

Ninety Miles Out

Ninety miles outside the nearest “metropolitan area.” If you’d ever been to a city before, you could forgive someone for mistaking Marfa, Texas as such. Nonetheless, Dan & his brother broke down just ninety miles west of Marfa and they sat ass-first on the dirt road wondering how they missed the warning signs.

“I’ll give it t’ya for, say, \$125.”

“A day?”

“Oh, Lord no! Till October 3rd.” *It was September 16th.*

“Really? That sounds great! We can definitely do that!”

The woman was eager to hand over the keys, but before she could she had one more detail to explain.

“When you drop it off, just make sure it’s at any o’our locations besides this’n.”

It all seemed so clear in retrospect.

“Why the hell else would she say, ‘drop it off anywhere but here,’” Jake attacked

“To be fair, she didn’t use those exact words.”

“The hell she didn’t,” he kicked the tire from the roadside, letting himself fall into the plain just beyond the road. “What were we thinking?”

“We were thinking we’d meander down to Albuquerque for the better part of three weeks on the cost of a tire rotation. Can you blame us?”

“Hell yes I can blame us!”

The magenta sky rolled in overhead. The thunder roared and cattle moaned from somewhere off in the ghostly distance. One thing could be certain — the rainy season was upon them.

Dan pointed at the cab of the truck.

“Shall we take to our lodgings for the night?”

“I’d rather sleep in the rain,” Jake shot back.

The door creaked open. The weather was biblical. Even with his eyes closed, Dan had seen enough Texas rainstorms to recognize this as among the worst he’d experienced. Was this to be his ark? He and his brother tasked with collecting two of every animal — the jackrabbits, the cattle, the armadillos, beavers, longhorns, and all matter of owls would be stowed within their Uhaul, saved for some greater purpose that God had in mind.

Meanwhile, humans would die off because, for the life of them, neither Jake nor Dan had any luck finding girlfriends for themselves.

The door slammed shut.

“Don’t you say a word,” Jake offered. The sound of his wet ponytail thwapped against the leather seat. “I know you’re awake and don’t you say a word.”

Dan opened his eyes. Facing the window he looked out as the clouds parted just enough for the silver glisten of the moon to peak through. It existed for that moment, before being thrust backwards behind the clouds — making room for their starring debut. He shut his eyes again without saying a word.

Morning proved fresh & refreshing. For the first time in as much as a month, the air felt breathable. It was a wonder how’d anyone survived so long in such putrid, recycled-tasting air. This — this was the future and, aside from the car trouble, indicative of life to come.

The passenger side door was ajar. *That would explain the air.* Jake was already awake, if he had slept at all. He stood at the front of the truck, examining the map they’d been given at check-out.

“Mornin’, Dan!”

“G’morning man,” his words felt as long as his arms as he stretched to his limit from inside the cab.

“I’ve got a plan for us.”

Dan opened his side door and got out, on wobbly feet.

“Yeah? And what’s that?” His yawn was powerful, nearly lulling him back off to sleep.

“Take a look here. We’re just under ninety miles outside of Marfa. With what we’ve got in the back, I doubt we could make it there without a bit o’ help...”

Dan followed along fruitlessly, taking in less information from the map the harder he tried.

“...But! We’re only about seven miles outside of this place ‘Quebec.’ I figure we could walk there no sweat & maybe find a place to fix the axel or at least a tow truck willing to give us a lift. Hell! If we’re lucky maybe we can drop this sack o’ shit off at their own Uhaul storage if’n they got it!”

The air, Dan took note of again, felt fresh...new. They might, as his brother said, make it there ‘with no sweat.’

“I suppose we haven’t a choice.”