

## Parable in Which No One Else in the Super 8 Breakfast Lounge Thinks About How This Hotel Might Outlive Us

by [Sarah Carson](#) in the [July 2025](#) issue

Published on June 19, 2025

Maybe the flatbed driver shrinking into the folds  
of her sweatshirt is only thinking about salting  
her hard-boiled egg. It could be that the well-dressed family  
checking their Google maps above the crunch of  
their overcooked waffles is only thinking about  
whatever important thing it is for which they have  
already parted their hair, applied their moisturizers.  
Surely the man eating alone in the pinched-front sombrero  
has so many other things to consider, he will  
not notice the nearby woman in her pajamas pants  
trying to steady a plate of pastries in the crook  
of her elbow, whom he has not offered to help balance  
a bowl of Lucky Charms beneath the spout of the milk.  
But, woe unto all of us if not for the lady coming now  
through the corridor, her sleeveless tee aflutter  
in the light of the vending machines. Who does  
she not see as she offers to take one of the teeming  
foam cups another girl attempts to maneuver around  
a cleaning cart, pauses to let the girl grab  
the room key from her back pocket.  
If the woman is not thinking about  
how much longer the planet can hold us,  
then why does she bother? *What would I do  
without you*, the girl asks, as if to say,  
*What would any of us do if not  
for the magic accident of other people?*  
The woman takes the cup into the soft curve  
of flesh between her thumb and forefinger,  
cradles it like a bean holds a sprout head.

*You'd spill your coffee,* she says,  
as if reading a fortune. An incantation  
to break the curse.