

Thanks for the Ride

A short play
by

D. Richard Tucker

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THANKS FOR THE RIDE

By D. Richard Tucker

CAST: CHLOE (F, 18)
GORDY (M, a little older)

Setting: Alley behind a restaurant

Time: Early one summer evening

An Alley behind a restaurant, complete with boxes, trash cans, etc. CHLOE stares sullenly into space, sitting on the back seat of an automobile, which has been removed from the car. GORDY enters from an upstage door, the backdoor of a restaurant, carrying a can of soda. GORDY is wearing the attire of a restaurant employee (busboy, server, etc.). GORDY opens the can and takes a drink, and then notices CHLOE.

Chloe? GORDY

Hey. CHLOE

What are you doing here? GORDY

Waitingfor you. CHLOE

What...um....what for? Are you okay? GORDY

CHLOE nods.

You look like crap. GORDY (cont'd)

Thanks.

CHLOE

GORDY offers his soda to CHLOE who takes the can.

Seriously – are you-

GORDY

CHLOE takes a sip and hands the can back to GORDY.

I didn't sleep last night.

CHLOE

What's up?

GORDY

Brad....

CHLOE

What's wrong with Brad?

GORDY

He-

CHLOE

Did he hurt you?

GORDY

No-

CHLOE

Did he? 'Cause I'll kick his ass. I'll bash his face in, Chloe, I've told you-

CHLOE

No, Gordy! He didn't....hurt me.

GORDY

(pause)
He got you pregnant?

CHLOE

No!

Good.
 (pause)
 So whywhy are you –

GORDY

I need advice.

CHLOE

From me? I don't know anything.

GORDY

It's just-

CHLOE

Except the Beatles - I know the Beatles. Anything about the Beatles, I can help.

GORDY

It's not about the Beatles.

CHLOE

Then I really don't-

GORDY

Would you just listen a minute? Brad broke up with me.

CHLOE

No.

GORDY

CHLOE nods.

Wow. Sorry, Chlo'.

GORDY (cont'd)

CHLOE nods.

(pause)
 What happened?

GORDY (cont'd)

CHLOE
 We were down at the docks last night. Sometimes we go down there to watch the boats. We sit in the backseat of his car, listen to music on the radio, and watch the boats come in. They look really cool...you know, the lights reflecting in the water. We lean the front seats forward so we've got more room and then sit in the back and watch.

CHLOE (cont'd)

(pause)

He was kind of quiet last night, and then he just said it.

GORDY

It?

CHLOE

You know, "I think we should see other people."

GORDY

Oh.

CHLOE

It just landed on my ears, like a big thud. My chest felt really tight – my heart was beating like super fast. Icouldn't believe it.

GORDY

What did you do?

CHLOE

I wasn't sure I heard it right the first time so I asked him again what he said and when he said it again it still sounded so weird so I asked him if I'd done something wrong because I didn't want to be insensitive and I didn't know if I'd said something or done something or not done something or not said something and I didn't want him to think I wasn't making him a priority or that I wasn't taking him into consideration or that I had somehow neglected him and I was afraid I had hurt him and that he was upset about what could be a stupid misunderstanding that got blown out of proportion because we didn't open up and talk about it, butthat wasn't it.

GORDY

What was it?

CHLOE

He never said – just that he thought we should see other people...he wasn't ready for this.

GORDY

This?

CHLOE

Whatever this is. And then he got out of the back seat, got in the front seat, and drove me home, with me still in the back seat like it was a taxi or something. He dropped me off at my house and I said "Can't we just talk about this?" He shook his head, and drove off.

GORDY

What did you do?

CHLOE

I didn't know what to do. I just waved and said "Thanks for the ride." I felt like I left my heart on the back seat of that 97 Nissan Altima.

GORDY

After all this time.

CHLOE

Yeah.

GORDY

(pause)
Do you want him back?

CHLOE

I don't know.

GORDY

'Cause if you want him back, then I know exactly what to do.

CHLOE

What?

GORDY

Totally ignore him. Don't call him, don't text him, don't talk about him. Nothing. He'll get upset if he thinks you don't miss him.

CHLOE

Really?

GORDY

(half-singing)
"When you told me
You didn't need me anymore
Well, you know, I nearly broke down and cried."

CHLOE

What?

GORDY

"Oh, Darling." The Beatles....from the "Abbey Road" album.

CHLOE

What if I don't want him back?

GORDY

That's easy. Then just forget him.

GORDY holds out his hand and CHLOE gives him her phone. As he's talking, GORDY opens the phone and erases Brad's number.

GORDY (cont'd)

Delete his phone number from your phone. Throw away anything that reminds you of him – no pictures, no cards, no presents, nothing. Completely wipe him out of your mind.

CHLOE

Should I tell him I'm doing that?

GORDY

No! Don't even look in his direction - forget about him. He's a real Nowhere Man.

GORDY returns the phone to CHLOE.

CHLOE

But what if he thinks that I'm not calling him because I want him back, instead of not calling him because I've forgotten about him?

GORDY

(having never thought of that)

It ... doesn't matter – he's on his own. You don't care what happens to him.

CHLOE

I don't know.

GORDY

Look, I know this whole thing hurts and you've heard people say "time heals all wounds" and stupid stuff like that, but the only way you can get through this is to make an active choice to move on.

CHLOE

Really?

GORDY

"Take these broken wings and learn to fly."

CHLOE gives GORDY a puzzled look.

GORDY (cont'd)

Blackbird, 1968, The White Album.

CHLOE

Don't you have to get back to work?

GORDY

(checking watch)

I've got a couple minutes. Look, you have got to do something – something big to get back at him.

CHLOE

I really don't-

GORDY

You've got to, Chloe – it's the only thing you can do make him pay.

CHLOE

I don't want to make him-

GORDY

What's the biggest thing you remember about being with Brad?

CHLOE

...the backseat of his car.

GORDY

Huh?

CHLOE

We had some amazing-

GORDY

Whoa! That's more than I want to know.

CHLOE

It's not like that. We used to sit back there – we'd listen to music and talk. You know, about all the things that bugged us. About what things would be like after graduationAbout our future.

(pause)

When we were together, it was likenobody could bother us. Brad would....he'd tell me how we had something special, how special I was to him. He told me everything I wanted to hear.

GORDY

(pause)

Then you've definitely gotta do it. You gotta have closure, you know – you've gotta do something really crazy to officially end it.

CHLOE

Gordy-

GORDY

You and me – we go find Brad's car. Maybe we can find a window down, maybe open it up with a coat hanger, and then we do something really awesome to the back seat, maybe squirt it with maple syrup or ammonia or something.

CHLOE

We can't.

GORDY

Sure we can.

CHLOE

No, we can't.

GORDY

Why not?

CHLOE nods toward the car seat on which they're sitting.

GORDY (cont'd)

You mean...?

CHLOE nods. GORDY jumps up.

GORDY (cont'd)

Get back, Jo jo!

(staring at the seat)

How did you do that?

CHLOE

It's a Nissan. All you need is a screwdriver and a ten millimeter socket.

GORDY

Wow.

CHLOE

Of course I had to bash in his back window to get at it.

GORDY

I guess.

GORDY sits back down.

GORDY (cont'd)

(pause)

I think you're well on the way to recovery.

(pause)

Can you imagine his face when he looks in his car? "Hey, Brad! I didn't know your Altima was a two-seater."

CHLOE and GORDY share a chuckle.
There's a pause and sadness settles on
CHLOE. GORDY awkwardly comforts her.

GORDY (cont'd)

Hey, it'll be okay.

(with a new idea)

There's just one more thing we need to do.

GORDY holds out his hand and CHLOE
gives him her phone.

CHLOE

What?

GORDY dials.

GORDY

We need to serenade Mr. Brad with a little music.

CHLOE

What did you have in-

GORDY

KBBZ. Brad's favorite station.

(the caller has answered)

Charlie, it's Gordy. Hey, I've got a request..... Come on, Charlie yes, it's a Beatles song, but it's not for me – it's for a friend.....Please.....Please....Hey, thanks. It's on Paul McCartney's "Ram" CD.... I need you to dedicate it to Brad Stevens ,,,,,, track number twelve.....yeah, "Back Seat of My Car."..... Thanks, Charlie.

GORDY hangs up and returns the phone to
CHLOE.

CHLOE

You didn't have to that.

GORDY

It'll cap it off - let Brad know what a jerk he is.

CHLOE

He's not going to hear it.

GORDY

Sure he will – that's his favorite radio station.

CHLOE

He's not going to hear it.

CHLOE reaches behind the seat and pulls out a car stereo. GORDY stares at the radio and then looks at CHLOE.

GORDY

A screwdriver and a socket wrench?

CHLOE nods. GORDY leans back in the seat and sighs.

GORDY (cont'd)

I think you're way ahead of me on this whole "closure" thing.

(with a touch of sarcasm)

So...Is there anything else I can help you with?

CHLOE

(slight pause)

You know anyone who needs a transmission for a '97 Altima?

GORDY slowly looks at CHLOE as the lights fade out.

End of play