

Tekst 3

De volgende tekst is het begin van Are These Actual Miles?, een kort verhaal van Raymond Carver.

Fact is the car needs to be sold in a hurry, and Leo sends Toni out to do it. Toni is smart and has personality. She used to sell children's encyclopedias door to door. She signed him up, even though he didn't have kids. Afterward, Leo asked her for a date, and the date led to this. This deal has to be cash, and it has to be done tonight. Tomorrow somebody they owe might slap a lien on the car. Monday they'll be in court, home free – but word on them went out yesterday, when their lawyer mailed the letters of intention. The hearing on Monday is nothing to worry about, the lawyer has said. They'll be asked some questions, and they'll sign some papers, and that's it. But sell the convertible, he said – today, *tonight*. They can hold onto the little car, Leo's car, no problem. But they go into court with that big convertible, the court will take it, and that's that.

Toni dresses up. It's four o'clock in the afternoon. Leo worries the lots will close. But Toni takes her time dressing. She puts on a new white blouse, wide lacy cuffs, the new two-piece suit, new heels. She transfers the stuff from her straw purse into the new patent-leather handbag. She studies the lizard makeup pouch and puts that in too. Toni has been two hours on her hair and face. Leo stands in the bedroom doorway and taps his lips with his knuckles, watching.

'You're making me nervous,' she says. 'I wish you wouldn't just stand,' she says. 'So tell me how I look.'

'You look fine,' he says. 'You look great. I'd buy a car from you anytime.'

'But you don't have money,' she says, peering into the mirror. She pats her hair, frowns. 'And your credit's lousy. You're nothing,' she says. 'Teasing,' she says and looks at him in the mirror. 'Don't be serious,' she says. 'It has to be done, so I'll do it. You take it out, you'd be lucky to get three, four hundred and we both know it. Honey, you'd be lucky if you didn't have to pay *them*.' She gives her a hair a final pat, gums her lips, blots the lipstick with a tissue. She turns away from the mirror and picks up her purse. 'I'll have to have dinner or something, I told you that already, that's the way they work, I know them. But don't worry, I'll get out of it,' she says. 'I can handle it.'

'Jesus,' Leo says, 'did you have to say that?'

She looks at him steadily. 'Wish me luck,' she says.

'Luck,' he says. 'You have the pink slip?'

She nods. He follows her through the house, a tall woman with a small high bust, broad hips and thighs. He scratches a pimple on his neck. 'You're sure?' he says. 'Make sure. You have to have the pink slip.'

'I have the pink slip,' she says.

'Make sure.'

She starts to say something, instead looks at

herself in the front window and then shakes her head.

'At least call,' he says. 'Let me know what's going on.'

'I'll call,' she says. 'Kiss, kiss. Here,' she says and points to the corner of her mouth. 'Careful,' she says.

He holds the door for her. 'Where are you going to try first?' he says. She moves past him and onto the porch.

Ernest Williams looks from across the street. In his Bermuda shorts, stomach hanging, he looks at Leo and Toni as he directs a spray onto his begonias. Once, last winter, during the holidays, when Toni and the kids were visiting his mother's, Leo brought a woman home. Nine o'clock the next morning, a cold foggy Saturday, Leo walked the woman to the car, surprised Ernest Williams on the sidewalk with a newspaper in his hand. Fog drifted, Ernest Williams stared, then slapped the paper against his leg, hard.

Leo recalls that slap, hunches his shoulders, says, 'You have someplace in mind first?'

'I'll just go down the line,' she says. 'The first lot, then I'll just go down the line.'

'Open at nine hundred,' he says. 'Then come down. Nine hundred is low bluebook, even on a cash deal.'

'I know where to start,' she says.

Ernest Williams turns the hose in their direction. He stares at them through the spray of water. Leo has an urge to cry out a confession.

'Just making sure,' he says.

'Okay, okay,' she says. 'I'm off.'

It's her car, they call it her car, and that makes it all the worse. They bought it new that summer three years ago. She wanted something to do after the kids started school, so she went back selling. He was working six days a week in the fiber-glass plant. For a while they didn't know how to spend the money. Then they put a thousand on the convertible and doubled and tripled the payments until in a year they had it paid. Earlier, while she was dressing, he took the jack and spare from the trunk and emptied the glove compartment of pencils, matchbooks, Blue Chip stamps. Then he washed it and vacuumed inside. The red hood and fenders shine.

'Good luck,' he says and touches her elbow.

She nods. He sees she is already gone, already negotiating.

'Things are going to be different!' he calls to her as she reaches the driveway. 'We start over Monday. I mean it.'

Ernest Williams looks at them and turns his head and spits. She gets into the car and lights a cigarette.

'This time next week!' Leo calls again. 'Ancient history!'

He waves as she backs into the street. She changes gear and starts ahead. She accelerates and the tires give a little scream.

■ Tekst 3 De volgende tekst...

3p 3 □ Geef van elk van de onderstaande beweringen aan of zij in de loop van het verhaal wel of niet vast komen te staan.

1 Er dreigt beslag te worden gelegd op een van de auto's van Toni en Leo.

2 Toni neemt het Leo kwalijk dat hij niet met haar mee durft te gaan.

3 Toni staat niet erg open voor Leo's bemoeienissen voordat zij vertrekt.

4 De blik van Ernest Williams werkt op Leo's geweten.

5 Toni besteedt haar hele salaris aan de auto.

6 Toni is heimelijk opgelucht dat ze de grote auto kan wegdoen.

Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".