

How Not To Be A Stupid Adult:
By Kyra Johanna Sparks & Andy Waldorf Strachan

Written by

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As Kyra and Andy separate, they discover a box of mementos from their childhood friendship, and a healthy serving of life advice from their 3rd-grade selves.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DUSK

A man's head slithers out the door he is closing. SMASH: A shoebox FIREWORKS its contents near where his head withdrew.

The room is dark. Stacked packing boxes. Heavy BREATHING.

Car lights pull out of a driveway. Through a blind, they scan KYRA, 19, power-packed petite redhead. She unclenches her fists to thrust open the window and yell out:

KYRA

I told you in the fifth grade you'd
never see me cry again Andy
Strachan!

The last stripe of light glimmers off her half-carat diamond wedding ring.

DARKNESS.

Kyra weaves her way through shadowed boxes to reach the light switch by the door. Flicks it on:

A floor littered with trinkets, colored papers, a map dotted with dates next to X's, a second place ribbon and an old duct-taped shoebox. She plucks up a baseball rolling by her feet.

In blue ink scrawl: "9-14-07 First played catch with Kyra."

KYRA (CONT'D)

Rather generous, calling it
"catch."

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - PAST

A YOUNG KYRA, age 8, plays catch with another girl. A YOUNG lanky ANDY hunkers on a nearby picnic table, staring. Without pausing her game or glancing his way:

YOUNG KYRA

Hey kid. You're always watching me.
You're creeping me out.

YOUNG ANDY

I was just... you throw every day?

YOUNG KYRA

Gotta train. I'm going to play
professional when I grow up.

YOUNG ANDY
 (point of information)
 Girls can't play in the majors.

Kyra stops. Her eyes narrow on the ball in her hand.

CATCHING GIRL
 Uh, ohhh...

A sheepish Andy closes his eyes. Kyra winds up and--

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Young Andy holds an ice pack to an eye. A stern MR. HART, balding, fingers arched before pursed lips, sits opposite him and young Kyra behind a desk.

MR. HART
 Andy, Mrs. Nielsen says Kyra threw
 the ball at you--

YOUNG KYRA
 We were just playing catch--

MR. HART
 --Andy. I'd like to hear from you.
 What's happening here?

Andy, eyes to floor, surfs the ice pack down to rest upon his ribs. Mr. Hart rises. Walks around the desk.

He towers over Andy. Reaches beneath the ice pack to roll up Andy's shirt. Two long, thin purpling welts greet air.

The furrow in Mr. Hart's eyebrows melts away.

YOUNG KYRA
 That wasn't me!

MR. HART
 Kyra, you'll sit on the wall during
 recess again this week.

Signs and hands a pink hall pass to Kyra.

MR. HART (CONT'D)
 Get back to class. Now, please.

Kyra, pass in hand, huffs out. As the door CREAKS shut, Mr. Hart folds into the child-sized seat next to Andy.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - PRESENT

Kyra sits cross-legged against the wall. Pulls a pink pass out of the tattered shoebox. Turns it over to read kid penmanship:

Dear Andy,

Do you want to:

[] Train with me for lunch

[] Or be beaten up (Check one box)?

~Kyra

Kyra lets it float to the floor. Peers into the box:

KYRA

No waaay. How!...?

Pries at something stuck inside. No luck. Flips the box upside-down, shakes it. Stops. Reads the faded masking tape label: "Kyra Katches."

KYRA (CONT'D)

(eye roll)

Quite a way with words, Mr. Writer.

Kneels. Bangs box on the floor until a worn, rolled-up purple notebook with a mud stain DROPS. Clutches it to her heart.

Flips a few pages. Reads:

KYRA (CONT'D)

"How Not To Be A Stupid Adult:

By Kyra Johanna Sparks & Andy

Waldorf Strachan.

#1) Never take away recess..."

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - PAST

Young Kyra sits cross-legged, back against the school's brick wall writing in a clean purple notebook. Without looking:

YOUNG KYRA

I can see you, you know.

At the corner, a nose blooms into Andy's face sporting a black eye.

YOUNG ANDY

How'd you know I was here?

YOUNG KYRA

Sixth sense. Writer's have that.

YOUNG ANDY
Whatcha... writing about?

YOUNG KYRA
How not to be a stupid adult.

Andy shuffles over.

YOUNG ANDY
So why's #2 say, "Always have
purple flowers?"

Kyra pushes on his legs to move his shadow off her page.

YOUNG KYRA
Because... they're flowers. And I
like purple. Duh.

YOUNG ANDY
And #3, "Go on great adventures?"

YOUNG KYRA
When I grow up I'm going to be a
writer that has adventures and
writes about them.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - PRESENT

Kyra interrogates a Starbucks apron hanging from a closet knob.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - PAST CONTINUING

Young Kyra sizes Andy up and down. He takes a step back.

YOUNG KYRA
Okay, I'll train you. How to fight.
I'll also defend you from Rob
Plimpton until you can hit back.

YOUNG ANDY
Um, you... will? Why...?

YOUNG KYRA
'Cuz that's stuff best friends do:
Help each other when the other's in
need. And you, Best Friend, are
most definitely in need.

YOUNG ANDY
Best friends? Me... and you?

YOUNG KYRA

Yeah. I decided you're going to be my best friend. You don't cry when you get hit.

YOUNG ANDY

Don't I get to decide... too?

YOUNG KYRA

No.

Pause.

YOUNG ANDY

I think #4 should be "Don't throw things when you're mad."

Kyra considers. Continues writing with a nod.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - PRESENT

Notebook in hand, viewing the trinket apocalypse about her.

KYRA

Nailed that one.

ANDY (O.S.)

We never did finish those.

Kyra looks up to see ANDY, a gangly 19 with soft brown eyes, nudging the door open.

KYRA

(rising)

We... Are. Finished.

ANDY

That's not what I--

KYRA

You stole this from me!

ANDY

I didn't... I collected it. That's--

KYRA

Mine. And you--

Swats him with the rolled up notebook, backing him into:

INT. HALLWAY

ANDY

--No, it was ours. Just because you never let me write in it--

KYRA

Well, you're getting enough of that now aren't ya, Mr. Writer?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - PAST

A TEENAGE KYRA leans against a car holding an opened envelope. TEENAGE ANDY rushes up to her, waving a paper.

ANDY

I got it. I got the scholarship, I--

He notices her envelope, then her expressionless face.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Oh, you didn't get it, did you?

KYRA

Nope. Got something else though...

Plants her envelope on his chest. Walks off.

Andy scans its contents.

KYRA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Pregnant.

A slack-jawed Andy trots after.

INT. HALLWAY - PRESENT

ANDY

We agreed, it was best. I take the scholarship, while you--

Andy sidesteps packing boxes as Kyra presses him backward in a windmill of swats.

KYRA

--While I serve spoiled trust-fund brats their pumpkin spiced lattes-almond, not soy milk-all day? While you, ...
YOU--

ANDY (CONT'D)

Am I supposed to feel bad? All the time?
Sorry if I'm living your dream.
You agreed,
YOU--

ANDY (CONT'D)
 You said you were fine with...

A relentless Kyra swats. Andy ducks into an impeccably clean:

INT. BABY'S ROOM

ANDY
 ...with being the one to make ends
 meet.

Kyra winds up. Andy, cornered, closes his eyes braced for impact. Kyra's arms drop to her sides.

KYRA
 Here's a turn of phrase for your
 next assignment: Someone already
 did meet an end.

Sans impact, Andy's eyes open to his own hand locked on a crib railing. He yanks it back, cradles it as if he just touched white-hot metal.

Silence.

Face ashen, he heads toward the exit, but Kyra counters with a step in to block his path.

ANDY
 Move.

KYRA
 No. Take a look. LOOK. Andy, YOU
 LOOK.

ANDY
 (almost inaudible)
 I never want to be in here.

What begins a uni-directional wind tunnel of rage...

KYRA
 LOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO--

...contorts into a choking animal howl...

KYRA (CONT'D)
 OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOK:

The crib is empty.

Andy stands frozen. Kyra, rabid:

KYRA (CONT'D)

My. Dream. New dream. Is supposed
to be there.

(convulsing)

Only dream... That mattered. Gone,
Forever Gone.

Kyra panics. Oxygen cannot penetrate spasming lungs.

Andy moves in, wrapping long arms around her. She writhes
against his touch. Two weak punches. But Andy holds tight.

ANDY

Stuff best friends do.

Kyra's body goes limp.

KYRA

(wild-eyed)

I don't know the color of his eyes.
My child. I'll never know. We
buried our child and I never saw
the color of his eyes.

Andy scoops Kyra into a hug. Sobs undulate her limbs.

Minutes. Embracing.

KYRA (CONT'D)

I haven't cried since... (sniff)
Since...

ANDY

...Fifth grade. Yeah, I heard.

They separate. A protective emotional moat re-established.

KYRA

We only got married because the
baby was coming. It's best.
Separation is best.

ANDY

I only took Honors Writing because
you were in the class--

Lifts the notebook. Reads from it.

ANDY (CONT'D)

"#5) If you lose something, it's
okay. You should look for it, but
if you can't find it again, that's
okay too." That beaut mine?

His arm lowers the notebook. Kyra hooks his elbow to rest her head on his shoulder. Reads:

KYRA

"#6) No hitting" exclamation point, exclamation point,... exclamation point. I've blown every one of these.

ANDY

Give you a pass on that one tonight if you do the same for me on: "#7) Don't leave without talking--ever." Failed that one for years now.

KYRA

Ha. "Hugging is always okay, but not kissing."

Andy stares at her. Sways.

KYRA (CONT'D)

Remember when I wrote that one?

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - PAST

Young Andy stands swaying in indecision next to Kyra, who writes. He jumps--lips first--into a kiss on her cheek.

Kyra, stunned. Writes in the notebook. Closes it. Throws it at him. He fumbles the notebook as she leaves.

Andy reaches down to retrieve it from a mud puddle.

INT. BABY'S ROOM

ANDY

Yeah. Kinda hard to forget. You wouldn't talk to me for two weeks.

KYRA

So.

ANDY

Yeah.

KYRA

So?

ANDY

Yeah, I've got an 8 a.m.

He steps around her. She jumps out to plant a kiss on his cheek. He stutter-steps.

KYRA

I think you should stay. Tonight.

Andy hands her the notebook. Continues out.

KYRA (CONT'D)

We can work on these.

No response. Waits... Nothing.

KYRA (CONT'D)

ANDY!

Rushes out.

INT. HALLWAY

He stands frozen at the end of the hallway. His back to her.

KYRA

Andy?

ANDY

Got #2 covered.

He turns to face her, a bouquet of purple flowers in-hand.

KYRA

(tears fall)

Come on. Waterworks... twice in one night?

ANDY

I just don't know what's next.

KYRA

I do.

Kyra rips into one of the boxes. Dumps a tray of desk supplies out. Grabs a pen. Lays the notebook open on a box.

Andy lays the flowers next to it and rests his arm on her shoulder. She tucks her free hand in his.

Andy watches the notebook as she scratches out, then amends, the top of the page:

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