

CAN YOU GET THERE FROM HERE?

By
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CHARACTERS

Jenna – Lost woman, mid-20s
Brian – Convenience store clerk, mid-20s
Charles – Customer, 60s – 70s
Bob – Customer, 40s
Radio announcer – male or female

SETTING

Convenience store in large city, current day

BRIAN is standing behind counter. JENNA enters holding her phone.

JENNA

Hi, can you help me?

BRIAN

Sure. What do you need?

JENNA

I'm trying to find a restaurant but my GPS isn't working.

BRIAN

That's weird. Which restaurant?

JENNA

La Hacienda de Mexico. I'm meeting friends and I'm going to be late.

BRIAN

Yeah, I've heard of that place. The margaritas are supposed to be kickass.

JENNA

Do you know where it is?

BRIAN

Not exactly. I think it's that way. (waves hand to the right) Did you check your GPS?

JENNA

I just said it wasn't working. I plugged in the name and nothing came up. See?
(shows BRIAN phone)

BRIAN

Bummer. Let's try mine. (takes phone out of pants pocket and taps) Huh. I'm not getting anything either.

JENNA

I even restarted my phone. I just don't understand what's wrong.

BRIAN

(looking out at JENNA'S car)

Your car looks pretty new. Does it have GPS?

JENNA

Yes. It's not working either. Damn it. It's a surprise party and I don't want to be late.

CHARLES enters, picks up newspaper. BRIAN ignores him

CHARLES

Excuse me. (pauses) Excuse me. I'd like to buy this.

ANNOUNCER (off stage or recording)

Breaking news. We've just learned that all GPS functions have stopped working worldwide. Authorities have asked the public to remain calm. Updates will be provided as they become available.

BRIAN

Just a minute.

BRIAN and JENNA continue to tap on phone

CHARLES

Wow, did you hear that? This should prove to be interesting.

BRIAN

Hang on. We've got an emergency here.

CHARLES

A medical emergency? Do we need to call 911?

JENNA

No, no. It's just my GPS isn't working and I don't know how to get where I'm going.

CHARLES

Of course not. They just announced it on the radio. (BRIAN and JENNA look confused)
Do you have the address?

JENNA

Well, yeah but if I can't look it up how does that help?

CHARLES

You could use a map.

BRIAN

A what?

CHARLES

Map. You sell them. See? (points to rack of maps)

JENNA

My grandfather used to have some in his car.

BRIAN

I don't think anyone's ever bought one of those. Do they still work?

CHARLES

Good Lord. Yes, they still work. Here, let's open one up. (unfolds map) Now, what's the address?

JENNA

7342 W. Harrison Ave.

CHARLES

Okay. We're on north Maple and Harrison is south of here.

JENNA

South? Is that, like, left or right?

BRIAN

I've never been good with directions.

CHARLES

Are you both honestly telling me that you can't tell if you're facing north or south? Didn't you ever take Geography in school?

JENNA

You don't have to be nasty about it.

BRIAN

Why do we have to know that? We're not like pioneers or anything.

CHARLES

I knew this day would come. I just knew it. Okay, let's make it simple. In which direction does the sun come up?

JENNA

(points forward)

That way.

CHARLES

Good. And what is that called?

BRIAN

(snaps fingers)

Um, um. I know this.

JENNA

East! Its east.

BRIAN

Nice job.

JENNA

Thanks. I was a Brownie in grade school.

CHARLES

Our future leaders. So if that's east and you want to go west, which direction do you want to go?

JENNA

The other way?

CHARLES

Yes. Good. Now we're making progress.

BRIAN
(to JENNA)

I like a smart girl.

JENNA

Thanks.

CHARLES

You're going to need one. Look at the map. Can you find where we are now?

BRIAN

What are all the lines?

CHARLES

Streets, son. This is a street map. (points to map) We're here and Harrison is over here. Now you have to figure out how to get there.

JENNA

This is so cool. Have they been making these a long time?

CHARLES

Yeah, for a few years. According to this, you have to go south on Maple and west on Harrison. That will take you right to the place.

BRIAN and JENNA stare at the map

JENNA

Is that left or right?

BRIAN
(turns map around)

I'm not sure.

CHARLES
(Crosses stage, speaking to self)

We're doomed. We're absolutely doomed. All of this technology has produced a generation of idiots. This is what comes from everyone gets a trophy, no one is a loser. You don't have to think. Let a machine do it for you. Bah.

JENNA
Hey, sir, are you okay?

CHARLES
I'll be fine but I'm not so sure about you two.

BOB enters

JENNA
I wonder if the GPS in the car started working yet.

BOB
GPS is down. Heard it on the news.

JENNA and BRIAN
What?

CHARLES
I told you that a few minutes ago. (to BOB) I really did. They weren't listening. Does anyone know what caused it?

BOB
Nope. My money is on aliens.

JENNA
Aliens?

BRIAN
Awesome!

BOB
Sure. The government's been sending "Come on down" signals into space for years. It was just a matter of time.

CHARLES

Do you honestly believe that? What is this? The “Twilight Zone?”

BRIAN

The what? Dude, it makes perfect sense. All those movies wouldn't lie.

JENNA

Oh my God. Do you think we'll be invaded? That would be so cool.

BOB

Anything is possible. Got to be prepared.

CHARLES

This is absurd. Aliens. It was probably a meteor or space debris. Satellites get hit all the time.

JENNA

(to BOB)

What do you mean by prepared? Like guns and stuff?

BOB

Sure. You ever shoot one?

JENNA

No. My parents are anti-violence advocates but I'm willing to try.

BRIAN

I have. Well, I mean I've spent hours playing video games. It can't be very different.

CHARLES

Not that I think we'll be invaded by aliens but I suspect that shooting with a real gun is quite different than pointing a controller at the tv screen. I learned to shoot in 'Nam. It was no picnic.

BOB

Well, kid, you may not have actual experience but at least it's better than nothing. We can train you. We'll need every able-bodied person we can get.

BRIAN

Awesome. What should we do next?

BOB

I camp out on a compound with some other like-minded folks outside of town. All these years of getting ready haven't been wasted, no matter what my ex-wife said. This is what we've been waiting for. Want to take a ride out there?

BRIAN

Absolutely. We can follow you.

JENNA

Sure.

CHARLES

Are you kidding? What about your job? What about your surprise party? What about real life?

BRIAN

Screw this job. We have a duty to our country, to the world, to the universe.

JENNA

You are so brave.

BRIAN

Not really. Just doing what any good American would do. Hey, what's your name? Mine's Brian.

JENNA

Yes, I read your name tag. Mine's Jenna.

BOB

Nice to meet you both. I'm Bob. Let's go and protect what's ours.

CHARLES

I think this is a very bad idea. Please reconsider.

BOB

Want to join us? An ex-military man could be useful, even if an older one.

JENNA

You should. (to BOB) He's a great map reader.

CHARLES

No, thank you. I'll take my chances with the "aliens". (finger quotation marks)

BOB

(shakes CHARLES hand)

Good luck, old man. If you change your mind, we're out past the old fairgrounds, just off Schwaner Road, behind the meat packing plant. (salutes) Thank you for your service.

BOB, JENNA and BRIAN exit

CHARLES

If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't have believed it. Aliens. Compounds of survivalists. Those two will be back before long. I suppose I'll just leave the money for the paper on the counter.

(Emergency signal)
ANNOUNCER

Breaking news! Unidentified aircraft have been spotted in U.S. airspace. Government officials urge all citizens to remain calm and to take refuge in a safe place until more information is available. GPS is still down and other systems may be affected. Please keep your radios tuned to this emergency station. (crackling, silence)

CHARLES

Well, I'll be damned. Schwaner Road, huh? How can I get there from here? (Takes map from rack) I guess I'll need this after all.

THE END