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554 words

Secrets

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“Hey, get your smelly feet out of the front seat!” Clara exclaims while still facing forward.

“What? What’s your problem?” Dave replies.

“Say you guys,” Ray intones as he shifts the battered orange Opel into higher gear, “This is going to be a very long trip if you two don’t stop sniping at each other.”

“Oh, Mister Adult,” Dave snaps.

“This car is too small for him to be stretching out like that.” Clara declares. “Don’t go taking his side.”

“I’m not taking sides!” says Dave, “I have not said anything about you two for the last fifty miles, but your dynamic is starting to grate on me.”

Dave shrugs as he bunches up a sweatshirt and tucks it under his head, not repositioning his outstretched legs overhanging Clara’s bucket seat. “That’s how we get along,” he says.

“You think we get along?” Clara swivels her head to face Dave directly. “Hey, I’m talking to you; open your eyes!”

Without moving, Dave whispers “You know you secretly want me.”

“Arrrgh!” Clara groans. “You know Ray, if we killed him now, no one would suspect us. I don’t think anyone from the office even knows he’s riding with us.”

“We could dump him in that ditch,” Ray offers, gesturing roadside.

“Hey!” Dave says, eyes wide open, “I thought you weren’t taking sides!”

“I wasn’t then; now I am.”

“You just want to get in her pants,” Dave replies.

“And you don’t!” says Ray.

“Boys, I’m flattered, really—” Clara begins.

“Oh shut up,” Dave snaps.

“Yep, that’s a way to get a girl to want to go out with you again; tell her to shut up.” Clara shakes her head.

“Again?” Ray asks.

“What? Did I— um— I mean—” Clara caught herself.

“You said not to tell anybody; but there you go,” Dave laughs.

“Oh shut up!” Clara punches Dave’s leg.

“Ow!” Dave pulls his leg towards his chest.

“Good! Get out of my seat!” Clara pushes against his shin, laughing.

“Oh christ, I’m stuck in a car with two lovesick puppies.” Ray moans, reaching to open the glove compartment.

“What? I so do not want her!” Dave retorts.

Without turning towards Dave, Clara states matter-of-factly “You know you secretly want me.” Dave snaps his head to look out the window.

“Can you hand me the map on top there,” Ray asks Clara.

“What, you’re going to drive and read a map at the same time? I was kidding about killing.”

Clara says, pulling out the map and closing the small black door. She unfolds the map and asks “What do you want to know?”

“Um, if taking Route 17 would be better than Route 4.” Ray said.

“I have the map they gave us; it shows the best route.” Clara says, pulling out a bright pink

sheet of paper with “Company Picnic” laser printed with a tacky ribbon graphic across the top.

“Exit 5 off Route 17. Are we close?”

“Closer than I thought; we just passed Exit 4. Thank god this ride is almost over.”

“Yeah,” Clara smirks, sneaking a glance at Ray.

Dave says in sing-song, “I’m — still — HERE — you know!”

Ray looks back at Clara, his eyes silently pleading “You know I secretly want you.”