

"ALL ROADS LEAD AWAY"

FADE IN:

1 INT. CAR - DAY

RICHARD is driving. His girlfriend, KATE, is in the passenger seat, writhing around as she tries to get comfortable and maybe catch a few Zs.

The backseat of the car is absolutely CRAMMED with stuff - luggage, trash bags, whatever. These are clearly two people who are down on their luck - everything they own is in this car, including an annoying SOMETHING that hangs from the rearview mirror.

RICHARD

What are you doing? You can't go to sleep.

KATE

I'm tired.

RICHARD

You have to stay up and help ME stay up.

KATE

You're the one who picked the route, so you get to drive it.

RICHARD

I'm telling you, this way -

KATE

This way is almost twice as long.

RICHARD

- we can meet up with my buddy Larry.

KATE

Right, right. Famous Larry. Famous buddy Larry Gardner...

RICHARD

Shut up, Kate. God, I hate that tone in your voice.

KATE

Get used to it. It's only gonna get worse when we run out of gas.

RICHARD

I promise you. I promise. We'll make it. You and me. You hear me? You and me.

KATE  
I hear you.

RICHARD  
Larry will lend me some money. And  
once we get to Cleveland, my brother's  
gonna let us stay with him until -

KATE  
I can't wait.

RICHARD  
There's that tone again.

KATE  
The needle's getting closer to E.

RICHARD  
Fine. Go to sleep. Maybe then I'll  
fall asleep and we'll die in a fiery  
crash.

Richard bats the SOMETHING around and growls at it.

RICHARD (CONT.) (CONT'D)  
I hate this thing!

KATE  
My mom gave it to me.

Richard yanks it off the mirror and tosses it on the floor.  
Kate's half-asleep and doesn't even notice.

2 INT. - OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

RICHARD  
Just let me do the talking, Okay?

KATE  
What would I have to say to him?

RICHARD  
Exactly.

LARRY opens the door and ushers them into the office.

LARRY  
Richard! Holy God, man! It's been  
forever! How are you?

RICHARD  
I've been better, man. Uh, this is  
Kate...

They shake hands.

LARRY  
What's wrong?

RICHARD  
Things are a little tight, and we're  
trying to get to Cleveland. Hey,  
could, uh, we talk in private?

He and Larry go over to another area of the office. Kate watches, almost bored. We can hear Larry and Richard talking - not the specifics, just the tone - and from that and from Kate's expression, we can tell it's not going well.

LLOYD walks over to Kate, clearing his throat.

LLOYD  
Hi, I'm, uh, Lloyd. I'm a designer  
here with Larry. I couldn't help  
overhearing that you're having a  
little bit of, uh, trouble.

KATE  
We are.

LLOYD  
Well, uh, I might be able to, uh, help  
out, you know?

KATE  
Really?

LLOYD  
Well, we could maybe come to a, uh, an  
arrangement, you know? An  
understanding.

Kate stares at him for a second before she gets it. Then she bursts out laughing so loud that everyone in the office turns to watch. Lloyd looks around nervously and slinks away.

Richard comes over and takes Kate's hand and they head for the door.

3 INT. CAR - LATER

KATE  
"I promise you."

RICHARD  
Stop it.

KATE  
"I promise."

RICHARD  
Kate...

KATE  
 "Larry will lend me some money..."

Richard slams on the brakes.

4 EXT. SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

From a distance, we see Richard barrel out of the car and start kicking the gravel by the side of the road, etc. He's throwing his hands up in the air, yelling. Kate stays in the car until he comes around to the passenger side and kicks the tire there.

Then she jumps out of the car and starts yelling at him, pointing at the tire (the message clearly being, "Hey, idiot, if you kick the car to death, we're REALLY screwed!")

5 INT. BAR - LATER

Kate is eating chicken fingers with a DIPPING SAUCE. A waitress comes by and sort of sullenly drops a basket of French fries in front of Richard.

WAITRESS  
 Here ya go, big spender.

RICHARD  
 You just cut your tip in half.

WAITRESS  
 'Course half of nothin's still nothin'.

RICHARD  
 Go sleep with the cook or something.

WAITRESS  
 Don't I wish.

The waitress walks off.

KATE  
 I'm tired.

RICHARD  
 I know.

KATE  
 I don't mean like sleepy or anything.  
 Although I am sleepy. I mean -

RICHARD  
 I know what you mean.

KATE

I mean tired of having to decide  
between food and gas. Tired of  
sleeping in the car. Tired of always  
getting the cheapest shit on the menu.

RICHARD

I said I knew what you meant. Jesus!

Silence for a beat.

KATE

Michael lives near here.

Richard looks up. He is NOT happy.

KATE (CONT'D)

Don't be like that.

The waitress shows up to refill the water glasses.

WAITRESS

Yeah, don't be like that.

They both look at her.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Just trying to help.

She shrugs and leaves.

RICHARD

No. No way.

KATE

But -

RICHARD

No!

KATE

It was years ago.

RICHARD

You SLEPT with him.

KATE

YEARS ago.

RICHARD

Forget it. No. The stories you've told  
me about him...

KATE

I'm not sleeping in the goddamn car  
again tonight!

RICHARD

We're not seeing your old boyfriend  
for a handout, either!

KATE

Fine. Then let's go back to Larry and  
ask him for help again. That worked  
out well.

Richard slams his fist on the table and gets up and walks  
away. Kate doesn't even watch him go. After a moment, she  
pulls his fries over to her and - after dipping one in her  
sauce - eats.

The waitress comes over.

WAITRESS

Better off without him, honey.

KATE

Shut up.

6 INT. CAR - LATER

RICHARD

Fine. Fine.

Kate smiles.

7 EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE

MICHAEL is shocked to see Kate at his door.

MICHAEL

Katie! Oh my God! I can't believe it!

They hug, maybe just a little too tightly, before Michael  
notices Richard glaring.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And you must be Richard.

He breaks the clinch with Kate and offers his hand to  
Richard, who takes it after a long moment.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Come on in, you guys...

8 INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Michael stands by the stove while Kate sits at a table,  
nursing a mug of hot tea.

KATE

We didn't even get a chance to go back  
into the house for half our stuff.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)  
They just locked it up while we stood there, begging them for five minutes. Just five more minutes.

MICHAEL  
I'm so sorry.

KATE  
The first couple of years were like magic. I mean, everything was just perfect. And then it's like... the whole world just fell apart.

MICHAEL  
Kate...

KATE  
Richard's brother says we can stay with him in Cleveland, maybe help Richard find some work. But we have to get there, and it's been tough. I can't lie, it's been really -

OFF, a TOILET FLUSHES.

KATE (CONT'D)  
It's been bad, is all.

MICHAEL  
If you guys need a little bit of money...

Richard enters.

RICHARD  
We're fine, thanks. Just a bed for the night is great

KATE  
But -

RICHARD  
I said we're fine.

He walks out.

Michael clears his throat and gives Kate a rather significant look. She slumps a little bit in the chair.

9 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard is asleep on the floor. Kate's on the sofa. She gets up, very quietly, worried about waking Richard. Then she steals down the hallway...

10 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Michael is fast asleep. Kate stands in the doorway, watching him. She looks back down the hall, then back towards Michael, then puts her face in her hands.

11 EXT. OUTSIDE MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Richard is trying to rearrange some stuff in the backseat when Kate comes out. A good night's sleep has done Richard a world of good - he's upbeat and jovial.

RICHARD

Oh, there you are. Thought maybe you weren't coming.

Kate says nothing.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Come on, Katie-loo. Gotta get a move on. I know a guy in Scranton who can let us spend a couple of days at his place and give me some piece work while we're there. But we gotta get going.

Kate still says nothing.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Come on, baby. I'm sorry. I really am. I was wrong, Okay, is that what you want to hear? Michael's an all right guy, I guess. I was wrong. I'll go apologize to him, too, Okay?

He goes to hug Kate, but she takes a step back.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What? What's wrong?

Kate reaches out with both hands, opening them to reveal a mass of crumpled bills.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What the hell...?

KATE

This is for you. I've been holding it. Just in case. I want you to have it.

RICHARD

What?

KATE

I'm not going with you.

RICHARD

What? What?

KATE

I can't take it any more. I just can't. It's too much.

RICHARD

But we just have to get to Scranton! We're home-free after that. I promise.

KATE

I don't care. I can't handle this any more. I can't make this my life. I'm staying here.

RICHARD

But you don't love him. You told me you never loved him.

KATE

It doesn't matter any more.

She pushes the bills at him and he takes them.

KATE (CONT'D)

Goodbye.

She leans over to kiss him on the cheek, then stops and shakes her head and turns. She walks back to the house.

Richard stands there, shocked.

12 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kate enters.

MICHAEL

You okay?

She nods.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You'll miss him, and that's okay.

KATE

No. I'll be glad when he's gone.

She looks out the window. Richard has the back door open and is pulling out Kate's belongings, leaving them on the ground. Michael comes up and puts his hands on Kate's shoulders. She shivers a little.

13 EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Richard takes one look back at the house. Shakes his head. He gets in the car. The pile of money is on the passenger seat.

He spies the SOMETHING on the floor. Picks it up. Stares at it.

RICHARD  
You and me.

He hangs the SOMETHING on the rear view mirror and starts the car.

14 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Kate watches Richard drive away, her belongings still piled on the ground.

FADE OUT.