

## Gasless

The engine of the car sputtered out and died. Maple had managed to pull the car over to the side of the road before the gas ran out completely. She glanced at the gas meter. It was on empty. She sighed in frustration and turned the hazard lights on. She was coming back from college to visit for Thanksgiving. She was supposed to get some bread since he ran out. He had peeked into her car and noticed the gas meter. He had also told her to get some gas along the way, but she had refused. She'd insisted that she had had enough gas. But, her father had been right. Again. She felt her phone vibrate as it rung in her pocket. She guessed it was her dad, checking up on her. He could be a little over protective sometimes. She never minded, though. She answered the phone.

"Hello?"

"Hey, are you at the store yet?" She thought about telling him about the fact she'd ran out of gas, but decided against it. She didn't want to admit he was right all along, but how was she going to get to his dad's house fast enough for Thanksgiving without help otherwise?

"No, not yet. But you know that the road I'm driving on is all windy and dark. I like going slow."

"Good. Could you also go get some gravy?"

"Sure. Bye, love you."

"Love you."

Maple hung up and stuffed the phone in her pocket. Groaning, she laid her head back and stared at the roof of her car. There went her chance to tell him. Her whole life, her dad had always been right, and he wasn't gentle about it either. He was an I-told-you-so dad. He always said she could be a bit prideful sometimes, but she didn't believe him. All she wanted to do was be right. And to do that, she needed to get gas in the car. She took out her touch screen phone and searched up the nearest gas station. It was about a mile away. She groaned. She couldn't possibly push her car all the way there, by the time she got there she'd be wet, muddy, exhausted, her outfit would be ruined and Thanksgiving would be over. She drummed her fingers on the steering wheel to the beat of the rain. She took out her phone again and looked through the contacts, trying to push down the rising panic and despair. She didn't want to call one of her friends and have

them come during Thanksgiving, away from their families. But she did know one person who could be able to come. Kyle's parents lived in California, so it wasn't easy to visit them, especially since he lived in Florida. Plus his parents didn't celebrate Thanksgiving. She had invited him, but he declined the offer to watch the football game. He was a good friend. She dialed his number and anxiously waited for him to pick up.

"Hello?"

"Hi, this is Maple. You'd know that if you ever looked at the caller's ID."

"And you called me to tell me this because...?"

"No-" she sighed. "I called you to ask you if you are busy right now."

"You know I'm watching the game. This better be important. In fact, you're taking up my time right now, so make it quick."

"Ok, could you come to that windy road that leads to my parent's neighborhood? I'll make it up to you, I promise."

"...Why?" She paused, not wanting to admit that she had ran out of gas. If she told him her engine had stopped working, he would just take a look at the engine and tell her that there was nothing wrong with it.

"Hello? Are you still there? This dang phone keeps doing this—"

"No, no I'm still here. It's just... I ran out of gas." She winced as he started howling with laughter.

"I told you needed gas before you left, I bet your dad and your sister told you, and you ignored all three. I can't believe you sometimes. I should leave you out in the rain."

"No, can you please, please come?" But he was ignoring her pleas.

"You know what? That's what I'm going to do. So you have no one to turn to but your dad. Then you can admit you're wrong for once."

"You're kidding me! Just come, you're not doing anything. Don't do this!"

"For your information, watching football is doing something."

"Whatever! I'll make it up to you!"

"Bye Maple!"

"Don't you hang up on me, or I swear to- he hung up." She sighed. So much for good friend. She stared at her phone, as if willing it to tell her what to do. She knew that

if she called her sister, she would tell her dad. So she might as well call her dad to buy some gas for her. She gingerly dialed the number.

"Maple?"

"Hi dad."

"Ran out of gas?"

"Why would you just immediately assume that I ran out of gas?"

"You didn't?"

"I did." She heard him laughing.

"I'll be right there." She hung up. She turned her headlights on so that her dad would see the car. It took fifteen minutes for him to come. She could see the faded blue truck even through the rain. He pulled over behind her and turned on the hazard lights. He got out with two gallons of gas and walked to the car. He dumped the two gallons in the car while she waited nervously. He finished and put the two empty gallon tanks down. He opened the door of her car, went inside and closed it. She tentatively looked up at her dad. He didn't look mad, just relieved.

"Maple, do me a favor and don't scare me like that again."

"Scare you? What are you talking about?"

"When you didn't come, all I could think about was you getting into a car crash, or you getting lost, or other stuff. It's dark and raining and the road is slippery. I thought you were in trouble."

"How could I have gotten lost? I know the way to your house by heart. And why didn't you just automatically assume I ran out of gas?"

"I thought you were telling the truth, I didn't think you would lie to me. But I sort of know why you would. I was very much like you when I was young. I wanted to be right all the time, every time. I never was. And when you came along, it was very easy to prove you wrong."

"Hey! I had some good government conspiracies when I was little!"

"Really? According to you back then, all adults are mind controlled."

"I had some good ones besides that one." She muttered with a smile.

"Anyhow, I guessed I abused that power. It's not a bad thing to be wrong. It's a bad thing to not admit when you're wrong and not learn from your mistakes. And you know you could have called a tow truck to get you to the gas station."

"Naw, they cost money, and it's not exactly subtle."

They sat in silence for a while, enjoying each others company.

"Let's go. They're gonna serve the turkey without us if we don't hurry. You know how Aunt Lily is. She doesn't care if it's your house, her house or a complete strangers, she does whatever she wants, especially when it concerns food!" She said with a laugh.

"Indeed." He got out of her car and paused to pick up the empty gallon tanks. He got in his truck and signaled for Maple to go. She turned on the car and gently put her foot on the gas pedal. The car crawled forwards. She started driving towards the store again. She still had to pick up the bread and gravy. A few minutes after she had started driving her phone started ringing. She took it out and was surprised to find it was her dad calling.

"What's up?"

"I need your help." He answered.

"What is it?" She asked. At first he wouldn't answer. Slowly, she realized what the problem was and her face broke into a grin.

"You're out of gas, aren't you?"