I’m alone, in a dark room.

There are no windows.

There is no door.

All there is is the inky blackness that surrounds me, tormenting and torturing me with its silent and sinister omnipresence. It claws at my sanity with its invisible talons, slowly dragging my mind into the dark abyss of…

No. I said I wouldn’t think about it. I promised myself that I wouldn’t think about it. You’ve got better things to think about.

Escape. *You must escape*.

My cell, if that’s what it is, is damp and musty. The fetid stench of corpses emanates from every corner, so I sleep in the middle of the room. There’s straw beneath me, I think, dirty and ragged, and beneath that there is solid concrete; there is no way to dig through the floor or walls. The ceiling is low and I can’t stand up, meaning I have to half-crouch when I want to stand. My back aches and creaks. My stomach is desperate for food or water. I feel drained, drained of spirit, drained of soul, drained of everything. I’m nothing but a hollow shell. No emotions cross my withered, starved heart.

Not anymore.

A memory floats to the front of my consciousness. I try and shake it off, to lock it away, back with all the others, but it keeps coming, stronger, and stronger each time, until I can do nothing but let it play out before my mind’s eye.

*They had come. There had been word of it for weeks, but, but… I’d never expected it to actually happen. It had been a light and airy morning; a thin layer of frost coated the fiery red leaves outside and everything seemed perfect and beautiful... but then they had come.*

*It had begun with the earthquake. A violent tremor had suddenly shaken the ground beneath me, and I was thrown over into a heap on the grass. The bench I had been sitting on in the park had uprooted itself and now lay on its side in a dented mess: the quake had bent its iron frame into two ugly fractured halves. Woozily, I stood got to my feet and slowly, foot after foot, made it a few metres across the grass before I crumpled to the ground again. Dirt was spraying from the ground and my vision blurred as the world shook ferociously around me and I clutched my head in pain. A sticky red substance had begun to trickle from my forehead and onto my hand. I tried to remember what that meant but my memories were all mixed together as if my brain had been put into a blender and back into my head. Someone, in the distance, was screaming.*

*And then, abruptly, they came and revealed themselves. Even through my blurred eyesight I could see the dark shape of one erupting from the ground, its serpentine, aquiline head darting from side to side with the air of a hunter searching for prey. The slimy mucus that covered every inch of their sleek and reptilian bodies glinted in the early morning light. The ebon figure turned its head to look at me in one movement, claws extended, but turned away. Maybe I had been lucky? Maybe I was as good as dead. I didn’t know. I was just glad to be out of the spotlight of those hateful amber eyes, so full of malice and revenge.*

*All over the park, I could see more of the coal-black creatures drag themselves out of the grass. Some crawled like lizards, some walked like humans, into every house.*

*There were more screams. The skies were turning to ash. Fire licked like forked tongues around me.*

*Everything went black.*

*All of a sudden, I fell, into the dark, far, far down beneath the surface of the Earth. I tried to reach back to that window of light at the top of this abyss, but I couldn’t reach it. It got further, and further away as I was dragged further down, down into the darkness.*

And now I am here. It had all happened so suddenly.

In this dark room, all alone, with no windows and no doors.

I let this painful vision occur again a few times, then attempt to wrestle it back into that sad little corner of my mind, where all my other distant memories are kept. Then, for the first time, I wonder where I am. Am I… am I… could I be *-*

No. Of course not.

I’m in a dark room, all alone, with no windows and no doors.

That’s all.

*I must escape.*