

THE HITCHED HIKER

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Based on a true story.

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From black, Nammi's voice is heard, on the phone. The room is littered with half-opened boxes- books and newly-bought college-necessities type stuff. Her table is set with brightly colored stationery and a collage of photos. A framed picture of a sweet-looking girl and her parents stands in a prime spot.

NAMMI

Yup, it's been a great first week,
Mom! Don't worry I've been fine,
everything's been going amazing.

Pause, hearing the other person on the line. The floor of the room is a mess, littered with an excess of camping things, oil lamp, fire starters, pots and plates. A hand is quickly placing folded clothes and food into a huge haversack.

NAMMI

Oh, this weekend?

Hand pauses, hovering over the bag zip.

NAMMI

Um, nothing much I guess, maybe
watch some TV, stay home to unpack
my things? Nothing unsafe at all,
so...don't worry at all, Mom!

With determination, Nammi continues her rushed packing as quietly as possible. She picks up a pair of hiking boots and starts trying to put them on with one hand, jumping around in awkward poses.

NAMMI

Yes, yes, eat my vitamins and don't
drink from the tap...I know! I
remember everything you told me
Mom, so DON'T WORRY okay? I'm 19
already! (laughs)

With some skill, the boots are all laced up and Nammi stands up.

NAMMI

Wait...wha...a picture now? Okay,
um hold on.

Nammi is seen fully for the first time. She is in full camping gear, a greens shirt and camo pants, boots and a bucket hat, looking almost comical.

(CONTINUED)

She runs to her bed and clears the packing gear from sight. She pulls the bed-covers around her shoulders, making sure her full hiking outfit is hidden underneath. She messes up her hair and then grabs a half-open pack of popcorn, stuffing some into her mouth. Making sure she looks like she's at home, she lifts her phone up and takes a smiley selfie, mouth full of popcorn.

NAMMI
(chewing) There...mm.. I sent it to you! Can you see my messy room?
(laughs) Yeah, gotcha Mom, will call you again soon. Mm. Okay! Bye, love ya.

Nammi kisses the phone and hangs up. Then, she immediately jolts into action, removing the covers and picking up all her packed things.

NAMMI
Shit, shit... I am so late!!!

She runs out the door.

2

INT. CAR IN DRIVEWAY - LATE AFTERNOON (LATER)

2

The sound of an old engine revving up.

NAMMI
C'mon Sandy, c'mon baby you can do this! Yes!

The engine starts and gives a familiar rumble. Trusty old Sandy. Nammi makes sure she has her seatbelt on and mirror adjusted.

Just then, her cell rings again- this time it's Lucy. Nammi looks visibly relieved.

NAMMI
Hey Lucy! Yeah, so sorry I'm late...Yep, I'm on my way now though! Will try to reach you guys before nightfall...yeah, it will be dark then, I know. No worries, I got this. My adventure's just beginning! (laughs) Don't start the party without me!

The call ends, and the car pulls out of the driveway.

(CONTINUED)

NAMMI

OK. We got this. Let's go Sandy.
Off to the woods for the weekend!
Woo!

CUT TO:

3

INT. CAR ON THE ROAD - EVENING

3

Country music plays softly in the background as Nammi drives along the road. It is a nice windy day.

GOOGLE MAPS

In 100 meters, take the exit on
your right.

Nammi looks to see a sign that says "Fall Creek, turn in". The main road turns into a quiet trail road. The car radio music starts to buzz, the signal seems to be blocked by the towering trees. She has never seen such a dense forest before, Nammi looks in awe.

Remembering the time, Nammi takes a look at the car clock. it says 5:00.

She quickly turns off the buzzing music, and speeds down the road.

GOOGLE MAPS

Continue straight for 1.3 miles.

A sign goes past that reads "Creek campsites".

NAMMI

Ooh, maybe we're nearing, Sandy.
Adventure time!

Another sign goes past- "SLOW - Wildlife Crossing".

Nammi lingers on the sign for too long, trying to make out the images of the animals on the sign. The car zooms past a figure by the side of the road.

NAMMI

Oh? Oh no, there's a-

In the rearview mirror, Nammi sees a sad old lady who is holding up a thumb looking at her car as it leaves.

NAMMI

-hitchhiker.

(CONTINUED)

Nammi slows down as she looks into the mirror again. The figure is a small speck by now. She looks at the clock again: 5:25 PM. Sighing, she gives a slight shake of her head and steps on the accelerator.

CUT TO:

4

EXT. FORK IN THE ROAD - EVENING

4

The car pulls up as there is a split in the road. Nammi checks her Google Maps for directions, but it is not saying anything. The signal bar shows "low" and there is no Internet connection.

NAMMI

Oh god, no. Not now!

Nammi tries to turn off and on her data connection. It comes up to 'no connection' again. Sighing, Nammi searches through a pile of papers on her dashboard and pulls one out. "Fall Creek Maps".

Nammi gets out of her car with the map and walks down the road. There is a field to the left road and more forest on the right. She squints at the map, but has no idea what she's looking at.

Sound of slow footsteps as Nammi turns around.

MRS. SOPHIE

Hullo there, love. You lost
?(hollers)

It's the hitchhiker from before. Nammi takes a gulp in guilt, and walks towards her. They meet near the car.

NAMMI

Hi, sorry, I noticed you too late just now, I was going to stop but I was kinda far down already, and I'm in a bit of a rush so I didnt, I'm so sorr-

MRS. SOPHIE

(chuckles) No, no, it's alright love. Most people don't even notice old Sophie by the side of the road, you know. Hitch hiking is never easy!

Sophie winks, but Nammi doesn't get it.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. SOPHIE

If not for these darned old legs of mine, I'd gladly walk up to my cabin, I know these trails by heart! But I can barely make a few hundred meters now...

NAMMI

(guiltily) Oh, I didn't know, I do apologise...

MRS. SOPHIE

No, you're all good my dear. Do you need help getting somewhere?

NAMMI

Oh yeah, just up to Creek Campsites, I'm just not sure which side to take.

MRS. SOPHIE

OOH, I love that place! Great for hiking and camping. And it's quite near my cabin too, here, just take this road on the right, then you turn left... Ah, I'll just draw the route for ya.

Sophie whips out an old fountain pen, and makes quick, sharp dotted lines to Nammi's map, drawing a route. She marks the spot with an 'X'.

MRS. SOPHIE

There, you're all set.

NAMMI

Oh, thank you so much! Here, since it's near your place I could give you a ride, I really was supposed to.

MRS. SOPHIE

Naw, thats sweet of you.

Sophie looks gleeful and smiles a crooked smile at Nammi.

CUT TO:

5

INT. CAR ON THE ROAD - LATE EVENING

5

Nammi and Sophie drives along the road, it is starting to get dim.

MRS. SOPHIE

So ya going up for a weekend hike?

NAMMI

Yeah, really wanted to explore the place since I'm new here. It's all so mysterious and exciting!

MRS. SOPHIE

Oh, it is mysterious, I'll tell ya that. (chuckles) So you're new are you! Studying here? Do you live alone?

NAMMI

At home? Yeah! But I'm here tonight with friends, we'll be camping and hiking around all weekend!

MRS. SOPHIE

Ah, I see yes yes. A lot of students come up here sometimes. You never know what you might find in these woods...

NAMMI

Yeah, I love the outdoors, all this fresh air and space, so different from where I'm from.

MRS. SOPHIE

Ooh, aren't you a healthy young girl! (chuckles for a little too long)

Mm, from a city are ya? Those big dirty cities, bad for you, you know. Bad air, bad food, spoils your organs.

NAMMI

Ha ha... I bet, yeah. What do you do up here?

MRS. SOPHIE

Oh me? I just stay out in my cabin one in awhile to... hunt. When there's a need for, you know, meat.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. SOPHIE (cont'd)
Meat's getting so expensive these
days, you just gotta go out and get
yer own!

Sophie chuckles and winks at Nammi, but Nammi just laughs
along. Mrs. Sophie seems nice, she is a little more at ease.

MRS. SOPHIE
Anyway, its really great up here
for hunting. You always happen to
get the young healthy ones...hee
hee. I mean, the animals, of
course.

Nammi is barely paying attention to the conversation, she
squints out at the road ahead. In the dark, there seems to
be a dark figure of something on the road, an
animal.

NAMMI
Oh my god, there's one-

Nammi tries her best to swerve and avoid it. In a blur,
there's a sound of a loud crash.

CUT TO:

6 EXT/INT - CAR CRASH - LATE EVENING

6

NAMMI
Oh my gosh, are you okay?

MRS. SOPHIE
I'm alright, dear. It must've been
a shocker for you, these nasty
deer, running out like this.

NAMMI
I almost knocked it down ohmygod!
Don't worry...I'll, I'll go check
on the car. Just relax for a little
bit here, Mrs.Sophie.

Nammi stumbles out of the car in a daze, the animal is no
longer on the road, but the car's engine is smoking and the
tire looks punctured.

NAMMI
Oh no, oh no... Sandy! What am I
going to do now...We need to get
you fixed, if Mom finds out, I am
so dead.

(CONTINUED)

Nammi whips out her phone and dials for a mechanic, as she puts the phone to her ear she turns around and is shocked to see Sophie behind her, holding up a wrench.

NAMMI

What are you-

MRS. SOPHIE

Oh, don't worry love, was just going to ask you to let me look at that car, I've got some tools here, maybe I could fix it...

Sophie gestures to the wrench, then the car.

NAMMI

Oh, no it's fine, it's too dark anyway. I think we gotta call a mechanic for this... I happened to have some contacts for that.

Nammi gestures to the phone just as the other line picks up and Nammi starts to talk on the phone.

Behind her, Sophie has a deadpan look as she watches Nammi talk.

NAMMI

Hi is this Able Mechanics? Sorry yes, I just crashed my car along Creek Road, some roadkill incident... Yup, yup yes, very urgent.

Yeah, the engine is smoking, I put the hood up...Yes. I don't know what to do now! Please send help, sorry about it. Yup, we'll just wait here. Oh yeah it's just me, and an old lady, she joined me as a hitchhik-

NAMMI turns around again to find Sophie, but suddenly, she's nowhere to be seen. Nammi finishes up the call as she looks in the car and around it, but no Sophie.

NAMMI

(scared, calling out loud) Mrs. Sophie? Where are you??

CUT TO BLACK.

7

EXT - CAR CRASH - LATE EVENING

7

A tow-truck pulls up on the road as Sophie is sitting by her car, looking shaken. JONNY calls out to her as he steps off the truck.

JONNY

Hey there, I'm Jonny. Is this Nammi who called? Wow, that engine is smokin'.

NAMMI

Yeah, Hi I'm so glad you're here, could you help me get this fixed? I can NOT lose this car.

JONNY

Geez, what happened?

NAMMI

I don't really know, I saw something on the road, some animal... I swerved to avoid it and crashed, the lady asked me to fix it, but I knew I had to call you guys, and I'm really late for my meeting too and-

JONNY

Where's the lady with you? Yeah, we should prolly bring that back to the garage to fix it up again. That car ain't driving anymore tonight.

NAMMI

I don't know where she went, I was calling you and she just disappeared! I don't know... she said she had some tools on her though! They should be at the back in the trunk with all her stuff she put there...

Jonny and Nammi peer into the trunk as they open it up. There is an ice cooler box and a dirty old ditty bag, looking somewhat like a tool bag. Jonny opens the bag and they shine their torch in. Silver things sparkle in the light. On closer inspection, they see a heap of tools-surgical scalpels and knives.

JONNY

Oh shit. No way.

(CONTINUED)

NAMMI

What are those? Knives?

JONNY quickly puts the bag down the yanks the top of the cooler box open, shining his light in. The box is lined with liquid nitrogen packs and filled with metal containers. Jonny gingerly opens the container- to reveal a bloody frozen piece of meat that looks like a liver, freshly stored.

Nammi screams.

JONNY

Shit, shit. We gotta call the police man. This is some crazy shit...

NAMMI

Are those organs? What...what was she doing with...

A loud rustling sound comes from the woods beside the roads. The shrubbery around a hole in the thicket parts into two and Sophie emerges, looking more scuffed-up than before. Behind her she drags a bloodied canvas bag with something in it. Nammi and Jonny freak out, looking shocked and more confused than anything.

NAMMI

Oh my god! Miss Sophie! Where did you go-

JONNY

-BACK AWAY WOMAN!

NAMMI

-is that an animal?

SOPHIE

(breath heavy) Oh, what do we have here... hello, you must be the mechanic! Yes dear, this is was the animal you almost ran over...I saw it limping about and I guess my hunter instinct too over! HAHA!

NAMMI

What was it?

SOPHIE

Just a big sort of rabbit...wanna see it?

(CONTINUED)

NAMMI

NO! Er, no thanks.

JONNY

Wait you caught it with your bare hands?!

SOPHIE

No dearie, what am I, a cannibal?
(Chuckles) I had a tranquilizer.
Hunters' must-haves ya know. Oh
wait, dear me, did you think I was
a nut-case with all those meat?

Sophie sees the open trunk and gestures to it, laughing.

SOPHIE

Those are just parts of the animals
I hunted that none of the butchers
wanted...thought I'd bring 'em back
for my dog, Morty back home! She
loves a good meal of fresh meat,
she does!

JONNY

Oh, thank God! We thought you were
some-

NAMMI

-I was just shocked you disappeared
like that. Well that explains it,
I'm thankful you're safe!

SOPHIE

Oh dearie, I'm so sorry, what
drama! Anyway it's really getting
late, what are we going to do now?

JONNY

Um, you guys could hop on! I'll
just drop y'all off before taking
this car back down I guess.

JONNY gets the car hooked up to the tow truck and gets the
ladies on board. Sophie transfers her things over to the
truck, and the truck leaves.

CUT TO:

8

EXT - FOREST - NIGHT

8

The truck pulls up next to a sign "Creek Campsites" and they all get down. Nammi is so relieved to finally reach, she looks tired but still turns to them smiling.

NAMMI

Thanks soo much for the ride! And do tell me when to collect my car next week, Jonny! Sorry about it, Mrs. Sophie, hope you'll get back safe from here?

SOPHIE

Yes, of course my dear. I'll see you again! Better luck next time. (Sophie winks)

Nammi gives Sophie a quick hug and runs off into the distance which looks like where a campfire is.

SOPHIE

Hey Mr. Mechanic, my cabin's right up there, to the left, how about say, I make you a nice warm cup of thank-you tea?

JONNY

It's alright, I should really be getting the car back to get repaired. Thank you though-

SOPHIE

Nonsense! You did us so much good already, and it's getting chilly tonight. Warm tea is exactly what you need. C'mon!

Sophie begins to shuffle her way up the forest road.

JONNY

Alright, here, let me get those.

Jonny picks up the cooler box and bags and starts up the road behind her.

CUT TO:

9

INT- CABIN - NIGHT

9

The cabin is warm and nicely furnished, just like a little cottage. A big metal kitchen table lies in the middle of the living room, but other than that, the cabin looks cosy and homely.

Jonny puts the bags down and Mrs Sophie hands him a cup of tea she just made.

SOPHIE

Here, drink up, son.

JONNY

(drinking) Nice place, Mrs. Sophie.
You stay alone?

SOPHIE

Yep, but it doesn't get lonely at all, not when you have visitors over once in awhile. (chuckles)

Then as if remembering something, Jonny puts a hand to his head, he looks tired and sleepy.

JONNY

Oh wait, you said you had a dog?
Where's m..marty?

Sophie smiles as she takes a sip of her own tea.

SOPHIE

Oh dearie, I was just kidding. I don't have a dog, Morty died long ago.

An expression of realization as Jonny starts to sway. His teacup drops, crashing to the floor. His vision blurs and he can barely hear Sophie whisper.

SOPHIE

It's okay, I've got you now, though. What a healthy young man you are...

FADE OUT.

-The End-