

Suzanne's Story – You'd Better Run

One of my favorite friends in this world is Suzanne. She's a beautiful, talented woman who loves her husband and cares for every injured cat she's adopted over the years. She lives a simple life though luxury surrounds her. She would value a Picasso as much as a drawing from a beloved niece or nephew. As a matter of fact, she'd give a Picasso the prime spot above the potty, while the child's masterpiece would beautify the heart of the home, the refrigerator.

Suzanne was the last of five kids that almost mimicked my husband's family. If Suzanne's mom had a girl, Paul's mom had one about the same time. Only one of Paul's sibling was unlucky enough to not have a matching playmate from Suzanne's family. Paul and Suzanne were the only children to not match in gender, but that certainly did not hamper the friendship.

When Suzanne was sixteen, it finally fell into her lap to be the designated retriever of the family car from Marklein Automotive, a neighborhood garage. Her older sister carefully walked her through the process before she left the house.

"The car was only there for an oil change," Denise told her.

"I know, I know, I've got it!" Suzanne responded.

"Really? Well don't forget to check the roof for scratches," Denise added.

Confused, Suzanne turned to inquire, "Scratches?"

"Yes." Denise continued to explain, "When they change the oil, the mechanics turn the car upside down to drain the oil out of the engine. Sometimes they get in a hurry and forget to put the tarps down. You've got to be careful and look over all their work. Dad will be pissed if you bring the car back with scratches. You have to point them out to Fred before you leave, or they won't accept responsibility for the damage."

Though I may disappoint some readers with the following statement, I'll continue in my usual fashion. Suzanne is blonde! Though her "blonde moments" are few and far between, this one was stereotypical perfection! If you happen to be blonde or love someone who is, don't be offended. Karma and age are getting me back one light colored hair at a time.

Suzanne rushed off to pick up the car, at least this was a fun errand. It was a special treat, at sixteen, to get to drive the family car alone. Her parents were out of town that day so it was a perfect moment to take her time getting back to the house.

The mechanics knew her, and her family. Fred Marklein, the owner, gave her the keys and directed her to the waiting vehicle. She opened the long heavy door, stepped onto the door well and began her roof inspection. This would have been fine. Suzanne could have simply looked, found no unusual scratches, entered the car and left. But no. Mr. Marklein happened to catch a glimpse of her unconventional way of entering the vehicle. Her pre-inspection before takeoff had caused him to wonder. He approached the vehicle and asked, "Is there a problem Suzanne?"

"No, no problem, at least not yet. I haven't checked the other side. I know that you guys turn the car over to drain out the old oil and I'm checking the roof for possible scratches."

Now, what do you imagine happened next? Of course!! Mr. Marklein started dying laughing. This was the talk of the shop for that day, the rest of the week, and for a few additional moments of joy over the next months, as new customers came in daily.

His laughter tipped Suzanne off. She stopped her inspection immediately, descended from the door well, entered the car and promptly escaped. I would imagine that the gas pedal was engaged a little more than

originally planned. Her plans of driving around a bit were certainly foiled and she could think of no place but home.

Your mind should now turn to her home, and her sister, both of which were only a few blocks away. The remainder of the story can only be told through utilizing descriptions of sound. The front door was whisked open, “SWOOSH.” The screen door slammed with the familiar sound of a light, thin piece of wood smashing into a heavier frame, assisted by the recoil of an overly elongated spring. “CREAK, BAM-M-M!” The only sound that followed were those of Denise’s feet, skipping as many steps as possible as she ascended the staircase to the sanctuary of her lockable bedroom. “BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM-BAM.” The final sound was the loudest, a 130-decibel blast from Suzanne, foretelling of Denise’s prompt demise. For reference, Jill Drake holds the Guinness World Record for the loudest scream at 129 decibels. Too bad the judges hadn’t been in Suzanne’s house to take an official reading.

The problem with pulling a prank like this is that sisters tend to live in the same place that you do. Parents tend to side with the negatively affected child. Mom’s control food and teenaged sisters can really deal a wallop when they are pissed. The moral? Sibling altercations have been around since the dawn of man. You aren’t going to stop them. Embrace the future stress relieving benefits of retelling the story. Take full advantage of what God has provided to you, a sibling.

I read this story aloud to Suzanne before putting it out there for you to see. She corrected me on a few things. In a few places, she liked my version better, so we left it. The fun thing is that the story didn’t end there! The fact that her parents had been out of town was new to me. It seems like a minor addition but think about it. Would Denise get in trouble? Their parents were not at home. For Denise to get in trouble, Suzanne would have to admit that she had been naïve enough to fall for this prank in the first place. I can just see it, “Mom I went down to pick up the car and Denise told me to check the roof for scratches because they turn the car upside down to drain the oil out of the car when they’re doing an oil change and so I checked the roof of the car and MOMMMMM, Mr. Marklein laughed at me and so you have to kill Denise!”

Now that was not a run-on sentence. Do you have kids? This is how they tell a story when they are upset. There is no time for punctuation or breathing. They take a big breath before they start and then just pelt your eardrum with the whole story.

All of this to simply say no, it did not and would never have happened this way. What did happen was that Suzanne’s dad ran into Mr. Marklein. Fred started to laugh the minute that their eyes met. He walked up to Suzanne’s dad and said, “Well Jim, I can finally retire. Thanks to Suzanne coming in the other day I can now say that I have seen everything.” They probably headed over to Stoney’s for something wet while he filled in the details. The mental curtain that revealed good times in Aurora can now close. The stage manager can now cue Paul Harvey. You’ll hear in your mind that distinct voice saying, “Now you know the rest of the story. Good day!”