LEDGE

A Ten-Minute Comedy Duet

by

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*Actors may stand on a sturdy table or two chairs. Any items or props in this duet should simply be mimed.*

CAST: TOM and MARY

TOM: This is my ledge.
MARY: I was here first.
TOM: I suppose you made a reservation.
MARY: If you're going to jump, jump.
TOM: Of course I'm going to jump! *(Several beats.)* You were here first.
MARY: Go ahead.
TOM: You go.
MARY: No, you go.
TOM: You.
MARY: Jump!
TOM: All right. *(HE adjusts his position. HE re-adjusts.)* You're crowding me.
MARY: I'm sorry!
TOM: Could you…

(SHE edges away, giving him room. SHE slips. HE grabs her.)

MARY: Thanks.

(HE readies himself. HE stops.)

TOM: How's it going to look?
MARY: Messy.
TOM: How's it going to look, me going first? Who'll pay attention to me, with you still up here, making a spectacle of yourself? They'll just step over me—what's left of me—and they'll be shining spotlights on you and sending reporters out to interview you, and I'll be lucky to be a sidebar on the comics page, which is the story of my life. So go on. *(SHE looks down. Cars honk, if sound effects are used)* You climbed out here. *(SHE gathers her courage.)* You made a decision. *(SHE readies herself.)* You knew there was no reason to put up with it any longer. *(SHE'S ready.)* Stop! *(SHE stops.)* You jump first, who'll pay any attention to me up here, a speck on the forty-first floor? You'll get all the attention, as usual.
MARY: As usual?
MARY: Off?
TOM: Through the window.
MARY: You're between me and the window.
TOM: There must be another window around the corner.
MARY: I might fall.
TOM: All right then, jump. I'll wait until they've scraped you up and carried you away in a shoebox. Then I'll call attention to myself. Go on, go on, get it over with.
MARY: I'll jump when I'm good and ready.
TOM: JUMP!
MARY: NO! *(TOM points his finger outward and mimics having a gun. HE aims it at her.)* Shoot me.

(TOM smiles, mimics putting away the gun.)

TOM: You women think you're so clever, so clever! Tom Longmyer, murderer? No, no. You can borrow it, if you like.
MARY: Why would I want your gun?
TOM: You could make sure that way.
MARY: Forty-one stories is sure.
TOM: I was going to use the revolver, but…
MARY: What?
TOM: I was afraid nobody would notice. A shot, drowned out by the bedlam of the city. Shots all the time! Gang warfare, drug dealers. Buses make a lot of noise, too. You can't hear yourself think.
MARY: I've never heard myself think. I mean, you think very quietly, really. Silently, in fact. Don't you?
TOM: (Points finger outward, miming the gun again.) Get off my ledge.
MARY: You are so insignificant.
TOM: Don’t say that to me.
MARY: Nothing. An absence.
TOM: Don’t say that to me!
MARY: Who will miss you? (HE begins to cry. SHE watches him coldly for a moment.) I’m sorry. (HE bawls.) I’m sorry! (HE bawls.) I’m sorry, Tom! (HE stops abruptly, smiles.) Give me the gun. (HE mimes handing her the gun.)
TOM: Be careful. The safety’s on.
MARY: How do you turn it off?

(HE switches off the safety.)
TOM: In the mouth. Blows the brains right out. The temple—the bullet can ricochet off the inside of your skull, leave you a semi-conscious vegetable for the rest of your life. (SHE points her finger and mimics aiming the revolver at him.) What are you doing?
MARY: You manipulated me.
TOM: You shoot me, they’ll send you to the chair.
MARY: I don’t care. You men are all the same.

(SHE pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. SHE pulls it several more times.)
TOM: I didn’t have the guts to load it.
MARY: You’re a zero.
TOM: I’m not worth your pity.
MARY: You’re disgusting!
TOM: I’m not even that significant.
MARY: Get off my ledge!

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