

Kiss Off
by
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FADE IN:

ON A ROAD which slices through idyllic, rolling countryside which continues on as far as the eye can see.

Solitude. Peace. And never ending hedgerows.

The legend "10 YEARS AGO" appears briefly.

Suddenly, a low BUZZ which grows louder. An MG convertible rises from a dip, accelerating through the heat haze of a late summer afternoon. Behind the wheel, a pretty twenty-something BRUNETTE.

INT. MOVING MG - CONTINUOUS

Unexpectedly, the sports car begins to shudder and slow down. It coasts to a dead stop. The brunette's hand knocks the legend "ELIZABETH" dangling from the ignition key as she tries unsuccessfully to restart the car.

CUT TO

CLOSE ON CAR BONNET as it slams down.

CUT TO

LEGS jumping back into the car.

CUT TO

Elizabeth attempting to start the car. A beat, as she realises the problem's staring her in the face, then:

ELIZABETH

No.

She turns the key again, taps the petrol gauge rigorously, knowing it won't make any difference.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Studmuffin, I'm going to kill you
when I get my hands on you.

She grabs her mobile. Her fingers dial quickly and carefully. Nothing. She stares at the fascia.

CLOSE ON MOBILE the display indicating NO SIGNAL.

Vanquished, she grabs an Evian bottle and drains the last of its contents. She addresses herself via the mirror.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Bad Hair Day.

She gets out of the vehicle, looking up and down the road.

EXT. LANE - MOMENTS LATER

Elizabeth plods along, feeling the heat. She's flanked on either side by hedgerows which surge above her - making it tough for her to orient herself now. This lends a peculiar claustrophobia to her predicament - despite it being outside.

She stops to wipe her brow, then starts suddenly as she sees: Ahead, slap bang in the middle of the road, a FIGURE stands in a hooded raincoat.

Relief. The young woman's pace quickens as the figure ducks through an opening in a hedge.

ELIZABETH

Wait!

She's at the opening, and stops, then slowly peers through, her head out of sight.

INT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

ELIZABETH'S POV OF THE FIELD

It's empty. We're looking at ploughed furrows.

ON ELIZABETH, dumbfounded.

She steps through, glances around, then retreats, uneasy.

EXT. ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Elizabeth plods more purposely now, glancing periodically backwards. She tries the mobile again. Nothing.

Curvature in the road ahead. The shadows cast by the dieing of the day seem to smother her. It bothers the brunette. She breaks into a small trot. She glances around, spooked, and loses it completely. Suddenly she's running.

A distant NOISE. Mechanical. As she whips down the lane, flashes of a TRACTOR through a hedge. Ahead an opening.

Elizabeth makes the aperture, flings herself through into the FIGURE that awaits her. She barrels past, SCREAMING, the shape pulling at her clothes...tearing...she loses her footing...she's on her back...lashing out...

And then she stops. Standing over her, the remains of the SCARECROW she's just crashed into.

ON ELIZABETH, dissolving into tears of relief and uncontrollable giggles.

She recovers. Then glances over her shoulder. Useless bloody FARMER. He hasn't even noticed her - the tractor's far-off, heading away from her.

She doesn't see the FIGURE behind her sit up in one of the furrows, climb to its feet. We don't see the face itself - the head is down, the hood up - only the glint of a KNIFE.

The young woman is on her feet, the figure almost on her now - if only she'd turn around...

ELIZABETH
(to tractor)
Useless git!

The figure explodes into Elizabeth, the KNIFE striking her back, over and over, mercilessly. The young woman's body suspends, momentarily hanging in the air, before collapsing to a heap on the ground.

CLOSE ON ELIZABETH'S FACE, LIFE DRAINING FROM HER QUIVERING LIPS,

And then she dies.

DISSOLVE TO:

A PAIR OF LIPS

They arch as they blow us a kiss as the legend "PRESENT DAY" appears briefly on screen.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

a bathroom and an open, freshly cleansed thirtysomething face, which stares out from the mirror at

NANCY NEUMANN.

She gulps from a red wine glass and begins to apply foundation. Snatches of Petula Clarke: An old-style ballad trawls the air.

"We choose it, win or lose it. Love is never quite the same..."

CUT TO:

- Eyebrows being plucked...

"I love you, now I've lost you..."

- Eyeliner going on.

"Don't feel bad, you're not to blame..."

- Lips being painted.

The ritual is more about Nancy than just applying cosmetics. Finished. And she doesn't seem happy. The look is too subtle, aloof.

NANCY
(to mirror)
Hi, I'm Nancy.

She groans and reaches for her cleanser and cotton wool.

"So kiss me goodbye..."

CUT TO:

- Nancy using a weapons grade blusher brush.

- Eyeliner growing bolder...

"...and I'll try not to cry"

CUT TO:

Nancy finished. Again, she doesn't seem happy. The look is excessive, sex kittenish.

NANCY
Hi, I'm Nancy.

She giggles and reaches for her cleanser and cotton wool.

"I belong to yesterday..."

CUT TO:

Impeccable make up. The look is pretty god damn perfect.

NANCY
Hi, I'm Nancy.

Her mouth edges up into a smile.

"My darling, kiss me goodbye..."

A beat, Nancy lost in her reflection, then we jump as an INTERCOM BUZZER stabs at our ears - the young woman almost knocks her wine over.

EXT. BOW LANE - LONDON - NIGHT

Nancy burns from a smart apartment block and into a waiting cab.

EXT. LONDON - AERIAL SHOT - NIGHT

Nancy's cab snakes past St Pauls and up through the City towards the west.

EXT. KNIGHTSBRIDGE STREET - NIGHT

Nancy's pays her driver and dashes past the DOORMAN into an elegant, turn-of-the-century mansion block.

INT. LIFT - NIGHT

Nancy adjusts herself via the mirror. TING! The doors open and she exits.

INT. MABRAY APARTMENT - RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

The BURBLE of PEOPLE nearby as a MAID takes Nancy's coat. CELIA MABRAY, 72, grabs Nancy and hugs her to within an inch of her life.

CELIA
Nancy, my Nancy!

NANCY
(barely audible)
I can't breathe.

Celia spots a seventy-something man, STEPHEN MABRAY, enter.

CELIA
(calling out)
Stephen, look who it is.

STEPHEN
Nancy!

Nancy offers him a card and a small, daintily-wrapped box.

NANCY
Mum and Dad-

CELIA
(interrupting)
You don't need to explain.

The older woman strokes Nancy's shoulder reassuringly.

STEPHEN
We're so glad you could make it.

INT. MABRAY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

An enormous living room by London standards, with a view that overlooks Hyde Park. PEOPLE of mixed age quaff champagne and nibble canapés. A BANNER reads: "Stephen and Celia - 50 Golden Years".

ON NANCY, uneasily adrift in a sea of couples. Suddenly, a tingle of awareness - she's being watched from across the room. It's a MAN. Middle-aged and gorgeously fit - good-looking to the point of deformed.

She looks away. Waits. Then returns his look. The edges of his mouth have curved up into an easy smile. Achingly self-conscious, Nancy struggles to stay composed. She scoops a glass of wine from a passing waiter, takes a gulp.

Looking around, her MYSTERY MAN has vanished. Shit! The room has gone quiet. ON STEPHEN AND CELIA, standing before an exquisite cake and assembled partygoers.

STEPHEN

(eying Celia)

A lot of people have asked about the secret of our long and successful marriage. We decided long ago that I would make all the major decisions and Celia here would make all the minor ones.

An anticipatory titter ripples around the room.

STEPHEN (cont'd)

Well after 50 years I can honestly say we have never had to make a *major* decision.

Laughter.

INT. MABRAY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nancy, adrift again, her eyes trawling desperately for her mystery admirer. A gasp as she's grabbed and spun to face... her hostess.

CELIA

(low)

I must introduce you to Nigel.

She gesticulates to a young bespectacled male across the room. A clumsy prerehearsed cue.

CELIA

Nigel's big in software. He's about to float his company.

NANCY

No really, it's...

But he's already moving towards them with a self-assurance that makes Bill Gates look like George Clooney.

INT. MABRAY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nigel and Nancy, both mildly desperate; the former to impress, the later to stay alert and receptive. Both are failing.

NANCY

...So the larger the user base, the larger the corporate license.

NIGEL

You got it. The average licence is a hundred thousand pounds and we might sell three or four of those a week.

NANCY

Wow, that's a lot of money.

An awkward beat. The music playing changes to something more up-tempo and Nancy can't resist jiggling a little. Suddenly, almost desperate:

NANCY

What's your favourite group?

Another beat; as he chews it over, then:

NIGEL

Financial or investment?

INT. MABRAY BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nancy flushes, starts washing her hands, goading herself.

NANCY

Hi, I'm Nancy, I'm single.

She turns away, but the urge to beat up on herself is strong.

NANCY

(via mirror)

Unmarried yes, a virgin - no.

(beat)

(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

Mateless - yes. Frigid? Most definitely not!

(beat)

Looking? I have to admit it.

Desperate?

(growl)

What do you think?

(beat)

I'm single - it doesn't make me a bad person!

EXT. MABRAY BALCONY - NIGHT

Nancy alone except for a breeze that caresses her clothes. She rummages in her bag for something as:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

The Rolling Stones.

She spins around to see.....her MYSTERY MAN. Some of her bags contents spill to the ground.

MYSTERY MAN

My favourite group.

(grinning)

Don't know what their latest position is on the FTSE 100 though.

He's made her laugh. They stoop to scoop up her bits.

NANCY

Oh, you heard.

He nods, bemused, extending his hand.

MYSTERY MAN

I'm Simon.

NANCY

(shaking his hand)

Hi I'm Nancy, I'm...

She slams on the brakes. He's waiting, grinning.

NANCY

(continuing)

...pleased to meet you.

Reading a card as he hands it to her.

SIMON

I'm also a member of your gym.

NANCY

I've not seen you there.

SIMON

Ah, the hypoxic chamber at the crack of dawn is normally where I'm at.

(glancing inside)

So how did they do it?

Nancy's monetarily lost in Simon. He's moved closer.

NANCY

Huh?

SIMON

The Mabrays. 50 Years, that's a huge amount of time to commit yourself to one person.

NANCY

Oh. They adore each other. Completely and utterly.

SIMON

Do you adore your partner?

NANCY

(without thinking)

I'm single.

She could kick herself. He's brushing closer to her now.

SIMON

You don't need to be.

A beat, as he stares right into her eyes.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I wondered where you'd got to.

The two separate, Nancy turning her head. An elegantly dressed WOMAN moves from the door way to Simon, sliding her arm around him, flashing Nancy an oh-so-sweet smile.

WOMAN

(to Simon)

I told the sitter we'd be back by ten thirty.

SIMON

Susan, Nancy. Nancy, Susan. Nancy and I have been having the most marvellous discussion.

He looks to Nancy. She nods carefully. Susan tugs her partner's hand.

SIMON

Nice to meet you Nancy.

SUSAN

Sorry if my husband was boring
you.

As they leave, Nancy's face sinks.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Mabrays stand with Nancy as she steps into the lift.

CELIA

Tell your mother I'll call when
things have settled.

NANCY

Thanks, I know she'd appreciate
it.

Stephen hugs her.

NANCY (CONT'D)

To the next fifty years.

The couple exchange glances then gentle smiles with Nancy
as the lift doors close.