

The Grade
by
Steven Clark

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Name: Steven Clark
E-Mail: SAClark69@verizon.net
Phone: 631-456-2752

FADE IN

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A large BOX TRUCK, white with a red cab, thunders along the asphalt. White lines on the road disappear under its tires.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

In the driver's seat is Kyra Wells, 42, red baseball cap, ripped jeans, no make-up. Natural good looks. Long blonde locks dance wildly across her face, out the open window.

She beeps her horn at the car in front of her.

KYRA

The gas pedal is not an option, lady!

Directional flashes left. Kyra guides the truck around the slow poke. Inside the car is a

LITTLE OLD LADY

with BLUE HAIR and glasses. Peers over the steering wheel. She's gotta be, like, a hundred.

KYRA

Un-freakin-believable.

The road winds left. Kyra passes a sign that says --

STEEP GRADE NEXT 1/4 MILE

She presses on the brakes, down shifts, begins her descent. Taps the brake again and --

-- this time it floors easily. No sound.

KYRA

Are you kidding me?

She grabs the emergency brake. Wrestles with it, but it will not catch.

KYRA

Oh shit.

The truck speeds up. Hands back on the wheel. Eyes the door handle. She wants to jump. Speedometer reads -- 57 MPH. No freakin' way.

Up ahead just road. For now.

Hands shake. Kyra fumbles wildly for her cigarettes. Takes one out. Lights it. Tries to suck in that first, sweet drag, but --

The cigarette blows out the window.

KYRA

Fuck a duck!

(beat)

This shit wasn't covered in the manual!

EXT. - MAIN STREET - DAY

The steep grade leads into a bustling Main Street. Office buildings. Small shops. Pedestrians two-step their way to work as morning traffic stops and goes.

EXT. QUAIN T POND - DAY

An OLD WOMAN, 70, and a YOUNG BOY, 7, feed the ducks in a small pond. A fountain sits in the middle. Water cascades rhythmically.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Kyra adjusts her cap. White knuckles the wheel. Determined. Time to get down to business.

KYRA

Okay, okay. I gotta try and bring this fucker in.

Speedometer -- 62 MPH. The road curves right. She steers the truck into the oncoming lane. Two cars approach. They split in half. Near miss.

She laughs nervously.

KYRA

Moses ain't got shit on me.

The truck speeds up. The grade is relentless. It gets steeper. Kyra comes up quickly behind three cars.

She POUNDS the horn. They do not move. The truck begins to SHAKE violently.

One car sees her. Swerves left. Spins out. She hits the other two from behind. One goes left. Spins out. Other goes right, careens into a ditch.

Kyra hears someone call out -- ASSHOLE!!

KYRA

I got no brakes, turkey!!

The truck feels like it's ready to fall apart. Speedometer approaches 70.

Bustling Main Street looms ahead.

Her cap blows off. Out the window. She checks the rearview. There it goes. It twists in the wind, then out of sight.

She closes her eyes.

FLASHBACK

-Kyra as a little girl, runs into her FATHER'S strong arms

-as a teenager at a party, downs shots, crowd CHANTS --"Kyra! Kyra! Kyra!"

-her wedding day, at the altar, handsome GROOM at her side

GROOM

I do.

KYRA

I do

-Kyra and her HUSBAND in a hospital birthing room, holds her NEWBORN, a tear in the corner of one eye

END FLASHBACK

INT. TRUCK

She opens her eyes.

KYRA

Fuck it.

A traffic light ahead. It's red. Four way corner.

She Hammers the horn. Speedometer at 75.

KYRA

I'm not gonna die! I'm not gonna die
in this fuckin', god forsaken fuckin'
truck!.

Her lips tremble. Too scared to cry. No one's in front of her. Traffic criss-crosses left to right a hundred yards away.

She stares at the red light. Wills it to change.

KYRA

Come on. Come on! COME ON!

It turns green! GO!

EXT. STREET

The truck ROARS through at 78. People scatter. Horns HONK. The grade ends. Flat street. She bottoms out, becomes airborne. Then --

CRASHES down hard. Sparks fly. Loses a tire, a muffler.

HORRIFIED onlookers GASP as she speeds through town. An

OLD LADY

crosses the street. Holds a leash. Lets go. A BLACK SCOTTISH TERRIER crosses by itself.

KYRA

sees the dog. Cuts the wheel right.

She narrowly misses the dog. And the old lady. Clips a parked car. Then another. The truck cuts left. Skids, flips. Sails through the air with the greatest of ease...

INT. TRUCK

Kyra's spins like she's riding a possessed Gravitron. Outside is the sound of CRUNCHING metal, DISEMBODIED SCREAMS. A bright, white light shines in her eyes. This must be the end.

THE POND

The old woman and young boy continue to toss crumbs to the ducks when suddenly an out of control box truck --

CRASHES into the pond.

QUACK!

A sheet of water like a tsunami DRENCHES them.

The ducks are gone. RIP. In their place the mangled truck. Crunched like an accordion. Smashed like a pancake. Absolutely totaled.

Water ripples in the pond. Smoke rises from the truck. Something hisses.

OLD WOMAN

Fuck!

The young boy looks at the wreckage. Turns to the old woman in amazement.

YOUNG BOY

Whoa! Grandma, you said fuck!

A CROWD of people has gathered. They stare at the wreckage. Hesitant to get close.

CROWD

Is she still in there?/I don't know./
She was driving like a maniac!/Ya
think it's gonna blow?

The young boy by the pond points.

YOUNG BOY

Look!

TRUCK

An outstretched hand reaches out the window. Grabs the handle. It won't open. Hand slides back in.

The door FLIES off its hinges. Two feet appear.

Kyra climbs out. She BLINKS.

The CROWD seems to have forgotten how to speak. They look at her. Waiting for her to say something.

Finally --

KYRA

Am I in Heaven?

A SKATER DUDE, 16, stands among the onlookers.

SKATER DUDE

You're in the park, lady.

Kyra nods. Climbs down carefully. Looks her body over. Legs, arms, torso. Not a scratch.

KYRA

Anybody got a cigarette?

THE YOUNG BOY

leans into his grandmother.

YOUNG BOY

Give her a cigarette, grandma.

The old woman stands. Goes through her purse. Hands Kyra a limp, wet cigarette.

Kyra takes it. Looks at it and LAUGHS hysterically.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Unpacked boxes lay everywhere.

Kyra's HUSBAND, 36, sits at a table. He feeds a TODDLER strained carrots. Glances at the clock.

A door opens.

KYRA (O.S.)

Hey, where is everybody?

HUSBAND

We're in here.

(to toddler)

Mommy's home.

This prompts a little smile from the toddler.

Kyra walks into the dining room. Carries a bag.

INSERT: BAG

A cartoon chicken holding a knife and fork. It reads: Jo Jo's Chicken & Wings.

HUSBAND

Hey, honey. I was gettin' worried.

TODDLER

(raises his arms)

Mama! Mama!

Kyra puts the bag down. Lifts the boy out of his high chair. Snuggles with him, nose-to-nose. Gives him a great big hug.

KYRA

And how's my little man today? Oh,
that's my big boy!

The little boy GIGGLES.

She puts him down. Takes over feeding duty.

KYRA

(to husband)

Jo Jo's okay? I thought you might
like take out.

HUSBAND

Yeah, yeah. That's perfect.

(beat)

So..?

KYRA

So, what?

HUSBAND

You gonna ask me how my interview
went?

He peeks in the Jo Jo's bag. Takes some boxes out.

KYRA

Oh yeah. Almost forgot. How'd it go?

HUSBAND

Aces! They want me to meet tomorrow
with the CEO, vice president--whatever
he is. I think they're gonna hire me.

KYRA

That's fantastic, honey. Timing
couldn't be better. Let's keep our
fingers crossed.

HUSBAND

Yeah, I know. So, how was your day?

Kyra spoons away strained carrots from the baby's chin.
Scrunches her nose. Glances over, then back.

KYRA

(smiles)

Interesting. Met a lot of people today. The mayor, a couple selectmen, the chief of police...

HUSBAND

Wow! Sounds like they rolled out the red carpet for you. Anyone give you an apple pie?

KYRA

No apples pies, honey.

HUSBAND

I guess you had a good first day on the job.

KYRA

You can say that again.

He gets up from the table.

HUSBAND

I got a good feeling about this place, baby. I really think we're gonna make it here.

He kisses Kyra on the cheek. Disappears into the kitchen. A cabinet CREAKS. He reappears with the plates. Sets them down on the table. Sits with his family and eats.

FADE OUT