

FALLING FOR HARRY

By Warren Paul Glover

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SYNOPSIS: When Harry, a suicidal Hare Krishna, meets heartbroken Harriet, love is in the air. But will they take the leap?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

HARRY (m).....A suicidal Hare Krishna, with robes and tambourine. *(53 lines)*
 HARRIET (f).....A suicidal woman in an orange dress, one high heeled shoe and carrying a handbag. *(56 lines)*

DURATION: 10 minutes

SETTING: A high bridge spanning a river.

AT RISE: *HARRY, tambourine at his feet, is trying to summon the courage to jump.*

HARRY: Just do it you coward! Come on! Stop thinking about it. Be a man, for once in your life! I can't. I can't. I am a coward! This is why I was useless as a Hare Krishna. My weak spirit. No discipline. I'm a starter, not a finisher. (*Peers down, scaring himself.*) Oh God it's high! But is it high enough? What was it that suicide website said? For a fall into water... (*Peers down.*) ...it needs to be at least 250 feet. (*Looks up, stares straight ahead at the audience: HE'S SCARED!*) Yep. I'd say it's 250 feet. Right then. Let's do it! One, two, three... (*Holds a finger up in the air: A REPRIEVE!*) Wait! The website said jumping into water from 250 feet is only 95-98% fatal. What if I'm in the 2-5% non-fatal cohort? That'd be just my luck, some bloody do-gooder fishing me out and rescuing me. (*Peers down.*) Oh look! There's a boat. What if I land on a boat but survive the fall? I could paralyze myself! And they'll probably make me pay for passage! Fuck! There are so many things to consider. I've got to get this right! (*Closes his eyes.*) Harry. Come on. Focus. Ommm... (*Eyes fly open.*) Got it! I must remember to land on my head. Increases the risk of fatal injury. But what if I end up doing a belly flop? It'll hurt. But not for long! Right. Harry! Come on. You're dithering. Concentrate. Get into the zone. (*Closes his eyes.*) Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama...

HARRIET enters.

HARRY: Oh fuck it! It's no use!

HARRIET: Excuse me!

HARRY is startled at the sound of HARRIET'S voice. He almost falls off the bridge but manages – just – to claw himself back.

HARRIET: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to startle you. Do you mind if I share your ledge? I'm not sure I really want to do this now. It's quite high up, isn't it?

HARRY stares at HARRIET, astonished to have company.

HARRIET: It's rude to stare you know.

HARRY looks HARRIET up and down, disbelievingly.

HARRY: You've scraped your knee. And your mascara's run. Are you all right?

HARRIET peers down, looks up and bursts into tears.

HARRIET: No, not really.

HARRY: Oh! Don't cry. Please don't cry. I don't do crying.

HARRIET sniffles heavily. She searches unsuccessfully in her handbag for a handkerchief then points at HARRY'S robes.

HARRIET: May I?

HARRY, confused, looks at his robes. HARRIET reaches out, grabs part of his robe and blows her nose, loudly, on it.

HARRIET: Thanks. Hey, we're both wearing this season's color. Although I think orange suits you better.

HARRY: It's saffron.

HARRIET: Pardon?

HARRY: It's not orange. It's saffron.

HARRIET: Ooooooh. Get you Mister Fashionista. (*Mimicking.*) It's not orange, it's saffron.

HARRY glares at HARRIET.

HARRY: Don't you need to be somewhere?

HARRY peers down then looks pointedly at HARRIET.

HARRIET: You were here first. You go. Don't mind me.

HARRY: First in, last out. You can go. I'm in no rush.

HARRIET: Age before beauty. Please, don't let me stop you.

HARRY: Ladies first.

HARRIET: I'm no lady.

HARRY: You're wearing a dress.

HARRIET: You're wearing a dress too! Sort of.

HARRY frowns. He flaps his hands in a gesture for HARRIET to clear off.

HARRIET: No! You first. Maybe if you go you can show me how it's done and I can follow?

HARRY thinks about this. He pulls a face.

HARRY: I'm not sure I like that idea. I imagined suicide to be a private act, not a spectator sport. Please, can't you just go away?

HARRIET: Just forget about me. Pretend I'm not here.

HARRIET turns her head and looks away from HARRY. HARRY peers down, closes his eyes, meditates for a moment, opens his eyes again.

HARRY: It's no use. I can't pretend you're not here. You've spoiled it for me now.

HARRIET: Well, I'm soooo sorry about that mister... what is your name anyway?

HARRY: Harold.

HARRIET: I'm Harriet.

HARRIET extends her hand to HARRY. HARRY shakes it.

HARRIET: Nice to meet you, Harold.

HARRY: My friends call me Harry. Well, they would if I had any. You can call me Harry.

HARRIET: Nice to meet you, Harry.

HARRY and HARRIET lean over and peer down.

HARRY: So, Harriet. What brings you to the brink?

HARRIET: My lover's dumped me.

HARRY: Is one person really worth ending it all for! (*Peering down.*)

There are plenty more fish in the sea.

HARRIET: My lover was also my boss. Now I'm single and unemployed. I had so much going for me. He said he would leave his wife.

HARRY: And you believed him?

HARRIET: Doesn't every mistress?

HARRY and HARRIET are silent for a moment

HARRIET: So, what's your story? Why are you here, contemplating... this?

HARRIET gestures to encompass the void in front of them. She rolls her heel, totters and almost falls over the edge. HARRY grabs her and drags her back to safety. She falls against him, holding onto him tightly. They could be two lovers in an embrace as they stare into each other's eyes. HARRIET hastily breaks eye contact.

HARRIET: Thanks!

An awkward moment. They avoid each other. HARRY considers HARRIET'S question.

HARRY: I'm having a crisis of faith.

HARRIET: Oh? I guess that must be quite hard. Believing in one thing one day and then... nothing the next.

HARRY nods his head.

HARRIET: I'm an atheist myself. I don't believe in anything. Not even...

HARRY: What?

HARRIET: (*Hesitating.*) Love.

HARRY stares at HARRIET then looks quickly away. HARRIET bursts into tears again.

HARRY: Hey, hey! Come on. Don't cry. You look kind of ugly when you cry.

HARRIET: Thanks a lot!

HARRY: No, no! I didn't mean that you are ugly. You're actually quite pretty. Very pretty! Very pretty indeed!

HARRIET sniffles.

HARRIET: Thanks.

HARRY reaches for and clasps one of HARRIET'S hands in his.

HARRY: You're welcome.

HARRIET: You have nice smooth hands. You can tell a lot by a man's hands.

HARRY: That's what my mother used to say. She was a palmist.

HARRIET: A palmist? I could do with a fortune teller right now. Someone to tell me that everything's going to be all right and that I'll live happily ever after.

HARRY: Everything's going to be all right. And you're going to live happily ever after. See. Easy.

HARRIET: If only it were that simple.

A momentary silence as HARRY and HARRIET contemplate. HARRIET nudges HARRY'S tambourine with her foot.

HARRIET: Give us a tune then.

HARRY: I'd rather not.

HARRIET: Oh, go on. Maybe a little music will help get us in the mood again. Do you know “Jump” by Van Halen?

HARRY: I don’t take requests.

HARRIET: You can’t play that thing, can you? You’re embarrassed.

HARRY: No, no! That’s not it. I just don’t like playing. My mother, when she wasn’t being a palmist, was a drummer. She bullied me into playing percussion. I had it ‘drummed’ into me while I was very young, you might say.

HARRIET: Very droll. Or should I say, very... drum roll?

HARRY glares at HARRIET.

HARRY: You’re not from around here, are you? You have an accent.

HARRIET: I’m from Australia. Queensland. *Tamborine Mountain.*

HARRY: Ha. That figures.

HARRIET glares at HARRY.

HARRIET: How long have you been a Hare, Harry?

HARRY: Ten years. You have the most beautiful eyes by the way.

HARRIET: Thanks. So, how come you lost your faith?

HARRY: *(Sitting down.)* This might sound strange...

HARRIET sits down also.

HARRY: But after ten years in the cult I’ve started to lust after forbidden fruit. Every time we march down the street I have an urge to dive into KFC or McDonald’s or Burger King. It’s driving me crazy!

HARRIET: I know what you mean. I was a vegetarian for twelve years until one Christmas I had a craving for duck. Just like that.

HARRY: Just like ‘quack’, you mean.

HARRIET: What? Oh, ha-ha. Don’t give up the day job, Harry.

HARRY: What a pair we are.

HARRIET: Are you serious about jumping?

HARRY: I was. But I think I’ve seen the light now.

They stare into each other's eyes until their faces get closer and closer and they kiss.

HARRY: Wow!

HARRIET: Wow! (*Beat.*) Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man. Can I buy you dinner?

HARRY: You want to buy me dinner? Really?

HARRIET: Yeah, I think I would. I think I like you, Harry.

HARRY: This isn't a rebound thing is it?

HARRIET: It may be. It could be. If you want it to be...

HARRY peers down, considers, looks directly at HARRIET.

HARRY: Well, I could murder a steak. And a martini. And a packet of smokes.

HARRIET: Uh-oh! Deal breaker.

HARRIET stands up. HARRY scrambles to his feet after her.

HARRY: Shit. Forget the smokes. I'll settle for a steak and a martini.

HARRIET glares at HARRY, narrowing her eyes at his expediency.

HARRIET: You shouldn't pretend to be something you're not just because some person you like doesn't like that thing that you like.

HARRY: See! This is why I joined the Hare Krishnas in the first place.

HARRIET doesn't understand. She gestures for more clarity from him.

HARRY: Because this dating lark is just too complicated!

HARRIET: That's true. That's why I decided to be a mistress. Much easier. Married men are so grateful for a bit on the side that they make it almost a pleasure to shag them.

HARRY: Pardon?

HARRIET: They buy you things!

HARRY stares dumfounded at HARRIET.

HARRY: That's why you went out with a married man? Because he bought you things?

HARRIET: Well, yes! Plus I was in love with him. Or in love with all the attention he showered over me.

HARRY: But you're so beautiful, Harriet. You shouldn't settle for being someone's number two. You should be somebody's number one. You'd be my number one.

HARRIET: Aw, thanks Harry. I am starting to really like you. You're ever so nice.

HARRY: I don't want to be 'nice'. Nice men never get anywhere.

HARRIET: Don't be so hard on yourself. You're here. With me. Aren't you?

HARRY: I guess. But just look at us! We're hardly great catches for people are we?

HARRIET: Maybe we're a great catch for each other? Maybe it's fate that's brought us together like this?

HARRY: Fate? You're don't really believe that do you?

HARRIET: Maybe. Maybe I want to believe it.

HARRY: I thought you didn't believe in anything?

HARRIET: I think we all need something to believe in, Harry. And right now, I'm starting to believe in a second chance. I'm starting to believe that I want to live.

HARRY: You know what? Me too!

HARRY holds out his hand to HARRIET.

HARRY: Do you still want to buy me dinner?

HARRIET takes HARRY'S hand.

HARRIET: Sure.

HARRY: Do you think we could do that kiss thing again? That was kinda nice.

HARRIET: Sure, Harry.

HARRY and HARRIET kiss. It's brief but it's the kiss of a lifetime. An excited HARRY moves in for another go but HARRIET—eyes-closed, still savoring the kiss – is unprepared and is accidentally knocked over the edge by HARRY'S over-exuberance. HARRY peers down, watching her fall. He looks up, stares at the audience.

HARRY: Oh fuck.

THE END

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