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CAST IN GRAY

by Doug Brunell
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2004, Un-rated, 39 minutes, Life is a Dream

"Cast in Gray" plays almost like a more subdued episode of "The Twilight Zone." It opens with a man (Timothy Burke) driving on a fairly deserted country road during a heavy rainstorm. He passes a hitchhiker (Stephen Angus) and his dog, but doesn't stop to give them a ride. From there things get a little weird.

The driver, who is suicidal, has some car troubles. Luckily, the hitchhiker shows up and says that he may be able to help ... but there's a catch. If he can help, the driver must take him to the next town. The suicidal driver reluctantly agrees, and they end up praying for assistance. As they wait for the prayer to come true, the hitchhiker makes the depressed driver an interesting offer. He would like the two of them to switch identities and lead each others' lives. The hitchhiker has worn many hats in his life. The driver is tired of living. It seems like the perfect plan, but like most perfect plans there are going to be problems along the way. To say anything else would spoil the surprise.

This is a wonderful short film that could've been a little better had it packed more of a punch. But as it stands, it's a mysterious what-if kind of story done in a remarkably mature manner.