

Driving me crazy

Short Play (Comedy)

by

Michelle Morgan

Too many driving instructors, only one car

CHARACTERS:

JACK/JACQUI: Male/female, aged 16 or 17 - can't wait to get his/her driver's license and some wheels.

HUGH: Male, 40s, Jack/Jacqui's father - likes to call the shots.

VALERIE: Female, 40s, Jack/Jacqui's mother - always takes the moral high ground.

JUDD: Male, 40s/50s, driving instructor - sees everything as black and white.

SETTING: Inside / outside a car

TIME: The present

There are two chairs side by side with two higher stools behind them, the seating arrangement for a car. One of the front chairs has an L plate attached. JUDD, a driving school instructor, is sitting on another chair off to the side with a sign on the chair: "JUDD'S Driving School". JUDD is wearing a headset and is talking on a mobile phone while holding a pen and clipboard.

JUDD: I can fit you in at four o'clock this afternoon. How does that suit?

HUGH and Jack enter. HUGH stops to type into his mobile phone while JACK sits down on the chair with the L plate, drumming his hands on his thighs and singing to the beat. JUDD writes on the clipboard.

JACK: Hey Dad, let's bounce!

HUGH: Urgent email. Won't be a tick.

HUGH types a bit more then puts the phone in his pocket and sits on the front chair next to JACK.

HUGH: Start her up. Ready to rock and roll!

JACK starts the car.

JACK: Sick!

VALERIE enters.

VALERIE: Hugh, wait! I just booked a driving lesson for Jack.

JACK: More lessons - cool!

HUGH: Who with?

VALERIE: Judd's Driving School.

HUGH: Why?

VALERIE: So he can learn to bungy jump.

HUGH: I'm teaching him to drive. You should've asked me first.

VALERIE: And you would've agreed?

HUGH: Absolutely not! I'm his father. It's my job to teach my own son how to drive.

VALERIE: It's a big commitment. You'll have to give up golf for while - a few months at least.

HUGH: Point taken. But I'm not too busy to take my own son for a drive every once in a while. Whadaya say Jack?

JACK: Cool!

VALERIE: I want to teach him how to drive too. It'll give him more practice - another perspective.

HUGH: Perspective? He wants to learn how to drive a car, not draw one.

VALERIE sits on the stool behind HUGH.

HUGH: What are you doing? We're not teaching him to drive at the same time!

VALERIE: There needs to be *one* responsible adult in this car.

HUGH: That's me.

VALERIE: I'm not moving.

JACK: Can we *please* get going?

HUGH: OK, but no backseat driving! I hope I don't regret this.

VALERIE: My lips are sealed. *(pause)* Seatbelts!

HUGH Shhh!

HUGH glares at VALERIE as they do up their pretend seatbelts. JACK impatiently drums his hands on his thighs.

HUGH: Into gear, son.

JACK: Which one?

HUGH: First. No, that one, D for um...

VALERIE: Dopey, deranged, delusional...

HUGH: Stupid automatic! Why can't your mother drive a real car?

JACK: Can I drive the Monaro?

HUGH: I told you, it takes years to learn how to drive a sophisticated machine like the Monaro.

VALERIE: Oh please!

JACK: I'll be real careful, Dad.

HUGH: Not today son. On the power - a bit more stick. Not that much! Hand break off. A little bit more stick. What the... Look out! Mirrors, check the mirrors! Stop!

JACK: Calm down Dad, we haven't even moved.

VALERIE: Indicator!

HUGH: Do you mind? I'm the driving instructor.

JACK: This is harder than I thought.

HUGH: You're doing fine. Now bring it up to 50k's. Slowly. Faster. Not that fast, slow down. You're doing great. *(Sighs)* What are you doing? Don't slow down, keep going!

JACK: But the light's orange!

HUGH: Speed up or the car behind will slam into the back of you.

VALERIE turns around.

VALERIE: What car?

HUGH: I'm speaking hypothetically.

JACK: The light's red!

HUGH looks around.

HUGH: It's OK, I can't see any police.

VALERIE: You just made our son run a red light! How irresponsible!

HUGH: I didn't *make* him do it. I was just trying to explain that when the light turns orange-

VALERIE: Watch out for the bird!

HUGH: Don't slow down, it's only a magpie. It'll soon get out of the way.

JACK: I don't want to kill it!

HUGH: What are you doing?

JACK: That was close!

HUGH: Sure was! Magpie's can make a horrible mess of the front grill.

VALERIE: The front grill? Is that all you're worried about? What if it was a child on the road?

HUGH: It wasn't.

VALERIE: But what if it was?

JACK: Which way do I go now?

HUGH: You don't think I'd tell him to stop for a child?

VALERIE: That's not what I'm getting at.

JACK: We're all agreed then, straight ahead.

HUGH: What do you think I am? Of course I'd stop. For God's sake!

VALERIE: Why, so they don't make a mess of the front grill?

HUGH: It's that time of the month again isn't it?

VALERIE: Why do you always insult me when you can't think of a good enough answer?

JACK: Children please! Nobody got hurt.

HUGH: Not even the magpie.

VALERIE: Moral bankrupt!

HUGH: Pull over Jack.

JACK: Now?

HUGH: Yes. Your mother is taking over as the driving instructor.

VALERIE: With pleasure!

HUGH and VALERIE blow kisses to each other as they swap seats.

HUGH: Ice queen!

VALERIE: Wanker!

JACK: You two are so gay!

HUGH: I'm looking forward to a bit of backseat driving.

JACK indicates, looks around and drives off.

VALERIE: Well done Jack. Keep going down Old South Road.

JACK: There's a roundabout up ahead, which way do I go?

HUGH: Straight ahead, son. And don't slow down this time.

VALERIE: Excuse me! (*Turns around*). It's *my* turn to be the driving instructor. (*To Jack*) You've got to give way to the cars on your right on the roundabout.

HUGH: If there's nothing coming, you don't have to-

VALERIE: You've got to slow down.

HUGH: But only if there are cars on the roundabout. Not on your *right*. If you're going to take Jack for driving lessons, you should at least learn the road rules.

VALERIE: Aren't the cars that you give way to on the roundabout always on your *right*?

HUGH: She does this to me all the time.

VALERIE: What?

HUGH: Pick, pick, pick.

VALERIE: Impressive vocabulary Hugh.

JACK: Can you please leave the domestics till we get home? I'm trying to drive. Do I indicate to get off the roundabout?

HUGH: No, we're just going straight ahead.

VALERIE: Of course you have to indicate when exiting a roundabout!

HUGH: Bullshit!

VALERIE: And you think I don't know the road rules!

HUGH: "When exiting a roundabout" - you sound like a bloody driving instructor.

VALERIE: Der...

JACK: Stop it, both of you!

HUGH's phone rings.

HUGH: G'day mate. What's up?

VALERIE: Thank God your father can't do two things at once! Turn into the driveway, Jack. It's time for your lesson with the driving school.

JUDD stands up, waiting to greet VALERIE.

JUDD: Hello Mrs Mann. I'm Judd from Judd's Driving School.

JUDD and VALERIE shake hands.

VALERIE: This is my son, Jack - your new pupil.

JACK and JUDD shake hands.

JUDD: You won't be disappointed.

VALERIE: We've just taken Jack for a driving lesson. He's getting the hang of it, but I think we might need to brush up on a few road rules.

JUDD: More problems to fix.

VALERIE: Pardon?

JUDD: You've made the right decision Mrs Mann. I'm the best there is. I'll teach your son the *right* way to drive.

VALERIE: Is there really a *right* way to drive?

JUDD: Absolutely.

HUGH: I'll meet you at the club at four. (*Puts the phone away*) No rest for the wicked!

VALERIE: Darling, this is Judd.

JUDD: Judd's Driving School.

HUGH: Pleased to meet you Judd. I'm Hugh Mann, Jack's father.

HUGH and JUDD shake hands.

HUGH: So tell me um...

VALERIE: Judd.

HUGH: I knew that. So Judd, how much does it cost for a driving lesson?

JUDD: \$50 for a half hour lesson.

HUGH: Fifty f...ing dollars!

VALERIE: Hugh! He's the best there is.

JUDD: I'll teach him the right way to drive. I do it by the book and I have a 90% success rate.

HUGH: Impressive. What about the other 10%?

VALERIE: Judd, would you mind if I come with you for Jack's first lesson? I'd like to pick up a few driving tips.

HUGH: You should've picked up enough tips from me.

VALERIE: I did darling, thank you for that. Now I know what *not* to do!

JUDD: Let's get started shall we? Time is money.

HUGH: Tell me about it.

VALERIE sits on one of the stools. JUDD sits on the chair next to JACK with the clipboard on his lap.

HUGH: If she's going, I'm going too.

HUGH sits on the seat next to VALERIE.

To give another perspective - isn't that right dear?

HUGH puts his arm around VALERIE.

It's a long time since we've done anything in the back seat together.

VALERIE: Dream on.

JUDD: Quiet in the back. Now, Jack, I always start with the four I's - Ignition, Indicator, Into gear, In the mirrors.

HUGH: He can spell! We're getting our money's worth already.

JUDD turns around and glares at HUGH.

JUDD: Ease out slowly. Well done. Keep driving straight ahead past the first intersection. *(Pause)* Now turn into the second driveway on your right.

JACK: At the sign?

HUGH: He can't turn in there, there's an unbroken line on the road.

JUDD: No, there's isn't.

HUGH: Yes, there is.

VALERIE: It's very faint.

JUDD: It doesn't count.

HUGH: What?

JUDD: Because I can't see it.

HUGH: I can't see lots of things - doesn't mean they're not there.

VALERIE: That's very deep, Hugh. I'm impressed.

JACK: Do I turn in or not? I can't just stay here in the middle of the road!

JUDD: I'm the driving instructor, and I say turn in!

HUGH: A \$50 a half hour arsehole! I thought he was going to teach him the *right* way to drive!

JUDD: I've been trained to ignore insults. Jack, we're going to go back the way we came. Into Reverse, now in Drive, on the power. Excellent. (*Pause*) I think we should have a talk about organ donation.

JACK: Organ donation?

VALERIE: Now?

HUGH: We're not dead yet!

JACK: What organs?

JUDD: On your license application. You've got to tick the boxes for the organs you want to donate.

HUGH: Can he donate your organs instead?

VALERIE: I ticked all of the boxes.

HUGH: You would.

VALERIE: It would be for the greater good.

HUGH: What? For me to die?

VALERIE: Donating your organs. You can save lives.

HUGH: Just not my own.

VALERIE: Brilliant deduction.

JACK: All I want to do is get my driver's license. I'm not ready to decide whether or not I want to donate my organs. For fuck's sake!

VALERIE: Jack!

JACK: I'm not even old enough to vote.

JUDD: You've got to tick one of the boxes on the form.

HUGH: Well, he's ticking no.

VALERIE: It's up to Jack.

JACK: Can we please talk about something else like driving the car?

HUGH: I'd like to talk about the \$50 per half hour that we're paying Mr 10% here.

JUDD: That's it! Pull over. I'm not putting up with any more insults.

JACK: But the sign says 'no parking'.

JUDD: We're not going to park, we're just going to pull over so your abusive father can get out.

HUGH: Abusive? I haven't even started.

VALERIE: Are you sure we can pull over in a 'no parking' zone?

HUGH: Ner, ner, two against one, we win!

JACK: I can't get into the left lane, there's too much traffic.

JUDD: OK then, drive through this intersection. We can pull over in the 'No standing' zone up ahead on your left.

HUGH: What's the difference?

VALERIE: Are you serious?

JACK: I can't see any 'No standing' sign.

HUGH: Mustn't be one then.

JUDD: You're married to a real asshole, Mrs Mann.

VALERIE: Tell me about it.

HUGH: Well, I didn't hear you complaining last night when I was-

VALERIE: Look out for the truck!

JUDD: Veer left!

JACK: It's heading straight for us!

VALERIE: Do something!

VALERIE grabs onto HUGH. HUGH leans over and grabs the steering wheel at the same time that JUDD does.

JUDD: Let go!

HUGH: Get out of my way!

ALL: Ahhhh!

Lights out. A crash.