

The Innocents

(A cavern)

I've been asking everybody, but no one gives me an answer. I really want to know.

What I want to know is, *What am I doing here?*

I hear there's another world up there, out there; shouldn't I be there? I'm innocent. I haven't done anything. I was born here; I wasn't sent here. My mother did whatever it was that she did up there in the world - and my brother and I were born in here when she was sent in. Now, is it my fault? Was it my brother's fault? No one answers my questions. The women creatures here claw me and hit me if I ask them. When I tell the men I'm innocent, they laugh and do it to me. Why? What have I done? Why should I be here?

I asked a soldier once... There were some soldiers here at the bottom working, and my brother and I hid in our hovel watching them. Then we stepped forward.

My brother stood behind me and he said, "I'm innocent." Six soldiers surrounded him; I could not see my brother nor what they did to him. But I guessed they had turned him over and did to him what the male creatures of the pit sometimes do to him. The soldiers stood up, and one of them said, "Now you're dead."

They turned to me. I ran to one of the soldiers who had done nothing. He looked innocent, like myself and my brother, my dead brother. I held the soldier by his hand and I said, "I'm innocent."

He smiled. I thought he understood me. I thought he knew.

"I'm innocent," I said again.

Then all the soldiers laughed, except the soldier to whom I had said those words. He looked at me as if in a dream, and held my hands and then threw me to the ground. The other soldiers watched on, and he did to me what the male creatures of the Northern Arch Cavern do to me when I tell them I'm innocent... Then he stood up and he kicked me and he said, "Now you're defiled! You're no longer innocent!" Then he laughed louder than any of the soldiers and hit me with his shovel and pushed me back into the darkness...

But why? Why are we here? Why are we innocents here? Why? We have done nothing. Why am I here? I'm innocent. I've done nothing... I've only been *done to*... I was born here...that's all I did... Like my brother and so many of my friends who were born here, I've done nothing. So why am I here?

I'm innocent...