

Into Dust

I could feel the slow dripping of sweat. Unable to think, nor was I even able to open my tired eyes. Left, right. I could see people there, I had to warn them of what was coming. Unable to think or to open my tired eyes. Smell of smoke from the candles. I could see people there, I had to warn them of what was coming. Run, jump. My heart forced my body up the floor as the images of this terrible nightmare slowly vanished from my short lived memory. I put my ragged clothes on and walked to the pantry, taking the last slice of bread and bringing it close enough to my mother for her to smell it and wake up. My dad had died two years ago today. I could hear her withering heartbeat as she landed a kiss on my forehead.

As I headed out, the sky opened and I felt ice cold drops mixing with those coming from my own shivering body. I strolled down the trail towards the cave's mouth. There, the quarry awaited. I grabbed a pickaxe from the pile and headed down right and to the far end of the cave, where the forced contact of metal and rock could be heard from miles away.

I heard a bang.

And another.

And another one.

I moved to the barely lit corner. Then, another bang. Concentrated on my block, I could only think of those that had been here before me.

Bang.

Bang.

About four years ago I came here for the very first time. I was meant to replace an old man. I remembered the lifeless expression on his face. It was as if he had been here for so long that his body was still quarrying even after his soul had left. I hit my stone harder.

Another bang.

The moment I stepped into this daemon's mouth for the first time, I saw the last piece of emotion left in this rotted man right before they took him away. The days never ended after that. I swung the pickaxe harder each day, but the wages stayed below minimal. We had to live off the last slice of bread I could get from the nearby market. Every day my mum would curl up in bed, just a bit more tired. Every day I felt like my blood was only seconds away from scaping my body.

Bang.

And another one.

I couldn't continue like this, I had to leave! Jump, run, don't look back. Just commands for my body to process. I passed the warden. Run. Keep going. Run. Do not crash into that person. Another pickaxe hit its stone. Dynamite. They had dynamite! They wanted to explode all the rock out! They were placing it right where the new workers had arrived. I had to warn them, get us all out of this prison. The opening on my left had a direct communication with the hole that was moments away from being blown out of its suffocating air. Go left, right, left, right. Straight forwards. I had to tell them, they had to leave!

Bang! Too late.

The two thin pillars behind me crashed down taking half the ceiling they were holding with them. The deafening sound of the dynamite, muffled under the exhausted crashing of rock. Forwards, a wall. Backwards, a wall. I started to scream; shout; cough from the amount of dust in my lungs. Bury yourself, that's the only way out. The stone above me gave up. My mother's kiss. The smell of bread. My dad. All that was left of me was that of the old man: a body surrounded by rocks, with a trickle of red fluid draining its way out to sea.