First Place – Fiction Division

Escaped Yet Again

By Evelyn Jenkins

I ran as fast as my legs could carry me. I didn't even take a second glance at the others. The cops almost caught us again, they're always on our trail. Don't they understand? We don't like it at that horrid orphanage. My two friends and I have lived here since we were five years old and we can't take it anymore. We have been on the run for the last year. As I run, I can feel the mid-summer night's air rushing through me like a hand through water.

Close behind me, I hear a noise like someone had been touched, but not caught. My pace quickens. They are still running after us. I run into town and turn into an alleyway. Tons of footsteps echo off the walls. I trip and scream, hit the ground hard, but I am strong so I get back up and keep running. I fight the limp that urges me to stop because I know that if I stop, I will surely be caught and turned back into the orphanage. I turn down several cobble-stone streets, each dimly lit with street lights.

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Wendy come up next to me, just a few feet away. We glance at each other and she gives me a smile that says 'We-just-might-get-lucky-enough'. I hope with all of my might that her smile tells the truth. I am probably the sweatiest person on the face of the earth right now. I hear something slam against the brick wall of the old Kellen Jelly Bean Factory. I never really liked jelly beans.

Carla comes up on the other side of me. Tears are silently streaming down her face. On her arm nearest to the wall, I notice red. I mouthed the words to her, "What happened?"

"They pushed me," she mouthed in return. Now I do take a second glance back at the police men. They are about fifteen feet back. I motion with my index finger, for Carla and Wendy to come closer. They run at a slant for a second and then they are next to me.

"Okay," I whisper, for I have hardly any energy left. "That looks like an abandoned apartment..." I point to the brick building in the distance where the cobblestone street curves. I am losing my breath. "My plan is... that we, run in there and all hide together... that way, if we... get found, we will all... be together."

"Good plan, Gina," Carla whispers, no longer crying, but her face is puffy and pink. As we grow closer to the entrance of the old apartments, that nervous feeling rises in my stomach. I feel as if I could pass out because of dehydration.

I blink and the building is just feet away. I take Wendy and Carla's hands in mine and we enter. I quickly take in my surroundings, and turn left. The place is certainly not an old apartment building. I don't know what it is. I pull them into an old elevator and quietly shut the doors. I hear the police men enter and one says "Spread out, this is a large building and they could be anywhere." I hear footsteps walking toward us, and some walking away.

It is pitch black, I can feel the rust on the walls of the great, old elevator. I reach out to touch someone's hair. It is curly, so it has to be Wendy. I have a handful of her golden, curly hair and I gently pull her head close to mine. I find her ear and whisper into it, as quiet as possible. "Listen to me. Hold both doors of the elevator door shut. While

you do that, I will tell Carla what to do. When I tap on your shoulder, we will all work together to keep the doors shut. Then when the police try to open it, they will think that the elevator is sealed shut from simply being old. Sound like a plan?" I asked her.

"Yes." She whispered back. I let go of her curls and told her to go hold the door shut.

I told Carla pretty much the same thing, then we began holding the door shut. I wondered what animals were in there with us. Rats, spiders, dead ones too.

All of a sudden we heard footsteps coming close and we all held the doors closed, pushing as hard as possible. After a couple of minutes, the pressure stopped. The footsteps faded.

We sat in that elevator for what seemed like another hour before a voice broke the silence. "Well, they got away, this time. But next time we are sure to get them. Let's go boys." With that, they left.

We escaped... again.