

BIOHAZARD

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FRESH BLOOD EDITION



The Butter Street Hitchhiker

written by

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Based on the Short Story
"How To Summon the Butter Street Hitchhiker"
by Chris Hicks

EXT. TWO LANE DIVIDED HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A dark night on a long, empty stretch of road.

Headlights of a FOUR DOOR SEDAN appear in the distance.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The DRIVER (male, 30s, unshaved, slovenly dressed) has both hands on the wheel as he drives. His phone maps out the distance to his destination, less than a mile away.

A heart-shaped charm with a photo of a WOMAN (late 20s) hangs from the rear-view mirror. It spins lazily.

The Woman in the photo has a goofy grin and big, happy eyes. A quick, casual photo, more selfie than glamour shot.

The front passenger seat is a mess of crumpled soda cans, candy wrappers, and fast food rubbish, evidence that there hasn't been a passenger in quite some time.

The Driver's eyes anxiously move between the map on his phone and the road ahead. He chews his thumbnail before returning his hand to the wheel.

DRIVER (V.O.)

There's an urban legend in my hometown about a hitchhiker who will appear at a certain spot in the road if you follow a series of instructions. Once summoned, you drive him to his destination, and if you play the game right, he will answer an unknowable question.

On the GPS, it shows the next turn is 100 feet ahead on the left. The Driver slows down and turns.

DRIVER (V.O.)

If you play it wrong, well, just don't play it wrong.

EXT. BUTTER STREET - NIGHT

A bent, rusted street sign that says BUTTER STREET. Behind it, an old gravel pit runs next to the road, a steep drop-off to an inky pool of deep water below.

Only weeds and a bent-over chain-link fence separate the sedan from the cliff of the gravel pit.

DRIVER (V.O.)

Over the years, many cars have been dredged up from the old gravel pit. Officially these drivers fell asleep at the wheel, but if you ask the locals, they'll say they are the lost souls who broke the Hitchhiker's rules.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver checks his GPS - 500 feet from his destination. He takes a deep, reassuring breath.

DRIVER (V.O.)

Everyone who's encountered the Hitchhiker says their trips start the same way. When he gets in, his clothes are dripping wet and he says, "It's a bad night for rain." To which you reply, "Is there ever a good night?" Then he laughs, and the game begins.

EXT. BUTTER STREET - NIGHT

The sedan inches onto the narrow shoulder, stopping just before a gnarled old oak tree at a break in the fence.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The GPS shows a checkered flag - you have arrived.

The Driver turns off his phone and puts it in the glove box. Out the passenger window, the darkness of the gravel pit.

He watches the time on his car radio, 2:59.

DRIVER (V.O.)

The locals account different rules for summoning him, but all successful attempts had the same actions and took place precisely at three A.M.

The Driver places his hand on the key in the ignition, watching the colon blink between the 2 and 59. He holds his breath, waiting... until-

3:00

He turns the car off, killing the headlights.

EXT. BUTTER STREET - NIGHT

A fog rolls in over the road. Everything is still, quiet. Not even crickets or the rustle of a breeze.

The car's tail lights flash three times as the Driver presses the brake pedal.

The door locks POP up and down three times.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver draws a deep, ragged breath as he flashes the headlights. One time. Two times. Three times.

Every flash reveals a vacant empty road ahead.

The Driver closes his eyes and takes a deep breath before turning over the ignition.

The time on the clock radio says 3:02. He watches the blinking colon. When it says 3:03 -

EXT. BUTTER STREET - NIGHT

The car's headlights pop on, illuminating an OUTSTRETCHED THUMB on the side of the road just past the oak tree. The rest of the figure remains obscured in the shadows.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver shifts the car into drive. The car inches back onto the road and pulls up alongside the oak tree.

He shifts his gaze down, avoiding the passenger side of the car as a dark figure passes by.

DRIVER (V.O.)

Another part of the game is you
can't look him in the eyes until
after the ride, after you've asked
your question. Not even his
reflection is safe.

The rear door opens. The car's suspension CREAKS and gently rocks to the side as the HITCHHIKER (20s, black, muscular frame, long dark duster jacket) enters.

The Hitchhiker hangs back in the shadows of the back seat, obscuring his face.

Besides the Driver's breathing, the only sound is the rhythmic DRIP, DRIP, DRIP of water from the Hitchhiker's pants onto his shoes.

HITCHHIKER

It's a bad night for rain.

The Driver audibly swallows as he adjusts the rear-view mirror with shaky hands. In the mirror, the shadowy outline of the Hitchhiker moves out of frame.

He clears his throat to dislodge the words stuck in there.

DRIVER

Is there ever a good night?

Silence as the Driver's eyes glance up to the rear-view mirror. The Hitchhiker shifts in his seat, but we move away from the mirror before his face is revealed.

The Driver casts his eyes down, anxiously gripping the steering wheel with white knuckles.

The Hitchhiker chuckles, slapping his palm against his leg. His fingers are pruned like he just got out of a bathtub.

HITCHHIKER

Not that I know of, friend.

The Driver lets out an uneasy sigh.

DRIVER (V.O.)

And now we play the game.

The car lurches forward, then stops as the Hitchhiker speaks.

HITCHHIKER

Hold up, put your wipers on champ.
With all that rain you won't see
the road.

Outside the car, nothing but clear night sky.

The Driver nods in agreement.

DRIVER

Right, sorry.

The wipers jump back and forth across the windshield, making a rhythmic squeak against the bone-dry glass.

The car accelerates as it pulls away from the pickup spot.

They drive in silence. The Driver checks the rear-view mirror, daring to move the mirror up little by little so more of the Hitchhiker's torso is visible.

Below the mirror, the photo charm spins. We focus on that for a second before returning to the mirror.

DRIVER

Where are you headed?

HITCHHIKER

I'm headed to see my girl. Worked the late shift tonight, so I thought I'd pop in to surprise her.

The car slows as it approaches a stop sign.

HITCHHIKER

You want to make a right here.

DRIVER (V.O.)

How well you follow his directions and answer his questions affects how long the ride will take. Some trips go on for hours while others only take minutes. This was part of his game.

HITCHHIKER

So what's your story, man?

DRIVER

I have a day job that pays the bills, boring office stuff, but in my spare time I like to explore urban legends and haunted places. Look for proof of life after death.

HITCHHIKER

Aw, for real? Damn, that sounds spooky as hell.

The Hitchhiker leans forward, putting his elbows on his knees. The sleeves of his jacket are shredded.

HITCHHIKER (CONT'D)

What's the scariest thing you've seen?

The Driver cracks a smile, more at ease as he continues.

DRIVER

Three years ago I was on an overnight ghost hunt at the Ohio State Reformatory, an old prison up in Mansfield where they filmed Shawshank Redemption. A group of six of us were exploring the administration wing when I felt this hand against my back, guiding me forward.

HITCHHIKER

Oh hell no, my ass would be gone up out of there, I ain't even playing.

The Hitchhiker laughs. The Driver laughs through his nose at first, then joins in with a chuckle of his own.

HITCHHIKER

Take a right up here.

The car pulls up to a broken stoplight. The CLICK of the turn signal and squeak of the windshield wipers across the glass are the only sounds cutting through the silence.

The Driver cranes his head down each direction of the road. All lights are out. No cars, nothing.

He makes the turn.

HITCHHIKER

So what did you do?

The Driver grins, fully in storytelling mode.

DRIVER

I turn and look, but no one is behind me, but I can smell rose-scented perfume. One of the ghosts there is the wife of the warden, who was killed when his gun fell out of the closet and shot her through the lung.

HITCHHIKER

That is crazy, man. But I can feel why she might be hanging around still, you know what I'm sayin'? Like she's got some unfinished business and shit because her life was cut short like that.

The Driver's smile fades as he checks the rear-view. The Hitchhiker stays hidden in the shadows of the backseat.

They ride in silence, until -

Two hands appear from the darkness and grip down on the Driver's shoulders.

The Driver quakes with fear, his eyes focused on the road but darting glances at the pruned fingertips.

The Hitchhiker leans close to the Driver, speaking directly into his ear. We still don't see his face.

HITCHHIKER

Could you imagine what that's like?
Your life cut short due to the
careless actions of another human
being? That's pretty fucked up.

The Driver's breath stutters with fear as he steels his focus on the road. Up ahead, a turnoff for a small country road appears through the darkness.

HITCHHIKER

That's your turn.

DRIVER

What?

HITCHHIKER

Take it! Now!

The Driver brakes hard and cuts the wheel, skidding as he just barely manages the sharp turn at that speed.

Through the windshield we see a yellow traffic sign: Winding Road Ahead - 5 Miles. The Driver slows, the night fog adding difficulty to navigation of the twisting country road.

HITCHHIKER

Why are you slowing down? My girl
is waiting, man, step on it!

The Driver obeys, his face a frantic mask of fear as the engine revs and speedometer ticks up.

EXT. WINDING ROAD - NIGHT

The car swings wide into the opposite lane as it heads into hairpin turns and throws gravel from the shoulder on the way out. Luckily, there's still no traffic.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver's head shifts side to side as he navigates the country road, but the Hitchhiker's grip never waivers.

After a final sharp turn, a stop sign appears through the fog. The Driver slams on the brakes, skidding to a stop.

The seats rock backward as the car comes to a halt. The Driver inhales quick raspy breaths, his fear pushing him nearer to hyperventilation.

The Hitchhiker loosens his grip on The Driver's shoulders and gives them a reassuring rub. His fingernails are split, cracked to the nail bed.

From the backseat, the Hitchhiker LAUGHS.

HITCHHIKER

You're so tense. You need to relax!

The Driver's eyes are still wide with fright as he looks down at his shoulders, seeing four distinct wet spots on his shirt where the Hitchhiker's fingertips had gripped him.

The Driver's breathing slows as he recovers from the fright.

HITCHHIKER

Go right here.

EXT. WINDING ROAD - NIGHT

A three-way stop at the end of the winding road. All of the surrounding street and house lights are off. Still no cars or signs of life.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver's hand shakes as he lifts the turn signal lever. He eases onto the gas and makes the turn.

The ride continues. The Driver stays on alert, keeping his eyes on the road but darting to the rear-view mirror every time the Hitchhiker shifts in the back seat.

HITCHHIKER

You got any family?

The charm on the rear-view mirror gently turns, spinning the photo away.

The Driver watches it spin before answering.

DRIVER

I used to. Just me now.

HITCHHIKER

That's tough, man. Before my girl,
I was all alone. I don't know what
I'd do if I didn't have her. Life
would be just... empty.

A deep breath of remorse from the Hitchhiker in the back,
followed by a sniff and a throat-clearing cough.

HITCHHIKER (CONT'D)

But you seem like an okay dude,
going out of your way to help a
young man like myself on a rainy
night like this. I'm sure you'll
find someone. Just takes time.

A damp reassuring hand claps the Driver on the shoulder.

HITCHHIKER (CONT'D)

This is me, up here.

The Hitchhiker leans forward and points. Ahead, nothing but
empty road. No houses, no driveway, no lights.

EXT. TWO LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The car inches to a stop along the side of the road. The
headlights turn off.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver pulls the emergency brake and shifts into neutral.

DRIVER (V.O.)

If you played correctly, when the
ride was over you were allowed to
ask him a question. It had to be
something personal but unknowable,
you can't ask for winning lottery
numbers or things like that.

The Driver unlocks the doors. The rear passenger door opens
as the Hitchhiker exits. The Driver closes his eyes and
breathes forcefully through his nostrils.

DRIVER (V.O.)

People claim to have learned the
locations of lost heirlooms, the
day and time of their death, even
the fate of long-lost loved ones.

The Driver opens his eyes and lowers his window. FOOTSTEPS
grow louder as the Hitchhiker approaches the Driver's door.

HITCHHIKER

Thanks for the ride. Do you have a
question for me?

Emotion overtakes the Driver as he tries to speak. After a
few aborted tries, he finally spits the words out.

DRIVER

Is... is she at peace? Does she
blame me?

On the rear-view mirror the charm lazily spins again,
revealing the smiling photo of the Woman.

An extended beat as the Hitchhiker stands motionless at the
window. The Driver holds his breath, waiting.

HITCHHIKER

That's two questions, friend.

The words jolt the Driver like an electric shock.

His forearms flex as his hands grip tight to the wheel. His
upper body quivers in fear as he awaits the Hitchhiker's
reaction to his rule breaking.

The Hitchhiker jerks his hands up in a sharp motion,
startling the Driver as he puts the hood up on his jacket.

HITCHHIKER (CONT'D)

But since you were kind enough to
save me from walking all this way
in the rain, I'll answer.

Tension eases from the Driver's shoulders as he relaxes.

But it's short-lived.

The Hitchhiker grabs the frame of the car door and lowers his
face into the window, eye to eye with the Driver.

We see his face for the first and only time: skin wrinkled
like an old prune with an ashen, almost blue color. His
distorted mouth is full of rotten, mildew-stained teeth.

His eyes are like large pools of black ink. Shiny, reflective, empty.

HITCHHIKER

She's not at peace. And she does
blame you.

The Driver never blinks or turns away from the Hitchhiker's face. A tear brims from his eye, rolling down his cheek.

The Hitchhiker stands back up.

HITCHHIKER

Drive safe.

FOOTSTEPS THROUGH GRAVEL as the Hitchhiker leaves.

In the SIDE-VIEW MIRROR, the Hitchhiker disappears into nothing as the steps fall silent.

The Driver cups the charm hanging from the rear-view mirror, holding it so he can see the photo.

HITCHHIKER (V.O.)

She's not at peace. And she does
blame you.

The Driver sobs as he stares at the photo. He pounds his fists into the dashboard.

DRIVER

No, no, please God no! I'm sorry,
I'm so sorry! I didn't-

He stops as the car's headlights pop on by themselves. We are back at-

EXT. BUTTER STREET - NIGHT

The car is parked next to the break in the fence by the gnarled oak tree, just as it was before the Driver summoned the Hitchhiker.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver wipes his eyes, clearing away his tears.

DRIVER (V.O.)

Those cars in the gravel pit, maybe
they aren't the people who played
the Hitchhiker's game wrong.

His eyes move from the photo, to the drop off of the gravel pit, to the parking brake.

He grips the parking brake lever in his hand.

DRIVER (V.O.)
Maybe they played it right, but
couldn't live with the answer to
their question.

The first drop of rain hits the windshield. Followed by another. It grows to a steady downpour.

Lightning reflects on the ink-black water of the gravel pit as thunder rolls in the distance.

The Driver releases the parking brake.

EXT. BUTTER STREET - NIGHT

The car inches ahead through the break in the fence.

Once through the fence, muddy hands SMACK against the trunk of the car, gripping it with broken fingernails.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver's head jerks back as the car jumps forward. He turns to see the LOST SOULS, men and women in decaying, rotten clothes, pushing against the rear of the car.

Another crash of lightning illuminates the Hitchhiker at the edge of the cliff. He points to the water below.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - NIGHT

The slope of the hill pitches down as the car gets nearer to the cliff. It picks up speed, pulling away from the ghostly hands that had been propelling it.

The waterlogged procession of Lost Souls stops in unison as the car pulls away from them. They vanish into the rain.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

As the car rolls, the Driver nods to the Hitchhiker. He grips the photo charm in his palm, ripping it from the mirror.

EXT. GRAVEL PIT - NIGHT

The car disappears over the cliff.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver takes one last look at the photo in his palm. He clutches it tight against his chest.

DIRECTOR

It's a bad night for rain.

He closes his eyes.

Through the windshield, the surface of the water gets closer and closer until-

CUT TO BLACK.