

After opening the door, I was greeted with the indistinguishable scent of onions, my eyes begin to water and I start to sneeze. Wiping the tears from my eyes I see Derek, a knife in his hand and a chopping board on the counter, 3 bowls full of cut up onions, 2 filled with the skins.

“Oh, hey Lloyd! Want one? They’re fresh!” he says, tossing an onion to me that ends up landing in my hand. “Whoa! Nice catch! My aim’s been off lately so that definitely must’ve taken some effort from you.” He explains as if there aren’t more important matters to discuss.

“We have a secret society of technologically advanced rogue spies to foil and you’re in here chopping onions?! WHY ARE YOU CHOPPING ONIONS?!” I yell out in bafflement, going to take a seat only to realize the smell is worse the further in I go. I ultimately decide that standing is fine.

“My sister’s wedding is tomorrow, she asked me to make a cake, but apparently her fiancé’s allergic to dairy and I’ve never made a cake without dairy and I didn’t have time to go out shopping because I knew you’d be here so I panicked and now I’m making a ton of meatloaf instead!” He explains all in one breath while chopping onions at a rate I never thought to be possible beforehand.

“... And now that you’ve said that out loud-”

“I’ve realized I’m probably going to ruin my sister’s wedding, yes.” Derek says, his shoulders slumping and his knife dropping to the countertop. “This week’s been a lot, can you blame me for not thinking all too straight?”

“Okay, look, we’ll go to the store, get what you need, make a wedding cake together and then get to business, alright?” I say, partially out of necessity, partially as an excuse to open the door and breath some fresh air.

“Really? You mean that? You’ll help me out?” it’s hard to tell if the tears forming in his eyes as he asks are ones of joy, or of the more obvious cause.

“Can we just get out of here?! I can hardly breathe.” I don’t bother waiting for a response and get in my car.

“Oh- right, I guess I must’ve gotten used to the scent- Lloyd, wait!” He calls out as I start my engine up.

“Dairy-free wedding cake... This’ll be fun to make.” This was an example of what is known as sarcasm, expertly executed by me as I drove us down to the supermarket.

“I just hope the thing can fit in my fridge... or my freezer? Why did I agree to this? I have no clue what I’m doing!” He looks to me as if I’m his life advice coach or something (which let me be clear, I am anything but), I simply give a shrug and keep driving.

As we cruise down the unusually calm highway, I notice my steering wheel starts to feel stiff, *really* stiff, taking all of my effort to turn it properly, until even that becomes no use and it starts turning towards the opposite direction of where I want it to go.

“What are you doing?! WE’RE GOING TO CRASH!!” Derek yells in panic and confusion, showing off his proficiency in stating the obvious in the process.

“I’M NOT DOING THIS! The wheel’s fighting me! Help me turn it so we can pull over!” I yell out to him, and now it’s us against my car, I take my foot off the gas pedal, but it doesn’t come back up. What on this wide round earth is happening to us?!

Just then, a logo appears on the touchscreen of my car, the same one that was plastered all over the spy’s base, I swing my door open as fast as I can, just before all the rest are locked shut. How they managed to get this much control over my smart-car by hacking into it is a question I have no time to consider as we careen towards a wall of stone.

“JUMP OUT THROUGH MY DOOR BEFORE THIS THING KILLS US!” Urgency overtakes every ounce of my being as I look into Derek’s wide eyes for a brief moment, before leaping out and rolling onto the pavement, with him following soon after. Within the next ten seconds we see and hear the huge crash that we were nearly part of.

“They’re onto us...” I say in shock, rushing over to help Derek up off the ground.

“Yeah... And my sister’s going to be maaaaaad...” he adds (unnecessarily), as I help stand him up.