

THE BIG RIDE

by STEPHANIE ALISON WALKER

CHARACTERS

MAN

WOMAN

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SCENE 1- DAY 6

Sound of a bicycle bell:

DING DING! DING DING!

Lights up on a man and a woman, riding bicycles, side by side, facing the audience. The woman wears a knee brace and rides a road bike; the man rides a mountain bike. They are equipped for a long ride-- helmets, CamelBaks, water bottles, padded bicycle shorts. They've been on these bikes for a while and it shows. They pedal dutifully without interruption.

The woman sucks the life out of her water bottle. The man watches her adoringly.

MAN

How's your knee?

WOMAN

I'm thinking it would hurt less if you just wailed on it with a sledgehammer.

MAN

Next pit stop we'll try that instead of ice.

WOMAN

Sounds like a plan. Unless you can't find a sledgehammer. In that case we'll just go with the ice.

MAN

Agreed.

(beat)

We're almost there. It's almost over. In thirty more miles we'll be there and we'll be...

WOMAN

Done. The longest thirty miles of my life. I'm in misery.

(she looks at him)

Now would be a good time to make me laugh.

MAN

(beat)

Marry me.

WOMAN

(beat)

That's not funny. Try again.

MAN
I'm serious. Marry me.

WOMAN
Marry you?

MAN
Marry me. Don't think. Just say yes.

SCENE 2- DAY 5

DING DING! DING DING!

Side by side, they slowly climb a hill.

MAN
You're good... at hills.

WOMAN
It's the knowledge... that... it... will... eventually...
plateau... Every hill has a summit!
(she reaches the summit...
catches her breath)

She reaches the summit and recovers
from the climb- drinking water and
waiting for him to catch up.

He passes her.

MAN
I'm better at down hills, myself.

WOMAN
I'm afraid I'll fall!

MAN
(calling back to her)
Lay off your brakes! Trust and let go.

She does. She screams. Relaxes into the
downhill speed. Catches up to him. Then

WOMAN
Just so you know, what happened last night in the tent, I
don't usually do that so fast. I've never. I mean... it
meant... something. Big! And I just hope you know that I
wouldn't have done it if you hadn't made... that phone call.

MAN
I know.

WOMAN
Because I'd never--

MAN
I know.

WOMAN
My friends say I have unreal expectations about people.
And I'm terribly naive. I'll believe anything you tell me.
Especially if it's something I want.

MAN
I love you.

WOMAN
I believe you.

SCENE 3 - DAY 4

DING DING! DING DING!

They ride directly into a head-wind.

WOMAN
(to the wind)
Go pick on someone your own size, wind, and leave me alone! I
hate you! Go away. Just go. Go. Leave!

MAN
(to the wind)
I'll kill you. Slice you open with a machete and beat you
with my bare hands. I'm stronger than you. I am stronger.

WOMAN MAN
FUCK! YOU! WIND!!! FUCK! YOU! WIND!!!

They look at each other.

WOMAN
I'm sorry about before.

MAN
No, *I'm* sorry.

WOMAN
I missed you.

MAN
I missed you too.
(beat)
How's... how's your knee?

WOMAN

It's punishing me. Thanks for asking.

MAN

You're doing great.

WOMAN

It's so unfair that you have no pain.

MAN

Oh I have pain. My butt hurts so much I'm thinking of replacing it.

WOMAN

Butt replacement?

MAN

Transplant.

WOMAN

Mine hurts too.

MAN

And my wrists...

WOMAN

Mine too. And my back.

MAN

Kills.

WOMAN

My knee, though. It's... beyond pain.

MAN

I could massage it at the next pit stop. If you want.

WOMAN

You don't have to.

MAN

I know.

WOMAN

That's sweet.

MAN

I think I love you.

WOMAN

(please don't break my heart)

I know I love you.

SCENE 4- DAY 3

DING DING! DING DING!

Still riding side by side.

MAN

How's your knee?

WOMAN

Would you stop asking about my knee?!

MAN

I'm just trying to be--

WOMAN

(near tears)

It's fine. Okay? It's not your concern.

MAN

But I'm just--

WOMAN

It's fine.

MAN

Okay.

(beat)

I tried to call her. No cell phone towers. No pay phones.

WOMAN

There was a pay phone at Subway.

MAN

I didn't see it.

WOMAN

You didn't look.

MAN

I said I'd call her. I'll call her.

WOMAN

I'm not telling you to call her.

MAN

You're just telling me what I'll miss out on if I don't.

WOMAN

Do what you want.

MAN

Fuck.

WOMAN
We turn here.

MAN
No, we don't.

WOMAN
Left at the tracks.

MAN
At the second set.

WOMAN
That was the second set!

MAN
No it wasn't!

WOMAN
Maybe we should take a break from each other and ride separately for a while.

MAN
What?

WOMAN
You go your way, I'll go mine.

MAN
Fine.

WOMAN
Fine.

SCENE 5- DAY 2

DING DING! DING DING!

They ride.

MAN
How's your knee?

WOMAN
What knee? I'm starving.

MAN
Me too!

WOMAN
And I can't possibly eat another Power bar. I'll die.

MAN
I know. I want real food.

WOMAN
Fast food.

MAN
Junk food.

WOMAN
I'd kill for some of that.

MAN
I'd kill for a root beer float.

WOMAN MAN
From A&W! From A&W!

They look at each other and smile.

MAN
I'm gonna call her. Next town with a cell phone tower. Or a
pay phone. I'll call her.

She picks up her water bottle and
drinks.

WOMAN
We should probably just be friends. You and me.

MAN
I'm gonna call her.

WOMAN
You're gonna call her? And...

MAN
Break it off.

He reaches for his water bottle to find
it empty.

WOMAN
Over the phone?

MAN
What else? Wait until we get back? I mean, it's your call.

WOMAN
My call?

MAN
What do you want?

What do *you* want? WOMAN

You. MAN

And? WOMAN

And only you. MAN

Really? WOMAN

Absolutely. MAN

Good. Because I refuse to be the other woman. WOMAN

She hands him her water bottle. He drinks.

SCENE 6 - DAY 1

DING DING! DING DING!

They ride. Side by side. She drinks her water and doesn't notice he's there.

Hi. MAN

She's startled by his presence.

Shit! WOMAN

Sorry. Did I scare you? I didn't mean to. MAN

I didn't know you were there. WOMAN

Do you mind if I ride beside you? MAN

We're supposed to ride single file. I was riding single file. And then you... WOMAN

I just saw you back there at the rest stop with a giant bag of ice on your knee and I wanted to make sure you were okay. MAN

WOMAN
(not really)
I'm fine.

MAN
You were crying.

Who are you? WOMAN

I'm sorry, I just... I saw you.

WOMAN
You saw me.

Crying. MAN

WOMAN
My knee really hurts. I trained too much.

MAN
You trained with Nick. Right?

WOMAN
Are you stalking me or something?

MAN
I'm his brother. I didn't train at all.

Oh, you're--

WOMAN

Sean. MAN

WOMAN
Helena.

MAN WOMAN

Nice to meet you. Nice to meet you.

WOMAN
What kind of person doesn't train for a 500 mile bike ride?

MAN
Spontaneous. And a little stupid.

WOMAN
A lot.

MAN

Hey, at least my legs are fresh.

She laughs.

MAN

Ah, you laugh. Can't feel pleasure and pain at the same time.
It's--

MAN

Impossible.

WOMAN

Impossible.

MAN

Yeah. So I make you laugh and you feel no pain.

WOMAN

Thanks. All you have to do is make me laugh for 400 more miles and I just might have a chance of making it.

MAN

That's not a bad plan. We'll ride together. The whole way.

WOMAN

You want to ride with me... the whole way?

MAN

We make the perfect team. You trained too much, I didn't train enough.

WOMAN

What if I'm too slow?

MAN

What if *I'm* too slow? Right now you're down and I'm up. Later you might be up when I'm down.

WOMAN

Do you know how to change a flat?

MAN

No. Do you?

WOMAN

No.

She smiles.

MAN

You have the most amazing dimples, you know.

Beat.

WOMAN

You have a girlfriend, don't you?

MAN

(after a beat)

Ride with me. The whole way. Don't think. Just say yes.

Lights. End of play.