

The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute -- two, consequently, obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge.

Out of options as the walls were closing in on me, I approached the pit in the center of the apartment. Quickly and carefully, I bent down and reached inside it, looking for a foot hold or anything I could possibly hang on to. After feeling my entire way around the perimeter of the hole, I found a small cavity in the stones where they had started to loosen and break free of the bulwark. Within seconds, the walls would be upon me, burning me to death. I cautiously descended into the pit, using the extruding rocks and crevasses to keep my hold. I heard yelling from above, and a man's face came into view above me. He did nothing, just watched me as I descended to the bottom.

Nearing the base of the pit, I could hear the scratches and squeals of rats. Oh, the disgust! It was rising in the hollow of my stomach until I thought I would vomit. I'm not sure what would have been worse: jumping into the pit, mangled, then devoured by rats, or sitting at the bottom, unscathed, yet without food or clean water while I perish and defend myself from being eaten alive.

After much pain at the expense of my arms and a few near hazardous slips, my foot touched a solid, slimy surface. I let myself drop onto the gross, yet reassuring, ground. I had

reached the bottom of the dreaded pit. The ceilings were only about three and a half feet high, forcing me to scrunch my back and bend my knees to continue standing. I felt a scratching on my ankles and let out a little screech. These rats, of all things, will be the death of me! How could this be so? Just last week I was sitting happily in my home. In the next moment I made a decision. I was determined not to die down here in this horrid, disgusting grave. I began to walk forward and tried to find my way to the wall. I looked up through the tall chamber which I had just entered through. I could see nothing. Pure dark surrounded me now. There was no way I was going to get the smallest ray of light down here. I had to rely solely on my sense of touch.

I walked and walked, following the wall and counting the paces I took. "14, 15, 16...." I needed to find something, anything, which would be of aid to me down here. After my 24th step, my foot hit something solid, producing an eerie clanking noise that echoed off the thick stone walls. I carefully bent down to pick up what felt to be a long metal bar. It was about 4 to 5 feet long and skinny, but solid and strong. Taking another step, my foot hit another clinking object. This time it was a thick metal chain, approximately three feet long. I continued on, carrying these random objects with me, unsure of how I might be able to use them. They were quite heavy and my body was aching everywhere. All I wanted to do is find a way out of this ghastly cavity deep in the ground.

I kept walking, afraid to stop and rest for fear I wouldn't be able to get up again. I didn't know how long I had been walking when I stumbled onto something with a loud crunching noise. I tripped and fell face first onto the hard ground. Regaining my bearings, I stood again and examined the entity which had just caused my fall. At first, I couldn't be sure, but after

closer inspection, I came to comprehend the horrid thing I had tripped over. Quickly, I jumped back, wanting to get as far away from it as I could: It was a skeleton. Rotting flesh exposed the rigid bone underneath. My stomach started convulsing, whether from lack of food or from the body I cannot be sure. Who knows how long that body had been there? It couldn't be too long, for the flesh was still decomposing. And how had that person come to be down here? Had they escaped down a pit too, only to meet their tragic fate at the bottom?

Once I regained composure, I stepped over the carcass and studied my surroundings. I was standing up straight! When had the ceiling height risen? I also came to realize that I could actually make out a glimpse of the dead body which I had fallen over. Therefore, there must be light. Yes, light! I looked up and could make out a faint circle of light straight above my head. An escape! There was another pit, exactly the same size as the one I had climbed down into. But how was I to reach the top? It looked so far up, and I was so fatigued from climbing down the first pit. The rats began to scurry around me, nibbling at the holes in my socks. I had to get out right now!

I found the metal bar and chain I had dropped during my fall. The walls of the hole leading upwards were within my reach. I thought for a moment, then lifted the pole above my head. Yes, it fit! I shimmied the pole between the walls on either side of the pit. It was a perfect fit, and it stayed snugly in its place when I pulled down on it. Next, I took the chain and tied it around the pole, using it to help me pull my body up the wall until I could use the rod to aid my hold. Luckily, I continuously found foot and hand holds in crevasses in the stones. Once I was

secure against the wall, I would pull out the rod and replace it above my head once again. I did this the whole way and gradually made my way to the top.

The light was so close! Two more feet and I would be at the top. I went to grab the rod out from under me and lost my balance. My foot slipped, but somehow I regained my footing. I got the metal bar and fit it in place right above my head. Slowly, using the last bit of strength I had left, I pulled myself to the top of the pit, reaching for the rim that would secure my safety. It was within an inch of my fingertips.

I stretched for the stone border and had to jump a little to reach it. But as my fingertips started to find their grip, they just as suddenly lost it. I fell backwards- falling and falling into my inevitable fate.