

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

Do Me No Favors

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. CAFE - DAY

A small group of impatient customers waits at the end of the counter while CHELE, a 20-something barista who gets her lifestyle advice from reality TV and TikTok, looks embarrassed. DAVID, a 20-something farm boy-turned college student, is working on an essential piece of machinery under the counter.

DAVID

Aaaaand done! Try it now.

Chele flips a switch on the coffee making contraption, and it operates as desired.

CHELE

Awesome! Coffee coming right up!

The patrons alternatively grumble or cheer, scrolling through their phones, glaring at their watches, or chatting with one another.

Chele and David hurry to make and distribute the overdue orders. When the pace quiets, the pair take a small break.

CHELE (cont'd)

So where'd you learn to fix stuff like that?

DAVID

At home. My parents were the "fix it up or do without" generation, so we learned to make do.

Chele watches David wipe a counter for a moment when she visibly has an idea.

CHELE

Hey, so what are you doing this weekend?

DAVID

Nothing much. What's up?

CHELE

(getting closer to David)
I thought we might spend some time together. Listen to music, talk and stuff. Get to know each other a little better. You interested?

DAVID

Uh huh.

CHELE

You sure? You don't have anything else going on?

DAVID

Yep. Uh huh. My calendar's clear.

CHELE

Fabulous! I need a ride to the airport Saturday morning. You can take me. My plane leaves at 6:30.

DAVID

Well, Monterey is a small airport. If you're there by 5:30 you'll still get through security in plenty of time.

CHELE

Oh, no. I'm flying out of San Jose so I'd need you to pick me up by 4.

DAVID

The San Jose airport. Awesome.

CHELE

I know, right? Hey, my friends are here to pick me up so I'm going to take off. You don't mind, right? Will you clock me out on time? Thank you so much, I'll see you Saturday! Don't be late!

Chele prances out the door to her friend's car, which was clearly purchased by Daddy, and they drive away, leaving David to tend the cafe.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - NIGHT

The wind whistles through the cracked seam of the sunroof. Chele is glued to her phone, texting her friends, while David plays with the radio.

Red and blue lights and a wall of brake lights indicate a major accident on the highway up ahead. Chele finally looks away from her screen.

CHELE

What the eff?! I can't miss my plane!

DAVID
Oh, I bet you can.

CHELE
Can't you go around?

David considers Chele's attitude for a moment before realizing she's onto something.

DAVID
Actually, I can. Hold on.

David drives on the shoulder for a few moments to the next exit. Driving through gravelly farm roads, David speeds up and drifts around bends, causing Chele to hold on to her seat.

CHELE
Are you trying to get us killed?

DAVID
It's all good. I grew up in Castroville, right by here. I've been driving these roads all my life. I'll get us around the accident and then back onto the highway. You'll be at the airport before you know it.

In a moment of confidence, David looks away from the road at Chele. Pointing out the windshield, she screams!

CHELE
Look out!

A massive shadow on the road ahead reveals itself as an enormous hole big enough to swallow the car. David yanks the wheel. The car slides on the dirt and gravel towards the hole before swerving into the drainage ditch beside the road. The airbags deploy, stunning the pair.

When they gather their wits, they let themselves out of the car which is resting at a 45-degree angle in the silt. They climb out of the ditch and look at the hole.

EXT. GRAVEL FARM ROAD - NIGHT

The sky is barely starting to lighten in the east across endless acres of vegetable farms. The rolling gravel and dirt road runs north-south with steep ditches to either side. The black hole stretches the width of the road and drops straight down into pitch blackness.

DAVID

That's a hell of a hole. I haven't seen anything like that out here before. Maybe it's a sink hole?

A faint scratching sound creeps up from the hole.

CHELE

It's fucked up, is what it is! You almost got us killed! And now I'm going to miss my plane!

David uses his phone's flashlight to look into the hole. Something shiny and black darts out of sight at the edge of his vision.

CHELE (cont'd)

(waiving her phone
in the air)

And I can't get a goddamned signal out here in the middle of nowhere!

Chele stomps her foot by the edge of the hole, causing dirt and rocks to tumble into the darkness. David hears more scratching noises and backs away from the pit.

DAVID

Hey, look, I'm sorry. We'll figure this out, okay? But you should probably get away from the edge.

CHELE

Really? That's what I should do? I should ask someone to get me to the airport who doesn't drive like an idiot is what I should do!

DAVID

Hey, now.

CHELE

You're such a simp! You've asked me out like a dozen times and can't take a hint. I only asked you to give me a ride because -

Chele's retort is cut short by a pair of massive, black mantis claws that drag her screaming to the ground and into the hole. A gigantic insectoid monstrosity the size of a horse gnaws on her while others come streaming out of the ground.

DAVID

Nope!

David bolts for his car in the ditch, diving in and slamming the doors shut. Enormous black bugs with locust heads, roach bodies, and mantis claws crawl all over David's car, scratching at the glass and peeling paint, looking for a way in.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - NIGHT

David huddles on the floorboard, watching the monsters tap and scratch at his car. As the sun rises over the farmlands and hits the ditch, the bugs retreat into their hole in the road.

DAVID

Like roaches, maybe? They don't like the light?

David peeks out the window, breathing a sigh of relief. Suddenly, his car lurches and shifts. It drops and sinks a foot into the dirt. Then it drops again.

DAVID (cont'd)

What the hell?!

David tries to open his door, but the ground holds it closed as the earth eats him alive one gulp at a time.

DAVID (cont'd)

Are they...they're underneath!

David starts tearing up the seat and upholstery, exposing the wiring and tubing along the frame of the car. He yanks and pulls at bundles until finally one breaks and spurts out gasoline, spraying the interior of the car.

The car rocks and sinks further until only the roof remains on ground level. David climbs over the seats, wrestling with the deflated air bag to find the glove box, and digs out a road flare.

For a brief moment, David is weightless as his car falls through the earth. He cracks his ribs on the center console when it lands, knocking the wind out of his lungs and forcing the road flare from his hand.

INT. BUG TUNNELS - DAY

David gasps through gasoline fumes, looking through the dim sunlight coming down the hole, illuminating the tunnel around him. It's big enough to drive a truck through and stretches back and forth farther than David can see.

The bug monsters are creeping out of the darkness toward David's car.

Dozens of them pile on and viciously hack at the vehicle, determined to get to the chewy center of this Tootsie Pop.

The windows start to crack, and David lays inverted in the passenger seat, putting his feet against the aged sunroof and grabbing the road flare from the floor.

DAVID

Let me give you a hand with that!

He thrusts both feet against the tinted glass, popping it up and out. The insectoids crush it in their massive claws and toss it aside, just as David lights the road flare and waves it through the opening in the roof.

The monsters hiss and retreat, giving him the tiniest room to crawl up and on top of his car. He waves the flare around, warding the creatures away.

DAVID (cont'd)

Here goes nothing!

David throws the road flare into his gasoline-soaked car as he leaps up through the car-sized hole in the earth above him. The erupting fireball incinerates the giant bugs, destroys his car, and launches him ten feet into the air.

David lands in the damp irrigation ditch, rolling around to extinguish the flames on his jeans. The fire roars underneath the ground, collapsing the tunnel for thirty feet in both directions.

David climbs up to the road and dusts himself off. Looking at the collapsed hole where his car disappeared, he scratches his head.

DAVID (cont'd)

Mom always said these ditches were dangerous. I thought she was just talking about the fertilizer.

David turns and starts walking across a field towards the highway.

DAVID (cont'd)

I'm gonna be late for work. Oh, damn, I'm gonna have to cover Chele's shift.

FADE OUT