

Katie (0:17)

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You are alone, holding onto a thick strap with both hands, arms raised above your head. You look up in the dim, pink lighting. You are hanging from this strap that is looped over a projection the width of a diving board, extending out into the vast pink dimness of a thousand—a million—tiny lights, row after row in the ceiling, in the walls, 50 feet away, extending as far as you can see in all directions. The floor, unfortunately, seems to be missing. This diving board from which your thick strap—also pink, probably canvas—hangs, is actually made of several—eight? 12?—long plastic tabs, each about an inch wide and as thin as a tongue depressor. Upon further examination you can see, with an attendant sickening of the heart, that there are fewer of these holding your weight than there might have been. Three or four of these on the outside edges of the board have broken off. At some point your strap was supported by maybe up to 20 plastic tabs. Now your life is dependent on fewer. You don't remember witnessing the snapping of these edge tabs, but you can easily imagine the lurch you would feel if another were to snap now without warning. So here you hang, above...a pit? a hole? a room? a chasm? Well, it must have been constructed at some point. The electricity for all these rows of pink, oddly dim, bulbs must come from somewhere. You look up, you look down. You are still hanging in a pink nightmare of a make-up mirror. Then you realize, in your confused need to discover the nature of your situation and the extent to which hope can effectively compete with dread, that you have not looked in front of you. Strange omission, perhaps, but you do recognize that your entire predicament is not without its peculiarities. So with a certain satisfaction, and yes, even hope, you turn your attention to this new quarter: this new land, this unexplored territory, where, with a little luck, some escape—some hope—or at least some new information may be discovered, and written into acknowledged fact that will complete this hesitating story of precarious uncertainty with a definitive end. Maybe a moral. Maybe an unexpected twist. Maybe a revelation. Or maybe only a warning of some form of eternal damnation. Or maybe you will wake up. Please god it is only a dream. But ahead of you, in the distance, not so far that it is indeterminate, nor so close as to be clearly identifiable, is another figure—hanging, like you, from a strap that loops over similar projecting plastic tabs in the same space of extending rows of the pink bulbs. At first you think, ah: some distance away is a mirror, reflecting my situation back to me. But a little motion of your legs—a wiggle that you swiftly cease at the sound of straining plastic from above—is all it takes to confirm that the figure you see out there is not yourself. You call out, but something about the acoustics of this hall makes it clear that nothing short of a gunshot could be heard at this distance. You watch the figure and forget about yourself.