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PICK THE GAS STATION

Monologues / Thriller / 2 min

Cast 1 Any x1

A rideshare passenger notices the car left the route the app shows three turns ago. They keep the conversation friendly with the driver while texting someone with the hand he can't see. Getting loud is not an option.

CHARACTERS

SAM - late 20s to early 30s, any gender, a frequent rideshare passenger who is very good at sounding relaxed

SETTING

The back seat of a rideshare sedan on a dark road, present day, late at night.

The back seat of a rideshare, night. Streetlights slide across the window, then get farther apart. SAM, late 20s, holds a phone low against one thigh, screen dimmed. The other hand rests easy on the door handle.

Sam talks to the back of the driver's head like a friend.

SAM

So is this like the local way? I'm not from here, I don't know the roads. My app's got us going down Fulton and you turned off it like three turns ago, so I figure you know something it doesn't.

(light)

Traffic, probably. Yeah.

The thumb moves on the phone. Sam doesn't look down.

I do this a lot, actually. Rides. I always tell people, the drivers know more than the map. The map's just a map, you know? Like, the map doesn't know there's a train.

Is there a train out here?

No answer. Sam nods like there was one.

Cool. Cool. I'll just, uh. I'm just texting my roommate, she waits up. She's kinda intense about it, she's like, "send me the plate, send me the car." So I did that. At pickup. Before I got in. Silver sedan, plate ending in four-seven-K. She's got it. Her boyfriend's got it. He's a cop, which, I know, everybody says that.

(beat)

He actually is, though.

The thumb keeps moving. The eyes stay on the rearview mirror.

You can just drop me anywhere, honestly. Up here's fine. That gas station's fine. I like a gas station. Bright lights. Cameras. Somebody behind the counter who's bored and looks at everybody. I'll get a different ride, I won't even rate you bad, I'll say the app glitched.

The car doesn't slow.

Okay.

(still even)

Here's the thing. I've been really nice for six minutes because I didn't know what you were doing, and being nice is what you do when you don't know. I know now. So I'm gonna stop being nice, but I'm not gonna get loud, because you don't get to have me loud.

My location's live. Three people. Since the second turn. There's a picture of you from the mirror, and there's a picture of the little tree thing on your dash with your kid's name on it.

(quiet)

Danny. Right?

So you can pull into that gas station, and I get out, and that's the whole story. Or we keep going, and it's a different story, and I'm not the one who's in it.

A red light ahead. The car slows. Sam's hand tightens on the handle.

Your call. But I'd pick the gas station.

The door lock clicks. Sam doesn't move yet.

END OF SCRIPT