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Escape

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Haley E. Foster

Faster, that was the only coherent thought in the girl's mind as she stumbled blindly in the dark. Faster, her body ached, and the pain in her face was blinding. Faster, a dull ache filled her shin, and she

realized with mixed horror and relief that she had finally reached the stairs leading up from the hellish place behind her. Faster, crawling up the stairs on numb hands and bruised knees, the too-large T and baggy sweatpants, stained with splashes of her own blood, hung loosely from her body, padding the sounds of her flesh connecting with the splintering wood beneath her. The clothes were not hers; she was in them when she woke up in this place, tied up and bleeding profusely from lashes on her abdomen. And they obviously did not belong to her sadistic captor; this fact only served to make her even more frightened. She was not the first. The boards groaned beneath her weight, making far more noise than she was comfortable with, though in that moment she couldn't bring herself to care. Faster, she felt her hands press against the rough wood of the door as she finally reached the top of the staircase, more adrenaline surging through her body. Feeling her way up the face of the door, she felt the cool metal handle sting at her hands; she grasped tightly to the doorknob and pushed. Nothing.

She pushed again, nothing. She pushed and pulled and beat at the door until her hands were bruised, hoping against hope that even in her weakened state the old wood would give. Nothing happened. She had been so close, after what must have been days down in the dark; she was so close. So close to a breath of fresh air and the sight of the sky, even if it was only for a moment.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

Daphne H. Babcock



The clothes were not hers; she was in them when she woke up in this place, tied up and bleeding profusely from lashes on her abdomen. And they obviously did not belong to her sadistic captor; this fact only served to make her even more frightened.

Even if she were only to be caught and dragged back down into the shadows to never see the light of day again— just one last glimpse.

Why was he doing this? She had been knocked unconscious yet again, only to wake to a sharp agonizing pain in her lips, but more importantly to find that she had been unbound. Why, what was this man thinking, if she could even call him a man. She would have been better off had she awoken still bound rather than with this false sense of hope.

Banging once, twice, three times on the door, she gave up and slumped against the wooden barrier in defeat. She would have wept if she hadn't cried all the tears a person could. She didn't know why she thought anything different would happen, this thing holding her wasn't stupid. If he had left her untied, then why on earth would he

leave the door unlocked? And even if he had, she had no clue where she was. She could be in a basement or some kind of bunker, the middle of the woods or some old abandoned building in a run-down neighborhood where she would be shot the minute she got out in the open, or perhaps a farmhouse miles away from anyone or anything. Her body shook with despair and the realization that she was never going to leave this place, not alive anyway.

Through her shaking breaths she could hear the soft footfalls of heavy boots attempting not to be heard approaching the door. He was back. Her shuddering breath quickened as her whole body went cold, every muscle in her body was paralyzed with fear. Not a single coherent thought was present in her mind— only pure, cold panic. Then all was quiet; the footsteps had stopped what seemed to be mere inches away from the door. The girl held her breath, the only sounds audible to her were her own pounding heart, thumping against her chest so heavily that she feared he too might be able to hear it, and the sound of blood rushing in her ears. Then she heard the clashing of keys on the other side as the door handle began to jiggle with the lock sliding easily away from the doorframe. Then another latch gave, the sliding kind that has a chain on it. In only a few minutes the door had gone from her key to freedom to another wall keeping her there. One moment a protective barrier between her and a madman, and now that barrier was dissolving into nothing.



Element and Purpose Duncan Odeny