

Departure

Written by

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2nd Draft, 1st Pass

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EXT. HIGH SCHOOL CARPARK - DAY

A high school transcript dangles out of a rolled-down car window. From the passenger seat of a hand-me-down SUV, CASSIE (17) still wearing her graduation dress, looks out at the empty cars around her. Camping gear stacked up in the back seat.

The car door clicks open.

ELLA (18) climbs into the drivers seat. She's caked in *deliberately* over the top makeup, her hair a rapidly untangling mess.

ELLA
(mumbling)
Fuck them.

She tosses her transcript onto the dash, starts scratching at her lipstick in the mirror. Cassie sneaks a look--

The visor slams. Cassie jumps. Ella snatches back her transcript.

ELLA (cont'd)
I won't be seeing you in Melbourne
next year.

She slumps back into the seat.

CASSIE
Sorry.

Cassie leans over and rests her head on Ella's shoulder.

ELLA
I know.

CASSIE
I can't stay Ell.
(silence)
I've got my stuff, wanna go?

ELLA
Definitely.

INT/EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON

The SUV cruises along an empty back-road, crop stubble zipping by. Inside, Cassie digests her own transcript while Ella drives.

CASSIE
Do you think I got adjusted down?

Ella glances over at her, letting the car drift.

ELLA
Seriously? *Your* marks too low?

CASSIE
Ella!

The car shakes along the soft edge, Ella veers back onto the road. She yanks the transcript away.

CASSIE (cont'd)
Hey!

ELLA
Aren't passengers supposed to entertain the driver?

CASSIE
I was talking to you!

ELLA
Sorry! That was so interesting.

CASSIE
You're just upset.

ELLA
I don't care.

CASSIE
Where's yours?

Cassie rifles through the back seat, grabbing for Ella's backpack.

ELLA
Don't--

The car swerves wildly, pulling off to the side as she grabs for it as well.

ELLA (cont'd)
Just leave it!

Ella wrests the backpack away. Both of the girls are visibly shaken.

CASSIE

Tell me you aren't just pissed about him.

Ella sorts through her bag, still driving, pushing the transcript back inside. Brushes over a folding camping knife buried at the bottom.

ELLA

I'm not! He'll follow you like he always does.

She tosses the bag into the rear seats. Cassie says nothing.

ELLA (cont'd)

Is he?

CASSIE

I don't want to talk about it.

ELLA

He fucking is! You didn't even tell me.

Ella, suddenly on the verge of tears, pulls off the road and into a gravel carpark--

EXT. GENERAL STORE CARPARK - CONTINUOUS

She yanks on the handbrake, stopping them just to the side of a backwoods general store.

ELLA

You've chosen him over me.

She pulls her bag out from the back seat, digs out her wallet. She opens the door.

CASSIE

What? That's not fair--

ELLA

It's true!

CASSIE

Your grades fucked our plan, not me! I'm not staying for you.

The door slams shut, Ella still in the car.

ELLA

Fuck you.

CASSIE
I tried to help you!

Ella stares daggers at her.

CASSIE (cont'd)
Lets just go home...

ELLA
I don't-- I-- God!

She turns back to the shop.

ELLA (cont'd)
It'll be fine.

The door swings open, and Ella hops out. She hesitates with her wallet before taking her whole bag with her. Cassie watches her charge inside, unsure.

INT. GENERAL STORE - AFTERNOON

Ella huffs her way into an aisle, indignant.

She snatches a bag of chips from a shelf and piffs it into a drinks fridge.

The ATTENDANT, stuck behind his counter, turns around at the sound. Doesn't see her.

Ella unzips her bag, slowly stuffing a selection of the aisle inside. Watching the attendant through the shelves.

She pulls out the knife. Unfolds it.

ELLA (O.S.)
Hey!

We PULL BACK as Ella marches towards the counter.

INT. ELLA'S CAR - GENERAL STORE CARPARK - SAME

Cassie slumps back against the headrest, pulls out her phone and brings up Ella's text chain.

CASSIE (TEXT)
Sorry--

She sighs. And deletes it.

INT. GENERAL STORE - AFTERNOON

Ella slams her bag onto the counter. The knife in her hands.

INT/EXT. GENERAL STORE CARPARK - AFTERNOON

Ella kicks the store door open, backing out and stuffing the knife into her bag at the same time.

ELLA
Stay in there!

From the car, Cassie looks up at the noise. Unable to make out the blood.

Ella strides back toward the car, bag drooping heavily from one shoulder.

Blood dots her cheeks.

The door clicks open and Ella climbs in, sitting her bag in her lap. She slaps a chocolate bar into Cassie's hands.

ELLA (cont'd)
Done.

Cassie finally notices the blood.

ELLA (cont'd)
We're going away.

Ella twists the key in the ignition. Reverses toward the road.

CASSIE
Ell, what did you do?

The car spins, Ella knocks it into 1st.

CASSIE (cont'd)
Ella!

Cassie reaches across for the wheel. Ella pushes her back, throwing her bag at Cassie.

The knife spins out onto the dashboard, still damp with blood. The engine screams, locked in 1st.

Ella punches Cassie. The car swings wide, slowing down as Ella loses control.

ELLA

Don't you dare fucking ask me why.

She reaches for the knife, Cassie lunges to meet her. They both struggle, grasping at each other for it.

CASSIE

Please!

A bump. The knife slips into Cassie's hand. She brandishes it forward

CASSIE (cont'd)

Don't!

Ella lets go of the wheel, the accelerator long forgotten, she dives for Cassie. Cassie snaps her eyes shut.

A shudder. Ella slumps onto Cassie.

The car jumps as it drifts onto the roadside. It stops.

Cassie pushes Ella off her, realising the knife's buried in Ella's chest.

CASSIE (cont'd)

Ella why!

Cassie pounds the dashboard, pushing at Ella's corpse.

She screams, ragged and loud.

Cassie punches the dash one final time, wiping away tears. Looking at her friend.

CASSIE (cont'd)

Fuck you Ella.

Cassie's still holding the knife. She realises and throws it into the back. Cassie looks both ways along the road. Still empty.

The door swings open, and Cassie pushes Ella's body out.

The car starts again.

Cassie puts it in 1st, and drives away.