

The Pursuit

by

Adrian Patenaude

adrianpatnod@icloud.com  
325-280-6167

May 20, 2015

FADE IN

EXT. STREET - DAY

The late afternoon sun slants against unlit neon signs as they drift across the backdrop of a blue sky.

INT. SEDAN

A clean cut ASIAN MAN in slightly disheveled work clothes inches through traffic in a BLACK SEDAN.

His windows are rolled down and he drums his fingers to the radio, trying to let off steam. Rush hour isn't helping.

His phone buzzes and he swipes to answer.

MAN

Hey. What's up?

An indistinct female voice is on the other end. He listens attentively with one hand on the steering wheel as he rolls forward a few feet.

MAN

Yeah, absolutely! What time did you say again?

She repeats herself.

MAN

Ok I'll be there.

He brakes as she responds.

MAN

Oh no worries! I'll see you then.

A car HONKS behind him and he half-turns before realizing it wasn't directed at him. He puts the phone up to his ear again, but the call has already ended. He puts it back.

On the dashboard, the gas light clicks on.

He lets his hands fall to his lap and mutters something NSFW under his breath. Then he goes back to the maddening cycle of braking, crawling forward, and braking again.

The song changes on the radio and he instantly recognizes the opening notes of his current obsession, an indie rock anthem with a way of making his feet move.

MAN

Aw yeah!

He cranks up the stereo and taps out the beat on his steering wheel as the traffic starts to flow again. Just the distraction he needed.

He rolls to a stop a few intersections later, still engrossed in the song.

Outside his window, a chili red MINI COOPER with white racing stripes brakes abruptly, approximately three inches from the crosswalk.

An energetic electronica track with female vocals is drifting from its open windows. The two songs begin to intermingle as he glances over to see -

INT. MINI

An uncommonly BEAUTIFUL WOMAN singing in the driver's seat. In the golden hour sunlight, she looks like someone straight out of a portrait photographer's Instagram feed.

Sun sifts softly through her long blonde hair.

A glass bead bracelet encircles her delicate wrist, catching light as she tucks a flyaway behind her ear.

Thick lashes frame ambiguously-colored eyes - which are turning to look at him.

INT. SEDAN

As their eyes lock, the two strains of music instantly harmonize in a freak sonic accident.

What should be an awkward encounter with a stranger feels like a chance meeting with an intimate friend he hasn't seen in years.

His face breaks into a foolish grin despite himself, incredulous of the movie-magic moment they're experiencing.

EXT. MINI

She laughs - it's infectious - and without breaking his gaze or missing a beat, she turns up her music even louder and keeps singing.

INT. SEDAN

He accepts her unspoken invitation and resumes his drumming - hesitant at first, then with gusto as her smile widens. Anything to hear that laugh again.

She sings louder and he drums faster as the music swells to a crescendo.

INT. MINI

Too soon, the music subsides. Her eyes crinkle in a final smile before driving off in what seems like slow motion.

He watches, paralyzed, as the music fades with her.

INT. SEDAN

He's jolted back to reality with a sharp BEEP from the car behind him. The light is green, but he's still reeling.

EXT. STREET

Her red Mini is speeding ahead of traffic, soon to be lost in the mess of rush hour.

INT. SEDAN

Panic flickers across his face, until something fierce - or foolhardy - settles in his eyes.

His hands grasp the steering wheel and he hits the gas.

EXT. STREET

He catches a glimpse of red as the Mini scoots around the corner a few intersections ahead.

INT. SEDAN

He puts on his blinker and edges his way into the left lane. Traffic is still moving slowly, but before long he rounds the corner as well.

EXT. STREET

She's already several blocks ahead, about to drive under the highway and left onto the frontage road.

INT. SEDAN

He follows, reaching the light just as the protected left arrow disappears. He darts through a gap in traffic a few moments later.

EXT. FRONTAGE ROAD

She's not visible on the frontage road, so he -

INT. SEDAN

speeds onto the entrance ramp. Traffic is moving quickly, but he manages to merge out of the exit-only lane while scanning ahead for the Mini.

EXT. HIGHWAY

He finally spots her - she's weaving effortlessly through traffic, drifting through narrow gaps and shaving minutes off her travel time. She seems to settle in the fast lane for a moment, so he follows suit several cars back.

Without warning, she darts across four lanes of traffic to catch the next exit.

INT. SEDAN

He has a death grip on his steering wheel.

MAN

Shit!

He attempts to imitate her maneuver. Blinkers on, he hits the gas, brakes, speeds up again, a car HONKS, he yells -

MAN

Sorry! I'm sorry!

Then slides into the exit-only lane just as the dotted lines turn solid.

EXT. EXIT RAMP

He has no time for relief - the exit ramp curves backward at an extreme degree and moments before he had hit the gas to pass one last car. He slams on the brakes, barely slowing.

The curve finally straightens out and he merges into traffic only a few cars behind the red Mini. He relishes the first real breath he's taken since he started this insanity.

EXT. STREET

The light turns yellow as the Mini and a few other cars roll through.

INT. SEDAN

He's stuck behind a car taking its sweet time turning right and just as it clears the corner, the light turns red and oncoming traffic starts to move.

After a second of hesitation and a glance ahead at the disappearing Mini, he guns it across the intersection, barely crossing without clipping the bumper of a black BMW.

He lets out a -

MAN

Whoop!

- and speeds up, grinning, as the adrenaline courses through him. Catching up to traffic, he catches sight of -

EXT. STREET

Not one, but two, bright red Mini Coopers.

INT. SEDAN

He rolls his eyes.

MAN

Really?

He leans forward, looking for some differentiator. His phone buzzes once, but he ignores it.

EXT. STREET

Only one has its windows down, but he's still unsure - until he catches a glimpse of her profile as she turns down a side street. A hint of her music drifts through his window.

INT. SEDAN

Energized at her sight, he settles deeper in his seat before pressing on the gas once again. He's come this far...

EXT. STREET

She enters a roundabout with him in hot pursuit. With a few other cars between them, he loses sight of which exit she took.

INT. SEDAN

His steering wheel spins as he goes around again. Finally, he sees her bright blur in the distance and catches the correct exit the second time around.

EXT. STREET - SERIES OF SHOTS

A wheel squeals on the asphalt.

A stop light turns green.

The world blurs by in a side mirror.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Light is fading fast.

He follows her around yet another corner and suddenly she's nowhere in sight. She could have gone in any number of directions.

The street lights click on, signaling dusk.

INT. SEDAN

He slows to the speed limit - which feels like a crawl - and peers down each street for some sign of where she went.

His phone buzzes a few times and he glances down as -

The gas light beeps.

The color drains out of his face.

MAN

No no no no...

It beeps again just as his car stalls. He manages to steer it to the side of the road with the last bit of momentum and puts on his hazards.

Sitting in silence for a long moment, he allows himself to feel the full effects of his foolishness.

His phone starts to buzz again and he snaps out of it.

He looks pained.

MAN

Jade.

He grabs it, answering as he climbs out of the car.

EXT. STREET

He paces back and forth on the dark street as he talks.

EXT. GAS STATION

He walks out lugging a plastic gas can.

EXT. STREET

He speed-walks back to his car and fills up, trying hard not to be noticed.

INT. SEDAN

He gets back in and drives off, dutifully stopping at red lights and obeying the speed limit.

EXT. HOSPITAL

He pulls up outside the building.

INT. SEDAN

He sends a quick text and after a few minutes, he jumps out to open the door.

A young BLACK WOMAN in scrubs slides into the passenger seat and settles in with her bags as he walks back around to climb behind the wheel.

The silence weighs on him, but he doesn't drive off quite yet.

MAN

I'm so sorry I made you wait.

He fingers the steering wheel for a moment, then looks up to see her studying his face. She meets his gaze with a surprising softness in her eyes.

JADE

Oh no, it's okay.

He's unconvinced, so she repeats herself.

JADE

Really, it's fine. I was catching up on paperwork.

Another beat.

MAN

(quietly)

I got distracted.

She reaches out and he relaxes under her touch.

JADE

(firmly)

Don't worry about it. Ok?

She waits patiently for his assent. He obliges with a nod and smiles weakly. Satisfied, she sinks deeper into her seat and closes her eyes.

Her lips twist in a playful hint of a smile.

JADE

Just take me home already. I'm exhausted!

It's his turn to study her face now. She looks rough and drained after a long shift, but the light from the street highlights her elegant silhouette.

He takes a few minutes just to watch her breathe.  
The words are out of his mouth before he can stop them.

MAN  
I love you.

She opens her eyes. She was already half-asleep.

JADE  
Huh did you say something?

He pauses.

MAN  
Yes. I said I love you.

She sits up, wide awake now, but says nothing.

She doesn't have to.

Instead, she pulls him close as his heart beats harder than it has all day.

EXT. STREET

After a while, they pull away from the curb and start driving home.

They roll to a stop at the next light.

INT. SEDAN

He looks over at her, fast asleep again.

To his horror, a red Mini Cooper pulls up beside them. He forces himself to look.

It's only a couple of college kids.

He smiles, rubs his thumb across his girl's hand, and drives away as the light shines green.

EXT. STREET

Bright neon signs drift across the backdrop of a clear night sky.

FADE OUT