

What If I Fall
By Maggie Flaugher

Two figures stand on a cliff overlooking the ocean. We hear an indistinct argument under the sound of crashing waves, gulls overhead, and a woman's screams. These sounds continue through out.

The play begins with a light shove.

JAN

(shoving MARK) Fuck, no, I'm not climbing down there!

MARK

She needs help!

JAN

And if I fall off the cliff? What then?

MARK

So you're just gonna let her die?

JAN

No, NO. Don't put this on me. You offered to help her, why don't YOU go down there.

MARK

Because if I go down there, there's no one up here to pull us both up!

JAN

I could pull you up.

MARK

Yeah. Right.

JAN

Oh, what. Because I'm just a woman? And you're some big tough man?

MARK

DON'T make this about SEXISM right now.

JAN

I'm not making it sexist, you're making it sexist.

MARK

I am NOT making it sexist, this has nothing to do with you being a woman and me being a man, this has EVERYTHING to do with the fact that I can bench 250 and you cannot!

JAN

Wow! I knew you hated that I don't work out.

MARK

Jan, can we not do this right now. This is SO not the time. Now, I need you to climb down to her!

JAN

(long childish groan) This is so STUPID why did we even come up here!

MARK

(over the cliff) Just hold on! We're coming to help! *(to Jan)* Shit. Her pants are caught on a, uh, a branch or something. You're going to have to climb down lower to-

JAN

What, no-

MARK

-yes, untangle it for her.

JAN

Mark. I'm scared of heights. If I go down there I will pass out. We will both fall.

MARK

Jan, you're going to be okay, I promise. We'll make it out of this, and think about her family. They'll probably be so relieved and happy we were here. What a great story to tell our grandkids!

JAN

Not if I never get to have kids!

MARK

I'm right here, you're gonna be fine. I promise.

JAN

What if I fall?! I don't know how to rock climb! I didn't even want to go on this fucking hike, I hate nature and you KNOW that. This is YOUR fault.

MARK

I know, I know, it's all my fault and I'm so so sorry, but you have to do this, Jan. You get to be the hero here!

JAN

I don't wanna be the hero, I wanna be at home!

MARK

What if, what if we tied our belts together? Maybe our shirts, too? We could make you like a safety harness.

JAN

You know how to do that?

MARK

(already taking his belt off) Sure, yeah, I think.

JAN

You THINK?

MARK

Yeah, I saw it in a movie. The hero grabs everyone's belts and they pull their friend up. It works.

JAN

Oh my god, no.

MARK

You have to let me try! Gimme your belt and your shirt. *(She hesitates)* Do you have a better idea? *(They take off their shirts and belts and MARK starts making the rope harness.)* Shit, it's not very long.

JAN

I've been telling you your shirts are too small.

MARK

Not helpful.

JAN

Hurry up, let's just do this so I can die already and not have to think about it.

MARK

Hey, look at me. You're not gonna die. I'm right here. I would never let you fall.

JAN

I know, I know. Okay.

MARK

Okay?

JAN

Okay. *(They have a quick, hard kiss and get in position)*

MARK

Okay, put this around your waist. And you'll buckle in like this, great. Now when you get down to her, you'll need to get her leg loose, and then have her hold onto your waist. Alright, I'm gonna start lowering you down-

JAN

(JAN suddenly sprints away screaming, pulling MARK onto his back with the belt rope) NO NO NO NO NO

MARK

JAN!!

JAN

Please please please I can't do it I can't. Let's just go! We don't have to be the heroes here, Mark. Let the next guys save her.

MARK

What?!

JAN

You and I can turn around and go home and pretend like you never took me on this goddamn hike.

MARK

Baby, you're scared and I get that but we cannot just leave her there.

JAN

Yes, we can.

MARK

We can't.

JAN

Who will know?! We're the only ones up here. If she survives, so what. She never even saw our faces. We can pretend this never happened!

MARK

People will know, Jan.

JAN

No one is going to know. No one knows we came here today. No one knows what we saw.

MARK

People know. We have to save her. People will absolutely know we saw her and we let her fall, and I can't be the guy that let a woman fall to her death for the rest of my life, I can't be that guy!

JAN

Who knows? You told people we were going hiking?

MARK

Yes, I told... people.

JAN

How many people know we are up here? We'll just tell them I got food poisoning and we decided not to go or something.

MARK

No, Jan, they know we are here, like, right now. So we have to save her, we have to pull her up.

JAN

No one saw us! How does anyone know we are here right now?!

MARK

Because they're waiting for us!

JAN

Who?!

MARK

Our friends and... family.

JAN

Wh- wait, their waiting for us?

MARK

Yes, they're down there. By the car.

JAN

Our friends and family are in the parking lot?

MARK

Yes. So, please-

JAN

WHY?

MARK

Because I asked them to be here. Now please, help me pull her up!

JAN

You wanted me to exercise AND spend time with my MOM?! WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT TO ME?

MARK

BECAUSE I WAS GOING TO PROPOSE!!!

(We hear one final, long, terrifying, blood curdling scream. It gets quieter and quieter until we hear a splash. The couple rushes to the edge to look, but they can't watch the final moment. JAN collapses and covers her face, MARK is frozen staring down the hill towards the parked car, and their family and friends.)

End.