

## **YOU HAVE ARRIVED AT YOUR DESTINATION**

**By Liane Fazio**

“In 100 feet, turn right,” the robotic female voice announced through the car’s speakers. Heather checked her side mirror, rearview mirror, turned on her right turn signal and eased into the right lane although there were no other cars on the road. The driving app still said she was only twelve minutes away. It felt like she was driving forever. She was getting drowsy and needed to stretch soon. She turned right.

Heather didn’t like driving at night. The oncoming headlights messed with her depth perception. But she didn’t have a choice after getting the phone call from her mom earlier that day. She rushed out of the house hoping to make it in time. Not having been to the rest home before, Heather typed in the address her mom had given into the driving app on her phone and set off on the seven-hour journey.

The sun was setting as she took the exit ramp off the expressway. That was what? An hour ago? No. It was full dark now. Two hours? She swears she should’ve been there by now. Before she exited the expressway she tried to call her mom via Bluetooth but there was no signal. Since then, the only connection she had was with the driving app. Not familiar with the area, Heather didn’t even want to turn on the radio for fear of getting distracted.

Her stomach rumbled. When was the last time she ate? Actually, when was the last time she passed a restaurant? Or a gas station? She glanced at her phone mounted on the dash and the driving app showed her car still driving forward and she was going to have to turn left soon.

“I have to be lost,” she said out loud. “I should have been there by now.” Heather peered through the windshield at the darkness. No cars were driving towards her from the other direction. “What town am I in?” She looked out her window but saw nothing.

“At the next street, turn left,” came the robotic female voice through the car’s speakers. Heather jumped. She looked in the mirrors again but didn’t see one car anywhere. Just in case a cop was hiding, she turned on her left turn signal and turned left.

The road was dark aside from for her headlights upon the blacktop. No streetlights, moon nor stars illuminated the roadway. The car’s headlights cut into the night’s darkness only ten feet in front of her. She slowed the car’s speed.

Heather’s finger clicked the button on the door and the driver’s side window rolled down. The breeze that came in smelled bland and not refreshing. There wasn’t a coolness to it or even a hint of earthiness. She looked at the map app again. It showed a straight arrow for 2.1 miles and ten minutes. At least it was progress, but where was she? Her phone still showed no bars so how was the map app still able to function? She tried to call her mom using Bluetooth anyway just in case she could get through. Nothing.

Her stomach growled again, louder this time. Keeping her eyes on the road, she dug in her bag that was laying on the passenger seat and rooted around for something to eat. She felt the familiar shape of a protein bar and pulled it out, ripped the end off with her teeth and took a big bite. It was smooshed and stale but tasted so good. She washed it down with the last of her water and immediately regretted it.

“Dammit,” she whispered. Looking out every window and checking each mirror, she slowly pulled to the side of the road. Turning the headlights and car off, Heather sat there for a full

minute listening to the night outside. She heard nothing. Sliding over to the passenger seat, she clasped the door handle and quietly opened the door. She unhooked her phone from the dash and tentatively stepped outside. The night was quiet and still.

She dropped her jeans and panties and holding onto the open passenger door squatted on the side of the road and peed. Looking up the sky was completely black, not a star in the sky. She looked up and down the road. No lights of any kind. Peering behind her, all she could see was dead grass and darkness. She finished, wiggled her bottom, pulled up her clothes, crawled into the car, slammed the door shut and punched the lock button. Turning the flashlight on her phone she peered into the back seat. She was still alone. Heather slid back into the driver's seat, mounted her phone, pulled up the map app, started the car, turned the headlights back on and continued on her route.

"At the next intersection, turn right," the robotic female voice announced. Heather shook her head. She was following the painted lines in the middle and side of the road since there were no streetlights and she just realized since she exited the expressway she has yet to see roadkill. Which is good, she supposed. There was an intersection up ahead.

"OK, I'll turn right," Heather sighed. She turned on her right turn signal and turned right. The road looked exactly the same as the one she had just turned off of. "This is just stupid. Where in the hell am I?" She looked at the map app. Only .25 miles from her destination. "A quarter of a mile left? There's nothing here! What could possibly be up ahead in a quarter of a mile?" she asked aloud.

"You have arrived at your destination," the robotic female voice announced. Heather stopped the car. This had to be wrong. Peering out the windshield, she saw where the road

ended. Literally. Turning to look out the passenger window, all she could see was a field of dead grass. Same on the driver's side. Checking the rearview mirror, she saw only her taillights. She opened the door and got out. The night air was still and quiet. She looked around once more. Nothing. No one. She slowly walked to the front of her car. With the tip of her finger, she touched the fabric of existence. Her destination.