

# Something Less Than a Modern Family

I'm not suggesting sex; I just want one kiss. One measly little kiss. It could even be on the cheek, if the lips are too much, too soon. Or in the background, where no one is really looking. Is it too much to ask? I mean, Claire and Phil do it. Jay and Gloria do it. And Dylan and Haley (those teenage sluts)—even they do it. It's only fair that Cam and Mitchell do it, too!

If you have no idea about what I'm alluding to: (1) where have you been? and (2) put down the paper and go find episodes of *Modern Family* online. I'm not joking. It's true that television is oversaturated with crap, and I watch it next to never. But some things, like the rise of Lady Gaga or the return of Betty White, are too fabulous to ignore. *Modern Family* also fits that bill. So go. Right. Now. We will wait...

Now that you've watched the entire season in one sitting, do you see what I'm saying? The series' token gay couple, Cam and Mitchell, never kiss. They touch or hug a few times and there is *never* any sexual banter. Granted, the show's main focus isn't intimacy, but a clear double standard exists between the straights and the gays when it comes to showing affection. Maybe this isn't shocking considering mainstream media's disastrous representation of homosexuality historically, but I was easily fooled into thinking this *Family* would break the mold.



## QUARTER-LIFE QUEERIES

by Krista Houstoun

Brothers hug it out.

Frat boys hug it out.

Life partners—regardless of sexual orientation—do not fucking hug it out. They kiss and make-up.

In a recent episode, "Airport 2010," the disparity between the straight and gay relationships depicted becomes crystal clear. When Phil and Mitchell return to the airport and find their respective partners, with whom each was previously arguing, both couples embrace and spew their apologies. *This is it, I thought. Here it comes! Lay it on him, Cam!* But the camera swiftly zoomed in on Phil and Claire getting their smooch on, while Cam and Mitchell just hugged it out. Smoochless, again.

Brothers hug it out. Frat boys hug it out.

Life partners—regardless of sexual orientation—do not fucking hug it out. They kiss and make up. I don't understand why that's such a difficult thing to pull off, especially for a sitcom selling itself as "modern." It's not like I'm asking for a sex scene here (not yet, anyway).

I expected more from this series. I thought because it started out so unapologetically gay (with the boys adopting a child), it would be the show to follow through. Sadly though, it's turning out to be just another example of how mainstream media doesn't fairly represent us. The show draws many of its laughs from playing on gay stereotypes, yet it fails to offer us adequate "normal life" coverage in return.

Perhaps this wouldn't be such an irritation if it weren't the 23rd episode. I've been waiting a long time for this damn kiss, okay? And it matters. The kiss matters because millions of people watch the show, and they shouldn't be led to think that homos are admissible so long as we publicly censor our affection. Equality can never be achieved from that. And while the point of the show is likely not to start a revolution, double standard tactics keep *Modern Family* from being great.

Gay couples kiss. They also grab each other's asses in public when they think no one is looking, hold hands on walks and exchange witty sexual innuendos. And yes, they, too, fuck. Just like any other couple. The straight

couples in *Modern Family* are depicted doing these sorts of behaviors (well, not the fucking—it's a *family* show after all). Is it really going to kill someone to see the dudes kiss for .5 seconds? It would probably be less provocative than Gloria's double D rack on constant display (not that I'm complaining about that, of course...).

So why would I make you plow through all the episodes of a program that I feel is unjust? Here's the thing: I love this show. I desperately want to continue loving this show. I believe the intentions of the series' creators are pure, not oppressive. But I'm getting frustrated with the lopsided representation, and thus, my love for this new pop show is evolving to be conditional: I need a kiss for my love to persevere. It's kind of a deal breaker.

Still, I remain hopeful, because it turns out I'm not the only one who feels this way: check out the Facebook group "Let Cam & Mitchell Kiss on *Modern Family*!" And if Facebook can get Betty White to host *Saturday Night Live*, that creepy little social network can do anything. ☺

*Krista Houstoun dislikes television, Facebook and most other modern "conveniences." She loves irony, Cam's "Lion King" rendition and laughter more—and fair play most. She happily accepts love and hate mail at krista.houstoun@gmail.com.*



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