

A I D E N K O

TRAFFIC JAM

“I never told this to anyone,” she started. She took a deep breath, steeling herself. “But I think my husband is having an affair.”

The woman in the back seat didn’t seem nearly as distraught as most wives would be upon a confession like this. In fact, she seemed eerily calm. Almost as if this was expected. Carefully, she tucked some loose hair behind her ear and kept her hands in her lap, still as poised and composed as before.

I’m not entirely sure why she was telling me this. I’m just her Uber driver. All I was supposed to do was pick her up and take her back to her hotel from the opera house. I didn’t even know there was an opera house in L.A. Unfortunately, there was an accident, so we were stuck in rush hour traffic, on the 405, at two in the morning. If anything, it was almost expected.

I glanced through the rearview mirror and tried not to blush when I stared for a moment too long. Even though this was incredibly serious and heavy information, it was almost impossible to ignore her beauty. Her hair cascaded down her shoulders like a waterfall, framing her face like a Filipina angel. Her makeup was so carefully done and her clothes and jewelry arranged in a way that seemed simple and minimalistic, but was clearly a power play: a symbol of her status and wealth.

As I moved the car forward a couple of feet, I wondered why she was taking an Uber when she probably had a long line of cars and chauffeurs ready and able to take her wherever she wanted.

She stared out the window, her gaze fixated on something in the distance.

I swallowed, trying my hardest not to get cottonmouth as I held onto the pink, blue, and purple bisexual pride pin I’d pocketed when I drove up to the opera house. Rich people scare me. Rich, presumably straight, cisgender people scare me even more.

“Oh?” I asked. “What makes you say that?”

“He’s—a prideful man,” she replied. “We haven’t agreed on much recently. And he has this—assistant. They’ve spoken at great length well into the night.”

The car in front of me moved up a little bit. I followed.

“Why haven’t you asked?” I wondered out loud, not realizing the words stumbled past my lips until it was too late to take them back.

There was a huff from behind me. It took a few moments to realize that was her laughing. I didn’t need to see her expression to feel the bitterness coming off of her. “He would deny it,” she said. “And even if he didn’t, I don’t know what we would do.”

A beat. Two. Three. The cars around me were completely stationary. It almost felt as though time itself had come to a screeching halt. I was in a car, trying to drive home this impossibly gorgeous woman with an unimaginable amount of money who was confessing to me, her bisexual Uber driver (who, by the way, was definitely attracted to her), that her husband was probably cheating on her with his assistant.

This was not how I thought my Thursday night was going to go.

“Why?” I choked out. “Why tell me?”

Silence. I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. I wondered if she could hear it.

My eyes flicked up to the rearview mirror to catch a glimpse of her expression. For a moment, her facade cracked. The composure she had been keeping up slipped away, like a loose mask falling to the floor and exposing the vulnerability behind it.

Her voice was hoarse when she spoke, her eyes glassy. Her words were a whisper on the air and if the rest of the world hadn’t fallen away, I wouldn’t have caught them.

“Because I have no one else to talk to.”

Her words slammed into me harder than any of the cars nearby could. Through all the calmness, the stillness in the way she presented herself, it was so plainly obvious that she was alone. She couldn’t go to her husband. Who knows if she had any friends. I couldn’t imagine what her family must have been like if she couldn’t turn to them.

She must have been so unfathomably lonely if the only person she felt like she could talk to about her husband’s potential affair was her Uber driver. A tear spilled forward, dragging down a bit of her mascara.

I quickly whipped out a tissue and passed it to her.

Delicately, she dabbed it to her eyes and managed to prevent any smears. Even now, as defenseless and exposed as she was, she was still impeccable.

I chewed on my lower lip, trying to figure out what to say. I had never been cheated on. I've never had any experience in this field. But, I knew a lot about love. And I knew a lot about heartbreak. I rubbed my thumb across the top of the pin again.

If being in this community has taught me anything, it's to expect heartbreak at every turn if you're bisexual.

I took a deep breath and put the car in park. The seatbelt stopped me from turning very far, so I took it off entirely so I could fully face the woman.

"Do you love your husband?" I asked.

"I'm—I'm sorry?" she said, her eyebrows scrunched together, trying to decipher the meaning behind my words.

"Do you love your husband?" I repeated.

There was a beat of silence as realization began to dawn in her eyes. "I—I don't know."

I reached over and took her hand. Her nails were perfectly manicured, her skin impossibly soft. I wondered how my rough, calloused hands must have felt. I wondered if she had ever worked a day in her life.

"Relationships are built on trust," I said. "So, if you trust your husband, then talk to him."

"What if he's already broken my trust?"

I just gave her a sad smile. "Then, it's up to him to decide if he wants to fix things."

As we held each other's gaze, one determined and one sorrowful, the car behind us honked, snapping me back to the 405 freeway. The traffic was moving again and there was a huge space in front of me.

I turned back to the wheel and clicked my seatbelt back into place, desperately trying to hide my blush.