

# LUXURY CARRIAGE

*Vernon  
Flower*



"She was all woman. And all car. Sally was her name. Hot to trot and ready to go. Just what the doctor ordered for ole Dim Whitley."

*L u x u r y C a r*



Dim bought a luxury car with the money his mom left him when she got carpal tunnel and died. Dim thought she died from “carpool tunnel.” So he vowed never to carpool again, especially in tunnels. He vowed never to ride in tunnels, period. He also vowed never to travel over bridges, the “tunnels of the open air” either.

Dim and his mother, who was named Star Power Coleslaw, had been estranged. When he heard of her passing, he vowed to learn as little as possible about the last fifteen years of her life. Hence his mistaking carpal for carpool. Dim never went to college and lived like a hermit. It's easy to make a lot of sweeping declarations and vows when you're an idiot in isolation.

Take the money and run, he thought. Or in this case, drive. Drive the money and go. Go the distance. You never know where that is. He wanted to break free of his shell. He had created the shell but it still felt like a prison that would be difficult to escape.

The luxury car he bought was top of the line. He used every penny of the inheritance on it. It was red and fast. He called it Sally because that was her name.

When he drove her off a cliff on his 40th birthday, the luxury car had already started to break down considerably. It was actually the main reason he committed suicide. He didn't feel like getting her fixed. And he couldn't bear to get another.

But, in between, they had their moments and adventures. This book is about but one of them. Their very first.

This adventure began on the day Dim decided to take Sally on a road trip to Alaska. This was their first truly long excursion and also the first time Sally spoke to him and when they fell in love and decided to become an official couple. It would be difficult to get to Alaska without going over any bridges or through any tunnels, but Sally knew a way.

It was cold and incredibly stormy when they left Dim's garage in the estate he'd inherited from his father just outside Chicago.

Dim's father, Chap, had divorced his mother when he was six. They broke off all communication when she blew off his 13th birthday. Chap died on the eve of Dim's high school graduation. He was mauled by a lion that had escaped from the Lincoln Park Zoo.

The lion who did it was named Caruso and was shot to death by cops soon after. Caruso had Alzheimer's. Caruso did not maul Dim to death even though he probably could've. Dim threw him a basket of hot dogs instead. And hid in a trash can until the cops arrived.

Dim started a petition for the state to allow him to kill the lion's best friend back at the zoo. It got lots of signatures but that lion, Soldaat, was peacefully euthanized by zoo officials as a show of good faith. It wasn't the best revenge but it made Dim feel somewhat better.

His mother tried to get back in his life after that but Dim refused every attempt. He burned every letter and hung up on every call. He would have deleted every email too, but Dim thought computers were the devil.

Star Power Coleslaw used computers all the time. She was a semi-famous vlogger who specialized in astronomy and yoga and other “new age hippie shit,” as Dim considered it. She was murdered by a deranged fan ten years to the day of his father's tragic death.

As he left for Alaska, safe from the violent weather inside Sally, Dim thought about both of his deceased parents. He thought about his how his mom, with her flowing yellow hair, kind of resembled a lion, and how it was a lion that killed dad, and how, perhaps, if she hadn't "followed her dreams," they'd both still be alive, they'd still be together, they'd still be a family.

Of course, Dim nor anybody else knew Star Power Coleslaw had been murdered. The carpal tunnel explanation was the work of an ingenious setup by her killer, one Glenn Rochester, who lived on the outskirts of Star's adopted home, Sioux Falls. He'd planned the details of the murder, along with the cover-up, for months. And for the death of a niche vlogger, well, the investigation just didn't dig deep enough. Glenn got away with it as the police quickly ruled the case closed.

Carpal tunnel isn't fatal, naturally. The official report listed her death as an accidental overdose on pain medication for nerve damage associated with traumatic carpal tunnel syndrome and internet addiction.

All of the thoughts and every decision Dim ever processed were fleeting. He consumed information in sound bites. He would, at best, pluck three or four words out of every sentence and fill in the rest with his increasingly abstract ideas. So when the officer in charge of notifying next of kin got back in her squad car, Dim honestly believed his mother had died in an automobile accident, in a tunnel, while carpooling.

Before the trip to Alaska he googled “Sioux Falls car tunnel” on a computer at the library. Dim became agitated when the search didn't yield too many results. He looked at a map and saw Sioux Falls to be generally on the way to Alaska from Chicago.

Detour, he thought.

In South Dakota, Dim found there was only one tunnel, the 57th Street tunnel, which was very short. It cut under I-229 and after being in Sioux Falls for nearly a week he learned that there was no way his mother could have died in the tunnel.

It had been closed to install a new LED lighting system when she passed away. There was also no record of any accidents, fatal or otherwise, ever occurring in or around the tunnel.

Something ain't right, Dim thought.

There is a pure bliss in letting things go.  
But, unfortunately, orphans are immune to  
this bliss.

The local sheriff of Sioux Falls, Sheriff Gary Rochester, was nice enough to let Dim look over the case files surrounding his mother's death. And much to his surprise, he found out that Star Power Coleslaw was not his mother. She was an imposter! Sheriff Gary let Dim read her diary too. And wouldn't you know it, that diary basically laid out a plan to steal Dim's inheritance. Thankfully, the plan didn't work because she died of carpal tunnel. He thanked the sheriff and the sheriff said, "You're welcome, and remember, my brother Glenn had nothing to do with this or any other crime."

As it turned out, Dim's mom didn't live in Sioux Falls but in Sioux City, Iowa. A magic squirrel told this information to Sally while Dim was in the toilet. So he fired up Sally and off they went.

When they got to Iowa, Dim's mom was still alive, but only for a few seconds. She was in the process of dying inside of a car that she had buried underground. Her last words were, "I am not really Dim's mom; I'm an android she built to deliver this final message: Dim's mom, Katy, is alive and well on the Siouxland Veterans Memorial Bridge in Nebraska. If you drive fast in a luxury car you can get to her before she jumps off."

Luckily, the bridge was only four minutes away as South Sioux City, Nebraska is just across the Missouri River from Sioux City, Iowa proper. “I’m sorry my name is Katy and not Star Power Coleslaw, son,” she told Dim. “And I’m sorry I do not know how to vlog either. But I’m the one who sent you that money and I’m glad you got this nice red car.” Then she jumped to her death.

When she hit the water, she became a large boat. Dead Katy the boat was big enough to fit Sally the luxury car on so they all decided to float up to Alaska instead of drive.

“Much nicer out on the water than that smelly road,” Dead Katy said.

“I love the road, as I am a luxury car, but I have to agree with you on that one,” Sally said.

Both girls chuckled. Dim took a nap.

The Missouri River is America's longest river. It's also, sadly, the most misogynistic. It was constantly trying to drown Sally and Dead Katy as they made their way north westerly across the Great Plains. It would only stop if Dim would treat the two women poorly. So, even though it greatly pained him, Dim called his mother and girlfriend (they had just become an official couple) all kinds of bad names for women. He used the b-word, the c-word, the d-word, the f-word, and the g-word, among other words.

When they got to Brower's Spring in Montana, the source of the Missouri River, they had a decision to make. Dead Katy was a boat and there was no way she could keep going on land. She thought maybe they could jump from Montana into the Pacific Ocean and sail the rest of the way to Alaska, but Dim knew that was far too long of a distance for a boat to jump. Boats are notoriously bad at jumping.

Together, the three of them decided that it would be most fair if they all walked to Alaska. It was difficult for a boat and a luxury car to learn how to walk, but what worth doing isn't?

When they got about halfway through Alberta, Canada, something began calling to Dim. It was a woman's voice. The voice had a magical ring to it and he felt compelled to ditch Dead Katy and Sally in the middle of the night. He walked some 37 miles westward to Cynthia, a hamlet in the Alberta province.

Cynthia as a town was not a town, but a person, and the town, which she was not, didn't have a single person inside it. She was all woman, however. And Dim was in love.

Dim agreed to marry Cynthia and they would settle down in Cynthia. He never saw himself as Canadian but he also never saw himself falling in love with a town. He felt bad about cheating on Sally, his luxury car and girlfriend.

One day, when they decided to have lots of children to repopulate the town of Cynthia, Cynthia's vagina started to morph into a luxury car, which Dim continued to have sex with until 17 little luxury cars were born and Cynthia transformed into Sally and Cynthia became a town again, which, in truth, she always had been.

“I’m sorry, Dim. I tricked you,” Sally said. “I couldn’t stand your mother so I posed as the voice of a neighboring town to call you back to me so we could be alone. And here we are. And we have a family now. And it’s time to go visit Alaska.”

Dim wondered if they should give names to their 17 luxury car children and Sally told him that their names would appear in time when they were old enough to grow vanity license plates.

They had left Dead Katy in the middle of Alberta, Canada, and Dim worried about her. “What’s a boat to do in such a dry, unforgiving foreign place?”

“Oh,” Sally replied. “Don’t worry about her at all. I sent your mother down the North Saskatchewan River, which connects to the South Saskatchewan River, which isn’t too far from Montana. And we practiced jumping while you were courting Cynthia, so I think she’ll be able to jump from there to a place called Medicine Lake where she can spend the rest of her days.”

It was good to be back on the road and driving fast after spending a good chunk of time either floating on a river, walking through Canada or falling in love with a town.

The 17 kids weren't as fast as Sally but they took to the open road quickly and only 13 of them died in horrible car wrecks in Northern Canada.

The four surviving children were named



because they were too mentally-handicapped to come up with good vanity names (except for WALGRN 1, whom they called Wally, who chose that because he passed by a Walgreens pharmacy one time).

Traveling through the Yukon proved to be the most challenging part of the voyage and they lost little 185 4068 when she was eaten by a large moose who mistook her for some moose food.

They tried to track the moose and potentially rescue poor 185 4068 from its belly but, sadly, ADN 837 and J87 0231 were both killed by Canadian hunters who mistook them for young moose.

Dim, Sally and Wally held a funeral for all 16 of the deceased cars and the parents vowed to keep little Wally safe so he could grow into a full-size luxury car someday.

When they finally arrived in Alaska, they threw themselves a huge car party and invited all of the cars in Anchorage, which was more cars than they thought, and the party got too big so somebody called the cops and the cops killed all the cars that weren't luxury cars, and even though Sally and Wally were luxury cars, they felt really bad and partially to blame, but mostly they blamed the cops, who were just too sad to not kill things because they weren't invited to the party and they didn't have the necessary human feelings to parse that sadness and understand what it really

means to be alive so their sadness became an anger and their anger became violence and they killed things that seemed the most worth killing, and the things most worth killing in their eyes were the things with the least worth, so they killed all the shitty cars and even the ones that were only sort of shitty.

They were pretty bummed out by the killer cops invading the party and killing all those innocent cars, so the family decided to leave Alaska the next day. They sped all the way home to Chicago in about 25 minutes. Not a single cop could catch Sally or Wally, who was fast becoming an even more luxury car than his mother.

One day, as they were settling into domestic life, Sally caught Dim kissing Wally in the garage. Wally was an orange luxury car. Dim, being colorblind, couldn't tell orange apart from red and thought he was kissing Sally. They all shared a nice laugh over that hilarious miscue.

A few nights later, when Wally became a teenage luxury car, he decided he wanted to move to Paris, which is not an uncommon thing for teenage luxury cars to want to do.

“You’ll have to learn to swim, obviously,” his mother told him.

“I’ve got a great idea!” Dim shouted.

They sent Wally to live with his grandma, Dead Katy, out in Medicine Lake, Montana. There she could teach the boy how to become more like a boat and less like a luxury car. If he didn't want to become more like a boat, he'd likely drown crossing the ocean on his way to France, his grandma warned him.

Wally drowned a few miles off the shore of New York City and a shark named Gertrude Rochester used his body as a toilet ship and propelled herself to Sioux Falls with one massive bowel movement. There she uncovered the murder plot perpetrated by her half-brothers Glenn and Sheriff Gary to kill Star Power Coleslaw.

The Brothers Rochester had taken over Star's semi-lucrative vlogging empire where they rebranded it as "The Sheriff and The Glennster." Their vlogs were mostly about how one of them was a sheriff and the other was a criminal and how they helped one another to commit and cover-up crimes. Their half-sister Gertrude ate them and then died because she was a shark in the middle of South Dakota.

Sally and Dim were sad about their son dying like that, but they were happy that the shark Gertrude Rochester was able to use his body for that purpose and get justice for Star Power Coleslaw, who wasn't Dim's real mother, but it's a nice end to the story just the same.

***The End***