

# Rooftop Suicide

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Rachael had stopped shivering in the rooftop wind.

Her black dress whipping in the thirty-story air, she looked down at the glowing lights of the city and wished the sky was that bright. Standing on the very corner of the building, she looked up at the aloof featureless sky of the city and wished it would open up. She needed the sky to save her because nothing beneath her feet would.

She slipped out of her shoes. For some reason, it struck her as senseless to fall wearing shoes. Beneath her feet, the ledge was smooth and worn. She could practically feel the grooves created by the erosion of rain. She approached the edge and stood with her toes just off the chilly cement lip. She looked at the expanse of the city and pretended they were stars. She picked a single bright point and made a wish, hoping that the landing would be painless, or at least wouldn't hurt for long.

She was one step away from flying when the rooftop door opened. She barely heard him step out, look around, and see her. She did, however, hear over the furious wind, as he yelled, "Hey!" She heard his footsteps crunch over the rooftop gravel. "Hey, don't!" he yelled.

Rachael was irritated. She didn't want an audience. This was her death. It was a special moment between her and life and no one else. It was so inconsiderate to interrupt. She looked over her shoulder at him with a chilly glare and told him, "Get lost."

"Don't jump!" he insisted, coming closer. He looked hesitant, like he was afraid of getting closer to her would cause her to do what she was here to do anyway.

She sighed. She saw over the edge and into the city lights, lights that were lights again and not stars. He'd ruined the moment. How typical. She turned around on the edge of the building and glared at him with a haughty gaze. "Why are you bothering me?" she accused. "Why are you even here?"

He hedged. "I..." He stammered some. Embarrassment gave way to some courage born of honesty. "A fortune-teller told me to." She brushed her wind-strewn hair from her face as she looked down on him in every sense. "Why are you here?" he asked of her defiantly.

"To meet my destiny," she told him poetically but clearly. She looked back at the lights like they were a lost lover departing from her forever. "I wanted to die," she shared with the stranger as she sat down on the ledge, facing into the rooftop. She slipped onto the gravel and knelt down, beginning to slide back into her shoes. "Not now." She stood and began to walk towards the exit with a morose look.

"Well—" he started as she passed, but stopped himself.

She reached a step away and glanced back at him. "What?"

He looked worried and rushed. "Well...what if you did?" he suggested, like he was trying to sound casual. She didn't follow and her expression reflected that. He grabbed her hand and pulled her towards the edge again. He sat her on the cement like he was pushing her into a chair. He kept her hand though and turned it towards him. "Okay," he told himself as well as her. He took from his pocket his keys, and from them produced a small utility knife. She watched the blade, not him, more curious than afraid.

"I'm going to do it for you," he told her patiently and slowly. He put the flat edge of his knife to her wrist and said, "I'm going to cut open your veins." He slid the knife's flat edge across her wrist like he would if he was really cutting her but all it did was feel cold. "There," he told her. "Your veins are cut. You're bleeding out." He put her hand in her lap. "You're going to die in less than a minute."

Rachael looked at her wrist and studied the slight discoloration left by the pressure of his knife, discoloration that was disappearing before her eyes. She swallowed, not sure what to say. "You're getting cold," he told her. "You're tired and, and you just want to go to sleep."

Compelled to go along with it, she turned and laid on the edge of the rooftop, the light of the city on one side and the dark of the rooftop on the other. She laid her hands on her stomach and closed her eyes. The wind whipped her hair and her dress alike. "Everything's fading," he told her, kneeling nearby but leaving her alone in her time of death. "Soon, your life will be over and you'll sink into the nothingness of death."

She exhaled slowly, imagining her soul leaving her body like one of those lights from the city beneath her. "You're dying," he continued in a breathy whisper. "Your heart slows," he narrated, noticing her deep breaths and the growing time between them. "Your pulse is nonexistent. Your life..." he told her slowly, whispering just over the wind, "is over."

Serenity.

Rachael felt cold and for a moment, she felt dead. Her eyes closed, all she knew was darkness. So far up, all she heard was the wind's endless howl. The cold blocked out all other sensations.

"You're dead," he told her still, watching over her living corpse. "You will be dead for the rest of the night."

Her lips slowly curled just at the edge. "And what happens come the morning?" she asked slowly, in a serene haze.

He readied a slow breath. "Someone new will be there. The life you lead is over. You died here, on this rooftop, tonight." He made it sound so final, so real.

"In the morning, with the first rays of the sun, you will have a different life. A different you, because you died here, tonight."

A breeze made it down her dress and Rachael shivered. She sat up with a self-conscious smile and hugged her elbows. He was watching her with some relief. Confident that her urge to take that one last step was placated, he sat down next to her and exhaled. She stared down at the gravel of the rooftop and kicked her feet a little. She looked at him and asked, "Why are you up here?"

He smiled, nervous. "A fortune-teller told me to come up here."

She nodded sarcastically, her disbelief quite obvious. "To meet me?"

"I..." He just shrugged, not even sure how to argue one way or another.

Rachael looked down again and shared the wind-filled silence with him. The distant horns of city traffic were little more than white noise to their night. "I'm dead," she said with some awe of the moment and its implications. She was amazed at how easily her breath now came. "I got what I wanted," she realized. She looked at him and asked, "What do you want?"