

THE MOONLIT PAGE

The Scarf on the Fourth Landing



The apartment building had five floors and an elevator that worked when it felt sociable. In the evenings, the caretaker, Agnes, usually took the stairs.

One dusk she met a dachshund carrying a folded green scarf in its mouth. It lived on the first floor, but it climbed with great purpose toward the fourth.

At each landing, the tassels on the scarf tilted upward, even when the air was perfectly still. Agnes followed. She had spent twenty years fixing things in this building and had never learned how to fix a scarf that pointed north—or, in this case, upstairs.

On the fourth floor, Mr. Bell was trying to bring two heavy watering cans through his door. The spring kept pulling it shut before he could turn around.

The dachshund set the scarf on his slippers. Mr. Bell laughed and held the door open with his heel.

“Your assistant?” Agnes asked.

“Only on Thursdays. The rest of the week he supervises.”

Agnes fetched a rubber doorstop from her tool cupboard. With the door steady, Mr. Bell carried

the cans inside, and the dog carried the scarf back down.

By bedtime, the fourth landing was quiet. A little green tassel lay on the first-floor mat, pointing nowhere at all.

To remember

1. Dachshund climbs with a folded green scarf
2. Tassels point mysteriously upstairs
3. Mr. Bell struggles with watering cans and a closing door
4. Agnes fixes the door; the scarf comes home.