

HITCHHIKER'S HIGHWAY

Written by

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EXT. HIGHWAY ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The road is visible for miles upon miles across the great planes. A storm looms on the horizon.

A 16-wheeler RUMBLES PAST. Headlights off.

IN THE TRUCK CAB

The red light of the radio dash falls on DARCY. Her eyes narrow against the darkness.

The road curves gently. The truck whines against the rumble strip. Darcy corrects course and flips on the headlights.

ON THE ROADSIDE a figure is silhouetted by the headlights. Darcy sees, but doesn't slow. The figure watches her pass.

A few yards later a different figure appears in the lights.

Darcy keeps driving, her hand hovers on the headlight toggle.

A THIRD FIGURE, a young man. He runs to the roadside, waving.

The rig grinds to a halt just past him. The man, ZECHARIAH, jogs over to the truck. Darcy calls down to him.

DARCY

Where you headed?

ZECHARIAH

Carson, it's just west-

DARCY

I know it. Heading home?

ZECHARIAH

Yeah, I was there a week ago. Just needed a lift back.

DARCY

I'm going to Wermont. Carson's on the way. I'll drop you there.

ZECHARIAH

Thanks! Uh-

DARCY

Darcy.

ZECHARIAH

I'm Zechariah. Thank you.

He climbs up into the passenger side of the cab and the rig rumbles off down the road.

INSIDE THE CAB

After a beat:

DARCY
Your name was Zacheriah?

ZECHARIAH
Ye- uh, Zechariah. Similar but-

DARCY
Yeah.

They pass another figure on the roadside.

DARCY (CONT'D)
Carson?

ZECHARIAH
It's my hometown. My family's still there. Parents and all that.

DARCY
You been there recently?

ZECHARIAH
Not since I was a kid. Wow, it really has been a while. Just hoping to crash with my folks while I find work.

DARCY
You talked to 'em yet?

ZECHARIAH
Who?

DARCY
Your folks. You just gonna show up and expect a bed?

Another figure, stock still, passes them on the shoulder.

ZECHARIAH
Guess not... Don't see why they'd turn me down, though. I mean we didn't have a falling out or anything.

DARCY

Yeah.

She turns off the headlights and the road straightens out.

ZECHARIAH

Whoah hey!

DARCY

Don't worry, there's no sharp turns out here.

ZECHARIAH

Still...

DARCY

How long's it been since you were in Carson?

ZECHARIAH

Not since I got recruited.

DARCY

Really? That long?

ZECHARIAH

Yeah, why are you driving blind?

DARCY

You want out?

ZECHARIAH

As long as you know what you're doing, I guess not.

He grips the door tightly.

ZECHARIAH (CONT'D)

What kind of stuff are you... hauling? Carrying?

DARCY

Paper products. Plates, napkins. Taking things from where no one needs them to where they belong.

ZECHARIAH

And these ones belong in Wermont. I've never been.

DARCY

Carson's on the way. Don't worry.

ZECHARIAH
Carson...

DARCY
When were you there last?

ZECHARIAH
Not since last October.

Heavy pause. Zechariah's expression grows puzzled.

DARCY
Ask it.

ZECHARIAH
Why do you keep asking me how long
it's been since I was home?

DARCY
Your answer keeps changing.

Zechariah freezes.

ZECHARIAH
I- what? It- what?

DARCY
When did you last go to Carson?

Zechariah fidgets in his chair. The rumble strip WHINES.

Darcy turns on the headlights. Zechariah squints at the sudden brightness through the window.

There are DOZENS OF FIGURES on the road side.

ZECHARIAH
I don't know, I can't think right
about it. Why can't I-

DARCY
It's okay.

ZECHARIAH
Why can't I think about it?

DARCY
You don't want to remember.

ZECHARIAH
(it's hurting him)
I was buried in Carson.

Darcy nods.

DARCY

But you didn't die there.

ZECHARIAH

I was buried in Carson. But I was still at my base... What's happening to me?

He looks at Darcy, scared for the first time.

DARCY

A ghost and a grave weren't meant to be apart. Most folks die at home. Get buried in town. But die far from your spot and you can't rest till you get back. I help. Take things from where they aren't needed them to where they belong.

ZECHARIAH

Why'd you pick me up-

She gestures to a figure on the road side. An older man.

DARCY

These folks aren't ready, and I can't stand seeing them like this. Things where they aren't meant to be... It ain't right. But you waved me down, you wanted a ride. I'll take you as far as you want to go. If you're not ready yet, you can join these folks and wave me down the next time I pass though.

ZECHARIAH

Yeah... Could you let me off here?

The rig grinds to a stop.

ZECHARIAH (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking me this far. I don't know. I just need time...

DARCY

Yeah... Yeah don't mention it.

He slowly gets out and walks to the roadside.

The trucks horn BLARES once. Then it rumbles to a start and takes off down the highway with the headlights off.

FADE TO BLACK.