



FAITH TAILS

Mav & Moony

IN

★ THE GREAT ★ AMERICAN ROAD TRIP

- DESERT CANYONS
- MOUNTAIN PEAKS
- OCEAN COAST
- WIDE OPEN SPACES
- KIND HEARTS ♥

Mav

Moony

FAITH TAILS

PAGE 1 — THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT



STORY TEXT

It was a Saturday morning, and Dad had that look on his face — the one that meant something big was coming. He stood in the living room holding a rolled-up map the size of a small tablecloth and grinned so wide his ears nearly touched. “Family meeting!” he announced. “We’re going on a ROAD TRIP.” Mav, the big bullmastiff, immediately sat up straight and knocked his water bowl off the coffee table. Moony, the dachshund, slowly opened one eye from his pillow. He had a bad feeling about this.

DIALOGUE

- **Dad:** “Texas! The Grand Canyon! California! Three weeks, one minivan, the whole family!”
- **Lily (age 10):** “YES! YES! YES!” (spinning in circles)
- **Theo (age 8):** “Are there bears in California?”
- **Mom:** “Theo, we’ll be fine.”
- **Theo:** “That’s not a no.”
- **Mav:** (tail wagging so hard his whole back half is swinging) “THIS IS THE GREATEST DAY OF MY LIFE!”
- **Moony:** (staring at the ceiling) “...I want it on record that I was comfortable on this pillow.”



STORY TEXT

Packing was an event. Dad tried to fit three suitcases, a cooler, two sleeping bags, a guitar, a boogie board, and a bag of dog food into the back of a minivan that was already full of optimism. Mav helpfully carried things to the car — mostly things that were not supposed to go to the car, like a throw pillow and the TV remote. Moony sat in the driveway and watched the chaos with the calm dignity of a small dog who knew exactly what was going to happen to him.

DIALOGUE

- **Dad:** "It'll fit. It WILL fit."
- **Mom:** "Steven. The guitar does not need to come."
- **Dad:** "The guitar ABSOLUTELY needs to come."
- **Mav:** "I helped!"
- **Theo:** "Mav, that's the remote."
- **Mav:** "...You're welcome."
- **Moony:** "I'd like everyone to note my exact location right now. Before I am buried under luggage."
(Ten minutes later — Moony is wedged between the cooler and a sleeping bag in the back seat.)
- **Moony:** "I called it."

★ TEXAS OR BUST ★



STORY TEXT

They pulled out of the driveway at 7 a.m. sharp, which actually meant 8:15 a.m. because Theo forgot his water bottle and then Dad forgot his sunglasses and then Moony had to make an emergency trip back inside that nobody asked questions about. But finally — FINALLY — the minivan rolled down the street and the adventure began. The open road stretched ahead of them, wide and long and golden in the morning sun. Mav had his head out the window, ears flapping like two flags. This was living.



DIALOGUE

Dad: (hands on wheel, big smile) "ROAD TRIP! Here we GO!"

All kids: "ROAD TRIP! ROAD TRIP!"

Moony: (wedged in back) "How long until Texas?"

Mom: "About six hours."

Moony: "...How long have we been driving?"

Lily: "Four minutes."

Moony: (long pause) "I see."

Mav: (head out window, wind in face, pure joy) "THIS IS THE BEST! MOONY, PUT YOUR HEAD OUT THE WINDOW!"

Moony: "I cannot reach the window. I am five inches tall."

★ PAGE 4 — DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS ★



STORY TEXT

Texas was big. Really, really big. They drove for hours and it was still Texas. Mile after mile of wide blue sky, mesquite trees, and roadside signs advertising things like 'WORLD'S LARGEST BELT BUCKLE — 14 MILES.' They stopped at a roadside BBQ stand called Big Earl's — a weathered red barn with smoke curling up into the afternoon sky — and the smell hit them like a warm, delicious wall. Theo immediately declared it the best place he'd ever been.



DIALOGUE

Theo: (nose pressed to the window) "I can SMELL it. I can smell the greatness."

Mom: "It does smell incredible."

Dad: "Welcome to Texas, family."

Mav: (stepping out of the van, nose raised) "That smell. That beautiful, smoky, magnificent smell."

Moony: (tumbling out after him) "Okay. Texas gets one point."

Big Earl: (enormous man with a bigger mustache, waving from the porch)

"Y'all hungry? Dogs too! Got a bone the size of your head, little fella!"

Moony: (standing up straighter) "I rescind my earlier skepticism. Texas gets all the points."



PAGE 5 – BRISKET THE LONGHORN



STORY TEXT

Behind Big Earl's BBQ, in a wide pasture that went on forever, stood the most impressive animal any of them had ever seen. He was a Texas Longhorn, dusty brown with horns that stretched wider than Dad's arms could reach. His name, a wooden sign on his fence post said, was Brisket. He watched them with calm, ancient eyes as they walked over, Moony hiding slightly behind Mav's front leg.



DIALOGUE

Theo: "His horns are HUGE."

Brisket: (slow, deep voice) "Been growin' 'em forty years, son. Takes patience."

Moony: (whispering to Mav) "He can talk."

Mav: (whispering back) "All animals talk. Humans just don't always listen."

Brisket: "Road trip, I take it? Where you headed?"

Mav: "Grand Canyon. Then California."

Brisket: (nodding slowly) "Long road. You'll see things that scare you and things that take your breath away. Usually the same thing."

Moony: "That is not reassuring."

Brisket: "Wasn't meant to be. Best things rarely are."



PAGE 6 – THE FLAT TIRE



★ STORY TEXT ★

They were back on the highway, deep in West Texas, when it happened. **WHUMP-WHUMP-WHUMP**. The van lurched. Dad gripped the wheel and pulled over to the gravel shoulder, where they sat looking at a completely, thoroughly, impressively flat rear tire. Around them: nothing. No gas station. No town. No signal on three phones. Just scrubby desert, a hot wind, and a family standing around a flat tire trying not to panic.

★ DIALOGUE ★

- Dad:** (staring at the tire) "...Okay. Okay. We're fine."
Mom: "Do we have a spare?"
Dad: (pause that went slightly too long) "...Yes. Probably. Let me check."
Theo: "Are we going to live here now?"
Lily: "Theo, stop."
Theo: "I'm just asking. Because there's nothing here. Forever."
Mav: (sitting down firmly) "Let's think. Let's pray. Then let's fix the tire."
Moony: "In that order?"
Mav: "Always in that order."



STORY TEXT

They prayed — right there on the side of the highway, Dad's hand on Mom's, kids bowing their heads, Mav sitting with his eyes closed and Moony peering with one eye open just in case. And fifteen minutes later, a dusty pickup truck slowed down and **pulled off ahead of them**. Out stepped an older woman in a wide straw hat named Rosa, who had a spare tire, a floor jack, and the practiced calm of someone who had fixed about fifty flat tires in her lifetime.

DIALOGUE



Rosa: (already pulling out her jack) 'Flat tire? I got you. Been there about a hundred times on this road.'

Dad: 'We can't thank you enough —'

Rosa: 'Don't thank me. Thank the Lord for putting me on this road at this exact minute.' (winks)

Mav: (quietly, to Moony) 'See?'

Moony: '...Yeah. I see.'

Theo: (watching Rosa work) 'She's changing the tire faster than Dad could.'

Dad: 'Theo.'

Theo: 'I'm just observing.'

Rosa: (laughing) 'He's not wrong, honey.'



STORY TEXT

Crossing into New Mexico felt like driving onto another planet. The landscape shifted from flat green scrub to dramatic red rock formations that glowed like embers in the setting sun. Huge mesas rose up against a sky that had turned purple and orange and gold all at once. Even Moony climbed halfway up onto the armrest to look out the window, which for Moony counted as genuine enthusiasm.

DIALOGUE

Lily: "It looks like Mars."

Dad: "Kind of does, doesn't it?"

Theo: "Are there Martians in New Mexico?"

Mom: "Theo —"

Theo: "There's a sign that says Roswell. That's the UFO place. Just saying."

Mav: "Look at those colors. Look at this place. God made ALL of this."

Moony: "...It's actually really beautiful."

Mav: "There it is."

Moony: "Don't make it weird."





STORY TEXT

They stopped at a rest area in New Mexico when a streak of brown and white shot across the parking lot at impossible speed, looped around a trash can, skidded under their van, popped out the other side, and then stopped and stared at them. It was a roadrunner — sleek, tall, with a crest of feathers on his head and the alert eyes of a creature that had consumed too much coffee. His name, he announced at full speed, was Dusty.

DIALOGUE

Dusty: (talking extremely fast) “HeyHowyadoingNicevanWhereyou headedGrandCanyonCoolbeenthereoncetwicemaybeFivetimes ItendtorunpastallthingsBeepbeephahhagetitbecauseI’maroadrunneranywaywherewasI —”

Mav: “...Slow down, buddy.”

Dusty: “CAN’T. Literally. Physiologically incapable.”

Moony: “Has anyone ever told you to take a breath?”

Dusty: “Everydayallthetime. ANYWAY I can show you a shortcut to the canyon wanna see it it’s GREAT —”

Mav: (to the family) “I like him.”

Moony: “He exhausts me and I’ve known him forty seconds.”



STORY TEXT

Dusty's shortcut turned out to be less of a shortcut and more of a scenic tour of every dirt road in northern Arizona. The GPS had given up somewhere around mile thirty, displaying only a sad spinning circle where the map used to be. They were in the middle of absolutely nowhere, the sun was getting low, and everyone was getting hungry. Theo had asked 'are we there yet' eleven times. Moony had counted.

DIALOGUE

Theo: "Are we there yet?"

Moony: "Twelve."

Theo: "What?"

Moony: "That's the twelfth time."

Dad: (squinting at the GPS spinning wheel) "We're fine. We're just... finding our way."

Mom: "Steven, we're lost."

Dad: "We're adventurously misplaced."

Lily: "Dad, there's literally a tumbleweed following us."

Mav: (calm, from the back seat) "Let's stop. Let's breathe. We know where we're going. We just don't know exactly how we're getting there. That's okay."

Moony: "Is that wisdom or are you just hungry?"

Mav: "Both. But mostly wisdom."



★ STORY TEXT ★

Dad turned off the engine. The desert went quiet — a big, wide, surprisingly peaceful quiet. Crickets somewhere. The last warm light painting the rocks gold. Dad suggested they pray, which Theo thought was admitting defeat, but which turned out to be the smartest thing that happened all day. Two minutes after they said amen, Lily spotted a small green highway sign half-hidden by a bush: **GRAND CANYON SOUTH RIM — 22 MILES.**



★ DIALOGUE ★

Dad: “Let’s pray.”

Theo: “Praying means we’re lost.”

Dad: “Praying means we trust Someone who knows where we are even when we don’t.”

(They bow their heads. Silence. Desert wind.)

Dad: “Lord, we don’t know the way. But You do. Guide us. Keep us safe. We trust You.”

Lily: “...DAD. SIGN. RIGHT THERE. GRAND CANYON — 22 MILES!”

Theo: “...Okay that was fast.”

Mav: “He always knows where we are.”

Moony: “I’m going to be honest, I’ve never been so happy to see a road sign in my life.”

PAGE 12 — FIRST SIGHT OF THE GRAND CANYON



STORY TEXT

Nothing prepares you for the Grand Canyon. You walk up to the rim and then suddenly — it's THERE. A mile deep and ten miles wide and so impossibly big that your brain takes a moment to agree that it's real. The family stood at the rim in a row, completely silent, which was a family record. Even Theo didn't say anything for a full forty-five seconds. Mav sat down slowly, looking out at the layers of red and orange and purple rock descending into the blue haze below. His tail wasn't even wagging. He was just... still.

DIALOGUE

(Forty-five seconds of complete silence.)



Theo: "...Whoa."



Lily: "Yeah."



Mom: *(squeezing Dad's hand)* "Worth it."



Dad: *(voice a little thick)* "Yeah. Yeah it is."



Mav: *(very quietly)* "God made all of this. Every layer. Every color. Millions of years of 'I love you.'"



Moony: *(staring into the canyon, almost whispering)* "It's so big."



Mav: "That's kind of the point."



STORY TEXT

The next morning they hiked the rim trail, which was gorgeous and also terrifying in places because the path got close — very close — to a drop that went down approximately forever. Everyone was told very clearly to stay back from the edge. Mav stayed back from the edge. The kids stayed back from the edge. Moony, being exactly the height of a small rock and unable to see over the trail's edge railing, decided to investigate a gap in the barrier. Closely.

DIALOGUE

Mav: (noticing) 'MOONY —'

Moony: (one paw over the edge, peering down) 'I just want to see how deep it —'

Mav: (grabbing Moony's tail) 'NOPE.'

Moony: (being pulled back firmly) 'I HAD IT.'

Mav: 'You had NOTHING. You were about to become a dachshund canyon.'

Moony: (indignant, back on safe ground) 'I was leaning. There's a difference between leaning and falling.'

Theo: 'Moony almost DIED.'

Moony: 'I was LEANING.'

Lily: 'We are telling this story forever.'



STORY TEXT

The shadow came first — enormous, sliding over the trail like a slow dark cloud. Then the wings: black, wide as a dining table, tilting on the updrafts with impossible grace. The California condor landed on a rock twenty feet away and folded its wings with the dignified care of someone setting down something very expensive. It was the biggest bird any of them had ever seen. Theo stepped behind Dad. Lily took a photo. Moony stood very still.

DIALOGUE

Theo: (hiding behind Dad) ‘Is it going to eat us?’

Canyon: (gravelly, unhurried voice) ‘Good morning.’

Theo: (quieter) ‘It talks.’

Canyon: ‘You look like you’ve never seen a condor before.’

Mav: ‘Not up close. You’re magnificent.’

Canyon: (tilting his bald head) ‘Most people run. Children especially.’

Moony: (speaking up, surprising himself) ‘You scared us. But I don’t think you mean to.’

Canyon: (quietly) ‘I never mean to. I’ve spent a lot of years being misunderstood.’

Mav: (gently) ‘A lot of God’s creatures have.’



STORY TEXT

Canyon had been born with feathers slightly different from the others in his flock, and he'd spent years keeping to himself because he assumed he wasn't welcome. But one day a storm came — a big one, the kind that knocked other birds off their perches — and Canyon spread his wings and rose on the wind instead of fighting it. That was the day he learned that what made him different was exactly what made him soar.

DIALOGUE

Canyon: "I used to hide. Thought being different meant being wrong."

Lily: "What changed?"

Canyon: "A storm. I stopped fighting the wind and let it carry me. Went higher than I ever had." (pause)
"Isaiah 40:31 — they will soar on wings like eagles. I'm not an eagle. But the same God made me. Same wind carries me."

Mav: "Same God. Same wind."

Moony: "Same God made dachshunds too."

Canyon: "Exactly."

Theo: "I'm going to remember this forever."

Lily: "Me too."

★ PAGE 16 — ★ ★ STARGAZING AT THE CANYON ★

★ STORY TEXT ★

That night they set up camp just outside the park. No city lights for a hundred miles. When the sun went down, the stars came out — not a few stars, not a scattering of stars, but a whole universe of them, wall to wall across the sky, so thick and bright that Theo sat down hard in the grass because his legs stopped working from the beauty of it. Mav lay on his back in the dirt, paws in the air, staring straight up, as happy as a dog can be.

★ DIALOGUE ★

Theo: (sitting in the grass, neck craned up) ‘There are so many.’

Mom: ‘David wrote about this. “The heavens declare the glory of God.”’

Lily: ‘Psalm 19.’

Mom: ‘That’s right.’

Dad: (arm around Mom) ‘He made every one of those. Named them all.’

Mav: (still on his back in the dirt) ‘And He knows us too. By name. Every one of us.’

Moony: (lying beside Mav, staring up) ‘That’s the part I can never fully understand.’

Mav: ‘Me neither. But I believe it.’

Moony: (quietly) ‘Yeah. Me too.’



STORY TEXT

Nevada, it turns out, is a very long state. And hot. And flat. For about three hundred miles it was essentially a frying pan with a road painted on it. The air conditioning worked heroically. Everyone had been in the car for four hours. Moony had reorganized the snack bag twice out of boredom. Theo had invented a game called 'Count the Identical Shrubs' and was currently at 847. The general mood could be described as 'alive, but only technically.'

DIALOGUE

Theo: 'Eight hundred and forty-eight. Eight hundred and forty-nine.'

Lily: 'Theo please stop.'

Theo: 'Eight hundred and fifty.'

Dad: 'How about a road trip game?'

Moony: (from the back, flatly) 'Steven. I love your enthusiasm. But we are beyond games. We are in the Void.'

Mav: (perking up) 'I SPY something brown!'

Everyone: (looking out the window at brown desert in every direction)

Lily: 'Is it the desert?'

Mav: '...Yes.'

Moony: 'We're in the Void.'



➤ PAGE 18 — MEET NEON THE JACKRABBIT ➤

📖 STORY TEXT

They stopped at a lonely rest area in the middle of the Nevada desert — a couple of picnic tables, a vending machine, and a lot of heat — when Mav noticed something behind the trash cans. A jackrabbit. But not just any jackrabbit. This one had enormous ears, a slightly bewildered expression, and was sitting completely alone in the shade, spinning a bottle cap in circles with his paw. He looked like someone who was lost but was trying very hard to look like he wasn't.

💬 DIALOGUE

Mav: (approaching slowly) “Hey. You okay?”

Neon: (startled, trying to look casual) “What? Yeah. Totally. Just hanging out. In this parking lot. By myself. In the desert.”

Moony: “You’re lost.”

Neon: “I’m not LOST, I’m just... directionally uncertain.”

Moony: “That’s lost.”

Neon: (ears drooping slightly) “...Yeah. A little bit lost.”

Mav: (sitting down beside him) “Where are you trying to go?”

Neon: “I’m trying to find the rest of my family. We got separated two days ago and I don’t know which way they went.”

Mav: “Then we’ll help you find them.”



📖 STORY TEXT

Neon the jackrabbit hopped into the minivan — briefly causing a minor crisis when Theo screamed because he didn't know the jackrabbit was coming — and they drove slowly along the desert road, windows down, Neon's huge ears rotating like radar dishes. He smelled something familiar at mile marker 14. And then they heard it: the sound of three jackrabbits yelling their brother's name across a flat stretch of desert.



💬 DIALOGUE

Neon: (ears rotating) "Wait. Wait. WAIT —"

Voice from the desert: "NEON! NEEON!"

Neon: (bolt upright) "THAT'S THEM!"

Dad: (pulling over) "Go! Go find your family!"

Neon: (leaping out of the van, then stopping) "Why did you help me? You didn't have to stop."

Mav: "Every creature matters. You matter. God put us on that road at the right time."

Neon: (looking at Mav for a long moment) "...Thank you. Really."

(Neon sprints across the desert floor toward three tiny distant shapes, his huge ears bouncing.)

Moony: (watching him go, quietly) "Every person matters to God."

Mav: "Every single one."



PAGE 20 — LIGHTS OF LAS VEGAS

They weren't stopping in Las Vegas — just passing through — but the highway went right past the Strip, and at dusk the lights came on all at once and it was something. Enormous hotels. Cascading LED signs. Colors in every direction. The kind of overwhelming, can't-look-away spectacle that feels exciting for about five minutes and then just feels very loud. Mav looked at it thoughtfully. Moony looked at it and then immediately looked away and stared at the floor.

Theo: (face pressed to window) "WOW. Can we stop? Can we PLEASE stop?"

Dad: "We're just passing through, bud."

Theo: "But the LIGHTS —"

Lily: "It's a lot."

Moony: (staring at the van floor) "It's too much. Way too much. How do people live here?"

Mav: "Noise isn't the same as joy. Bright isn't the same as beautiful."

Moony: "That's deep for a dog looking at a casino."

Mav: "I had a moment."

Mom: (smiling) "I think Mav's right."



STORY TEXT

The mountains appeared gradually — first as shapes on the horizon, then as real walls of stone rising up to meet the highway. Crossing into California through the Cajon Pass, the minivan climbed through cool mountain air, pine trees appearing for the first time in days. Everybody sat up straighter. The road trip magic, which had been running a little low during Nevada, came back all at once. They were almost at the ocean. The actual Pacific Ocean.

DIALOGUE

Lily: *(reading the road sign)* “Welcome to California!”

Theo: “Does California have bears?”

Mom: “Theo —”

Theo: “There’s a BEAR on the state FLAG, Mom. That’s a WARNING.”

Dad: *(laughing)* “We’ll be fine, bud.”

Mav: *(nose going crazy with new smells through the cracked window)* “Pine trees. Cool air. Mountains. Do you SMELL that, Moony?”

Moony: *(nose twitching, then slowly smiling)* “...I do.”

Mav: “We’re almost there.”

Moony: “We’re almost there.”



PAGE 22 – THE PACIFIC OCEAN

STORY TEXT

Nobody was ready. Not really. You can know the ocean is big and still not be ready for the moment you come over a hill on the Pacific Coast Highway and there it is: infinite blue, horizon to horizon, the sun making a road of light straight across the water toward you. Dad pulled into a beach parking lot and nobody even waited for him to fully stop. Doors flew open. Shoes came off before feet hit the pavement. Theo ran so hard toward the water that he fell twice and didn't stop.

DIALOGUE

Lily: "IT'S SO BIG IT'S SO BIG IT'S SO BIG —"

Theo: "THE WATER IS COLD! THE WATER IS COLD! I LOVE IT!"

Mom: "We made it."

Dad: "We made it."

Mav: "Look at all of it. Look at what God made."

Moony: "It's enormous."

Mav: "Bigger than any problem we've ever had."

Moony: "...Yeah."





Moony was having a perfectly dignified time observing the ocean from the dry sand when a rogue wave — bigger than the others, sneaky, apparently personally offended by dachshunds — came rolling in faster than expected. Moony turned to run. The wave was faster. The wave won. When it receded, Moony was sitting in an inch of water looking like a very small, very soggy, very undignified dog. He turned slowly to look at Mav.

DIALOGUE

Mav: *(trying VERY hard not to laugh)* ‘You okay?’

Moony: *(soaking wet, completely flat ears)* ‘I’d like to go on record saying I was not foolish enough to stand in the water.’

Mav: ‘The water came to you.’

Moony: ‘The water was RUDE.’

Lily: *(losing it)* ‘MOONY! You’re SOAKED!’

Theo: *(already taking a mental photograph)* ‘This is going in the story.
This is going in THE STORY.’

Moony: *(with enormous dignity)* ‘I shall not be commenting further.’

Mav: *(can’t hold it in anymore, laughing)* ‘You look like a tiny wet mop, buddy.’

Moony: ‘...Thank you, Mav. Very helpful.’

 STORY TEXT


A sea lion hauled herself up onto the beach near their towels late in the afternoon — big, glossy, brown, with whiskers like a distinguished professor and the general air of someone who had seen everything and found most of it amusing. She introduced herself as Paloma, settled onto the sand with a satisfied grunt, and looked at the family with calm, intelligent eyes. Moony, who was now dry but still dignified, regarded her with careful respect.

 DIALOGUE

Paloma: (with a warm, slightly raspy voice) "Long trip?"
Mav: "Three weeks. Texas to here."
Paloma: "Mmm. You look like people who needed the ocean."
Mom: (surprised) "We did, actually."
Paloma: "Everyone does eventually. The ocean has a way of making everything feel the right size again."
Moony: "What do you mean?"
Paloma: "Your problems feel big? Come to the ocean. See how big the ocean is. See how small the problems are."
Theo: "What if the ocean is the problem? I just got knocked over by it."
Paloma: (looking at Theo) "...That's different. That's just waves being waves."





 Paloma had been swimming since before sunrise that day, she told them — fifty miles out and back, riding currents, diving deep, surfacing in the light. But every afternoon she came to this same beach and just... stopped. Rested. Lay in the sun and let the world be still. “Be still, and know that I am God,” she said, quoting *Psalm 46:10* like it was the most natural thing in the world. Like the *Psalm* was written with beach afternoons in mind.



Lily: “You swim fifty miles and then just rest?”



Paloma: “The rest is part of the work. You can’t keep going without stopping. God knew that. He rested on the seventh day — not because He was tired, but to show us how.”



Mav: “Be still and know.”



Paloma: “Be STILL. Most people skip that part.”



Moony: “...I’ve been fighting rest this whole trip.”



Paloma: “Most do. Until they stop fighting.”



Moony lets out a long sigh and closes his eyes in the warm afternoon sun.



Mav: “There he is.”



★ PAGE 26 — THE BEACH BONFIRE ★

STORY TEXT

That evening Dad built a fire in a beach fire ring while the sky turned pink and orange and the stars began to appear over the water. They cooked hot dogs on sticks — which Mav watched with intense professional interest — and then sat around the fire talking about the trip. Every state. Every moment. Every animal they'd met. Each one had given them something. A word. A lesson. A new way of seeing.

DIALOGUE

Lily: "Brisket said the best things are rarely reassuring."

Theo: "Dusty was the most chaotic creature I've ever encountered and I respect him for it."

Mom: "Canyon taught me that being different can be the very thing that makes you soar."

Dad: "Neon reminded me that a little help at the right moment changes everything."

Moony: "Paloma told me to rest. I didn't know I needed that until I did it."

Mav: "And Rosa on the side of the road in Texas — she showed up exactly when we needed her. Right after we prayed."

(The fire crackled. The waves rolled. The family sat quiet and full.)

Theo: (full of hot dog and firelight) "...Best trip ever."

Everyone: "Best trip ever."



📖 STORY TEXT

Leaving California felt different from leaving home. Quieter. Fuller. Like a backpack packed with everything they'd learned. They got back on the highway heading east, the ocean shrinking in the rearview mirror until it was just a glint of light and then gone. But something about seeing it never goes away. You carry it with you. Theo, who had been counting shrubs just a few days ago, was now writing things down in a small notebook. Mav noticed. He didn't say anything. He just smiled.



💬 DIALOGUE

Mav: (noticing Theo writing) "Whatcha writing?"

Theo: 'Stuff. Things people said. Things I want to remember.'

Mav: 'Like what?'

Theo: (reading quietly) 'Every person matters to God. Brisket said don't be scared of the hard road. Canyon said what makes you different makes you fly. Neon — I want to be the person who stops.'

Mav: (very gently) 'You just summed up the whole trip.'

Theo: 'I'm going to need more pages.'

Mav: 'That's a good problem to have.'

Miles rolled by. States came and went. And Mav thought about everything — all the animals, all the moments, all the people like Rosa who showed up exactly when they were needed. Every single one of them was different. Different sizes, different shapes, different ways of living. The Longhorn and the condor and the jackrabbit and the sea lion. And the family in the minivan. All of them made by the same hands. All of them known by the same name.

DIALOGUE

(Mav, thinking quietly, looking out at the road ahead.)

Mav: *(to Moony, half-asleep beside him)*
"Do you know what's been in every single state we drove through?"

Moony: *(one eye open)* "Bad GPS signal?"

Mav: "God."

Moony: "...Yeah."

Mav: "Different places. Different faces. Different landscapes. But the same love everywhere. Waiting in every rest stop and every overlook and every parking lot with a lost jackrabbit."

Moony: "He's hard to miss once you start looking."

Mav: "That's exactly it. You just have to start looking."



familiar smell of home coming in through the windows. Theo fell asleep twenty minutes from the house — his notebook still open on his lap. Dad carried him inside. Mom stood in the driveway for a moment just breathing, the way you do when you've been away long enough that home smells different and good. Mav and Moony stood in the grass side by side, neither of them moving, just taking it in.

DIALOGUE

Moony: "We're home."

Mav: "We're home."

Moony: "...I missed this pillow. Genuinely. I missed this pillow."

Mav: "I know you did."

Moony: "I'm not saying the trip wasn't worth it. It was. Every mile."

Mav: "But?"

Moony: "But this pillow didn't come up once. Not once. And I think that's God's design too."

Mav: (*laughing*) "He made you a homebody, Moony."

Moony: "He made me a homebody who goes on adventures. There's a difference."



of paper that Theo had clearly torn from his notebook and placed there during the night. Mav read it, then smiled so wide his whole face crinkled. He left it where Theo had put it, tucked against the pillow, so Moony would find it when he woke up. It said: 'Every person matters to God. Even dogs. — Theo'

DIALOGUE

(Moony wakes up, sees the note, reads it, reads it again.)

Moony: (calling out) 'MAV!'

Mav: (from the kitchen) 'Yeah?'

Moony: 'Theo left me a note.'

Mav: (already knowing) 'What's it say?'

Moony: (reading it one more time, quietly)

'Every person matters to God. Even dogs.'

(A long pause.)

Moony: '...I really like that kid.'

Mav: 'I know you do.'

Moony: 'When's the next road trip?'

Mav: (grinning) 'I thought you'd never ask.'



ROAD TRIP
PLANS

FAITH TAILS

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Mav & Moony The Great American Road Trip

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"For God so loved the world..."

John 3:16