

BACKSEAT

Written by

Michael Ludwig

I/E. CAR, DRIVE-THRU - DAY

A black 1965 Mustang waits in line at a McDonald's drive-thru. In the driver's seat is BECCA (late 60s), the kind of woman you'd see volunteering at a soup kitchen. ETHAN (7), practically vibrating with excitement, sits in the backseat. Next to Ethan is a MAN (30s) wearing all black.

The car pulls up to the speaker.

EMPLOYEE
Whenever you're ready.

BECCA
One happy meal, please. Also a
chicken sandwich with a small fry
and a side of ranch.

Ethan makes a face.

ETHAN
Yuck!

Becca pulls up through the drive-thru with a smile on her face.

BECCA
Don't knock it 'til you try it.

ETHAN
But you put the fries and ranch on
the chicken! That's gross!

Becca looks up in the mirror making eye contact with the man. His face is stoic but Becca keeps smiling.

BECCA
That's what I thought at first too.
Your grandfather was certainly an
unusual man.

Becca turns on some music, Shape Of My Heart by Sting.

BECCA (CONT'D)
This was one of his favorites.

They get the food and drive off.

I/E. CAR, DRIVEWAY - LATER

Becca pulls the car into the driveway. Ethan has started working on his food.

ETHAN

Come on grandma, I want to show you my drawings!

BECCA

Tell you what, you go ahead and get it all set up. I'll be right behind you.

ETHAN

Alright, are you okay?

Becca maintains a sweet smile.

BECCA

Oh don't worry about me. My knees aren't what they used to be, that's all.

Ethan doubts her for a second, but eventually gets out and runs into the house.

Becca and the man hold eye contact through the mirror.

BECCA (CONT'D)

You should have gone for a few years down the line. He always looked better with some gray in his beard.

MAN

I try to pick forms that won't startle the humans, familiar faces, pets, the sort. I'm sorry this wasn't to your preference.

Becca sighs and looks up. They sit in silence for a moment.

BECCA

How long?

MAN

As soon as you step out of the car. You will go into cardiac arrest and fall, hitting your head.

She chuckles.

BECCA

So organized, like scheduling an appointment. So what happens if I never leave this car?

MAN

Then you'll die of another cause.
The method does not matter to me.
You are free to spend your last
minutes however you'd like.

Becca opens the car door.

BECCA

Thank you for waiting.

The man watches silently as Becca undoes her seatbelt and pivots toward the door. She steps out.

Deep breath. Calm. Through the front window, Ethan is laying out some papers on the table.

In the reflection Becca falls dead.