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100 Miles Per Hour

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100 Miles Per Hour

Five miles per hour felt dreadfully slow on the gravel driveway of the White River Drive-Ins. Mazzy barely had to brake once stopping at the ticket window. Charlie, sitting in the passenger's seat, passed her a crumpled wad of cash, totaling nine dollars. She took her own wallet out from the glove compartment, the door hitting his knees as it dropped open, and unzipped her wallet to scrounge for more.

As she handed the man a handful of bills— crinkled fives and ones, he gave her two printed tickets. She wondered what their purpose was. She imagined turning fifty, attending scrapbook meets in the Baptist Church basement, pasting hand-cut hearts and the same printed tickets to a page.

After driving through rows of cars, Mazzy found a slim vacant space between a bunch of rocking vehicles. She parked the car, but left it on and cranked up the volume to hear the previews. She and Charlie crawled over the center console to the back seat.

"Here we are," Charlie announced, trying to be clever or ease her tension. He stretched out, wrapping his narrow arm over her shoulders like a boa constrictor tightening its choke.

"Grammy wants you to come over this Sunday for brunch," he said. "My cousins from Delaware are visiting."

"Okay."

A black-and-white cartoon of a striped box of popcorn and a paper soft drink container danced across the screen, singing about White River's refreshment counter, but the front seats blocked Mazzy's view. She meddled with the levers, but the seats only reclined so far.

"Don't worry about it, babe," Charlie said.

Mazzy gave up, leaving the seats at an awkward angle. She sat back next to Charlie. As the Pixar logo appeared, and the little desk lamp bopped across the

screen to trampoline on letters, Charlie placed his hand on top of her knee. He rested his head on her shoulder, something she always believed worked the other way around. His body heat was overwhelming in the muggy, summer air. He was stuck to her like cling wrap.

He kissed into her neck, trying to mimic some sort of sucking sensation he'd seen actors perform in movies. His hot breath on her skin sent uncomfortable chills through her. Mazzy twitched, something he mistook for pleasure, and she felt the purple mark deepening on her neck, draining the blood and the feeling until her skin was raw.

Charlie came up for air. She wished she could, too.

"I love you," Charlie told her, and without waiting for an answer, targeted another spot on her neck.

She held the movie ticket in her hand, picking at its splintering corners and crinkling its perfect flat shape.