

Ride (Pilot)

by

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1 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

SUPERIMPOSED: 1952, Louisiana

A REVVING engine. A motorcycle flies down the highway. JACK FREEMAN pilots the 1948 maroon Triumph with a slender woman riding behind him.

Anticipation and exhilaration flood Jack's face and eyes as he looks forward. He grips the handlebars with purpose, his sinewy, 18 year old frame braced for adventure.

WOMAN
(yelling over the wind)
They're catching up!

He guns the engine and speeds off down the highway without so much as a glance behind him.

2 EXT. EVERGREEN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

SUPERIMPOSED: 3 DAYS EARLIER

Middle of autumn. 1952. Leaves are changing. A brisk feel of optimism is in the air as a few students mill about.

ELLIE WIDMORE parts from her friends and walks over to the Triumph Roadster, lazily sliding down onto the seat. She props her feet on the handlebars while her slender body parallels the contours of the bike, her dirty blonde pony tail gently blowing in the breeze.

3 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Jack is looking out the window of his classroom, eyes fixated on Ellie. He grins slightly as he takes a deep, contented breath.

TEACHER
Jack!

Jack snaps back to the reality of the packed, incandescent classroom. Light chuckles spread among his peers. Jack smiles, sheepishly.

TEACHER
Should I repeat myself?

JACK
Why not?

The teacher winces.

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER

What was your take on Dean?

JACK

Dean? James Dean?

More chuckles.

The teacher looks sternly down upon him, pointing at him with a hand that holds Kerouac's novel *On the Road*.

TEACHER

Mr. Freeman, if you're ever wondering why your grades are so low or, in twenty years, why you'll inevitably be working at the Gas and Go for minimum wage, be sure to refer to this moment.

The classroom is silent. The teacher begins walking back to the front, his back turned on Jack.

Jack regroups and, in a condescending yet humble tone, addresses the teacher at his slow, methodical pace.

JACK

Dean is the road. Sal wasn't being pulled in by Dean on his crazy adventures, it was the lure of the road, the glimpse of opportunity. A chance to experience something real while still escaping reality. Dean was just an excuse to go. He represents everything about the road, good and bad, encompassing it in unbridled passion. Without Dean, Sal is ordinary.

The teacher stares blankly. The other students can't decide who to look at, so their eyes bounce aimlessly around the room.

The bell rings. Students exit as quickly as possible.

The teacher can't decide how to respond. Jack has lost interest and slowly packs his bag and walks deliberately to the door.

4 EXT. EVERGREEN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Jack creeps up behind Ellie, still resting on the bike. He shakes it vigorously and she falls off the side, catching herself on the ground.

ELLIE

JACK!

She gets up, smiling and brushing herself off, and tries to shove Jack.

ELLIE (cont'd)

Don't do that!

He deflects and wraps his arms around her. She struggles to get an arm free and gets in one good punch.

Jack releases immediately and drops back a few steps.

Ellie recognizes the pain on his face and is quick to respond by raising his sleeve to reveal a nasty bruise. She knows the answer to her next question.

ELLIE (cont'd)

What is that?

Jack pulls his sleeve back down and slips his arms through his leather jacket.

JACK

It's nothing.

ELLIE

You promised me.

JACK

It's not that bad.

ELLIE

I don't care! Anything is bad enough.

Jack walks around her and throws a leg over his bike. He reaches down for a helmet and extends it to her.

ELLIE (cont'd)

No. Are you kidding? I'm not going with you.

JACK

Ellie, stop it.

(CONTINUED)

Ellie is furious. She can't find the words to say so she lets out a frustrated growl and turns to walk away.

JACK (cont'd)

El!

ELLIE

No, Jack. If you're not doing anything about it, then I will.

Jack doesn't know exactly what that entails, but he is concerned, maybe for himself, maybe for Ellie.

He pulls his helmet down over his head, violently cranks the bike and slams it into gear. He peels off down the road.

Titles Roll.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

5 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD ROAD - DAY

DAVID LANE, 17, drives his pickup down the road, his radio skipping in and out. He pounds his skinny arm on the dash and punches the radio.

DAVID

Come on, you stupid piece of crap.

He comes to a stop sign and puts on the brakes.

DAVID (cont'd)

Please, girl, please work for me, baby.

Gently coaxing the dials and buttons, his finger gets pinned in between the radio and the frame that surrounds it.

He rips his finger out and wails in pain as the skin is punctured and blood begins to drip down. He punches the dashboard repeatedly in a furious rage. Suddenly, at his opened window-

ELLIE

Whoa! Did you at least buy her dinner before banging her like that?

David is caught off guard. He turns, unamused. He rolls his eyes and sticks his finger in his mouth to relieve the pain.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
She doesn't deserve dinner.

ELLIE
A true gentlemen.

DAVID
That's me.

ELLIE
How lucky the girls are to have
men- well, boys like you.

David nods sarcastically.

DAVID
So did you pop up out of nowhere
just to insult me?

ELLIE
That, and this...

She smacks him across the back of the head.

ELLIE (cont'd)
Why didn't you tell me about Jack?

DAVID
Geez, Ellie, I didn't think that
was my job.

ELLIE
Whatever, David.

She walks around the back of the car and to the passenger
side door. David's eyes follow her the entire time.

ELLIE (cont'd)
You're taking me home.

David looks at her then at the road and shakes his head. He
puts his foot gently on the gas and drives.

They ride in silence for a moment.

DAVID
Jack can take care of himself, El.

ELLIE
He can, but he isn't.

DAVID
Just give him some time, he'll work
it out.

ELLIE
It's been over a year, his time is
up.

David is confused.

DAVID
What does that mean?

ELLIE
It means things are gonna change
whether he wants them to or not.

David gathers his thoughts.

DAVID
Don't corner him, it will have the
opposite effect than what you want.

ELLIE
Says you.

DAVID
When have you ever been able to
force him into anything? Ever?

Ellie doesn't want to concede, but a weak response would
betray her.

DAVID (cont'd)
You may want to try backing off.

ELLIE
Does that sound like me?

DAVID
You just have to decide if it's
worth the risks.

ELLIE
Risks?

DAVID
Of driving him away.

Ellie slouches into her seat, miserable.

ELLIE
Will you help me?

He looks over and gives her a supporting grin.

DAVID
Anything for you, El.

She is immediately lost in thought while David glances over at her with a constrained nervousness.

6 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Jack pulls up out front and props his bike up. A deafening truck pulls into the gas pumps and screeches to a stop. Jack turns and looks. Two men hop out. He starts to look away when-

MARY. Jet black hair cascading around her shoulders. A cigarette tucked deftly in one hand. She leans against the side of the truck and takes a drag.

Jack is captivated. Mary is unaware of her spectator, giving a nonchalant grin to the two men exiting the car and walking toward the store.

He starts walking toward the door, but is shoved aside by the two men.

JACK
Hey!

One of the men turns and stands tall, begging for Jack to do something. Jack evaluates and just motions the man onward.

Jack enters the store and goes to the back. He opens up a fridge of beer as the two men open one a few feet away.

MAN 1
How is a woman like that
hitchhiking?

MAN 2
I don't care, we found her. Someone
else's loss is our gain.

Jack is even more intrigued by this woman. He grabs a six pack of beer and follows them to the register.

MAN 1
You know she's mine, right?

(CONTINUED)

MAN 2
How do you figure?

MAN 1
I was driving when we got her!

MAN 2
So?! I saw her and told you to stop.

MAN 1
Without me she'd still be on the side of the road.

MAN 2
Same here!!

They have set their packs of beer on the counter. The CASHIER is waiting for payment.

CASHIER
\$23.17.

They don't hear.

MAN 1
She clearly likes me.

MAN 2
She had her hands all over me, "likes you" my ass.

CASHIER
\$23.17.

MAN 1
Oh, right.

Man 1 searches for his wallet.

MAN 1 (cont'd)
Damn it, I think I left my wallet in the truck. Do you have yours?

Jack looks out the window toward their truck. Mary is crouched behind the steering wheel. She glances up and sees Jack. She stops for a moment, holding his gaze. She grins.

MAN 2
I must have left mine in the-

The engine cranks up. The men look at each other in horror.

(CONTINUED)

MAN 1

That bitch!

Jack steps in front of the door as they take off outside., slowing them down drastically. Mary guns the engine and peels out of the parking lot, winking at Jack as she does so.

The men are furious, screaming in the parking lot. Man 1 tries to run after the truck.

Jack is in awe, who was that?