

RIDE REQUEST

Written by

Allison Kraus

INT. BLACK CRV - EARLY MORNING - 6:30AM

We start inside a clean, well-maintained car. The windows are free of finger smudges, the seats are free of crumbs, SOFT JAZZ seeps out of the speakers, the like.

Hanging on the rearview window of the car is a red student ID badge from the University of Maryland. It reads "CLARK BELLUE: Graduate Student," with a picture of a young man's face. On the dashboard is a phone mount, upon which his phone sits.

Sitting in the front seat is said man in the photo - CLARK BELLUE - age 24 with shaggy brown hair, a BLACK BUTTON-UP with an unevenly folded collar, FADED BLUE JEANS, and GREY-RIMMED GLASSES.

The car sits in a parking lot of an apartment building. Clark waits patiently. He taps his fingers on the steering wheel along to the jazz music.

RING RING. His phone rings. Clark removes the phone from the mount and answers.

CLARK

(on the phone)

Hi Mom, can I call you back? I'm about to start working.

MOTHER (V.O.)

No, Clark. This is urgent.

CLARK

Urgent? Are you okay? How's Dad, where is he?

MOTHER (V.O.)

We're fine. Your father's fine. It's about Davey.

That name makes Clark's blood run cold.

MOTHER (V.O.)

(cont.)

Clark, he's out.

Clark is stunned. He can barely breathe.

MOTHER (V.O.)

(cont.)

Clark?

Clark comes to his senses.

CLARK
 (suddenly bitter)
 Not a good time to tell me. It's
 too early.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Clark-

CLARK
 No. Absolutely not. I'm not dealing
 with this now. I'll call you later,
 but I'm busy. I refuse to be a part
 of this.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Clark!

BEEP. Clark hangs up and stares at his phone, a bit
 overwhelmed. He inhales deeply.

A VOICE from the back pipes up.

PASSENGER (O.S.)

Are you serious?

Clark glances in his rearview mirror. In the back passenger
 seat is a VERY BUSINESS-FORMAL LADY of about 35, glaring at
 him. He hadn't noticed her get into his car.

CLARK
 (under his breath)
 Shit.

He fumbles the phone back onto the car mount and pull up the
 Uber app. A map shows up, with a car path and a user ID.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. Okay, Catherine?
 We're headed to 7401 Kitteridge
 Avenue, yes?

He turns his head around back to look at the passenger. She
 simply glares at him, irritated. Clark turns back around
 sheepishly.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 (more-so to himself)
 Okay then.

Clark taps START TRIP on his phone and begins driving.

BEGIN MONTAGE (THIS INCLUDES ALL OF THE FOLLOWING AND THEN SOME)

-Clark pulls car up to non-de-scrip building and Catherine climbs out.

-The "MY EARNINGS" tab at the top of Clark's phone reads \$9.48.

-Clark chugs a cup of coffee

-An OLDER MAN sits in the back, trying to start an awkward conversation with Clark.

-"MY EARNINGS" blinks to \$20.87.

-A MOTHER and CHILD sit in the back; the child whines and carries on about something arbitrary while the mother scolds him.

-"MY EARNINGS" goes up to \$43.75.

INT. BLACK CRV - 10:30AM

Clark drops off his current passenger, a YOUNG BUSINESSMAN who hands Clark his card before exiting the car. He turns to look at the back of his car. It's already got a fresh layer of crumbs on the seats. Clark rolls his eyes.

DING. The app beeps with a new passenger.

The rider is named EVAN, and is located two minutes away from him. He has a request for a location that is about a half hour away. Clark exhales and hits ACCEPT.

He grabs his coffee, takes a long swig, hits the gas and begins to drive towards the pick-up location.

Two minutes later, his GPS BEEPS OUT with a robotic female voice: "In 500 feet, turn right."

Clark glances to the right and frowns. There is no discernible street signs or markings that he can identify, but there is a loose gravel road that cuts off from the main road. He takes that turn. His car bumps along over the uneven gravel and sand below his wheels. Small, worn-down houses line the pathway every several yards.

Clark eventually pulls up to a very small house, barely one story off the ground, painted a chipped blue-gray color. His GPS sounds off again: "You have reached your destination."

Clark brakes and puts his car in park. There is no indication that anyone is waiting for him. He sits quietly for a moment.

His phone RINGS. It's his Mom again. Clark rolls his eyes and hits ANSWER, putting her on speaker.

CLARK

(monotone)

I told you that I'd call you later.

MOTHER (V.O.)

I know, but it's urgent. Are you alone?

CLARK

(huffs)

For a minute, yeah, but-

MOTHER (V.O.)

Davey wants to talk to you.

CLARK

No.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Clark!

CLARK

Tell him I'm busy. That, and I don't want to talk to him.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Please, Clark? This is a good sign.

CLARK

That what?

MOTHER (V.O.)

That he's rehabilitated and ready to start reaching out again!

CLARK

He's gonna need a lot more rehab if he wants to start talking to me.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Clark, please. This isn't any easier for me. If you can't do it for him, do it for me. Your mother. *His* mother.

Small beat.

CLARK
 Alright, I'll text him later. But
 that's it. Now I *really* gotta go.

MOTHER (V.O.)
 Thank you.

Clark hangs up. He huffs loudly.

CLICK. The back passenger door flies open. EVAN MCCORMICK,
 age 26 with shoulder length black hair and wearing an
 OVERSIZED GREEN SHIRT and BAGGY JEANS barrels into the
 backseat, catching Clark completely by surprise.

EVAN
 Yo!

CLARK
 Aah!

EVAN
 You Clark, man?

CLARK
 Uh, yeah. Are you Evan?

EVAN
 Yeah yeah yeah. Let's go.

CLARK
 Yeah.

Clark puts the car in drive, awkwardly turns it around, and
 drives away, wheels rumbling across the pitted gravel.

Evan noisily stretches out in the back seat as though it is a
 couch.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 Um, can you buckle up, please? I
 don't want to risk a ticket.

EVAN
 (scoffs)
 I never wear a belt and I've never
 gotten in trouble.

CLARK
 Yeah, well, company rules. If I get
 caught I'll lose my job.

EVAN
 Aww, I won't tell on you.

Evan barks out a laugh.

CLARK
(assertive)
Please put your belt on.

Evan sits up and makes a big show of pulling his belt across his lap.

EVAN
Are you always this much of a
hardass?

Clark ignores the question.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Hey. Yoo-hooooooooo. Hardass.

Clark keeps his eyes on the road. Evan scoffs and settles back into his seat.

The soft jazz music continues to ECHO out of the stereo. The two ride in silence for a bit.

Evan lowers his window. He rolls it back up. He lowers it again. Then back up. Down. Up. Down. Up. He hits it quicker each time.

Clark tenses up a little bit each time. Finally he explodes - or at least, how a person with great patience would explode.

CLARK
Please don't do that.

EVAN
Ha! You DO talk!

Evan chuckles with self-satisfaction. More silence.

Evan suddenly leans forward towards the drivers seat and gets right behind Clark's shoulder, again causing Clark to jump a bit. He points at Clark's U-Maryland ID dangling off of the rearview mirror.

EVAN (CONT'D)
You in school?

CLARK
Mmhmm.

EVAN
Whatcha studying?

CLARK
Business administration.

EVAN
Damn, typical white guy. You gonna
open a sports bar or something?

CLARK
Nope...

EVAN
Nah, man, I'm just kidding. My
sister goes to U Maryland.

CLARK
Oh yeah? Would I know her?

EVAN
God, I hope not. She wants to be a
teacher. Teaching the special kids
and whatever.

CLARK
That's cool.

EVAN
I mean, that's what it was last
time I saw her.

CLARK
When was that?

EVAN
Fuck if I know. You ever have
someone throw up in here?

CLARK
No.

EVAN
Dude, I was in an Lyft once with my
buddies and we were smashed, and
Carl hurled his Taco Bell all over
me and Tony. We had to pay, like
another hundred or some bullshit,
but I don't think Carl ever did. Do
you guys charge if someone barfs in
your car?

CLARK
Yeah, an extra \$150 or something-

EVAN
 (cutting him off)
 Hey, you got an AUX cord? This
 music is pissing me off.

CLARK
 Uh, yeah. Here.

Clark passes the AUX cord to Evan. He jams it into his phone and swipes his screen a few times.

DU HAST by Rammstein BLASTS throughout the car stereo at a volume that's just above tolerable. Clark winces and turns the volume on his stereo down.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 What is this?

EVAN
 Rammstein!

Evan pantomimes electric guitar.

EVAN (CONT'D)
 You a metalhead?

CLARK
 No.

EVAN
 Figures. Rammstein's the shit.
 They've got this album cover that's
 a dead baby.

CLARK
 (obviously disgusted)
 Oh.

The song hits the chorus. Evan breaks out into song. His voice is so comically warbly and deep that Clark can't help but smile a bit.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 It's not bad.

EVAN
 Right?! It fucking slaps.

Clark begins to tap his hand on the wheel in rhythm to the music.

Evan suddenly gestures wildly.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Oh, yo yo yo, pull off here.

CLARK
What, why? This isn't your stop.

EVAN
I know, I know, but I forgot. I
need to grab something. Five
seconds, I swear.

CLARK
I, uh ... fuck it. Show me where.

Clark pulls off onto a nearby exit.

EVAN
Down that road. First house you
see.

Clark turns the car down a suburban street. It rumbles along
for a moment before pulling up to a small house.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Thanks, man. Two seconds.

Evan jumps out of the car and runs up to the house. He soon
disappears inside.

Clark puts the car in park and waits. The car continues to
play Ramstein - Evan forgot his phone.

Clark's phone pings. It's a text from a DAVEY. He swallows
nervously and picks up his phone. He goes to open the
message, but he hesitates. His finger hovers over his phone
screen.

CLICK. The back passenger door swings open and Evan dives
back in.

EVAN (CONT'D)
You waited! My man!

He slaps Clark on the shoulder.

CLARK
Great.

Clark puts the car in reverse and glances in his rearview
mirror. Right behind him, he sees Evan stick his fingernail
into a tiny baggie of brown powder and sniff it up his nose.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Woah, what the hell is that? Put
that shit away!

EVAN
(sniffing)
Too late.

He lets out a defiant cackle. Clark hits the brakes and puts
the car in park.

CLARK
Get out.

EVAN
Oh come on man, lighten up. Look,
you want some? Here.

He sticks the small baggie under Clark's nose. Clark shoves
his hand away.

CLARK
(ice cold)
No fucking way. Get out of my car
and take your junkie shit with you.

EVAN
No way! You still have to drive me
to Carl's!

CLARK
Out. Now.

He unplugs Evan's phone from the AUX chord and throws it onto
his lap. Evan doesn't seem to notice.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Go call another car. I'm done.

EVAN
I don't have that kind of money!

CLARK
That's not my problem. Not anymore.

EVAN
I ain't going back in there, you
fucking piece of -

CLARK
GET THE HELL OUT, DAVEY!

Evan freezes. He stares at Clark, a bit dumbfounded.

Clark blinks, taking stock of what he just said.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 (stammering)
 I -

Clark halts, then points at the door, resolute.

Evan scrambles out of the car. He shuts the door and stands awkwardly next to the car, unmoving.

Clark begins to slowly back the car away from Evan. Evan just stands there, staring at the car like a lost puppy, his phone clutched tightly in his fist, like a shred of a lifeline.

Clark moves the car a few more yards, trying to avoid eye contact with Evan, who remains frozen in his spot.

Clark slowly puts his foot on the brake. This looks too familiar. He rubs his face with his hand and exhales.

CLARK (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Christ.

He puts the car in park and HONKS the horn. Evan snaps to attention and shuffles to the car.

Evan opens the door to the front seat and climbs in, taking care to buckle his seatbelt. Clark backs the car out of the driveway and heads back to the main road.

Silence. Clark refuses to look at Evan.

Evan delicately plugs his phone back into the AUX. The radio continues to GRUMBLE HEAVY METAL from Evan's phone, albeit a lot softer.

EVAN
 (quiet)
 You weren't really gonna leave me
 ... were you?

CLARK
 Oh I was. I just need this job.

A pause.

EVAN
 Wanna know how I lost mine?

CLARK
 Something to do with drugs,
 probably?

EVAN
(suddenly bitter)
You don't fucking know me.

Clark shuts up. A small beat.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I nearly set Kingston Gastro Pub on
fire.

CLARK
On 56th and D Street?

EVAN
(laughing)
Yeah, man, we were fucking around
with the stove, using Logan's sick
new lighter to ignite these big ass
flames, and I knocked a whole
bottle of cooking wine right onto
the stove and nearly lit the place
up. Scott's uniform got scorched,
it was amaaaaazing.
(small pause)
And yeah I was high.

Evan sniffs and stares out the window. Clark drives, not looking at Evan. The car is silent, with nothing but the WHIR of the engine and the THUD THUD of thrasher music as background noise.

Evan absentmindedly wiggles his fingers in front of his face. Clark stares at the road.

RING RING. Clark's phone rings. It's his mom again. Evan's head pops up.

EVAN (CONT'D)
(slurred)
Whossat?

CLARK
No one, just my mom.

EVAN
You gonna answer?

CLARK
No, I'm driving you. That's rude.

EVAN
I don't give a shit.

Evan goes back to waving his hand in front of his face and giggling.

EVAN (CONT'D)
Fingernails are *weird*.

Clark considers Evan, then hits "ACCEPT" on his phone.

CLARK
(to the phone)
I'm still driving.

MOTHER (V.O.)
(via phone speaker)
Have you texted Davey?

EVAN
(giggles to himself)
Davey. S'a stupid name.

CLARK
No, I've been driving.

MOTHER (V.O.)
How much longer?

CLARK
I don't know, but I promise I'll
text him, now please stop calling
for now.

MOTHER (V.O.)
Hurry, he really wants --

CLARK
I *know* he wants to talk to me, I
know. I promise.

EVAN
(shouting)
He promises!

MOTHER (V.O.)
Who's that?

CLARK
My passenger. You're on speaker.
Goodbye, Mom.

MOTHER (V.O.)
Okay, but--

Clark hits "END" on his phone, effectively hanging up.

CLARK

Christ.

Evan sniffs. His eyes are a little glassy.

EVAN

(to himself)

Losing my buzz.

He pulls the tiny baggy of drugs out of his pocket and scoops some more in his nose.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Gaahh, too much, too much. Whooo!

CLARK

Really wish you wouldn't do that, man.

EVAN

(chuckles)

I really wish it too, *man*.

Clark shakes his head and stares at the road. A silence, with nothing but Evan's intermittent sniffing.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Who's Davey?

Clark hesitates.

CLARK

My brother.

EVAN

Why ya gotta text him so bad?

Another pause.

CLARK

He just got out of rehab.

EVAN

Oh.

Sniff.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Drugs?

CLARK

Yep.

Sniff.

EVAN
I almost tried that.

CLARK
Rehab?

EVAN
Mm. Parents wanted it. Sister too.
But I didn't.

Evan's starting to sound a bit less coherent.

EVAN (CONT'D)
I juss...did my own thing. Did your
bro do that too?

CLARK
Yeah. For a while.

Evan's head lolls against the car door.

EVAN
He got better?

CLARK
(half to himself)
God, I hope so.

EVAN
Can I get better?

Another pause, the most intense one yet. Clark glances at Evan, sitting slumped against the window, face ashen and eyes sunken in. He notices tears forming at the corner of Evan's eyes.

Clark blinks back his own tears.

CLARK
I don't know, Evan.

Evan suddenly begins to pull himself upright in his seat.

EVAN
Do you think my parents hate me?

CLARK
What?

EVAN
(panicked)
Am I a disappointment? Should I
have gone back to rehab? Should I
have ignored Carl?

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

Jesus, I'm so high. Why am I high?
I'm 22, why am I so damn high? Oh
God, my parents are gonna kill me.
I'm gonna kill my parents just by
being high.

Evan is starting to hyperventilate. He begins to paw at his seatbelt, but he's too disoriented to make any meaningful contact. Clark is dumbfounded, but only for a moment. Something seems to shift in him. He switches on his emergency blinkers and pulls the car to the side of the highway.

He puts the car in park and unbuckles Evan's seatbelt for him, like a big brother would do for his little brother.

CLARK

Take it easy, Evan. I'm sure your
parents don't hate you.

EVAN

What if Dad called the cops again?
Oh my god, they're gonna be waiting
for me at Carl's. They're gonna get
us both. Jesus. Man, you can't
drive me to Carl's. Drop me off
here. Anywhere. Just not at Carl's.
Please.

CLARK

Okay, okay. We won't go to Carl's.
We'll go somewhere else, okay?

Clark takes his phone out of the mount and hits "CHANGE DESTINATION" on the Uber map. He quickly punches in "HOSPITAL" and taps the first result that shows up for ST. CHRISTOPHER'S REGIONAL HOSPITAL, which is miraculously off the next exit.

He cranks the car back in drive and tears off down the highway.

Evan is hyperventilating so hard that he is on the verge of passing out. His head rocks back and forth, as if he's on a swivel. His face is gray and his eyes are wide.

EVAN

Fuck, dude, where am I?

CLARK

You're in an Uber. My name is
Clark, I'm driving you to the
hospital.

EVAN

No. Turn around. I'm not going in there.

CLARK

Yes you are.

With that, Clark pulls to the front entrance of the EMERGENCY ROOM at ST. CHRISTOPHER'S REGIONAL HOSPITAL. He stops at the entrance.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Time to get out.

EVAN

No no no, you can't leave me here. They'll call the cops, they'll arrest me.

CLARK

Evan, get it together for just a second, okay? Look at me. You want to get better. You don't want to keep losing money you don't have, right? You want to see your family again. They want to see you too. I know it. And if you want that too, then you gotta get out of the car.

EVAN

I can't.

CLARK

Yes you can. You can get better.

EVAN

No way man!

Evan lunges across the median and grabs the steering wheel.

CLARK

(stifling panic)

Evan, let go. We're in park.

He tries to pry Evan's hands off of the steering wheel, but Evan has his hands locked in a vice grip around it.

EVAN

(hysterical)

They'll send me to jail! I don't wanna go to jail, I wanna go home!

Evan crumples across the median and begins to sob.

Clark jumps out of the car.

EXT. ST. CHRISTOPHER'S REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Keeping one hand on the steering wheel, Clark begins frantically waving at the glass entrance door. He catches the attention of the receptionist, who rushes outside to help him. Two nurses follow her out shortly after.

The two nurses open up the passenger door and grab Evan by the underarms. He goes limp and allows them to pull him out of the CRV.

Evan pauses his crying and manages to get one last look at Clark. His eyes are pleading.

Clark looks right back at him and nods. He's not going anywhere.

Evan begins to cry again, but not out of panic; out of relief.

The nurses guide him inside as his sobs bellow out of him. The receptionist turns to Clark.

RECEPTIONIST

Tell me what happened.

CLARK

My name is Clark Bellue. He is high off of something, I'm not sure what. I'm just an Uber driver.

RECEPTIONIST

Because there are drugs involved, we'll need you to stay for further questioning.

CLARK

Yeah, of course. Let me just go park my car.

Clark climbs back into the car and shuts the door.

INT. BLACK CRV

Clark stares at his dashboard, in shock. He slowly puts the car in DRIVE and delicately steers out of the emergency room entrance.

He pulls into a parking spot and shuts off his car. He sits quietly;

it's the quietest it's ever been in the past hour and a half. He looks down at the median and notices that Evan's phone is still plugged into the AUX chord.

At the same time, Clark's phone beeps with an alert: a five-star system followed up with "How would you rate your ride with Evan?"

Clark starts to cry. Not huge, painful sobs like Evan's, but quiet exhales. Slowly releasing a cry that had been sitting inside of him for far too long.

Clark slows his little cry. He picks up his phone. Ignores the Rating pop-up. Opens iMessage. Creates a new message, addressed to "Davey."

CLARK
(in a text)
"Hey. Call me."

He hits SEND.

THE END