

NO CLOWNING AROUND

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FADE IN

EXT. DRIVEWAY - UNCLE'S HOUSE - DAY

JAKE (22), climbs into a new Ford pickup truck. He reaches across the cab and opens the passenger door.

JAKE

Hop in.

EM (21) settles into her seat. She looks about the inside of the truck.

EM

Your uncle's? When you gotta bring this back?

JAKE

We're good for the whole party. He's with his girlfriend for the weekend. As long as I bring it back in one piece with a full tank, he'll have no clue I snagged it.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Jake drives along an Interstate highway. With windows down, his shoulder length dark hair blows in the breeze.

Em stares silently out her window at a sea of farmland, lit by the mid-day sun.

Jake glances at her with concern.

JAKE

You're awfully quiet. What's poppin'

EM

Just thinkin'

JAKE

'bout what?

EM

The future.

JAKE

What future?

EM

Ours.

A silence hangs awkwardly between them for a moment.

JAKE
What about it?

EM
I think I want more than a
situationship.

JAKE
Like what?

EM
You know, like a future. Maybe a
family. You know, normal stuff.

JAKE
I don't know what to say.

EM
Tell me how you feel.

JAKE
We vibe. You know, like our aura's
vibe. You're my forever bae, no cap.

Em smiles. She unlatches her seat belt and slides next to Jake. She gives him a gentle kiss on his cheek and places her head on his shoulder, closes her eyes.

EM
We vibe.

EXT. HIGHWAY REST STOP - DAY

The pickup truck arrives and parks in a space. Jake and Em step out, clasp hands and approach the visitor's center.

An emerald green SUV sits backed into a space across the parking lot from the pickup truck.

INT. SUV

A CLOWN watches the couple enter the building. He looks at his phone, then the license plate of Jake's truck. He puts the phone in the console saddle and takes a deep breath.

INT. SUV - LATER

The clown has dozed off.

EXT. HIGHWAY REST STOP - SAME TIME

Jake and Em emerge from the visitor's center and climb into the pickup. It backs out of its parking space and leaves.

INT. SUV

The clown wakes in time to see the pickup depart. With urgency, he starts his car and speeds off in pursuit.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Jake drives casually along the same highway. He notices the emerald SUV behind him, raises his eyebrows.

Em notices.

EM

Wazzup bae?

JAKE

That green whip behind us is kinda sus. I peeped one like it at the rest stop. It had a clown sleeping in it. I think it's the same one.

EM

Chill, bae. It's just going the same way.

JAKE

I guess. We're bailing at the next off ramp. We'll find out then.

EXT. HIGHWAY OFF RAMP - DAY

The pickup truck exits the highway, cruises down the ramp. The emerald SUV passes shortly thereafter.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

It drives along a two-lane highway that divides a sea of cornfields, straight as far as the eye can see.

Jake stiffens with concern.

JAKE

That sus green whip is still behind us. Better tighten your seat belt, bae. This truck's gonna fly.

Jake stomps on the gas pedal. The engine roars to life. He looks in the rear view mirror, clenches the steering wheel tightly.

Em looks over her shoulder through the back window.

EM
That cringe clown mobile is low key
catching us.

JAKE
I know.

The emerald SUV flashes it's headlights. The clown honks the horn. The vehicle swerves from side-to-side.

Jake sticks his arm out the window, waves the SUV to pass.

The SUV pulls along side. The clown crouches down, looks up at Jake. He gives Jake a hand signal.

It accelerates and pulls away. Jake grumbles.

JAKE
Quirky clown.

He takes a deep breath and settles down.

EXT. ROADWAY - DAY

The emerald SUV is stopped on the side of the road. The clown stands before an open hood. He peeks around the hood at the approaching pickup truck, steps out, waves his arms.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK

Jake and Em see the emerald SUV and the clown.

EM
Looks like the quirky clown broke
down.

JAKE
Good. I ain't stoppin'

Jake pulls into the oncoming lane and accelerates. He buzzes past the clown.

Em looks back at the clown through the back window.

The clown waves his arms in frustration as the pickup leaves him behind.

EM
I think he needs help.

JAKE
That's cap. It's a robbery setup.

Jake looks into the rear view mirror. The emerald SUV has resumed its pursuit.

JAKE (cont'd)
Guess who's back.

Em looks over her shoulder at the clown car.

The SUV passes Jake at almost double the pickup's speed. When the SUV is about a hundred yards ahead, it locks it's breaks. Smoke pours from all four wheels as the SUV swerves and slides to a transverse stop. It blocks both lanes.

Jake slows and drives off the road around the road block. The truck returns to the pavement and accelerates. It leaves the clown behind.

EM
How far is the party?

JAKE
We're almost there.

Jake pulls into a side street.

The SUV follows; lights flashing, horn blaring.

The pickup pulls into a long gravel driveway up to a large farm house.

The SUV follows.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - FARM HOUSE - DAY

The pickup slides to a stop. The SUV parks close behind.

Jake jumps out of the pickup. He reaches in and grabs a baseball bat from behind the back seat.

The clown steps out of the SUV. He reaches in and pulls out a sheet of cardboard. He runs to the passenger side of the pickup and drops to one knee.

Em gasps with fright.

The clown holds up a sign which reads: ALICE, WILL YOU MARRY HENRY?

EM
Who the fuck is Alice?

Jake trots around the pickup. He freezes in his tracks, bat in hand.

JAKE
Who the fuck is Henry?

The clown rises to his feet.

CLOWN
Aren't you Henry and Alice?

Jake shrugs.

CLOWN (cont'd)
I was hired by a mister Henry Kortenhaus to help him propose to Alice. I was supposed to do this back at the rest stop. I fell asleep.

JAKE
That was hours ago.

CLOWN
(grimacing)
I know... and a quarter tank of gas.

JAKE
My bad. Hey, you want to come to a party? Every party needs a clown.

CLOWN
Might as well. Thanks.

JAKE
By the way, Henry's my uncle. I guess he def knows I got his truck. Low-key busted. No hurry gettin' it back now.

The three walk toward the house.

EM
Jake, FYI... Don't hire a clown to propose for you. Low-key deal breaker.

FADE OUT

THE END