

From *Nutmeg Street: Egyptian Secrets*, Chapter 4:

“Here we go again. An aftershock! I’ve been afraid this would happen,” said Dr. Kurtz [the zoo’s curator of herpetology]. She rapidly surveyed the room full of terraria. “And one of my assistants just called to say he’s found a somewhat hidden but large crack from this morning’s tremor on one of our venomous snake enclosure’s glass panes. It’s a major emergency. Come out with me quickly boys—now! I have to attend to this immediately,” she shouted behind her, as she grabbed her tool bag, yanked open the heavy door, and fled outside and down the breezeway to the enclosure.

Unfortunately, Moki and Lanny weren’t as fast as Dr. Kurtz. The door banged shut in their surprised faces and locked. They were trapped in a windowless room. As if that weren’t bad enough, the power failed simultaneously, and the room went pitch black. Both boys froze, helplessly surrounded by three walls of venomous snakes they could still hear but no longer see. . . .