

# Gloomy day for Griselda's owner

Wed. Aug. 6, 1986

Friday, Griselda-the-car joined Ed-Buffy-the-Cat.

She was my first car, and when I heard the screech, thud, and raucous sound of grinding metal, I felt my stomach flip-flop.

The large, pale blue sedan had shot out at me from a side street, hit my car on the passenger side, and dragged it across the street.

The cars collided, my rear-view mirror crashed to the floor, knocking my glasses off my face, and the coke Gordon held spilled all over the place.

I gasped when we crashed, and held my breath.

"First Ed-the-cat's death, then my car!" I thought. "How am I going to commute (45 minutes) to work?"

Griselda-the-car's fatal accident was a fitting end to one of the most exciting years of my life.

One of the most lasting memories of my first year out of college, and in the "real world," the 1980 Ford Fiesta was a graduation present which I received from my parents before I moved into the first apartment I just moved out of last week, and before the death of my puppy-like kitten a few months ago.

The grinding sound stopped, and the blue sedan pulled away to the other side of the street.

Gordon and I sat and stared at each other. My hands still clutched the steering wheel, now sticky with Coke, and my foot pushed the brakes all the way into the floor.

"Was that my fault at all?" I asked Gordon after a moment of silent meditation.

"No," he said adamantly, obviously in as much shock as I was. He wiped drops of Coke from his arms and legs.

We pulled our cars out of the main road and onto a side street. The driver's side door was jammed shut, so I had to wait for Gordon to exit, and then climb out through the passenger side.

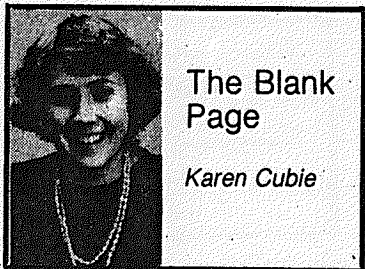
I walked around to the car to take a good look.

The whole front end was lopsided, and the front corner of the passenger side had been bashed in.

I shook my head.

"How am I going to tell my father," I thought, remembering how proud he was when he showed me my graduation present for the first time.

He had spent days trying to find



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Karen Cubie

"just the right car for a young, single, professional girl like you."

"Look at the racing stripe, Karen," he said, excitedly pointing to the brown strip along the side of the beige car. "It makes it look so much faster."

"It even handles like a race car!"

Every time I came home, he had to take it out for a ride around the block "to listen to the engine."

"That's a good little car," he'd say again, shaking his head. "Just look at that racing stripe."

The racing stripe was all scrunched up and scraped now. He wouldn't be so proud of it.

I had never had a problem with Griselda before. She had been dependable, and she got great

mileage. Dad was right when he said she "drives like a race car."

"Her reactions are so quick," he raved. "My car's just as small, but she doesn't react that well."

Griselda and I could dash off ahead of other cars at intersections, and she could easily dart in and out of traffic along my hefty commute.

The only other time I had felt heartsick on her account was the night Bork and I walked out of a Cambridge theater at 2 a.m. after seeing a midnight show, and discovered she was not where we had left her.

First we thought she was stolen, and then we discovered she had been towed.

I was never so relieved.

But this time I knew the problem wouldn't be solved so quickly. I stared at the dents, kept my mouth shut, and quietly exchanged papers with the driver of the blue sedan.

A policeman soon drove over, and took down our names, and the name of a witness who said the sedan pulled out without stopping.

By this time, a crowd had gathered. An elderly couple watched from their yard, shouting occasional bits of advice, and a troop of 10-year-old boys on bicycles rode around and around the accident site.

"Did you have insurance?" one of the boys asked Gordon, assuming he was driving since he was the male.

"No," he said, shaking his head, "but she does." He pointed at me.

About 45 minutes after the crash, Gordon and I climbed back into Griselda.

The engine started, and I turned around.

Griselda limped the block and a half home. She started up without a problem, but the front end was thrown out of alignment, and she wanted to lean to the left.

I did feel lucky. Griselda was the only one injured, and maybe it wasn't so bad, I thought.

But since the accident, more internal injuries have materialized.

When I started her up for a short, local drive yesterday, I heard this awful scraping sound. So I shut off the engine, climbed out the passenger side, and looked under the car to see if anything was scraping on the ground.

Griselda's belly was free of any obstacles, so I started her up again.

The same grinding, scraping noise arose.

I shut off the engine, shut the car doors, and walked back into the house to arrange rent-a-car transportation.

But that's another story.



# Right management key to economy