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SAVE LILY

“Russell?” Will lets himself in.

“Hey,” Russell says, “What brings this surprise visit?”

“I think Lily’s in danger.”

Russell gives a long, drawn-out, “Okay,” then, “where’s the punchline?”

“Russell, I’m serious.”

“One,” Russell says, “hand me your phone. And two, what makes you think she’s in danger?”

“It’s hard to explain,” Will says, digging his phone out of his pocket and handing it to Russell. “I had this dream at Wen’s house today that I just can’t shake. And after I left Wen’s I

couldn't get this bizarre scene out of my head, bad guys destroying flowers. I think it's trying to tell me something."

"She taking flying lessons?" Russell shows Will his phone. "She's at 'Aviators Unlimited.'" While he was talking, Russell used Find My Friends.

"This is not good."

"Weird," Russell says, "they don't have a website. Or hours. Or anything."

"What do we do?" Will asks, now talking over Russell.

"Hold that thought," Russell says and leaves the room, coming back a moment later with a big grin. From his outstretched hand, he dangles Harry's car keys. "We have a sweet electric ride that will bring us to your Lily."

"Great, where's Harry?"

"He's out with dad, we got this."

"Are you kidding? Neither of us has a driver's license; we've never even driven a car; the odds of us pulling this off are astronomical!"

"Never tell me the odds," Russell replies, with a dramatic voice. "God, I've always wanted to say that!" He jingles the keys in the air. Tyson comes running in, "Tyson, wanna go for a ride?!" Tyson's tail wags furiously. Russell opens the front door to the

house and Tyson bolts for the car. Russell heads out. He turns around to see Will is not following him. “Are you coming or what?” Russell asks. Will, seeing no better option, shakes his head and reluctantly follows him.

Russell opens the door, and Tyson enthusiastically hops in. “Move over, you.” Russell motions to Tyson to get out of the driver’s seat so he can sit down. Tyson can’t hold in his enthusiasm, his tail is wagging so hard it’s making a *wap wap wap* sound on the chair. Once Russell gets his seatbelt on, Tyson sits in his lap. “Hmm, first time driving,” he says, “with a doggie in my seat, what could possibly go wrong?” Will nervously gets in the passenger seat and buckles up. Russell looks at Will and adds, “How much harder could it be than Forza?” Tyson moves to Will’s lap (one could imagine to comfort him), but he clearly wants the window open. Will opens it so Tyson can get some fresh air, but he’s so short he has to put his front legs on the door to poke his head out. Russell backs out haltingly, just barely avoiding parked cars.

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“Yellow light,” Will points to the intersection up ahead.

“I got this,” Russell replies and presses his foot down on the pedal. Will shoots him a look of disapproval. Had he been paying better attention as he approached the intersection, Russell might have noticed the police officer on the cross street. Were he paying attention to the officer, he might have noticed the series of micro-expressions flash across his face as he ran the red light: surprise, shock, anger, and the thrill of being able to deliver justice. He might have also noticed his ride-along partner talking endlessly about whatever, and that he was oblivious to Russell’s offense.

What Russell does notice, albeit too late, is the flashing blue and red lights in his rearview mirror. “Uh oh,” he says. “Time for evasive maneuvers.”

“Are you serious?” Will asks frantically, “You’re gonna try to outrun a cop?”

“Your destination is ahead on the left,” the phone reports. They see a small, discreet sign ahead: Aviators Unlimited.

“Relax, relax, I got this,” Russell says, and gripping the wheel tighter he puts the pedal to the floor. Tyson hops over Russell’s arm to sit in his lap. While Will is looking out the back, Russell glances at the rearview mirror, they both see the cruiser getting smaller. They look at each other and breathe a sigh of relief. Russell looks again, “...and now he’s gaining on us. Sprint’s over!”

“You have arrived at your destination,” the phone relays with a calm, bright voice. They pass the sign dangerously fast.

Russell spies a one-way side street just ahead on the right. “I wonder if drifting works the same in the real world,” he says. “Hang on!”

Will, still strapped in— right hand on the dash to brace himself — turns to face Russell, “We won’t make it!”

Russell cuts the wheel sharp to the right, and the car starts to drift. As they round the corner, Will feels his side of the car lifting off the ground. Will and Russell instinctively lean to the

right to try to not tip over. They see a row of parked cars in the cross street coming up fast. Realizing he won't be able to clear them, Russell slams on the brakes, but only two tires are on the ground.

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In the brief moment preceding a tragedy, they say time slows down. This was indeed the case for Russell and Will. In this stretched out moment Will felt disappointed, realizing he would not rescue Lily. Later, when he has the time to reflect on this moment, he will be surprised, that with death imminent, his last thoughts were for someone other than him.

Russell took this moment to consider that the combined position and weight of the battery were insufficient to lower the center of gravity enough to reliably drift at this speed and with this sharp a turn; if he survives, he needs to discuss strategies with his brother to further lower the center of gravity. Perhaps load the trunk with a weight set. Or the footwell in the passenger seat. Or maybe different tires are more drift-worthy; this is not like Forza at all.

No one knows if dogs who understand English think in English, or if they think in Dog. So it is a crude assumption, but a rough translation of Tyson's thoughts might be, *YOU'RE AN AWESOME DRIVER!!!! THIS. IS. AWESOME!!!*