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THE FIRST RED LIGHT

Monologues / Romance / 2-3 min
Cast 1 Male x1

For eleven years Theo has been the friend who drives Nora to the station. Now she is leaving for good and he has one platform, two coffees and a speech he practiced badly. He has to say the thing before the train comes.

CHARACTERS

THEO - late 30s, a piano tuner, patient with instruments and hopeless with timing

SETTING

A regional train platform on a cold early morning, present day.

A regional train platform, early morning. Cold. A departure board flickers. One bench, one suitcase.

THEO, late 30s, holds two paper cups of coffee. He has been holding them too long. He speaks to NORA, who stands by the suitcase.

THEO

They didn't have oat. I said "whatever's closest" and the guy gave me a look like I'd insulted his mother. So that one might be anything.

He hands one over. He does not let go of it right away.

I had a whole thing. I practiced it in the car. I practiced it at three different red lights and it got worse every time, so I'm gonna do the version from the first red light, which is short.

(beat)

Eleven years. That's how long I've been the guy who drives you to the station. I've done the airport. I've done two hospitals. I've done that awful apartment in the city with

the stairs. I've carried the boxes. I've sat at the table when you told me about every single one of them, and I've said the right thing, every time, and I have meant the right thing, most of the time.

And I have never once said the thing.

The board changes. He does not look at it.

So. Here it is. The first red light version.

I don't wanna be the guy who drives you to the station. I wanna be the guy you're coming back to. And I know that's late. I know it's stupid to say it on a platform with a coffee that might be anything. I know you have a job and an apartment and a whole life packed into that suitcase, and I'm not asking you to unpack it. I just couldn't let the train come without you knowing.

(beat)

That's it. That's the whole thing. You can get on now.

A train pulls in. He finally looks at the board.

That's not yours.

(reading)

That's the 7:40 to the coast. Yours is the... yours is the 8:40. You said 7:40. You've been saying 7:40 all week.

He looks at her.

You got here an hour early.

(slowly, working it out)

You gave me an hour.

END OF SCRIPT