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### A Rude Awakening

Cold. The kind of cold that you feel standing in the middle of a blizzard. The wind blowing and the snow falling and touching the bare skin. The goose bumps that form on your skin, all over your body, a leftover from the evolutionary process of elimination, but at that moment you wish you had fur. Fur would be a protection from this torment. But alas, no, your bare naked body is unprotected from the onslaught of cold, piercing into your flesh and tingling like a hundred thousand needles poking at your most private places. Making you wish for something to reach for, a blanket, a sheet, dirt, anything which would provide some warmth, some comfort, some protection. Unending cold.

The ringing in your ears. A mind numbing ringing that is unceasing in its persistency. Louder than anything you have ever heard because it is all that you can hear. If there are any other sounds. Perhaps this is the only sound remaining. All of the beauty and majesty of great symphonies, the whirling of the wind on a sunny spring day and the chirping of birds in the sky without any other care in the world besides the majesty of flight. All of that is gone and replaced by this incessant ringing in your ears. Incessant and unending, tormenting ringing. Unending noise.

Death and decay. They have a smell and it is an atrocious one. The smell fills your nostrils. All that you will ever smell is this awful stench. A smell so permeating that it is penetrating your mind. Clouding your thoughts. Making you think of nothing but darkness and abomination. The smell is the antithesis of what is moral and right. The sweet smell of a rose

bush or the scent of your lover when held close to your breast. Replaced by this stench. All that there is this unending repugnant stink. This unending stench.

Fingers graze upon the surface of the ground. Rough and callous. The movement is agonizing. Bones creek against bones. Scraping and grinding. The pain is horrible. The texture of what you feel is worse. A rough surface like sandpaper scraping against wood; shavings of saw duct sinking leisurely to the ground. And this is all that is left to feel. Agonizingly uncomfortable scraping texture. The soft plush of a pillow against your tired head and the comforting warmth of a love at your side. Sweet in its texture, beautiful in its feathery softness. It has been replaced by this unending, uncomfortable, excruciating texture. Unending discomfort.

A bend of the wrist to acclimate your hand to itself produces no movement. You realize that direction is relative. That spatial awareness is not coming to you. Which way is up? Finding yourself in a new dimension, so it would seem in your mind. Would someone living in two dimensions understand the concept of up? At this very moment, neither do you. Direction seems like an abstract concept, touted by philosophers in the form of an unanswerable question. There is no up or down. There is no east to west or north to south. You are but a single point in space and time. Unendingly lost.

Eye lids creek open slowly but it changes nothing. Blankness is all that your eyes are able to perceive. The blackest black that you have ever known. Blacker than the darkest, most starless night and blacker than the depths of the deepest ocean where photons are not permitted to penetrate. Your eyes perceive a black so dark that it no longer looks like the absence of color, but something less. Less than nothing. Eye lids fully extended and there is no reason for them to be because this darkness would penetrate through skin. This darkness would penetrate through skin, blood, bone and soul. Light has been replaced by blackness. Your shadow is all that remains in

this world of opposites. The entire color palette has been simplified. Reds, blues, and yellows have retreated from the world in defeat and have been replaced by the new color of everything, black. Unending blackness.

A burst of effort and your arm begins to ascend. In what direction you know not. But it is moving until it is stopped. There is a barrier blocking its path. Again it moves, in another direction this time, and again it is forced to halt its progress. Your arm moves again, in the only other direction remaining to it, and again it can progress no more. An then a sudden realization descends upon your mind...

Fear. Fear consumes your being. The kind of fear that is inexplicable but completely warranted. The only kind of fear that can consume you while you are in the safest place in the world. The kind of fear that only erupts from small spaces. Locked in a trunk or pressed into a crowd like an ant beneath a boot. Frantic now, the second appendage comes into being and, paying no heed to the burning, horrible pain that now scorches your mind, scurries around your surroundings. Feeling around in this blackest of blacks for some sign that you are not eternally alone, that there is someone out there waiting for you and that you will see them again. But there is nothing but walls on all sides of you. Walls that trap you in like a rat in a cage. Scampering through space and time your arms becoming more and more frantic they finally brush upon something in the unending darkness...

A rope! Sweet salvation. A rope that must lead somewhere. Hands awkwardly grapple with the rope trying frantically to attain a grip and fail time after time. The pain is an afterthought in your mind at this point. The thought of ending this misery consumes your being. A successful grip is established and a tug of war beings with you and the rope. Pulling, pulling, pulling on this rope in the hopes that something will happen. You can see nothing but unending

blackness. You can hear nothing but unending noise. You can feel nothing but unending discomfort. You can smell nothing but unending stench. You can feel nothing but unending cold. You are nothing but an infinitesimally small point living outside of time, space and dimension. But still you pull...

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# Old Safety Coffin Bell Inexplicably Rings Throughout Morning

**The bell rigged to a 150 year old coffin in Greater Manchester graveyard rang for about an hour yesterday morning.**

Beverly Pratt, 76, was taking her morning walk when at about 7:30 GMT Saturday she noticed the sound of a bell ringing in the Saint Mary Churchyard Cemetery.



Saint Mary Churchyard Cemetery, Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Det Insp Amber Waywell said that the ringing was probably caused by some sort of ground dwelling animal gnawing at the cable leading into the grave.

Pratt expressed her utter shock when first discovering the bell in the cemetery.

"I was so frightened when I saw it ringing. I thought that there was someone in the coffin calling for help. The first thing I did was call the police."

Safety coffins were popular during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. They were fitted with a mechanism to prevent premature burial by allowing the occupant to signal that they have been buried alive.

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