

# STOPLIGHT

by Raleigh Marcell

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*Stoplight*

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**SYNOPSIS**

Four young people are driving to Grandma's for the holidays through a deserted stretch of highway. Behind the wheel is Camille, the leader of this expedition, the oldest, and also a person who drives the exact speed limit because it's the law. She, in fact, obeys all laws.

In the middle of nowhere they come to a stoplight as it changes from green to red. They stop. And wait. Camille is more than willing to wait. Nothing happens. They wait some more. Her fellow travelers begin to revolt. Camille proves to them that the light is not broken. This does not sway them. The light doesn't change back. They know it's working. Do they run the light or wait even longer? Suddenly citizenship intersects with folly! This gentle comedy is sure to make your audience laugh.

Running time: About 30 minutes.

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**1 m, 3 w**

**CAMILLE:** Female. A sophomore in college.

**ROXANNA:** Female. A high school senior.

**SHAWN:** Female. A high school freshman.

**GEORGE:** Male. Their precocious cousin.

The girls are sisters.

### **THE SET**

The inside of a car. As realistic or as simple as desired. A high-backed bench can serve as a back seat, with two chairs for the front. The entire area around and under the seats is littered with crushed soft-drink cans, paper or plastic cups (some intact, some peeled into "flowers"), empty potato chip bags, gum wrappers, an empty box or two from a fast food restaurant, and a couple of empty 2-liter soft drink containers (*Suggestion: Just don't clean up after rehearsals.*)

### **PROPERTIES**

one high-backed bench  
2 chairs  
assorted car litter: empty wrappers, cans, etc.  
travel bag  
road map of a Western state  
binoculars  
Rubik's Cube (or suitable substitute)  
Caspar comic book  
automobile owner's manual  
flip-up sunglasses  
regular sunglasses  
pad and pencil  
large empty potato chip bag  
wrist watch (Shawn)  
yellow bandanna (Roxanna)

### **COSTUMES**

CAMILLE & ROXANNA dress a bit preppy (Yuppie), Camille wearing a dress.  
SHAWN wears jeans and a sweatshirt with a large design or lettering.  
GEORGE wears slacks and a bright long-sleeve shirt with the sleeves rolled halfway up, with white sneakers.

## STOP LIGHT

*(AT RISE: A junk food-junkyard of a car. CAMILLE, wearing sunglasses, is intently driving. GEORGE, in the other front seat, sitting cross-legged, wears a pair of flip-up sunglasses (the kind ballplayers wear) and a baseball cap. He is bored, bored, bored. There are times he tends to precociousness. Behind George, in the back seat, is ROXANNA. She wears a yellow bandanna and feigns an aloofness to everything not directly related to being a senior in high school. At the moment she has her hand out of the "window" and is discovering aerodynamics. Opposite Roxanna is SHAWN. She has her shoes off and her bare feet propped up on the back of Camille's seat, a foot on each side. She's reading a Caspar comic book. Between the two girls in the back seat is a floppy travel bag from which protrudes a large potato chip bag. After a moment or two, Shawn breaks pose to take a glance over Camille's shoulder at the "speedometer." She shakes her head and returns to her reading. Roxanna does the same. After looking, she pulls the potato chip bag out. It is empty and she crumples it up, throwing it on the floor.)*

**GEORGE:** *(Turns, flips up sunglasses.)* Camille -- we're not getting any younger. Our Christmas vacation is certainly not getting any longer ... and if you don't speed up I'm going to yell as loud as I can! *(Turns back, flipping down glasses.)*

**SHAWN:** Yeah, Camille, me too.

**ROXANNA:** And me three! We're never gonna get to Grandma's house if you don't speed up!

**CAMILLE:** Look, gang, I'm going as fast as I can.

**GEORGE:** As fast as you can? Look at that: 55 miles an hour! Hey, you guys, will you look at that --?

**SHAWN:** And this car is practically bran' new.

**ROXANNA:** *(Snatching CAMILLE'S glasses.)* Yeah. Look -- it's only got 995 miles on it and you're telling us it can't go any faster than 55 miles an hour?

**CAMILLE:** Give me my glasses.

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**ROXANNA:** Not till you speed up.... Unless it can't go any faster.

**CAMILLE:** Oh, I'm sure it can go much faster than this.

**GEORGE:** Then step on it!

**ROXANNA:** Yeah, let's get going.

**SHAWN:** We'd like to get to where we're going before it's time to start back. If you know what I mean....

**CAMILLE:** Is the only thing on your mind Christmas presents?

**SHAWN:** No. I'm hungry too.

**CAMILLE:** Give me back my glasses please.

**ROXANNA:** Not until we're going at least as fast as that ... that turtle out there.

**CAMILLE:** There's no turtle out there.

**GEORGE:** There's nothing out there.

**CAMILLE:** All right then, I don't need my sunglasses. I'll squint. Squinting's good for the neck muscles.

**ROXANNA:** They say it causes brain tumors....

**CAMILLE:** You just don't understand.

**GEORGE:** Why don't you pull over and let me drive?

**ROXANNA:** Yeah, let George do it.

**CAMILLE:** George! He doesn't even have a license to drive.

**GEORGE:** You call this driving? And I've got a learner's permit.

**CAMILLE:** I'm not going to permit you to learn in my car.

**SHAWN:** It's our car. We're your sisters.

**CAMILLE:** Don't remind me.

**GEORGE:** If I promise not to remind you, will you speed up?

**CAMILLE:** No.

**GEORGE:** Well, let Roxanna drive. She's your sister. I know I'm just a cousin...

**CAMILLE:** No - NO - NO! The owner's manual specifically states that the car should not be driven at an excessive rate of speed during the first thousand miles.

**GEORGE:** Thousand miles? You've got 995...make that 995 point four now...

**SHAWN:** Yeah, speed up!

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**CAMILLE:** The book says a thousand. If they had meant 995 point four--

**ROXANNA:** -- point five!

**CAMILLE:** -- they would have said so.

**GEORGE:** The book? The book? What book?

**CAMILLE:** In the bag....

**ROXANNA:** This it?

**GEORGE:** *(Takes it from ROXANNA.)* Book? It's a pamphlet! *(Opening to middle.)* Stapled together! Really, Camille, you act as though it's got a black leatherette cover and a zipper!

**CAMILLE:** It's the owner's manual, George. It exists for a purpose. To guide us in the proper use of this new --

**GEORGE:** Oh, can it, Camille.

*(Pause. SHAWN moves to the middle of the back seat. She puts one hand on GEORGE'S shoulder and the other hand on CAMILLE'S.)*

**SHAWN:** I gotta idea.... I'll be wise King Solomon: "And I decree that the driving of this vehicle be divided equally between the two of you which sittith at the front end of this car." So why don't y'all split up the drivin'?

**GEORGE:** Yeah. Camille, you steer...and I'll slip over here and ... step on the accelerator....

**CAMILLE:** Hey! Whattaya doing? *(Managing to kick away GEORGE'S foot.)* I'm driving this car. By myself .... Boy, if I had let any of you guys drive there's no telling what woulda happened.

**GEORGE:** Yeah, that's right! We might have been where it was we're going and, God forbid! that's only why we're in this car in the first place.

**ROXANNA:** Yeah, Camille. The sooner we get to Grandma's, the sooner we can get back, and I don't know about you, but I've got six dates lined up for when we get home and only four days to do 'em in.

**SHAWN:** So you better hurry because it takes her two days just to fix her face.

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