

Jacob exhaled a huge cloud of grey marijuana smoke as the 1986 Chevette barreled down the gravel back roads of rural North Dakota. Eliza squinted her youthful eyes; trying to focus as her hands gripped the wheel. It was well past midnight, and there's nothing more disorienting than the all encompassing darkness of the plains. The sky was crystal clear and as the light from the city retreated the milky way could be seen beginning to emerge out of the darkness. In the back seat lay a plastic kite still in the package. The floor of the old Chevy had accumulated months of convenience store food. Empty bags of chips intermingled with empty soda cans and candy wrappers. The kite had been purchased only 15 minutes earlier when Jacob had the idea to go to Wal Mart and "get stoned and fly kites".

Eliza's foot slammed down on the breaks as they approached a fork in the road. The Chevette's tires slid and the car was engulfed in a dirty khaki cloud. "What the fuck?!" Jacob exclaimed as a grin slowly crept up his face. The chevette's engine idled as Eliza began to come to her senses. She then looked over at Jacob with her eyes wide open before she descended into laughter. She wasn't used to smoking so much weed. As she continued to laugh her eyes began to water and she managed to blurt out. "I didn't know which way to.....fucking....go!" Jacob's head fell back on the seat as he exhaled, still smiling. "Let's just pull over here sweetie"

As soon as the engine was turned off the change of atmosphere was instantaneous. Only the sound of crickets and a distant highway interrupted the otherwise dead silence. Jacob stayed inside the car, sparking the lighter above a bowl made from pipe fittings they bought from a local hardware store. Eliza sat on the hood, her eyes on the sky. She leaned back, allowing her back to soak up all the warmth of the engine as she gazed up at the stars. In an instant a flash of light skirted across the black sky. "Shooting star!" Eliza exclaimed. "Better make a wish quick" Jacob replied, his eyes now focused on assembling the kite which lay in his lap. Eliza closed her eyes as she tried to calm her mind so as to speak directly to the falling star wish gods. Then whispering she said "I wish, I wish that Jacob really loved....no. no. that's not a good wish. Maybe I'll fall in love again too. Once I go to college. wait. fuck. I need to wish. shit. Ok. I wish to know if god is.." Jacob interrupted her concentration and as she opened her eyes she saw him, kite in hand, with a stoned grin plastered across his face. "You're a dick" Eliza blurted out as her face morphed into a way that only a 15 year old girl's can. Showing pure disdain, naiveté, and fear all at once. "I'm sorry babe" he said, still smiling as he handed her the kite. Just then; another white streak skidded across the atmosphere. It was so bright that Jacob saw it in the reflection of the windshield. Eliza's anger quickly turned to a youthful sigh as she began to crack a smile. Jacob came closer to her and gave her a little peck and said "Looks like you got another wish". It was just the reason why she had fallen so hard in love with him. Even though Jacob was a complete fuck up he always had a way of being clever and thoughtful. Eliza looked back up at Jacob "So, you think it'll fly?" Eliza said. "Yeah, of course it'll fly. It was assembled by an expert pothead. I know all about the physics of building and shit." Jacob replied as he slowly walked away, the thimble of string slowly unwinding as he walked further and further into the darkness of the cornfields.

As Eliza began to scan the cornfields surrounding her an eerie feeling began to creep into her. At this point Jacob was at least 50 yards away, Eliza stood alone in front of her Chevette

clutching the kite. And then another white streak across the sky. "Jacob!" she yelled. "Another one!". But she couldn't see Jacob anywhere. Desperation quickly set in. "Don't fuck with me!" she yelled into the darkness. Only crickets responded. "Jacob!" she screamed again. At this point another flash of light across the sky. But Eliza noticed that the light didn't burn out. It sat there hovering near the horizon before darting off in another direction. "Jacob what the fuck! We gotta go!". She tugged on the string and it went taught. Against every bone in her body she trudged slowly forward, pulling on the string and following it into the black cornfield. The light in the sky continued to do its dance. "Jacob?!". At this point the corn completely engulfed her, she gave the string another tug and saw a stalk of corn jolt against the black sky. He had tied the string around a corn stalk. Her mind began to race as she quickly turned around, making her retreat back to her car. The razor sharp leaves were cutting her forearms as she bounded out of the field onto the dirt road. "I'll leave the fucker here!" she thought to herself as she plunged her hand into her pocket in search of her keys. She was running as fast as she could to the car when she saw a small flash come from within the field behind the car. A small amber flash, it looked like a lighter. Eliza pulled the door open and slammed it behind her and thrust the keys into the ignition. The engine revved and just as she was about to pop the clutch she saw the same light flicker for a second. It was a lighter. It had to be Jacob. Rolling down her window she yelled "Get in the fucking car Jacob. Seriously. I'm leaving". No response. Only a flicker of light. "Have a fun walk back to town dickweed!". She popped the clutch and her tires spun on the gravel road.

It only took a few moments to realize she was driving away from the highway entrance. As she slowed she saw the light continue to dart back and forth across the sky. "Fuck Off!" she yelled at it while performing a three point turn in the middle of the road. With her car now back on track she noticed a light slowly getting brighter and brighter directly in front of her. "Probably just a pissed off farmer coming to see who's messing around in his field. It's gonna be ok." she said to herself. But this was no farmer. The light began to glow amber and blue and became so bright that she had to bring the car to a halt. A warmth began to fill her body as she closed her eyes from the blinding glare. She was at peace and completely relaxed.

Suddenly she felt her body being pulled from the seat and dragged across the road. The bright lights had made her completely night blind. She could see the light in the distance filling up the interior of her chevette. Her shoe came off and her foot scraped against the gravel cutting the bottom of her foot open. "Ahhhhh" her scream was cut short by a hand firmly pressed over her mouth. "Shhhhhhh" she heard. "It's ok babe". It was Jacob. His features were still blurry but it was him. She felt the same leaves scraping her skin. She was back in the corn field. As her vision came back she began to make out the image of Jacob with his finger over his mouth. "quiet. they hunt sound" he whispered. His arms held her firmly as she pressed her head into his shoulder. Looking out from the field she could still see her Chevette lit up like a Christmas tree. The light began to slowly dissipate as Eliza watched in awe, occasionally looking up at Jacob for verification as to whether it was ok to speak or not yet. And then in a flash, the light rocketed straight up into space. Becoming only as big as a distant star. It stayed in place for a moment, and then like that, it was gone.

Jacob broke the silence. "well, you want to smoke a bowl?" he said as if nothing had happened. Eliza should've been annoyed but the fact that everything was ok comforted her. "what...the....fuck...was that" Eliza stated with a shocked smile across her face. "Those, those were just drones. Kind of like alien paparazzi" Jacob stated still playing with Eliza's emotions a bit. Eliza crinkled up her nose and began to smile and then stated "And so, what are you?" . "Me?

I'm the person in charge of protecting you, and I'm going to be in a shitload of trouble" Jacob said as he took Eliza's hand while walking back to the car. "You're protecting me from what?" "Well, let's just say that far far away there are some people who really care a lot about you and they think you are perfect in every way. You give them hope for the future. Our relationship is being viewed far from this planet on something kind of like Tv". Eliza wasn't sure whether to be honored or frightened. They got back inside her chevette which was parked sideways in the road. All the wrappers were gone and the car was completely clean. Jacob blurted out laughing "haha, they took all your shit! probably going to end up on alien ebay!". Eliza was still in a state of shock but it was mixed with a new strange sort of self confidence . She slid the keys back into the ignition and started the car. As they buzzed down the dirt road Jacob looked over at her. "So should I pack another bowl?" Eliza's glanced at Jacob, the same guy she had fallen in love with months ago. "Yeah sweetie, pack another one. Then lets go get some pizza."