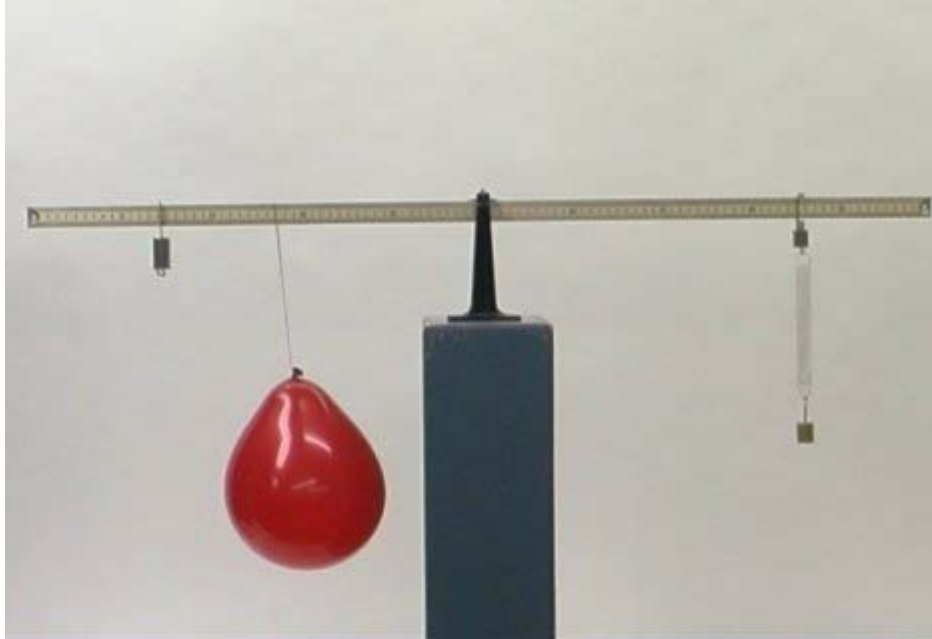


## Question #239

The meter stick shown below is held by a low-friction support on the black stand. A single weight and a balloon hang from the left side of the meter stick and a weight with a spring, to which a second weight is attached, hang from the right side of the meter stick.

The meter stick is in equilibrium because the torques exerted on each side are equal and opposite.



Now the string holding the balloon will be burned, so as to exert no torque when the string breaks. What will happen?

When the string breaks:

- (a) the right side of the meter stick will go down.
- (b) the left side of the meter stick will go down.
- (c) the meter stick will remain balanced.

Click here for [Answer #239](#) after January 30, 2006.

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For questions and comments regarding the *Question of the Week* contact [Dr. Richard E. Berg](#) by e-mail or using phone number or regular mail address given on the [Lecture-Demonstration Home Page](#).