

***DRIVE***

***SAFE***

by  
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For Kris, Jen  
and the evil readers of Kris'n'GoodBooks

*Ingredients chosen by readers:*

- *the name Orville*
- *the name Ulrich*
- *a thick mat of hair*
- *a drag queen*
- *a tattoo of the name of a former boyfriend*
- *olive oil*
- *a road trip*

“HONEY, YOU’RE NOT driving while on the phone, are you?”

Rick guiltily crossed his fingers, which almost caused him to swerve into the gravel at the side of the road. “No, no, of course not!”

“Liar.”

He could hear the reproach in George’s voice, and he grimaced. “Okay, I am. But I just wanted to call you and let you know that I’m on my way home.”

“I want you to make it in one piece, so get off the line.”

“Okay. I love you.”

“I love you, too. Now, off the phone! Bye.”

Rick laughed, said his goodbyes and snapped the phone shut, throwing it on top of the dashboard. It rattled from one side of the car to the other as the road ahead began twisting and turning. Rick hit the button to slide his window closed so he wouldn’t lose the phone on the next corner and activated the air-conditioning instead.

He still had a hundred and eighty kilometres until he reached home – he and George had moved out to the country six months before in order to escape the city and work from home instead. Unfortunately, Rick still had to travel to the city occasionally for conferences and important meetings, but he had gotten used to it. A couple of good CDs, and most of the time on the road passed by without much pain.

The car almost slid out from under him as he rounded a corner – he had forgotten how sharp some of the bends

were just outside the shire of Kangol. He righted the wheel, and continued along just above the speed limit while singing to some song of heartbreak and vengeance.

Another bend, and he took it a little bit too fast. He tapped on the brake, not too much, he didn't want to make the car skid in protest, but as the road began to twist back he realised with horror that there was a car stalled up ahead and directly in his way.

He stamped on the brake, and the car swung wildly. The tyres screamed and the smell of burnt rubber hit his nostrils. Glancing up into the rearview mirror, he saw dark tracks appear behind him. *Shit, those are new tyres! The tread will be fucked!*

Finally, he skidded to a halt, a mere half-metre from the boot of the other car. He watched nervously as the front door swung open, and a statuesque woman emerged and sashayed her way over to his window. Mindful of the rules of the road, the outback driver's etiquette, Rick rolled down his window to speak to her. It was only as she got closer that he noticed her dress was rather bombastic for the time of day, as was the neon, lime-green feather boa that draped across her squarish shoulders.

"Can I help you, ma'am?" he called out respectfully.

"You sure can, sugar," she replied in a deep voice.

It was only then that Rick got a close look at her face, and noticed the five o'clock shadow and the Adam's apple that bobbed as she spoke. Thankful his car was still running, his hand twitched towards the gearstick in order to get the car moving again, when the stranger's hand deftly moved inside the handbag she was carrying.

“Oh no, you don’t,” she said, her voice quavering. “I need your help.”

Her face was streaked with makeup, and Rick would have felt more natural sympathy arise within him had she not started waving her handbag around wildly. “I have a gun!”

His stomach constricted painfully. *I thought it was only in the city that you were meant to be scared of strangers. Everyone told us when we moved to the country it was safer...*

Mind you, the woman sure didn’t look like most country people Rick and George had met in their time since moving.

By now, she had moved around to the passenger side and squeezed herself in next to him. A tear in her stocking showed shapely legs that were, however, in dire need of a shave. “Drive,” she instructed.

“Where to?” he found himself asking, glad that his voice sounded steadier than he felt.

She motioned with the handbag. “Forward!”

Slowly and calmly, so as not to set her off, Rick put the car into gear and they began driving down the road again.

“How can you have a gun?” Rick asked. “I mean, you need a permit, and with the gun buyback scheme—”

She looked at him as if he were stupid. “Well, der Fred, it’s obviously illegal.”

“But *why* do you have a gun? Is it that hard to use your thumb while hitch-hiking?” It was strange; he didn’t *feel*

like his life was in danger, so he was becoming dangerously mouthy instead of being scared silent.

“I wasn’t hitch-hiking.” And she still looked at him as if he were dumb. “My car broke down. And you looked like you were about to take off and leave me.”

“Only when you started waving your gun around.”

“Calm down sugarlips, it’s not like I’m going to shoot you.”

“You just threatened to,” Rick pointed out.

She made an exasperated sigh. “Potato, potahto.”

The road ahead was straight for a distance, so he risked a look at her. Squarish shoulders was right. A thick mat of chest hair poked out of the top of her dress and puffed out of where her bra obviously held some kind of device that gave the appearance of breasts.

“You like what you see?” she drawled.

Rick snorted.

“What?”

“You’re the most slovenly drag queen I’ve ever seen.”

“It’s part of the spectacle, darling.” Obviously feeling more relaxed, she reached into her handbag, produced a compact and began powdering her nose. “Some people like to have the masquerade as transparent as possible.” She snapped the compact shut and dropped it back in the bag. “So you’re a member of the family, then?”

“What family?”

“The queer brigade. It’s just that you implied you’ve met quite a few drag queens.”

“I am gay, yes,” Rick replied. “And no, I haven’t met that many drag queens.”

“Well, I’m all woman, baby,” she said, and to emphasise it she grabbed her crotch as if she were doing a Michael Jackson impersonation.

Rick couldn’t help but take a quick look, and he saw what a sizable... piece of equipment... bulging against the fabric of the dress, and snapped his attention back to the road, his throat dry.

“Oh yeah,” the drag queen said, proud of herself. “Anyway, I’m Alotta Moxie, what’s your name?”

*Alotta Moxie? Jesus Christ.* “Rick,” he replied. “Actually, it’s Ulrich. But everyone calls me Rick.”

“And everyone calls *me* baby,” Ms Moxie leered.

“I’ll just call you Alotta,” Rick said firmly.

“You’re no fun.” She stretched out, and Rick could see, even from his angle, that her armpits were just as healthily hairy as her chest and legs. “Most people have to pay to look at me, honey.”

Rick snorted. “Well, seeing I’m being taken hostage, or acting as your chauffeur, or whatever, I can have a freebie, can’t I?”

“I’m not that kind of girl,” Alotta told him.

Rick snorted again.

She smacked him over the head. “You’ll hurt my feelings if you’re not careful.”

“Hey! I’m driving, remember?” he protested.

She scratched at the side of her dress, and then burst into tears.

*This is getting even more surreal.*

“Alotta...”

She didn’t respond; she started scrabbling around in her handbag and Rick breathed a sigh of relief when she produced some tissues. When he said her name again it was drowned out by the sound of her nose being blown.

“Where are we going?” Rick finally asked.

“Danning,” she sniffed.

That was only two towns over from where he and George lived, and basically on his way home. “You live in Danning?”

“No,” she hesitated. “Not any more.”

“Then why are you going there?”

She scratched at her side again. “None of your business.”

If he hadn’t been driving, he would have thrown up his hands in despair. “Okay then!”

“Are you seeing someone?” she asked out of the blue.

“Yes,” he said, quickly, before she got any ideas.

She must have read his mind.

“Don’t get too full of yourself,” Alotta snarled. “I’m not looking for a boyfriend.” She scratched at her side again. “In fact, I’m giving up on men altogether.”

“Break-up?” Rick asked, wondering *why* on earth anybody would want to break up with such a specimen of humanity.

She sniffed again. “This morning. Right after my final show.”

“That’s tough.”

“Three years, and he says it’s over. Just like that.”

“Did he tell you why?”

“No. But maybe it was because I hit him with a giant plastic leg.”

Rick almost swerved off the road.

“Watch it! You’re not really that great a driver, are you?” Alotta cried out, and calmed down as the car righted itself. “It’s part of my show,” she explained.

“Oh, I see,” Rick said, as if everything had just become crystal clear.

“Anyway, he started screaming about calling the cops and pressing charges, so I just got out of the there and jumped into my car. What an asshole. So I kept driving, listening

to sad songs and crying, and then my car broke down. About thirty cars went by, and no one would stop for me.”

Rick wondered why it had never occurred to her that country people might be a little freaked out by a six foot drag queen in full costume looking for a ride, but instead he asked, “Why didn’t you pull your gun on *them*?”

“My gun?” Alotta asked in surprise. “Oh, my *gun*. Well, I decided I would have to do so with the next driver, and, well, along *you* came.”

“Lucky me,” Rick said. He was starting to feel that danger was the least thing he was in. “So, what’s in Danning?”

Alotta sighed. “In times of heartbreak, a girl needs her mum.”

Rick tried to imagine what Alotta’s mum looked like, and what her reaction would be to Alotta turning up on her doorstep the way she looked. “So... your mother... knows you’re *you*?”

“What are you saying?”

“Just, if you turn up looking like that—”

“What’s wrong with the way I look?” Alotta wrenched the rearview mirror and gazed within it. “You’re right, I look *dreadful!*” She began patting at her wig.

“It’s not *that* bad,” Rick said consolingly.

“You’re just saying that,” she accused him. “Men have no sense of style.” Her deeply masculine voice conveyed no irony of this.

“Probably not,” Rick agreed.

Alotta reached into her handbag for a brush, and at that moment a lizard ran across the road. Rick threw on the brakes, and Alotta’s bag flew to her feet. There was a sound of breaking glass, and the smell of garlic was immediately released into the air. It was so pungent that Rick had to open the windows once the car stopped.

“What the hell?” he asked.

“My bag!” Alotta shrieked. “This isn’t a knock-off you know! It’s a true Versace!”

A viscous fluid was leaking out of it, and onto the carpet.

“Is that... *olive oil*?” Rick asked. Suddenly it all made sense to him, the shape that he had seen briefly as Alotta had first waved the bag at him. “Is that your *gun*?”

“Fine, fine!” Alotta admitted. “I don’t have a gun!”

“But you do have a bottle of olive oil in your bag?” He didn’t even want to know for what purpose.

“I won it in the club raffle last night. I should have just left it there.”

*You should have left yourself there, lady.* But Rick remained silent.

Alotta dabbed at her eyes again. “Brian bought me this bag. It’s now a symbol of our relationship, I guess.”

“Brian?” Rick asked.

Alotta unsuccessfully tried to scrub the oil off the side of her bag, then threw the tissues into it. She gave a soft sigh and rubbed at her side. “My boyfriend. My ex-boyfriend, now.”

“Why do you keep doing that?” Rick demanded.

Rather than saying anything, she unzipped the side of her dress. Rick was impressed by the amount of hair on her chest and belly. He’d always liked a hairy man, and was glad that George fit the bill. But on the pale skin of Alotta’s side was a raw-looking tattoo, obviously very recent; French script in the name of *Brian*.

“Guess you had no idea that the break-up was coming.”

Alotta zipped up the dress angrily, almost getting the side of her bra caught in it. “Obviously.”

Feeling sorry for her, Rick moved the car back onto the road. They weren’t that far from Danning now.

“I’m sorry if I scared you,” Alotta said softly. “You know, before, when I told you I had a gun. I was just hot, and stuck, and desperate.”

“It’s okay,” Rick said. And strangely, it was.

“I guess I lucked out that it was you who stopped.”

She really had no idea just how lucky. Rick thought of some of the less-than-welcoming reactions he and George had experienced from a tiny part of the population of his town, and was glad that Alotta hadn’t gotten a ride from them.

“I just want to get home,” Alotta said miserably.

So *do I*, thought Rick. He wanted to drag George into their large bathtub, and relax with him, and be thankful for a great and somewhat sane relationship. And later they could retire to the bedroom...

He almost drove off the road again, and Alotta yelled out a warning.

“Sorry.”

The remainder of the drive into Danning was silent, until Alotta started giving directions to her mother’s house. It was a completely normal 1950s style railroad worker’s cottage, and Rick found it hard to believe that someone as large as life as Alotta could have ever grown up in it.

He pulled on the handbrake, and turned to speak to Alotta but found himself with an armful of hot, hairy and judging by what he could feel against his thigh, *horny* male. Before he could pull away, Alotta’s mouth was upon his, working feverishly and insistently. His lips were parted against his will, and the slick muscle of Alotta’s tongue found his and danced merrily. It was totally alien and nothing like George’s, and he squirmed unhappily and uncomfortably even though there was no escape.

Rick pressed the palms of his hands against Alotta’s chest, the hair tickling them, and pushed with all his strength. The invading tongue retreated, and the car was filled with the sound of their heavy breathing.

“Alotta!” he cried, aware of how prissy he sounded.

Alotta wiped her mouth casually, and checked her reflection in the mirror. “Thank you for everything, Ulrich. And by the way, my name is Orville.” She pulled her dress

against her hard-on and climbed out, positioning her leaking handbag to hide it as she tottered up the drive on her high heels.

In a state of shock, Rick lay against the door, the handle digging into his back. His own hard-on made him feel guilty as he thought of George, even though Alotta's—*Orville's*---assault upon him had certainly been unwanted, and he had in no way reciprocated.

But the sense of chivalry within him made him peer out the window to make sure she got in the house okay. He could see her now on the front veranda, and the door was opening. A small, older woman came out, gave a cry of joy, and was enveloped by the large arms of the drag queen. They talked excitedly and disappeared back into the house.

Rick smiled to himself, touched by the sight. *Love is love is love.*

Turning the stereo back on, it didn't seem that long until he was turning into the driveway of his own home. George was on the veranda, applying a coat of paint to a small armoire they had bought the weekend before. He wiped his hands off on his shorts, and came down the stairs to greet him with a warm kiss.

George pulled away, laughing. "You smell like a cheap whore! Who the hell hugged you goodbye at that conference?"

Rick wasn't even sure if George would believe him, had he told him the truth. He just laughed it off, and let George lead him into the house.

“Same old boring drive?” George asked, kissing him again.

The familiarity of that mouth made Rick’s body sing with happiness. “I made it home in one piece, that’s what counts, right?”

“Sure is,” George agreed, starting to undress him. “But I’d like to check.”

Rick was only too happy to comply.

**THE END**