**The Run (Mailgirls Vignette)**

by SliceReality

Step… step… step… step…tick… tock… tick… tock…  
  
… along the corridor, left, through the cubicles, left again… through the doors… past the windows in the foyer… up the stairs… through the doors…  
  
Step… step… step… step…tick… tock… tick… tock…  
  
… breasts swaying lightly, bare feet pounding the hallways, I’m naked surrounded by clothed professionals, former friends, colleagues… I block it out of my mind… run… run… run… I know every floor, every hallway, every inch of the complex from feel alone, the textures of the different floors beneath my feet; it’s something only the other mailgirls understand…  
  
Step… step… step… step…tick… tock… tick… tock…  
  
The MMU on my arm starts buzzing every second… 1 minute remaining… almost there…  
  
Step… step… step… step… buzz… buzz… buzz… buzz…  
  
Left… right…. up the stairs… through the doors… running faster now… so close!… through the doors… around the cubicles… The vibrating gets more insistent, 30 seconds!  
  
50 feet… 40… 30… buzz-buzz-buzz-buzz… 20… 10…   
  
I practically skid through the office doorway, my naked skin adorned with nothing but the MMU on my arm and the number 19 drawn on my hips, back and breast. It’s the office of a junior manager, he’s well dressed and professional looking, sitting behind his desk, his blue suit jacket hanging from the back of his chair as he strokes his stylishly trimmed beard, deep in thought.  
  
I gasp for breath as I stop respectfully short, panting as I speak, “I, I have a package for you Sir”  
  
“Oh, great” He says with a brief look up from his monitor, his words aren’t a note of my performance; the tone conveys obviously his meaning was a mere contraction of ‘oh, great, my package has arrived’.  
  
I put the small package on his desk and drop to my knees, taking an opportunity to rest my legs and assuming the position required of us, thighs spread, back arched and my breasts pushed forward. I always keep my hands behind my back, some of the other girls keep them on their thighs but I get too anxious I might accidentally cover myself and earn more demerits than I can afford.  
  
I watch him pick up the package and open it, spilling the contents of files and memory-sticks on to his desk. He glances at me hungrily; it’s a look all the mailgirls are used to and I can feel his eyes take in the curves of my body and the swells of my breasts. I pull back my shoulders just a little, pushing my breasts just a little further forward and subtly shifting my knees a little further apart, blushing as I suppress a tiny smile of joy at the sight of his eyes lighting up. Even now I find it embarrassing to admit the small thrill I get from being regarded with such an appreciative eye, from knowing my naked body has caused a stir in their mind. I don’t know why I get that excitement, whether it’s inherent in me or just a kind of Stockholm syndrome; that after all these months of being humiliated, putting even more of a show is my only way to have some control, to get some positivity and I’m subconsciously taking their stares as a compliment.  
  
I focus on my breathing and my heart rate; the stop-start nature of what we do can be physically confusing at first, with such intense activity interspersed with moments of complete stillness. It takes a conscious effort to stop the adrenalin pumping, to slow your breaths, conserving energy for when you need it next.  
  
I keep my eyes down but watch him from the edges of my vision as he goes over the papers. Those brief moments of waiting after a delivery are always anxious, it doesn’t matter how many runs you make in a day you always make the same hopeful prayer after each one that you’ll be dismissed without being given another immediate delivery; hoping that you might get lucky and get a chance to rest on one of the mats, even for a few minutes.  
  
I glance at my nipples and blush, the air conditioning in this wing is always turned up higher than in the tower and now that I’ve stopped running the light sheen of perspiration on my skin is rapidly cooling… leading to the inevitable… I can feel my cheeks flush a little brighter as I watch them grow before my eyes and they just seem to beg for attention.  
  
“I have tower deliveries for Wilson Peters on fifth and Erica Jonas on ninth”  
  
His voice snaps me from my distraction and I glance up, suppressing the urge to groan at the news that not only has my brief time resting come to an end, but my next run was a multi-floor multi-stop across the entire complex.  
  
A respectful “Yes Sir” escapes my lips so quickly I swear I say it on reflex now and I can only watch mutely as his fingers work on the screen of his smart phone, inputting the destinations of his deliveries. A moment later I feel the MMU on my arm buzz softly to life, the clock resetting to a 5 minute timer and I know the moment I walk out the door of this office it will start its unstoppable countdown.  
  
He seals a pair of envelopes, writing names on each of them and then sliding them across the desk so I can reach them. Reluctantly I stand, knowing I’m only delaying the inevitable and if I don’t respond enthusiastically to the run I’ll become a magnet for demerits.  
  
I can feel the skin of my knees is lightly indented with the pattern from the carpet, I know it will quickly fade but for a moment I feel that primal anxiety all of us mailgirls feel when we know, if inspected right then, we could fail. I hate that they have trained me like that; that I have become so conditioned to hate the procedure for failing inspections that I have very real, primal, responses to the idea of failing one, meaning I constantly strive to keep myself flawless. Some staff will use any excuse to fail us, and I always want to beat them at their own game by not giving them any, it’s taken me a long time to realise that by making sure I’m always presenting myself to standard, I’m actually doing exactly what they want.  
  
My toes curl into the plush carpet as I stand barefoot and naked in front of him, his expensive blue suit only highlighting the difference between us as I take the envelopes into my left hand and wait for his dismissal. I can’t help but wonder if he’s ever felt the texture of the carpet in his office himself… probably not, why would he remove his expensive brogues?  
  
“I don’t have the credits for premium-rush, but make it quick”  
  
His voice is dripping with that fake salesman charm and inside I can feel the urge to respond sarcastically growing but I resist and force a polite smile instead. It feels like the number of people that try to get us to go faster than they can afford grows every day, the worst are the ones that threaten you with demerits if you don’t meet their deadlines rather than those on the MMU.  
  
“I’ll do my best for you Sir” I say, trying my best to sound perky, gripping the envelopes to my hip as I mentally get myself ready to run again.  
  
“Good girl 19; Erica might also have something to send back so I’ll see you again in a few minutes”   
  
I clench my empty fist on instinct, but otherwise don’t let myself show my frustration, knowing I’ll have to run across most of the complex, climb up the tower and then do the whole thing in reverse is daunting and I know I’ll be tired tonight.  
  
“Thank you Sir” I say with a forced nod and smile and, taking a deep breath, I scurry from the room, my bare feet pounding the halls all over again as the clock on my arm starts its unstoppable countdown. All conscious thoughts fall away as my mind focuses on nothing but the run…  
  
Step… step… step… step…tick… tock… tick… tock…  
  
… past the cubicles… through the doors… end of the corridor, left, down the stairs, through the doors… left… straight… through the doors… across the floor…  
  
Bare feet landing lightly on the hard office floors, the clothed workers all around me, their eyes drinking in my nakedness…  
  
Step… step… step… step…tick… tock… tick… tock…  
  
… outside, across the courtyard… into the sunshine… towards the tower…  
  
Step… step… step… step…tick… tock… tick… tock…

**The Run - Part 2**

Step… step…step…step…  
  
I can feel the bright midday sun on my skin from above and the light breeze dancing amongst the buildings as I cross the grassy area in the quad in the centre of the complex towards the tower. I remember my first week, having to run through the offices naked like this was bad enough, but there was something even more daunting and humiliating about leaving the safety of being ‘indoors’ and venturing outside, knowing all the windows in every office building are overlooking you… knowing your total nudity can be seen from every angle…  
  
Step… step…step…step…  
  
I bound past a couple of female employees, obviously on their lunch break and sunbathing on the grass, their business attire rolled up to soak up the sun while staying modestly covered… I try to ignore their looks in my direction. I can feel their eyes burning into me beneath their sunglasses, their judgemental giggles as my naked body rushes past…  
  
Tick…tock…tick…tock… ignore them… focus… focus on the delivery!  
  
I run past the main employee doors at the base of the tower and around to the small maintenance stairwell entrance; the doorway has a warning sticker emblazed on the outside, a silhouette of a mailgirl running in a yellow warning triangle that reads “Mailgirl Route”. I bundle myself into the cold interior and immediately start to climb the hard worn carpeted stairs. The edges of the steps are dusty but there is a well-trodden clean route through the middle, kept clean by the hundreds of times bare feet pass up and down these steps every day.  
  
… ground… floor 1… floor 2…  
  
The stairwell runs all the way to the top of the tower but has no windows; it was really designed to serve as a fire escape and maintenance access, but it’s really become the primary mailgirl route now…   
  
I touch the metal handrail and shiver, it’s cold to the touch, all the air conditioning equipment runs through this stairwell and it’s always uncomfortably cold… some of the other mailgirls are convinced they keep it cold in here to prevent us hanging out in the only place we get any privacy…  
  
Step… step… step… step…  
  
My thighs are burning already, running upstairs is exhausting… I hear another door open above me and see 14 emerge from floor 3 and start climbing down towards me. She gives me a smile and I call back to her through panting breathes,  
  
“How’s it going?”  
  
“You know how it is…” she says with a roll of her eyes, she keeps one hand on her chest to stop her breasts bouncing as she descends… I still can’t imagine what it must be like to do this with a chest as big as hers… I count my blessings my breasts are comfortably small…  
  
We stop on the stairs as we meet and I give a nod to the envelopes in my hands, “All the way to ninth…” I say with a sigh and she gives me a wince of sympathy, “My morning was all third and sixth, back and forth… OH! … Just a heads up, the executives are having meetings most of the day on tenth so you know what that means…”  
  
We start to move again; both aware of our deadlines as we continue to talk, tick…tock…tick…tock…  
  
“Coffee runs?” I ask with a disgruntled sigh, “Why can’t they just move the coffee makers from fifth to tenth!” I call to her as she passes beneath me.  
  
“Because then they wouldn’t need mailgirls bringing it to them!” She calls back with a sarcastic smile, her voice echoing through the concrete lined stairwell as we move further apart.  
  
I check my MMU with a glance and realise I need to pick up the pace, climbing, legs burning onto fifth and then throwing open the doors and running past the elevator bank enviously. A woman on her cell phone waiting for an elevator gives me a snorting look as I run past her and I stifle the urge to tell her to try running up and down the tower for a change…  
  
At least running on the flat feels easy again, compared with climbing the stairs, running down the hallways feels like a breeze…  
I bundle around the corner and immediately curse silently… three members of staff, walking towards me, next to one another in deep conversation and blocking the width of the entire corridor, their shoes squeaking on the polished floor.   
  
I already know it’s my responsibility to get out of their way but I step as far up the corridor towards them as I dare before sliding myself against the wall and spreading my legs, my cheeks burning with embarrassment. I can feel the coolness of the rough wall against my exposed ass cheeks and I pant from the excursion of climbing the stairs, my bare left foot taps imperceivably with nervous energy as I keep my head down and silently beg them to walk faster.  
  
Come on… come on…  
  
I glance at my MMU and bite the inside of my cheek… 1:34 remaining… barely enough time already… I stand taller on my toes and put my hands clutching the delivery, in the small of by back, trying to shrink into the wall as much as possible. I blush knowing I’ll probably leave a shiny ass print on the wall.  
  
…Come on!!!...  
  
The group leisurely stroll past me without more than a glance, they pass so close I feel the rough fabric of a suit jacket brush delicately against one of my breasts and I jump a little at the jolting sensation it causes in my naked body. But I can’t stop, the moment they pass me I bolt from the wall and start sprinting again… simultaneously my MMU springs urgently to life, the one minute warning starts to vibrate on my arm.  
  
I can feel every passing second now; the rhythmic buzzing is like a hand pushing me forwards. I’m almost there but I know it will be tight as I bundle through another set of double doors and across the foyer balcony. My lungs gasping urgently for hair, heart pounding as I break into a full on sprint, my bare feet slap on the cold tiles and squeak when I change direction. I run into one of the huge open-plan areas of the tower, cubicles and desks whizzing past as I run.  
  
30 second warning. Buzz-buzz-buzz-buzz-buzz…  
  
The faces of the workers all around me become a blur, I can feel their eyes but nothing matters except the deadline, I can feel my ponytail bouncing against the back of my neck, my lungs heaving a little heavier with excerption… I know I shouldn’t have stopped in the stairwell…   
  
I can see my destination… the desk on the end… but it’s on the opposite side of the floor…  
  
My MMU starts buzzing constantly, I glance at it and supress a frustrated whine as I see the timer 00:00:00 … I’m late, and the red screen lets everyone I pass know it too.  
  
I skid to a stop at the desk, my lungs bursting, cheeks burning with disappointment, shame and anger at myself… I shouldn’t have stopped in the stairwell! I have to catch myself at moments like this, I’m an intelligent qualified woman… I went to college… and here I am, through nature or just their training of me, having an internal tantrum for failing to run fast enough…  
  
“I… I have a package for you Sir” I find the words tentatively, trying to regain my breathing as I hand one of the envelopes to the scrawny looking guy at his desk. He looks like a developer but I can’t really tell, slightly chubby with that unkempt look… He peers at me over his glasses and I stutter an apology, feeling his eyes boring into me, “I’m sorry for any delay in delivery Sir”  
  
He silently takes the package from me and my anxiety only grows. Only once he’s opened it and peered inside does he pick up his phone and tap the screen a few times, his voice distant and disinterested, “2 demerits for being late, 5 for not assuming position… thank you 19”  
  
He doesn’t even look at me.   
  
I feel my heart sink, the MMU hands out 5 demerits per 30 seconds of lateness automatically but staff are allowed to add more, plus, being distracted by trying to make the delivery, I’d failed to assume either the standing or kneeling position properly, standing with my legs crossed. 12 demerits for being, what? 10 seconds late… I can’t be sure exactly… I bite the inside of my cheek in annoyance and make a weak attempt to shuffle into a more presentable position, but I know it’s too late.  
  
12 demerits… brings my total to 21 this week already… $210 gone from my weekly pay cheque plus knowing I’ll have to work 4 hours overtime… great…  
  
I hate people like this, that seem to take every pleasure in the power they have over us, lording in their superiority… I know, technically, everyone is superior over me right now… but it’s nice not to have it rubbed in our faces…  
  
…I don’t have time to think about it further, my MMU screen turns green again, the countdown timer resetting… 2 minutes to get up to ninth... wait…tenth?!  
  
I look at the destination again and groan silently, Erica Jonas isn’t in her office, she’s in meeting room 5 on the tenth floor. I start off again, glancing occasionally at my MMU screen to make sure Erica isn’t moving. It’s perhaps the worst part of the ‘roaming’ setting on the staff phones, that the MMU monitors their location in real time and updates our destination automatically. It means they can get a delivery anywhere, but for us mailgirls it means that unless you’re paying attention you could end up running to an empty office only to find your recipient is in a meeting in a different building…  
  
You’d have to be pretty oblivious for that to happen though, considering the MMUs vibrate violently if you go off route, you’d find out you were going in the wrong direction pretty quickly…  
  
Step… step… step… through the doors… past the elevators… back to the stairwell… climb… climb… climb…

**The Run - Part 3**

…Floor 7… thighs burning… that familiar ache from climbing these awful stairs… if anyone had told me 6 months ago I could climb 10 flights of stairs in 2 minutes I’d have laughed in their face… now look at me, panting, naked, legs pounding away as I run up them… floor 8… it’s not easy, but I can do it… I suppose a lot of things have changed for me in the last 6 months…  
  
My MMU starts buzzing again… 1 minute warning… buzz… buzz… buzz…  
  
Floor 9… come on… just two more flights… my thighs ache so bad now, I honestly think if the tower was even a floor taller I’d be a wreck trying to do this. Even though I know my body will recover from that ache in minutes once I’m running flat again, it doesn’t seem to make it any less of an effort to crest these last few steps…  
  
Floor 10… buzz… buzz… buzz…  
  
My bare feet on the hard carpet floor… I think I miss shoes the most… or a bra…. god, just thinking about it I can feel my jealousy coming back… I can’t think this way; I have to suppress these thoughts… The only way to stay happy and sane is to not envy the other employees and their clothes… I’m a mailgirl… I’m a mailgirl…   
  
I burst through the doors onto the top floor, the plush carpet here is immediately noticeable and I almost forget to wipe my feet on the mat by the door. Just another extra protocol up here… everything is so plush and expensive for the executives… leaving dirty footprints wont only earn you a whole bunch of demerits, but result in having to run all the way down to the basement to fetch a cleaning kit and lug it all the way back up here just to clean up your own mess…   
  
… wipe… wipe… I kick my feet up in turn behind me to check my soles… clean… good… I lift my head to start up again… the buzzing reaches double speed… 30 seconds… It’s only now as I race from the doorway I realise the secretaries up here are watching me run past, their looks make me blush crimson… I can’t help myself but glance down at their expensive pumps and I almost drool with envy… STOP… don’t think like that… mailgirl… mailgirl…  
  
Buzz-buzz-buzz-buzz…  
  
… Meeting room 5 … right… along the corridor… past the windows… room 1… room 2… 3… 4… 5!  
  
I open the glass meeting room door as quietly as I can and slip inside, my head bowed, immediately dropping to my knees in an attempt to be discreet… I check my MMU… 11 seconds to go… another close call!  
  
My legs ache, my lungs are burning and my heart is pounding desperately in my chest. The roaring in my ears is too loud to really make out any semblance of the conversation in the room but I can tell they are all deep in discussion about something, my presence barely registered… good…  
  
I spread my legs even wider… I don’t know why I do it, I suppose subconsciously I know I have a package and it almost feels like the only way I have of begging for attention…  
  
“19”  
  
A woman’s voice calls me… Just the number jolts me on instinct… the way any normal person would react to hearing their own name… I don’t think I’ll ever get used to my reaction to that number now… they’ve made it my name… They’ve made me ’19’… They say ‘19’ and I respond automatically…  
  
“Yes Ma’am”  
  
I hear the words escape my mouth without consciously choosing to say them… they say ‘19’… I respond...  
  
“I have a delivery for you Ma’am, Erica Jonas…” I say hopefully, glancing up at the long board table and only now being able to focus enough to realise there are at least 20 expensively dressed men and women sitting around it, all staring at me expectantly…  
  
“Bring it to me then… Jesus…” A stern looking middle-aged woman, her red hair specked with grey, clicks her fingers at me her voice dripping with frustration. I clench my empty fist again but stand obediently, feeling the twinge in my thighs from the effort of pulling myself to my feet again after my climb.  
  
I can feel the derision in her voice… she thinks we’re dumb… mindless… because we’re supposed to be…  
  
I walk around the table timidly, my heart pounding from a combination of my run and nervous anxiety at being naked in this luxurious boardroom surrounded by wealthy executives in their expensive power-suits. It doesn’t get easier, moments like these, when you really feel like their naked toy… so small compared to them…  
  
I can feel all of their eyes on every inch of me… so I walk as pleasingly as I can, keeping my back arched… staying light on my toes… I can’t stop them looking at me… so I want them to like looking at me… what choice do I have?  
  
I stand where Erica is pointing, her fingers clicking me into position as I quickly obey, handing her the envelope before putting my hands on my head and spreading my legs… my head bowed… Why am I doing this?  
  
… She didn’t ask to inspect me… why did I instinctively get into this pose? … is it this room? … These people… I can’t think straight when I get up here like this… their power… their wealth… Am I submitting because I want to? Because I have to? Am I panicking and this is my safest way out? … What am I doing?!  
  
I’m trying to be pleasing but I can feel them judging me… their looks burning into my naked skin… my bare breasts… my exposed pussy… every inch of my body theirs to survey… I can feel the subconscious NEED to cover myself, but it’s too late, I have to fight myself internally and hold this pose now…  
  
She snaps her fingers near me, down by my navel and I gasp, jumping slightly as my eyes snap down to where she clicked…  
  
“Take this back to Matthew in sales” she says, holding out a single post-it note for me to take. I balk slightly at it, knowing she’ll dispatch it premium rush… that I’ll be made to run across the whole complex all over again to deliver a message that’s a single sentence long… she could’ve text it or emailed it… but no… it’s like they’ve been brain washed into forgetting those even exist… they all think we’re quicker and easier… we often are… but still…  
  
I take the post it and gently grasp it in my fingers, returning my hands to my head again as I wait patiently for her to type on her phone… The seconds feel like hours now… try not to think about how naked you are… how on display and surrounded by clothed people are you are…  
  
“Premium rush 19… 3 minutes”  
  
I gasp, the panic immediate as I feel my MMU reset and buzz, the countdown starting… 3 minutes… 3!  
  
I don’t have time for anything but to sprint again…. Step… step… step…step… go… go… go…