

## Fear of Falling

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## Fear of Falling

by [Pixie](#)

### Summary

Gabriel and Katrina head to the top of a cliff to watch the Perseids meteor shower

"What's this?"

"Picnic," he drawls, with a somewhat uncharacteristic twinkle in his eye.

"How romantic," she suggests flashing a sideways smile in amusement.

"It happens." He clasps her hand with a firm grip. "Now and again." Hefting the basket with his free hand, he starts up the path, tugging her hand to follow. "C'mon, I've a spot picked out."

Katrina peers up at the hill with slight trepidation. "...How far up?"

"'Til all we see are stars."

They walk past a modest crowd of other couples, families, one small class of middle schoolers. It's a clear night, a comfortable temperature, and while the shower is scheduled to peak closer to 1am, they could start seeing something as early as 20:00. The hillside is prime viewing, but Gabriel doesn't want to settle for a seat among the masses. He leads her past the crowd and off the path, finally stopping at a rocky outcropping.

"Here we are." He sets down the basket. She glances past him.

"Wow."

The ground is mostly rock, and mostly level, but juts out over the hill, and a fall from this height could be fatal. Past the park boundary, there is no energy shield, not even ropes or railing, and Katrina morbidly imagines it's an exceptional spot to commit suicide. She hangs back in the grass, close to the tree line, but Gabriel walks out to the ledge without pause.

"Wait 'til it's dark," he murmurs with a kind of quiet rapture. "You can't see the edge."

The sun is dipping low in the sky, blurring the boundary already, and Katrina's hands twitch with a nervous desire to pull him back. Sensing her anxiety, he steps back and squeezes her shoulders.

"There's a blanket in the basket."

She nods and they crouch to open the basket. She removes the blanket and hands it to him to spread over the grass, then moves to unpack the rest.

"Gabriel..."

"Hmm?"

She holds up a bottle and tumbler, its twin rests on the blanket. "All that's in here is whisky."

"No, Kat." He reaches into the basket and pulls out a small gold box. "There's also chocolate."

"That's not a picnic," she teases.

"It's the perfect kind of picnic." He removes a chocolate from the box and holds it out to her between his finger and thumb. Eyes on his, Katrina opens her mouth and he places the candy between her lips. Her tongue flicks the tip of his finger as she swallows and he leans in to brush her lips. She smiles into the kiss.

With a nod for her to get comfortable, Gabriel hands her the chocolates and reaches for the bottle. He pours two glasses and holds one out to her. When she accepts it, he raises the second.

"To picnics."

"To the Perseids," she adds, raising her own drink to his.

"To us," he answers as their glasses clink.

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"How'd you find this place?"

"I climbed."

It's how he does everything. Onward and upward and never look back.

"Look." He gestures to the crowded hillside below. She finishes her remaining drink before focusing beyond the ledge. She doesn't really want the reminder of how far up they are, or how much safer everyone else is. "They have to share the view."

"It's a big sky," she murmurs. The meteors are falling steadily by now, they may even be visible back in the city.

"We can see everything." He hands her a refilled glass and she sips to steady her nerves. Gabriel picks up his own glass. "Truth or dare?"

She blinks. "What?"

"Truth," he repeats, low and slow. "Or dare."

His eyes rake over her body as he asks, and seem to bore into her soul. In someone else, it would be menacing. In him, her body responds with desire and she doesn't want to talk.

"Dare."

He downs his glass and sets it aside, stands and walks with careful deliberation to the edge of their outcropping. Katrina's eyes go wide, arousal turning to apprehension as he reaches the ledge and turns to hold out a hand.

"No."

"I dare you."

"Gabriel..." She shakes her head, the combination of whisky and panic has her lightheaded.

He steps back towards her, arm still outstretched. "Are you afraid of heights?" Such mundanity does not fit with his vision of her, but it's never come up.

"I'm afraid of falling."

"I won't let you," he answers with conviction.

Katrina bites her lip and takes his hand, allowing him to pull her up into his arms. He holds her close a long moment, until her breathing is steady, then slowly maneuvers her to the edge. His hands are on her at all times, to lend strength and make good on his promise to keep her safe. At the ledge he moves behind her, arms around hers, holding tight.

"Now look up."

She lifts her eyes to a sky full of stars, surrounding her in their dance as the perseids blink in and out of view every few minutes. Her eyes flicker back and forth with the movement but she would have to crane her neck to see below the outcropping.

It's just her, and him, and the sky.

"So beautiful," she whispers.

A calm breeze blows through her hair, tickling her jaw line. "Yes," he answers, watching her watch the stars.

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After a time, he draws her back down to the safety of the blanket and the trees, and they lay back side by side to watch.

"Truth."

She glances over, pushes up on her elbow to face him, and takes a long sip from a glass — hers or his hardly matters at this point.

"What's *your* biggest fear?"

"Spiders."

She shoots him a disbelieving — and disapproving — look. He answers it with a low chuckle.

"They're creepy."

She inches closer. "You can tell me." Nods to the nearing empty bottle of whisky. "I probably won't even remember in the morning."

He leans up, cups her neck, and pulls her mouth down to his. She leans into the kiss, and he pulls her body onto his, both pulsing with anticipation. As she slips a hand down his leg, he spins, suddenly, flips her over onto her back, and presses her against the ground, holding her captive with his weight.

"Loss of control," he answers before drawing back to release her.

Katrina holds his gaze a long, charged, moment, before pressing her hips against his to draw herself up and yank his shirt up over his head. He moves his hands to her waist, spins again to land with her on top, and grins as she tugs her own shirt off and throws it beside his. They roll and tug, again and again, until all their clothes are littered around their entwined bodies. He draws a hand slowly down her body, cups a breast, flicks a nipple. She bites her lip, he flashes a wolfish grin, and leans down to devour her.

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In the pale light of dawn, the bottle is empty.

Gabriel leans against a tree, their jackets pressed against it in a clump, a makeshift pillow. Katrina is curled against his body, the blanket tucked around them both. He draws a gentle hand through her hair before settling back to watch the sunrise. She's sleeping peacefully, breathing slow, a quiet contentment replacing both her earlier fear, and excitement. In contrast, he's agitated by the idyll. But he clamps the feeling down and away, pops the last chocolate into his mouth, and ignores his wandering mind so as to escape simple truths.

Love is the greatest loss of control of all.

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