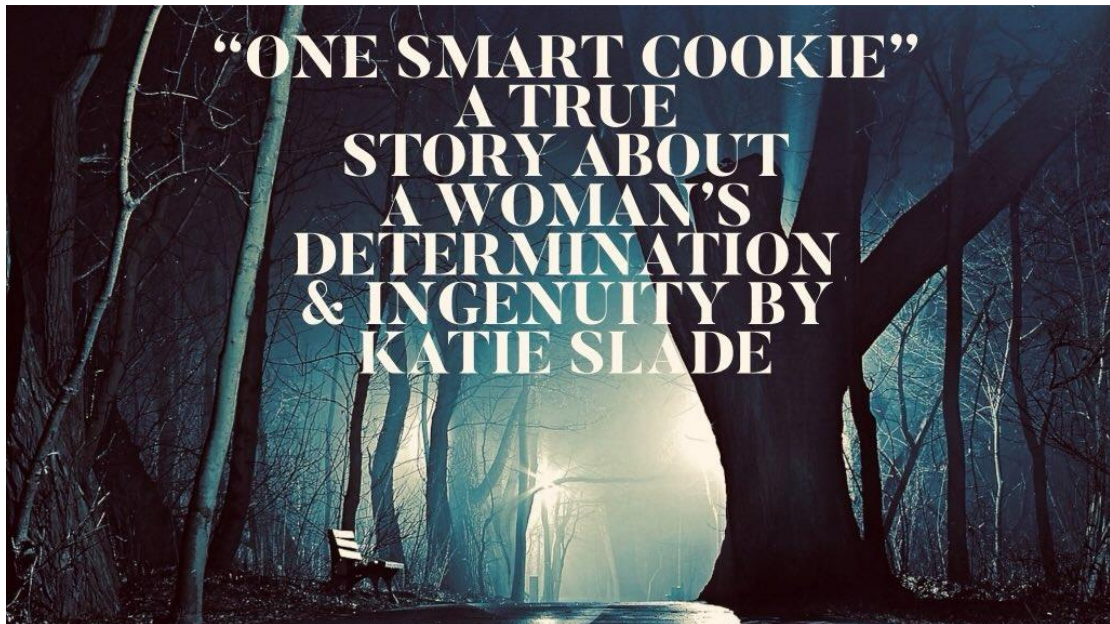


“One Smart Cookie!”

A true story by Katie Slade



“Watch out!” I cried as my boyfriend, Roy, narrowly missed careening into a vehicle moving faster than we were. The driver never signaled when changing lanes, and with God’s grace we were saved from a fatal collision!

“What a freakin idiot!” Roy bellowed.

“Well, you’re no better! How many times do I have to beg you to slow down!” I said with aggravation in my voice.



My boyfriend, Roy, drove like a daring Nascar racer, oblivious to his passengers white knuckles and requesting that he slow down. His driving acumen would have been fine, had he been driving on the Autobahn in Germany, but on the highways of New York, where fools drove 30 mph in the fast lane, and idiots texted on their cell phones like it was the last message they would ever send, one had to drive carefully and anticipate a potential disaster.

It was a fiercely rainy summer night, one of those nights when thunderstorms hovered in the distance. The air was tumid with humidity, and the atmosphere was heavy and sticky. It had

already poured earlier in the evening, but the threat of monsoon like activity was once again an ominous presence. Sitting in the front seat of our luxurious Cadillac CTS, I was comfortable, but exhausted. I was dying for bed after a lovely, but long evening.



It was Roy's father's 85th birthday, and with the exception of arriving at the restaurant during a torrential downpour, (nothing like trying to navigate a feeble old man out of vehicle with water raging in the gutter like a river) it had been a wonderful evening, without question a meal fit for a king. Extra thick slices of bacon, premium aged porterhouse steaks and wine that paired perfectly. The restaurant, a historic Brooklyn steakhouse, overflowed with diners; no evidence of financial hardship in this establishment. With dinner devoured, Roy requested the check. Thankfully, it was made clear when making the reservation that it was a "cash only" business. They had to be raking in some big money.

We took my mom home and said our nights. As we headed to Long Island, the hope that we would make it home before the rain began again, was the primary thought on my mind. Gosh, how I hated what rain could do to a wonderful evening out on the town, not to mention my hair! Driving on, we splashed through one roadside lagoon after another. The land was completely sodden and could no longer accommodate the constant deluge of rain. I prayed that Roy would slow down, before we found ourselves hydroplaning into a roadside

barrier or worse another vehicle. Fortunately, because it was already late, there were fewer cars on the road than usual.

Suddenly, a large dark object darted across the road, and Roy hit the breaks!



“What the hell was that?!” we yelled in unison.

Roy said, “No way was that a dog, it was too close to the ground!”

His father chimed in, “Maybe a raccoon?”

I commented under my breath, “Maybe it was God’s way of telling you to slow down.”

Roy took the hint, and cruised the rest of the way at a more relaxing speed of 40 mph. As we neared the assisted living facility where Roy’s father lived, the rain began to come down in torrents. We scrambled to get his very frail father inside as quickly as possible. Once in the lobby we said our goodnights, and Roy took his father upstairs to get him settled in his room. I dashed back to the car and waited patiently for Roy to return. I was exhausted, I had worked all day, and I had dressed up for dinner.

I had met up with Roy’s older son in Manhattan to take the train into Brooklyn. The idea was that Roy’s dad could see the old neighborhood where he was born decades earlier, and to see my mom’s Victorian mansion, which she had restored to its original splendor from the ravages of the depression, the economic urban decline and the crack epidemic of the

1980's. The visit went very well, and being in Brooklyn reignited a lot of childhood memories for his father.

When Roy returned to the car it was already after 11:00 and I couldn't wait to get to his place. I needed a shower and to get to bed. Commuting to Manhattan from Long Island was a beast, it required an earlier than normal wake up time for me. And the commuter trains left exactly on schedule, there was no room for running late, unlike the city subways, which provided last minute options. As we got closer to Roy's condo the rain began to taper, but it was still steady. Suddenly, as we crested a hill to make a right turn on to a main road, the car began to shake. Roy started leaning on the horn and cursing the driver in front of us.

"What's going on?" I said anxiously.

"We're running out of gas and if this idiot would turn, oh hell!" Just then the car died. Roy was cursing like a drunk sailor and pounding on the steering wheel.

"Calm down!" I said, "The gas station is just down the hill!"

Roy responded, "I don't have a gas canister! This is just great, if that f*cking idiot had just made the turn we would have been fine!" That was Roy, always blaming someone else for his shortcomings.

I said, "I don't understand, you knew you were driving to Brooklyn and back, didn't you get gas?"

"I did, but I was running late, so I only put in \$15.00 worth." I just shook my head, so typical of him!

He put the hazards on and said, "I'm going to see if I can get gas, you need to stand behind the car so no one hits us."

Oh, now I was pissed, I had to stand in the rain, in a dangerous situation because of his lack of preparedness! I got out of the car and watched him walk off bitching and cursing. But, God was watching over me as He always does, the car had died curbside as opposed to in the middle of the road, which would have been lethal, and the rain had slowed to a light drizzle. I made the sign of the Cross over my head and chest. As I stood there, I thought about how many times Roy had run out of gas in the three years I was with him, at least four times that I knew of. I shook my head, at least the next day was Friday. Just then he returned, bitching and empty handed.

Angry to see him without a canister, I said, “What happened?!”

“They don’t have any canisters and the mechanics shop is closed, they have nothing, I don’t believe this! Now I’ll have to pay \$200.00 for a tow truck! I’m calling David to come pick you up”!

David, Roy’s younger son, could be very disrespectful to his father and I didn’t want to be part of a father and son quarrel. I said, “This is ridiculous, we have two gas stations right here, I’ll be back!”



“Honey! Where are you going?!” Roy yelled.

I was determined not to sit there like a helpless woman. Dressed in a pencil skirt and heels, I walked down to the gas station via an abandoned restaurant parking lot. Fortunately, the station was super close, not more than a block and a half walking distance. As I approached, I saw the attendant inside the convenience store of the gas station.

“Hi, I need some help, our car ran out of gas up the road, and I need to buy some gas.”

“Are you with the guy who came in here minutes ago? I told him, “I have no canisters, the mechanics shop is closed and I don’t have keys, sorry I can’t help.”

Having been bitten by the “necessity is the mother of invention” bug, I walked out to the gas pumps. I stood there a moment, the attendant watched me not knowing what more to say. Then bang, it hit me!

I said, “How much for the windshield washer fluid?”

“The bottle is \$3.00.”

“Great, I’ll take one, and you can pour it in the trough. Now, let’s fill this bottle with gas, it’s exactly one gallon, perfect! I paid for the gas and said, “Do you have a funnel?”

The attendant replied, “Like I said before, the mechanic’s shop is locked up, sorry”.

I thought for a second, what could I use to pour the gas into the tank, and then bam it hit me!

“You have Styrofoam cups in the convenience area for coffee, I’ll buy one of those”.

As I punched a hole through the bottom of the cup with keys from my handbag, he looked at me and smiled. “Good luck, with that, some high performance vehicles have difficult gas tanks”.

I responded, “I’m keeping the faith, where there’s a will there’s a way”!



As I walked back through the empty parking lot and approached the Caddy, I could see David had arrived. Roy looked at me and said, “What are you going to do with that?”

I just glared at him, and opened the gas tank door, I put the cup over the gas tank and began to pour.

Roy said, “Do you think it will work?”

David said, “Why wouldn’t it, great idea Katie! I’ll see you guys back at the condo.”

Having poured the entire gallon into the tank, I told Roy to go start the car, sure enough it purred back to life.



As I got in the car I said, “I just saved you \$200.00 bucks!”

We drove to the gas station and as we pulled up to the pump, Roy rolled down his window, and told the attendant to fill it up. The attendant took his card and said, “You’re a lucky guy, she’s one smart cookie”!

