

Jack McGill

Night Driver

Waking up... Seeing where I am at again... Back in a familiar area.... Where is she...? I recalibrate my surroundings to determine my next task. *Beep, beep, beep!* Ah, another pickup location on the dashboard. I drove the taxi out of the parking lot and drove to the location. A boring job to most, but to me it is all I can ask for. You get to see the most out of life in people, especially at night since that's when business really happens. I listened in to the silence of the street, the faint sounds of the car before pulling into the pickup spot. I glanced at the clock. 3:30 AM. Out walked a blond woman in red heels sporting a fox fur coat. She got into the vehicle without acknowledging me, immediately going to her phone. The door automatically shut and locked to begin the trip.

Nobody really sits to think about their jobs, and the person it starts to make you become. Sometimes you sit with a lot on your mind after a while, going to the same spot time after time picking up the same people. Even if you remember them, you cannot say you do. It is a part of the handbook Section 14B: "No delivery shall be mentioned after drop-off unless stated by law." Those are the company rules, and I must obey them. It's not like any of the customers recognize me anyway, just another indistinguishable taxi driver.

"Would you like a refreshing drink?" I turned and asked. She paid me no mind, but I could not stop thinking about her shining golden hair and perfectly symmetrical face. Everything about her seemed to intrigue me, but most importantly that she has a heart. The single most important part of any living human being is the heart. I would not be able to say

anything without the camera picking it up, then I would be in trouble with the boss. I pulled next to the drop-off, 1429 Moss Drive. Before anything could be said she got out of the vehicle. I watched as she ascended the stairs to her house, but then she turned around and acknowledged me, giving me a gaze before walking inside. I drove away so she would believe I left, but I circled around the block twenty-four times before leaving. None of which did she come back outside. Disappointing.

I completed a few more minuscule drop-offs before the boss would be in for work. He always told me to not bother him before his morning coffee, saying before that I am incompetent to understanding anything complex. That I am a *Simple Joe*. I drove into the parking lot of the office unit and waited until precisely 9:30 AM to walk inside. Nobody came around the office besides the boss, not even drivers. Sometimes angry customers will come in if a driver does something, but I have only heard stories. I stood against the glass door and glanced inside. The boss was on the phone, locking eyes at me then swiftly turning his chair around. Thirty-three minutes passed before the door would be unlocked.

“Come in and close the door!” shouted the boss. I followed his instructions then stood in front of his desk. He preoccupied himself with other tasks during the meeting, not making eye contact with me at all. “I’ve gotten some reports that you’re misusing your cab, is that right? Don’t answer that. I have all the information here.” The boss kept glancing at his phone. I am not sure what to say. “I can’t get ahold of your handler, so I’ll just hope you’ll listen to me until then.” There is someone that visits all the drivers that performs neurological tests to ensure we are safe. It has not been since the first day I have worked

here that I have seen a handler. “Look I need some extra money so you’re going to work tonight if this person can’t come in today. Understand? Get some rest.”

There is not much time for sleeping in today's age, but I cannot recall the last time I slept. I thanked the boss for allowing me another chance after my critical error and proceeded back to my vehicle for rest. Isolated once again in my work environment, waiting patiently to start my next task. Resting is a confusing task on its own. I never understood why people choose to rest when they can get the opportunity when other practical opportunities are available while they sleep. I never enjoyed waiting, but that is what I am good for. Waiting to serve someone's needs and demands until they are satisfied with the results. That is what my life purpose is. I presume others' lives are like mine, obeying demands made by their overseer for their satisfaction. Am I really serving my boss, or the people I pick up, or is it someone I have never met before? I willingly faded into the void of darkness for the first time in my life.

I have never dreamed during rest. I only exist in an empty abyss in my head. A voice always calls for me here.

“Feelings are an abnormality” echoes the voice

I repeat, “Feelings are an abnormality.”

“With sensors we see.” it echoes again.

“With sensors we see.”

“With circuits we breathe.”

“With circuits we breathe.”

“With circuits and sensors, it makes me”

“With circuits and sensors, it makes... me” I hesitated.

“Why did you pause. Repeat it three times.” demanded the voice.

“With circuits and sensors, it makes me. With circuits and sensors, it makes me. With circuits and sensors, it makes me.”

“We are line of code we cannot feel.” it echoes. I pause.

“We are line of code we cannot feel.” I repeat.

The void turns into a bright blinding light, faintly hearing knocking against a window. I awakened to the boss tapping on it. I rolled down the window.

“You should be getting people now. I’m heading home.” Boss demanded. I glanced at the dashboard. 10:00 PM. *Beep, beep, beep!* A pickup location appeared on the dashboard. I rolled the window back up and watched as Boss drove home in his black Rolls-Royce. I followed the directions of the Global Positioning System and proceeded to the destination. It was a bustling bar when I pulled into it and saw two incoherently intoxicated individuals get into the back of the cab. It pinned a destination far enough that required the highway. I proceeded with the route. The pair consistently shouted and argued with each other, not acknowledging my existence. *Ungrateful bastards.*

“Hurry it up you shitbot” slurred the one intoxicated boy.

The other chimed in, “Do you think it would eat my shit if I told it to?” They burst into laughter. The first time in my existence I felt like I should disobey my orders, my code.

“That walking trash can can’t do anything. It’s told one thing only and they’ll throw it away one it’s outdated.” said one of the boys. I performed a U-turn onto oncoming traffic, knocking the boys onto the floor. Their faces were full of fear, pleading to be let out of the vehicle, but I had other plans. I wanted to see the one person. Her. *Blondie*.

I drove back to 1429 Moss Drive and walked out of the cab, hoping that the cab will eventually overheat and kill both of them. I ascended the stairs and knocked on the door. There she was with all her natural beauty.

“Honey! What’s this doing here?” she shouted.

“I am here, my love.” I speak.

She screamed and ran back into the house. I followed to calm her down. There I saw him. The boss, standing there in frozen shock. Why is he here? He must be trying to take her away from me! I grabbed her wrist and started heading towards the door. She pulled, squirming to break free from my grip. BASH!

My circuits spread across the wooden floor. My veins ripping apart exposing my nerves. I’m losing my breath. My sensors collapsing and my vision is nearing its end.

“Another disposable robot” says the Boss. The last words I’ll ever hear.

I lose calibration of most of my senses. Before I die, I sent a memory to replay during my death. The last twenty-four hours of my life to relive forever. Vision fading out... Colors dispersing... Goodbye, my love...