

Don't Make Me Pop the Trunk

“Crap! This isn't happening!” Aidan screeched.

“Sweetie, what's going on? Why're you speeding up?” Annechka very loudly queried.

Aidan's driving was on an aggressive scale, during regular traffic an eleven on ten points. And now? Well, now the dial in his head started to move from a docile less than one to about a practical but not real happy two.

He turned Yelawolf down. Too bad. Great music when you can let the needle drop and just chill cruising down a feverish Phoenix night. He punched up the panel to close all the windows. The stink of the hot city night bounced off the glass with impunity.

Aidan kept one eye on the road and his other roving detached field of vision right eye did a quick ass slap-gaze at her as he shook his head over his shoulder. Very basic body language of be kind, look behind.

She turned her head and totally grokked his meaning. The meaning smelled sulphury, brimstony, acidic, and time to chew bubble gum or drive faster. Aidan was out of bubblegum. He stomped on the gas and clicked the onscreen dial to 1 and the Mean Green Machine blasted forward and shoved both of them deep bear-hugged into their seats. Like deep as a brick plus. Annechka just shook her head and chirped a “here we go again.” In a not so good, power puff girl nicey nicey way. She actually hated it when he did this. He loved the kinetics, and she hated the snap back crick in your neck giggly on a sand worm.

He punched up the button on the console screen and turned on the night vision rear view cameras. *Shit fuck*, he thought to himself, they were still gaining. Not so unusual that some gear head or tuner junkie wanted to challenge the Machine. But the darkness behind him with the

purplish headlights was on a mission. Since his break with his previous employers and not-so-benevolent colleagues, he became quickly conditioned to look over his shoulder and doubt that goodness would be aggressively accelerating after him.

He keyed the center of the screen and a dial appeared with just four numbers. He splash-glanced at Annechka, shook his head as if to say *hang on to your boobies baby, it's gonna be a rough ride*.

She was lost in the moment. Hot night tar road smells crept in through the crevices of door meets car body and continued on to poking up her nose on top of the spent fuel eau de essence. Annechka tensed and dug her feet into the firewall and pulled a secondary cross body belt over to click into lock mode. The I Love Turtles embroidered belt went where he liked to see it. Between the great divide of puppy one and two. If things went badly, it still is only a machine, and she is one of a kind. And she knew Aidan thought of her in just that manner. *His* one of a kind. Divine was always on his mind. She was his Goddess who was drippy, wonderful Goddessy. Yum.

As soon as he heard the loudest ever click and the thumbs up on the right side of the screen, he moved the center dial to two. The Machine was a bit spastic and jerky, but still behaved on the road. But two? Whoa. It kicks it up a peppa and lets you know it. Aidan's special blend nitro got snorted up and blasted the cylinders like a fusion reactor. Almost airborne, the traction sensors kicked in and took it down a click with a notch on the top and the beast that rolls squishing up on the soft rubber grippy tires. The entire center screen pulsed a very visible red glow. His ride was letting him know to pay attention young man, pay attention!

He laughed and thought that'll fixem. Nobody does my box Chevy that way. Nobody.

He took a quick glance in the mirror and his guffaws went to oh ohs. In a really really really bad way. They were still gaining on him. *What the fuck is going on? Persistent as shit!*

He had never taken the dial up to three. All he knew was that Jeff, his mechanic bro said, “Just don’ do it, unless you really have to.” But Jeff never explained what would happen with going to three. He did say though that four was verboten. A Stalag Luft III verboten. For some good reason this was not a joke, and it was definitely a touchy subject to head smack. Aidan just left it alone. And Aidan did wonder why even have a four if you couldn’t use it?

There were no dashes on the asphalt, just a very squiggly, break dancing wavy yellow line. Annechka decided to close her eyes and that was wise because the Machine had no motion sickness bags. Aidan would be so pissed if she puked all over his dash, all over the windshield, all over the WeatherTech floor guard and missed the bag. Aidan knew that having the WeatherTechs installed was a great idea. At least you could hose them down and spray it with lavender essential oil. Or not. No puke bag, no pukey, no watchey. Words to not blow chunky chile burrito by.

The screen flashed a bright yellow exclamation point. Not good. The engine spooled way down way fast. He saw it. A short flatbed had broken down and was partially straddling the centerline. No choice had to stop. The dash Elephant Hula bobble went from rockin to still life. Here they were Scottie Pippin both ways. He braked and reached to his left and pulled his CZ out just enough, just in case, it was his ace. Safety off. Annechka had opened her eyes as if to say, *are we there yet?* and did the same. Left and right all gatted with nines fed with frags.

His pursuer pulled up behind and then lit him up with a bank of under fender LEDs that were bright enough to let aliens know that something like intelligence was here. Wonder if the greys would take one look and move on. Just shiny lights, nothing more would be the vibe.

He got it. It was a Dodge Demon. A purple one at that. And must be way tricked out. It sure wasn't one of the fancy need an automotive mechanic in the trunk Euro belchers. No Big Money Waster or ballered Benzo.

Snap, snap, snap. Aidan locked all the doors, windows, hood, and of course the trunk. Have to make sure the trunk stays locked.

Three miscreants exited the Demon, and the driver wasn't one of them. Makes sense. The driver always has to be in control. A whip like that is nothing to laugh at and under no circumstances was it going to end up in a chain linked poleece impound. Nope, not even on a very bad day. Not even one of those days with horizontal rain, no moon, and one hundred mile an hour winds. Heck, one hundred mile an hour winds to an automotive monster like this was like sailing on a sunny day in Tampa Bay. It blew through 160 so a light weather breeze was just a kiss on the tush. But this wasn't Tampa, it was Phoenix. The waves here were pure unadulterated natural desert heat. The look of water on the freeways during the day. At night not much to see, a lot to smell. Ancient ook that had become petroleum and asphalt. Thus, human-ity standing on the shoulders of dinosaurs and moving to the same evolutionary self-defeating moment. The distinction is self-imposed extinction.

“Open the door now.” The shortest most tatted guy Aidan had ever seen spat spittle words on his window. Smelly gooey *I don't even know what Listerine is*, bubbly spittle. Some of the tats looked like epidermal canvas roadkill. In more than one place it looked like some kind of literary correction had taken place. Bad patching over a good image.

Aidan just shook his head and hit the OnStar. He hated cleaning spittle off the glass. Especially stinky, sticky expectorant of unusual composition.

“You’re a funny guy migo. It’s jammed and we all know your windshield is so solid your chickee couldn’t kick her way through it with bladed titanium Jimmy Achoos.” And with that a proud, broad greasy lipped smile.

One of his bangers stepped closely to him and whispered in his ear. The talker hid his embarrassment, but not well.

“An’ not your Jimmy Choos either.” Again, repeat act smile part deux. But inch dicks like this guy just can’t stop flapping jaws. They just go on and on. Like someone cared. They get on a roll and never even ask if it’s whole wheat, Kaiser, or simply white.

“No funky stuff with shootin’ through tha’ door. We know all about the carbon fiber shit. Tell your gash to not do so much as pass gas and put her gat back where it lives. Hombre, you have three choices. One, open your door and we won’t smoke you or your chick. Two, open the door and we drive off into the twilight and you two hitchhikes.” And he stopped. That was it. Closed mouth, curtain down and no tongue curtsy. His number two again whispered in his ear. A fade in the dirty Kabuki smiley confidence. The fades never were clipped to shade with his crew. They knew better. Only one guy can whisper sweet nothings in his ear and get away with it. Last guy who tried now speaks in grunts and hand signs. That’s what happens when a smart-ass tongue dick becomes a verbal eunuch.

“And yeah, three. We do a little chop up and haul off the pieces. Look in your mirror.”

Aidan saw that the third thug had gone back to the Demon and had returned with a jaw of life painted up like Leatherface. He was hanging heavy. Aidan felt confident in his ride not being a crunch monkey, but getting the scratches out simply sucked.

“We get cheese in pieces or let’s keep this all together. Garbage?” Aidan noticed this guy had a complete gold grill, uppers and lowers. But Aidan’s facial expression projected a shot and a jigger of Russian Ultra Black Label and stung the brain with what’s this guy saying?

Another whisper into tattooed Jack-off’s ear.

A very brief cough to fakey fakey sputum on the move. “Capisce?”

Aidan thought he should either beam up with Annechka and join the greys or use a universal translator. Too bad though. Even a translator that included Klingon or Romulan would not be able to follow.

Decisions, decisions, decisions. Aidan turned his head and winked at Annechka, and he said, “Do keep a light on for me hun?” She just micronodded. Shelter in place in haste and light ‘em up and smoke the blokes if you have to.

Aidan put both hands on the steering wheel right after he slipped his 75 back into its hidey hole. He looked up at the linguistics expert and wrinkled his brow.

“Yeah, get out nice and slow, like a tap dance.” The illustrated man wannabe demanded.

Which evoked another set of tenders in his ear.

“Lap dance, Nice and slow.” Now there was a topic this intelligent chap was familiar with. He’s not a Rhodes Scholar, just an oil slick roads’ scholar.

Aidan exited the vehicle and was starting to view this as a street comedy. Understanding what this guy was saying required a graduate degree in speech pathology crossed with the grunts and snorts lexicon of a bonobo. He forced himself not to laugh out loud.

“I want your knob.” Good grief Aidan thought I am not that kind of guy. He liked girls and one in particular. The whole guy knob thing was not his bag of scrotum.

Whisper, whisper, whisper.

“Fob.”

“Guys, this is really a bad idea.” Aidan stated as calmly as a valedictorian accepting the award. But his sophistry and eloquence was not to be fully appreciated.

“You’re a real, real funny white guy. Bad idea? Ya gonna wet yourself cuz you can’t hold your excitement?” Bully taunt - bullet time. Slowing down in bits and pieces like a broken open bag of Reese’s bouncing on the asphalt, chachicketychick chick chi...

Aidan interrupted the full sound of the Reese’s on the greases. “Well, here we are on this two-lane road and at any moment, blue could just ride on through.” Aidan played his best card from the Baccarat boot.

The thugs all started to laugh. The snarking, *what dumb shit this guy is* belly laugh. “Whatchou think we’re stupid. Ever heard of poooooiiiiiccce scanner? We already blocked off both ends of this strip with at least a dozen or a half dozen, five, you know fuckhead, a clear half a dozen call-ins. Popo not cruising this part of the burg for a while.” Aidan thought of this one as ratatouille tattoo-ey. And it continued to speak in some type of twisted appropriated banger language.

Again, the one Aidan now called in his head, the ratatouille whisperer, was the ultimate Google interpreter in real time.

The whisperer didn’t fail him. Whisper, whisper, whisper, and a look of *ya gottit?*

“Half dozen, six.” Ratatouille spat out.

Aidan was delighted that at least someone in this crew knew how to count. He hoped there was no need to count to three. He liked the number three though. It brought back a foggy happy place in head moment with a three to the mirror. Thirty would be better though.

“Fob!”

“Well, I once more strongly protest and request that you reconsider this whole affair. No need to have the fob. Can’t we all just forget about this and go home and have some nice lines of coke, shoot up some fentanyl stepped on heroin, or at least burn some wood? Some bud, sativa? Would you consider this please?” Aidan presented his option with a huge serving of hope, but hope was not on the buffet.

Ratatouille pulled a rather large, quite overcompensating Smith and Wesson R8 out of his trousers and pointed it at Aidan’s head. A click and then. A random *noire humour* trotted through Aidan’s noggin. He had previously noticed a huge crotch bulge in his-now-adversary. Not that he was checking him out. Not that at all. Aidan was pure hetero. He thought that this guy’s size genes made a bit of size miscalculation and gave this guy a Johnson to hang a wrecking ball on. Nope. Just another wannabe gangsta who packs a gat to make him look all that. Inch dick, inch dick, true inch dick.

“Fob, now.” A calm directive from his lips to Aidan’s ears.

Aidan was now at that in-or-out decision stage. Magnum gat to the head or give up the fob. Think he’s bullet proof or give up the fob. Or maybe the big bad bullet being sent upon its appointed rounds because this guy is a nervous fuck, or the fob.

“Here ya’ go.” Aidan shared. “Catch.”

“Good boy. Now here’s your reward. I won’t turn your head into a lasso.” Gold teeth displayed in an all kind of proud way.

The whisperer came to the verbal rescue, again. Whisper, whisper, whisper.

“Canoe.”

Aidan thought it’s so nice to bond over a word. He was quite thrilled. That line was from Tombstone, in a very mashed up way. Arizona, Tombstone, and canoe, oh my!

Click, click, clickclick klick. A majorly frustrated lip curl ensued.

“It donut work!” Wow ‘touille was outdoing himself. Aidan gave a glance to the tutor. The whisperer sent his eyeballs up just a scooch accompanied by the ever so slight micro expressive shrug. No mad dog Webster’s Cujo coming to the rescue this time with a cask of Mountain Dew flavored wet meth.

With that lovely interaction, ‘touille tossed the fob back to Aidan.

“Fix it as in right know, no more fucking around. Know!”

Okay, okay, the language thing was on full tilt. But the tossed fob was the body language that had an indisputable meaning.

“Don’t make me pop the trunk.” Aidan’s voice was beginning to crack, but only at those frequencies that rats can hear. The squeak that never was. Let’s keep in mind that when a tree falls in the woods, animals of all sorts hear with their ears.

“Man, you one stupid mothfucker, pop the trunk.”

At that moment, a short sequence of bumping things in the night came from the trunk. With the bumps were sounds like someone trying to catch their breath.

“You trafficking? You sly ass mother. Is she cute? Maybe more than one? That’s a bonus. We get your car. We get your money makers. We’ll let you keep your boo skank. It’ll be great to have her always remind you of this moment. Funny ass shit!” ‘touille was now in his glory. He’d have the ho in the trunk be working under his bottom bitch. She’d be a dicket ticket machine that spits out cash or picks up hot quarters on the table.

“Look, give me just a little bit of room here as I pop it.” Aidan tried to get between the trunk and the tranq heads.

“No way Jose. You could have another gat, or it could be pew pew pew and tater tot for us. You stand right there, and Polvo, you shine the light in and take a look-see.” Sounds like the man has a plan. If the zombies chase you, always have a fat guy around to trip. More calories per gram. Yummy!

Aidan played a sequence among the membrane buttons and was ready to hit the last key-in, and the trunk went pre-emptive and click-popped on its own. Not an all-the-way-open trunk lid moment. Just open enough to fit a hand. The insides of Aidan were not shaken, stirred, or even surprised. He had learned that surprises and randomness are just nature and the universe letting you know they like fucking with your head to see if you're evolved enough to detect a rhythm or pattern. Ego aside, all that is really left is to laugh at the perverse humor of the cosmos.

There are two kinds of advice in this world. Good and not so good. There are bad people giving you bad advice. Bad people, even if accidentally, provide good advice with some hidden messaging. And there are good people who give you bad advice. Completing this little paragraph, good people who provide the *summum bonum* of potential life guidance are the crest jewels. For 'touille, it was good advice. Thus, a good person, in some ways maybe, offers up the bonum. 'touille was not completely mindless, and he provided Polvo with some really awful, double dog poo poo on your custom shoes advice. Bad guy giving bad advice to a bad person. an inverse, Mobius loop bad trifecta.

Polvo being the good little hang-arounder-prospect, did as he was told. Phone facing close to the trunk, bright light shiny and such as though a spotlight waiting for the main act, not

the lead-in, opening act. He still couldn't clearly see what was in the trunk, so he moved his camera hand in just a bit.

"It's a giant mother fucking snake!" and at that very last sonic vowel the thing in the trunk, the snake, grabbed his arm and pulled him head bangingly into the trunk edge and eventually into the trunk. Big bad rag doll getting crunched into a more pliable, bloody form. Polvo's shoes disappeared into the darkness of the trunk faster than the Wicked Witch of the East lost her ruby reds. Act two, the munched-a-bunch person that was once Polvo was shoved back out through the partially open trunk like a denied credit card from an auto teller. Raggedy man doll on the asphalt.

'touille's mouth dropped open. "You moving wildlife like endangered feces?" He asked with very surprised consonants and vowels. Aidan guessed he meant species. Hey, species to species it all really ends up feces. Circle of life thing. Right?

Now the second thug, the one with the bizarre, tagged jaws of life, was motioned forth by 'touille. "You, see wutz in there."

The thug gave a thug *ya mean me?* Body language that restated the obvious was just so *passee*'.

He gently, like touching a sleeping baby, edged the trunk more open just a tad with the tips of the metal lips of the jaws. Something grabbed the jaws from him and spooled out of the trunk. The jaw became a spastic metal claw. It jammed into this poor soul's chest, was activated, and ripped him open and crushed his heart faster than a sadistic Aztec priest can ask what blood type you are. He let out a very loud, painful scream and blood was everywhere. Blood on the trunk, blood on the road, blood on 'touille. Oddly though, not one drop on Aidan. Must be the

luck of the breeze if you please. No Dexter needed. This man's life had retreated and descended to places unknown.

The jaws and what was left of the carcass fell to the road with a set of thuds of unusual size. Clank of metal and thuddiness of muscle and sinew. *C'est fini.*

At this point, 'touille was in a go-right, go-left, or just dump a load moment. Make a quick fake to the left, let loose his Wesson or run. Go right, point his gat back and click the clickety click until its hungry again or run. Or, take a really big dump in his jockeys and run. Run like the Devil was calling in the collateral cited in your agreement. All real-life decisions distill into a straiaghtyleftyrighty or not. Pretty simple actually. Life is just a click up from binary events.

'touille surprised the Universe. He faked the move to the left; went to the right and flipped the .358 backward; and took a big chunky dump, which hindered his gate. Big baby, full diaper, and no one to butt crack wipe 'em cheeks. He beat feet towards the waiting Demon and fired backward all eight rounds. He was too freaked out to do a reload. That's funny, reload after a deload with a load in the man panties.

Noire humour injected into the pandemonium that was unfolding, Aidan thought. True. Dark humor. But had the obese lady crooned yet? Hmmm. 'touille was still good enough now to do a rather handicapped 440 sprint over the dashed yellow lines on the roadway.

The universe has an interesting manner to respond to what seems like a good idea. A blindingly luminescent shimmering serrated gold disc spat out of the trunk opening in pursuit. As 'touille was opening the car door and an internal smile beamed up. He thought he was in the cle...

Not fast enough, young man with the load in his pants. The rapidly spinning disc severed his head from neck. It was the finest deepest cut in the hood. Or anywhere, in fact. 'touille just stood motionless. He held fast on his door handle grip. He was now at that in-or-out decision stage. He had the gat still enwrapped with bacon fingers. *Trouvée de l'art*. A reverse demented twisted Statue of Liberty. With horns. Give me your muddled, twisted, rude, violent, heaps of soul compost to breathe air from a waterless place and burn all toasty and such.

The driver was the smartest hot dog eating unit in this crew. He hit the gas and pulled away. Fast. A Johnny Cash exit into the enveloping inkiness of the night.

'touille's head rose up on a glistening crimson three sixty fountain. He was the fountainhead. His head tilted to the side, fell from his shoulders, and bounced a couple of times on the pavement. Neck blood pulsing spurt and a big thud.

The driver sped past Aidan and gave him a shaded-snap-side-look imaging a stadium sized *fuck you* as he put two fingers to his throat. As the Devil approached the truck it donuted, dontcha know. With the spin and drift the driver double backed to Aidan. The repeat drive-by-performance was accompanied by a phone flash and now Aidan's soul was imaged and captured in the dark net. For one and all to see if you knew the secret handshakes, had a need, and traded in bit coins.

The disc did a chippy thunk back into the trunk. "What the fuck was that G? You almost offed me!"

"But I didn't did I? Hey, migo, get back on the clue train you were on. Stop blabbing like a loose caboose. Making up stories and dumping yourself center stage is pure ego. Dump it like a bag of rocks. You have a lot to do, and even more to work on. Oh, that. It was something I

borrowed from one of my relatives, Vishy. Pretty cool, huh?” A toothy smile beamed back white and bright to Aidan.

“Pretty cool? All depends upon your definition of cool. A head from neck severing disk was just what we needed to be coolios. I think. But G, you just offed three dregs. Are you supposed to do that? I mean what about all that stuff of not messing with lesser beings. They were just a plaque of carjackers on the road artery.” Aidan was confused. This was a different script for sure and a half.

“They were demons inside. They sold themselves out. They just weren’t what you think you saw. You know me better than that. You really do have a ways to go.” G so very smoothly shared with Aidan.

“Some of the stuff you do, c’mon, you’re never really sure it’s the right path. Own it, don’t bone it.” Aidan was trying to make a point here. He was out of his element though.

“Heck yeah. The future doesn’t run on Swiss time and butterflies don’t get refueled at JFK. Get it? Do you have any more of those tasty, sweet dumplings we got from TJ’s? I would even be okay with some of the fried plantains we picked up at that street vendor.” G politely asked. A sweet snacking G was a very happy G. His dental insurance was the best.

“Hang. I’ll check and see what we have up front. G, we need to jet. Bodies on black top are not the most desirable thing to be with. Catch my drift?” Aidan did his best to inject the dance with logic.

He returned moments later with some sweet sesame cookies and some hard fried plantains. “A favor though, Ganesh, no crumbs in the trunk. Okay?” Aidan had to clean out the trunk on more than a couple of occasions. Sarcasm thoughts floated through his mind like *cleaning up on the elephants as they pass in the parade.*

“That was a joke, right? I always have crumbs in the trunk. Silly mala covered samsarin. Hey, migo, be a major dude and do me a solid? Crank Yelawolf way back up. That guy totally rocks. By the way, got any of that super cool Creek Water booze, cinnamon, if you do.” G playfully chuckled. Then again, G chuckled at just about everything around him. He simply could not hide his ecstasy. Time for snacks, wicked tunes, and a divine nap in the back.

In the trunk.

The End