

THIS IS WHERE I GET OFF

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EXT. THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE (MID-SPAN) - DAY

TITLE: APRIL 24TH, 1998

Thick fog rolls into the bay off the Pacific. It's overcast, dreary, and a steady drizzle comes down on TOURISTS as they make their way back and forth over the iconic bridge.

Walking amongst them with her hands stuffed into her jacket pockets is CHRISTINE (51), an unassuming woman wearing muted colors and mom jeans.

Walking toward Christine from the opposite direction is VANESSA (22), a young woman who, as her hooded sweatshirt indicates, is currently a student enrolled at Berkeley.

Their eyes lock as they approach each other. Both women quickly look down, and then continue past one another.

LATER

An hour has passed, as Christine and Vanessa once again approach each other from opposite directions.

Again, their eyes lock, but this time each of them offers up a small smile to the other person.

Again, they pass each other.

LATER

Christine and Vanessa slowly approach each other for a third and final time. The tourists around them have cycled in and out, but for some reason these two strangers find themselves still there, meeting at the same spot on the bridge in the drizzling rain.

This time, they stop in front of each other. Vanessa opens her mouth to say something, but is cut off by--

CHRISTINE

Heck of a day for a walk out here,
isn't it?

VANESSA

It is.

A long, silent moment passes between them as they size each other up. Then--

CHRISTINE
 Forgive my forwardness, but you
 wouldn't be here to--

VANESSA
 (interrupting)
 I am.

CHRISTINE
 I see.
 (beat)
 Me, too.

Vanessa nods.

Together, these two strangers turn and sidle up to the bridge's bright orange railing. They stare out across the bay, taking in San Francisco and the thousands of people living out their lives on the bustling peninsula.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
 It *is* beautiful.

VANESSA
 It is. Even in this weather.

CHRISTINE
Especially in this weather. If you
 don't love the weather, move to
 L.A. That's what my husband always
 said. He loved this weather. Said
 it gave the city character.

VANESSA
 Where is your husband now?

CHRISTINE
 Gone.

VANESSA
 I'm sorry to hear that.
 (beat)
 Did you have any children?

CHRISTINE
 A girl. She's with him.

VANESSA
 Again, I'm--

CHRISTINE
 (interrupting)
 I know. Thank you.
 (MORE)

(beat)
What about you? Family?

VANESSA
I guess that's what they're called.
They fit the bill only in name.

CHRISTINE
(nodding)
You can pick your friends, but....

VANESSA
Exactly.

A long, silent beat passes between them.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
So... shall we?

Christine continues to stare at the city as she thinks about it for one last moment. She turns to Vanessa and nods.

As if choreographed, the two women climb over the railing together. Vanessa makes her way over first, and then helps Christine down.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
Careful, don't slip.

They pause and smile at the ridiculousness of the comment, then burst out into LAUGHTER. As they continue to laugh, they sit down on the ledge above the bridge's stiffening trusses.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, that was really stupid.

CHRISTINE
I know what you meant. You don't
want me to get hurt. That's
thoughtful, thank you.

Again, they LAUGH, except now, a passing BICYCLIST (20s) hears them. He pulls over and looks over the railing.

BICYCLIST
(noticing)
Ah... hello?

Hello.

VANESSA

Hello.

CHRISTINE

BICYCLIST (CONT'D)
Everything... okay?

CHRISTINE
Everything is wonderful. We're just enjoying the view.

BICYCLIST
I think you're supposed to do that on *this side* of the railing.

CHRISTINE
But everything looks so much prettier on this side.

BICYCLIST
Oh... kay?

The Bicyclist ditches his bike and rushes off to get help.

The two strangers continue to stare out over the bay, their feet dangling high above the water below. A beat passes as Christine adjusts her gaze.

CHRISTINE
It really *does*, doesn't it?

VANESSA
What?

CHRISTINE
Look prettier on this side.

Beat, as Vanessa adjusts her gaze, trying to see what Christine is seeing. It doesn't come.

The Bicyclist returns with a BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER (30s), who leans over the railing and looks down at the ladies. A GROUP has also started to gather.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER
(to Group)
Everyone back, please! Get back!
(into walkie-talkie)
Pole 69, two females.

WALKIE-TALKIE
Copy that.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER
(to women)
Hey, ladies. Everything okay today?

CHRISTINE
Just fine.

VANESSA

Perfect.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER

Well, see, here's the thing: I'm not exactly inclined to believe that because you're both *over there* when you should be *up here*.

CHRISTINE

So hop on over.

The Officer CHUCKLES nervously, thinking they're joking.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER

Not exactly what I was getting at.
(into walkie-talkie)
Need a C.C. and backup here, *now*.

WALKIE-TALKIE

Copy.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER

(to women)

It's a pleasure meeting you both.
I'm Kevin. What are your names?

CHRISTINE

(to Vanessa)

Oh, I'm sorry. I just realized I don't know your name. I apologize, that was rude of me.

VANESSA

(chuckling)

No, it wasn't. I didn't ask yours.
I'm Vanessa.

CHRISTINE

Christine.

(putting hand out)

Nice to meet you, Vanessa.

VANESSA

(shaking her hand)

You, as well.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER

(overhearing)

Christine and Vanessa. Great names for two wonderful women.

(beat)

So, Christine and Vanessa, do you have any plans for tomorrow?

The women ignore him as they stare out across the bay.

More OFFICERS arrive and push people back; as they do so, Christine stands.

CHRISTINE

It was wonderful to meet you,
Vanessa, but unfortunately this is
where I get off.

VANESSA

Be... safe.

CHRISTINE

(smiling)
Promise.

Christine turns precariously and faces the crowd.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER

(nervously, reaching out)
Come on, Christine, let me help you
over the railing here, easy-peasy.
(beat)
Christine... you wouldn't want to
hurt yourself now, would you?

Beat.

CHRISTINE

I don't want to hurt *anymore*.

Christine falls backward. ONLOOKERS GASP and SCREAM and CRY
as she tumbles head-over-feet 220 feet straight down.

As Christine hits the water, Vanessa stands.

BRIDGE PATROL OFFICER

(frantic, reaching out)
Vanessa, do not do this!

Vanessa adjusts her gaze. Something in her brain clicks.

VANESSA

(to herself, quietly)
Weird... it really *is* prettier on
this side.

Vanessa jumps.

THE END

BACKSTORY:

On April 24th, 1998, Christine Bepp (51) and Vanessa Chapman (22), two women who did not know each other, ended up at the same spot on the Golden Gate Bridge at the same time with the same intention: killing themselves.

For a brief period, these two strangers sat on the other side of the railing and talked to one another.

When a Bridge Patrol Officer noticed them and tried to talk them back to safety, Christine stood up and stepped backward off the bridge. Vanessa then followed.