

No Gas Getting to the Engine
c. Mike Fedel, 2008

connection/reading:

Prayer/belief/doubt.

props:

Cell phone.

personnel:

Mike
Mark
Lisa

STAGING NOTES:

The three are leisurely leaning against a wall, or a railing of some kind. The three are quiet for several seconds after the lights come up. Just milling about.

Mike turns his head quickly, tracking a passing car.

MIKE: Toyota Tercel. 2006. Great mileage, powerful engine.

Several more seconds go by. Mike repeats the action.

MIKE: Ford Mustang. 2004. [pause] What I wouldn't give for a bright red '65, eh?

No response from anyone. Several more seconds of silence.

MIKE: [to Lisa] So, how did things go with you and your

friends yesterday?

LISA: [polite, but not excited]] Our trip to the mall?

MIKE: Yeah.

LISA: I guess it was fun.

Several more seconds of silence. Mike starts pacing slowly, swinging his arms slightly at his sides.

MIKE: Uh, yep...kind of nice just being out here, getting some sun and fresh air...

Several seconds of silence. Mike watches another car go by. Mike opens his mouth to speak, Mark interrupts.

MARK: [exasperated, not quite angry] I can't believe you ran out of gas!

MIKE: [pauses] I don't like to think of it that way.

MARK: Well, what would you call it?

MIKE: Exactly what I am going to call it when I tell [motion toward Lisa] her mom about it. "We had a mechanical incident with the car and fuel was no longer getting from the tank to the engine."

MARK: [pause] You think she'll buy that?

MIKE: Well, it's the truth!

MARK: No, no, no...[deliberately] YOU RAN OUT OF GAS.

MIKE: Well, I guess you could say it that way.

Mike walks away toward Lisa, trying to change the subject.

MIKE: Sure is a nice day out, isn't it?

LISA: I'll say. Not like the last time you ran out of gas.

MARK: [surprised - moves closer] What was that?

LISA: The last time Dad ran out of gas...

MIKE: [protesting] That was a long time ago.

LISA: [slight pause] This winter. On the way to confirmation. I remember because I was in my confirmation dress. And your cell phone was dead and we had to walk through the snow to the store so we could use their phone.

MARK: [chuckling] Is that true?

MIKE: Well, yeah, but the last time before that was nearly 20 years ago!

Mark and Lisa laugh.

LISA: Dad, you have to remember to charge your cell phone!

MIKE: I know, I know. At least we didn't have that problem this time.

LISA: Well, dad, I wanted to tell you about that...

MARK: [interrupts her] Look, here comes the truck from the gas station. [he peers at it] Lewis's. Hmmm, I don't recognize that name. It must not be local.

Mike waves his arms to catch the driver's attention.

MIKE: Well, that was pretty quick. Thanks so much for coming out. [pause] That's two gallons, hm? That should get us going pretty well. [pause] How much do I owe you? [pause] Ah, OK then. Well, thanks.

Mike gets into the car, starts the engine, then motions for Mark and Lisa to take their seats.

MIKE: Well, that wasn't so bad, was it?.

MARK: Don't you think you should call Jean and tell her everything is OK?

MIKE: Good idea. Lisa, hand Mark the phone, would you?

LISA: Um, dad...

MIKE: [ignores her] Mark, will you dial for me, please?

MARK: Sure.

Lisa hands Mark the cell phone. Mark raises it to his ear, indicates no dial tone. Holds it back from his ear, presses the power button. Nothing.

MARK: It's dead.

MIKE: It can't be dead. We just used it to call the tow truck.

Mark fidgets with it a bit more.

MARK: Nope, it's dead.

LISA: Dad...

MIKE: No, check the power. It's the button on the right. You have to hold it down.

MARK: I did. I've been pressing the button on the right. It's dead, I tell you.

LISA: Dad...

MIKE: Well, it couldn't have just DIED!

LISA: Dad!

MIKE: Sorry, honey, what?

LISA: That's what I was trying to tell you. Remember when you asked me to press the buttons for AAA?

MIKE: Yes, honey, and you did a very good job. A real grown-up girl kind of job.

LISA: [insulted] OK, first of all, I'm fifteen years old and second second of all, your cell phone battery was dead again, so I started praying about it really hard and...

MIKE: You what?

LISA: ...and asking God to send someone with gas to help us out since your phone wasn't working...

Mike shakes his head.

MIKE: Lisa, did you actually talk to anyone from AAA?

MARK: I didn't actually hear her talking to anyone...

MIKE: Well, yeah, but that doesn't really mean anything...

MARK: [to Lisa] And you never actually TOLD them where we were, did you?

MIKE: Yeah...but...well, how could that be?

They look at each other, then turn back and look at Lisa. She just smiles and shrugs her shoulders.

LISA: Faith, Dad. Have a little faith. [pause] And stop and get some more gas once in a while.

THE END