

# **The Rental Car**

**By**

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## CHARACTERS

Man 50+

Woman 40+

*There's a platform centre stage to the left at an angle , two feet high, with a steering wheel and four chairs.*

*Enter Man clutching papers and pushing a suitcase. He is flustered.*

MAN

(shouting, angrily)

I told you we should have left yesterday.

*He struggles with the case*

Damn this fucking case! Never goes in the direction I want it to.

*He sees the car.*

Oh my God! That can't be it.

*Enter Woman pulling two suit cases and a hat box*

WOMAN

Help me!

MAN

Have you seen this?

(indicating the car)

It's a fucking tank!

WOMAN

Will you stop swearing? You've been like this since you got up this morning. Help me. That's the rental car?

MAN

*In trying to help her his case falls over. He checks the papers for the rental car.*

That's what it says. Tahoe.

WOMAN

I am not driving that.

MAN

I thought you said it would be a compact.

WOMAN

I got the cheapest rate so you take whatever they've got. I thought it was bound to be a VW or Toyota Corolla or something... Would you PLEASE help me with this case?

MAN

Well, if you didn't bring your whole bloody wardrobe ...

WOMAN

You really do not understand women do you? We are going to our daughter's wedding.

MAN

Did it never occur to you, that you can only wear one dress at a time.?

WOMAN

Just stop arguing. We're late. Can you drive this thing?

MAN

I have no idea. At least if I hit someone I have the reassuring knowledge that I will NOT be the one who gets killed.

WOMAN

Check the paperwork. Are there any instructions.

MAN

I'm trying to find them.

WOMAN

We're late. We're over three hours late.

MAN

*As he tries to check the paperwork, he drops part of it*  
Shit. It's not my fault we're late. It's the airline's.

*As he scrambles to get the paperwork, he drops the car keys.*

I told you we should have got a flight yesterday. You always leave everything to the last minute. I've lost the damn car key. Where's the fucking key?

WOMAN

Please stop swearing. Get a grip.

MAN

Where's the key. It was in my hand a moment ago.

WOMAN

It's there by your foot.

MAN

Okay. Got it. I don't know what the world is coming to. The guy at the car rental Counter was an Indian. I could barely understand him.

*He imitates Indian accent*

He said "We have only two units left Chevy Tahoe SUV or Toyota Truck . You will be taking which one? I will be having the one with the chicken curry and the papadum. Thank you very, very much. "

(resumes his normal accent)

I didn't think you wanted to go to our daughter's wedding in a truck.

*He mimes putting the key in and opening the car door*

WOMAN

I don't and stop with the swearing and the racist jokes. Your future son in laws family are LDS so no religious jokes either.

MAN

LSD? They're druggies?

WOMAN

L D S... Latter Day Saints. Just open the back, put in the cases, get in the car and drive it.

MAN

*He puts in the cases*

We could have taken the whole family in this. God knows how much gas it uses.

WOMAN

I'm sure our daughter's husband will be impressed. Will you help me up? It's too high.

MAN

Here ya' go. O.K. Cases on, bags in, you're onboard. Paperwork stowed.  
(he helps her up in the car and goes to the driver's side)

Please Lord, preserve me from American drivers.

WOMAN

What do you mean by that?

MAN

Well, you know how Americans drive. Basic philosophy is: Can I kill somebody?

WOMAN

You think the British drive any better. They barely have roads. Itsy bitsy tiny little cars.

MAN

How does this thing work?

WOMAN

Put the key in the ignition.

MAN

Not used to this old technology.

WOMAN

That's ironic coming from you.

MAN

I'm a technologically selective Luddite and proud of it. I only use what works and saves time.

WOMAN

Old fart is more appropriate.

MAN

Do you mind? Could we just try for a brief while to get on with each other? It's bad enough Americans don't know the right side of the road to drive on.

WOMAN

It's called the right side of the road for a reason.

MAN

I am just going to ignore you. Now... how do you get it into gear? Oh, start the engine. Right. This must be the gear lever... on the column. Stupid thing. How do you know when it's in drive or not? It's automatic isn't it?

WOMAN

No. Look at the dashboard.

MAN

There's nothing there.

WOMAN

There.

*She points*

MAN

I can't even see it. Why have they hidden it?

WOMAN

D for Drive.

MAN

Right... Oh, brake. Where is it?

WOMAN

It'll be on your left... a pedal.

MAN

Hand Brake on a pedal?

WOMAN

It's designed that way to make it easier. Just press with your foot and release. It's easy.

MAN

All right. Brake off. In drive. Press accelerator.

WOMAN

Watch out!

MAN

What?

WOMAN

Someone just walked in front of us.

MAN

God Almighty. You frightened me. Don't shout at me.

WOMAN

I thought you were going to run her over.

MAN

I have never run over anything except a cat once.

WOMAN

Yea, my cat. Just drive will you.

*The car lurches forward*

MAN

Whoops... bit heavy on the accelerator. O.K. Where now?

WOMAN

There. Exit.

MAN

And after that?

WOMAN

The Hotel. I've already programmed the directions into my Iphone

MAN

O.K.

WOMAN

Just follow the signs and listen to me.

*She brandishes her Iphone*

Turn left at the next intersection.

MAN

O.K. I'm turning left .

*There's a pause as if they are driving. She looks at her Iphone then looks up and screams.*

WOMAN

THAT'S WAS A STOP SIGN

MAN

I know it was a stop sign. I WAS stopping until you yelled at me.

WOMAN

Take the next left.

MAN

What do you mean the next left?. There are four lanes. We're in the wrong lane.

WOMAN

THE NEXT LEFT. Watch that car on the right.

MAN

It says NO ENTRY. Don't backseat drive.

WOMAN

Take the middle lane. It must be the next one.

MAN

You'll get us killed.

WOMAN

Just do what I say.

O.K. O.K. Hold on...Let me see.



MAN

There's a junction coming up. Do I turn left?

WOMAN

No. Yes. Just..... I don't think this is working properly...

MAN

I'm going to go straight ahead.

WOMAN

NO! You should've turned left .

MAN

Shit!

WOMAN

Just keep going... we have to double back.... Where are we going?

Look there's the freeway on the left . The road we SHOULD be on..

MAN

We're running parallel.

WOMAN

WATCH OUT!

MAN

What's the matter with him?

WOMAN

You're on the wrong side of the road.

MAN

Sorry. This is so confusing. I thought it was.....You got me all flustered.

WOMAN

*She is frightened*

Just take it easy. We'll have to double back. Look, pull into that little side road. By the ditch You can reverse back. That's the road we should be on over there.

MAN

Right.

(he is visibly shaken)

Sorry... That was stupid... I...

WOMAN

That's all right.

(pause)

Let's take a deep breath.

MAN

This car's enormous.

WOMAN

Just take it easy.

MAN

Why don't you drive?

WOMAN

I have never driven a car this size either.

MAN

We're going to be late for the wedding.

WOMAN

No, we're not. I'll just redo the directions on Goggle. It's a thirty minute drive to the church from the hotel. Hold on. Yes... we'll have to go back the way we came. Back to that junction.

MAN

Look....it must be at least a twenty minute drive to the hotel, then we have to sign in, get changed and leave for the wedding which is at three. It's 11:30 Now.

WOMAN

11:30? Are you sure?

MAN

I checked my watch before we left the house.

WOMAN

But this is a different time zone isn't it?

MAN

Oh God yes. I forgot. It must be one thirty. We're two hours behind.

WOMAN

I said we'd be arriving early...

MAN

Give them a ring. Tell them we've been delayed.

WOMAN

All right.

MAN

It'll be fine.

WOMAN

*She phones, looks at him.*

Not picking up...All the preparations....must be difficult.... Getting married without your mom there...

*Leaves a message*

Hi! It's Mom and Dad. Flight was delayed. We had a little problem with the rental car. But we'll be there. Love you. So excited. Hope...

*She puts her finger over the microphone on the phone*

What the hell was his name?

MAN

Frank. No, Flint.

WOMAN

Flint? Hope - Flint is ... O.K. Byeeee. See you soon. Give me a call if you have time. Love you.

MAN

We'll never make it unless we go straight to the church.

WOMAN

But I can't go like this...

MAN

We can changed in the car. God's knows it's big enough. This is perfect. Right where we are. It's quiet and there's no traffic. Must be a back road to the airport. We'll change and then go straight to the church. I'll get the clothes.

*He opens the car door and slithers down into a heap.*

Owwwww..... There's a damn ditch.

WOMAN

Are you all right?

MAN

No...I've hurt my leg.

WOMAN

Do you want me to help you?

MAN

No. Stay where you are. I've got dirt all over me. You get in the back seat. I'll get the cases. Which one do you want?

WOMAN

I don't know.

*He goes to the back of the car, mimes opening the trunk and passes the cases over the back seat. He brings his own case to the front. She gets out of her seat and goes into the back..*

MAN

I'll change in the front. These trousers are ruined. I hurt my leg.

*He pushes his case into the driver's seat and gets into the other front seat.*

*She opens her case, finds her dress. He takes off his trousers.*

Ruined.

WOMAN

Are you sure no one is watching? It feels odd taking your clothes off in a car

MAN

It's just a back road. If anyone sees us they'll just think we're having a bit of fun.

WOMAN

There was a time.

MAN

If it was before me. I don't want to hear about it.

WOMAN

I've got my dress and hat but I need to put my panty hose on.

MAN

I've grazed my knee.

WOMAN

This is going to be a squeeze. Where's my make-up?

*This whole bit should be very funny as she doesn't know what to do with her hat so puts it on and tries to get on her panty hose under her slip. He is in his boxers.*

MAN

I hate this shirt.

WOMAN

It looks nice on you. The blue tie.

MAN

Whatever you say. I'm too old for this.

*The phone rings and they both frantically look for it.  
Woman finds it under her stuff.*

WOMAN

Oh... that'll be her now. Yes darling. We're on our way. Flight was delayed. What? Yes. We should get there any.... What? Yes... the 11th. It was on the invitation. 3:00 P.M.. You said...It's what? The 17th?... are you sure? Of course you're sure. No... We must have made a mistake. I had it down on the calendar for the 11th. Silly me. Of course, it was your father's fault. He writes those funny French 7s with a line through it. Not to worry. We'll just take the hire car back and get a flight back home. No problem. No, we're fine. You take care. We'll see you next week. Say Hi to Flint.

MAN

Bloody Hell.

WOMAN

It's all your fault.

MAN

My fault? Look. . I didn't put the wrong date down on our shared calendar. Next time, I will book the flight and we'll get a compact car!!

WOMAN

All right. Stopping fussing. We'll just put our clothes back on.... My God. Why on earth is that police car stopping?

MAN

Oh No!!!!

