

Baggage

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

A worn down, grey Toyota mini van hurdles down the highway in the left lane. The back of the car is packed with stuff, suitcases, blankets, a mattress, etc.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

A MOTHER sits in the driver seat with one hand gripping the bottom of the wheel. Her son, BEN, a teenager, sits in the passenger seat with his arms crossed and headphones in.

MOTHER
I'm doing my best.

Ben says nothing.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Ben.

Still no response. Ben's mother reaches over and swats at his headphones, knocking them out of his ears.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Benjamin.

BEN
What the hell?

Ben moves to put his headphones back in. His mother turns her head away from the road and shoots him warning look.

MOTHER
You better not.

Ben stares back at his mother for a moment, then sighs, turns away from her and tilts his head up towards the ceiling.

MOTHER
I'm doing my best.

BEN
I heard.

Ben's mother merges into the middle lane and then merges back into the left lane, passing the car in front of them.

MOTHER
I love you.

BEN
I miss Dad.

A few seconds of silence pass.

MOTHER
Yeah, well, he doesn't miss you.

BEN
You're the one he left.

MOTHER
Where is he then?

Ben's mother keeps her eyes fixed on the road ahead.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
You think you haven't heard from
him in years cuz he wants you
around?

Ben doesn't say anything and pulls out his phone, tapping the screen, as his mother merges into the middle lane again.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I didn't think so.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The old Toyota merges into the right lane and then turns off the highway at the next exit. The car makes a right turn from the exit ramp and continues straight down the road.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

BEN
Where are we going?

MOTHER
Gas.

BEN
I don't see why we had to leave
home in the first place.

MOTHER
Yes you do.

BEN
I don't.

MOTHER

Forget that we're two months behind on rent?

BEN

No, I just don't see how that's going to be any better in Texas. We don't know anyone there.

MOTHER

Exactly, no one knows us there.

Ben's mother turns off the road and pulls the car into a gas station.

BEN

If you couldn't get a job here, how are you going to find one there?

MOTHER

Just trust me, okay?

She gets out of the car and starts filling up the gas tank. She wears a dark grey sweatshirt and blue jeans, the hood of her sweatshirt covers her hair. She leaves the gas filling and walks inside the store section of the station. Ben flicks through his phone from inside the car. A few minutes later his mother comes out of the store, looking more frantic, almost running towards the car. She quickly takes the pump out and jumps in the car.

BEN

Mom?

His mother doesn't answer as she turns on the car and speeds out of the gas station back towards the highway.

MOTHER

Here.

Ben's mother starts pulling money out of her pockets and throwing it into the passenger seat.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Make it look neat.

Ben doesn't move.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Come on!

Ben slowly starts to smooth out the money. His mother frequently checking the rearview mirror.

BEN
Trust you?

MOTHER
We need this.

Ben continues to uncrumple the money as his mother turns the car to merge onto the highway.

BEN
Let me out.

MOTHER
Everything's gonna to be okay.

BEN
Let me out.

MOTHER
Ben-

Ben stops smoothing out the money. Ben's mother continues to check the rearview mirror.

BEN
Let me out!

MOTHER
Enough!

BEN
Let-

MOTHER
No, you listen. Since the day you were born I've only tried to make you happy. Tried to make a life for us that would make you happy. And you know what? I couldn't do it. I sent you to a shit school. I rented a shit apartment. And I got fired from a shit job. And I'm sorry Ben. I'm so fucking sorry, but I've never quit on you. So don't you DARE quit on me.

There is a short pause.

BEN
(Calmly)
I'm going to go find Dad.

Ben unbuckles his seatbelt.

MOTHER
Don't even think about it.

BEN
Pull over.

MOTHER
He doesn't want you! I do!

Ben reaches for the car door handle.

BEN
Anything's better than this shit.

MOTHER
Ben, please.

Ben cracks the door open. Wind rushes into the car, the crumpled money flies around the car.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Fine! I'll pull over. I'll pull over.

Ben closes the door. His mother merges into the middle lane, then to right lane before slowing to a stop in the breakdown lane. Cars shoot past them on the left.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
Don't do this.

Ben opens his door and steps out of the car. His mother stays inside, watching him as he walks around to the trunk and opens it. A few seconds later he closes it and walks back towards the passenger side of the car.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
I love you.

BEN
I know.

MOTHER
Call me if-

Ben closes the door. His mother watches through the windshield as he walks away along the side of the highway, wearing a backpack and carrying his suitcase.

FADE OUT.