

Change

by

Robin Fulford

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Driving along. Him and Her.

'Don't speed,' says Him.

Her continues to drive aggressively.

'Thanks for not speeding up.'

'Sorry. I was thinking of something else,' says Her.

'You think a lot about something else, don't you?'

'Do I? No, I don't.' she says.

'Well, it seems that way,' says Him. 'Go left,' he blurts.

'Oops, too late. Let's just go this way,' purrs Her.

'It's the wrong way. There's traffic down there. And flashing lights. We won't get through.'

'We might.'

'We might not. I don't want to get stuck,' emphasizes Him cracking out the "k".

'Well, who does? You make it sound as if I want to get stuck,' cracking back the "k".

'If you'd only turned left,' Him mutters.

'Don't mutter,' Her barks.

'Don't bark then.'

'I don't bark.'

'Then I don't mutter.'

'Well, you speak with your lips pursed and look away. That's muttering.'

'I do not purse, but you bark.'

'I do not bark!' Her barks. And then mutters, 'But that is what you are doing.'

'Pardon. I can't hear you. You're muttering,' Him pipes.

'Good. I'm talking to myself.'

'That's not all that polite.'

'Exactly.'

'You're speeding again. Hey, speed bump. Jesus!' as Him rifles up and down.

'Sorry.'

'Are you?'

'Do you blame me?'

Him says, 'I don't deal in blame.'

'Really? How things change.'

Him points his forefinger. Her leans back. 'Turn left there.'

'There? Why?'

'To get back on track. You missed the last turn.'

'Because you were daydreaming. And I don't want to get back on track,' Her insists.

'Then how are we going to get back?'

'We don't need to. There's lots of ways to get to the same point.'

'But all routes are not the same. Some take longer and are farther. Gas and time. It's simple. Turn left.' Him's voice squeaks up a notch.

Her turns left and speeds up.

'Speeding again.'

'Just accelerating, thank you very much.'

'That can be speeding too. It's better to just drive and let me navigate. And tell you when you are going to fast or are tailgating.'

'You're paranoid,' Her accuses.

'Do you blame me?'

'You were born that way.'

'Was I? I am not,' Him decides.

Her smirks in the rear view mirror. 'Got it all figured out, haven't you?'

'I just know myself,' Him says.

'And I know you too, but in a different way.'

'Turn left.'

'I don't want to backtrack anymore,' Her whines gnawingly.

'You drive, I navigate. It's always been that way.'

'Well let's change it then. It's my turn,' Her commands.

'Turn right then.'

'It's a one way street. Do you want us to die?'

Her pauses at the stop sign, and then turns left. 'I want to change,' Her says to the world as she speeds out of the turn throwing Him against the door.

'Change what?' Him bleats, pinned like a crazed hyena.

'Change me. I'm tired of me. I want to change myself. Tonight. Right now.'

'You can't just change like that. It's impossible. I mean, with time and therapy and weight lifting and -'

'Maybe impossible for you, but not for me.'

'Slow down. Limit is forty. Turn right at the lights. Another bump then a pothole.'

'I know and I don't care.'

'But if you change then things will be different,' Him reasons.

'I want something different. I want to be different doing different things.' Her speaks with fervor.

Him hesitates. 'Ah, well, I wouldn't want to change. I mean, what would I change into? I'd just kidding myself? Some say they change and don't, just get a new set of lies.

'For you maybe, but not for me.'

Him looks down the road. 'If you change I might not recognize you or like you. Or you might not recognize me or like me.'

'You're just being paranoid.'

'For good reason.' Him says, clutching the door handle. Him is getting alarmed. 'Slow down. When you get worked up you drive faster. I mean, if you change I might have to change too.

'Would that be such a bad thing?' Her asks.

'Well, it would mean...I might not like who I change into.

'That's your business,' Her says.

'But we're a team. We're two halves of a whole. Our love is based on...on us!' Him is barking again. She doesn't answer. Him looks at Her as she drives.

'What?' Her demands.

'Nothing.'

'You're looking at me.'

'I'm just looking.'

'What's wrong?' she asks looking in the rear view mirror at her face.

'Eyes on the road. I'm just looking. Can't I look?' Him watches the road while Her looks in the mirror.

'You just don't usually do that.'

'Some do change,' Him smirks.

'That's not a change,' says Her looking down to Him. Him puts his left hand on her accelerator thigh. 'Don't squeeze,' Her warns.

'I won't. Not this time...I love you.' Him looks at the odometer.

'Do you?' Her says, surprised.

'Yes, of course.'

'Then I love you too.'

'Would you love me if I didn't love you?' Him asks.

Her laughs. 'Why would I do that?'

'You didn't use your signal,' Him says. 'Do you love me only because I love you?'

'That's insulting.'

'See what's happening to me because you want to change.'

'Let's not talk anymore,' Her says.

They drive for thirty seconds in silence, his hand not touching her accelerator thigh anymore. Him then turns to Her. 'Just don't change tonight.' Her just drives. 'Am I a failure in your eyes?'

Her sighs and slows slightly. 'Everyone is a failure in my eyes, don't you see? That's one of the things I want to change.'

'But not tonight. Light's changed.'

'Don't worry. Not tonight. God, you are so...so... paranoid.'

'Don't say it. Pull up here. Good. So what do we need?'

'Groceries, I assume.' Her looks out the window.

'Which ones?'

'Anything you need.' Her revs the motor.

Him says, 'Turn it off. But I thought you needed something.'

'Get some milk then,' Her says. She leans back and closes her eyes.

Him undoes the seatbelt and grabs the door handle. 'You won't change while I'm gone, will you?'

'No, I won't change.'

'How will I know you haven't changed?'

'Ask.' Her settles farther into the seat.

Him opens the door. 'You might lie.'

'I don't lie anymore.' Her smiles.

'See, you've changed already and I'm not even out of the car.'

'Just kidding.'

'How do I know?'

Her rolls her head on the headrest and looks at Him. 'Trust me.'

'Is trust easier than love?'

'How do you define easy?'

Him feels his pockets. 'Got any change for the meter?'

'I think we're safe for a minute. I'll stand guard,' Her says.

'You mean sit guard.'

Him swings out the door, then bends in and looks at Her. Her looks back at Him. They stare into eyes they've never seen before, but somehow have always been hoping to find.

