

FREE FALL

Written by

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BLACK.

Silence, but for the sound of quick, panicked BREATHING.

It grows louder -- pained, difficult breaths.

A harsh, unforgiving WIND slices through the air.

Fingers SCRAPE against rock --

A GIRL *SCREAMS* through her teeth --

SMASH IN ON:

EXT. WALL - DAY

We look UP a SHEER GRANITE ROCK WALL --

CLOSE ON our GIRL as she pulls as hard as she can, all of her weight on her fingers, wrapped around TINY HANDHOLDS.

This is **GRACE** (18).

Above her, nothing but sky; this wall is COMPLETELY VERTICAL.

We rotate around her in a continuous shot -- her clothes are torn and dirty, and BLOOD runs down her hands from her fingers, which are scraped nearly to the bone.

She wears a CLIMBING HARNESS, but there's no rope attached to it. Nothing will catch her if she falls.

We arrive above her, LOOKING DOWN -- and for the first time, we see the ground is A THOUSAND FEET AWAY.

We slowly RACK FOCUS to make it STRETCH AWAY FROM US even more -- if you weren't afraid of heights, you are now.

As she reaches for another hold, she looks up. She's cold, tired, streaked with blood and dirt, but there's a fire in her eyes even scarier than the height.

She's up here alone. Any second could be her last.

She reaches again, squeezes her fingers like a vice around a rock spur the size of a penny, and pulls -- then --

CRACK! The hold CRUMBLES, she LOSES HER BALANCE, and we --

SMASH TO **BLACK.**

We hear a recording of a WOMAN'S VOICE --

CAROL (V.O.)
Happy birthday to you, Happy
birthday toooo --

HONKING horns.

CAROL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm going! God! It's my
daughter's birthday!
(back to call)
Okay, sorry about that...

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING - CONT.

Grace lies on her bed, the phone on the pillow next to her ear. She doesn't yet have the cuts and scrapes we just saw her with.

She reaches for the phone and clicks to another voicemail.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Okay, so if I want to print those
pictures from your Instagram for
grandma and grandpa, how do I do it
without all the comments and stuff
being on it? I -- wait, I did it!
(beat)
Oh, no I didn't. Call me back.

Grace clicks the next voicemail.

CAROL (CONT'D)
It's eleven p.m. on a Sunday, so I
hope you're not answering because
you're asleep already. I won't get
home until after you're at school
tomorrow, but I just may have
gotten you something in Toronto...
(beat)
Love you, bye.

Grace listens in silence, tears in her eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Grace stands in the small, unadorned bedroom. She picks clothes out of a SUITCASE and dresses. Her phone buzzes.

She looks down -- it says: "**DAD.**"

She clicks "**IGNORE**" and goes back to what she was doing.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ED and **JANE** (both 60s), Grace's grandparents, mill around the kitchen. Ed makes coffee while Jane butters toast.

They stop as Grace walks in.

ED
Good morning!

GRACE
Morning.

Grace sits at the small kitchen table across from Ed.

ED
How are you feeling?

Grace looks down -- she doesn't want to talk about this.

GRACE
I'm fine.

They share a look again.

JANE
Have you thought about when you'd
like to go back to school?

Grace goes quiet.

GRACE
I'm not ready yet.

JANE
Honey --

GRACE
I don't want to talk about it, ok?

JANE
Okay.

Jane and Ed share a look.

ED
Your father called.

GRACE
I know.

Jane sits down next to Grace.

JANE
Honey, you should spend some time
with him.

GRACE
I thought you guys hated him.

ED
I'm not his biggest fan, but he
cares about you. He wants to see
you.

GRACE
I don't even know where he lives
right now.

JANE
He's in town.

Grace looks at her grandparents. She sighs.

JANE (CONT'D)
He'll be over in an hour.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. DRIVEWAY/TRUCK - DAY

Grace exits the house and walks toward a pickup that blares
the Eagles' "Life in the Fast Lane."

Inside is **MATT** (38) in aviators; he taps along to the music,
a little too relaxed.

Grace gets into the car as Matt leans out the window and
calls out to Ed and Jane.

MATT
Hey, Ed! Bet you thought you had
enough of me picking up girls from
your house!

He laughs into deafening silence.

MATT (CONT'D)
I'll get her home in one piece!

Matt turns to Grace.

MATT (CONT'D)
All right pretty girl: let's roll.

He backs the truck out and drives.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Matt drives through the streets of Boulder, Colorado.

MATT

Surprised this thing still runs! I traded it to my friend Brock back when I got that job in Montana, borrowed it while I'm in town. You know you used to ride in the back of this thing? Your mother was not happy about *that*.

GRACE

Yeah.

Matt thinks.

MATT

Did you see that thing I sent you?

GRACE

No.

He pulls out his phone and looks at it.

MATT

Check this out.

She looks down at the phone, which has a meme that says "*You know you're from Northern Colorado when...*" and a picture of a man in a suit with his bare feet on his desk.

MATT (CONT'D)

That's pretty good, right?

GRACE

Can you please watch the road?

Matt straightens up.

MATT

Sorry, madam.

A moment of excruciating silence. Grace sniffs the air.

MATT (CONT'D)

Don't get carried away -- that smell's leftover from Brock. I
(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)
haven't had a cigarette in eight
months.

Grace looks marginally impressed.

MATT (CONT'D)
So what are we doing today? You
want to go to the mall?

GRACE
No.

Matt tries again.

MATT
Want to get some pizza?

GRACE
Pizza is so unhealthy.

Matt thinks harder.

MATT
Mini-golf? Want to hit up The Big
Apple?

GRACE
They closed that place when I was
nine.

He's struggling.

MATT
Okay, well... you got your dad here
to spend money on you. What are
you in the mood for?

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Matt and Grace sit in a fancy third-wave coffee shop. Matt
looks around at the clientele, all very hip.

MATT
Do you have to wear a stupid hat to
be in here?

A SERVER comes over with two cups of coffee.

SERVER
Hey, Grace.

GRACE

Hi.

She sets down two cappuccinos -- Grace's has latte art that looks like a Hello Kitty. Matt looks down at his -- it looks like a sad bloodhound.

MATT

How do they do that?

Grace looks down at her phone.

MATT (CONT'D)

Back before you were born, a few of my friends and I took a trip to Seattle -- I'd never had a cappuccino before. There were no fancy coffee shops around here back then -- we knew it would be a gold mine! But then one of the guys fell out, and a few months later a Starbucks came to town, so...

Grace mostly ignores him. Matt tries again.

MATT (CONT'D)

Hey, so I've been working for a contracting company down in Albuquerque. It's not bad -- I've got a company cell phone!

Grace isn't listening -- she messes around with her phone.

MATT (CONT'D)

You been hanging with your friends?

GRACE

They usually have school.

Matt pauses as he tries to figure out what to do next.

MATT

Your grandparents told me you haven't been back to school since Mom's funeral.

GRACE

I haven't felt ready.

MATT

I know -- I don't want to rush you. But they also told me that you're going to have to drop the whole semester, which means not

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)
graduating next month, which means
college --

GRACE
Could you afford my college anyway?

Matt sighs.

MATT
I'm not trying to come down hard on
you; I just worry about you.

GRACE
Well, I don't need you to worry.

He looks down at his coffee again; Matt is not good at this.

MATT
We don't have to talk about this
all day if you don't want.
(beat)
I've got you for a whole day --
let's do something. We can't just
sit here.

Grace shrugs.

MATT (CONT'D)
You been doing anything... for fun?

GRACE
Yeah, but you wouldn't like it.

MATT
I'm tougher than you think.

CUT TO:

INT. ROCK OUT - DAY

A huge indoor rock-climbing gym. The walls are twenty-five feet high, covered with multi-colored holds and fake rock. Dozens of CLIMBERS all around the gym work in pairs as they traverse the different routes.

Matt looks around, intimidated. There's no way you're getting him up there.

Grace is on a wall, harness knotted to a top rope. Next to Matt is **JASON** (20s), a climbing instructor. Fit and optimistic, Jason is a guy who always keeps his cool.

Grace hustles right up a route marked by holds of the same color, hands and feet dancing from one hold to the next.

As she goes, Jason quickly pulls the rope through his belay device to take out the slack.

JASON

See how I do this? Just keep taking out the slack as she goes.

MATT

Just make sure you've got her.

Grace nears the top of the route, but the holds disappear. She looks -- it's a RUNOUT -- she's gone up a little too high, past a junction where she should have moved laterally.

The route continues to her right, but the nearest hold is several feet away.

Matt sees her mistake.

MATT (CONT'D)

Uh-oh, might have to backtrack...

But instead, Grace readies herself -- she springs off a foothold and LEAPS --

Jason's grip goes taut, expecting a fall --

But Grace CATCHES the hold and PULLS herself up. She powers her way to the top.

MATT (CONT'D)

Whoa!

She signals to them. Matt and Jason share a smile.

CUT TO:

LATER --

Back on the ground, Grace unties the rope.

JASON

All right, Grace!

They double high-five. Matt steps over, smiling.

MATT

You got any more she can conquer?

JASON
That was 5.13a -- that's the
toughest one we have.

GRACE
You want to give it a try, dad?

Matt freezes up.

MATT
Nah, I'm good. I've been real sore
-- tweaked my knee last week
helping a friend move.

Jason and Grace share a look -- suuuuure he did.

JASON
You thinking about doing some
outdoor stuff?

GRACE
Uh, maybe.

JASON
Well, I'm teaching lead climbing
lessons on some walls in the park.
Weather's supposed to clear up this
Saturday if you want to go.

GRACE
Yeah!

Matt looks a little taken aback.

JASON
Awesome, there's a spot called the
Peace Wall that's a great place to
learn --

Matt butts in.

MATT
Well, we'll have to see if we're
available...

Grace looks annoyed.

JASON
Okay. Well, let me get you a card
anyway...

He walks off. Grace glares at Matt.

GRACE
We're going to be busy now?

MATT
I just thought... it's a bit
much...

GRACE
I'm going.

Jason comes back and hands Matt a card.

JASON
Here you go. I can organize a nice
easy route for us.

GRACE
Great, I'll call you!

JASON
Bye, Grace.

Grace marches past Matt and walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK OUT - DAY

Matt catches up to Grace in the parking lot.

MATT
I think it's really cool, that you
want to go mountain climbing.

Grace doesn't say anything.

MATT (CONT'D)
I just know your mom was never big
on --

GRACE
Yeah, mom never let me do outdoor
climbs, but she's not here, is she?

Matt is clearly nervous, but doesn't say why.

MATT
It's just very dangerous.

Grace snarls at him.

GRACE

So what? Playing it safe didn't keep mom alive, did it? She wore her seat belt every day of her life and got killed by a drunk driver.

(beat)

This is the one thing I still like doing; I'm going to do it.

MATT

Look, you can't just give up on your life --

GRACE

Oh my god, spare me, Dad. I need this from you, too? When have you ever buckled down and thought about the future? When you were going to start your own brewery? Or that bike store you were going to open? Or when you were going to move to silicon valley to work at your friend's startup?

Matt is stung by each recitation of his broken promises.

MATT

Not everything works out.

GRACE

Obviously.

Grace stops at the truck.

MATT

I'm just trying to be here for you because I know --

Grace gets angry.

GRACE

Well it's too late!

Matt struggles for a response.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You can't just show up and act like everything is okay! You visit what, every couple years? I'm not going to just drop everything for you; I have my own life.

Matt isn't sure what to say.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Mom and I were doing just fine without you. Just because she's gone doesn't mean you can take her place. I figured out a long time ago that when you say you're going to do something, that means it probably won't happen. You'll act like my dad now, and in a week you'll be off doing something else selfish.

Grace stops as she sees people looking at them.

MATT

I get it. I know I haven't been a great dad. I had my chance, and now you're old enough that you don't need me.

He pauses before this next part.

MATT (CONT'D)

That's why I'm flying back to Albuquerque next week.

Grace looks up, surprised.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm going to let you stay with Ed and Jane. You're eighteen, you can make your own decisions. It'll be up to you if we have a relationship; if you don't want to see me, you don't have to.

Matt stares off into space and shakes his head.

MATT (CONT'D)

Maybe this was over a long time ago. But I want to give it one more shot so I can at least say I tried.

He turns to Grace.

MATT (CONT'D)

One more day with your dad, and then you can make your decisions on your own.

Grace thinks, debating within herself. She glares at him.

GRACE
I'm going climbing Saturday. You
can come if you want.

Off Matt's worried look --

CUT TO:

INT. OUTDOOR STORE - EVENING

Matt walks into a large retail outlet. JASON waits for him.

JASON
Hey!

MATT
Thanks for meeting up with me.

JASON
No problem -- always happy to make
recommendations on gear.

Matt grabs a cart and they walk around the store.

JASON (CONT'D)
Most important thing is the shoes.
I know Grace has some already.

Matt picks up a pair of shoes; he looks at the price.

MATT
Whoa...

He puts them back.

MATT (CONT'D)
Those are... more expensive than
they were in my day.

JASON
Those are pretty much the best
brand out there. You probably don't
need those unless you're serious
about it. If it's just one day, you
can go with something cheaper.

Matt thinks on this.

JASON (CONT'D)
Have you done the Peace Wall
before?

MATT

No, I'm... not big on heights.

JASON

Well, it's cool you're doing it with Grace. My dad got me into climbing.

He reminisces for a moment.

JASON (CONT'D)

I got into a lot of trouble as a teenager. My dad took me climbing and we did the whole wall that first day.

Matt listens intently to Jason's story.

JASON (CONT'D)

I was so beat -- I wanted to quit, but he wouldn't let me. By the end of the day, I knew this was what I wanted to do. It taught me discipline, really gave me a sense of purpose. Without climbing, I don't know where I'd be.

He smiles at Matt.

JASON (CONT'D)

I'd recommend it to anyone who needs a little direction.

Jason moves on to look at some other gear. Matt grabs the expensive shoes and tosses them into his cart.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - DAY

Matt walks out onto the second-floor balcony of his motel room. He puts his hands on the railing, a lot on his mind.

He looks over the edge, but the distance to the ground makes him queasy. He pulls back up and shakes his head, worried.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

Matt drives toward the house as the sun comes up. He takes a nervous drag on a CIGARETTE and tosses it out the window as he pulls up.

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

CLUNK! Matt pops open the tailgate of his truck.

In the back, a coil of rope and a brand new hiking backpack full of gear, along with protein bars, Nalgene bottles -- Matt's gotten everything.

He turns to Grace, who stands with Ed.

MATT

You ready to go?

She nods and climbs into the truck. Ed turns to Matt.

ED

I was surprised when she told me you were gonna do this. I remember you getting sick and nearly falling off the ladder trying to get a frisbee off the roof.

MATT

I've got a good reason this time.

ED

Don't get her hopes up for nothing.

MATT

I won't. This is more than a stuck frisbee, and I'm her dad.

ED

I'm glad you remembered.

Matt takes a step toward the truck.

MATT

Don't worry if we don't call -- might be pretty beat afterward, I'll try and let you know if we stop at a hotel.

Ed nods. Matt gets into the truck.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS - MORNING

Matt drives. Boulder disappears behind them, the landscape more and more expansive and beautiful as they head towards --

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - MORNING

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, where they pull up to the gate.

A PARK RANGER leans down through the booth window. Matt hands him the entry fee.

PARK RANGER

Where you guys headed today?

The Park Ranger hands him a sticker.

MATT

We're going to the Peace Wall.

The Park Ranger points out roads on a map.

PARK RANGER

You want to keep a lookout when you get down to this road -- it's not much more than a single lane. You should be able to get up to the second pitch by mid-day, then it's an easy walk down the back slope.

He hands Matt the map.

PARK RANGER (CONT'D)

The route goes up a ways after that, but anything past that second pitch is not for beginners, okay?

(beat)

Are you going with anyone else?

MATT

Yeah, we've got a guide.

PARK RANGER

All right. Well, we've had a lot of rain, so listen to your guide and make sure you don't start something too late and get stuck out there.

MATT

Don't worry, we'll take it easy.

Matt pulls out and drives on into the park.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILHEAD - PARK - DAY

Matt and Grace pull up next to Jason's SUV, parked at the edge of a STEEP VALLEY.

They get out. Jason is half way through coiling a rope.

JASON
Hey, you two!

Matt looks around the lot.

MATT
Where's the wall?

JASON
That way.

He points through a clearing: a couple miles into the valley, a STEEP ROCK WALL rises up to a sharp peak.

JASON (CONT'D)
Last chance to check your email.
We won't get any reception as long
as we're in the valley.

Matt looks at the wall, made up of sharp angles and sheer granite. It's breathtaking, like Ansel Adams' photos of Half Dome and El Capitan.

MATT
All the way over there?

Grace looks away, embarrassed.

JASON
Yeah, the hike's a good warm up!

Jason finishes coiling the rope, slings his pack over his shoulder, and trots down the trail. Grace follows behind him. Matt sighs and swats at a mosquito.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - BASE - DAY

Jason drops his pack and plops down on a boulder. Grace finds a spot nearby and unpacks her gear.

Matt slowly ambles up, out of breath and drenched in sweat. That was enough of a workout for him.

Matt looks up at the wall -- it seems even taller from where he stands. Jason sees him looking.

JASON

Don't worry, we're just doing the first two pitches.

CUT TO:

LATER --

Jason has laid their gear out on a boulder. He shows it to them.

JASON

Here's our gear: we got chocks, hexes, and cams. Matt, depending on the order we go in, you may have to remove some of these.

MATT

No problem.

As they speak, Matt feeds the rope into his belay device. He pulls the rope carelessly, repeatedly letting go of it, too busy looking up at the wall.

Jason reaches down and YANKS THE ROPE. Matt stumbles as the rope flies out of his belay device.

JASON

Here's an important rule: Never take both hands off the rope. If somebody falls -- and they will, a lot -- you need to catch them.

MATT

Of course. Sorry...

JASON

Just good it happened now and not up there. You saw how just pulling it yanked you off balance? On the wall it'll be even harder, so we'll make sure you're clipped to the anchor with a daisy chain.

Jason shows Grace and Matt the daisy chain.

JASON (CONT'D)
Okay, so here's how it'll go...

EXT. WALL - DAY

Jason CLIMBS. His explanation continues in VOICEOVER as he places a CHOCK -- the most basic form of climbing protection, a metal wedge you jam into crevices to make an anchor.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'll set protections as I go up...

He clips the rope through the carabiner attached to the chock, securing himself to the wall.

DOWN BELOW --

Grace belays -- she eases out some slack to let him advance. Matt watches attentively.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Grace, you'll belay me.

JASON --

Reaches up above himself, fingers probing for a good hold.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
This is a lot farther than the gym,
so remember to pace yourself and
push with your legs, don't pull
with your arms.

He opens up a CAM, a spring-loaded wedge, in a crack and tests the hold. It's good -- he clips in.

MATT --

Watches Jason grow smaller as he goes up the wall.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Make sure to test every hold, and
watch out for any that look too
good to be true. Unstable chunks
of rock can fall off, and big
cracks can be home to bugs, mice,
snakes -- you name it.

Matt looks at a crack at his level and winces.

JASON --

He pulls his feet up onto a small LEDGE. Now he's 100 or so feet off the ground.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 We'll be farther apart than
 indoors, so we'll use walkie
 talkies so we don't miss anything.

He keys a WALKIE TALKIE on his pack-strap and waves his arm at Grace and Matt below --

DOWN BELOW --

On her own walkie, Grace listens.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You know how to do the rest...

Grace ties herself into the rope.

JASON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...hold on tight and don't let go.

Grace steps up to the wall.

GRACE (INTO WALKIE)
 Climbing!

JASON (OVER WALKIE)
 Climb on!

She climbs...

We stay steady on her as she puts one hand on the wall, then the other -- gets a hold -- pulls one leg -- the other --

Legs PUSH --

And she's UP.

Matt watches nervously, left at the bottom by himself.

Grace continues. She's just a few feet off the ground, but we respect the height. A fall from even this high is bad news. Every one of these moves is serious.

She reaches the first chock. Grace is tied to the rope attached to Jason, and behind her she trails a second rope for Matt. She un-cilps the rope attached to Jason and clips in the one for Matt.

Grace shakes out her arms. She reads the rocks above her and chooses her moves.

She leans down, then pushes up with her legs and reaches for the next hold.

As she grabs it, she searches with her foot to find the next footholds, then pushes off --

She keeps going, carefully locating each position, moving at a steady pace --

Another couple moves, another chock -- then a hex --

FROM ABOVE, we TILT UP over Grace's shoulder as she looks down -- she's now 30 feet off the ground.

We feel it. The height adds up quickly --

But Grace SMILES. She's having fun.

Down below, Matt looks up and watches. She's far enough up that he doesn't have to hide that this scares him.

In QUICK CUTS:

She reaches for holds -- probes with her toes --

Pushes -- pulls --

She's in a rhythm.

Now 50 feet -- High up, but she's got it.

55, 60 --

She deftly leans over and FLAGS -- balancing herself on one foot -- as she grabs another hold and steps up to reach a tough foothold.

70, 80, 90 --

One more move to the top of the pitch.

She pulls herself up to Jason, big smile on her face. He high-fives her as she clips into the anchor.

DOWN BELOW --

Matt nervously eyes the wall.

JASON (OVER WALKIE)
Okay, Matt -- you ready to go?

MATT
(unconvincing)
Yeah...

JASON
Just take it one hold at a time.

Matt walks up to the wall. He looks at the holds Grace used, then scans the wall upward.

MATT
Okay...

He grabs a hold and puts his feet on the rock --
And promptly slips. He sets his foot back on the ground.

MATT (CONT'D)
Shoot...

He tries again, gets his feet up, and looks for another hold. He grabs and PULLS himself up, now a few feet off the ground.

Matt looks DOWN -- and FREEZES.

The ground seems to SHOOT UP at him -- even this short distance terrifies him. He grabs the rope, feeling sick.

JASON
You're doing good. Keep going.

As he gets his position and tries again, Jason and Grace look down at him. This is going to be a while.

LATER --

Matt reaches the first piece of gear. He looks at it.

MATT
Okay, so...

He stares, unsure of what to do. The walkie crackles.

JASON (OVER WALKIE)
Yeah, so when you reach those, give the rope a little tug to make sure that she's got you steady, then remove the gear and clip it to one of your gear loops.

Matt pulls on the rope, then reaches for the chock -- his hands SHAKE as he clips it to his loop.

He trembles as he reaches over and hits the walkie.

MATT

Okay.

JASON

Great. Now on to the next one.

Matt closes his eyes and steadies himself. This is torture.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - DAY - LATER

Matt is higher up now, closer to Grace and Jason. Jason calls down to him:

JASON

You're doing good, Matt!

Matt struggles with a hold -- each time he reaches for it, he loses his balance and has to grab back onto the previous hold. He tries to go for it -- and misses --

In doing so, he FALLS.

The rope immediately catches him -- up above, Grace has him -- but Matt is terrified from only hanging by the rope. He claws at the wall desperately.

JASON (CONT'D)

Don't worry -- she's got you.

Matt glances DOWN -- he's really high up now. He closes his eyes and shivers, afraid.

JASON (CONT'D)

You all right?

Matt gets control of himself.

MATT

Yeah, yeah.

JASON

Okay - back on the wall!

Matt looks up -- it's still a long way. He puts his feet back on the wall and tries again.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - DAY - LATER

Matt finally reaches the top of the pitch. Exhausted and sweating, he crawls up next to Grace and Jason.

JASON
All right, good job!

Matt smiles as he gasps for breath.

JASON (CONT'D)
You'll belay me on the next one.

Matt pauses.

MATT
The next one.

JASON
Yeah!

Matt looks up -- they're only halfway to the first ledge.

MATT
Okay.

Jason clips in and quickly shoots up the wall as Matt belays.

CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS OF THE NEXT PITCH --

Jason CLIMBS --

Once he reaches the top, Grace FOLLOWS --

Then Matt, who sloooooowly traverses the rock.

EXT. WALL - DAY

Matt pulls himself up onto the ledge with Grace and Jason.

JASON
All right! We did it! So from here, we can traverse a few yards left and pick up the trail down to the valley.

MATT
I think that's enough for the day.

GRACE
I'd like to keep going.

They turn to her.

GRACE (CONT'D)
It's still clear out. Dad, if you're tired, why don't you walk down and Jason and I will do the last few pitches?

MATT
Uh, well....

JASON
We could do that -- it's an easy walk down. We'll go fast, meet up with you.

Matt looks at Grace, who challenges him with her eyes.

MATT
Why don't Grace and I have a talk about it?

JASON
Okay -- I'm gonna head over to where the trail picks up, take a bathroom break.

He scoots over to where the trail is and disappears.

MATT
What are you trying to do?

GRACE
I want to keep climbing, and it seems like you aren't up for it.

MATT
We said we'd do this much --

GRACE
Yeah, and I spent the whole time waiting for you!

MATT
Is this about this boy? I'm not leaving you here alone --

Grace groans.

GRACE

I want to keep climbing. You *clearly* can't keep up. I did what you asked, but I'm not tired. I don't owe it to you to stop just because you're ready to quit.

He stares at her, then looks up at the wall. He looks out at the valley, but then closes his eyes and takes a moment.

MATT

This is difficult for me.

GRACE

Everything's difficult when you're a quitter.

Jason reappears into view.

JASON

So what did we decide?

Matt looks at Grace as he answers.

MATT

We're gonna do the rest.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - AFTERNOON - LATER

Matt is above Grace, with Jason above him. He gets his hand around a hold and PULLS -- but the hold COLLAPSES and pieces of rock FALL DOWN on him.

Matt instinctively covers his face, loses his grip, and falls back a few feet.

MATT

Ah!

Jason easily catches him. Down below, Grace covers up as pebbles bounce past him, down the wall.

JASON

When the rain gets in there, it can make the wall less stable. That's why big hunks fly off like that.

Matt takes a moment to catch his breath - that was scary.

GRACE

Come on, Dad! Let's go!

Matt grits his teeth -- this is a bit much, but he knows this is his chance to prove something. He keeps climbing.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - AFTERNOON - LATER

Grace makes her way up to Matt and Jason; she grabs her water, tired.

MATT

You were doing good there.

Grace doesn't answer him.

JASON

You want to try leading a pitch?

Grace smiles.

GRACE

Yeah.

JASON

All right, I'll bring up the rear on this one.

Grace puts her water in her pack and goes back to the wall.

CUT TO:

Grace LEADS, above Matt and Jason by about 30 feet.

Matt belays her from the base of the pitch; between them, the rope threads through several chocks and hexes.

Grace struggles against the wall. She bends her knees and takes deep breaths.

She reaches for a hold, a few inches short. Straining, she pushes hard with her left leg -- so hard that it SLIPS from the foothold --

She FALLS, but is quickly yanked up by her harness as the rope goes taut.

Matt has her, hands shaking as he holds the rope as tight as he can. She hangs a couple feet below the cam she just set.

JASON (OVER WALKIE) (CONT'D)

That's all right, take a sec and then get a good triangle before you start again.

Grace catches her breath as she leans against the wall. Below her, Jason turns to Matt.

JASON (CONT'D)
Those lead falls are a little tougher -- that's why they call it the sharp end of the rope.

Matt makes the mistake of looking down. He nearly hurls.

MATT
I'm going to stick with trying not to fall at all.

Jason smiles.

JASON
You can't hold back -- just gotta go for it, and trust that the rope will be there to catch you.
(beat)
Make sure you keep your eyes on her so you can tighten your grip when she falls.

Grace slips again, but Matt has her.

JASON (CONT'D)
There you go. You're a pro!

As she grabs hold and pulls herself up again, Matt and Jason share a smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - DAY

Grace reaches the top of the pitch. She sets the anchor, clips in, and signals to Matt and Jason.

GRACE
All right!

Matt readies himself. He ties his harness to the rope that Grace will belay from above.

JASON
Okay, let me check you...

He checks Matt's knot to ensure it's tight.

JASON (CONT'D)
 And can't forget this one -- this
 is my rope!

Jason checks the second rope Matt will be trailing, so he can
 belay for Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)
 All right -- you're good to go!

Matt, a little more confident now, slowly starts his climb.

EXT. WALL - LATER

Matt is at the last piece of protection between Jason and
 Grace. He's going faster now, getting the hang of it a bit,
 but noticeably tired.

He reaches for a hold -- but his hands slips off. He slumps.

JASON (OVER WALKIE)
 That's okay -- just take a sec,
 shake out your arms.

Grace is less sympathetic.

GRACE
 We don't have all day, dad.

MATT
 I know, I just...

GRACE
 Don't pull with your arms; that's
 why you're tired --

MATT
 Will you just let me do it?

She stops, surprised.

GRACE
 Okay, Jesus.

MATT
 I'm not mad at you, I just --

GRACE
 Yeah, because you can't be mad or
 admit fault ever.

MATT
 I am trying --

JASON (OVER WALKIE)

Hey guys?

They stop as they hear: THUNDER. It's loud.

They all look up -- the sky is covered in clouds.

JASON (CONT'D)

Rain's coming fast. We've only got about an hour to get to the top.

Matt looks -- it's a long way to the top.

MATT

We have to get all the way up there in an hour?

JASON

We don't want to be out here when it's raining -- it's a lot harder to stay on holds if they're wet.

MATT

Can't we go down?

GRACE

(annoyed)

Dad...

JASON

We can, but... it's easier to just go to the top. We're already halfway there, and I'd rather not set up a rappel...

Matt pauses. He looks worried. He stares up at how much is left to go and closes his eyes.

MATT

I... can't make it to the top.

JASON

You've been doing really good...

MATT

I can't do it.

Grace's disappointment shows. Jason takes a moment.

JASON

Okay, well, finish out the pitch. I'll climb up to you guys, and then we'll rappel down. We'll have to go fast, but we can do it.

MATT

Okay.

Matt gets back to the wall. Grace keeps the rope tight so that he doesn't fall far when his grip slips. He finally gets up to her.

He pulls himself up on the ledge with Grace.

MATT (INTO WALKIE) (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm up.

JASON

Okay, I'm tying in. Make sure the rope's through your belay device and I'll head up.

As Matt threads the rope through his belay device, he NEGLECTS TO CLIP HIMSELF into the anchor -- he's still tied to the rope that Grace has, but isn't secured to the wall.

MATT

Okay -- belay on.

Down below, Jason readies himself and climbs. He makes quick work of the wall; this is easy for him.

Grace scowls at Matt.

GRACE

I cannot believe you.

He turns to her, taking his eyes off of Jason.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You don't have any idea how this works, do you? We're going to have to leave a bunch of Jason's gear up here if we rappel.

MATT

I'm sorry. I'll pay for --

GRACE

Right, it's no problem to bail since it's something *I* care about, not something *you* care about.

MATT

I said --

GRACE

This is just like everything else.

MATT

I'm sorry --

GRACE

You're a joke, you know that? You always come up with these excuses about why you were gone all the time, but you could have been around if you tried -- you just never did.

Matt just stares -- he knows it's true.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I already had to grow up without my dad around -- now I have to babysit you while you pretend like you're going to learn to climb.

Below them, Jason removes gear. He can hear their voices, but he keeps climbing.

MATT

I'm still your dad --

GRACE

Do you think we *missed* you? Like it was a problem that you weren't here? Mom and I got along *fine* without you.

Matt pays little attention to belaying as Jason heads for the last piece of protection.

MATT

Well after this you won't have to deal with me anymore.

GRACE

Good. I wish you were the one who --

Below, Jason's foot SLIPS -- the rope FLIES through Matt's hands as Jason falls.

MATT

Shit!

Matt clamps down on the rope, which CUTS INTO HIS HANDS.

MATT (CONT'D)

Aaaah!

Matt lets go, in pain. Jason falls farther -- until Matt GRABS THE ROPE and PULLS --

Below, Jason is WHIPPED into the wall. He winces, hurt, but manages to steady himself. He grabs hold of the wall --

But the tug of the rope is enough to pull Matt off-balance --

Not clipped into the anchor, Matt **FALLS OFF THE LEDGE.**

MATT (CONT'D)

Ahh!

Jason watches as Matt falls PAST him --

Rock rushes by INCHES FROM Matt'S FACE as he TUMBLES --

GRACE

Dad!

She grabs at her belay device -- the rope goes taut --

And Matt is SLAMMED INTO THE WALL.

We hear a sickening CRUNCH, and HE CRIES OUT IN PAIN.

Grace holds onto the rope with all her strength.

Fifty feet below her, Matt lies motionless.

The rope hangs over an OUTCROP, so Matt dangles at least five feet away from the wall.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Dad? *Dad!*

Jason looks down at Matt -- he can't see if he's okay. He keys the walkie with his chin.

JASON

Grace, are you okay?

Grace looks down -- she doesn't want to let go to press the button. She PULLS even harder on the rope -- just enough to get her hands up to press on the walkie.

GRACE

I think he's hurt!

JASON

Okay, just hold on to the rope.

Jason looks up at Grace, then down at Matt. He'll have to traverse sideways around the outcrop, then down to him.

JASON (CONT'D)

I'll try to get down to him.

Jason tries to move, but his rope still runs through the cam above him, and then down to Matt's harness; Matt's counterweight makes it impossible for Jason to go down.

Up above, Grace hits her walkie.

GRACE

Dad -- dad, can you hear me?

Matt moans -- he's alive, but not fully conscious.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I think he's really hurt.

Jason thinks a second, then turns his attention to his rope. He UNTIES the knot through the loop on his harness.

JASON

I can't do this with the rope --
your dad's weight is pulling me up.

GRACE

You can't go off-rope!

JASON

Just make sure you have him.

But he's already done with the knot. He lets his rope hang slack in the wind.

JASON (CONT'D)

Don't let go.

We ROTATE OVER Jason as he makes his first move DOWN, not connected to anything, the ground HUNDREDS OF FEET BELOW HIM.

It's HORRIFYING.

But Jason climbs -- he has to gingerly probe with his feet, find holds, and drop into a crouch to readjust himself -- and with no rope, the smallest mistake will send him plummeting.

Jason stops after each move and takes measured breaths.

GRACE (INTO WALKIE)

Dad -- dad, can you hear me?
Please -- say something --

MATT

My leg -- I think it's broken.

GRACE

Hold on, dad. Jason's coming.

The wind howls as Jason gets closer to Matt, now only a few feet to his right.

JASON
Almost to you, Matt...

Jason gets as close to Matt as he can, but Matt is still just out of reach because of the way he hangs.

JASON (CONT'D)
See if you can reach my hand --

Jason TIGHTENS HIS GRIP on the wall and LEANS -- Matt strains -- their hands are inches apart.

JASON (CONT'D)
Hold on --

Jason rearranges his feet and finds a CREVICE wide enough for his fingers.

Using only the first two digits of each finger, he carefully extends his arm -- the difference of a few inches -- and now he's able to reach Matt.

JASON (CONT'D)
I got you --

Suddenly: *CRACK!*

The crevice CRUMBLES under the strain --

With nothing else securing Jason to the wall, he FALLS --

Matt grabs for him, but Jason is an inch out of his reach.

Jason SCREAMS --

Matt stares, frozen in shock.

GRACE
Jason!

Her voice echoes out over the valley, replaced by the empty sound of the wind.

Eyes wide, she watches down below -- but there's nothing.

Then: the faint sound of an impact down below.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Jason!!

Matt looks at the ground in horror. His vision swims.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Oh my god... oh my god...

She shakes.

This is really happening.

The two of them are alone, FOUR HUNDRED FEET OFF THE GROUND.

Grace breathes hard -- she's losing control.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Oh my god...

Below her, Matt looks down again -- and nearly vomits. To him, it's as if the ground is MILES AWAY.

He closes his eyes and gasps for breath.

A painful, panicked beat --

Matt opens his eyes.

MATT

Grace? I'm going to try to get up to you -- but first I need to get over to the wall. Just keep the rope as steady as you can.

GRACE

Okay...

Matt takes a deep breath and -- SWINGS --

He CRINGES as his harness DIGS into his injured leg -- reaches for the wall -- but misses it.

Up above, Grace struggles to hold the rope.

Matt tries again, but once again, he's just short --

With every inch closer he swings, he's pulled just as far away as he swings back, out in mid-air as the rope creaks with the strain.

He makes the mistake of looking down again -- we RACK FOCUS to achieve insane VERTIGO.

The dizzying effect of the FOUR HUNDRED FEET between him and the ground hasn't worn off yet.

It's not going to.

Up above, Grace strains. Down below, Matt swings again -- he almost has it -- he scrapes the rock, but can't get it.

This time, he KICKS off the wall with his good leg -- gets up speed as he swings like a pendulum --

And SMASHES back into the wall --

Matt CRIES OUT as he GRIPS with both hands. It hurts, but he keeps the hold. He takes a moment to catch his breath.

He looks down at his injured leg.

MATT

Okay, just pull as hard as you can.

Grace holds the rope steady as Matt grabs it and PULLS --

He YANKS himself up the wall, about five feet.

He stops, gets foot and hands holds, and keys the walkie.

MATT (CONT'D)

Okay -- take in the slack.

Grace quickly pulls the rope in until it's taut.

Matt leans off the wall again. Again, he PULLS himself -- it's slow, but he's making a little progress.

We PULL BACK to see the two of them, about forty feet apart.

The farther we get out, the smaller they are against the wall, far from anyone or anything that could save them.

Grace grits her teeth as the rope pulls on her hands.

GRACE

Come on... come on....

Matt gets closer to her -- 30 feet, 25, 20...

Matt strains, in severe pain. He keeps his sights on Grace and forces the pain from his mind.

MATT

Don't look down, don't look down...

15 feet, 10, 5...

He pulls with all his might --

And makes it up to her. He pulls himself onto the ledge.

Grace quickly grabs Matt's carabiners and clips him to the anchor, securing him. He leans back, exhausted and hurt.

Grace pulls the rope in, then collapses into Matt's arms.

He puts his arms around her and comforts his daughter as she cries.

Matt looks around -- nowhere to go. They're stuck up there.

Grace pulls back as her crying subsides. She looks to him for answers.

GRACE

What do we do?

MATT

I don't know.

Grace looks down; she hyperventilates.

GRACE

He's dead...

MATT

We have to figure out what to do --

GRACE

Why did you come here?

She freaks out and hits Matt.

GRACE (CONT'D)

He was trying to save you! Now he's dead!

MATT

I'm sorry...

GRACE

We're going to die up here!

She hits him until she runs out of energy. He holds her, unsure of what else to say.

After a few moments, her crying subsides.

MATT

Look: we're going to make it out of here. We can rappel down, just like he said.

GRACE

I've never done that before.

Grace looks up.

GRACE (CONT'D)

We can climb up -- we've been doing that. We can try to make it before the storm comes.

MATT

Honey, my leg is broken.

Grace looks at him -- she can see that he really is in a lot of pain, but is trying to fight through it.

GRACE

Show me where it hurts.

Matt points to a spot on his leg.

MATT

Right here...

Grace unclips a knife from her packstrap and cuts away part of his pant leg. She pulls back the fabric --

Underneath, a nasty COMPOUND FRACTURE. Blood everywhere. Part of Matt's FEMUR STICKS THROUGH THE MUSCLE.

MATT (CONT'D)

Oh my god...

GRACE

We have to stop the bleeding!

Grace looks in her pack.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Jason had the medical kit...

Matt grits his teeth. The pain makes this all a blur.

GRACE (CONT'D)

We need cloth -- anything --

MATT

I have another shirt in my pack.

Grace reaches past him and rifles through it. She yanks out an Under Armor athletic shirt.

GRACE

Hold on...

She pulls a nylon runner off of her harness and wraps it around Matt's leg above the wound, a makeshift tourniquet.

GRACE (CONT'D)
That should help...
(re: the shirt)
I need to put this in the wound to
stop the bleeding.

Matt grits his teeth.

MATT
Do it.

She brings the shirt up to the wound, pauses at the sight of
the bone poking out --

He takes a deep breath and nods to her.

She pushes in the shirt.

Matt SCREAMS as she packs it in, every nerve on fire.

Grace wraps it as best she can, then uses several lengths of
CLIMBING TAPE to secure it to his leg.

Matt convulses as he battles the pain.

Grace finishes. Matt immediately clamps down on the
makeshift bandage to apply pressure.

For a moment, they just wait. It's an unsettling quiet.

Grace looks.

GRACE
It looks like it stopped bleeding.

Matt catches his breath. He keeps pressure on the wound.

He waits a moment, just breathing, his eyes closed.

He opens them.

MATT
Okay...

Grace leans back and takes a moment.

GRACE
We have to get down...

She looks down -- it seems an impossible distance.

MATT
What about calling for help? The
Park Rangers...

Grace pulls out her CELL PHONE and holds it up.

GRACE
There's no service.

MATT
Let me see.

GRACE
It says --

MATT
Just let me see it.

She hands it over. He examines it.

MATT (CONT'D)
Shit.

He hands it back to her.

GRACE
Jason said it wouldn't work in the valley; we might be able to get service at the top.

Matt looks up -- no way he can make it all that way.

He bites his lip; she needs him to figure this out, but he's still struggling to concentrate through the pain.

MATT
You have to go down to get help.

GRACE
If the phone doesn't work up here, it's not going to work down there.

MATT
You're going to have to hike out and bring someone back.

GRACE
I can't get down by myself -- I don't know how!

MATT
We'll figure it out.

Grace looks him over.

GRACE
I can't leave you up here like this.

Matt thinks.

MATT

All right. Then we need to figure out how to rappel down together.

GRACE

I've seen people do tandem rappels...

She gets out their gear and look at it.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Okay, so I need to be able to move down the rope and have you secured to me... that means...

She freezes. Matt looks at her, worried.

MATT

What?

Then he also freezes.

We hear the first drops of RAIN.

MATT (CONT'D)

Shit...

More raindrops fall on them -- then a surge of WIND. The clouds have settled in above them.

The storm is here.

Grace looks to her father, afraid.

His mind races -- he isn't sure how to reassure her.

Another gust of WIND blows them, this one strong enough to actually MOVE them.

He puts his hand on hers.

MATT (CONT'D)

Hold on tight.

She nods.

MATT (CONT'D)

We can't go down if it's wet.

GRACE

What do we do?

Matt just stares -- he doesn't know.

They hang for a moment as the raindrops steadily patter their helmets, their increasing intensity a dangerous omen.

Grace looks around.

GRACE (CONT'D)
What about there?

She points to a DIHEDRAL FORMATION, a 90 degree angle that could shield them from the wind and some of the rain.

GRACE (CONT'D)
It could keep us out of the wind,
help us avoid lightning.

The only problem is that it's easily 40 feet away.

Matt hesitates; that could be impossible in these conditions.

His worried look is punctuated with the sound of THUNDER --

No time to waste.

MATT
We'd better hurry.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The rain intensifies as Grace sets out for the dihedral.

She has Matt's pack, as well as all of the remaining gear, which she'll use to set the rope as she goes.

MATT
Just be careful, okay?

The wind HOWLS, loud enough that she and Matt have to shout.

GRACE
Okay.

She moves out. She places a hex or chock every few feet, but the downpour makes them slick and unsteady.

Grace strains. The wall scrapes against her skin, cold and wet from the rain.

Matt watches uneasily as she disappears around a jutting rock in the wall -- he can no longer see how she's doing.

He hits his walkie.

MATT
You okay?

There's a pause -- long enough for him to grow concerned.

MATT (CONT'D)
Grace --

The walkie-talkie crackles.

GRACE (OVER WALKIE)
Hold on...

GRACE --

Is ten feet or so from the dihedral, but it's windier here.

MATT
You're out of sight, you have to
let me know how you're doing.

GRACE
I can barely hold on -- I can't
talk on this thing.

MATT
Sorry... Just...

GRACE
I'll tell you when I get there.

MATT
Okay.

She hugs the wall as gusts push her back and forth.

They die down -- she starts out again -- but then the wind
comes right back. There's no easy way to do this.

She's alone here, the rain silencing everything.

Grace has to hold on that much tighter to avoid being blown
by the vicious wind. She turns her head away from the wind
as she feels for the next hold, barely able to see.

MATT --

Waits, every second an eternity.

GRACE --

Reaches the dihedral, the result of a long vertical crack in the wall. She puts in a cam and hits the walkie.

GRACE

Okay.

MATT --

Lets out a sigh of relief.

GRACE

I'm set.

MATT

Okay. I'm coming.

Matt takes a deep breath; he unclips from his anchor and clips onto the rope, then removes the anchor from the wall.

Since he can't use his legs, he must pull himself the rope, which is now strung up laterally.

He PULLS himself --

He WINCES as his leg drags against the rock wall.

The rope is a little slack under his weight, and he has to hold tight, without the benefit of footholds for balance.

He pulls slowly, inching along.

He reaches the first chock and stops --

To continue along the rope, he has to unclip his carabiners, move them to the other side of the chock, then re-clip them to the rope.

He has to do this every time there's gear in the wall.

Clip-clip...

Clip-clip...

Matt is careful -- the chocks wobble in the wind and rain.

He continues along, inch by inch.

GRACE --

Watches for her father to appear around the jutting rock that obscures him. This could take a long time.

Gusts of wind howl behind needles of icy rain. Their gear rattles against the wall -- secure, but unsettling.

She turns and looks out over the valley.

LIGHTNING strikes in the distance -- then closer --

The real bulk of the storm is moving toward them.

Suddenly, she FREEZES.

In the distance, a dull light cuts through the fog.

She gives herself some slack and pulls herself around the dihedral to see:

HEADLIGHTS --

A CAR.

Grace GASPS.

GRACE
HEY!! OVER HERE!!

She waves her arms and screams -- but she's drowned out by the echo of the rain.

Matt talks to her on the walkie-talkie, still obscured by the rock between them.

MATT
What is it?

GRACE
There's a car!

Matt freezes.

MATT
In the pack -- there's flares!

Grace rifles through his pack.

IN THE DISTANCE --

The car curves around a windy road --

GRACE --

Searches --

THE CAR --

Rounds a bend, and the headlights become TAILLIGHTS.

GRACE --

Finds a flare, ONE of TWO in there. She shouts to Matt:

GRACE
How do I light it?

MATT
What?

Matt tries to listen, but her voice is garbled in the rain.

He tries to shout to her, but the wind drowns out his voice -- she can't hear him.

GRACE
Shit!

She looks at the instructions.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Remove cap... strike against end of
the...

This, of course, requires both hands. Grace tries to balance on her elbow, but it's too tough -- she needs to hold on.

She thinks -- then BITES off the PLASTIC STRIKING CAP and jams it into a CRACK IN THE WALL.

She takes the flare and STRIKES it against the cap --

Nothing.

She strikes it again -- *again* --

The storm rages --

IN THE DISTANCE --

The car rounds another bend, now further away.

GRACE --

Strikes and strikes --

It CATCHES --

FWOOM! Grace ducks back as a plume of bright red flame shoots out of the flare.

She turns and WAVES it as broadly as she can --

GRACE
HEEEEEEEELP!!!

But the car grows smaller...

Then it's gone.

GRACE (CONT'D)
NO!

She falls back, defeated.

GRACE (INTO WALKIE) (CONT'D)
It's gone.

MATT --

Doesn't have to hide his worry while she can't see him.

MATT (INTO WALKIE)
It's all right, we're okay...

She can barely hear him as he struggles through the rain.

MATT (CONT'D)
We'll wait this out...

Grace looks around -- the rock obscures part of her view. She holds the flare in one hand and reaches with the other up to a ledge and tries to swing herself into a more visible position. She feels around for a good hold --

Suddenly --

There's a SCREECH, and a shape DARTS OUT AT HER -- a HAWK that had been taking shelter in a crevice.

Grace SCREAMS --

Startled, she DROPS THE FLARE, which lands at her feet.

The hawk swooshes by her, defensive of its territory.

Grace swats at it, but the Hawk CLAWS at her head. She hunches down --

She reaches for the flare -- hanging by one hand from a ledge in the middle of a mountain storm --

MATT (CONT'D)

Grace, tell me what's happening...

Grace STRAINS -- her fingertips just touch the flare.

She finally gets it -- she brings it up to her head and waves the flame at the hawk. The hawk screeches, then flies away.

Grace drops the flare and holds her head. Her helmet is covered in scratch marks.

MATT (CONT'D)

Grace? Grace, are you okay?

She keys the walkie, emotion taking over.

GRACE

Yes. Just hurry.

Matt nods to himself. He knows what he has to do.

Matt reaches the jutting rock. The chock is set above it, which means he'll have to pull himself up to it to re-clip.

He takes a few deep breaths to control his breathing.

He closes his eyes --

And PULLS.

He yells, letting out everything as he pulls himself up --

And yanks himself over the rock.

Grace sees her dad pull himself up and over, struggling.

He balances awkwardly on the rock as he grabs at the chock above. He un-clips his first carabiner and clips it back in on the other side.

He un-clips the second...

But LOSES HIS GRIP on the wet rope --

GRACE --

Sees him FALL.

GRACE

Dad!

Matt cries out as he falls sideways --

His leg SMACKS against the wall --

He DANGLES from the lone carabiner.

Grace springs into action -- she clips onto the rope and races toward him. She climbs as quickly as she can, but her hands and feet slip against the wall.

MATT --

Reaches for the rope, but he's not mobile enough to grab it.

GRACE --

Is PELTED by rain as she struggles toward him.

LIGHTNING flashes --

She hurries -- *they have to get out of this storm.*

She gets to Matt and grabs him by the harness.

GRACE

Aaaahhh!

She pulls him up with all her strength --

He grabs the rope --

They pull together -- and he clips back in.

Grace is exhausted. She slumps against her dad. Matt is surprised by this moment --

He puts his arm around her and pats her shoulder. Thunder booms and rain batters them, but for at least this moment, they have each other.

Eventually, wet and tired, she pulls her head up.

MATT

We have to get out of the rain.

They push on.

Grace helps Matt pull himself along the rope.

They reach the last piece of protection. She holds onto him as he re-clips his carabiners around it.

Grace is exhausted, but she pulls her father on --

They're so intent on making the dihedral that they fail to notice a sharp rock sticking out just below them.

As Matt pulls, his leg SCRAPES against the rock.

MATT (CONT'D)

Aaaah!

It TEARS at the makeshift bandage on his leg. BLOOD pours out of the wound.

MATT (CONT'D)

Shit!

GRACE

Oh my god...

He reaches down and grabs it.

MATT

Keep going!

They struggle the rest of the way, Matt in intense pain.

Finally they make into the corner of the dihedral, out of the wind. Grace clips them into the anchor.

Matt struggles with his bloody leg. He tugs at the shirt on his leg, but the tape is soaked, useless --

Blood seeps out all around his hands.

MATT (CONT'D)

We have to re-tape it!

GRACE

It won't stick if it's wet...

Matt thinks --

MATT

I'll bleed out if we don't close off the artery. We need to cauterize it.

He reaches past her and reaches into the pack -- he pulls out the remaining FLARE.

MATT (CONT'D)
You need to use this.

He pushes it into her hands.

MATT (CONT'D)
I don't know how long I'll be able
to stay conscious; whatever
happens, however much it looks like
it hurts, just don't stop until the
bleeding stops, okay?

Grace trembles. More blood seeps out around his hand.

GRACE
Okay.

Grace musters her courage. She yanks off the plastic cap,
strikes it against the flare --

Nothing.

Tries again -- a *SPARK* --

Tries one more time -- but *FUMBLES* -- *DROPS THE CAP* --

She grabs for it --

GRACE (CONT'D)
NO!

It bounces off the wall, disappears into the darkness.

They both stare after it for a second.

Matt looks up.

Grace looks back at him, hopelessness in her eyes.

They look at one another through the rain and lightning.

Matt takes a deep breath, resigned. When he speaks, his
voice is soft, barely audible against the thunder and wind.

MATT
It's okay... it's...

Something occurs to Grace --

She tucks the flare into her harness, knots off the slack in
her rope, and *SPRINGS* around the side of the dihedral.

GRACE --

SWINGS around the wall.

She grabs a hold and steadies herself, eyes scanning every crack and crevice --

She's where she was when she tried to signal the car.

She stops.

Jammed into a crack -- the *IGNITER CAP*.

She takes the flare and STRIKES --

A plume of red flame ERUPTS FROM THE END.

But now she has to get back around to her father.

With the flare in her hand, but can't grip the rock.

She needs to hurry --

She sets the flare sideways between her teeth and CLIMBS -- every second counts.

The flame burns closer to her cheek as she goes. She feels the heat -- it singes the ends of her hair --

She swings around the corner and pulls herself up to Matt with the rope.

He sees the flare -- she eyes the wound -- they share a look.

He nods to her.

MATT

Do it.

Matt runs a strand of the rope through his mouth.

He holds open the wound --

Grace takes a deep breath -- brings up the burning flare --

FLAME burns BLOOD and SKIN --

Matt BITES DOWN ON THE ROPE -- CONVULSES -- SCREAMS --

MATT (CONT'D)

AAAAAAH!!!

The ARTERY is SEARED CLOSED.

Grace cries -- she can't believe she's doing this --

Finally she drops the flare.

Matt breathes panicked breaths. He lets go of the rock, fingers bloody.

Looks down at his leg --

It's still grotesque, but the bleeding is at bay.

He leans back, still wincing in pain.

He lays his head back --

And PASSES OUT.

Grace puts her hand up to his mouth to check if he's breathing.

He is.

She looks at her father -- he's alive -- barely, but alive.

She looks at where they are -- stuck together -- inches from one another, halfway up a rock wall in the middle of a vast, empty valley.

Clouds cover what little of the sun is left. The thunder GROWLS, and the rain EXPLODES in greater force, pouring out over the valley. They made it to the dihedral just in time.

She pulls out her JACKET from her pack and wraps it around herself as best she can --

Then thinks -- and wraps it around Matt to keep him warm.

She shivers, cold and wet.

We pull out to see them, tiny specks against the vast wilderness.

FADE TO **BLACK.**

EXT. WALL - NIGHT

Matt wakes. He gasps for breath and looks around.

The rain has stopped.

He looks up to see Grace, who hasn't slept. He can't see her face in the darkness.

MATT

Grace?

She clicks on a FLASHLIGHT, which picks up the CONDENSATION in their breath -- with the sun down, it's much colder.

Matt shivers. They look at one another. Both are worried.

MATT (CONT'D)

How long have I been out?

GRACE

A couple hours.

He nods.

MATT

Let's look at the leg.

She shines the flashlight at his leg. He can't see much, but it doesn't look good.

MATT (CONT'D)

Oh boy...

He shakes his head.

MATT (CONT'D)

I don't know how long it'll hold.

She clicks the flashlight off.

GRACE

I've been watching for cars.

Matt looks at her sadly as she watches out over the valley.

MATT

Cars aren't going to come by here at night, honey.

She keeps watching.

GRACE

I know. But just in case.

MATT

You should rest.

GRACE

I'm fine.

Matt takes a deep breath. He knows he needs to say something, but has no idea how.

MATT

This is a horrible situation, but we're here. So we need to think about what the best thing to do is.

Grace can tell he's about to say something, but doesn't turn to look at him, because she already knows what it is.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm very hurt, honey. My leg's probably already infected... if I lose any more blood... anything can happen overnight...

He looks down -- there's no good way to do this.

MATT (CONT'D)

I could die out here tonight. You need to be prepared to get yourself down if...

Grace turns to him, tears in her eyes.

GRACE

Please just don't... I can't handle this right now...

Matt stops.

MATT

That's why I want to make sure you sleep -- for the morning...

Grace breaks, fully crying now. She puts her face in her dad's shoulder and cries.

Matt holds her. They share a long moment -- right now, there's nothing else to do.

GRACE

Jason's dead, Dad...

MATT

It's my fault... you didn't do anything wrong.

GRACE

We should have paid more attention, clipped you to the anchor --

MATT

I know.

GRACE

He was trying to save you. Why did he risk that?

MATT

He wanted to make sure we're okay. So we owe it to him to do whatever we can to get out of here.

She stops her crying and pulls back and looks at him.

MATT (CONT'D)

Let's figure out how we're going to rappel down in the morning.

Grace nods.

She pulls out the cord and shows Matt a PRUSIK KNOT.

GRACE

Okay, so I know you can't just go down on the rope, you have to secure yourself with a thing called a prusik knot...

MATT

All right, let's test it...

They practice securing themselves to the anchor for rappel, both of them aware that Matt may not make it to tomorrow.

FADE TO:

EXT. WALL - NIGHT

Grace and Matt hang in the dihedral. Grace lifts her water bottle to her face -- it's empty.

GRACE

I should have tried to catch some water when it rained.

MATT

You should try and get some sleep.

GRACE

I'm not tired.

MATT

There's no way that's true.

Grace looks him over.

GRACE

I'm worried that if I fall asleep,
you won't be here when I wake up.

Matt nods -- so is he.

They simply hang for a moment -- with the darkness, we can't see how high up they are; it's surprisingly intimate; they could be anywhere.

MATT

I'm sorry I haven't been there
since your mom died; I thought it
was best not to add any more stress
to your life, so I figured you'd
call when you were ready.

(beat)

I knew something must be really
wrong when your grandparents called
-- they'd have to be pretty worried
to ask me to help out.

Grace stares. She can't avoid the conversation up here.

MATT (CONT'D)

You're grown now, I can't tell you
what to do, but... I just hate to
see you give up. You have so much
going for you.

GRACE

I just don't see the point.

She stares into the blackness as she speaks.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Mom and I did everything together.
It was always just the two of us.
After she died...

(beat)

There just didn't seem to be a
reason to do anything. Who cares
if I go to school, or college, or
whatever? She's not going to be
here to see it.

He puts his hand out to touch Grace's arm, but shifting positions hurts his leg and he has to pull back.

MATT

Your mother was a great person. I
know it's unfair that she got taken
away from you... but I think she

(MORE)

MATT (CONT'D)
did a good enough job that you'll
be okay.

Grace breaks eye contact.

MATT (CONT'D)
I'm really proud of you. How you
handled this today. I'd be dead if
you hadn't been here.

Grace wipes tears from here eyes.

GRACE
Why does this have to happen --
mom, now Jason's dead, and I'm
going to lose you too...
(beat)
If I weren't here, none of this
would have happened.

Matt gives Grace a look of complete understanding.

MATT
You can't do that to yourself; it
won't change anything. If you
weren't here, I don't know what I'd
have to live for.

Matt musters up the courage to say what's next.

MATT (CONT'D)
I've never told you this... when I
was seventeen, my friend Anthony
and I tried to climb the water
tower by your grandma's house. We
thought we were so brave...

Matt's eyes well up.

MATT (CONT'D)
I went up first, Anthony behind me.
He didn't want to go, but I talked
him into it. He slipped and fell
fifty feet... he was paralyzed,
couldn't even talk...

Grace doesn't know what to say. Matt bites his lip.

MATT (CONT'D)
That's why your mom never let you
go climbing out here -- she knew
how much it would scare me. Every
time I get off the ground, I...

Matt shakes his head.

GRACE

Then why'd you come today?

MATT

I had to do something to help you get on the right track. I don't want to watch you end up like me.

Tears form in Matt's eyes as he talks.

MATT (CONT'D)

Anthony and I had all these plans for the things we were going to do - now we weren't going to do any of them. So nothing felt worth doing.

He wipes his eyes.

MATT (CONT'D)

That's probably why I bounced around so much -- I was waiting for something to come along that would make up for what happened, and nothing ever felt right.

He pauses. This isn't coming out right.

MATT (CONT'D)

I loved your mother, but we got married very young. When we had you, she was ready for the job. I wasn't.

He takes a moment to readjust his leg, wincing.

MATT (CONT'D)

I disappointed everybody so much: my parents, your mom...

(beat)

It was easier to just stay away rather than disappoint you.

Grace breaks eye contact -- this isn't easy to hear.

MATT (CONT'D)

That's why I thought it would be best to leave you with your grandparents. I think you'd be better off without me... you and your mom certainly didn't need me.

Grace nods -- they agree on that much.

GRACE

It wasn't easy to grow up without a dad, you know. Having to explain to people why my mom and I were alone, never having a good answer.

Matt nods.

MATT

You deserve a lot better than me.

Grace doesn't argue with him.

MATT (CONT'D)

If we... *when* we get out of here, I just hope... I just don't want you to end up like me. You can't live in the past and let regret swallow you up. It won't change anything, and you can't stop time from moving forward. Whatever happens, you just have to keep going.

Matt pauses. He takes a deep breath.

MATT (CONT'D)

I wish we'd had this conversation years ago.

Grace nods.

GRACE

Would have been nice to get this out of the way before we ended up stranded on the side of a mountain.

Matt chuckles.

Grace shifts, tired. She leans up against him and lays her head on his arm.

MATT

I ever tell you about the time you wandered away at the state fair when you were three?

GRACE

No!

MATT

Oh, your mom didn't tell you about that one? Well, gather 'round...

He softly talks to her as she drifts off to sleep...

SMASH TO:

EXT. WALL - NIGHT

Matt's eyes shoot open -- he shivers violently.

He looks at Grace, who shivers even more. Small patches of ICE glisten around them. It's FREEZING up there.

Matt rubs her arms to warm her up. Just then, the wind kicks in -- it's loud and forceful, pushing them back and forth.

MATT

Gotta stay warm...

He grabs her hands and rubs them. She shivers intensely, so cold that she's in pain. She doesn't even try to speak.

The wind blows harder. Matt wraps his arms around his daughter to shield her -- they cling to one another, two tiny specks against the giant wall.

Matt looks out into the darkness as the wind dies down.

MATT (CONT'D)

We're gonna make it...

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - MORNING

Dawn over the valley. Peaceful.

But Grace wakes up with a jolt. She looks --

Matt is next to her -- awake. Alive. Although noticeably weaker than before, he tries to smile reassuringly.

MATT

Morning.

Grace looks him over. He talks slowly, each word forced out through pain.

GRACE

How are you doing?

MATT

I've been better.

Grace tries to get a look at his leg --

MATT (CONT'D)
I wouldn't look at it if I were
you. Let's just get down.

CUT TO:

INT. PARK RANGER STATION - MORNING

The PARK RANGER from the opening arrives and opens up the booth. He yawns as he looks out across the park, until something catches his eye --

In the sky:

VULTURES.

He peers through binoculars.

POV ON the VULTURES; they circle near the wall --

But when he scans down the wall, he doesn't see Grace and Matt -- they're HIDDEN from his view by the dihedral.

He lowers the binoculars and looks back up at the vultures, pondering --

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - MORNING

Matt and Grace are roped up for a tandem rappel. The rope runs through Grace's belay device, and Matt is secured in front of her with a prusik knot.

Above, they hear the vultures.

MATT
They're not here for us yet. Let's
get moving.

Grace has her hands clamped down on the rope.

GRACE
Okay. The rope is knotted so we
won't fall off the end.

MATT
Whenever you're ready.

Grace closes her eyes a moment, readying herself.

She and Matt get into a good position -- he's up against her, legs perpendicular to the wall. She'll guide them down.

Grace leans back and sets her feet lightly against the wall, flat, standing almost ninety degrees.

She lets a little bit of rope through her belay device and steps back with her feet -- they descend a few inches.

Grace plants her feet again and holds the belay device. Now they're a foot below the anchor, but stable.

Grace sets her feet against a tiny ledge --

Which CRUMBLES away -- she quickly GRIPS the rope to keep from falling. They sway from the sudden tug on the rope.

Both exhale.

MATT (CONT'D)

Remember what Jason said about the rocks being less stable after the rain.

She lets rope through, pushes off -- and they descend in a small curve, a few feet. Grace exhales.

MATT (CONT'D)

We're doing good...

She nods. They descend another few feet, her feet steering them down the wall.

They go a few more feet this time -- she lets out a little too much rope, then catches it -- they stop abruptly. Matt bumps his leg against the wall.

MATT (CONT'D)

Ahhh!!

GRACE

Sorry.

She readies herself to go again.

Matt watches her with pride -- she has this under control.

He looks out at the valley. It's beautiful.

CRUNCH!

A small hold crumbles under Grace's foot. A few pebbles flake off the wall and sail out into the valley.

Grace stops.

MATT

Whoa, whoa -- stop a second.

Grace tries to set her foot, but again little bits of rock break off. She looks to Matt.

MATT (CONT'D)

That's all right, we're fine...

Grace looks worried -- she glances all around them.

A few dozen feet above and clear on the other side of the wall, they see another small bit of rocks break off and tumble down to the valley below.

MATT (CONT'D)

Let's just keep moving -- we'll get down and it'll be fine.

From his face, it's clear he doesn't really believe this.

Grace tries to find her footing, but she's tentative.

She lets out some rope --

When there's a CRACKING SOUND in the distance. It's quiet, but severe enough to echo.

Grace grips the rope suddenly, jolting them to a stop. Matt looks up the wall.

Another CRACK, followed by an echo --

Several PEBBLES tumble past them.

GRACE

We gotta lock off the rope.

She grabs the rope, right as --

CRACK!!

They look up -- several HUGE chunks of rock fall off the wall 50 feet above them --

MATT

Look out!

He grabs Grace and pulls her close to him.

FWOOSH! Two rock SHOOT PAST THEM.

They're each the size of a basketball -- an impact could have killed them.

Smaller debris follows -- a shard ricochets off Matt's back.

MATT (CONT'D)

Ahhh!!

He lets go of the rope --

The sudden loss of tension catches Grace off guard -- they fall a few feet before she can stop them.

Matt winces in pain. Grace looks up --

More rocks FALL RIGHT AT THEM.

Grace pulls up her feet and KICKS OFF THE WALL -- they FLY back as --

FWOOSH!

A ROCK SHOOTs RIGHT THROUGH WHERE THEY WERE.

They swing back toward the wall --

WHAM! They smash into it.

Above, more rocks tumble at them.

Grace jams her feet up against the wall -- this time, pushes off, sending them SIDEWAYS.

They fly to the side, again narrowly missing more rocks.

Some smash into the wall -- debris flies all over the place.

Matt shields her as best he can.

They swing back and forth, a pendulum through a barrage of falling granite.

Grace kicks again, harder this time. They fly to the side, but as they swing back --

The rope is PULLED from above --

They SPIN, out of control.

Grace puts her feet against the wall, trying to drag them to a stop, but she slips --

They stop swinging, now twisting in the air, as --

CRAAAAAACK!!!

Up above, more rocks smash into the wall and break up.

Grace catches the wall at a ledge formed by a WIDE CREVICE.

Matt wraps his arms around her to protect her as --

HUNDREDS OF SMALL ROCKS rain down -- too many to avoid -- a STORM OF DEBRIS pelts them.

Rocks PELT Matt. He cries out, but doesn't let go.

Impacts thump like artillery. The echo roars through the valley. It feels like it goes on forever --

But eventually it stops.

They breathe heavily, unsure if it's really over. It takes a moment for the echo to fade.

MATT (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

She nods.

MATT (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's keep going.

Grace pulls against the ledge to untangle the rope, which has wrapped around them a few times.

As she looks DOWN, she's immediately reminded of the insane distance -- the height is intense and terrifying.

Trembling, she tugs on the rope to straighten them out --

But it won't budge. They look up.

The rope snagged on a twisted piece of rock as they swung. Now it's caught, fifteen feet up, ten feet to the left.

GRACE

It's stuck.

Matt grabs on and they both pull. Nothing.

GRACE (CONT'D)

We can't get down without it.

Grace tugs on the rope -- she angrily grunts as she tries with all her might. Her breath quickens. She snuffles. Matt puts his arm around her.

MATT
Just breathe, honey...

She closes her eyes. She doesn't say a word, but inside she's fully losing it.

She settles, but spends a long quiet minute in silence.

She opens her eyes.

GRACE
I have to go get it.

Matt slowly nods. There's nothing else for him to say here.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I can do it...

Matt puts his hand on her shoulder as she looks up and studies the rocks to plan out her route.

MATT
Don't put too much weight on it.

She nods. She carefully studies the holds.

MATT (CONT'D)
Go slow, you could get tired.

GRACE
I've got it.

He backs off -- he can see she's determined.

MATT
I know you do.

GRACE --

Sets out. Roped in, she grabs hold and works her way up the first five feet or so.

To move sideways, she grabs onto the rope. Taking Matt's advice, she tries to climb properly as much as possible -- but when the holds get tough, she pushes on the rope and uses it to pull herself up.

MATT --

Watches from below, helpless, hurting, but hoping.

MATT

Good. It seems steady. Remember
you have to come back down.

GRACE --

Nears the spur of rock. She transitions from hand-holds to a wide horizontal CREVICE that runs over to the spur.

Then --

Chick chick... chick chick...

She stops at the sound.

Chick chick... chick chick...

Grace freezes.

She listens -- another RATTLE -- then a *HISS*.

In the crevice:

A RATTLESNAKE.

It's only two feet away from Grace's hands.

GRACE

Dad...

MATT

I see it.

GRACE

What do I do?

MATT

Don't move.

The rattlesnake hisses again. It slithers slowly toward Grace, eyes on her.

MATT --

Watches -- he can see Grace, frozen in fear. She's fifteen feet away from him --

GRACE

It's getting closer...

MATT

Don't move. If you move, it might go for you.

The snake continues toward Grace --

Matt takes a deep breath and SPRINGS INTO ACTION.

He grabs the rope and the rock and PULLS himself up. The pull on the rope causes Grace to sway --

GRACE

Ah!

Matt tightens his grip to keep her steady, then shifts both hands to the wall to keep from jostling her.

Matt CLAWS at the rock, only able to use his hands and his good leg. The other THROBS, in INTENSE PAIN.

He makes the mistake of looking DOWN -- we RACK FOCUS to create SICKENING VERTIGO.

But he doesn't have time for it. He grits his teeth and powers through fear and pain toward --

GRACE --

Who cautiously eyes the approaching snake. Trembling, she slowly tries to make a move the other way --

And the snake REARS UP at her, fangs out.

It HISSES and LUNGES at Grace's left hand --

She pulls it back just in time, but now she only hangs by her right hand.

The rattlesnake rears up again. Grace dangles --

It LUNGES --

And a HAND SHOOTS IN --

MATT --

GRABS the snake by the tail and WHIPS it away from Grace.

With only one hand on the wall, Matt swings the snake clear of his daughter.

He tries to throw it, but there's a BLUR OF FANGS --

MATT

Aaaah!!

It BITES Matt until he lets go -- the snake plummets down.

GRACE

Dad!

Matt shakes his hand and winces. Grace hustles over to him.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Are you bit?

Matt switches hands and looks down at his wrist, where BLOOD oozes through his shirt. He pulls up the sleeve to reveal TWO BITE MARKS.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You're supposed to suck out the poison.

He closes his eyes for a moment.

MATT

Give me the knife.

Grace looks at him, unsure.

MATT (CONT'D)

Give it to me.

She hands it to him.

Matt digs the blade into his skin to enlarge the bite marks.

He SUCKS at the bite marks and spits poison out.

He goes for it again -- sucks -- and spits. The blood splatters on the rocks as it falls down.

Matt stops. He heaves, then vomits. He shakes with pain.

GRACE

Did you get it?

Matt shakes his head.

MATT

I don't know how to tell.

Grace looks at her father.

GRACE

We don't have much time.

Matt nods.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Thank you. For...

Matt shakes his head.

MATT
Just go. We have to go.

Grace nods.

She pulls herself up along the rope, surprised at the strength she still has. She follows the rope up above the outcrop. Pushes herself up and over --

Only to see that a BOULDER is jammed into a crack on top of the rope. The rope -- which is doubled over -- is pinned.

Grace tugs on the two strands that poke out from under the rock, but they won't budge.

She wraps the rope around her hand and PULLS as hard as she can -- throws all of her weight into it -- but the boulder has it fixed there.

Grace stops.

She slumps against the rock. She has no idea what to do.

She hits her walkie.

GRACE
It's totally stuck.

MATT
Can you pull it loose?

GRACE
No. It's jammed between two rocks.
I can't pull it out.

Matt is silent for a moment.

Grace waits for him to say something.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Dad?

MATT
I'm... I'm thinking...

His voice is soft and unsure.

MATT (CONT'D)

If you can cut the rope, we can tie
it back together; it'll be shorter,
but we'll still have a rope.

Grace goes into the gear bag and pulls out the knife.

She grabs the ends of the rope that stick out from the rock.

She cuts --

But the rope doesn't cut easily. She saws with the blade's
few serrations, but makes little progress.

She loops both strands of rope over the blade and pushes with
all her strength --

She strains --

GRACE

Guuuhhh!!!!

RIIIIIIP! One strand of the rope gives suddenly.

But Grace pushes so hard that she SLIPS.

The rope -- and the knife -- fly out of her hands.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Shit!

She reaches out, but misses --

The knife tumbles down below -- she watches as it clanks
against the wall.

The loop of rope attached to the top is longest -- still
jammed into the rock.

One of the strands attached to Matt is still stuck under the
boulder.

The other flutters away and falls, lost.

Grace looks around -- she's on a tiny ledge on the side of a
mountain, her father out of view, all on her own.

ON MATT --

As he listens, waiting, but hears nothing.

MATT

Grace?

GRACE

Yeah.

MATT

What happened?

GRACE

I... slipped.

Matt can feel the rope slack. He reels it in.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I lost the knife.

Matt pulls in the rest of the rope.

GRACE --

Leans against the wall, defeated.

MATT

It's okay...

Grace looks out over the valley.

She's still hundreds of feet in the air, stuck here for close to twenty-four hours, hurt and struggling.

GRACE

No it's not.

ON MATT --

He thinks. What to say here?

MATT

We can do this. We'll figure something out.

GRACE

We keep saying that, but we've barely moved in a whole day.

MATT

It'll be okay. Just get back to me and we'll try to get down.

GRACE

That rope is what, thirty feet? We can't rappel down with that.

On Matt's face as he hears this -- he wants to argue, but can't. Grace continues:

GRACE (CONT'D)

And even if we could, how can we get out of here? Hike three miles to the car? Then you'll teach me how to drive a stick?

Matt trembles.

MATT

We'll... We'll figure something out...

ON GRACE --

She thinks hard, stares out over the valley. It would be beautiful if it weren't a prison.

She pulls out her phone.

Grace presses a VOICEMAIL and holds the phone to her ear. CAROL'S voice cuts through the sound of the wind.

CAROL (V.O.)

It's eleven p.m. on a Sunday, so I hope you're not answering because you're asleep already. I won't get home until after you're at school tomorrow, but I just may have gotten you something in Toronto...

(beat)

Love you, bye.

Grace wipes the tears from her eyes. She looks at the rope, stuck in the rock, trailing upward diagonally to the anchor.

MATT (OVER WALKIE)

I know this is bad. But I'm gonna get you down. No matter what, I'm gonna get you out of here.

Grace stares at the rock the rest of the way up -- it's a long way up, but an even farther distance down.

She comes to a realization.

GRACE

We're not going to walk out of here. The only way we both survive is if we call for help.

She stands up and sizes up the wall. She looks down, toward where Matt is --

Then UP.

She scans the wall -- every hold, every crack.

MATT

Honey, don't do something crazy.
Just get back to me and we'll
figure this out.

She shakes her head, convincing herself.

GRACE

You're going to die if we don't get
help. The phone's not going to
work at the bottom.

(beat)

I have to go up.

Matt shifts, startled.

MATT

Honey, no...

GRACE

I can make the call from the top.
It's the only way.

She looks through her pack. There's nothing in there for her. She takes it off.

She pulls out her phone and puts it in a velcro cargo pocket.

MATT

Grace, you can't climb without a
rope, that's crazy...

She glances at the rope. It goes from the boulder up to their rappel anchor.

Then it's at least another 200 feet to the top.

GRACE

I can use the rope until I get to
the anchor. From there, I'll have
to figure it out.

Matt shifts -- he wants to go to her, to stop her, to do something -- *anything* -- but he can barely move.

MATT

Grace -- *please*. We'll find a way
out of here -- *do not do this*. If
you fall, *you will die*.

Grace closes her eyes.

GRACE

I have to try.

Matt stops. He can't even see her. He doesn't want her to
go, but... what can he do?

GRACE (CONT'D)

I won't be able to talk to you, but
I can hear you. Just let me know
how you're doing.

She clips the walkie talkie to her harness.

MATT

Honey, please...

GRACE --

Looks up. It's 250 feet to the top. A tough climb no matter
who you are.

And Grace will be doing it FREE SOLO.

No safety. No rope. If she falls, she's dead.

She looks at her hands, fingers already bruised and bloody.

She tapes over them.

MATT

Honey, talk to me...

GRACE

I'm not going to let you talk me
out of this.

(beat)

I won't give up unless I've tried
everything.

She chalks up...

Takes a deep breath...

Grips the first hold...

And CLIMBS.

MATT --

Trembles. Tears have formed in his eyes.

He thinks of what to say. Arguing won't do any good. He forces himself to calm down.

Any one of them could be the last he ever says to her.

MATT

You know, I'm surprised your mom never got you into *fishing*.

We go back and forth between Grace and Matt as she climbs --

MATT (CONT'D)

She loved going out on a boat. I was the one who always got seasick.

He chuckles.

Grace pushes -- grips -- pulls --

MATT (CONT'D)

And your mom had no trouble hanging with the boys. She used to drink and smoke -- I bet you never knew about that.

Grace listens as she rests, prepares for her next move --

MATT (CONT'D)

The first time I introduced her to my friends, we went bowling. She rolled a 240 and drank every round with us.

He chuckles.

MATT (CONT'D)

At the end of the night my buddy Travis pulled me aside and said "All right, you can keep her."

Grace smiles. She doesn't look down -- only at the climb in front of her -- Matt's words help sooth her as she goes.

MATT (CONT'D)

But she put a stop to all that when you were born. All she cared about was spending time with you.

Grace continues --

When there's nothing to grab, she pinches parts of the rock to keep her balance, the strength of the grip the only thing keeping her on the wall.

MATT (CONT'D)

I bet she never told you what a mischievous toddler you were, either.

Matt is more emotional now, still in a lot of pain. Concentrating on this story is all he can do.

MATT (CONT'D)

Forget about putting you in a high chair. We had to hold you every single meal, every single time. One night I was helping unload gear -- I knew a guy who ran a bar where bands played, picked up some extra work at night -- so your mom called and said "If you don't get here right now and hold this baby, I'm gluing her to the chair."

He chokes up, unable to continue --

He wipes his eyes.

All Grace can hear is the sound of the wind -- until Matt's voice returns over the walkie.

MATT (CONT'D)

It was pretty funny.

Grace leans over, flagging to balance herself as she reaches for a tough hold.

Matt listens, but he can't hear anything.

Grace grabs the hold and swings her foot, delicately places it on another hold and finds her balance --

But he has no idea if she's still up there. He sighs.

MATT (CONT'D)

So what else...

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - LATER

Grace climbs, further up. The tape on her fingers is wearing down, but she still has a good grip on the wall.

MATT

...and he kept putting his pincers against the tank wherever you would put your finger. You loved it. And this poor waiter, she's about to explain that we're going to eat this little guy, and your mom just waved her off. We ended up buying him so you could put him in the ocean; we had popcorn for dinner.

Matt coughs when he laughs.

He looks down at his leg -- the bleeding is worse. Not as bad as during the storm, but steady.

Up above, Grace rests in a knee bar and shakes out her arms, one at a time.

MATT (CONT'D)

It's so beautiful up here... So...

For a moment his head rolls -- he's close to passing out from the pain.

Grace stops -- she can't say anything to him, just waits to hear him again.

He snaps back and shakes his head.

MATT (CONT'D)

Sorry.

She lets out a sigh. She wastes no time -- just continues on up the wall.

Matt closes his eyes. He can't concentrate on anything but broadcasting to Grace.

MATT (CONT'D)

What was I saying? Oh... the mountains here, it's nothing like up in Alaska. I only got to go once, but it was really beautiful...

Grace hugs a sheer part of the wall with nowhere to put her feet. She reaches up and finds a small horizontal crack.

She flags with one foot while she brings the other up into a heel hook.

She PUSHES and almost loses her grip as she finds her footing on the tiny, thin crack. She lets out her breath.

Matt (CONT'D)

You probably don't remember this...
we used to play this game...
whenever you wanted a chocolate,
you had to sing the song...

He's fading now, struggling with his words.

Grace lodges her hands into two sidepulls -- with no easy hold above her, she must pull sideways to steady herself while she finds the next spot for her feet.

She pushes --

She tries to keep her breathing steady as she reaches --

MATT (CONT'D)

I should have come back. I thought
about it. Every day. Maybe your
mom would have given me another
chance -- I was just afraid to ask.

He coughs again. His speech is slower now, more sporadic.

MATT (CONT'D)

Sometimes I'd pick up the phone,
and then... I don't know. I didn't
know what to say... Never let that
be the reason you don't do
something... Whatever it is -- just
do it, say it... However hard it
is, it'll be worse looking back...

Suddenly, loses her grip -- she CRIES OUT in pain.

She checks her hand:

The tape has worn through. Now her scraped, bruised fingers are exposed to the rock.

The wind whistles behind her. She looks --

It's a long way down.

Still a long way up.

This isn't going to get any easier.

But from the sound of him, Matt doesn't have long to go.
Grace buries the pain --

She *PULLS* --

CUT TO:

EXT. WALL - LATER

Grace continues. We stay with her from this point on, and only hear Matt over the walkie. His voice is even more sporadic now -- STATIC interrupts every so often.

MATT (OVER WALKIE)

*I miss you so much sometimes...
seeing you... you make me so
happy... you grew up...*

He breathes heavily in between words, just as she inhales and exhales as she works her way up the wall.

She lines up her feet, sets her hand to feel for the next hold, pushes -- then stops.

She feels with her hand --

We see:

There's nothing to hold. The wall is as smooth as glass -- the route RUNS OUT.

Up above her, completely smooth rock. Even if she had gear, there'd be nothing to hold onto.

Grace wobbles on the wall -- she steadies herself.

She looks around as she feels the wall.

There can't be *nowhere* to go...

GRACE

Come on... come on...

She spots a CRACK a few yards to the right --

Reaches --

But it's too far.

She runs her hand over everything else around her, but there's nothing.

Her breathing picks up.

Panic sets in.

This could be it.

She leans into a knee bar and hits her walkie.

GRACE (CONT'D)
 Dad, I think I made a mistake... I
 think I lost the route -- it runs
 out...

But she's met with static -- then Matt continues as if he
 didn't hear her.

MATT (OVER WALKIE)
You know, if we get back...

GRACE
 Dad!

More static. Then:

MATT (OVER WALKIE)
Things'll be different...

She looks up:

Another hundred feet to go.

She looks down:

That's not an option.

She hears her father struggle to breathe.

Static mangles his words.

She looks over at the CRACK leading upward.

She REACHES again --

But it's just too far.

MATT (OVER WALKIE) (CONT'D)
She raised you right...

Grace cries.

Matt's voice fades in and out at random.

MATT (OVER WALKIE) (CONT'D)
Don't forget about your dad...

She hits the wall, in tears. Pounds on it. Tears through
 the rest of the tape.

MATT (OVER WALKIE) (CONT'D)
...I love you...

Grace takes one last look at the crack.

She steels herself --

This is insane.

She shouldn't do this.

No one should do this.

But she's not ready to give up.

She coils herself --

Takes a deep breath --

Kicks off the wall --

JUMPS --

Sails through the air --

Inches from the crack --

Grabs for it -- fingernails SCRAPE off the rock --

Now she's falling --

FLAILS --

Jams in her hand -- CLAMPS DOWN -- we hear a CRUNCH --

She cries out in pain -- but she's not falling anymore.

She caught herself.

She dangles from one hand jammed into the wall.

She hangs there --

Nowhere for her feet.

Nothing to grab onto with the other hand.

She looks down -- the ground seems to RUSH UP at her.

A trickle of blood runs down from her hand. All her weight is on it -- just her fingertips.

Every second of this hurts --

It would be so easy to let go --

But Grace PULLS -- SCREAMS -- PULLS --

She gains enough height to grab on with the other hand --

She did it.

For the moment, she's secure on the wall.

She looks -- there's nowhere good for her feet. She flags with one leg and swings the other wide, bringing it up to a spur she can use for a heel hook.

As she does --

The PHONE slowly SLIPS THROUGH the flap of her cargo pocket --

She sees it, unable to reach it -- it *FALLS* --

Grace gasps.

She tries to grab it, but misses.

GRACE

No!

The phone skitters off the wall and disappears into the valley below.

Grace stares after it, totally helpless.

She slumps against the wall, safe for the moment -- but she's lost the phone.

She checks the walkie.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Dad? Dad...? Can you hear me?

Nothing but STATIC.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Dad, I dropped the phone!

More STATIC. The jump put her out of range.

Tears form in Grace's eyes - this is too much.

Suddenly, a sharp pain runs up her arm.

She carefully switches her grip so she can examine her hand. She looks at it -- her index finger is **BADLY DISLOCATED** from the one-arm hang.

Any more climbing is going to be near impossible.

She looks up.

There's still a full pitch to climb.

She's bruised and battered -- she barely has anything left.

She looks out at the valley -- she's all alone up here.

She sniffles.

If there's a moment to quit, this is it.

But instead: she steadies herself.

She takes the finger -- carefully bites down on it --

She SCREAMS through her teeth as she wedges it back in place.

It snaps back into the joint.

Grace shivers. The pain is OVERWHELMING.

She takes a deep breath, reads the wall --

And CLIMBS.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK ROAD - DAY

The Ranger pulls his jeep off the road -- Matt and Jason's cars are still there.

He gets out and walks up to the cars. He looks inside - no one there.

The Ranger looks around - no one in sight.

He pulls out his binoculars --

POV ON the VULTURES, diving down toward Jason's body.

He takes another look up the wall -- nothing there, although his view is partially OBSCURED by jutting rocks that cover a bend in the valley.

He scans up to the top -- nothing there, either.

Just as he's about to quit --

Something appears at the bottom of his POV.

PARK RANGER
What the hell...

He adjusts the focus, and now GRACE comes clearly into view. We see her strain, working her way up the wall with what little strength she has left.

The Ranger quickly pulls out his phone.

PARK RANGER (CONT'D)
Hey -- I've got an emergency...

EXT. WALL - SAME

Grace moves up the wall.

A foot at a time.

Sometimes just an inch.

But she doesn't stop.

We DO NOT CUT.

We're right there with her, with each agonizing move --

Just as aware of the danger as she is --

The CAMERA moves around her:

Sometimes above her, CLOSE ON her fingers, tape gone, scraped close to the bone -- the only thing keeping her from the ground, hundreds of feet below --

Sometimes below her, CLOSE ON her feet, as her toes settle on holds the size of a penny.

All we hear is the wind --

Her controlled breaths --

Her skin fighting for purchase on the wall --

This is the real thing.

One mistake and she's gone.

Each passing second, a battle not to let go.

Her life depends on it.

Matt's too, if he's still alive.

This can only end one of two ways:

She's either going to fall off this wall --

Or she's going to climb it.

For several minutes, we watch her in a continuous climb -- in silence.

Each scrape of her fingers is heard, each tiny slip that could send her plummeting to her death.

CRACK! A hold CRUMBLES as she pulls on it. Grace slips and catches herself with her other hand -- but then that hold STARTS TO CRUMBLE AS WELL.

If she moves too quickly, she'll pull it all the way off and fall -- but if she's too slow, she'll fall all the same.

She carefully adjusts herself as the hold flakes under her weight -- and just as it cracks off the wall -- she locks her fingers around another one.

It's a PINCH -- she has to squeeze her fingers like a vice, including the one she dislocated -- holding on with sheer will and determination.

She steadies herself.

She cringes as she holds on, in extreme pain, and readjusts her feet to grab an easier hold.

She keeps climbing --

We stay with her through all the danger as she refuses to give into the wall and climbs it.

The top is in sight -- only twenty more feet.

She struggles, sweating, hands bloody and worn.

She stops as she hears something --

ABOVE HER:

PEOPLE.

A SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM appears over the top. They ready themselves --

Two RESCUE WORKERS rappel down to her. They move quickly, descending a few feet from either side of her --

But she waves them off.

GRACE

No! Go down!

They stop.

RESCUE TEAM MEMBER
Come on -- we've got you!

GRACE
No!
(beat)
My dad is down there! Go help him!

A Rescue Worker reaches out his hand --

But she pushes him away.

GRACE (CONT'D)
Go get my dad!

The Rescue Worker sees the fire in her eyes. He signals to his buddy.

RESCUE TEAM MEMBER
Okay, let's go down and find him...

They move down. Grace continues on the wall.

She doesn't think, just moves. With each grasp, each pull, she's closer to the top...

Fifteen feet... ten...

She just breathes, ignoring the pain...

Five feet...

Her muscles sore, she almost gives out. She has to reach several times for each hold...

Up above her, she sees an ARM reach down.

With her last ounce of strength, Grace REACHES for it --

She pushes off with her legs and LUNGES --

And her hand CLASPS THE ARM.

It GRABS her and pulls her up and over the edge.

Another set of hands grabs her other arm.

The Rescue Team pulls her safely from the edge.

She COLLAPSES onto the ground.

The Rescue Team swarms around her to give her medical attention as she holds herself and cries.

FADE TO **BLACK**.

All we hear is the wind.

COME BACK TO:

GRACE --

Eyes closed. A deep whir in the background.

Her eyes slowly open.

As before, the light is overwhelming --

As she gets her bearings, the whir grows to a ROAR.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY - MOVING

Grace is strapped to a gurney.

The S&R CREWMAN leans over her to adjust her oxygen mask. She's also plugged into a heart monitor and an IV.

The valley flies by outside, the wall in the distance. Grace watches it grow smaller and smaller.

She strains to tilt her head the other way, but she can barely move.

She turns slowly -- sees a hand over hers --

And there's Matt, on a gurney next to her.

He's alive.

They made it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Matt lies in a hospital bed, his leg propped up. He looks around -- he's been here for a while.

GRACE (O.C.)

Hey.

Matt looks up -- Grace is at the door.

MATT

Hey there, pretty girl...

She comes over and sits down.

GRACE

How's the leg?

Matt looks down and shrugs.

MATT

I'm so doped up I might flap my arms and fly out of here. It's still attached, isn't it?

Grace smiles.

GRACE

Yeah.

MATT

Then I won't complain.

They sit for a moment. Matt takes her in.

MATT (CONT'D)

So... I don't know how much longer I'll be in here. But...

(beat)

I suppose you've talked to your grandparents.

She nods.

GRACE

They're pretty pissed at you.

He shrugs.

MATT

I can't imagine why. I told them I'd get you home in one piece.

(beat)

And you've still got your dad's good looks.

GRACE

Maybe I can find a guy who doesn't mind scabs all over my fingers.

They sit in silence. These moments never play out simply.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I talked to school. I can take summer school to finish out the classes I need.

MATT

Good.

Grace hesitates.

GRACE

Then maybe I can enroll in community college in the fall, eventually transfer to another school.

MATT

That sounds good.

GRACE

Well, it's not what I planned on, but... that's okay.

Grace smiles.

MATT

You did good, girl. Your mom would be proud.

GRACE

Thanks.

Grace stops for a moment to reflect.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You know she told me she admired how you never stopped dreaming.
(beat)
She always believed you'd come through one day.

Matt pauses -- he's afraid to say what comes next.

MATT

So, they need me back at the job site in Albuquerque next week...

Grace looks disappointed.

MATT (CONT'D)

But I was thinking...
(beat)
Maybe I could get a place here, move my stuff back...

Grace smiles a little.

MATT (CONT'D)
So... if I moved back...

She stops him - she gets what he's saying.

GRACE
Yeah.

He smiles at her.

MATT
I might need some help around the house, with this broken leg...

GRACE
I'll do the dishes, but I am not learning how to cook.

MATT
You must not remember my famous spaghetti with hot dogs...

Matt thinks a moment. He looks around the room, at where they are after all this.

MATT (CONT'D)
You were pretty tough out there.

Grace shrugs.

GRACE
I didn't have a choice -- all I could do was keep going.

MATT
That's all you can ever do.

Grace nods -- she knows.

They share a silent smile in the hospital, alive, together.

FADE TO **BLACK**.