

Three, Two, One

Shoot, shoot, shoot, the phrase echoed endlessly in my brain again and again and again. My vision blurred into nothingness for all my mind could ponder was the ground beneath me. Mumbles fluttered in and out the background, but it stood no chance against the growing ringing in my ears. What am I going to do?

Suddenly oxygen seemed to fly away from me leaving me with suffocation and panic. My eyes darted around trying to find a safe place to look like somehow it would make this fall any better. Hurry up, hurry up, hurry up, my brain screeched as I realized all eyes were on me. Everyone's view felt like needles slowly pricking me in and out taking away my stream of consciousness.

"Uhm," I muttered slowly, not having a clue what to say or do. The hanging bar in front of me would be no option as my hands were drowned in an ocean of sweat. I couldn't climb down because no one was going to wait for that, but every silhouette with seemingly devilish eyes frightened me more. A constant shaking filled my body leaving me with no clue what to do. Ages go by, with everyone's eyes still glued on to me as if I were the lead in some circus. What do I do, what do I do, what do I do?

"Could I just slide down?" I stutter trying to calm myself down. The instructor, with a cold gray beanie covering his shiny blond hair moves his light pink lips causing his clear glasses to fall just a centimeter down to his nose. I don't know what he said and being left with no patience I try to sit down. I feel my legs trembling as they go weak and collapse. My hands aren't a better support so inevitably I fall backwards. Gasps and worried faces don't help forcing me to close my eyes and push my body to breathe. I look once again at the ground beneath me covered in moist, dark brown dirt and bits of shiny green grass. Orange leaves, crunchy and dead along with broken acorn shells haunt me as I slowly scoot to the edge of the squeaky frame I somehow managed to climb up on.

"Three," I announced cautiously.

"Three," the instructor echos, his pale blue eyes fixed on me.

"Two," I go again.

"Two," he repeats.

I stop frozen at the thought of falling down what seems like a skyscraper. What if the rope breaks and everything falls. My breathing worsens as my thoughts think of only the worst, I want to scream for help as water pushes against the rims of my eyes. I've never been afraid of heights before, or at least I never thought I was. When I was a kid I could always climb trees and go to big sky view towers with trust that I was safe. Maybe my fear grew as I aged, or maybe it was the fall. The taunting height laughing at you while you stand there helplessly knowing it's too late to go back. Whatever it was I had to jump, I couldn't wait here forever.

"One!" I shout scared for my life as I miraculously manage to scoot myself off. My mind cuts out not thinking about anything as freezing air plunges towards me. The ringing that taunts me increases in volume as I'm falling quicker and quicker down. All I want is to never do this again.

Suddenly, I stop falling as a strong thrust pulls me against my own weight. I look down as the mocking height starts to get closer, and finally, I'm able to breathe.

Aubrey Xu