

Caprice Classic

by Matt DeVirgiliis

The 1988 Chevy Caprice Classic sat alone in the 7-Eleven parking lot. The neon lights from the store's sign traced the edges of the dark blue tank of an automobile.

The night was damp and thick; transformers crackled on top of their branchless perches.

A cloud of light, white smoke floated out of the driver's side window. Nate and Zach sat on the front bench seat, talked, and puffed away. "Breath in and say Mom is coming," said Zach.

"What does that do?" asked Nate.

"Helps you inhale."

"Isn't it worse to inhale?"

"What's the point if you're not going to inhale?" said Zach.

They each took long drags, interrupted by amateur coughs and hacks.

"I can't believe you have your license and a car," said Nate.

"It's a hoopty, but it still runs," said Zach as he smacked the cracked dash. "I can go anywhere now."

"Let's do it," said Nate. "Let's hit the road this summer. Drive the countryside."

They inhaled and sputtered. Smoke pillows filled the car and smothered the drooping fabric of the car's ceiling. "Mom's coming. Mom's coming," they said.

"How are you going to hide the smell?" asked Nate.

Zach fished through a plastic bag and pulled out a stack of pine tree air fresheners. "I figure we can put two in the car and rub the rest on ourselves."

"Mom's coming. Mom's coming."

Another car pulled into the lot, its headlights highlighting the wet particles of air. Nate looked back through the rear windshield and squinted to identify the silhouette approaching the car. "Mom's coming. Mom's coming."

"You don't have to say it every time," said Zach.

“Hi, boys. What are you up to?”

Nate leaned toward the driver's seat so he could peak out the window and Zach slouched down on the plush bench, half hiding his face. “Just planning a road trip for the summer, Mrs. D.,” said Nate.

“Oh that sounds like a good idea. You do mean next summer though? Zach's going to be grounded this summer.”

“Of course, Mrs. D.,” said Nate.

“Good. Zach, when you get home, make sure you put your key in my dresser. You won't be needing it for a while.”

Zach grunted. Mrs. D. turned from the Caprice and disappeared into the 7-Eleven, her brightly colored dress creating a stained-glass effect through the store's foggy windows.

“Way to park at the 7-Eleven down the street from your house,” said Nate.

“Shut up,” said Zach. He started the engine and pulled out of the parking lot, his headlights and brake lights cutting through the wet air the entire way home.

