



Purpose: To make the reader feel tense about how the characters will escape



Key features

Structural:

- Throw the reader straight into the action
- Show how the main character is confused
- Describe how the characters escape
- End on a shock



Language:

- Dramatic verbs: thrust
- Short sentences: You have to leave.
- Exclamations: Now!
- Repeated questions: Gone? Where?
- Onomatopoeia: crash

Writer's toolbox

Show not tell:

Show not tell how a character is feeling:
Her heart was hammering in her chest.

Alan Peat:

'Outside (inside)' sentences
Example: *She told the little girl not to be so naughty. (Inside, however, she was secretly amused by what she had done.)*

Punctuation:

Remember to use question marks to mark questions.
Try and use a colon to clarify what something is, e.g. *It was an ampulla: a baby's feeding bottle.*

Vocabulary:

Flickering light	Tawny
Thrust	Fastened
Groggily	Trembling
Crash	Distract

Recommended reads



Extract from 'Escape from Rome' by Caroline Lawrence

The Emperor's men came at midnight.

Juba heard the banging on the distant front door as his mother shook him awake. "Juba!" she cried. "You have to leave. Now!"

In the flickering light of a bronze oil-lamp he could see that she was wearing his father's winter cloak even though it was a warm summer's night. Her tawny hair—the same colour as the cloak—was loose, making her seem much younger than her thirty-three years. She pulled off Juba's sheet, helped him sit up and thrust his baby sister into his arms.

Baby Dora was fast asleep, wrapped in his mother's blue palla.

"What's happening?" he yawned.

His mother quickly fastened his best leather travelling belt around his waist, then knelt to put on his boots.

"Why are you putting on my boots?" He looked around groggily. "Where's Tutianus?"

"The slaves have gone," she said standing up.

"Gone? Where?"

"Away. And you must too." She pressed something into his hand. At first he thought it was a clay oil-lamp, then he saw that it was an ampulla: a baby's feeding bottle. It was made of black-glazed clay and was decorated with a grinning actor's mask to keep away evil. The nozzle end and the filing end were both sealed with beeswax, but he could still smell milk. It was full, and heavy in his hand.

He stared at it stupidly. "I don't understand. Why are you giving me Dora's feeding bottle?"

"Because I can't go with you." His mother took the ampulla and pout it into the neck of his tunic so that it slipped down and was caught where the belt cinched his waist. "Keep it there," she said. "Your body will help it stay warm." Then she took the tawny cloak from her shoulders and put it on him. "This is your father's birrus Britannicus, worth a fortune. He told you its secret didn't he?"

Juba nodded. His father had told him it was from a province called Britannica at the edge of the known world.

"Good and do you know who gave it to him?"

"Uncle Pantera. He brought it from Britannia."

"Which is where you must go," she said. He could feel her fingers trembling as she fastened the boxwood toggle and another crash came from the front door.

He frowned. "What do you mean? Where must we go? I don't understand."

"The Emperor Domitian is taking possession of our house and everything in it. Your father and I will stay here and distract his men long enough for you to escape."