

Just Another Pickup at the Airport

by Brandon M. Dennis

Steven worked as a van driver for a hotel that was very close to the airport. He drove people from the airport to the hotel and back again, and helped them with their luggage. He felt very lucky indeed if he ever got a tip, and so naturally he was excited when he pulled up to Island Three one day to pick up a couple and received a very fine ten dollar bill as a reward.

“Thank you sir!” said Steven when given the bill. He placed the couple’s luggage in the back of the van and then loaded the couple. He climbed inside, set the radio to a classical station—a music that offends no one—and started the van.

“So are you two staying the night or picking up a car?” he asked.

“Staying the night,” replied the man. “The lady and I have a date in the Bahamas and have an early flight, so we need all the rest we can get. Don’t we love?” The two giggled and kissed each other as Steven drove out of the airport and onto the highway. Now, as a driver Steven often overheard some of the most interesting conversations. This day was no different, and the couple began to talk amongst themselves.

“Oh it’s so good to get out of the house,” said the lady. “I really needed this vacation; thanks so much for planning it hun.”

“Not at all,” said the man, “I needed a break too. Work was starting to get to me, but I left things in the hands of Gunther and he should do just fine while I am gone. Did you let mom and dad know that we were leaving?”

“I left them a message on their machine. I told them to come by and check on the house if they found any free time. But I doubt they will, they have been so busy lately. Well, I suppose they have been just as busy all their lives, even when we were kids.” Steven smiled to himself. It was so nice to see a couple that had been together since they were young.

“Yes, they were, weren’t they,” said the man with a laugh. “But I guess we can thank them for it. Why, had they been home as often as they should have, I very much doubt we would have ever had the opportunity to fall in love.” Steven cocked an eyebrow at this point. Did they have a habit of calling each other’s parents “mom” and “dad”?

Were they neighbors whose families were so close that they felt like kin? Were their parents away from the home often enough for them to visit each other every day and eventually fall in love? He pulled up to a stoplight and turned on his blinker for a left turn.

“I sometimes miss our childhood,” said the lady. “We were such crazy kids and had so much fun. I got to know you well during those years; its no wonder we ended up together. I sometimes feel sorry for our brother though. I wonder what he ended up doing?”

“I do not know,” said the man. “James fell in love with you, I think, a long time ago, but since he knew you loved me I think he did the only thing he knew to do, and that was to run off. I certainly hope he has found someone, for he was a good friend.”

Maybe they were stepchildren. Maybe their parents had married while they were young, and being the son and daughter from another marriage they just grew up together and decided to get married. That had to be it, otherwise...

“Brother dear, let’s go out for a romantic dinner tonight—we can sleep on the plane!”

“Bah, all right, you know I can’t say no to you!” They nuzzled together and began to kiss in the back of the van. Steven’s face paled and he held down his vomit, but he couldn’t help from retching.

“Are you all right?” asked the man. Steven shook his head and coughed.

“I’m terribly sorry, but I couldn’t help overhearing your conversation.”

“And what was it about our conversation that caused you to retch?” Steven glanced in the rear view mirror to see if the man was smiling or not. He wasn’t.

“Well, you two are siblings right?”

“Yes we are.”

“Son and daughter of the same father?”

“Yes.”

“Son and daughter if the same mother?”

“Yep.”

“And... you’re married?”

“Of course!” said the man as he turned a loving glance at his sister. Steven couldn’t help himself. He wore the most disgusted face he had ever worn and could barely drive straight.

“That’s so... *gross!*” he said. He pulled into the parking lot of the hotel, but the couple didn’t get out of the van.

“How dare you?” exclaimed the woman, sitting up sharply. “How dare you judge me and my husband?”

“I’m sorry,” said Steven, “but this is incredibly disgusting.”

“Disgusting? We disgust you? Of all the nerve!” cried the man. “Am I not a grown man living in a free country? Can I not love whomever I choose?”

“Well I suppose,” said Steven, “but it is still gross. And it’s just wrong.”

“Wrong? How could it be wrong?”

“For the same reason incest has been wrong for as long as history can remember.”

“Oh yeah?” said the woman. “And would you mind enlightening me as to what these reasons are?” Steven sat there in his chair feeling utterly miserable. He was no philosopher. He was no scientist. All he knew was that it was disgusting and wrong, and he didn’t know why.

“What about your children?” he asked. “If you have kids they will be born deformed. That is why it is wrong.”

“Well then,” said the man angrily, “we will adopt, or have no children at all. There now; that fixes the birth defect argument. Is incest still wrong?”

“*Ugh*, yes!”

“Why?”

“I... I don’t know why, but it is disgusting and wrong to get married to and have sex with a partner of such close kin. It just is.”

“Ha!” cried the man, unbuckling his seatbelt and throwing it aside. “Exactly! There is no reason whatsoever, and you are simply prejudice! We have a right to express our sexuality any way we want to, and I love my sister and we are married, and you just have to deal with it. Come now honey, let’s get away from this jerk and report him to his supervisor.” The man opened the sliding side door, but not before Steven could say one more thing.

“Is it any different than, say, if you married your mother?” Steven turned around and looked at them. They both had shocked looks on their faces. “Or what about you lady, what if you married your father?”

“How can you say such a repulsive thing?” she asked. “My father is a good and noble man and I respect him. How can you suggest such a wrong and immoral thing?”

“I am just asking; what is the difference? I find it just as disgusting for a brother to marry a sister as a daughter to marry a father, so please tell me, is there a difference?”

“There is immense difference!” cried the man. He paused for a moment. “They are still married, for one thing.”

“Suppose they got a divorce,” suggested Steven. “How then would it be wrong for you to marry your mother and for the lady to marry her father?” The couple’s faces contorted into looks of disgust and repulsion.

“Can’t you see the difference?” the lady said. “Incest between a brother and sister doesn’t even compare to incest between a father and daughter. They are two different things!”

“How?”

“I can’t tell you how, they just are and everyone but you it seems knows this.”

“Well,” said Steven, “what about marrying your pet dog?”

“*What?*” exclaimed the sister.

“You know, marry an animal and have it for a spouse. After all, you said it yourselves; you live in a free country and have the right to love whomever or, in this case, whatever you choose. If the dog is all for it, what is the problem? If your parents are unmarried and are all for it, how is it different? I see no difference between bestiality and incest.” The brother and sister were horrified. The lady began to cry.

“What kind of person are you, harassing your guests like this?”

“Me? You two were making out in the back of my van, and you are siblings! How could I not be utterly grossed out? And you asked me what my problem was and I told you.”

“Oh that’s it,” cried the man. “You put me and my sister into the same camp as perverts and immoral men. There is no similarity between us—none at all—and you will pay for what you have said this day!” He stepped out of the van and took his sister by the

hand. The pair rushed inside the lobby of the hotel. Steven sighed and turned off the van. He stepped out and took the luggage from the back and walked inside. There he saw the irate brother yelling at the desk clerk on duty, who just happened to be Steven's manager. As he walked up with the baggage he could hear his manager apologizing.

"And I will not be harassed at your establishment by this *incestaphobe*!" said the man. He walked over and snatched the luggage from Steven.

"Give me my ten dollars back you bigot, you deserve no tip from me." Steven reached into his pockets and gave him the bill back.

"Steven," said the manager, "did you really harass our guests about their sexual orientation?"

"No! I didn't! I didn't harass them at all. We had a mutual discussion about it, but I did not harass them."

"They have the right to their own sexual orientation, and you have no place lecturing them about it."

"I'm sorry, but it disgusted me and I couldn't help showing it. If they have the right to express their orientation publicly, do I not have the right to express my distaste publicly?" The manager slammed his fist down on the counter.

"No, you don't! I will not tolerate *incestiphobia* from my employees. This is the way the world is Steven, and you just have to adjust. A man and a woman marrying the traditional way is old and outdated, for this is a new age with new morals and greater enlightenment. You will learn to accept and tolerate any behavior you deem perverse if you wish to remain an employee of this hotel. Now give me your keys and go home. I will let you know if I want you back in the morning." Steven reluctantly handed over his keys. The man and woman stood there holding each other with chagrin on their faces as he turned to leave.

"I guess I will go back home to my wife, who is not of my kin, and wonder how much longer I will be allowed to live in this society as a practicing heterosexual," he muttered under his breath as he walked out the door.