

ON THE EDGE

An original short script by: John M. Grace

(c) 2017 All Rights Reserved

John Grace
12807 Stillwood Dr.
Savannah, GA 31419
(505) 301-5279

EXT. ROOF OF A TALL BUILDING DAY

FADE IN ON:

A desperate-looking MAN exits a stairwell onto the roof of a downtown high-rise building and walks determinedly toward the edge. He stops abruptly when he realizes he is not alone... An attractive, young WOMAN sits astride the parapet wall. He approaches warily.

MAN
What are you doing up here?

WOMAN
Why, are you with building security?

MAN
No... I just...

WOMAN
You just...

MAN
I just wanted to look over the side of the building.

WOMAN
Cut the shit. You're here for the same reason I am, aren't you?

MAN
I don't know what you're talking about.

WOMAN
You came up here to jump, didn't you?

MAN
No, I just...

WOMAN
You keep saying that.

He realizes that she isn't buying what he's selling and changes tack. A realization comes to his face.

MAN
Wait... You came up here to jump?

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

That was the plan until you came along... I would prefer not to have an audience... Can you come back a little later?

MAN

Why don't you just get on with it? I'll turn my back and you can jump. How's that?

WOMAN

And then you jump and we're all... co-mingled? That's a little intimate considering we don't even know each other. Just go jump off the other side.

MAN

If you're up here, you've scouted the location... you know that this is the only section of roof with a direct shot to the pavement. There is no other side that will work.

WOMAN

Then fuck off. Come back another day or find another building. I was here first.

MAN

Why are you up here, anyway? I mean, aside from the view... and the height.

WOMAN

None of your business.

MAN

Whatever your reason is, it can't be as bad as mine.

WOMAN

I don't care why you're here. Just go away and let me get on with this.

MAN

My life is falling apart.

WOMAN

It's none of my business. I'm sure you have a good reason to have come up here.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

I thought things were going great;
I own a thriving business, I've got
a happy marriage and then it all
went to shit.

WOMAN

(sarcastic)

Boo Hoo! Poor little yuppie... owns
his own business and has a happy
marriage. What happened, did your
wife cheat on you?

MAN

No, she died... childbirth. He was
going to be our first child. James
junior. We were going to call him
JJ. They both died. Complications.
I was holding her hand.

WOMAN

(sincerely)

I'm sorry. But, that's still not
that bad... Time heals all wounds.

JAMES

You're a fine one to talk. You're
the one sitting on the ledge.

WOMAN

You have no idea the pain I've
endured... James, is it?

JAMES

Then tell me about it.

WOMAN

No, it's mine... and to share it is
to cheapen it. Lots of people lose
loved ones. You still have your...
(air quotes)
...thriving business.

JAMES

Maybe not for long. Evidently, my
manager has been embezzling all the
payroll deductions that should have
been paid to the Feds and now I'm
being audited by the IRS and the
Justice Department. It's going to
bankrupt me.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

And that's why you're up here? Men really do have thin skin.

JAMES

Let's not make this a man-woman thing.

WOMAN

That's exactly what this is... a man-woman thing. Never mind, you wouldn't understand.

JAMES

Try me.

She pivots toward him, still sitting on the ledge.

WOMAN

I don't know why I'm telling you this... But just maybe you will understand since you're up here too... I was clueless. My fucking ex-boyfriend was having sex with my 12-year-old daughter and I was totally clueless.

Tears start to well up in her eyes.

WOMAN

What kind of mother lets that happen?

JAMES

(Searching)

She'll be okay... Kids are resilient.

WOMAN

Really? That's all you have to offer? What a waste of time... telling you...

She turns back toward the edge.

JAMES

Wait! Where will it leave your daughter if you jump?

WOMAN

Right where she is now... She jumped off this very spot. I was the one who found her...

(CONTINUED)

She is crying openly.

WOMAN

Have you ever seen someone who has fallen 17 floors? It was like a bloody sack of bones... with her face. My baby girl's beautiful, damaged face. I could barely recognize her. Her suicide note was how I finally found out what had been happening.

JAMES

Oh shit... that's awful.

WOMAN

So you see why I'm up here. They can't even prosecute the bastard because there's no witness. The system is rigged against the victims.

JAMES

I'll make you a deal... What's your name?

WOMAN

Just go away and let me do this. I have no reason to continue living in this world.

JAMES

Wait! You, yourself said that time heals all wounds.

WOMAN

That was bullshit! Time can't heal *some* wounds... Some wounds are fatal. The only cure waits for me 17 floors down.

JAMES

You don't want to hear my deal? And again, what's your name?

WOMAN

Sarah, I'm Sarah. I'll hear you out... but the results will still be the same.

JAMES

Okay, Sarah, if you agree not to jump, I'll agree not to jump.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

That's your deal? The thing is,
James, I don't care if you jump.
All men are pigs.

JAMES

Not all men are pigs... some are
just stupid.

SARAH

(smiling despite herself)
And you're one of the stupid ones?
That's not a very compelling
argument.

JAMES

It's all I've got. I'll try facing
another day if you will...

SARAH

That's all I wanted to hear...

Unnoticed until now, a handsome black man, KENYA, approaches
from the stairwell.

KENYA

Nice work, rookie.

JAMES

What the hell's going on here?

KENYA

This was Sarah's first save...

JAMES

You were just playing me? This is
perfect... my life is a shambles
and now I've been conned.

KENYA

Everything she told you is straight
from the heart. She lost Sadie just
over a month ago... and then she
met me - right up here on the edge.

SARAH

Kenya knew exactly what I needed to
hear at the lowest point in my
life... he literally saved me. And
he saved my family from the
heartbreak you've been feeling.

(CONTINUED)

KENYA

If you had jumped, your loved ones would never have recovered. One of them might have found their way up here, just like Sarah did.

SARAH

Right then, I knew what I needed to do and I've got to say, it feels amazing... being able to help you today has been the best I've felt in weeks. Thank you for that... I feel like I've finally found my purpose and I have you to thank for it.

KENYA

It's an awesome feeling, isn't it?

JAMES

So let me get this straight... the two of you stake out this ledge and stop people from... doing what I almost did?

KENYA

Oh no, there's not just two of us. There are hundreds of survivors and the list grows every day. We're up to, what, over 200 of us now... all over the state... with over 500 saves...

SARAH

...But we still lose a few and that's heartbreaking for the team. We all feel it almost as deeply as when we originally lost our loved ones.

KENYA

You can't reach everyone. What do you think James, do you want to join us?

JAMES

I don't know...

SARAH

It doesn't pay a cent, but the benefits are amazing! (or "over the moon" for the Single Take Challenge) We all have our

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (cont'd)
full-time jobs and take shifts
whenever we can.

JAMES
And you just hang out up here?

She hops down from the ledge and and smiles up at him.

SARAH
It's a great view, and it gives you
time to think about all the good
memories you have of your loved
one. Plus, we're like a family. We
help each other out in other ways
too. Like, don't we have a lawyer
on the team?

KENYA
Right! He could help you with your
legal issues and... we can all help
with your recovery.

JAMES
I need some time to process all
this...

SARAH
How about we get a cup of coffee
and get to know each other better?
I can try to answer any questions
you might have.

He hesitates and then appraises her differently. He seems to
like what he sees.

JAMES
I think I'd like that...
(to Kenya)
Will you be joining us?

KENYA
No, you kids go on and enjoy
yourselves... my shift is starting
and I have a feeling it's going to
be a great day.

James and Sarah exit the rooftop with hopeful smiles on
their faces as Kenya looks wistfully out over the city.

FADE TO BLACK