

Extract from *The Abdication* by Justin Newland

The world ground to a halt. The angels held their breath. The man swayed back and forth as if resisting some unseen power. Behind him, there appeared to be a dark-winged entity urging him to jump. Or were they filaments of mist outlined in the dusk? It was difficult to tell.

Slowly, his body tipped forward until it reached the point of no return. Losing his balance, he fell off the bridge and spun into the arms of the gaping abyss, still clutching the dead child to his chest.

Birds can fly. Angels can fly. A man cannot.

No cry was made. No prayer was heard. No mourning song was sung. He made a soft whistling sound as he plummeted through the unforgiving air. Soon, he was out of sight, brutally ejected out of this world. The bridge rocked from side to side, a silent witness to this nameless tragedy.