JUMP

by

Montana Kane

Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, Holy heck, why in the world did that young woman just jump from the 96th floor?

Well, to tell you the truth, I can sort of see why you would wonder about that. And to be perfectly honest, sometimes I question that myself. But there are some decisions in life, which, once you've committed to them, are nearly impossible to take back.

 (By the way, I just flew past the 90th floor, and let me tell you, I am really picking up speed.)

The fact is, I intended to *kill* (such an ugly word) myself a lot sooner, but I am such a darn procrastinator that I could never find the right time. I kept telling myself things like:

- You have to lose ten pounds before you commit suicide, think about what your naked body will look like spread out like a slab of meat at the morgue.
-You can't die until you've cleaned your apartment, because what in the world would that say about you?
-You have to put your affairs in order, otherwise that is just really insensitive to whoever gets stuck going through all your things.
-If you want to make a good impression when you're dead, then you really need to wait until you can afford better clothes.

Etc, etc. I believe that in literature, that is what they like to call irony. Making sure one's death makes a better impression than one's life. Or, living the life you told yourself you should live just in time to die. Well, rest assured, the irony is not lost on me. But it is what it is, I mean as much as we would all like our lives to not be overly governed by literary irony, sometimes you just can't help it.

The fact is, and I know how unreasonable this might sound to some of you, the thing that bothers me the most about death is the idea of being in the public eye without

my own consent, with no sense of control whatsoever. I am a very private person. I mean, I can't even stand to have my picture taken, to tell you the truth. The thought of people gazing down at me, when I am at my most vulnerable, right there on display before everybody, and not being able to do anything about it, well for me that is just incredibly stressful to think about. It's like watching someone sleep, only a million times worse. I know in the movies they always make it out be a really romantic or tender moment, but personally I think it's kind of invasive and even a bit creepy. I used to like to watch my dog sleep, but I think that's different. I don't think he minded. I think dogs have different kinds of boundaries, they always like to be included in everything. That's one of the many things that is really just so great about dogs.

(Oh my gosh, I swear to God, I just saw my neighbor in an office on the 65th floor! I tried to wave, but I was going so fast, I'm not sure he saw me. That's so funny, I knew he worked downtown but I had no idea it was this building!)

So I don't know. Sometimes I think maybe that's why I chose to have my body explode beyond recognition onto the pavement. It won't be me anymore. I mean, I haven't done too much research on the subject, but what I am hoping is that my body and face will be smashed into bloody pulp and no longer bear any resemblance to me. The advantage of that is that obviously, it means that there wouldn't be an open casket kind of ordeal, although technically there wouldn't be one *anyway* because technically I have requested cremation. But let's face it, can you really ever be sure that your wishes will in fact be respected at such a critical time in your life? I'm a little wary, to tell you the truth. I mean, I don't think I'm an overly paranoid type of person necessarily, but I can just imagine that once you're dead, someone will come along to claim that they're doing the right and respectful thing, even if it is the exact total opposite of what you asked for.

And even if they do respect my wishes, which are clearly printed out in Century Gothic bold font on the note I printed out twice and left one copy of on my desk at home and one in my coat pocket, there would still be the matter of someone, whoever they call, coming to identify me. So there I would be, all alone and incapable of voicing my protest, lying there on a metal table, probably undressed, and one of my friends or family members would be staring down at me as I lay there all naked and exposed, and there is absolutely nothing I would be able to do about it. Now, I know how weird it sounds for me to say what I am about to say, but to me that prospect is even more horrifying than death itself. Which, let's face it, is already pretty darn scary to begin with. I just figure, some things should be private, and death should definitely be one of them, right up there at the top of the list.

So I figured, better be all smashed up. And in many ways, I am comfortable with my decision.

For some reason, I always thought that a violent yet hopefully painless death was really the only way to die properly, in a way that honors death. What I mean by that

is that first, I'm not overly anxious to be in a lot of pain, but that second, since we only die once, it would seem to me that death should be a truly unique experience. A once in a lifetime kind of thing, something to talk about, except that naturally, you wouldn't be around to actually talk about it afterwards. Something really original and exciting, something you can only experience if you're about to die.

(Oh my gosh, I'm laughing out loud, I just flew past the 60th floor where a couple was totally making out in the bathroom!)

What I mean to say is that, if you die in your sleep, I mean probably a lot of people would think that's a great way to go and all, but it would be just like going to sleep. Which isn't very interesting. I mean, you're not actually experiencing anything new. You just go to bed and you don't wake up. Whether you're silenced for eternity or summoned into an afterlife by a hopefully benevolent supreme being, the journey that took you there was not overly interesting.

For a long time, I thought that I liked the idea of dying while falling out of a plane.

A few things pertaining to that:

-One, it's a bit more than I can afford at the moment.
-Two, the instructor would probably find a way to rescue me somehow if I pretended that I couldn't get my parachute open, so that would just be money down the drain.
-Three, I admit that I have a problem planning ahead, and to tell you the truth, my action today was kind of spontaneous and out of the *blue,* otherwise, let's face it, I probably could have saved up the money, I mean I think it's only like 200 bucks or something.
-Four, well I guess what I'm doing in a sense is the cheap version. But obviously, it's not nearly as good because I don't have nearly the same amount time to see the ground rush at me, which is the specific part of falling from a plane that would be really cool and interesting. I mean my goodness, I'm already at the 50th floor (not much to see, just a maze of boring cubicles).

The irony of what I was saying before about pain, is that, and I know how ridiculous this sounds coming from someone who is about to be scooped up in bloody bits of gunk off the sidewalk, ironically one of the reasons I decided to do this was because I was doing some research on death-related subjects and I got a bit overwhelmed.

Sometimes, and believe me, you don't have to tell me what a destructive habit this is, sometimes I get way too absorbed by the terrible things human beings have done or have suffered, and before you know it, I am completely depressed. I mean, I don't even know if I should give you examples, because then you won't be able to sleep, and it will be my fault. I mean, there are things we all know about, which are already nearly impossible to imagine without going a bit crazy, but then on top of that you

find out about things you *didn't* know about, and well, let's just say it's not pleasant or useful.

(I just saw something really nice, there was a party on the 40th floor, with a bunch of people hugging an older man who seemed to be fighting back tears)

Anyway, like I said, I don't really think I should go into it. Let's just say it robbed me at times of my capacity to see the glass as anything but half-empty, and that's being conservative. It was more like three quarters empty, really. So I guess probably that's when the idea of leaving this place first occurred to me. But to be perfectly honest, it wasn't the only factor.

(I really wish I could slow down somehow, there was an incredibly beautiful mural on the 35th floor but I didn't have time to really take in all the details.)

What I was going to say is that to tell you the truth, yes, I'll admit it, I was getting a bit depressed over other things, not just the horrors of the world. I guess I had been feeling sort of alone lately, but then when my dog died, I just really lost it. I cried for days and days and days, I tried to stop and go outside and take a walk, but then I would end up crying on the street and it was kind of embarrassing. A few people asked me if I was okay, but mostly they would just cross the street.

(Oh my gosh, my cell phone is ringing! I could probably reach it if I tried hard enough, but I can't imagine any conversation that wouldn't be really awkward at the moment.)

Anyway, so there was that. And that was a lot, I mean I was completely devastated, but there were also more general, abstract kinds of things. I was feeling that I sure as heck didn't seem to have a whole lot of direction in my life. I was feeling like I had slipped through the cracks somehow. That maybe I had done everything wrong, made nothing but wrong decisions. Or sometimes I thought, well maybe it isn't my fault, I mean I sure have tried, but maybe the universe just sort of forgot about me, which is understandable, I mean there are a lot of people to keep track of.

(I just got a text! Probably from the same person who tried to call.)

For those who don't know this about me, I am what you call a multimedia artist. That means that I like to mix different media and formats together and make installations or works that stand or hang on their own. I have a lot of fun doing it, but unfortunately, I've been really struggling to make any headway. I spent a lot of time on a proposal to turn a friend's novel into a giant, multimedia exhibition with music, photography, text, live food stands and performances, which I thought was a really cool idea. Basically visitors would step into the novel. I would take one sentence, or even one word, and make something visual from it, and the piece of text would be "up-loaded" next to the visual work.

Anyway, I was really proud of that and I worked really hard to produce some samples, and I shopped it around to a bunch of galleries and museums, but so far they all rejected it. There's one curator who hasn't reacted yet, but it's been over two months and to tell you the truth, I'm not really holding my breath.

Now, I know what you're thinking, you're thinking it's always really tough to make it in any artistic field, and that compared to the problems other people have, people who are starving or live in war-torn countries or have an incurable disease for instance, that's not really a good enough reason to get depressed, let alone jump out a window.

Well, I agree with you, I'm just being honest about how I've been feeling, that's all. I mean yes, I know all that. Seriously, you don't have to tell me. To be perfectly frank, it's almost embarrassing, I will freely admit it. It just is what it is.

I don't know. There were other things too. My best friend got married and moved to Tokyo so that was another factor. I was dating this guy I really liked but that didn't work out, but I absolutely do *not* want anybody to think I jumped out of a window because of a guy, I mean what kind of message would that send?

(I just sailed past a large cafeteria, which reminds me, I really should have cooked something delicious for myself before doing this, my last meal as they call it, I mean I am a pretty good cook actually.)

I suppose if I were to try to sum it all up for someone to try to understand, I might say that it has something to do with losing hope. And you know what they say about that. Once you lose hope, there really isn't much of a point anymore. Gradually I just got to the point where I couldn't even imagine anything joyful, I couldn't visualize any major change or improvement or my life ever again being altered in any significant and positive way. I mean yes, I realize I'm not even thirty yet, but still, the feeling is genuine. In these types of instances, intellectual reasoning is sort of not very useful.

Anyway, now the pavement is looking really close, I mean, wow, it's coming up incredibly fast.

It looks like I'm probably going to land on that red Volkswagen Bug. I wonder if I could swerve a bit to the right to avoid it, I mean I would hate to be the one responsible for bashing in someone's car, especially since it looks as if it might be new.

(Oh my gosh, I just thought of a new twist on the Smashed Like a Bug expression!)

Also, if at all possible, I will do my absolute best not to fall on top of someone. I mean, that wouldn't really be fair to them. Not one single bit. Just because I have decided to die today does not mean someone else should have to as well. It's a very

personal decision and you really shouldn't rob another person of the freedom to make that decision on their own.

Man, I am going really, really fast. This is it.

For a minute I was worried I might land on that street sign down there and end up impaled and dangling all bloody for everybody to see, howling in agony kind of thing, but now it looks like it's not really in my direct line of flight, which believe me, is a huge relief.

You know what, I think I'll read that text. I mean at this point, what harm could it do?

This is it, oh my gosh, a few more seconds and I will explode. Things are happening really fast.

I have to say, I'm getting a little emotional right now. I think I might even be crying a little bit. It's hard to tell because the wind and the incredible velocity at which I'm *traveling* are doing weird things to my eyes, but still, I'm pretty sure I'm crying.

To be perfectly honest, I'm also beginning to think that maybe this wasn't altogether such a great idea, even though I clearly had my reasons.

Also, I hadn't really noticed before, but it really is a beautiful day. When I first jumped, when I was still pretty high up, I could see the ocean, and it was all blue and sparkly.

Here we go, I'm opening my cell phone, let's see what it says.

"Sorry, crazy busy lately. LOVE the idea, LOVE the work. Let's talk."

Oh, n

THE END