

“We have to go! We’re gonna be late!” John shouted to his girlfriend Cindy as they ran out the door. John was already standing on the sidewalk by his car. Cindy had gone back inside to grab a hat and scarf. It was very cold outside.

“Why are you even bothering! We’re gonna be in a car the whole time.”

“But what if we stop somewhere? Every single time I don’t bring my hat, I end up walking six blocks in the freezing cold. No sir, not this time. I’m going to be prepared!” Cindy proclaimed.

“Whatever floats your boat.”

John laughed at Cindy.

“Don’t make fun of me!”

“I’m not. I think it’s cute.”

The two of them climbed in the car with John getting into the driver seat and Cindy sitting passenger. She then removed a small device from her pocket and began searching for a route.

“Should we take the expressway to the tunnel?”

“No! The bridge. Always the bridge.”

“But the map on my phone says to take the tunnel.”

“Why?”

“It says it’s faster.”

“It’s not.”

“But it says it is.”

John shook his head, no. “It’s a conspiracy.”

“What?”

“You heard me.”

Cindy seemed a bit confused, “What do you mean? It’s not a conspiracy.”

“It’s the apps trying to get us to go the routes they want us to take.”

“Why would they even care?”

“The mayor, the city, special interests.”

“John, what ‘special interests’ care about our route into the city?”

“Real estate developers.”

Cindy stopped to think about it. He had a point.

“But you’re still paranoid,” she said with a little guff.

“Doesn’t mean I’m wrong.”

“Yeah we’ll see,” Cindy was skeptical. “Take the bridge.”

John turned the key and started the car and after removing himself from an oddly squeezed parallel parking situation, the two of them began rolling down the street where they took a left at the light.

“So what’s been going on at work?” She asked.

“Doctor Roberts has been away for the last few weeks and that has all the residents on edge trying to pick up the slack.”

“Isn’t he the one with the marital issues?”

“No that’s his assistant.”

“Wait he wasn’t the one sleeping with his assistant?”

“No! That’s Doctor Raymond. And people still don’t know about that. So don’t go yelling it in public.”

“Right, right,” Cindy shook her head, “I can’t stand men like that.”

“Me either.”

“So wait, who’s Doctor Roberts?”

The car was now turning onto the expressway, where a lovely view of the city was speeding by to their left out the window.

“Doctor Roberts is the one with the dead cousin.”

“Right, right,” she said, nodding apologetically.

“Yeah he’s been out of town for the funeral so that’s meant there is no one to cover his floor.

We’ve all been a little overworked and stretched thin because of it.”

The dashboard clicked as John engaged the turn signal and began merging lanes to get out from behind a large truck.

“Things should ease up next Monday when he gets back,” John said.

“Well that’s good,” she said while rolling down the windows. “It’s such a nice day.”

“Really is,” he said.

With no one in front of him, John engaged the peddle and they swung around the onramp and hit the bridge with the wind in their hair.

“Beautiful.”

The sun was shining through a fluffy white patch of clouds.

They turned towards one another and smiled.

“Yeah,” she said. “It really is.”

They sped across the bridge and as they did steel girders on either side of them began to flash by, creating a sort of framed flip book of city skyline.

Things were nice.

John changed lanes again.

Cindy giggled and leaned forward to turn on the radio.

A modern tune of jazz fusion came bouncing through the speakers.

John began tapping his hands on the steering wheel.

Just then the flashing red light of an ambulance came screeching from behind them.

John yielded to let it pass.

“I wonder where they’re going.”

Cindy looked at John. “You’re not working today babe.”

John gripped the steering wheel, “Yeah you’re right.”

They reached the end of the bridge and John passed the turn for the expressway, instead following the exit into downtown city streets.

“I might have to go in later,” he said.

“It’s a hospital, John. There are other people working there.”

Cindy had grown impatient.

This was not the first time this had come up.

“But they’re short staffed this weekend. They might need my help.”

“They’re always short staffed, every weekend.”

“I told Dr Roberts I would fill in while he was away.”

“Why?”

“He asked.”

“Then why would you say yes?”

“I was free.”

“We made plans.”

“This was before that.”

“But wouldn’t it be safe to assume I would want to spend the weekend with you?”

John frowned.

He looked down at the steering wheel.

The traffic light turned green.

He signaled, returning his attention to the road.

“Isn’t there someone that could cover for you?”

“Probably not.”

“John…”

He thought about it.

“Maybe one person.”

Cindy grabbed her smartphone from the dash and handed it to John.

“Call him now.”

John looked at her.

“I can’t. I’m driving.”

Cindy took the phone back.

“Ok, then give me yours and I’ll text him. What’s his number?”

“I don’t know if he’ll be able to cover.”

“That’s why we’re asking now.”

John grinned.

“What would I do without you?”

“Get into a car accident.”

They both laughed.

“Alright here,” John handed her his phone, “Text Matt. It should say hospital next to his name.”

“Got it.”

Cindy quickly typed the message and hit send, “Done.” She said.

“Fantastic.” He said.

John signaled and made a turn at the light.

Cindy placed his phone in the dashboard and turned down the car stereo before turning to look out the window.

As they passed she could see a man handing out paper fliers on the sidewalk. He was wearing a suit shaped to look like a large bar of soap.

“Hilarious!” Cindy laughed. “Look at that.”

John kept his eyes on the road.

“What is it?” He asked.

“Just something silly,” she said. “It’s not important.”

The light turned red and John stopped at the crosswalk.

A car pulled up on his right side.

Followed by another one on his left.

All three of them were sitting at the light.

“What is that?” Cindy said.

Something was very loud.

Behind them the flashing red siren of an ambulance.

“Shit.” John said. “We have to move.”

“We can’t.”

“Someone could be in trouble.”

“It’s a red light. Let them go around.”

“They can’t”

“And you can’t move.”

“There’s no traffic coming in the other direction, if I can just pull out front—”

“John, it’s a red light.”

“We have to move.”

“Let them go around.”

“They can’t!”

“John it’s a red light!”

“Someone could be hurt!”

John pressed his foot on the accelerator.

“If the ambulance doesn’t get there in time—”

Cindy froze as the car lurched forward.

“John—”

“We have to help,” he said.

The ambulance lights flashed in the mirror.

John engaged the pedal.

The car cleared the crosswalk.

He turned right to pull up to the curb.

The ambulance passed through the opening they had left behind.

Towards whatever emergency had called it.

In the rearview mirror John could see a large truck passing through the intersection.

Another wave of cars passed before the light changed.

John and Cindy looked at each other with a sigh of relief.

Then the car in front of them began honking it’s horn.

So did the one next to it.

The light was green.

“We have to go,” Cindy said. “We’re blocking traffic.”

John laughed.

“I can’t. We’re stuck.”