

LIVING IN A ROAD MOVIE

By Judy Klass

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SYNOPSIS: It's the summer before Trey's senior year of high school. He bikes out to the megastore where his dad works, and he talks to Dad in the employee break room. Trey wants Dad to understand that they can't go on the way they've been living since they lost their house – sleeping in a van in a neighbor's driveway. Trey tells Dad that they should either go to Dad's estranged brother for help – or move into a homeless shelter. All the lying and living in denial about being homeless, Trey says, are especially hard on his little brother Scottie. But Dad can't hear what Trey is saying. Dad wants Trey to keep on pretending they're traveling across country on a fun family road trip; they can teach Scottie about the cities and states that they imagine they're passing through! If only Trey could help Dad regain his grip on reality . . .

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 MALES)

DAD.....A good-hearted, gruff, bluff guy - in serious denial.
TREYHis seventeen or eighteen-year-old son who loves him and finds him a little hard to talk to.

SETTING

The present. The break room at a megastore.

LIVING IN A ROAD MOVIE was first produced in September 2012 in the Bolderlife Festival in Boulder, Colorado.

AT RISE

TREY waits for his father. At last, DAD wearing a company hat, apron or uniform, hurries in.

DAD: Trey!

TREY: Hey, Dad.

DAD: Man, when they told me you were here I couldn't believe it. I can't believe you biked all the way out here. Is something wrong?

TREY: No, I'm okay.

DAD: Scottie -- is he --

TREY: Scottie's fine. I just wanted a chance to talk to you without him around.

DAD: Well, son, talk fast, because they do not smile on employees taking long breaks around here. I mean, you can see this break room isn't exactly jam-packed.

TREY: They're supposed to give you a couple of breaks a day.

DAD: I get a lunch break, and bathroom breaks, and one other ten-minute break -- and this is it, so make it good!

TREY: Dad -- okay, I'll come right to the point, then.

DAD: Good!

TREY: Dad, we've got to change our situation. It's bad for Scottie. It's bad for me and I think it's bad for you.

DAD: Our situation?

TREY: The van. We can't keep it up. Living in the van.

DAD: Well, now, Trey -- sleeping in the van was never my idea of how to do right by you boys. If you think I didn't do everything I could to keep the house --

TREY: I know you did, Dad --

DAD: That foreclosure was bogus, it wasn't my fault, it should never have happened and nobody believed me, but now it's all coming out, the banks are crooked, I was a month or two behind on my payments, yes, but I was in talks with them, and they go and lock us out --

TREY: I know, Dad --

DAD: They throw our things out on the street! What am I supposed to do? They screwed me.

TREY: They screwed all of us, Dad.

DAD: I'm doing the best I can. I try to make it feel like an adventure.

For Scottie, at least. And you can help a little more with that.

TREY: I try, Dad. I try to tell him it's a road trip.

DAD: Tell him it's fun to go camping, just a man and his two sons!

Tell him we're seeing America! I got bookmarks all over that library book; we're plotting our route across the States. You could read up, you could tell him about every state we're passing through. Make it feel real!

TREY: I try to play the game with you, Dad. But -- I don't know that even Scottie is getting that much out of it.

DAD: It's teaching him geography! Nobody learns geography in school anymore. Kids don't know Nebraska from Maine from a hole in the ground.

TREY: I don't think Scottie is really all that excited about it. He's playing along, to make you feel better.

DAD: Well, it's the best I can do! You think I don't take overtime here when they give it to me? You think I'm not trying to save money? Since *before* we lost the house. But it's just not . . . I can't change jobs, there's -- there's nothing!

TREY: I know.

DAD: So, what do you *want* from me?

TREY: I think there are two things we could try, Dad. Instead of just parking in the Davidson's driveway every night...

DAD: We're lucky the Davidsons let us park there, and use the pool house shower. Bob Davidson and I aren't so close that he had to go and do that. His wife wants us gone already, I can tell.

TREY: It was meant to be a temporary fix, Dad.

DAD: Well, so what are these hot new options I've overlooked? You want to go live with your mother?

TREY: No. No, I do not. And she wouldn't have us.

DAD: You want to try to get the courts to take you away from me and give you to her?

TREY: Dad, I do not want that, and Scottie would not want that either. We don't need that kind of craziness. We're with you. We're a family.

DAD: Well, all right then. What are your two concepts?

TREY: One is . . . Uncle Jeff.

DAD: No. Absolutely not. If you think I'm going to give that rich, smug bastard a chance to gloat --

TREY: He's your brother, Dad. He won't gloat.

DAD: You weren't there. You don't know what he said last time I saw him. You didn't grow up with him competing with you at everything you tried, sneering and putting you down --

TREY: If he knew you were in trouble, Dad, it might change things. You're the only family he's got left and vice versa.

DAD: He's got that hyena of a wife. And he can have her!

TREY: But they've got a furnished basement. Separate entrance. Shower. Heating. We could get a microwave.

DAD: No!

TREY: You could pay them rent, it wouldn't be charity. Maybe Scottie and I could bond with, you know, the kid with the weird laugh . . . (*TREY demonstrates the weird laugh.*)

DAD: Your cousin's name is Mitchell. And the answer is no.

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