

## Two First Dates

Gina and Howard were being drawn together by a cosmic puberty magnet. Neither had ever dated another life form since reaching recent sexual maturity. Two virgin college frosh of different species--one with crossed arms and the other with crossed eyes—pulled like comets hurtling towards each other...with fiery libidos.

Howard tripped and dropped his books near Gina's library table where she was studying one afternoon. He'd finally bolstered his courage to ask her out on a date.

"I'm sorry. I had my eyes in the clouds," he lied looking up at her.

"Really Howard Dundergard?" Gina Goily knew he was fibbing since she saw he had tripped more by design than by accident. "I've got my eyes on you."

Howard didn't then understand Gina's multiple entendre. This species of female *did have* eyes in the back of her head. But, for all he knew, she was just a tall shy platinum blonde, not an Oculan. Using his four arms to climb up a tree near the bus stop, he'd surveyed her boarding and disembarking alone. In classes, he'd watched her enter and leave without conversing with others. Not even other girls. Hope she likes boys. Hope she doesn't have a boyfriend, he thought. Was she introverted? Or was it something else?

"So you uh, you uh, busy next Friday?" He stammered with a face as red as a blood moon.

"Yes. I have to study." Her green eyes stared down at him. I tried, he said to himself.

"Oh okay. Well maybe some other time then." His courage had evaporated like yesterday's rain. He picked up his books and turned to leave. Just then she placed her hand on his shoulder and said, "You never give up the basketball that easy. I was just teasing. You're the first boy to ask me to go out."

“Really? As pretty as you are?” It’s a good sign she knows I play basketball, he thought.

“I think it’s because I’m taller than all the boys.”

She is at least a foot taller than me. She could dunk a basketball over me. “I can reach up and touch your ears with one of my hands”. They both laughed at his joke. She shook her head side to side, indicating *that* wouldn’t happen on their first date.

“I’m going to have to ask my parents for permission,” Gina said.

“I’ll bring you back by midnight,” Howard promised, “There’s a new *Species* sequel.”

“Those movies are so predictable.”

“Just a suggestion. Whatever you like. Even a chick flick.”

“You’re so sweet, Howard Dundergard.”

Along with her mound of cotton candy hair, he enjoyed how she’d remembered and rolled his entire name off her tongue...and cooed he was sweet. He could’ve stared at her until the next triple eclipse.

But Gina picked up her books and said, “I’m sorry. Look at the time. I’ve got a late class. I’ll ask my parents this evening.” They exchanged cell phone numbers. He agreed to call her after nine pm. Exactly.

...

“I wish you wouldn’t read the paper like that,” Georgia Goily said to her husband as she feather-dusted shelves and vacuumed the carpet in their living room. “What if someone spots you through the windows? Then we’d have to move again. You know there are *specists* in this neighborhood too.

“Specists? I probably dislike them as much as they hate me. But being a good God-fearing Oculan...never mind. While you’re nagging me, why do you have every TV in the house

turned on? Couldn't we save a little electricity?"

"I like to keep in touch with the world while I work. You're the great proponent of multi-tasking."

"If you'd keep the blinds closed, like I've asked, I could read like I want." Morgan Goily was an editor for a publishing house. In the daily presence of other species, he would work with his green eyes. Like a human, this pair was centered on his chubby face. In the comfort of his home, he would rest this duo; he would appear to be taking a nap.

This particular morning, in a lazy pique, Morgan had removed his toupee. Assisted by strapped reading glasses, a pair of rear red eyes perused his paper. With his hands cupped behind his head, he was doing low impact stretching exercises whenever he turned the pages. His other eyes were enjoying his wife's ears enlarging, as she moved around the room.

"I'd like to have some sunshine coming in and appreciate the beautiful outside world once in a while. When we first dated, we went out. Now? Only on Halloween and my birthday," Joanie said.

"I've told you---you need to get a wig. I wear one. Then we'll go out. You've lost too much of your own hair. It's too thin. You can dye it all you want but other species can see all your eyes. When you wear a scarf---you look like a Muslim. They'll profile and follow us for sure. Worse than ostracized for being an Oculan. Swallow your pride and get a wig with long blonde hair."

"You want me to look like Gina?"

"What'd be wrong with that? She *is* our daughter. You *are* her mother. If you better covered your optical organs, less attention would be drawn to us. That's all."

“And what’s wrong with my natural hair color? Could you lift your feet where I’m vacuuming? Thank you.”

“We’ve been over this for several hundred years. Kelly green and hot pink are unacceptable. We can’t all look like Lady Gaga did. Other species will think we’re weirdoes.”

“We are weirdoes. What’s wrong with being weird? We had more freedom in the twenty fifth century. I didn’t need a wig or have to dye my hair back then. Where have all the hippies gone?” She had to shout over the vacuum’s noise.

“We could move to Colorado. They’re very tolerant there and becoming more so with each passing day. They won’t notice.”

“We’re not moving again until Gina’s finished college.”

“And we have way too many eyes to protect against cold and extreme temperatures. You’d have to wear a knit hat and scarf everyday---worse than a wig.”

“I was just venting, that’s all,” Joanie said.

“It’s okay. I’ve learned to live with your whining for a couple of centuries, I guess I can handle a few more. So you want to put our heads together?” Beads of sugar water were forming on his forehead. Joanie was starting to smell like a gardenia.

“Fooling around. That’s all you think about. Be serious. Gina will be home from school any minute. You want her walking in on us? So you have a thing for blondes? I’d been a brunette before. You prefer blondes?”

“Look-- other species, mostly humans, they look at long blonde hair and big boobs and they don’t look at much else. They dismiss blonde women. You don’t need to do anything about your boobs. Just get the wig. We’ll go out for dinner. I promise.”

“Go read in your office. I want to have some sunlight coming in.”

“Nag, nag, nag. Oculan or human, all females are the same.” Last word or no, Morgan Gaily decided he’d best get up from his easy chair and complete his reading elsewhere. In five centuries of marriage, he’d learned if he had any chance of ear tonguing coitus after dinner, he’d better let Joanie have the last word.

...

At the Gaily residence, over their regular vegetarian, fruit, and raw fish fare, the Oculan family sat around their dining room table, discussing the day’s activities. Morgan had read several books as well as reviews. He hadn’t been impressed by the quality of the submitted materials nor their themes. He commented writers today don’t know how to scribe anything meaningful without injecting eroticism and strange looking creatures into their stories. Everything he’d critiqued was devoid of any humor. No dirty ear jokes!

Joanie frowned at his last remark. She said her day was uneventful-- just dusting, vacuuming, mopping...and opening blinds and windows to allow some fresh autumn air in. She winked eight eyes at Morgan.

Gina said she had done well on two exams, and a male class mate had asked her out for her first ever college date. Immediately Morgan raised his ten eye brows.

“You’re too young to be going out with any boys,” he stated, knowing full well her being close to fifty Gregorian Calendar years was the Oculan age of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.

“I’m in college now Daddy.”

“She’s becoming a young lady, Morgan.”

“Young lady or no. If he’s not an Oculan then she doesn’t need to be going out with him.”

“Now who’s being a *specist*?” Joanie countered, “What is he dear?”

“Mom, I don’t know his exact species. He’s not human though. He has four arms and he’s very good at basketball.”

“Does he only have two eyes? Four arms and two eyes? Sounds like the kid is Brachian.”

Morgan nodded like he’d just solved a species puzzle.

“Morgan. Stop right there. Be a little open-minded.”

“Okay how good is he? Is he tall as well? Can he dunk the ball? If he’s too short, he’ll never make it in the pros.”

“Daddy I don’t know. He just asked me to go to the movies. I’m not looking to marry him.”

“What do his parents do? Where’s he from? I wish you’d go out with one of our kind.”

“Enough Morgan. I remember you and I dated other species before we became serious. You had an eye for an Ursidaen back in high school.”

“You’ve got a memory like a Mamothadon.” Morgan knew if he continued objecting, he’d end up sleeping on the couch. Again.

“Do you like the boy Gina? Do you want to go out with him?” Joanie didn’t realize she’d won the debate.

“Yes Mom I do. Dad, he’s much shorter than me but kind of cute. It’s just the movies. He dropped his books at the library on purpose just so he could ask me out. He’s as shy as me.”

“Invite him over for dinner. Let’s meet him. If he checks out, afterwards you can go to the show. We’ll lay the ground rules for him. Joanie ---you’re definitely going to need to get that wig. He probably thinks Gina’s more human than any other species. Let’s not give him any hint we’re Oculans. Never know—his parents may be *specists*.”

“Now who’s nagging who?” Joanie answered, but she smiled at her motherly victory for her daughter.

Gina thanked her parents for their consent. Later that evening at exactly nine pm, the phone in the Gaily residence rang. Howard’s arms quivered when Gina relayed the welcome news-- their “meet the parents” dinner-movie first date for Friday would only be a couple of days away.

...

Elated, excited, and enthused, Howard couldn’t sleep for hours. Finally he did and dreamt of Gina. He had his first hair dream. In the morning, he awoke with his four arms covered in heavy fur; his room smelled like week-old salmon. Fortunately he also still lived with his father. His parents had divorced a few years ago.

His Dad retrieved his electric razor, shaved Howard’s arms down to their bare skin, opened windows and sprayed Lysol about the bedroom to kill the unpleasant odor.

“Howard, I’m guessing you had a pretty serious dream about a girl last night.”

With his head down, he nodded up and down.

“Don’t be ashamed son. You’re growing up. Your body’s experiencing physical changes.”

Howard lifted his head and looked his Dad in the eye. “I’ve got a date with a girl on Friday. Will this happen then?” he asked pointing to the pile of follicles on the floor.

“For the next few months, try to control your emotions as best as possible. You’re a healthy Brachian passing into sexual adulthood for the first time. Your hormones are at their peak. Always carry my razor with you. Here’s a bottle of cologne too.”

“Dad?” Howard stood up, all five foot four inches of him.

“Yes son. What is it?”

“My tongue became real stiff and larger last night. It woke me up.”

“They didn’t teach you anything in that sex education class in high school,” his dad answered, “For Brachians, our tongues double as penises. Your first date—you’re probably not going to stick it anywhere. I never asked ---what species of girl is she?”

“I don’t exactly know. She didn’t have four arms. I didn’t want to ask and have her reject me. I’m guessing she’s human.”

“Human girl? You’ll be okay. Their sexual reproductive organs are nowhere near their heads. She can suck on your tongue all day long and not get pregnant.”

“What if she’s some other species?”

“Then you may---I say may—need to be very careful where you stick that tongue of yours.” He shook his head from side-to-side. “My best advice to you is practice celibacy until you find someone you want to settle down with. Easier said than done. Sometimes hormones and emotions will get the better of two individuals.” His dad dug in his pocket and pulled out an elastic tongue protector. “It’s chocolate-flavored and stretches. Be careful—that’s my best advice to you.”

On the basketball court, with four arms, no one was going to steal the ball away from Howard when he was dribbling. As an all-star college point guard, his passes were crisp and he could break any double team. Attending classes, he appeared like any other teenager-- he wore loose-fitting sweat shirts which hid his second pair of arms. His extra appendages, working two laptops, allowed him to research and write term papers with alacrity. He was confident in every facet of his life except one—dating a girl. A first date. He hoped he wouldn’t mess up at dinner



and later at the movie with Gina. Brachian puberty? “Be careful”—the words bounced in his head like a basketball on hard wood.

...

At the Gaily residence, Joanie experimented with several styles of Gina’s platinum blonde wigs.

“You know Mom, some girls at school dye their hair pink, blue, green—all sorts of colors.”

“That’s humans for you Gina. They want to be different. Unique. But if too many of another species are different, then they discriminate or make crude gestures.”

“I don’t think Howard’s like that at all.”

“Your father wants us to appear human. He’s a good man, but he has his blind spots.” They both laughed at the unintended humor. Oculans had two light green eyes, like humans, and four other pairs of red eyes on the back, sides, and tops of their heads. “For your Howard, we’ll look alike. Long blonde hair. Mother. Daughter.” She adjusted the wig in the mirror, agreeing with Morgan, she was an attractive, green-eyed blonde.

“Mom there’s something else. When I daydream about Howard, my eyes become watery and my ears start to extend.”

“Sit down Gina. We need to talk.” For the next hour Joanie told her daughter about the facts of life. When an Oculan female becomes sexually stimulated, the tear ducts of all her red eyes open in torrents. The female has two vaginas—her two ears—which will grow to accept a male’s penis.

“If Howard is Brachian like your father thinks, don’t let him attempt to shove his tongue in your ear. Practice abstinence—that’s safest.”

“What if he’s a mutant human?” Gina’s eyes widened.

“You don’t have to worry about their tongues. They have no reproductive capabilities. Male humans will try to stick their penis most anywhere *except* your ears.”

“And what if he wants to put his tongue in my mouth?”

“Nothing will happen. What comes out may taste a little sweet. But he’ll enjoy it and you’ve no chance of impregnation. With your father, we did that on our first date. I let him get to second base. That’s our species.”

...

The next day, in the school’s cafeteria, Howard found Gina and they ate a late lunch together. Neither discussed their bodily changes nor their parents’ advice. Gina asked about Howard’s next basketball game. He told her if she didn’t care to see the movie he’d selected, they could go to any of her choosing with her parents’ approval. As if they were telepathic, they mutually agreed *not* to see each other until Friday.

Gina ran to the women’s restroom. There she removed her wig and dried it under the hot air blower. Then she let it cool. She’d remembered heat could injure the corneas of her camouflaged red eyes.

Howard missed his next class. He’d felt scratchiness inside his sweatshirt. His arms needed to be mowed of their fur again. His appeared to look and smell like a Wolfarian, a *howlish* species if there ever was one. He decided he couldn’t practice with teammates like this—everyone would tease him. He’d tell his coach he’d contracted food poisoning from the cafeteria. Sudden attack. Felt like puking. This lie would gain him a one-day reprieve. Tomorrow? And then Friday? He was dreading how he’d metamorphosis when he’d have dinner with Gina’s parents.

...

For dinner, Howard had worn a billowy shirt hiding one set of arms and long cotton sleeves for the other. They began to inflate with hair. Gina was no help. Her fragrance was like a gardenia in full bloom. He excused himself halfway through the meal.

The family could hear his electric razor humming in their bathroom.

Breaking the silence, Morgan said, "He certainly likes to keep himself properly groomed."

Howard collected all of his shorn fur and flushed the evidence down the toilet. He slapped some cologne on and returned with a Chanelian's body odor. Then it was Gina's turn. She said she had to "brush her teeth." Instead, she changed wigs in her bed room, discarding a soaking spaghetti mess.

"So what movie are you kids planning to see?" Morgan asked.

"Gina suggested the new X-Men X flick," Howard answered, "It's rated PG-13 and has quite a few different mutants in it."

"Remember it's a movie. It's fiction. There are many different species in our world but really few true mutants. We should judge each being as an individual, not by their external physical appearance. It's what's inside a person that counts most."

"Yes sir," Howard said. He didn't want the conversation to continue much longer and have to return to the bathroom with his razor again.

But Mr. Gaily wanted to wax eloquent now on the virtues and strengths of almost all species. (He didn't care for Capulans because they were stuck up). He had evaluated Howard during dinner and found him to be a down-to-earth, respectful individual. A Brachian was a good solid species. He spent quite a bit of time in the bathroom? A little strange. Maybe the food didn't agree with him? Still, for a first date, the boy seemed okay. As they said "goodbye"

at the door, Mr. Goily reminded Howard to have Gina home before midnight. They waved “so long” as Howard eased the car out of the driveway.

...

Before the movie started, Gina let Howard place two of his arms around her shoulders. She needed to slide down in her seat because of their height differential.

“Your perfume. What’s it called? It’s wonderful.” Howard said.

“It’s not a perfume, sweetie. It’s my sometime body odor.”

“Lucky you. I stink like week-old fish. Sorry.”

“You’re not that bad. Your cologne is masking it.”

“Gina. This is not going to sound right but I’ve got to ask you a personal question. Don’t be offended okay?” Howard’s tongue was stiffening and enlarging. He started to talk like he’d just visited the dentist and his gums had been numbed.

“Are you feeling okay? Was my mom’s food not cooked enough?”

“It was fine, mmm, uh. You’re not human are you? I guess you figured by now I’m Brachian.”

“I’m Oculan. You thought I was human. Are you disappointed?”

“No I’m fine. That’s great really.” His tongue had grown thick and long. It stuck out from his mouth.

“Howard your tongue is swollen.” Gina was alarmed.

“I’ll be okay,” he garbled out, and he took his arms from around her shoulders and turned his head away from her, “It’s a Brachian becoming a man thing. My dad told me about it. Let’s watch the movie.” They held hands throughout the flick. After the movie, Howard drove his car back to the Goily’s home.

Parked in their driveway with the car engine off, Howard said, “I’m sorry I couldn’t talk. I couldn’t control my tongue. It’s a natural reaction to me liking you. That’s what my dad told me.” His tongue had normalized its size.

“Howard I can’t control my eyes watering underneath my wig.”

“You wear a ...” She cut him off.

“The main thing is we made it through this date and we still like each other.”

“We do?” He needed to be re-assured.

“Yes. Look at you. You look like Wolverine’s great-grandson and stink like a bad tuna. And your tongue inflates itself when your mind is aroused. I like you. If you could only imagine how big my ears are right now.” They both laughed breaking the tension.

“Okay. Well it’s almost midnight. Let me walk you to the door.”

They held hands once again as they didn’t hurry their steps. All the lights were out. She put her hand on the knob, then turned, and surprised Howard. She bent her head down and kissed him, wrapping her lips around his once again swollen tongue. The first kiss for both of them—they’d always remember. Gina stopped after what seemed an eternity for Howard. She left him standing on the porch. He couldn’t whistle as he skipped to his car; his tongue was much too distended.

...

Earlier in the evening, as Joanie was washing the dishes and Morgan was drying them, she asked, “Remember our first date?”

“I can’t remember in which drawer I put my socks yesterday and you’re asking me to remember what happened centuries ago?” He remembered quite well but admitting was another matter.

“I let you get to second base.”

“You liked me.” Her wig looked like she’d just stepped out of the shower. She smelled like a gardenia. His tongue was enlarging and starting to stiffen and throb.

“We can finish cleaning up tomorrow morning. You want to turn in early?” She asked.

Taking her hand in his and leading her up the stairs, Morgan said, “Can I do both ears?”

“One is never enough for you.”

“We *are* married you know.”

“I think you always had a thing for blondes,” she said as they entered their bedroom and locked the door.

The End

