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Love is after all a selfish thing

by Lawrence Howard

At 45 Jayne knew that she had finally met her soul mate. Jerome was the man she wished she'd met 20 years ago. When she'd got married aged 25 she'd known deep down she was making a mistake. Instead of her wedding day being a day of joy, love and celebration, she had spent much of that morning crying. She wasn't sure if she was making the right decision, and now she realised her mistake.

Paul was good looking but slightly arrogant. Unfortunately, this arrogance had turned to smug pomposity. His job meant that he had to travel away from home, and she was sure he was having an affair. In fact, on reflection, she reckoned that this wasn't the first time. To see if her theory was true, she would question his every move to see if his stories tied up and made sense. But then maybe he'd become very good at lying? The thought of him with another woman created an all-consuming jealousy. And even though now she no longer loved him, her ego couldn't cope with his possible infidelity.

And that was how she was feeling up until she met Jerome. He was French and good looking although not in a French way. He had wavy blonde hair that would often get blown across his light blue eyes. In fact, at 6ft 4 he looked Scandinavian. She was travelling to Paris on the Eurostar and sat down next to him. He had been working in London and was travelling back home. They talked all of the way to Paris and, realising that they had so much in common, exchanged business cards. As they said goodbye he kissed her on the cheek and her heart melted. The following month she returned to Paris and their relationship began.

But hurt by her suspicions of Paul's affairs, she knew she couldn't bear it if Jerome was also unfaithful. She loved him so much, but why was such a good-looking man interested in her? She suspected that he must have many women in his life and this jealousy overwhelmed her. She questioned him constantly, until he could prove his innocence.

After many arguments Jerome confronted her. He said that her jealousy was an act of selfishness and had destroyed their relationship. Jayne said she couldn't help it because she loved him so much. "Love is, after all, a selfish thing," she said.

But Jerome understood the true meaning of love.

“No,” he said, “love is about trust and knowing that you only want each other and no one else. Your version of love is only about how you feel, fuelled by distorted memories that are not fact. I know I have never been or wanted to be unfaithful, but you don’t. For this reason, I cannot continue our relationship anymore. However, although we can’t be lovers, maybe we can still be friends? And in future, you should remember my friend, that knowledge is stronger than memory. If you look at the facts, you will always see the truth.”