

You're cold. Why is it so cold? You look around, but it's too dark to see much. Where are you? You feel the bed you're lying on. It's wet. It smells bad. You smell bad. You try to sit up, eventually managing, though there's no strength left in your arms. Your stomach growls. When was the last time you've eaten? You can't remember. Why are you so sore? You can't remember this either. You feel a panic rising in you. You're hungry, you're thirsty, you're dirty, you're lost. You don't know where anyone is. Are you alone? No, there, footsteps in the hall. But as they come closer you feel terror shaking your fragile frame. Why are you so scared? What happened? Why can't you remember? The footsteps pass. The fear subsides to a small nagging in the back of your mind. Now you can think or try to. You struggle to fill the gaping holes in your memory. Nothing. The panic is creeping back, taking advantage of your insecurities. You've never felt so alone before. Or so thirsty. Your skin starts to itch from the dryness. You find welts on your legs. Where did those come from? The footsteps come again, along with the fear, and, this time, the door opens. Bright light floods your dark room. You turn away, shielding your eyes in pain. Someone comes in, murmurs something. She grabs your arm, forcing you to look at her, the lady in her white uniform. You can barely make her out. She's yelling at you. If only you could focus enough to listen, if you could, maybe she would stop. Maybe she would tell you where your family was. Your son, your daughter. You wouldn't be alone anymore. But even her yelling is faint, and the hunger, the thirst, her tight grip in your arm, the welts on your legs, the smell of filth around you. You're shaking again. It's too much. Tears start running down your cheeks. You try to tell her to stop, try to tell her that it hurts, that you're hungry, that you need a bath. This infuriates her more. She hits you. You're sobbing now, you can't help it. She lets you go,

shoving you back onto the bed, storming back out into the hall, shutting you in the dark again. Sobs rack your body. You want some ray of light, something that clears up the blackness, that heals all the tears in your memory. You want someone who help you. You want your family. Why aren't they here, why did they leave you here? Slowly you calm yourself down, pushing the panic into the background of your mind until it finally fades.

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This is your mother, you father, your grandparent. In time, this will be you. Panic and confusion and darkness. Self-doubting, fear, abandonment. Helplessness. Why should you care about elder abuse?