



Falling: The Story of One Marriage

John Taylor

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"We had to help each other bring it to an end. To summon the strength to proceed we would need to reassure each other, to depend on and trust each other. We would have to work together to dissolve the marriage in a way we had never been able to do to sustain it. I saw all this with piercing clarity, and then I thought, But if we are capable of such delicate and complicated collaboration, maybe we should stay together after all."

In **Falling: The Story of One Marriage**, John Taylor portrays the central human struggle—"the competition between [the] need to keep life interesting, to accept its limits, and to give it value"—that lies at the heart of divorce. Writing with moving eloquence and unflinching honesty, he describes the hopeful beginnings of his marriage, its gradual disintegration, and the "horrifying act of will" needed to bring it to an end. He wrestles with the decision to leave his wife and young daughter, and the life they share, and struggles to clarify the nature of his responsibilities as a husband and father. Despite his involvement with other women, and his near certainty that his marriage is not salvageable, he remains profoundly reluctant to remove his wedding ring—even after he has moved out.

Taylor's own story is interwoven with descriptions of the marriages of his family and friends, some faltering, some unaccountably strong. He witnesses the way divorce sweeps through his neighborhood "like a tornado, leveling one house and leaving the next intact." And with great clarity and compassion he explores the question that nearly all adults, married or single, ask themselves at some point: Should I stay or should I go?

A naked, intimate portrait that will strike a deep chord in both men and women, *Falling* is as much about the shape and texture of a contemporary marriage as it is about its dissolution. Beyond that, it is an account of one man's search for "moral coherence in a world that no longer imposes it." As the author learns that his decisions are often imperfect and that his choices have far-reaching and unanticipated consequences, he gradually discovers the truth about his own moral center.

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