

The Escape

by J.B. Stamper

Do you know what a phobia is? A phobia is a fear of something. Some people are afraid of heights. Some people are afraid of spiders. Some people are even afraid of the dark. In this story you are about to hear, you are going to meet a man named Boris. Boris is in prison and he has a couple of phobias. He's deathly afraid of rats. And he really hates tight, small, cramped spaces. Nothing bothers him more. As you listen to this tale, can you identify with Boris and his phobias?

Boris looked down the long, dark hallway of the prison. It looked endless.

He was being taken to a place that few people had seen. But everyone feared it. Solitary. The other prisoners said the word with a shudder.

Behind him, the guard laughed. "Well, this will teach you a lesson," he said. "Once you've been in solitary, there will be no more bad behavior from you."

Boris forced his feet to move down the hall. He knew there was no hope for him.

Seven years ago, he had committed a crime. It was a crime so terrible that even he could not believe that he had done it.

Now he was in prison for the rest of his life. He was trapped like an animal in a cage. He could not face it any longer!

That's why he had tried to escape.

It had been just after sunset. He was all alone in the courtyard. The guard who was supposed to be there had made a mistake. He had left Boris alone.

Boris had run for the wall like an animal. He had climbed up and was almost

over. Then he had heard the words, "Freeze, prisoner!"

And he had frozen.

That was just yesterday. Now he was headed to an even worse cage.

"You don't have to put me in solitary," Boris said to the guard in a scared voice. "I'll never try that again. I promise!"

The guard just laughed. "You'll learn your lesson," he said again. "Maybe they'll let you out after a few months. But you're a tough one. I know what you did to get inside. You don't deserve anybody's pity."

Boris felt hopeless. It was no good trying. He would just have to deal with it, somehow.

They were coming to the end of the hallway. Boris saw the door at the end. He saw the bars across the small window in the door.

He knew that this was it. The others had told him what it would be like inside.

They were right. The guard unlocked three locks. Then he swung open the door. He pushed Boris inside.

The room was like a pen. It was long