

She woke up in an unfamiliar room. A pulsing of sorts not unlike a heartbeat or steady breathing surrounded her. Taking a deep breath of her own, she took stock of the layout.

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To the left, an empty expanse of wall.

To the right, an array of dangling threads connected to a complex system of rails on the ceiling. They were thin and reminded her of spider silk or marionette strings.

In front of her, a rectangular plastic table below a circular opening in the ceiling. The plastic looked flimsy and cheap—one could probably cause the table to collapse simply by looking at it too hard.

Behind her, a single light bulb dangled from a cord. This seemed unnecessary, as the glowing walls evenly lit the room. There was also, at second glance, an eye washing station on the wall behind her.

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Alright, observation over. *Where on Earth am I, and how did I get here?* Her quiet thoughts garnered no response. She sighed and stood up. Walking around, she felt the walls to try and find a hidden door or control or...or something. Nothing offered her a way to escape.

Hours passed and nothing happened. She got no respite from the urge to sleep, felt no stress from the urge to go to the bathroom, felt no pangs of hunger. Indeed, only her thoughts were actively changing with time. She had considered many scenarios, many reasons, and many endgames for her imprisonment, but none really made logical or physical sense.

She sighed, a silent exhalation of resignation.

Immediately, a voice spoke. [RESILIENT.] She jumped with a start before the voice continued. [YOUR RESPONSE TO UNCERTAINTY IS COMMENDABLE. LOGICAL THINKING AND CONSIDERATION ARE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR MINDSPACE.] She slowly blinked at the unexpected...compliment? It felt more of a neutral statement of fact than anything else, but it felt nice all the same. [REGARDLESS, IT BEGINS FROM YOU.] Much like the ambient light in the room, the voice was everywhere. Unlike the light, the voice was also nowhere in particular. Was it coming from her own mind or from a speaker hooked up to some distant microphone?

That didn't matter much, since she suddenly found herself hunched over, coughing. Her coughs were endless and rhythmic, leaving her more and more breathless between each spasm. As the coughs continued, the texture gradually changed, getting sharper and rougher. Finally, her last cough sputtered out, sending a lump of tissue out and onto the ground in front of her. She stared at it in confusion before clearing her throat.

Unfortunately, her throat exploded in pain when she did so. [THE MAIN CARTILAGE OF YOUR LARYNX. DO NOT MANIPULATE YOUR THROAT IN THAT WAY UNTIL IT IS REPLACED, OR YOU MAY IRREVERSIBLY DAMAGE YOUR THROAT.] The voice seemed to know exactly what question she was thinking about. As she was silently shaking from the exertion, the tissue was suddenly absorbed into the floor.

Her eyes widened at the sight but were quickly drawn to an object being lowered onto the table from the ceiling. She walked over and saw that the object was actually a cooler containing a different lump of tissue and a glass of water. [CONSUME IT QUICKLY.] She froze in place, eyes locked on the table's contents, barely able to comprehend the quick succession of what had just happened to her. Seeing no alternative (and unable to fathom one in her disturbed mind), she gingerly picked up the tissue and placed it in her mouth.

It was bitter and slimy, with a slightly more dense layer of mass inside the vaguely gelatinous glob. Fighting back the urge to violently eject it, she grabbed the water and poured as much of it in her mouth as possible so she could easily swallow the tissue. It seemed stuck on her tongue, but before she could freak out, it suddenly slid down her throat with no resistance.

The sudden swallow made her cough once more, but then she felt it settle into her throat where her old larynx once was. It integrated into her existing muscles and connected back to the laryngeal and vagus nerves. The connections burned her throat for a good fifteen seconds before slowly subsiding into nothing.

She froze again afterwards, not daring to move. [SPEAK AND VERIFY THE CONNECTION.]

She almost imperceptibly shook her head, not wanting to feel that pain in her throat again. [THERE SHOULD BE NO PAIN. SPEAK AND VERIFY THE CONNECTION.]

Trembling, she opened her mouth, but no sound came out. [THE LONGER YOU WAIT, THE LONGER YOU WILL BE HERE. SPEAK AND VERIFY THE CONNECTION.]

She took a deep breath and calmed herself before trying to speak once more, eliciting a croak of sound. [NO STRUCTURE, BUT SOUND IS PRESENT. CONNECTION VERIFIED. ATTEMPT A WORD.]

Again, a croak of sound. [A POTENTIALLY PSYCHOSOMATIC INABILITY TO SPEAK. FURTHER STIMULATION IS REQUIRED.]

Furrowing her brow in confusion, she looked around the room to the various objects along the walls. [CORRECT. STRUCTURED SPEECH WILL BE ELICITED IN THIS CHAMBER.]