

j. Snodgrass

Louder and Faster

“Police! I’m commandeering this vehicle! Now follow that--”

“Wow, Marla. Barging in, not so much as a--”

“Asher!?”

“Who else would it be? We bought this car together.”

“Drive! I don’t have time for your crap right now – follow that car!”

“I can’t reach the gear-shift, your thigh--”

“Is gonna kick your ass through that window if you finish that sentence. There, can you reach it now?”

“Marla, it’s been five years and--”

“Fine! How-you-been-how’s-your-mama – now drive!”

“She died.”

“DRIVE!”

“I’m driving!”

“Left! He just turned left!”

“I saw.”

“So why are you stopping?”

“There's a red light and my mother is dead!”

“Run it – GO!”

“And now all I can think about--”

“STOP, there's a TRUCK coming!”

“The last time I saw her she--”

“Now GO! Turn! He just turned right – can't you see?”

“Sorry but now I've got tears in my eyes! She was knitting a sweater.”

“What?”

“Mama, she was-- Her mind was gone, dementia, but her hands kept moving in this funny way and one of the nurses said it looked like she was knitting so I brought her some needles and--”

“Speed up!”

“She-knitted-a-whole-sweater-with-that-same-blank-gone-expression--”

“I meant drive faster!”

“I am! And then one day I came in, the sweater was done and she looked at me. Recognized me for the first time in two years and said--”

“Asher you idiot, keep your eyes on the road!”

“And she said 'Where's Marla? That fine girl I made her a sweater.' And I didn't have the heart to tell her we got divorced. And the next day she was dead.”

“Hm. So you never did stand up to that old bat. I didn't think-- OW! What!? Why'd you hit the brakes!? Go, GO! He's getting away!”

“That old bat' made you a sweater! With her dying hands.”

“And she made me an ulcer through our whole marriage--”

“Yes, but at the very end she finally--”

“FINE! I appreciate the sweater! Thank you Mrs. Moskowitz! Now DRIVE!”

“Maybe if you'd spoke to her like that when she was alive--”

“Nothing I said was gonna change that I'm not like you people, and--”

“Really? We're 'you people' now?”

“And you could never stand up to her and you could never stand up to me – little Asher always doing what Mama said. Now pull into the left lane. Left!”

“I'm trying.”

“Left!”

“Trying!”

“Stop 'trying' and take that lane like you own it! Do it, Asher! Do it! Go! Go! There! ...Was that so hard?”

“Um, ya know for a moment?”

“Oh, shut up and drive.”

“And, um...and you?”

“No, changing lanes was not like sex for me.”

“I meant 'and you' this last five years..? Thirty pounds and a police uniform – when did this happen?”

“I did not grow thirty pounds. You made me slimmer in your memory.”

“I clearly remember driving with you before and-- I certainly don't remember you ever saying you wanted to be a cop.”

“I needed a new start. Right! RIGHT! You've gotta be aggressive, Asher, you're letting all these soccer-mom minivans bully you!”

“You're the one who just hit me!”

“Pull over.”

“What? Why? We're right on his tail!”

“Because you can't handle a chase. I'm gonna commandeer someone else's car. Pull up next to that Lexus.”

“Forget it, there's no way that guy would let you in his car. Look at you! You're getting crumbs all over the place!”

“WHAT?”

“You're eating! In my car! And you know I--”

“I am not-- OH! OH! Asher, you bastard!”

“What? Ow! Stop hitting me, I'm driving!”

“You broke my diet!”

“What diet? You brought that donut in with you!”

“It wasn't supposed to get eaten, it was for an emergency! It's not even mine!”

“Oh yeah right. 'Officer I swear!’”

“Shut up! Shut! Up!”

“Stop hitting me with the donut!”

“I can't!”

“Yes you can!”

“No I can't – because if I do I'm gonna beat you to death with my nightstick!”

“Listen! I've had a lot of time to think about this--”

“No! No, Asher, you--”

“What I would say if I saw you again. And I didn't think we'd be going ninety on Main street, but--”

“We're barely doing seventy! Go!”

“But it feels like ninety because my heart-- I have to tell you I-- Mrfle-mffr-mruff-- P-tuh! Pfuh!

Don't feed me while I'm driving!”

“I have to shut you up - I couldn't share an apartment with your groveling, much less this tiny car! We need to catch that suspect! Run the light! Gun it! Peddle to the metal!”

“It is on the metal! Damn it Marla! You commandeered my car and you've commandeered this conversation-- Just like I let you commandeer our marriage but--”

“I did not – now gimme the steering wheel--”

“NO. I'm driving. And when I came back and Mama was dead I was too late, but I said it anyway, 'You were wrong. And I'm done doing what you say.' And we buried her with that ugly sweater and I made a promise to myself. And damn it I--”

“You buried my sweater!?”

“It wasn't gonna fit anyway and it was ugly and--”

“Asher! BRAKES!”

“FINE.”

“Oh! ...Oh, gross...”

“Ew... Right into the garbage truck...”

“I... I've gotta go read him his rights.”

“NO. He doesn't have any rights, I can see his brains on the windshield from here. Marla.”

“I need to call this in, you're released from--”

“Sit. Down. Now.”

“Asher, I--”

“SIT YOUR FAT ASS DOWN! ...I didn't mean that, you know I--”

“Yes you did.”

“It took me too long. To stand up to her and she was dead. And now I see you again, and we could all die any day... And that's why I've got to say... Marla...”

“Asher... You've already said it.”