be alone. Push the button. No.

I feel sick.

