**Extract edited and taken from ‘Shatter Me’ by Tahereh Mafi**

**I’ve been locked up for 264 days.**

**I have nothing but a small notebook and a broken pen and the numbers in my head to keep me company. 1 window. 4 walls. 144 square feet of space. 26 letters in an alphabet I haven’t spoken in 264 days of isolation.**

**6,336 hours since I’ve touched another human being.**

**“You’re getting a roommate,” they said to me.**

**“For good behaviour”, they said to me.**

**“No more isolation” they said to me.**

**I have no idea where I am.**

**I only know that I was transported by someone in a white van who drove 6 hours and 37 minutes to get me here. I know that I was handcuffed to my seat. I know I was strapped to my chair. I know my parents never bothered to say good-bye. I know I didn’t cry as I was taken away.**

**I know the sky falls down every day.**

**The sun drops into the oceans and splashes browns and reds and yellows and oranges into the world outside my window. A million leaves from a hundred different branches dip in the wind, fluttering with the false promise of flight. The gust catches their withered wings only to force them downward, forgotten, left to be trampled by the soldiers stationed just below.**

**I press my palm to the small pane of glass and feel the cold clasp my hand in a familiar embrace. We are both alone, both existing as the absence of someone else.**