

The Dangerous Drive

I gazed wistfully at the glimmering stars above me. I always thought that someday they would give me a sign, a sign about what, I don't know. My grandmother used to say our ancestors watch over us from the stars, and I like to think she's up there, keeping an eye on me. I allow myself a half smile for my delusions, because that's all they are, a child's petty hope. A single drop of rain glides gracefully down the window, a dancing child of nature.

There's no noise to distract myself with, the driver isn't very chatty. That's good. Meaningless, small talk isn't exactly my strong suit. I've learnt over my hard, painful years that it's better to be still, quiet, observe not interfere, you learn more that way, see more, notice the dangerous things before it's too late to act.

The only noise to focus on is the quiet pitter-patter of soft rain dropping peacefully across the windshield, slithering like miniature snakes on glass. There is the occasional car, navigating home in the middle of a dark night on a hushed street in New York. I shuffle in my seat, trying to find any possible way to distract myself from my turmoil of thoughts and emotions cascading over me. I settle with studying my silent driver, he was early to pick me up, a sign of eagerness was my first thought, but his silent, dark demeanour and stiffened posture speaks otherwise. A sharp scar imprinted on his cheek, recent- but not new, indicates a rough lifestyle, and his jet-black pants and long sleeves tells me there's more that he's trying to cover up. Overall, he looks dangerous, a gruff beard, thick pants for hiding a weapon maybe? I should be careful. No, I'm overreacting, reading into things that are standardly, perfectly, typical for a person. I need to calm down, straighten my poker face and take a deep breath. This kind of thinking is what got me into this mess in the first place.

Eyes still on the road, one hand on the wheel, one on his leg- he seems to realise that I'm studying him. Clearing his throat quietly and glancing boldly at me from the rearview mirror he inquires in a low, husky voice, "You doing alright back there?"

I manage somehow to summon my voice as I utter softly. "Alright, thanks."

I obviously can't go back to examining him, so instead I turn my attention elsewhere and pull out a slim and black burner phone from my dirty, ripped jeans. It's a new one this time, my old one ran out of data and there were contacts in there that I don't need now that I'm off to a new life. Turning it on I see a message that freezes my very core, shakes me to a point of proper, deep, blood-curdling fear that rattles me inside.

"It's Uber. I'm outside your pickup destination, sorry about the delay."

Sent three minutes ago...