

Caught

Written by
Laari Ruby

EXT. GAS STATION, 9AM

ALEX steps out of the driver's seat of the car and stretches. The passenger door behind him opens to reveal a packed back seat row. ALYSSA stumbles out of the car, tired and groggy at the early hour. MALIA can be seen through the open door, still asleep in the middle seat.

Alex walks around to the passenger side of the car and begins pumping gas. Alyssa follows him to the other side of the car and leans her head on his shoulder.

ALYSSA

How much longer do we have now?

ALEX

About two hours. I have half a tank but I'm not sure how many gas stations there are closer to our cabin.

ALYSSA

Okay.

Alyssa turns around and knocks on the passenger window of the car, startling CALUM who had been asleep. Calum throws Alyssa a dirty look and steps out of the car. He reaches behind him and quickly opens the backseat door, causing JAMES to fall part way out of the car.

CALUM

James, look out!

James yells as he braces himself against the ground and kicks his feet around in the cabin. He flails around panicking, very uncoordinated trying to stand up. Calum and Alex laugh at this un-athletic sight, James seemingly scared of some imaginary attacker. One of his feet flies around and he kicks Malia in the side of the head. She lets out a yelp.

ALYSSA

Enough! You guys are so dumb.

Alyssa harshly grabs James' ankles and he stops kicking.

JAMES

Let go bruh

Alyssa pulls his legs out of the car and drops him on the ground.

CALUM

How did it possibly take you that long
to stand up?

ALEX

Uh oh! Malia's gonna get you! You
better kick her in the head again.

Alyssa gives Alex an annoyed look, then turns and leans into the
cabin of the car.

ALYSSA

Are you okay?

Malia rubs her eyes and brushes her hand over the spot she got
kicked. She squints at the light coming in the window.

MALIA

I'm fine.

ALYSSA

Do you want to come get something to
eat with me?

MALIA

Yea sure.

Alyssa helps Malia out of the car and they walk toward the gas
station store together.

LONG SHOT OF ALYSSA AND MALIA WALKING INTO THE STORE

ALEX

(shouting from the car)

Ooh babe can you grab me a water? Maybe
a gatorade?

Alyssa waves him off. James and Calum jog after Alyssa and Malia
toward the store. The doors to the store close and Alex turns
back toward the gas pump and watches the numbers slowly get
higher.

Alex's phone starts ringing in his pocket. He reaches into his
pocket and shows his screen, it's his mom, JULIA DIAZ.

ALEX

(in spanish)

Hi mom.

JULIA
(in spanish)
How are you doing? Are you almost there?

ALEX
(in english)
Good, there's like two hours left.

JULIA
Do you know how to get there?

ALEX
Yea, I have my GPS

JULIA
No, no, the GPS doesn't work out there.
I'll tell you, get a pen

ALEX
I don't need to write it down just tell me

JULIA
(in spanish)
You are going to get lost! Get a pen.

Alex sighs and shuffles his feet for a few seconds.

ALEX
(in english)
I have a pen.

Alex holds his left hand up as if holding an imaginary pen.

JULIA
Okay. When you get on the gravel road
you go straight, then turn right after
you get to the lake sign. It's the
third house on the left after that.

Alex pretends to write the directions in the air and flicks his hand off to the left as if to punctuate the sentence.

Alyssa, Malia, James, and Calum walk out of the store with snacks in hand and get in the car.

ALEX
Okay mom.

Alyssa pauses next to Alex and holds up a gatorade. Alex smiles and lifts his head away from the phone.

ALEX
(silently)
Thank you.

JULIA
You got it?

Alex turns away from Alyssa and speaks toward the phone again.

ALEX
Yes, yes, I got it.

JULIA
(in spanish)
I love you, be safe!

ALEX
Love you.

Alex hangs up the phone. He removes the gas pump from his car and returns it to the stand. Alex starts the car and pulls up the map on his phone.

ALYSSA
Was that your mom?

ALEX
Yea, she was just telling me how to get there.

ALYSSA
Oh gotcha. Will the map not work?

ALEX
I don't know, she said not to follow it but I'm sure it's fine.

ALYSSA
Yea they update those all the time, it's probably right by now.

The car pulls out of the gas station parking lot and drives quickly down the road toward the highway.

INT. CAR, 10:30AM

Alex takes an exit off the highway, which wakes Malia up in the backseat. Alex takes another turn, and Malia leans forward to look out the front of the car.

The view out the windshield of the car is beautiful. They drive through the heavy woods of western North Carolina and the sun shines down through the trees. Malia looks to the sky straight above, which is blue and completely clear. Malia sits back in her seat and smiles. She turns to look out the side window.

MALIA

Wow, it's beautiful out here.

ALEX

I know. I miss coming here. I used to come to this cabin every year as a kid. We just stopped for some reason like 8 years ago, now it's just an Airbnb.

Alyssa looks over at Alex and smiles.

ALYSSA

It's gonna be so much fun.

She turns up the radio to a very high volume and a rap song plays. Calum and James startle awake, looking groggy.

OUTSIDE THE CAR, LONG SHOT

The car flies down a two lane road, the bass can be heard from far away. The woods just outside the road are extremely dense, and the light does not penetrate more than 20 feet into the forest. There is a heavy darkness just beyond the road. The wind from the car moves the branches as it passes, and then a silent stillness takes over the trees. A quiet wind can be heard and a few birds chirping, but an ominous music plays.

SLOWLY CLOSE IN ON THE TREES

INSIDE THE CAR

The car bumps up aggressively onto a gravel road and Alex brakes hard as the passengers get jostled around.

AUTOMATED VOICE

You have arrived at your destination.

ALEX

Wait what? Why did it stop?

Alex looks at his phone and sees that the GPS has ended their route in the middle of the gravel road. He reaches to turn the music down. Alyssa looks over at his phone and sees the GPS has returned to the search screen.

ALYSSA

(laughing)

Your mom was right.

Alex's eyes are wide with fear.

ALEX

Try it on your phone. Quick!

Alyssa pulls out her phone and types the address in. She presses enter on her GPS.

AUTOMATED VOICE

You have arrived at your destination.

Alex groans and Calum laughs from the backseat.

JAMES

Just keep driving, maybe you'll recognize it as we get closer.

ALYSSA

(In a mocking shocked tone)

Did you not listen to Ms. Diaz? How disrespectful.

Alyssa clicks her tongue in disapproval and shakes her head. Malia leans forward in between the front seats, squinting at a sign that can be barely seen in the distance. The car pulls to a slow stop just in front of the sign and all the kids stare out the windshield.

CALUM

Lake Lure. That's a weird name.

ALYSSA

Well, what way did she say to go?

ALEX

(under his breath)

Shit. Uhhh

Alex's eyes dart around as he tries to recall what his mom said. He looks into his lap in deep thought, looking a bit worried. His eyes light up and he lifts his left hand, flicking it off to the left. Alex smiles, looking satisfied with himself.

ALEX

Left. It's the third house on the left.

ALYSSA

Nice, let's go!

JAMES

Turn that up!

Alyssa reaches to the radio and turns the volume all the way back up, causing the back of the car to vibrate harshly. She turns to face the backseat smiling and laughing. James and Calum start cheering and singing along, Malia and Alyssa meet eyes and laugh together.

OUTSIDE THE CAR

The car drives straight up the road, passing the first two driveways. Dust from the gravel road is thrown into the air and the bass is visibly shaking the trunk of the car. The camera slows and lingers at the entrance to the second driveway and begins panning left as the car turns into the third driveway. The car disappears behind the trees of the third driveway and can no longer be heard. The camera continues to pan left until a cabin can be seen in the distance of the second driveway.

The camera slowly moves in on the cabin, where on the front porch two older men can be seen. One man on the front porch sits slowly rocking in a creaky chair while another slowly closes his front door behind him. The two men look angry, unsettling, and rugged. A disturbing music plays as the men look directly into the camera from a distance.