

LIFE AND DEATH ON THE EDGE

Written by

J.H. Long

EXT. APARTMENT ROOFTOP - NIGHT

LYNN, 20s, emerges from the rooftop access door. She carries an open bottle of beer and a pack of cigarettes.

She sets the beer down on the parapet and lights a cigarette, looking out over the city as she smokes.

Lynn notices without reaction that ANDY, 20s, stands on the parapet nearby. She takes a long drag and watches while Andy stares at the street many floors below. After a moment, she moseys to Andy.

LYNN  
(imitating an older man)  
If you not living on the edge, you  
be taking up too much space.

Andy flinches, unsteady on the parapet.

ANDY  
What?

LYNN  
My uncle said that when I was  
little. It sounds silly, I know. I  
don't even know what it means.

Lynn sets her beer down and leans on the parapet.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
So, you gonna jump?

ANDY  
Please, just go away.

LYNN  
Don't worry, I'm not gonna try to  
talk you out of it.

ANDY  
You're not?

LYNN  
No. Can I watch?

ANDY  
What? No.

LYNN  
Why not?

ANDY  
This is sort of private.

LYNN  
Private? Your body's about to land  
in the street.

A few seconds pass awkwardly. Lynn waits for Andy to jump.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
Hey, can I ask you a question? Why  
do you want to kill yourself?

ANDY  
You said you weren't going to try  
to talk me out of this.

LYNN  
I'm not! I'm just curious.

ANDY  
Why do you care?

LYNN  
I don't, really. It's just, I'd  
like to know what makes a man want  
to kill himself. It's a curiosity.

Andy only sighs and squeezes his eyes shut.

ANDY  
You'll just think it's stupid.

LYNN  
No, I won't. Come on, tell me. When  
you hit the pavement, at least  
someone will know why.

Andy grimaces before he speaks.

ANDY  
This girl, she, she stopped talking  
to me.

LYNN  
Maybe I was wrong.

ANDY  
Goddammit.

LYNN  
Okay, I suppose you wouldn't be the  
first guy to think about taking the  
plunge after some girl dropkicked  
his heart.

Lynn takes a drag on her cigarette.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
You thought she was the one, huh?

ANDY  
I barely knew her.

LYNN  
What? Then what's all this for?  
Why're you heartbroken if you  
didn't even know her?

ANDY  
Because it happens all the time.  
I've never been in a real  
relationship.

LYNN  
Hey, me neither! You ever feel like  
it might be a conspiracy?

ANDY  
You get dumped all the time, too?

LYNN  
Well, no. I--

ANDY  
You do the dumping, don't you?

LYNN  
Yeah. What? A girls got her  
prerogative, you know. It is the  
twenty-first century, still.

ANDY  
You dumping a dozen guys isn't a  
conspiracy--

LYNN  
Woah, nobody said a dozen, alright?  
Cool your jets, Mr. Lonely.

ANDY  
All I know is that there was one  
constant in all those  
relationships.

LYNN  
Yeah, says the guy who's been  
dumped so many times, the only  
thing left to kiss is the pavement.

Lynn flicks her cigarette over the parapet and it lands with a splash of cinders on the sidewalk. The two share a meaningful look.

ANDY

Did your uncle live on the edge?

LYNN

You could say that.

ANDY

Where is he now?

Lynn lights another cigarette.

LYNN

He's dead.

ANDY

How?

LYNN

Heart disease.

ANDY

That's a little pedestrian for someone living on the edge.

LYNN

Believe me, he tried to go out other ways. All he ever did was smoke, drink, get high, and ride his motorcycle.

ANDY

Then he had a good run.

LYNN

Not really. He liked to dance with death, but, well, there was always this look in his eye. He kinda looked like you do, now.

ANDY

He wanted to die?

LYNN

No, he didn't want to die, he just hurt. He wanted the pain to end.

ANDY

Sounds like he thought he was doing everyone a favor, too, with all his talk about taking up space. I could do everyone the same favor.

Lynn follows Andy's gaze down to the street and she sets her burning cigarette on the parapet.

LYNN

Hey, listen. What's your name?

ANDY

Why? You don't care.

LYNN

I-- right.

A beat.

ANDY

It's Andy. My name is Andy.

LYNN

Andy. My name's Lynn. Hey, what do you say we go do something?

ANDY

You want to go out with me?

LYNN

Calm down, flyboy. I'm not talking about a date. I just think we could talk more.

ANDY

Don't pretend that you want anything to do with me.

LYNN

Would it surprise you so much to learn that I'm not pretending?

ANDY

Stop.

LYNN

What?

ANDY

Don't dangle this in front of me. I'm sick of being lifted up just to be pushed back down and kicked.

Lynn glances at her cigarette, burning closer to the butt.

LYNN

I need you to come down because I think you and I are alike.

ANDY

I'm nothing like you.

LYNN

You are. That look in your eye, the same look my uncle had, nowadays I see it in the mirror. I've been seeing it for quite a while.

ANDY

Now you're just making shit up. You having fun? Huh? You enjoying this?

LYNN

Look, I'm not the best example of humanity over here, but I'm a person, just like you. I care.

ANDY

What care? You don't care! You said it yourself. You throw men like me away without a thought!

LYNN

What do I have to do to make you believe me, huh? You want this?

Lynn clambers onto the parapet. She inches toward Andy.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Is this proof? Now we're both living on the edge.

ANDY

Stay away.

LYNN

No. If I'm right about our eyes, and you can't think of a reason to live, then what does that mean for me? You still think my pain is different than yours?

ANDY

Stop lying. You don't want to die.

LYNN

Of course I don't. Haven't you been listening? I just want the pain to end. That doesn't have to mean ending up like my uncle.

Lynn offers Andy her hand.

ANDY

What if I still feel like I'm taking up too much space?

Lynn smiles.

LYNN

Nothing wrong with being cozy.

Andy smirks and takes Lynn's hand. Lynn loses her balance and they both totter before pitching off the parapet-- backwards. Lynn writhes and groans on the roof.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I think I broke my ass-bone.

Andy giggles and then laughs out loud. Lynn laughs.

LYNN (CONT'D)

No, seriously.