

CASS TELL

High Heel SLIP

a short story



High Heel Slip – A Short Story

by Cass Tell

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Lily was stressed and rapidly walked out of Walmart to her car. She had bought some cream for a blister on her left foot caused by her new Jimmy Choo high heels. They had cost a fortune and they looked fabulous, elegant golden sandals with four inch heels, but it had been stupid to wear a new pair of shoes for an entire evening without breaking them in.

And she had paid the price.

She was addicted to shoes and had them for every occasion. At work she wore loafers and flats, but for evening events it was high heels. Lilly loved the colors and artistry one found with high heels. They added inches to her slender five foot nine body and made her feel terrific.

Shoes complemented the clothing and what did her friends say? “The higher the heels, the shorter the dress.”

But lately she was having doubts about the amount of money she had tied up in shoes and clothes, and the wasted time spent on weekends visiting shops and lusting after clothing. The debt on her credit card was rising. It was starting to feel empty, not only the shopping but life in general.

Coupled with that she had recently read something written by a feminist who said, “You are what you wear”, and Lilly questioned if her obsession was turning her into a baby-doll object. Wasn’t a woman more than that?

Tonight she was meeting some of her girl friends at a fancy restaurant in town, one of those chic French places with nouvelle cuisine and she was late.

The Jimmy Choo’s were left at home because of the blister problem and she was wearing another pair of high heels, well worn-in, pink jaguar, t-strap Gucci pumps. They gave her the necessary height and approving glances from onlookers.

She got into her German built sports car and turned it on. The blister on her foot hurt like crazy. As she backed up, the high heeled shoe on her sore foot slipped off the clutch peddle and she lost control of the car, speeding backwards. Then there was a loud bang that shook her.

Lily turned around and saw that her car had collided with a rusty old pickup truck. It was like the truck had come out of nowhere. Had the driver been going too fast?

She sat for a moment her nerves shaking and a thought flashed through her brain. How many people had told her not to drive in high heels? Maybe they were right. Feeling embarrassed, she got out and walked to the back of her car.

Stepping out of the truck was a young man about her age. The most remarkable thing about him was that he was covered in dirt. He wore a long sleeved, faded plaid cotton shirt, ancient jeans with a hole in one knee, and well worn work boots with dry caked mud. Smears of grease were on his face and his hair was covered in dust. As he walked toward her she noticed that he was taller than her in spite of her high heels.

“You were driving too fast,” Lily said, taking the offensive.

The dirty man smiled and said, “Like I’m driving a Formula One racer.” He patted his hand on the hood of his truck and dust rose in the air. “This thing doesn’t go all that fast. Most of the time we have to push it.”

“Seriously, this is your fault,” she exclaimed. She looked at her back bumper, relieved to see only a scratch. Indeed the Germans knew how to make solid cars. The truck on the other hand had a good sized dent on the right fender.

The man looked at his truck and said, “I think you’re looking at jail time.”

“It’s your fault,” she said.

He took out his cell phone, started taking pictures and said with a big grin, “Better look again. You see the position of the dent. That’s about 180 degrees from the side with a six inch depression representing major repair work. Of course we have to factor in hospital time because of the ruptured sternocleidomastoid muscle in my neck, so you’re facing sizeable compensation for personal and moral injury.”

He began to rub his neck while he snapped a picture of her. He moaned, “Agggggh.”

“Hay, you can’t do that. No photos of me,” anger rising in her.

“Don’t worry. I need to have some pictures of you as evidence. Maybe we can go on one of those TV court cases. My name’s Tyler by the way, so you know who the plaintiff is.”

A man wearing a cowboy hat and cowboy boots appeared from the direction of the store. He walked up near the front of the truck, stood and watched. He had leathery skin with wrinkles around his eyes.

Lily was getting nervous. She couldn’t tell if Tyler was serious or joking. He smiled when he talked and had a twinkle in his eye. Was he mocking her? She thought she better play it careful and in spite of her initial reaction of blaming him it was her foot that slipped off the pedal.

“Maybe we could discuss it,” she said in a softer voice. “I’m sure we can find a solution.”

“Well, I’m willing, but I don’t think there’s much hope for you. We’re talking big bucks.”

“How should we do this?” she insisted. She noticed that dirt-boy Tyler had broad shoulders and sparkling green eyes.

“I’m kind of in a hurry,” he said. “If you just sign a paper explaining your culpability and willingness to accept all damages, then that should be enough.”

“But, I think we should talk,” she anxiously said.

“Well maybe, but we might have to negotiate and you ain’t startin’ from a very good position as I’ve got my photos and a witness here.” Tyler turned to the man with the cowboy hat and asked, “What’d you think Roudy?”

Roudy took off his hat and wiped his brow and said, “Tyler, looks like you stepped into a heap ah trouble here.” With a mocking smile his eyes scanned Lily up and down.

Lily was upset the cowboy showed up and was gazing at her like a dog drooling over his food. She turned to Tyler. “We need to resolve this right now.”

He said, “Sorry ma’am, I’m in a hurry. Maybe you could come by the ranch tomorrow at noon and we can work it out, and why don’t you stay for the barbeque. We’re having a Saturday get-together.”

“We can’t talk now?” she asked, shifting her weight from one foot to the other.

“Ain’t got time . . . and with this sore neck and all. Probably gotta get to the hospital. But, tomorrow I may be more amenable.”

Lily took a deep breath, looked at Tyler and then at Rowdy. All she wanted was to get away from them as fast as possible. “Okay, give me driving instructions and I’ll be there.”

Tyler glanced at the dent in the truck and chuckled, “For sure you need instructions in driving.”

“That’s not what I meant,” Lily said, her face tightening. “I meant give me driving instructions on how to get to your place and tomorrow we can talk. I’ll have to think about the meal.”

They exchanged contact information and Tyler drew out a map. Lily got in her car and drove away, a tight ball in her stomach.

Still standing by the truck, Rowdy turned to Tyler and asked, “We having a barbeque tomorrow?”

Tyler smiled. “We are now. We better get into the store there and do some shopping.”

Rowdy said, “Must admit she got some spunk besides them fancy pink shoes.”

* * *

The next day Lily followed Tyler’s hand drawn map and drove twenty miles west through a small town and then out into rolling green hills scattered with forests, farms and ranches. The landscape became less populated and with each mile her anxiety increased.

Twenty miles was a long way to drive to discuss a silly dent, but as she thought of dirt-boy and his cowboy friend, she wondered what kind of a deal they were trying to pull on her. There were many scam artists that maneuvered their cars into situations causing accidents and then they would claim enormous damages. The thought of that horrified her. Was she a victim of a scam?

It had been a perfect setup, although she remembered the panic she felt when her foot slipped off the clutch and the hopeless feeling of not having control.

Lily wondered if Tyler had gone to the hospital and would he sue her?

If that was the case, then she would fight back. She worked as an accountant and knew her way around

numbers. She could pick Tyler apart with her financial knowledge, but if he had the right lawyer then she had a problem. But how could the dirt-boy even afford a lawyer. He looked like a borderline tramp.

She decided her strategy would be to charm them to death. She wore pink platform stiletto shoes with a heel height of six inches. That might put her eye ball to eye ball with Tyler.

She had considered wearing a short dress but had opted for tight black cropped trousers with a floral print of pink and yellow flowers. She also wore a yellow blouse with a low swoop neck conscious that her appearance might distract hillbilly Tyler.

As she thought about her clothing she had this reoccurring doubt about herself. The accounting job paid well but it was becoming mundane, so she needed something to make life interesting. Going shopping was a way to do that but she wondered if the clothing was gaining control of her, like a boa constrictor that starts unseen and ends up suffocating the life out of you.

Indeed her routines outside of work seemed to consist of shopping and shopping.

On some week nights and on weekends she hung out with a select group of friends, young professionals whose main topic of conversation was the last party.

Over the past four years since graduating from university she had gone through several relationships but her men were only interested in a limited number of things, like their careers, staying single and treating her as a trophy object. This had left a bitter taste and for the past six months she had avoided any serious relationships.

She had tried to find mister-right but without success. Registering on a couple of dating websites had also resulted in failure. There had never been a fit. Her profile was still on the sites but she now wasn't responding to any enquiries.

So, her life was empty.

As she thought about Tyler she realized he was hard to read. Was he playing her along when he had threatened her with damages and a court-case on TV? Or was he just a hick that drove a rusted truck?

While Tyler used words like "ain't", his vocabulary included "plaintif" and some long medical name for a muscle in the neck which she couldn't even pronounce.

Indeed he was a bit of a mystery.

The thought of an insurance claim, or even worse a court case, terrified her. At the same time he didn't seem to be too injured, as she tried to reassure herself.

All she knew was that she needed to get this accident behind her and move on with her life.

* * *

When she got to the twenty mile mark she took a small country road north. From the instructions Tyler had drawn she went another three miles. The scenery here was changing. There were no houses and the land was greener, with cows grazing in lush pastures, all surrounded by forests. She turned left onto a private road after passing over a small river.

Next to the road was a sign that said, "Eagle Ranch".

Finally she came to several powder blue buildings that appeared to be living quarters. On the rise of a hill a hundred yards beyond was a large modern house. Tyler had told her to go to "the big house in the back", so she assumed that was it.

She drove up and parked her car next to maybe ten pickup trucks. They all looked new and shiny. The rusty pickup truck was parked to the side. To her surprise, Tyler or someone else had painted a large red circle around the dent caused by her car.

When she looked at it again, the dent didn't look so bad and she wondered why she had even bothered to come out here. Except Tyler had threatened medical and personal damages and that caused her anxiety.

She got out of her car and walked on the paved parking lot and then came to a gravel walkway that led to the house. In her high heels it was difficult to walk and she found herself going cautiously like balancing on a tightrope.

Ahead of her to the side of the house was a large lawn with picnic tables covered by umbrellas, and a long barbeque with meat cooking. The aroma hit Lily and made her hungry.

There were around fifteen men and women standing and talking in small groups. They were drinking beer and soft drinks from the cans. Most of them were wearing western style shirts, jeans and cowboy boots. Several wore cowboy hats, even the women. Down the hill there were a number of children throwing rocks into the river.

She noticed that Rowdy was standing next to the barbeque flipping huge pieces of meat.

As she approached them on her wobbly shoes, all eyes turned to look at her and the conversation stopped. She realized she was totally out of place, like a cat among dogs.

Tyler appeared from around the side of the house. He was wearing a blue short sleeved cotton shirt, fairly new blue jeans at least without a hole, and leather flip flops. Lisa noticed that his arms were tanned and muscular. He was sparkling clean and no longer covered in filth. In fact, he was more than presentable.

He saw her and smiled. "See you made it," he said. "Welcome. Didn't think you would come."

"It was a longer drive than you described," she stated, and then she realized she was deviating from her charm strategy. She didn't want to antagonize him.

Tyler rubbed his neck and said, "Agggggh."

Lily looked at him and said, "Does it hurt?"

"Well, I think we should get some of that fine steak into our bodies and that might help, then we can talk. You ain't a vegetarian?"

"No I'm not, but I'd prefer that we talk first."

Tyler rubbed his neck again and mumbled, "Agggggh."

"Well, okay," she sighed. "I'd be pleased to have lunch with you and then we can discuss the accident."

Tyler smiled.

* * *

The lunch was superb and Lily could never remember eating a steak that was so tender and delicious. Tyler's friends were kind to her. They had funny stories, laughed easy and politely listened to her. Some came from other ranches whereas the rest worked on the Eagle Ranch.

She found herself relaxing. The people here were natural, very different than her circle of friends that seemed only interested in themselves.

The countryside was tranquil and she could feel it working on her soul. She wondered what it would be like to live in a beautiful place like this, which was different from the tall buildings and traffic jams one found in the city.

After the meal Tyler asked, "How was it?"

"Excellent, thank you," she said.

"Maybe we can go talk? Can you come on into the house?"

She nodded, got up and walked next to him on the path going to the house. She had to go slow because of the gravel walkway and she knew that the platform shoes had been a mistake.

As they neared the house, her foot slipped and her ankle twisted and she started to fall. Then she felt powerful arms catch her and Tyler was holding her against himself."

"You okay?" he asked. He didn't let go.

She felt awkward to be held like this, but it felt good, like she was being protected. "Ah . . . yes," she stated, looking up into his eyes. His body was virile, almost animal like and she felt a sudden unexplained passion rise up from her core.

He still didn't let her go. "I'll have to fix this path," he said.

"I shouldn't have worn these shoes." It was strange but she felt she could stay in his arms forever.

Finally he guided her to her feet and they went into the large living room in the house where they sat on comfortable sofas.

"Whose house if this, if I may ask," she said.

"Mine . . . well, it belongs to my family."

"You live here?" She asked.

“Part of the time. We also have large ranches in Wyoming and North Dakota about five thousand acres each, so I travel. But this place is my favorite.”

“I see why. The scenery around here is stunning.”

“Nothing like an evening sunset on a ranch,” he said.

“So you run these ranches?” She asked.

He laughed. “No, each ranch has a foreman that handles the day to day operations, like Rowdy here at the Eagle Ranch. I’ve got a Masters in Business Administration so I just focus on the overall business and investments, along with my father. The ranch in North Dakota is taking up most of our time because we have a lot of oil reserves.”

Lily’s head was spinning. It seemed like dirt-boy Tyler was something more than she imagined.

“That’s a lot to manage,” she said.

“Keeps us busy. We’re currently looking to make further investments,” he said looking into her eyes, “and we’ve been researching to find a skilled person to help with financial analysis and accounting.”

“That’s funny, I’m an accountant.”

Tyler smiled and paused. “I know.”

Lily felt surprise. “How do you know?”

“In today’s world you can find out just about everything about someone through social media websites . . . and dating websites.”

Lily’s cheeks turned red and she felt embarrassed that he may have seen her profile on the dating websites where she was registered. Her profile was also on a social media website for business professionals. “So you are spying on me?”

“No. I’m just saying the information is out there. My lawyer hired a high level executive search firm to find a candidate.” He bowed his head and spoke softly. “More like to find the right partner. I rarely have the time and am not very good at . . . ah, courting. The best professionals are working for me and they are rarely wrong. They’ve done exhaustive research and claim there is a match. Now I’m curious to find out.”

“What? How long have you been doing this . . . this research?”

Tyler stretched, spread out his legs and put his hands behind his head. “Ain’t saying. Y’all might say our first formal interview was yesterday.”

Lily’s head was spinning. Had it been a random accident or was it planned. In any case her life had certainly been turned upside down with that slip of her high heel on the clutch pedal. At least that part wasn’t planned.

This seemed crazy. Out of the clear blue sky Tyler had offered her a job, but something much more if she understood him correctly. Indeed when she thought about it she felt like her life in the city was becoming a dead end, nothing but an empty superficial existence.

The surroundings here were something new and the friendship between these ranchers seemed genuine. This is what was missing in her life. And being in his arms she had felt secure, something she desired for a long time.

“Oh my,” she said.

“Well, there’s an offer is on the table.”

Lily smiled. “This is all so sudden and you must understand that accountants are cautious people.”

“And accountants know there is no reward without risk. Would you be willing to explore it?”

She thought for a moment. “I believe I understand your proposal. Can we take our time?”

Tyler rubbed his neck. “Absolutely. Maybe we should wait until this neck pain goes away.”

“We didn’t speak about the accident,” Lily said.

“Accident. What accident? And the pain seems to be disappearing. Perhaps we could speed up a bit.”

“Was that accident caused by you?” She asked.

“Of course not. It was you, but, perhaps with a tad of premeditation. Why don’t we just call it fate,” he laughed.

This was too much to imagine, but what did they say, “to strike while the iron is hot” and she felt heat in her heart. “Alright, when do we start . . . ah, this new job?” She asked. This was just too much to imagine, the suddenness of this and the change it represented.

“It’s more than a job and more than being an associate. I’m looking for a partner, someone to share life and

love with. So, why not start right now,” he said. “Please tell me more about yourself, your hopes and dreams. But I’m also thinking we need to get you a pair of cowboy boots.”

In all those endless hours of shopping for high heel shoes, she had never thought about cowboy boots. It was a nice idea.

The End

Author’s Notes:

Do you like high heel shoes? What are your favorites? At social events I’ve noticed a diversity of high heel shoes on women. The artistic detail is impressive and shows the creativity of the designers. And best of all high heels seem to extend a woman’s legs, a delight to the eyes. There is something feminine about them that definitely differentiates the sexes.

There’s a lot of controversy about high heels, that is, the health impact to the spine and feet. Surveys show that approximately 30% of women have sprained their ankles with these shoes.

Various opinions also exist on what these shoes do to a woman’s identity. Some say that they reduce a woman to nothing more than a materialistic object.

My question is more practical. What in the world is it like to walk in high heels? If I were to wear shoes like that I’m sure I would be falling into everything. So I admire women who can walk so elegantly in stilettos, and even dance in them.

In a light and fun way I tried to touch on some of these thoughts in my short story, ‘High Heel Slip’. The story is simple and sweet, where Lily the main character experiences an unexpected outcome.

If you liked ‘High Heel Slip’, please check out ‘A Smile Forever’ which is a longer romantic novelette. It’s a story about love at first sight and true love against all odds.

Cass Tell

