

A Brush With Fame

How far would you go to get in the record book?

Characters

Narrators 1 and 2: people who tell the story

Samantha Grady: a teenage girl

Mr. Grady: Samantha's father

Fiona: Samantha's friend

Kyle: Samantha's rival

Roger: Kyle's friend

Apple: Samantha's friend

Scene 1

Narrator 1: At sunrise, Samantha Grady is already awake and outside. She is standing in her backyard in front of an ironing board.

Narrator 2: Samantha's father, Mr. Grady, can't believe his eyes as he steps outside.

Samantha Grady: (to herself) I need more starch!

Mr. Grady: Dare I even ask what you're doing?

Samantha: I'm ironing, Dad. Can't you see?

Mr. Grady: Yes, I can see that. But why are you ironing in the backyard?

Samantha: I have to practice and get better for extreme ironing. It's a real sport, you know.

Mr. Grady: Ironing? A sport?

Samantha: Yup, and it's going to get my name in Guinness World Records.

Mr. Grady: It sounds like a bunch of nonsense.

Samantha: It's not nonsense, Dad! It's a real competition with judges, just like in gymnastics. But before I can begin ironing on mountains, I need to develop my skills and join the Extreme Ironing Bureau.

Scene 2

Narrator 2: Later in the day, Samantha hangs out at her locker with her friend Fiona.

Fiona: So what's next, Sam? You've probably attempted all the Guinness records by now.

Samantha: Not quite. There are so many. It's just a matter of picking the right one.

Fiona: And then breaking it before Kyle does?

Samantha: Oh, don't remind me.

Narrator 1: Kyle, a boy from their class, walks toward them. His friend Roger is with him.

Kyle: Well, well, well. Look who we have here.

Fiona: What do you want, Kyle?

Kyle: I want to invite you to my history-making performance after school today.

Samantha: Are you creeping into a hole so deep that even you won't seem creepy in it?

Narrator 2: Roger and Fiona begin to laugh.

Kyle shoots an angry look at Roger.

Kyle: No one will be laughing after I blow the world's biggest bubblegum bubble.

Samantha: Yeah, right. Good luck—I've tried that one. The biggest bubblegum bubble ever blown was 23 inches in diameter.

Kyle: I blew one just yesterday that was almost 12 inches. It shouldn't be a problem to blow the current record holder out of her bubble. Take that, Susan Montgomery Williams of Fresno, California!

Samantha: I'm going home to perfect the steady art of balancing spoons on my face.

Kyle: You'll never beat that kid in California who balanced 15.

Samantha: That shows what you know. I can already balance three.

Roger: (to Kyle) Let's bounce, man.

Narrator 1: Kyle and Roger walk away.

Fiona: Kyle is such a loser. Forget him, Sam.

Samantha: Yeah.

Scene 3

Narrator 2: The next day, Samantha sits with Fiona and Apple in the cafeteria.

Apple: Did you guys hear about Kyle?

Samantha: Don't tell me he broke the record.

Apple: No, don't worry about that. He didn't come close to blowing the world's biggest bubblegum bubble. But he blew a big one!

Fiona: Oh? How big?

Apple: Well, Roger was standing there with a ruler. When the bubble grew to 20 inches, it hit the ruler and popped all over Kyle's face.

Fiona: Ha! Too bad we missed that.

Apple: Kyle was pulling gum from his eyebrows.

Roger was pulling the stuff out of his hair.

Narrator 1: Apple and Fiona break into a laughing fit. Samantha just sits there.

Apple: Come on, Sam. That's hilarious!

Samantha: No, it's not. Remember when I tried to break Dustin Phillips's record?

Fiona: Um, which record was that again?

Samantha: You know which one: fastest ketchup drinker with a straw. Dustin polished off 91 percent

of a 14-ounce Heinz ketchup bottle in just 33 seconds—

Apple: And you got about halfway down and started laughing. Ketchup was coming out of your nose. Now that was funny.

Samantha: It was not funny. That stuff burns!

Narrator 2: Apple and Fiona crack up.

Samantha: You guys just don't get what it's like to want to achieve greatness.

Narrator 1: Samantha gets up and walks away.

Scene 4

Narrator 2: After school, Samantha rides her bike to Kyle's house. He is sitting in his driveway with many decks of playing cards.

Narrator 1: Samantha drops her bike on the lawn and walks toward Kyle. He whizzes a card down the length of the driveway.

Samantha: Not bad.

Kyle: That was only about 30 feet.

Samantha: That's a long way from the record of Rick Smith Jr., at 216 feet 4 inches.

Narrator 2: Kyle throws another card. It lands near the last one. He looks up at Samantha.

Kyle: What are you doing here, anyway?

Samantha: I heard about yesterday.

Kyle: Oh, that. And you came here to laugh at me, I suppose?

Narrator 1: Samantha sits down next to Kyle. She grabs a card and flings it. The card sails about 50 feet.

Samantha: I've had plenty of embarrassing failures too. Believe me, I feel your pain.

Kyle: OK, so what do you want?

Samantha: Well, I was thinking ... what if we were to combine our record-setting talents? We're not getting anywhere on our own.

Kyle: True. What did you have in mind?

Samantha: Well ... when was the last time you went to the dentist?

Scene 5

Narrator 2: One month later, 3,000 students are gathered on the school's soccer field.

Narrator 1: Samantha, Kyle, Roger, and Fiona stand on a platform with a microphone stand.

Kyle: (to Samantha) Are you nervous?

Samantha: No way. I was born for this!

Fiona: I can't believe you guys organized the entire student body to come out here on a Saturday just to brush their teeth.

Samantha: What can we say? Some people will do anything for fame. According to Guinness World Records, the record stands at 2,883 people brushing their teeth at once. We're going to beat that for sure.

Roger: Then shall we?

Samantha: Let's roll.

Narrator 2: Roger pumps his fists in the air. Then he squirts toothpaste into the crowd before grabbing the microphone.

Roger: Yeah! Woo-hoo! It's Crest time, baby!

Narrator 1: The crowd cheers.

Fiona: (to Samantha and Kyle) Come on, guys! It's the moment of truth.

Narrator 2: Fiona runs across the stage with her toothbrush. She joins Roger in a dance.

Kyle: (to Samantha) Can you believe it? We're finally getting into the record book!

Samantha: Yeah, it's just like in my dreams!

Narrator 1: Just then, Apple runs onto the stage. She gets to Samantha and Kyle just as they are about to speak to the crowd.

Apple: (out of breath) Sam ... Sam ... no good ... record ...

Kyle: All right, Apple. Catch your breath. Tell us what's wrong.

Apple: I just got off the phone with the Guinness World Records people. I called them, like you said, to tell them about today.

Samantha: Yes? And?

Apple: I'm sorry, Sam. They said your record book is outdated.

Samantha: Outdated? What do you mean?

Apple: They told me that 10,240 Chinese kids brushed their teeth at the same time in 2003. It's on the Guinness Web site—I checked.

Samantha: Oh, no! 10,000? We have only 3,000 people to set the record. This is awful!

Courtesy of www.extremeironing.com

Kyle: It's all right, Sam. We'll get 'em next time. You had better make an announcement, though.

Narrator 2: Roger hands Samantha the microphone. The crowd cheers loudly.

Narrator 1: Samantha looks out at the big crowd and sees 3,000 smiling faces looking back at her.

Samantha: (into the microphone) Hello, everyone. I'm afraid I have some bad news for you ...

Narrator 2: The crowd goes hush. Samantha takes a deep breath. Then slowly, she begins to smile.

Samantha: The bad news is that the dentist is in! Let the brush-a-thon begin!

Narrator 1: Samantha whips out her toothbrush and begins to brush her teeth. Kyle, Fiona, Apple, Roger, and 3,000 kids join her. Everyone seems happy.

Narrator 2: Kyle speaks through a minty grin.

Kyle: (to Samantha) But what about the record?

Samantha: Forget about the record. Look how happy everyone is! We'll tell them, but not now.

Narrator 1: Samantha winks and smiles at Kyle.

Narrator 2: Roger runs to the microphone.

Roger: (loudly) Yeah, baby! Now, who's got floss?
—Byron Cahill

Isn't It Ironic?

To some people, extreme ironing is a real sport. To others, it's a real joke. The idea is to go to far-out places and bring along an iron, an ironing board, and, of course, laundry. Extreme ironing can take place on mountaintops (see photo) or almost anywhere in the wilderness. Some people have tried a form of extreme ironing underwater. Still others have ironed while flying!

To find out more about this strange activity, go to www.extremeironing.com.

